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EPISTEMIC MODALITY IN AMHARIC

MODALNOŚĆ EPISTEMICZNA W JĘZYKU AMHARSKIM

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Poznań 2019

*To my Family*

*Mojej Rodzinie*



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

In interlinear glosses of examples the following tags for grammatical morphemes and categories are used.

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ACC	accusative
ADJ	adjective
ADV	adverbializer
ASS	associative
ASSER	assertive
APPL	applicative
BEN	benefactive
CIRC	circumfix
COMP	complementizer
COND	conditional
COP	copula
DEF	definite article
DSTR	distributive
EMPH	emphatic
EPST	epistemic modality
EPST:Q	modal epistemic question
IMPR	imperative
INTR	interrogative
IPFV	imperfective
JUSS	jussivus
F	feminine
FOC	focus
FUT	future tense
M	masculine

MAL	malefactive
MIR	mirativity
NEG	negative
NOM	nominal (noun or adjective)
NPST	non-past tense
OBJ	object
PAREN	parenthetical
PF	perfect tense
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PN	proper name
POL	polite
POSS	possessive
PROG	progressive
PST	past tense
PRES	present tense
REL	relative
SF	singular feminine
SG	singular
SM	singular masculine
SPOL	singular polite
TOP	topic
VN	verbal noun

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this thesis has taken a large chunk of my life, in which I met many people who helped me in bringing it to a successful conclusion. To begin with I thank my supervisor Prof. Jerzy Bańczerowski thanks to whom I started writing the thesis at all, who carefully read and commented on the early drafts of my work and who has patiently waited for me to complete the dissertation.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Orin Gensler, thanks to whom I finished the thesis. I thank him for teaching me, in our endless fascinating discussions, how to think about language and linguistics, for arguing with me, for providing counterexamples which forced me to better mull over my ideas, for his unfailing friendship, and both intellectual and moral support. Orin proofread the entire thesis furnishing me with many useful comments and criticisms which played an important role in the development of the present work.

I am very grateful to Fitsum Woldemariam, *primus inter pares* among my Amharic-speaking informants, for spending many hours with me and answering my long lists of questions. Without his exquisite knowledge of Amharic and without his efforts to understand my inquiries I would not have been able to capture many important points concerning epistemic modality in this language. I would also like to thank very much my other Amharic-speaking friends and colleagues who assisted me in the course of writing: Kumlachew Fantahun, Hiruie Ermias, Solomon Gebreyes, Tigist Berhanu, Abraham Adugna, Yonas Abreha, Elias Feleke Gebretsadik, Sisay Sahle, Hewan Semon, Desalegn Hagos, Gidena Mesfin, Getie Gelaye, Daniel Assefa, Mersha Alegne and Dolombera Negga.

I should thank Orin Gensler, Iosif Fridman and Ya'ar Hever for translating for me various parts of Gideon Goldenberg's PhD thesis from Hebrew. I am also indebted to Iosif, Denis Nosnitsin, Andreas Ellwardt and Prof. Mechthild Reh for reading and commenting on some parts of the thesis and for discussing with me Amharic grammar. I thank Agnieszka Jagodzińska for her constructive advice on the layout and the summary.

I thank my friends and colleagues from the Hiob Ludolf Centre for Ethiopian Studies, and its director Prof. Alessandro Bausi, for creating a stimulating, supportive and amiable atmosphere. Because of all of you, coming to work every day has been a sheer

pleasure. Finally, I am grateful for the love and support of my family, my close friends and my beloved D. N.

# PRINCIPLES OF TRANSLITERATION AND GLOSSING

## Transliteration

For the Ethiopic script (*fidäl*) in its Amharic version there is no single standard system of transliteration accepted for academic purposes among scholars, nor for practical purposes among the Ethiopian population. The transliteration used in this thesis follows that adopted in the canonical linguistic works on Amharic: Leslau's *Amharic Textbook* (1967), Leslau's *Reference Grammar of Amharic* (1995) and Kane's *Amharic-English Dictionary* (1990). A near-identical system is employed in the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* (2003-2014).

The Ethiopic script is a so-called alphasyllabary. It originated from the abjad (i.e. all-consonantal) script of South Arabia which later developed into the alphasyllabary (Bright 1996: 384; 2000), called by Daniels "abugida" (1996: 4). In the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, the basic syllabographs (constituting the so-called 1<sup>st</sup> order) were modified semi-systematically, probably under the influence of Indic scripts, so as to form six other CV characters each containing a different vowel (Meyer 2016a: 139-140)<sup>1</sup>. The seven series are called "orders": 1<sup>st</sup> order Cä, 2<sup>nd</sup> order Cu, 3<sup>rd</sup> order Ci, 4<sup>th</sup> order Ca, 5<sup>th</sup> order Ce, 6<sup>th</sup> order Cə or C, 7<sup>th</sup> order Co.

Originally the script was used for writing Gə<sup>ə</sup>əz (Classical Ethiopic) but later it was also adapted to Amharic, an auxiliary language for Gə<sup>ə</sup>əz, and finally to other Ethiosemitic languages. The Ethiopic alphasyllabary has been extended with specifically Amharic letters for specifically Amharic sounds, i.e. characters standing for palatalized sounds like ḥ šä and ḥ ḡä, and for labialized sounds (see below). It should be noted that two of the CV series of the original Ge<sup>ə</sup>ez alphasyllabary involved so-called "guttural" consonants: the laryngeal (glottal) ḥ ° and the pharyngeal ʔ °; in Amharic both of these guttural sounds have disappeared, leaving two syllabographic series (respectively ḥ, ʔ) which actually represent no consonant at all but only the vowel. This can create a problem for transliteration. In the table below (but not elsewhere) I will treat these two syllabographic series as if they really started with a consonant (CV), to be transcribed here as ° V, which was true for Ge<sup>ə</sup>ez but false for Amharic. Elsewhere in the thesis these signs ḥ, ʔ will be rendered simply as vowels, without any consonant. The syllabary is shown in Table 1

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<sup>1</sup> See his article for an updated bibliography concerning the Ethiopic script.

below. The 34 syllabographs are arranged in the traditional *habu* (referring to the first two characters) sequence.

Graphemes for labialized consonants are derived from their plain counterparts. Non-velar labialized consonants all have the form  $C^w + a$ , and are thus uniformly derived from the 4<sup>th</sup> order grapheme by adding a longish horizontal stroke under the basic non-labialized grapheme (Meyer 2016a: 149). Some of the Amharic labialized consonants are as follows: **ሏ**  $l^w a$ , **ሟ**  $m^w a$ , **ሐ**  $b^w a$ , **ረ**  $z^w a$ , **ሩ**  $f^w a$ . There also exists a special set of syllabographs representing the  $Gə^cəz$  labialized velars, but for the most part these signs are rarely used in Amharic; only the 4<sup>th</sup>-order signs (e.g. **ቋ**  $q^w a$ , **ቋ**  $g^w a$ ) have any currency. Hence these signs will not be shown in the table.

Several Amharic consonants can be represented by more than one grapheme: for instance, the graphemes **ሀ**, **ሐ** and **ከ** stand for the same sound [h], even though, historically they stood for [h], [h̥] and [x], respectively. Similar graphic multiplicity affects the consonants [s], [s̥], and (original) [ʔ/ʕ]. The transcription applied in this work will not reflect the differences between such graphemes: for instance, **ሕዝብ** is transcribed as *həzb* ‘people’ rather than *h̥əzb*. Thus, the present transcription system should rather be viewed as a blend of transliteration and transcription. The 1<sup>st</sup> order vowel normally is the mid-central vowel [ä]; however, after the five historical gutturals (represented here as *b* and *ʔ*) the 1<sup>st</sup> order instead represents the low-central vowel [a], just like the 4<sup>th</sup> order, and will here be so transcribed. A “real” glottal stop, which appears in Amharic exclusively in  $Gə^cəz$  loanwords but for convenience will also appear in the table below in rendering **አ**, **ዐ**, is indicated by *ʔ*, such as in **ማእከን** *maʔzän* ‘angle’. The script does not indicate two important phonemic features: gemination of consonants is not marked, and the 6<sup>th</sup> order consonant may either be followed by the vowel [ə] or by nothing (i.e.  $Cə$ ,  $C$ ). These two features will, however, be reflected in the present transcription. The script is written from left to right.

## Glossing

In the present work the description and analysis of epistemic modality in Amharic is richly illustrated with sentences taken from the corpus (see Introduction). Each example sentence is presented in a four-line format. In the first line, the Amharic example sentences is reproduced in the Ethiopic script. In the second line, it is transliterated using the system described above. The third line contains the interlinear gloss following the guidelines and rules laid down by the Leipzig Glossing Rules.<sup>2</sup> The last line is a translation into English. The spelling of Amharic sentences has not been normalized but kept in the version given in the source. Translations into English tend to be faithful rather than beautiful—to mimic the structure and, occasionally, idiomaticity of the Amharic language, though without doing violence to the English. The glossing reflects Amharic morphemes to whatever degree of detail I judged to be useful for the reader in this kind of work, with the aim of avoiding irrelevant clutter. For instance, I will not break down into morphemes some derived adverbs but provide an English translation of the whole expression (e.g. *bäqarbu* ‘soon’, instead of *bä-qarḅ-u*). Demonstrative pronouns will be glossed with plain words: ‘this, that, these, those’ instead of using the grammatical abbreviations for Proximative (PROX) and Distal (DIST). The masculine definite article is the default in Amharic and therefore will be glossed just as “DEF”. The feminine definite article will be glossed “DEF.F”. Vowels that are underlyingly part of a morpheme but have been elided at a morpheme boundary will not be reconstructed (e.g. *kä-ssu* ‘from him’, not *kä-əssu*). A vowel that itself constitutes a single morpheme and is elided, notably the 1SG personal prefix *ə-*, will not be reconstructed but will be glossed together with the following morpheme by using a dot (e.g. \**ə-assəḅ*=*all-ähu* > *assəḅ*=*all-ähu* 1SG.think\IPFV-NPST-1SG). The only morpheme that will consistently be re-constituted is the relative marker *yä-* which deletes if preceded by a preposition (e.g. *kä-(yä)-hon-ä* from-(REL)-COP\PFV-3SM). The same holds for the marker *yä-* in its function as a genitive (e.g. *lä-(yä)-təqit-očč zanna-(ə)-nna* for-(GEN)-few-PL fame-and). The applicative morphemes *-bb-* and *-ll-* will be glossed in three ways according to their function (for more on this see Section 1.2.2.4). In the negative imperfective the 1SG negative marker is not the usual *a-* but a special

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php>. [Accessed: 26.07.2015]

portmanteau *al-*; I will gloss this *al-* as NEG.1SG. The Amharic copula and existential verb come in various forms, whose glossing is demonstrated in Section 1.2.2.4 (Tables 12 and 13). Epenthetic vowels and glides are given in parenthesis without being glossed, for instance: *təyyaqe-(w)-očč* is rendered as “question-PL”; *mäsmat-(ə)-mm* is glossed as “hear\VN-FOC”. Occasionally the glossing will contain suprasegmental features such as pause and sentence stress. These will be indicated by using # and 'XXX, respectively.

TABLE 1. Amharic alphasyllabary in the usual (*Habu*) order

	1 <sup>st</sup> order ä	2 <sup>nd</sup> order u	3 <sup>rd</sup> order i	4 <sup>th</sup> order a	5 <sup>th</sup> order e	6 <sup>th</sup> order ə, –	7 <sup>th</sup> order o
h	ሀ [ha]	ሁ	ሂ	ሃ	ሄ	ህ	ሆ
l	ለ	ሉ	ሊ	ላ	ሌ	ል	ሎ
h	ሐ [ha]	ሑ	ሒ	ሓ	ሔ	ሕ	ሖ
m	መ	ሙ	ሚ	ማ	ሜ	ም	ሞ
s	ሠ	ሡ	ሢ	ሣ	ሤ	ሥ	ሦ
r	ረ	ሩ	ሪ	ራ	ራ	ር	ሮ
s	ሰ	ሱ	ሲ	ሳ	ሴ	ስ	ሶ
š	ሸ	ሹ	ሺ	ሻ	ሼ	ሽ	ሾ
q	ቀ	ቁ	ቂ	ቃ	ቄ	ቅ	ቆ
b	በ	ቡ	ቢ	ባ	ቤ	ብ	ቦ
t	ተ	ቱ	ቲ	ታ	ቲ	ት	ቶ
č	ቸ	ቹ	ቺ	ቻ	ቼ	ች	ቾ
h	ኀ [ha]	ኁ	ኂ	ኃ	ኄ	ኅ	ኆ
n	ነ	ኑ	ኒ	ና	ኔ	ን	ኖ
ñ	ኸ	ኹ	ኺ	ኻ	ኼ	ኽ	ኾ
<°> a	አ [a]	አ	አ	አ	አ	አ	አ
k	ከ	ከ	ከ	ካ	ኬ	ክ	ኮ
h	ከ	ከ	ከ	ካ	ኬ	ክ	ኮ
w	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ
<°>a	ዐ [a]	ዐ	ዐ	ዐ	ዐ	ዐ	ዐ
z	ዘ	ዘ	ዘ	ዘ	ዘ	ዘ	ዘ
ž	ዠ	ዡ	ዢ	ዣ	ዤ	ዥ	ዦ
y	የ	የ	የ	የ	የ	የ	የ
d	ደ	ደ	ደ	ደ	ደ	ደ	ደ
š	ረ	ረ	ረ	ረ	ረ	ረ	ረ
g	ገ	ገ	ገ	ገ	ገ	ገ	ገ
t	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ
č	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ	ጠ
p	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ
š	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ	ጸ
š	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ	ፀ
f	ፈ	ፈ	ፈ	ፈ	ፈ	ፈ	ፈ
p	ፕ	ፕ	ፕ	ፕ	ፕ	ፕ	ፕ



## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to describe and analyze epistemic modality in contemporary Amharic. This category is represented by such expressions as English ‘may’, ‘must’, ‘should’, ‘probably’, ‘it is possible that’, ‘I think (that)’, ‘I am sure (that)’, ‘it seems (to me) that’, ‘there is no doubt that’, ‘in all likelihood’, ‘it is likely that’ and ‘maybe’. This list is intended to be representative of both the range of forms and the range of meanings that are subsumed under epistemic modality. In comparison to the large literature on epistemic modality in well-researched languages, so far this category has only been occasionally and superficially treated in works on Amharic grammar and, in fact, on grammar of any other Ethiosemitic language. The present study is thus a first attempt at a systematic and in-depth investigation of epistemic modality in this language. The category of epistemic modality is as challenging for anyone who tries to examine it as it is essential for any language user. It is challenging because it is hard to grasp its semantics without getting trapped in the fallacy of *ignotum per ignotum* (‘unknown by unknown’). It is essential because it deals with one of the fundamental concepts of human life, i.e. knowledge.

I have read a number of leading works on epistemic modality and in honesty I have often been dissatisfied with the superficial semantic analysis of epistemic expressions (frequently limited to the class of modal verbs). I could not agree with such an approach, which draws heavily (I would say, excessively) on putative synonymies and alleged scalar analyses. What I do agree with almost entirely is the approach developed in the Polish school of semantics, and I will use their thinking as a *Leitfaden*—not following it in all respects but conforming to the spirit of it. My work draws fundamentally on the thinking of two Polish semanticists, namely Andrzej Bogusławski and Magdalena Danielewiczowa, but augmented by study and awareness of Western-style functionalism and typology. Both of the scholars are professors in the Institute of Formal Linguistics at Warsaw University. A. Bogusławski is a renowned linguist and a great thinker whose original works, published in a few European languages, are known both inside and outside of Poland. He has written on many aspects of linguistic theory and methodology, being noted, among others, for his work on the methodology of semantics and the theoretical basis of synchronic morphology, lexicology and lexicography. In the 1960s he launched a semantic theory in which the meaning of a language expression is elucidated by means of

simple expressions, i.e. semantic primitives. Since then his theory has been developed and tested by the scholar himself and his disciples. An off-shoot of his theory is Natural Semantic Metalanguage, worked out by Anna Wierzbicka (Zaron 2011: 7-8). The two main ideas that I have drawn on in Bogusławski's work and taken over for my thesis are the notion of a unit of language and the concept of knowledge as a primitive term.

M. Danielewiczowa, an outstanding disciple of Bogusławski, is known chiefly in Poland (and very likely in Slavic-speaking countries), as she writes mostly in Polish and about the Polish language. In her books and numerous articles she tests and expands Bogusławski's semantic theory. She has authored a crucial book for the present thesis, *Wiedza i niewiedza: studium polskich czasowników epistemicznych* [Knowledge and non-knowledge: the study of Polish epistemic verbs] (2002), which has inspired and guided me throughout my work. In this fascinating work, Danielewiczowa investigates the semantic content of 23 Polish epistemic verbs containing a propositional argument, such as *myśleć, że* ('think that'), *sądzić, że* ('believe that'), *być pewnym, że* ('be sure that'). All these verbs are semantically founded on the concept of knowledge, which is taken as an unanalyzable primitive. With the help of this concept and a few other simple expressions (including negation) she builds semantic representations of the selected verbs. She opens her discussion of each verb with some remarks concerning the examined verb and then guides the reader through the semantic analysis, explaining which senses are thematic, presupposed and rhematic,<sup>1</sup> and testing her hypotheses. Towards the end of each discussion she provides a full semantic representation of the given verb which consists of a dismembered expression equivalent to the verb. Much as I admire it, Danielewiczowa's approach to the analysis of Polish epistemic verbs is, at least for the time being, an unattainable model for my analysis of Amharic. What I have tried to do, following Danielewiczowa, was to test on sentence examples the grammaticality of an expression and draw semantic conclusions from its behaviour. More details concerning the method I have used will be given in what follows. I will begin with some comments on the corpus.

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<sup>1</sup> For the explanation of these terms see Section 2.1.

I am skeptical about a priori approaches to linguistic study in general. That is why my study is based on a corpus of written and spoken texts that come from both printed and electronic media. This approach has helped me to collect at least some expressions that might never have been elicited from a native speaker, if only because they would simply not occur to her/him. The core of the corpus consists of some twenty Amharic novels and short stories which were composed from around 1975 onwards, i.e. in the post-revolution period, up to 2013. The year 1975 has more a symbolic, political value rather than indicating any caesura in the development of the Amharic language. In fact the Derg-regime did have a significant impact on Amharic by conducting literacy campaigns, encouraging translations and enriching the vocabulary. However, my main concern was to ensure that my corpus contains relatively recent Amharic. The second criterion was the literary value of the book—I tended to choose works of renowned writers, credited with a good style and language. A small number of books conform to only one of the two criteria. Apart from literary works, I have extensively used the press (2002-2019), both online and print publications, such as the weekly *Addis Admas* ('New Horizon'), dedicated to cultural and social affairs, and *Reporter*, dealing mostly with social and political issues (this part of my corpus was open—I culled examples whenever needed). The corpus of spoken texts, which counterbalances the neat language of novels, encompasses talk shows broadcast by Radio Fana and two series of radio dramas, *Filega* ('Search') and *Yegna* ('Ours'). Contrary to my expectations that utterances adduced from live talks would be difficult to interpret in isolation, in fact they proved easier to translate. Because of their relative simplicity in comparison to written text I find them especially appropriate for my study. Whenever I could not find an appropriate example in any of the above sources I would search for it online, at various websites. The printed corpus materials were produced in Ethiopia, though they may not always have been written in the country (for instance, one of the authors, Addam Rätta, lives in the diaspora). For some electronic sources that I used it was impossible to determine whether their authors were based in Ethiopia or outside. As the reader will see, my corpus reflects the topics that are most often raised online by the Ethiopians themselves: politics and religion. Whenever there was a choice I would take a sentence which dealt with "lighter" issues, reported in

less complicated language.<sup>2</sup> In a few cases I use example sentences invented by an informant or by myself. Because of the open-ended and rather fluid character of my corpus, I have mostly refrained from making any cut-and-dried statements concerning the frequency of occurrence of a given expression. Any observations of this type, though they do appear occasionally in my work, are impressionistic rather than quantitative. All examples culled from written sources retain their original spelling, which due to a lack of a standardized orthography may show some inconsistencies.

Once I decided on the core of my corpus, I extracted modal epistemic expressions from it. I have called modal epistemic expressions “epistemificators” and this term is used throughout the thesis. A few other terms, crucial in the present work, are: “epistemizer” (the sender of an epistemically modalized sentence), “epistemized” (the clause expressing the propositional content of the epistemically modalized sentence), “epistemized head” (the head verb of the epistemized) and “epistemificator head” (the head verb of the epistemificator) (Section 2.1) While extracting epistemificators from the corpus, it turned out that the field of lexical expressions was quite extensive and so, to make my project feasible, I had to select the most frequent. However, what there is, I hope, makes a representative sample. Additionally, adopting Bogusławski’s postulate to investigate the meaning of such a unit of language which bears a distinct meaning and occupies a place in the system of the language, I established three principles for identification of epistemificators (Section 2.4).

- i. Each epistemificator is investigated together with the arguments that it takes and with which it forms a semantically analyzable whole.
- ii. Modal epistemic verbs are statives when it comes to their lexical aspect and occur in the present tense.
- iii. Modal epistemic verbal phrases, noun phrases and some adjectival phrases must have an explicit 1<sup>st</sup>-person notional subject.

Additionally, some modal expression have more than one subsense not always in the realm of epistemic modality; these should be carefully distinguished. Prosody (sentence stress) plays also a vital role in separating epistemificators from formally similar non-

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<sup>2</sup> Amharic prose that deals with “heavy” issues can be stylistically quite dense.

epistemificator expressions and in investigating the thematic-rhematic structure of modal epistemic sentences.

Notwithstanding this selectivity, the inventory of epistemificators treated in this thesis contains 70-odd items. I list so many expressions to show the richness of epistemificators in Amharic and to impress the reader with the sheer quantity and abundance of the area under investigation. But they do not all have the same coverage in the thesis and I focus on those which appear to me the most frequent and important. In fact to each of them one could devote a monograph.

The whole set of epistemificators was classified into three main groups and one additional group, along with their degree of grammaticalization/lexicalization (Section 2.3). The four groups consist of grammatical, lexical, copular and parenthetical modal epistemic expressions. In Chapter 4 they are presented, group by group, as a list together with their morphosyntactic description. Each expression is illustrated with at least one sentence, glossed and translated into English, with the English sticking as close to the original as possible even at the cost of some roughness. For the majority of epistemificators I provide information on the stress of the sentence in which they are involved. The prosody is vital for identification of epistemificators as well as for elucidating their semantics. Because there is no research on prosody in Amharic assertive sentences and questions, I could not compare in what way the prosody of epistemificators differs from them. As mentioned, I will be presenting a very large number of epistemificators in this thesis, and except in Chapter 4 (the catalogue of epistemificators), I will almost always use them selectively in my argumentation. This is simply for practical reasons, to prevent the thesis from becoming unwieldy.

I present the semantics of epistemificators mainly by means of dimensions, each comprising two or more different values (Sections 5.2-5.9). In this way I try to locate each expression in a multidimensional semantic space. The list of dimensions is not intended to be definitive or all-inclusive. There are all together eight dimensions that I have made use of, of which five are semantic and three are formal. It should be emphasized here that the formal dimensions themselves have semantic correlates, but for the time being I am not able to provide a convincing semantic analysis. In addition, I provide semantic sketches of selected epistemificators, which can be used in the future for a more comprehensive

semantic description (Section 5.10). In order to arrive at conclusions concerning the meaning of epistemificators I have implemented tests of falsification and substitution. In these tests, I apply deviant, starred sentences (\*) which are especially enlightening in the analysis insofar as they contribute to the understanding of the conveyed senses, and not simply to show the absurdity of the sentence. With the help of tests one can extract in a verifiable, non-impressionistic and non-arbitrary way semantic components of an expression. Thus, as Bogusławski states, negative linguistic data is essential for positive description of expressions (2009: 124). The tests have been conducted with the help of my Amharic-speaking informants and were based almost entirely on the corpus. It should be stressed that in such tests, the English translation may not show the level of grammaticality of the Amharic example: what sounds strange in Amharic may be correct in English (and vice versa).

Additionally, I apply, to a limited extent, the approach to semantics which consists in analysing the thematic-rhematic structure of sentences and units of language. This approach was especially important for explaining the difference between epistemificators with three kinds of complements (Section 5.11). In order to study the interaction of epistemic modality with time and negation I use the above-mentioned concepts of epistemificator head and epistemized head. I examine which one of the two takes the negation or time marker, and what results it yields (Chapter 6).

In this thesis, I often make generalizations about various epistemificators. Typically, it will be possible, with some effort, to create an unusual context in which the generalization fails to hold true, such as ‘I hope I will fail the test in English’ which is grammatically correct but semantically very odd. However, to do this is closer to a game than to ordinary language use and I will usually not even attempt to address such cases.

As for the scope of my work, I should mention three types of expressions which I have excluded from my investigation, despite the fact that other students of modality have taken them under scrutiny. Thus, in some approaches conditional sentences are considered to belong to the domain of epistemic modality. For instance, Palmer (1986) treats epistemic modality in terms of the opposition “real-unreal” or “factual-non-factual”. Conditionals come under the category of unreal or non-factual, hence they are treated by Palmer as a kind of modal epistemic construction. This is quite different from my

approach to epistemic modality, which focuses on the speaker's assessment of the knowledge expressed in the proposition. Likewise, my study does not treat the vast field of questions, except for such interrogative sentences which contain an epistemificator. I have excluded questions because they concern, prototypically, the sender's ignorance about whether a given state of affairs takes place or not (yes/no questions) or what the object asked about is (content questions), whereas in my approach, epistemic modality has to do precisely with the middle ground between knowledge and ignorance. Of course any prototypical question may trigger an answer involving an epistemically modalized sentence. Also, I have not considered here any expressions referring to opinions, such as 'to my mind', 'in my opinion' and 'according to me'. By voicing an opinion, the sender refers to her/his system of values which, in contrast to facts, cannot be verified. In other words, a truth-value cannot be assigned to opinions (Danielewiczowa 2000a: 244).<sup>3</sup> Additionally, if I had subsumed such expressions under the category of epistemic modality, it would expand the list of epistemificators enormously.

Finally I own the reader some words on the state of the art concerning modality. There is a huge and ever-growing literature on this category in both logic and linguistics which somehow reflects the difficulties that it poses for its interpreters (at least in linguistics). Because of that I have decided to devote a separate Chapter 3 to the review of literature. The last section of Chapter 3 deals with what little there is in the way of studies on epistemic modality in Amharic.

This thesis is organized in the following way. In Chapter 1, I will present the Amharic language to the reader, first primarily from a sociolinguistic point of view, then from a formal descriptive point of view, providing a sketch grammar of the language. In Chapter 2, I will introduce the approach to epistemic modality in Amharic that I will take in this thesis. Chapter 3, in turn, will survey the literature, embedding my approach within the general context of current and past research into the topic. Chapters 4-6 present an extensive list of the modal epistemic expressions ("epistemificators") in Amharic, first from a formal perspective, then giving a semantic analysis mainly in terms of dimensions, then examining the interaction between epistemic modality and other, non-modal

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<sup>3</sup> Expressions of opinion are discussed within the category of epistemic modality in Bralczyk (1978).

categories. The conclusion will be followed by a lexicon of Amharic epistemifiers, keyed to the pages where they are discussed.

# 1. THE AMHARIC LANGUAGE

## 1.1. The Amharic language in its social setting

### 1.1.1. A mother tongue and a *lingua franca*

Amharic is the most widely-spoken language of Ethiopia and is constitutionally recognized as the working language of the Ethiopian State (cf. Nāgarit Gazeta 1994: §5, in Richter 2007: 505). Its privileged position among the remaining over 70 speech varieties of Ethiopia (Hudson 2004: 160) is a result of long-lasting policies of “Amharization” that were pursued by the 20<sup>th</sup>-century governments, especially by Haile Selassie I. Additionally, before the implementation of the deliberate pro-Amharic language policy, it was used at the royal court as the so-called *lāssanä nāgus* “the language of the king” as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Appleyard 2003: 233). Throughout the centuries, Amharic also served as a spoken medium of instruction in the traditional church schools, in particular in schools of religious poetry, *qāne bet*, and exegesis, *māṣhaf bet*.

Due to the significant role that Amharic has played in the past, nowadays, it is spoken as a first and second language by the majority of urban Ethiopians (Meyer and Richter 2003: 40). According to the latest census conducted in 2007, Amharic has almost 22 million mother-tongue speakers (of about 74 million inhabitants; by comparison, 25 million Ethiopians speak Oromo as their mother tongue). The previous census, carried out in 1994, reports that some 5 million Ethiopians use Amharic as a second language (Hudson 1999: 102). However, it can be assumed that the latter figure is too low and that probably several million more Ethiopians speak Amharic to some extent (Anbessa and Hudson 2007: 22; Meyer 2006: 117). A recent common phenomenon is so-called “linguistic migration” to the urban areas where Amharic is easily accessible (Appleyard and Orwin 2008: 279).

As the first language Amharic is spoken mainly in northern Šäwa, Gondär (previously Bāgemdār), western Wällo with Mänz, and Goḡḡam where it serves as the medium of instruction in primary schools (from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade up to the 6<sup>th</sup>), in secondary schools (grades 9-12) in subjects other than natural science and mathematics, as well as in administration. In other regional states, for instance in Tigray and Oromia, Amharic is taught as a school subject from the 5<sup>th</sup> up to the 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Additionally, Amharic is widely

used outside the country by the populous Ethiopian diaspora, especially in Sweden, the USA and Israel. For the approximately one million Eritreans who came to Eritrea from Ethiopia at the outbreak of the last Ethio-Eritrean war (2000-2002), it is still the language of everyday familiar communication.

### 1.1.2. Genetic classification

Amharic, whose indigenous name is *Amarəñña*, belongs to the Semitic family of languages. Within this family, Amharic and the other Semitic languages of Ethiopia and Eritrea as well as both epigraphic and modern South Arabian are grouped under South Semitic. The Ethiopian/Eritrean Semitic languages are divided into North and South Ethiopic. Within South Ethiopic, Amharic is a member of the eastern branch, which is often referred to as “Transversal” in contrast to the Outer South Ethiopic group (Hetzron 1990: 161). The closest relative of Amharic is Argobba, an endangered language that is spoken in two small enclaves: in the region of Ankobär in eastern Šäwa, and near the city of Harar in eastern Ethiopia (Wetter 2010: 17-19).

Despite its accepted classification as a Semitic language, some linguists suggest the possibility that Amharic originated as a pidgin with a Cushitic (largely Agaw) and Omotic substratum and a Semitic superstratum (Bender 1983). Hetzron, in turn, argues for the established, orthodox view, that Amharic originated from common Proto-Ethiosemitic and then was strongly influenced by Cushitic languages (1972: 122-123). At present the generally accepted view on the origin of Amharic is that of Hetzron.

### 1.1.3. Geographical and social variations

Given the wide distribution of Amharic, its dialectal diversity is rather low. Indeed, it may be perceived as a linguistic monolith. It should be mentioned, however, that an exhaustive dialect study of Amharic has yet to be undertaken. There are five regional variants that are commonly recognized by linguists: the dialects of Šäwa, Gondär, Wällo, Mänz and Goğgam. In these regions Amharic either originated or has been spoken for centuries (Appleyard 2003: 233). The differences between the dialects exist mostly at the phonetic, phonological and lexical levels. While the dialects of Šäwa, Gondär, Wällo and Mänz seem to be rather close to each other, the dialect of Goğgam, with a number of morphological peculiarities, diverges from them to some extent (Appleyard 2003: 234). Zelealem Leyew

(2007) adds to the list the variety of Addis Ababa—today the most influential form of spoken and written Amharic. Over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has emerged as a de facto standard dialect used across all linguistic communities (Habte Mariam 1973: 114). Thus, the Amharic of Addis Ababa is used in the mass media, in national administration, in education as well as in intellectual circles. Also, this is the form used by contemporary writers, although some of them may employ a regional variety “as a marker of local colour” (Appleyard 2003: 234).

Among the youth of Addis Ababa, a form of Amharic slang called *yä'arada q<sup>w</sup>anq<sup>w</sup>a* “the language of Arada” has been developed (Koji 2003). High school, college and university graduates tend to intersperse their conversation with English words, sometimes to a very great extent.

#### 1.1.4. Literature, orality and literacy

In principle, the Amharic written tradition began in the mid-nineteenth century with the official chronicles of Emperor Tewodros. Prior to this period, Amharic served only rather sporadically as a written language, mainly in religious works translated from Gə'əz and in apologetic treatises (Mantel-Niećko 1985: 307-308). For many centuries the language of writing activity, *ləssanä səḥuf*, and the language of written history, *ləssanä tarik*, was Gə'əz, the usual vehicle for any kind of literature including books of devotion, chronicles, formal letters and documents (Wright 1955: 323). The Amharic chronicles of Tewodros were followed by the translation of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1884) and *Ləbb wäläd tarik* (“Fictitious story”), the first attempt at an Amharic novel, written by Afäwärq Gäbrä Iyäsus in 1908 (Kane 1975: 5-7). The most prolific and influential writer of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was Həruy Wäldä Səllase (Gérard 1971: 287). In the aftermath of the Italian occupation, Mäkönnən Əndalkaččäw, Gərmaččäw Täklä Hawaryat and Käbbädä Mika'el should be mentioned as the most outstanding and active writers (Mantel-Niećko 1985: 317). In 1966/1967 (1959 EC) Haddis Alämayyāhu published *Fəqər əskä məqabər* (“Love unto the grave”) which is considered to be the first “real” Amharic novel (Kane 1975: 15). More recent writers (1970s–2010s) include: Mängəstu Lämna, Bä'alu Gərma, Bərhanu Zäryəhun, Daññaččäw Wäruq, Şəggayä Gäbrä Mädhən (poet and playwright), Mammo Wəddənäh and Səbhat Gäbrä Əgzi'abəher. Finally, some of the prolific writers and poets

of contemporary Ethiopia are: Addam Rätta, Bäwqātu Səyyum and Alämayyāhu Gälagay.<sup>4</sup>

In Ethiopia, along with written literature, there exists a wealth of oral art covering a broad spectrum of genres: poems, stories, folk tales, proverbs, songs, riddles, blessings, curses, jokes, lamentations, war chants and heroic recitals (Getie 2000). One may conjecture that its richness probably exceeds that of Amharic written literature.

According to the figures provided by UNICEF, in 2008-2012 the literacy rate in Ethiopia as a whole amounted to 63 % among male youths (age 15-24) and 47 % among female youths. In 2015 the total literacy rate was estimated at 49 % and is steadily rising. This leads to the conclusion that Ethiopia in general is still primarily an oral milieu. The Amharic language, as other Ethiopian languages, is used, above all, in face-to-face oral verbalization rather than in written verbalization.

#### 1.1.5. The present state of Amharic

Amharic is by far the most developed as well as relatively the most researched language of the numerous tongues of Ethiopia. The National Academy of the Amharic Language, later renamed the Academy of Ethiopian Languages (Kebede 2005: 411), has been working on enriching Amharic vocabulary so that its speakers can use it in all domains of life, including sophisticated scientific discourse. The Academy has published among others *Amarəñña mäzɡäbä qalat* [Amharic Dictionary] (2000/2001) and *Science and Technology Dictionary, (English-Amharic)* (Girma Zenebe *et al.* 1996). It should be mentioned, however, that few of the Academy's suggested lexical innovations (relative to the effort invested) have actually taken hold and are in active use. Also, a reform of the Ethiopic writing system proposed by the Academy has not been put into effect (Kebede 2005: 411). More effective seem attempts made by individuals, mainly writers, journalists and university teachers, who not only propose coinages, but also use them in their works and ultimately put them into wide circulation.

There are B.A, M.A. and PhD programmes in Amharic at Addis Ababa University. The language is also taught at B.A. level in most universities and teachers colleges in Ethiopia. Outside Ethiopia, several Israeli, European and American universities offer undergraduate and graduate courses in Amharic.

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<sup>4</sup> For a short introduction to Amharic literature see Krzyżanowska (2017b).

## 1.2. Sketch of Amharic grammar

The preceding section dealt with some basic, mostly sociolinguistic and dialectal facts about Amharic. In this section, I will provide an outline of Amharic grammar to help the reader who has not studied the language to understand the grammatical discussion.<sup>5</sup> Apart from the general issues expected in such a sketch I will present a few grammatical points which either occur particularly often in the present thesis and/or are essential for comprehending the structure of Amharic modal epistemic expressions.

### 1.2.1. Sounds of Amharic

The repertoire of the 31 consonants<sup>6</sup> of Amharic is provided in the following table.

TABLE 2. Amharic consonants

		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal	Labialized velar
Plosive	Voiceless	(p)		t			k	(ʔ)	k <sup>w</sup>
	Ejective	(p) {p'}		t̥ {t'}			q {k'}		q <sup>w</sup> {k <sup>w</sup> '}
	Voiced	b		d			g		g <sup>w</sup>
Affricate	Voiceless				č {tʃ}				
	Ejective			ʃ {ts'}	č̥ {tʃ'}				
	Voiced				ǰ {dʒ}				
Fricative	Voiceless		f	s	š {ʃ}			h	
	Voiced		(v)	z	ž {ʒ}				
Nasal		m		n		ɲ {ɲ}			
Trill/ Lateral				r					
				l					
Approximant		w				y {j}			

<sup>5</sup> For a comprehensive treatment of Amharic grammar see Cohen [1936] 1970, Hartmann (1980), Titov (1991), Leslau (1995), and Anbessa and Hudson (2009). The present grammatical sketch draws on these books as well as the following works: Meyer (2011), Titov and Bulakh (2013), Shimelis (2015), Krzyżanowska (2017a). When I take information from a different source, dealing with some particular points of Amharic grammar, I give a reference.

<sup>6</sup> All Amharic consonants are counted here, including those occurring only in loan words, namely [p], [v], [p], and [ʔ].

The phonetic symbols used in Table 2 are the same as for the transcription (see “Principles of transliteration and glossing” after the Introduction).<sup>7</sup> If an IPA equivalent differs from my transcription, it is given in curly brackets. Sounds that occur only in loan words (including loans from Gəʕəz) are given in parentheses. Of note in this inventory is a set of ejective sounds, each having a non-glottalized counterpart, such as [t] and [t̚], [č] and [č̚]. Amharic has three labialized velars (also called labiovelars) that appear before the vowels [ä], [a] and [ə]; their phonemic status, however, is sometimes considered problematic (Meyer 2011: 1185). Additionally, the majority of labial and alveolar sounds can be labialized but only when they are followed by the central vowel [a]. The consonants [p] and [v] occur exclusively in words of foreign, European origin, while [p̚] and [v̚] occur in Gəʕəz<sup>8</sup> words used in Amharic. Except for the two glottal sounds ([ʔ] and [h]) all the remaining consonants can be geminated; the presence and absence of gemination makes a difference in either lexical or grammatical meaning.

Amharic has a neat system of seven vowels provided in Table 3 (after Meyer 2011: 1185). The IPA transliteration is given after Hayward and Hayward (1999: 47).

TABLE 3. Amharic vowels

	FRONT	CENTRAL	BACK
HIGH	i		u
HIGH-MID	e	ə {ɨ}	o
LOW-MID		ä {ə}	
LOW		a	

Two vowels deserve brief comment. The central vowel [ä] stands for a sound whose quality, in IPA, ranges between [ə], [ɛ] and [a]. According to Devens it corresponds to IPA [ɐ] (1983: 118, 122). Another central vowel, [ə], often functions as epenthetic.<sup>9</sup> Note that the symbol [ə] designates different vowels in the two transcription systems.

<sup>7</sup> The inventory draws mostly on Hayward and Hayward (1999: 45), who use the IPA transcription, and is supplemented by information given in Meyer (2011: 1184-1185).

<sup>8</sup> The language-name “Gəʕəz” contains the voiced pharyngeal sound [ʕ]. Although the sound is not present in Amharic I use it here as this is the conventional way of writing the name of the language.

<sup>9</sup> For the convention used here to indicate the epenthetic vowel in glossing, see above.

Amharic does not allow vowel clusters. Hence, if two vowels come together across a morpheme boundary, there are two phonetic adjustments that may occur: one of the vowels is elided, or a glide [w] or [y] is introduced between them. The two vowels [ə] and [ä] are always subject to elision when adjacent to another vowel, *bä-antä* → *b-antä* ‘on you’.<sup>10</sup> Of the two [ə] is ‘weaker’ and thus it is [ə] that elides when coming together with [ä], *bä-ərgat* → *bä-rgat* ‘clearly’. If a sequence [a] + [a] or [ə] + [ə] occurs the resulting vowel (expected [aa], [əə]) becomes short, *wəšša-aččən* → *wəššaččən* ‘our dog’. The glide [w] separates the back vowels [u] and [o] from the central vowel [a], *ərməğğä-w-očč* ‘steps’, from the front vowels [e] and [i], *täsatafi-w-očč* ‘participants’, as well as from [u] and [o] themselves, *goğğo-w-očč* ‘huts’. The glide [y] is inserted whenever the front vowels [i] or [e] are followed by [a], *tämari-y-aččən* ‘our student’.

Amharic has the following main syllable patterns: (C)V, (C)VC, (C)VCC. Word-initial consonant clusters are disfavoured and clusters of three and more consonants in any position are disallowed—they are broken up by an epenthetic [ə].

## 1.2.2. Morphology<sup>11</sup>

### 1.2.2.1. Generalities

From the typological point of view, Amharic is a synthetic-fusional language whereby a morpheme can express more than one grammatical notion and markers are bound to the host (often non-linearly).<sup>12</sup> Typically for Semitic languages, Amharic has a nonconcatenative (non-linear) root-and-pattern morphology, especially in the verbal domain. Nominal forms follow the root-and-pattern morphology to a lesser extent: the Amharic lexicon contains a relatively large number of underived nominals.

Amharic has the following word classes: nouns, adjectives, pronouns, numerals, verbs, adverbs, adpositions, conjunctions, particles, ideophones and interjections. Nouns and adjectives can morphologically be treated as a single word class. They are, however, distinguishable on semantic and syntactic grounds: normally an adjective modifies a noun,

<sup>10</sup> The elided vowel can, however, be still retained in careful writing, for instance *bä-ərgat*, *bä-əne*.

<sup>11</sup> I will focus on inflectional rather on derivational morphology.

<sup>12</sup> Velupillai uses the term “introflexive” for the non-linear morphological patterns found in Semitic languages (2012: 96).

and cannot function as a noun unless it is determined. I will briefly discuss all the word classes one by one below. It remains to add that for the most part I will adopt a synchronic approach to the description of the language. A full diachronic description of Amharic grammar has yet to be undertaken.

### 1.2.2.2. Nouns and noun modifiers

Nouns take the grammatical categories of number, gender, definiteness and case. As for number, Amharic makes the basic distinction between singular and plural. The common plural marker is *-očč*: *mäskot* → *mäskotočč* ‘window(s)’. Nouns of Gəʕəz origin have different (unproductive) plural endings, namely *-an* or *-at*, such as *mämhər* → *mämhəran* ‘teacher(s)’, *həšan* → *həšanat* ‘child(ren)’, or they assume a broken plural form, e.g., *dəngəl* → *dänagəl* ‘virgin(s)’. Additionally, associative *ənnä*- ‘X and associates/followers’ is used with proper names:

- (1) *ənnä-Yohannəs* *mätt-u*<sup>13</sup>  
 ASS-PN                      come\PFV-3PL  
 ‘Yohannəs and **his associates** came’

If the associative is preceded by the preposition *kä*- ‘with’ it can be employed with any noun:

- (2) *kä-ənnä-g<sup>w</sup>az-u*                      *mättä*  
 with-ASS-luggage-POSS.3SM      come\PFV.3SM  
 ‘He came **with** his luggage’

Amharic has two genders, feminine and masculine, which are marked on personal pronouns, suffixal pronominal forms, demonstrative pronouns, definite articles, and verbs. Few nouns are lexically assigned a feminine gender and, if so, it mostly reflects natural gender. Amharic has only a definite article (not an indefinite), with masculine (*-u*, allomorph *-w*) and feminine (*-wa*) forms. Inanimate and plural nouns are marked for definiteness in the same way as singular masculine. The relative verb, being a nominalized form, can take the masculine definite suffix *-w*, *-əw*, *-äw* and also a special definite

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<sup>13</sup> For the sake of clarity, sentence examples given in this section are not corpus-based but constructed with the help of native speakers or taken from Leslau (1995).

allomorph *-t*, to convey the meaning ‘the one who Verbs’, or the feminine definite suffix *-əwa* and *-äwa*.<sup>14</sup>

Amharic is a nominative-accusative language, in which the accusative is the marked case: its marker is the suffix *-n* added, except for very few cases (see Section 1.2.3.2), to a definite noun:

- (3) *Azeb mäsə-wa-n bälläčč* ‘Azeb ate her lunch’  
 Azeb lunch-POSS.3SF-ACC eat\PFV.3SF  
 S O V

If a noun functioning as the object has no definite marker and, consequently, no accusative marker, the difference between the nominative and accusative is determined syntactically by the position: the subject comes before the object, as in (4).

- (4) *Azeb wəha tättäčč* ‘Azeb drank water’  
 Azeb water drink\PFV.3SF  
 S O V

Possession may be expressed in Amharic in two ways: by the possessive suffixes (see below) or analytically with the genitive preposition *yä-* ‘of’:

- (5) a. *bet-u* ‘his house’  
 house-POSS.3SM  
 b. *yä-ssu bet* ‘his house’ (lit. ‘of-him house’)  
 GEN-3SM house  
 c. *yä-Alula bet* ‘Alula’s house’  
 GEN-PN house

There is also a possessive construction that is inherited from Gə<sup>ə</sup>z, called construct. It exists in Amharic only in particular frozen combinations which can be thought of as compounds.

Amharic has a group of compound nouns, most often of Gə<sup>ə</sup>z origin, whose first component (the Head Noun)<sup>15</sup> takes the Gə<sup>ə</sup>z construct state morpheme *-ä* or

<sup>14</sup> In this case, as in all other cases involving allomorphs, there exist rules governing the distribution of the allomorphs but I will not go into them in this short description.

<sup>15</sup> In the literature on Semitic languages, the head noun in a genitive construction is often referred to as *nomen regens* (noun in the construct state), and the dependent noun is called *nomen rectum* (noun in the absolute state) (Tropper 2002: 168).

morphological zero, *betä mäṣahəft* ‘library’ (lit. ‘house of books’), *məṭṭane habt* ‘economy’ (lit. ‘measurer of wealth’). A small group of compounds preserve the Amharic word order but nonetheless are built according to the construct pattern inherited from Gə‘əz with -ä on the first element (now the Dependent Noun), such as *agärä gäṣ* ‘governor’ (lit. ‘country’s ruler’), *afä tarik* ‘oral history’ (lit. ‘mouth’s history’).

Adjectives prototypically modify nouns; they inflect, just like nouns, for number, gender, definiteness and case. Some adjectives form the plural by reduplicating (and geminating) the second radical, e.g., *addis* → *adaddis* ‘new’; the vast majority take the normal ending -očč: *bičä-(w)-očč* ‘yellow ones’. A small number of adjectives may take the feminine suffix -(i)t, e.g. *qonḡo* → *qonḡit* ‘beautiful’. Amharic does not have morphological means to express the comparative and superlative (see Section 1.2.3.2 below).

Amharic basic cardinal numerals are displayed in Table 4. Only the numeral ‘one’ takes the category of gender: *and* (M), *andit* (F). The numeral *assər* ‘ten’ changes its form into *asra* when it combines with the numerals 1-9 to form the teens, i.e. *asra hulätt* ‘twelve’. Ordinal numbers are formed by adding -(ä)ñña to cardinal numerals, e.g., *andännä* ‘first’, *hayañña* ‘twentieth’.

TABLE 4. Cardinal numerals

0 <i>zero</i>	1 <i>and</i>	2 <i>hulätt</i>	3 <i>sost</i>	4 <i>aratt</i>	5 <i>amməst</i>
6 <i>səddəst</i>	7 <i>səbatt</i>	8 <i>səmmənt</i>	9 <i>zätänn</i>	10 <i>assər</i>	11 <i>asra and</i>
20 <i>haya</i>	30 <i>sälasa</i>	40 <i>arba</i>	50 <i>hamsa</i>	60 <i>səlsa</i>	70 <i>säba</i>
80 <i>səmanya</i>	90 <i>zätäna</i>	100 <i>mäto</i>	1000 <i>ši(h)</i>	10000 <i>əlf</i>	

### 1.2.2.3. Pronouns

There are ten independent personal pronouns in Amharic, which distinguish the categories of person, number, gender and politeness. These are: *əne* ‘I’, *antä* ‘you (M)’, *anči* ‘you (F)’, *ərswo* ‘you (POL)’, *əssu* (also *ərsu*) ‘he’, *əss<sup>w</sup>a* (also *ərs<sup>w</sup>a*) ‘she’, *əssaččäw* (also *ərsaččäw*) ‘she/he (POL)’, *əñña* ‘we’, *ənnantä* ‘you (PL)’, *ənnäsu* (also *ənärsu*) ‘they’. The latter two pronouns *ənnantä* and *ənnäsu* are composite—historically, they consist of the associative prefix *ənnä-*, followed by the second and third persons singular. Thus, *ənnantä*

= *ənnä-* + *antä* ‘you and associates’. Second and third persons singular, but not plural, have distinct forms for the masculine and feminine genders; additionally, they each have a polite form, identical for masculine and feminine, which both formally take a 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural marker on the verb: *ərswo* ‘you (POL)’ and *əssaččäw* ‘she/he (POL)’:

- (6) *ərswo-ss, mann-(ə)-n yə-ṭəbbəq=all-u?*  
 2SPOL-TOP who-ACC 3PL-wait\IPFV=NPST-3PL  
 ‘And you, who are you waiting for?’ (or ‘who will you wait for?’)

Normally, however, I will gloss such polite verb forms simply as 2/3 SPOL. Independent personal pronouns are optional and, when they occur, serve for emphasis. The real personal marker is on the verb.

There is a set of verb suffixes for expressing personal pronouns in the function of direct object.<sup>16</sup>

TABLE 5. Object suffix pronouns on the verb

		GENDER & POLITENESS	NUMBER	
			Singular	Plural
PERSON	1	Communis	-(ə)ññ, -äññ	-(ə)n, -än
	2	Masculine	-(ə)h	-(y/w)aččəhu
		Feminine	-(ə)š	
		Polite	-(ə)wo(t)	
	3	Masculine	-(ə)w, -əw, -(ə)t	-(y/w)aččäw
		Feminine	-(y/w)at	
		Polite	-(y/w)aččäw	

Possessive pronouns appear as suffixes on the possessed noun. They take the grammatical categories of number, gender, politeness and person. Note that the 3SG pronouns are identical to the definite article, which can occasionally lead to ambiguity. The object suffix pronouns and possessive suffix pronouns are very similar in all persons except for 1 SG and PL.

<sup>16</sup> Direct object pronouns and possessive pronouns in the form of suffixes rather than full words is a general feature of Semitic languages.

TABLE 6. Possessive suffix pronouns on the noun

		GENDER & POLITENESS	NUMBER	
			Singular	Plural
PERSON	1	Communis	-(y)e	-(y/w)aččən
	2	Masculine	-(ə)h	-(y/w)aččəhu
		Feminine	-(ə)š	
		Polite	-wo(t)	
	3	Masculine	-u/-w	-(y/w)aččäw
		Feminine	-wa	
		Polite	-(y/w)aččäw	

Demonstrative pronouns take values from the grammatical categories of number, gender and politeness, and distance. They can also function as demonstrative adverbs by appending a preposition. If a demonstrative pronoun beginning with *y-* is preceded by a preposition its form changes into an allomorph beginning with *-zz-* (*yəh* > *-zzih*, etc.): *bä-zzih* ‘in this’.

TABLE 7. Demonstrative pronouns

NUMBER	GENDER & POLITENESS	DEICTIC DISTANCE	
		Proximative	Distal
Singular	Masculine	<i>yəh</i>	<i>ya</i>
	Feminine	<i>yəhəčč</i>	<i>yačči</i>
	Polite	<i>ənnih</i>	<i>ənniya</i>
Plural		<i>ənnäzzih</i>	<i>ənnäzziya</i>

Amharic has the following basic interrogative pronouns: *man* ‘who’, *mən* ‘what’, *məndən* ‘what’, *ma* ‘who’. In contrast to (most?) European languages, they can be pluralized by means of the plural marker *-očč* or the associative *ənnä-*. There are also interrogative pronouns with the adjectival ending *-ñña*: *mannəññaw* ‘which, which one’, *yätəññaw* ‘which, which one’. These are always followed by a possessive pronoun or the definite article, which serve as nominalizers.

There are other simple interrogative elements which are not pronouns: adverbs like *mäčē* ‘when’, *ändet* ‘how’, *yät* ‘where’, and numerals like *sənt* ‘how many/much’, *səntännä* ‘how many-th’. All these basic interrogative elements can be combined with prepositions yielding compound interrogatives, such as *lä-mən* ‘why’ (lit. ‘for-what’), *sälä-mən* ‘why’ (lit. ‘about-what’), *kä-yät* ‘from where’.

Reflexivity and reciprocity are most typically expressed by verbal derivation (see below) but there are also independent pronouns which are used in these functions (Goldenberg 2013: 97), sometimes preferentially or even obligatorily. The independent reflexive pronoun is expressed by *ras-* (lit. ‘head’) to which a possessive suffix pronoun is appended, referring to the person/number/gender, and an accusative marker:

- (7) *ras-e-n*                      *ṭäyyäq-bu*  
 self-POSS.1SG-ACC        ask\PFV-1SG  
 ‘I asked **myself**’

The pronoun of reciprocity consists of two components *ərs bārs* (= *ərs bā-(ə)rs*), alternatively *ərs bāras* ‘each other’. A plural possessive pronoun can be added to the second component, e.g. *ərs bārs-aččäw* ‘they each other’:

- (8) *ərs bārs-aččən*            *ənnə-däwawwäl=all-än*  
 each.other-POSS.1PL        1PL-call.each.other=NPST-1PL  
 ‘We will call **each other**’

The relative pronoun (actually a relative particle) is totally invariant. Since this pronoun is a bound, affixal marker which is prefixed to the relative verb, one can speak of the combination [Rel.Pron + Verb] as a “relative verb”. A different form exists for the perfective, *yä-*, and imperfective, *yämmə-*; the piece *-mmə-* is difficult to analyse and has been treated here as an integral part of the imperfective relative pronoun. *Yä-* is both a relative marker and a genitive preposition (see Section 1.2.2.2).

#### 1.2.2.4. Verbs

Describing the verb in Amharic is difficult because there are many intersecting categories. Amharic verbs are based on a root, which standardly has two, three or four radicals (consonants) but occasionally one or five. The initial radical of some verbs is the vowel

[a], as in *assäbä* ‘think’.<sup>17</sup> With respect to the number of radicals they consist of, and the quality of the vowels, Amharic verbs are divided into classes. In the description of the Amharic verbal system I will focus (as is usual) on the three-radical verb and use it for illustration.

Amharic words in general are built from a consonantal root and a vowel pattern, sometimes with the addition of affixes, which is imposed on the root to express different grammatical meanings. The Amharic verb has five principal parts: perfective, (simple) imperfective,<sup>18</sup> (simple) gerund,<sup>19</sup> imperative and jussive (the latter two are in complementary distribution).<sup>20</sup> Perfective, gerund and imperative verbs take only suffixes for subject agreement while imperfective and jussive take subject agreement markers that are partly prefixal and partly suffixal.

Most verbal forms can be termed “finite”. By a finite verb I will understand any verb that is (obligatorily) marked for the subject. Finite verbs can be further divided into independent finite verbs and dependent finite verbs. Independent finite verbs are also marked for the categories of tense and aspect, and as such are eligible to form a full-fledged sentence. In contrast, dependent finite verbs have no morphology indicating tense and aspect and, consequently, cannot form a sentence. Finally, a non-finite verb is not marked for any of the grammatical categories mentioned above. In Amharic a non-finite form of the verb is a verbal noun.

The citation form for Amharic verbs is the 3SM perfective, represented in this thesis by the dummy verb *näggärä* ‘tell’ (lit. ‘he told’). Table 8 presents the conjugational patterns of the five principal parts for the verb *näggärä*.

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<sup>17</sup> This vowel [a] was originally preceded by a laryngeal consonant which was deleted. In some respects, it behaves like a consonant.

<sup>18</sup> The terms “perfective” and “imperfective” refer here exclusively to the verbal form. They should not be confused with the categories of aspect known from, for instance, Slavic languages.

<sup>19</sup> Some scholars use the term “converb” instead of “gerund”. Imperfective and gerund are sometimes preceded by the word “simple” to contrast them with their compound forms explained below.

<sup>20</sup> The exact function of all these principal parts will be described below.

TABLE 8. The five principal parts of the action verb *näggärä* ‘tell’

NUMBER/ PERSON	PERFECTIVE	IMPERFECTIVE	JUSSIVE	IMPERATIVE	GERUND
1S	<i>näggär-ku (-hu)</i>	<i>ə-nägr</i>	<i>lə-ngär</i>		<i>nägərr-e</i>
2 SM	<i>näggär-k (-h)</i>	<i>tə-nägr</i>		<i>nəgär</i>	<i>nägr-äh</i>
2 SF	<i>näggär-š</i>	<i>tə-nägr-i</i>		<i>nəgär-i</i>	<i>nägr-äš</i>
3 SM	<i>näggär-ä</i>	<i>yə-nägr</i>	<i>yə-ngär</i>		<i>nägr-o</i>
3 SF	<i>näggär-äčč</i>	<i>tə-nägr</i>	<i>tə-ngär</i>		<i>nägr-a</i>
1 PL	<i>näggär-ən</i>	<i>ənnə-nägr</i>	<i>ənnə-ngär</i>		<i>nägr-än</i>
2 PL	<i>näggär-aččəhu</i>	<i>tə-nägr-u</i>		<i>nəgär-u</i>	<i>nägr-aččəhu</i>
3 PL	<i>näggär-u</i>	<i>yə-nägr-u</i>	<i>yə-ngär-u</i>		<i>nägr-əw</i>

Semantically, *näggärä* is an action verb, and sometimes it will be useful to have a stative dummy verb. In such cases, I will employ the verb *awwäqä* ‘know’. Its principal parts together with their conjugational patterns are as follows:

TABLE 9. The five principal parts of the stative verb *awwäqä* ‘know’

NUMBER/ PERSON	PERFECTIVE	IMPERFECTIVE	JUSSIVE	IMPERATIVE	GERUND
1S	<i>awwäq-ku (-hu)</i>	<i>awq</i>	<i>l-əwäq</i>		<i>awəqq-e</i>
2 SM	<i>awwäq-k (-h)</i>	<i>t-awq</i>		<i>əwäq</i>	<i>awq-äh</i>
2 SF	<i>awwäq-š</i>	<i>t-awq-i</i>		<i>əwäq-i</i>	<i>awq-äš</i>
3 SM	<i>awwäq-ä</i>	<i>y-awq</i>	<i>y-əwäq</i>		<i>awq-o</i>
3 SF	<i>awwäq-äčč</i>	<i>t-awq</i>	<i>t-əwäq</i>		<i>awq-a</i>
1 PL	<i>awwäq-ən</i>	<i>ənn-awq</i>	<i>ənn-əwäq</i>		<i>awq-än</i>
2 PL	<i>awwäq-aččəhu</i>	<i>t-awq-u</i>		<i>əwäq-u</i>	<i>awq-aččəhu</i>
3 PL	<i>awwäq-u</i>	<i>y-awq-u</i>	<i>y-əwäq-u</i>		<i>awq-əw</i>

Apart from the difference in number of root consonants, Amharic verbs are grouped into types A, B and C according to the (non-)gemination behaviour of the penultimate radical. Thus, in type A verbs the penultimate radical is geminated only in the perfective whereas in type B verbs it is geminated in all five forms. In verbs of type C, in turn, the penultimate radical is geminated in the perfective and imperfective but not in the other forms, and the first vowel is [a], not [ä]. For instance, the verb *näggärä* is a type A verb,

*fällägä* ‘want’, ‘look for’ is a type B verb and *gaggärä* ‘bake’ is a type C verb. There is also a relatively small group of three-radical verbs whose final radical is geminated. Any stem (type A, B or C) can be inflected for all the normal verbal grammatical categories. In addition to types A, B and C there is another verbal base, the reduplicative (*nägaggärä*), which can likewise be inflected for all the normal verbal categories. I will discuss the reduplicative below.

To the five principal parts presented above we should add two other basic forms: compound imperfective and compound gerund. Because they play a major and quite specific function in the language they deserve to be mentioned as a separate form. Compound imperfective and gerund are formed by attaching the auxiliary verb *-allä* (lit. ‘exist’) to the stem of the verb (imperfective or gerund), followed by a regular subject suffix. The imperfective and gerund form on the one hand and the auxiliary on the other have undergone univerbation, sometimes with small changes in one or the other component.

- (9) *tə-nägr-all-äh*  
 2SM.PREFIX-STEM-AUXILIARY-2SM.SUFFIX  
 ‘You will tell’

The simple imperfective and gerund are used only in dependent clauses whereas compound imperfective and compound gerund are used in independent clauses.

TABLE 10. Compound imperfective and gerund

NUMBER/ PERSON	COMPOUND IMPERFECTIVE	COMPOUND GERUND
1S	<i>ənägr-allähu</i>	<i>nägərre-allähu</i>
2 SM	<i>tənägr-alläh</i>	<i>nägräh-all</i>
2 SF	<i>tənägr-i-alläš</i>	<i>nägräš-all</i>
3 SM	<i>yənägr-all</i>	<i>nägro-all</i>
3 SF	<i>tənägr-alläčč</i>	<i>nägra-alläčč</i>
1 PL	<i>ənnənägr-allän</i>	<i>nägrän-all</i>
2 PL	<i>tənägr-allaččəhu</i>	<i>nägraččəhu-all</i>
3 PL	<i>yənägr-allu</i>	<i>nägrəw-all</i>

Alongside simple and compound synthetic forms, Amharic has a number of analytic constructions which consist of simple imperfective or simple gerund, with or without another preceding grammatical morpheme (*lə-*, *sə-*, *bə-*, *əyyä-*) and a separate, non-univerbated auxiliary, most often in the form of a copula:

- (10) *ə-mäta*                      *näbbär*  
 1SG-come\IPFV                  PAST.AUX  
 ‘I used to come’

With simple verb forms the object suffix pronouns are placed just after the stem:

- (11) *wässäd-at*  
 take\PFV.3SM-OBJ.3SF  
 ‘He took **her**’

With compound forms they intervene between the imperfective/gerund and the auxiliary.

- (12) *yə-wäsd-at-all-ə*  
 3SM-take\IPFV-OBJ.3SF-NPST-3SM  
 ‘He will take **her**’

In addition to plain objects the Amharic verb can encode applicative objects, MALEfactive *-bb-* and BENefactive *-ll-*, always followed by an object suffix (thereby forming an embedded prepositional phrase). They appear in the verbal complex in exactly the same place as the object suffixes (but cannot co-occur with plain object suffixes):

- (13) *ə-käft-(ə)-[ll-(ə)-b]=all-äbu*  
 1SG-open\IPFV-[BEN-OBJ.2SM]=AUX-1SG  
 ‘I will open **for you**’

Verbal negation in Amharic is not done analytically but is expressed by an affix on the verb. The negative follows a standard pattern: the positive perfective verb is prefixed by *al-* and suffixed by *-mm*, for instance:<sup>21</sup>

- (14) *al-näggär-ä-mm*  
 NEG-tell\PFV-3SM-NEG  
 ‘He **didn’t** tell’

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<sup>21</sup> Negation of Amharic verbal forms will be presented in depth in Section 6.2 which deals with the interaction between epistemic modality and negation.

In the imperfective and imperative/jussive the negative prefix is *a-*, often with following gemination of the subject prefix. Exceptionally, the 1SG negative marker is the allomorph *al-*. The final negative marker *-mm* deletes in a subordinate clause. There are fewer negative forms than positive forms. In standard Amharic, gerunds have no distinct negative form: the compound gerund is negated by means of the negative perfective, whereas the simple gerund is negated either in this way or by means of the conjunction *sə-* ‘when’ followed by the negative simple imperfective. When negating the compound imperfective the auxiliary *-allä* disappears.

The Amharic tense-aspect system is complex and several articles have been written about it. Tense values and aspectual values are interwoven in the system in a way that often makes it very difficult to establish a clear separation between them.<sup>22</sup> In this grammatical sketch I want to avoid this issue completely. Instead, I will orient my presentation to constructions, giving each of the major constructions pertaining to tense-aspect with a brief statement of its formation and functions.<sup>23</sup> To the degree possible, I will present tense-aspect as a unitary, unarticulated macro-category. In presenting the constructions I will use *näggärä* ‘tell’ as a dummy verb in the 3SM. All these constructions are found in independent clauses except where otherwise mentioned.

- i. Perfective, *näggärä* ‘he told’; it denotes past time (preterite).
- ii. (Simple) imperfective, *yənägr*; it occurs in the negative present-future, in subordinating contexts, and as part of a number of composite verbal constructions, including both tense-aspect and epistemic modal constructions.
- iii. Compound imperfective (univerbated), *yənägrall* ‘he will tell, he tells’; it consists of the simple imperfective form of the verb *yənägr* and the non-past auxiliary *-allä* (here *-all* for the 3SM). Primarily, it locates the state of affairs in the future. If used with a frequency adverb it refers to a state of affairs which takes place habitually in the present. In its gnomic function it designates a general truth.

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<sup>22</sup> The terms “perfective” and “imperfective” should be treated only as labels for these particular forms. Their usage in Amharic originates from the Semitist tradition.

<sup>23</sup> This will also be my approach to the analysis of epistemic modality.

- iv. Imperfective + *näbbär* (non-univerbated), *yanägr näbbär* ‘he used to tell’; it consists of the simple imperfective and the auxiliary *näbbär*, which serves as the suppletive perfective form of the existential verb *allä*.
- v. (Simple) gerund, *nägro* ‘he having told’; it is used in clause-chaining for all but the last verb. Each of the chained-gerunds has a pronounced rising intonation.
- vi. Compound gerund (univerbated), *nägr<sup>w</sup>all* (*nägroall*) ‘he has told’; it comprises the simple gerund and the auxiliary *-allä* (here *-all* for the 3SM). It expresses the perfect (‘he has told’) in its two main meanings: resultative and experiential (Fridman 2016: 657-661).
- vii. Gerund + *näbbär* (non-univerbated), *nägro näbbär* ‘he had told’; it consists of the simple gerund and the past auxiliary *näbbär*. It often functions as a pluperfect, referring to a state of affairs which took place prior to another state of affairs.
- viii. Progressive *əyyä-* + perfective, *əyyänäggärä* ‘he telling’. It refers to a state of affairs which takes place when another state of affairs takes place. Additionally, it expresses circumstantial state of affairs (‘He lives by selling used bicycles’) or habitual.
- ix. Progressive *əyyä-* + perfective + *näw*, *əyyänäggärä näw* ‘he is telling’; the construction comprises the conjunction *əyyä-* with the perfective form of the verb followed by an invariant copula; it refers to a state of affairs which is in progress at the moment of speaking.
- x. Progressive *əyyä-* + perfective + *näbbär*; in this construction the auxiliary verb is the past copula *näbbär*. It refers to a state of affairs which was in progress in the past.
- xi. Immediate future; verbal noun + POSS + *näw*, *mängäru näw* ‘he is about to tell’
- xii. Frequentative (iterative), *tämälalläsä* ‘commute’; the verb is derived by reduplicating the second radical; the reduplicated radical is followed always by the vowel [a] (and not as expected [ä]). To some stems the prefix *tä-* is added. Structurally, the frequentative belongs to another level of grammar but its function is to express aspect—it refers to a state of affairs which repeats.

The category of mood in Amharic is rather simple and consists of the indicative and the imperative/jussive. The imperative occurs only in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person whereas the jussive

occurs in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons. The verb *mätta* ‘come’ has a suppletive imperative form *na* (2SM), *näy* (2SF) and *nu* (2PL) ‘come!’.

In Amharic from any root there can be formed a number of derived stems, called *binyanim*,<sup>24</sup> whose main function involves the category of voice. The formation of these stems is morphologically very regular, but semantically only semi-predictable. As Gensler notes, “The *binyan* system is predominantly derivational, or straddles the borders between derivational and inflectional. [...] it is heavily lexicalized: one can seldom predict *whether* a root can occur at all in a given *binyan*, or precisely *what meaning* it will have if it does occur in the given *binyan*” (2011: 284-285). The most frequent Amharic *binyanim* are mediopassive-reflexive, direct causative, indirect causative and adjutative; additionally, there are special forms for reciprocal and reduplicative. These labels indicate their prototypical function(s), but very often a *binyan* from a particular root will be lexicalized with a non-predictable meaning. The derived stems will be briefly characterized below and displayed for quick orientation in Table 11.

The mediopassive-reflexive is formed by prefixing *tä-* to the stem. Such a *tä-*Verb shows gemination in the perfective and imperfective only (a pattern seen also in type C). After a subject prefix (as in the imperfective and jussive) or the verbal noun and instrumental prefix *mä-*, this *tä-* changes into *t-* which, in turn, assimilates to the first consonant of the stem: *tänäggärä* → \**yə-t-näggär* > *yə-n-näggär* ‘he was told’, \**mä-t-näggär* > *männäggär* ‘telling’.<sup>25</sup>

The direct causative is derived by prefixing *a-* to the stem of intransitive verbs, usually a non-agentive (unaccusative) intransitive, but also to some transitive verbs, notably verbs of ingestion (eating, drinking). Verbs with the first radical [a] take the prefix *as-* instead of *a-* because a sequence of two vowels is not permitted in Amharic. The indirect causative has the prefix *as-* which is attached to agentive intransitive and transitive verbs.

There is also an adjutative stem (‘help to Verb’) which is formed by adding the prefix *a(t)-* to the type C verb. The consonant [t] of the prefix is always assimilated to the first

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<sup>24</sup> Plural (*-im*) of Hebrew *binyan* ‘building’. The term is in common use among Semitists.

<sup>25</sup> It is different with a verb stem with initial [a]; here it is the passive prefix *t-* that is geminated and appears whenever there is a subject or *mä-* prefix: *yə-t-assəb* > *yə-tt-assəb* ‘it is thought’.

radical of the stem: *at-naggärä* > *an-naggärä* (an example is *affarräsä* ‘help to demolish’, from the root *f-r-s* ‘be demolished’). The reciprocal is formed by prefixing *tä-* to the type C stem.

A final derived stem, with the general name “reduplicative”, is formed by reduplicating the second consonant and inserting vowel [a] after the derived radical: C<sub>1</sub>äC<sub>2</sub>aCC<sub>2</sub>äC<sub>3</sub>. The reduplicative formally resembles type C in two respects: the vowel [a] appears throughout the conjugation, and the patterning of internal gemination in the conjugation is the same (gemination in the perfective and imperfective but not elsewhere.) This reduplicative form has been separated out in Table 11 because of its distinctive behaviour. First, its formation does not involve affixes at all but only internal stem modification; second, it does not express voice but conveys a range of aspectual meanings, such as frequentative, pluractional, intensive and distributive; third, it can itself be used as a basic stem to which the various *binyanim*-prefixes are added: *tä-näggärä*, *a-näggärä*, *as-näggärä*.

There are a few other, less frequent verbal derivations which are taken over from Gəʕəz, notably *astä-*, *tän-*, *an-*, as well as other extremely rare formations, such as *aš-* and *täš-*.

TABLE 11. Amharic derived stems (schematic)<sup>26</sup>

FORM	APPROXIMATE FUNCTION
<i>näggärä</i>	plain meaning
<i>tä-näggärä</i>	mediopassive-reflexive
<i>a-näggärä</i>	direct causative
<i>as-näggärä</i>	indirect causative
<i>an-naggärä</i> (< <i>at-</i> )	adjutative
<i>näggärä</i>	frequentative, pluractional, intensive, distributive
<i>tä-naggärä</i> , <i>tä-näggärä</i>	reciprocal

<sup>26</sup> In the table, the root *n-g-r* is used schematically only to show the forms. The *binyanim* which are actually formed from the real root *n-g-r* sometimes have idiosyncratic semantics.

As already noted, the *binyan* system is the primary way of expressing voice in Amharic. Decrease of valence is done in Amharic through a single *binyan*, the *tä-* form, which can express various semantic values: passive, middle, reflexive and reciprocal. The *binyan* system has three valence-increasing derivations: direct causative, indirect causative and adjunctive. Apart from the *binyan* system, there is another way of increasing valence in Amharic, the applicative, which exists in two forms, both of which embed a small prepositional phrase within the verb: *-bb-* + OBJ (MALEfactive) and *-ll-* + OBJ (BENefactive). Benefactive and Malefactive are only prototypical uses of these applicatives; in fact the applicative can express other nuances as well. Especially *-bb-* + OBJ has many other functions, encoding instrument, time, place and cause. Consider the following example in which *-bb-ät* encodes a locative:

- (15) የምኖርበት  
*yämm-ə-nor-(ə)-bb-ät*  
 REL-1SG-live\IPFV-in-OBJ.3SM  
 ‘where I live’ (lit. ‘that I live in it’)

My glossing of the applicative will be semantically based: I will use the abbreviations BEN and MAL whenever the semantics is clearly benefactive and malefactive, respectively; otherwise I will use the cover term “applicative” (APPL). Although the verb-word cannot simultaneously accommodate a plain object and an applicative object, at the level of syntax the applicative certainly adds a valence participant: the plain object is not a pronoun on the verb but simply a noun in the sentence.

Of the valence-decreasing and increasing operations, direct and indirect causatives deserve particular note. In the process of causativization an additional valence participant is added (agent) necessarily leading to adjustments in the case marking of the clause. The causative agent (causer) becomes the subject, while the subject of the non-causative sentence (causee) is now marked as an object. With the direct causative the act of causing and the caused action are often both part of a single macro-action (e.g. *a-tätta* ‘make drink, give to drink’). With the indirect causative, by contrast, the act of causation and the caused action are clearly distinct.

Along with “standard” verbs, Amharic has a group of composite verbs which consist of an invariant “fixed root” (Leslau 1995: 580), being either an ideophone or a nominal form derived from a verb, followed by a helping verb *alä* ‘say’, *adärrägä* ‘do’ or *assännä*

‘cause’. The term “ideophone” is used here loosely in reference to any underived, basic form (also onomatopoeic) which is lexically isolated, as in *quččälä* ‘sit down’. In contrast, the nominal forms are productively derived from any verb, primarily expressing two meanings: attenuative, *käfätt adärrägä* ‘open slightly’, and intensive, *kəffätt adärrägä* ‘open completely or suddenly’. The second component of a composite verb behaves like a standard verb.

Amharic employs a copula (always non-zero) in nominal sentences, which occurs in various forms. The present tense copula, used exclusively as a finite verb, is formed from a particle \**n-* followed by an object suffix. The past tense copula is derived from the root *n-b-r*, and the future from the root *h-w-n*. The negative of *näw* is not \**al-näw-mm* but suppletive *aydällä-mm* ‘it is not’. The verb of existence features similar irregularities. In the present it has, in fact, a perfective form *allä* ‘exist’. The past form is *näbbärä*, the same as with the copula, and in the future it is a verb derived from the root *n-w-r*. The negative form is again unpredictable: it is not \**al-allä-mm* but a fused portmanteau verb *yällämm* ‘it does not exist’. The verb *allä* also has a special negative relative form *-lellä*.

The independent forms of the copula and the existential will be glossed in an idiosyncratic way, using both tense and aspect category labels unlike anywhere else in the thesis. The irregularity in the glossing reflects an irregularity in form: the present form of the copula looks like no other verb and the present existential has the form of a perfective.

TABLE 12. Copulas and verbs of existence (independent), with their glosses

	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
COPULA	<i>näbbär-ä</i> COP\PST, <i>hon-ä</i> COP\PST (become)	<i>n-äw</i> COP	( <i>yə</i> )- <i>hon</i> = <i>all-</i> COP\IPFV=NPST-
EXISTENTIAL	<i>näbbär-ä</i> exist\PST	<i>all-ä</i> exist	( <i>yə</i> )- <i>nor</i> = <i>all-</i> exist\IPFV=NPST-

Paradoxically, the dependent forms of the copula and the existential do conform to the normal temporal marking.

TABLE 13. Copulas and verbs of existence (dependent), with their glosses

	PERFECTIVE	IMPERFECTIVE
COPULA	<i>hon-ä</i> COP\PFV	( <i>yə</i> )- <i>hon</i> COP\IPFV
EXISTENTIAL	<i>nor-ä</i> exist\PFV	( <i>yə</i> )- <i>nor</i> exist\IPFV

To express ‘to have’ Amharic uses the verb of existence to which an object suffix is appended referring to the possessor, according to the pattern ‘there is to me/you/him’ etc.<sup>27</sup>

- (16) a. *all-ä-w* ‘he has it’ (lit. ‘it is upon him’)  
 exist-3SM-OBJ.3SM  
 b. *näbbär-ä-w* ‘he had it’  
 exist\PST-3SM-OBJ.3SM  
 c. *ya-nor-äw=all-ø* ‘he will have it’  
 3SM-exist\IPFV-OBJ.3SM=NPST-3SM

The notion of necessity (both deontic and epistemic) is similarly expressed by the verb *allä* ‘exist’ followed by the applicative suffix *-bb-* ‘on, upon’ and the object pronoun.<sup>28</sup> The object pronoun refers to the person upon whom the necessity is imposed. Note that here the 3SM object pronoun assumes a special form *-ät*.

- (17) a. *all-ä-bb-ät* ‘he must’  
 exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM  
 b. *näbbär-ä-bb-ät* ‘he had to’  
 exist\PST-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM  
 d. *ya-nor-(ə)-bb-ät=all-ø* ‘he will have to’  
 3SM-exist\IPFV-APPL=NPST-3SM

Finally it should be mentioned that all verbs can regularly form a verbal noun with the prefix *mä-*,<sup>29</sup> expressing the doing of the verbal action:

- (18) *qəddəm əndalkut manənnätaččənən lä-mawäq tənnəš mämot*  
 before as.I.said our.identity.ACC for-know\VN little die\VN  
*yasfälləgänall*<sub>[KB 48: 1-2]</sub>  
 we.have.to

‘As I said before, to **know** who we are we have to **die** a little’

Verbal nouns play an important role in the discussion of Amharic modal epistemic expressions, see Sections 4.4.2.1 and 5.11.5.

<sup>27</sup> See also Section 4.4.3.1 ftn. 84.

<sup>28</sup> See also Section 4.2.2.2.

<sup>29</sup> The exceptions are the copula *näw* and the existential *allä* whose verbal nouns are derived irregularly from their suppletive forms *honä* and *norä*.

### 1.2.2.5. Adpositions

The class of adpositions contains both prepositions and postpositions; a selected list is displayed in Table 14. Amharic also has circumpositions, consisting of a lexicalized combination of a preposition and a postposition. There are some circumpositions in which both components are obligatory, e.g. the temporal adposition *kä*-NP *bäh<sup>w</sup>ala* ‘after’:

- (19) *kä-and sä<sup>o</sup>at bäh<sup>w</sup>ala* ‘after one hour’  
 from-one hour after

Furthermore, many postpositions which are derived from nouns (and which often function as real nouns) can be used adpositionally only as part of a circumposition, such as *bä*-NP *məknəyat* ‘because of’, *bä*-NP *akkababi* ‘around’, *kä*-NP *čaf* ‘from the top of’. However, with many (perhaps even most) circumpositions, the preposition can be omitted:

- (20) a. *bä-kəfl-u wəst alga all-ä*  
 in-room-DEF in bed exist-3SM  
 ‘In the room there is a bed’
- b. *kəfl-u wəst alga all-ä*  
 room-DEF in bed exist-3SM  
 ‘In the room there is a bed’

Sometimes, especially in spoken Amharic, a spatial adposition is unnecessary:

- (21) *Hamburg ə-nor=all-ähu*  
 Hamburg 1SG-live\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I live (in) Hamburg’

The prepositions divide into one-syllable prefixal prepositions (*lä-, bä-, kä-, yä-, ə-*), which are written together with the following nominal, and two-syllable prepositions, which are written as separate words. The genitive preposition *yä-* deletes if it is preceded by any other preposition:

- (22) *sälä yä-əhət-e baläbet > sälä əhət-e baläbet*  
 GEN about sister-POSS.1SG husband  
 ‘About my sister’s husband’

Under some syntactic circumstances, the preposition can be repeated on each member of the noun phrase:

- (23) *kä-mm-awq-aččäw*                      *kä-sost*    *säw-očč*    *gar*  
 with-REL-1SG.know\IPFV-OBJ.3PL    with-three    man-PL    with  
 ‘With three people that I know’

Special geminated allomorphs of the prepositions *lä-* and *bä-*, namely *-ll-* and *-bb-*, function as applicatives when embedded (with a pronominal object) inside a verb. The preposition *lä-* functions as a marker of indirect object if the indirect object is expressed by means of a substantive. Several prepositions also function as conjunctions, either in the identical form or with minor vocalic change, e.g. *bə-* ‘if’ and *bä-* ‘in’.

Almost all Amharic postpositions are clearly derived from various parts of speech: nouns, verbs, or combinations of prepositions with verbs and with demonstrative pronouns. A rare exception is the postposition *zänd* ‘at, with (a person)’, which is also unique in that it can be a conjunction as well as a postposition. The prepositions *bä-*, *lä-* and *bästä-* can occur as part of a compound postposition in combination with another lexeme, i.e. NP *bä-h<sup>w</sup>ala* ‘after’, NP (*fit*) *lä-fit* ‘opposite’, NP *bästä-ğärba* ‘at the back’. Many postpositions also function as adverbs, e.g., *wəst* can occur as both as a postposition ‘in’ and an adverb ‘inside’.

TABLE 14. Selected adpositions

PREPOSITIONS	<i>bä-</i> ‘in’, <i>lä-</i> ‘for’, <i>kä-</i> ‘from, with’, <i>ə-</i> ‘at’, <i>wädä</i> ‘to’, <i>əskä</i> ‘till’, <i>sälä</i> ‘about’, <i>ändä</i> ‘like’, <i>yalä</i> ‘without’, <i>bästä</i> ‘toward’
POSTPOSITIONS	<i>h<sup>w</sup>ala</i> ‘behind’, <i>lay</i> ‘on’, <i>məknəyat</i> ‘because of’, <i>mäkakkäl</i> ‘between’, <i>sər</i> ‘under’, <i>baššaggär</i> ‘beyond’, <i>tačč</i> ‘below’, <i>anat</i> ‘on top of’, <i>wəst</i> ‘inside of’, <i>wəčč</i> ‘outside of’, <i>ga</i> ‘by’, <i>gar</i> ‘with’, <i>ğärba</i> ‘back’, <i>bästäqär</i> ‘except for’, <i>dərəs</i> ‘up to’

### 1.2.2.6. Conjunctions

Amharic coordinating conjunctions divide into preposed, which form an intonational unit with the word they precede, such as *wäyamm* ‘or’, *gən* ‘but’, and postposed, which are uttered together with the word they follow, such as *ənği* ‘else, otherwise, but’ and enclitic *-anna* ‘and’ (the latter also written as a separate word *anna*). The conjunction *gən* ‘but’ often occurs with a preceding element *nägär* ‘thing’, thus *nägär gən* ‘but’.

Nominal coordination can also be expressed by means of *-mm* which is suffixed to all conjuncts:

- (24) *set-u-mm*                      *wänd-u-mm*      *mätta*  
 woman-DEF-and      man-DEF-and      come\PFV.3SM

‘Both the women and the men came’ (note the singular verb)

All Amharic subordinating conjunctions are preposed with the exception of postposed *zänd* ‘in order to’, which nowadays is rarely used. There are several discontinuous conjunctions which consist of more than one component; notably a conjunction may consist of two elements belonging to the same morpheme but separated by another morpheme, such as in *bə- + IPFV + -əmm* ‘although’. In addition, there might be one more, separate word belonging to the conjunction, as in the following example:

- (25) *bə-tt-mäta-mm*                                              *ənk<sup>w</sup>a*  
 even.though-2SM-come\IPFV- even.though      even.though

‘Even though you (will) come/came’

Some Amharic subordinating conjunctions have the same form (if followed by the perfective) or very similar form (if followed by the imperfective) as the preposition from which they originate, i.e. *kä-* ‘in case’, *əndä-* ‘that’, *bə-* ‘if’, *lə-* ‘to, that’, *ənd-* ‘to, that’. As for the last three conjunctions, note that they differ from their prepositional counterparts only by the absence of the vowel [ä]. A few conjunctions are followed by the relative imperfective instead of the simple imperfective: *əndä-mm-* ‘that’, *sälä-mm-* ‘because’ and *əskä-mm-* ‘till’.<sup>30</sup> There are cases when some relational elements are on the border between an analysis as conjunctions or adpositions. Consider the example:

- (26) *wädä Ityopya*      *bä-(yä)-hed-ku*      *gize*  
 to      Ethiopia      in-(REL)-go\PFV-1SG      time

‘when I go to Ethiopia’

In sentence (26) *bä- ... gize* can be analysed as a prepositional phrase with a relative clause modifying the head noun *gize* (the relative marker deletes in such an environment, see

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<sup>30</sup> It is the element *-mm-* that makes it clear that this is the relative imperfective. For discussion concerning the form *əndämm-* see Section 4.4.2.1.

above). Alternatively, one might consider it a discontinuous composite conjunction *bä-gize*. Selected Amharic conjunctions are shown in Table 15.

TABLE 15. Selected conjunctions

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS	<i>-anna</i> ‘and’, <i>-mm ... -mm</i> ‘both ... and’, <i>wäyamm</i> ‘or’, <i>wäyäss</i> ‘or’ (in INTR clauses), <i>gən</i> ‘but’, <i>nägär gən</i> ‘but’, <i>daru gən</i> ‘but’, <i>ənği</i> ‘but, by contrast, else’
SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS	<i>lä-</i> ‘to’, <i>sə-</i> ‘when’, <i>sälä-</i> ‘because’, <i>bə-</i> ‘if’, <i>əskä-</i> ‘till’, <i>əsk-</i> ‘till’, <i>əndä-</i> ‘that’, <i>ənd-</i> ‘to, so that’, <i>kä-</i> ‘if’, <i>bə-V -əmm</i> ‘although’, <i>bə-V (-əmm) ənkw a</i> ‘even though’, <i>zänd</i> ‘in order to’

### 1.2.2.7. Adverbs and particles

The Amharic functional category of adverbs consists of a relatively small group of primary adverbs that most often refer to the temporal and manner domains and a large group of derived adverbs.<sup>31</sup> Some Amharic primary adverbs are: *ahun* ‘now’, *nägä* ‘tomorrow’, *zare* ‘today’, *təlant* ‘yesterday’, *dəro* ‘long ago’, *zändəro* ‘this year’, *amna* ‘last year’, *tolo* ‘quickly’, *bätam* ‘very’, *əğğəg* ‘extremely’. Some primary adverbs can serve as a basis for further adverbial derivatives: for instance, they can take a suffix identical to the definite article (*-u*, *-w*), either alone or together with a suffix identical to the accusative marker *-n* (this sometimes being again followed by *-u*), as in *bätam-u-n* ‘really’, *ahun-u-n-u* ‘just now’.

Derived adverbs can be formed from almost all parts of speech: nouns, adjectives, participles, demonstrative pronouns and verbs. Formally speaking, they would be better termed “adverbials”, since they typically form small phrases. In what follows I will list the primary ways of deriving adverbs:

- i. adverbializers *-u*, *-wən/-wun*, *-wan*, *-wənu/-unu*; with or without the preposition *bä-* they are employed to form adverbs out of adjectives and participles, as in *bä-qällal-u* ‘easily’, *abəzañña-w-(ə)-n* ‘mostly’. They can be appended to the relative perfective, e.g. *yä-basä-w-(ə)-n* ‘worse’ and simple imperfective, e.g. *yəbält-u-n* ‘mostly’.

<sup>31</sup> The content of this section draws on Kapeliuk’s article “Creating Adverbs in Amharic” (2011).

- ii. the preposition *bä-*, as in *bä-fəṭnät* ‘quickly’; this is the standard way of deriving adverbs of manner from nouns.
- iii. the preposition *yä-*, as in *yä-gədd* ‘by force, necessarily’, *yä-mərr* ‘seriously’; this strategy is employed less often than that in (ii).
- iv. the preposition *bä-* followed by the distributive marker *əyyä-* (*bäyyä-*) and with the definite article suffixed to the noun, e.g. *bäyyä-qän-u* ‘every day’; these are used for forming adverbs of frequency.
- v. combinations of prepositions with demonstrative pronouns and nouns, e.g. *ändä-zzih* ‘like this’, *əskä-zziya* ‘up to that’, *wädä-fit* ‘in the future’.
- vi. various conjunctions prefixed to the imperfective of verbs, e.g. *b-iyans* ‘at least’ (lit. ‘if it is not enough’), *s-ayaq<sup>w</sup>arrəṭ* ‘constantly’ (lit. ‘when it does not stop’).

A certain group of deverbal adverbs is derived from the simple imperfective, e.g. *yaləq* ‘more’ (lit. ‘it exceeds’), *yahəl* ‘approximately’ (lit. ‘it equals’), and from the gerund (which may conjugate or remain invariant), e.g. *awqo* ‘deliberately’ (lit. ‘he knowing’), *alfo alfo* ‘occasionally’ (lit. ‘it/he passing passing’). A few adjectives, such as *dähna* ‘good’ and *tənnəṣ* ‘small’, can function as adverbs with no further modification—the position of the item and the word class that it modifies is decisive for its interpretation as an adjective or an adverb. Several spatial adverbs are evidently of nominal origin: *wəṣṭ* ‘inside’, *tačč* ‘below’, *lay* ‘above’, *h<sup>w</sup>ala* ‘at the back’.

Many linguists consider particles as a “wastebasket” class and (reluctantly) I will do the same. Particles include independent words as well as bound morphemes. Some particles scope over individual words, others over the whole sentence, still others over pieces of discourse. They have a variety of functions, all fairly abstract, and are close to grammatical items. The class of Amharic particles embraces, among others, the following lexemes: *läkka* ‘to one’s surprise, why indeed!’, *gäna* ‘still’, *bəčča* ‘only’, *dägmo* ‘also’, *ənk<sup>w</sup>an* ‘even’, *mənalbat* ‘maybe’. The two enclitic particles *-mm* (a focus marker) and *-ss* (a topic marker in questions) function at the discourse level.

### 1.2.3. Syntax

#### 1.2.3.1. Word order

In this brief syntactic sketch I can only mention a few of the most fundamental points. The Amharic (unmarked) word order is very consistently Subject-Object-Verb. While the verb overwhelmingly takes the final position (though even here there are occasional exceptions in spoken language), the order of the constituents that come before the verb exhibits some flexibility:

- (27) *lä-ne čäwata wədd näbbär*<sup>32</sup>  
for-1SG playing precious COP\ PST  
'For me playing was precious' (instead of 'Playing for me was precious')

Typically, the indirect object precedes the direct object:

- (28) *Yohannəs lä-Winta bärr-u-n käfät-ä-ll-at*  
PN for-PN door-DEF-ACC open\PFV-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SF  
'Yohannəs opened the door for Winta'

In complex sentences the subordinate clause canonically precedes the main clause. Preferentially, a temporal adverb comes after the subject:

- (29) *Winta zare wädä səbsäba a-t-mäta-mm*  
PN today to meeting NEG-3SF-come\IPFV-NEG  
'Today Winta will not come to the meeting'

#### 1.2.3.2. Noun phrase<sup>33</sup>

In the noun phrase the head almost always follows the dependent. The unmarked slot sequence in the noun phrase seems to be roughly as follows:

Dem pron – Relative verb – Quantifier –  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Adjective – Possessive} \\ \text{Possessive – Adjective} \end{array} \right]$  – Head Noun – *bullu* 'all'  
*bəčča* 'only'

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<sup>32</sup> From the interview with Bähaylu Gäbrä Mädhən: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnHBiTkPpSo>.  
[Accessed: 13.06.2018]

<sup>33</sup> For this description I draw heavily on the comments given by Leslau (1995: 195) and by Kapeliuk (1994: 82-83). Both authors make it clear that there is much flexibility.

In principle a definite direct object NP will take the accusative marker *-n*, and an indefinite direct object will not. An NP is definite by virtue of the presence of the article, a possessive pronoun, or a demonstrative pronoun; a proper name is also intrinsically definite (Leslau 1995: 181). However, the accusative can also appear on abstracts and intrinsically determined nouns, and in general statements, even with no formal marker of definiteness (Leslau 1995: 182).

In the simplest case the accusative marker directly follows a suffixal definite marker, either the definite article (a.) or a possessive suffix (b.):

- (30) a. *bet-u-n*  
house-DEF-ACC
- b. *bet-aččahu-n*  
house-POSS.2PL-ACC

If the NP is definite because it is a proper noun then the accusative will attach directly to the noun:

- (31) *Yohannäs-(ə)-n*  
PN-ACC

But if the NP has a modifier (adjective, quantifier or a relative clause) then the definite article and the accusative do not attach to the head noun, but move leftward as a unit within the noun phrase. As the demonstrative pronoun is both a modifier and a definitizer there is no definite article; hence the accusative moves leftward on its own:

- (32) *yəb-(ə)-n təlləq bet*  
this-ACC big house

A similar rule holds when the phrase has a definite article but no accusative. Then the definite article moves leftward on its own:

- (33) *təlləq-u bet*  
big-DEF house

The accusative marker can move not only leftward but also to a lower level of embedding:

- (34) [[*yä-[zziya-n säw]*] səm] *a-y-aŋq-(ə)-mm* (Leslau 1995: 185)  
GEN-that-ACC man name NEG-3SM-know\IPFV-NEG  
'He doesn't know that man's name'

Logically, the accusative marker “should” be on the word *səm* ‘name’; instead, moving leftward, it appears on the embedded phrase *yäzziya säw*, and even here it does not appear on the head noun but on the modifier *-zziya*.

As a rule of thumb, we might say that the accusative marker moves all the way to the left, and the definite article moves almost all the way to the left but cannot land on the bare demonstrative. There are exceptions, but this rule describes the basic phenomenon. It should also be noted that the accusative marker and the definite article can sometimes occur multiple times in the NP but I will not go into this here.

A noun that is preceded by a plural numeral can appear either in the singular or in the plural:

- (35) a. *bulätt kəfəl* (lit.) ‘two room’  
 b. *bulätt kəfl-očč* ‘two rooms’

An adjective can be nominalized by means of the definite article and as such functions exactly like a (definite) noun:

- (36) *tənnəs-u mätta* ‘The small one came’  
 small-DEF came

As mentioned Amharic has no morphological comparative or superlative, but uses syntactic means to express these concepts. The comparative can be expressed by the plain adjective preceded by the standard of comparison marked with the preposition *kä*:

- (37) *Winta kä-Alämu bələh n-at*  
 PN than-PN smart COP-3SF  
 ‘Winta is smarter **than** Alämu’

Alternatively, it may be expressed by a variety of verbs meaning ‘exceed’:<sup>34</sup>

- (38) *Winta kä-Alämu yələq bələh n-at*  
 PN than-PN exceeds smart COP-3SF  
 ‘Winta is smarter **than** Alämu’ (lit. ‘Winta is smart **exceeds than** Alämu’)

The superlative is often expressed in the same way as the comparative, but with *kä-hullu(mm)* ‘than everything/everybody’ as the standard:

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<sup>34</sup> This is the “action schema” of Heine (1997: 112): X is Y surpasses Z.

- (39) *Winta kä-bullumm bələb n-at*  
 PN than-everybody smart COP-3SF  
 ‘Winta is the smartest (of all)’ (lit. ‘Winta **than everybody** smart is’)

Like the comparative the superlative can additionally take a variety of verbs expressing the concept of “exceeding”:

- (40) *Winta kä-bullumm yəbält bələb n-at*  
 PN than-everybody is.more smart COP-3SF  
 ‘Winta is the smartest (of all)’ (lit. ‘Winta is smart **than everybody is more**’)

### 1.2.3.3. Important verbal constructions

**Impersonal verbs:** There are many important verbs in Amharic where the notional subject appears formally as a direct object; the verb itself is in 3SM. The majority of these verbs are experientials, denoting states out of voluntary control.

- (41) *gäbba-ññ*  
 understand\PFV.3SM-OBJ.1SG  
 ‘I understand’ (lit. ‘it understands me’)

- (42) *rabä-ññ*  
 hunger\PFV.3SM-OBJ.1SG  
 ‘I am hungry’ (lit. ‘it hungers me’)

**Headless relative clauses:** Canonically a relative clause is a clause which modifies a head noun; the noun should play some semantic role within the relative clause. However, very commonly in Amharic there is no head noun. In this case the relative verb typically takes the definite article to convey the meaning ‘the one who’:

- (43) *amarəñña aqqälatf-o yämm-i-nnaggär säw*  
 Amharic speak.fluently\GER-3SM REL-3SM-speak\IPFV man  
 ‘A man who speaks Amharic fluently’

- (44) *amarəñña aqqälatf-o yämm-i-nnaggär-äw*  
 Amharic speak.fluently\GER-3SM REL-3SM-speak\IPFV-DEF  
 ‘**The one** who speaks Amharic fluently’

Such headless relatives are very important in cleft constructions, which play a major role in the discussion of Amharic epistemic expressions. Surprisingly, what is formally a headless relative clause can sometimes function as a complement clause, without any

relativization at all. It is noteworthy that in such case the headless relative clause never takes the definite article. This will be discussed in detail in Sections 2.3.3 and 4.4.1.

**Clefts:** Cleft sentences play a very important role in Amharic grammar,<sup>35</sup> including the grammar of epistemic modality. In a cleft one element is cut (cleft) out of the sentence as the rheme or focus; it is combined with a copula and the original sentence is recast as a relative clause. For example, *It is John who came*, *It is John who I saw*; or *The one who came is John*, *The one who I saw is John*. In Amharic simple clefts are of two types:<sup>36</sup>

(45) *yä-mätta-w*                      *Yohannäs*    *n-äw*  
REL-come\PFV.3SM-DEF    PN                      COP-3SM  
'The one who came is John'

(46) *Yohannäs*    *n-äw*                      *yä-mätta-w*  
PN                      COP-3SM                      REL-come\PFV.3SM-DEF  
'John is the one who came', 'It is John who came'

No other permutation of relative verb, copula and clefted component is possible; this is because in Amharic the rheme or focus must immediately precede the copula (here lit. 'John is'). The definite article at the end of the relative verb is a typical feature of clefts in Amharic. It serves to nominalize the adjectival relative clause just as the article serves to nominalize a plain adjective (see above); hence the English translation with "the one who" is especially appropriate.

Almost any element in the basic sentence can be clefted: subject, objects, objects of adpositions, adverbs (temporal, spatial and others), possessor etc.

(47) *yä-mätta-w*                      *tənant*    *n-äw*  
REL-come\PFV.3SM-DEF    yesterday    COP-3SM  
'When he came was yesterday' (lit. 'What he came is yesterday')

(48) *yä-mätta-w*                      *kä-Addis Abäba*    *n-äw*  
REL-come\PFV.3SM-DEF    from-Addis Abäba    COP-3SM  
'Where he came from was Addis Ababa' (lit. 'What he came is from Addis Ababa')

(49) *yä-mätta-w*                      *bäfatnät*    *n-äw*  
REL-come\PFV.3SM-DEF    quickly    COP-3SM  
'How he came was quickly' (lit. 'What he came is quickly')

<sup>35</sup> See Kapeliuk (1988: 101).

<sup>36</sup> The clefted element is underlined.

- (50) *y-ayyā-hu-t*                      *bet*      *yä-Winta*   *n-äw*  
REL-see\PFV-1SG-DEF    house      GEN-PN    COP-3SM  
‘The house that I saw was Winta’s’ (lit. ‘[What I saw] house is Winta’s’)

As these examples, (45), (47)-(49), show, Amharic simply uses *yä-* as the relative marker where English will have to differentiate, respectively, “who”, “when”, “where” and “how”. All four of these Amharic sentences are structurally identical.

A word should be said about reduced cleft sentences. There are sentences which consist only of a copula and its complement where we can infer that they are indeed cleft sentences with the subject (relative verb) not present on the surface but reconstructible from the context. For instance:

- (51) A: *yä-mätta-w*                      *man*   *n-äw?*  
REL-come\PFV-DEF    who    COP-3SM  
‘Who came?’ (lit. ‘Who is what came?’)
- B: *Yohannäs*   *n-äw*              [*yä-mätta-w*]  
PN                      COP-3SM    REL-come\PFV-DEF  
‘It is John (who came)’

The grammar of clefting will be discussed in further detail in Section 4.3.1.3.

#### 1.2.4. Interrogatives

A polar question in Amharic is most frequently formed by a rising intonation at the end of the utterance:

- (52) *nägä*                      *əñña*   *ga*      ↗ *tə-mäčī=(y)-all-äs?*  
tomorrow    1PL    at              2SF-come\IPFV=NPST-2SF  
‘Will you come to us tomorrow?’

In a content question the interrogative element occurs immediately before the predicate and receives stress.

- (53) *əñña*   *ga*    ' *mäče*   *tə-mäčī=(y)-all-äs?*  
1PL    at    when    2SF-come\IPFV=NPST-2SF  
‘**When** will you come to us?’

Additionally, there are two interrogative particles *wäy* and *-nə*, both pragmatically marked and relatively uncommon, which occur in the final position in the sentence. The usage of *-nə* is confined to literary works of high style, such as the Bible.



## 2. EPISTEMIC MODALITY: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PRELIMINARIES

This chapter lays the foundation of my work—it introduces basic concepts and terms that will be used throughout the thesis, puts forward the principles of identification of epistemic expressions and, finally, classifies them into four basic groups.

### 2.1. Working definition of epistemic modality and relevant terminology

The most neutral epistemic state is the state of *knowledge* which according to Bogusławski (1998: 21, 81) takes the formula of a four-argument knowledge predicate (K, for Knowledge):

- (1) “someone knows about somebody/something **that** *p*, not: *q*”<sup>1</sup>

It is important to stress that this is propositional knowledge, i.e. knowing *that p*, as opposed to knowledge *about* something. Knowledge about something is a gradable concept: you can know much or little. By contrast, knowledge that *p* is an absolute, yes/no concept: it seems almost incoherent to say that I “almost know” that *p*.<sup>2</sup>

At the other extreme from knowledge is ignorance.<sup>3</sup> For convenience and terminological clarity, I will use the term ‘non-knowledge’ for any epistemic stance that is neither knowledge nor ignorance.<sup>4</sup> The semantic category of epistemic modality falls precisely in the realm of non-knowledge. In this case, the unqualified assertion is replaced by a different statement: the speaker does not claim knowledge of *p* but rather indicates

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<sup>1</sup> By claiming the knowledge that *p*, the speaker makes a choice between the elements of a set in which there is *p* and an element contradictory to it *q* (Stępień 2010: 15). For instance: *Peter knows his father is ill, not: healthy* (Bogusławski 1998: 21). This component, even if syntactically optional, is semantically always present (*ibid.* p. 81).

<sup>2</sup> Bogusławski considers, as he puts it, an “expression/concept ‘know that’” as a candidate “[for] the status of a semantic primitive” (1998: 92). There are other semanticists who claim ‘know’ as a primitive together with ‘think’ (Wierzbicka 1996, 1998), ‘sčitat’ (Rus. ‘believe’) (Apresjan 2001). In contrast, Bogusławski considers ‘know that’ as “unique [... and] not paradigmatically contrasted with anything” (1998: 101).

<sup>3</sup> I am using here the term ‘ignorance’ (as in French) for absolute, definite lack of knowledge.

<sup>4</sup> Danielewiczowa uses the term “insufficient knowledge” (2002: 109-111).

her/his non-knowledge and stance as to the truth of *p*.<sup>5</sup> Thus, in this study epistemic modality will be understood as the speaker's assessment of her/his non-knowledge in respect to the proposition.<sup>6</sup> The two extreme cases of knowledge and ignorance are explicitly excluded from the field of inquiry.<sup>7</sup>

Danielewiczowa, whose thinking is foundational for this dissertation, defines all epistemic expressions through the technique of paraphrases (which are called "paralocutions") which are couched in terms of knowledge and a few other basic concepts. I agree with her approach and accept her results, although I have not tried to apply this method in my thesis. I take it for granted that all the epistemificators I give are indeed based on knowledge, without seeking to demonstrate this closely as Danielewiczowa does. Instead, my analysis will emphasise the establishment of semantic and structural dimensions that can capture the whole field of epistemic modality.

The speaker's assessment of her/his knowledge in respect to the truth of the proposition may have various characteristics which are reflected by different modal epistemic expressions. In general, there is a lack of standardized terminology for discussing modal epistemic expressions. Hence, in this work, I will use the following terms:

- epistemificator = modal epistemic expression
- epistemizer = the sender (utterer, writer) of an epistemically modalized sentence
- epistemized = the epistemically modalized sentence
- epistemized head = the head verb of the epistemized
- epistemificator head = the head verb of the epistemificator

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<sup>5</sup> An unqualified declarative sentence implies knowledge on the part of the speaker (Bogusławski 1998: 80). Any declarative sentence is implicitly embedded under the knowledge operator (see (1) above). At times the operator may appear on the surface as "somebody knows that" but, as Żabowska (2013: 132) mentions, this is to draw the addressee's attention to what is said as an object of our knowledge and not of guess or of illusion.

<sup>6</sup> This assessment will be of both quantitative and qualitative nature; see Chapter 5.

<sup>7</sup> Epistemic expressions that entail knowledge will be treated to some extent in section 5.11.4, to show their different behaviour from expressions that do not entail knowledge.

- kernel: Many epistemifiers, of the type we will call “lexical epistemifiers” (see below for discussion), consist of a lexical part (verb, noun or adjective), sometimes followed by a helping verb, and accompanied by a preceding complement clause which can assume a variety of forms. A full specification of this kind of epistemifier must indicate the grammatical type of the complement. For the “lexical part” I will introduce the term “kernel”. Thus the general formula for such a lexical epistemifier is:

Specification of complement type – Kernel – (Helping verb)

(2)	<b>እንደሚመጣ</b> <i>ändä-mm-i-mäṭa</i> COMP-REL-3SM-come\IPFV	<b>እርግጠኛ</b> <i>ərgəṭäñña</i> certain	<b>ነኝ</b> <i>n-äññ</i> COP-1SG
	‘I am certain that he will come’		

For the epistemifier in example (2), the type of complement is an *ändä*- clause (“that”-clause). The kernel is *ərgəṭäñña* (‘certain’), and the helping verb is *näññ* (‘I am’). The concept of “kernel” will be important later when we discuss prosody (Section 2.4.6). For complement types see Section 5.11.

- matrix vs. embedded clause: In most lexical epistemifiers there are clearly two clauses involved, each expressing a fully lexical predicate. One is embedded in the other. The epistemifier, which is the top-level clause, will be called the matrix clause; its complement, i.e. the epistemized, will be called the embedded clause. This represents the standard usage of the terms.
- main vs. auxiliary verb: In a few epistemifiers, the epistemifier is a helping verb which is adjoined to the fully lexical verb of the epistemized (cf. English ‘he may come’). The helping verb is an auxiliary; the fully lexical verb is the main verb. There is no embedding. There is also an intermediate class called quasi-auxiliaries; see Section 2.3.2.3 for full discussion.
- sentence vs. utterance: I will take the notion of sentence as an undefined term, but one which is understood in terms of syntax. “Sentence” in this sense will be my basic unit of analysis. However, often one encounters “sentences” which include extra,

intrusive material — parentheticals, modal adverbs, modal particles — that do not seem to “belong” to the sentence in its narrow meaning. In such cases, I will use the term “utterance”.

The reader may have already noticed some degree of terminological inconsistency. I will be approaching epistemic modality in terms of both semantics and syntax, which would seem to demand two parallel levels of analysis and layers of terminology; notably, “proposition” belongs to the realm of semantics, whereas terms like “sentence” and “head” clearly belong to syntax. I will not strictly enforce such a separation. The terms I use will be taken sometimes from syntax, sometimes from semantics, sometimes ambiguously from both, as the context requires. In practice I do not believe this will lead to serious confusion, notably because the two levels are often isomorphic or near-isomorphic: a sentence expresses a proposition; both a predicate and a verb have arguments; the concept of negation is relevant to both domains; etc.

For me, the most general semantic formula for an epistemic sentence is:

$$E(p)$$

where “E” stands for an epistemificator and “p” for a proposition. From the above schematic formula one can infer that an epistemificator does not contribute to the proposition but remains outside it, being the speaker’s comment on the proposition. Although this formula functions for the vast majority of modal epistemic expressions there is a small class of epistemic particles (3), adverbs (4) and copular epistemificators (5) that can scope either over the whole proposition or over only a part of the proposition. Consider the following examples:

- (3) [...] የዛሬ አሥር ዓመት ምናልባት በአሥር ብር እንገዛቸው  
*yä-zare assər amät mənəlbət bā-assər bərr ənn-(ə)-gäza-ččäw*  
 GEN-today ten year maybe in-ten birr 1PL-buy\IPFV-OBJ.3PL
- የነበሩ ዕቃዎች ዛሬ አንድ መቶ ብር ገብተዋል<sup>8</sup>  
*yä-näbbär-u əqa-(w)-očč zare and mäto bərr gäbt-äw=all-ø*  
 REL-PST-3PL thing-PL today one hundred birr enter\GER-3PL=PF-3PL

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/«አሁን-ያለውን-የዕርዳታና-የብድር-አሰጣጥ-አዝማሚያ-ብዙም-ተስፋ-ባናደርግበት-መልካም-ነው»> [Accessed: 26.03.2019]

‘Things that ten years ago we used to buy for **maybe** ten birr, today they cost one hundred birr’

- (4) እውነቱን ለመናገር በእርግጠኝነት ለመመለስ በጣም  
*əwənät-u-n lä-männagär bə-rgätäññännät lä-mämälläs bätam*  
 truth-DEF-ACC for-speak\VN with-certainty for-answer\VN very

አስቸጋሪ ነው<sub>[MBL 8: 13-14]</sub>  
*asčäggari n-äw*  
 difficult COP-3SM

‘To tell the truth, it is very difficult to answer **with certainty**’

- (5) ሥራ የጀመርኩ ዘመን ገና ልጅ ነበርኩ ፤ አስራ ሁለት - አስራ ሦስት  
*səra yä-ğämmär-ku zämän gäna laḡ näbbär-ku asra hulätt asra sost*  
 work REL-begin\PFV-1SG time still child COP\PST-1SG twelve thirteen

ዓመቴ ቢሆን ነው<sub>[KB 9: 3-4]</sub>  
*amät-e b-i-hon n-äw*  
 year-POSS.1SG if-3SM-COP\IPFV COP-3SM

‘I was still a child when I began working; I **was most probably** twelve or thirteen years old’

In sentence (3) ምናልባት *mənalbat* ‘maybe’ scopes over a quantity (‘for maybe ten birr’), in (4) በእርግጠኝነት *bä<sup>3</sup>ərgätäññännät* ‘with certainty’ scopes over the verb (‘to answer’) while in (5) ቢሆን ነው *binägrs näw* (here ‘he will most probably tells’) also scopes over quantity (‘most probably twelve or thirteen years old’). As Bogusławski shows (2003: 25-26, 33) such epistemificators can scope over a proposition too, which can be reconstructed from the context and which is not necessarily obtained simply by removing the epistemic expression from the rest of the sentence. I will treat such instances as another special type of epistemificator without seeking to analyse this question further.

All the epistemificators belong to the vast class of so-called metatextual expressions. In contrast to expressions which refer to an extralinguistic reality, metatextual expressions refer to other expressions used in an utterance or to the act of speaking (Żabowska 2009: 179). Thus, an epistemificator is a kind of speaker’s comment, concerning her/his knowledge, on the content of the proposition. From the syntactic point of view, metatextual expressions can be more or less tightly connected with the sentence in which they occur. Some of them may be well integrated into the tissue of the sentence while others may only co-occur with other sentential components and have no syntactic relation

to them. The inventory of epistemificators presented in Chapter 4 comprises expressions which occupy different planes in an utterance. In general, the higher the plane of language an expression occupies, the larger its scope.

Throughout the thesis, the epistemificator in question is given in boldface both in the glossing and in the translation. In the citation form of the epistemificators, the subscripted letter ‘S’ indicates that a linguistic item agrees grammatically with the subject of its sentence. In the English translation I will put the subscript ‘S’ on the verb, not the subject pronoun, and only on those verbs which show agreement. The action verb ነገረ *näggärä* ‘tell’ and the stative verb አወቀ *awwäqä* ‘know’ will serve in these descriptions as the dummy verbs, appearing in the complement of Amharic epistemificators. Additionally, a component of the epistemificator which can be substituted by another form, depending on the temporal and aspectual characteristics of the state of affairs, is given in parenthesis as in (*yänägr*)<sub>S</sub> *yəhonall*.

## 2.2. Research procedures for semantic analysis

To carry out the semantic analysis of Amharic epistemificators I will apply some tests used in structural approaches to language study. These are:

- i. Falsification/verification: in this test one statement is juxtaposed to another in order to see whether the two statements semantically clash with each other or not. By means of this test we can determine presuppositions. For examples see Section 5.6.2, sentences 81-84 (verification); Section 5.6.3, sentences 85-90 (falsification).
- ii. Substitution: in this test one expression is replaced by another one in order to check whether it is acceptable in a given context. Negative results of such a test give insight into the meaning of the given epistemificator. For examples see Section 5.3.7, sentences (133) and (134).

Falsification and substitution tests provide negative semantic information which, in turn, gives some (positive) clues about the boundaries within which an expression is semantically acceptable (Bogusławski 2009: 127-128).

The semantics of epistemificators will mainly be studied with the help of semantic dimensions. The notion of a semantic dimension may be explained in the following way. When a set of distinct but related entities is considered as a whole group, they will typically differ from each other in a number of ways. Each kind of difference expresses a different aspect of the entities' nature. Ideally, each of these aspects can vary independently of the others. We can then model the set of entities in terms of multiple intersecting, cross-cutting axes which may be called *dimensions* or *features* or *parameters*. Each axis expresses one variational aspect of the entities in question. The axes will jointly define a multidimensional *space* in which the entities are located. Ideally, the axes will be conceptualized as being orthogonal, i.e. completely independent of each other.

Sometimes the ideal is achieved. If the set of entities is the set of physical points in space, the three spatial dimensions are truly orthogonal. If the set of entities is “phonemes of a language”, then the distinctive features of the phonemes constitute the orthogonal dimensions. But when the entities are semantic in nature, it is usually difficult or impossible to specify the semantics, and thus the semantic dimensions, with sufficient precision to ensure that the dimensions will be truly orthogonal. The goal is to set up *independent* semantic dimensions; but we can expect often not to attain this goal. The semantic dimensions to be set up here for modal epistemificators are of this nature. I have tried hard to conceptualize “independent” aspects of modal epistemic semantics, but there is no guarantee that they are truly independent.

The dimensions will be discrete in nature: that is, they will not be a matter of degree, but will involve several distinct *values* which will stand in opposition to each other. Depending on the dimension in question, “value” may stand for a meaning which is conveyed by a particular epistemificator (in semantic dimensions) or it may stand for a formal morphosyntactic feature (in formal dimensions). Sometimes the values may be “yes” and “no” with respect to the property that defines the given dimension. Sometimes the dimension may conceptually be a matter of degree, but different ranges along the dimension will be grouped together as a single value. Thus, the dimension “epistemic strength”, in principle a continuous concept, will be assigned the discrete values “strong,

weak, medium”. In such cases I will strive to avoid loose and impressionistic selection of a particular value by specifying explicit, testable criteria for “strong, weak, medium”. Dimensions are not the best way, but rather one possible way, to talk about epistemic expressions. Their disadvantage is, in contrast to paralogutions, used by Polish semanticist such as Danielewiczowa (2002), that they do not (or not easily) allow us to tease out the meaning of each epistemificator so that each of them has a unique representation in terms of values of the various dimensions.

In the present thesis I will, to a limited extent and only occasionally, apply the approach to semantics which consists in analysing the thematic-rhematic structure of sentences (or utterances).<sup>9</sup> This term refers to the division of a sentence into two main semantic parts called theme and rheme. Theme (psychological or semantic subject) is the (concrete) thing or concept which is being talked about in the sentence, while rheme (psychological predicate) is what is being said about this thing. On the surface, the theme is represented by a thematic expression, such as a proper name or a deictic expression, while the rheme is represented by a rhematic expression. Only simple sentences have such a simple binary structure. For complex sentences with several arguments and/or several predicates the structure may consist of several themes and rhemes (Karolak 1999a: 493 f.; 1999b: 596 f.). Furthermore, there can be various additional predications which are connected with the theme and which cannot be negated; these are called thematic dicta or presuppositions (Danielewiczowa 1996: 42). In Amharic the theme-rheme structure of the sentence is typically directly reflected in the sentence stress. The stressed element is the rheme. I make this statement specifically for Amharic since I lack the knowledge to generalize to other languages.

Apart from a sentence, also a unit of language (this concept is discussed in Section 2.4 below) can be analyzed in terms of theme, rheme and presupposed components. A given semantic component of an expression has a concrete position within the meaning; hence the task of the semanticist is not only to find out the semantic components but also to place them appropriately in the hierarchy of the thematic-rhematic structure.

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<sup>9</sup> The thematic-rhematic structure of sentences is studied within the Functional Sentence Perspective.

At times in my investigations I will evoke, alongside the category of epistemic modality, other types of modality: deontic and dynamic, described in Sections 3.2.5 and 3.2.6, respectively. Dynamic modality will be mentioned in connection with the issue of ambiguity between epistemic and dynamic expressions. Deontic modality will be crucial in some semantic tests which aim at elucidating semantic distinctions among various epistemic expressions.

## 2.3. Classification of epistemificators

### 2.3.1. Introduction

In this subsection we shall classify epistemificators into grammatical, lexical, and an intermediate category to be called “copular epistemificators”, according to their degree of grammaticalization/lexicalization. Additionally a group of parenthetical epistemificators will be established. Grammatical epistemificators, in turn, may be further divided into:

- i. morphological,
- ii. auxiliary,
- iii. quasi-auxiliary,
- iv. syntactic.<sup>10</sup>

From a diachronic perspective epistemificators may result from grammaticalization of lexemes or from further grammaticalization of other grammatical morphemes. By (diachronic) grammaticalization we understand a process whereby a lexeme undergoes a semantic reduction and gradually takes on a more specified grammatical meaning. The semantic reduction is sometimes accompanied by phonological reduction (Bybee *et al.* 1994: 4-9). Because of the gradual character of this process, synchronically we may distinguish various degrees to which epistemificators are grammaticalized/lexicalized. It should be noted, however, that sometimes it is difficult to decide whether a given epistemificator is grammatical or lexical as the border between them is fuzzy.<sup>11</sup> This is the

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<sup>10</sup> Additionally, prosodic features may contribute an epistemic modal meaning.

<sup>11</sup> Similar complications may arise when trying to make finer distinctions within grammatical and lexical epistemificators.

rationale for establishing a distinct group of “copular epistemificators”. In many ways the verbs *yəbonall* ‘be(come)’ and *yəməslall* ‘seem’ behave analogously and in a similar manner. Thus it seems advisable to treat them together as copulas, comprising a special class of epistemificators which I will call “copular epistemificators”.

The classification provided below is less than fully rigorous and hence has a preliminary character. A detailed description of each individual Amharic epistemificator will be presented in Chapter 4. In what follows here I will discuss different kinds of epistemificators, both grammatical and lexical, in more general terms.

### 2.3.2. Grammatical epistemificators

#### 2.3.2.1. Morphological epistemificators

Morphological epistemificators — a type which Amharic does not have at all — may take the form of verbal affixes or clitics. If a language has a clearly distinguished verbal paradigm (ideally without a morphological zero) which has the function of expressing modalities, this can be referred to as “mood”. This is as opposed to isolated morphemes which individually express modality but do not form a clear modal paradigm (see below). In languages that have mood, it is an obligatory category. The epistemic moods most frequently encountered in the languages of the world are the indicative (unmarked) and the subjunctive, as in Sanskrit, Romance languages and German (de Haan 2006: 33). Amharic, however, does not have a verbal category of mood, some of whose members would convey an epistemic meaning and thus stand in opposition to the indicative.

In the description of Native American and Papua New Guinea languages, pidgins, creoles and occasionally some other languages, one often encounters the distinction between “realis” and “irrealis” (de Haan 2006: 41-45). According to Palmer (2001: 145-146), in some languages the marker of realis or irrealis obligatorily co-occurs with other grammatical categories, such as futurity, negation and prohibition (joint markers); in other languages it occurs independently (non-joint markers). There is no basis for distinguishing a category of realis and irrealis in Amharic.

In some languages modality-expressing affixes may not form neat inflectional paradigms, as happens with prototypical “mood”. For instance, an affix on verbs which

expresses epistemic modality may not stand in opposition to another modal epistemic affix in the same slot. In other cases, different modal epistemic affixes may occur in different slots within the verbal complex. In yet another situation, even if there are two or three modal epistemic affixes in the same slot, the slot may also be empty, i.e. there is a morphological zero which calls into question the obligatoriness of the category. According to de Haan what allows us to distinguish between affixes forming moods from other modal affixes is their obligatoriness. De Haan also proposes “degree of cohesion” as another parameter enabling us to make a distinction: the more easily a morpheme can be separated from the verb, the more likely it is to be a non-obligatory and non-paradigmatic affix (2006: 37). Non-paradigmatic modal affixes on verbs, of the kind found for instance in Koasati (Kimball 1991: 200), are not attested in Amharic.

### 2.3.2.2. Auxiliary epistemificators

As auxiliary epistemificators we consider auxiliary verb constructions (to adopt Anderson’s term; 2006: 7), consisting of a main (lexical) verb and an auxiliary, whose function is to convey a modal epistemic meaning. Additionally, the main verb and the auxiliary must belong to one and the same clause. The best-known example of auxiliary epistemificators is the class of English modal verbs (Palmer 1990: 3). A significant difference between Amharic auxiliary verb constructions in general and similar constructions in the Romance and Germanic languages is that whereas in Amharic the auxiliaries tend to lose their inflection, in Romance and Germanic they are “the only inflected form within the verbal complex” (Heine 1993: 7). Some non-European languages that possess an auxiliary epistemificator are, for instance, Harar Oromo (Owens 1985: 78-79) and Xakas (Anderson 1998: 60-61). Amharic has two such linguistic items — **ይሆናል** *yəhonall* ‘may’ and interrogative **ይሆን** *yəhon* ‘might’—which are preceded by an inflectable main verb.<sup>12</sup> The main verb is followed by a frozen form of an auxiliary, which (like other auxiliaries in Amharic) always occurs in the final position in the sentence.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Goldenberg uses the term “auxilié” (1966: xii).

<sup>13</sup> This is in keeping with Greenberg’s Universal 16 which states that languages with SOV word order have (inflected) auxiliaries in the postverbal position (1966: 85).

Our goal here is to characterize the class of modal epistemic auxiliary constructions in Amharic. Since the semantic, syntactic and morphological properties of “auxiliaries” in general vary across languages (Heine 1993: 4-8), we must first consider the properties of auxiliaries per se (of any kind) in Amharic. As a point of departure we will make a selection of the properties proposed by Goldenberg specifically for tense auxiliaries (1966: xii; cf. 132-136). His criteria will be supplemented with some of the features mentioned by Heine (1993: 22-24). The following are the properties I propose for modal *epistemic* auxiliaries:

- i. The auxiliary expresses a grammatical meaning, in this case modal epistemic meaning, and is devoid of lexical meaning (is synsemantic).
- ii. It belongs to a (synchronically) closed class of linguistic items.
- iii. It also occurs as a lexical verb. That is why it can be considered as a type of verb.
- iv. It is polysemous and as such conveys other, non-modal meanings.
- v. The auxiliary and the main (lexical) verb must both refer to the same state of affairs. The state of affairs is indicated by the main verb whereas the auxiliary epistemically modifies it.
- vi. The main verb appears in a dependent form whereas the auxiliary, being syntactically independent, is the head. There is no linguistic item, such as a complementizer or a conjunction, that separates the main verb and the auxiliary.<sup>14</sup> Hence, there is a tight formal unity between the auxiliary and the main verb: they clearly belong to one and the same clause (VP).
- vii. Subject agreement (number, person, gender), tense and aspect are marked on the main verb, not the auxiliary. The non-past is conveyed by imperfective + epistemic auxiliary; the past is expressed by gerund + epistemic auxiliary. Thus, in Amharic

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<sup>14</sup> Some non-modal auxiliaries, however, may combine with a main verb which is introduced by a conjunction or a complementizer (see the table in Goldenberg 1966: 174 and in 2013: 220).

modal epistemic auxiliary constructions the “morphosyntactic locus of inflection” (Anderson 2006: 22) is the main verb, with the auxiliary having a frozen form.<sup>15</sup>

- viii. The epistemic auxiliary can only appear in a main clause.
- ix. It cannot be passivized.
- x. It does not have an imperative form.
- xi. The auxiliary cannot be independently negated.

### 2.3.2.3. Quasi-auxiliary epistemificators

The class of quasi-auxiliary epistemificators embraces constructions consisting of the main verb followed by what I will call a quasi-auxiliary: i.e. a non-copular verb which shows some features pertaining to lexical verbs, and some pertaining to auxiliaries. Such modal items are, for instance, typical for the Slavic languages (eastern branch) and for Hungarian (Hansen and de Haan 2009: 546). Quasi-auxiliary epistemificators are structurally more complex than “plain” auxiliary epistemificators, and possibly semantically as well. There are two clear differences between quasi-auxiliaries and plain auxiliaries, and one clear similarity:

- a. The quasi-auxiliary may be conjugated for person/number/gender, as with full lexical verbs.
- b. The quasi-auxiliary may be separated from the main verb by a (brief) word, as is also the case with full lexical verbs.
- c. But the semantics of the quasi-auxiliaries remains abstract and grammatical, as with epistemic auxiliaries and unlike full lexical verbs.

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<sup>15</sup> Amharic auxiliary verbal constructions in general vary as to whether inflection is encoded only on the auxiliary or on both components and which categories are expressed by each of them. The auxiliary አለ *allä*, which is part of the compound imperfective and the compound gerund, retains its inflection in both paradigms, though the inflection is reduced in various ways (some shortened or ending-less forms; paradigmatic syncretisms). Other auxiliaries, such as ነበር *näbbär* and ነው *näw*, have fixed forms, although Leslau mentions their optional inflectability (1995: 316, 321, 323, 332). Bulakh notes that Amharic auxiliaries tend to lose their subject agreement suffixes (2014: 166). See her article and the handout by Diertani and Eilam (2010) for more information about the inflection in auxiliary verb constructions. The present discussion, however, deals specifically with modal epistemic auxiliary constructions.

Four Amharic quasi-auxiliary epistemificators, exemplified here with the verb *näggärä* ‘tell’ and *awwäqä* ‘know’, are: **ሊነግር** **ይችላል**<sub>S</sub> *linägrs yäčälall<sub>S</sub>* ‘he could<sub>S</sub> tell<sub>S</sub>’, **ማወቅ አለበት**<sub>S</sub> *mawäq alläbb(ät)<sub>S</sub>* ‘he must<sub>S</sub> know’, **ሳይነግር** **አይቀርም**<sub>S</sub>, *saynägrs ayqärämm<sub>S</sub>* ‘he will surely/ probably tell<sub>S</sub>’ and **መንገሩ** **አይቀርም** *mängäru<sub>S</sub> ayqärämm* ‘he will definitely tell<sub>S</sub>’. Quasi-auxiliaries share some features with auxiliaries proper (notably i-iii, v, and ix-xi) but, in contrast to auxiliaries, they are biclausal and, with the exception of *mängäru<sub>S</sub> ayqärämm*, they retain their inflection. The latter two characteristics reflect the affinity of quasi-auxiliaries to lexical verbs. Differences are as follows (the numbering corresponds to the numbering used for auxiliaries):

- iv. A quasi-auxiliary is polysemous and as such conveys other meaning(s), modal or non-modal.
- vi. As with the auxiliary epistemificators, the main verb is syntactically dependent on the quasi-auxiliary serving as its head. However, now the main verb is introduced by a complementizer<sup>16</sup> or appears as a verbal noun. Furthermore, it may be separated from the quasi-auxiliary by the conjunction **ግን** *gən* ‘but’,<sup>17</sup> and it belongs to a different clause than the quasi-auxiliary. Thus, the quasi-auxiliary epistemificator is a biclausal construction.
- vii. Subject agreement (number, person, gender) is marked on the quasi-auxiliary and/or on the main verb. Non-past tense is encoded on the main verb while past tense marking has different realizations depending on the particular epistemic construction.
- viii. The quasi-auxiliary can appear in any type of subordinate clause.

Intuitively, the auxiliary and quasi-auxiliary epistemificators serve as a prototype for the entire class of epistemificators; these are the grammatical (as opposed to the lexical) epistemificators. Such epistemificators have no function other than to express modality—unlike lexical epistemificators, which have richer semantics and have a separate existence

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<sup>16</sup> In this work, I will use the term “complementizer” to denote any grammatical morpheme that introduces a clause which is the complement of another verb.

<sup>17</sup> There may exist other such separatory elements, but if so they do not appear in my data.

as independent verbs. Note that, in all such grammatical epistemifiers, the epistemizer is never explicitly present (the opposite of e.g. ‘I think’).<sup>18</sup>

#### 2.3.2.4. Syntactic epistemifiers

A “syntactic epistemifier” should refer to a particular syntactic construction, notably a distinctive word order, which yields a modal epistemic meaning. As far as I know, thus far no syntactic devices have been registered for any language in the literature about epistemic modality. Such devices do appear in conditional sentences in some languages of the world such as English (“Should you come earlier, let me know”) but also Old Babylonian (Cohen 2005). In some approaches, conditional sentences belong to the category of modality, as mentioned in the Introduction; however, as also mentioned, conditionals have been excluded from consideration in this thesis.

#### 2.3.3. Copular epistemifiers

A large variety of epistemifiers include the words **ይሆናል** *yəhonall* ‘be(come)’ (or variants) in non-auxiliary use or **ይመስላል** *yəməslall* ‘seem’ (or variants).<sup>19</sup> These indicate the concept of “being”, whether plain or modalized. Here I will treat these two verbs as together constituting a single macro-category of “copulas”, which in turn form a major category of epistemifiers to be called “copular epistemifiers”. I present this category as a third kind of epistemifier whose behaviour overlaps with that of both grammatical and lexical epistemifiers. What justifies the status of “copular epistemifiers” as a separate class? Most basically, the two verbs participate in parallel ways in a variety of epistemifiers (Kapeliuk 1988: 140-141) e.g.:

(6)	<b>ያቀረቡትን</b> <i>y-aqärräb-u-t-(ə)-n</i> REL-present\PFV-3PL-DEF-ACC	<b>ሐሳብ</b> <i>hassab</i> idea	« <b>ጅምር</b> <b>መፍትሔ</b> » <i>ǧəmmər məftəhe</i> provisional solution	<b>ማለት</b> <i>malät</i> say\VN
	<b>የፈለጉትም</b> <i>yä-fälläg-u-t-(ə)-mm</i> REL-want\PFV-3PL-DEF-FOC	<b>ለዚህ</b> <i>lä-zzih</i> for-this	<b>ይሆናል</b> <sub>[AA 870]</sub> <i>yə-hon=all-ø</i> 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM	

<sup>18</sup> On the explicit and implicit epistemizer see Section 5.2.

<sup>19</sup> Unlike *yəhonall*, *yəməslall* can never be used as an auxiliary. *Yəməslall* also has a non-copular use which will figure briefly in this section.

‘It **may be** for this that they wanted to call the idea they have presented a “provisional solution”’

- (7) አየር ኃይል የገባው ለዚህ ይመስለኛል<sup>[TK 161: 13-14]<sup>20</sup></sup>  
*ayyär hayl yä-gäbba-w lä-zzih yə-mäsl-äññ=all-ø*  
 air force REL-join\PFV.3SG-DEF for-this 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘It **seems to be** for this that he joined the air force’

On the other hand, grouping the two verbs together creates a semantically heterogeneous class, comprising the lexically plain (semantically “empty”) copula *yəhonall* ‘be(come)’ and the lexically modal copula *yəmäslall* ‘seem’. Epistemifiers with ‘be’ seem intrinsically more grammatical in nature, whereas epistemifiers with ‘seem’ appear more lexical in nature. Putting the two into a single, intermediate class of “copular epistemifiers” allows us to treat them together while avoiding the need to decide whether to call them “grammatical” or “lexical”.

The two verbs *yəhonall* and *yəmäslall* show important and interesting differences when used in epistemifiers. *Yəmäslall* ‘seem’ is inherently modal by virtue of its lexical semantics. The plain copula is not inherently modal, but can be modalized in (at least) two different ways; by appearing in the form *yəhonall* (8); or by taking as its complement the combination ቢገባ *binägr* (9), which imparts a modal meaning to the construction. Thus:

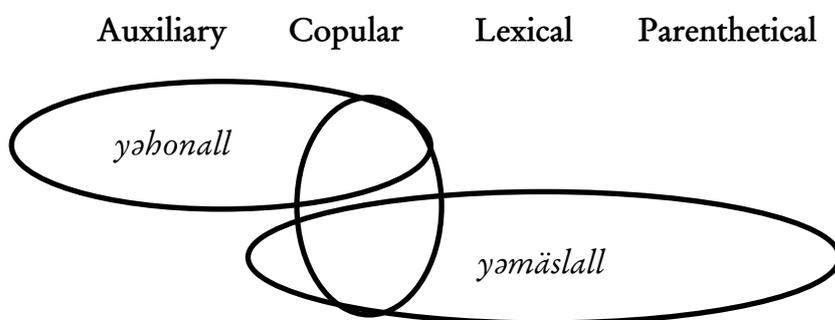
- (8) አማጭን ሊሰናበቱ ይሆናል  
*əmmaye-n li-ssänabbät-u yə-hon=all-ø*  
 my.mum-ACC COMP-3PL-say.goodbye\IPFV-3PL 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 የመጡት<sup>[YG 2/13]</sup>  
*yä-mätt-u-t*  
 REL-come\PFV-3PL-DEF  
 ‘It **may be** in order to say goodbye to my mum that they have come’

- (9) አንድኔ ያለው ወንድ ባያጋጥማት  
*ändä-ne y-all-ä-w wänd b-a-y-aggattəm-at*  
 like-1SG REL-exist-3SM-DEF man if-NEG-3SM-encounter\IPFV-OBJ.3SF  
 ነው<sup>[KB 98: 3]</sup>  
*n-äw*  
 COP-3SM  
 ‘It is **probably** that (i.e. because) she **hasn’t encountered** a man like me’

<sup>20</sup> The word order of the original sentence has been changed.

Another difference between *yəhonall* and *yəməslall* involves the different *non-copular* epistemic uses that they have. The form *yəhonall*, as well as being a copula, can also (as we have seen) be an auxiliary verb, e.g. (ይነግር)<sub>S</sub> ይሆናል (*yənägr*)<sub>S</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tell<sub>S</sub>’. *Yəməslall* cannot function as an auxiliary. On the other hand, *yəməslall* has multiple other uses: it can function as a true lexical epistemificator of “seeming”,<sup>21</sup> and it forms a number of parenthetical epistemificators which are not syntactically embedded in the sentence, e.g. መሰለኝ *mässälänn* ‘I think, it seems to me’.<sup>22</sup> The plain copula has neither of these uses. We can represent this in the following diagram:

FIGURE 1. Copular epistemificators with *yəhonall* and *yəməslall*



Sometimes, the copulas *yəhonall* and *yəməslall* are fully inflecting conjugable verbs. In other cases (including the use of *yəməslall* as a lexical verb of “seeming”) they do not inflect for person, gender and number, appearing only in the impersonal 3SM (compare English *She seems to be good* vs. *It seems that she is good*); such a verb may, however, still express tense/aspect and negativity, and as such still shows inflection to a restricted degree. I will refer to such a verb as “invariant”. By contrast, when *yəhonall* is used as an auxiliary (i.e. not as a copula), it cannot inflect at all and will be referred to as “frozen”. Additionally, with *yəməslall* the notional subject can sometimes be expressed as an indirect object pronominal suffix on the copula (*It seems to me*).

<sup>21</sup> See Section 4.4.1.

<sup>22</sup> See Section 4.5.

As copulas, both *yəhonall* and *yəməslall* can prototypically be expected to take a nominal as their subject and as their complement.<sup>23</sup> In Amharic very often this subject nominal is a relative clause (usually headless), and very often this relative clause participates in a cleft construction (e.g. *The one who left today may be John*). Clefts are enormously important in Amharic grammar.<sup>24</sup> Alongside “full” clefts, there are also reduced clefts whose subject, in the form of the relative clause, is not present but can be reconstructed from the context.<sup>25</sup>

This dissertation is not fundamentally about clefts, so I will deliberately say as little as possible about the subject. However, one general point about headless relative clauses with *yəməslall* must be mentioned. In *yəməslall* clauses, a construction which is formally a headless relative clause often truly is a headless relative clause, but in other cases such a clause seems to be functioning as a “that” clause. A suggestive terminological middle ground would be to attempt a translation as a “pseudo-headed relative clause” ‘(the case that’; I will develop this theme further in Section 4.4.1. The choice between the two interpretations (headless relative vs. “that”-clause) is correlated with the choice between conjugable vs. invariant *yəməslall*. With conjugated *yəməslall* (‘he seems’) I will understand and translate the **የ**- *yä*- complement as a headless relative clause:

- (10) **ፀጉሯ**                      **እንደነገሩ**                      **ተሸከፏል ።**                      **የፈረንጅ**  
*ṣägur-<sup>w</sup>a*                      *ändänägäru*                      *täšäkkəf-<sup>w</sup>=all-ø.*                      *yä-Färäng*  
hair-POSS.3SF                      casually                      be.tied.up\GER-3SM=PF-3SM                      GEN-Westerner
- ባህል**                      **የነካካት**                                              **ትመስላለች** [AA 865]  
*bahäl*                      *yä-näkakk-at*                                              *tə-mäsl=all-äčč*  
culture                      REL-touch\PFV.3SM-OBJ.3SF                      3SF-seem\IPFV=NPST-3SF
- ‘Her hair is tied up casually. **She seems [to be] one who** has been touched by Western culture’

<sup>23</sup> Sometimes these copulas may also take an adverbial complement, see Sections 4.3.1.3 (exx. 44 and 45), 4.3.2.3 (ex. 73).

<sup>24</sup> See Kapeliuk (1988: 101).

<sup>25</sup> On clefts and reduced cleft see Sections 4.3.1.3 and 6.1.4.1 ii. Excursus on clefting.

With an invariant *yəməslall* (‘it seems’) I will understand and translate the *yä*- complement as a “that”-clause:<sup>26</sup>

- (11) መቼም የአቅማን ያህል የሠራሁ  
*mäčemm yä-aqm-e-n yahəl yä-särra-hu*  
 after.all GEN-capacity-POSS.1SG-ACC equal REL-work\PFV-1SG  
**ይመስለኛል**<sub>[MW 10: 10-12]</sub>  
*yə-mäsl-änn=all-ø*  
 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘After all, it seems to me that I have worked equal to my capacity’

In both cases, unlike English, the complement clause is expressed in the very same way (with *yä*-). This *yä*-is obligatory: it is not possible to express the complement as an *ändä*-clause or a verbal noun. The only problem — for the linguist (including myself), not the native speaker — is to tell whether a given instance of 3SM *yəməslall* in a text represents conjugable or invariant *yəməslall*. This can be clarified with an informant by changing the notional subject to 3SF or any plural form.

### 2.3.4. Lexical epistemificators

With a single exception (to be discussed briefly just below), all other epistemificators (a very large set) are lexical epistemificators. These comprise: non-copular epistemificators of seeming, mental verbal, mental noun, impersonal verbal, adjectival and adjectivalized, adverbial and particle epistemificators. I will discuss these in detail in Chapter 4; here I will only give an example for each category:

- i. Non-copular epistemificators of seeming: የ-X ይመስላል *yä-X yəməslall* ‘it seems that X, it appears that X’
- ii. Mental verbal: እንደ-X አስባለሁ *ändä-X assəballähu* ‘I think (that) X’, X ብዬ አስባለሁ *X bəyye assəballähu* ‘I think: X’
- iii. (Mental) noun: X የሚል ሐሳብ አለኝ *X yämmil hassab allänn* ‘I have a thought: X’
- iv. Impersonal verbal: እንደ-X ይሰማኛል *ändä-X yəssəmmaññall* ‘I feel that X’ (lit. ‘it is heard to me that X’)
- v. Adjectival: እንደ-X እርግጠኛ ነኝ *ändä-X ərgəṭännä nänn* ‘I am sure (that) X

<sup>26</sup> See Dixon’s discussion of “seems” in English (Dixon 1991: 201-202, 249).

- vi. Adjectivalized: እንደ-X የማይቀር ነው· *andä-X yämmayqär näw* ‘it is inevitable that X’
- vii. Adverbial: በእርግጠኝነት *bä’ərgätännännät* ‘for certain’
- viii. Particle: ምናልባት *mənalbat* ‘perhaps, maybe’

Because epistemificators are usually complex units which comprise more than one constituent it is impossible to assign them to traditional parts of speech. In fact, the majority of them consist of more than one element, each belonging to a different part of speech.

### 2.3.5. Parenthetical epistemificators

The single exception mentioned just above will be called “parenthetical epistemificators”. These refer to epistemificators which have been added to a certain basic utterance but bear no syntactic relation to it.<sup>27</sup> With one exception (እርግጠኛ ነኝ X *ərgätännä näññ X* ‘I am sure, X’), such an epistemificator is a verb or a verbal phrase. The parenthetical is not an obligatory component that accompanies the basic utterance: if it were removed, there would be no change in the basic utterance. Between the parenthetical epistemificator and the basic utterance there is nothing more than a relation of co-occurrence.<sup>28</sup> Parentheticals do not determine the class and the degree of complexity of the object with which they are connected (Moroz 2010: 113-116, Stepień 2014: 12). They scope over the whole utterance.

## 2.4. Identification of epistemificators in Amharic

### 2.4.1. Introduction

The objects of my analysis will be modal epistemic expressions, called in the present work epistemificators. Each of them will be considered as a unit of language in the sense

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<sup>27</sup> This concept of parenthetical epistemificator is based on the concept of parenthetical expressions in general provided by Marzena Stepień (2014: 11).

<sup>28</sup> The syntactic nature of parentheticals is a subject of much debate. For instance, Newmeyer (2015) analyses the parenthetical “(X), I think,” as a main clause that takes a subordinate clause. As such, the parenthetical is syntactically part of the sentence. In contrast, Kaltenböck *et al.* (2015) argue that parentheticals belong to a larger group of “theticals” and that they are syntactically independent from the utterance in which they are inserted.

proposed by Bogusławski (see e.g. 1976, 1988, 1993, 1996, 1998), i.e. units of language (a, b, c, d etc.) are bilaterally disjunctive with each other ( $ac : ad = bc : bd$ ), each belonging to an open class whose items can be assigned a general characteristic. A unit of language should bear a distinct meaning and occupy a place in the system of the language. The reason behind this is to avoid ascribing a “meaning” to an isolated “graphic word”, for instance *think* (as opposed to a construction that includes *think*), which can be massively polysemous. In that case, what is being put forward for analysis is an artificial polysemous cluster, about whose semantics it typically is hardly possible to say anything accurate or precise (Bogusławski 1988: 12-13).

In the case of Amharic to identify epistemificators it is particularly difficult because of their poor treatment in lexicographical and grammatical descriptions.<sup>29</sup> The existing dictionaries, either monolingual or bilingual, are of little help since most often they register the root form of a verb (e.g. አሰበ *assäbä* ‘think’) and selected derivations (e.g. ታሰበ *tassäbä* ‘it is thought’ አሰቢ *assabi* ‘one who thinks’) but with almost no attention to valence and “subtle” semantics. Meanings conveyed by a lexeme are explained by means of synonyms (monolingual dictionaries) or equivalent expressions of the target language (bilingual dictionaries). Rarely are example sentences provided. Such constructed dictionary entries do not correspond to real units of language since they do not reflect either their syntactic or semantic or pragmatic properties.

For a proper identification of epistemificators, I will apply the principles stated below.<sup>30</sup> These principles apply only to those epistemificators (the majority) which are formally predicational expressions, that is, which are verbal, noun, adjectival or adjectivalized phrases. Regarding other epistemificators, namely adverbs and particles, little can be said about them as a general class.

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<sup>29</sup> For a survey of lexicographical treatment of Amharic epistemic expressions see Section 3.3.5; for a review of grammatical analysis of Amharic epistemic expressions see Section 3.3.2.

<sup>30</sup> Danielewiczowa (2000a, 2002: 35-66) proposes four procedures for an identification of epistemic verbs in Polish. Her ideas have been adopted for the principles provided in this thesis.

## 2.4.2. Epistemificators as whole constructions: Epistemificator + arguments

All epistemificators will be investigated together with the arguments that they take and with which they form a semantically analysable whole. Thus, it is assumed that the argument structure<sup>31</sup> and meaning of the modal verb/noun/adjective are inextricably interdependent and must be specified together (Bogusławski 1988, Danielewiczowa 2000a). An illustration of this is the lexeme አሰበ *assäbä* ‘think’, which conveys different meanings depending on its valence:<sup>32</sup>

ለመንገር አሰበ<sub>s</sub> *lämängär assäbäs*, ‘he thought<sub>s</sub> to tell’, ‘he intended<sub>s</sub> to tell’

- (12) ናዎሚ ባልዋና ልጆቻቸው ከሞቱ በኋላ  
*Na’omi bal-wa-(ə)-nna läğ-očč-wa kä-mot-u bäh<sup>w</sup>ala*  
 PN husband-POSS.3SF-and child-PL-POSS.3SF after-die\PFV-3PL after
- ወደ ሀገርዋ ለመመለስ አሰበች<sup>33</sup>  
*wädä hagär-wa lä-mämmälläs assäb-äčč*  
 to land-POSS.3SF for-return\VN think\PFV-3SF
- ‘After her husband and her children died Naomi **thought to go back to her land**’

In contrast to:

X ብዬ አሰባለሁ X *bəyye assəballähu* ‘I think: X’

- (13) የፍቅር ምንነት የተዛባ ትርጉም  
*yä-fəqər mənənnät yä-täzabba tərgum*  
 GEN-love essence REL-be.twisted\PFV.3SM sense
- የተሰጠው እንግዲህ እዚህ ላይ ነው  
*yä-täsättä-w əngədih ə-zzih lay n-äw*  
 REL-be.given\PFV.3SM-DEF thus at-this on COP-3SM
- ብዬ አሰባለሁ<sub>[AA 227]</sub>  
*bəyye-e assəb=all-ähu*  
 say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I **think**: so it is here that the essence of love is given a twisted sense’

<sup>31</sup> Termed also “valence of the verb”, which is the potential of a given verb for taking particular kind of arguments, as well as the semantic characteristics of these arguments and their structural features, i.e. the type and form of syntactic indicators of these arguments such as *that, to* (Karolak 1999c: 629-630).

<sup>32</sup> For a different analysis of the Amharic verbs ‘think’, ‘know’ and ‘understand’ from the Natural Semantic Metalanguage standpoint see Amberber (2003).

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.ethiocist.org/sacred-scripture/lessons/1002-2013-04-30-06-21-39>. [Accessed: 16.11.2016]

Both verbs, **አሰበች** *assäbäčč* ‘she thought’ in sentence (12) and **አስባለሁ** *assəballähu* ‘I think’ in sentence (13), are bivalent but while they have one argument in common (the experiencer) the other argument is different. In sentence (12) the arguments are the experiencer and the verbal noun preceded by **ለ** *lä* ‘for’. In sentence (13) they are the experiencer and a proposition introduced by the inflectable subordinate linker **ብዬ** *bəyye* ‘I saying:’<sup>34</sup>. Of the two constructions, only that in sentence (13) conveys a modal epistemic meaning.

In the same way, other modal epistemifiers will be provided and examined together with their argument structure. Let us consider two more examples involving the lexeme **ቻለ** *čälä* ‘be able, can, could, may, manage’:

**መንገር ይችላል**<sub>S</sub> *mängär yəčälall*<sub>S</sub> ‘he can<sub>S</sub> /is<sub>S</sub> able to tell’ (ability)

- (14) **በፍጥነት መሮጥ ይችላል**  
*bäfəṭnät märot yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 fast run\VN 3SM-can\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘He **can run** fast’

In contrast to:

**ሊነግር ይችላል**<sub>S</sub> *linägr<sub>S</sub> yəčälall<sub>S</sub>* ‘he could<sub>S</sub> tell<sub>S</sub>’

- (15) **አባቴ ረጅም ጸጉር አይወድም ። የንግዱ ፀባይ ሆኖ ሊሆን ይችላል**<sub>[GQ 103: 2-3]</sub>  
*abbat-e räğğəm šägur a-y-wädd-(ə)-mm. yä-nəgd-u*  
 father-POSS.1SG long hair NEG-3SM-like\IPFV-NEG GEN-business-POSS.3SM  
**ፀባይ ሆኖ ሊሆን ይችላል**<sub>[GQ 103: 2-3]</sub>  
*šəbay hon-o l-i-hon yə-čäl-all-ø*  
 character COP\GER-3SM COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV 3SM-could\IPFV-NPST-3SM  
 ‘My father doesn’t like long hair. It **could** be that it is [because of] the character of his business’

In sentence (14) the lexeme *čälä* ‘be able, can, could, may, manage’ takes as its arguments the possessor of an ability and a verbal noun referring to the ability. In sentence (15) the verb also has two arguments: an animate or inanimate epistemizer and a conjugable verb

<sup>34</sup> The inflectable subordinate linker *bəyye* (which, though inflectable, occurs in epistemifiers only in the 1SG) is discussed in section 4.4.2.1.

in its imperfective form introduced by the complementizer *lä*. Modal epistemic meaning is conveyed only by the argument structure illustrated in sentence (15).

In general, verbal epistemificators require as one of their arguments a proposition. A special case is that of copulas, which in certain circumstances may carry a modal meaning and hence count as a subtype of verbal epistemificator. Here the argument is a nominal, which may either serve as an attributive (qualifying the subject) or an identificational copula (equating two entities). An attributive copula plus its complement (including a clausal complement) conveys a proposition, just as a verb does (compare *it was red* and *it reddened*).<sup>35</sup> Consider the following sentence:

- (16) **ምናልባትም ምን እንደሚፈልጉ ማውቅ**  
*mənalbat-(ə)-mm mən əndä-mm-i-fälləg-u mawäq*  
 perhaps-FOC what COMP-REL-3PL-want\IPFV-3PL know\VN  
**ጠቃሚ ይሆናል**<sub>[AA 817]</sub>  
*täqami yə-hon=all-ø*  
 useful 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Perhaps it **may be** useful to know what they want’

### 2.4.3. Verbal epistemificators and their aspect and tense

From the point of view of lexical aspect (*Aktionsart*), that is, “inherent temporal structure of a situation” (Croft 2012: 31), Amharic modal epistemic verbs are statives. Additionally, their temporal location is definitionally in the present, as expressed by the non-past tense. These stipulations are needed because a given lexeme such as **አሰበ** *assäbä* ‘think’, like any other verbal lexeme, has the potential to manifest various aspectual and temporal types (*ibid.* 37; see also Dahl 1985: 26-27) depending on its TAM categories, valence and context. But only some of these can serve as modals. Consider sentences (17) and (18). They illustrate the lexeme *assäbä* ‘think’ in the perfective form whose complement is introduced by the inflectable subordinate linker **ብዬ** *bəyye* ‘I saying:’. Despite their formal identity, the context suggests that the lexical aspect of *assäbku* ‘I thought’ (17) should be interpreted as an achievement whereas *assäbku* ‘I thought’ (18) should be interpreted as a state.

<sup>35</sup> With identificational copulas this is much less clear.

- (17) የእሀቲ ልጅ ፤ “ሰሞኑን ጂሜይል አይሰራም  
*yä-əhät-e ləḅ sämonun ḡimeyl a-y-sära-mm*  
 GEN-sister-POSS.1SG child recently gmail NEG-3SM-work\IPFV-NEG
- ነበር” ስትለኝ ፤ ያልጻፈው ለዚያ  
*näbbär s-(ə)-ttə-l-änn y-al-saf-ä-ፕw lä-zziya*  
 PST when-3SF-say\IPFV-OBJ.1SG REL-NEG-write\PFV-3SM-DEF for-that
- ይሆናል ብዬ አሰብኩ<sup>[AA 856]</sup>  
*yə-hon=all-ø bəyy-e assäb-ku*  
 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM say\GER-1SG think\PFV-1SG

‘When my sister’s child told me “Gmail hasn’t been working recently”, I thought (a thought came to my mind): it might be because of this that he hasn’t written’

- (18) ወደ ቤተክርስቲያን ተጠግኜ ወንጌል መስበክ  
*wädä betäkrästiyān tätägäčč-e wängel mäsbäk*  
 to church come.close\GER-1SG gospel preach\VN
- አለብኝ ብዬ አሰብኩ  
*all-ä-bb-(ə)-ññ bəyy-e assäb-ku*  
 exist\PFV-3SM-APPL-OBJ.1SG say\GER-1SG think\PFV-1SG

‘I thought (was thinking): I will come closer to the church and will have to preach the gospel’

In sentence (19) the lexeme *assäbä* (in the progressive) appears as an activity.

- (19) እንዲህ እያሰብኩ ... በእግራ ምን ያህል  
*əndih əyy-assäb-ku... bə-əgr-e mən yəhəl*  
 like.this PROG-think\PFV-1SG by-foot-POSS.1SG how much
- አንደተጓዝኩ አላውቅም<sup>[AA 859]</sup>  
*əndä-täg<sup>w</sup> az-ku al-awq-(ə)-mm*  
 COMP-travel\PFV-1SG NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG

‘Thinking like this... I don’t know how much I travelled on foot’

In the following two sentences, (20) and (21), *assäbä* (in the compound and simple imperfective forms, respectively) occurs in the stative aspectual type.

- (20) ማንነታችንን በትክክል ተረድተን ፤ አንድ ላይ ለመጓዝ  
*manənnät-aččən-(ə)-n bätəkəkkəl tärädət-än and lay lä-mäg<sup>w</sup> az*  
 identity-POSS.1PL-ACC properly understand\GER-1PL one on for-travel\VN
- ያስችለናል ብዬ አሰባለሁ<sup>[AA 862]</sup>  
*y-asčəl-än=all-ø bəyy-e assäb=all-ähw*  
 3SM-enable\IPFV-OBJ.1PL=NPST-3SM say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I think: having understood properly our identity will enable us to proceed together’

(21)	<b>ያንን</b> <i>yann-(ə)-n</i> that-ACC	<b>ነገር</b> <i>nägär</i> thing	<b>ለማግኘት</b> <i>lä-magnät</i> for-obtain\VN	<b>የግድ</b> <i>yä-gädd</i> GEN-necessity	<b>እዛው</b> <i>ə-zza-w</i> at-that-DEF
	<b>ቦታው</b> <i>bota-w</i> place-DEF	<b>መገኘትና</b> <i>mäggänät-(ə)-nna</i> be.located\VN-and	<b>መማር</b> <i>mämmar</i> learn\VN	<b>አለብኝ</b> <i>all-ä-bb-(ə)-ññ</i> exist\PFV-3SM-APPL-OBJ.1SG	
	<b>ብዬ</b> <i>bəyy-e</i> say\GER-1SG	<b>አስብ</b> <i>assəb</i> 1SG.think\IPFV	<b>ነበር</b> <sup>36</sup> <i>näbbär</i> PST		

‘I used to think: to get this thing I have to necessarily be at that place and study’

Of the five sentences (17-21) only (20) conveys modal epistemic meaning. In sentences (17) and (19) *assäbä* appears in aspectual types which do not lend themselves to a modal interpretation. In (17), (18) and (21), the past location of the verbs *assäbku* (Preterite) and *assəb näbbär* (Past habitual) precludes a modal use. Their use in a past tense indicates “a description of a non-actual epistemic state” of the speaker (Tutak 2003: 66) and as such excludes them from the sphere of modality.<sup>37</sup>

Let us give one more example now involving the lexeme *čalä* ‘be able, can, could, may, manage’, which has different aspectual interpretations depending on its form. In both sentences below it occurs with the same complementizer *lä-*.

(22)	<b>ይህ</b> <i>yəh</i> this	<b>ሰው</b> <i>säw</i> man	<b>በእምነትና</b> <i>bä-əmnät-(ə)-nna</i> in-faith-and	<b>በባሕርይ</b> <i>bä-bahrəy</i> in-character	<b>እንዴት</b> <i>əndet</i> how	<b>እኔን</b> <i>əne-n</i> 1SG-ACC
	<b>ሊመስል</b> <i>li-mäsəl</i> COMP-3SM-resemble\IPFV	<b>ቻለ?</b> <sub>[BF 127: 2-3]</sub> <i>čal-ä</i> manage\PFV-3SM				

‘How did this man manage to resemble me in faith and in character?’

(23)	<b>ዞሮ ዞሮ</b> <i>zoro zoro</i> all.in.all	<b>ለቤተሰቧ</b> <i>lä-betäsäb-wa</i> for-family-POSS.3SF	<b>ማስቧ</b> <i>massäb-wa-mm</i> think\VN-POSS.3SF-FOC	<b>ደግሞ</b> <i>dägmo</i> also
	<b>ተገቢ</b> <i>tägäbi</i> appropriate	<b>ሊሆን</b> <i>li-hon</i> COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV	<b>ይችላል</b> <sub>[TS 2]</sub> <i>yə-čäl-all-ø</i> 3SM-could\IPFV-NPST-3SM	

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=17695:ሀበሻ-ዊክሊ-ከዩ-ወዴት?&Itemid=240](http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=17695:ሀበሻ-ዊክሊ-ከዩ-ወዴት?&Itemid=240). [Accessed: 02.09.2017]

<sup>37</sup> See also Danielewiczowa (1998: 124).

‘All in all, her thinking about her family **could** also be appropriate’

The perfective form in sentence (22) takes an achievement interpretation (‘manage, be able’) whereas the compound imperfective form in (23) takes a stative interpretation. Additionally, the verb in sentence (22) is in the preterite, which precludes a modal use. Of the two sentences only (23) conveys modal epistemic meaning.

#### 2.4.4. Epistemifiers are 1SG

An epistemic modal expression is, by definition, concerned with the epistemic stance of the *speaker*, whom I have called here the epistemizer. Such epistemic verbal phrases, noun phrases and some adjectival phrases always have an explicit 1<sup>st</sup>-person notional subject, which is at the same time itself the epistemizer. If the notional subject is not in the 1SG, it definitionally cannot be an epistemizer and the expression cannot be an epistemifier. Thus, the objects of my study will be, for instance, X ብዬ አስባለሁ X *bəyye assəballähu* ‘I think: X’, እንደ-X ይሰማኛል *ändä-X yässämmaññall* ‘I feel that X’ and እንደ-X እርግጠኛ ነኝ *ändä-X ərgəṭäñña näññ* ‘I am certain (that) X’ but not X ብሎ ያስባል X *bəlo yässəball* ‘he thinks: X’, እንደ-X ይሰማዋል *ändä-X yässämmaɰwall* ‘he feels that X’ and እንደ-X እርግጠኛ ነው *ändä-X ərgəṭäñña näw* ‘he is certain (that) X’.

An epistemic verbal phrase (or an equivalent) may also occur with no visible epistemizer at all. If so, it is typically the case that a 1<sup>st</sup>-person epistemizer can be implicitly understood. Thus we have an opposition between two types of epistemizers, explicit and implicit, a topic which will be treated in detail in Section 5.2. These cases can be tricky because (paradoxically) an explicit 1<sup>st</sup>-person pronoun “I” can perfectly well be present in such sentences. But then it will be functioning as the subject of the epistemized, not as the epistemizer. The embedded notional subject and the epistemizer are referentially identical, namely 1SG; but only the former is explicitly present. Consider the following example, where “I” occurs twice, each time referring to the subject of the sentence, but never representing the epistemizer (which, however, is implicitly 1SG):

(24)	<b>ያኔ</b>	<b>ሳልሳሳት</b>	<b>አልቀረሁም</b> <sup>[FLG 7]</sup>
	<i>yanne</i>	<i>s-al-(ə)-ssasat</i>	<i>al-qärr-ähu-mm</i>
	at.that.time	when-NEG.1SG-make.a.mistake\IPFV	NEG-remain\PFV-1SG-NEG

‘At that time, I surely will have made a mistake’

In other cases, however, the unmentioned “epistemizer” is vague, general, and impersonal, and cannot be understood as being unambiguously 1SG. In such a case, how can we be said to be dealing with an epistemificator at all? One way out of this dilemma might be to consider that the vague reading in this case is not *not* 1SG; that is, 1SG is included among the set of possible epistemizers. This would be the case with mental verbal epistemificators in their passive form, e.g.:

- (25) አዲስ ፕሬስ ላለፉት ተከታታይ ሳምንታት በአገር ቤት  
*addis p̄ares l-alläf-u-t tākätattay sammənt-at b̄ä-agär bet*  
 new press for-REL.pass\PFV-3PL-DEF successive week-PL in-country  
 የጋዜጣ ገበያ ላይ ባለመታየቱ ከጋዜጦች  
*yä-gazeta gäbäya lay b-alä-mättayät-u kä-gazet-očč*  
 GEN-newspaper market on by-NEG-be.seen\VN-POSS.3SM from-newspaper-PL  
 ዓለም እንደተሰናበተ ይገመታል<sup>38</sup>  
*aläm ändä-täsänabbät-ä yə-ggämmät=all-ø*  
 world COMP-bid.farewell\PFV-3SM 3SM-be.assumed\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘It is assumed that because Addis Press has not been seen in the newspaper market of the country in the last few weeks it has bade farewell to the world of newspapers’

However, the speaker of an utterance containing an apparent epistemificator which is passive mental verb can very easily cancel the apparent epistemificator by saying that s/he does not belong to the group of people who are of a certain thought, belief, assumption and the like. This shows that the implicit “epistemizer” cannot be 1SG. Thus, the speaker of (25) could add:

- (26) ነገር ግን እኔ ይህንን አልገምትም  
*nägär gən əne yəbhenn-(ə)-n a-l-gämmät-(ə)-mm*  
 but 1SG this-ACC NEG-1SG-assume\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘But I don’t assume so’

It seems, then, that epistemic verbs in the passive form have as their “epistemizer” an unspecified group of people, who can be identified only from the context. The role of the speaker is just to report their epistemic stance; but whether s/he identifies with it cannot be determined from the semantics of the verb. The “epistemizer” is obscured precisely so

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.cyberethiopia.com/warka14/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=43298>. [Accessed: 08.12.2017]

that the speaker can distance her/himself from what is thought, believed, assumed etc. Consequently, I have chosen not to consider mental verbal epistemificators in their passive form as epistemificators.

In the same vein, the use of verbal phrases with an explicit epistemic subject in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person (such as those mentioned above) intrinsically involves quotation or description of someone else’s epistemic stance (Danielewiczowa 2002: 62-65).<sup>39</sup> Note that any sentence containing a 1SG epistemizer can be converted into a corresponding “impersonal” sentence lacking any explicit epistemizer, while preserving the same modal status. For instance, the following sentence:

- (27) “ምን የሚባል ዲስክ?” ብለው የሚጠይቁ  
*mən yämm-i-bbal disk bəl-äw yämm-i-täyyaq-u*  
 what REL-3SM-be.called\IPFV disk say\GER-3PL REL-3PL-ask\IPFV-3PL  
 ብዙ ሰዎች እንደሚኖሩ እርግጠኛ ነኝ<sup>[AA 854]</sup>  
*bəzu säw-očč ändä-mm-i-nor-u ərgət-äñña n-äññ*  
 many man-PL COMP-REL-3PL-exist\IPFV-3PL sure COP-1SG  
 ‘I am sure that there will be many people who will ask, “What kind of (computer) disk?’”

can be converted into one with an auxiliary or quasi-auxiliary epistemificator, such as ሳይነገር አይቀርም *saynägrs ayqärəmm*s ‘he will surely/probably tells’ in (28):

- (28) “ምን የሚባል ዲስክ?” ብለው የሚጠይቁ  
*mən yämm-i-bbal disk bəl-äw yämm-i-täyyaq-u*  
 what REL-3SM-be.called\IPFV disk say\GER-3PL REL-3PL-ask\IPFV-3PL  
 ብዙ ሰዎች ሳይኖሩ አይቀሩም  
*bəzu säw-očč s-a-γ-nor-u a-γ-qär-u-mm*  
 many man-PL when-NEG-3PL-exist\IPFV-3PL NEG-3PL-remain\IPFV-3PL-NEG  
 ‘There surely will be many people who will ask, “What kind of (computer) disk?’”

In contrast, a sentence with 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person epistemic subject cannot be so converted; if we were to do so, the sentence would express the current epistemizer’s own assessment rather than that of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person epistemic subject. In sentence (29) the speaker

<sup>39</sup> The distinctiveness of 1<sup>st</sup>-person mental verbs was noticed by Benveniste (1971: 228); see Section 3.2.10. A number of “epistemic verbal phrases” in the 1<sup>st</sup> person form, as distinct from forms in other grammatical persons, are explicated by Wierzbicka (2006: 204-246).

reports someone else’s thought; he does not impose his own epistemic stance but remains neutral (Danielewiczowa 2004: 192-93):

- (29) **ሁሉንም በጉልበቱና በገንዘቡ ብቻ ማድረግ**  
*hullu-n-(ə)-mm bä-gulbät-u-(ə)-nna bä-gänzäb-u bəčča madräg*  
 all-ACC-FOC by-power-POSS.3SM-and by-money-POSS.3SM only do\VN  
**እንደሚችል ያስባል**<sub>[AA 862]</sub>  
*andä-mm-i-čäl y-assəb=all-ø*  
 COMP-REL-3SM-can\IPFV 3SM-think\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘He **thinks that** he can do anything only thanks to his power and thanks to his money’

In sentence (30) the same proposition as in (29) is modalized by means of the epistemificator (*yənägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells’. However now, with the epistemificator *yəhonall*, the one who is making the epistemic assessment is implicitly “I”, not “he”.

- (30) **ሁሉንም በጉልበቱና በገንዘቡ ብቻ ሊያደርግ ይችል ይሆናል**  
*hullu-n-(ə)-mm bä-gulbät-u-(ə)-nna bä-gänzäb-u bəčča*  
 all-ACC-FOC by-power-POSS.3SM-and by-money-POSS.3SM only  
**ሊያደርግ ይችል ይሆናል**  
*l-i-(y)-adärg yə-čäl yəhonall*  
 COMP-3SM-do\IPFV 3SM-be.able\IPFV EPST  
 ‘He **may** be able to do anything only thanks to his power and thanks to his money’

I treat this substitution test, which converts a sentence into a near-equivalent containing an auxiliary or quasi-auxiliary epistemificator, as decisive because, as noted above, such grammatical epistemificators (which necessarily contain an implicit epistemizer) constitute the prototype of modal epistemic expressions. That is, they are specialized expressions whose primary meaning is to convey epistemic modality.

Additionally, we should note that verbal epistemificators of the type X **ብዬ አስባለሁ** X *bəyye assəballähu* ‘I think: X’ in the 1SG cannot be epistemically modalized by other epistemificators. For instance, if we change sentence (31) so that the epistemificator *bəyye assəballähu* is further epistemically modalized by the epistemificator (*yənägr*)<sub>s</sub> **ይሆናል** (*yənägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells’ as in (32), the resulting sentence is semantically

unacceptable. One cannot call into question one own’s epistemic state,<sup>40</sup> precisely because one has privileged access to it.

- (31) እናትየዋ የሚሉት ነገር ይኖራል  
*annatəyyä-wa yämm-i-l-u-t nägär yə-nor=all-ø*  
 mother-DEF.F REL-3SPOL-say\IPFV-3SPOL-DEF thing 3SM-exist\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ብዬ አስባለሁ<sup>[TS 3]</sup>  
*bəyy-e assəb=all-ähu*  
 say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I think: there will be something that the mother will say’

- (32) \*እናትየዋ የሚሉት ነገር ይኖራል  
*annatəyyä-wa yämm-i-l-u-t nägär yə-nor=all-ø*  
 mother-DEF.F REL-3SPOL-say\IPFV-3SPOL-DEF thing 3SM-exist\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ብዬ አስብ ይሆናል  
*bəyy-e assəb yəhonall*  
 say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV EPST  
 \*I may think: there will be something that the mother will say’

It is different with these same phrases in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons. They can readily be epistemically modalized by another epistemificator because they are used as a description of someone else’s epistemic state. Consider sentences (33) and (34), both of which are normal and grammatical:

- (33) የእምነት ልዩነታቸው የፍቅራቸውን መጠን  
*yä-əmnät ləyyunnät-aččäw yä-fəqər-aččäw-(ə)-n mäṭän*  
 GEN-faith difference-POSS.3PL GEN-love-POSS.3PL-ACC size  
 ይቀንሰዋል ብሎ ያስባል<sup>41</sup>  
*yə-qännəs-äw=all-ø bəl-o y-assəb=all-ø*  
 3SG-reduce\IPFV-OBJ.3SM=NPST-3SM say\GER-3SM 3SM-think\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘He thinks: their difference in faith will reduce the greatness of their love’

- (34) የእምነት ልዩነታቸው የፍቅራቸውን መጠን  
*yä-əmnät ləyyunnät-aččäw yä-fəqər-aččäw-(ə)-n mäṭän*  
 GEN-faith difference-POSS.3PL GEN-love-POSS.3PL-ACC size  
 ይቀንሰዋል ብሎ ያስብ ይሆናል  
*yə-qännəs-äw=all-ø bəl-o y-assəb yəhonall*  
 3SG-reduce\IPFV-OBJ.3SM=NPST-3SM say\GER-3SM 3SM-think\IPFV EPST

<sup>40</sup> On this see also Danielewiczowa (1998: 122-123).

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/13418>. [Accessed 26.06.2019]



infer nothing about the views of those associates of “I” who would constitute “we”. I consider this test as decisive for not including sentences in the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural in my analysis.

To conclude: the use of epistemic verbal and adjectival phrases in other than the 1SG does not involve modality and as such will not be treated in the present thesis.

#### 2.4.5. Differentiation of polysemous subsenses

Another methodological requirement is to differentiate between possible subsenses of a single expression. Of the various ways to do this, one of the most important is prosody, i.e. different patterns of sentence intonation; a separate Section (2.4.6) will be devoted to this below. The issue of multiple sub-senses is especially relevant to the highly polysemous ሊነግርያ ይችላል<sub>S</sub> *linägr<sub>S</sub> yäčälall<sub>S</sub>* ‘he cans, could<sub>S</sub>, may<sub>S</sub> tells’.<sup>44</sup> Consider the following example:

- (37) በላቸው እኩ ይህን ሊያደርግ ይችላል<sub>[FLG 18]</sub>  
*Bälaččäw äkko yäb-(ə)-n l-i-(y-)adärg yä-čäl=all-ø*  
 Bälaččäw after.all this-ACC COMP-3SM-do\IPFV 3SM-can\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 a) ‘After all Bälaččäw **can do** this’; b) ‘After all Bälaččäw **could do** this’

In sentence (37) two readings are evident: a) Bälaččäw has the physical/mental etc. capacity to do this as a general matter (neutral possibility); or b) The speaker is making a judgement about his own non-knowledge as to whether Bälaččäw will do this or not in a given context (epistemic possibility).

These two different readings are reflected in the way they are negated. If we want to negate Bälaččäw’s capacity to do the work then the verb *yäčälall* is negated (*ayčälamm*), with the stress localized on this negated verb:

- (38) በላቸው እኩ ይህን ሊያደርግ 'አይችልም'  
*Bälaččäw äkko yäb-(ə)-n l-i-(y-)adärg 'a-y-čäl-(ə)-mm*  
 Bälaččäw after.all this-ACC COMP-3SM-do\IPFV NEG-3SM-can\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘After all, Bälaččäw **'cannot do** this (It **'cannot** be that he will do this)’<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Another highly polysemous expression is ማወቅ አለበት<sub>S</sub> *mawäq alläbb(ät)<sub>S</sub>* ‘he must know<sub>S</sub>’.

<sup>45</sup> The notation 'WORD indicates that the word is stressed.

If, on the other hand, the epistemic possibility that Bäláččäw will do the work is negated, then the main verb (*liyadärg*) is negated (and stressed).<sup>46</sup>

- (39) በላቸው እኮ ይህን 'ላያደርግ ይችላል  
*Bälaččäw əkko yəh-(ə)-n 'la-y-adärg yə-čəl=all-ø*  
 Bäláččäw after.all this-ACC COMP-NEG-3SM-do\IPFV 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 'After all, Bäláččäw **might** 'not do this (It could be that he will not do this)'

Thus the way the two expressions in question are negated is related with the main sentence stress. In each case it is the new (rhematic) part that is subjected to negation. More on this in 2.4.6 below).

Let us notice that the neutral possibility<sup>47</sup> reading is compatible with the claim of knowledge, which is not the case with the epistemic meaning:

- (40) ለኔና ለመሰለግ ለምን ሚስት እንዳላገባን  
*lä-nne-(ə)-nna lä-mässäl-očč-e lämän mist ənd-al-agäbba-n*  
 for-me-and for-peer-PL-POSS.1SG why wife COMP-NEG-marry\PFV-1PL  
 ከሥር መሠረቱ ለማብራራት አንድ<sup>48</sup> 200 ገጽ የሚፈጅ  
*kä-sər mäsarät-u lä-mabrarat and 200 gäṣ yämm-i-fäṣ*  
 from-root basis-DEF for-explain\VN one 200 page REL-3SM-take\IPFV  
 መጽሐፍ ሊወጣው 'እንደሚችል  
*mäṣəhaf li-wäta-w 'əndä-mm-i-čəl*  
 book COMP-3SM-come.out\IPFV-OBJ.3SM COMP-REL-3SM-can\IPFV  
 አውቃለሁ<sub>[AB 44: 1-2]</sub>  
*awq=all-ähu*  
 1SG.know\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 'I know that a roughly 200-page book could (can) come out [be published] to explain, from the bottom up, why I and those like me have not got married'

There is also one more reading of *linägrs yəčəlall*s, which, however, does not seem to lead to ambiguity—the deontic reading:

- (41) ኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ የ18 ዓመት ወጣቶች መኪና  
*Ityo p ya wəṣt yä-18 amät wätṭat-očč mäkina*  
 Ethiopia in GEN-18 year youngster-PL car

<sup>46</sup> On negation of epistemificators see Section 6.2.

<sup>47</sup> On neutral possibility see Section 3.2.6.

<sup>48</sup> Here *and* means 'approximately'.

<b>ሊነዳ-</b>	<b>ይችላሉ-</b>
<i>li-näd-u</i>	<i>ya-čäl=all-u</i>
COMP-3PL-drive\IPFV-3PL	3PL-can\IPFV=NPST-3PL
‘In Ethiopia 18-year-old youngsters <b>can drive</b> a car’	

#### 2.4.6. Epistemifiers and prosody

As already noted, the proper identification of epistemifiers may involve prosody: suprasegmental features such as the main sentence stress, differences of intonation and the existence of pauses. With regard to the main sentence stress, prosody can serve to separate epistemifiers from formally similar non-epistemifier expressions. This is true notably with two epistemifiers **ሊነግር**<sub>s</sub> **ይችላል**<sub>s</sub> *linägr<sub>s</sub> yačälall<sub>s</sub>* and **ማወቅ አለበት**<sub>s</sub> *mawäq alläbb(ät)<sub>s</sub>*, which are both polysemous, having a reading as an epistemifier and another, non-epistemic meaning. As shown in sentences (38) and (39), the position of the sentence stress—whether it falls on *yačälall* or on the main verb—shows whether we are dealing with a neutral possibility (non-epistemic) meaning or with an epistemic meaning, respectively. Similarly, the sentence stress is diagnostic of deontic or epistemic meaning in the expression **ማወቅ አለበት**<sub>s</sub> *mawäq alläbb(ät)<sub>s</sub>* ‘he must<sub>s</sub> know, he should<sub>s</sub> know’. Consider the following examples:

(42)	<b>ቤተሰብ አልሰማ</b>	<b>ካላት</b>	<b>የዘመድ</b>	<b>ወዳጅ</b>
	<i>betäsäb al-säma</i>	<i>k-al-at</i>	<i>yä-zämäd</i>	<i>wädağ</i>
	family	NEG.1SG-listen\IPFV	if-say\PFV.3SM-OBJ.3SF	GEN-relative friend
	<b>ምክር መጠየቅ</b>	<b>'አለባት</b> <sub>[TS 3]</sub>		
	<i>məkər mäṭäyyäq</i>	<i>'all-ä-bb-at</i>		
	advice	ask\VN	exist\PFV-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SF	

‘If the family does not agree with her (lit. says to her ‘I won’t listen’) she **must** ask advice from a friend of the family’

(43)	<b>በ1998 የሰድስት ኪሎ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ተማሪ ከነበርሽ ዶክተር</b>
	<i>bä-1998 yä-səddäst kilo yunivärsiti tämari kä-näbbär-š doktär</i>
	in-1998 GEN-PN PN university student if-COP\PST-2SF doctor
	<b>ጌታቸውን 'ማስታወስ አለብሽ</b>
	<i>Gätaččäw-(ə)-n 'mastawäs all-ä-bb-(ə)-š</i>
	PN-ACC remember\VN exist\PFV-3SM-APPL-OBJ.2SF

‘If you were a student at *Səddäst Kilo* University (Campus) you **must remember** Doctor *Gätaččäw*’

In sentence (42), in which *alläbbat* ‘she must’ conveys a deontic meaning, the main stress falls on this same word. In sentence (43), where *alläbbəs* ‘you must’ is epistemic, the semantically main verb (the verbal noun ‘remembering’) receives the main sentence stress. With these two epistemificators, in cases of uncertainty whether a given sentence conveys an epistemic or non-epistemic meaning, the main sentence stress test can be a useful diagnostic tool: main verb stress implies epistemic meaning, whereas stress on the quasi-auxiliary implies non-epistemic meaning.

Furthermore, within the group of epistemificators, there are a number of distinct main sentence stress patterns which reflect the thematic-rhematic structure of the epistemificator. We observe, for instance, that for those epistemificators which take a clausal complement the following correlations exist:

- a. If the clausal complement is introduced by the complementizer *ändä*- ‘that’, the main sentence stress falls on the embedded verb (the epistemized head), for instance:

(44)	<b>አብሮ</b>	<b>የኖረ</b>	<b>ሕዝብ</b>	<b>እየተነሱት</b>		
	<i>abro</i>	<i>yä-nor-ä</i>	<i>həzb</i>	<i>əyyä-tänäss-u-t</i>		
	together	REL-live\PFV-3SM	people	PROG-be.raised\PFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM		
	<b>ባሉት</b>		<b>ጥያቄዎች</b>	<b>ብቻ</b>	<b>ይህን</b>	<b>ያህል</b>
	<i>b-all-u-t</i>		<i>təyyaqe-(w)-očč</i>	<i>bəčča</i>	<i>yəh-(ə)-n</i>	<i>yahəl</i>
	in-REL.exist\PFV-3PL-DEF		question-PL	only	this-ACC	much
	<b>እንደግ'ይጋጭ</b>		<b>እርግጥ ነው</b> <sup>49</sup>			
	<i>ändä-mm-a-'y-gga čč</i>		<i>ərgət n-äw</i>			
	COMP-REL-NEG-3SM-clash\IPFV		certain COP-3SM			

‘It is certain that a people who have lived together CANNOT BE CLASHING this much with one another simply because of the questions (now) being raised’

- b. If the complement takes the form of the verbal noun the main sentence stress falls on the kernel of the epistemificator, for instance:

(45)	<b>የከፍተኛ</b>	<b>ትምህርት</b>	<b>የመውጫ</b>	<b>ምዘና</b>	<b>በሚቀጥለው</b>
	<i>yä-käffätännä</i>	<i>təmhərt</i>	<i>yä-mäw ča</i>	<i>məzzäna</i>	<i>bä-mm-i-qättäl-äw</i>
	GEN-high	education	GEN-exit	exam	in-REL-3SM-follow\IPFV-DEF

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/5614>. [Accessed: 07.04.2018]

<b>ዓመት</b>	<b>መጀመሩ</b>	<b>'እርግጥ</b>	<b>ነው</b> <sup>50</sup>
<i>amät</i>	<i>mäǧämmär-u</i>	<i>'ərgəṭ</i>	<i>n-äw</i>
year	begin\VN-POSS.3SM	certain	COP-3SM

‘It is CERTAIN that the exit exam [at institutions] of higher education will begin next year’

This is actually a manifestation of a more general phenomenon: even in embedding contexts that have nothing to do with modality, whenever the complement is a verbal noun, the stress will fall on the upstairs verb. The single exception (actually quite a salient one) is when the verbal noun is the complement of a copula, which is semantically the most empty verb; then the stress will fall on the verbal noun.

As we can see the above epistemificators differ by the type of complement that they take. But from the formal, non-prosodic structure of the complement per se we cannot tell what the thematic-rhematic structure of the sentence is. This information can be obtained by checking the sentence’s stress pattern. In sentences (44) and (45), the semantics of the two noun epistemificators of certainty is the same but the sentences differ from the point of view of their information structure. The stress pattern in (44) implies that the rheme is the main verb of the embedded sentence. In contrast, in (45) the rheme is the concept “certain”. I will deal with this issue in greater detail in Section 5.11.

Parentheticals have a distinctive prosodic feature: they are followed (but not preceded) by a pause (see Section 4.4). I don’t discuss here the prosodic features of adverbs and particles because they do not perform any differentiating function.

It remains to add that by main sentence stress (here and further on) I mean the unmarked stress under ordinary circumstances, rather than a contrastive stress which can be shifted to any word in a sentence.

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<sup>50</sup> <http://blog.topaddis.news/social/የከፍተኛ-ትምህርት-የመውጫ-ምዘና-ባሚቀጥ/>. [Accessed: 06.04.2018]



### 3. CONCEPTS AND APPROACHES TO EPISTEMIC MODALITY: STATE OF THE ART

This chapter is entirely devoted to the survey of literature on modality. It comprises three main sections which deal with different areas of modal pursue. The first section (3.1) outlines how modality is approached in logic. What the reader will find in this section is only an approximation as modal logic is neither the focus of my work, nor the field I feel comfortable with. In the second, linguistic section (3.2) I discuss the treatment of modality in general and epistemic modality in particular. The final, third section (3.3) gives account on what has been done on epistemic modality in Amharic.

#### 3.1. Modality in logic

##### 3.1.1. Introduction

Linguistic investigation into modality has been largely inspired by modern logic. One might argue that the category of modality had already been discerned by the ancient grammarians in the form of mood.<sup>1</sup> However, the fact remains that the notion of modality as well as different types of modality stem from modal logic, a branch of logic which has been thriving since the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since then, linguists too have been trying to adapt some of the achievements of modal logic as well as to develop their own conceptual apparatus to analyze this category in languages of the world. Doubtless the objectives and methods of analysis in linguistics are distinct from those applied in logic. As Portner puts it, whereas the aim of the logician is to apprehend essential features of reasoning involving such philosophically important concepts as necessity, possibility, knowledge, belief, obligation and implication, the linguist's task is to propose a semantic theory by means of which s/he may describe the domain of modality in a particular natural language as well as across languages (2009: 10, 29).

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<sup>1</sup> According to Diogenes Laertius it was Protagoras (490-420 BC) who first identified four modes of speech (λόγος): entreaty, interrogation, declaration and command. It is not clear whether the Greek philosopher considered them as types of moods or of sentences (Heinz 1983: 37).

The question arises, in what ways can linguists benefit from the achievements of modal logic, and to what extent? Basically, within the extensive literature on linguistic semantics of modality three kinds of approaches may be distinguished. While the first one, developed within formal semantics, builds its theories on possible worlds semantics – the interpretive device for modal systems (see Section 3.1.3.3) – the second one uses concepts of modal logic selectively, treating it as a source of inspiration. The third approach, finally, disregards the modal logic conceptual apparatus altogether as incompatible with the objectives of linguistic analysis.

The present section (3.1) consists of three parts. In the first part (3.1.2) an attempt will be made to give a brief outline of how the idea of modality emerged in the thought of logicians and philosophers. In the second part (3.1.3) some notions and problems which pertain to the study of modality within modal logic will be discussed. The last part (3.1.4) is devoted to the major discrepancies between the treatment of modality in modal logic and linguistics.

### 3.1.2. Historical background

Modal systems developed as extensions of standard propositional and predicate logic<sup>2</sup> in order to account for the richness of natural languages. Before modern logical investigations into modality were instigated in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some modal concepts had already been considered within traditional logic. In what follows, only some of the major accomplishments in the ancient, medieval and modern history of modal logic will be outlined.

The initiator of the study of modalities was Aristotle, who treated modal statements and formulated modal syllogisms in his two works *De Interpretatione* and *Prior Analytics* (Bocheński 1938: 22). There he discussed four modal notions or operators: ‘necessary’, ‘possible’, ‘impossible’ and ‘contingent’ as well as the logical relations between them<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Some logicians deny modal systems the appellation “logic”, e.g. W. O. Quine and R. Suszko. The latter claims that modal systems should be conceived of as certain *theories* on modalities rather than as a distinctive logic of necessity and possibility. He calls such systems “intensional demons” (Pogonowski 2009: 10).

<sup>3</sup> About the differences in understanding the modal notions in Aristotle’s works as opposed to modern modal logic see Hintikka (1973).

(Bocheński 1963: 55-56). However, perhaps apart from ‘impossible’, none of these notions is used unambiguously, with ‘contingent’ being the most complex (Łukasiewicz 1988: 181, 207-211).<sup>4</sup> What is more, Aristotle accurately identified modal words as those which range over the whole sentence and do not pertain only to a part of it. He distinguished and used in some theorems three types of modal statements: ‘It is necessary that  $p$ ’, ‘It is possible that  $p$ ’, and ‘It is contingent that  $p$ ’ (Kneale and Kneale 1962: 83). Finally, despite not formulating them explicitly, Aristotle knew two important modal theorems, elucidated later by the scholastics (Łukasiewicz 1988: 183), i.e. ( $\Box$  stands for ‘necessarily’ and  $\Diamond$  stands for ‘possibly’):

- i.  $\Box p \rightarrow p$ , “if  $p$  is necessarily true, then  $p$  is true”
- ii.  $p \rightarrow \Diamond p$ , “if  $p$  is true, then  $p$  is possibly true”

The medieval thinkers, such as Albertus Magnus, William of Sherwood, Thomas Aquinas, (Pseudo-) Duns Scotus and William of Ockham, retained the Aristotelian four *modi* (modes),<sup>5</sup> at the same time specifying their meanings (e.g. the difference between ‘possible’ and ‘contingent’) and their usage in syllogisms. Many medieval discussions on modality concerned the distinction between the two Aristotelian modal structures, i.e. the one which refers to the whole sentence, *de dicto*, and which refers to the thing itself, *de re* (Kneale and Kneale 1962: 213, 237). Additionally, Pseudo-Scotus included in his list of epistemic verbs, which Bocheński calls “subjective operators” (1938: 125), such items as *dubium*, *scitum*, *opinatum*, *apparens notum*, *volitum* and *dilectum*. In contrast to the previously discussed operators, which pertain to the state of affairs, they concern the state of mind of the speaker or his/her will (Bocheński 1938: 101). Nowadays,

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<sup>4</sup> Even so, he comprehended them objectively, i.e. they pertain to the property of entities and not to the attitude or to the mental state of the speaker. What he attempted to delve into is “[...] the objective relationship between the entity and its property (e.g., ‘a man is an organism by necessity’) and the objective probability of a fact [...]” (Bocheński 1938: 33). [Translated from Polish by MK]

<sup>5</sup> That means: ‘possible’, ‘impossible’, ‘contingent’ and ‘necessary’. The modalities treated by Aristotle and the medieval schoolmen are referred today as *aletheitic* modalities (pertaining to the truth).

these verbs are referred to as propositional attitude verbs and explored within intensional contexts.

After the vibrant period of medieval inquiry, modal logic was subject to considerable stagnation till the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when it emerged in connection with the discussion of material implication. Discontented with the counterintuitive relation between the antecedent and the consequent in material implication, Clarence Irving Lewis proposed (in collaboration with C. H. Langford) in *Symbolic Logic*<sup>6</sup> the notion of strict implication.<sup>7</sup> In doing so, he took as logical constants the following operators: negation ( $\neg$ ), conjunction ( $\wedge$ ), the sign “is/means by definition” ( $=_{df}$ ) and the modal operator of possibility ( $\diamond$ ) (but not “necessary”). With the help of these he defined strict implication as follows (Kotarbiński 1985: 126, Gamut 1991: 20):

$$p > q (=_{df}) \neg \diamond (p \wedge \neg q)$$

“a strict implication” means by definition “it is not possible that both  $p$  and  $\neg q$ ”.

In this manner, with the help of the modal operators, modality reentered logic. Nowadays, Lewis’ logic is considered not so much as a theory of inference, which was his intention, but as a theory of modal sentences, which is what it turned out to be.

Subsequently, a set of concepts appeared related to the logical modalities of necessity and possibility. The trailblazer in this field was G. H. von Wright who conceived modal logic as “the logic of the modes of being” (Bull and Segerberg 2001: 5). In *An Essay in Modal Logic* (1951) he put forward four types of modes: alethic (modes of truth), epistemic (modes of knowing), deontic (modes of obligation) and existential (modes of existence) (Palmer 1986: 11). Von Wright’s insights into the epistemic modes were later extended by Jaakko Hintikka in his seminal work *Knowledge and Belief: An Introduction to the Logic of the Two Notions* (1962) (Rendsvik and Symons 2019). At around the same

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<sup>6</sup> C. I. Lewis and C.H. Langford (1932).

<sup>7</sup> Actually, C.I. Lewis had introduced strict implication in his previous work *Survey of Symbolic Logic* (1918, Berkeley). There, it was the modal operator ‘it is impossible that’ by means of which he defined the dyadic operator. In the later *Symbolic Logic* he developed the idea and replaced this definitional operator by ‘it is possible that’ (Kneale and Kneale 1962: 549-550).

time Arthur Prior invented and developed tense logic (temporal logic), as expounded in *Time and Modality* (published in 1957). There, he introduced two new modal operators, ‘It will be the case that’ and ‘It has been the case that’ (Copeland 2017). While Prior’s chief intention was to address philosophical and semiotic issues, in particular the question of determinism, nowadays temporal logic also has a range of practical applications (Trzęsicki 2008: 18). Arthur Prior, and before him R. Carnap who came up with the idea of ‘state-description’, were the first to propose a semantics for modal logic. However, a complete and satisfactory semantics was proposed by S. Kripke (1958-1965), hence called “Kripke semantics”. There were a number of logicians who contributed to this breakthrough in the history of modal logic. What Kripke did was to combine the concept of possible worlds with the binary relation interpreted as a relation of accessibility between worlds. Subsequently, he provided completeness proofs for a range of systems. Independently from him J. Hintikka (1957) obtained similar results (Copeland 2019).

Before Prior there was another logician deeply interested in the question of determinism, Jan Łukasiewicz. In 1920 Łukasiewicz formulated three-valued logic and then many-valued logic. His question was what logical value should be ascribed to two prognostic (future) events. Because they have not been determined yet, it is not possible to say in advance which of them will happen or which of them will not happen. Łukasiewicz linked the answer with the modal notion of possibility which is a third value in his system, next to ‘the true’ and ‘the false’ (Kotarbiński 1985: 118-122).

### 3.1.3. Notions involved in modal logic

#### 3.1.3.1. Necessity and possibility

The modalities treated by Aristotle and the medieval schoolmen are referred to today as ‘aletheutic’ or ‘alethic’ modalities (from Greek *alētheia* ‘true’) since they deal with the logic of necessary and possible truth of propositions (Lyons 1995: 328). Sometimes the appellation ‘logical modalities’ is used. Necessity and possibility are monadic (one-argument) operators which yield a composite proposition when applied to a simpler proposition (Hughes and Cresswell 1973: 23). For example, given a proposition  $p$ , we can formulate a new proposition using the necessity and possibility operators:

- i. “It is necessarily true (false) that  $p$ ” or, simply, “It is necessary that  $p$ ”, symbolically:  
 $\Box p$ ,
- ii. “It is possibly true (false) that  $p$ ”, alternatively, “It is possible that  $p$ ”, symbolically:  
 $\Diamond p$ .

With the help of the modal operators the following sentences of ordinary language are rendered as follows: *He is possibly right* corresponds to *It is possibly true that he is right*. By the same token, *Nature must obey necessity* corresponds to *It is necessarily true that nature obeys necessity* (Kaufmann *et al.* 2006: 71).

One of the properties of modal operators is that they are duals, i.e., one may define the other by means of the Law of Double Negation (Lyons 1995: 328, Kaufmann *et al.* 2006: 71-72) :

- i.  $\Box p \equiv \neg \Diamond \neg p$ , “it is necessary that  $p$ ” is logically equivalent to “it is not possible that not  $p$ ”
- ii.  $\Diamond p \equiv \neg \Box \neg p$ , “it is possible that  $p$ ” is logically equivalent to “it is not necessary that not  $p$ ”.

A necessarily true proposition is true in whatever world and at whatever time considered, since its truth is assured by its meaning. A possibly true proposition is one that is true in the world to which it refers but may not be true in another (Kiefer 1987: 68, Lyons 1995: 329). Given that the two operators are duals, it is reasonable to treat one of them as the primitive one. In logic, this position is frequently accorded to the necessity operator (Lyons 1995: 329) whereas in linguistics it is possibility which is thought to be more basic. Two other modal operators are ‘impossibly’ and ‘contingently’. Whereas the former is defined simply as  $\sim \Diamond p$ , the latter qualifies propositions which are neither necessary nor impossible (Hughes and Cresswell 1996: 15).

In linguistics, alethic modalities have not attracted much attention. The reason for this would seem to be what Palmer argues in his book, i.e. that “there is no formal grammatical distinction in English, and, perhaps in no other language either, between alethic and epistemic modality” (1986: 11). Normally, people do not distinguish what is

necessarily true in all possible worlds from what is necessarily true in a certain possible world, i.e. the everyday world which is present at their hand (Holvoet 1989: 19).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, in logic, to give an account of the relation of implication between two propositions, the statement is aletheutically modalized, for instance:

*He is a bachelor, so he must be unmarried* (Palmer 1986: 11).

Its counterpart in natural language, however, would be simply:

*He is a bachelor, so he is unmarried* (*ibid.*).

### 3.1.3.2. Types of modal operators

The standard aletheutic (logical) modalities have laid the foundation for various other kinds of modalities that we shall touch upon presently. These modalities, examples being deontic (relating to obligation), epistemic (relating to knowledge), doxastic (relating to belief), boulomaic (relating to desire) and tense (relating to time), are defined by modal operators which possess properties related to the aletheutic as well their own peculiar features and symbols (Kaufmann *et al.* 2006: 72). For instance, the operators O and P of deontic logic represent ‘it is obligatory that *p*’ and ‘it is permitted that *p*’, respectively. Some philosophers suggest that modal expressions can be generalized as fitting into the pattern ‘it is  $\Phi$  that *p*’ (Świrydowicz 2004: 39).

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<sup>8</sup> Some linguists, however, do use the term ‘aletheutic modality’ but give it a slightly different content than it has in logic. Thus, D. Rytel (1982) in her monograph on modality in Polish and Czech, and B. Ligara (1997) in her comparative work on Polish and French modal verbs, essentially conceive of aletheutic modality in the following way: “it is necessary that *p*” is interpreted to mean that there are some circumstances or conditions which cause that a certain state of affairs *p* takes place. Likewise, “it is possible that *p*” means that there are no such factors or circumstances which do not allow a state of affairs *p* to take place. The nature of the relationship between a given circumstance and the state of affairs is various. The point is that the ascription of a truth-value to a proposition must be independent of the speaker. Note that the two linguists apply the term ‘aletheutic modality’ to what other linguists prefer to label ‘dynamic’, ‘circumstantial’ or ‘root’ modality and what some researchers do not regard as modality at all (e.g. Halliday 1970).

Let us illustrate in more detail epistemic logic. The commonly accepted operator for epistemic logic is K(knowledge). Interpreted as epistemic necessity,  $Kp$  is read ‘it is known that  $p$ ’. Alternatively, when the agent is known the operator takes an index “ $x$ ”,  $K_x p$ , “ $x$  knows that  $p$ ”. Again, interpreted as epistemic possibility  $Kp$  is read ‘it is not true that it is known that not- $p$ ’ or, for  $K_x p$ , “it is not true that  $x$  knows that not- $p$ ”. Some of the axioms of the epistemic system are as follows (Świrydowicz 2004: 199):

- i)  $K_x (p \rightarrow p') \rightarrow (K_x p \rightarrow K_x p')$
- ii)  $K_x p \rightarrow p$
- iii)  $K_x p \rightarrow K_x K_x p$

The first formula states that if  $x$  knows that  $p$  entails  $p'$ , then this in turn entails that  $x$  knows that knowing  $p$  entails knowing  $p'$ . The second formula expresses the veridicality property: if  $x$  knows  $p$  then  $p$  is true. The third formula is called the axiom of introspection or self-consciousness, i.e. if an agent knows something, that means that he knows that he knows about it.

### 3.1.3.3. Possible world semantics

As was mentioned in the subsection on the history of modality, semantic interpretation for modal logics is provided by means of the concept of possible worlds which could be also conceived of as alternative sets of circumstances or conceivable states of affairs that are different from the actual world.<sup>9</sup> Possible worlds are abstract entities. The meaning of a proposition is presented as a set of possible worlds in which this proposition is true. In other words, what the proposition does is to divide all possible worlds into two groups: “those in which the proposition is true” and “those in which it is false”. Hence, the proposition operates as a function which associates each possible world with one of the truth-values (Allwood *et al.*, 1997: 22-23). How then can we distinguish between different readings of necessity and possibility and, in general, obtain various modalities, for instance, epistemic and deontic? The distinctions are introduced by means of the concept

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<sup>9</sup> The idea of possible worlds comes from *Essays in Theodicy on the Goodness of God the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*, the work of the seventeenth-century philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who claimed that God chose the actual world from an infinity of possible worlds (Jolley 2005: 155-156).

of accessibility relation. The idea behind this is that for determining the truth-value of a certain proposition, out of a set of possible worlds only some of those worlds are relevant. For example, the epistemic accessibility relation takes only those worlds in which something is known. Other types of accessibility relations include, for example, deontic, boulomaic, ability and historical. This is, one might say, the qualitative aspect of the accessibility relation. Its quantitative aspect concerns “how many worlds” (Portner 2005: 157) are relevant, in order to make distinctions between such modals as ‘may’ and ‘must’. The accessibility relation exhibits various formal properties such as reflexivity, symmetry, transitivity, seriality which correspond to the characteristic features of the operators. The fundamental task of logicians is to ponder over consequences which all these properties have for different modal systems. Additionally, attempts are made to provide further refinements in modal meanings, i.e. to discern subtypes within a certain kind of accessibility relation—for example, to account for the difference between the meaning of ‘must’ and ‘should’ (Portner 2005: 154-160, Portner 2009: 9-24, 33-38, 40-46). Finally, to give information about the context of the utterance (the speaker and the time), the accessibility relation is conceived of as one which holds between “a world, individual and time, on the one hand, and worlds, on the other” (Portner 2009: 42).

#### **3.1.4. Where their ways diverge: modality in logic and linguistics**

In this subsection some issues will be addressed pertaining to the different approach to modality taken in logic vs. linguistics. The main thrust is to make more conspicuous the idiosyncrasies of both disciplines in their treatment of modality.

The fundamental difference between modality in modal logic and the kind of modality proposed by linguists lies in how they construe the notion and what they regard as the object of their analysis. Whereas the modal logician conceives of modality as a kind of qualification over a proposition which results in a more complex proposition (Rescher 1968: 24), the linguist’s understanding of modality characterizes it as the speaker’s attitude towards the contents of the proposition. Thus, it is also a kind of “qualification over a proposition”, with the difference that linguists explicitly emphasize the role of the speaker and her/his mental attitude. In modal logic, only rarely is the interpretation of an operator

relativized to an individual. Exceptional in this regard are the epistemic and doxastic logics construed by Hintikka (1962) where the knower/believer is indicated by an index 'a',  $Kap$  (a knows that  $p$ ) and  $Bap$  (a believes that  $p$ ).

Another difference between the logical and linguistic approaches to modality concerns the vital question of what kind of meaning is regarded as modal and as such researchable with the help of the conceptual apparatus of modal logic and, in linguistics, within the concept of modality. As implied in the previous subsections, modal logic accounts only for those modal expressions which are somehow traceable to the notions of necessity and possibility. Hence, for example, propositional attitudes are not necessarily investigated within modality since their meanings cannot be reduced to them (Kiefer 1987: 72). A. Kratzer, a formal semanticist who has worked extensively on the semantics of modal expressions, examines modal expressions precisely along the axis of possibility vs. necessity. Thus, such English modal auxiliaries as 'must', 'should', 'would' relate to necessity. 'May', 'might', 'can', 'could', on the other hand, relate to possibility (Portner 2005: 32). Whereas these expressions are analyzable in this way, what to do with such expressions as 'it is probable', 'probably', 'it is likely', 'it is certain'? In modal logic at least the first three expressions could be embraced by the logic of probability and likelihood. There have been attempts to construe epistemic modality grounded on the theory of probability. It appears, however, that the probabilistic approach, fruitful though it may be for expressions of mathematical language (i.e. "numerical probabilities", such as *there is a 70 percent probability that*), can hardly be applied to expressions of natural language of the type 'may', 'could', 'must' (Portner 2009: 73ff). What is more, Portner mentions two other reasons for the inadequacy of such an approach. First, he notices that "the scale of probability" does not correspond to "the scale of possibility". Second, applying probabilistic theory to the linguistic treatment specifically of epistemic modality would break the connection that epistemic modality has with other non-probabilistic modalities such as deontic and dynamic. This would be highly inconvenient, since a number of linguists of all theoretical persuasions want, as Portner notes, "to give a unified analysis of modals" (Portner 2009: 76-77).

This brings us back to the question of the concept of modality in both disciplines. It is often stressed by linguists that the linguistic treatment of modality is broader than the its counterpart in logic (e.g. Boniecka 1976:103; Kiefer 1987: 72; Ligara 1997: 28). Let us explain what is understood by that. As we have mentioned in the outline of the history of modal logic, there are numerous modal systems, some of them of the kind that are outside the interest of linguists (e.g. geometric: ‘it is locally the case that’, metalogic: ‘it is valid that’ Goldblatt 2006: 3). The point is that the types distinguished in modal logic do not necessarily correspond to the types identified by linguists, though the latter derive from modal logic. For instance, the meanings analyzed under the notion of epistemic modality in linguistics correspond to at least five different systems in modal logic: alethic, epistemic, doxastic, likelihood and probability. Therefore, whatever it is that makes the scope of linguistic modality broader, it is not the number of various modalities involved.

It would seem that logicians take a more unified stand on how to understand modality and how to specify its different types. As we will see in section 3.2, in linguistics the notion of modality has been notoriously unclear, let alone its division into types. Modal logic has left its imprint on the understanding of modality in linguistics, in particular, in the move to limit it to the notions of necessity and possibility and subsequently, to the closed class of auxiliaries. However, while studying various types of modality it becomes apparent that each of them involves more meanings than just necessity and possibility, and that there are other means of expressing modal meanings than just a small group of highly grammaticalized “auxiliary” verbs, attested only in some languages of the world. When it comes to the latter point, it should be noticed that linguists, provided that they have at hand at least a “working” notion of modality, have investigated a wide range of distinct forms for expressing modality, at different levels of language (intonation, morphology, syntax, text). Peculiarly, expressions of the kind ‘It is  $\Phi$  that  $p$ ’, though privileged by modal logic, are rarely examined in linguistics. Moreover, linguists harbour distinct ideas as to what the notion of modality means. Some understand modality as “an indispensable component of the proposition” (Grzegorzczkova 2001: 94), whereas some see it as a “supercategory” embracing a number of meanings including

tense and aspect (Nuyts 2006), while still others construe it more narrowly as the speaker's attitude.

## 3.2. Modality in linguistics

### 3.2.1. Introduction

We began this chapter with a section on modality in logic. In this section we will see how modality is conceived of in linguistics. Modality, though well established in grammatical analyses of languages, remains one of the most disputed notions in linguistics. According to Palmer its controversial status results mainly from the obscurity of its semantics as well as the lack of any single core feature which would indicate what this category actually refers to (Palmer 1999: 229). The impressive number of works which have been devoted to modality in language appears to confirm the challenge that it poses. Thus, it has been treated from various perspectives (e.g. semantic, pragmatic, typological, lexicographical as well as in contrastive, translation and grammaticalization studies), within diverse theoretical frameworks (structural, functional, transformational grammar and cognitive) and in regard to a number of languages of the world. Consequently, in the literature we encounter different understandings and types of modality as well as different kinds of conceptual apparatus by means of which it is studied.<sup>10</sup>

Linguists have proposed different strategies of how to adequately describe modality. For instance, Cohen has come to a conclusion that this category differs so much from language to language that to achieve high precision of the analysis, it is better to undertake

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<sup>10</sup> Modality has also been the subject of several international symposia. Two of them were held as early as 1969 in Cracow and 1971 in Brno. Despite being devoted mainly to Slavic languages, the participants addressed many essential questions about the semantic basis of this category in general as well as methods of linguistic analysis (Publications: Urbańczyk (ed.) *Sesja Naukowa...*1971; *Otázky Slovanské Syntaxe III...*1973). In 1992 there was a symposium held at the University of New Mexico-which aimed at discussing modality in a variety of languages and within diverse theoretical frameworks (Publication: Joan L. Bybee, Suzanne Fleischman, eds. 1995. *Modality in Grammar and Discourse*). In June 2006 SOAS organized a conference *Revisiting Japanese Modality*. When it comes to the languages of Ethiopia, there was a conference on the Omotic languages: *Omotic utterance type, mood and attitude markers and linguistic typology* organized at Leiden University in 2008.

a language-specific research in which modality is examined “with respect to the other sub-systems in that very language” (Cohen 2005: 9). Bybee *et al.* (1994: 176) question if it is possible to arrive at any “succinct characterization” of modality and its comprehension outside of diachronic investigation. Nuyts in his articles (2005, 2006) opts for ‘disassembling’ the prevalent notion of modality, which (he says) consists of a set of heterogeneous phenomena, and introducing instead several clear-cut semantic concepts. Some of these may be lumped together into one supercategory. To the contrary, however, Palmer claims that modality is “a valid cross-language grammatical category that can be the subject of a typological study” (2001: 1) in the same manner as tense and aspect are. Calbert proposes to look for a “basic semantic system of modality which is formally realized in a variety of ways in each language” (1975: 1). On the other hand, van der Auwera and Plungian opt for a somewhat anarchistic approach, arguing that “Modality and its types can be defined and named in various ways. There is no one correct way. The only requirement is that one makes clear how one uses one’s terms” (1998: 80).

The present section (3.2) is divided into three parts. The first part concerns the current discussion on modality in theoretical linguistics, including the notion of modality, its types as well as some concepts to its analysis (Sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3). This is followed by a more extensive account of epistemic modality in which I try to single out and discuss some problems pertaining to the analysis of this category (3.2.4). The next two sections are devoted to non-epistemic modalities: deontic and dynamic (3.2.5 and 3.2.6). The question of polysemy and indeterminacy of modal verbs is at the centre of Section 3.2.7. In the subsequent section (3.2.8), I discuss issues related to two ways of analyzing epistemic modality (and actually any other category): from meanings to forms and from forms to meanings. In Section 3.2.9 I deal briefly with evidentiality and mirativity which are closely related to epistemic modality. Unlike the previous section (3.1) on modal logic, I will defer the account of the history of modality in linguistics to the end of this part (3.2.10).

In my account of the different views on modality I have adopted a spiral approach, i.e. I begin with wider concepts of modality and “zoom in” on narrower ones. Epistemic modality, as the main object of this thesis, will remain at the center of my discussion.

### 3.2.2. What is “modality”?

Essentially, one might distinguish two ways in which the notion “modality” is used in the linguistic literature.<sup>11</sup> In one sense modality refers to utterance types, such as statements, commands and questions. This in turn serves as the point of departure for the second understanding of modality, whereby it indicates the speaker’s cognitive or volitive attitude to the content of the utterance.

Together with predicate-argument structure (the proposition) and temporal reference, modality may be regarded as “an indispensable semantic component of a utterance” (Grzegorzczkova 2001: 121).<sup>12</sup> When the speaker ascribes a property to an entity, s/he always does it with a certain attitude or intention which is referred to as “modality”. This kind of modality is referred to by various linguists as “generic modality” (Grepl 1973, 23-38), “intentional modality” or “sentence modality”.<sup>13</sup> I will use the term “sentence modality” as the clearest. Grzegorzczkova distinguishes four types of sentence modality: declarative, interrogative, imperative and expressive, the last of these referring to the speaker’s mental state (intellectual, volitive, emotional) (2001: 124).<sup>14</sup> She interprets the speaker’s modal intention as a deep predicate which may be presented by means of the following semantic formulas (here S – *speaker*, A – *addressee*, P – *propositional content*, C

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<sup>11</sup> There is in fact one more use which rarely appears in the linguistic literature and so will not be discussed here. In this very wide sense modality pertains to “any kind of speaker modification of a state of affairs, including [...] tense and aspect”. In semantic terms it refers to “qualifications of states of affairs” (Nuyts 2006: 1).

<sup>12</sup> The account here draws primarily on the framework proposed by Grzegorzczkova (2001: 121-136). For other, different views on the issue see Ransom (1977) and Lyons (1995: 253-257).

<sup>13</sup> Kiefer uses the term “sentence mood”, as he considers sentence-types as related to sentence mood (1987: 77-84).

<sup>14</sup> In some classifications, expressions of judgement and emotions are treated as types of declarative sentences (Grzegorzczkova 2001: 125).

– *cause*, R – *response*, Vol – *volition*, E – *emotion*, Cog – *judgement*) (Grzegorzczkova 2001: 124-125):

- i. Decl (S, P) – statements
- ii. Vol (S, C (A, P) – mands<sup>15</sup>
- iii. Vol (S, R (A, P) – questions
- iv. Expr (S, Vol (E, Cog) (P)) – expressions of desires, emotions, judgments

Mands and questions include a volitional component ‘I want you to do *p*’ and ‘I want you to say if *p*’ and as such they involve the addressee. In the case of statements, the presence of the addressee is not mandatory, although they too may be regarded as having a volitional component in the form of ‘I want you to know’ (Grzegorzczkova 2001: 125). A statement focuses entirely on the speaker and so the involvement of the addressee is not required. However, it still deals with the expression of will on the part of the speaker. Modality pertaining to the speaker’s knowledge (epistemic) and volition (deontic), Grzegorzczkova places within the declarative modality.

The foregoing formulas resemble the kinds of simple and composite “modal frames” initially proposed by Anna Wierzbicka (1971). She lists four such “modal frames”, being “the sign of the speaker’s attitude to a state of affairs in which the predicate P is ascribed to the subject S”,<sup>16</sup> i.e. ‘I think’,<sup>17</sup> ‘I want’, ‘I don’t want’ and ‘I feel’ (*ibid.* p. 179). Their schematic notation is as follows: M that S is P (where “M” stands for a modal frame). Bellert further argues that each utterance may be interpreted as expressing a certain “modal attitude” which can be indicated explicitly by such phrases as: ‘The speaker asserts that...’, ‘The speaker wants to know if...’, ‘The speaker wants to...’ (1971). This clear picture becomes more complicated, however, if we take into consideration that an utterance usually simultaneously expresses more than one “modal frame” (Bellert 1971: 161).

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<sup>15</sup> The term “mand” refers to requests and entreaties as well as to orders (Lyons 1977: 745-746).

<sup>16</sup> Translation from Polish by MK.

<sup>17</sup> Or ‘I believe’, in Polish ‘*sądzę*’.

The sentence modality outlined above contrasts with the more specific and optional modality which is basically indicative of a speaker's cognitive or volitive attitude (Grzegorzczkova 2001: 124). It is conceived of within a communicative event, which essentially involves the speaker (the addresser), the addressee and the message, whose content refers to a certain state of affairs within the extralinguistic world. Now, linguists hold different views on which of the relations between the components of a communicative event is constitutive for this kind of understanding of modality. Let us discuss some of the proposals, together with some of their adherents.

The first approach, developed by Vinogradov (1950) and Mirowicz (1956), concentrates on the relation between the contents of the proposition and the extralinguistic reality. It disregards the role of the speaker in establishing the relation. It thus diverges radically from the current mainstream conception of modality as concerning the speaker's attitude. Additionally, in this approach a modal meaning is a property of each and every sentence, which makes it cognate, in this respect, with sentence modality and with Bally's approach (see Section 3.2.10).

The second way of apprehending modality is the most common among linguists, though it has many variants. Basically, it is concerned with the relation between the speaker and the contents of the proposition, or the speaker's attitude towards the content of the proposition (Jespersen [1924] 1965: 313, Bally [1932] 1965, Bellert 1971, Palmer 1986, Lyons 1995: 330). The conception of modality presented above seems vague but, as Nuyts points out, it is difficult to propose a more precise description of it, at least at this level of conceptualization. We cannot, he says, expect to be able to state clearly what modality *as a general concept* refers to in a way comparable to other grammatical categories like tense and aspect.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, says Nuyts, it is preferable to try to conceptualize in a precise way particular types of modality (2005: 6-7). And indeed, this

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<sup>18</sup> Nuyts argues that the grammatical category of modality conceived of in the manner presented above cannot be regarded as being at the same level of analysis as the categories of tense and aspect. There are rather particular types of modality (e.g. epistemic, deontic) which might be "equated" with tense or aspect (2005: 18-28).

is what linguists usually do.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, such a broad conception of modality raises a question if *all* of a speaker's attitudes should be regarded as modal. More specifically, the question concerns emotional, axiological and volitional attitudes as well as other meanings related to speaker's attitudes (Ligara 1997: 29). Researchers face this issue variously, marking the boundaries of modality according to their own theoretical presuppositions. The rather imprecise notion of modality results also in the situation where other categories are regarded as modal (such as so-called dynamic modality; see below) which strictly speaking have nothing to do with the speaker's attitude.

### 3.2.3. Types of modality

The concept of modality previously outlined provides only a rough idea what the category refers to. As has been alluded, in order to arrive at a better understanding of modality it is necessary to delve into its individual types which linguists distinguish. At present the most common terminological division of modality into types stems from logical investigations.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, there are also terms worked out by linguists which were meant to reflect certain properties of the researched linguistic objects (Nuyts 2006: 6). Although sometimes the differences between types of modality are little more than a matter of different labels, yet in certain cases they imply greater dissimilarity in the approach.

By way of introduction, let us note that the basic binary grouping of modality splits it into types involves epistemic and non-epistemic modality.<sup>21</sup> The former type seems to be well established and there is little controversy among linguists about its status (Ziegeler 2006: 259, Holvoet 2007: 16). In fact, epistemic modality is regarded as the major type within this category, i.e. modality par excellence, and is sometimes even identified with it (e.g. by Halliday 1970). The situation is different when we come to non-epistemic

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<sup>19</sup> In the majority of works devoted to modality there is a tendency to explore an individual type of modality without delving into the question of what in fact is the notional connection between the different types of modality.

<sup>20</sup> See Section 3.1.

<sup>21</sup> Here I use the term 'non-epistemic modality' simply as a convenient auxiliary cover-term for the discussion of types of modality.

modality which, as we will see, constitutes a panoply of modalities. There seem to be two main issues involved in its division:

- i. what subtypes of modalities might be distinguished,
- ii. whether a given subtype is to count as “modal” at all and if so, on what grounds.

When it comes to the essential criterion of the distinction between epistemic and non-epistemic modality it is grounded in the meaning and in the kind of entity on which the two kinds of modality operate. Thus, epistemic modality is thought to operate on propositions whereas non-epistemic modality pertains to events. Palmer, who refers directly to the foregoing distinction, distinguishes two major types of modality, i.e. propositional and event. He illustrates them with the following examples (2001: 7):

TABLE 16. Palmer’s major types of modality

	<b>Propositional</b>	<b>Event</b>
	<i>Kate may be at home now</i>	<i>Kate may come in now</i>
Paraphrase	<i>It is possible that Kate is at home now</i>	<i>It is possible for Kate to be at home now</i>

While Palmer opts for a logical characteristic of epistemic modality, Perkins notices that it depends on the linguist whether s/he wants to operate on second- or on third-order entities,<sup>22</sup> i.e. on states of affairs or on propositions, which (propositions) are abstract entities (1983: 7-8). Operating on propositions allows us to benefit from truth values, i.e. truth and falsity. In the subsection concerned with non-epistemic modality other reasons for discerning it from epistemic modality will be provided.

In what follows, we shall give priority to the exploration of various conceptions of epistemic modality, as it remains the subject of the thesis. Non-epistemic modalities, deontic and dynamic, will be presented only in outline, since they will be dealt with in the course of the thesis only insofar as they cross paths with the epistemic meanings.

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<sup>22</sup> Three types of entities have been introduced by Lyons (1977: 442 ff).

Boulomaic (bouletic) modality (attitude) which concerns “the degree of the speaker’s liking or disliking of the state of affairs” (Nuyts 2006: 12) will not be discussed.

#### 3.2.4. Epistemic modality

This part seeks to examine how epistemic modality has been approached in the literature. Rather than describing one by one the different ways of treating epistemic modality by various linguists, I will try to single out problems and discuss them.

The first paramount issue concerns the semantics of epistemic modality: in what terms it can be captured and how to analyse it? Typically, epistemic modality is conceived of as a property of the speaker’s state of mind towards a certain state of affairs, on the one hand, and as the status of a proposition which refers to this state of affairs, on the other. Yet there is great variation in conceptualizing epistemic modality, as linguists may lend greater weight either to the former or to the latter component. Thus, Halliday refers to epistemic modality as “the speaker’s assessment of the probability of what he is saying, or the extent to which he regards it as self-evident” (1970: 328). Rytel comprehends it as “information about the certainty of the proposition of the sentence from the point of view of the speaker”<sup>23</sup> (1982: 18). In Coates’ wording, “It is concerned with the speaker’s assumption or assessment of possibilities and, in most cases, it indicates the speaker’s confidence (or lack of confidence) in the truth of the proposition expressed” (1983: 18). In Perkins’ terms it is described as relativization of the truth of a proposition to a set of “rational laws of inference, deduction etc.” (1983: 10). Palmer understands it as “the degree of commitment by the speaker to what he says” (1986: 51). For Bybee *et al.*, “Epistemic modality applies to assertions and indicates the extent to which the speaker is committed to the truth of the proposition” (1994: 179). Hansen presents it as involving “the domain of conviction of the speaker, which he expresses, whether the proposition in his opinion corresponds to the reality or he doubts about it” (2001: 19).<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Allan understands it as expressing “degrees of confidence in the facts” (2001: 364). Nuyts couches epistemic modality in terms of “an estimation of the likelihood that (some aspect of) a certain state

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<sup>23</sup> Translated from Polish by MK.

<sup>24</sup> Translated from German by MK.

of affairs is/has been/will be true (or false) in the context of the possible world under consideration” (2001b: 21-22), as well as in terms of “the estimation [...] of the chances that the state of affairs expressed in the clause applies in the world or not” (2005: 10). According to de Haan it “refers to the degree of certainty the speaker has that what s/he is saying is true” (2006: 29). Finally, Boye has decided to avoid such notions as degree of certainty, commitment or confidence and instead discuss epistemic modality in terms of “epistemic support” (2012: 21).

I have given such a long list of apprehensions of epistemic modality by no means to exhaust the reader, but to show the very large spectrum of (rather similar) terms in which the notion of epistemic modality is couched. Although it is generally accepted that epistemic modality concerns knowledge or belief (Lyons 1977: 793), as we can see, it is rarely conceived of in either of these terms. It must be added that some authors use the above-mentioned terms (‘probability’, ‘possibility’, ‘likelihood’ etc.) as synonyms and so employ them alternately (see, for instance, Nuyts 2001b: 21-22).

It is notable that whatever the notion used for conceptualizing modality, almost all of them refer to parameters which are gradable. This gradability is tightly connected with the way the semantics of epistemic modality is most often approached, i.e. the scale. Thus, there is a common conviction among linguists that modal epistemic meanings can best be captured as approximate points on an imagined epistemic scale. Nuyts goes so far as to argue that such a scalar approach is “unavoidable” for anyone of cognitive or functional convictions (2005: 11). Here are some examples: Allan proposes a “credibility metric for a proposition” (2001: 365). His scale shows the degree of the speaker’s commitment to the truth or falsity of the proposition and the degree of credibility of the proposition, i.e., how credible it is for the speaker to judge it as true or false. Hence, there are such points on the metric as: undoubtedly true (1), most probably true (0.9), probably true (0.8), [...], just possibly true (0.6), indeterminable (0.5), just possibly false (0.4), [...], most probably false (0.1), undoubtedly false (0). Bralczyk (1978) and Rytel (1982) prefer not to provide fine-grained points on the epistemic scale. Rytel sets three basic degrees of speaker’s certainty in regard to the truth-value of the proposition whereas Bralczyk determines three degrees

of probability of the dictum:<sup>25</sup> low, medium and high. Having established these three groups Bralczyk tries to refine the scale within each of them. Coates, who studies the English modals, takes into account two scalar parameters: a scale ranging from confidence down to doubt and a scale involving at its opposite extremes inference and non-inference (1983: 18-19). The two parameters involve the presence and absence, respectively, of some evidence on the basis of which the speaker may draw conclusions as to whether a state of affairs takes place or not. Inferential expressions of English are ‘must’, ‘ought to’ and ‘should’, whereas non-inferential expressions include ‘will’, ‘may’, ‘might’ and ‘could’. In Boye’s crosslinguistic study, there are three degrees of epistemic support: “full support”, “partial support” and “neutral support” (2012: 21). Apart from these three areas on the scale, Boye occasionally makes further distinctions: “strong support” (embracing full support and strong partial support) vs. “weak support” (encompassing weak partial support and neutral support) as well as “less than full support” and “more than neutral support” (2012: 21-22).

In approaches confined to the class of modal verbs, there is an attempt to name epistemic meanings and indicate them on the epistemic scale. The two meanings most often mentioned in the linguistic literature are “possibility” and “necessity”. Thus, the English modals ‘may’ and ‘must’ express, respectively, possibility and necessity (Palmer 1990: 8-9). For Coates epistemic possibility is expressed not only by ‘may’ but also by ‘might’ and ‘could’ (1983: 131-168). She distinguishes also “probability”, expressed by ‘should’ and ‘ought to’, as well as “doubt” involved in ‘ought to’ (*ibid.* p. 82). Hermerén discusses four different modalities labeled as CERTAINTY (‘must’), PREDICTION (‘will’), PROBABILITY (‘should’) and POSSIBILITY (‘may’) (1978: 103-114). In his typologically oriented study, Palmer claims that there are three types of “judgements” occurring in languages: “Speculative” (‘may’), “Deductive” (‘must’) and “Assumptive” (‘will’) (2001: 24-31). In all the studies presented above, the authors have tried to provide the meaning of a given expression by referring to an epistemic concept, often (if not always) a concept

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<sup>25</sup> Bralczyk, following Bally, distinguishes in each sentence “modus” and “dictum”. See Section 3.2.10 below.

which is even more complex than the expression itself. This is not the only problem with such an approach. Expressions are given a label without any investigation whether, for example, ‘may’, ‘should’ and ‘must’ really has anything to do with probability (and if so, what?) and what actually the meaning of probability is (Danielewiczowa 2008: 113-114). The weakness of explanation via assigning of labels manifests itself especially when epistemic expressions other than modal verbs are taken into consideration, such as, in English, ‘perhaps’, ‘presumably’, ‘I presume’, ‘I believe’. To which pre-labeled meaning should they be assigned? Do they represent yet other meanings? Without any clear notion of what the labels mean in the first place, it is difficult to compare.

Danielewiczowa is very critical of this scalar approach to the semantics of epistemic modality (2002: 71; 2008: 117-118; 2012: 49). She points out that in order to place epistemic expressions on an undefined (or only vaguely defined) scale in the manner in which it is commonly done, one does not need any special linguistic knowledge. Furthermore, if the difference between epistemic expressions can be captured in terms of certainty (and related concepts, such as credibility, possibility, likeliness), it is necessary to explain what this “certainty” is, how it is related to, for instance, “probability” and “conviction”, and why it has been singled out as *the* criterial concept. It is also indispensable to clarify what this “degree” of certainty is, how to measure it and in what units. Danielewiczowa argues that the prerequisite for locating epistemic expressions on a scale is their “meticulous analysis”. Otherwise, such an attempt is intuitive and arbitrary. She also emphasizes that epistemic adverbs (2008: 118) and verbs “constitute qualitative oppositions and not only quantitative” (2002: 71).

Alongside the scalar and “label” approaches, the meaning of an epistemic expression is often “elucidated” by providing a paraphrase. The technique of providing paraphrases consists of giving allegedly synonymous expressions in an allegedly simpler language. For instance, Palmer explains that the epistemic ‘may’ is paraphrasable in terms of “It is possible that...”; ‘must’ in terms of “The only possible conclusion is that...” (1990: 50); and ‘will’ in terms of “A reasonable inference is that...” (1990: 57). Often some modal epistemic expressions are treated as synonymous. A frequent example is the English pair

of particles (considered by some as adverbs) ‘perhaps’ and ‘maybe’, treated, without any investigation, as mere regional and/or stylistic variants (Nuyts 2001b: 56).

Another, quite different semantic approach has been launched by Wierzbicka (2006) and Danielewiczowa (2002). Both linguists try to reveal the meaning of epistemic expressions by means of reductive paraphrase, which in Wierzbicka’s work is called “explication”. Their approaches are similar but by no means identical. The main differences are in the way the semantic metalanguage is established and in the way the reductive paraphrases are built.<sup>26</sup> From the area of English epistemic expressions, Wierzbicka investigates epistemic phrases (*I think, I guess, I believe, I assume, etc.*) (2006: 204-246), and epistemic adverbs (*probably, possibly, clearly, presumably, certainly, etc.*) (2006: 247-296), using the following “key semantic molecules”: I THINK, I KNOW, I SAY, I DON’T THINK, I DON’T KNOW, I DON’T SAY, I CAN (or CAN’T) THINK, I CAN (or CAN’T) KNOW, and I CAN (or CAN’T) SAY (*ibid.* p. 207). Danielewiczowa’s book is dedicated to a group of Polish epistemic verbs (*myśleć, że* ‘think that’; *sądzić, że* ‘believe that’; *przypuszczać, że* ‘assume that’; *wierzyć, że* ‘believe that’). Following Bogusławski, Danielewiczowa treats ‘know that’ as the only semantic primitive in the area of epistemic expressions, with the help of which all other epistemic expressions can be elucidated.<sup>27</sup> The reader may obtain some impression of how the two linguists bring their respective semantic metalanguages into play by comparing the following reductive paraphrases:

I think it is raining =

a. I say: I think like this: it is raining

b. I don’t say I know (Wierzbicka 2006: 208)

*a thinks that p*

[Theme] *a*

[Thematic dictum] *is such that in regard to what s/he knows*

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<sup>26</sup> More on Wierzbicka’s endeavour in comparison with the approach implemented by Danielewiczowa in Bogusławski (2011).

<sup>27</sup> Note that Wierzbicka considers also THINK and MAYBE as semantic primes (2006), despite the fact that she provides an explication for *I think* (2006: 208).

[Rheme]<sup>28</sup> *s/he is ready to say that p* (Danielewiczowa 2002: 139)

The incontestable advantage of such an approach is the fact that in reductive paraphrases there is no circularity, in contrast to the scalar approach which, as we have seen, is unavoidably vulnerable to it.

There have also been linguistic attempts to describe modal epistemic expressions in terms of the opposition: subjectivity vs. objectivity. Thus Lyons distinguishes between objective and subjective epistemic modality, at the same time indicating some problems involved in this distinction, such as what the difference between objective epistemic modality and alethic modality is (1977: 797-798). He is also concerned whether (or: to what extent?) the distinction is really present in everyday language usage. To illustrate the difference between subjective and objective epistemic modality Lyons provides the following sentence: *Alfred may be unmarried*. Under the subjective interpretation “the speaker may be understood as [...] qualifying his commitment to the possibility of Alfred’s being unmarried in terms of his own uncertainty” (*ibid.* p. 797). Under the objective interpretation Alfred’s being unmarried is a matter of mathematics: there are some quantifiable chances that Alfred is married. For instance, says Lyons, there is a group of 90 people including our Alfred. We know that 30 of them are unmarried and so there is an objective possibility (i.e. a probability of 33.33%) that Alfred is indeed unmarried (*ibid.* p. 798). Lyon’s approach to subjectivity vs. objectivity within epistemic modality is rather an isolated and distinctly idiosyncratic one. It can rightly be objected that there exists an “objective possibility” of almost anything; further, in real language use the utterance *Alfred may be unmarried* is very seldom treated probabilistically in this “objective” way (although it can be), and is almost never relativized to any well-defined group of known size.

More often, subjectivity is regarded as the speaker’s *involvement* in or attitude to what is being said, and is considered as an inherent feature of epistemic modality (Coates 1983: 18; Palmer 1986: 16; Palmer 1990: 10) which distinguishes it from other types of modality. In yet another understanding, subjectivity concerns the explicit or implicit

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<sup>28</sup> For the terms: theme, thematic dictum and rheme see Section 2.1.

presence of the speaker who makes an epistemic evaluation (Bralczyk 1978: 40-44, Perkins 1983). If the speaker is explicitly mentioned, as in ‘I am sure...’, ‘I have doubts...’, the sentence is considered as subjective. If, on the other hand, the sentence refers to the probability or possibility that a given state of affairs holds in reality, i.e. regardless of the particular speaker, as in ‘It is possible...’, ‘It is probable...’ such a sentence is considered as objective. In between are placed modal expressions which are neutral along the parameter subjectivity : objectivity—i.e. those where the speaker is not explicitly mentioned, nor is there any assignment of probability or possibility to the reality described in the proposition, as in ‘probably’, ‘perhaps’, ‘maybe’ (Bralczyk 1978: 40-44).<sup>29</sup>

Nuyts proposes to abandon the distinction subjective vs. objective modality à la Lyons and to replace it with the dyad subjective vs. (inter)subjective evidentiality (2001a, 2001b: 33-39).<sup>30</sup> Thus, claims Nuyts, any epistemic judgement must involve some evidence; without it the speaker can only admit ignorance. Now, the quality of the evidence may differ to the effect that strong evidence is regarded as objective and weak evidence as subjective. Alongside the quality of evidence, “status of evidence” also plays a role. Namely, the speaker may either indicate that s/he is the only person who “knows the evidence” (subjective) or may indicate that the knowledge of the evidence is shared among a group of people (intersubjective). The parameter of subjectivity is thus separate from modal evaluation and belongs to the realm of evidentiality. Danielewiczowa points out that Nuyts has simply changed the labels from an obscure ‘objectivity’ to an equally obscure ‘(inter)subjective evidentiality’ (2012: 43).

Another concept which has been used in more recent accounts of epistemic modality is that of performativity, conceptualized differently than by Austin. The first linguist to apply this term to epistemic modal verbs was Palmer (1990: 10-11). According to him, epistemic modals reveal their performative character in that “speakers actually make a judgement about the truth of the proposition”, just as with Searle’s assertives.<sup>31</sup> This

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<sup>29</sup> For a similar conceptualization of the terms ‘subjectivity’, ‘objectivity’ (without the third ‘neutral’ category) see Langacker (1985, 1990).

<sup>30</sup> On the category of evidentiality see Section 3.2.9.

<sup>31</sup> The same applies to deontic modals (Palmer 1990: 10).

semantic feature of modals has morphosyntactic correlates, such as the lack of past tense forms.

Verstraete takes up Palmer's idea and applies it to subjective modals.<sup>32</sup> Under "modal performativity" he understands "a particular position of commitment with respect to the propositional content of the utterance" (2001: 1517).<sup>33</sup> Again, the "modal performativity" is reflected in some formal features which allow us to distinguish clearly between subjective and objective modality. One of the formal features is demonstrated in conditional sentences, namely, "subjective modals cannot occur in the protasis of a conditional construction without echoic reinterpretation"<sup>34</sup> whereas objective modals are unproblematic" (*ibid.*). Two other criteria of performativity are interrogativity and tense. By applying the three criteria to epistemic modality, Verstraete comes to the conclusion that this category can only be subjective. Consequently, Lyons' (1977) and Hengeveld's (1988) assumption about the existence of subjective vs. objective epistemic modality has no support (Verstraete 2001: 1525).

In Nuyts' approach, performativity is opposed to descriptivity (2001b: 39-41). Performative modal epistemic expressions "involve the speaker's own current evaluation of a state of affairs" whereas with descriptive modal epistemic expressions the speaker reports "on another person's evaluation of the state of affairs, but there is no indication whatsoever of commitment to it on his/her own part." To descriptive modal epistemic expressions also belong any non-current evaluations on the part of the speaker (in the past). This idea of Nuyts can best be demonstrated with some examples. "I think they have run out of fuel" indicates a performative evaluation. "John thinks they ran out of fuel" and "I thought they had run out of fuel" refer to descriptive modal evaluations (*ibid.* p. 39).

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<sup>32</sup> Verstraete tries to show in his article how subjective and objective modality is "still very poorly understood" (2001: 1505). However, he himself uses the notion of subjectivity without elucidating its meaning, and on top of that adds the notion of performativity.

<sup>33</sup> Again, as in Palmer's account, his "modal performativity" applies both to epistemic and deontic modals.

<sup>34</sup> Echoic reinterpretation means that the speaker takes a previous piece of discourse and repeats it. A: "He may come." B: "If he may come then...".

The status of a state of affairs, or alternatively the status of a proposition, is the next relevant point in the discussion on epistemic modality. This point concerns modality in general but is discussed here with special attention to epistemic modality. The basic idea behind it is as follows. In the extralinguistic reality a given state of affairs either takes place or not; there are no stages in between. However, the speaker's state of knowledge about whether a given state of affairs holds or not may vary. Thus, s/he may 'know'/'be sure'/'doubt' that a state of affairs takes place. Now if the speaker knows that a state of affairs takes place (or does not take place) s/he indicates it as real. If s/he cannot claim knowledge as to whether a state of affairs takes place (or does not take place) s/he indicates it as unreal. Apart from the pair "real" – "unreal" (e.g. Perkins 1983) there are other binary terms in the literature which indicate the status of states of affairs, such as "factivity" – "non-factivity"<sup>35</sup> (e.g. Lyons 1977: 794), "factual"– "non-factual" (Palmer 1986: 17-18) and "actual" – "non-actual" (e.g. Chung and Timberlake 1993: 241). In his second book on mood and modality (2001), Palmer suggests that the status of the proposition (the key concept for understanding modality in general) is better conceived of in terms of the opposition "realis" and "irrealis" (*ibid.* p. 1-3). He understands these terms, following Mithun (1999: 173), in the following way: "The realis portrays situations as actualized, as having occurred or actually occurring, knowable through direct perception. The irrealis portrays situations as purely within the realm of thought, knowable only through imagination" (Palmer 2001: 1). "Realis" and "irrealis" are treated by Palmer as typological categories of mood which occur in languages alongside modal systems (modal verbs). Whatever the term used, epistemic modality always involves the second (i.e. the negative) member of the respective dyad: "non-factuality", "non-actuality", "irrealis" etc. One might also operate with third-order entities,<sup>36</sup> i.e. propositions, in which case one talks about their status in terms of truth and falsity (e.g. Rytel 1982).<sup>37</sup> Palmer argues that it is

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<sup>35</sup> We disregard in this study the issue of contra-factuality.

<sup>36</sup> The division is by no means neat, as linguists tend to operate with both kinds of entities, namely states of affairs and propositions, e.g. Rytel (1982: 20).

<sup>37</sup> In the Polish literature on epistemic modality one may encounter the term "modalność prawdziwościowa", 'truth-value modality', in respect to epistemic modality (e.g. Grzegorzczkowska 2001:125). The term suggests

a mistake to concentrate on non-factuality (and similar notions) since factual statements, too, “are subjective and represent the speaker’s point of view” (1986: 18). The question whether the status of states of affairs should be decisive for conceptualizing modality obviously has significant implications for the inventory of expressions that are investigated.

The final point concerns epistemic modality and prosody. Investigations into the prosody of epistemically modalized utterances are a great rarity. As far as I know only Krause has devoted to it a longer monograph. In her study on the interaction between lexical means of expressing epistemic modality and prosody in Russian and Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, she concludes that in these languages expressions conveying a higher degree of certainty on the part of the speaker tend to be uttered with a lower pitch and with a relatively less distinct melodic contour. By contrast, expressions indicating lower degree of certainty are realized with a higher pitch and with a distinct melodic contour (Krause 2007: 191-192). Prosodic characteristics of epistemic expressions (and any other expressions for that matter) are part of investigations into the thematic-rhematic structure of utterance (Danielewiczowa 2002, Bogusławski 2003).

It should be emphasized here that the category of epistemic modality has often been investigated within studies dealing with the (more or less grammaticalized) class of modal verbs, which undoubtedly has influenced the way of conceptualizing and studying it. There are few (non-typological) works in which the authors discuss ways of expressing the category other than modal verbs (Bralczyk 1978, Perkins 1983, Nuyts 2001).

### 3.2.5. Deontic modality

Deontic modality<sup>38</sup> is the most well-established type within non-epistemic modality. Essentially, it concerns “the necessity or possibility of acts performed by morally responsible agents” (Lyons 1977: 823). There are two major approaches to it. According to the first, narrower one, propounded by Grzegorzczkova (2001: 133-135), deontic

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a close link between aletheutic and epistemic modalities, as both relate to the truth-value of the proposition. This is not so with deontic modality (Lyons 1977: 823).

<sup>38</sup> The name “deontic” stems from Greek *déon* ‘duty’.

modality pertains only to statements expressed by means of declaratives. More specifically, it concerns postulative (normative) sentences which express either the speaker's acts of will in regard to a certain state of affairs or the speaker's axiological stance (Grzegorzczkova 2001: 134). Some typical deontic meanings are obligative, permissive and prohibitive. Under this understanding, the following two sentences are examples of deontically modalized sentences: *You should study less* and *You can sit in the armchair, it is free*, but not *Study less, please!* and *Sit in the armchair!*

The second, broader approach embraces not only postulatatives but also directives, which are typically conveyed by imperative, jussive and subjunctive moods (Lyons 1977: 745-753, Palmer 1986: 111). These include: commands, requests, advice and threats. Permissions, too, might be expressed by means of the imperative (Lyons 1977: 838).<sup>39</sup> Grzegorzczkova points out that there is a semantic difference between postulatatives and directives and so it is preferable to keep them apart. Namely, with postulatatives the strength of imposition is milder and, consequently, it is left for the addressee whether s/he wants to comply with the speaker's will (Grzegorzczkova 2001: 134). For Holvoet postulatatives and directives show sufficient semantic affinity to treat them within one system as they both concern "acts of will" (2007: 22).<sup>40</sup>

Deontic meanings often identified by linguists encompass three positive meanings and three negative ones: Permissive (deontic possibility), Obligative (deontic necessity) and Prohibitive, and non-Permissive, non-Obligative and non-Prohibitive (Bańczerowski and Matulewska 2012). Similarly to epistemic modality, deontic modality is often constructed as scalar since it might be conceptualized as "the degree of force (moral, societal etc.) exerted on the subject of the sentence to perform an action" (de Haan 2006: 29). The continuum of meanings would go from "strong" (Obligative 'must') through "weaker" ('should, ought to') to "the weakest" (Permissive 'may, can') (Rytel 1982: 84;

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<sup>39</sup> The fact that by means of directives the speaker imposes some conditions on the addressee has prompted Bybee *et al.* to name the whole category of deontic modality "speaker-oriented modality", in contrast to "agent-oriented modality" and "epistemic modality" (1994: 179).

<sup>40</sup> A similar stance is propounded by Jespersen (his "'moods' containing an element of will" ([1924] 1965: 319-321)) as well as by Lyons (1977) and Palmer (1986).

Coates 1983, Palmer 1986: 100-102). Nuyts perceives it as a scale “going from absolute moral necessity via degrees of desirability to acceptability and [...] further on to the negative values of undesirability and absolute moral unacceptability” (Nuyts 2016: 36). Bybee *et al.* list the following deontic moods: imperative, prohibitive, optative, hortative, admonitive and permissive (1994: 179).

Deontic modality originates from a certain external authority that imposes an obligation or gives a permission. The authority might be of different kinds such as a person, an institution, a body of principles (legal, moral, cultural) and even “some inner compulsion” (Lyons 1977: 824). Lyons embraces all these sources or causes of authority under one general term “deontic source” (*ibid.*). Their proper distinction is crucial for the proper identification of deontic meanings (Rytel 1982: 89). For an obligation to be imposed or a permission to be given, the deontic source needs to have a higher rank than the addressee, in particular in the case of directives. The deontic source is typically the speaker but s/he subscribes to a certain collective principle issued by someone else, as in *It is not allowed to bring one’s own book into the library.*

An important difference between epistemic and deontic modality is their relation to future tense. By its very nature, a deontically modalized utterance can only refer to a future state of affairs. An epistemically modalized utterance is subject to no such restriction; any tense is possible. As mentioned before, there are at least two features which deontic and epistemic modalities have in common: in both, the status of the state of affairs is non-factual and both involve the speaker’s attitude (Palmer 1986: 96). Additionally, both the deontic and epistemic assessment are made “here and now”. In spite of these commonalities which are constitutive for deontic and epistemic modalities, Palmer concedes that “the chief reason for treating them as a single category lies in the fact that in English, and many other languages, the same forms are used for the expression of both” (*ibid.* see also below).

Deontic modality has drawn the attention of linguists dealing with legal texts (Bańcerowski and Matulewska 2012).

### 3.2.6. Dynamic modality<sup>41</sup>

Dynamic modality fundamentally has to do with inherently triggered modality which emerges from factors that are intrinsically present in a person or a situation. This is in contrast to deontic modality, which emerges from exterior, socially defined factors, and epistemic modality, which has to do with the speaker's knowledge about a state of affairs. The concept of dynamic modality, and the approaches to it, are fairly heterogeneous since, in current studies, it embraces at least four different meanings (cf. Holvoet 2007: 18-19). Here are three prototypical dynamic modal meanings, illustrated with examples:

- i. inherent ability of the subject of the clause to perform certain action: *They can't speak a word of English* [...] (Palmer 1990: 85)
- ii. inherent needs on the part of the subject: *I must eat something now, or I'll starve.* (Nuyts 2005: 8)
- iii. possibility or necessity inherent in
- iv. the circumstances described in the clause: *It can snow in winter* (Nuyts 2005: 8)<sup>42</sup>

Palmer counts also as dynamic modality a Volitive, i.e., the meaning of willingness. In English it is expressed by means of an auxiliary verb 'will' as well as the verb 'want', e.g. *Why don't you go and see if Martin will let you stay?* There is no consensus among linguists whether volition should be regarded as modal<sup>43</sup> and to which type of modality it should be assigned.

It is open to doubt whether the foregoing, dynamic meanings are modal since they certainly do not refer to the speaker's attitude (with the exception of the volitive meaning). They are considered within the category of modality partly due to formal resemblance between the expressions which convey them and expressions which refer to epistemic and deontic modalities rather than out of any semantic motivations.

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<sup>41</sup> The word "dynamic" stems from Greek *dýnamis* 'strength, power'. Dynamic modality is also labelled "facultative modality" (Goossens 1985) and "inherent modality" (Hengeveld 1988).

<sup>42</sup> This type of modality is also labelled "circumstantial modality" (Kiefer 1999: 225) and "neutral modality" (Palmer 1990: 37). Further on I will be using the terms "neutral necessity" and "neutral possibility".

<sup>43</sup> For a brief discussion see Nuyts (2006: 9).

The terminology employed in analyses of deontic and dynamic modalities deserves a comment here. Some linguists prefer to lump together deontic and dynamic modality under the label “root modality” (see e.g. Hofmann (1976: 85), Sweetser (1982: 484, 1990: 49),<sup>44</sup> Coates (1983: 10)).<sup>45</sup> The term “root” is also used independently as a special type of possibility and necessity, especially “root possibility” (Bybee *et al.* 1994: 191), which corresponds to “neutral possibility/necessity” (see fn. 42). As mentioned before, Palmer in his typological study of modality uses the term “event modality” in regard to deontic and dynamic modality (2001).

After becoming familiar with the three conventionally defined types of “modality”, we may not always find (in a given language) a convincing motivation for subsuming them under a single grammatical macro-category of “modality”. This is most evident in the case of dynamic modality, which refers to the subject (the doer of the action) and not to the speaker and does not involve her/his attitude towards the content of the proposition; indeed, the subject of a dynamic modal need not even be human, so the issue of “attitude” does not arise. One can imagine that the three domains: epistemic, deontic and dynamic could be treated as three completely separate categories from the semantic point of view. As Palmer suggests, keeping these three types together makes sense if the language has a class of modal verbs of the English type. If we look at other languages that do not have polysemous modal verbs but a heterogeneous variety of modal constructions, such as ‘perhaps’ and ‘be allowed to’, one major justification for uniting deontic, epistemic and dynamic into a single macro-category of “modality” vanishes. Either the overarching notion of modality will have to be abandoned or a totally different justification (quite likely semantic) must be found.

### 3.2.7. Polysemy and indeterminacy of modal verbs

The three meanings: epistemic, deontic and dynamic are subsumed under the category of modality partly due to the modal logic tradition underlying them and partly due to the fact that in some languages they are expressed by the same forms, as in English ‘can’, ‘may’

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<sup>44</sup> Sweetser uses the term “root” especially in regard to deontic modality.

<sup>45</sup> For Sweetser “root” indicates that which is “sociophysical” (1990: 152).

and ‘must’, which constitute a distinct class (more or less grammaticalized). Once other means of expressing the different modalities, in particular lexical means, are taken into consideration the bonds that link the three modalities become weaker and less evident.

After the diachronic studies of Bybee 1988 and Bybee *et al.* (1994) into the class of English modal verbs, no one can harbour doubts that their dynamic, deontic and epistemic meanings involve polysemy rather than homonymy. The authors argue that in English (and in all likelihood also in some other languages that were sampled) the agent-oriented meaning referring to ability, whether mental (‘can’) or physical (‘may’, cf. ‘might’), developed, through the mechanism of inference, into a root possibility meaning which, in turn, bifurcated into permission and epistemic possibility (Bybee *et al.* 1994: 194-199).

Sweetser also tries to “motivate the root–epistemic polysemy of the English modals” (1990: 59), adopting Talmy’s approach of force-dynamics.<sup>46</sup> Her main tenet is that our sociophysical world is often mapped onto our world of reasoning and that this cognitive process involves metaphor. Applying this principle to the domain of modality, she concludes that “[root] *may* is an absent potential barrier in the sociophysical world, and the epistemic *may* is the force-dynamically parallel case in the world of reasoning” (*ibid.* p. 59). For Sweetser it is not sufficient to assume that the exponents of modality are polysemous but in her approach she seeks to show their semantic closeness (*ibid.* p. 51).

Similarly Coates, within a different framework, tries to reconcile the polysemous approach to the modal verbs with the monosemous one, being dissatisfied with both views on modal verbs (1983). According to her, the linguists who work with discrete meanings, such as Palmer (1979, and later 1990), fail to account for the question of indeterminacy (vagueness) in a language,<sup>47</sup> while those who take the monosemantic perspective, such as Joos (1964), Ehrman (1966), have trouble with assigning a “basic meaning” to each verb (Coates 1983: 9-10). She proposes a model for modal meanings which deals with indeterminacy by means of “fuzzy sets” which involve “graded degree of membership”

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<sup>46</sup> Force dynamics, developed by Talmy (1981, 1988), treats modality in terms of forces and barriers. For instance, ‘may’ refers to “taking away [...] a potentially present barrier” (Sweetser 1990: 51-52).

<sup>47</sup> By “indeterminacy” Palmer understands the fact that categories “merge or fade into another” and due to this they cannot be described “in wholly discrete categories” (1979: 21).

captured in terms of “gradience” (Coates 1983: 12, 14). For each modal auxiliary she distinguishes, in its continuum of meanings, three basic grades (i.e. a gradient from a strong feature to a weak feature) which are related to one of the areas within a fuzzy set, i.e. “core”, “skirt” and “periphery”. For instance, the gradient of Root *may* is “from ‘Permission’ to general ‘Possibility’” (*ibid.* p. 15). Thanks to such an approach one does not have to make any arbitrary decisions concerning the boundaries between various types and can thus keep “the essential unity of Root modals” (*ibid.* p. 21). From her analysis it turns out that root modality shows a greater degree of fuzziness than epistemic modality (*ibid.* p. 12-13).

The polysemy of modal verbs (“modal markers”) has drawn the attention of van der Auwera, Amman and Kindt who delve into the question whether such polysemy is a feature typical for Standard Average European (2005). They prefer to use the term “polyfunctionality” in order not to be confronted with the issue of “polysemy” vs. “monosemy” of modal markers (*ibid.* p. 252). Based on a sample comprising 241 languages, they come to the conclusion that “modal polyfunctionality for both possibility and necessity is typical of Europe” whereas non-European languages “do not exhibit the full polyfunctionality” (*ibid.* p. 256). Their sample also includes Amharic, which they rightly treat as a language with modal polyfunctionality for both necessity and possibility (*ibid.* p. 256). They hypothesise that modal polyfunctionality for both necessity and possibility occurs in non-Standard Average European languages due to the influence (also cultural) of Western Indo-European languages (*ibid.* p. 256-257). Whether this assumption is reasonable for Amharic is a matter for study. It remains to add that modal verbs in the languages of Europe are extensively discussed in the book edited by Hansen and de Haan (2009).

### **3.2.8. Beyond modal verbs: From meaning to form and vice versa**

Approaches to modality may also differ as to whether they start from modal meanings pointing to the forms which carry them (semasiology → onomasiology); or vice-versa (onomasiology → semasiology), focusing on selected linguistic forms, such as modal auxiliaries, modal adverbials, parenthetical verbs, modal particles etc., and trying to elucidate their meanings (Kiefer 1987: 67). The latter *modus operandi* in respect to modal

verbs seems common in the linguistics of Germanic languages (e.g. Leech 1970, Palmer 1979, Coates 1983, Öhlschläger 1989, Heine 1995). As a result, so-called dynamic modality is included in the category by virtue of the formal identity of dynamic modals with such verbs as *can*, *could*, *must* which (also) express epistemic and deontic modalities. Moreover, Perkins notices that some modal expressions, such as ‘it is possible’, ‘it is necessary’, ‘it is obligatory’, often serve only as means of accounting for the meaning of modal auxiliaries, yet are not studied on their own (1983: 19).

A similar approach has also been taken for other languages. Hansen’s lexicographical description of “an area within modality” which is indicated by the meanings of the verbs ‘können’ (*can*), ‘müssen’ (*must*) and ‘wollen’ (*will*, *want*) in the Slavic languages<sup>48</sup> is a case in point (2001). The meanings of the three foregoing items constitute a “modal subsystem” which Hansen labels as “Geltungsmodalität”<sup>49</sup> and as such stand in the center of the system. Subsequently, meanings of peripheral and adjacent lexemes are investigated. Limiting his research to selected lexemes, Hansen explains that he does not aim at formulating a theory of modality.

In view of the difficulties of proposing a valid semantic definition of modality, it comes as no surprise that many linguists (like those just mentioned) prefer to begin their investigations by selecting a class of forms and then proposing for them a semantic description.

The semantics-first approach (semasiology → onomasiology) has been taken by Perkins (1983), Hermerén (1986), Koseska-Toszewa *et al.* (1996: 154) and others. Koseska-Toszewa *et al.* (1996: 154), pointing out the advantages of this approach, argues that it ensures a consistent semantic interpretation. In this way, also, it is possible to discern all those forms in a language which convey a certain modal meaning. Hermerén develops the last postulate in the following words:

By taking a conceptual (semantic) approach to modality, it may be possible to establish new relationships between forms of language that have hitherto been unrelated. That

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<sup>48</sup> The study concerns Polish, Russian, Serbian/Croatian and Old Church Slavonic.

<sup>49</sup> The reference/extension of this term is clear but I do not understand what it means.

is, it may be possible to reveal a relationship between, say, certain modals and other verbs, adjectives, adverbs and even nouns which express the same modality as the modals. In other words, such an approach will make it possible to include language means which have so far never or hardly ever been mentioned in connection with modality although they do, in fact, express modal meanings (1986: 57).

Modality as a conceptual notion refers not only to grammatical forms, such as mood and modal auxiliaries, but also to lexical items. In practice, however, a considerable number of works focus on the class of modal verbs, appealing to lexical expressions to explain meanings of grammatical forms under the assumption that they are semantically equivalent.

One might add that the semantic-first approach is generally adopted in typological studies (e.g. Chung and Timberlake 1985; Palmer 1986, 2001; van der Auwera and Ammann 2013a, 2013b).

### **3.2.9. Non-modal grammatical categories related to epistemic modality: evidentiality and mirativity**

In this section I will discuss two grammatical categories connected with epistemic modality, namely evidentiality, which refers to the source of information, and mirativity, which refers to unexpected information. Especially the former category is considered as closely related to epistemic modality and at times is even not distinguished from it (Chafe 1986, Palmer 1986, Tutak 2003). This has motivated some linguists to raise the question of the relation to each other of the two categories, epistemic modality and evidentiality (de Haan 1999, Wiemer 2018).

Evidentiality is present as a grammatical category in a fair number of languages on each continent with the exception of Africa, where only three languages are reported to have evidentials (de Haan 2013a). As mentioned, it refers to the source of information or, in other words, to the kind of evidence that the speaker has for her/his statement. Thus, evidentiality involves two things: the existence of evidence and the nature of this evidence (Aikhenvald 2003: 1). Aikhenvald distinguishes two major types of evidentiality systems (2003: 3):

- i. “those which state the existence of a source for the evidence without specifying it”
- ii. “those which specify the kind of evidence – be it visually obtained, based on inference, or reported information”

The first type of evidentiality system occurs in Turkic and in many Iranian and Finno-Ugric languages. The second type is heterogeneous and embraces further subtypes, each expressing a different kind of evidence and having a different number of values. Some existing systems are, for instance, eyewitness and non-eyewitness (e.g. Jarawara); reported and everything else (very common, e.g. Lezgian); visual, nonvisual sensory, inferred, assumed, reported (e.g. Tuyuca) (Aikhenvald 2003: 3-4).

Formally, the most widespread way of expressing evidentiality is through affixes and clitics on verbs, as in Lezgian. In some languages evidentiality is marked with an unbound particle. Another strategy of encoding evidentiality is by means of a modal morpheme, such as ‘sollen’ in German. Different evidentiality markers may co-occur in one language, being responsible for coding distinct meanings (de Haan 2013b).

Aikhenvald defends the autonomy of evidentiality as a distinct category from epistemic modality. She believes that scholars who do treat evidentiality as a subcategory of modality try to “explain an unusual category in terms of some other, more conventional, notion” (2004: 7). Although evidentiality may secondarily acquire modal epistemic meanings, typically evidentials neither affect the truth value of the sentence nor have to do with “validity or reliability of knowledge or information” (Aikhenvald 2004: 4-5). She shares de Haan’s view, who admits that both evidentiality and epistemic modality involve evidence but they make use of it in two distinct ways: epistemic modality “EVALUATES evidence and on the basis of this evaluation assigns a confidence measure to the speaker’s utterance” whereas “an evidential ASSERTS that there is evidence for the speaker’s utterance but refuses to interpret the evidence in any way” (1999: 85). An immediate objection can be made to this: the very decision that one particular evidential rather than another is appropriate in the given context is itself an “interpretation of the evidence”.

Another grammatical category linked to epistemic modality is mirativity, also known under the term “admirative”.<sup>50</sup> This concept involves the grammatical marking of unexpected information. It concerns “both statements based on inference and statements based on direct experience for which the speaker had no psychological preparation”. In some languages mirativity pertains also to hearsay (DeLancey 1997: 35).

Mirativity may be an extension of the evidential system in a language, it may be an extension of a grammatical category other than evidentiality or, finally, it may be a distinct category in its own right (Aikhenvald 2004: 195). When mirativity is integrated into the evidential system it hardly ever combines with a firsthand or a visual evidential. In systems with two evidentials there are typically mirative overtones on the non-firsthand form (e.g. Yukaghir). In larger evidential systems, with 3-4 meanings, miratives are connected with inferentials and reports (e.g. Nganasan) (Aikhenvald 2004: 196-204). Mirativity may be encoded into the system of aspect (e.g. Hare) or it may be expressed by means of passive (e.g. Lithuanian) (Aikhenvald 2004: 204-206). Languages with mirativity include Turkish, Albanian, Bulgarian-Macedonian and Georgian (DeLancey 1997: 36). Amharic seems to possess a mirative auxiliary **ኖሯል** *nor<sup>w</sup>all* and a mirative particle **ለካ** *läkka* which I will illustrate with the following sentence:

- (1) **ለካ እሱ የአየርላንድ ተወላጅ “አይሪሽ” ኖሯል**<sub>[DB 139: 7]</sub>  
*läkka əssu yä-ayärländ täwälağ ayriš nor<sup>w</sup>all*  
 oh 3SM GEN-Ireland native Irish MIR  
 Oh, so he is a native of Ireland; he is Irish!

### 3.2.10. A chronology of thought about epistemic modality: From antiquity to Jespersen

In this section I will try to present some strands of thought on modality which have their beginnings in the past (sometimes the not so remote past) and are still being picked up by contemporary linguists so as to develop their own understanding of this category. The potentiality of some of them seems not to have been exploited, Bally’s comprehensive approach to modality being a case in point. It must be stressed that, although I will begin with the treatment of mood by the ancient grammarians, the account provided below

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<sup>50</sup> Though in some linguistic works the term may cover distinct meanings than the one presented by DeLancey in his seminal article (1997). For further details see Aikhenvald (2004: 210).

cannot be considered as a full historical background to the concept of modality. Indeed, the category is so complex and so diversely treated that to trace back the various lines of thought and notions involved in it would go far beyond the ambit of the thesis.

In the course of this section it will also become evident that linguists tried to conceptualise modality in language even before the vigorous development of modal logic. One might say that some of the post-Wright language researchers have reached for the conceptual apparatus offered by modal logic in order to treat anew and expand what had been previously done. Still others adopted ideas from logic only superficially, benefitting especially from the neat division into types and the nomenclature.

The first part of this outline is devoted to a succinct discussion of the ancient treatment of mood. This is followed by an outline of Bréal and Benveniste's reflections on subjectivity in language. Subsequently, Bally's theory of enunciation with the division of each sentence into *modus* and *dictum* is examined. The final part deals with Jespersen's proposal of "moods" as a notional category, which appears to have been the first comprehensive approach to modality.

Linguistic research into modality had its beginnings in the study of mood. In section 3.1.1 we already mentioned Protagoras (5<sup>th</sup> BC) as the one who distinguished four moods (*enkliseis*) in Classical Greek. Ancient grammarians, of both Greek and Latin, often confused moods with types of sentences on the one hand and with voice on the other (Heinz 1983: 42, 67). This might suggest that they were not clear whether mood is a semantic category or a form of the verb. Also, the number of moods distinguished by the grammarians was subject to revision.<sup>51</sup> We will not delve here into the issue how mood was conceived of by the ancient grammarians and their epigones throughout the centuries. Let us only mention Apollonius Dyscolus (2<sup>nd</sup> AD), the pioneer of the scientific description of Greek, who put the conceptualization of mood on the right track. Thus, in *De Constructione* he talks about *psychikê diathesis* by which he meant, as Hahn argues, "distinction of mood" or "a distinction as to mood", and not (as some maintain) "an

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<sup>51</sup> The number of moods oscillated between 4 and 6. Some early scholars included infinitive as one of them. Apollonius Dyscolus added deliberative (Hahn 1951: 33, Heinz 1983).

attitude of mind” or a similar notion involving “the mind” or “the soul”<sup>52</sup> (Hahn 1951: 30-31). There were early medieval commentators, in particular Choeroboscus (6<sup>th</sup> AD), and 19<sup>th</sup>-century scholars of Greek, who used “mood” as a technical term referring to a mental attitude (*ibid.* p. 44). Roman grammarians adopted the Greek term *enkliseis* under the name of *modus*<sup>53</sup> which was, in turn, passed on to the scholastics and much later taken over by Charles Bally (together with *dictum*). The longstanding grammatical tradition as well as the presence of different moods in the languages of Europe influenced the way that modality was first viewed in other languages of the world. I will touch upon this issue when discussing the history of the studies in modality in Amharic.<sup>54</sup>

Another strand of thought in the linguistic study of modality appears to have its origins in reflections on what in utterances is related to the speaker—more precisely, how cognitive activities and their outcomes on the part of the speaker as well as her/his role in the communicative event are encoded in language. The paramount notion involved in discussions on these questions is subjectivity. This notion is far from being unambiguous and only some researchers clearly state what they understand by it (see also the discussion above, 3.2.4). Here I will touch upon subjectivity insofar as it functions in the works of Bréal and Benveniste.

It seems that the idea of modality as, broadly speaking, “attitude or opinion of the speaker” (Palmer 1986: 2), was first articulated by the French linguist Michel Bréal (1832-1915). In his *Essai de sémantique* he writes about the “Subjective Element” (*élément subjectif*) (1964: 229-238). First, he singles out “the Subjective side of Language” (*le côté subjectif du langage*) which is encoded in various words and phrases as well as conveyed through grammatical means (*ibid.* p. 229). According to Bréal “Many adverbs, adjectives, or sentences which we interpolate [...], are reflections or appreciations of the narrator

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<sup>52</sup> That would be, indeed, anachronistic.

<sup>53</sup> The English equivalent of the Latin *modus* is ‘mode’. “Mood” is related to the Latin *affectus animi* (Hahn 1951: 47).

<sup>54</sup> See Section 2.3.

(Bréal 1964: 230).<sup>55</sup> Thus, some expressions in language are used not so much to describe reality but to enunciate the speaker's "personal feeling" (1964: 229). Blending what is a report of an event with what is the speaker's attitude to the contents of the report, is intrinsically involved in the nature of language. Among such expressions, Bréal mentions those which refer to "the greater or less degree of certainty or of confidence" on the part of the speaker, such as "no doubt, perhaps, probably, assuredly" (*ibid.*) (*sans doute, peut-être, probablement, sûrement*).

The linguistic object in which the two components, i.e. the subjective and the one which gives an account of the event, come together is the verb, more precisely, its mood, such as subjunctive and optative (*ibid.* pp. 232-233). Likewise, tenses play an important role in expressing the "Subjective side of Language", especially the future tense which is "an expression of our wishes or of doubts" (*ibid.* p. 234). Bréal connects the "Subjective Element" in language with the grammatical persons. Through them the speaker expresses the split between the subjective and the objective in the most conspicuous manner. By means of the first person, the speaker "places himself in opposition to the universe". The second person has no other *raison d'être* than to exist in opposition to the first. Only the third person relates to what is the "objective portion of Language" (*ibid.* p. 237). For Bréal, the "Subjective side of Language" is part of "the general plan of our languages" (*ibid.* p. 229). The speaker is never "a disinterested observer" of the world, but rather an agent, a doer (*ibid.* p. 237). And through speaking one does not primarily describe the world in an indifferent manner, but is involved in acting in it: expressing one's own desires and orders, exerting influence upon other people and making decisions. The latter, in turn, is linked with expressing one's views, beliefs and doubts (*ibid.* p. 238).

Bréal's ideas were later taken up and elaborated by Émile Benveniste. In *Problems of General Linguistics* (1971) Benveniste deals with subjectivity in language which he understands as "the capacity of the speaker to posit himself as 'subject'", i.e. "the psychic unity that transcends the totality of the actual experiences it assembles and that makes the

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<sup>55</sup> "Une quantité d'adverbes, d'adjectifs, de membres de phrase, que nous intercalons [...], sont des réflexions ou des appréciations du narrateur" [1904] 1976: 235).

permanence of the consciousness ” (1971: 224). This capacity is realized in a communicative event (“discourse”) where the speaker has an opportunity to refer to her/himself as “I”. Posing oneself as a subject is possible because there is another person referred to as “you”. For Benveniste, then, the speaker in the first instance juxtaposes her/his individuality not so much to “the rest of the universe”, as Bréal suggested, but to her/his interlocutor. Furthermore, language is permeated with subjectivity, since it “is so organized that it permits each speaker to *appropriate to himself* an entire language by designating himself as *I*” (1971: 226). One instance of such an appropriation is the present tense, which is “the time at which one *is speaking*” (*ibid.* p. 227).

Subsequently, Benveniste points to a group of mental verbs such as ‘I believe’, ‘I suppose’, ‘I presume’, ‘I conclude’ etc. What is characteristic of them is that they refer to the speaker’s attitude and as such are not on a par with verbs of the type ‘I reason’ or ‘I reflect’ which indicate an activity of “reasoning and reflecting” (1971: 228). Subsequently, he emphasizes that only the first person of expressions of the form: ‘mental verb + that’ manifests subjectivity. Using such expressions in the second person, as in “you suppose that he has left”, indicates that the speaker repeats a statement of another interlocutor and not that s/he reveals her/his attitude towards the utterance ‘he has left’.

Benveniste’s remarks concerning verbs of mental attitude as well as those referring to person will find their application in the present thesis in the construction of epistemic semantic dimensions.

Bally’s theory of enunciation is in fact a theory concerning modality. Modality is obligatory for each sentence though it may be expressed either explicitly or implicitly. The Genevan linguist conceives of modality as “la forme linguistique d’un jugement intellectuel, d’un jugement affectif ou d’une volonté qu’un sujet pensant énonce à propos d’une perception ou d’une représentation de son esprit”<sup>56</sup> (1942: 3). Thus, for Bally the meaning of a sentence is a thought which constitutes “a reaction to a representation” (1932

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<sup>56</sup> “[Modality] is the linguistic form of an intellectual judgement, an affective judgement or a wish which a thinking subject states regarding a perception or representation of his spirit.”

[1965]: 35).<sup>57</sup> Consequently, each sentence assumes the following binary structure: “X has this particular reaction to this particular representation” (Ducrot *et al.* 1991: 5). The reactional component of the sentence, which expresses judgement, emotion or will, is called “modus” whereas the representational component, referring to the object of modus, is “dictum”. This is in conformity with the idea that all thought has an active, subjective component, i.e. the reaction, as well as a passive, objective component, to wit the representation (Ducrot *et al.* 1991: 4).<sup>58</sup> In both the modus and the dictum, two further components may be distinguished, i.e., a subject and a verb. Thus, the doubly binary structure of a sentence might be illustrated as follows (presented after Ligara 1997: 33):

- |     |               |                     |                    |                                  |
|-----|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| (1) | <i>I</i>      | <i>believe that</i> | <i>the accused</i> | <i>is innocent</i> <sup>59</sup> |
|     | modal subject | modal verb          | dictal subject     | dictal verb                      |
|     | <b>modus</b>  |                     | <b>dictum</b>      |                                  |

However, sentences rarely assume such a canonical structure. For instance, the modal subject and the modal verb might not appear explicitly, the modal verb might be inserted into the dictal part of the sentence, or the modal verb might coincide with the dictal verb. There are further complications which involve the distinction between the modal subject and the speaker, though they cannot be discussed here at length. Suffice it to say that in the theory of enunciations the modal subject and the speaker may differ. Furthermore, modality may be expressed through a variety of linguistic means including verbs, auxiliaries, tense, mood as well as prosodic features (Bally 1942). Bally’s idea that each sentence has an explicit or implicit modal verb which indicates the modal subject’s attitude to the contents of the dictum was later to take the form of “a modal frame” (cf. Wierzbicka 1969, 1971).

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<sup>57</sup> Quoted after Ducrot *et al.* (1991: 4).

<sup>58</sup> Ducrot *et al.* mention that the concept of the binary structure of a sentence as having an active (the reaction) and a passive (the representation) component as well as the comprehension of the meaning of a sentence in terms of a thought are grounded in Descartes’ philosophy.

<sup>59</sup> The sentence is taken from Ducrot’s *et al.* article (1991: 2).

Otto Jespersen's contribution to the concept of modality, the last in this section, is worth noticing because of his attempt to build a "consistent system" of "moods"<sup>60</sup>, as he calls them, which one may simply conceive of as modal meanings (1924 [1965]: 319-321). The system is notional (semantic) in character. Jespersen sees a need to establish at the outset a list of "moods". After that, one might assign to a particular "mood" all those expressions which realize it. This procedure allows one to avoid the confusion between what belongs to a syntactic category and what to a notional. Jespersen himself proposes such a list and provides for each "mood" an exemplary expression, though he does not attach much weight to this list since "the categories overlap, and some of the terms are not quite unobjectionable" ([1924] 1965: 320). What merits particular mention is the division of the "moods" into two groups: a group of "moods" which "contain an element of will" (e.g. Jussive, Compulsive, Advisory, Desiderative, etc.) and a group of "moods" "containing no element of will" (e.g. Apodictive, Necessitative, Presumptive, Dubitative, Hypothetical, Concessional, etc.). This corresponds to the classification into deontic and epistemic modality, respectively.

For a more detailed discussion of the history of the notions of mood and, to a lesser extent, of modality, the reader is referred to van der Auwera and Zamorano Aguilar (2016).

### **3.3. Previous research into epistemic modality in Amharic**

#### **3.3.1. Introduction**

This section is devoted to a review of research on epistemic modality in Amharic. In the survey I will take into consideration selected grammars written from 1842 (when Isenberg published his grammar) up until now, and a few articles that deal with epistemificators (epistemic modal expressions). In Section 3.3.5 I will briefly discuss the representation of modal epistemic expressions in Amharic dictionaries. Although the Amharic grammars published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were often written by people without solid linguistic training

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<sup>60</sup> Jespersen puts "moods" in quotation marks throughout the chapter. For him "mood" is not a syntactic or morphological category but a notional (semantic) one ([1924] 1965: 320).

(even of the kind provided at that time) and lacking the sophisticated terminology of modern linguistics, they can be of interest to the contemporary reader. They not only give insights into the language of that time but also witness how their authors thought about the language. In the course of the section it will become clear that in Amharic grammars and dictionaries the category of epistemic modality has not only been underrepresented but occasionally even misrepresented.

The questions that I will pose and will try to answer in dealing with the grammars of Amharic are the following: which epistemificators are registered, how they are registered (within which category) and how their meanings are presented. The Amharic grammars that I will refer to are as follows (arranged in chronological order): *Grammar of the Amharic language* by Isenberg (1942), *Die amharische Sprache* by Praetorius (1878), *Grammaire de la langue Abyssine (Amharique)* by Mondon-Vidailhet (1898), *Initia Amharica: An introduction to spoken Amharic* by Armbruster (1908), *Traité de langue amharique (Abyssinie)* by Cohen ([1936] 1970), *Amharische Grammatik* by Hartmann (1980), *Grammatika amcharskogo jazyka* by Titov (1991) and *Reference Grammar of Amharic* by Leslau (1995). Together with the grammars, I will refer to Goldenberg's doctoral thesis *The Amharic tense-system* (1966).<sup>61</sup> I will keep to this chronological order in the course of the section to demonstrate how the thinking about the place of epistemic modality evolved over the history of linguistic writing on Amharic. Because the authors of grammars and articles I will be surveying adopt different transcription conventions for registering Amharic expressions, in some cases I will use my own convention. I employ the verbs *näggärä* 'tell' or *awwäqä* 'know' in the 3SM as a dummy verb to present the form of whatever root the main verb may have. I should be added here that, apart from the present survey, I will also be referring to different works on Amharic modal epistemic expressions throughout the thesis.

In Amharic epistemic modality, and actually the whole category of modality, occurs rather on the margins of grammar and therefore, it is treated briefly, if at all, in both old

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<sup>61</sup> My thanks to Orin Gensler and Iosif Fridman for English translations of Goldenberg's Hebrew text and for help in its interpretation.

and modern Amharic grammars.<sup>62</sup> It does not appear under this name (which is a rather modern invention as mentioned in Section 3.2) but exclusively through the expressions that represent it. Leslau’s grammar is exceptional in this regard as it presents relatively many modal epistemic expressions and it contains a section on “clause of possibility, probability, likelihood” (1995: 751-752). Additionally, all the grammarians of the Amharic language take a common path when it comes to the way they talk about grammatical categories: they go from form to meaning. To the best of my knowledge, no Amharic word for “modality” has yet been coined and the category has not been treated in any recent book on Amharic grammar written in Amharic (Getahun Amarä 1997, Baye Yimam 2016/2017).

### 3.3.2. Individual epistemificators in the literature on Amharic

#### 3.3.2.1. ይነግር ይሆናል *yənägr yəhonall*, ይነግር ይሆን *yənägr yəhon?* and related epistemificators

The modal epistemic expression that is most frequently accounted for is **ይነግር ይሆናል** *yənägr yəhonall* ‘he may tell, he might tell’, which consists of the simple imperfective form of the verb *yənägr* and the auxiliary *yəhonall*, together with its past equivalent **ነግሮ ይሆናል** *nägro yəhonall* ‘he may have told, he might have told’ consisting of the gerund *nägro* and the auxiliary *yəhonall*. Less often we encounter their interrogative counterparts **ይነግር ይሆን** *yənägr yəhon?* ‘might he tell?’ and **ነግሮ ይሆናል** *nägro yəhon?* ‘might he have told?’. All of these expressions involve the auxiliaries *yəhonall* and *yəhon*, and as such are formed in a way similar to that in which temporal distinctions are made, namely “main verb + auxiliary”. It seems to me that *yənägr yəhonall* and *yənägr yəhon?* appear more often than other modal expressions because they are relatively easy to notice by analogy to the temporal system of Amharic. This is corroborated by the fact that both expressions have been treated in many grammars as a part of the temporal system of the language. Thus, Isenberg places the “constructive form of uncertainty” (1842: 72), by which he

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<sup>62</sup> The only part of the Amharic modal system which occurs in all grammars is that of imperative and jussive, which belong to the area of deontic modality.

means the construction gerund + *yəhonall*, under the Amharic tenses. He calls the gerund a “constructive mood”<sup>63</sup> and gerund + *yəhonall* is one of its compound forms. The paradigm that he provides indicates that at his time the auxiliary *yəhonall* was still conjugated, and was not frozen as it is nowadays. Here is an excerpt (Isenberg 1842: 72):

**ከብሮ ይሆናል** *käbro yəhonall* ‘he may probably be honourable’<sup>64</sup>

**ከብራ ትሆናለች** *käbra təhonalläčč* ‘she may probably be honourable’

**ከብረሽ ትሆናለሽ** *käbräš təhoññalläš* ‘thou mayest probably be honourable’

**ከብረው ይሆናሉ** *käbräw yəhonallu* ‘they may be honourable’

It is notable that he presents the whole conjugational paradigm for gerund + *yəhonall* but not for simple imperfective + *yəhonall*.<sup>65</sup> But he knows about its existence because he uses simple imperfective + *yəhonall* in providing conjugational patterns for different derived stems, such as **ይሰባብር ይሆናል** *yəsäbabbär yəhonall* ‘he may probably break to pieces’ and **ይሰባብሩ ይሆናሉ** *yəsäbabbäru yəhonallu* ‘they may probably break to pieces’ (*ibid.* p. 88).

Similarly, Praetorius mentions (*yənägr*) *yəhonall* under “Tempora und Modi”, more precisely in the section “losere Zusammensetzungen” (‘looser compounds’), which he distinguishes from “zusammengesetzte Verbalformen” (‘compound verbal forms’), in the sections on the simple imperfective and on the auxiliary **ሆነ** *honä* ([1878] 1970: 355-382). In his strictly corpus-based work, he reports that simple imperfective + *yəhonall* is a rare form especially in main clauses, and that its interrogative counterpart, simple imperfective + *yəhon*, appears more often in the texts which he studied (*ibid.* pp. 363, 381). Praetorius does not explain the meaning of these constructions but provides examples with a German translation, such as the following **ምን ፣ አልባት ፣ እግዚአብሔር ፣ ያግዘን ፣ ይሆናል** *mən*

<sup>63</sup> Isenberg distinguishes seven “moods” in Amharic (1842: 61) which in modern terminology correspond to the basic forms of the Amharic verb, such as simple imperfective, perfective, imperative and gerund.

<sup>64</sup> It is not clear to me why Isenberg in his translation uses in the singular both ‘may’ and ‘probably’, but in the plural only ‘may’. This must be an oversight.

<sup>65</sup> He terms simple imperfective as “contingent mood”.

*albat ገዳጅን ለእኛ ይረዳል* (1 Samuel 14: 6)<sup>66</sup> *vielleicht wird der Herr uns stützen* ‘Perhaps the Lord will help us’. In his reference to Isenberg’s work, he notes that he has not come across the constructions of the type **ከብሮ ይሆናል** *käbro yəhonall* ‘he may probably be honourable’ but he does not doubt their existence (Praetorius [1878] 1970: 381).

The influence of Isenberg’s grammar on Mondon-Vidailhet’s work is evident (1898). The French scholar follows Isenberg in his terminology and in the way that Amharic grammar is conceptualized. Just like Isenberg he places the construction *gerund* + (conjugated) *yəhonall* in the section on the construction of Amharic tenses, and like Isenberg he does not mention the analogical construction with simple imperfective in that part. However, he adds a chapter on the usage of moods and tenses, and gives new interpretations of the modal epistemic expressions comparing them with French conditional clauses. Here his analysis goes astray. Thus, **ሰብራ እሆናለሁ** *säbərre əhonallähu* he translates as “j’aurai (peut-être) brisé, je briserais” ‘I will (maybe) have broken, I would break’ and holds that the construction indicates “futur incertain ou *conditionnel*” thanks to the auxiliary verb *honä* (Mondon-Vidailhet 1898: 80). In the chapter dealing with the usage of Amharic moods and tenses, Mondon-Vidailhet presents both simple imperfective + *yəhonall* and *gerund* + *yəhonall* under the “auxiliaire accidentel” *honä*. According to him, the former construction “donne au verbe la valeur d’un futur incertain correspondant parfois à notre conditionnel”<sup>67</sup> (*ibid.* p. 221). The examples he provides are as follows:

**ይገዙ ይሆናል** *yəgäzu yəhonall* “ils achèteraient” ‘they would buy’

**ይሆን ይሆናል** *yəhon yəhonall* “cela pourrait être, aurait pu être” ‘it could be, it could have been’

Continuing with his erroneous interpretation as a conditional, in this part he holds that *gerund* + *yəhonall* “donne au verbe la valeur d’un conditionnel antérieur”,<sup>68</sup> as in **ነግሮ**

<sup>66</sup> Quotation after the Old Testament translation into Amharic by Abu Rumi (between 1808-1818; in Ullendorff 1968: 64), and later improved by Thomas Pell Platt (1840). Praetorius used the revised version edited by L. Krapf and published in 1873 (Ullendorff 1968: 66).

<sup>67</sup> ‘It gives the verb the value of an uncertain future that sometimes corresponds to our conditional.’

<sup>68</sup> ‘It gives the verb the value of a conditional anterior.’

**ይሆናል** *nägro yəhonall* “il aurait parlé, il doit avoir parlé” ‘he would have spoken, he should/must have spoken’ (Mondon-Vidailhet 1898: 221). The second translation is (almost) correct, but not the first one, nor the grammatical function as a conditional. Armbruster, too, places the forms **ለቅም ይሆናል** *läqmo yəhonall* ‘he would pick, he must have picked’, and **ይለቅም ይሆናል** *yäläqəm yəhonall* ‘he may pick, he probably will pick’ under composite tenses (1908: 97). Unlike Isenberg and Mondon-Vidailhet, he mentions that the auxiliary *yəhonall* can be conjugated or it may “remain invariable” (1908: 106).

Cohen continues the line of thought of his predecessors and locates his discussion of the modal constructions with *yəhonall* in the section on the formation and usage of tenses and moods ([1936] 1970: 162-198). According to him simple imperfective + *yəhonall* conveys the meaning of “éventuel” ‘possible’: “ce pourra être, il se peut, peut-être” ‘this could be, it may be’, ‘maybe’, as in **ይነገሩ ይሆናሉ (ይሆናል)** *yənägru yəhonallu (yəhonall)* “ils diront probablement” ‘they will probably say’, “il se peut qu’ils disent” ‘it may be that they (will) say’ ([1936] 1970: 176). Like Armbruster (but not clear whether depending on him) he mentions that *yəhonall* may conjugate or remain frozen ([1936] 1970: 176). As for gerund followed by *yəhonall*, Cohen suggests that it conveys the meaning of “le futur antérieur de supposition ou de doute”:<sup>69</sup> **ወስደውት ይሆናሉ (ይሆናል)** *wäsdäwut yəhonallu (yəhonall)* *ils l’auront (sans doute) emporté* ‘they will have it (doubtlessly) carried away’ (*ibid.* p. 190). He takes up the two constructions once again in the chapter on conditional clauses on the ground that the constructions with *yəhonall* express “éventualité vraisemblable” ‘plausible eventuality’ or ‘probability’, too. Here he states that *yəhonall* is frozen and provides examples for this (*ibid.* pp. 378-379).

In Goldenberg’s doctoral thesis the epistemifiers *yənägr yəhonall*, *nägro yəhonall*, *yənägr yəhon?* and *nägro yəhon?* are treated as representatives of compound tenses (1966: 173-208). Additionally, he discusses separately the auxiliaries *yəhonall* and *yəhon* in the part devoted to “Copulas, auxiliaries and analogous verbs” (*ibid.* pp. 93-172). Goldenberg notes that the construction gerund + *yəhonall* (*nägro yəhonall*) occurs frequently in descriptions of Amharic grammar. According to him, the meaning of this expression can

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<sup>69</sup> ‘The future anterior of supposition or doubt.’

be calculated from that of its components: the gerund conveys the perfectivity of the main verb and *yəhonall* is “a form of the copula that indicates a hedged assertion ‘it might be’”. Hence the meaning of አድርጎ ይሆናል *adrəgo yəhonall* is ‘it might be that he did’. In the example sentences, which he takes from various Amharic novels, he has found only the invariant form of the auxiliary *yəhonall* (Goldenberg 1966: 208). The parallel, non-past construction *yənägr yəhonall* he renders as a “hedged assertion ‘it is possible that’”. Here too the auxiliary occurs exclusively in the 3SM (*ibid.* p. 248). The constructions *nägro yəhon?* and *yənägr yəhon?* occur in “a question-exclamation of surprise or suspicion” (*ibid.* pp. 196, 247). He translates *nägro yəhon?* as “Perhaps it was...?!, Could it have been that...” and mentions that it is characteristic for monologues and “internal speech” (*ibid.* p. 206). *Yənägr yəhon?*, in turn, is used when the modalized event is localized in the present or future (*ibid.* p. 247).

The two most recent grammarians, Hartmann (1980) and Leslau (1995), take a more careful approach to the description of the Amharic verbal forms in that they always start with a particular form and try to pin down which function it has. They do not talk about overarching grammatical categories of the verb such as tense, aspect and mood/modality but operate with forms and their meanings. Hartmann (1980: 193) describes (simple) imperfective + *yəhonall* as referring to a future probable action (“probables Futur”). He translates the construction into German with the future auxiliary ‘werden’ followed by ‘wohl’: ይመጣ ይሆናል *yəmätä yəhonall* ‘Er wird wohl kommen’. In the same vein, he treats gerund + *yəhonall* as the expression of a probable past action (“probables Perfekt”) እራቱን በልቶ ይሆናል *əratun bälto yəhonall* ‘Er wird schon zu Abend gegessen haben’. ‘Er hat wahrscheinlich schon zu Abend gegessen’ (*ibid.* p. 201).

Leslau provides by far the most lengthy account of simple imperfective + *yəhonall/yəhon* (1995: 326-29) and gerund + *yəhonall/yəhon* (*ibid.* pp. 380-82). According to Leslau, the former construction, with a conjugable or frozen auxiliary, expresses “possibility or probability in the present-future in a main clause” (*ibid.* p. 326), as in ይህ ፣ መርዝ ፣ ይገድለው ፣ ይሆናል *yəh märz yəgädläw yəhonall* ‘this poison might kill him’ (*ibid.* p. 327). The construction is most often rendered into English with the modal verbs

‘may’ and ‘might’. Importantly, Leslau also explicitly states that the simple imperfective + *yəhonall* can refer to the “future perfect”, giving several example sentences as in **ይህ ሳምንት ከግለቁ በፊት ሦስት ቴያትር ያዩ ይሆናል** *yəh sammənt kəmaläqu bəfit sost tiyatər yayu yəhonall* ‘before this week has passed they will probably have seen three plays’ (Leslau 1995: 327). Such sentences are absent in my corpus. Additionally, he rightly notes that the simple imperfective + *yəhonall* can be accompanied by **ምናልባት** *mənalbat*.

In the part dealing with the gerund + *yəhonall*, Leslau states that it “expresses the idea of possibility, uncertainty, probability, doubt, or prediction for the past in the main clause rendered by ‘probably, possibly, may have, will have, must have’” (1995: 380). Of interest is again the assertion that this construction may be used for expressing (epistemically modalized) “future perfect” (witness his translation below), not registered in my corpus (and judged as unacceptable by my informant), as in **ይህ ሳምንት ከግለቁ በፊት ሦስት ቴያትር አይተው ይሆናል** *yəh sammənt kəmaläqu bəfit sost tiyatər aytäw yəhonall* ‘before this week is over they will have seen three plays’ (*ibid.* p. 381). It is noteworthy that Leslau gives exactly the same “future perfect” example sentence (except for the verb tense) for IPFV + *yəhonall* (see above) and for GER + *yəhonall* and gives them essentially the same translation.

Apart from these constructions, Leslau mentions a few more containing the auxiliary *yəhonall*, such as the conjunction *bə-* followed by simple imperfective + *yəhonall*, and the conjunction *lə-* followed by simple imperfective + *yəhonall/yəhon* (*ibid.* pp. 329-30).

Märsə’*e* Hazän Wäldä Qirqos’ approach needs a special treatment (1942/1943). Within his section on Amharic auxiliary verbs, the Ethiopian scholar devotes a separate section to *yəhonall*, in which he makes a distinction between *yəhonall* as a future copula and *yəhonall* as an auxiliary (**የግሥ ፡ ረዳት** *yägəss räddat* ‘helping verb’, lit. ‘helper of the verb’) (1942/1943: 87). *Yəhonall* preceded by the simple imperfective (**የትንቢት ፡ ቦዝ** *yätənbīt boz*) or by the gerund (**የኃላፊ ፡ ቦዝ** *yəhalafi boz*) he subsumes under the category of **አጠራጣሪ አንቀጽ** *attäraṭari anqäṣ* (*attäraṭari* meaning ‘doubtful’). His usage of the word *anqäṣ* is not very clear to me. Once he defines this word in the sense of a “predicate”

(Märsä<sup>3</sup>e Hazän 1942/1943: 74, 163) while in another place he seems to use it as an equivalent of “mood” (*ibid.* pp. 102-104).<sup>70</sup>

**3.3.2.2. ሳይነግር አይቀርም** *saynägr ayqärämm*, **ሳይነግር አልቀረም** *saynägr alqärrämm* and **መንገድ አይቀርም** *mängäru ayqärämm*

Another modal epistemic expression which is registered in some older grammars of Amharic, and has been paid more attention to in recent grammars, is **ሳይነግር አይቀርም** *saynägr ayqärämm* ‘he surely/probably tells/will tell/told’. The first component of this construction consists of the conjunction **ስ** *sə* ‘when’, followed by the imperfective form of the verb. The second component, *ayqärämm*, responsible for the modal meaning, is a compound negative imperfective form of the verb *qärrä* ‘remain’. It seems that the main motivation for including this expression in the early grammars was its strange formation with a double negative: ‘he will not remain when he will not tell’. Mondon-Vidailhet mentions **ሳይመጣ አይቀርም** *saymäta ayqärämm* which he translates into French mirroring the Amharic structure: “il ne manquera pas de venir” ‘he won’t fail to come’ (1898: 211). Here one of the two negatives is rendered grammatically (*ne...pas*) while the other is rendered by the lexically negative verb *manquer* ‘fail’. Cohen provides a similar, word for word, translation of this expression into French without catching its idiomatic, modal epistemic meaning: **ሳልሔድ አልቀርም** *salhed alqärämm* “je ne resterai pas sans aller” ‘I will not remain without going’, “je ne manquerai pas d’aller” ‘I will not fail to go’. He states that “these constructions are the more common in that the gerund cannot be used to indicate a negative circumstance.” ([1936] 1970: 303).<sup>71</sup> Indeed, the gerund cannot be negated as such, and instead one must use the negated perfective. Cohen’s analysis has two shortcomings: he does not explain why the negative here requires the temporal

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<sup>70</sup> It might be mentioned that the usage of the word *anqäs* is also not univocal in modern grammars written in Amharic. Baye Yimam uses it in reference to “aspect” under which he understands also the imperative (2009/2010: 151-161). In his larger grammar (2016/2017: 142-144), he employs it to mean “aspect” and thus uses it to refer to a partially different set of linguistic objects. In contrast, Getahun Amarä seems to use it in reference to sentence types: declaratives, interrogatives, imperatives and negatives (1997: 112-113).

<sup>71</sup> “Ces constructions sont d’autant plus usuelles que le gérondif ne peut pas s’employer pour marquer une circonstance négative.”

conjunction *sə-* (which in turn forces the simple imperfective form),<sup>72</sup> and, more seriously, he renders the meaning as a simple unqualified future instead of epistemically modalized future.

A linguist who pays much attention to *saynägr ayqärämm* as well as to another modal epistemic expression with *ayqärämm*, i.e. **መንገሩ አይቀርም** *mängäru ayqärämm* ‘he will definitely tell’, ‘he is sure to tell’, is Titov. Beginning from his early article (1974), through his main Amharic grammar (1991), and up to his last work with Bulakh (2013), he situates both of these expressions among the Amharic analytical indefinite<sup>73</sup> aspectual and temporal forms, with an additional qualification “with a modal nuance of probability (вероятност)” (Titov 1991: 133).<sup>74</sup> Even though he rightly considers both expressions as modal epistemic, he erroneously holds that there is no semantic difference between them but only a syntactic one: *saynägr ayqärämm* can take object suffixes whereas *mängäru ayqärämm* is incapable of doing so (1991: 131).<sup>75</sup> Another inaccuracy in Titov’s account concerns the allegedly modal epistemic character of the “past” form of *mängäru ayqärämm*, namely **መሥራቱ አልቀረም** *mäsratu alqärrämm*,<sup>76</sup> which in fact conveys the non-modal meaning of ‘he has been still working’.<sup>77</sup> I have found in my corpus one example sentence containing another expression that he lists, i.e. **ሳይሠራ አልቀረም ነበር** *saysära alqärrämm näbbär* ‘he, apparently, had already worked’, but in the apodosis of a conditional sentence which, I think, is the only possible context where it may be encountered. For one more expression that he mentions: **መሥራቱ አልቀረም ነበር**<sup>78</sup>

<sup>72</sup> See my discussion of this conjunction in Section 5.3.3 “Embedding via conjunction”.

<sup>73</sup> The intended meaning of “indefinite” is unclear to me. Titov writes that “from the standpoint of the unfolding of an action” Amharic analytical temporal forms divide into three groups: “indefinite, continuous (continued) and perfective” (1991: 128).

<sup>74</sup> Surprisingly, Titov nowhere mentions any of the constructions with epistemic *yəbonall* in his works.

<sup>75</sup> The difference is discussed in Section 5.9.2 below.

<sup>76</sup> Titov uses *sarrä* ‘work’ as his dummy verb, fulfilling the same role as my *näggärä*. Hence my *mängäru* becomes his *mäsratu*.

<sup>77</sup> A good example from my corpus is **አደዋወላ እንደ ቀድሞ ባይሆንም መደወላ አልቀረም**<sub>[TS 2]</sub> *addäwawäl<sup>w</sup>a andä qädmo baybonämm mädäwawälwa alqärrämm* ‘Even though she doesn’t phone [lit. ‘her way of phoning is not’] like before, she still phones.

<sup>78</sup> Titov provides an example; but its meaning is not clear and my informant interpreted it as ‘still’.

*mäsratu alqärrämm näbbär* (Titov 1991: 130-131) I have not found any evidence, neither in the corpus nor in the internet sources.

Goldenberg deals with *saynägr ayqärämm* and *mängäru ayqärämm* together with other “descriptive verbs”, such as **አወቀ** *awwäqä* ‘know’ and **አደረገ** *adärrägä* ‘do’ (1966: 148-49). It seems that by “descriptive verbs” he understands those auxiliary-like verbs which have not entirely lost their lexical meaning when entering into analytical constructions, but rather have preserved some more or less palpable traces of these original meanings (*ibid.* p. 137). Goldenberg rightly considers *saynägr ayqärämm* and *mängäru ayqärämm* as idiomatic expressions but he does not correctly interpret their meaning, relying too much on the word for word translation of these constructions. Thus, according to him, the construction *sə-* + imperfective + *ayqärämm* conveys the meaning “he does not remain without doing the thing, which is to say, indeed he did it” (*ibid.* p. 148). In his example sentences, the construction is also translated with “indeed” (*ibid.* p. 149). The second epistemic expression, *mängäru ayqärämm*, refers, says Goldenberg, to “affirmation that the activity indicated by the verb in the infinitive (i.e. *mängäru*) truly happened or will happen.” (*ibid.* p. 149).

Leslau provides the broadest spectrum of modal epistemic expressions involving the verb *qärrä*: verbal noun + **አልቀረም** *alqärrämm* / **አይቀርም** *ayqärämm* / **የማይቀር ነው** *yämmayqär näw* (1995: 409, 752, 873-74), **ሰ-** *sə-* + negative imperfective + **አይቀርም** *ayqärämm* (*ibid.* pp. 337-38, 751-52, 874, 876), **ሰ-** *sə-* + negative imperfective + **አልቀረም** *alqärrämm* (*ibid.* pp. 337-38). The first three expressions (those with the verbal noun) are said to convey the meanings “certainly, definitely, sooner or later, undoubtedly, likely, probably” (*ibid.* p. 409). As we can see the range of senses that Leslau ascribes to the expressions is quite extensive.

According to Leslau, *sə-* + negative imperfective + *alqärrämm* refers to “probability or likelihood (‘likely, liable’) of the action in the past” while the similar construction with *ayqärämm* indicates “probability or likelihood of the action in the present or future”; the latter construction can also refer to the past but with the meaning of ‘must’ (1995: 337-38). His further statement, however, to the effect that *sə-* + negative imperfective + *alqärrämm*



context, whether a conditional clause or a modal epistemic verb. This is corroborated by another example of his quoted above (Section 3.3.2.1) where the particle accompanies the epistemificator **ይነግር ይሆናል** *yənägr yəhonall* ‘he may tell, he might tell’: *mən albat Ägzi’abher yaggazänä yəhonall* (1 Samuel 14, 6) ‘Perhaps the Lord will help us’. Leslau makes a similar point, though indirectly. It is noteworthy that he registers the particle *solely* in the context of the epistemificators *yənägr yəhonall* (1995: 327) and *nägro yəhonall* (*ibid.* p. 381), stating that it “may augment” both structures. I report carefully on this point because *mənalbat* is far too often (and too casually) equated to English ‘maybe, perhaps’.<sup>80</sup> Hartmann mentions *mənalbat* among other Amharic modal expressions (“Modalwörter”), which he classifies as sentence adverbs: **እውነትም** *əwnätəmm* (‘bestimmt, wirklich’), **ደግነቱ** *däggännätu* (‘glücklicherweise’) **እምብዛም** *əmbəzamm* (‘reichlich’), **ምናልባት** *mənalbat* (‘vielleicht’) **ያለጥርጥር** *yälätərəṭṭər* (‘zweifelsohne’) (Hartmann 1980: 323). It might be noted that he regards as “modal” both those expressions which entail the truth of the proposition over which they scope (e.g. *əwnätəmm*), and those which do not entail the truth (e.g. *mənalbat*).

#### 3.3.2.4. መሰለ(ው) *mässälä(w)*<sup>81</sup>

Of the array of Amharic lexical epistemic verbs, **መሰለ(ው)** *mässälä(w)* ‘it seems to (him)’ is privileged as being the most comprehensively studied. The verb has the intriguing double nature of a plain verb and a copula, it can be conjugated or remain invariant, and it takes as its subject or its complement a relative verb. Departing here from my previous, chronological presentation of the studies on epistemificators, I will begin with the most comprehensive, and actually the most recent, account of *mässälä(w)*, authored by Kapeliuk ([1981] 2009, 1988). This is because Kapeliuk provides the best analysis and overview of the complexity of the various structures in which the verb is involved. Her two studies differ from each other in the way they are organized. In her article ([1981]

<sup>80</sup> For detailed discussion see Section 4.4.7.1.

<sup>81</sup> Further on in the thesis (though not here) the verb will be presented as an epistemificator in the compound imperfective form, with or without the personal object suffix, **ይመሰላል** *yəməslall* ‘it seems’, **ይመሰለኛል** *yəməslännall* ‘it seems to me’.

2009) she recognizes distinct structures depending on whether the verb is transitive vs. intransitive, conjugable copula vs. invariable plain verb, and whether it appears with a subject vs. without a subject. In her book (Kapeliuk 1988), on the other hand, she pays attention to the fact that *mässälä(w)* can occur as an invariant (3SM) copula of a cleft sentence, a conjugable copula of a non-cleft sentence, and a plain invariable verb. Some of the structures discussed in the article are not included in the book and vice versa. Here I will use the terminology as used in her book (1988).

*Mässälä(w)* ‘it seems to (him)’ can occur in a cleft sentence, behaving analogously to the copula, and “giving to the whole expression a shade of uncertainty” (Kapeliuk 1988: 140). What is clefted may be the subject of the underlying sentence, in which case *mässälä(w)* conjugates agreeing with the subject in person, gender, and number (Kapeliuk [1981] 2009: 320-323). Alternatively, what is clefted can be something other than the subject, in which case the verb remains invariant (1988: 140).<sup>82</sup> Next, she deals with two other structures with *mässälä(w)* in which, however, the verb has a different function (1988: 154-155). These two structures are formally identical to each other, and have the following form: *yä(mm)- + verb + mässälä(w)* and are highly specific to this verb. In the first structure of the pair, *mässälä(w)* ‘it seems to (him)’ is a conjugable copula, with the relative verb functioning as its complement. In the second structure, *mässälä(w)* is a plain, invariant verb, and the preceding relative verb functions as its subject. Additionally, in ([1981] 2009) she gives a transitive use of *mässälä* with the meaning ‘resemble’, ‘imitate’ (*ibid.* pp. 319-320), and *mässälä* in its “impersonal usage”, without a subject but always with a personal object suffix (*ibid.* pp. 328-29). Although Kapeliuk presents an account of numerous manifestations of *mässälä(w)*, the range of structures in which it is involved may actually be even richer (see Sections 4.3.2, 4.3.2.4, 4.4.1).

Goldenberg deals with *mässälä* in his section on descriptive verbs (see above). Nevertheless, he notices how much *mässälä* differs from these, being syntactically close

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<sup>82</sup> In the article Kapeliuk mentions only the cleft construction with a conjugable *mässälä(w)* (“emploi multipersonnel de *mässälä*”) ([1981] 2009). In her book, she instead talks about the “impersonal use” of *mässälä(w)*, which I am inclined to interpret as its usage as invariant copula. This interpretation is supported by the examples that she provides (1988: 140-141).

to the copula (1966: 146-147). He lists and illustrates three different structures in which *mässälä* is involved and in which, according to him, the verb comes close to functioning as a copula. These are: *mässälä* taking an adjective as its predicate, *mässälä* taking “the free abstract relative as its subject”,<sup>83</sup> and *mässälä* in the imperfective form (*yämäslall*) in an “asyndetic subordination” (Goldenberg 1966: 146). However, Goldenberg’s analysis of *mässälä* as being both copula-like and at the same time a verb taking “the free abstract relative as its subject” seems to me problematic. I assume that, for a verb to count as a copula, it must have a complement. But if *mässälä* is indeed a copula in the examples that Goldenberg gives, then there is nothing to fill the role of complement. That is why I have found it reasonable to treat it, not as a copula, but as a full verb (see Section 4.4.1). In fact, if we look more closely at the examples he gives we find there two sentences (out of five) in which *mässälä* is truly a copula<sup>84</sup>: በአራያ ሥላሴ የተፈጠረ አይመስላቸውም ነበር *bä’araya sallase yätäfäṭṭärä aymäslaččäwəmm näbbär* ‘He did not seem to them to be created in the image of the Trinity’; የሚረባው ይመስልዎታል ወይ? *yämmiräbaw yämäslwotall wäy?* ‘Does it seem useful for you?’.<sup>85</sup> In the remaining three sentences *mässälä* is a full verb with the abstract relative clause as its (true) subject, as in በምን ምክንያት የሞቱ ይመስልኛል? *bämən məknəyat yəmotu yämäsləšall?* ‘What seems to you (to be) the reason that they died?’.

Praetorius was the first to take note of this verb, in his discussion of “subjektische Sätze” ‘subject sentences’—nowadays analysed as cleft sentences ([1878] 1970: 465-66). He observes that *yä-* and *yämm-*, which formally play the role of a relative pronoun but in such constructions functionally combine with the verb to create a verbal noun, appear “exceptionally often” with *mässälä*, as in አይመስላሽሁ ፣ የመጣሁ ፣ አሪትንኛ ፣ ነቢያትን ፣

<sup>83</sup> By “free abstract relative” Goldenberg means a (formally) headless relative clause, functioning not as a “normal” headless relative but as a pure noun clause expressing the verbal action as a whole (1965: 9-10), e.g. የሚረዳት ይመስልኛል *yämmirädat yämäslännäll* (lit.) ‘that(Rel) he will help her seems to me’.

<sup>84</sup> A key diagnostic for a copula is that it should have a non-dummy subject, and that this subject should show concord with the verb (not “It seems that he” but rather “He seems...”). This cannot be seen if the verb is 3SM, as in the present case; but with the help of my informants I changed the number and gender of the relative verb (“They seem...”, “She seems...”), yielding fully acceptable sentences which count as copular.

<sup>85</sup> These and the following two sentences were translated into English by MK.

ለመቼር *aymäslaččahu yämätṭahu oritənənna näbiyatən lämäšar* (Mt. 5:17) ‘nicht möge es euch scheinen dass ich gekommen bin, Gesetz und Propheten aufzulösen’.<sup>86</sup> (This is the same as Goldenberg’s “abstract relative”.) He rightly emphasizes the peculiarity of *mässälä* but fails to notice the structural difference between how the relative verb functions with *mässälä* and how it functions with cleft sentences about which he talks in this section. In the above sentence, *yämätṭahu* ‘who I came’ is a headless relative clause functioning as the subject, just like in cleft sentences; but the sentence does not contain the complement, hence *mässälä* cannot be the copula and the whole sentence cannot be a cleft.

Apart from *mässälä(w)*, the only epistemic verbs discussed in the literature on Amharic are *assäbä* ‘think’ and *awwäqä* ‘know’. Amberber (2003) treats them as “conceptual primitives”, following Wierzbicka’s Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach. He demonstrates the different “frames” in which both verbs may occur and accounts for the meaning of such established constructions.

### 3.3.3. Grammaticalization studies on epistemic modality

Thus far very little has been written about grammaticalization processes within epistemic modality in Amharic. To my knowledge, there are only two publications on this topic, both written by Laura Łykowska (2003, 2006). In her article on the “Grammaticalization of the Amharic Tense System” (2003) she deals with “grammaticalization of modality structures” using the approach of complex schemas proposed by Heine (1993). As “auxiliary verbs” encoding epistemic modality she treats *honä* ‘be, become’, *qärrä* ‘remain’ and *čalä* ‘can’. The auxiliary verb *qärrä* especially draws her attention because it is found in two constructions: in one of them both the main verb and *qärrä* are negated (*saynägr ayqärämm*); in the other, only *qärrä* is negated while the main verb in the form of a verbal noun remains in the affirmative (*mängäru ayqärämm*). According to her, as a result of the process of grammaticalization the negated verb *qärrä* ‘remain’ started to convey the meaning of high probability or certainty (*ibid.* pp. 35-37). Łykowska does not explain, for

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<sup>86</sup> “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill” (Mt 5:17, NRSV).

the specific case of Amharic modals, what the different schemata mean and how they are activated.

Łykowska's second contribution deals with grammaticalization patterns in Amharic (2006). Here again she discusses the epistemic construction with *qärrä* in the context of negation. For the epistemificator መንገሩ አይቀርም *mängäru<sub>s</sub> ayqärämm* 'he will definitely tells', 'he is sure to tells' the grammaticalization pattern is: NEGATION, REMAIN > POSSIBILITY/CERTAINTY. For the epistemificator ሳይነገር አይቀርም *saynägr<sub>s</sub> ayqärämm<sub>s</sub>* 'he surely/probably tells/will tells/told<sub>s</sub>' it is NEGATION-V, NEGATION-REMAIN > CERTAINTY (*ibid.* p. 805).<sup>87</sup>

### 3.3.4. Baye Yimam on modality in Amharic

The article "Modality in Amharic", by Baye Yimam (2011), is thus far the only work dedicated specifically to this category, and hence it merits a special section. Baye understands modality as "a semantic/pragmatic feature which refers to degrees of possibility, probability, necessity, volition, obligation, etc. of an event or state of affairs becoming possible or real in a set of possible worlds or circumstances surrounding it." (2011: 48). For him the core of modality consists of the "features"<sup>88</sup> of "possibility" and "necessity" while other "features fall into their periphery" (*ibid.*). It is not clear to me whether Baye intends by these terms concepts that are meant to apply in the first instance to the domain of epistemic modality, or whether he means them in a more neutral sense as applying to both epistemic and deontic modality, and even to an overarching, undifferentiated category of modality *tout court*.

The aim of his article is to present these two features, namely possibility and necessity. Because possibility is scalar the status of the event may be arranged "from the most certain or possible to the least certain or impossible" (*ibid.*). Note that in the course of the text he talks not only about "degrees of possibility" but also about "degrees of modality", which supports the last-mentioned idea in the previous paragraph. The division

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<sup>87</sup> She is not consistent in the notation of her patterns.

<sup>88</sup> The author uses the term "feature" both for the category of modality as a whole and for one of its values, e.g. possibility.

into epistemic and deontic modality he considers, interestingly, as a matter of the kind of evidence (“The evidence may be epistemic or deontic”) (Baye 2011: 41). Although the article concentrates on modality, at the beginning Baye lists auxiliaries of all types: temporal, aspectual and modal. The set of modal auxiliaries are said to embrace the following items: *all-* ‘exist’, *nor-* ‘live/exist’, *čal-* ‘can/be able to’, *hon-* ‘become/may’ and *tägäbba-* ‘be necessary’ (*ibid.* pp. 43-44). He singles out *čal-* ‘can/be able to’ and *hon-* ‘become/may’ as those which express degrees of possibility (*ibid.* p. 43)—although, in fact, in the section dealing with “possibility” he presents only *hon-*.

Asserting that there are five various degrees of possibility, Baye demonstrates these with a single proposition *ləğočču nägä ən č ät yifältallu* ‘The children will chop wood tomorrow’<sup>89</sup> and applies to it four modal expressions: *bä’rgəṭ* ‘certainly’, *mənalbat* + simple imperfective + *yəhonall*, *mənalbat* + simple imperfective + *yəhon* + *yəhonall*, (*mənalbat*) + NEG simple imperfective + *yəhon* + *yəhonall*, as well as negation (section 3.1). Repeatedly throughout the article, Baye makes it clear that his focus will be on modal auxiliaries. Nevertheless in order to show degree of possibility he makes use not only of modal auxiliaries but also a modal particle *bä’rgəṭ* (to show certainty) and negation of a verb under assertion (*ibid.* pp. 48-51).

In the next two sections (3.2 and 3.3) he shifts away from what we would call “epistemic modality” (i.e. possibility) to “deontic modality”. In this domain he mentions the following “readings” or “features”: permission/volition expressed by *čal-* ‘can/be able to’ and necessity/obligation expressed by *tägäbba-*. He applies to propositions containing the two auxiliaries *čal-* and *tägäbba-* the four above-mentioned diagnostic expressions and the negation to show different scalar degrees of “permissibility” and “obligation”.

Baye appears to be taking here an atypical approach to modality whereby he presents first a scale that is defined in terms of possibility and then seeks to generalize and apply this scale to deontic notions. All the examples that he provides are based on manipulating the single proposition *ləğočču nägä ən č ät yifältallu*, which at times renders unnatural, overburdened sentences. I agree with Kapeliuk, who, in her review of the issue of *Rassegna*

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<sup>89</sup> Here Baye translates the Amharic word *ən č ät* as “log” which yields unidiomatic English.

*di Studi Etiopici* in which Baye’s article appeared, notes that these sentences must reflect Baye Yimam’s idiolect rather than the Amharic most people would speak or write (2013: 249).

### 3.3.5. Epistemificators in Amharic lexicography

Amharic mono- and bilingual dictionaries are, alongside grammars, another source of information on epistemificators. I do not intend here to attempt a comprehensive survey of mono- and bilingual dictionaries but rather to give the reader a general idea of how epistemificators are presented in lexicographical works. The questions I will try to answer resemble those posed in regard to Amharic grammars: whether a given epistemificator has been registered at all, how it is registered, and how it is translated into the target language. I will focus on grammatical epistemificators and selected lexical ones.

For this brief survey, I have chosen a variety of dictionaries, both mono- and bilingual, from both the beginning and the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>90</sup> and (in bilingual works) with English, Italian and Russian as the second language (SL) (only in the direction Amharic-SL). These are: the monolingual *Addis yamarəñña mäzɡäbä qalat* [A new Amharic dictionary] (1969/1970) by Dästa Täklä Wäld and *Amarəñña Mäzɡäbä Qalat* [Amharic dictionary] (2000/2001) compiled by the Academy of Ethiopian Languages and Cultures, and the bilingual *Vocabolario amarico-italiano* by Ignazio Guidi (1901), *Amcharsko-ruskij slovar'* [Amharic-Russian dictionary] by Gankin (1969) and *Amharic-English Dictionary*. Vol 1, 2 (1990) by Kane. Epistemificators will naturally be listed under the epistemificator head because it is the only lexical part of the expression which is at all stable. For instance, the epistemificator **ይነግር ይሆናል** *yənägr yəhonall* we expect to find under **ሆነ** *honä* ‘be(come)’.

My first general observation on the monolingual dictionaries is that they hardly register any grammatical epistemificator at all. An exception is the copular epistemificator *yəhonall* listed in *Amarəñña Mäzɡäbä Qalat*, translated with the help of another grammatical epistemificator “**ሳይሆን አይቀርም**” *sayhon ayqärəmm*, and illustrated with a

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<sup>90</sup> No new, 21<sup>st</sup>-century dictionary has yet appeared.

cleft sentence (2000/2001: 11).<sup>91</sup> It seems that monolingual dictionaries fail to include grammatical epistemificators because of their tendency to focus on single words rather than on larger units, especially discontinuous units.<sup>92</sup> Additionally, thus far no serious and systematic scientific attempt to compile a monolingual Amharic dictionary has been undertaken. The editors of *Amarəñña Mäzɡäbä Qalat*, the most recent lexicographical enterprise, based their dictionary on previous one-man works, adding some new lemmas and omitting some others (2000/2001: iv).

Bilingual dictionaries perform better in this regard, as they do include at least some grammatical epistemificators. This could be due to the fact that their compilers have a broader linguistic base of comparison, i.e. they can draw on both the source language and the target language in seeking expressions that should be included. But even they rarely, if at all, make note of epistemificators such as **ማወቅ አለበት** *mawäq alläbbät* ‘he must know’ and **ሊነግር ይችላል** *linägr yäčälall*, ‘he could tell, he may tell’—expressions which may also convey deontic and dynamic meaning (see Sections 2.4.5, 2.4.6). *Mawäq alläbbät* is registered exclusively in its deontic meaning (e.g. Gankin 1969: 469). *Linägr yäčälall* is mentioned in Gankin’s dictionary: **ሊሆን ይችላል** *libon yäčälall* это может быть ‘it may be’, это может случиться ‘it may happen’ as a subsense of the main entry **ቻለ** *čälä* ‘can’ (1969: 438).

The epistemificators **ይነግር ይሆናል** *yänägr yəhonall* ‘he may tell’ and **ይነግር ይሆን** *yänägr yəhon?* ‘might he tell?’ appear in all the dictionaries although in different places within the main entry. Gankin, whose dictionary is the most advanced Amharic lexicographical work since he distinguishes and orders senses, treats them as idioms. For *yəhonall* he provides the following Russian equivalents: **ይሆናል** *yəhonall* очевидно ‘apparently’, вероятно ‘probably’, возможно ‘possibly’; **ይሆን ይሆናል** это может быть ‘it may be’, **አይተውት ይሆናል** возможно, они видели его ‘possibly they saw him’ (1969: 45). For *yəhon* he gives more examples, but he fails to notice the semantic connection

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<sup>91</sup> It should be noted that *sayhon ayqärəmm* is not itself listed in the dictionary.

<sup>92</sup> In Amharic monolingual dictionaries there do exist entries that are larger than a single word, but only provided that the component elements typically occur adjacent to one another. These include compound nouns, some noun-verb collocations and some multi-word adverbials.

between this epistemificator and *yəhonall*: he states only that *yəhon* is used “to impart a greater expressivity (выразительность) to an interrogative sentence”, as in **የቲ ይሆን?** *yätu yəhon?* какой же? ‘which one?’ (1969: 45). Guidi mentions only *yənägr yəhon?* among other constructions with the verb *honä*: **እንዴት ይመጣ ይሆን?** *come potrebbe venire?* ‘how could s/he come?’ (1901 col. 9). In Kane’s dictionary, constructions are given a special field, separated from other entries by a line. Kane states that “**ይሆናል** *yəhonall* with the imperfect or gerund indicates probability” while “the simple imperfect **ይሆን** *yəhon* indicates uncertainty”. In his example sentences *yəhonall* is translated by “probably” and “might” (the latter in sentences GER + *yəhonall*) (1990: 20-21).

Of the two epistemificators with the verb *qärrä*, **መንገሩ አይቀርም** *mängäru ayqärəmm* ‘he will definitely tell’ is not included in the dictionaries at all. The other epistemificator, **ሳይነግር አይቀርም** *saynägr ayqärəmm* ‘he surely/probably tells/will tell/s/told/s’, is registered either in this form or in its past form: **ሳይነግር አልቀረም** *saynägr alqärrämm* ‘he surely/probably did not tell’, or both forms are mentioned. Each of the lexicographers places the epistemificator within the entry in a way similar to that of *yəhonall*. Thus, Guidi inserts “**ሳይመጣ አይቀርም** non mancherà di venire ‘he will not fail to come’, verrà certamente ‘he will certainly come’” as an example of *qärrä* with negation which, according to him, means “non mancar di...” ‘not fail to...’ (1901 col. 252). Gankin classes “**ሳይፈራ አልቀረም** *sayfära alqärrämm* наверно, он испугался” ‘he probably got scared’ in a group of idioms (1969: 288). In Kane’s dictionary we find **ሳይነግር አይቀርም** *saynägr ayqärəmm* in the form of “**ስ** sə + negative imperfective + **አይቀርም** *ayqärəmm*” with the meaning “to be liable to, most probably [+verb]”. His example is “**ሳይመጣ አይቀርም**” *saymäta ayqärəmm* rendered as “he will probably come, most likely come, he may come” (1990: 712). He treats the epistemificator *saynägr alqärrämm* separately rendering it as “most probably, very likely” and not as a past form of the same expression (*ibid.* p. 711).

When it comes to mental epistemic verbs of the type ‘think that’, ‘believe that’, it will seldom be the case that a 1SG present tense<sup>93</sup> form will be provided as part of the subsenses of the main entry; rather, the 3SM citation form will tend to be followed in all subentries. A more important point here is whether the lexicographers give information about the valence of the verb, i.e. its arguments. As shown in Section 2.4.2 valence is decisive for determining the meaning of a verb; but none of the dictionaries provides information on it explicitly and in a systematic way. Gankin distinguishes at times meanings based on the valence of the verb, as in አሰበ *assäbä*, but even in his dictionary one can make inferences about the arguments a given verb takes only from examples. These, however, are given accidentally and sporadically rather than systematically. Just to give one example. In Gankin’s dictionary, under the entry *assäbä* we encounter an example with the quotative linker ብሎ *bälo*, but not an example in which the subordinate sentence is introduced by the complementizer አንድ- *ändä-* (1969: 487-88).<sup>94</sup> Under the headword አመኘ *ammänä* the situation is the other way round: the lexicographer presents an example sentence with *ändä-*, but not with the quotative linker *bälo* (*ibid.* 476-77). Kane’s approach is idiosyncratic and most inconvenient for the user, because he simply lists all possible meanings of an abstract verb such as *assäbä* without further indicating in which context (grammatical and semantic) a given equivalent is appropriate.

The way epistemifiers are registered in Amharic dictionaries reflects the deficiencies of the lexicography of this language. Some major shortcomings are lack of systematicity in registering expressions, unsatisfying treatment of larger units of language, lack of information about valence and, related to it, failure to distinguish between different senses. My proposal for how epistemifiers could be registered in a bilingual dictionary will be found in the Lexicon of Amharic epistemifiers towards the end of the thesis.

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<sup>93</sup> See Section 2.4.4 in which I argue that only 1SG present tense stative mental epistemic verbs are to be treated as modal.

<sup>94</sup> For types of complement clauses see Section 4.4.2.1.



## 4. THE INVENTORY OF AMHARIC EPISTEMIFIATORS

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an extensive survey of the Amharic epistemifiers together with their morphosyntactic description and their meaning as suggested by appropriate English translations. In this chapter the semantic characterisations are deliberately very rough; much more precise analysis will be given in Chapter 5. The reader should be warned: the question of listing and classifying epistemifiers is a swamp and s/he should not expect either completeness or total clarity.

The characteristics of the epistemifiers vis-à-vis the grammatical categories of tense and aspect will be limited in this section to mentioning their means of expression. An in-depth analysis of the interaction between epistemic modality and these categories is contained in Chapter 6. In that same chapter I will discuss the issue of negation.

The list below presents some 70-odd epistemifiers that I have come across. This list, I feel, though not complete, includes the most frequently used epistemifiers in the language. The epistemifiers are divided into four main groups: grammatical, copular, lexical and parenthetical. Let me remind the reader that the verbs *näggärä* ‘tell’ and *awwäqä* ‘know’ are used throughout the present work as dummy verbs which stand for the form of whatever root the main verb may have.

### 4.2. Grammatical epistemifiers

This and the following category (quasi-auxiliaries) are the two types that are subsumed under the general category of grammatical epistemifiers.

#### 4.2.1. Auxiliary epistemifiers

##### 4.2.1.1. (ይነግር)<sub>S</sub> ይሆናል (*yənägr*)<sub>S</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells, he might tells’

This epistemifier is the most frequent fully auxiliarized modal epistemic expression in Amharic. From the morphological point of view, ይሆናል *yəhonall* is a standard compound imperfective form, composed (in the usual way) of the 3SM, simple imperfective form of the verb ሆነ *honä* ‘be(come)’, that is ይሆን *yəhon*, and the 3SM, perfective form of the verb አለ *allä* ‘be present, exist’, አል *all*, functioning as the non-past

tense auxiliary.<sup>1</sup> Thus, **ይሆናል** *yəhonall* stands literally for ‘it will be(come)’. The form is frozen and as such does not conjugate. Leslau notes that it may agree with the subject (1995: 326), but such an instance has not been recorded in my corpus.<sup>2</sup> It is semantically dependent in that it needs another verb whose meaning it (epistemically) modifies. The attendant main verb **ይነግሩ** *yənāgrs* ‘he tells/he will tell’, in turn, occurs in the (dependent) simple imperfective<sup>3</sup> form within a complement clause; therefore it is syntactically dependent. It is here given in parenthesis to indicate that it may be substituted by two other subordinate verbal forms, namely the gerund **ነግሮ** *nāgro* ‘he having told’ or the progressive **እየነገረ** *əyyänäggäräs* ‘he is telling’. These verbal forms are used for expressing a past and a progressive state of affairs, respectively. The main verb hosts pronominal subject and object markers (1), expresses various temporal and aspectual (but not modal) nuances of the predicate, and undergoes negation (3).<sup>4</sup> Modality, on the other hand, is expressed in this construction purely by the invariant auxiliary *yəhonall*, and this is its only function. It is notable that the sentence stress always falls on the main verb.

- (1) **ምናልባት** **ሳራ** **የው-በነሽ** **'ታ-መጣው** **ይሆናል**<sub>[YWN 224: 5]</sub>  
*mənalbat zərə Yəwəbbənäš 't-amäta-w yəhonall*  
 possibly today PN 3SF-bring\IPFV-OBJ.3SM EPST  
 ‘Perhaps Yəwəbbənäš **may** bring **him** today’
- (2) **በእስራኤል** **የመሬት** **መንቀጥቀጥ** **'ይከሰት** **ይሆናል**<sup>5</sup>  
*bä-ʾIsraʾel yä-märet mänqätqät 'yə-kkässät yəhonall*  
 in-Israel GEN-earth shake\VN 3SM-occur\IPFV EPST  
 ‘An earthquake **may** occur in Israel’

<sup>1</sup> In Goldenberg’s term, *yəhon-all* is a compound auxiliary — in contrast to a simple one, for instance **ነበረ** *näbbärä* ‘was’ indicating the past tense category (2013: 219).

<sup>2</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup>-century grammarians of the Amharic language provide paradigms and examples showing that the auxiliary *yəhonall* was conjugated. The first grammarian to mention that *yəhonall* can either be conjugated or remain frozen was Armbruster (1908: 106). For more detailed discussion see Section 3.3.2.1.

<sup>3</sup> In Amharic, the Semitic “imperfective” tense/aspect occurs with the suffixed auxiliary **ከለ** *allä* (“compound imperfective”) when it expresses an independent predication, but without **ከለ** *allä* (“simple imperfective”) in subordinate clauses.

<sup>4</sup> On the interaction between this epistemificator and negation see Section 6.2.2.

<sup>5</sup> [http://mapi.gov.il/Earthquake/downloads/eq\\_guide-amhar.pdf](http://mapi.gov.il/Earthquake/downloads/eq_guide-amhar.pdf). [Accessed: 17.11.2015]

- (3) ስድስት ወር ሲሞላ መሙላቱን  
*səddəst wär s-i-mola mämulat-u-n*  
 six month when-3SM-fill\IPFV fill\VN-POSS.3SM-ACC

'ይረሱት ይሆናል ፣  
*yə-räs-u-t yəhonall*  
 3SPOL-forget\IPFV-3SPOL-OBJ.3SM EPST

'አያስታውሱት ይሆናል<sub>[DB 84: 22-23]</sub>  
*a-y-astawəs-u-t yəhonall*  
 NEG-3SPOL-remember\IPVF-3SPOL-OBJ.3SM EPST

‘When six months have gone by, **maybe** he will have forgotten their passage; he **may not remember** it’

Interestingly, the simple imperfective component of the auxiliary, ይሆን *yəhon*, can itself be repeated, bringing about a change in the meaning—lowering in the degree of epistemic strength.<sup>6</sup>

- (4) ማን ያውቃል ነገ ምስጢሩ ይገለጥ  
*man y-aswq=all-ø nägä məstir-u yə-ggällät*  
 who 3SM-know\IPFV=NPST-3SM tomorrow secret-POSS.3SM 3SM-be.revealed\IPFV

ይሆን ይሆናል<sup>7</sup>  
*yəhon yəhonall*  
 EPST EPST

‘Who knows; **maybe** his secret **may be revealed** tomorrow’

It should also be noted that a copula clause, consisting of a copula and a copula complement, can itself be used with *yəhonall*. Like other verbs, the copula occurs here in the simple imperfective form:

- (5) ሌላው የበቀለ ምክንያት እኛው እንሆን  
*lela-w yä-bäqäl-u məknəyat əñña-w ənn-(ə)-hon*  
 another-DEF GEN-revenge-POSS.3SM reason 1PL-DEF 1PL-COP\IPFV

ይሆናል<sub>[MBL 214: 24]</sub>  
*yəhonall*  
 EPST

‘We, ourselves, **may be** the other reason for his revenge’

<sup>6</sup> Baye (2011: 53) mentions this reduplication and accounts for its meaning.

<sup>7</sup> <https://yefikerabate.wordpress.com/author/tatektsegaye/page/3/>. [Accessed: 17.11.2015]

The epistemificator (*yänägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* cannot be used in a subordinate clause introduced by the complementizer እንደ- *ändä*- ‘that’. It may, however, occur in a clause introduced by the inflectable quotative linker ብዬ *bəyye* ‘I saying:’:<sup>8</sup>

- (6) **ምናልባት የሌተና ኮሎኔል አጥናፉ ቁጥብ ባህሪ የበለጠ**  
*mənalbat yä-letäna kolonel Aṭnafu quṭṭəb bahri yäbällätä*  
 possibly GEN-lieutenant colonel PN reserved character more  
**አላቀራረባቸው ይሆናል ብዬ**  
*al-aqärarräb-aččäw yəhonall bəyye*  
 NEG-bring.together\PFV.3SM-OBJ.3PL EPST say\GER-1SG  
**እገምታለሁ**<sub>[NB 290: 13-14]</sub>  
*ə-gämmət=all-ähu*  
 1SG-assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I assume: possibly Lieutenant Colonel Aṭnafu’s reserved character **may have failed to bring** them together’

4.2.1.2. (**ይነግር**)<sub>s</sub> **ይሆን** (*yänägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhon?* ‘might he tells?’

This epistemificator occurs only in questions of the kind known as *deliberative* or *meditative*.<sup>9</sup> Morphologically, **ይሆን** *yəhon* is the 3SM simple imperfective form of the verb **ሆነ** *honä* ‘become’. The verb *yəhon* has undergone a grammaticalization process and has come to serve as a frozen interrogative auxiliary (it is completely invariant) which always follows the main verb. Just like the epistemificator (*yänägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall*, the attendant main verb can be in the (dependent) simple imperfective form, the gerund or the progressive, depending on the tense and aspect. The epistemificator can be used with both polar (7) and content questions (8).

- (7) **ሌላስ ጥላን ሊኖር አይችል ይሆን?**<sub>[DB 17: 9]</sub>  
*lela-ss plan li-nor a-y-čäl yəhon*  
 another-TOP plan COMP-3SM-exist\IPFV NEG-3SM-can\IPFV EPST:Q  
 ‘**Might not** another plan possibly exist?’
- (8) **የወዲያነሽ ስንት ዓመት ይፈረድባት ይሆን?**<sub>[YWN 103: 22]</sub>  
*Yäwädiyanäš sənt amät yə-ffärräd-(ə)-bb-at yəhon*  
 PN how.many year 3SM-be.sentenced\IPFV-MAL-OBJ.3SF EPST:Q  
 ‘How many years **might** Yäwädiyanäš **be sentenced to?**’

<sup>8</sup> The complementizer እንደ- *ändä*- ‘that’ and the quotative linker ብዬ *bəyye* ‘I saying:’ are described below, in the context of mental verbal epistemificators; see Sections 4.4.2.1. and 5.11.

<sup>9</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this epistemificator see Krzyżanowska (2014).

## 4.2.2. Quasi-auxiliary epistemificators

### 4.2.2.1. ሊነግር<sub>S</sub> ይችላል<sub>S</sub> *linägr<sub>S</sub> yäčälall<sub>S</sub>* ‘he could<sub>S</sub> tells, he may<sub>S</sub> tells’

The quasi-auxiliary epistemificator ሊነግር<sub>S</sub> ይችላል<sub>S</sub> *linägr<sub>S</sub> yäčälall<sub>S</sub>*, ‘he could<sub>S</sub> tells, he may<sub>S</sub> tells’<sup>10</sup> consists of the main verb preceded by the complementizer ለ- *lä-* (roughly ‘for’, ‘to’),<sup>11</sup> and of the independent inflected verb ይችላል<sub>S</sub> *yäčälall<sub>S</sub>* functioning as the quasi-auxiliary. Semantically the complementizer *lä-* introduces, to use Dixon’s terminology, a “potential complement clause” (2010: 392-393).<sup>12</sup> It should be stressed that while some other verbs taking a *lä-* + imperfective complement can alternatively take ለ-*lä-* + verbal noun complement (Goldenberg 1966: 61), or even a bare verbal noun complement,<sup>13</sup> this is impossible for the epistemificator *linägr<sub>S</sub> yäčälall<sub>S</sub>*. Both verbs have a coreferential subject, animate (9) or inanimate (abstract) (10), with which they agree. The verb ይችላል<sub>S</sub> *yäčälall<sub>S</sub>* is composed of the conjugable imperfective form of the verb ቻለ *čälä*, ‘can, be able, manage, could’, (ይችላ *yäčäl* for 3SM) and the perfective form of the verb አለ *allä* ‘be present, exist’ (3SM አለ *all*) which serves as the non-past tense auxiliary. The quasi-auxiliary *yäčälall<sub>S</sub>* is syntactically independent but semantically dependent while the main verb, which occurs in the (dependent) simple imperfective form, is syntactically dependent. The sentence stress always falls on the main verb.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The most fitting translation of this epistemificator is ‘could’. However, in some contexts it is better to render the Amharic expression as ‘may’. See also a more detailed semantic description of this epistemificator in Section 5.10.1.

<sup>11</sup> *lä + yänägr > linägr*.

<sup>12</sup> Goldenberg (1965: 10-11) mentions that ለ- *lä-* + imperfective precedes verbs expressing “various shades of intention and will (including consent and refusal), possibility and necessity”. He lists 38 verbs of this kind (*ibid.* his ftn. 9). Similarly, Titov and Bulakh note that it introduces purpose clauses as well as clauses with the meaning of obligation, possibility, intention and decision (2013: 348). For instance, Amharic verbs of wanting take as their complement a verb preceded by ለ- *lä-*: ሊነግር ወደደ *linägr wäddädä*, ‘he liked to tell’; ሊነግር ፈለገ *linägr fällägä*, ‘he wanted to tell’; ሊነግር ከጀለ *linägr kägğälä*, ‘he desired to tell’.

<sup>13</sup> There is, however, a slight semantic difference between these different types of complements which will not be examined here.

<sup>14</sup> See also brief discussion and an example in Section 2.4.5.

In contrast to the monoclausal (**ይነግር**)<sub>s</sub> **ይሆናል** (*yənägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells’, in this epistemificator we are dealing with two clauses: the main clause *yäčälall*<sub>s</sub> and the subordinate clause introduced by the complementaizer *lä-*.

- (9) **ምናልባት እሱን 'ልታጣው ትችላለች**  
*mənalbat əssu-n 'l-(ə)-tt-ata-w tə-čäl=all-äčč*  
 maybe 3SM-ACC COMP-3SF-lose\IPFV- OBJ.3SM 3SF-could\IPFV=NPST-3SF  
 ‘Maybe she **could lose** him’

- (10) **ይህች ሴት ነገ የተሻለ ዕድል**  
*yəhəčč set nägä yä-täšäl-ä əddəl*  
 this.F woman tomorrow REL-be.better\PFV-3SM fate  
**'ሊገጥማት ይችላል**<sub>[TS 1]</sub>  
*'l-i-gätm-at yə-čäl=all-ə*  
 COMP-3SM-happen\IPFV-OBJ.3SF 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘This woman, tomorrow a better fate **could be in store** for her (lit. happen to her)’

There is a convincing argument that *yäčälall*<sub>s</sub> and its complement verb belong to two different clauses: namely, they can be separated by another word, such as the conjunction **ግን** *gən* (this is not possible with (*yənägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells’):

- (11) **ምናልባት የሞገዱ መጠን ሊያንስ ወይም**  
*mənalbat yä-mogäd-u mätän l-i-(y)-ans wäyämm*  
 perhaps GEN-wave-DEF size COMP-3SM-diminish\IPFV or  
**ሊበዛ ግን ይችላል**<sup>15</sup>  
*l-i-bäza gən yə-čäl=all-ə*  
 COMP-3SM-increase\IPFV but 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘But perhaps the size of the wave **could diminish** or **increase**’

This epistemificator may also occur in most types of subordinate clauses. In sentences (12) and (13) it is used in a causal clause (*libon/laynoraččäw səlämmičäl*).

- (12) **ልጆቹ ከሆኑ የልምድ ጉዳይ ሊሆን**  
*läğ-öčč-u kä-hon-u yä-ləmd gudday l-i-hon*  
 child-PL-DEF if-COP\PFV-3PL GEN-habit matter COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV  
**ስለሚችል አይፈረድባቸውም**<sub>[TS 3]</sub>  
*sälä-mm-i-čäl a-y-ffärräd-(ə)-bb-aččäw-(ə)-mm*  
 because-REL-3SM-could\IPFV NEG-3SM-be.judged\IPFV-MAL-OBJ.3PL-NEG

<sup>15</sup> [http://getanehkassie.blogspot.de/2016/08/blog-post\\_23.html](http://getanehkassie.blogspot.de/2016/08/blog-post_23.html). [Accessed: 12.02.2016]

‘Inasmuch as they are children, because it **could be** a habit, they should not be judged (lit. “it should not be judged against them”)’

- (13) እናትየዋ የገንዘብ አቅም ላይኖራቸው  
*annatəyyä-wa yä-gänzäb aqəm l-a-y-nor-aččäw*  
 mother-DEF.F GEN-money means COMP-NEG-3SM-exist\IPFV-OBJ.3SPOL  
 ስለሚችል ሊወቀሱ  
*sälä-mm-i-čäl l-i-wwäqqäs-u*  
 because-REL-3SM-may\IPFV COMP-3SPOL- be.reproached\IPFV-3SPOL  
 አይገባም<sup>[TS 3]</sup>  
*a-y-ggäbba-mm*  
 NEG-3SM-be.proper\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘The mother should not be reproached (just) because she **may have no** financial means’

The past tense is conveyed by the main verb (the gerund), which must be followed by the imperfective of the copula ሆነ *honä* in order to fill the slot after the complementizer *lä-* (14).

- (14) ምናልባት የአማርኛ ቋንቋ ከሌሎች ጋር  
*mənalbat yä-Amarəñña q<sup>w</sup>anq<sup>w</sup>a kä-lel-očč gar*  
 maybe GEN-Amharic language with-another-PL with  
 ሲደበላለቅ ሲሜቲክ ቤተሰብ ውስጥ ተገኝቶ  
*s-i-ddäbälalläq Semetik betäsäb wəst təgäññat-o*  
 when-3SM-mix.with.one.another\IPFV Semitic family in be.found\GER-3SM  
 ሊሆን ይችላል<sup>[AA 862]</sup>  
*l-i-hon yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Maybe when the Amharic language mixed with others it **could have found** itself in the Semitic family’

A similar construction exists for the progressive aspect: the main verb occurs in the progressive followed by the complementizer *lä-* and imperfective ሆነ *honä*.

The epistemificator *linägrs yəčälalls*, ‘he could<sub>s</sub> tells’ may appear as the complement of the auxiliary *yəhonall*.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> On cooccurrence of these two modal epistemificators see Section 5.10.1.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that *linägrs yäčälalls* ‘he could<sub>s</sub> tell<sub>s</sub>, he may<sub>s</sub> tell<sub>s</sub>’ and the next epistemificator, **ማወቅ አለበት**<sub>s</sub> *mawäq alläbbät*<sub>s</sub> ‘he must<sub>s</sub> know, he should<sub>s</sub> know’, can convey not only an epistemic meaning but also deontic and dynamic meanings. In this regard they are similar to the modal verbs “may” and “must” in many European languages.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4.2.2.2. **ማወቅ አለበት**<sub>s</sub> *mawäq alläbb(ät)*<sub>s</sub> ‘he must<sub>s</sub> know, he should<sub>s</sub> know’<sup>18</sup>

There are only a few examples of this epistemificator in the written and in the spoken corpus.<sup>19</sup> It consists of the quasi-auxiliary **አለበት** *alläbb(ät)*<sub>s</sub> preceded by the main verb. The quasi-auxiliary *alläbb(ät)*<sub>s</sub> is composed of the invariant 3SM perfective form of the verb of existence **አለ** *allä* ‘be present, exist’ followed by the applicative infix **-ብ- -bb-**, ‘on, upon’ with the semantic nuance of burden of necessity, to which an object marker is attached. The conjugable suffix *-ät*, here in the 3SM, is the applicative object which semantically refers to the person upon whom the burden is placed. The main function of the quasi-auxiliary *alläbb(ät)*<sub>s</sub> in this construction is to convey the modal epistemic meaning “must”; the main verb, which conveys the lexical meaning of the whole construction, takes the form of the verbal noun. It is the grammatical subject of the sentence (Hetzron 1970: 308, Kapeliuk 1988: 40). The epistemificator translates literally as ‘a state of affairs exists upon someone’. The sentence stress always falls on the main verb.<sup>20</sup>

- (15) **እንዴ በቡድኑ ውስጥ ቆይተሻል!** **አንዳንድቹን**  
*ände bā-budən-u wəst qoyyət-äš=all-ø andand-očč-u-n*  
 oh.really in-team-DEF in stay\GER-2SF=PF-2SF some-PL-DEF-ACC  
**መሪዎች** **'ማወቅ አለብሽ**<sub>[MBL 235: 4-8]</sub>  
*märi-(w)-očč 'mawäq all-ä-bb-(ə)-š*  
 leader-PL know\VN exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.2SF  
 ‘Oh really you have stayed in the group!? **You must know** some of the leaders’

<sup>17</sup> On this see Section 3.2.7.

<sup>18</sup> In this epistemificator the main verb is indicated schematically by the stative verb *mawäq* (verbal noun of ‘know’) rather than the usual dummy verb *mängär* ‘telling’. This is because *mängär alläbbät* ‘he must tell’, since it is an active verb, necessarily takes a deontic reading.

<sup>19</sup> In contrast, a similar expression conveying deontic and dynamic meanings is frequently encountered in texts.

<sup>20</sup> See also brief discussion and examples in Section 2.4.6.

- (16) **ደክተሩ እንደነገረችኝ ከሆነ ደግሞ መስማት**  
*doktär-<sup>w</sup>a andä-näggär-äčč-(ə)-ññ kə-hon-ä dägmo mäsmat*  
 doctor-DEF.F as-tell\PFV-3SF-OBJ.1SG if-COP\PFV-3SM moreover hear\VN
- ሁሉ ይችላል ። እንዲያውም ድምጹን**  
*hullu yə-čəl=all-ø. andiyawəmm dəmṣ-e-n*  
 everything 3SM-can\IPFV=NPST-3SM in.fact voice-POSS.1SG-ACC
- 'መስማትም አለበት'** [HL 107: 6-8]  
*'mäsmat-(ə)-mm all-ä-bb-ät*  
 hear\VN-FOC exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM

‘Besides, as for what the (woman) doctor told me, he can hear everything. In fact, he must (be able to) hear my voice’

Despite being syntactically independent the quasi-auxiliary *alläbb(ät)<sub>s</sub>* is semantically deficient and, consequently, requires a fully lexical verb as its complement, which appears as a verbal noun.<sup>21</sup> To express the past tense and the progressive aspect, the main verb occurs instead as the gerund and the progressive (17), respectively, followed by the verbal noun of the copula **ሆነ** *honä*, i.e. **መሆን** *mähon*.

- (17) **ባንተ ድምጹ?! በዚያ ላይ በሴቶች ባንድ ውስጥ ገብተህ ፤ እየቀለድክ መሆን አለበት** [YG 2/4]  
*b-(yä)-antä dəmṣ bə-zziya lay bə-set-očč band wəṣt gäbt-äh*  
 with-GEN-2SM voice in-that on in-woman-PL band in enter\GER-2SM
- እየቀለድክ መሆን አለበት** [YG 2/4]  
*əyyä-qälläd-k mähon all-ä-bb-ät*  
 PROG-joke\PFV-2SM COP\VN exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM

‘With *your* voice?! On top of that joining a girl band; you must be joking’

If the predicate is instead a nominal construction then its copula again takes the form of the verbal noun, **መሆን** *mähon*:

- (18) **የነዚህ እጆች ባለቤት የግድ ጀግናና ጠንካራ**  
*yä-nnäzzih əğğ-očč baläbet yä-gədd ġägna-(ə)-nna tänkarra*  
 GEN-these hand-PL owner GEN-necessity hero-and strong
- መሆን አለበት** [TFT 9: 18]  
*mähon all-ä-bb-ät*  
 COP\VN exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM

‘The owner of these hands must necessarily be a hero and strong’

<sup>21</sup> The verbal noun occurs as a complement, either in the subject or object position, of many Amharic verbs (see Kapeliuk 1988: 32-33, 44-46).

It is notable that the verbal noun in the construction with *alläbb(ät)<sub>S</sub>* can only be derived from a stative verb. In order to use an action verb in this construction, the action verb occurs in the progressive form followed by the verbal noun of the copula. An action verb with *alläbb(ät)<sub>S</sub>* has a deontic interpretation, not epistemic.

**4.2.2.3. ሳይነግር<sub>S</sub> አይቀርም<sub>S</sub>** *saynägr<sub>S</sub> ayqärəmm<sub>S</sub>* ‘he surely/probably tells/will tell<sub>S</sub>/told<sub>S</sub>’ This epistemificator has a relatively complex morphology. It is composed of the main verb introduced by the conjunction **ስ** *sə-* ‘when’ and of the independent conjugable verb **አይቀርም<sub>S</sub>** *ayqärəmm<sub>S</sub>* ‘he will not remain<sub>S</sub>’.<sup>22</sup> In this construction both verbs are in the negative. The main verb takes the form of the negative simple imperfective, **አይነግር<sub>S</sub>** *aynägr<sub>S</sub>* ‘he will/does not tell<sub>S</sub>’; joined to the conjunction *sə-* it appears as **ሳይነግር<sub>S</sub>** *saynägr<sub>S</sub>*. The item *ayqärəmm<sub>S</sub>* is analysable into the simple imperfective of the verb **ቀረ** *qärrä* ‘remain’, **ይቀር** *yəqär*, and the negative marker comprised of the circumfix **አ-** *a-* and **-ም** *-(ə)mm*. Thus, the whole construction **ሳይነግር<sub>S</sub> አይቀርም<sub>S</sub>**, *saynägr<sub>S</sub> ayqärəmm<sub>S</sub>* could be literally translated as ‘he will not remain<sub>S</sub> when he will/does not tell<sub>S</sub>’. The epistemificator is biclausal, containing the matrix clause *ayqärəmm<sub>S</sub>* ‘he will not remain<sub>S</sub>’ and the subordinate clause with the main, lexical verb introduced by the conjunction *sə-* ‘when’. The sentence stress always falls on the main verb.<sup>23</sup>

- (19) የአባቴ                      ጅሮ ትልቅ መሆኑን                      ልብ አልኩ።  
*yä-abbat-e                      ḡoro tälləq mähon-u-n                      läbb al-ku.*  
 GEN-father-POSS.1SG ear big COP\VN-POSS.3SM-ACC heart say\PFV-1SG

<sup>22</sup> Titov (1974: 228) considers **አይቀርም** *ayqärəmm* (in this and in the following epistemificator) as an auxiliary whose lexical meaning has been completely bleached.

<sup>23</sup> Alongside the present epistemificator, there is one more, similar construction in Amharic involving negation of both verbs but which does not convey an epistemic meaning. It can be used with all grammatical persons and with a wider range of verbs than suggested by Leslau (1995: 339). Schematically it can be presented as **ሳይነግር አያልፍም** *saynägr ayalfəmm* ‘he will tell’, lit. ‘he will not pass when he does not tell’. Here is one example:

- አንድ እናት አንገብግቧቸው**                      የተራገሙትን                      ሳልጠቅስ  
*and ənnat angäbgəb<sup>w</sup>-accäw                      yä-tärəggäm-u-t-(ə)-n                      s-al-täqs*  
 one mother be.enraged\GER-OBJ.3SPOL REL-curse\PFV-3SPOL-DEF-ACC when-NEG.1SG-mention\IPFV  
**አላልፍም** [SQ 23.04.2014]  
*al-alf-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG.1SG-pass\IPFV-NEG

‘I will mention how one mother (elderly woman) got enraged and cursed’

<b>ሁለቱ</b>	<b>ጅሮዎች</b>	<b>ተደምረው</b>	<b>ፊቱን</b>
<i>hulätt-u</i>	<i>ǰoro-(w)-očč</i>	<i>tädämmär-äw</i>	<i>fit-u-n</i>
two-DEF	ear-PL	be.added.up\GER-3PL	face-POSS.3SM-ACC

<b>'ሳያክሉ</b>	<b>አይቀሩም</b> [GQ 80: 29-30]
<i>'s-a-y-akl-u</i>	<i>a-y-qär-u-mm</i>
when-NEG-3PL-equal\IPFV-3PL	NEG-3PL-remain\IPFV-3PL-NEG

‘I noticed that my father’s ears are big. Added up, the two ears are surely equal (in size) to his face.’

The quasi-auxiliary *ayqärəmm*s described above, may also appear as a frozen form **አይቀርም** *ayqärəmm*, with the subject now cross-referenced only on the main verb.<sup>24</sup> Here the syntactic scope of *ayqärəmm* is extended in comparison to the conjugable *ayqärəmm*s, now embracing the whole proposition and not only the main verb. This shows that the epistemificator is in the process of grammaticalization.

(20)	<b>ዛሬ</b>	<b>'ሳይዎች</b>	<b>አይቀርም</b>	<b>ነጭነቱ</b>
	<i>zare</i>	<i>'s-a-y-wañ-u</i>	<i>a-y-qär-(ə)-mm</i>	<i>näččännät-u</i>
	today	when-NEG-3PL-swim\IPFV-3PL	NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG	whiteness-DEF

<b>ብሶባቸዋል</b> [BF 71: 14-15]
<i>bäs-o-bb-aččäw=all-ø</i>
worsen\GER-3SM-MAL-OBJ.3PL=PF-3SM

‘They have surely been swimming today; the whiteness (of their skin) has got worse on them’

(21)	<b>ከሰው</b>	<b>ሁሉ</b>	<b>በቀላሉ</b>	<b>የሚደስቱና</b>	<b>የሚያዝኑ</b>
	<i>kä-säw</i>	<i>bullu</i>	<i>bäqällalu</i>	<i>yämm-i-ddässät-u-(ə)-nna</i>	<i>yämm-i-(y)-azn-u</i>
	from-person	all	easily	REL-3PL-rejoice\IPFV-3PL-and	REL-3PL-mourn\IPFV-3PL

<b>ሴተኛ</b>	<b>አዳሪዎች</b>	<b>ሳይሆኑ</b>	<b>አይቀርም</b> [BŠ 207: 10-12]
<i>setännä</i>	<i>adari-(w)-očč</i>	<i>s-a-y-hon-u</i>	<i>a-y-qär-(ə)-mm</i>
prostitute-PL	when-NEG-3PL-COP\IPFV-3PL	NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG	

‘Of all people they are surely prostitutes, who easily rejoice and mourn’

In spoken Amharic, the negative suffix **-ም** *-(ə)mm* can alternatively be attached to the end of the main verb instead of to *ayqär*.

(22)	<b>እነዚህ</b>	<b>የውኃ</b>	<b>ጉድጓዶች</b>	<b>ዙሪያ</b>	<b>ከዕለታት</b>	<b>አንድ ቀን</b>	<b>እሳት</b>
	<i>ännäzzih</i>	<i>yä-wəba</i>	<i>gudg<sup>w</sup>ad-očč</i>	<i>zurija</i>	<i>kä-əlät-at</i>	<i>and qän</i>	<i>əsät</i>
	these	GEN-water	hole-PL	around	from-day-PL	one day	fire

<sup>24</sup> See Leslau (1995: 672-673).

እንድደው ፣ ጀበና ጥደው ቡና  
*andəd-äw* ḡäbäna təd-äw bunna  
 light\GER-3PL coffee.pot put.on\GER-3PL coffee

ሳይጠጡም አይቀር [GQ 127: 6-7]  
*s-a-y-täät-u-mm* a-y-qär  
 when-NEG-3PL-drink\IPFV-3PL-NEG NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV

‘One day around these waterholes they probably will light a fire, put a pot on and drink coffee’

This epistemificator may appear in most types of subordinate clauses:

(23) ይልቁንስ ወዳጆቹ የሆኑ ሰዎች በቅርቡ  
*yäləqunəss wädag-očč-e yä-hon-u säw-očč bäqərbu*  
 rather friend-PL-POSS.1SG REL-COP\PFV-3PL man-PL soon

ካንድ ግብ ላይ ሳይደርሱ  
*k-and gəbb lay s-a-y-därs-u*  
 from-one goal on when-NEG-3PL-reach\IPFV-3PL

እንደማይቀሩ ተስፋ ሰጥተውኛል [MAH 425: 12-14]  
*ändä-mm-a-y-qär-u täsfa sätat-äw-(ə)-ññ=all-ø*  
 COMP-REL-NEG-3PL-remain\IPFV-3PL hope give\GER-3PL-OBJ.1SG-PF-3PL

‘Rather, some people who are my friends have given me hope that they surely will soon reach one goal’

A temporal variant of *saynägrs ayqärəmm*s used in some past contexts is ሳይነግር **አልቀረም**s *saynägrs alqärrämm*s ‘he surely/probably tolds’, employing the perfective form of the verb *qärrä* ‘remain’ instead of the imperfective. Detailed discussion of this epistemificator is deferred to Section 6.1.4.2. Here an example will suffice:

(24) ሥራው ካንድ ሳምንት በላይ ሳይወስድብን  
*səra-w k-and sammənt bə-lay s-a-y-wäsd-(ə)-bb-(ə)-n*  
 work-DEF from-one week in-on when-NEG-3SM-take\IPFV-MAL-OBJ.1PL

**አልቀረም** [DB 22:1]  
*al-qärr-ä-mm*  
 NEG-remain\PFV-3SM-NEG

‘The work surely will have taken us more than one week’

4.2.2.4. መንገሩ አይቀርም *mängärus ayqärəmm* ‘he will definitely tells’, ‘he is sure to tells’

**መንገሩ አይቀርም** *mängärus ayqärəmm* consists of the invariant form **አይቀርም** *ayqärəmm* ‘it will not fail’ preceded by the verbal noun which encodes a state of affairs. Like the quasi-auxiliary **አይቀርም**s *ayqärəmm*s above, the verb *ayqärəmm* here is

composed of the 3SM imperfective form of the verb ቀረ *qärrä* ‘remain’, that is ይቀር *yəqär*, and a circumfix of negation ኡ- *a-* and -ም -(ə)mm. The verbal noun, in turn, is followed by a possessive pronoun expressing the subject of the verbal noun. The whole construction can be translated as ‘his telling will not fail’. The sentence stress always falls on the main verb.

There is a serious analytical problem when we compare the two constructions *saynägrs ayqärəmm*<sub>S</sub> and *mängärus ayqärəmm*: the first has two negatives, the second only one. We translated *saynägrs ayqärəmm*<sub>S</sub> so as to reflect this double negativity: ‘will not remain without telling’. Following this logic, the single negative expression *mängärus ayqärəmm* should mean ‘will not remain telling’. It actually means almost the opposite: ‘will definitely tell’. The only way out of this paradox is to assume that the verb *qärrä* also has developed the lexical meaning ‘to fail’, so that the construction would mean ‘will not fail to tell’.<sup>25</sup> This strange lexical development might be a result of reanalysis: ‘remain behind’ implicitly contains the negative sense ‘not go away’, which might have been generalized to ‘not do’, i.e. ‘fail to do’.<sup>26</sup>

The verbal noun and the verb *ayqärəmm* have different subjects. As mentioned, the subject of the verbal noun is encoded by the possessive pronoun attached to it while the subject of the verb *ayqärəmm* is the verbal noun itself,<sup>27</sup> naturally encoded on *ayqärəmm* as the default 3SM.

(25)	<b>የቤተ</b> <i>yä-bet-ä</i> REL-house-of	<b>ዘመድ</b> <i>zämäd</i> relative	<b>ዳኛ</b> <i>dañña</i> judge	<b>ከሁለቱም</b> <i>kä-hulätt-u-mm</i> from-two-DEF-FOC	<b>ወገኖች</b> <i>wägän-očč</i> side-PL	<b>በስምምነት</b> <i>bä-səməmənnät</i> in-agreement
	<b>የሚመረጡ</b> <i>yämm-i-mmärrät-u</i> REL-3PL-be.chosen\IPFV-3PL		<b>ስለሆነ</b> ቶ <i>sälä-hon-ä</i> because-COP\PFV-3SM	<b>መቸም</b> <i>mäčämm</i> one.way.or.another		

<sup>25</sup> The sense ‘remain (behind)’ is definitely the older meaning; in Gurage (Leslau 1979: 494) and in Arabic *qarra* never means ‘to fail’ (Orin Gensler p.c.).

<sup>26</sup> This strange semantics of *qärrä* has gone unnoticed in its grammatical descriptions. Goldenberg (1966: 148), for instance, lists the following meanings of *qärrä* in one go “to remain, be omitted, cease (etc.)”. Łykowska in her article on the grammaticalization of the concept of negation does not mention the difference in meaning of *qärrä*, neither in this nor in the previous epistemificator (2006: 805).

<sup>27</sup> On the infinitive as the subject of the verb in Amharic see Kapeliuk (1988: 32-33).

**አንዱ 'መሆኔ አይቀርም** [MBL 172: 26-27]  
*and-u 'mäbon-e a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 one-DEF COP\VN-POSS.1SG NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV-NEG

‘Because the judge of the clan is chosen by agreement from the two parties, one way or another I will definitely be one (of them)’

(26) **ልጅ-ም አባቴን ብሎ 'መምጣቱ**  
*läḡ-u-mm abbat-e-n bəl-o 'mämṭat-u*  
 child-DEF-FOC father-POSS.1SG-ACC say\GER-3SM come\VN-POSS.3SM

**አይቀርም** [TS 6]  
*a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV-NEG

‘The child will definitely come saying: “(Where is) my father?”’

Occasionally, the quasi-auxiliary is deprived of the final negative *-mm*. According to my informants this could be a feature of spoken language. Also, by omitting *-mm*, the speaker may sound more determined.

(27) **ለግብርም ፥ ለልብም ፥ ለሌላም ነገር ከሆኛችን**  
*lä-gəbər-(ə)-mm lä-ləbs-(ə)-mm lä-lela-mm nägär kä-hod-aččän*  
 for-tax-also for-clothes-also for-another-also thing from-stomach-POSS.1PL

**ቀንሰን መሸጣችን አይቀር** [MBL 77: 15-16]  
*qännəs-än mäšät-aččän a-y-qär*  
 subtract\GER-1PL sell\VN-POSS.1PL NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV

‘We will definitely stint our bellies and sell (from what we have saved) for taxes, for clothing, and for other things’

The conjunction **ግን** *gən* ‘but’ can be inserted between the verbal noun and *ayqärəmm* as illustrated in (28). This indicates that the verbal noun and *ayqärəmm* belong to two clauses:

(28) **የግል ቴሌቪዥን ጣቢያ በቅርቡ ባይጀመርም**  
*yä-gall televižən ṭabiya bäqərbu b-a-yə-ğğämmär-(ə)-mm*  
 GEN-private television station soon although-NEG-3SM-be.started\IPFV-CIRC

ሥራ መልቀቁ ግን አይቀርም<sup>28</sup>  
*səra mälqäq-e gən a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 job leave\VN-POSS.1SG but NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV-NEG

‘Although a private television station will not be launched soon, I will definitely, however, leave the job’

The epistemificator can occur in a subordinate clause of any type:

- (29) የቡድን ስራ ውጤታማ እንደሚያደርግ ፍልስፍናው  
*yä-budən səra wəttetamma əndä-mm-i-(y)-adärg fəlsəfənnə-w*  
 GEN-team work successful COMP-REL-3SM-make\IPFV philosophy-DEF
- በስኬት ላይ መንጸባረቁ እንደማይቀር  
*bä-säket lay mänṣäbäräq-u əndä-mm-a-y-qär*  
 on-success on be.reflected\VN-POSS.3SM COMP-REL-NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV
- የምንገነዘብ ይመስለኛል<sub>[AA 818]</sub>  
*yämm-(ə)-nnə-gännäzzäb yə-mäsl-äññ=all-ø*  
 REL-1PL-be.aware\IPFV 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM

‘I think we are aware that the philosophy that team work makes one successful will definitely be reflected in the success itself’

### 4.3. Copular epistemificators

It should be noted in advance that ይሆናል *yəhonall* appears very often in uses that have nothing to do with epistemic modality. Both epistemic and non-epistemic copular *yəhonall* will be glossed in this work in the same way. If a sentence has two instances of *yəhonall* then a prose discussion will indicate which one is the epistemificator, if necessary.

Basically, copular epistemificators divide into two types: those with *yəhonall* ‘be(come)’ (etc.) and those with *yəmäslall* ‘seem’ (etc.). As the grammatical analysis is somewhat different in the two types, I will treat them separately. I will begin with *yəhonall* (etc.), where the issues are conceptually simpler.

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=1225](http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1225). [Accessed: 25.08.2016]

#### 4.3.1. With *yəhonall* (etc.)

##### 4.3.1.1. NOM ይሆናል<sub>S</sub> NOM *yəhonall*<sub>S</sub> ‘he/it will be<sub>S</sub> NOM’, ‘he/it may be<sub>S</sub> NOM’

If there is a nominal in front of ይሆናል *yəhonall* instead of a verb, we are dealing with a rather different epistemificator *yəhonall* than that in 4.2.2.1. From the morphological point of view, just like auxiliary *yəhonall*, this epistemificator is also a standard compound imperfective form which consists of the verb ሆኑ *honä* ‘be(come)’ and the perfective form of the verb አለ *allä* ‘be present, exist’, functioning as the non-past tense auxiliary. However, it is always conjugated and agrees with the copular complement in person, number, and gender. The copular complement can be either a noun or an adjective. A noun complement can occur as an attributive nonreferential predicate or as an identificational referential predicate.<sup>29</sup> Compare the attributive clause in (30) with the identificational clause in (31).

- (30) ምናልባት ያርባ አምስት ዓመት ሰው ይሆናል<sub>[TK 88: 20-21]</sub>  
*mənalbat y-arba amməst amät 'säw yə-hon=all-ø*  
 perhaps GEN-forty five year man 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Perhaps he may be a man of 45 years’

- (31) ይቺ ጥሩነሽ ዲባባ ትሆናለች  
*yäčči Ṭərunäš Dibaba tə-hon=all-äčč*  
 this.F PN 3SF-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SF  
 ‘She will be Ṭərunäš Dibaba’<sup>30</sup>

The epistemificator can be used alone as a reaction to the previous utterance:

- (32) የቀበሮ ድምጽ ነው? ይሆናል<sub>[BS 263: 13-14]</sub>  
*yä-qäbäro dəmʂ n-äw? yə-hon=all-ø*  
 GEN-fox voice COP-3SM 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Is it the voice of a fox?’ ‘It may be’

In contrast to the epistemificator (*yənägr*)<sub>S</sub> *yəhonall* (4.2.2.1) which always assumes a modal epistemic meaning, out of context a nominal followed by *yəhonall* can be interpreted in two different ways: either *yəhonall* functions as a future tense copula ‘(be)come’

<sup>29</sup> On the two basic types of copular clauses, equational clauses (our identificational) and clauses with true nominal predicate (our attributive), see Dryer (2007: 233-236).

<sup>30</sup> A famous Ethiopian runner.

or it functions as an epistemically modalized copula. Consider the non-modal example (33):

- (33) አናርኪስት ትሆናለች  
*anarkist tə-hon=all-äčč*  
 anarchist 3SF-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SF  
 ‘She will be(come) an anarchist’

versus modal epistemic

- (34) አናርኪስት ትሆናለች  
*anarkist tə-hon=all-äčč*  
 anarchist 3SF-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SF  
 ‘She will be the anarchist’

The two sentences are identical, but their interpretations are different. Sentence (33) is attributive while (34) is identificational. In sentence (34) the word ‘anarchist’ has a referential meaning, which in English is indicated by the definite article, while in (33) it has a nonreferential meaning, indicated in English by the indefinite article. In Amharic we cannot appeal to the article to formally define the distinction just mentioned. We must depend on context alone. Amharic does have a definite article but it appears neither in (33) nor in (34):

- (35) \*አናርኪስቷ ትሆናለች  
*anarkist-wa tə-hon=all-äčč*  
 anarchist-DEF.F 3SF-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SF  
 \*‘She will be the anarchist’

It might be mentioned that whereas it is possible to add a personal pronoun referring to the subject in sentence (33), with the attributive (nonreferential) meaning of ‘anarchist’:

- (36) እሷ (ወደፊት) አናርኪስት ትሆናለች  
*əss<sup>w</sup>a (wädäfit) anarkist tə-hon=all-äčč*  
 she (in.the.future) anarchist 3SF-be(come)=NPST-3SF  
 ‘She will be(come) an anarchist (in the future)’

the same for (34) yields an unacceptable sentence.

#### 4.3.1.2. NOM ይሆን፤ NOM ሃክቦን? ‘might፤ he/it be NOM?’

Similarly to the epistemificator (*yənägr*)<sub>S</sub> *yəhon?* this epistemificator occurs in deliberative (meditative) questions. *Yəhon* is the simple imperfective form of the verb ሆነ *honä* ‘become’,

which agrees with its nominal complement in person, number and gender. The epistemificator can be used with both polar (37) and content questions (38).

- (37) **ምናልባት ፓትርያሪካችን እርሱ ይሆን እንዴ?**<sup>31</sup>  
*mənalbat patrəyarik-aččən ərsu yə-hon ənde*  
 perhaps patriarch-POSS.1PL 3SM 3SM-COP\IPFV really  
 ‘**Might he** perhaps really be our patriarch?’

- (38) **መንስኤውና መፍትሄው ምን ይሆን?**  
*mänsə'e-w-(ə)-nna mäftəhe-w mən yə-hon*  
 cause-DEF-and solution what 3SM-COP\IPFV  
 ‘What **might be** the cause and the solution?’

Depending on the type of the nominal predicate, in polar questions we can distinguish between identificational (37) and attributive clauses (39), just as in 4.2.2.2.

- (39) **ጥበበኛ ትሆን ወይስ ዕድለኛ?**  
*təbäbännä tə-hon wäyäss əddälännä*  
 wise 3SF-COP\IPFV or lucky  
 ‘**Might she be** wise or lucky?’

Content questions can also be divided into identificational (40) and attributive (41):

- (40) **ይህ ጉዳይ ማብቂያው መቼ ይሆን?**<sup>[AA 865]</sup>  
*yəh gudday mabqiya-w mäče yə-hon*  
 this issue end-POSS.3SM when 3SM-COP\IPFV  
 ‘When **might be** the end of this issue?’

- (41) **የአየሩ ሁኔታ ነገ እንዴት ይሆን?**  
*yä-ayyär-u huneta nägä əndet yə-hon*  
 GEN-weather-DEF condition tomorrow how 3SM-COP\IPFV  
 ‘How (what) **might be** the weather tomorrow?’

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.dejeselam.org/2010/07/ghost-writer.html>. [Accessed: 21.01.2018]

#### 4.3.1.3. Cleft sentences with *yəhonall* and *yəhon*

Amharic has a large variety of cleft sentences, which are widely used in both spoken and written language. As mentioned in 2.3.3. a copula can behave in two different ways: either as a fully inflecting verb or as an invariant verb. Based on the behaviour of the copula, Kapeliuk (1988: 109-112) distinguishes two kinds of cleft sentences: so-called construction I and construction II. Here, and in the remainder of this chapter, I will underline the clefted constituent for the sake of clarity. In construction I, what is clefted is the subject of the underlying sentence. Here the copula (and the relative verb) agrees with the subject in person, gender, and number. The examples are:

- (42) **ምናልባት ያንን መራራ ጊዜ የማያውቁት አሁን**  
*mənalbat yann-(ə)-n märara gize yämm-a-y-aፀq-u-t* *ahun*  
 perhaps that-ACC bitter time REL-NEG-3PL-know\IPFV-3PL-DEF now  
**በጉርምስና ላይ ያሉት 'ወጣቶች' ይሆናሉ<sup>32</sup>**  
*bä-gurmäsanna lay y-all-u-t 'wättat-očč yə-hon=all-u*  
 in-adolescence on REL-be\PFV-3PL-DEF youngster-PL 3PL-COP\IPFV=NPST-3PL  
 ‘Perhaps those who don’t know that bitter time **may** (only) **be** youngsters who are now in their adolescence’

In contrast, in construction II, what is clefted is anything except the underlying subject — “any of the complements of the underlying plain predicate whether it is in the accusative or with a preposition, or an adverb, or an entire subordinate clause” (*ibid.* p. 110). Here the copula always occurs in the invariant 3SM. In the following sentence the copula complement is the indirect object of the verbal noun **ማሳየት** *masayät*:

- (43) **ምናልባት እኮ ጠንካራነቱን ለማሳየት የፈለገው**  
*mənalbat əkko tänkarrannät-u-n lä-masayät yä-fälläg-ä-ፀ*  
 perhaps indeed fortitude-POSS.3SM-ACC for-show\VN REL-want\PFV-3SM-DEF  
**ለአንዳንድ ዳያስፖራ ታጋዮችና ፖለቲከኞች ይሆናል<sub>[AA 863]</sub>**  
*lä-andand dayaspora tagay-očč-(ə)-nna poletikänn-očč yə-hon=all-ø*  
 for-some diaspora struggler-PL-and politician-PL 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Perhaps indeed those to whom he wanted to show his fortitude **may be** some diaspora strugglers and politicians’

<sup>32</sup><http://197.156.69.172/addiszemen/index.php/2015-04-26-07-42-33/item/14181-2017-09-22-17-25-46>.  
 [Accessed: 27.09.2017]

Even though it would seem that any cleft could be turned into an epistemic modal sentence simply by changing the assertive copula ነው *näw* (44) into ይሆናል *yəhonall* (45) this is insufficient. In some cleft sentences with *yəhonall* the preferred word order is with the relative clause (the subject of the sentence) occurring after the copula.<sup>33</sup> Compare:<sup>34</sup>

(44) ማርታ ከእንግሊዝ የተመለሰችው ከሁለት ቀን በፊት ነው  
*Marta kä-Engliz yä-tämälläs-äčč-(ə)-w kə-hulätt qän bəfit n-äw*  
 PN from-England REL-return\PFV-3SF-DEF from-two day before COP-3SM  
 ‘That (i.e. when) Marta came back from England, it is two days ago’

(45) ከሁለት ቀን 'በፊት ይሆናል ማርታ ከእንግሊዝ  
*kə-hulätt qän 'bəfit yə-hon=all-ø Marta kä-Engliz*  
 from-two day before 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM PN from-England  
 የተመለሰችው  
*yä-tämälläs-äčč-(ə)-w*  
 REL-return\PFV-3SF-DEF  
 ‘It may be two days ago that Marta came back from England’

The clefted constituent, just as in clefts with the copula *näw*, can be a subordinate clause (46)<sup>35</sup> or a verbal noun (47):

(46) ይህን ገለፈው ሳምንት የተቀበለውን ብር  
*yəhenne b-(yä)-alläf-ä-w sammənt yä-täqäbbäl-ä-w-(ə)-n bərr*  
 then in-REL-pass\PFV-3SM-DEF week REL-receive\PFV-3SM-DEF-ACC birr  
 'ሲያጠፋ ይሆናል ያመሸው [YG 1/2]  
*'s-i-(y)-atäfa yə-hon=all-ø y-amäššä-w*  
 when-3SM-lose\IPFV 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM REL-stay.out.late\PFV.3SM-DEF

<sup>33</sup> Thus far I have not managed to fully establish which type of cleft sentences with *yəhonall* favours this word order. It seems, however, that the word order is determined by the information structure. What seems clear is that an answer to a WH-question favours the order with the clefted clause coming first. Sentence (44) is part of a narration while (45) is an answer to a WH-question *Marta käEngliz yätämälläsäččəw mäche näw?* ‘When did Marta come back from England?’ What comes first is the rheme of the sentence *kəhulätt qän bəfit yəhonall* ‘It may be two days ago’. The question still remains why (45) cannot take the plain “narrational” word order with the subject (the relative clause) in the initial position. In fact, sentence (44) can also have the same word order as (45), but only as an answer to a question. (Kapeliuk (1988: 121-125) in her discussion of the place of the subject in a cleft sentence says that locating the relative clause after the copula ነው *näw* is very common, especially in the spoken language.)

<sup>34</sup> (44) and (45) were both elicited from a linguistically sophisticated native speaker.

<sup>35</sup> In this sentence the relative clause follows the copula. However, according to my informant, it can equally well, and even better, be placed before the copula complement.

‘Then, it may be that it was while losing the money he received last week that he stayed out late’

- (47) **ምናልባት ደርጉንና «አጀንዳውን» በቅጡ**  
*mənalbat Därg-u-n-(ə)-nna aǰända-w-(ə)-n bəqətu*  
 perhaps Derg-DEF-ACC-and propaganda-POSS.3SM-ACC properly  
**እስከሚለምዷቸውና እስከሚገነዘቧቸው**  
*askä-mm-i-lämd-<sup>w</sup>-aččäw-(ə)-nna askä-mm-i-gännäzäb-<sup>w</sup>-aččäw*  
 till-REL-3PL-get.used.to\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.3PL-and till-REL-3PL-be.aware\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.3PL  
**ድረስ መጠበቃቸው ይሆናል**<sub>[NB 109: 3-5]</sub>  
*dəräs mätäbbäq-aččäw yə-hon=all-ø*  
 till wait\VN-POSS.3PL 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘Perhaps it may be their waiting until they properly (= perhaps it may be that they are waiting) get used to and become aware of the Derg and its propaganda’

Another kind of clefted constituent is the gerund form of a verb.<sup>36</sup> Such cleft sentences may be confused with the auxiliary epistemificator (*yənägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tell<sub>s</sub>’ which in the past tense takes the gerund, instead of the imperfective. This issue will be discussed in more detail in Section 6.1.4.1. Here is an example:

- (48) **የሚናገሩት ፍልስፍና ስላልገባኝ**  
*yämm-i-nnaggär-u-t falsəfənnə səl-al-gäbba-ññ*  
 REL-3PL-say\IPFV-3PL-DEF philosophy because-NEG-understand\PFV.3SM-OBJ.1SG  
**ተበላላጭቼ አርዕስት ለመለወጥ ጥረት ያደረግሁ**  
*täbäsaččä-e arəʾst lä-mäläwəwät tərät y-adärräg-hu*  
 be.annoyed\GER-1SG topic for-change\VN effort REL-make\PFV-1SG  
**መስሎት ይሆናል**<sub>[GQ 185: 11-2]</sub>  
*mäsl-o-t yə-hon=all-ø*  
 seem\GER-3SM-OBJ.3SM 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘It may be that it seemed to him that because I didn’t understand the philosophy they were discussing, I was annoyed and was making an effort to change the topic’

Cleft sentences with the gerund as the complement of the copula *yəhonall* frequently appear as reduced clefts:

- (49) A: **ወንድዎስንን ዛሬ ምን ነካው?** [...]<sub>[BQ]</sub>  
*Wändwosän-(ə)-n zare mən näkka-w?*  
 PN-ACC today what bother\PFV.3SM-OBJ.3SM

<sup>36</sup> On the semantics of cleft sentences with gerund as the complement of the copula *näw* see Fridman (2016: 699-701).

B: **ጉዳይ ገጥሞት** **ይሆናል** **[የዘገየው]**  
*gudday gätm-o-t* *yə-hon=all-ø* *[yä-zägäyyä-w]*  
 problem happen\GER-3SM-OBJ.3SM 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM REL-be.late\PFV-3SM-DEF  
 ‘A: What’s bothering Wändosän today? [...] B: It **may be** because a problem has befallen him [that he is late]’

In sentence (49B) the subject of the sentence, **የዘገየው** *yägäyyäw* ‘that he is late’, is not mentioned as it can easily be reconstructed by the addressee from the context of the conversation.

Another example of a reduced cleft is provided by a subordinate clause with the complementizer *lä-* followed by the copula *yəhonall*:

(50) A: **እኚህ ገፋፊ ደግሞ እዚህ ምን ሊሆኑ** **መጡ?** [...] **መጡ?** [...] **ገልበት**  
*əññih gäfafi dägmō ə-zzih mən l-i-hon-u* *mätt-u?*  
 this.POL robber also here what COMP-3SPOL-COP\IPFV-3SPOL come\PFV-3SPOL  
 B: **የአዲሱን ላንድሮቭ ራቶቭ ደግሞ ገልበት**  
*yä-addis-u-n landrovär-aččäw-(ə)-n gullbät*  
 GEN-new-DEF-ACC Land Rover-POSS.3SPOL-ACC power  
**ሊፈትኑ** **ይሆናል** [MAH 337: 7-8] **[የመጡት]**  
*l-i-fättən-u* *yə-hon=all-ø* *[yä- mätt-u-t]*  
 COMP-3SPOL-test\IPFV-3SPOL 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM REL-come\PFV-3SPOL-DEF  
 A: ‘And what did this robber come here (to do)?’ B: ‘It **may be** in order to test the power of their new Land Rover [that he has come]’

Leslau (1995: 330) gives an account of the construction *lä-* followed by invariant *yəhonall* noting that it “expresses imminence with an element of probability”. It seems, however, that the construction occurs only in cleft sentences and is not parallel to the construction **ሊነግር ነው** *linägrs näw* ‘he is about to tell’. It expresses the intention of the agent.

In a similar way to *yəhonall*, the interrogative epistemificator *yəhon* can also occur as a copula in cleft sentences.

(51) **ፖሊስ እንዳለው ታፋው ላይ የተነከሰው**  
*polis-u and-alä-w tafa-w lay yä-tänäkkäs-ä-w*  
 policeman-DEF as-say\PFV-OBJ.3SM thigh-POSS.3SM on REL-be.bitten\PFV-3SM-DEF  
**'ንበዜ ይሆን?** [MBL 242: 16]  
**'Gobbäze yə-hon**  
 PN 3SM-COP\IPFV  
 ‘As the policeman said to him, **might** the one who was bitten on his thigh **be** Gobbäze?’

- (52) መቸ ይሆን ወግ ያለው አይወት መኖር  
*mäč yə-hon wäg y-all-ä-w həywät mänor*  
 when 3SM-COP\IPFV order REL-exist-3SM-DEF life live\VN

የምጀምረው?<sup>[BŠ 168: 26-27]</sup>

*yämm-ə-ǧämmər-äw*

REL-1SG-begin\IPFV-DEF

‘When **might it be** that I will begin living a life that has some order?’

Some sentences with a nominal followed by *yəhonall* look like the identificational clauses presented in 4.3.1.1 (NOM *yəhonalls*):

- (53) ከመሽ እኛ ቤት ማን ይመጣል  
*kä-mäššä-ø añña bet man yə-mäta=all-ø*  
 after-be.dusk\PFV-3SM 1PL house who 3SM-come\IPFV=NPST-3SM

ብለሽ ነው፤ 'ሳረቤት ይሆናል<sup>[BQ]</sup>

*bəl-äš n-äw; 'goräbet yə-hon=all-ø*

say\GER-2SF COP-3SM neighbour 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘What do you think — who is coming/will come to our house after dusk? It **will be** the neighbour’

However, in such sentences the epistemificator *yəhonall* is part of a reduced cleft. Thus, in (54) the clause:

- (54) ሳረቤት ይሆናል  
*goräbet yə-hon=all-ø*  
 neighbour 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘It **will be** the neighbour’

is arguably the reduced form of a full, cleft sentence, in which the subject is implicit and known from the context:<sup>37</sup>

- (55) ሳረቤት ይሆናል የመጣው  
*goräbet yə-hon=all-ø yä-mätta-w*  
 neighbour 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM REL-come\PFV-DEF

‘It **will be** the neighbour who has come’ or ‘The one who has come **will be** the neighbour’

The same applies to the construction of the nominal followed by *yəhon*:

<sup>37</sup> In sentence (55) the present Amharic word order is the optimal one. If the relative clause, being the subject of the sentence, is placed in the initial position the sentence is still correct but less favourable in the context given in (53).

- (56) **ግን ከእግዚአብሔርና ከዳዊት ማናቸውን ነው**  
*gan kä-Ǫgziʼbäher-(ə)-nna kä-Dawit mannaččäw-(ə)-n n-äw*  
 but from-God-and from-Dawit which.one-ACC COP-3SM  
**አብልጭ የምወደው? እግዚአብሔርን ይሆን?**<sub>[BŠ 43: 1-2]</sub>  
*abläčč-e yämm-ə-wädd-(ä)-w? Ǫgziʼabäher-(ə)-n ya-hon?*  
 increase\GER-1SG REL-1SG-love\IPFV-DEF God-ACC 3SM-COP\IPFV  
 ‘But which one do I love more, God or Dawit? **Might it be God?**’

In (55) the reduced cleft of (54) is expanded so as to provide a fuller and more explicit answer to the original question. In (57), as in (55), the answer itself assumes the form of a deliberative question, thus:

- (57) **እግዚአብሔርን ይሆን አብልጭ የምወደው?**  
*Ǫgziʼabäher-(ə)-n ya-hon abläčč-e yämm-ə-wädd-(ä)-w*  
 God-ACC 3SM-COP\IPFV increase\GER-1SG REL-1SG-love\IPFV-DEF  
 ‘**Might it be God** that I love more?’

It should be mentioned that all semi-auxiliarized epistemificators can occur in a cleft sentence. In that case the copula of the cleft becomes the complement of the epistemificator such as in the following examples:

- (58) **ይህን ሐሳብ ያሳደረብህ ተካ መሆን**  
*ya-h-(ə)-n hassab ya-saddär-ä-bb-(ə)-b Täkka mähon*  
 this-ACC idea REL-inspire\PFV-3SM-APPL-OBJ.2SM PN COP\VN  
**አለበት**<sub>[TK 38: 16]</sub>  
*all-ä-bb-ät*  
 exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM  
 ‘The one who has inspired in you this idea **must be** Täkka’

- (59) **አውቃ ሳይሆን አይቀርም እንዲህ**  
*awq-a sa-y-hon a-y-qär-(ə)-mm ändib*  
 know\GER-3SF when-NEG-COP\IPFV-3SM NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG like.this  
**የምታደርገው**<sub>[BŠ 206: 18-19]</sub>  
*yämm-(ə)-t-adärg-äw*  
 REL-3SF-do\IPFV-DEF  
 ‘It is **surely knowingly** that she is doing (acting) like this’

#### 4.3.1.4. ቢነግር ነው binägrs näw ‘he probably tells, will probably tells’

This epistemificator occurs in three different contexts which will be discussed beginning from the simplest. In general, the epistemificator consists of the assertive, invariant copula ነው näw ‘it is’ preceded by a copula complement, namely, the conjunction *bə-* ‘if’ followed



- (62) **ይህንን ሐሳብ የምታቀርብለት እኮ የሆነ**  
*yəhənn-(ə)-n hassab yämm-(ə)-t-aqärb-(ə)-ll-ät akko yä-hon-ä*  
 this-ACC idea REL-3SF-suggest\IPFV-APPL-OBJ.3SM indeed REL-COP\IPFV-3SM
- የተጠነሰሰ 'ሴራ ቢኖር ነው**<sup>[TS 2]</sup>  
*yä-tätänässäs-ä 'sera b-i-nor n-äw*  
 REL-be.brewed\IPFV-3SM plot if-3SM-exist\IPFV COP-3SM
- ‘Indeed, that she has suggested to him this idea is **probably** because there is some plot brewing’

4.3.1.5. **ቢነግርህ ይሆናል** *binägrs yəhonall* ‘it may be that he tells<sub>s</sub>, it may be that he will tell<sub>s</sub>’

Similarly to *binägrs näw*, this epistemificator contains the conjunction *bə-* ‘if’ followed by a verb in the simple imperfective. However, now the copula takes the form of invariant *yəhonall*. Hence, there are two elements in this epistemificator which impart a modal meaning to the construction: *bə-* and *yəhonall*. The present epistemificator occurs in contexts similar to the previous epistemificator *bə-IPFV näw*, with the exception that it cannot make reference to an estimation of quantity. Thus, it occurs with the connector *ənği* ‘but, on the contrary, else’:

- (63) **ሌላ ምክንያት ቢኖረው ይሆናል እንጂ**  
*lela məknəyat b-i-nor-äw yə-hon=all-ø ənği*  
 another reason if-3SM-exist\IPFV-DEF 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM else
- እንዲህ በጥዋት ምን ያስወጣዋል?**  
*əndih bə-twat mən y-aswätta-w=all-ø*  
 like.this in-morning what 3SM-make.go.out\IPFV-OBJ.3SM=NPST-3SM
- ‘It may be that he has another reason; else what would make him go out like this in the morning?’

The epistemificator can be used in complex sentences with another, temporal clause:

- (64) **ምላሽ ስናጣ በቤቱ ሰው ባይኖር**  
*məllaš s-(ə)-nn-aṭa bə-bet-u säw b-a-y-nor*  
 answer when-1PL-lose\IPFV in-house-DEF man if-NEG-3SM-exist\IPFV
- ይሆናል**<sup>[AA 866]</sup>  
*yə-hon=all-ø*  
 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM
- ‘When we didn’t get an answer it **may have been** that there was no one at home’

The epistemificator may also appear in a cleft sentence in which there is a relation of causality between the clefted clause and the relative clause, just like in sentence (62). The following sentence is a reduced cleft; the subject can be reconstructed from the preceding context:

- (65) ጉዳዩ ት ቀልድና ጨዋታ እንዳልሆነ በቅጡ  
*gudday-u qäld-(ə)-mma čäwata ənd-al-hon-ä bäqətu*  
 issue-DEF joke-and game COMP-NEG-COP\PFV-3SM properly  
 ባይገባቸው ይሆናል<sub>[AA 859]</sub> [የተናደዱት]  
*b-a-y-gäba-ččäw yə-hon=all-ø [yä-tänaddäd-u-t]*  
 if-NEG-3SM-understand\IPFV-OBJ.3PL 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM REL-get.angry\PFV-3PL-DEF  
 ‘It may be because they didn’t understand properly that the issue is not a joke or a game [that they got angry]’

#### 4.3.2. With *yämäslall* (etc.)

##### 4.3.2.1. ADJ ይመስላል<sub>S</sub> ADJ *yämäslall<sub>S</sub>* ‘he/it seems<sub>S</sub> ADJ’

This epistemificator consists of the adjective followed by the conjugated form of the copula ይመስላል *yämäslall*. *Yämäslall* is a standard compound imperfective form of the verb መስለ *mässälä* ‘seem’ (also ‘resemble’) consisting of the 3SM imperfective ይመስል *yämäsl* and the 3SM auxiliary አል *all* encoding the non-past tense. It agrees in number, person and gender with the copula subject. Its complement can be a participle acting as an adjective as in (68).<sup>40</sup>

- (66) ከፊትህ<sup>41</sup> 'ጤነኛ አትመስልም<sub>[BŠ 234: 15]</sub>  
*kä-fit-(ə)-b 'tenäñña a-t-mäsl-(ə)-mm*  
 from-face-POSS.2SM healthy NEG-2SM-seem\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘From your face you don’t seem (to be) healthy’
- (67) ማስረጃው 'ልክ ይመስላል<sub>[MBL 283: 6-10]</sub>  
*masräğğa-w 'ləkek yə-mäsl=all-ø*  
 explanation-POSS.3SM right 3SM-seem\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘His explanation seems right’
- (68) ጠጪ ይመስላል<sub>[BŠ 61: 28]</sub>  
*täččī yə-mäsl=all-ø*  
 drunkard 3SM-seem\IPFV=NPST-3SM

<sup>40</sup> On the participle used as a copula complement see Kapeliuk (1988: 161-163.)

<sup>41</sup> My informants found the expression *käfitəb* odd. They suggested ፊትህን ሳየው *fithən sayyärw* ‘when I see your face’ instead.

‘He seems (to be) a drunkard’

This epistemificator should be distinguished from other, non-epistemic uses of *yəməslall*. The same form can be a transitive verb with the meaning ‘it/he resembles something, it/he looks like something’.<sup>42</sup> In this case an object appears, which receives an accusative marker where appropriate:

- (69) **ፈረንሳይኛዋ**      **የታላላቆችን**      **ደራሲያን**      **ቋንቋ**  
*färänsayəñña-wa*    *yä-talallaq-očč-u-n*    *därasi-(y)-an*    *q<sup>w</sup>anq<sup>w</sup>a*  
 French-DEF.F      GEN-great-PL-DEF-ACC    writer-PL      language

**ይመስላል**<sub>[TK 164: 26]</sub>

*yə-mäsl=all-ø*

3SM-seem\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘Her French **resembles** the language of the great writers’

- (70) **ከለበሰው**      **ልብስ ጋር**      **ወፍረቱን**      **ለተመለከተ**  
*kä-(yä)-läbbäs-ä-w*    *läbs gar*    *wəfrät-u-n*    *lä-(yä)-tämmäläkät-ä*  
 from-REL-wear\PFV-3SM-DEF    clothes with    fatness-POSS.3SM-ACC    for-REL-look.at\PFV-3SM

**ቱጃር ነጋዴ**      **እንጂ**      **አስተናጋጅ**      **አይመስልም**<sub>[BŠ 114: 4-5]</sub>

*tuḡar näggade*    *ənḡi*    *astänagaḡ*    *a-y-mäsl-(ə)-mm*  
 rich    businessman    but    waiter    NEG-3SM-look.like\IPFV-NEG

‘For someone who looks at his fatness together with the clothes that he is wearing **he doesn’t look like** a waiter but like a rich businessman’

#### 4.3.2.2. NOM **ይመስለኛል**<sub>S</sub> NOM *yəməslännäll*<sub>S</sub> ‘he/it seems<sub>S</sub> to me NOM’

Similarly to the previous epistemificator (4.3.2.1), this epistemificator also consists of a nominal followed by the conjugated form of the verb **ይመስላል** *yəməslall* but it takes one more argument in the indirect object slot, expressed by the 1SG object pronoun **-ኝ** *-(ä)ññ*, referring to the epistemizer. In contrast to the epistemificator in 4.3.2.1. it can take a noun (and not just an adjective) as its copula complement (72).

- (71) **ከሁሉም**      **የሕጻን**      **ጸጉር**      **ማስተካከል**      **'ቀላል**  
*kä-hullu-mm*    *yä-həṣan*    *ṣəgur*    *mastäkakkäl*    *'qällal*  
 from-all-FOC    GEN-child    hair    trim\VN    easy

**አይመስለኝም**<sub>[BBS 62: 10]</sub>

*a-y-mäsl-änn-(ə)-mm*

NEG-3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG-NEG

‘From all (this), trimming children’s hair **doesn’t seem easy to me**’

<sup>42</sup> On this use of the transitive verb *mässälä* see Kapeliuk ([1981] 2009: 319-320).

- (72) ሰዎች ይመስሉኛል ። በጎችም  
*säw-očč yə-mäsl-u-ññ=all. bäg-očč-(ə)-mm*  
 person-PL 3PL-seem\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.1SG=NPST sheep-PL-also  
**ይመስሉኛል**<sup>43</sup>  
*yə-mäsl-u-ññ=all*  
 3PL-seem\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.1SG=NPST  
 ‘They seem to me (to be) people. They also seem to me (to be) sheep’

4.3.2.3. Cleft sentences with **ይመስላል** *yəməslall* ‘it seems’ and **ይመስለኛል** *yəməslännñall* ‘it seems to me’

The copulas **ይመስላል** *yəməslall* and **ይመስለኛል** *yəməslännñall* can be involved in cleft sentences in a similar manner to the copulas *yəhonall* and *yəhon* mentioned above. They can be a fully inflecting verb (construction I) or remain invariant (construction II). I have decided to keep the copula *yəməslännñall*, containing the 1SG object pronoun, separate from the copula *yəməslall*, which has no reference to the epistemizer, because the two are not always interchangeable. For instance, in sentence (73), *yəməslännñall* cannot be replaced by *yəməslall*:<sup>44</sup>

- (73) ማርታ ከእንግሊዝ የተመለሰችው ከሁለት ቀን በፊት  
*Marta kä-Engliz yä-tämälläs-äčč-(ə)-w kä-bulätt qän bəfit*  
 PN from-England REL-return\PFV-3SF-DEF from-two day before  
**ይመስለኛል**  
*yə-mäsl-ännñ=all-ø*  
 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘That (when) Marta came back from England seems to me (to have been) two days ago’

This yields four possibilities: construction I versus II, and presence versus absence of the 1SG object. In what follows examples of these four constructions will be provided. The first two represent construction I while the third and the fourth are construction II:

- **ይመስላል**<sub>s</sub> *yəməslalls* ‘he/it seems<sub>s</sub>’

- (74) ዛሬ ቅዳሴ የሚቀድሱት መምህር ጎሩይ  
*zare qəddase yämm-i-qəddəs-u-t məmhər Həruy*  
 today liturgy REL-3SPOL-celebrate\IPFV-3SPOL-DEF teacher PN

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.shegerblogs.com/ሰዎች/>. [Accessed: 17.12.2017]

<sup>44</sup> At the moment it is not clear to me what is the semantic explanation for the lack of interchangeability of the two epistemifiers *yəməslall* and *yəməslännñall* in some contexts.



'ለዚህ ይመስለኛል አየር ኃይል የገባው<sup>[TK 161: 12-14]</sup>  
 'lä-zzib yə-mäsl-äññ=all ayyär hayl yä-gäbba-w  
 for-this 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM air force REL-join\PFV.3SM-DEF  
 'He admired Saint-Exupéry from his heart. Because of this, it seems to me, he joined  
 the air force'

The verbs *yəməslall* and *yəməsläññall* can also be clefted which results in a complex sentence with two clefted components:

(79) መጀመሪያ መናገር ያለባት 'ለፍቅረኛዋ  
 mäğämmäriya männagär y-all-ä-bb-at 'lä-fəqərəñña-wa  
 first speak\VN REL-exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SF for-lover-POSS.3SF  
 ነው የሚመስለኝ<sup>[TS 6]</sup>  
 n-äw yämm-i-mäsl-äññ  
 COP-3SM REL-3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG

'What seems to me is that it is to her lover that she should tell (it) first (of all)'

#### 4.3.2.4. Copular epistemificators of seeming

The following two copular constructions seem fairly clearly not to be clefts (I leave the question open, as the decision does not really matter here).

- የ-X ይመስላል<sub>S</sub> yä-X yəməslall<sub>S</sub> 'he/it seems<sub>S</sub> X'

The epistemificator የ-X ይመስላል<sub>S</sub> yä-X yəməslall<sub>S</sub> consists of the conjugable copula ይመስላል<sub>S</sub> yəməslall<sub>S</sub><sup>45</sup> 'he seems<sub>S</sub>, he appears<sub>S</sub>' and the main verb taking the form of the relative verb and acting as its complement.<sup>46</sup> The verb *yəməslall<sub>S</sub>* always agrees in number, person and gender with the subject of the relative verb, and, consequently, with the form of the relative verb.<sup>47</sup> Its predicative complement, preceding *yəməslall* as *yä-X*, is a headless relative clause. The function of *yəməslall<sub>S</sub>* is similar to that of the copula *näw* in that it attributes a certain characteristic, expressed by the relative verb, to the subject (Kapeliuk [1981] 2009: 321). Thus, a sentence containing this epistemificator consists of three main

<sup>45</sup> For its morphological composition see epistemificator 4.3.2.1.

<sup>46</sup> Kapeliuk ([1981] 2009) describes in detail the syntactic characteristics of this expression ("mässälä mulitpersonnel"), and compares it with the use of "mässälä unipersonnel" (here epistemificators in 4.4.1.). On this same topic see also her (1988: 154-155).

<sup>47</sup> The subject of the relative verb and *yəməslall<sub>S</sub>* are normally the same; for exceptions see Kapeliuk ([1981] 2009: 322).

components: the subject, the predicative complement (in the form of the headless relative clause) and the verb *yämäslall*s (*ibid.* p. 320).

- (80) አጉር አስተካካዮች ደግሞ የሚገኙት  
*ṣägur astäkakkay-očč dä'mmo yämm-i-'mot-u*  
 hair cutter-PL also REL-3PL-die\IPFV-3PL

አይመስለም [GQ 75: 15-17]

*a-y-mäsl-u-mm*

NEG-3PL-seem\IPFV-3PL-NEG

'The barbers also **don't seem** (to be) the ones who die'

- (81) የነገርኩህ ወሬ ደስ 'ያስኘህ  
*yä-näggär-ku-h wäre däss 'yä-assänn-ä-b*  
 REL-tell\PFV-1SG-OBJ.2SM news please REL-make\PFV-3SM-OBJ.2SM

ይመስላል [TK 22-23]

*yä-mäsl=all-ø*

3SM-seem\IPFV=NPST-3SM

'The news that I told you **seems** (to be) something that has pleased you'

- የ-X ይመስላኛል<sub>s</sub> *yä-X yämäslännälls* 'he/it seems<sub>s</sub> X to me'

From the morphological and syntactic point of view this epistemificator is very similar to the previous one with the difference that, additionally, it takes an argument in the indirect object slot, expressed by the 1SG object pronoun *-ኝ* *-(ä)ññ*, referring to the epistemizer.

- (82) አንዳንዶቹ ቁጥሮቹ ትክክለኛ ናቸው ብለው የምር  
*andand-očč-u quṭar-očč-u təkəkkeläñña n-aččäw bäl-äw yämərr*  
 some-PL-DEF number-PL-DEF right COP-3PL say\GER-3PL seriously

ከልባቸው

የሚያምኑ

ይመስላኛል<sup>48</sup>

*kä-ləbb-aččäw*

*yämm-i-(y)-'amn-u*

*yä-mäsl-u-ññ=all*

from-heart-POSS.3PL

REL-3PL-believe\IPFV-3PL

3PL-seem\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.1SG=NPST

'They seem to me (to be people) who believe seriously from their heart, saying: Some of the numbers (statistics) are right'

## 4.4. Lexical epistemificators

### 4.4.1. Non-copular epistemificators of seeming

I am starting this section on lexical epistemificators with epistemificators (involving *yämäslännäll*) that look like the copular epistemificators we have just examined but where

<sup>48</sup> <http://ethioaddisua.blogspot.com/2013/09/blog-post.html>. [Accessed 29.06.2019]

the structure is not copular. This will help the reader to compare these similar constructions in close proximity.

- የ-X ይመስላል *yä-X yämäslall* ‘it seems that X, it appears that X’

This epistemificator consists of the verb ይመስላል *yämäslall*<sup>49</sup> ‘it seems, it appears’ and a main verb having the form of a relative verb. Here *yämäslall* takes only one core argument, in the slot of the subject, and hence it cannot be a copula: it has no complement. Because its subject is the whole relative clause, involving the relative verb together and its arguments, *yämäslall* has the invariant 3SM form. The relative clause then plays the role, as Kapeliuk notes, of “un substantif déverbal abstrait avec le sens de ‘[le fait] que’, et correspondant plus ou moins à un infinitif” ([1981] 2009: 325-326).<sup>50</sup> It refers to the whole nominalized state of affairs. In English we might attempt a translation like “(the case) that”, “(the circumstance) that”, “(the fact) that”, or some other very general abstract nouns as the implicit head of the headless relative clause.<sup>51</sup> In contrast to the conjugable copular *yämäslalls* in 4.3.2.4, *yämäslall* in this epistemificator is not a copula but a full-fledged verb with its own lexical meaning which functions as the predicate of the sentence (*ibid.* p. 324).

- (83) ደግሞ ሴቶች የሚ'ወዱት ይመስላል<sub>[TK 71: 4]</sub>  
*dämmo set-očč yämm-i-'wädd-u-t yə-mäsl=all-ø*  
 also woman-PL REL-3PL-like\IPFV-3PL-DEF 3SM-seem\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Also, it seems (to be the fact) that women like him’

- የ-X ይመስለኛል *yä-X yämäslännäll* ‘it seems to me that X, it appears to me that X’

This epistemificator is very similar to the previous one, የ-X ይመስላል *yä-X yämäslall* ‘it seems that’. It differs in that it takes the 1SG object pronoun -ኛ -(ä)ññ, referring to the epistemizer. Structurally this (also) belongs to the category of impersonal epistemificators (see below), but it is included here in order to keep all the epistemificators with *mässälä* together.

<sup>49</sup> For its morphological composition see epistemificator 4.3.2.1.

<sup>50</sup> ‘An abstract deverbal noun with the meaning “the fact that” and corresponding, more or less, to an infinitive.’

<sup>51</sup> See also preliminary discussion in Section 2.3.3.

- (84) እንዲህ ያለ ችግር ተፈጥሯል  
*andih y-all-ä čaggər täfäṭr-o<sup>(w)</sup>=all-ø*  
 such REL-exist-3SM problem be.created\GER-3SM=PF-3SM
- ብትለው የሚረዳት  
*b-(ə)-ttə-l-äw yämm-i-'räda-at*  
 if-3SF-say\IPFV-OBJ.3SM REL-3SM-help\IPFV.3SM-OBJ.3SF
- ይመስለኛል<sub>[TS 6]</sub>  
*yə-mäsl-änn=all-ø*  
 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM
- ‘If she tells him that such a problem has arisen, it seems to me that he will help her’

The epistemificator *yä-X yämäslännall* may occur together with an independent personal pronoun (*əne*) and with expressions of opinion (*bäbäkkule*) as in the following sentence:

- (85) እኔ በበኩሌ በማንኛውም ቦታ ቀን ሲጻፍ  
*əne bä-bäkkul-e bä-mannännawəmm bota qän s-i-ššaf*  
 1SG on-side-POSS.1SG in-any place day when-3SM-be.written\IPFV
- በግዕዝ አቆጣጠር ቢጻፍ የሚሻል  
*bä-Gəʼəz aqqoṭatär b-i-ššaf yämm-i-'ššal*  
 in-Gəʼəz calculation if-3SM-be.written\IPFV REL-3SM-be.better\IPFV
- ይመስለኛል  
*yə-mäsl-änn=all-ø*  
 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM
- ‘I, in my view, it seems to me that when a date is written in any place it is better if it is written according to the Gəʼəz calendar’

It may stand alone as a reaction to the previous utterance:

- (86) [ፕሮግራሙ] ሊሰፋ ሊያድግ የሚችል  
*program-u l-i-säfa l-i-(y)-adəg yämm-i-čäl*  
 programme-DEF COMP-3SM-expand\IPFV COMP-3SM-grow\IPFV REL-3SM-can\IPFV
- ይመስልኛል?  
*yə-mäsl-(ə)-h=all-ø*  
 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.2SM=NPST-3SM
- ‘Do you think [the programme] can expand and grow?’
- ይመስለኛል ። የማስተባበር ጉዳይ ነው<sub>[AA 855]</sub>  
*yə-mäsl-änn=all-ø yä-mastäbabär gudday n-äw*  
 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM GEN-coordinate\VN matter COP-3SM
- ‘I think (so). It is a matter of coordination’

#### 4.4.2. Mental verbal epistemifiers

##### 4.4.2.1. Structure and grammar

Mental verbal epistemifiers embrace all non-factive verbs (as opposed to factive verbs, which entail the truth of the proposition such as አንድ-X ይገባኛል *andä-X yəgäbaññall*, ‘I understand that X’; አንድ-X አረዳለሁ *andä-X ərräddallähu* ‘I understand that X’) which explicitly refer to the mental state of the epistemiser.<sup>52</sup> As discussed in 2.4.4 they will be considered as modal only in their stative 1<sup>st</sup> person present tense form.

All Amharic mental verbal epistemifiers have an identical morphological structure. The subject of the verb is at the same time the speaker. The verb consists of an imperfective form of the verb and the non-past auxiliary አለ *allä*. The subject agreement markers of the 1SG are አ- *ə-*, prefixed to the main verb, and -ሁ *-ähu*, suffixed to the auxiliary:

- (87) አሰባለሁ  
*assəb=all-ähu*  
1SG-think\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
‘I think’

Mental verbal epistemifiers require two core arguments: a 1SG epistemizer in the slot of the subject and a complement clause in the slot of the object. They can take four types of complement clauses:

- i. introduced by the complementizer አንድ- *andä-* ‘that’
- ii. introduced by the complementizer አንድ- *and-* ‘lest’ (with NEG), also ‘to, so that’
- iii. introduced by the inflectable quotative linker ብዬ *bəyye* ‘I saying:’ (though inflectable, this is always in 1SG when occurring with mental verbal epistemifiers)
- iv. nominalized clauses.<sup>53</sup>

These four methods of complementation will be discussed in turn below.

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<sup>52</sup> They are also called “attitudinal verbs” or “propositional verbs”.

<sup>53</sup> For the nominalization strategy of complementation see Dixon (1995, 2006).

i. ENDÄ- complement clauses

These are the prototypical complement clauses in Amharic, and can occur with all mental verbal epistemificators. The clause is introduced by the obligatory complementizer እንደ- *ändä*- ‘that’<sup>54</sup> prefixed to the perfective (88) or the relative imperfective (89) form of the verb. (For discussion of the use of the relative imperfective here, see below.)

- |      |                                                                                                                               |                                                          |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| (88) | እንደ-ነገረ (እንደነገረ)<br><i>ändä-näggär-ä (ändänäggärä)</i><br>COMP-tell\IPFV-3SM<br>‘I think that he told’                        | አስባለሁ<br><i>assəb=all-ähu</i><br>1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG |
| (89) | እንደ-የም ይነገር (እንደሚነገር)<br><i>ändä-yämm-(ə)-yə-nägr (ändämmminägr)</i><br>COMP-REL-3SM-tell\IPFV<br>‘I think that he will tell’ | አስባለሁ<br><i>assəb=all-ähu</i><br>1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG |

The complement clause and the mental verbal epistemificator can be separated by a word, such as the conjunction ግን or an adverb:

- |      |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (90) | የከፋ ኪሳራ ውስጥ እንደምንገኝ አጥብቄ<br><i>yäkäffa kisara wəst ändä-mm-(ə)-nnə-ggäñ atbəqq-e</i><br>worse deficit in COMP-REL-1PL-be.found\IPFV lay.emphasis\GER-1SG | አምናለሁ <sup>55</sup><br><i>amn=all-ähu</i><br>1SG.believe\IPFV=NPST-1SG<br>‘I <b>strongly</b> believe that we will be in an even worse deficit’ |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

In (88) the complementizer *ändä*- is followed by the bare perfective form of the verb *näggärä* ‘he told’ while in (89) it is followed by the relative marker *yämm*- (surfacing as *-mm-*) and only then the imperfective form of the verb (*yənägr*). It is quite puzzling that the complementizer *ändä*- ‘that’ should be followed by a relative imperfective verb and not simply by a bare imperfective form of the verb. Equally puzzling is that there is a relative marker in the imperfective but not the perfective. In fact, some scholars choose to

<sup>54</sup> *Endä*-complement clauses are also employed in indirect speech in Amharic. For a survey of functions of እንደ- *ändä*- ‘like’, ‘that’ see Leslau (1995: 690-704).

<sup>55</sup> [http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=15796: በአዲስ-አድማስ-ጥዕና](http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=15796: በአዲስ-አድማስ-ጥዕና) &Itemid=211. [Accessed 27.06.2019]

resolve this asymmetry by postulating that the perfective verb also underlyingly takes a relative form. Thus, different scholars have approached this problem in two ways:

- a. *ändä-* + PFV simply does not have any relative marker **የ**- *yä-*
- b. *ändä-* + PFV underlyingly does have *yä-*, but it is always deleted because of the standard combinatoric rules of Amharic (*lä- + yä- → lä-, bä- + yä- → bä-* etc.).

Goldenberg (1965: 10) prefers the second solution, as does Leslau (1995: 677). This statement must be diachronically nuanced, however. As Goldenberg notes (1965: 10), in pre-modern Amharic the “content clauses of verbs of expression and perception” were not constructed the way they are today: the complementizer **እንደ-** *änd-* used to be attached directly to the imperfective, and likewise to the perfective and not to their relative counterparts.<sup>56</sup> As far as I know in these early texts the relative marker never occurs in such constructions. If so, a major change has happened. Goldenberg does not venture to inquire why this change should have occurred.<sup>57</sup> He suggests, however, as we can see, that also the perfective, by way of analogy, is prefixed by a relative marker *yä-* (1965: 10).

Here, to the contrary, I wish to argue for the first solution: that *ändä-* + PFV has no underlying relative marker at all.<sup>58</sup> The basis for assuming that it does have the relative marker is by comparison to *ändä-* + IPFV, in which the relative marker is clearly present; then the perfective would have analogically (but invisibly) been reanalysed on the basis of the imperfective. This means that the imperfective is somehow seen as being more “basic”

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<sup>56</sup> The change probably took place in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. *Ändä-* clauses followed by simple imperfective form are still attested in texts dating back to the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, for instance in the letter of the Metropolitan Petros from 1904 (Krzyżanowska-Ancel 2014: 132).

<sup>57</sup> He mentions, however, that the introduction of the relative verbs brought about a formal distinction between complement clauses of two semantic types of verbs: on the one hand those referring to speech, knowledge and perception, which in today’s Amharic take an imperfective complement with the relative marker and, on the other hand, those referring to request, advice, intention, permission and wish, which do not (1965: 10). Kapeliuk (1988: 96-97) hypothesises that because the complementizer **እንደ-** *ändä-* ‘that’, and some other conjunctions, were originally prepositions, they therefore may require a nominal form of the verb, such as a relative verb. This conjecture, however, sounds implausible in view of the fact that up to a hundred years ago the complementizer was always attached directly to the bare form of the verb, both perfective and imperfective.

<sup>58</sup> The same stance is adopted by Shimelis (2015: 238 fn. 3). See also his discussion on p. 240.

than the perfective: the perfective changes to be like the imperfective, not vice versa. But why? In fact, historically, we know from older texts that originally neither the perfective nor the imperfective had any relative marker in this construction. The present-day imperfective construction (with relative marker) is thus secondary. Yet we are to consider it as being synchronically basic, and thus as providing an analogical model for the perfective. This is possible, but complex and unmotivated. It is unnecessarily complex because in the perfective it involves adding *yä-* which is then always deleted; it is unmotivated because it seems to be an *ad hoc* stipulation regarding what is to count as the unmarked form, hence as the model for an analogical re-formation.

Another problem concerns the phrase “standard combinatoric rules of Amharic” (see b. above). Changes like *lä- + yä- → lä-* involve a preposition as the first element. In Amharic today, *ändä-* is not a preposition in this construction (as a preposition, *ändä-* would mean ‘like, as’). Historically it may once have been a preposition even in this construction;<sup>59</sup> but (as just noted) originally *yä-* was not a part of this construction at all, hence the possible combinability of *yä-* with the “alleged” preposition *ändä-* could not have originally been an issue either. The arguments presented above are still in the realm of hypothesis and the question whether *ändä-* is followed by a bare perfective or relative perfective remains open.

The subject of the main clause and the subject of the *ändä-* complement clause can be the same or different. In comparison to the corresponding main clause, the grammatical possibilities of the *ändä-* complement clause are more limited. Here the verbal complement has a restricted range of formal possibilities: the imperative and jussive moods, and the perfect tense, are not allowed.<sup>60</sup> This type of complement clause is also incompatible with auxiliarized epistemificators such as (**ይነገር**)<sub>S</sub> **ይሆናል** (*yənägr*)<sub>S</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells’.

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<sup>59</sup> Thus in colloquial English, *like* can be used as a quotative complementizer (e.g. “She was, like, What’s the problem?”). Orin Gensler, p.c. See Güldemann (2008: 317-327).

<sup>60</sup> See also Section 6.1.3.

In the corpus, the mental verbal epistemifiers, which by definition do not entail knowledge on the part of the speaker, occur more rarely with an *ändä*- complement clause than with a *bəyye* ‘I saying:’ complement clause (see below). In contrast, those epistemic verbs that do entail knowledge, such as **አውቃለሁ** *awqallähu* ‘I know’ and **ይገባኛል** *yəgäbaññall* ‘I understand’, take an *ändä*- complement clause (or a nominalized clause) and never the *bəyye* complement clause.<sup>61</sup>

ii. *END- complement clauses*

This complementizer is used only with two epistemifiers that are listed below:<sup>62</sup> **እንድ-** NEG.X **እሠጋለሁ** *änd-NEG.X əsägallähu* ‘I worry lest X, I am worried lest X’ and **እንድ-** NEG.X **እፈራለሁ** *änd-NEG.X əfärallähu* ‘I fear lest X’. It is often used with a range of verbs from the domain “hindering, preventing, fearing” (Leslau 1995: 699) to which the two epistemifiers belong. With all these verbs the *änd*- complementizer is always followed by the negated imperfective verb. In the case of *änd-NEG.X əsägallähu* and *änd-NEG.X əfärallähu* this so-called pleonastic negation<sup>63</sup> indicates that the speaker is afraid that the state of affairs expressed by the embedded verb will take place, which is undesirable or bad. *Änd-NEG* will be rendered into English with the conjunction ‘lest’.<sup>64</sup>

(91) <b>እንዳይመጣ</b>	<b>እሠጋለሁ</b>
<i>änd-a-y-mäta</i>	<i>ə-säg=all-ähu</i>
COMP-NEG-3SM-come\IPFV	1SG-worry\IPFV=NPST-1SG
‘I worry lest he come’ (lit. ‘that he won’t come’)	

*Änd*- may also occur with verbs of desire, volition and commanding such as **ፈለገ** *fällägä* ‘want’ and **አዘዘ** *azzäzä* ‘order’.

<sup>61</sup> Because they entail knowledge, these verbs do not count as epistemifiers. On these verbs in the context of verbal complementation see Section 5.11.4.

<sup>62</sup> Further, there are three mental noun epistemifiers, discussed in 4.4.3.1. below, which also take the complementizer *änd*-.

<sup>63</sup> Pleonastic negation is also termed “paratactic” (Jespersen 1917) and “expletive” (especially by Romance linguists) (in Zovko Dinković and Ilc 2017: 160).

<sup>64</sup> Using ‘lest’ is not always the most graceful way to translate sentences with these epistemifiers; but it does convey well their negatively oriented semantics, and I will try to use it consistently.

iii. BƏYYE *adjoined complement clauses*

Almost all modal epistemic verbs that do not entail knowledge on the part of the speaker can have a ብዬ *bəyye* ‘I saying:’ type of clause as their object argument. The clause is followed by the inflectable quotative linker ብዬ *bəyye* ‘I saying:’, functioning as a complementizer. *Bəyye* is the 1SG gerund form of the verb አለ *alä* ‘say’ and as such it agrees with the subject of the main clause. Since the complement clause of *bəyye* is structurally identical to a main clause there are no restrictions in regard to time, aspect and modality. In fact, the terms “complement clause” and “complementizer” are themselves almost misnomers (although for convenience we will continue to use them), since the clause preceding *bəyye* is arguably not subordinated but merely adjoined (i.e. loosely attached) to the epistemificator clause (see Section 5.3.5 for detailed discussion). Thus *bəyye* has the function of simply linking two sentences. In the English translation of Amharic epistemificators the linker ብዬ *bəyye* will be rendered with a colon, e.g. ‘I think:’ in the following example.

- (92) **ለአባቴ**                      **ጉዳዩን**                      **ቢነግረው**  
*lä-abbat-e*                      *gudday-u-n*                      *b-i-nägr-äw*  
 for-father-POSS.1SG    matter-DEF-ACC    if-3SM-tell\IPFV-OBJ.3SM  
**ይስማማል**                      **ብዬ**                      **አስባለሁ**<sup>[TS 6]</sup>  
*yə-smamm=all-ø*                      *bəyye*                      *assab=all-ähu*  
 3SM-agree\IPFV=NPST-3SM    say\GER-1SG    1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I think :if he tells my father about the matter, he (the father) will agree’

The adjoined complement clause can be separated from the mental verbal epistemificator by a (brief) word:

- (93) **የጋንግስተር**    **ጠባይ**    **ስላለውና**                      **ችኩል**  
*yä-gangəstär*    *täbay*    *səl-all-ä-w-(ə)-nna*                      *čəkkul*  
 GEN-gangster    character    because-exist-3SM-OBJ.3SM-and    impulsive  
**በመሆኑ**                      **ለመሪነት**    **አይመጥንም**                      **ብዬ**  
*bä-mähon-u*                      *lä-märinnät*    *a-y-mätṭən-(ə)-mm*                      *bəyye*  
 in-COP\VN-POSS.3SM    for-leadership    NEG-3SM-measure.up\IPFV-NEG    say\GER-1SG  
**ግን አምናለሁ**<sup>65</sup>  
*gən amn=all-ähu*  
 but    1SG.believe\IPFV-1SG

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.ethiopianreview.com/index/27226>. [Accessed: 03.03.2018]

‘I believe, **however**: because he has a gangster’s character and because he is impulsive he doesn’t measure up to leadership’

The semantic difference between the *ändä*- and *bäyye* complement clauses will be examined in Section 5.11.

iv. Nominalized clauses

These clauses occur fairly infrequently with mental verbal epistemificators. In the corpus the only examples are with the verbs **አጠራጠራለሁ** *aṭṭäraṭṭarallähu* ‘I doubt’ and **አምናለሁ** *amnallähu* ‘I believe’; there are only a few examples of *amnallähu*, in all of which the nominalized predicate is the copula. In all my examples (and I believe in the language in general) the verbal nominalization is of the type corresponding to English “destroying”, not “destruction”: it is not a lexical nominalization but is part of any verb’s regular morphological inflection.<sup>66</sup> It is expressed in Amharic with the prefix **መ-** *mä-* and it is often called a “verbal noun”. As usual in Amharic, the stem to which **መ-** *mä-* is added depends on the morphological type, class and root augmentation of the verb, for instance, **ሰበረ** *säbbärä* ‘break’ → **መሰበረ** *mäsbar* ‘breaking’, **አረጋገጠ** *arrägaggätä* ‘confirm’ → **ማረጋገጥ** *marrägagät* ‘confirming’.<sup>67</sup> Syntactically the function of verbal nouns is similar to that of the infinitive in other languages. For this reason some scholars use the term ‘infinitive’ in regard to the verbal noun, for instance Kapeliuk (1988).

In a nominalized clause<sup>68</sup> the verbal noun takes a possessive suffix expressing the subject of the nominalized clause followed by the accusative marker indicating the object relation between the complement clause and the superordinate predicate.

(94)	<b>የአሁኑ</b> <i>yä-abun-u</i> GEN-now-DEF	<b>መጽሐፉ</b> <i>mäṣhaf-u</i> book-POSS.3SM	<b>“ገንቶገራ”</b> <i>Žantožara</i> PN	<b>ይስማዕክ</b> <i>Yasma’əkä</i> PN	<b>ሁለገብ</b> <i>hullägäbb</i> comprehensive
	<b>በሆነ</b> <i>bä-(yä)-hon-ä</i> in-(REL)-COP\PFV-3SM	<b>መልኩ</b> <i>mälk-u</i> form-DEF	<b>አምርታ</b> <i>ammarta</i> step.forward	<b>ያሳየበት</b> <i>y-asayy-ä-bb-ät</i> REL-show\PFV-3SM-in-OBJ.3SM	

<sup>66</sup> The generative tradition calls this process “action nominalization” (Chomsky 1970). This term has gained a foothold outside the generative circle.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Kapeliuk (1988: 22). For an in-depth analysis of action nominalization in Amharic see Shimelis (2015).

<sup>68</sup> In the linguistic literature these are also called ‘action nominal constructions’ (see, for instance, Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993). This same term is used by Shimelis (2015).

መሆኑን

*māhon-u-n*

COP\VN-POSS.3SM-ACC 1SG.believe\IPFV= NPST-1SG

አምናለሁ<sup>69</sup>

*amn=all-āhu*

‘I believe that Yəsma’əkä in a comprehensive way has made a step forward in his current book *Žantožara*’

There are more constraints imposed upon a nominalized clause than upon an *ändä*-complement clause. Giving that the verbal noun is a morphological noun (Kapeliuk 1988: 22), it does not inflect for the verbal categories of time and aspect (but see towards the end of Section 6.1.3) The nominalization strategy cannot be used if the verb of the subordinated clause takes an object pronoun, and it is disfavoured when the verb is negated (Kapeliuk 1988: 45). Because I have found almost no examples of the verbal noun with mental verbs other than **አጠራጠራለሁ** *aṭṭäraṭṭərarallāhu* ‘I doubt’ and **አምናለሁ** *amnallāhu* ‘I believe’, this construction will not be presented systematically, in the way that *ändä*- and *bəyye* complement clauses will be.

Different rules govern main sentence stress depending on the type of the complement clause. With *ändä*- (‘that’) complements the stress is on the embedded verb, typically followed by a pause. With the *bəyye* ‘I saying:’ linker, the primary stress falls on the quotative linker *bəyye* which is often followed by a pause. However, the adjoined sentence has its own stress, too, placed on its own main verb (or predicate). That is why, if the adjoined sentence ends with a “canonical” verb (not a copula), this verb receives a stress which is immediately followed by an even more audibly perceptible stress on *bəyye*. We know that the main verb of the adjoined sentence also receives a stress, and that what we hear is not just a rise in intonation which peaks on *bəyye*, thanks to copular sentences. As it happens, if an adjoined sentence contains a copular sentence, the stress is on the complement of the copula. The stress then decreases on the copula only to increase rapidly on *bəyye*. With VN complements the stress is on the kernel of the epistemificator. There is one epistemificator which does not conform to the above rules: with **አንድ-X ያጠራጥራል**

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<sup>69</sup>[http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=2891:“ዣንቶጆራ”-ዓይናችንን-የገለጠልን-ልብወለድ](http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2891:“ዣንቶጆራ”-ዓይናችንን-የገለጠልን-ልብወለድ). [Accessed: 14.09.2017]

*ändä-X yattäraṭṭəral* ‘it raises doubts that X’ the stress falls on *yattäraṭṭəral*, and not on the embedded verb.

#### 4.4.2.2. List of mental verbal epistemificators with examples

In the following list a few of the epistemificators involve the *änd-* complementizer or a verbal noun complement, but the vast majority have *ändä-* and *bəyye* complementizers.

These have the structures:

*ändä-X* Epistemic Verb

*X bəyye* Epistemic Verb

The question of when to use *ändä-* and *bəyye* is difficult; it will be discussed later in Section 5.11.

- **እንደ-X አስባለሁ** *ändä-X assəballähu* ‘I think (that) X’, ‘I reckon (that) X’

(95)	<b>ያስተዋልኩትን</b> <i>yä-astäwal-ku-t-(ə)-n</i> REL-observe\PFV-1SG-DEF-ACC	<b>እለማመዳለሁ ።</b> [...] <i>ə-llämammäd=all-ähu. [...]</i> 1SG-practise\IPFV=NPST-1SG
	<b>ትክክለኛውን መንገድ የያዝኩ</b> <i>təkəkəkäläñña-w-(ə)-n mängäd yä-yaz-ku</i> right-DEF-ACC way REL-take\PFV-1SG	<b>ይመስለኛል</b> <i>yə-mäsl-äññ=all-ø</i> 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM
	<b>ወደፊት ጥሩ እንደሚሆን</b> <i>wädäfit tərū ändä-mm-i-'hon</i> in.the.future good COMP-REL-3SM-COP\IPFV	<b>አስባለሁ</b> <sub>[AA 227]</sub> <sup>70</sup> <i>assəb=all-ähu</i> 1SG.think\IPFV-NPST-1SG

‘I practise what I have observed. [...] It seems to me I have taken the right way. I think that it will be good in the future’

- **X ብዬ አስባለሁ** *X bəyye assəballähu* ‘I think: X’, ‘I reckon: X’

(96)	<b>ያ አማራጭ ቢኖር</b> <i>ya ammaraç b-i-nor</i> that choice if-3SM-exist\IPFV	<b>ለቀጣዩ</b> <i>lä-qäṭṭay-u</i> for-next-DEF	<b>ውሳኔ</b> <i>wəssane</i> decision
	<b>ይረዳታል</b> <i>yə-räd-at=all-ø</i> 3SM-help\IPFV-OBJ.3SF=NPST-3SM	<b>'ብዬ</b> <i>'bəyy-e</i> say\GER-1SG	<b>አስባለሁ</b> <sub>[TS 7]</sub> <i>assəb=all-ähu</i> 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I think: if there is that choice, it will help her in the next decision’

- **እንደ-X አምናለሁ** *ändä-X amnallähu* ‘I believe (that) X’

(97)	<b>ይህ አነጋጋሪ</b> <i>yəh annägagari</i> this controversial	<b>ጉዳይ</b> <i>gudday</i> matter	<b>መቼም ይሁን መቼ</b> <i>mäčemm yəhun mäče</i> one.way.or.another	<b>ምላሽ</b> <i>mällas</i> answer
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<sup>70</sup> The original sentence has been slightly modified.

**የሚያስፈልገው**                      **እንደሆነ**                      **አምናለሁ**  
*yämm-i-(y)-asfälläg-äw*                      *ändä-'hon-ä*                      *amn=all-ähu*  
REL-3SM-need\IPFV-OBJ.3SM    COMP-COP\PFV-3SM    1SG.believe\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
‘I believe that, one way or another, this controversial matter needs an answer’

- X ብዬ አምናለሁ X *bäyye amnallähu* ‘I believe: X’

(98) **ንባብ**    **በግሌ**                      **ሙሉ**    **ሰው**    **እንደሆነ**  
*nəbab*    *bä-gäll-e*                      *mulu*    *säw*    *änd-ə-hon*  
reading    in-private-POSS.1SG    full    person    COMP-1SG-be(come)\IPFV  
**አድርጎኛል**                                      **'ብዬ**                      **አምናለሁ**<sup>[SQ]</sup>  
*adrəg-o-ññ=all-ø*                                      *'bäyy-e*                      *amn=all-ähu*  
make\GER-3SM-OBJ.1SG=PF-3SM    say\GER-1SG    1SG.believe\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
‘I believe: reading, personally, has made me be(come) a full person’

- እንደ-X እገምታለሁ *ändä-X əgämmätallähu* ‘I assume (that) X, I guess (that), I estimate (that)’

(99) **ይህ**    **ጠንካራ**    **ፍላጎታቸው**                      **በውስጣቸው**                      **እየፈለ**  
*yəh*    *tänkarrä*    *fällagot-aččäw*                      *bä-wəst-aččäw*                      *əyyä-fälla*  
this    strong    urge-POSS.3SPOL    in-inside-POSS.3SPOL    PROG-seethe\PFV.3SM  
**ጊዜና**                      **ሁኔታን**                      **በትግሥት**    **መጠበቅ**  
*gize-(ə)-nna huneta-n*                      *bä-təgəst*    *mätäbbäq*  
time-and    circumstance-ACC    in-patience    wait\VN  
**እንዳላስቻላቸው**                                      **እገምታለሁ**<sup>[NB 157: 14-15]</sup>  
*änd-'al-asčal-aččäw*                                      *ə-gämmät=all-ähu*  
COMP-NEG-enable\PFV.3SM-OBJ.3SPOL    1SG-assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
‘I assume that this strong urge seething inside him has made him unable to wait patiently for (favourable) time and circumstances’

- X ብዬ እገምታለሁ X *bäyye əgämmätallähu* ‘I assume: X, I guess: X, I speculate: X’

(100) **ምናልባት**    **የሲኒማ**                      **ቤቶች**    **መበራከት**                      **ችግሩን**  
*mənalbat*    *yä-sinima*                      *bet-očč*    *mäbbärakät*                      *čəggər-u-n*  
maybe    GEN-cinema    house-PL    be.multiplied\VN    problem-DEF-ACC  
**ይቀርፈዋል**                                      **'ብዬ**                      **እገምታለሁ**<sup>71</sup>  
*yə-qärf-äw=all-ø*                                      *'bäyy-e*                      *ə-gämmät=all-ähu*  
3SM-eliminate\IPFV-OBJ.3SM=NPST-3SM    say\GER-1SG    1SG-assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
‘I assume: maybe it will eliminate the problem of the multiplication of cinemas’

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.sendeknewspaper.com/entertainment-sendek/item/3270/>. [Accessed: 17.09.2015]

- እንደ-X ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ *ändä-X täsfa adärgallähu* ‘I hope (that) X’

(101) **ዕድሜና ጤና ከሰጠኝ ገና ብዙ**  
*ädme-(ə)-nna tena kä-sätt-ä-ññ gäna bəzu*  
 age-and health if-give\IPFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG still much  
**የማውቅበትና የምማርበት**  
*yämm-aωq-(ə)-bb-ät-(ə)-nna yämm-ə-mmār-(ə)-bb-ät*  
 REL-1SG.get.to.know\IPFV-in-OBJ.3SM-and REL-1SG.learn\IPFV-in-OBJ.3SM  
**ትምህርት ቤቱ እንደሚሆን 'ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ'**<sup>[AA 268]</sup>  
*təmhərt bet-e ändä-mm-i-'hon 'täsfä adärg=all-ähu*  
 school-POSS.1SG COMP-REL-3SM-COP\IPFV hope 1SG.make\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘If He (God) grants me (long) life and health, I hope that my school will be (a place) where I can still get to know and learn a lot’

- X ብዬ ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ *X bəyye täsfa adärgallähu* ‘I hope: X’

(102) **መልካም አቶ... ምናልባት በሌሎች ፕሮግራሞች**  
*mälkam ato... mənalbat bə-lel-očč program-očč*  
 good mister... maybe in-another-PL programme-PL  
**እንገናኛለን 'ብዬ 'ተስፋ**  
*ənnə-ggänaññ=all-än 'bəyye 'täsfä*  
 1PL-meet.each.other\IPFV=NPST-1PL say\GER-1SG hope  
**አደርጋለሁ**<sup>[TS 1]</sup>  
*adärg=all-ähu*  
 1SG.make\IPFV= NPST-1SG  
 ‘Good, Mr. ... I hope: maybe we will meet in other programmes’

- እንደ-X እተማመናለሁ *ändä-X əttämammänallähu* ‘I am confident (that) X’

(103) **ግን ከእንግዲህ ወዲያ ብዙ ጊዜ እንደማይፈጅ**  
*gən kä'əngədih wädiya bəzu gize ändä-mm-'a-y-fäğ*  
 but henceforth onwards much time COMP-REL-NEG-3SM-take\IPFV  
**እተማመናለሁ**<sup>[MAH 77: 1-2]</sup>  
*ə-ttämammän=all-ähu*  
 1SG-be.confident\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘But I am confident that from now on (it) will not take much time’

- X ብዬ እተማመናለሁ *X bəyye əttämammänallähu* ‘I am confident: X’

I could not find many example sentences containing this epistemificator. This scarcity goes hand in hand with native speakers’ judgement that those sentences which do contain the epistemificator are on the verge of being infelicitous: a preferred mental verb following *bəyye* is either *amnallähu* ‘I believe’ (as in 104) or *assəballähu* ‘I think’. The epistemificator

is more common in its negative form X **ብዬ አልተማመንም** X *bəyye alətämammänəmm* ‘I am not confident: X’ (see Section 6.2.5).

(104) **ገንዘብ መበደር ብፈልግ ባልደረቦኛ**  
*gänzäb mäbbädär b-ə-fälläg baldäräb-očč-e*  
 money borrow\VN if-1SG-want\IPFV colleague-PL-POSS.1SG  
**ያበድሩኛል** **ብዬ** **እተማመናለሁ**<sup>72</sup>  
*y-abäddär-u-ññ=all* *bəyye* *ə-ttämammän=all-ähu*  
 3PL-lend\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.1SG=NPST say\GER-1SG 1SG-be.confident\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I am confident: if I wanted to borrow money my colleagues will lend (it) to me’

• **እንደ-X እጠብቃለሁ** *ändä-X ətəbbəqallähu* ‘I expect (that) X’

(105) **የምንጠራውን ሰው ማዘናናት አለብን** **፤**  
*yämm-(ə)-nnə-tära-w-(ə)-n säw maznanat all-ä-bb-(ə)-n;*  
 REL-1PL-invite\IPFV-DEF-ACC person entertain\VN exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.1PL  
**በትዕይንቱ እንደሚደሰቱ እጠብቃለሁ**<sup>73</sup>  
*bä-tə’əynt-u ändä-mm-i-’ddässät-u ə-təbbəq=all-ähu*  
 by-spectacle-DEF COMP-REL-3PL-be.happy\IPFV-3PL 1SG-expect\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘We must entertain people that we invite. I expect that they will be happy with the spectacle’

• X **ብዬ እጠብቃለሁ** X *bəyye ətəbbəqallähu* ‘I expect: X’

(106) **በቤተሰባቸው ጉዳይ ላይ ይወያያሉ** **ብዬ**  
*bä-betäsäb-aččäw gudday lay yə-wəyayayy=all-u* *bəyye*  
 in-family-POSS.3PL matter on 3PL-discuss\IPFV=NPST-3PL say\GER-1SG  
**እጠብቃለሁ**  
*ə-təbbəq=all-ähu*  
 1SG-expect\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I expect: they will discuss (about) their family matter’

• **እንደ-NEG.X እሠጋለሁ** *änd-NEG.X əsägallähu* ‘I worry lest X, I am worried lest X’

(107) **በአገራችን ውስጥ ጥሩ ያልሆነ ለውጥ**  
*bä-agär-aččän wəst tərū y-al-hon-ä läwəṭ*  
 in-country-POSS.1PL in good REL-NEG-COP\PFV-3SM change  
**እንዳይመጣ** **እሰጋለሁ**  
*änd-a-(y)-mäta* *’ə-säg=all-ähu*  
 COMP-NEG-3SM-come\IPFV 1SG-worry\IPFV=NPST-1SG

<sup>72</sup> <http://etd.aau.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/16909/1/Ephrata%20Damtew.pdf>. [Accessed: 09.03.2018]

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.ethiopianreporter.com/index.php/other-sections/social-affairs/social/item/9792>. [Accessed: 23.01.2018]

‘I worry lest a change that is not good will happen in our country’

- X ብዬ እሠጋለሁ X *bəyye asägallähu* ‘I worry (that): X, I am worried: X’

(108) ከሰሜን ኢትዮጵያና ከአሮሞ የዜማ ቅላጾችና ምቶች  
*kä-sämen Ityopya-nna kä-Oromo yä-zema qäläṣe-(w)-očč-(ə)-nna mat-očč*  
 from-north Ethiopia-and from-Oromo GEN-melody rhythm-PL-and beat-PL

ጋር እየቀላቀሉት ስለሆነ ደብዛው  
*gar əyyä-qälaqqäl-u-t səlä-hon-ä däbza-w*  
 with PROG-mix\PFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM because-COP\PFV-3SM trace-DEF

ይጠፋል 'ብዬ 'እሠጋለሁ<sup>74</sup>  
*yə-täf=all-ø 'bəyye 'ə-säg=all-ähu*  
 3SM-disappear\IPFV=NPST-3SM say\GER-1SG 1SG-worry\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘Because they are mixing it (Wäläyta music) with melodic rhythms and beats from northern Ethiopia and from Oromo, I am worried: it will disappear without a trace’

- እንድ-NEG.X እፈራለሁ and-NEG.X *əfärallähu* ‘I am afraid lest X, I fear lest X’

(109) በየንዳው ማጉመትመት ባህላችን  
*bä-yä-g<sup>w</sup>ada-w magumätmät bahäl-aččən*  
 in-DIST-inner.part.of.the.house-DEF grumble\VN culture-POSS.1PL

እንዳይሆን 'እፈራለሁ<sup>75</sup>  
*ənd-a-y-hon 'ə-fär=all-ähu*  
 COMP-NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV 1SG-be.afraid\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I am afraid lest grumbling in every inner part of the house (household) will be(come) our culture’

- X ብዬ እፈራለሁ X *bəyye əfärallähu* ‘I am afraid: X, I fear: X’

(110) ባለቤቴ በእኔም ላይ ጉዳት ሊያደርስ  
*baläbet-e bä-əne-mm lay gudat l-i-(y)-adärs*  
 spouse-POSS-1SG in-1SG-FOC on harm COMP-3SM-inflict\IPFV

ይችላል 'ብዬ 'እፈራለሁ<sub>[AA 810]</sub>  
*yə-čäl=all-ø 'bəyye 'ə-fär=all-ähu*  
 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM say\GER-1SG 1SG-fear\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I fear: my spouse could harm me’

- እንድ-X እጠረጥራለሁ andä-X *əṯärättərarallähu* ‘I suspect (that) X’

(111) በርግጥም አንድ ምስጢር ሊኖር እንደሚችል  
*bärgəṯ-(ə)-mm and məstir l-i-nor əndä-mm-i-čäl*  
 clearly-FOC one secret COMP-3SM-exist\IPFV COMP-REL-3SM-could\IPFV

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mx7NAm18FsM>. [Accessed: 14.09.2017]

<sup>75</sup> <http://archiveamharic.ethiopianreporter.com/content/የመገንጠል-ጥያቄ-በሎግያ>. [Accessed: 14.09.2017]

**እጠረጥራለሁ**<sup>76</sup>

*ə-tärättər=all-ähu*

1SG-suspect\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘Clearly, I suspect that there could be a secret’

- X **’ብዬ እጠረጥራለሁ** X *bəyye ətärättərallähu* ‘I suspect: X’<sup>77</sup>

(112) <b>የገሰገሰች</b>	<b>እናቴ</b>	<b>ናት</b>	<b>’ብዬ</b>
<i>yä-näggär-äčč-at</i>	<i>ənnat-e</i>	<i>n-at</i>	<i>’bəyye</i>
REL-tell\PFV-3SF-OBJ.3SF	mother-POSS.1SG	COP-3SF	say\GER-1SG

**እጠረጥራለሁ**

*ə-tärättər=all-ähu*

1SG-suspect\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I suspect: it was my mother who told her’

- X **’ብዬ እጠራጠራለሁ** X *bəyye əttärättärallähu* ‘I suspect X’

Despite the fact that the epistemificator head in this and in the following epistemificator is the same *əttärättärallähu*, paradoxically I will provide them with two different, even opposite meanings: “suspect” and “doubt”. To “suspect” means to think that something will happen and that it is bad. To “doubt” means to think that something (good or bad) will not happen. Both “doubt” and “suspect” include negativity but in two different senses and at two different levels. In the case of “doubt” we are dealing with logical negativity applied to the epistemificator head. In the case of “suspect” we deal with axiological negativity (not good = bad) applied to the epistemized.

(113) <b>ይህን</b>	<b>ሳስታውስ</b>	<b>ምናልባት ለህይወቱ</b>	<b>የሚያሰጋ</b>
<i>yəh-(ə)-n</i>	<i>s-astawwas</i>	<i>mənallbat lä-həywat-u</i>	<i>yämm-i-(y)-asäga</i>
this-ACC	when-1SG.remember\IPFV	perhaps for-life-POSS.3SM	REL-3SM-threaten\IPFV
<b>በሽታ</b>	<b>እንዳለበት</b>	<b>ያውቅ</b>	<b>ይሆን</b>
<i>bäššata</i>	<i>ənd-all-ä-bb-ät</i>	<i>y-awq</i>	<i>yəhon</i>
disease	COMP-exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM	3SM-know\IPFV	EPST:Q
<b>’ብዬ</b>	<b>’እጠራጠራለሁ</b> <sup>78</sup>		
<i>’bəyye</i>	<i>’ə-ttärättər=all-ähu</i>		
say\GER-1SG	1SG-suspect\IPFV=NPST-1SG		

<sup>76</sup> <http://andargachew.com//አንዳርጋቸው-ፅኑ-እንዴት-ተያዘ/>. [Accessed: 17.10.2017]

<sup>77</sup> This and the next two epistemificators come from the same root *ጠረጠረ ጥጥጥጥጥጥ*. The verb *እጠራጠራለሁ* *əttärättärallähu* goes back to the form *ተጠራጠረ ጥጥጥጥጥጥ*.

<sup>78</sup> [https://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=20030:ዝክረ-አሰፋ-ጭብ&Itemid=101](https://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=20030:ዝክረ-አሰፋ-ጭብ&Itemid=101) [Accessed 27.06.2019]

‘When I remember this, I **suspect**: might he know that perhaps he has a disease which threatens his life?’

- **መንገሩን እጠራጠራለሁ** *mängärun ättärattärallähu* ‘I have doubts (about) his telling’ (lit. ‘I doubt his telling’)

This epistemificator differs from other mental verbal epistemificators in that it takes a *bäyye* clause (113) or a verbal noun (114) as its complement, but not an *ändä*- clause. Thus the same sentence as in (114) but with the complementizer *ändä*- + IPFV instead of the verbal noun is ungrammatical (115).

(114) <b>በየሠፈሩ</b> <i>bä-ygä-säfar-u</i> in-DIST-vicinity-DEF	<b>ያሉ</b> <i>y-all-u</i> REL-exist-3PL	<b>እድሮች</b> <i>əddər-očč</i> burial.society-PL	<b>በዚህ</b> <i>bä-zzih</i> in-this	<b>«የትልቅ</b> <i>yä-təlləq</i> GEN-elder
<b>ሰው» አሠራራቸው</b> <i>säw assärar-aččäw</i> man manner.of.working-POSS.3PL	<b>ከቀጠሉ</b> <i>kä-qättäl-u</i> if-continue\IPFV-3PL	<b>ወራሽ</b> <i>wärasš</i> successor		
<b>ማግኘታቸውን</b> <i>magñät-aččäw-(ə)-n</i> obtain\VN-POSS.3PL-ACC	<b>'እጠራጠራለሁ'</b> <sup>79</sup> <i>'ə-ättärattär=all-ähu</i> 1SG-doubt\IPFV=NPST-1SG			

‘I have doubts (about) burial societies, which exist everywhere, **having** any successors if they continue working in this “big man” (lit. elder) style’

(115) * <b>[X]</b> <b>እንደሚያገኙ</b> <i>ändä-mm-i-(y)-agänn-u</i> COMP-REL-3PL-obtain\IPFV-3PL	<b>'እጠራጠራለሁ'</b> <i>'ə-ättärattär=all-ähu</i> 1SG-doubt\IPFV=NPST-1SG
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\*‘I have doubts that they will obtain [X]’

It is notable that in this epistemificator the stressed element is the verb itself *ättärattärallähu*, not the nominalized complement. If it is negated, instead of the nominalized predicate, the complementizer *ändä*- is used (see Section 6.2.5).

This is the basic construction. There are other variants (actually other epistemificators) where the thing doubted occurs as the object of the preposition *sälä*- or *lä*- (and not as a direct object).<sup>80</sup> For instance:

(116) <b>ሥነ ምግባርን</b> <i>sənä məgbar-(ə)-n</i> code.of.conduct-ACC	<b>የሚያርቁ</b> <i>yämm-i-(y)-arrəq-u</i> REL-3PL-rectify\IPFV-3PL	<b>ንግድ ምክር ቤቶች</b> <i>nəgd məkər bet-očč</i> chamber.of.commerce-PL
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<sup>79</sup> [http://www.danielkibret.com/2010/05/blog-post\\_07.html](http://www.danielkibret.com/2010/05/blog-post_07.html). [Accessed: 10.10.2017]

<sup>80</sup> There may be some semantic difference between the variant with the direct object and the variant with a preposition, but I have not explored this question.

**ስለመኖራቸው**                      **'አጠራጠራ-ለሁ'**<sup>81</sup>  
*sälä-mänor-aččäw*                *'ə-ttärattär=all-ähu*  
 about-exist\VN-POSS.3PL    1SG-doubt\IPFV=NPST-1SG

'I have doubts about the existence of chambers of commerce which rectify the code of conduct'

The following two epistemificators differ in that, unlike the previous epistemificators, their verbs come from the causative form **አጠራጠራ** *attärattärä* 'cause /raise doubts' and they take a subject clause. The affirmative verb **ያጠራጠራል** *yattärattärall* 'it raises doubts' (like the negative verb **አያጠራጠርም** *ayattärattärämm* 'it does not raise any doubts' discussed in Section 6.2.5) takes as its subject either a clause introduced by the conjunction *ändä*- 'that', or a verbal noun. Thus, there is a state of affairs which raises doubts on the part of the speaker. The verb occurs in the unmarked 3SM because it agrees with its subject, which is the entire clause; compare **ይህ ነገር ያጠራጠራል** *yəh nägär yattärattärall* 'this issue raises doubts', where the subject is the simple noun *nägär*, occurring in the same position as the noun clause in (117). The subject clause is either introduced by means of the complementizer *ändä*- (117) or it is nominalized (118). It should be mentioned here that the terms "complement" and "complementizer" refer to both subject and object clauses.

- **እንደ-X ያጠራጠራል** *ändä-X yattärattärall* 'it raises doubts that X'

(117) **ይህ እስካልሆነ ድረስ ሌሎች እንዲማሩ**  
*yəh əsk-al-hon-ä dəräs lel-očč ənd-i-mmar-u*  
 this until-NEG-COP\PFV-3SM till another-PL COMP-3PL-learn\IPFV-3PL

**ለማድረግ መሞከር ምን ያህል ውጤታማ ሊሆን**  
*lä-madräg mämokkär mən yəhəl wəttetamma l-i-hon*  
 for-make\VN try\VN how.much successful COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV

**እንደሚችል 'ያጠራጠራ'**<sup>82</sup>  
*ändä-mm-i-čəl 'y-attärattär=all-ø*  
 COMP-REL-3SM-can\IPFV 3SM-raise.doubts\IPFV=NPST-3SM

'Until this happens, it raises doubts as to what extent it can be successful trying to make them learn'

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/አዲሱ-ዓመት-የግለ-ዘርፍ-ከማጥ-ወደ-ለውጥ-የሚያቀናበት-ይሁን>. [Accessed 30.06.2019]

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.ethiowengel.com/faq>. [Accessed: 17.10.2017]

- መንገሩ ያጠራጥራል *mängäruṣ yaṭṭärattärall* ‘his tellings raises doubts’

(118) የኢትዮጵያ	መንግሥት	የዋጋ	ጭማሪውን	በአስተዳደራዊ
<i>yä-Ityopya</i>	<i>mängəst</i>	<i>yä-waga</i>	<i>čəmmari-w-(ə)-n</i>	<i>bä-astädadärarwi</i>
GEN-Ethiopia	government	GEN-price	rise-DEF-ACC	through-administrative
እርምጃዎች	እቆጣጠራለሁ	ቢልም	ዘላቂ	
<i>ərməğğa-(w)-očč</i>	<i>ə-qoṭattär=all-ähu</i>	<i>b-i-l-(ə)-mm</i>	<i>zälaqi</i>	
measure-PL	1SG-control\IPFV=NPST-1SG	although-3SM-say\IPFV-CIRC	lasting	
መፍትሔ	መሆኑ	ግን	'ያጠራጥራል' <sup>83</sup>	
<i>mäftähe</i>	<i>mähon-u</i>	<i>gən</i>	<i>'y-attärattär=all-ø</i>	
solution	COP\VN-POSS.3SM	but	3SM-raise.doubts\IPFV=NPST-3SM	

‘Although the Ethiopian government says: I will control the rise in prices through administrative measures, its being a lasting solution raises doubts’

#### 4.4.3. Noun epistemificators

##### 4.4.3.1. Mental noun epistemificators

These epistemificators have as their main component a noun referring to a mental state, such as ሐሳብ *hassab* ‘thought’, እምነት *əmnät* ‘belief’ and ጥርጣሬ *tərəttare* ‘suspicion’. The noun is followed by the verb አለኝ *alläññ* ‘I have’<sup>84</sup> and is preceded by the 3SM relative form of the verb አለ *alä* ‘say’, የሚል *yämmil* ‘that it says:’, which functions as a relative quotative linker. Here is an example:

(119) የሚል	ሐሳብ	አለኝ
<i>yämm-i-l</i>	<i>hassab</i>	<i>all-ä-ññ</i>
REL-3SM-say\IPFV	thought	exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG
‘I have a thought that says:’		

The verb *alläññ* and the relative verb *yämmil* remain invariable because they both agree with the noun. Plural forms of the epistemificators, such as የሚሉ ሐሳቦች አለኝ *yämmilu hassabočč alluññ* ‘I have thoughts which say’, though theoretically grammatical, are completely unacceptable, having been lexicalized in just this, singular form; compare the strangeness of English ‘in my opinions’. The object complement of these epistemificators

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.dw.com/am/ኢትዮጵያ-ግሽበትን-መቆጣጠር-ትችላለች/a-41101683>. [Accessed: 22.03.2018]

<sup>84</sup> In the Amharic possessive construction ‘there is to me’ the possessor, here እኔ *əne* ‘I’, controls object agreement, here -ኝ -*ññ*, while the possessed controls subject agreement, here a mental noun (Amberber 2002: 23). The possessor appears in extraposition (Hetzron 1970: 307-308).

is a finite independent clause, just as with the inflectable quotative linker ብዬ *bəyye* ‘I saying’ (which is a form of the same verb as *yämmil*). As for the sentence stress it occurs in two places: on the embedded verb and on the noun referring to the mental state (i.e. the kernel; here *hassab*).

Note too that there are three epistemificators which contain the complementizer *and-* ‘that’, instead of the linker *yämmil*, followed by the negative imperfective, e.g. እንደ-NEG.X ሥጋት አለኝ *and-NEG.X səgat allänn* ‘I have a worry lest X’. This complementizer *and-* occurs with mental noun epistemificators of the ‘worry’ type. Recall that there are two mental verbal epistemificators of the ‘worry’ type which also occur with *and-NEG.X* (see Section 4.4.2.2, exx. 107 and 109). In both cases we deal with so-called pleonastic negation, which does not indicate a real negation but the idea that the speaker is afraid that the state of affairs expressed by the embedded verb will take place, contrary to the speaker’s wish. A mental noun epistemificator of this kind takes the following form:

- (120) እንዳይመጣ ሥጋት አለኝ  
*and-a-y-mäta səgat all-ä-ññ*  
 COMP-NEG-3SM-come\IPFV worry exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG  
 ‘I have a worry lest he will come’ (lit. ‘that he won’t come’)

In what follows, I will list the mental noun epistemificators and illustrate them with a sentence. For convenience, in the translation of the epistemificators instead of the phrase ‘that says’ I will use (as before) a colon (:).<sup>85</sup>

- X የሚል ሐሳብ አለኝ X *yämmil hassab allänn* ‘I have a thought: X’

- (121) ወላጆች ስለ ልጆቻቸው አስተዳደግና ትምህርት ጠንክረው  
*wälağ-očč səlä ləğ-očč-aččäw astädadäg-(ə)-nna təmhərt tänkər-äw*  
 parent-PL about child-PL-POSS.3PL upbringing-and education be.strong\GER-3PL  
 በጋራ ማሰብ 'አለባቸው' የሚል 'ሐሳብ'  
*bägara massäb 'all-ä-bb-aččäw yämm-i-l 'hassab*  
 jointly think\VN exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3PL REL-3SM-say\IPFV thought

<sup>85</sup> Apart from the epistemificators listed, there are other mental noun epistemificators with the complementizer እንደ- *andä-*, of the form እንደ-X እምነቴ ነው *andä-X əmnäte näw* ‘it is my belief that X’; እንደ-X ጥርጥር የለውም *andä-X tərətətər yälläwəmm* ‘there is no doubt that X’. They will not be further discussed in this thesis.

አለኝ<sub>[MA 1]</sub>

*all-ä-ññ*

exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘I have a thought: parents should think jointly and decisively about their children’s upbringing and education’

- X የሚል እምነት አለኝ X *yämmil əmnät alläññ* ‘I have a belief: X’

(122) **ዘመድ ላይ ጥገኛ ከመሆን ራሴን ብኝል**  
*zämäd lay təggäñña kä-mähon ras-e-n b-ə-čəl*  
 relative on dependent from-COP\VN self\POSS.1SG-ACC if-1SG-can\IPFV

**እናቴም የገሊና እረፍት ታገኛለኝ**  
*ənnat-e-mm yä-hällina əreft 't-agäññ=all-äčč*  
 mother-POSS.1SG-FOC GEN-mind rest 3SF-gain\IPFV=NPST-3SF

**የሚል 'እምነት አለኝ**<sub>[BS 97: 9-11]</sub>

*yämm-i-l 'əmnät all-ä-ññ*  
 REL-3SM-say\IPFV belief exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘I have a belief: rather than becoming dependent on a relative, if I can be independent my mother’s mind will rest easy’ (lit. ‘my mother will gain mental rest)’

- X የሚል ግምት አለኝ X *yämmil gəmmät alläññ* ‘I have an assumption: X, I have a guess X’

(123) **ምናልባት ግዴታ ማድረግ የተሻለ ነው**  
*mənalbat gəddeta madrəg-u 'yä-täšal-ä n-ärw*  
 perhaps obligation make\VN-POSS.3SM REL-be.better\PFV-3SM COP-3SM

**የሚል 'ግምት አለኝ**<sub>[TS 7]</sub>  
*yämm-i-l 'gəmmät all-ä-ññ*  
 REL-3SM-say\IPFV assumption exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘I have an assumption: perhaps making it mandatory is better’

- X የሚል ተስፋ አለኝ X *yämmil täsfa alläññ* ‘I have a hope: X’

(124) **የአሸንፋ በዓል እንደ መስቀል በዓል የዩኔስኮ ምዝገባ**  
*yä-ašānda bā'al əndä mäsqäl bā'al yä-yunesko məzgäba*  
 GEN-Ašānda feast like Mäsqäl feast GEN-UNESCO register

**ውስጥ ይገባል የሚል ተስፋ አለኝ**<sup>86</sup>  
*wəst yə-gäb=all-ø yämm-i-l täsfa all-ä-ññ*  
 in 3SM-enter\IPFV=NPST-3SM REL-3SM-say\IPFV hope exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘I have a hope: the Ašānda feast will enter the UNESCO list (just) like the Mäsqäl feast’

<sup>86</sup> <http://archiveamharic.ethiopianreporter.com/content/«የአሸንፋ-በዓል-እንደ-መስቀል-በዓል-የዩኔስኮ-ምዝገባ-ውስጥ-ይገባል-የሚል-ተስፋ-አለኝ»>. [ Accessed: 06.10.2017]

- X የሚል ሥጋት አለኝ X *yämmil sägat allänn* ‘I have a worry: X’

(125) ምናልባት ሁኔታው ከተካረረ ወንድሜን  
*mənalbat huneta-w kä-täkarrär-ä wändəmm-e-n*  
 perhaps situation-DEF if-deteriorate\PFV-3SM brother-POSS.1SG-ACC  
 ሊያስሩት ይችላሉ የሚል  
*li-(y)-asr-u-t yə-čäl=all-u yämm-i-l*  
 COMP-3PL-imprison\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM 3PL-may\IPFV=NPST-3PL REL-3SM-say\IPFV  
 ሥጋት አለኝ  
*səgat all-ä-ññ*  
 worry exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘I have a worry: perhaps if the situation deteriorates they may imprison my brother’

- እንድ-NEG.X ሥጋት አለኝ *and-NEG.X sägat allänn* ‘I have a worry lest X’

(126) ዳግም ወደ እርስ በርስ ጦርነት እንዳንገባ ትልቅ ሥጋት  
*dagəm wädä ərs bärs torənnät and-a-nnə-gäba talləq sägat*  
 again to mutual war COMP-NEG-1PL-enter\IPFV big worry  
 አለኝ<sup>87</sup>  
*all-ä-ññ*  
 exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘I have a great worry lest we again enter a war against each other’

- X የሚል ፍርሃት አለኝ X *yämmil färhat allänn* ‘I have a fear: X’

(127) ይሁንና የአብዛኛዎቹ ግጥሞች ቅርጽ ተመሳሳይ መሆኑ  
*yəhunənnə yä-abəzaññaw-očč-u gəṭəm-očč qərs təmäsasay məhon-u*  
 nevertheless GEN-most-PL-DEF poem-PL form similar COP\VN-POSS.3SM  
 አሰልቺ ያደርገዋል የሚል ፍርሃት አለኝ<sup>88</sup>  
*asälčči y-adärg-äw=all-ø yämm-i-l färhat all-ä-ññ*  
 boring 3SM-make\IPFV-OBJ.3SM=NPST-3SM REL-3SM-say\IPFV fear exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘Nevertheless, I have a fear: the form of most of the poems being similar (i.e. the fact that the form is similar) will make it boring’

- እንድ-NEG.X ፍርሃት አለኝ *and-NEG.X färhat allänn* ‘I have a fear lest X’

(128) በነገራችን ላይ «የሚመጣው» ትውልድ በጣም ፈሪ  
*bänägäraččən lay yämm-i-mäta-w təwlədd bätam färi*  
 by.the.way REL-3SM-come\IPFV-DEF generation very timid

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/index.php/article/6304>. [Accessed: 16.06.2019]

<sup>88</sup> [https://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=21037:የበላይ-በቀለ-ወያኔ-አዳዲስ-ግጥሞች&Itemid=211](https://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=21037:የበላይ-በቀለ-ወያኔ-አዳዲስ-ግጥሞች&Itemid=211). [Accessed: 16.06.2019]

**ከመሆኑ**                      **የተነሳ**      **«አልመጣም»**                      **እንዳይል**  
*kä-mähon-u*                      *yätänässa*      *al-mäta-mm*                      *änd-a-y-l*  
 from-COP\VN-POSS.3SM      because      NEG.1SG-come\IPFV-NEG      COMP-NEG-3SM-say\IPFV

**ፍርሃት**      **አለኝ<sup>89</sup>**  
*fərhat*      *all-ä-ññ*  
 fear                      exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘By the way, I have a fear lest the “coming” generation, because of being timid (i.e. out of timidity), will say: “I won’t come”’

- X የሚል ፍራቻ አለኝ X *yämmil fəračča alläññ* ‘I have a concern: X’<sup>90</sup>

(129) **ችግሩ**                      **በጊዜ**      **መፍትሄ**      **ካላገኘ**                      **ሀገሪቱ**                      **ወደ**                      **ግጭት**  
*čəggər-u*                      *bä-gize*      *mäftəbe*      *k-al-agäññ-ä*                      *hager-itu*                      *wädä*                      *gəččət*  
 problem-DEF      in-time      solution      if-NEG-find\PFV-3SM      country-DEF.F      to                      conflict

**ልትገባ**                      **ትችላለች**                      **የሚል**                      **ፍራቻ**  
*lə-t-gäba*                      *tə-čäl=all-äčč*                      *yämm-i-l*                      *fəračča*  
 COMP-3SF-enter\IPFV      3SF-could\IPFV=NPST-3SF      REL-3SM-say\IPFV      concern

**አለኝ<sup>91</sup>**  
*all-ä-ññ*  
 exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘If the problem doesn’t find a solution in due time I have a concern: the country could enter into a conflict’

- እንድ-NEG.X ፍራቻ አለኝ *änd-NEG.X fəračča alläññ* ‘I have a concern lest X’

(130) **ይህ ነገር ቁጣ እንዳይቀሰቅስ**                      **ፍራቻ አለኝ<sup>92</sup>**  
*yəh nägär qutṭa änd-a-y-qäsäqqəs*                      *fəračča all-ä-ññ*  
 this      thing      anger      COMP-NEG-3SM-arouse\IPFV      concern      exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘I have a concern lest this issue may arouse anger’

- X የሚል ጥርጣሬ አለኝ X *yämmil tərəṭṭare alläññ* ‘I have a suspicion: X’

<sup>89</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/267663236699175/posts/563895450409284/>. [Accessed: 16.06.2019]

<sup>90</sup> The words *fərhat* and *fəračča* are synonymous but not substitutable in some contexts. *Fərhat* ‘fear’ is a feeling triggered by a physical or emotional danger. *Fəračča* seems to be for more abstract fears such as fear of a future event. Note that it does not collocate with the word for ‘feeling’: የፍርሃት ስሜት *yä-fərhat səmet* \*‘feeling of *fərhat*’ but not የፍራቻ ስሜት *yä-fəračča səmet* \*‘feeling of *fəračča*’. The word *səgat* does not collocate with ‘feeling’ either and in this way is similar to *fəračča*.

<sup>91</sup> [http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=18836:አንዲት-ግዛቸው-፤-ኪስ-ያለው-በአሀዳዊ-እጅ-ነው-ይላሉ-Itemid=214](http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=18836:አንዲት-ግዛቸው-፤-ኪስ-ያለው-በአሀዳዊ-እጅ-ነው-ይላሉ-Itemid=214). [Accessed: 16.06.2019]

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.satenaw.com/amharic/archives/43975>. [Accessed: 16.06.2019]

(131) <b>ለክቼሩ</b>	<b>እንዲካሄድ</b>	<b>የተወሰነው</b>	<b>እርብ ምሽት</b>
<i>läkč'er-u</i>	<i>änd-i-kahed</i>	<i>yä-täwässän-ä-w</i>	<i>arb mašät</i>
lecture-DEF	COMP-3SM-take.place\IPFV	REL-be.decided\PFV-3SM-DEF	Friday evening
<b>ስለሆነ</b>	<b>ብዙ</b>	<b>ተሳታፊዎች</b>	<b>አይገኙም</b>
<i>sälä-hon-ä</i>	<i>bäzu</i>	<i>täsatafi-(w)-očč</i>	<i>a-yä-ggäñ-u-mm</i>
because-COP\PFV-3SM	many	participant-PL	NEG-3PL-be.present\IPFV-3PL-NEG
<b>የሚል</b>	<b>ጥርጣሬ</b>	<b>አለኝ</b> <sub>[AA 819]</sub>	
<i>yämm-i-l</i>	<i>təraštare</i>	<i>all-ä-ññ</i>	
REL-3SM-say\IPFV	suspicion	exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG	

‘Because it is on Friday evening that the lecture has been determined to take place, I have a suspicion: there will not be many participants’

#### 4.4.3.2. Noun epistemificators of certainty

The following two epistemificators both involve the word **እርግጥ** *ərgät*.<sup>93</sup> Despite the adjectival translation ‘certain, sure’, *ərgät* is better analyzed as a noun ‘certainty’, for several reasons:

- i. From *ərgät* is derived the unquestionable adjective **እርግጠኛ** *ərgätäñña* ‘certain’ (see below Section 4.4.5.1). The derivational suffix *-(ä)ñña* normally derives adjectives from nouns, arguing that *ərgät* is a noun.
  - ii. *Ərgät* is similar to the unquestionable noun **እውነት** *əwnät* ‘truth’ both formally and functionally.
  - iii. *Ərgät* occurs together with the preposition **ቡ** *bä-* in the fixed phrase **በእርግጥ** *bä-ərgät* (see below Section 4.4.6.2). Adpositions normally take nouns, not adjectives, as their complement.
- **እንደ-X እርግጥ ነው** *ändä-X ərgät näw* ‘it is certain that X, it is sure that X’

This epistemificator appears relatively seldom in texts. It consists of the word **እርግጥ** *ərgät* ‘certain’ followed by the copula **ነው** *näw* and preceded by the complementizer **እንደ** *ändä-* with the main verb either in the imperfective or the perfective form.

(132) <b>ይህ</b>	<b>መፍትሔ</b>	<b>ለሁለቱ</b>	<b>አገሮች</b>	<b>ብቻ</b>	<b>ሳይሆን</b>
<i>yəh</i>	<i>mäftəhe</i>	<i>lä-hulätt-u</i>	<i>agär-očč</i>	<i>bəčča</i>	<i>s-a-y-hon</i>
this	solution	for-two-DEF	country-PL	only	when-NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV

<sup>93</sup> **እርግጥ** *ərgät* seems to come from the root **ረገጠ** *räggätä* ‘step on’, ‘tread on’, just like the verb **አረገጠ** *aräggätä* ‘assure, make sure, make certain’, ‘confirm’ (Kane 1990: 419-420). Leslau in his *Concise Amharic Dictionary* (1976) gives two different verb-roots *räggätä*: 1) *räggätä* ‘kick, trample, step on, tread on’ and 2) *\*räggätä*, *aräggätä* ‘assure, make sure, reassure, make certain’ etc. (pp. 45-46). The word *ərgät* is to be found under the latter root.

<b>ለአካባቢውም</b>	<b>ሰላም ፣ መረጋጋትና</b>	<b>ብልፅግና</b>
<i>lä-akkababi-w-(ə)-mm</i>	<i>sälam mǎrrägagat-(ə)-nna</i>	<i>bəlsəganna</i>
for-area-DEF-also	peace quiet-and	prosperity

<b>እንደሚያመጣ</b>	<b>እርግጥ ነው</b> <sup>94</sup>
<i>ändä-mm-i-(y)-'amäta</i>	<i>ərgət n-äw</i>
COMP-REL-3SM-bring\IPFV	certain COP-3SM

‘It is certain that this solution will bring peace, quietness and prosperity not only for both countries but also for the (whole) area’

With this epistemificator the sentence stress falls on the epistemized head (the embedded verb) just as with other epistemificators with the complementizer *ändä*. In contrast to the similar epistemificator below, this one is used especially when the temporal location of the state of affairs is in the future.

This and the following epistemificator should not be confused with another, parenthetical epistemic expression **እርግጥ ነው** *ərgət näw* ‘it is true, granted, indeed, certainly’,<sup>95</sup> which occurs at the beginning of a sentence. With this parenthetical *ərgət näw* the speaker says that s/he knows that what somebody has said is true. Quite commonly, the clause containing this expression is followed by a contrastive linker such as **ግን** *gən* ‘but’, **ቢሆንም** *bihonamm* ‘although it is’. Because *ərgət näw* entails knowledge on the part of the speaker, it will not be treated as an epistemificator. Consider the example:

(133) <b>እርግጥ ነው</b> #	<b>እወዳታለሁ</b>	<b>ነገር ግን</b>	<b>ባንዳንድ</b>
<i>'ərgət n-äw</i>	<i>ə-wädd-at=all-ähu</i>	<i>nägär gən</i>	<i>b-andand</i>
sure COP-3SM	1SG-love\IPFV-OBJ.3SF=NPST-1SG	but	in-some
<b>ጉዳዮች</b>	<b>እሷን</b>	<b>ማመን</b>	<b>አይቀለኝም</b> [TS 4]
<i>gudday-očč</i>	<i>əss<sup>w</sup>a-n</i>	<i>mamän</i>	<i>a-y-qäll-(ä)-ññ-(ə)-mm</i>
matter-PL	3SF-ACC	believe\VN	NEG-3SM-be.easy\IPFV-OBJ.1SG-NEG

‘Granted, I love her but in some matters it is not easy for me to believe her’

- **መንገሩ እርግጥ ነው** *mängäru<sub>s</sub> ərgət näw*, ‘it is certain that he told<sub>s</sub>/he tells<sub>s</sub>/will tells<sub>s</sub>’ (lit. ‘his telling is certain’)

This epistemificator consists of the word **እርግጥ** *ərgət* ‘certain’ followed by the copula **ነው** *näw* and preceded by the verbal noun. The subject of the verbal noun is indicated as

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/13627>. [Accessed 01.07.2019]

<sup>95</sup> In Wierzbicka’s terms, this “certainly” is of the type which is used to “agree, or partially agree, with what has been said before” (2006: 284-285).

usual by the possessive suffix on the verbal noun. The main sentence stress always falls on the kernel, i.e. *ərgəṭ*.

- (134) **ከማህበረሰቡ**                      **በሚደርስባቸው**                      **ተፅእኖ መያወጥ**  
*kä-mahbäräsäb-u*    *bä-mm-i-därs-(ə)-bb-aččäw*                      *täsə'no muya-w-(ə)-n*  
 from-society-DEF    in-REL-3SM-arrive\IPFV-MAL-OBJ.3PL    pressure    profession-DEF-ACC
- ወደጎን**                      **ብለው**                      **በሌላ**                      **ሥራ**                      **የተሰማሩ**  
*wädä-gon*    *bäl-äw*                      *bä-lela*                      *səra*                      *yä-täsämarr-u*  
 to-side                      say\GER-3PL                      in-another                      job                      REL-be.employed\PFV-3PL
- መኖራቸውም#**                      **'እርግጥ ነው'**<sup>96</sup>  
*mānor-aččäw-(ə)-mm*                      *'ərgəṭ*                      *n-äw*  
 exist\VN-POSS.3PL-FOC                      certain                      COP-3SM

‘Due to pressure from the society, **it is certain** that there are those who have put aside their profession to pursue another career’ (lit. ‘their existence is certain’)

- (135) **የአገሪቱ**                      **ኢኮኖሚ**                      **በየጊዜው**                      **ዕድገት እያሳየ**  
*yä-agär-itu*                      *ikonomi*                      *bä-yyä-gizä-w*                      *ədgät*                      *əyy-asaɣɣ-ä*  
 GEN-country-DEF.F                      economy                      in-DSTR-time-DEF                      growth                      PROG-show\PFV-3SM
- መጓዙ**                      **እርግጥ ነው'**<sup>97</sup>  
*mäg<sup>w</sup>az-u*                      *ərgəṭ*                      *n-äw*  
 travel\VN-POSS.3SM                      certain                      COP-3SM

‘**It is certain that** the economy of the country is showing on-going (progressive) growth’

#### 4.4.4. Impersonal verbal epistemificators

These epistemificators are derived from verbs of perception. They are all impersonal constructions, with the logical subject expressed as an oblique.

- **እንደ-X ይሰማል** *ändä-X yässämmaññall* ‘I feel that X’ (lit. ‘it is heard to me that X’)

This epistemificator consist of the compound imperfective of the passive form of the perception verb **ይሰማል** *yässämall* ‘it is heard’, to which the 1SG object pronoun **-ኝ** - (*ä*)*ññ* is infixed as logical subject. In Leslau’s terminology (1995: 435) the verb is impersonal, hence 3SM. The complement clause is always introduced by the complementizer **እንደ-** *ändä-* ‘that’, never **ብዬ** *bəyye* ‘I saying:’.

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/የነጠላ-ዜማዎች-ገበያ>. [Accessed: 15.10.2017]

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/ከውጭ-ምንዛሪ-እጥረቱ-እኩል-ለማነቁ-አሠራሮችም-መፍትሔ>. [Accessed: 14.10.2017]

- (136) ተመሳሳይ ነገር በኔ ላይ የደረሰ ስለሆነ  
*tämäsasay nägär bä-ne lay yä-därräs-ä salä-hon-ä*  
 similar thing in-1SG on REL-reach\PFV-3SM because-COP\PFV-3SM  
 ጉዳዩ ከባድ እንደሆነ ይሰማኛል<sup>[TS 4]</sup>  
*gudday-u käbbad ändä-'hon-ä yə-ssämma-ññ=all-ø*  
 matter-DEF difficult COMP-COP\PFV-3SM 3SM-be.felt\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Because there is something similar that happened to me I feel that it’s a difficult matter’

There are other epistemificators which are structurally similar but not identical to this, such as NOM መስሎ ይታየኛል NOM *mäslo yattayyännall* ‘sth. appears to me [to be] NOM’; NOM ሆኖ ይሰማኛል NOM *hono yässämmaññall* ‘I feel that sth. is NOM’ (lit. ‘sth. feels me to be NOM’); and NOM መስሎ ይሰማኛል NOM *mäslo yässämmaññall* ‘I have the impression that sth. is NOM’ (lit. ‘sth. feels me to seem NOM’). The main verb in the epistemificator takes as its complement a copula (either a plain or modalized) in the gerund form, which in turn takes a complement clause of its own. Let us note that it is the copula that takes the sentence stress. I will not discuss these epistemificators further in this dissertation. Examples:

- (137) በዚህ ሁሉ ምክንያት ይህን ጽሑፍ ማዘጋጀት ተገቢ  
*bä-zzib hullu məknəyat yəb-(ə)-n səbuf mazzägağğät tägäbi*  
 in-this all reason this-ACC writing prepare\VN appropriate  
 'መስሎ ይታየኛል<sup>[DB 15: 16-17]</sup>  
 'mäsl-o yə-ttayy-(ä)-ññ=all-ø  
 seem\GER-3SM 3SM-be.seen\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Because of all these reasons it appears to me appropriate to prepare this piece of writing’

- (138) በምጽፍበት ሰዓት ሁሉም እኩል ጥሩ ሆኖ  
*bä-mm-ə-şəf-(ə)-bb-ät säʔat hullumm əkkul tərū 'hon-o*  
 in-REL-1SG-write\IPFV-in-OBJ.3SM time everything equally good COP\GER-3SM  
 ይሰማኛል<sup>[TK 48: 20-22]</sup>  
*yə-ssämma-ññ=all-ø*  
 3SM-be.felt\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘When I write, I feel (that) everything is equally good’

- (139) አብዛኛው ክርክር ወደ መግባባት ሳይሆን ወደ  
*abəzaññaw kərəkəkər wädä mägbabbat s-a-y-hon wädä*  
 most debate to understand\VN when-NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV to

<b>አደገኛ</b> <i>adägäñña</i> dangerous	<b>ግጭት እንዳያመራም</b> <i>gəččət and-a-y-amära-mm</i> conflict COMP-NEG-3SM-lead\IPFV-NEG	<b>ሥጋት ያዘለ</b> <i>səgat y-azzäl-ä</i> anxiety REL-contain\PFV-3SM
<b>መስሎ</b> <i>mäsl-o</i> seem\GER-3SM	<b>ይሰማኛል</b> <sup>98</sup> <i>yə-ssämma-ññ=all-ø</i> 3SM-be.felt\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM	

‘I have the impression that most debates don’t lead to (real) understanding but rather embody a concern that they should not lead to a dangerous conflict’

#### 4.4.5. Adjectival and adjectivalized epistemificators

This class of epistemificators is rather small. It consists of four adjectival expressions, the second and the fourth of which take the form of a relative verb.<sup>99</sup>

##### 4.4.5.1. እንደ-X እርግጠኛ ነኝ *ändä-X ərgəṭäñña näññ* ‘I am sure (that) X’, ‘I am certain (that) X’

The epistemificator consists of the adjective **እርግጠኛ** *ərgəṭäñña* ‘sure’ followed by the 1SG copula **ነኝ** *näññ* ‘I am’ and preceded by the complementizer **እንደ-** *ändä-* which may take a perfective or an imperfective verbal form.

(140) <b>በእርግጥ በጣም ቆንጆና ለየት ያለች ነች ፤ መቼም አይቻት</b> <i>bä'ərgəṭ bätam qonǰo-(ə)-nna läyyätt y-al-äčč n-äčč mäčemm</i> certainly very pretty-and slightly.different REL-say\PFV-3SF COP-3SF never	<b>እንደማላውቅ እርግጠኛ ነኝ</b> <i>ändä-mm-'al-awq ərgəṭäñña n-äññ</i> COMP-REL-NEG.1SG-know\IPFV sure COP-1SG
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‘Certainly, she is very pretty and slightly different; I am sure that I have never seen her’

Of interest is the fact that in contrast to mental verbal epistemificators the epistemificator in question does not combine with the subordinator *bəyye* but exclusively with the complementizer *ändä-*, just like factive mental verbs.<sup>100</sup> This indicates that the epistemificator differs semantically from mental verbal epistemificators; to the contrary, its meaning is closer to that of factive verbs.

<sup>98</sup> <http://new.ethiopianreporter.com/content/የልዩ-ጥቅም-ረቂቅ-አዋጁ-ና-ውዝግቡ>. [Accessed: 18.10.2017]

<sup>99</sup> On the relative verb in Amharic see Section 1.2.2.3.

<sup>100</sup> On these see Section 5.11.4.

The relation of certainty to knowledge has been the subject of much philosophical debate. If certainty is distinguished from knowledge, which is not always done, then it is thought of as “either the highest form of knowledge or [as] the only epistemic property superior to knowledge” (Reed 2011). In opposition to such ideas, which are largely philosophically based and detached from actual language use, Danielewiczowa shows in terms of real language use that “be sure that” does not entail knowledge (2002: 220):

*I am sure that this student has passed the exam even though I can't say that I know it. vs. \*I am aware (of the fact) that this student has passed the exam even though I can't say that I know it.*

The second sentence, but not the first, is self-contradictory.

According to Danielewiczowa (*ibid.* p. 221), “be sure that” requires a synthetic statement—in contrast to knowledge, which can also operate on analytical statements. Thus, it is commonly used in such contexts as the following in which two students are preparing themselves for an exam in geometry.

*A: What is a triangle? B: It is a plane figure that has three angles and three sides.*

*A: Are you sure that a triangle is a figure that has three angles and three sides?*

*B: Yes, I am sure.*

In this conversation, the question and the answer containing “be sure that” do not refer to an analytical truth about the essence of triangle-hood but whether the student remembers properly what he was supposed to learn. This belongs to the sphere of synthetic statements.

Because of Danielewiczowa’s convincing argument,<sup>101</sup> I have decided to include **እንደ-X እርግጠኛ ነኝ** *ändä-X ərgəṭäñña näññ* ‘I am sure (that) X’ to my list of epistemificators. Here “be sure that” definitely does not necessarily imply knowledge, and hence can legitimately be considered an epistemificator.

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<sup>101</sup> See also Danielewiczowa’s article (2000b).

4.4.5.2. መንገሩ የሚያጠራጥር ነው *mängäruṣ yämmiyattäraṭṭar näw* ‘there are doubts about his tellings’ (either the fact of his telling or what he is telling)

In this epistemificator የሚያጠራጥር *yämmiyattäraṭṭar* functions as a predicate adjective which is morphologically a relative verb. It is followed by the copula and is preceded by a verbal noun. The subject of the verbal noun is marked by the possessive pronoun on the verbal noun.

(141)	<b>በእለቱ</b>	<b>በዚያ</b>	<b>በረራ</b>	<b>ላይ</b>	<b>የነበሩት</b>	<b>የአየር</b>	<b>መንገዱ</b>
	<i>bä-älät-u</i>	<i>bä-zziya</i>	<i>bärära</i>	<i>lay</i>	<i>yä-näbbär-u-t</i>	<i>yä-ayyär</i>	<i>mängäd-u</i>
	in-day-DEF	in-that	flight	on	REL-exist\PST-3PL-DEF	GEN-air	way-DEF
	<b>ሰራተኞች</b>	<b>ከአንድ</b>	<b>ዝነኛ</b>	<b>ከሆነ</b>		<b>የበረራ</b>	<b>መስተንግዶ</b>
	<i>särratänn-očč</i>	<i>kä-and</i>	<i>zännäña</i>	<i>kä-(yä)-hon-ä</i>		<i>yä-bärära</i>	<i>mästängädo</i>
	employee-PL	from-one	famous	from-(REL)-COP\PFV-3SM		GEN-flight	service
	<b>ትምህርት ቤት</b>	<b>የወጡ</b>		<b>መሆኑ</b>		<b>በፍጹም</b>	
	<i>tämhärt bet</i>	<i>yä-wäṭṭ-u</i>		<i>mähon-u</i>		<i>bäfäṣṣum</i>	
	school	REL-go.out\PFV-3PL		COP\VN-POSS.3SM		absolutely	
	<b>'የሚያጠራጥር</b>	<b>ነው</b> <sup>102</sup>					
	<i>'yämm-i-(y)-attäraṭṭar</i>	<i>n-äw</i>					
	REL-3SM-raise.doubts\IPFV	COP-3SM					

‘It is absolutely doubtful that the airline employees who were on the flight on that day had graduated from one famous flight attendant school’

4.4.5.3. መንገሩ አይቀሬ ነው *mängäruṣ ayqäre näw* ‘his tellings is inevitable’

This epistemificator consists of an adjective አይቀሬ *ayqäre*, a nominalized form built (with -e) from the verb አይቀር *ayqär* (Leslau 1995: 242), followed by the copula and preceded by the verbal noun. The subject of the verbal noun is marked by the possessive pronoun.

(142)	<b>የተማረ</b>	<b>ከሆነ</b>	<b>እና</b>	<b>ትንሽ</b>	<b>ገንዘብ</b>	<b>ያለው</b>
	<i>yä-tämar-ä</i>	<i>kä-hon-ä</i>	<i>anna</i>	<i>tännäṣ</i>	<i>gänzäb</i>	<i>y-all-ä-w</i>
	REL-learn\PFV-3SM	if-COP\PFV-3SM	and	little	money	REL-exist-3SM-OBJ.3SM
	<b>ከሆነ</b>	<b>ደግሞ</b> ፤	<b>አዲስ</b>	<b>ነገር</b>	<b>ለመሞከር</b>	<b>መፈለጉ</b>
	<i>kä-hon-ä</i>	<i>dägmo</i>	<i>addis</i>	<i>nägär</i>	<i>lä-mämokkär</i>	<i>mäfälläg-u</i>
	if-COP\PFV-3SM	besides	new	thing	for-try\VN	search\VN-POSS.3SM
	<b>'አይቀሬ</b>	<b>ነው</b> <sup>103</sup>				
	<i>'ayqäre</i>	<i>n-äw</i>				
	inevitable	COP-3SM				

<sup>102</sup> <http://www.cyberethiopia.com/warka14/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=21200>. [Accessed: 17.10.2017]

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.dw.com/am/የአፍሪቃ-የተማረ-የሰው>. [Accessed: 15.10.2017]

‘If he is educated and if he has some money besides, **it is inevitable for him to want** to try new things’

Note that the meaning of the verb *qärrä* in this and the following epistemificators is similar to that in *mängäru<sub>s</sub> ayqärəmm*—it means here ‘to fail’.<sup>104</sup>

**4.4.5.4. መንገሩ ማይቀር ነው** *mängäru<sub>s</sub> yämmayqär näw* ‘his tellings is inevitable’

Similarly to *mängäru<sub>s</sub> yämmiyatṭäratṭər näw* in 4.4.5.2, this epistemificator consists of the relative verb followed by the copula and preceded by the verbal noun. The negative relative verb is *yämmayqär*, from the verb **ቀረ** *qärrä* ‘remain’: ‘which will not remain’. As just mentioned, in 4.4.5.3, the verb *qärrä* has the meaning ‘fail’. Thus, the literal meaning of the whole construction is ‘it is that his telling will not fail’. The present epistemificator does not have a positive counterpart \***መንገሩ ማይቀር ነው** *mängäru<sub>s</sub> yämmiqär näw* \*‘his tellings is evitable (avoidable)’.

(143) <b>ይህ ውል በሚፈጸምበት</b>	<b>ወቅት የተለያዩ</b>	
<i>yəh wəl bə-mm-i-ffäṣṣäm-(ə)-bb-ät</i>	<i>wäqt yä-täläyayy-u</i>	
this contract in-REL-3SM-be.concluded\IPFV-in-OBJ.3SG	period REL-be.different\PFV-3PL	
<b>ግጭቶችና</b>	<b>አለመግባባቶች</b>	<b>መነሳታቸው</b>
<i>gəččət-očč-(ə)-nna</i>	<i>alämägbabat-očč</i>	<i>männäsat-aččäw</i>
conflict-PL-and	misunderstanding-PL	arise\VN-POSS.3PL
<b>ማይቀር</b>	<b>ነው</b> <sup>105</sup>	
<i>yämm-a-y-qär</i>	<i>n-äw</i>	
REL-NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV	COP-3SM	

‘At the time of concluding this contract, **it is inevitable that** conflicts and misunderstandings will arise (the arising of conflicts and misunderstandings is inevitable)’

It seems that some strong epistemificators, such as ‘it is inevitable that’ show double behaviour. When they take as their proposition a general truth of the type “It is inevitable that he will die” they imply knowledge; with other propositions they refer instead to a strong epistemic state.

<sup>104</sup> See the discussion in Section 4.2.2.4.

<sup>105</sup> <https://www.abysinnialaw.com/blog-posts/item/1691-risks>. [Accessed: 06.07.2018]

#### 4.4.6. Adverbial epistemificators

The class of Amharic adverbial epistemificators is rather small: it has three representatives in the form of በእርግጠኝነት *bä'ərgätäññännät* 'with certainty', በእርግጥ *bä'ərgat* 'clearly' and ያለ ጥርጥር *yalä tərəttər* 'undoubtedly, doubtless, without any doubt'. This is related to the fact that Amharic does not have a clear morphological class of adverbs, but that most adverbs (with the exception of temporal and spatial adverbs) are derived, in various ways, from other parts of speech (Kapeliuk 2011). The three adverbial epistemificators listed above are prepositional phrases consisting of the prepositions *bä-* or *yalä*, and a noun.<sup>106</sup> In contrast to Amharic, English has a rich repertoire of epistemic adverbs, which, according to Wierzbicka (2006: 247-249), is unparalleled in number in comparison with German, French and Dutch.<sup>107</sup>

In Amharic epistemic adverbs have a more flexible position within the sentence than other epistemificators (with the exception of the particle *mənalbat*, see below). As already adumbrated in Section 2.1, they can scope over the whole proposition or only over a part of it; this part may belong to various classes of words (a verb, a noun, a numeral) or constitute a phrase. To use the functional semantic terminology, they function as “rhematizers”, that is, they comment on the main rheme of the sentence. Consequently, they cannot be negated because one cannot sensibly negate her/his own comment, nor do they occur in questions. The constituent that the adverb epistemically modifies typically stands directly after the adverb<sup>108</sup> and receives the main stress. If the adverb epistemificator operates on the whole sentence the main sentence stress falls on the predicate. Sentence-initial adverbs are often separated from the rest of the sentence by a short pause in which case they are also slightly stressed.

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<sup>106</sup> Prepositional phrases are cross-linguistically a common source of adverbs, especially in languages which lack a morphological class of adverbials. (Orin Gensler p.c.)

<sup>107</sup> Wierzbicka mentions 18 English epistemic adverbs, some entailing knowledge and some entailing non-knowledge on the part of the speaker.

<sup>108</sup> This, however, is apparently not always the case.

4.4.6.1. **በእርግጠኝነት** *bä'ərgätännännät* (allegro form **በርግጠኝነት** *bärgätännännät*) ‘with certainty, for certain, for sure’

Morphologically, this epistemificator is built like some other Amharic adverbs such as **በፍጥነት** *bäfətnät* ‘quickly’, lit. ‘with speed’, **በአንድነት** *bä'andännät* ‘together’, lit. ‘in unison’ and **በደንብ** *bädänb* ‘properly’, lit. ‘with rule’. It is composed of the noun **እርግጠኝነት** *ərgätännännät* ‘certainty’, ‘sureness’, this being a nominalization of the adjective **እርግጠኛ** *ərgätännä* ‘certain’, ‘sure’, preceded by the preposition **በ-** *bä-* ‘in, by’. In the corpus, the epistemificator occurs in two main contexts. First of all, and most often, it accompanies verbs of speaking (*verba dicendi*) like **አለ** *alä* ‘say’, **ተናገረ** *tänaggärä* ‘speak’, ‘talk’, **ገለጸ** *gälläšä* ‘explain’:

(144) **እኔ በርግጠኝነት ልል የምችለው ነገር**  
*əne bə'ərgätännännät l-ə-l yämm-ə-čäl-äw nägär*  
 1SG in-certainty COMP-1SG-say\IPFV REL-1SG-can\IPFV-DEF thing  
**ከልጅቷ ጋር ተነጋግረው ገንዘቡን**  
*kä-ləğ-(ə)-t<sup>w</sup>a gar tänägagr-äw gänzäb-u-n*  
 with-child-DEF.F with speak.to.one.another\GER-3PL money-DEF-ACC  
**ቢመልስላት 'ጥሩ ነበር**<sub>[TS 2]</sub>  
*b-i-mälləs-(ə)-ll-at 'ጥሩ näbbär*  
 if-3SM-return\IPFV-BEN-OBJ.3SF good COP\PST.3SM  
 ‘Me, the thing that I can say **for certain** is, it would be good if he talked with the girl and gave her the money back’

It appears also with the verb **አወቀ** *awwäqä* ‘know’:

(145) **እንደሰማሁት አልጋ ወራሽ ኃላፊነት አይወዱም**  
*əndä-sämma-hu-t alga wäraš halafinnät a-y-wädd-u-mm*  
 as-hear\PFV-1SG-DEF throne heir responsibility NEG-3SPOL-like\IPFV-3SPOL-NEG  
**ነበር ነው የሚባለው ። እኔ ግን በእርግጠኝነት**  
*näbbär n-äw yämm-i-bbal-äw. əne gən bə'ərgätännännät*  
 PST COP-3SM REL-3SM-be.said\IPFV-DEF 1SG but in-certainty  
**ይህን አላውቅም** <sub>[MW 61: 12-14]</sub>  
*yəb-(ə)-n al-awq-(ə)-mm*  
 this-ACC NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘As I have heard, it is said that the heir to the throne didn’t like responsibility. But me, I don’t know this **for certain**’

As we can see above in these utterances *bä'ərgätäññännät* is used to modify a verb which comments on the proposition as a whole. In sentence (144) the epistemizer evaluates epistemically her/his ability to say something about something whereas in sentence (145) s/he evaluates her/his knowledge concerning something.

The second context in which *bä'ərgätäññännät* may occur is at the beginning of a clause. In this case, it does not refer to one predicate in particular but scopes over the whole proposition:

- (146) በእርግጠኝነት# 10 ሰዓት ከ30 ላይ መጠጥ 'ጀምራለሁ'<sub>[BKR 14]</sub>  
*bä'ərgätäññännät* 10 sä'at kä-30 lay mä'tätt ġämmərr-e-(y)=all-ähu  
 in-sureness 10 o'clock with-30 at drink start\GER-1SG=PF-1SG  
 'For sure I started drinking at 10:30'

- (147) አብረው ቢሠሩ በእርግጠኝነት ነገሮች  
*abr-äw b-i-sär-u bä'ərgätäññännät nägär-očč*  
 be.united\GER-3PL if-3PL-work\IPFV-3PL in-sureness thing-PL  
**አይኖሩም**<sup>109</sup>  
*a-y-nor-u-mm*  
 NEG-3PL-exist\IPFV-3PL-FOC  
 'If they work together, for sure there won't be issues (problems)'

In contrast to the morphologically similar adverbs mentioned above (e.g. *bä'ərgät* 'quickly'), *bä'ərgätäññännät* does not refer to the course of a certain action in extralinguistic reality, but either accompanies a verb which comments on what is said or comments alone on what is said in the whole proposition. Furthermore, it cannot be negated, and it may be used alone or accompanied by the particle **አዎ** *awo* 'yes' in an answer. These features are not characteristic of normal adverbs. Consider examples (148) and (149):

- (148) በእርግጥ በኮርፖሬሽኑ ደረጃ ቢያንስ አንድ ግድብ ገንብታችሁ ሥራ  
*bä'ərgät bə-korporešən-u dārāḡa biyans and gəddəb gänbət-aččəhu səra*  
 really in-corporation-DEF level at.least one dam build\GER-2PL work  
**ላይ ለማጥል እንችላለን ብላችሁ ታምናላችሁ?**  
*lay lä-məwal ənn-(ə)-čəl=all-än bəl-aččəhu t-amn=all-aččəhu*  
 on for-use\VN 1PL-be.able\IPFV=NPST-1PL say\GER-2PL 2PL-believe\IPFV=NPST-2PL

<sup>109</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/index.php/content/«ከፌዴሬሽኑ-ጀምሮ-የእኔነት-ስሜት-ወደ-አትሌቶች-ሠርዖ-እንዲገባ-አልተሠራም»>. [Accessed 02.07.2109]

<b>በእርግጠኝነት</b>	<b>አዎ ። እኛ</b>	<b>በዕድገትና</b>	<b>ትራንስፎርሜሽን</b>	<b>ዕቅድ</b>
<i>bä-ərgätäññännät</i>	<i>awo. əñña</i>	<i>bä-ədğät-(ə)-nna</i>	<i>transformešan</i>	<i>əqqəd</i>
in-sureness	yes 1PL	in-growth-and	transformation	plan
<b>በእርግጠኝነት</b>	<b>የምንገባበት</b>		<b>ሥራ</b>	<b>አለ</b> <sup>110</sup>
<i>bä-ərgätäññännät</i>	<i>yämm-(ə)-nna-gäba-bb-ät</i>		<i>səra</i>	<i>all-ä</i>
in-sureness	REL-1PL-enter\IPFV-in-OBJ.3SM		work	exist-3SM

‘Do you believe: really, as a corporation we can build at least one dam and implement it? **Yes, for sure.** There is some work in the plan of growth and transformation that we will **for sure** enter’

(149) **ለማ ነገ ይመጣል ብለህ ታስባለህ?**

<i>Lämma nägä</i>	<i>yə-mät=all-ə</i>	<i>bəl-äh</i>	<i>t-assəb=all-äh?</i>
PN	tomorrow 3SM-come\IPFV=NPST-3SM	say\GER-2SM 2SM-think\IPFV=NPST-2SM	

‘Do you think: Lämman will come tomorrow?’

**በእርግጠኝነት**  
*bä-ərgätäññännät*  
 in-sureness  
 ‘For sure’

It might be noticed, however, that there are some features which *bä-ərgätäññännät*, when it occurs in front of a verb of speaking, shares with regular adverbs. First of all, it occurs just before the verb that it modifies (see examples 144 and 145). Secondly, it may occur with an intensifier, just like adverbs of manner:

(150) **በጣም በእርግጠኝነት ልንናገረው የምንችለው ነገር ወደ ዋናው ድርድር መግባት ከተጀመረ [...]**<sup>[REP 1755]</sup>

<i>bätam</i>	<i>bä-ərgätäññännät</i>	<i>l-(ə)-nna-nnaggär-äw</i>	<i>yämm-(ə)-nna-čəl-äw</i>
very	in-certainty	COMP-1PL-speak\IPFV-DEF	REL-1PL-can\IPFV-DEF
<i>nägär</i>	<i>wädä</i>	<i>wanna-w</i>	<i>dərəddər</i>
thing	to	main-DEF	negotiations
			<i>mägbat</i>
			enter\VN
			<i>kä-tägämmär-ä</i>
			if-be.started\PFV-3SM

‘The thing that we can say **with great certainty** (is that) if it starts to enter the main negotiations [...].’

Third, it may occur in questions:

(151) **ይህን ነገር በእርግጠኝነት ልትል ትችላለህ?**

<i>yəb-(ə)-n</i>	<i>nägär</i>	<i>bä-ərgätäññännät</i>	<i>l-(ə)-ttə-l</i>	<i>tə-čəl=all-äh?</i>
this-ACC	thing	in-certainty	COMP-2SM-say\IPFV	2SM-can\IPFV=NPST-2SM

<sup>110</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/12782>. [Accessed 30.06.2019]

‘Can you say this thing **for certain**?’

The three features mentioned above are not shared by sentence-initial *bä<sup>o</sup> argätännännät*. For instance, the latter cannot appear in questions. Thus, the following sentence is semantically unacceptable:

- (152) \***በእርግጠኝነት** 10 **ሠዓት** **ከ30** **ላይ መጠጥ** **መጠጣት** **ጀምረሃል?**  
*bä-argätännännät* 10 *sä<sup>o</sup>at* *kä-30* *lay* *mätätt* *mätättat* *ǰämmär-äh=all-ø*  
 in-certainty 10 o'clock with-30 at drink drink\VN start\GER-2SM=PF-2SM  
 \*‘For sure did you start drinking at 10:30?’

In view of this fact, an alternative analysis might consider treating these two positional variants of *bä<sup>o</sup> argätännännät* as two different epistemifiers.<sup>111</sup>

#### 4.4.6.2. **በእርግጥ** *bä<sup>o</sup> argät* (allegro form **በርግጥ** *bärgät*) ‘clearly, evidently’

This epistemifier always takes the initial position in a clause.<sup>112</sup> It consists of the noun **እርግጥ** *argät* ‘certainty, sureness’ preceded by the preposition **በ-** *bä-* ‘in’. Frequently it appears in a clause followed by another clause with which it is connected by a contrastive conjunction or linker. In such contexts *bä<sup>o</sup> argät* expresses the speaker’s reaction to a previous utterance. Consider the following sentence:

- (153) **በርግጥ# በጊዜው** **ለአባቷ** **መናገር** **ነበረባት ፤**  
*bärgät* *bä-gize-<sup>w</sup>* *lä-abbat-<sup>w</sup>a* *männagär* *näbbär-ä-bb-at*  
 clearly in-time-DEF to-father-POSS.3SF say\VN exist\PFV-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SF  
**ሆኖም** **የርሷ** **ሕይወት** **የርሷ** **ነው** [TS 6]  
*honomm* *yä-rs<sup>w</sup>a* *həywät* *yä-rs<sup>w</sup>a* *n-äw*  
 however GEN-3SF life GEN-3SF COP-3SM  
 ‘Clearly, she should have told her father earlier; but her life is her own’

Secondly, it is used to indicate the epistemizer’s conclusion as to why something has happened:

- (154) **ሶስቱም** **ደንግጠውና** **ግራ ገብቷቸው**  
*sost-u-mm* *dängät-äw-(ə)-nna* *gra gäbt-<sup>w</sup>-aččäw*  
 three-DEF-FOC be.shocked\GER-3PL-and be.confused\GER-3SM-OBJ.3PL

<sup>111</sup> But see Section 2.1.

<sup>112</sup> *Bä<sup>o</sup> argät* can also occur in sentence-internal position, but not as an epistemifier.

<b>በያለበት</b> <i>bä-y-all-u-bb-ät</i> in-REL-exist-3PL-in-OBJ.3SM	<b>ሆነው</b> <i>hon-äw</i> be\GER-3PL	<b>እርስ በርሳቸው</b> <i>ars bärs-aččäw</i> one.another-3PL			
<b>ይተያዩ</b> <i>yä-ttäyayy-u</i> 3PL-look.at.each.other\IPFV-3PL	<b>ጀመር</b> # <i>ǧämmär.</i> start\PFV	<b>በእርግጥ</b> <i>bä'ərgəṭ</i> clearly	<b>ለእንደዚህ</b> <i>lä-ändä-zzih</i> for-like-this	<b>ዓይነት</b> <i>aynät</i> kind	
<b>ሰው</b> <b>አልተዘጋጁም</b> [TFT 23: 4] <i>säw al-täzägaǧǧ-u-mm</i> person NEG-be.prepared\PFV-3PL-NEG					

‘The three were shocked and confused, and remaining where they were they started to look at each other. **Clearly**, they were not prepared for this kind of person’

In spoken Amharic there is always a short pause after *bä'ərgəṭ* and then comes the rest of the sentence.

It is interesting that in the Amharic Bible<sup>113</sup> *bä'ərgəṭ* appears in sentences emphatically expressing a commitment to a future action:

(155) **በእርግጥ ከአንተ ጋር እሆናለሁ** [MQ 1987/1988, Judges 6:16]  
*bä'ərgəṭ k-antä gar ə-hon=all-ähu*  
surely with-2SM with 1SG-COP\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
‘Surely I will be with you’ [NKJV]

(156) **እግዚአብሔር በመካከላችን ምስክር ይሁን ፤ በእርግጥ እንደ ቃልህ እናደርጋለን** [MQ 1987/1988, Judges 11:10]  
*Ēgzi'abəher bā-mäkakkäl-aččən mäsəkkər yə-hun bā'ərgəṭ ändä*  
God in-between-POSS.1PL witness 3SM-COP\JUUS certainly like  
*qal-(ə)-h ənn-adärg=all-än al-u-t*  
word-POSS.2SM 1PL-do\IPFV=NPST-1PL say\PFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM  
‘The Lord is our witness; we will **certainly** do as you say’ [NKJV]

This usage, however, is not recorded in my corpus. My assumption is that *bä'ərgəṭ* was introduced here as the calqued translation equivalent of English ‘surely’<sup>114</sup> and ‘certainly’. One of my informants claims that this usage of *bä'ərgəṭ* is present especially among better-educated older church people.

<sup>113</sup> I mean here *Mäṣhaf Qəddus* (1987/1988) (MQ) and *Mäṣhaf Qəddus. Addis Mädäbännä Tərg'əm* (MQA) (2001/2002).

<sup>114</sup> It might be of interest to add that the meaning of ‘surely’ found in the 17<sup>th</sup> century King James Version (as well as in the New King James Version (1982) used here) differs from the present-day meaning of this word. On this see Bromhead (2009: 79-97).

4.4.6.3. **ያለ ጥርጥር** *yalä täräṭṭər* ‘undoubtedly, doubtless, without any doubt’ (also written together as **ያለጥርጥር** *yaläṭṭəräṭṭər*)

This epistemificator consists of the preposition **ያለ** *yalä* ‘without’ and the noun **ጥርጥር** *täräṭṭər* ‘doubt’. Like some other particles, it may occur in initial position, scoping over the entire sentence (157) or over just one part of it (158).

(157)	<b>ይህ ለየት</b> <i>yəh läyyätt</i> this somewhat.different	<b>ያለ</b> <i>y-al-ä</i> REL-say\PFV-3SM	<b>ልምድ</b> <i>ləmd</i> experience	<b>ነው ።</b> <i>n-äw.</i> COP-3SM	<b>ያለጥርጥር#</b> <i>yalä-täräṭṭər</i> without-doubt
	<b>ሰላምታዎቻችን</b> <i>gorebät-očč-aččän</i> neighbour-PL-POSS.1PL	<b>ሳይቀሩ</b> <i>s-a-y-qär-u</i> when-NEG-3PL-remain\IPFV-3PL	<b>ልምድ</b> <i>ləmd</i> experience		
	<b>ሊካፈሉ</b> <i>li-kkaffäl-u</i> COMP-3PL-share\IPFV-3PL	<b>ይፈልጋሉ</b> <sup>115</sup> <i>yä-fälläg=all-u</i> 3PL-want\IPFV=NPST-3PL			

‘This is a somewhat different experience. **Undoubtedly** our neighbours also want to share the experience’

(158)	<b>ሁሉም</b> <i>hullumm</i> all	<b>ያለጥርጥር</b> <i>yalä-täräṭṭər</i> without-doubt	<b>አማርኛ</b> <i>'amarəñña</i> Amharic	<b>ተናጋሪዎች</b> <i>tänagari-(w)-očč</i> speaker-PL	<b>ናቸው ፤</b> <i>n-aččäw</i> COP-3PL	<b>ነገር ግን</b> <i>nägär gən</i> but
	<b>ከየት</b> <i>kä-yät</i> from-where	<b>ከየት</b> <i>kä-yät</i> from-where	<b>እንደበቀሉ</b> <i>ändä-bäqqäl-u</i> COMP-sprout\PFV-3PL	<b>አጠራጣሪ</b> <i>attäraṭari</i> questionable	<b>ነው</b> <sub>[AA 866]</sub> <i>n-äw</i> COP-3SM	

‘All **doubtless** are Amharic speakers; but there is a question as to where they come from (lit. from where from where [distributive] they sprouted)’

In sentence (158) the sentence stress falls on the word *amarəñña* ‘Amharic’ over which *yaläṭṭəräṭṭər* scopes.

The epistemificator can also be used alone:

(159)	<b>ሴቶች</b> <i>set-očč</i> woman-PL	<b>የከባድ</b> <i>yä-käbbad</i> GEN-heavy	<b>መኪና</b> <i>mäkina</i> car	<b>ሾፌሮች</b> <i>šofer-očč</i> driver-PL	<b>መሆን</b> <i>mähon</i> COP\VN	<b>ይችላሉ!</b> <i>yä-čäl=all-u!</i> 3PL-can\IPFV=NPST-3PL
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<sup>115</sup> <http://www.ethpress.gov.et/addiszemen/index.php/society/item/10014-2016-11-19-23-27-31>.  
[Accessed: 24.01.2018]

**ያለጥርጥር!**<sup>116</sup>

*yalä-ṭarəṭṭar!*

without-doubt

‘Women can be truck drivers! **Without any doubt!**’

#### 4.4.7. Particle epistemificators

There is only one item that belongs to the class of epistemic particles: **ምናልባት** *mənalbat* ‘maybe, perhaps’. In contrast to the adverbs discussed above, the particle is (synchronically) not derived from any other parts of speech. Its peculiarity resides in the fact that it most often appears with other epistemificators, signalling to the listener the hypothetical character of the statement. Similar to the adverbs, it may scope over the whole sentence as well as to only one part of it. Particles cannot be negated since they are comments on the rheme.

##### 4.4.7.1. **ምናልባት** *mənalbat* ‘maybe, perhaps’

The epistemificator **ምናልባት** *mənalbat* appears quite frequently in both spoken and written Amharic.<sup>117</sup> In what follows, I will describe four typical contexts in which *mənalbat* occurs: as a sentence-initial particle accompanying other epistemificators; as a sentence-initial independent particle; as a sentence-initial particle in conditional sentences; as a sentence-internal particle standing in front of a numeral.

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<sup>116</sup> <http://www.ethpress.gov.et/addiszemen/index.php/editorial-view-point/item/5178-2016-01-14-16-01-36>. [Accessed: 24.01.2018]

<sup>117</sup> In the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach, *mənalbat* is listed by Amberber (2016) among the Amharic Semantic Primes as the equivalent of English ‘maybe’. Yri (2015: 573) in his list of Amharic primes provides the same equivalent as Amberber, that is *mənalbat*. However, there are differences in usage between Amharic *mənalbat* and English *maybe* which argue that they are less than fully equivalent. The most important difference is that *mənalbat* typically does not stand alone but appears with another (verbal) epistemificator. Nevertheless, here I do translate *mənalbat* as ‘maybe, perhaps’, first of all because I have to translate it into English in one way or another. A second reason is the fact that the English particles ‘maybe, perhaps’ can co-occur with other English epistemic expressions, just like *mənalbat*. These words thus seem to be the best translation equivalent. — Arguably, a better candidate for the equivalent of ‘maybe’ might be *yəhonall* (see discussion near the beginning of Section 5.10.1). Wierzbicka’s claim (2006: 250) that MAYBE (= PERHAPS) can be considered an undefinable semantic prime because it has “exact semantic equivalents in all languages” is untenable. Bogusławski (2003) in fact succeeded in semantically decomposing the Polish words ‘może’ and ‘być może’ (the latter wrongly being treated by Wierzbicka (2015) as more basic and thus as the main Polish equivalent of the prime MAYBE) into simpler concepts.

First of all, *mənalbat* very often stands in initial position,<sup>118</sup> scoping over the whole sentence, and accompanying some other epistemificator.<sup>119</sup> In the following sentence, it accompanies the epistemificator (*yənägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells’:

- (160) **ምናልባት የሠለጠነ ውሻ እንዲህ ሊያደርግ**  
*mənalbat yä-sälättän-ä wəšša əndih l-i-(y)-adärg*  
 perhaps REL-be.trained\PFV-3SM dog like.this COMP-3SM-do\IPFV  
**ይችላል የሚሉ ይኖሩ ይሆናል**<sub>[BBS 14: 9-10]</sub>  
*yə-čəl=all-ø yämm-i-l-u yə-nor-u yəhonall*  
 3SM-can\IPFV=NPST-3SM REL-3PL-say\IPFV-3PL 3PL-exist\IPFV-3PL EPST  
 ‘Perhaps there may be those who say: a trained dog can do like this’

Occasionally, in spoken language, it may occur instead at the end of a sentence:

- (161) **ምስኪን ተመስገን! እንዴት አርጎ ይወቅ? እንጃ ፣**  
*məskin Tämäsgän! əndet arg-o yə-wäq? ənǧa*  
 poor PN how do\GER-3SM 3SM-know\JUSS I.don’t.know  
**ነግረሽው ሊያውቅ ይችላል ምናልባት**<sub>[TK 198: 8-9]</sub><sup>120</sup>  
*nägr-äš-(ə)-w l-i-(y)-awq yə-čəl=all-ø mənalbat*  
 tell\GER-2SF-OBJ.3SM COMP-3SM-know\IPFV 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM perhaps  
 ‘Poor Tämäsgän! How could he know?’ ‘I don’t know, you told him and (so) he could know, perhaps’

Second, *mənalbat* can also appear alone, without another epistemificator, though such occurrences are relatively infrequent:<sup>121</sup>

- (162) **ምናልባት እኮ እናትየዋ ይህን ጉዳይ ታውቃለች**<sub>[TS 3]</sub>  
*mənalbat əkko ənnatyä-wa yəh-(ə)-n gudday t-awq=all-äčč*  
 maybe after.all mother-DEF.F this-ACC matter 3SF-know\IPFV=NPST-3SG  
 ‘Maybe, the mother knows about this matter, after all’

- (163) **ዘፈኑን ወደውት ይሆን? ምናልባት ከበቂ በላይ**  
*zäfan-u-n wädd-äw-(ə)-t yəhon? mənalbat kä-bäqi bälay*  
 song-DEF-ACC like\GER-3PL-OBJ.3SM EPST:Q maybe from-enough above

<sup>118</sup> It may, however, be preceded by temporal and locative adverbs.

<sup>119</sup> I will discuss the cooccurrence of *mənalbat* with other epistemificators in Section 5.6.3.

<sup>120</sup> The sentence would be grammatically more correct if constructed as a conditional sentence: **እንጃ ፣ ነግረሽው ከሆነ ሊያውቅ ይችላል ምናልባት** *ənǧa, nägräšəw kähonä liyawq yəčəlall mənalbat* ‘If you have told him, he could know, maybe’.

<sup>121</sup> Some of my informants argue that *mənalbat* followed by an assertive verb does not sound good, as if it was in contradiction to the verb that is being asserted. Instead *mənalbat* is to be followed by a non-assertive verb.

ሰምተውታል<sup>[BŠ 207: 24-25]</sup>

*sämt-äw-(ə)-t=all-ø*

hear\GER-3PL-OBJ.3SM=PF-3PL

‘Might they have liked the song? **Maybe** they have heard it more than enough’

Third, the epistemificator can appear in front of the protasis. However, in this case it does not belong to the protasis alone but scopes over the whole sentence:

- (164) **ምናልባት ዝም ብል ዝም ይሉ ነበር ብዩ**  
*mənalbat zəmm b-ə-l zəmm yə-l-u nəbbär bəyy-e*  
 maybe silence if-1SG-say\IPFV silence 3PL-say\IPFV-3PL PST say\GER-1SG

እንምታሁ<sup>[AB 40: 35-36]</sup>

*ə-gämmət=all-ähu*

1SG-assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘**Perhaps** if I (had) kept silent I assume: they would (also) have kept silent’

Fourth and finally, if used with an expressions referring to quantity,<sup>122</sup> *mənalbat* occurs in front of this quantity phrase. The stress falls on the word referring to the quantity: **አስር** *assər* ‘ten’ (in 165) and **ለአንድ** *lä-and* ‘for one’ (in 166):

- (165) **አበራ መሰልቸት ሲጀምር ምናልባት በደቂቃ ውስጥ**  
*Abärra məsälcät s-i-ğämmər mənalbat bə-däqīqa wəst*  
 PN be.bored\VN when-3SM-start\IPFV maybe in-minute in

**አስር ጊዜ ያዛጋጥል**<sup>[KB 82: 7-8]</sup>

*assər gize y-azzaggä-w=all-ø*

ten time 3SM-yawn\IPFV-OBJ.3SM=NPST-3SM

‘When Abärra starts to be bored he yawns **maybe** ten times a minute’

- (166) **ምናልባት ለአንድ ሳምንት ያህል ያነጋገረኝ ሰው**  
*mənalbat lä-and sammənt yəhəl y-annägaggär-ä-ññ säw*  
 maybe for-one week about REL-talk.to\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG man

**አልነበረም**<sup>[AB 40: 14-15]</sup>

*al-näbbär-ä-mm*

NEG-exist\PST-3SM-NEG

‘**Maybe** for about one week there was no one to talk to me’

*Mənalbat* may also occur in other, more minor contexts. It may occur in isolation as an answer to a question:

<sup>122</sup> See also Section 2.1.

(167) ነገ ወደ ሰርጉ ትመጧልህ?  
*nägä wädä särg-u tə-mäčī-(y)=all-äs*  
 tomorrow to wedding-DEF 2SF-come\IPFV=NPST-2SF  
 ‘Will you come to the wedding tomorrow?’

**ምናልባት**  
*mənalbat*  
 maybe  
 ‘Maybe’

*Mənalbat* can occur in certain types of questions. It may occur with the interrogative epistemificator *yəhon*:

(168) **ምናልባት እውነቷን ይሆን?** [MBL 258: 18-19]  
*mənalbat əwnät-<sup>w</sup>a-n yəhon?*  
 maybe truth-POSS.3SF-ACC EPST:Q  
 ‘Might she possibly be right?’

It is also possible with the interrogative particle **ወይ** *wäy*:

(169) **ቀይ ፈሳሹ ምናልባት ደም ነው ወይ**  
*qäyy fäsas-<sup>u</sup> mənalbat dämm n-äw wäy*  
 red liquid-DEF maybe blood COP-3SM INTER  
**የሚለውን ለማጣራት ፈልጌ...** [TS 7]  
*yämm-i-l-äw-(ə)-n lä-mattarat fälləg-e*  
 REL-3SM-say\IPFV-DEF-ACC for-check\VN want\GER-1SG  
 ‘I would like to check what has been said: **maybe** the red liquid is blood ...’

Outside these two usages, questions with *mənalbat* are not acceptable.

In the following interrogative sentence *mənalbat* is repeated to stress the hypothetical character of the proposition:

(170) **ምናልባት እንደው ምናልባት ለእነዚያ ግብዝ ህግ አዋቂዎች**  
*mənalbat əndäw mənalbat lä-ənnäzziya gəbbəz həgg əwaqi-(w)-očč*  
 maybe just maybe for-those false law expert-PL  
**“አብሯት ያመነዘረውን ረስታችሁት**  
*abr-<sup>w</sup>-at y-amänäzzär-ä-w-(ə)-n räst-aččəhu-t*  
 be.united\GER-3SM-OBJ.3SF REL-fornicate\PFV-3SM-DEF-ACC forget\GER-2PL-DEF  
**ነው ወይስ ከእናንተ አንዱ ነው?” ይሆን**  
*n-äw wäyss kə-ənnantä and-u n-äw? yəhon*  
 COP-3SM or from-2PL one-DEF COP-3SM? 3SM-COP\IPFV

ያላቸው???”<sup>123</sup>

*y-al-aččäw*

REL-say\PFV.3SM-OBJ.3PL

‘Maybe, just maybe, what he said to those hypocritical experts in law might have been: “Have you forgotten who committed adultery with her, or is it one of you????”’

The epistemificator in one sentence can become the theme of the following sentence as in this example:

- (171) **ምናልባት ፣ መፅሃፉ ከተሸጠ ፣ ለአሳታሚውና ለደራሲዋ ፣**  
*mənalbat, məṣhaf-u kə-täšätt-ä, lä-assatami-w-(ə)-nna lä-därsi-wa,*  
 perhaps book-DEF if-be.sold\PFV-3SM for-publisher-DEF-and for-writer-DEF.F
- ደህና ገቢ ያስገኝላቸው ይሆናል ። ግን ፣ ‘ምናልባት’ ...**  
*dähna gäbi y-asgänn-(ə)-ll-aččäw yəhonall. gən, mənalbat...*  
 good profit 3SM-bring\IPFV-APPL-OBJ.3PL EPST but perhaps
- ብቻ ነው።<sup>124</sup>**  
*bəčča n-äw*  
 only COP-3SM

‘Perhaps, if the book is sold, it may bring good profit for the publisher and the writer. But only “perhaps”...’

Sentence-initial *mənalbat* is followed by a short pause which in writing is sometimes indicated by a punctuation mark, as in the following sentence:

- (172) **ምናልባት ፤ በዘመናችን የአገላለፅ ዘይቤ ፤ የነፃ**  
*mənalbat; bə-zämän-aččən yä-aggälaläṣ zäybe yä-näṣa*  
 perhaps in-era-POSS.1PL GEN-manner.of.explaining expression GEN-free
- ሐሳብ አቀንቃኝ (freethinker) ትባል ይሆናል<sub>[AA 819]</sub><sup>125</sup>**  
*hassab aqänqañ tə-bbal yəhonall*  
 thought soloist 3SF-be.called\IPFV EPST

‘Perhaps, in the idiom of our time, she may be called a freethinker’

#### 4.5. Parenthetical epistemificators

As remarked in Section 2.3.5, a parenthetical epistemificator is an epistemificator which has been added to a basic utterance but bears no syntactic relation to it. There is no consensus about which position in a sentence an expression should assume in order to be

<sup>123</sup> <http://dailyinjera.org/articles/what-christ-wrote-in-the-sand>. [Accessed: 21.11.2017]

<sup>124</sup> [https://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=18362:ግራፖቲርን-በትያትር-ለማየት-፣-3ሺ-ፓውንድ?&Itemid=214](https://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=18362:ግራፖቲርን-በትያትር-ለማየት-፣-3ሺ-ፓውንድ?&Itemid=214). [Accessed 26.06.2019]

<sup>125</sup> The original sentence has been slightly changed.

considered as parenthetical. In some works, only expressions occurring sentence-internally are treated as parentheticals (e.g. Grochowski 2007) whereas in others expressions occurring at the beginning or at the end of the utterance can also count as parentheticals (Moroz 2010). In this thesis the latter approach has been adopted: a parenthetical epistemificator can appear in the initial, intermediate or final position of the basic utterance. A parenthetical is typically set off from the rest of the utterance by a following pause. It may occur in the middle or at the end of the utterance (also at the end of the clause); if so it is intonationally connected with the preceding verb. The pause which sets off a parenthetical from the rest of the utterance will be indicated in the Amharic line with #. The parenthetical is stressed with the exception of cases when it occurs after the first clause (sentences 182 and 183 below).

A number of parentheticals can only occur in utterance-initial position. I will call these “initial parentheticals”. Note that not all scholars would accept such items as “parentheticals” at all.

Of the parenthetical epistemificators to be listed below, the first three go back to the verb መሰለ *mässälä* ‘seem’, ‘resemble’ just like some of the copular epistemificators described in Section 4.3.2 and the non-copular epistemificators of “seeming” in Section 4.4.1. It is worth noticing that none of the parentheticals can function as a copula.

#### 4.5.1. ይመስለኛል *yəməslännäll* ‘it seems to me’

This epistemificator is comprised of the compound imperfective form of the verb መሰለ *mässälä* ‘seem’, ‘resemble’, ይመስላል *yəməslall*, and the 1SG object pronoun -ኝ -*ññ*, referring to the epistemizer. The object pronoun is inserted (in the usual way) between the imperfective ይመስል *yəməsl* and the reduced perfective form of the verb አል *all* which functions as a non-past auxiliary. The form ይመስለኛል *yəməslännäll* is frozen and occurs only in the 1SG. In contrast to the epistemificators in 4.3.2 and 4.4.1, which typically occur only at the end of an utterance, parenthetical *yəməslännäll* may appear either at the beginning of an utterance (173) or inside the utterance (174) but not at the end.

(173) 'ይመስለኛል ፣ #	በውስጡ	የልጃገረድነት	ጊዜያት
' <i>yə-mäsl-änn=</i> all- <i>ø</i>	<i>bä-wəst-e</i>	<i>yä-ləğagärädännät</i>	<i>gize-(y)-at</i>
3SM-seem\IPFV-1SG=NPST-3SM	in-inside-POSS.1SG	GEN-girlhood	time-PL

**ከሱ ጋር ተዋህዷል**<sub>[TK 232: 22-23]</sub>  
*kä-ssu gar täwahd-<sup>w</sup>=all-ø*  
 with-3SM with merge\GER-3SM=PF-3SM

‘(As) it seems to me, inside me the period (lit. ‘times’) of my girlhood has merged with him’<sup>126</sup>

(174) **ከሦስት ቀናት በኋላ 'ይመስለኛል # ተመልሰው**  
*kä-sost qän-at bäh<sup>w</sup>ala 'ya-mäsl-äññ=all-ø tämälləs-ärw*  
 from-three day-PL after 3SM-seem\IPFV-1SG=NPST-3SM come.back\GER-3PL

**መጡ**<sub>[NB 160: 25-26]</sub>  
*mätt-u*  
 come\PFV-3PL

‘After three days, it seems to me, they came back’

#### 4.5.2. መስል *mässäl* ‘it seems’

This frozen parenthetical epistemificator appears exclusively in the 3SM reduced perfective form of the verb **መስል** *mässälä* ‘seem’, ‘resemble’. It is a morphologically reduced form in that it does not have the final vowel *-ä* that normally marks the 3SM.<sup>127</sup> This formal feature of *mässäl* indicates that it is less than fully verbal, inclining rather toward an auxiliary. The epistemificator typically occurs at the end of the utterance, just after the main verb. There is no intonational pause between *mässäl* and the preceding verb.

(175) **ወሬ አበዛሁብህ መስል #**  
*wäre abäzza-hu-bb-(ə)-h mässäl*  
 information multiply\PFV-1SG-MAL-OBJ.2SM seem\PFV

**ላሳጥርላህ**<sub>[YWN 157: 34-35]</sub>  
*l-asatr-(ə)-ll-(ə)-h*  
 1SG-shorten\JUUS-BEN-OBJ.2SM

‘I’ve given you too much information, it seems. Let me make it shorter for you’

(176) **ዛሬ ምን ነካችሁ? መንጋቱንና**  
*zare mən näkka-ččəhu? mängat-u-n-(ə)-nna*  
 today what touch\PFV-2PL dawn\VN-POSS.3SM-ACC-and

<sup>126</sup> I do not understand the 3SM marker on the verb since the subject “gizeyat” is plural. My translation as “period” is a makeshift.

<sup>127</sup> A similar reduction to the bare stem occurs in Amharic with (among others) the non-past and perfect auxiliary **-አል** *-all*, the past tense auxiliary **ነበር** *näbbär* and some deverbal postpositions like **በቀር** *bäqär* ‘except’, **በስተቀር** *bästäqär* ‘except’, **በሻገር** *baššaggär* ‘beyond’ (Leslau 1995: 289).

**መርፈዱን**

*märfäd-u-n*

be.midmorning\VN-POSS.3SM-ACC

**ረስታችሁታል**

*räst-aččəhu-t=all-ø*

forget\GER-2PL-OBJ.3SM=PF-2PL

**መሰል**<sub>[YWN 8: 6]</sub>

*mässäl*

seem\PFV

‘What’s the matter with you today? You forgot, **it seems**, about the dawn and the morning (lit. that it has already dawned and is late morning)’

The epistemificator occurs only in this particular form; if it is preceded by a copula (*näw mässäl*) the two can be replaced by the copular epistemificator *yəməslall*.<sup>128</sup> In that case, however, the compound imperfective form of the verb *mässälä* is truly a copula and as such must agree with the subject of the sentence. Thus, after turning the epistemificator *mässäl* in (177) into a copula we arrive at sentence (178):

(177) እንግዶች ናችሁ መሰል? እዚሁ ቆማችሁ ባጭር  
*əngəd-očč n-aččəhu mässäl ə-zziḥ-u qom-aččəhu b-aččər*  
guest-PL COP-2PL seem\PFV in-this-DEF stand\GER-2PL in-short

ባጭሩ ጠይቋችሁ<sub>[YWN 101: 27]</sub>  
*b-aččər-u təyyəq<sup>w</sup>-at*  
in-short-DEF ask/IMPER-2PL-OBJ.2SF

‘You are guests, **it seems?** Stand here and ask her briefly’

(178) እንግዶች ትመስላላችሁ  
*əngəd-očč tə-mäsl=all-aččəhu*  
guest-PL 2PL-seem\IPFV=NPST-2PL

‘You seem to be guests’

#### 4.5.3. መሰለኝ *mässälänn* ‘it seems to me, I think’

Similarly to the previous epistemificator, parenthetical **መሰለኝ** *mässälänn* can only occur in the 3SM perfective (full, non-reduced) form of the verb **መሰል** *mässälä* ‘seem’, but in contrast it always takes the 1SG epistemizer, **-ኝ -ንክ**, as the argument in the indirect object slot. The epistemificator may occur either in final position in the utterance (179-181) or, in the case of complex sentences, between clauses (182, 183), in which case *mässälänn* forms one intonation unit with the preceding (subordinate) clause. Because of the final position that both *mässäl* and *mässälänn* assume in the utterance, the two epistemificators are often interchangeable. Examples:

<sup>128</sup> See Section 4.3.2.2.

- (179) እና [ጥንቅልዎ] በዛ ዞራ ስትመጣ ሰው  
*anna tənčäl-wa bāzza zor-a sə-ttə-mäta säw*  
 and rabbit-DEF.F that.way turn.around\GER-3SF when-3SF-come\IPFV man  
 ሲጮኸባት ተደነጋገራት መሰለኝ #  
*s-i-čoh-(ə)-bb-at tädänägaggär-at mässäl-ä-ññ*  
 when-3SM-shout\IPFV-MAL-OBJ.3SF be.confused\PFV.3SM-OBJ.3SF seem\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG  
 በበቆሎ መጥበሻው በኩል ስታልፍ የከሰል ምድጃ  
*bä-bäqqollo mäṭbäša-w bākkul s-(ə)-tt-alf yä-käsäl madağğä*  
 in-maize roasting.pan-DEF side when-3SF-pass\IPFV GEN-charcoal stove  
 ደፋችኛ እሳት ወደቀባት መሰለኝ [GQ 55: 29-31]  
*däffa-čč-(ə)-nna əsat wäddäq-ä-bb-at mässäl-ä-ññ*  
 overturn\PFV-3SF-and fire fall\PFV-3SM-MAL-OBJ.3SF seem\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘So, when it [the rabbit] turned around that way and came (and) when the people shouted at it, it got confused, it seems to me; when it was passing on the side of the maize roasting pan, it overturned the charcoal stove and the fire fell on it, it seems to me’

- (180) በሌ እንግዲህ እኔ ልሂድላችሁ ፣ ሌላ ሥራ  
*bäl-u ənግədih əne la-hid-(ə)-ll-aččəhu lela səra*  
 say\IMPR-2PL so 1SG 1SG-go\JUUS-BEN-2PL another work  
 መያዛችሁ ነው መሰለኝ [DB 73: 9]  
*mäyaz-aččəhu n-əw mässäl-ä-ññ*  
 hold\VN-2PL COP-3SM seem\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘Well, then, I’m going; you are about to do other work, it seems to me’

- (181) አንድ ሰውዬ # ፈረንሳዊ ነው መሰለኝ # መስኮብ አገር  
*and säwəyye färänsawi n-əw mässäl-ä-ññ Mäskob agär*  
 one man Frenchman COP-3SM seem\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG Moscow country  
 ተጋብዞ ምንም የማይጎድለው ከተማ ሂዶ  
*tägabəz-o mənəmm yämm-a-y-godl-əw kätäma hed-o*  
 be.invited\GER-3SM nothing REL-NEG-3SM-lack\IPFV-DEF town go\GER-3SM  
 እንዲጎበኝ ተደረገ [MW 93: 27-28]  
*änd-i-gobäññ tädärräg-ä*  
 COMP-3SM-visit\IPFV be.made\PFV-3SM

‘A certain man, he is a Frenchman, I think, was invited to Russia and was made to go and visit a town where nothing was lacking’

- (182) ክፍሉ ትልቅ ከመሆኑ የተነሣ መሰለኝ #  
*kəfl-u təlləq kä-mäbon-u yätänässa mässäl-ä-ññ*  
 room-DEF big from-COP\VN-POSS.3SM because seem\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG  
 ውስጡ ያለት እቃዎችም ትላልቆች  
*wəst-u y-all-u-t əqa-wočč-(ə)-mm təlalləq-očč*  
 inside-POSS.3SM REL-exist-3PL-DEF object-PL-FOC big.PL-PL

ናቸው<sup>[HL 117: 12-13]</sup>

*n-aččäw*

COP-3PL

‘Because the room is big, I think, things which are inside it are also big’

(183) ከትምህርት ቤት ሲመለስ                      መሰለኝ #                      ሰላም ብሎ  
*kä-təmhərt bet s-i-mmälläs                      mässäl-ä-ññ                      sälam bəl-o*  
 from-school                      when-3SM-return\IPFV                      seem\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG                      greeting say\GER-3SM

ነው                      ያለፈው  
*n-äw                      y-alläf-ä-τw*  
 COP-3SM                      REL-pass.by\PFV-3SM-DEF

‘When he returned from school, I think, he passed by, saying a greeting’

#### 4.5.4. Initial parentheticals

The following two groups of parentheticals occur only in initial position—so called “initial parentheticals” (see brief discussion above).

##### 4.5.4.1. Parentheticals of the form እንደማስበው X *əndämmassəbäw* X ‘as I think (it), X’

(lit. ‘like/as what I think it’)

These parenthetical epistemificators consist of a headless relative clause preceded by the word እንደ- *əndä-* ‘as’. This *əndä-* might be the complementizer ‘that’, or the preposition ‘like’; I will not further address this question. The headless relative clause, in turn, is comprised of the relative marker የም- *yämm-* and the simple imperfective form of a mental epistemic verb, such as አስብ *assəb* ‘I think’, አምን *amən* ‘I believe’ followed by a 3SM object marker.

- እንደማስበው X *əndämmassəbäw* X ‘as I think, X’

(184) እንደማስበው #                      አሁን ላይ እኛ                      እንስሳ ወደመሆን  
*əndä-mm-assəb-äw                      ahun lay əñña                      ənsəsa wädä-mähon*  
 as-REL-1SG.think\IPFV-OBJ.3SM                      now                      on                      1PL                      animal                      to-COP\VN

እየመጣን                      ነው<sup>129</sup>  
*əyyä-mätta-n                      n-äw*  
 PROG-come\PFV-1PL                      COP-3SM

‘As I think (it), now we are coming to be (like) animals’

<sup>129</sup> <http://www.ethpress.gov.et/addiszemen/index.php/society/item/10615-2016-12-25-19-53-23>.

[Accessed: 23.10.2017]

- እንደማምነው X *ändämmamnäw* X ‘as I believe, X’

(185) እኔ የምፅፈው ለአእምሮዬ ነፃነት ነው ።  
*əne yämm-ə-ʃəf-äw lä-aʼəmro-ye näʃannät n-äw.*  
 1SG REL-1SG-write\IPFV-3SM.OBJ for-mind-POSS.1SG freedom COP-3SM

እንደማምነው# ለጓደኞቼ ብዙ የማካፍላቸው  
*ändä-mm-amn-äw lä-gʷaddänn-očč-e bəzu yämm-akkaffəl-aččäw*  
 as-REL-believe\IPFV-OBJ.3SM for-friend-PL-POSS.1SG much REL-1.SG.share\IPFV-OBJ.3PL

አለኝ<sup>130</sup>  
*all-ä-ññ*  
 exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘I write for the freedom of my mind. As I believe (it), I have much to share with my friends’

- እንደምገምተው X *ändämmägämmätäw* ‘as I estimate, X; as I assume, X’

(186) እኔ እንደምገምተው # መጽሐፉ ሙሉ በሙሉ  
*əne ändä-mm-ə-gämmät-äw mäʃhaf-u mulu bä-mulu*  
 1SG as-REL-1SG-assume\IPFV-OBJ.3SM book-DEF full in-full

ያለውን ሁኔታ አያስረዳም  
*y-all-ä-w-(ə)-n huneta a-y-asrädä-mm*  
 REL-exist-3SM.DEF-ACC situation NEG-3SM-explain\IPFV-NEG

‘Me, as I assume (it), the book doesn’t fully explain the situation’

- እንደሚመስለኝ X *ändämmimäslänn* ‘as it seems to me, X’

(187) እኔ እንደሚመስለኝ # ይህ ነገር የመጣው  
*əne ändä-mm-i-mäsl-änn yəb nəgär yä-mätta-w*  
 1SG as-REL-3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG this thing REL-come\PFV-DEF

ከሱ ነው<sub>[TS 7]</sub>  
*kä-ssu n-äw*  
 from-3SM COP-3SM

‘Me, as it seems to me, it is from him that this thing came’

#### 4.5.4.2. እርግጠኛ ነኝ X *ərgətännä näññ* X ‘I am sure, X’

This epistemificator consists of the adjective **እርግጠኛ** *ərgətännä* ‘sure’ followed by the 1SG copula **ነኝ** *näññ* ‘I am’. It usually occurs at the beginning of the sentence:

(188) እርግጠኛ ነኝ # ደዋዝ ሳይጠይቁ የሚሠሩ  
*ərgətännä n-änn dämoz s-a-y-ṭäyyəq-u yämm-i-sär-u*  
 sure COP-1SG salary when-NEG-3PL-ask\IPFV-3PL REL-3PL-work\IPFV-3PL

<sup>130</sup> [https://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=2255:አዲሱ-አማራጭ-ጠማር&Itemid=209](https://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2255:አዲሱ-አማራጭ-ጠማር&Itemid=209) [Accessed 26.06.2019]

<b>ሀበሾችንም</b>	<b>ሆነ</b>	<b>ፈረንጅችን</b>	<b>በጥቂት</b>	<b>ሳምንታት</b>
<i>Habäs-ocč-(ə)-n-(ə)-mm</i>	<i>honä</i>	<i>Färäng-ocč-(ə)-n</i>	<i>bä-ṭəqit</i>	<i>samənt-at</i>
Ethiopian-PL-ACC-and	and	Westerner-PL-ACC	in-a few	week-PL

<b>ውስጥ</b>	<b>ማግኘት</b>	<b>ይቻላል</b> <sup>[AA 819]</sup>
<i>wəst</i>	<i>magñät</i>	<i>ya-ččal=all-ø</i>
in	gain\VN	3SM-be.possible\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘It will be possible, I am sure, to get within a few weeks some Ethiopians as well as Westerners who will work without asking for a salary’

The epistemificator can be modified by the adverb **በጣም** *bätam* ‘very’:

(189)	<b>እኔ</b>	<b>በጣም</b>	<b>እርግጠኛ</b>	<b>ነኝ</b> #	<b>ቁጥሩ</b>	<b>ከ24</b>
	<i>əne</i>	<i>bätam</i>	<i>ərgəṭäñña</i>	<i>n-äññ</i>	<i>qutr-u</i>	<i>kä-24</i>
	1SG	very	sure	COP-1SG	number-POSS.3SM	from-24

<b>አያንስም</b>	<b>አይበልጥም</b> <sup>[AA 846]</sup>
<i>a-y-ans-(ə)-mm</i>	<i>a-y-bält-(ə)-mm</i>
NEG-3SM-be.less\IPFV-NEG	NEG-3SM-be.more\IPFV-NEG

‘Me, (as) I am very sure, the number is not less and not more than 24’

## 5. SEMANTICS OF AMHARIC EPISTEMIFICATORS

### 5.1. Introduction

The semantics of epistemificators will mainly be studied with the help of semantic dimensions.<sup>1</sup> Dimensions can be a powerful explanatory tool as they combine two kinds of approaches which, after Kenneth L. Pike, are called etic and emic (1971: 37-39). Whereas the goal of the etic approach is to provide in brief a real-world characterisation of a set of entities, the objective of the emic approach is to display in a schematic way how a set of entities stand in opposition to each other. In the present study, the “entities” are the various epistemificators. What the dimensions “do” is actually to provide the emic categorisation of etic data.

How can one go about setting up dimensions? I can imagine two opposite approaches. Ideally, one would conduct a thorough semantic analysis (etic)—for instance, an analysis via careful paraphrases built on simpler notions, à la Danielewiczowa (2002)—and, with this in hand, create a very fine-grained set of dimensions to capture one’s rich understanding of the field (emic). This is a daunting task. The simpler alternative is basically one of brainstorming: doing a crude preliminary analysis, and keeping a careful eye on the data, one hunts for semantic aspects that apply to several epistemificators at once, and use those as dimensions. This is the approach I have followed here. The list of dimensions and values that result from such an approach is by no means complete, but it will cover some large part of the semantic field.

What kinds of values can a dimension have? First, a dimension may be continuous (scalar) or discrete. If it is discrete, then it may be either privative (the values are either + or –, with one of the values simply being “the opposite of the other”) or equipollent (there are several values, each given its own positive characterization). Additionally, a dimension can be bivalent/dichotomous or multivalent. The values themselves can be specified in various ways. Always at least one of the values must be given some positive content. This may be simply a collection of intuitively clear terms among which one can choose. Thus

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<sup>1</sup> For the concept of semantic dimension see Section 2.2.

“colour” as a dimension can be conceived of in terms of the set {red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet} (or similar), which will then provide the possible values. Or the process of giving positive content may be more complex: the value may require a working definition, which will normally be formulated in everyday language. (In some fields a precise semantic metalanguage may be available; but this is not typical.) I, too, will formulate working definitions in everyday language—or give no definition at all, relying on the reader’s lexical competence.

I did not manage to create dimensions that could tell the whole story. There is much more to the semantics of epistemificators, which I was unable to pin down in dimensions. For this reason I have added a section called “Beyond dimensionality” (5.10), in which I discuss (in ordinary language) important semantic aspects of some epistemificators that I was unable to dimensionalize. This section also includes comparisons of pairs (or triplets) of semantically similar epistemificators.

Among most linguists who study the subject, the usual approach to epistemic modality is quite different. Generally only one dimension is considered: the continuous/scalar dimension of degree of epistemic strength. This is of course important, but to use only this simple dimension trivializes a rich and complex phenomenon. It fails to explain, for example, why it is often not possible to replace one epistemificator with another, including those of equal “epistemic strength”. It is essential to emphasize (as Danielewiczowa does, 2002: 71) that epistemic modality needs to be described in qualitative as well as quantitative terms. One can easily get a false impression of the (non-) complexity of epistemic modality by starting with a very simple non-modal sentence and mechanically adding various modal expressions. English, with its single “modal” slot, is especially misleading in this regard. Thus, *John goes to work* can be mechanically modalized to yield *John may/might/must/has to/can/could/should/ought to/need to/ect. go to work*, which conveys the rather simple impression of mere paradigmatic substitution. If, however, one uses real data, in real contexts of usage, it becomes clear that such mechanical intersubstitutability does not work. That is why this dissertation is based empirically on quite a large sample of attested textual examples, both written and oral. I

have supplemented this with informant work, but only as a secondary part of my research methodology. Informant work was indispensable chiefly to test the grammaticality of invented expressions that are formally similar to the attested expressions.

Some brief general remarks in conclusion. Since epistemifiers have both a morphosyntactic and a semantic aspect, some of the dimensions concern formal morphosyntactic structure and some have to do with meaning. All of the dimensions are discrete. Some are privative (two values pinned down as + and -), while some are equipollent (several positive values). Some of the dimensions are bivalent/dichotomous, while some are multivalent. Finally, some of the dimensions apply to all epistemifiers and are hence obligatory, while others apply only to some epistemifiers (typically a rather small subset) and are thus optional. When an optional dimension fails to apply to a given epistemifier, we will characterise the dimension as “inapplicable” and not assign the epistemifier any value. However, in the discussion below, “inapplicable” will be counted as a value.

Here is a list of the dimensions I will be examining, with brief schematic characterizations:

1. Explicit vs. implicit epistemizer (formal, obligatory, equipollent, bivalent)
2. Manner of integration of epistemized and epistemifier into the sentence (formal, obligatory, equipollent, multivalent)
3. Concrete vs. abstract epistemifiers (formal, obligatory, equipollent, bivalent)
4. Personal vs. non-personal epistemifiers (semantic, obligatory, equipollent, bivalent)
5. Degree of epistemic strength (semantic, optional, equipollent, multivalent)
6. Epistemic assessment (semantic, optional, equipollent, multivalent)
7. Axiological judgement (semantic, optional, equipollent, multivalent)
8. Time orientation (semantic, optional, privative, multivalent)

Formal dimensions actually rest on semantic foundations, which however I have not been able to develop for the moment.

## 5.2. Dimension 1: Explicit vs. implicit epistemizer

### 5.2.1. Introduction

All epistemificators reflect the assessment of knowledge on the part of the speaker, whom I have here called the epistemizer (see Section 2.1). As already mentioned (see Section 2.4.4), in my approach, the epistemizer is by definition 1<sup>st</sup> person singular. The epistemizer is necessarily present in the meaning of all epistemificators; the question is whether it is explicitly present or only implicit. This explicit/implicit presence of the epistemizer is connected with the fact that some epistemificators are oriented more towards the identity of the speaker while others are more oriented towards the content of the proposition.<sup>2</sup> Within this dimension the following values are distinguished:

{explicit epistemizer, implicit epistemizer}

### 5.2.2. Explicit epistemizer

An “explicit epistemizer” can be expressed in Amharic either as a subject affix (prefix or suffix or both) or an object suffix, depending on the epistemificator. The object suffix marks the notional subject in the case of *allä-nñ* ‘I have’. A subject affix is present in the following epistemificators:

- i. Mental verbal epistemificators and the majority of initial parenthetical epistemificators of the type **እንደማስበው** X *ändä-mm-assäbäw* X ‘as I think, X’.

The subject affixes (1SG) are *ə* and (in the case of mental verbal epistemificators) *-(ä)hu*.

(1)	<b>መቼም</b> <i>mäčemm</i> in.any.case	<b>ርዕሱን</b> <i>rəʾəs-u-n</i> title-DEF-ACC	<b>ስትመለከቱ</b> <i>s-(ə)-tə-mmäläkkät-u</i> when-2PL-look\IPFV-2PL	<b>በውስጣችሁ</b> <i>bä-wəst-aččəhu</i> in-inside-POSS.2PL	<b>በርካታ</b> <i>bärkatta</i> many
	<b>ጥያቄዎች</b> <i>təyyaqe-(w)-očč</i> question-PL	<b>እንደሚመለሱ</b> <i>ändä-mm-i-mmälälläs-u</i> COMP-REL-3PL-come.repeatedly\IPFV-3PL	<b>እገምታለሁ</b> <sup>3</sup> <i>ə-gämmät=all-ähu</i> 1SG-suppose\IPFV=NPST-1SG		

<sup>2</sup> The distinction between the explicit and implicit epistemizer corresponds partially to what Danielewiczowa (2002: 65-66) says about the thematic-rhematic structure of non-factive epistemic verbs and modal particles. The epistemizer-sender occurs in these two types at different levels. Whereas the epistemizer-sender is the ultimate theme of the non-factive epistemic verbs, s/he appears at a lower level of the thematic-rhematic structure in the case of modal particles.

<sup>3</sup> <http://dw.com/p/1452O>. [Accessed: 16.09.2015]



- (5) እኔ ይኸ ትውልድ የራሱን ሚና መጫወት  
*ane yəhe təwələdd yä-ras-u-n mina mäččawät*  
 1SG this generation GEN-own-POSS.3SM-ACC role play\VN  
 አለበት የሚል እምነት አለኝ<sup>6</sup>  
*all-ä-bb-ät yämm-i-l əmnät all-ä-ññ*  
 exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM REL-3SM-say\IPFV belief exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG  
 ‘Me, I have a belief: this generation must play its own role’

- iii. Adjectival epistemificator እንደ-X እርግጠኛ ነኝ *ändä-X ərgətäñña näññ* ‘I am sure (that) X’ and initial parenthetical epistemificator እርግጠኛ ነኝ *ərgətäñña näññ* ‘I am sure’

The epistemizer is indicated by the 1SG suffix -ኝ -ññ on the copula verb.

- (6) እርግጠኛ ነኝ ... ኢ.ቢ.ሲ ለብዙዎቹ መንግስታዊ ተቋማት  
*ərgətäñña n-äññ EBC lä-bəzu-(w)-očč-u mängəstawi tāq<sup>w</sup>am-at*  
 sure COP-1SG PN for-many-PL-DEF governmental institution-PL  
 አርአያ ይሆናል<sup>[AA 838]</sup>  
*ar’aya yə-hon=all-ø*  
 model 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘EBC,<sup>7</sup> I am sure, will become a model for the numerous governmental institutions’

When we deal with a verb of seeming, perception or feeling, if an explicit epistemizer is present, it takes the form of an object suffix. The object suffix occurs in the following epistemificators:

- iv. Different kinds of copular epistemificators containing ይመስለኛል<sub>s</sub> *yəmäsläññalls* ‘he/it seems<sub>s</sub> to me’ and ይመስለኛል *yəmäsläññall* ‘it seems to me’

- Nominal *yəmäsläññalls* ‘he/it seems<sub>s</sub> to me’

- (7) እስካሁን ሐሳባችን አንድ ይመስለኛል<sup>[TS 2]</sup>  
*ask-abun hassab-aččən and yə-mäsl-äññ=all-ø*  
 till-now thought-POSS.1PL one 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Till now our thinking seems to me (to be) the same’

- Cleft sentences with ይመስለኛል<sub>s</sub> *yəmäsläññalls* and ይመስለኛል *yəmäsläññall* (The following example illustrates the latter construction.)

<sup>6</sup> <https://freedom4ethiopian.wordpress.com/2015/03/13/hg-7/>. [Accessed: 16.10.2017]

<sup>7</sup> EBC stands for “Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation”.

(8) በሽታው የጀመረኝ ያን ጊዜ ይመስለኛል<sup>[TK 209: 8-9]</sup>  
*bäššəta-w yä-ǧämmär-ä-ññ yan gize yə-mäsl-äññ=all-ø*  
 disease-DEF REL-begin\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG that time 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘(The moment) that I came down with the disease seems to me (to have been) at that time’

v. Non-copular epistemificator of seeming የ-X ይመስለኛል *yä-X yəmäsläññall* ‘it seems to me that X, it appears to me that X’

(9) ይህ ጥያቄ ዕድሜ ልኬን በውስጤ የሚኖር  
*yəb təyyaqe ədme ləkke-e-n bə-wəst-e yämm-i-nor*  
 this question age extent-POSS.1SG-ACC in-inside-POSS.1SG REL-3SM-exist\IPFV  
 ይመስለኛል<sup>[NB 160: 9-10]</sup>  
*yə-mäsl-äññ=all-ø*  
 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM

‘It seems to me that this question will be with me till the end of my life’

vi. Impersonal verbs አንድ-X ይሰማኛል *əndä-X yəssämmaññall* ‘I feel that X’ and NOM መስሎ ይታየኛል NOM *mäslə yəttayyänñall* ‘it appears to me NOM’

(10) ስለሆነም አገሪን ከወዲህኛው ማዶ  
*sälä-hon-ä-mm agär-e-n kä-wädihəññaw mado*  
 because-COP\PFV-3SM-FOC country-POSS.1SG-ACC from-this.side beyond  
 ሆኜ ስመለከታት በተወሰነ  
*hoññ-e s-ə-mmäläkkät-at bə-(yä)-täwässän-ä*  
 COP\GER-1SG when-1SG-look.at\IPFV-OBJ.3SF in-(REL)-be.limited\PFV-3SM  
 መልኩም ቢሆን የጤናማነት ስሜት  
*mälk-u-mm b-i-hon yä-tenamannät səmet*  
 form-DEF-FOC if-3SM-COP\IPFV GEN-health feeling  
 የጎደላት መስሎ ይታየኛል<sup>8</sup>  
*yä-goddäl-at mäsl-o yə-ttayy-äññ=all-ø*  
 REF-be.missing\PFV.3SM-OBJ.3SF seem\GER-3SM 3SM-be.seen\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM

‘Because of that, when I look at my country from this point of view (lit. from this side), even if (only) to some extent, it appears to me that it is missing the sense of being healthy’

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ethpress.gov.et/addiszemen/index.php/editorial-view-point/item/1341-2015-06-18-03-45-28>.  
 [Accessed: 31.10.2017]

vii. Parenthetical epistemificators such as **ይመስለኛል** *yəməslännäll* ‘it seems to me’ and the initial parenthetical **እንደሚመስለኝ** *X əndämmimäslänn* ‘as it seems to me, X’.

- (11) **ከሦስት ቀናት በኋላ ይመስለኛል ተመልሰው**  
*kä-sost qän-at bäh<sup>w</sup> ala yə-mäsl-änn=all-ø tämälləs-äw*  
 from-three day-PL after 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM return\GER-3PL  
**መጡ**<sup>[NB 160: 25-26]</sup>  
*mätt-u*  
 come\PFV-3PL  
 ‘They came back, it seems to **me**, after three days’

- (12) A: **እርስዎ በኢንካርኔሽን ያምናሉ?**  
*ərswo bä-inkarnešən y-əmn=all-u?*  
 2SPOL in-(re)incarnation 2SPOL-believe\IPFV=NPST-2SPOL  
 B: **እኔ እንደሚመስለኝ ማመን ይገባል**<sup>[MW 76: 14-15]</sup>  
*əne əndä-mm-i-mäsl-änn mamän yə-ggäbb=all-ø*  
 1SG COMP-REL-3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG believe\VN 3SM-be.proper\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘A: Do you believe in (re-)incarnation? B: **Me**, as it seems to **me**, it is proper to believe [in it]’

### 5.2.3. Implicit epistemizer

Tautologically, an epistemificator that has no explicit epistemizer is an implicit epistemizer. But one must be careful. Even if the epistemificator includes an explicit 1SG element this need not be the epistemizer. The following pair of parallel sentences shows this neatly:

- (13) **እመጣ ይሆናል** ‘I may come’  
*ə-mäta yəhonall*  
 1SG-come\IPFV EPST  
 (14) **ትመጣ ይሆናል** ‘You may come’  
*tə-mäta yəhonall*  
 2SM-come\IPFV EPST

The epistemizer (in both (13) and (14), as everywhere) is 1SG, but in (13)—accidentally—the subject is identical to the epistemizer. In both (13) and (14), the epistemizer is implicit.

An implicit epistemizer is present in the following epistemificators:

- i. Auxiliary epistemificators (**ይነገር**)<sub>s</sub> **ይሆናል** (*yənägər*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may<sub>s</sub> tell’,  
 (**ይነገር**)<sub>s</sub> **ይሆን** (*yənägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhon?* ‘might he tell<sub>s</sub>?’

- (15) የሥዕል ትምህርት መማር ሠዓሊ አያደርግም ፤ ምናልባት  
*yä-səʔal təmhərt mämmar säʔali a-y-adärg-(ə)-mm; mənalbat*  
 GEN-painting education learn\VN painter NEG-3SM-make\IPFV-NEG perhaps  
 ሥዕል ለመስራት ያግዝ ይሆናል እንጂ<sub>[BKR 12]</sub>  
*səʔal lä-mäsrät y-aggəz yəhonall ənǧi*  
 painting for-make\VN 3SM-help\IPFV EPST but  
 ‘Having a painting education doesn’t make (one) a painter. But perhaps it may help to make a painting’

ii. Quasi-auxiliary epistemificators ሊነግር ይችላል *linägrs yäčəlall*s, ‘he could<sub>s</sub> tell<sub>s</sub>, he may<sub>s</sub> tell<sub>s</sub>’ and መንገሩ አይቀርም *mängärus ayqärəmm* ‘he will definitely tell<sub>s</sub>’

- (16) የተለያዩ ያልተጠበቁ ነገሮች  
*yä-täläyayy-u y-al-tätäbbäq-u nägär-očč*  
 REL-be.different\PFV-3PL REL-NEG-be.expected\PFV-PL thing-PL  
 ሊያጋጥሙን ይችላሉ<sub>[REP 1740]</sub>  
*l-(i)-y-aggattəm-u-n yə-čəl=all-u*  
 COMP-3PL-happen\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.1PL 3PL-could\IPFV=NPST-3PL  
 ‘Different, unexpected things could happen to us’

- (17) መቼም የተሰወረ መገለጡ አይቀር<sub>[MBL 133: 31-32]</sub>  
*mäčemm yä-täsäwwär-ä mäggälät-u a-y-qär*  
 in.any.case REL-be.hidden\PFV-3SM be.revealed\VN-POSS.3SM NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV  
 ‘In any case what is hidden will definitely be revealed’

iii. Various copular epistemificators containing ይሆናል *yəhonall* and ይሆን *yəhon*

- Nominal ይሆናል<sub>s</sub> *yəhonalls* ‘he/it may bes’

- (18) ምናልባትም ምን እንደሚፈልጉ ማውቅ  
*mənalbat-(ə)-mm mən ənä-m-m-i-fälləg-u mawäq*  
 maybe-FOC what COMP-REL-3PL-want\IPFV-3PL know\VN  
 ጠቃሚ ይሆናል<sub>[AA 817]</sub>  
*täqami yə-hon=all-ø*  
 useful 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Maybe it will be useful to know what they want’

- Clefts with ይሆናል *yəhonall*

- (19) ምናልባት ብር በኪሴ ስለሌለ  
*mənalbat bərr bä-kis-e səlä-lell-ä*  
 perhaps birra in-pocket-POSS.1SG because-NEG.exist-3SM

**ይሆናል**                      **በራስ**      **መተማመኔ**  
*yä-hon=all-ø*                      *bä-ras*      *mättämamän-e*  
 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM    in-myself    be.confident\VN-POSS.1SG

**የጠፋው** [AA 820]  
*yä-täffa-w*  
 REL-disappear\PFV.3SM-DEF

‘Perhaps it may be because there is no money in my pocket that my self-confidence has disappeared’

iv. Different kinds of copular epistemificators with **ይመስላል**<sub>S</sub> *yämäslall*<sub>S</sub> ‘he/it seems<sub>S</sub>’ and **ይመስላል** *yämäslall* ‘it seems’

- Cleft sentences with **ይመስላል**<sub>S</sub> *yämäslall*<sub>S</sub> ‘he/it seems<sub>S</sub>’

(20) **ንግግሩን**                      **ያነሳሳው**                      **የፓርቲዎች**                      **የጋራ**  
*nəgəggər-u-n*                      *y-anäsassa-w*                      *yä-parti-(w)-očč*                      *yä-gara*  
 discussion-DEF-ACC    REL-initiate\PFV.3SM-DEF    GEN-party-PL                      GEN-joint

**ምክር ቤት**      **ይመስላል**<sup>9</sup>  
*məkər bet*      *yä-mäsl=all-ø*  
 council                      3SM-seem\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘What initiated the discussion seems (to have been) the joint council of the parties’ or ‘It seems (to have been) the joint council of the parties that initiated the dicussion’

- Epistemificators **የ-X** **ይመስላል**<sub>S</sub> *yä-X yämäslall*<sub>S</sub> ‘he seems<sub>S</sub> X’ and **የ-X** **ይመስላል** *yä-X yämäslall* ‘it seems that X, it appears that X’ (The following example illustrates the former construction.)

(21) **ደስ**      **ያላት**                                      **ትመስላለች** [BŠ 71: 19]  
*däss*      *y-al-at*                                      *tə-mäsl=all-äčč*  
 pleased    REL-say\PFV.3SM-OBJ.3SF                      3SF-seem\IPFV=NPST-3SF

‘She seems (to be) pleased’

v. Epistemificators of the type **እንደ-X** **ያጠራጥራል** *ändä-X yattärattərall* ‘it raises doubt that X’ (In the following example the epistemificator occurs in the negative form.)

<sup>9</sup> <http://amharic.borkena.com/2016/09/03/ሀወሓት-ከፖለቲካ-ፓርቲዎች-ጋር-ለመነጋገ/>.  
 [Accessed: 06.10.2017]

(22) **ይህም ዕድሜያቸውን ለማሳጠር አንዱ ዳፋ**  
*yəh-(ə)-mm ədme-(y)-aččäw-(ə)-n lä-masaṭṭär and-u dafa*  
 this-FOC age-3SPOL-ACC for-shorten\VN one-DEF reason

**ይህንባቸው እንደነበር አያጠራጥርም** [NB 105: 9-11]  
*yə-hon-(ə)-bb-aččäw andä-näbbär a-y-attärattär-(ə)-mm*  
 3SM-COP\IPFV-APPL-OBJ.3SPOL COMP-PST NEG-3SM-raise.doubts\IPFV-NEG

‘There is no doubt that this was one of the reasons to cut short his life’

vi. Parenthetical epistemificator **መሰል** *mässäl* ‘it seems’

(23) **የአማራ ነጋዴ ሴቶች ማህበርም በጥረቱ**  
*yä-Amara näggade set-očč mahäbär-(ə)-mm bä-tärät-e*  
 GEN-Amara trader woman-PL association-FOC by-effort-POSS.1SG

**ተደሰተ መሰል ድጋፍን አበላልኝ** [AA 795]  
*tädässät-ä mässäl dəgaf-u-n abäzza-ll-(ə)-ññ*  
 be.happy\PFV-3SM seem\PFV support-POSS.3SM-ACC give.in.abundance\PFV-BEN-OBJ.1SG

‘The Amhara Businesswomen’s Association was happy because of my efforts, it seems; it gave me much its support’

vii. Noun epistemificators of certainty, such as **እንደ-X እርግጥ ነው** *andä-X ərgət näw* ‘it is certain that X, it is sure that X’

(24) **[አፄ ቴዎድሮስ] ፍላጎታቸውንና እምነታቸውን እውን ለማድረግ**  
*[aše Tewodros] fəllagot-aččäw-(ə)-n-(ə)-nna əmnätaččäw-(ə)-n əwən lä-madräg*  
 king PN will\POSS.3SPOL-ACC-and belief-POSS.3SPOL-ACC true for-make\VN

**አልፎ አልፎ የእኩይ ባህሪይ ተላብሰው የጨካኝነት**  
*alfo alfo yä-əkkuɣ bahriy təlabs-äw yä-čäkkəññät*  
 from.time.to.time GEN-evil character take.on\GER-3SPOL GEN-cruelty

**ተግባር ይፈጽሙ እንደነበር እርግጥ ነው**<sup>10</sup>  
*tägbar yə-fäššəm-u andä-näbbär ərgət n-äw*  
 work 3SPOL-perform\IPFV-3SPOL COMP-PST sure COP-3SM

‘It is sure that [King Tewodros], in order to carry out his will and belief, from time to time would take on an evil character and would perform deeds of cruelty’

iv. Adjectival and adjectivalized epistemificators, such as **መንገሩ የሚያጠራጥር ነው** *mängäru yämmiyattärattär näw* ‘there are doubts about his telling’ and **መንገሩ የማይቀር ነው** *mängäru yämmayqär näw* ‘it is inevitable that he will tell’

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/4181> [Accessed: 13.12.2017]

(25) መንግሥት...ይሁንና ሰሚ ጅሮ ማግኘቱ፤ ስጋቱን  
*mängəst... yəhunənnə sämi ġoro magñät-u; səgat-u-n*  
 government... however listener ear gain\VN-POSS.3SM insecurity-POSS.3SM-ACC  
 ማለዝብ መቻሉ ለጊዜው የሚያጠራጥር ነው<sup>11</sup>  
*maləzzäb mäčäl-u lä-gize-ω yämm-(i)-y-aṭṭärəṭṭər n-äω*  
 reduce\VN can\VN-POSS.3SM for-time-DEF REL-3SM-raise.doubts\IPFV COP-3SM  
 ‘However, it is doubtful whether for the moment the government .... will get anyone to listen to it and will be able to reduce insecurity’

(26) እንዲያው ምን ብዬ ልግለጽልህ? ከቆየሁ ቶ  
*əndiyəω mən bəyye lä-gläṣ-(ə)-ll-(ə)-b? kä-qoyyā-hu,*  
 and.so what say\GER-1SG 1SG-explain\JUUS-BEN-OBJ.2SM if-stay\PFV-1SG  
 አማኑኤል መግባቱ የማይቀር ነው<sup>[MBL 203: 27-28]</sup>  
*Amanu<sup>9</sup>el mägbat-e yämm-a-y-qär n-äω*  
 PN enter\VN-POSS.1SG REL-NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV COP-3SM  
 ‘And so how should I explain [that] to you? If I stay longer it is inevitable that I will enter Amanu<sup>9</sup>el [Mental Hospital]’

viii. Adverbial epistemificator በእርግጠኝነት *bä<sup>9</sup>ərgätäññənnät* ‘with certainty’

(27) ...ኢትዮጵያ በእርግጠኝነት መካከለኛ ገቢ  
*...Ityoṗya bə-ərgätäññənnät məkakkäläñña gäbi*  
 ...Ethiopia in-sureness average income  
 ካላቸው አገሮች ትቀላቀላለች<sup>12</sup>  
*k-(yā)-all-aččäω agar-očč tə-qqälaqqäl=all-äčč*  
 from-(REL)-exist.3SM-OBJ.3PL country-PL 3SF-join\IPFV=NPST-3SF  
 ‘...Ethiopia for sure will join the middle-income countries’

v. Particle epistemificator ምናልባት *mənalbat* ‘maybe’

(28) ምናልባት እንደኔ በእንጀራ እናት አድጎ ይሆናል<sup>[GQ 93: 20]</sup>  
*mənalbat əndä-ne bə-ənğära ənnat adg-o yəhonall*  
 maybe like-1SG by-stepmother grow.up\GER-3SM EPST  
 ‘Maybe, like me, he might have grown up with a stepmother’

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.dw.com/am/የምግብ-ዋጋ-መናር-በታዳጊው-ዓለም/a-3338966>. [Accessed: 13.12.2017]

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ethpress.gov.et/addiszemen/index.php/environment/item/14000-2017-09-12-19-11-03>. [Accessed: 13.12.2017]

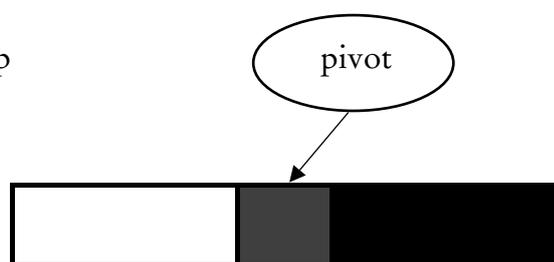
### 5.3. Dimension 2: Manner of integration of epistemized and epistemificator into the sentence

#### 5.3.1. Introduction

Whereas the previous dimension dealt with the epistemizer, this dimension focuses on the epistemized. More specifically, it concerns the way in which the epistemized is integrated into the sentence. But even though the main entity I will be dealing with here is the epistemized, it is impossible to talk about it without taking into consideration which epistemificator is involved. In other words, the way in which the epistemized is integrated and what form it takes depends on the epistemificator, of which, semantically speaking, the epistemized constitutes an argument. My approach to this dimension will be primarily structural.

The key concept for this dimension is the epistemized head (the head verb of the epistemized), which literally functions as a pivot because it belongs both to the epistemificator and to the epistemized. It overlaps with both. In terms of its lexical content, it is part of the epistemized, but its form is dictated by the epistemificator head (the head verb of the epistemificator). By means of the epistemized head the epistemized is embedded within the matrix sentence, whose head verb is the epistemificator. This kind of overlap will be termed a “simple overlap”. Schematically, it can be pictured in the following way:

FIGURE 2. Simple overlap



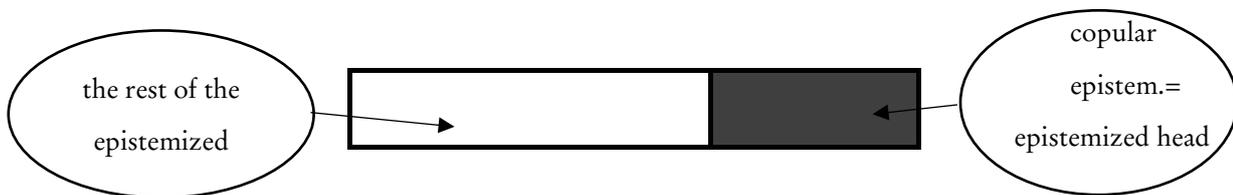
Alongside the simple overlap described above, there is an interlocking overlap in which one part of the epistemificator interrupts the epistemized. This situation occurs whenever there is a conjunction or a relative marker that is a part of the epistemificator and precedes the epistemized head. A schematic representation of interlocking overlap is as follows:

FIGURE 3. Interlocking overlap



Another type of overlap, called ‘total overlap’, pertains to copular epistemificators. Here the epistemized head and the epistemificator are one and the same entity and, thus, totally overlap with each other, as the following figure illustrates:

FIGURE 4. Total overlap



Finally, some epistemificators do not share any overlapping component with the epistemized: the epistemificator and the epistemized are simply adjoined to each other. Figure 5 gives a schematic representation of this type of integration, which I will call “adjoining” (no overlap).

FIGURE 5. Adjoining



Thus, the present dimension has the following four values:

{simple overlap, interlocking overlap, total overlap, adjoining}

### 5.3.2. Simple overlap

The value of simple overlap is structurally realized in two ways, depending on the kind of form that the epistemized head takes, and in consequence on whether or not the epistemized head and the epistemificator head together form a single verbal complex:

- Epistemized head is a finite dependent verb<sup>13</sup>

This kind of epistemized head occurs with the auxiliary epistemificators *yəhonall* and *yəhon*. The epistemized head can take the form of the imperfective, the gerund or the progressive, each rendering a difference in tense/aspect. As noted in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2.2. the auxiliary is truly a helping verb, and forms a single verbal complex with the verb.

- (29) እንኳን ሚስትና ራሴንም ቸዩ ለማስተዳደር  
*ənk<sup>w</sup>an mist-(ə)-nna ras-e-n-(ə)-mm čəyy-e lä-mastädadär*  
 let.alone wife-and self-POSS.1SG-ACC-FOC can\GER-1SG for-support/VN

ይቸግረኝ ይሆናል<sub>[KB 107: 11-12]</sub>  
*yə-čägr-äññ yəhonall*  
 3SM-be.difficult\IPFV-OBJ.1SG EPST

‘Let alone a wife, it may be difficult for me (even) to support myself’

- (30) ምን አደጋ አግኝቶት ይሆን?<sub>[AB 82: 11]</sub>  
*mən adäga agəñt-o-t yəhon*  
 what accident meet.with\GER-3SM-OBJ.3SM EPST:Q

What accident might he have met with?

- Epistemized head is a verbal noun

In several epistemificators the epistemized head takes the form of a verbal noun. Depending on the type of the semi-auxiliary or matrix verb, the verbal noun may be in the nominative (31) or accusative (32) case. With certain epistemificators the notional subject is marked by the possessive pronoun, (32) and (33). In contrast to the epistemized head in the form of the finite dependent verb, here the epistemized head (the VN) and the epistemificator head each belongs to its own distinct clause. Therefore, just as for interlocking overlap (see below), the epistemized head (the VN) is embedded into the epistemificator head.

- (31) እንግድያውስ ስለሷ የሰማሁት እውነት መሆን  
*əngədəyawəss səlä-ss<sup>w</sup>a yä-sämma-hu-t əwnät mähon*  
 in.that.case about-3SF REL-hear\PFV-1SG-DEF truth COP\VN

<sup>13</sup> For the distinction between finite (dependent and independent) and non-finite verbs see beginning of Section 1.2.2.4.

**አለበት**<sup>[KB 112: 16-17]</sup>

*all-ä-bb-ät*

exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM

‘In that case, what I heard about her must be the truth’

- (32) **እንዲያውም ሀያ አራት ሰዓት ለመቆየት መቻልህን**  
*əndiyawəmm haya aratt säʾat lä-mäqoyyät mäčal-(ə)-b-(ə)-n*  
 in.fact twenty four hour for-wait\VN be.able/VN-POSS.2SM-ACC

**እጠራጠራለሁ**<sup>14</sup>

*ə-ttärattər=all-ähu*

1SG-doubt\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘In fact, I doubt your being able to stay for twenty-four hours’

- (33) **እንኳን ከዚያች ከመናጢ ገረድ ጋር አብሮ ያልታየና**  
*ənk wan kä-zziyačč kä-mänäti gärad gar abro y-al-tayy-ä-nna*  
 thank.goodness with-that.F with-pauper maid with together REL-NEG-be.seen\PFV-3SM-and

**ስማችንን**

*səm-aččən-(ə)-n*

name-POSS.1PL-ACC

**ያሳስጠፋው**

*y-al-asṭäffa-ɸ*

REL-NEG-cause.to.destroy\PFV.3SM-DEF

**እንጂ የኋላ-ኋላ**

*ənǧi yäh<sup>w</sup> ala-b<sup>w</sup> ala*

but sooner.or.later

**መመለሱና**

*mämmälläs-u-(ə)-nna*

come.back\VN-POSS.3SM-and

**ልብ**

*labb*

heart

**መግዛቱ**

*mägzat-u*

control\VN-POSS.3SM

**አይቀርም**<sup>[YWN 169: 22-24]</sup>

*a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*

NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV-NEG

‘Thank goodness he has not been seen with this pauper maid and he has not ruined our name; but sooner or later he will definitely come back and he will come to his senses’

### 5.3.3. Interlocking overlap

This type of overlap occurs whenever the epistemized head, being a dependent finite verb, is embedded by means of a conjunction (a complementizer conjunction or a conjunction proper) or by means of a relative marker. The epistemized head directly precedes this part of the epistemificator, which interrupts the epistemized. In what follows I will present these two ways of embedment. As the epistemized constitutes a subordinate clause and

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=18519](http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=18519): “ከአንበሳና ከዝሆን ማን ያሸንፋል?” ቢለው ፯-“ከሁሉም አሳ መልጭልጭ ነው” አለው.&Itemid=101.

[Accessed: 26.06.2019]

the epistemificator a matrix clause, into which the subordinate clause is embedded, I will use the two terminologies interchangeably.

- **Embedment via a conjunction**

The conjunction here covers two kinds of terms which are different semantically but similar structurally: complementizer conjunctions (**እንደ**- *ändä*- ‘that’, **ለ**- *lä*- ‘that, to’) and conjunctions proper (**ስ**- *sə*- ‘when’ and **ብ**- *bə*- ‘if’).

The subordinate clause can be embedded into the matrix clause by means of the complementizers *ändä*- ‘that’, either as object clause (34) or subject clause (35), or by *lä*- (only an object clause) (36). The main verb of the subordinate clause is a dependent finite verb. *Ändä*- can be followed, depending on the context, by either the imperfective relative form of the verb (34) or the perfective form (35). The simple imperfective form is always dependent. The perfective form does not have any dependent counterpart: the fact that it is a dependent form is indicated by the presence of the complementizer. *Lä*- can precede only the simple imperfective (36).

(34) **እርስዎም አሳምረው እንደሚያውቁት**  
*ərswo-mm asammər-äw ändä-mm-i-(y)-awq-u-t*  
 2SPOL-FOC be.well\GER-2SPOL COMP-REL-2SPOL-know\IPFV-2SPOL-DEF  
**አምናለሁ**<sup>[MAH 238: 29-30]</sup>  
*amn=all-ähu*  
 1SG.believe\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I believe **that** you know it well’

(35) **በተለይ ከአገሩ ሕይወት ጋር ሲነፃፀር እጅግ ሰፊና የበለጸገ ልምድ**  
*bätäläyy kä-agär-u həywät gar s-i-nnäšaṣṣär*  
 especially with-country-POSS.3SM life with when-3SM-be.compared\IPFV  
**እጅግ ሰፊና የበለጸገ ልምድ**  
*əğğəg säffi-(ə)-nna yä-bäläṣṣäg-ä ləmd*  
 very wide-and REL-be.rich\PFV-3SM experience  
**እንዳስገኘለት አያጠራጥርም**<sup>[DB 220: 2-3]</sup>  
*änd-asgäññ-ä-ll-ät a-y-aṭṭäraṭṭär-(ə)-mm*  
 COMP-provide\PFV-3SM-BEN-OBJ.3SM NEG-3SM-raise.doubts\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘Especially when it is compared with the life of his country there is no doubt **that** it provided him very wide and rich experience’





‘Wäsän does not seem [to be] **one who wants** to see anyone. She seems [to be] **one who is ashamed**’

- (40) **ያንተም አስተያየት ከዚህ የመነጨ**  
*y-antä-mm astäyayyät kä-zzih yä-mänäčč-ä*  
 GEN-2SM-FOC standpoint from-this REL-arise\PFV-3SM  
**ይመስለኛል**<sub>[BŠ 232: 29]</sub>  
*yə-mäsl-änn=all-ø*  
 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM

‘It seems to me that your standpoint **arises** from this’

### 5.3.4. Total overlap

This value features copular epistemificators, which, however, in view of this dimension are puzzling in that it is not clear, at least not at first sight, which part we should consider as the epistemized head: the copular complement alone or the copular complement together with the copula? If we opt for the latter analysis what we will identify as an epistemificator? In what follows I will argue that indeed in the case of copular epistemificators we are dealing with a total integration (total overlap) in which not only is the epistemized head shared between the epistemized and the epistemificator, but the epistemized as a whole and the epistemificator as a whole are represented by exactly the same entities: copula complement + *yəhonall* (etc.) ‘be(come)’ or *yəmäslall* (etc.) If we try to extract an epistemificator from an epistemically modalized copular sentence there is nothing left that could signal it but the copular sentence in its entirety. Therefore, the epistemized and the epistemificator totally overlap with each other. Here are some example sentences:

- (41) **ምናልባት ባለጋቢው ይሆናል**<sub>[GQ 371: 10]</sub>  
*mənalbat balä-gabi-w yə-hon=all-ø*  
 perhaps owner-gabi.cloth-DEF 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘Perhaps it may be the owner of the *gabi*-cloth’

- (42) **ወሰን[የለኝ] ስምዎ ቢያምረኝም ንፍገት**  
*Wäsän [Yälläš] səm-wa b-i(y)-amr-änn-(ə)-mm nəfgät*  
 PN name-POSS.3SF although-3SM-like\IPFV-OBJ.1SG-CIRC avarice  
**ይመስለኛል**<sub>[GQ 10: 14-15]</sub>  
*yə-mäsl-änn=all-ø*  
 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM

‘Although I like her name “Wäsän [Yälläš]” (‘you have no borders’) **it seems to me [to be] avarice**’

The following sentence is a cleft:

- (43) **ጎርኪ ስለራሱ እናት ይሆናል የጸፈው** [GQ 179: 1]  
*Gorki salä-ras-u annat ya-hon=all-ø yä-saf-ä-w*  
 PN about-own-POSS.3SM mother 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM REL-write\PFV-3SM-DEF  
 ‘It may be about his own mother that Gorki wrote (it)’

### 5.3.5. Adjoining

The term “Adjoining” indicates lack of any tight syntactic integration of the epistemized into the sentence. Within this type we can distinguish three different ways of adjoining:

- **Adjoining via the inflectable quotative linker ብዩ** *bəyye* ‘I saying:’ and the relative quotative linker የሚል *yämmil* ‘that (it) says:’

The inflectable quotative linker *bəyye* connects a mental verbal epistemificator with its epistemized. However, there is no overlapping on the part of the epistemized and the epistemificator. The two are simply adjoined to each other. Neither the epistemificator head nor the quotative linker *bəyye* selects any particular form of the epistemized, except that the epistemized head must be a finite independent verb:

- (44) **በስልክ በሚደረገው የሎተሪ ጨዋታ ከፍተኛ ገንዘብ ይሰበሰባል ብዩ እገምታለሁ**<sup>16</sup>  
*bä-salk bä-mm-i-ddärräg-äw yä-loteri čäwata käffätännä*  
 by-phone in-REL-3SM-be.done\IPFV-DEF GEN-lottery game high  
**ገንዘብ ይሰበሰባል ብዩ እገምታለሁ**<sup>16</sup>  
*gänzäb ya-ssäbässäb=all-ø bəyy-e ə-gämmät=all-ähu*  
 money 3SM-be.collected\IPFV=NPST-3SM say\GER-1SG 1SG-estimate\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I estimate :\_a lot of money will be collected in the lottery game which is carried out by phone’

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.ethiopianreporter.com/index.php/kibur-minister>. [Accessed: 25.06.2018]

In the same vein, the relative quotative linker *yämmil* (a form of the same verb as *bəyye*, *alä* ‘say’) connects a mental noun epistemificator with the epistemized. The linker always appears in the 3SM and so agrees with its subject noun (the mental noun epistemificator) in person, gender, and number. There is no overlap between the epistemificator and the epistemized, thereby securing the epistemized a total syntactic independence from the epistemificator. As with *bəyye*, the epistemized head must occur in a finite independent form.

- (45) **ሌሎች አማራጮችን ማፈለግ ይገባው ነበር**  
*lel-očč ammarač-očč-(ə)-n mafälaläg yə-ggäbba-w näbbär*  
 another-PL option-PL-ACC search\VN 3SM-be.proper\IPFV-OBJ.3SM PST  
**የሚል እምነት አለኝ<sup>17</sup>**  
*yämm-i-l əmnät all-ä-ññ*  
 REL-3SM-say\IPFV belief exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG  
 ‘I have a belief :he ought to have searched for other options’

- **Adjoining of adverbs and particles**

The modal epistemic adverbs and particles are connected to the epistemized in a very different way than the epistemificators discussed above. They are somehow immersed in the epistemized (an opposite situation to the embedment of the epistemized) but are syntactically unrelated to it. In contrast to the type of adjoining that involves the inflectable linker *bəyye* ‘saying:’, in which the position of the epistemized and the epistemificator is fixed, adverbs and particles show some flexibility and can occur in various positions within the epistemized (with differences in scope). Sentence (46) illustrates the adverb *bä’ərgätäññənnät* occurring at the beginning of the clause.

- (46) **አንድ መኪና ያለሹፊር ሞተር ተነስቶ**  
*and mäkina yalä-šufer motär-u tənäst-o*  
 one car without-driver engine-POSS.3SM start\GER-3SM  
**ቢለቀቅ ፤ በእርግጠኝነት ቀጥ ብሎ ለመጓዝ**  
*b-i-lläqqäq bə-’ərgätäññənnät qät bəl-o lä-mägwaz-u*  
 if-3SM-be.released\IPFV in-certainty straight say\GER-3SM for-travel\VN-POSS.3SM

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/የኢትዮጵያ-መሠረተ-ካፒታል-ምንድነው>. [Accessed: 28.01.2019]

**አይቻለውም**<sup>18</sup>

*a-y-ččal-äw-(ə)-mm*

NEG-3SM-be.capable\IPFV-OBJ.3SM-NEG

‘A car without a driver, if its engine is released to start, **in certainty** it will not be capable of moving straight ahead’

• **Adjoining of parentheticals**

The status of parentheticals vis-à-vis the epistemized is similar to that with modal epistemic adverbs and particles, with some important differences. Parentheticals are more complex expressions, in comparison to one-word adverbs and particles, as some of them form small sentences. Others represent verbal phrases of the type **እንደማስበው** X *ändämmassəbäw* X ‘as I think (it), X’ (lit. ‘like/as what I think (it)’). Of the parentheticals, verbal phrases are always sentence-initial; but with this exception, parentheticals can occur in various positions within the sentence, showing an even greater flexibility than epistemic adverbs and particles. Sentence (47) demonstrates the parenthetical *mässälänn* ‘it seems to me’ which here stands at the end of the sentence:

(47)	<b>በዙ በልቺ</b>	<b>ነበር መሰለኝ</b>	<b>እንቅልፍ እንቅልፍ</b>
	<i>bəzu bäləčč-e</i>	<i>näbbär mässäl-ä-ññ</i>	<i>ənqəlf ənqəlf</i>
	much eat\GER-1SG	PST seem\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG	sleep sleep

**ይለኛል**<sub>[GQ 81: 16-17]</sub>

*yə-l-äññ=all-ø*

3SM-say\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM

‘I ate (too) much, **it seems to me**; I am sleepy (lit. It says to me “sleep, sleep”)’

**5.4. Dimension 3: Concrete vs. abstract epistemificators**

Unlike the first two dimensions, the present dimension—the concrete vs. abstract nature of the epistemificator—is defined semantically. At the same time, however, this dimension has fairly far-reaching grammatical consequences. A concrete epistemificator is one that refers to a mental or perceptual state of affairs in the extralinguistic world. An abstract epistemificator comes closer to being a “pure grammatical device”, with little or no

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.ethpress.gov.et/addiszemen/index.php/environment/item/14325-2017-10-02-19-34-40>.

[Accessed: 25.06.2018]

reference to the extralinguistic world. The present dimension is thus dichotomous and embraces two values:

{concrete, abstract}

Concrete epistemificators include mental epistemic verbs, mental epistemic nouns, adjectival and adjectivalized epistemificators, impersonal verbs, and the noun epistemificator *ərgət* ‘certain’; a special subtype is represented by parenthetical epistemificators and sentence-level adverbial epistemificators. Abstract epistemificators, in turn, include auxiliary epistemificators (notably *yəhonall*), quasi-auxiliary epistemificators and the particle epistemificator *mənalbat*; a special subtype is the copula. Below I will discuss the grammatical correlates of these types. Note that these correlates in general represent strong tendencies, not absolute requirements; there are exceptions. These grammatical correlates include three phenomena:

- i. whether or not the epistemificator constitutes a clause on its own right, distinct from the epistemized
- ii. whether the epistemificator can be separately negated
- iii. where the sentence stress falls.

In general, a concrete epistemificator forms a clause in its own right, whereas an abstract epistemificator does not. This is easiest to see with mental verbal epistemificators; in the following sentence with *əndä-X assəballähu* ‘I think (that) X’, ‘I reckon (that) X’:

(48) **ወደፊት ጥሩ እንደሚሆን አስባለሁ**<sup>[AA 227]<sup>19</sup></sup>  
*wädäfit ṭəru əndä-mm-i-hon assəb=all-ähu*  
 in.the.future good COMP-REL-3SM-COP\IPFV 1SG.think\IPFV-NPST-1SG  
 I think that it will be good in the future’

there are clearly two clauses, a matrix clause and an embedded clause. (The two clauses, of course, represent two propositions.) Similarly with adjectival epistemificators (**እንደ-X እርግጠኛ ነኝ** *əndä-X ərgətännä nänn* ‘I am sure (that) X’), mental noun epistemificators (**X የሚል ሐሳብ አለኝ** *X yämmil hassab allänn* ‘I have a thought: X’) and the noun

<sup>19</sup> The original sentence has been slightly modified.

epistemifiers of certainty (**እንደ-X እርግጥ ነው** *ändä-X ərgət näw* ‘it is certain that X, it is sure that X’). Parentheticals, insofar as they contain a mental verb, are concrete; and they too involve two clauses even though the parenthetical is totally unintegrated into the main sentence. Sentence-level adverbials are deviant here; they are concrete, but they certainly do not form a clause of their own. Consider the following sentences with a parenthetical *mässälänn* (49) and a sentence-level adverbial *bä’ərgätännännät* (50):

(49) በሉ- እንግዲህ እኔ ልሂድላችሁ ፣ ሌላ  
*bäl-u angədih əne l-(ə)-hid-(ə)-ll-aččəhu, lela*  
 say\IMPR-2PL so 1SG JUSS.1SG-go\IPFV-BEN-2PL other  
 ሥራ መያዛችሁ ነው መሰለኝ<sup>[DB 73: 9]</sup>  
*səra mäyaz-aččəhu n-əw mässäl-ä-ññ*  
 work hold\VN-2PL COP-3SM seem\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG  
 ‘Well, then, let me go; you are busy with other work, I think’

(50) በጣም በእርግጠኝነት ልንናገረው የምንችለው  
*bätam bä-ərgätännännät l-(ə)-nn-(ə)-nnaggär-əw yämm-(ə)-nnə-čəl-əw*  
 very in-certainty COMP-1PL-speak\IPFV-DEF REL-1PL-can\IPFV-DEF  
 ነገር ወደ ዋናው ድርድር መግባት ከተጀመረ [...] [REP 24.03.2017]  
*nägär wädä wanna-w dərəddər mägbat kä-tägämmär-ä*  
 thing to main-DEF negotiations enter\VN if-be.started\PFV-3SM  
 ‘The thing that we can say **with great certainty** (is that) if it starts to enter the main negotiations [...]’

By contrast, in general no such biclausal division exists with abstract epistemifiers. We have already seen that the grammatical epistemifier *yəhonall* constitutes a single clause together with the epistemized (compare the monoclausal nature of English ‘he may come’); similarly, the particle *mənalbat* ‘maybe’ is not itself a clause.

(51) ይህን የአዕምሮ ህመም አይነት Sociopath ይሉታል ።  
*yəb-(ə)-n yä-a’əmro həməm aynät Sociopath yə-l-u-t=all*  
 this-ACC GEN-mind illness kind sociopath 3PL-say\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM=NPST  
 በአማርኛ ለመተርጎም ይከብደኛል ። ምናልባትም  
*bä-amarəñña lä-mätərgom yə-käbd-änn=all-ø mənalbat-(ə)-mm*  
 in-Amharic for-translate\VN 3SM-be.difficult-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM perhaps-FOC  
 ዕቡይ ማለት ይቻል ይሆናል<sup>[AA 863]</sup>  
*əbbuy malät yə-ččal yəhonall*  
 wicked say\VN 3SM-be.possible\IPFV EPST

‘This kind of mental illness they call “Sociopath”. It is difficult for me to translate (it) into Amharic. **Perhaps** it may mean “wicked”’

A notable deviation from the biclausal/monoclausal pattern involves semi-auxiliary epistemificators, which are abstract and yet involve two predications. However, the semi-auxiliary epistemificator **ሳይነግር<sub>S</sub> አይቀርም<sub>S</sub>** *saynägr<sub>S</sub> ayqärəmm<sub>S</sub>* ‘he surely/probably tells/will tell/told’ is making its way towards monoclausality. It is undergoing the process of grammaticalization in which the conjugable semi-auxiliary *ayqärəmm* is becoming frozen and thus approaching closer to the status of a true grammatical auxiliary. In my corpus I have recorded a few instances of this epistemificator with frozen *ayqärəmm*.

- (52) **ሌሎችም**                      **የሚባረሩ**                      **ሳይኖሩ**  
*lel-očč-(ə)-mm*      *yämm-i-bbarrär-u*                      *s-a-y-nor-u*  
 another-PL-FOC      REL-3PL-get.fired\IPFV-3PL      when-NEG-3PL-exist\IPFV-3PL  
**አይቀርም<sup>20</sup>**  
*a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘There are surely/probably others who got fired, too’

The copular epistemificator *yəhonall* etc. does not form a clause separate from the epistemized; rather, it is itself both the epistemificator and the epistemized head.

The next feature to be examined is the ability of the epistemificator to undergo negation *as* an epistemificator (separately from any negation that may apply to the epistemized). Here, in general, concrete epistemificators can undergo negation on their own. With mental verbal epistemificators with the linker *bəyye* we have (e.g.) both X *bəyye assəballähu* ‘I think: X’ and X *bəyye alassəbəmm* ‘I don’t think: X’.<sup>21</sup> Similarly for adjectival epistemificators (*ändä-X ərgəṭäñña nəññ* ‘I am sure (that) X’ and *ändä-X ərgəṭäñña aydälləhummm* ‘I am not sure (that) X’), mental noun epistemificators (*yämmil hassab alläññ* ‘I have a thought: X’ and *yämmil hassab yälläññəmm* ‘I don’t have a thought: X’) and the noun epistemificators of certainty (*ändä-X ərgəṭ nəw* ‘it is certain that X’ and

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/2515>. [Accessed: 29.01.2019]

<sup>21</sup> Mental epistemic verbs with the complementizer *ändä-* cannot have their epistemificator head negated, see Section 6.2.4.

*andä-X ərgəṭ aydällämm* ‘it is not certain that X’). Parentheticals cannot be negated; sentence-level adverbials are not negated at all with the exception of *yälä tərəṭṭər* ‘without doubt’, which is lexicalized as a frozen negative expression. — On the other hand, if we formally negate an abstract epistemificator in Amharic, the result is either ungrammatical, or the meaning changes significantly. Thus, **ሊነግርያ ይችላል** *linägrs yäčälalls*, ‘he could<sub>s</sub> tells, he may<sub>s</sub> tells’ is an abstract epistemic modal, but the negative form of the epistemificator head, namely *ayčäləmm*, can only be a deontic or dynamic modal. Similarly, **ማወቅ አለበት** *mawäq alläbbät<sub>s</sub>* as an epistemic modal means ‘he must<sub>s</sub> know, he should<sub>s</sub> know’, but its negated form *yäläbbätəmm* only has the deontic meaning of prohibition. The salient exception to this is the epistemic copula, which does readily undergo negation while preserving its epistemic meaning; for example,

- (53) **ጎረቤት አይሆንም የመጣው**  
*goräbet a-y-hon-(ə)-mm yä-mäṭṭa-w*  
 neighbour NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV-NEG REL-come\PFV-DEF  
 ‘The one who came will not be the neighbour’

Negation will be treated in detail in Section 6.2.

The last diagnostic feature has to do with sentence stress. Here, too, there is a striking difference in the behaviour of concrete and abstract epistemificators. In this case it will be easier to begin with abstract epistemificators. Here the sentence stress typically falls on the epistemized head.<sup>22</sup> In (54) *yäčälu*, although itself an epistemificator, is also the epistemized head of the main epistemificator *yəhonall*.

- (54) **ምናልባት ለመንፈስህም ፍቱን መድኃኒት ሊሆኑ**  
*mənalbat lä-mänfäs-(ə)-b-(ə)-mm fəttun mädhānit li-i-hon-u*  
 perhaps for-spirit-POSS.2SM-FOC effective medicine COMP-3PL-COP\IPFV-3PL  
**'ይችሉ ይሆናል** [BŠ 165: 19-20]  
*'yä-čäl-u yəhonall*  
 3PL-can\IPFV-3PL EPST  
 ‘Perhaps they (books) may be an effective medicine for your spirit’

<sup>22</sup> See for detailed discussion on the stress in Section 2.4.6.

With concrete epistemificators, the form of the epistemized plays a role. If the complement (the epistemized) is expressed as a finite dependent verb with *ändä-*, then the stress will fall on the epistemized head.

- (55) በኔ በኩል ሁለቱም [መጻሕፍት] በተመጣጣኝ ደረጃ ላይ እንዳለው እንምታለሁ<sup>23</sup>  
*bä-ne bääkul hulätt-u-mm [mäṣabəft] bä-tämäṭaṭañ däraḡa lay and-'all-u ə-gämmət=all-ähu*  
 in-1SG side two-DEF-FOC books in-equal level on  
 COMP-exist-PL 1SG-assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘To my mind, I assume that both [books] are on an equal level’

If, on the other hand, the complement is a verbal noun, then the stress will fall on the epistemificator head. In fact, this is the case for any epistemificator, concrete or abstract. We see an example with a concrete epistemificator in (56), and with an abstract epistemificator in (57).<sup>24</sup>

- (56) የወንዙን የተፈጥሮ ፍሰት አቋርጦህ ግድብ ስትሠራ አካባቢያዊና ሌሎች ሊጠጉ የሚችሉ ተፅዕኖዎች መኖራቸው 'የማይቀር ነው።  
*yä-wänz-u-n yä-täfätro fässät aq<sup>w</sup>artä-h gəddəb s-(ə)-ttə-sära akkababiyaswi-(ə)-nna lel-očč l-i-ttägän-u yämm-i-čäl-u täšə<sup>o</sup>no-(w)-očč manor-aččäw 'yämm-a-y-qär n-äw*  
 GEN-river-DEF-ACC GEN-nature flow interrupt\GER-2SM dam when-2SM-make\IPFV environmental-and another-PL COMP-3PL-be.fixed\IPFV-3PL REL-3PL-can\IPFV-3PL impact-PL exist\VN-POSS.3PL REL-NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV COP-3SM  
 ‘When you interrupt the natural flow of the river and make a dam, it is inevitable that there will exist environmental and other impacts that can be fixed’

- (57) ፀቡን ዛሬ ብታስቀር እንኳን ቆይቶ መምጣቱ  
*šäb-u-n zare b-(ə)-tt-asqär ənkw an qoyyato mämṭat-u*  
 strife-DEF-ACC today if-2SM-prevent\IPFV even later come\VN-POSS.3SM

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.ethiopianreview.com/content/27226>. [Accessed: 25.06.2018]

<sup>24</sup> It is difficult to say why the verbal noun does not normally take the stress (there is at least one exception: it takes stress if it is in the complement position of a cleft sentence). One explanation could be that the verbal noun, as a tenseless and aspectless nominalized unit, is too abstract; it lacks two of the main categories associated with predications and so its predicative power is weak. Thus, it serves mainly for encoding those parts of the utterance that are thematic (not rhematic).

'አይቀርም' [BF 37: 18]

'a-y-qär-(ə)-mm

NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV-NEG

'Even if you prevent the strife today it will definitely come after some time (lit. staying)'

If the complement is a *bəyye* clause, the main stress (as always) falls on *bəyye*.

- (58) **ከአስክንድሪያ የመጣልንን የማርቆስን ሐይማኖት**  
*kä-Eskəndriya yä-mättä-ll-(ə)-n-(ə)-n yä-Marqos-(ə)-n haymanot*  
 from-Alexandria REL-come\PFV.3SM-BEN-OBJ.1PL-ACC GEN-PN-ACC religion
- ትተህ ጠረ-ማርያም “ብሩስታንት” ትሆናለህ**  
*tät-äh tärä-Maryam bərustant tə-hon=all-äh*  
 abandon\GER-2SM anti-Mary Protestant 2SM-become\IPFV=NPST-2SM
- 'ብዬ አልሠጋም** [DB 84: 1-3]  
*'bəyy-e al-säga-mm*  
 say\GER-1SG NEG.1SG-worry\IPFV-NEG

'I don't worry (that): you will abandon Mark's religion that came to us from Alexandria and you will become an anti-Mary Protestant'

It should be noted that the locus of the stress is an important indicator of the sentence's theme-rheme structure: the stressed component is the rheme.

## 5.5. Dimension 4: Personal vs. non-personal epistemificator

### 5.5.1. Introduction

Although by definition the epistemizer per se is always personal (= 1SG), there is a choice as to what aspect of the epistemic predicate is being emphasized: the (personal) epistemizer, or the (non-personal) epistemized. The values of this dimension are thus

{personal, non-personal}<sup>25</sup>

When an explicit epistemizer is present, this choice is not there: the very presence of the epistemizer calls it (the epistemizer) to our attention. Here the epistemificator must be personal. Rather, it is with implicit epistemizers that the choice of personal vs. non-personal becomes relevant. With verbs of mental cognition or perception, the

<sup>25</sup> I avoid the term “impersonal” here, as it is used elsewhere in the thesis in a different, grammatical, sense.

epistemificator is personal: the epistemizer is present to our consciousness even if unexpressed, precisely because a cognitive/perceptual verb is involved. Prototypical for this subtype is the family of *mässälä* “it seems”: any event of seeming requires a “seemer”, someone to whom something seems to be the case. Another example is the family of *argət(äñña)* “certain(ly)”: only a human being can be in a state of certainty. But other, non-personal epistemificators do not directly impose upon us the presence of the epistemizer. The epistemizer is present, as always, but it is very deeply backgrounded. The epistemificator’s lexical meaning per se does not immediately show you that an epistemizer is involved because the epistemificator is not a cognitive/perceptual predicate. Rather, the emphasis and focus of such an epistemificator is strongly on the epistemized. These non-personal epistemificators involve abstract epistemificators par excellence, exemplified e.g. by *yəhonall*.<sup>26</sup> However, in both personal and non-personal epistemificators, the implicit epistemizer is indeed 1SG. Consider the following semantically deviant sentence:<sup>27</sup>

- (59) \*አሁን አሁን ወደድኳት ብዬ ሳላስብ  
*ahun ahun wäddäd-k<sup>w</sup>-at bəyy-e s-al-assəb*  
 now now like\PFV-1SG-OBJ.3SF say\GER-1SG when-NEG.1SG-think\IPFV  
**አልቀርም**  
*al-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG.1SG-remain\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘\*I surely think: recently I started liking her’

The sentence is tricky in the way discussed in Section 2.4.4. Although “I” occurs four times in the sentence, in none of these cases does it indicate the epistemizer, but rather the

<sup>26</sup> Wierzbicka (1988: 55-58) opposes “psychological predicates”, such as *know, think, believe* which “require individual mind[s] as their point of reference”, to “logical predicates”, such as *true, false, possible, probable* which “do not require individual minds as their point of reference”. In English, psychological predicates can undergo ‘subject-to-subject raising’, e.g., ‘It is certain that he will come’ vs. ‘He is certain to come’. This rule, however, does not apply to Amharic. Bralczyk (1978: 41) proposes a distinction, in principle similar to Wierzbicka’s, couched in terms of expressions which relate the *dictum* to the sender, such as Polish *jest pewne* ‘it is certain’, and those which do not relate the *dictum* to the sender but pertain to the reality described in the *dictum*, such as [*jest*] *prawdopodobne* ‘[it is] probable’.

<sup>27</sup> See also Grochowski (2002: 69).

subject of the sentence. In the epistemificator *salassəb alqärəmm* ‘I will surely think’ both parts of the expression are inflectable, expressing the 1SG subject of the sentence. Thus the epistemizer is not present. Nonetheless, the epistemizer must indeed be 1SG. Why? In the embedded clause (epistemized), the speaker expresses her/his own mental attitude; the epistemificator expresses uncertainty about this. Whose uncertainty? The speaker’s own uncertainty. It is precisely because the epistemizer is implicitly “I” that an epistemificator of uncertainty cannot coherently accompany a proposition that the speaker makes about his own mental attitude. In contrast, sentence (60) in which the speaker epistemically talks about someone else’s mental attitude is felicitous:

(60) **ምናልባት ያላወቅነውና የሰነ ልቦና ቅኝት**  
*mənalbat y-al-aṣwäq-n-äw-(ə)-nna yä-sənä läbbona qəññät*  
 perhaps REL-NEG-know\PFV-1PL-DEF-and GEN-psychology survey

**የሚፈልገው ሙርሲዎች ዛሬም የባሪያ ንግድ**  
*yämm-i-fälləg-(ä)-w Mursi-(w)-očč zare-mm yä-bariya nəgd*  
 REL-3SM-need\IPFV-DEF Mursi-PL today-FOC GEN-slave trade

**አለ ብለው ሳያስቡ**  
*all-ä bəl-äw s-a-y-assəb-u*  
 exist\PFV-3SM say\GER-3PL when-NEG-3PL-think\IPFV-3PL

**አይቀርም<sup>28</sup>**  
*a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG

‘Perhaps—which we don’t know and which needs a psychological survey—the Mursi<sup>29</sup> probably think: even today there is a slave trade’

In what follows I will illustrate both values of this dimension, as realized in three subtypes of epistemificators:

- i. explicit, necessarily personal
- ii. implicit, personal
- iii. non-personal

<sup>28</sup> <http://sendeknewspaper.com/milkta/item/968-ከሙርሲዎች-ሰማይ-ስር.html>. [Accessed 26.06.2019]  
<sup>29</sup> The Mursi are a Surmic (Nilo-Saharan) pastoralist ethnic group living in southwestern Ethiopia.



iv. Copular and non-copular epistemificators of seeming: የ-X ይመስለኛል<sub>S</sub> *yä-X yəmäsälännäll<sub>S</sub>* ‘he/it seems<sub>S</sub> X to me’. The following example illustrates a non-copular epistemificator:

- (64) **ለማንኛውም ይህንን ጽሑፍ መቋጨት ያለብኝ**  
*lämannännäwəmm yəbenn-(ə)-n şəhuf mäq<sup>w</sup>ačät y-all-ä-bb-(ə)-ññ*  
 anyway this-ACC writing conclude\VN REL-exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.1SG  
**ይመስለኛል**<sub>[BBS 121: 27]</sub>  
*yə-mäsl-änn=all-ø*  
 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Anyway, it seems to me that I should conclude this writing’

v. Impersonal<sup>31</sup> verbal epistemificators

- (65) **እንደምትወደኝ ይሰማኛል**<sub>[TK 98: 14]</sub>  
*ändä-mm-(ə)-ttə-wädd-änn yə-ssämma-ññ=all-ø*  
 COMP-REL-3SF-love\IPFV-OBJ.1SG 3SM-be.felt\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘I feel that she loves me’

vi. Adjectival epistemificator እንደ-X እርግጠኛ ነኝ *ändä-X ərgəṭännä nänn* ‘I am sure (that) X’

- (66) **ፀጥተኛው ጦርነት በእናቴና በአባቴ መካከል**  
*şättətännä-w torənnät bə-ənnat-e-(ə)-nna bə-abbat-e mäkakkäl*  
 silent-DEF war in-mother-POSS.1SG-and in-father-POSS.1SG between  
**እየተካሄደ እንደሆነ እርግጠኛ ነኝ**<sub>[BF 23: 9-10]</sub>  
*əyyä-tākahed-ä ändä-hon-ä ərgəṭännä n-änn*  
 PROG-take.place\PFV-3SM COMP-COP\PFV-3SM sure COP-1SG  
 ‘I am sure that a silent war is taking place between my mother and my father’

vii. Some parenthetical epistemificators

- (67) **እነዚህ የሚመጡት ሠርገኞች ናቸው**  
*ənnäzzih yämm-i-mät-u-t särgänn-ocč n-aččärw*  
 these REL-3PL-come\IPFV-3PL-DEF wedding.participant-PL COP-3PL  
**መስለኝ**<sub>[MW 6: 4-5]</sub>  
*mässäl-ä-ññ*  
 seem\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG  
 ‘These who are coming are members of the bride and bridegroom’s party, it seems to me’

<sup>31</sup> Recall again that “impersonal” has a different meaning from “non-personal”.

B. Implicit personal

i. ADJ ይመስላል<sub>s</sub> ADJ *yämäslall<sub>s</sub>* ‘he/it seems<sub>s</sub>’

(68) ቀጫጫና በሽተኛ ይመስላል<sub>s</sub> [BŠ 118: 18]  
*qäčäčä-(ə)-nna bäsšätäñña yə-mäsl=all-ø*  
 skinny-and ill 3SM-seem\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘He seems skinny and ill’

ii. Copular and non-copular epistemificators of seeming: የ-X ይመስላል<sub>s</sub> *yä-X yämäslall<sub>s</sub>* ‘he seems<sub>s</sub> X’. The following example illustrates a copular epistemificator:

(69) ፍቅር የያዘው ትመስላለህ [TK 148: 20]  
*fəqər yä-yaz-ä-h tə-mäsl=all-äh*  
 love REL-catch\PFV-3SM-OBJ.2SM 2SM-seem\IPFV=NPST-2SM  
 ‘You seem to have fallen in love (lit. you seem that love caught you)’

iii. Noun epistemificators of certainty, such as እንደ-X እርግጥ ነው *ändä-X ərgət näw* ‘it is certain that X, it is sure that X’

(70) የተጠናከረ ገቢ ሳይኖራችሁ  
*yä-tätänakkär-ä gäbi s-a-y-nor-aččəhu*  
 REL-be.sufficient\PFV-3SM income when-NEG-3PL-exist\IPFV-OBJ.2PL  
 ስትንቀሳቀሱ የተለያዩ ችግሮች በሥራችሁ  
*s-(ə)-ttə-nqäsaqqäs-u yä-täläyayy-u čəggər-očč bə-səra-ččəhu*  
 when-2PL-move\IPFV-2PL REL-be.different\PFV-3PL problem-PL in-work-POSS.2PL  
 እንቅፋት ሊሆኑ እንደሚችሉ እርግጥ ነው<sup>32</sup>  
*ənqəfat l-i-hon-u ändä-mm-i-čəl-u ərgət n-äw*  
 obstacle COMP-3PL-COP\IPFV-3PL COMP-REL-3PL-can\IPFV-3PL certain COP-3SM  
 ‘When you act without having a sufficient income it is certain that different problems can be an obstacle in your work’

iv. Adjectivalized epistemificator መንገሩ የሚያጠራጥር ነው *mängäru yämmiyattärattər näw* ‘there are doubts about his telling (what he is telling)’

(71) ነገር ግን ይህ ሠላማዊ የሥልጣን ሽግግር ጽንሰ ሃሳብን በትክክል  
*nägär gən yəb sälamaawi yä-səltan šəgəggər şənsä hassab-(ə)-n bätəkəkkəl*  
 but this peaceful GEN-power change concept-ACC correctly

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/10424>. [Accessed: 11.03.2019]

**የሚያንፀባርቅ መሆኑ የሚያጠራጥር ነው<sup>33</sup>**  
*yämm-i-(y)-anṣäbarräq mähon-u yämm-i-(y)-atṭärattär n-äw*  
 REL-3SM-reflect\IPFV COP\VN-POSS.3SM REL-3SM-raise.doubts\IPFV COP-3SM

‘But it is **doubtful** that this peaceful change of power correctly reflects the concept’

v. Adverbial epistemificators

(72) **ያለጥርጥር መነሻው የተዘረፈ የመንግስትና**  
*yalä-ṭärattär männäṣa-w yä-täzärräf-ä yä-mängäst-(ə)-nna*  
 without-doubt starting.point-POSS.3SM REL-be.plundered\PFV-3SM GEN-state-and

**የሕዝብ ሀብት ነው<sup>34</sup>**  
*yä-həzb habt n-äw*  
 GEN-people wealth COP-3SM

‘**Without any doubt**, its starting point is the plundered wealth of the state and of the people’

vi. Parenthetical epistemificator **መሰል** *mässäl* ‘it seems’

(73) **አንዳንዶቹ ግን ምን ጉድ ናት ብለው ፈሩኝ**  
*andand-očč-u gən mən gud n-at bəl-äw färr-u-ññ*  
 some-PL-DEF but what freak COP-3SF say\GER-3PL fear\PFV-3PL-OBJ.1SG

**መሰል እምቢ አሉ<sup>[AA 797]</sup>**  
*mässäl əmbi al-u*  
 seem\PFV no say\PFV-3PL

‘But some of them saying, “What (kind of) freak is she?”, feared me, it seems, (and) refused’

5.5.3. Non-personal

i. Auxiliary epistemificators

(74) **እርስዎ የሰሙት ነገር ይኖር ይሆን?<sup>[AA 865]</sup>**  
*ərswo yä-sämm-u-t nägär yə-nor yəhon?*  
 2SPOL REL-hear\PFV-2SPOL-DEF thing 3SM-exist\IPFV EPST:Q

‘**Might there exist** something that you heard?’

<sup>33</sup> [https://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=21494:የጠቅላይ-ሚኒስትር-ኃይለማርያም-ደሣለኝ-ስንብት&Itemid=214](https://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=21494:የጠቅላይ-ሚኒስትር-ኃይለማርያም-ደሣለኝ-ስንብት&Itemid=214) [Accessed: 29.03.2019]

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.ethpress.gov.et/addiszemen/index.php/technology/item/12696-2017-05-18-18-27-50>. [Accessed: 11.03.2019]

ii. Quasi-auxiliary epistemificators

- (75) ቢሆንም ተሰጥአውን አውቆ ሥራ ላይ በማዋሉ  
*bihonamm täsäṭə'o-w-(ə)-n awq-o sara lay bä-marwal-u*  
 anyway talent-POSS.3SM-ACC recognize\GER-3SM work on by-apply\VN-POSS.3SM  
 ከኛ ላይኛል አይቀርም [KB 38: 13-15]  
*kä-ñña s-a-y-šal a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 from-1PL when-NEG-3SM-be.better\IPFV NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘Anyway, since he has recognized his talent and put it to work, he is **surely** better than us’

iii. Various copular epistemificators containing *yəhonall* and *yəhon*

- Nominal ይሆን Nominal *yəhons*? ‘might<sub>s</sub> he/it be?’

- (76) አእምሮይ የፈጠረው ልቤ የገነባው  
*a'əmro-ye yä-fättär-ä-w ləbb-e yä-gänäbba-w*  
 mind-POSS.1SG REL-create\PFV-3SM-DEF heart-POSS.1SG REL-build\PFV.3SM-DEF  
 ምናባዊ ፍቅር ይሆን? [BŠ 57: 19-20]  
*mənabarwi fəqər yə-hon*  
 imaginary love 3SM-COP\IPFV  
 ‘**Might it be** an imaginary love that was created in my mind (and) built in my heart?’

- Clefts with *yəhonall*

- (77) ኅርኪ ስለራሱ እናት ይሆናል የጻፈው [GQ 179: 1]  
*Gorki səlä-ras-u ənnat yə-hon=all-ø yä-šaf-ä-w*  
 PN about-own-POSS.3SM mother 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM REL-write\PFV-3SM-DEF  
 ‘It **may be** about his own mother that Gorki wrote’

- ቢነግር ነው/ይሆናል *binägərs näw/yəhonall*

- (78) ምን አጣላህ ከሴት ቤት ሄደህ ተፈንክተህ  
*mən atṭalla-h kä-set bet hed-äh täfänkət-äh*  
 what make.fight\PFV-2SM from-woman house go\GER-2SM hit.on.the.head\GER-2SM  
 የምትመጣው? ሌላ ጉዳይ ቢኖርህ ነው  
*yämm-(ə)-tə-mäta-w? lela gudday b-i-nor-(ə)-h n-äw*  
 REL-2SM-come\IPFV-DEF another issue if-3SM-exist\IPFV-OBJ.2SM COP-2SM  
 እንጂ [FLG 1]  
*ənǧi*  
 else  
 ‘What made you fight, that you went to the woman’s house and you are coming back hit on the head? You **probably** have another issue’

- Adjectival and adjectivalized epistemificators መንገሩ አይቀሬ ነው *mängäruṣ ayqäre näw* ‘his tellings is inevitable’ and መንገሩ የማይቀር ነው *mängäruṣ yämmayqär näw* ‘his tellings is inevitable’

(79) በአገሪቱ ያለ የመንግስት ግብርና ተቋማት  
*bä-agär-itu y-all-u yä-mängäst gəbränna täqwam-at*  
 in-country-DEF.F REL-exist-3PL GEN-government agriculture institution-PL

አሰራር ለዘርፉ አመቺ ናቸው ወይ የሚለው  
*assärar lä-zärf-u amäčči n-äw wäy yämm-i-l-äw*  
 way.of.working for-sector-DEF suitable COP-3SM INTER REL-3SM-say\IPFV-DEF

ጥያቄ መነሳቱ የማይቀር ነው<sup>35</sup>  
*ጥያቄ መነሳቱ የማይቀር ነው*  
*ጥያቄ መነሳቱ የማይቀር ነው*  
 question arise\VN-POSS.3SM REL-NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV COP-3SM

‘It is inevitable that the question arises: Is the way of working of the governmental agricultural institutions that are in the country suitable for this sector (i.e. agriculture)?’

- Particle epistemificator ምናልባት *mənalbat* ‘maybe, perhaps’

(80) ምናልባት የቄስ ልጅ ነው ብላ ትጠረጥር  
*mənalbat yä-qes läğ n-äw bəl-a tə-tärättər*  
 possibly GEN-priest child COP-3SM say\GER-3SF 3SF-suspect\IPFV

ይሆናል<sub>[GQ 112: 12-13]</sub>  
*yəhonall*  
 EPST

‘Perhaps she may suspect, saying: he is a priest’s child’

## 5.6. Dimension 5: Degree of epistemic strength

### 5.6.1. Introduction

As already mentioned in Section 3.2.4 epistemic modality has traditionally been approached in terms of “degree of certainty” and similar concepts. In the same section, I also presented Danielewiczowa’s severe criticism of this approach which, according to her, is just taking the easy way out. One of the problems is that this notion is usually approached intuitively: the linguist or the informant “feels” that a given epistemificator is somehow more certain than another.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.eiar.gov.et/index.php/en/2018-10-03-11-20-05>. [Accessed: 29.03.2019]

The present dimension takes the notion of “degree of certainty” and recasts it as “degree of epistemic strength”. The term “epistemic strength” is introduced here in order to avoid using one epistemic concept, namely “certainty”, to elucidate other concepts, such as “possibility” or “probability”. Crucially, it rejects the intuitive approach, substituting instead explicit tests for different degrees of epistemic strength. I present this dimension as having three values (+ inapplicable), each established by certain tests.

The dimension of epistemic strength has the following three values:

{weak, medium, strong, inapplicable}

The two tests that I will employ as my primary separating tool are as follows:

- i. a test which checks whether a given epistemificator presupposes lack of knowledge (ignorance)
- ii. test of combinability with the weak epistemificator **ምናልባት** *mənalbat* ‘maybe, perhaps’

These two tests yield in principle four types, the second of which does not exist (++, [+ -], - +, - -). This gives us three degrees of epistemic strength, as indicated in the following table:

TABLE 17. Degrees of epistemic strength

	lack of knowledge	<i>mənalbat</i> ‘maybe’
weak	+	+
medium	-	+
strong	-	-

Three additional tests will be used as secondary separating tools which will support the results of the two main tests. These are:

- i. test of combinability of the given epistemificator with the expression ‘I am not certain’
- ii. test of combinability of the given epistemificator with the claim of knowledge: ‘and indeed I know that this is the case’

- iii. test of combinability of the given epistemificator with the expression ‘but I cannot say that I know X’

It might be mentioned that, from the viewpoint of the theme-rheme structure approach (developed by Bogusławski and his students, see Section 2.2), the present dimension involves mainly one semantic component of the epistemificators: presupposition of the lack of knowledge, vs. absence of this presupposition.

I will discuss the three values (weak, medium, strong) in detail below, applying the tests presented above. My analysis will be limited to selected epistemificators.

### 5.6.2. Weak epistemificators

Epistemificators of weak epistemic strength are those which have as one of their presupposed semantic components “lack of knowledge” (ignorance) on the part of the speaker. This lack of knowledge (‘I don’t know’) is given in the sentence as a kind of presupposition and so it cannot be negated. That means that, if the sentence is negated, the presupposition is still true. The presupposition of lack of knowledge can be revealed by means of a test in which a phrase like: ‘I don’t know whether *p* (or not *p*)’ (often phrased in Amharic as a positive verb and the self-same negated verb coupled together) or ‘I don’t know whether it is true’ is combined with a sentence containing the epistemificator. If the epistemificator is compatible with the phrase, it means that the epistemificator entails lack of knowledge on the part of the speaker and as such takes the value of weak epistemic strength. The speaker simply hypothesises about *p* without having any knowledge of whether it takes place or not.

Sentences (i-iv) below illustrate the test applied to four different epistemificators. The epistemificator is given in bold-face in the transcription-line. In all of the sentences the example proper is taken from a text; I myself, however, have added the phrase ‘but I don’t know’.

- i. (ይነግር)<sub>S</sub> ይሆናል (*yənägr*)<sub>S</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells’

(81)	<b>ይህ</b>	<b>ሰው</b>	<b>እንቅልፍ</b>	<b>ማጣቱን</b>	<b>ይፈልግ</b>	<b>ይሆናል</b> <sub>[GQ 385: 25]</sub>
	<i>yəhe</i>	<i>säw</i>	<i>ənqəlf</i>	<i>maṭat-e-n</i>	<i>yə-fälləg</i>	<i>yəhonall</i>
	this	man	sleep	lose\VN-POSS.1SG-ACC	3SM-want\IPFV	EPST

**ነገር ግን ይህንን አላውቅም**  
*nägär gän yəbənn-(ə)-n al-awq-(ə)-mm*  
 but this-ACC NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG

‘This man **may want** me to lose sleep but I don’t know this’

ii. **ሊነግር ይችላል** *linägrs yəčalalls* ‘he could<sub>s</sub> tell<sub>s</sub>’

(82) **ጉዳዩ ሰፋ ያለ መድረክ የሚያስፈልገው**  
*gudday-u säfa y-al-ä mädräk yämm-i-(y)-asfälläg-äw*  
 issue-DEF somewhat.wide REL-say\PFV-3SM forum REL-3SM-require\IPFV-DEF

**ሊሆን ይችላል** [AA 868] **ሆኖም ይህንን**  
*li-hon y-čäl=all-ø honomm yəbənn-(ə)-n*  
 COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM however this-ACC

**እኔ አላውቅም**  
*əne al-awq-(ə)-mm*  
 1SG NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG

‘The issue **could** require a somewhat wide(r) forum; however I don’t know this’

iii. **ቢነግር ይሆናል** *binägrs yəhonall* ‘it may be that he tell<sub>s</sub>’

(83) **እንዲህ በጥዋት ምን ያስወጣል? ሌላ**  
*əndih bä-təwat mən y-aswätta-w=all-ø lela*  
 like.this in-morning what 3SM-make.go.out\IPFV-OBJ.3SM=NPST-3SM another

**ምክንያት ቢኖረው ይሆናል እንጂ ፤ ነገር ግን**  
*məknəyat b-i-nor-(ä)-w yə-hon=all-ø ənği nägär gän*  
 reason if-3SM-exist\IPFV-DEF 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM else but

**ሌላ ምክንያት ይኑረው አይኑረው**  
*lela məknəyat yə-nur-äw a-y-nur-äw*  
 another reason 3SM-exist\JUSS-OBJ.3SM NEG-3SM-exist\JUSS-OBJ.3SM

**አላውቅም**  
*al-awq-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG

‘What makes him go out like this in the morning? **It may be that he has** another reason, indeed; but whether he has another reason or not, I don’t know’

iv. **ምናልባት** *mənalbat* ‘maybe’

(84) **ምናልባት እኮ እናትየዋ ይህን ጉዳይ ታውቃለች** [TS 3]  
*mənalbat əkko ənnatəyyä-wa yəb-(ə)-n gudday t-awq=all-äčč*  
 maybe after.all mother-DEF.F this-ACC matter 3SF-know\IPFV=NPST-3SF

**ነገር ግን ይህን ጉዳይ ትወቅ አትወቅ እኔ**  
*nägär gän yəb-(ə)-n gudday tə-wäq a-ttə-wäq əne*  
 but this-ACC matter 3SF-know\JUSS NEG-3SF-know\JUSS 1SG

**አላውቅም**

*al-awq-(ə)-mm*

NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG

‘Maybe, after all, the mother knows about this matter, but I don’t know whether she knows about this matter or not’

**5.6.3. Non-weak epistemificators**

Epistemificators (i-iv) above are compatible with a phrase expressing lack of knowledge on the part of the speaker and as such take the value of weak epistemic strength. But many epistemificators are not weak: they are not compatible with lack of knowledge. This means that the speaker must have some knowledge of *p*, or that *s/he* does not know anything that would contradict *p*. It is not that the speaker does not know whether *p* or not *p*; rather *s/he* cannot say that *s/he* knows that *p*. Such a non-weak epistemificator may be of either strong or medium epistemic strength; another test (to be given shortly) will be needed to separate these two. Let us give a few examples of such non-weak epistemificators. Here the text example itself is (of course) grammatical; however it becomes ungrammatical (\*) when the ‘I don’t know’ phrase is added.

i. **ሳይነግር አይቀርም**<sub>S</sub> *saynägrs ayqärəmmS* ‘he surely/probably tells<sub>S</sub>/will tells/told<sub>S</sub>’

(85) \***በወንድሜና በኔ መሃል የተፈጠረው ጋኔን**  
*bä-wändəmm-e-(ə)-nna bä-ne mähal yä-täfättär-ä-w ganen*  
in-brother-POSS.1SG-and in-1SG between REL-be.created\PFV-3SM-DEF demon

**እንዲያውም አንተ ሳትሆን አትቀርም!**<sub>[KB 23: 25-26]</sub>  
*əndiyawəmm antä s-a-ttä-hon a-t-qär-(ə)-mm*  
in.fact 2SM when-NEG-2SM-COP\IPFV NEG-2SM-remain\IPFV-NEG

**ነገር ግን አንተ ሁን አትሁን አላውቅም**  
*nägär gən antä hun-ø a-ttä-hun al-awq-(ə)-mm*  
but 2SM 2SM-COP\IMPR-2SM NEG-2SM-COP\JUUS NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG

\*‘The demon who has been created between my brother and me is **surely** you! However, I don’t know whether it is you or not you’

ii. **ማወቅ አለበት**<sub>S</sub> *mawäq alläbb(ät)<sub>S</sub>* ‘he must<sub>S</sub> know, he should<sub>S</sub> know’

(86) \***ከኛ የምትፈልገው አንድ ነገር መኖር**  
*kä-nña yämm-(ə)-ttä-fälləg-äw and nägär manor*  
from-1PL REL-2SM-want\IPFV-DEF one thing exist\VN

<b>አለበት</b> <small>[KB 35: 3-4]</small>	<b>ነገር ግን</b>	<b>የምትፈልገው</b>	<b>አንድ</b>	<b>ነገር</b>
<i>all-ä-bb-ät</i>	<i>nägär gän</i>	<i>yämm-(ə)-ttə-fälläg-äw</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>nägär</i>
exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM	but	REL-2SM-want\IPFV-DEF	one	thing

<b>ይኑር</b>	<b>አይኑር</b>	<b>አላውቅም</b>
<i>yə-nur</i>	<i>a-y-nur</i>	<i>al-awq-(ə)-mm</i>
3SM-exist\JUUS	NEG-3SM-exist\JUUS	NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG

\*‘There **must be** something that you want from us, but I don’t know whether or not there is something you want from us’

iii. **መንገሩ አይቀርም** *mängärus ayqärəmm* ‘he will definitely tell’

(87) <b>*የሚወደውን</b>	<b>ነገር</b>	<b>የሚሠራ</b>	<b>ሰው</b>	<b>በሥራው</b>
<i>yämm-i-wädd-äw-(ə)-n</i>	<i>nägär</i>	<i>yämm-i-sära</i>	<i>säw</i>	<i>bä-səra-w</i>
REL-3SM-like\IPFV-DEF-ACC	thing	REL-3SM-do\IPFV	man	in-work-POSS.3SM

<b>መደሰቱ</b>	<b>አይቀርም</b> <small>[AA 227]</small>	<b>ነገር ግን</b>	<b>ይደሰት</b>
<i>mäddäsät-u</i>	<i>a-y-qär-(ə)-mm</i>	<i>nägär gän</i>	<i>yə-ddäsät</i>
be.pleased\VN-POSS.3SM	NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV-NEG	but	3SM-be.pleased\JUUS

<b>አይደሰት</b>	<b>አላውቅም</b>
<i>a-yə-ddäsät</i>	<i>al-awq-(ə)-mm</i>
NEG-3SM-be.pleased\JUUS	NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG

\*‘A person who does something that he likes will **definitely be pleased** with his work, but I don’t know whether he will be pleased or not’

iv. **እንደ-X እርግጠኛ ነኝ** *ändä-X ərgətäñña näññ* ‘I am sure (that) X’

(88) <b>*ይህ ዓይነቱ አነጋገር የተለመደ ሆኖ</b>
<i>yəh aynät-u annägagär yä-tälämmäd-ä hon-o</i>
this kind-DEF way.of.saying REL-be.in.use\PFV-3SM COP\GER-3SM

<b>እንደምታገኘው</b>	<b>እርግጠኛ</b>	<b>ነኝ</b>	<b>ነገር ግን</b>
<i>ändä-mm-(ə)-tt-agäññi-w</i>	<i>ərgətäñña</i>	<i>n-äññ</i>	<i>nägär gän</i>
COMP-REL-2SF-find\IPFV-OBJ.3SM	sure	COP-1SG	but

<b>አግኘው</b>	<b>አታግኘው</b>	<b>አላውቅም</b>
<i>agñ-i-w</i>	<i>a-tt-agñi-w</i>	<i>al-awq-(ə)-mm</i>
find\IMPR-2SF-OBJ.3SM	NEG-2SF-find\JUUS-OBJ.3SM	NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG

\* ‘I am sure that you will find this kind of saying common, but I don’t know whether you will find it common or not’

v. **እንደ-X እገምታለሁ** *ändä-X əgämmətallähu* ‘I assume (that) X’

(89) <b>*“እመን” የሚለው የቦታ ስም ለብዙዎች</b>
<i>əmmägəwa yämm-i-l-äw yä-bota səm lä-bəzu-(w)-očč</i>
PN REL-3SM-say\IPFV-DEF GEN-place name for-many-PL

<b>ያልተለመደ</b> <i>y-al-tälämmäd-ä</i> REL-NEG-be.in.use\IPFV-3SM	<b>እንደሚሆን</b> <i>ändä-mm-i-hon</i> COMP-REL-3SM-COP\IPFV	<b>እገምታለሁ</b> <sup>36</sup> <i>ə-gämmət=all-ähu</i> 1SG-assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG
<b>ነገር ግን ያልተለመደ</b> <i>nägär gən y-al-tälämmäd-ä</i> but REL-NEG- be.in.use\IPFV-3SM	<b>ይሁን</b> <i>yə-hun</i> 3SM-COP/JUSS	<b>አይሁን</b> <i>a-y-hun</i> NEG-3SM-COP\JUUS

**አላውቅም**  
*al-awq-(ə)-mm*  
NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG

\* ‘I assume that the name of the place which is called Emmägwa is unusual for many [people], but I don’t know whether it is unusual or not’

vi. **እንደ-X አምናለሁ** *ändä-X amnallähu* ‘I believe (that) X’

(90) <b>*ሁላችሁም</b> <i>hull-aččəhu-mm</i> all-POSS.2PL-FOC	<b>ከተማውንና</b> <i>kätäma-w-(ə)-n-(ə)-nna</i> city-DEF-ACC-and	<b>ሕዝቡን</b> <i>həzb-u-n</i> people-DEF-ACC	<b>አሳምራችሁ</b> <i>asammər-aččəhu</i> be.good\GER-2PL
-----------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------

<b>እንደምታውቁት</b> <i>ändä-mm-(ə)-t-awq-u-t</i> COMP-REL-2PL-know\IPFV-2PL-OBJ.3SM	<b>አምናለሁ</b> <sub>[MAH 106: 3-4]</sub> <i>amn=all-ähu</i> 1SG.believe\IPFV=NPST-2PL	<b>ነገር ግን</b> <i>nägär gən</i> but
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<b>እወቁ</b> <i>əwäq-u</i> 2PL-know\IMPR-2PL	<b>አትወቁ</b> <i>a-ttə-wäq-u</i> NEG-2PL-know\JUUS-2PL	<b>እኔ</b> <i>əne</i> 1SG	<b>አላውቅም</b> <i>al-awq-(ə)-mm</i> NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG
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\*‘I believe that all of you know the city and the people well, but I don’t know whether you know (them) or not’

#### 5.6.4. Strong epistemicators

The test given above allowed us to separate out weak epistemicators from non-weak epistemicators. The next semantic test involves the epistemicator **ምናልባት** *mənalbat* ‘maybe, perhaps’, and serves to separate strong epistemicators from weak-or-medium epistemicators. Strong epistemicators are those which cannot take *mənalbat*. As has already been pointed out (4.4.7.1) *mənalbat* frequently accompanies some other epistemicators, with *mənalbat* always in the initial position. Since *mənalbat* can co-occur with a range of epistemicators its meaning must be (and is) fairly neutral and general.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.sendeknewspaper.com/milkta/item/5755>. [Accessed: 03.04.2018]

<sup>37</sup> In this respect, *mənalbat* is similar to the Polish epistemic adverb *może* ‘maybe’, about which Bogusławski says that it is “maximally neutral in epistemic sense; that is why it fits for all occasions except for assertion” (2003: 39).

In order to account for this maximally neutral and broad meaning of *mənalbat* I will elucidate it in the following way: “the speaker does not know whether *p* or not *p*”.

In a sentence where *mənalbat* and another epistemificator co-occur, the main epistemic meaning is conveyed by the latter expression. *Mənalbat*, appearing sentence-initially, serves as a kind of advance warning on the part of the speaker that what s/he is going to say is in the realm of hypothesis.<sup>38</sup> Sentences 91-97 illustrate the use of *mənalbat* with various epistemificators, first with weak (i-ii), and then with medium (iii-vii). Later we will show that *mənalbat* is ungrammatical with strong epistemificators (viii-ix).

i. (ይነግር)<sub>S</sub> ይሆናል (yənägr)<sub>S</sub> yəhonall ‘he may tells, he might tells’

(91) **ምናልባት ሲደርስብህ ይገባህ**  
*mənalbat s-i-därs-(ə)-bb-(ə)-h yə-gäba-h*  
 perhaps when-3SM-happen\IPFV-MAL-OBJ.2SM 3SM-understand\IPFV-OBJ.2SM  
**ይሆናል**<sup>39</sup>  
*yəhonall*  
 EPST  
 ‘When it happens to you, perhaps you may understand (get to understand)’

ii. ሊነግር ይችላል<sub>S</sub> linägr<sub>S</sub> yäčälall<sub>S</sub> ‘he could<sub>S</sub> tells, he may<sub>S</sub> tells’

(92) **ምናልባት ከበሬቱም የተሻለ አጋጣሚ**  
*mənalbat kä-bäfit-u-mm yä-täšal-ä aggaṭami*  
 maybe from-before-DEF-FOC REL-be.better\PFV-3SM opportunity  
**ልታገኝ ትችላለች**<sub>[TS 4]</sub>  
*l-(ə)-tt-agäññ tə-čäl=all-äčč*  
 COMP-3SF-find\IPFV 3SF-could\IPFV=NPST-3SF  
 ‘Maybe she could find a better opportunity than before’

iii. ሳይነግር አይቀርም<sub>S</sub> saynägr<sub>S</sub> ayqärəmm<sub>S</sub> ‘he surely/probably tells<sub>S</sub>/will tells<sub>S</sub>/told<sub>S</sub>’

(93) **ምናልባት ለነዚህም ከባድ ዝናብ ሳያስፈልጋቸው**  
*mənalbat lä-nnāzih-(ə)-mm käbbad zəṇab s-a-y-asfälləg-aččärw*  
 maybe for-these-FOC heavy rain when-NEG-3SM-need\IPFV-OBJ.3PL

<sup>38</sup> Wierzbicka, talking about English epistemic expressions, says that a sentence-initial epistemic adverb “emphasizes the non-fully assertive nature of what is being said”. It contains a “‘warning’ component ‘I want to say what I think’” (2006: 261).

<sup>39</sup> [http://dejebirhan.blogspot.de/2012/06/blog-post\\_193.html](http://dejebirhan.blogspot.de/2012/06/blog-post_193.html). [Accessed: 13.02.2018]

**አይቀርም!**<sup>[BBS 73: 24-25]</sup>

*a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*

NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG

‘Maybe, for these they surely will need heavy rain’

iv. **ሳይነግር**<sub>S</sub> **አልቀረም**<sub>S</sub> *saynägar<sub>S</sub> alqärrämm<sub>S</sub>* ‘he surely/probably told<sub>S</sub>’

- (94) **«ለከይወትህ ዋጋ ስጥ» የሚለው የዲኬቲ**  
*lä-həywät-(ə)-h waga sət yämm-i-l-äw yä-diketi*  
 for-life-POSS.2SM value give/IMPR.2SM REL-3SM-say\IPFV-DEF GEN-DKT<sup>40</sup>
- ማስታወቂያና «ከጋብቻ በፊት መታቀብ» የሚለው**  
*mastawäqiyā-nna kə-gabəčča bəfit mätaqäb yämm-i-l-äw*  
 advertisement-and from-marriage before be.guarded\VN REL-3SM-say\IPFV-DEF
- መልእክት ምናልባት ትንሽ ሳይምታታብህ**  
*mäləʾəkt mənəlbət tənnəš s-a-yə-mtatta-bb-(ə)-h*  
 message maybe little when-NEG-3SM\be.confused\IPFV-MAL-OBJ.2SM

**አልቀረም**<sup>[AA 230]</sup>

*al-qärr-ä-mm*

NEG-remain\PFV-3SM-NEG

‘Maybe, you probably slightly confused the DKT advertisement which says “Give value to your life” with the message which says “Get protected before marriage”’

v. **ቢነግር**<sub>S</sub> **ነው** *binägar<sub>S</sub> näw* ‘he will probably tell<sub>S</sub>’

- (95) **ወጣት ነው ። ምናልባት ዕድሜው ከ30 እስከ 35**  
*wätät n-äw. mənəlbət ədme-w kə-30 əskä 35*  
 young COP-3SM maybe age-POSS.3SM from-30 until 35

**ቢሆን ነው**<sup>[AB 48: 15-16]</sup>

*b-i-hon n-äw*

if-3SM-COP\IPFV COP-3SM

‘He is young. His age may be probably between 30 and 35’

vi. **X ብዬ አስገለሁ** *X bəyye assəballähu* ‘I think: X’, ‘I reckon: X’

- (96) **አዲስ አድማስ ጋዜጣም ምናልባት አስቸጋሪ በሆነ ሁኔታ**  
*addis admas gazeṭa-mm mənəlbət asčəggari bə-(yā)-hon-ä huneta*  
 PN newspaper-FOC maybe difficult in-REL-COP\PFV-3SM situation
- ውስጥ በቀጭን ክር እየተራመደ ዘልቋል**  
*wəst bə-qäččən kərr əyyä-tərammäd-ä zälq-<sup>w</sup>=all-ø*  
 in in-thin thread PROG-walk\PFV-3SM make.through\GER-3SM=PFV

<sup>40</sup> DKT is a company which provides family planning products.

**ብዬ**                    **አሰባለሁ**<sup>[AA 789]</sup>  
*bəyy-e*                *assəb=all-äbu*  
 say\GER-1SG    1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I think: the Addis Admas newspaper has managed, as if walking on a thin tightrope, to make it through a situation which was **maybe** difficult’

vii. **X የሚል ግምት አለኝ** X *yämmil gammät allänn* ‘I have an assumption: X, I have a guess X’

(97) **ምናልባት ግዴታ ማድረግ የተሻለ ነው**  
*mənalbat gəddeta madräg-u yä-täšal-ä n-aw*  
 maybe obligation do\VN-POSS.3SM REL-be.better\PFV-3SM COP-3SM

**የሚል ግምት አለኝ**<sup>[TS 7]</sup>  
*yämm-i-l gammät all-ä-ññ*  
 REL-3SM-say\IPFV assumption exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘I have an assumption: **maybe** it is better to make it obligatory’

Of interest is the fact that *mənalbat* does not occur equally frequently with all the epistemificators presented above. It tends to appear most often with weak epistemificators, namely (**ይነግር**)<sub>s</sub> **ይሆናል** (*yənägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells, he might tells’ and **ሊነግር**<sub>s</sub> **ይችላል**<sub>s</sub> *linägr*<sub>s</sub> *yəčəlalls*, ‘he could<sub>s</sub> tells, he may<sub>s</sub> tells’, as shown (i, ii) above. Here *mənalbat* has the “warning” function referred to above. *Mənalbat* may also, of course, occur with medium-strength epistemificators. Here it has an additional function: to weaken the epistemic strength of the other epistemificator.

Unlike the epistemificators listed above, *mənalbat* cannot appear together with strong epistemificators; such a combination results in an infelicitous sentence. Here are two examples:

viii. **ማወቅ አለበት**<sub>s</sub> *mawäq alläbb(ät)*<sub>s</sub> ‘he must<sub>s</sub> know, he should<sub>s</sub> know’

(98) **\*ምናልባት**<sup>41</sup> **ብርዱ አእምሮዬ የፈጠረው ችግር**  
*mənalbat bərd-u a’əmro-ye yä-fättär-ä-w čəggər*  
 maybe coldness-DEF mind-POSS.1SG REL-create\PFV-3SM-DEF problem

**መሆን አለበት**<sup>[HL 87: 25-26]</sup>  
*mähon all-ä-bb-ät*  
 COP\VN exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM

\*‘**Maybe**, (as regards) the coldness, it **must be** my mind which created the problem’

<sup>41</sup> In this and the following infelicitous sentence *mənalbat* does not belong to the original sentence but has been added for the sake of the test.

ix. መንገሩ አይቀርም *mängäru<sub>s</sub> ayqärəmm* ‘he will definitely tells’

(99) \*ምናልባት የጊዜ ጉዳይ ነው እንጂ ነገሩ አባትዬው  
*mənalbat yä-gize gudday n-äw ənḡi nägär-u abbatəyye-w*  
 maybe GEN-time matter COP-3SM but thing-DEF father-DEF  
 ጋር መድረሱ አይቀርም<sup>[TS 6]</sup>  
*gar mädräs-u a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 at reach\VN-POSS.3SM NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV-NEG

\*‘It is only a matter of time, maybe the issue will definitely reach the father’

The two tests above, taken in combination, enable us to distinguish three values within the dimension of epistemic strength. I want to propose an additional, but methodologically problematic, test which supports the previous ones. The test involves the phrase ‘I am not certain (that X)’ (እንደ-X) እርግጠኛ አይደለሁም (*ändä-X*) *ərgəṭäñña aydällähummm* (appearing in the test sentences with the concessive conjunction ‘although’: እርግጠኛ ባልሆንም *ərgəṭäñña b-al-hon-(ə)-mm* ‘although I am not certain’). The problem with using this phrase as a diagnostic is precisely how we are to specify its meaning. Given that ‘know’ is treated here, after Bogusławski, as a primitive term, and that ‘I am certain that X’ is perfectly analysable in terms of knowledge (Danielewiczowa 2002: 215-230), certainty cannot itself possibly be regarded as a primitive term. This calls into question its legitimacy as a diagnostic. Because I have not been able to conduct a thorough semantic analysis of this epistemic phrase, I have no choice but to rely on the informants’ linguistic intuition, which will sometimes (inevitably) be subjective. It should also be made clear that I will employ this test only as a secondary separating tool. Thus, as with *mənalbat*, while weak and medium epistemificators are compatible with ‘I am not certain that X’, strong epistemificators when combined with this phrase render infelicitous sentences. ‘I am not certain (that X)’ is semantically compatible with, for instance, the following epistemificators:

i. (ይነገር)<sub>s</sub> ይሆናል (*yənägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells, he might tells’

(100) እርግጠኛ ባልሆንም ምናልባት ከዚህ  
*ərgəṭäñña b-al-hon-(ə)-mm mənalbat kə-zzih*  
 certain although-NEG.1SG-COP\IPFV-CIRC perhaps from-this

<b>የከፋ</b>	<b>ዜና</b>	<b>እንሰማ</b>	<b>ይሆናል</b> <sub>[AA 797]</sub>
<i>yä-käffa</i>	<i>zena</i>	<i>ənnə-säma</i>	<i>yəhonall</i>
REL-be.worse\PFV.3SG	news	1PL-hear\IPFV	EPST

‘Although I am not certain, perhaps **we may hear** news even worse than this’

ii. **ሳይነግር**<sub>S</sub> **አይቀርም**<sub>S</sub> *saynägrs ayqärəmmS* ‘he surely/probably tells<sub>S</sub>/will tells<sub>S</sub>/told<sub>S</sub>’

(101) <b>A: ምን አጋጠመህ?</b>	<b>B: እርግጠኛ ባልሆንም</b>
<i>mən aggattäm-ä-b?</i>	<i>ərgətäñña b-al-hon-(ə)-mm</i>
what happen\PFV-3SM-OBJ.2SM	certain although-NEG.1SG-COP\IPFV-CIRC

<b>ክርክር</b>	<b>ሳይዘኝ</b>	<b>አይቀርም</b>
<i>kärkär</i>	<i>s-a-yə-z-äññ</i>	<i>a-y-qär-(ə)-mm</i>
chancroid	when-NEG-3SM-hold\IPFV-OBJ.1SG	NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG

‘A: “What has happened to you?” B: “Although I am not certain, I have **probably** got a chancroid”’

iii. **ቢነግር**<sub>S</sub> **ነው** *binägrs näw* ‘he most probably will tells’

(102) <b>እርግጠኛ ባልሆንም</b>	<b>እሱ የሰዎችን</b>
<i>ərgətäñña b-al-hon-(ə)-mm</i>	<i>əssu yä-säw-očč-(ə)-n</i>
certain although-NEG-1SG-COP\IPFV-CIRC	3SM GEN-person-PL-ACC

<b>ምክር መጠየቁ</b>	<b>የጠረጠረው</b>	<b>ነገር ቢኖር</b>	<b>ነው</b> <sub>[TS 2]</sub>
<i>məkər mätäyyäq-u</i>	<i>yä-ṭärättär-ä-w</i>	<i>nägär b-i-nor</i>	<i>n-äw</i>
advice ask\VN-POSS.3M	REL-suspect\PFV-3SM-DEF	thing if-3SM-exist\IPFV	COP-3SM

‘Although I am not certain, he asked the people for advice because there **is probably** something that he suspects’

iv. NOM **ይመስለኛል**<sub>S</sub> NOM *yəməsläññallS* ‘he/it seems<sub>S</sub> to me’

(103) <b>እርግጠኛ ባልሆንም</b>	<b>በባሕሪ</b>	<b>ከሻለቃ</b>
<i>ərgətäñña b-al-hon-(ə)-mm</i>	<i>bä-babri</i>	<i>kä-šaläqa</i>
certain although-NEG.1SG-COP\IPFV-CIRC	in-character	with-major

<b>መንግሥቱ ጋር ተቀራራቢ</b>	<b>ይመስለኛል</b> <sub>[NB 48: 26]</sub>
<i>Mängəstu gar täqärarrabi</i>	<i>yə-mäsl-u-ññ=all</i>
PN with close	3SPOL-seem\IPFV-3SPOL-OBJ.1SG=NPST

‘Although I cannot be certain, **he seems to me** to be close in character to Major Mängəstu’

v. Cleft with **ይመስለኛል**<sub>S</sub> *yəməsläññallS* ‘it/he seems<sub>S</sub> to me’

(104) <b>እርግጠኛ ባልሆንም</b>	<b>መጀመሪያ</b>	<b>መናገር</b>
<i>ərgətäñña b-al-hon-(ə)-mm</i>	<i>mägämmäriya</i>	<i>männagär</i>
certain although-NEG.1SG-COP\IPFV-CIRC	first	talk\VN

<b>ያለባት</b> <i>y-all-ä-bb-at</i> REL-exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SF	<b>ለፍቅረኛዋ</b> <i>lä-fəqəräñña-wa</i> for-boyfriend-DEF.F	<b>ይመስለኛል</b> <sub>[TS 6]</sub> <i>yə-mäsl-äññ=all-ø</i> 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST
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‘Although I cannot be certain, **it seems to me** that it is her boyfriend that she should talk to first’

vi. Non-copular የ-X **ይመስለኛል** *yä-X yəməsläññall* ‘it seems to me that X’

(105) <b>እርግጠኛ</b> <i>ərgəṭäñña</i> certain	<b>ባልሆንም</b> <i>b-al-hon-(ə)-mm</i> although-NEG.1SG-COP\IPFV-CIRC	<b>ትክክለኛውን</b> <i>təkəkäläñña-w-(ə)-n</i> right-DEF-ACC
<b>መንገድ</b> <i>mängäd</i> way	<b>የያዘኩ</b> <i>yä-yaz-ku</i> REL-take\PFV-1SG	<b>ይመስለኛል</b> <sub>[AA 227]</sub> <i>yə-mäsl-äññ=all-ø</i> 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST

‘Although I cannot be certain, **it seems to me that** I have taken the right way’

vii. **መስለኝ** *mässäläññ* ‘it seems to me, I think’

(106) <b>እርግጠኛ</b> <i>ərgəṭäñña</i> certain	<b>ባልሆንም</b> <i>b-al-hon-(ə)-mm</i> although-NEG.1SG-COP\IPFV-CIRC	<b>ናፖሊዎን</b> <i>Napoliwon</i> PN	<b>ነው</b> <i>n-äw</i> COP-3SM
<b>መስለኝ</b> <i>mässäl-ä-ññ</i> seem\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG	<b>ተናግሯል</b> <sub>[MW 8: 11]</sub> <i>tänagr-<sup>w</sup>=all-ø</i> say\GER-3SM=PF-3SG		

‘Although I cannot be certain, it is Napoleon, **it seems to me, who said**’

Some epistemificators are compatible neither with the phrase ‘I don’t know’ nor with the phrase ‘I am not certain’. These convey the meaning of strong epistemic strength. Here are some such examples:

i. **በእርግጠኝነት** *bä* ‘ərgəṭäññənnät’ ‘for certain, with certainty’

(107) <b>*እርግጠኛ</b> <i>ərgəṭäñña</i> certain	<b>ባልሆንም</b> <i>b-al-hon-(ə)-mm</i> although-NEG.1SG-COP\IPFV-CIRC	<b>በእርግጠኝነት</b> <i>bä-ərgəṭäññənnät</i> in-certainty
<b>ለመጨረሻ</b> <i>lä-mäčärräša</i> for-end	<b>ጊዜ</b> <i>gize</i> time	<b>ያየሁት</b> <i>y-ayyā-hu-t</i> REL-see\PFV-1SG-OBJ.3SM
		<b>በምርጫ</b> 97 <i>bä-mərča</i> 97
		<b>አካባቢ</b> <i>akkababi</i> vicinity

**የፖለቲካ ወበቅ በነበረበት ጊዜ ነው<sup>42</sup>**  
*yä-polätika wäbäq bä-näbbär-ä-bb-ät gize n-äw*  
 GEN-politics heat in-COP\PST-3SM-at-OBJ.3SM time COP-3SM

\* ‘Although I cannot be certain, **in certainty** I saw him for the last time around the ’97 election at the time of political heat’

ii. **መንገሩ እርግጥ ነው** *mängärus ärgat näw* ‘it is certain that he tells<sub>S</sub> /is tellings/will tell<sub>S</sub>’

(108) **\*ተወቃሹ እግዚአብሔር ደግሞ ለሌላ ቀን የማካካሻ**  
*täwäqqaš-u Ägzi<sup>3</sup> abäher dägmo lä-lela qän yä-makkakaša*  
 one.who.is.reproached-DEF God also for-another day GEN-compensation  
**ፕሮግራም ማዘጋጀቱ እርግጥ ነው<sup>[BF 49: 10-11]</sup> ነገር ግን**  
*program mazzägağğät-u ärgat n-äw nägär gän*  
 programme prepare\VN-POSS.3SM certain COP-3SM but  
**ያዘጋጅ አያዘጋጅ አላውቅም**  
*y-azzägağğ ä-y-azzägağğ al-awq-(ə)-mm*  
 3SM-prepare\JUUS NEG-3SM-prepare\JUUS NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG

\*‘Moreover, **it is certain that** God, who is blamed, will prepare a compensation programme for another day but I don’t know whether he will prepare or will not prepare’

iii. **እንደ-X አምናለሁ** *ändä-X amnällähu* ‘I believe (that) X’

(109) **\*የጊዜን ትርጉም በትክክል እንድንረዳው**  
*yä-gize-n tærgum bätəkəkəkəl änd-(ə)-nnə-rrädda-w*  
 GEN-time-ACC meaning properly COMP-1PL-understand\IPFV-OBJ.3SM  
**ያስፈልጋል ። እርስዎም አሳምረው**  
*y-asfälläg=all-ø. ärswo-mm asamr-äw*  
 3SM-is.necessary\IPFV=NPST-3SM 2SPOL-FOC make.beautiful\GER-2SPOL  
**እንደሚያውቁት አምናለሁ<sup>[MAH 238: 29-30]</sup> ነገር ግን**  
*ändä-mm-i-(y)-awq-u-t amn=all-ähu nägär gän*  
 COMP-REL-2SPOL-know\IPFV-2SPOL-OBJ.3SM 1SG.believe\IPFV=NPST-1SG but  
**ይወቁ አይወቁ አላውቅም**  
*yə-wäq-u a-y-wäq-u al-awq-(ə)-mm*  
 2SPOL-know\JUUS NEG-2SPOL-know\JUUS NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG

\* ‘It is necessary that we understand properly the meaning of time. **I believe that** you know [it] very well but I don’t know whether you know [it] or you don’t know [it]’

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/የሳምንቱ-ገጠመኝ-62>. [Accessed: 18.04.2018]

iv. **ለመንገሩ አያጠራጥርም** *lämängärus ayattäraṭṭərəmm* ‘it doesn’t raise any doubts about his tellings’

(110) **\*አርግጠኛ ባልሆንም** **ወንጀሉ አስቀድሞ**  
*ərgəṭäñña b-al-hon-(ə)-mm wänğäl-u asqädm-o*  
 certain although-NEG.1SG-COP/IPFV-CIRC crime-DEF anticipate\GER-3SM

**የታሰበበት ለመሆኑ**  
*yä-tassäb-ä-bb-ät lä-mähon-u*  
 REL-be.thought\PFV-3SM-about-OBJ.3SM for-COP\VN-POSS.3SM

**አያጠራጥርም** [KB 163: 25-26]  
*a-y-attäraṭṭər-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG-3SM-raise.doubts\IPFV-NEG

\*‘Even though I am not certain, there can be no doubt about the crime having been planned beforehand’

Strong epistemificators are quite close to the state of knowledge (which in a sense is the “ultimately strong” epistemic state) but do not reach it. This can be examined with the help of a test in which they are juxtaposed to an expression ‘and indeed/in fact I know that it is the case’;<sup>43</sup> if you state that you know something, there is no reason to make a weaker statement at the same time. Strong epistemificators (and indeed weak and medium epistemificators, too) are incompatible with this expression. Consider the following examples, with *maswäq alläbb(ät)<sub>S</sub>* (111) and *mängärus ayqärəmm* (112):

(111) **\*ከኛ የምትፈልገው አንድ ነገር መኖር አለበት** <sup>1</sup>[KB 35: 3-4]  
*kä-ñña yämm-(ə)-ttə-fälləg-äw and nägär mänor all-ä-bb-ät*  
 from-1PL REL-2SM-want/IPFV-DEF one thing exist\VN exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM

**እንዲያውም ከኛ የምትፈልገው አንድ ነገር እንዳለ**  
*əndiyawəmm kä-ñña yämmə-ttə-fälləg-äw and nägär ənd-all-ä*  
 in.fact from-1PL REL-2SM-want/IPFV-DEF one thing COMP-exist-3SM

**አውቃለሁ**  
*aswq=all-ähu*  
 1SG.know/IPFV=NPST-1SG

\*‘There must be something that you want from us, in fact I know that there is something that you want from us’

(112) **\*ጉዳዩ አባቱ ጋር መድረሱ አይቀርም** <sup>1</sup>[TS 6]  
*gudday-u abbatu gar mädräs-u a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 issue-DEF father-POSS.3SM with reach\VN-POSS.3SM NEG-3SM-fail/IPFV-NEG

<sup>43</sup> See Danielewiczowa (2002: 224).

<b>እንዲያውም</b>	<b>ጉዳይ</b>	<b>አባቱ</b>	<b>ጋር</b>	<b>እንደሚደርስ</b>
<i>andiyawəmm</i>	<i>gudday-u</i>	<i>abbat-u</i>	<i>gar</i>	<i>ändä-mm-i-därs</i>
in.fact	issue-DEF	father-POSS.3SM	with	COMP-REL-3SM-reach\IPFV

**አውቃለሁ**

*awq=all-ähu*

1SG.know\IPFV=NPST-1SG

\* The issue will **definitely reach** the father, in fact I know that it will reach the father’

The expression ‘and indeed/in fact I know that it is the case’ following the modal epistemic sentence should be considered as part of the selfsame thought, rather than as an afterthought, different thought or the next stage in the speaker’s process of thinking.

**5.6.5. Inapplicability of epistemic strength**

Finally, a comment is necessary on the conceptual difficulty of assigning any value of “epistemic strength” at all to many lexical epistemificators—some mental verbal epistemificators, mental noun epistemificators and impersonal epistemificators, such as **እንደ-X አሰባለሁ** *ändä-X assəballähu* ‘I think (that) X’, **እንደ-NEG.X እሠጋለሁ** *änd-NEG.X əsägallähu* ‘I worry lest X, I am worried lest X’, **እንደ-X እጠረጥራለሁ** *ändä-X aṭärätṭəralähu* ‘I suspect that X’, X **የሚል ሐሳብ አለኝ** X *yämmil hassab allänn* ‘I have a thought: X’, X **የሚል ተስፋ አለኝ** X *yämmil täsfa allänn* ‘I have a hope: X’ and **እንደ-X ይሰማኛል** *ändä-X yəssämmaññall* ‘I feel that X’. Grammatical epistemificators, because they are specialized for expressing epistemic modality, highlight the concept of (non-) knowledge and so have a natural affinity for the notion of epistemic strength. In contrast, many lexical mental epistemificators (exemplified above) do not primarily express modality (epistemic or otherwise) and do not focus on knowledge, but have richer semantics which goes beyond the boundaries of modality per se. Correspondingly, such epistemificators do not have a natural affinity for the concept of epistemic strength; their rich semantics, so to speak, blurs or obscures the very concept of epistemic strength. For instance, *änd-NEG.X əsägallähu* ‘I worry lest X, I am worried lest X’ contains the value “bad” from the dimension of axiological judgement (see Section 5.8.3). It seems a pointless exercise to try to assign any value of epistemic strength to the just-mentioned epistemificator. On the other hand, there are the epistemificators of the ‘think’ type whose

meaning is so general that they can refer to non-knowledge as well as to knowledge;<sup>44</sup> what could we possibly assign as the “epistemic strength” of such a very general epistemificator?

Thus I am not able to apply the dimension of epistemic strength to the above mentioned expressions; hence the notion of epistemic strength alone cannot be sufficient to capture epistemificators as a general matter. Yet there is no doubt that the above expressions are all truly epistemificators. They all fit the basic definition of epistemificators as expressions conveying the speaker’s attitude to her/his non-knowledge.

## 5.7. Dimension 6: Source of epistemic assessment

### 5.7.1. Introduction

The speaker’s epistemic assessment of her/his non-knowledge<sup>45</sup> concerning the state of affairs may involve the source from which this assessment comes. That is, some Amharic epistemificators contain in their semantics a component which refers to the way in which the speaker has acquired her/his non-knowledge. Note how natural it is to ask: “How do you know?”; the German equivalent “Woher weißt du das?” (lit. from-where do you know that?) explicitly asks for the source (in a way that the English does not).<sup>46</sup> Thus epistemic assessment can stem from perception, from reasoning or simply from intuition. Consequently, the present dimension embraces the following values:

{perception, inference, intuition, inapplicable}

It should be noted that for the vast majority of epistemificators nothing can be said about the source of non-knowledge, so the dimension is inapplicable.

Before proceeding with the individual values, one comment is in order. The present dimension overlaps with the typological grammatical category of “evidentiality” in the sense that both refer to the source of (non-)knowledge (see Section 3.2.9). However,

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<sup>44</sup> See Danielewiczowa (2002: 121-139).

<sup>45</sup> See Section 2.1 for the concept of “non-knowledge” as the middle ground between knowledge and ignorance. Epistemificators assess non-knowledge.

<sup>46</sup> On the felicity of the question ‘How does *a* know?’ in contrast to deviant ‘Why does *a* know?’ see Bogusławski (1994: 276-289).

whereas evidential expressions refer explicitly to the source of (non-)knowledge, epistemificators only incidentally say something, if at all, about this. Epistemificators primarily convey the evaluation of the speaker’s non-knowledge concerning a given state of affairs, and only secondarily some of them may encode information about the source of this non-knowledge. Additionally, evidentials can entail knowledge on the part of the speaker while epistemificators, by definition, are restricted to the realm of non-knowledge. In Amharic evidentiality is not expressed grammatically.

### 5.7.2. Perception<sup>47</sup>

Perception as the source of knowledge contributes to the meaning of epistemificators involving **ይመስላል** *yəməslall* and **ይመስለኛል** *yəməslännäll*, namely, ADJ **ይመስላል**<sub>S</sub> ADJ *yəməslall*<sub>S</sub> ‘he/it seems<sub>S</sub>’; NOM **ይመስለኛል**<sub>S</sub> NOM *yəməslännäll*<sub>S</sub> ‘he/it seems<sub>S</sub> to me’; clefts with **ይመስላል** *yəməslall* ‘he/it seems’ and **ይመስለኛል** *yəməslännäll* ‘he/it seems to me’; copular **የ-X** **ይመስላል**<sub>S</sub> *yä-X* *yəməslall*<sub>S</sub> ‘he/it seems<sub>S</sub> X’; and non-copular **የ-X** **ይመስለኛል** *yä-X* *yəməslännäll* ‘it seems to me that X, it appears to me that X’. These epistemificators occur in contexts involving verbs referring to the senses (sight, hearing, touch), where some other, more purely mental verbal/noun epistemificators would be unacceptable. Compare the following pairs of sentences with various perception verbs: (113) and (114); (115) and (116); (117) and (118):

(113) **ከዚያኛው ክፍል ሙዚቃ የሰማሁ ይመስለኛል**  
*kä-zziyañña-w kəfəl muziqa yä-sämma-hu yə-mäsl-ännäll=all-ø*  
 from-that-DEF room music REL-hear\PFV-1SG 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘It seems to me that I can hear music from that room’

vs. infelicitous

(114) \***ከዚያኛው ክፍል ሙዚቃ ይሰማኛል ብዬ**  
*kä-zziyañña-w kəfəl muziqa yä-ssämma-ññ=all-ø bəyy-e*  
 from-that-DEF room music 3SM-be.heard\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM say\GER-1SG  
**አስባለሁ**  
*assəb=all-ähu*  
 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

<sup>47</sup> In my discussion of perception and intuition (Sections 5.7.2 and 5.7.4), I am particularly indebted to Danielewiczowa’s thinking (2002: 186-205).

\*‘I think: I can hear music from that room’

- (115) እዚያ ጋር ሌዋንን ያየሁ ይመስለኛል  
*ə-zziya gar Hewan-(ə)-n y-ayyā-hu yə-mäsl-äññ=all-ø*  
 at-that at PN-ACC REL-see\PFV-1SG 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘(The one) who I have seen over there **seems to me** Hewan’

vs. infelicitous

- (116) \*እዚያ ጋር ሌዋን ትታየኛለች ብዬ  
*ə-zziya gar Hewan tə-ttayy-äññ=all-äčč bəyy-e*  
 at-that at PN 3SF-be.seen\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SF say\GER-1SG  
**አስባለሁ**  
*assəb=all-ähu*  
 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

\*‘I think: I can see Hewan over there’

- (117) እዚህ ላሱቲክ ውስጥ የነካሁት ብርቱካን ይመስለኛል  
*ə-zzih lastik wəst yä-näkkə-hu-t bərtukan yə-mäsl-äññ=all-ø*  
 at-this plastic.bag in REL-touch\PFV-1SG-DEF orange 3SM-seem\IPFV-  
 OBJ.1SG =NPST-3SM

‘What I have touched in this plastic bag **seems to me** an orange’

vs. infelicitous

- (118) \*እዚህ ላሱቲክ ውስጥ የነካሁት ብርቱካን ነው ብዬ  
*ə-zzih lastik wəst yä-näkkə-hu-t bərtukan n-äw*  
 at-this plastic.bag in REL-touch\PFV-1SG-DEF orange COP-3SM  
**አስባለሁ**  
*assəb=all-ähu*  
 say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

\*‘I think: what I have touched in this plastic bag is an orange’

A cleft sentence with copular epistemificator *yəhonall* is also acceptable in such contexts, as it is lexically empty. Compare (115, 116) and (119):

- (119) እዚያ ጋር የቆመችው ሌዋን ትሆናለች  
*ə-zziya gar yä-qom-äčč-(ə)-w Hewan tə-hon=all-äčč*  
 at-that at REL-stand\PFV-3SF-DEF PN 3SF-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SF  
 ‘The one who is standing there **will be** Hewan’

The inherent involvement of perception in the semantics of *yəmäslall* and *yəmäsläññall* is further supported by the fact that they are used in sentences in which the

speaker pictures to her/himself a virtual visual image, as in the following sentence; the English translation with polysemous “appear” captures this nuance perfectly.

- (120) አንዳንድ ጊዜ አባቴና እንጅራ እናቴ መኝታ ቤት ውስጥ  
*andand gize abbat-e-(ə)-nna ənğära ənnat-e mǎññata bet wəst*  
 sometimes father-POSS.1SG-and stepmother-POSS.1SG bedroom in  
 ትልቅ የሽሮ እርሻ ያለ ይመስለኛል<sup>[GQ 5: 19-20]</sup>  
*talləq yä-šəro ərša y-all-ä yə-mäsl-ǎññ=all-ø*  
 big GEN-chickpea.and.beans field REL-exist-3SM 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Sometimes it appears to me that in my father’s and stepmother’s bedroom there is a big chickpea and beans field’

In the above sentence it is not possible to replace *yəməslǎññall* with any other epistemificator (apart from related *yəməslall*, which is here excluded on other grounds) because none of them allows the speaker to depict the visual image that comes to her/his mind.

The existence of a perceptual source of knowledge in *yəməslall* and *yəməslǎññall* can also be detected in sentences with verbs other than those of perception. In this regard *yəməslall* (conjugated or not) is more transparent than *yəməslǎññall* as the perception as the source of epistemic assessment is easily recognizable. In what follows there are two examples in which hearing (121) and vision (122, 123) stand at the origin of the epistemic assessment:

- (121) አማርኛው በእንግሊዝኛ ቅላጭ የታጀበ ነው ።  
*amarəñña-w bä-ənglizəñña qəllase yä-tağğäb-ä n-əw*  
 Amharic-POSS.3SM by-English rhythm REL-be.accompanied\PFV-3SM COP-3SM  
 ሲያወራ የወፍ ቋንቋ የሚያወራ እንጂ አማርኛ  
*s-i-(y)-awära yä-wäf q<sup>w</sup>anq<sup>w</sup>a yämm-i-(y)-awära ənği amarəñña*  
 when-3SM-speak\IPFV GEN-bird language REL-3SM-speak\IPFV but Amharic  
 የሚያወራ አይመስልም<sup>[AA 942]</sup>  
*yämm-i-(y)-awära a-y-mäsl-(ə)-mm*  
 REL-3SM-speak\IPFV NEG-3SM-seem\IPFV-NEG

‘His Amharic is accompanied by English rhythms. When he speaks it doesn’t seem that he is speaking Amharic but that he is speaking bird language’

- (122) የነገርኩህ ወሬ ደስ ያሰኘህ  
*yä-näggär-ku-h wäre däss y-assäññ-ä-h*  
 REL-tell\PFV-1SG-OBJ.2SM news please REL-make\PFV-3SM-OBJ.2SM

**ይመስላል**<sub>[TK 22-23]</sub>  
*yə-mäsl=all-ø*  
 3SM-seem\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘The news that I told **you** seems (to be) something that has pleased you’

- (123) **የሚከተሉት ሁለት ልጆች የተዳከሙ**  
*yämm-i-kkättäl-u-t                      hulätt    läğ-očč    yä-tädakkäm-u*  
 REL-3PL-chase\IPFV-3PL-DEF    two            child-PL    REL-be.tired\PFV-3PL

**ይመስላሉ**<sub>[GQ 39: 20]</sub>  
*yə-mäsl=all-u*  
 3PL-seem\IPFV=NPST-3PL

‘The two children who were chasing him seem (to be) tired’

The involvement of sensory input seems less essential with the epistemificators containing *yämäslännäll*, exemplified by the following sentence:

- (124) **ትንተናው ከመሥመር የወጣ ይመስለኛል**<sub>[AA 227]</sub>  
*təntäna-ግ    kä-mäsmär    yä-ግättä                      yə-mäsl-änn=all-ø*  
 analysis-DEF    from-line            REL-go.out\PFV.3SM    3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM

‘The analysis seems to me out of line’

However, let us note that in the case of epistemificators with *yämäslännäll* (and also with *yämäslall*) the speaker is presented as the recipient of a state of affairs, in contrast to epistemificators like X **ብዬ አሰባለሁ** X *bəyye assaballähu* ‘I think: X’ or X **ብዬ አምናለሁ** X *bəyye amnallähu* ‘I believe: X’, where the speaker is conceptualized as the producer of the state of affairs (i.e. the “thinker” of it). This “passivity” of the speaker is expressed formally by the object pronoun attached to the impersonal verb. The state of affairs is conceptualized as “approaching” the speaker, mediated by the senses, and unfolds in front of her/him. A state of affairs which approaches the speaker may also easily approach other people, and hence it is regarded as a more neutral (general) epistemificator than an epistemificator where the epistemizer is the subject. Compare the following two sentences:

- (125) **ትዳር ውስጥ ሳይገቡ በፊት እንዲህ እንዲህ ነው**  
*tədar            wəst    s-a-y-gäb-u                      bəfit    əndih    əndih    n-äw*  
 marriage    in            when-NEG-3PL-enter\IPFV-3PL    before    like.this    like.this    COP-3SM
- ብትለው ሊረዳት**  
*b-(ə)-ttə-l-äw                      l-i-rrädd-at*  
 if-3SF-say\IPFV-OBJ.3SM    COMP-3SM-understand\IPFV-OBJ.3SF

**ይችላል**

*yə-čəl=*all-ø

3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM

**ብዩ**

*bəyye*

say\GER-1SG

**አስባለሁ**<sup>[TS 6]</sup>

*assəb=*all-*ähu*

1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘If she tells him “It is like this and like that” before they get married, **I think**: he could understand her’

as against:

(126) **ትዳር ውስጥ ሳይገቡ**

*tədar wəst s-a-y-gäb-u*

marriage in when-NEG-3PL-enter\IPFV-3PL

**በፊት እንዲህ እንዲህ ነው**

*bäfit andih andih n-äw*

before like.this like.this COP-3SM

**ብትለው**

*b-(ə)-ttə-l-äw*

if-3SF-say\IPFV-OBJ.3SM

**ሊረዳት**

*l-i-rrädd-at*

COMP-3SM-understand\IPFV-OBJ.3SF

**የሚችል**

*yämm-i-čəl*

REL-3SM-could\IPFV

**ይመስለኛል**

*yə-mäsl-äññ=*all-ø

3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM

‘If she tells him “It is like this and like that” before they get married, **it seems to me that** he could understand her’

Whereas in sentence (125) the speaker emphasizes her/his personal stance concerning the state of affairs, in (126) s/he provides a more balanced view, as if s/he has made a quick, semi-objective capsule summary of the situation. To make this argument stronger and clearer, imagine that a friend of yours tells you a story about a couple having a crisis. Your reaction to her/his account could be: ‘From what I’ve just heard from you, it seems to me that the couple...’ but much less likely ‘From what I’ve just heard from you, I think (that) the couple...’. Because the speaker has received the information through hearsay, s/he would preferably use an epistemificator which harmonizes with the source of the information— hearsay—but not with any mental verbal/noun epistemificator. The same holds for Amharic:

(127) **ካንቺ አሁን እንደሰማሁ ባልና ሚስቴ መለያየት**

*k-anči ahun əndä-sämma-hu bal-(ə)-nna mist-u mälläyayyät*

from-2SF now as-hear\PFV-1SG husband-and wife-DEF separate\VN

**ያለባቸው**

*y-all-ä-bb-aččäw*

REL-exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3PL

**አይመስለኝም**

*a-y-mäsl-äññ-(ə)-mm*

NEG-3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG-NEG

‘From what I heard from you just now, **it seems to me that** the husband and wife should not separate’



‘When the man meets his friend one day, he (the man) has a black eye. His friend [says] ... “What happened to you? Somebody **must have** hit you”’

- (131) [ደብዳቤውን] በክፍሉ የሚነፍስ የመተላለፊያውን ጎፋስ  
 [däbdabbe-w-(ə)-n] bə-kəfl-u yämm-i-näfs yä-mättäläläfiya-w nəfas  
 letter-DEF-ACC in-room-DEF REL-3SM-blow\IPFV GEN-passage\VN-DEF wind  
 አንሥቶ ጥሎት መሆን አለበት<sub>[MBL 226: 22-23]</sub>  
 ansät-o ጥለ-o-t mähon all-ä-bb-ät  
 lift\GER-3SM throw\GER-3SM-OBJ.3SM COP\VN exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM

‘The draught blowing through the room **must have** lifted [the letter] and thrown it (down) [that is why it is lying on the floor]’

- (132) «ማናት?» አሉ ፣ በውስጣቸው ። [...] «አዲስ የተቀጠረች  
 man-n-at al-u bə-wəst-äččəw. addis yä-täqättär-äčč  
 who-COP-3SF say\PFV-3SPOL in-inside-POSS.3SPOL new REL-be.employed\PFV-3SF  
 ሠራተኛ መሆን አለባት» አሉ ሐሳባቸው  
 särratännä mähon all-ä-bb-at al-u hassab-äččəw  
 staff.member COP\VN exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SF say\PFV-3SPOL thought-POSS.3SPOL  
 በመቀጠል<sub>[BŠ 108: 24-26]</sub>  
 bə-mäqättäl  
 by-continue\VN

“‘Who is she”, he said to himself. [...] She **must be** the newly employed staff member, he said continuing his thought’

The epistemificator *mawäq alläbb(ät)*<sub>s</sub> ‘he must<sub>s</sub> know, he should<sub>s</sub> know’ invites a potential challenge, in the phrase: ‘How do you know?’ እንዴት አወቅህ? *ändet awwäqəb?* This indicates that the listener considers it reasonable and appropriate to ask about the grounds for the epistemic statement. The phrasing of the challenge (with ‘know’) also indicates how very close this epistemificator (‘must’) is to knowledge. Weaker epistemificators (such as ‘may’, ‘could’, ‘surely’) also invite a potential challenge, but weaker: ‘Why do you think so?’ እንዴት እንደዚህ አሰብህ? *ändet ändäzzih assäbb?* (lit. ‘how have you thought like this?’). Thus, in the following sentence ሳይነግር አይቀርም<sub>s</sub> *saynägrs ayqärəmm*<sub>s</sub> ‘he surely/probably tells<sub>s</sub>/will tells<sub>s</sub>/told<sub>s</sub>’ (133) cannot be felicitously replaced with the stronger *mawäq alläbb(ät)*<sub>s</sub> ‘he/it must<sub>s</sub> know, he/it should<sub>s</sub> know’ (134), because with ‘must’ the epistemizer has to be able to provide arguments for her/his modalized conclusion. It is important here that in (133) and (134), the clause ‘Don’t ask

me “How do you know” is understood to indirectly convey the idea “I can’t really give you any reason”.

- (133) **በምን አወቅሀ እንዳትሉኝ እንጂ**  
*bämən awwäq-h and-a-ttə-l-u-ññ əngi*  
 how know\PFV-2SM COMP-NEG-2PL-say\IPFV-2PL-OBJ.1SG else  
**የተሳለት ባልና ሚስት ሳይሆኑ**  
*yä-täsal-u-t bal-(ə)-nna mist s-a-y-hon-u*  
 REL-be.painted\PFV-3PL-DEF husband-and wife when-NEG-3PL-COP\IPFV  
**አይቀሩም** [BBS 11: 5-6]  
*a-y-qär-u-mm*  
 NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-3PL-NEG

‘Don’t ask (lit. tell) me “How do you know?”; but surely those who are painted (i.e. the people depicted in the painting) are husband and wife’

- (134) **\*በምን አወቅሀ እንዳትሉኝ እንጂ**  
*bämən awwäq-h and-a-ttə-l-u-ññ əngi*  
 how know\PFV-2SM COMP-NEG-2PL-say\IPFV-2PL-OBJ.1SG else  
**የተሳለት ባልና ሚስት መሆን አለባቸው**  
*yä-täsal-u-t bal-(ə)-nna mist mähon all-ä-bb-aččäw*  
 REL-be.painted\PFV-3PL-DEF husband-and wife COP\VN exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3PL

\*‘Don’t ask (lit. tell) me “How do you know?”; but (those) who are painted must be husband and wife’

#### 5.7.4. Intuition

Intuition as the source of knowledge is encoded in the meaning of the epistemificator **እንደ-X ይሰማኛል** *ändä-X yässämmaññall* ‘I feel that X’ (lit. ‘it is heard to me that X’).

- (135) **እንደምትወደኝ ይሰማኛል** [TK 98: 14]  
*ändä-mm-(ə)-t-wädd-äññ yə-ssämma-ññ=all-ø*  
 COMP-REL-2SM-love\IPFV-OBJ.1SG 3SM-be.felt\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘I feel that you love me’

Even though the epistemificator kernel *yässämmaññall* is derived from a verb of perception (‘hear’), this epistemificator cannot be used with an epistemized head which refers to physical perception (in contrast to the epistemificators with *yəmäslall* and *yəmäsläññall* discussed in 5.7.2):

- (136) \*ከሩቁ አባቴን እንደማየው  
*kä-ruqu abbat-e-n andä-mm-ay-äw*  
 from-afar father-POSS.1SG-ACC COMP-REL-1SG.see\IPFV-DEF  
**ይሰማኛል**  
*yə-ssämma-ññ=all-ø*  
 3SM-be.felt\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 \* ‘I feel that I can see my father from afar’

In order to use this epistemificator, the epistemizer reaches for her/his intuition, “deep knowledge about her/himself” (Danielewiczowa 2002: 205) which is not shared with anyone else. That is why *andä-X yəssämmaññall* ‘I feel that X’ cannot be applied to any other grammatical person (\**andä-X yəssämma-wall* ‘he feels that’) except for a context with an omniscient narrator. Additionally, and in contrast to *yəmäsläññall*, there is no \**andä-X yəssämmall* ‘it feels that’ — a form without the 1SG object pronoun. Here is a last example:

- (137) በሚልዮን ውስጥ እንዳንተ ያለ አንድ እንደማይገኝ  
*bä-milyon wəst and-antä y-all-ä and andä-mm-a-y-ggäññ*  
 in-million in like-2SM REL-exist-3SM one COMP-REL-NEG-3SM-be.found\IPFV  
**ይሰማኛል**<sub>[TK 135: 27-28]</sub>  
*yə-ssämma-ññ=all-ø*  
 3SM-be.felt\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Among one million I feel that there is no one like you’

## 5.8. Dimension 7: Axiological judgement

### 5.8.1. Introduction

This dimension has to do with value judgements (“axiological”<sup>49</sup> judgements) concerning a given state of affairs: the speaker may evaluate a state of affairs as good for her/himself and/or for others, and hence desirable; or as bad, and consequently undesirable. I use the terms “good” and “bad” in their conventional, broad meaning and will not attempt to define them. The present dimension embraces the following three values:

{good, bad, inapplicable}

<sup>49</sup> Axiology deals with values and value judgements.

As we will see in the course of this section, there are not many epistemificators that take the values “good” and “bad”, and those that do take them are exclusively mental verbal and mental noun epistemificators. For the vast majority of Amharic epistemificators the value is “inapplicable”.

The definitive way to determine whether an axiological component is indeed included in the meaning of an epistemificator is to apply a substitution test. Here is an example: if in sentence (138), where the epistemificator እንደ-X ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ *ändä-X täsfa adärgallähu* ‘I hope (that) X’ is used, we replace the epistemized with an epistemized whose content refers to a bad state of affairs, as in (139), the resultant sentence is judged as unacceptable. The point is that *ändä-X täsfa adärgallähu* demands an epistemized referring to a state of affairs that is considered as good and thus receives the axiological value “good”.

(138) በቅርቡ እንደምሾም ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ  
*bäqərbu ändä-mm-ə-ššom täsfa adärg=all-ähu*  
 soon COMP-REL-1SG-be.promoted\IPFV hope 1SG.make\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I hope that soon I will be promoted’

(139) \*በቅርቡ ከሥራዬ እንደምባረር ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ  
*bäqərbu kä-səra-ye ändä-mm-ə-bbarrär täsfa adärg=all-ähu*  
 soon from-work-POSS.1SG COMP-REL-1SG-get.fired\IPFV hope  
 1SG.make\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 \*‘I hope that soon I will get fired from my work’

Sentence (139) becomes felicitous if we replace *ändä-X täsfa adärgallähu* with an epistemificator of the opposite axiological value, which demands a negatively evaluated state of affairs, such as እንደ-NEG.X እሠጋለሁ *änd-NEG.X əsəgallähu* ‘I worry lest X, I am worried lest X’.<sup>50</sup>

(140) በቅርቡ ከሥራዬ እንዳልባረር  
*bäqərbu kä-səra-ye änd-ala-bbarrär*  
 soon from-work-POSS.1SG COMP-NEG.1SG-get.fired\IPFV

<sup>50</sup> Of course, the sentence would also be felicitous if you actually wanted to get fired; but we are systematically excluding such exceptional cases in this dissertation.

**እሠጋለሁ**

*ə-säg=all-ähu*

1SG-worry\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I worry lest soon I will get fired from my work’

A positively (131) or negatively (142) evaluated state of affairs can also be (and indeed usually is) the epistemized of a neutral epistemificator, such as **እንደ-X አስባለሁ** *andä-X assəballähu* ‘I think (that) X’, ‘I reckon (that) X’. In that case, the speaker assumes an axiologically uncommitted stance to the epistemized.

- (141) **በቅርቡ እንደምሾም አስባለሁ**  
*bäqərbu andä-mm-ə-ššom assəb=all-ähu*  
 soon COMP-REL-1SG-be.promoted\IPFV 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I think that soon I will be promoted’

- (142) **በቅርቡ ከሥራዬ እንደምባረር አስባለሁ**  
*bäqərbu kä-səra-ye andä-mm-ə-bbarrär assəb=all-ähu*  
 soon from-work-POSS.1SG COMP-REL-1SG-get.fired\IPFV 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I think that soon I will get fired from my work’

As alluded to above, some epistemificators require an epistemized which refers to a state of affairs considered as bad. For instance, **እንደ-NEG.X እሠጋለሁ** *and-NEG.X əsəgallähu* ‘I worry lest X, I am worried lest X’ makes an acceptable sentence in (140), but not in (143):

- (143) **\*ለበሽታው መድኃኒት እንዳላገኝ እሠጋለሁ**  
*lä-bäššəta-w mädhanit and-al-agäññ ə-säg=all-ähu*  
 for-disease-DEF medicine COMP-NEG.1SG-find\IPFV 1SG-worry\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 \*‘I worry lest I find a medicine for the disease’

In order to obtain a felicitous sentence, *and-NEG.X əsəgallähu* has to be replaced by an epistemificator which takes the value “good” (as in (144)) or “inapplicable” along the present dimension.

- (144) **ለበሽታው መድኃኒት እንደማገኝ ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ**  
*lä-bäššəta-w mädhanit andä-mm-agäññ täsfa adärg=all-ähu*  
 for-disease-DEF medicine COMP-REL-1SG.find\IPFV hope 1SG.make\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I hope that I will find a medicine for the disease’

In the same vein the epistemificators *ändä-X atärättärallähu* ‘I suspect that X’ and X *bäyye atärättärallähu* ‘I suspect: X’ do not accept a positive epistemized. That is why the following sentence, with a positive, desirable epistemized, is unacceptable:

- (145) \*ኢትዮጵያ በአፍሪቃ ውስጥ በፍጥነት እያደገ ካለ-  
*Ityopya bä-Afrika wəst bə-fətnät əyy-addäg-u k-(yä)-all-u*  
 Ethiopia in-Africa in in-speed PROG-grow\PFV-3PL from-(REL)-exist-3PL  
 አገራት አንዷ ናት ብዬ እጠረጥራለሁ-  
*agär-at and-<sup>w</sup>a n-at bəyye ə-tärättär=all-ähu*  
 country-PL one-DEF.F COP-3SF say\GER-1SG 1SG-suspect\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 \*‘I suspect: Ethiopia is one of the countries in Africa which are growing fast’

The epistemized should be adjoined to an epistemificator having the axiological value “good” or “inapplicable”.

### 5.8.2. Epistemificators with the value “good”

There are five epistemificators that take the value “good”. These are: እንደ-X ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ *ändä-X täsfa adärgallähu* ‘I hope (that) X’, X ብዬ ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ X *bäyye täsfa adärgallähu* ‘I hope: X’, እንደ-X እተማመናለሁ *ändä-X attämammänallähu* ‘I am confident that X’, X ብዬ እተማመናለሁ X *bäyye attämammänallähu* ‘I am confident: X’, and X የሚል ተስፋ አለኝ X *yämmil täsfa allänn* ‘I have a hope: X’. All of them have as their epistemificator head either *täsfa adärgallähu/allänn* ‘I hope/I have a hope’ or *attämammänallähu* ‘I am confident’. They are illustrated by the following sentences:

- (146) እንግዲህ በሚመጣው ሳምንት እንደሚያልቅ  
*əngədih bə-mm-i-mäta-w sammənt ändä-mm-i-(y)-alq*  
 in.any.case in-REL-3SM-come\IPFV-DEF week COMP-REL-3SM-be.completed\IPFV  
 እኔ ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ<sup>[MW 9: 15]</sup>  
*əne täsfa adärg=all-ähu*  
 1SG hope 1SG.make\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘In any case, me, I hope that it will be completed in the coming week’

- (147) ተቃዋሚዎች ይህን ይረዱታል ብዬ  
*təqawami-(w)-očč yəh-(ə)-n yə-rrädd-u-t=all bəyye*  
 oppositionist-PL this-ACC 3PL-understand\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM=NPST say\GER-1SG

<sup>51</sup> The sentence has been slightly altered.

**ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ**

*täsfä adärg=all-ähu*

hope 1SG.make\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I hope: the oppositionists will understand this’

(148) **ማለፊያ ሠንጋዎች እንደሚሆኑ**

*maläfiya sänga-(w)-očč ändä-mm-i-hon-u*

good ox-PL COMP-REL-3PL-COP\IPFV-3PL

**እተማመናለሁ** [MAH 77: 1-2]

*ə-ttämammän=all-ähu*

1SG-be.confident\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I am confident that they will be good oxen’

(149) **ለኔ መረጃ እውቀት የሚሆነው በዚህ ረገድ**  
*lä-ne märräḡa əwqät yämm-i-hon-äw bā-zzih-u rägäd*  
for-1SG information knowledge REL-3SM-COP\IPFV-DEF in-this-DEF respect

**ነው ብዬ እተማመናለሁ**<sup>52</sup>  
*n-äw bəyy-e ə-ttämammän=all-ähu*

COP-3SM say\GER-1SG 1SG-be.confident\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘For me, I am confident: information becomes knowledge in this very respect’

(150) [ፊልሙ] **ሐምሌ ውስጥ ተመርቆ ለዕይታ**  
*film-u hamle wəst tāmärrəq-o lä-əyyəta*  
film-DEF Hamle in have.premiere\GER-3SM for-watching

**ይበቃል የሚል ተስፋ አለኝ**  
*yə-bäq=all-ø yämm-i-l täsfä all-ä-ññ*  
3SM-be.enough\IPFV=NPST-3SM REL-3SM-say\IPFV hope exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘I have a hope: [the film] will have (its) premiere and will be released in *Hamle*<sup>53</sup>’

As for the two epistemificators with *əttämammänallähu* ‘I am confident’, Amharic differs from English in that the English word ‘confident’ does not so clearly require a good state of affairs (Orin Gensler, p.c.). The same is true for the Polish ‘być przekonany, że’ (‘be confident that’) (Danielewiczowa 2002: 230-238).

### 5.8.3. Epistemificators with the value “bad”

The axiological value “bad” characterizes the following epistemificators: **እንድ**-NEG.X **እሠጋለሁ** *ənd*-NEG.X *əsägallähu* ‘I worry lest X, I am worried lest X’, X **ብዬ እሠጋለሁ** X

<sup>52</sup> [http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=20916: አኩቴት-የሚገባት-ድንቅ-ጋዜጠኛ](http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=20916:አኩቴት-የሚገባት-ድንቅ-ጋዜጠኛ)&Itemid=211. [Accessed: 17.01.2019]

<sup>53</sup> The name of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of the Ethiopian calendar (8<sup>th</sup> July – 6<sup>th</sup> August).

*bəyye əsəgallähu* ‘I worry (that): X, I am worried: X’, **እንድ-**NEG.X **እፈራለሁ** and-NEG.X *əfärallähu* ‘I am afraid lest X, I fear lest X’, X **ብዬ እፈራለሁ** X *bəyye əfärallähu* ‘I am afraid: X, I fear: X’, X **የሚል ሥጋት አለኝ** X *yämmil sägat allänn* ‘I have a worry: X’, **እንድ-**NEG.X **ሥጋት አለኝ** and-NEG.X *səgat allänn* ‘I have a worry lest X’, X **የሚል ፍርሃት አለኝ** X *yämmil fərhat allänn* ‘I have a fear: X’, **እንድ-**NEG.X **ፍርሃት አለኝ** and-NEG.X *fərhat allänn* ‘I have a fear lest X’, X **የሚል ፍራቻ አለኝ** X *yämmil fəračča allänn* ‘I have a concern: X’, **እንድ-**NEG.X **ፍራቻ አለኝ** and-NEG.X *fəračča allänn* ‘I have a concern lest X’, **እንድ-**X **እጠረጥራለሁ** andä-X *ətärättərallähu* ‘I suspect (that) X’, X **ብዬ እጠረጥራለሁ** X *bəyye ətärättərallähu* ‘I suspect: X’ and X **የሚል ጥርጣሬ አለኝ** X *yämmil tərəttare allänn* ‘I have a suspicion: X’. Some example sentences are as follows:

(151) **ዶ/ር አብይ ያለ ጊዜያቸው የተከሰቱ መሪ**  
*do/r Abəyy yalä gize-(y)-aččäw yä-täkässät-u məri*  
 dr PN without time-POSS.3SPOL REL-happen\PFV-3SPOL leader  
**ሳይሆኑ አይቀሩም**  
*s-a-y-hon-u a-y-qär-u-mm*  
 when-NEG-3SPOL-COP\IPFV-3SPOL NEG-3SPOL-remain\IPFV-3SPOL-NEG  
**ብዬ እፈራለሁ**<sup>54</sup>  
*bəyy-e əfär=all-ähu*  
 say\GER-1SG 1SG-fear\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I fear: Dr. Abiy is surely a leader who has appeared before his time’ (lit. ‘not in his time’)

(152) **ታሪኬን መደበቅ ይኖርብኝ ይሆን**  
*tarik-e-n mädäbbäq yə-nor-(ə)-bb-(ə)-ññ yəhon*  
 story-POSS.1SG-ACC hide\VN 3SM-exist\IPFV-APPL-OBJ.1SG EPST:Q  
**ብልም ከሌላ ሰው**  
*b-ə-l-(ə)-mm kä-lela säw*  
 although-1SG-say\IPFV-CIRC from-another person  
**እንዳይሰሙት ደግሞ እሰጋለሁ**<sup>55</sup>  
*ənd-a-y-säm-u-t dägmo ə-säg=all-ähu*  
 COMP-NEG-3PL-hear\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM also 1SG-worry\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘Although I say: “Might I have to hide my story?” I also worry that they may hear it from someone else’

<sup>54</sup> <https://ethiopianege.com/archives/7018>. [Accessed: 22.01.2019]

<sup>55</sup> <http://ethiopikalink.net/news-articles/item/171-21>. [Accessed: 21.01.2018]

(153) ግጭቱና                      እልቂቱ                      በአጭር ጊዜ ውስጥ ተባብሶ                      አስከፊ  
*gəččət-u-(ə)-nna alqit-u                      bā-aččər gize wəst tǎbabs-o                      askäffi*  
 conflict-DEF-and    destruction-DEF    in-short    time    in                      escalate\GER-3SM    horrifying  
 ደረጃ    ላይ ይደርሳል                      የሚል                      ፍራቻ    አለኝ<sup>56</sup>  
*däräğa lay yə-därs=all-ø                      yämm-i-l                      fəračča all-ä-ññ*  
 degree    on    3SM-reach\IPFV=NPST-3SM    REL-3SM-say\IPFV    concern    exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG  
 ‘I have a concern: the conflict and the destruction will escalate within a short time and will reach a horrifying degree’

(154) አዎን ፣ ገጣሚ ደምሰው እንዳለው እኔም በዚህ ዘመን  
*awon gätami Dämsäw ənd-al-ä-w                      əne-mm bā-zzih zämän*  
 yes    poet    PN                      as-say\PFV-3SM-DEF    1SG-FOC    at-this    time  
 “ዘሩ                      እንደጠፋ”                      አሊያም ሊጠፋ  
*zäru                      əndä-täffa                      aliyamm l-i-täfa*  
 generation-DEF    COMP-disappear\PFV    or.else                      COMP-3SM-disappear\IPFV  
 እንደተቃረበ                      እጠረጥራለሁ  
*əndä-täqarräb-ä                      ə-tärättər=all-ähu*  
 COMP-near\PFV-3SM    1SG-suspect\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘Yes, as the poet Dämsäw said, I too suspect that at this time the generation (that was just mentioned) has disappeared or else is coming close to disappearing’

The remaining epistemificators listed in the inventory in Chapter 4 take the axiological value “inapplicable”.

**5.9. Dimension 8: Time orientation**

**5.9.1. Introduction**

This dimension captures the fact that some epistemificators may encode in their semantics a specific time. The only time-value that is thus distinguished is future, to the effect that it appears in the inherent semantics of some epistemificators; the other temporal values, past and present, are not represented in this way. Thus, this dimension has only one positive value, future, which stands in opposition to its absence:

{future, inapplicable}

This privileged position arguably has to do with the fact that futurity is by its very nature closely related to epistemic modality. As Lyons says, “reference to the future, in contrast

<sup>56</sup> <https://amharic.ethsat.com/ኢትዮጵያ-ውስጥ-በኦሮሞና-በጋራ-ማህበረሰብ/>. [Accessed: 17.01.2019]

with reference to the past or the present, is generally, if not always, tinged with uncertainty or, alternatively, with expectancy and anticipation” (1995: 319). Given this uncertainty of the future, the Amharic language has at its disposal, along with the non-past tense, some other means of expressing the concept—in particular via modals. Of the epistemificators conveying the value “future” there is the semi-auxiliary መንገሩ አይቀርም *mängäruṣ ayqärämm* ‘he will definitely tell’s’, ‘he is sure to tell’s’. Because *mängäruṣ ayqärämm* is a grammatical epistemificator and grammatical epistemificators constitute the core of epistemic modality, the fact that it must express the future is indicative of the privileged position of the future in comparison to the other temporal values.

Futurity is closely related to epistemic modality in one more important way. Epistemic modality concerns states of affairs about which the epistemizer basically does not know, at the moment of speaking, whether they took/take/will take place or not. But it is not excluded that s/he may come to know it in the future. This applies to all epistemificators, not only to these discussed in the present dimension, as the following example demonstrates:

(155) አባትህን	አበድሩኝ	በላቸው ፣	ምን
<i>abbat-h-(ə)-n</i>	<i>abäddär-u-ññ</i>	<i>bäl-aččäw,</i>	<i>mən</i>
father-POSS.2SM-ACC	lend\IMPR-2SPOL-OBJ.1SG	say\IMPR.2SM-3SPOL	what
ይታወቃል?	ያበድሩህ		ይሆናል <sub>[DB 55: 22-23]</sub>
<i>yə-ttawwäq=all-ə?</i>	<i>y-abäddär-u-h</i>		<i>yəhonall</i>
3SM-be.known\IPFV=NPST-3SM	3SPOL-lend\IPFV-3SPOL-OBJ.2SM		EPST

‘Say to your father, “Lend me (some money)”. Who knows? [lit. What is it known?]  
He may lend it to you’

Returning to the main point of this section, the “future” epistemificators can be divided into two groups depending on the way the futurity is conveyed. Thus, the futurity can be imparted by:

- i. the epistemificator as a whole
- ii. the lexical meaning of the epistemificator head
- iii. the complementizer

I will now discuss these types of “future” epistemificators in the order just given.

### 5.9.2. The epistemificator as a whole

This group embraces the family of epistemificators containing the verb *qärrä* ‘remain’ in the imperfective form: መንገሩ አይቀርም *mängäru<sub>s</sub> ayqärəmm* ‘he will definitely tell<sub>s</sub>’, ‘he is sure to tell<sub>s</sub>’, መንገሩ አይቀሬ ነው *mängäru<sub>s</sub> ayqäre näw* ‘his tellings<sub>s</sub> is inevitable’ and መንገሩ የማይቀር ነው *mängäru<sub>s</sub> yämmayqär näw* ‘his tellings<sub>s</sub> is inevitable’. All of them refer exclusively to a future state of affairs as in the following examples:

- (156) የጊዜ ጉዳይ ነው እንጂ ነገሩ አባትዬው ጋር  
*yä-gize gudday n-äw ənǧi nägär-u abbatəyye-w gar*  
 GEN-time matter COP-3SM but issue-DEF father-DEF at  
 መድረሱ አይቀርም<sup>[TS 6]</sup>  
*mädäs-u a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 reach\VN-POSS.3SM NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV-NEG

‘It is a matter of time but the issue **will definitely reach** the father’

- (157) አባትዬው ከሞተ በኋላ ልጆቹ ንብረቱን  
*abbatəyyä-w kä-mot-ä bäh<sup>w</sup>ala läǧ-očč-u nəbrät-u-n*  
 father-DEF after-die\PFV-3SM after child-PL-DEF property-POSS.3SM-ACC  
 መከፋፈላቸው የማይቀር ነው<sup>[TS 4]</sup>  
*mäkəfafäl-aččäw yämm-a-y-qär n-äw*  
 divide\VN-POSS.3PL REL-NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV COP-3SM

‘After the father has died his children **will inevitably divide** his property’

- (158) በደቡብ ክልል ውስጥ ያሉት የተለያዩ  
*bä-(yä)-däbub-u källäl wəst y-all-u-t yä-täläyayy-u*  
 in-(GEN)-south-DEF region in REL-exist-3PL-DEF REL-be.different\PFV-3PL  
 ወገኖች ፤ በውስጣዊ የደንበር መካለል ምክንያት ግጭት  
*wägän-očč bā-wəstawi yä-dānbär mäkəkaläl məknəyat gəččət*  
 party-PL in-internal GEN-border demarcate\VN reason conflict  
 ማድረጋቸው አይቀሬ ነው<sup>57</sup>  
*madräg-aččäw ayqäre n-äw*  
 create\VN-POSS.3PL inevitable COP-3SM

‘It is inevitable that the different parties which are in the southern region will create a conflict due to the demarcation of internal borders’

A good test to show that the epistemificators are indeed future-oriented is to attempt to use them in order to modalize a state of affairs that must be present or past. By way of illustration consider the following sentence with the temporally more flexible

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.zehabesha.com/amharic/?p=46916>. [Accessed: 18.04.2019]

epistemificator ሳይነግር<sub>s</sub> አይቀርም<sub>s</sub> *saynägrs ayqärəmm<sub>s</sub>* ‘he surely/probably tells/will tell/s/told/s’, whose epistemized is here located in the present.

- (159) በምን አወቅህ አንዳትሉኝ አንጂ  
*bämən awwäq-h and-a-ttə-l-u-ññ əngi*  
 how know\PFV-2SM COMP-NEG-2PL-say\IPFV-2PL-OBJ.1SG else  
 የተሳለት ባልና ሚስት ሳይሆኑ  
*yä-täsal-u-t bal-(ə)-nna mist s-a-y-hon-u*  
 REL-be.painted\PFV-3PL-DEF husband-and wife when-NEG-3PL-COP\IPFV-3PL  
 አይቀሩም [BBS 11: 5-6]  
*a-y-qär-u-mm*  
 NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-3PL-NEG

‘Don’t ask (lit. tell) me “How do you know?”; but surely those who are painted (i.e. those depicted in the painting) are husband and wife’

If we replace this epistemificator with *mängäru<sub>s</sub> ayqärəmm* we will obtain an unacceptable sentence (160) precisely because the new epistemificator will take us explicitly into the realm of futurity, whereas it is only the present that makes sense here.

- (160) \*የተሳለት ባልና ሚስት መሆናቸው  
*yä-täsal-u-t bal-(ə)-nna mist mähon-aččäw*  
 REL-be.painted\PFV-3PL-DEF husband-and wife COP\VN-POSS.3PL  
 አይቀርም  
*a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG

\*(Those) who are painted will definitely be husband and wife’

We have already pointed out that the epistemificator *mängäru<sub>s</sub> ayqärəmm* exists alongside *saynägrs ayqärəmm<sub>s</sub>* (note the same component *ayqärəmm* in both epistemificators). The first of these requires a future interpretation; the second does not. This invites the question, why should this be? One might answer on two levels. A mechanical answer is: the reason is the presence vs. absence of the verbal noun. But if we ask why the verbal noun—which itself is intrinsically timeless—should force a specifically future reading, no answer suggests itself (to me). It cannot be *ayqärəmm* which forces the future reading because the combination with *saynägrs* allows *ayqärəmm<sub>s</sub>* to be temporally more flexible (future, present, past). It seems that the best we can do is to say that the temporal interpretation (frozen vs. flexible) is simply a property of the construction as a whole, and not to ask why. The other

epistemificators *mängäru<sub>s</sub> ayqäre näw* ‘his tellings is inevitable’ and *mängäru<sub>s</sub> yämmayqär näw* ‘his tellings is inevitable’ are derivatives of *mängäru<sub>s</sub> ayqärämm* and therefore demand the same future reading.

### 5.9.3. The lexical meaning of the epistemificator head

Two related epistemificators whose lexical meaning imparts futurity are **እንደ-X እጠብቃለሁ** *ändä-X aṭäbbəqallähu* ‘I expect that X’ and X **ብዬ እጠብቃለሁ** X *bəyye aṭäbbəqallähu* ‘I expect: X’. The future-time orientation of these epistemificators harmonizes with the temporal location of the epistemized, which is typically located in the future, as in the following example:<sup>58</sup>

- (161) **የጠቅላይ ሚኒስትርነቱን ቦታ ሲረከቡ አምስት**  
*yä-täqalay ministərännät-u bota s-i-rräkkäb-u amməst*  
 GEN-prime ministership-DEF position when-3SPOL-take.over\IPFV-3SPOL five
- ዋና ዋና ነጥቦችና ችግሮች ላይ አተኩረው**  
*wanna wanna näṭəb-očč-(ə)-nna čəggər-očč lay atkur-äw*  
 main main point-PL-and problem-PL on focus\GER-3SPOL
- ይሠራሉ ብዬ እጠብቃለሁ**<sup>59</sup>  
*yə-sär=all-u bəyye aṭ-äbbəq=all-ähu*  
 3SPOL-work\IPFV=NPST-3SPOL say\GER-POSS.1SG 1SG-expect\IPFV=NPST-1SG
- ‘I expect: when he takes over the position of prime ministership he will work attentively on five main points and problems’

These two epistemificators can also take an epistemized located in the present, although this seems to be less frequent:<sup>60</sup>

- (162) **ልጁን ትምህርቱን በደንብ ይከታተላል**  
*ləğ-aččən təmhərt-u-n bädänb yə-kkätattäl=all-ø*  
 child-POSS.1PL education-POSS.3SM-ACC properly 3SM-pursue\IPFV=NPST-3SM
- ብዬ እጠብቃለሁ**  
*bəyye aṭ-äbbəq=all-ähu*

<sup>58</sup> Danielewiczowa provides an explanation why the Polish expression *oczekiwac, ze* ‘expect that’ inclines towards the future (2002: 271). I do not give this explanation here because it is not clear to me.

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/9696>. [Accessed: 22.03.2019]

<sup>60</sup> I have not found any relevant example sentences of a present-time epistemized, neither in the corpus nor on the Amharic internet sites; but my informants invented a few such sentences that are acceptable, even though they do not sound as good as similar sentences with the epistemized in the future. Note that the equivalent English expression ‘expect that’ and Polish *oczekiwac, ze* (Danielewiczowa 2002: 271) can take an epistemized in the past.

say\GER-POSS.1SG 1SG-expect\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I expect: our son (should) properly pursue his education’

But an epistemized in the past is not possible. Whereas the epistemized of all other epistemificators with the linkers *bəyye* and *əndä-* may also appear in the past, this is not possible with these two epistemificators. Thus, the sentence below is semantically defective:

- (163) \***ጎበኝኝ ወደ አገሯ በሰላም ገባች ብዬ**  
*Gobäznäš wädä agar-wa bäsälam gäbba-čč bəyye*  
 PN to country-POSS-3SF in-peace enter\PFV-3SF say\GER-POSS.1SG  
**እጠብቃለሁ**  
*ə-täbbəq=all-ähu*  
 1SG-expect\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 \*‘I expect: Gobäznäš has returned safely to her country’

#### 5.9.4. The complementizer

In the case of epistemificators with *ənd-* the bearer of the futurity is the complementizer itself. The epistemificators that belong to this group involve verbs (though not every verb) of fearing and concern: **እንድ-NEG.X እሠጋለሁ** *ənd-NEG.X əsägallähu* ‘I worry lest X, I am worried lest X’, **እንድ-NEG.X እፈራለሁ** *ənd-NEG.X əfärallähu* ‘I am afraid lest X, I fear lest X’, **እንድ-NEG.X ሥጋት አለኝ** *ənd-NEG.X səgat allänn* ‘I have a worry lest X’, **እንድ-NEG.X ፍርሃት አለኝ** *ənd-NEG.X fərhat allänn* ‘I have a fear lest X’ and **እንድ-NEG.X ፍራቻ አለኝ** *ənd-NEG.X fəračča allänn* ‘I have a concern lest X’. The complementizer *ənd-* conveys the meaning “the speaker wants X to happen”. Because in the case of epistemificators *ənd-* is always followed by a negated verb, *ənd-NEG.X* can be paraphrased as “the sender wants X not to happen”. Here is an example:

- (164) **ጉዳ ጉዳ በዚህ ከቀጠለ በራሳችን መልካም**  
*guda gud-u bə-zzih kä-qätṭäl-ä bäs-ras-aččən mälkam*  
 obscure.issue-DEF in-this if-continue\PFV-3SM by-own-POSS.1PL good  
**ፈቃድ «ኢንተርኔት ይታሸግ» ብለን አደባባይ**  
*fäqad intärnet yə-ttäšäg bäl-än addäbabay*  
 will internet 3SM-be. shut.down\JUUS say\GER-1PL public.place



## 5.10. Semantics beyond dimensionality: Individual epistemificators and contrasts among them

The goal of Sections 5.2-5.9 was to capture the meaning of epistemificators by means of semantic dimensions. In this section, in turn, I will try to pin down idiosyncratic semantic characteristics of selected Amharic epistemificators, which do not lend themselves to being captured by means of dimensions. My approach will be, as in the previous sections, to use tests and to contrast a given epistemificator with another one, with the aim, on the one hand, of revealing their positive characteristics and, on the other hand, of showing where they differ. Some of these characteristics may be an intrinsic part of the semantic representation of the given epistemificator while others may be manifestations of something more general and hence may require further analysis. The reader should treat these descriptions as anecdotal observations and semantic sketches, rather than rigorous formal-semantic analyses. In general, I will be examining epistemificators in contrast sets, usually contrasting two epistemificator but occasionally more than two, in the hope that in this way I can better elucidate their meanings.

### 5.10.1. ሊነግር<sub>S</sub> ይችላል<sub>S</sub> *linägr<sub>S</sub> yäčälall<sub>S</sub>*, ‘he could<sub>S</sub> tells, he may<sub>S</sub> tells’ vs. (ይነግር)<sub>S</sub> ይሆናል (*yänägr<sub>S</sub> yəhonall*) ‘he may tells, he might tells’

The two epistemificators may give the impression of being almost synonymous and yet they are not freely substitutable in most contexts, which reliably indicates that they convey different meanings. The first observation that confirms this is the fact that they can co-occur in a sentence. In such case, (*yänägr<sub>S</sub> yəhonall*) scopes over *linägr<sub>S</sub> yäčälall<sub>S</sub>*, with the simple imperfective *yäčäl<sub>S</sub>* becoming the epistemized head of *yänägr<sub>S</sub> yəhonall* (as well as the epistemificator head of its own clause):

- (1) ምናልባት ለመንፈስህም ፍቱን መድኃኒት ሊሆኑ  
*mənalbat lä-mänfäs-(ə)-h-(ə)-mm fəttun mädhanit li-hon-u*  
 perhaps for-spirit-POSS.2SM-FOC effective remedy COMP-3PL-COP\IPFV-3PL  
 ይችላ ይሆናል<sub>[BŠ 165: 19-20]</sub>  
*yäčäl-u yəhonall*  
 3PL-could\IPFV-3PL EPST  
 ‘Perhaps, it may be that they could be an effective remedy for your spirit’

Let us here remind the reader that *linägrs yäčälalls* ‘he could<sub>s</sub> tells, he may<sub>s</sub> tells’ is a part of the verbal complex whereas in (*yänägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells, he might tells’ the auxiliary *yəhonall* is frozen and occupies a higher position within the sentence: *yəhonall* can be used alone as a brief reaction to a previous utterance (2B) whereas *yäčälalls* cannot. The following sentences illustrate this observation:

- (2) A: የአባቱ                      ሞት    ቀድሞን  
*yä-abbat-u*                      *mot*    *qäye-w-(ə)-n*  
 GEN-father-POSS.3SM    dead    home.place-POSS.3SM-ACC  
 አስጠልቶት                      ይሆናላ!<sub>[MBL 275: 25-31]</sub>  
*asätält-o-t*                      *yəhonall-a*  
 cause.to.hate\GER-3SM-OBJ.3SM    EPST-EMPH

- B: “ይሆናል” አለ                      ካህሁን    በሆኑ  
*yəhonall*    *al-ä*                      *Kasahun*    *bä-hod-u*  
 EPST                      say\PFV-3SM    PN                      in-belly-POSS.3SM

‘A: Well, **maybe** his father’s death has made him hate his home.

B: **Maybe**, said Kasahun to himself (lit. in his belly)’

- (3) A: አኔም                      የማላውቀው                      ምስጢር    ሊኖር  
*əne-mm*    *yämm-al-awq-äw*                      *məstir*    *l-i-nor*  
 1SG-FOC    REL-NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-OBJ.3SM    secret    COMP-3SM-exist\IPFV  
 ይችላል<sub>[TS 6]</sub>  
*yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM

- B: \*ይችላል  
*yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘A: ‘There could be a secret that I don’t know’

B: \*Could’

A felicitous reaction to part A in (3) would be to repeat the whole verbal complex:

- (4) አዎ ፤ ሊኖር                      ይችላል  
*awo*    *l-i-nor*                      *yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 yes    COMP-3SM-exist\IPFV    3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘Yes, it could be’

From the behaviour of the two epistemificators it becomes clear that they have different scopes: *yəhonall* scopes over the entire embedded proposition; in this respect it is an excellent analogue to the English modal particle ‘maybe’. By contrast, *yäčälall* scopes

over the epistemized head. Thus, the two epistemificators function on two different language levels. In connection with this, note that  $(y\grave{a}n\grave{a}gr)_S y\grave{a}honall$ , in contrast to  $lin\grave{a}gr_S y\grave{a}\check{c}alall_S$  (see example (12) in Section 4.2.2.1), cannot be involved in any syntactic relation of subordination, precisely because it can be disconnected from the rest of the sentence.

$Lin\grave{a}gr_S y\grave{a}\check{c}alall_S$  always implies a choice:  $lin\grave{a}gr_S y\grave{a}\check{c}alall_S$  vs.  $layn\grave{a}gr_S y\grave{a}\check{c}alall_S$  ‘he may<sub>S</sub> tells’ vs. ‘he may<sub>S</sub> not tells’.<sup>1</sup> In this way the speaker indicates that s/he refrains from deciding whether a given state of affairs holds or does not hold.<sup>2</sup> The speaker may express both of the alternatives at once or s/he may express only one of them: the one that s/he considers as closer to the truth. The following sentences illustrate the three possibilities.

- i. If both alternatives are expressed, the epistemized head occurs first in the positive form and then in the negated form, as in (5):

(5) «[ገድ ገነ] ዛሬ ሥራ ይገባል?» [...] «ሊገባም ት  
*g<sup>w</sup>add Gännänä zare sära yə-gäb=all-ø?* *li-gäba-mm*  
 comrade PN today work 3SM-enter\IPFV=NPST-3SM COMP-3SM-enter\IPFV-or  
**ላይገባም ይችላል ። አላውቅም**»[MBL 4: 8-10]  
*l-a-y-gäba-mm yə-čäl=all-ø al-a-wq-(ə)-mm*  
 COMP-NEG-3SM-enter\IPFV-or 3SM-may\IPFV=NPST-3SM NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘Is comrade Gännänä coming to work today? [...] He may come, he may not come.  
 I don’t know’

- ii. The choice can also be expressed lexically, with the disjunctive conjunction  $w\grave{ä}y$  ‘or’, as in (6):

(6) እንዲረዳት ቀርባ ብታናግረው ወይ  
*änd-i-räd-at qärb-a b-(ə)-t-annagr-äw wäy*  
 COMP-3SM-help\IPFV-OBJ.3SF approach\GER-3SF if-3SM-talk.to\IPFV-OBJ.3SM or  
**እሺ ሊል ይችላል ወይ እምቢ**  
*əšši li-l yə-čäl=all-ø wäy əmbi*  
 yes COMP-3SM-say\IPFV 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM or no  
**ሊል ይችላል**<sub>[TS 6]</sub>  
*li-l yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 COMP-3SM-say\IPFV 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM

<sup>1</sup> In Horn’s terms the epistemificator is “tolerant” since it can modalize the positive and the negative proposition at the same time without resulting in contradiction (1989: 325).

<sup>2</sup> For this idea I am indebted to Bogusławski who talks about a similar feature of the Polish expression *może* ‘maybe’ (2003: 20).

‘If she approaches him and talks to (asks) him that he help her, he **could** say **yes** or he **could** say **no**’

iii. The speaker utters only one of the alternatives, the one which s/he thinks is closer to the truth:

(7) **ከወደዳት ሊረዳት ይችላል**<sub>[TS 6]</sub>  
*kä-wäddäd-at l-i-räd-at yä-čäl=all-ø*  
 if-love\IPFV.3SM-OBJ.3SF COMP-3SM-help\IPFV-OBJ.3SF 3SM-may\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘If he loves her he **may** help her’

(8) **ማንም ሰው አንድ ጊዜ ላይሆንለት ይችላል**<sub>[MBL 303: 25-26]</sub>  
*mannəmm säw and gize l-a-y-hon-(ə)-ll-ät yä-čäl=all-ø*  
 any person one time COMP-NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV-BEN-OBJ.3SM 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Anyone **could** be unsuccessful at one point’

That is not the case with the epistemificator (*yänägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells’: a sentence expressing a choice (*yänägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall wäyämm* (*aynägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells or he may not tells’ sounds awkward (9). This indicates that in using (*yänägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* the speaker is not taking into consideration an alternative state of affairs.

(9) **?አሁን ባላችሁበት ሁኔታ ይህን መረዳት ትንሽ ይከብዳችሁ ይሆናል**<sub>[BF 97: 5-6]</sub>  
*ahun b-all-aččəhu-bb-ät huneta yəhe-n mährädat tənnəš yə-käbd-aččəhu yəhonall*  
 now in-exist-2PL-in-OBJ.3SM situation this-ACC understand\VN slightly 3SM-be.difficult\IPFV-OBJ.2PL EPST  
**ወይም አይከብዳችሁ ይሆናል**  
*wäyämm a-y-käbd-aččəhu yəhonall*  
 or NEG-3SM-be.difficult\IPFV-OBJ.2PL EPST  
 ?‘In the situation that you are now in, it **may be** slightly **difficult** for you to understand this **or it may not be difficult** for you’

In seeking to understand the meaning of the two epistemificators I find it useful to touch upon their history. The origin of the auxiliary *yəhonall* and the semi-auxiliary *yäčälall*<sub>s</sub> appears transparent. *Yəhonall* is the compound imperfective form of the copula *honä* ‘be(come)’ whose temporal meaning, future or imperfective, developed into the

epistemic meaning of “the speaker does not know whether *p*”. The future is unreal and an epistemically modalized proposition is unreal. This provides the diachronic bridge between the two concepts. *Yäčälall*<sub>s</sub> seems to have followed the same path of development as its equivalent verbs in many other languages (English *may*, Polish *móc*): from ability through possibility to an epistemic meaning (Bybee *et al.* 1994: 199).<sup>3</sup> As Bybee *et al.* show for English *may*, the meaning of this verb changed from neutral possibility<sup>4</sup> (“root possibility” in their terminology) to epistemic possibility by way of an “inferential mechanism”, namely in some contexts *may* was ambiguous between the neutral possibility and the epistemic possibility readings, the epistemic meaning being one subsense of the neutral meaning (*ibid.* p. 198). The same phenomenon is observable with Amharic *yäčälall*<sub>s</sub>. Consider the following example:

- (10) ባለቤቱ                      በማንኛውም                      መንገድ                      ለትሞት  
*baläbet-u                      bä-mannəññawəmm                      mängäd                      l-(ə)-ttə-mot*  
 wife-POSS.3SM                      in-any                      way                      COMP-3SF-die\IPFV  
 ትችላለች<sub>[TS 5]</sub>  
*tə-čäl=all-äčč*  
 3SF-could\IPFV=NPST-2SF  
 ‘His wife **could die** in any way’

In sentence (10) the neutral possibility meaning ‘His wife can die in any way’ implies the epistemic meaning ‘His wife may die in any way’. Here I want to argue that because of its neutral possibility heritage, in the meaning of Amharic epistemic *yäčälall*<sub>s</sub> we have to take into account “the enabling conditions” related to the external world or properties that pertain to a certain state of affairs. Thus, when using *linägr*<sub>s</sub> *yäčälall*<sub>s</sub> the epistemizer does

<sup>3</sup> On this issue see also Section 3.2.7. For the moment it remains an open question whether this path of development took place in Amharic or was inherited from its predecessor Gəʿəz. To find this out one would need to study the Gəʿəz verb *kəhlä* ‘can’, the ancestor lexeme of Amharic *yäčälall*.

<sup>4</sup> Bybee *et al.* speak of neutral (root) possibility (conveyed in English by *can*) when “the enabling conditions for an agent to perform an act do not lie entirely in the agent, but also depend on the external world” (1994: 192) — that is to say, there are external enabling conditions.

not exclude that the state of affairs happens and s/he knows that the properties of this state of affairs enable it to happen.<sup>5</sup>

As mentioned, *(yənägr)<sub>s</sub> yəhonall* ‘he may tells, he might tells’ is typically used for talking about specific states of affairs in the future (predictions).

- (11) **ምናልባት አደጋ ሊጥሉበት** **ይሞክሩ**  
*mənalbat adäga li-ṭal-u-bb-ät* *yə-mokkəṛ-u*  
 perhaps danger COMP-3PL-put\IPFV-3PL-MAL-OBJ.3SM 3PL-try\IPFV-3PL  
**ይሆናል**<sub>[MBL 98: 10-11]</sub>  
*yəhonall*  
 EPST  
 ‘Perhaps they **may try** to put him into danger’

In contrast, *linägr<sub>s</sub> yəčəlall<sub>s</sub>* usually renders unacceptable sentences in the context of predictions. Compare the following sentences:

- (12) **አባቴ ክራቫቶች ነበሩት ። ሁለት ። [...] ‘ጥቁሩን**  
*abbat-e kravat-očč nəbbär-u-t.* *bulätt. ṭəqur-u-n*  
 father.POSS.1SG tie-PL exist\PFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM two black-DEF-ACC  
**እወዳለሁ፣ ይላል ። ለብሶት**  
*ə-wädd=all-ähu yə-l=all-ø läbs-o-t*  
 1SG-like\IPFV=NPST-1SG 3SM-say\IPFV=NPST-3SM wear\GER-3SM-OBJ.3SM  
**አይኛው ግን አላውቅም ። እኔ ሰሞት**  
*ayəčč-e-w gən al-awq-(ə)-mm əne s-ə-mot*  
 see\GER-1SG-OBJ.3SM but NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG 1SG when-1SG-die\IPFV  
**ያደርገው ይሆናል**<sub>[GQ 18: 21-24]</sub>  
*y-adärg-äw yəhonall*  
 3SM-put.on\IPFV-OBJ.3SM EPST  
 ‘My father had ties. Two. [...] He says, “I like the black one”. But I have never seen him wear it. He **may put it on** when I die’

- (13) **\*አባቴ ክራቫቶች ነበሩት ። ሁለት ። [...] ‘ጥቁሩን**  
*abbat-e kravat-očč nəbbär-u-t.* *bulätt. ṭəqur-u-n*  
 father.POSS.1SG tie-PL exist\PFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM two black-DEF-ACC  
**እወዳለሁ፣ ይላል ። ለብሶት**  
*ə-wädd=all-ähu yə-l=all-ø läbs-o-t*

<sup>5</sup> The phrase ‘a does not exclude that *p*’ has been proposed by Danielewiczowa (1996: 50) and later taken up by Bogusławski (2003: 20). Bogusławski makes it more transparent in the following paraphrase: the speaker “declares lack of knowledge in regard to anything which could prompt him to reject the proposition in favour of its negative partner” (*ibid.*).

1SG-like\IPFV=NPST-1SG 3SM-say\IPFV=NPST-3SM wear\GER-3SM-OBJ.3SM

**አይቼው**                      **ግን**      **አላውቅም ።**                      **እኔ**      **ስሞት**  
*ayäčč-e-w*                      *gən*      *al-awq-(ə)-mm*                      *əne*      *s-ə-mot*  
 see\GER-1SG-OBJ.3SM      but      NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG      1SG      when-1SG-die\IPFV

**ሊያደርገው**                                              **ይችላል**<sub>[GQ 18: 21-24]</sub>  
*l-i-(y)-adärg-äw*                                              *yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 COMP-3SM-put.on\IPFV-OBJ.3SM      3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM

\*‘My father had ties. Two. [...] He says, “I like the black one”. But I have never seen him wear it. He **could** put it on when I die’

In the next two sentences (14, 15) it is possible to replace *(yänägr)s yəhonall* by *linägrs yəčälall*s but the meaning of the new sentence (15) is different: it no longer refers to a clearly future event but to a state of affairs that may take place at any time.

(14) **ምናልባት ከዚህ የከፋ ዜና እንሰማ ይሆናል**<sub>[AA 797]</sub>  
*mənalbat kə-zzih yä-käffa zena ənnə-säma yəhonall*  
 perhaps from-this REL-be.bad\PFV.3SM news 1PL-hear\IPFV EPST  
 ‘Perhaps we **may hear** worse news than this’

(15) **ምናልባት ከዚህ የከፋ ዜና ልንሰማ እንችላለን**  
*mənalbat kə-zzih yä-käffa zena l-(ə)-nnə-säma*  
 perhaps from-this REL-be.bad\PFV.3SM news COMP-1PL-hear\IPFV  
**እንችላለን**  
*ənnə-čäl=all-än*  
 1PL-could\IPFV=NPST-1PL  
 ‘Perhaps we **could hear** worse news than this’

In connection with this let us note that *linägrs yəčälall*s may co-occur with adverbs of frequency, emphasizing regularity of a state of affairs. With *(yänägr)s yəhonall* such contexts render an infelicitous sentence. Compare:

(16) **ሁልጊዜ ስኬትን መጠበቁ የሚያስኬድ አይሆንም ። አንዳንድ ጊዜ ያልታሰቡ ችግሮች ሊፈጠሩ ይችላሉ**<sub>[TS 4]</sub>  
*hullgize səket-(ə)-n mätäbbäq-u yämm-i-(y)-asked*  
 always success-ACC expect\VN-POSS.3SM REL-3SM-be.right\IPFV  
**አይሆንም ።**                      **አንዳንድ ጊዜ**      **ያልታሰቡ**                                              **ችግሮች**  
*a-y-hon-(ə)-mm andand gize y-al-tassäb-u čəggər-očč*  
 NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV-NEG      some      time      REL-NEG-be.thought\PFV-3PL      problem-PL  
**ሊፈጠሩ**                                              **ይችላሉ**<sub>[TS 4]</sub>  
*l-i-ffättär-u yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 COMP-3PL-be.created\IPFV-3PL      3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘It is not right to always expect success. Sometimes unexpected problems **could** arise (lit. be created)’

But not

- (17) \*ሁልጊዜ ስኬትን መጠበቁ የሚያስኬድ  
*hullgize saket-(ə)-n mäṭäbbäq-u yämm-i-(y)-asked*  
 always success-ACC expect\VN-POSS.3SM REL-3SM-be.right\IPFV
- አይሆንም። አንዳንድ ጊዜ ያልታሰቡ ችግሮች  
*a-y-hon-(ə)-mm andand gize y-al-tassäb-u čaggər-očč*  
 NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV-NEG some time REL-NEG-be.thought\PFV-3PL problem-PL
- ይፈጠሩ ይሆናል  
*yə-ffättär-u yəhonall*  
 3PL-be.created\IPFV-3PL EPST

\*‘It is not right to always expect success. Sometimes unexpected problems **may** arise’

As already mentioned *linägr<sub>s</sub> yäčälall<sub>s</sub>* contains in its semantics a reference to enabling conditions. That is why *linägr<sub>s</sub> yäčälall<sub>s</sub>* shows a stronger tendency to occur in the apodosis of the indicative conditional sentences than does *(yänägr)<sub>s</sub> yəhonall*. In the following example the speaker’s reasoning makes a connection between the fact that the man is a government employee who receives a decent salary and the assumption that he is in the possession of more than one pair of trousers.

- (18) የመንግሥት ሠራተኛ ከሆነና ደዋዝ ካለው  
*yä-mängəst särratäñña kä-hon-ä-(ə)-nna dämoz k-all-ä-w*  
 GEN-government employee if-COP\PFV-3SM-and salary if-exist\PFV-3SM-OBJ.3SM
- ከአንድ የበለጠ ሱሪ ሊኖረው  
*kä-and yä-bällät-ä surri l-i-nor-äw*  
 from-one REL-be.more\PFV-3SM trousers COMP-3SM-exist\IPFV-OBJ.3SM
- ይችላል<sub>[MBL 279: 7-8]</sub>  
*yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘If he is a government employee and if he has got a salary he **could** have more than one [pair of] trousers’

In this context a sentence with *(yänägr)<sub>s</sub> yəhonall* is infelicitous:

- (19) \*የመንግሥት ሠራተኛ ከሆነና ደዋዝ ካለው  
*yä-mängəst särratäñña kä-hon-ä-(ə)-nna dämoz k-all-ä-w*  
 GEN-government employee if-COP\PFV-3SM-and salary if-exist\PFV-3SM-OBJ.3SM
- ከአንድ የበለጠ ሱሪ ይኖረው ይሆናል

*kä-and* *yä-bällät-ä* *surri* *yə-nor-äw* *yəhonall*  
 from-one REL-be.more\PFV-3SM trousers 3SM-exist\IPFV-OBJ.3SM EPST

\*‘If he is a government employee and if he has got a salary **he will have** more than one [pair of] trousers’

Similarly, the following sentence is felicitous only in its original version with *linägrs yəčälalls*; the sentence expresses a causal relationship between parts (a) and (b):

- (20) (a) **ጎረቤት ግድኑን ይጥላል ።** (b) **ከዚያም**  
*goräbet ayn-u-n* *yə-ṭəl=all-ø* *kä-zziya-mm*  
 neighbour eye-POSS.3SM-ACC 3SM-throw\IPFV-NPST-3SM from-that-FOC  
**ወሬና ሐሜት ሊፈጠር ይችላል** [MBL 179: 7-8]  
*wäre-anna hamet* *li-ffättär* *yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 gossip-and slander COMP-3SM-be.created\IPFV 3SM-may\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘The neighbour will notice (lit. throw his eye). Afterwards gossip and slander **may** be created’

Summary:

*Linägrs yəčälalls* scopes over the epistemized head and always implies an alternative: something may happen or may not happen. Two things are involved in the meaning of *linägrs yəčälalls*: the speaker’s epistemic assessment and the general properties of the state of affairs, which the speaker knows about and ascribes to the state of affairs. That is why *linägrs yəčälalls* sounds more “informed” and epistemically stronger to native speakers than *(yənägr)s yəhonall*. *Linägrs yəčälalls* may co-occur with adverbs of frequency, emphasizing regularity of a state of affairs, and in the apodosis of conditional sentences. *(Yənägr)s yəhonall* scopes over the entire sentence (epistemized) and does not imply an alternative state of affairs. It tends to occur in sentences referring to the future and it conveys, loosely speaking, pure speculation on the part of the speaker.

5.10.2. **ሳይነግርና አይቀርም** *saynägrs ayqärəmm* ‘he surely/probably tells<sub>s</sub>/will tells<sub>s</sub>/told<sub>s</sub>’  
 This epistemificator has been assigned the value medium along the dimension of epistemic strength (see Section 5.6.3). Because of this intermediate position it is reasonable to compare it with epistemificators of stronger and weaker epistemic strength, what I will do below. The most characteristic feature of this epistemificator is the fact that it involves

two formal negations—of the epistemized head and the epistemificator head—which cannot be “denegated” (see Section 6.2.7).

First of all, let us note that *saynägrs ayqärəmm*s must indicate such a strong epistemic state that it can be used with deontic statements of the kind quoted below:

- (21) **ጸድቅና ኩነኔ ቢኖርም ባይኖርም ከክፋት**  
*ṣədq-(ə)-nna kunäne b-i-nor-(ə)-mm b-a-y-nor-(ə)-mm kä-kəfat*  
 righteous-and damnation if-3SM-exist\IPFV-or if-NEG-3SM-exist\IPFV-or from-evil  
**ደግነት ባይሻል አይቀርም**  
*dägənnät s-a-y-ššal a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 goodness when-NEG-3SM-be.better\IPFV NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘Whether there is righteousness and damnation or not, **surely** goodness is **better** than evil’

This particular collocation *sayššal ayqärəmm* occurs several times in my corpus. The same proposition when epistemized with the epistemificators *linägrs yəčəlalls*, ‘he could<sub>s</sub> tells, he may<sub>s</sub> tells’ and *(yənägr)s yəhonall* ‘he may tells, he might tells’ renders unacceptable sentences: goodness ceases to be perceived as a desired value and the first (subordinate) clause (“whether there is righteousness and damnation or not”) does not show any direct semantic connection to the clause with the epistemificator:

- (22) **\*ጸድቅና ኩነኔ ቢኖርም ባይኖርም ከክፋት**  
*ṣədq-(ə)-nna kunäne b-i-nor-(ə)-mm b-a-y-nor-(ə)-mm kä-kəfat*  
 righteous-and damnation if-3SM-exist\IPFV-or if-NEG-3SM-exist\IPFV-or from-evil  
**ደግነት ይሻል ይሆናል**  
*dägənnät yə-ššal yəhonall*  
 goodness 3SM-be.better\IPFV EPST  
 \*‘Whether there is righteousness and damnation or not, goodness **may be better** than evil’

To assume this relatively strong epistemic state the epistemizer has to know something about the state of affairs in question (another proposition, say *q*, which is not equal to *p*) that enables her/him to say that *p*. There is a relation of implication between *q* and *p*. Often this knowledge about the state of affairs (*q*) is given explicitly as in the following sentences:

- (23) **አብሮት ያለው ወጣት ረጅም ነው ።**



how know\PFV-2SM COMP-NEG-2PL-say\IPFV-2PL-OBJ.1SG else

**የተሣለ-ት**                      **ባልና**              **ሚስት**      **ሳይሆኑ**  
*yä-täsal-u-t*                      *bal-(ə)-nna*      *mist*      *s-a-y-hon-u*  
 REL-be.painted\PFV-3PL-DEF husband-and wife when-NEG-3PL-COP\IPFV

**አይቀሩም** [BBS 11: 5-6]

*a-y-qär-u-mm*  
 NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-3PL-NEG

‘Don’t ask (lit. tell) me “How do you know?”, but surely (those) who are painted [i.e. depicted in the picture] are husband and wife’

As demonstrated in Section 5.7.3 (exx. 133, 134), the same proposition as in (28) with the epistemificator **ማወቅ አለበት**<sub>s</sub> *mawäq alläbb(ät)*<sub>s</sub> ‘he/it must<sub>s</sub> know, he/it should<sub>s</sub> know’ is deviant. On the other hand, in many contexts in which the epistemizer expresses her/his insufficient knowledge concerning a given state of affairs, *saynägrs ayqärämm*<sub>s</sub> cannot replace *(yänägr)*<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall*. Thus, in the following sentence (26), which contains a pure speculation on the part of the epistemizer, *saynägrs ayqärämm*<sub>s</sub> would be unacceptable:

(26) **እነርሱ እኮ ዓለም የላብ አደሮች ሆናለች ብለው**  
*ännärsu əkko aläm yä-lab adär-očč hon-(a)=all-äčč bəl-äw*  
 3PL after.all world GEN-labourer-PL COP\GER-3SF=PF-3SF say\GER-3PL  
**ያስቡ ይሆናል ፣ እነርሱ እኮ የሃገራችን ገበሬ**  
*y-assəb-u yəhonall ännärsu əkko yä-hagär-aččən gäbäre*  
 3PL-think\IPFV-3PL EPST 3PL after.all GEN-country-POSS.1PL peasant  
**ያለፈለት ይመስላቸው ይሆናል**  
*y-alläf-ä-ll-ät yə-mäsl-aččäw yəhonall*  
 REL-get.rich\PFV-3SM-BEN-OBJ.3SM 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.3PL EPST  
 ‘After all, they **may think**: the world has become the labourers’; after all, **it may seem to them** that our country’s peasant(ry) has become rich’

Since *saynägrs ayqärämm*<sub>s</sub> does not have to involve an explicit justification, it is suitable for talking about the epistemizer’s own emotions and mental states to which s/he has exclusive access, as in sentence (27).

(27) **ሆኖም ጀርባዬን አሽቶ የሚያጥብልኝ**  
*honomm ġärba-ye-n ašt-o yämm-i-(y)-atb-(ə)-ll-(ə)-ññ*  
 however back-POSS.1SG-ACC rub\GER-3SM REL-3SM-wash\IPFV-BEN-OBJ.1SG  
**ሰው በማግኘቴ ሳልደሰት አልቀረሁም** [KB 130: 1-3]

*säw* *bä-magñät-e* *s-al-(ə)-ddässät* *al-qärr-ähu-mm*  
 person by-find\VN-POSS.1SG when-NEG.1SG-be.happy\IPFV NEG.1SG-remain\PFV-1SG-NEG  
 ‘However, I was **surely** happy to find a person who would rub and wash my back’

**ሳይነግር**<sub>S</sub> **አይቀርም**<sub>S</sub> *saynägrs ayqärämmS* ‘he surely/probably tells<sub>S</sub>/will tells<sub>S</sub>/told<sub>S</sub>’  
 can be used when talking about one’s own physical reactions:

(28) A: **ምን አጋጠመህ?**  
*mən aggaṭäm-ä-h*  
 what happen\PFV-3SM-OBJ.2SM

B: **ክርክር ሳይዘኝ አይቀርም ።**  
*kärkär s-a-yə-z-äññ a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 chancroid when-NEG-3SM-hold\IPFV-OBJ.1SG NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG

**ወደ አዲስ አበባም የምሄደው ለዚህ ነው**<sup>[B§ 230: 17-18]</sup>  
*wädä Addis Abäba-mm yämm-ə-hed-äw lä-zzih n-äw*  
 to PN-FOC REL-1SG-go\IPFV-DEF for-this COP-3SM

‘A: “What has happened to you?” B: “I have **surely** got a chancroid. It is for this (reason) that I am going to Addis Ababa”’

Finally, the epistemificator *saynägrs ayqärämmS* is employed to talk about predictions. In contrast to predictions involving the epistemificator (*yänägr*)<sub>S</sub> *yəhonall* they are based on some knowledge and so are epistemically stronger.

(29) **እነዚህ የውኃ ጉድጓዶች ዙሪያ ከዕለታት አንድ ቀን እሳት**  
*ənnäzzih yä-wəha gudg<sup>w</sup> ad-očč zuriya kə-älät-at and qän əsat*  
 these GEN-water hole-PL around from-day-PL one day fire

**አንድደው ፣ ጀበና ጥደው ቡና**  
*andəd-äw ḡäbäna ṭəd-äw bunna*  
 light\GER-3PL coffee.pot put.on.the.fire\GER-3PL coffee

**ሳይጠጡም አይቀር**<sub>[GQ 127: 6-7]</sub>  
*s-a-y-tätt-u-mm a-y-qär*  
 when-NEG-3PL-drink\IPFV-3PL-NEG NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV

‘Around these water holes, one day they will **probably** light a fire, put a coffee pot on the fire and drink coffee’

**Summary:** the epistemizer uses **ሳይነግር**<sub>S</sub> **አይቀርም**<sub>S</sub> *saynägrs ayqärämmS* ‘he surely/probably tells<sub>S</sub>/will tells<sub>S</sub>/told<sub>S</sub>’ when he knows something about the state of affairs *p*, say another proposition *q*, which is related to *p* (by relation of cause and effect). The cause can be expressed on the surface but does not have to be. The epistemificator is used

to talk about future predictions (stronger than in the case of (*yänägr*)<sub>S</sub>*yəhonall*), and about her/his own emotions, mental states and physicality.

5.10.3. X ብዩ አስባለሁ X *bəyye assəballähu* ‘I think: X’, X ብዩ አምናለሁ X *bəyye amnallähu* ‘I believe: X’, X ብዩ እገምታለሁ X *bəyye əgəmmətallähu* ‘I assume: X’

In this section I will try to show some basic differences among the mental verbal epistemificators with the quotative linker *bəyye* which are listed above. I will focus on just these three epistemificators and will not refer to their counterparts with the complementizer *ändä*- (e.g. *ändä-X assəballähu*). The reason is that, as will be shown in the next section, there is a semantic difference between each pair of epistemificators, such as X *bəyye assəballähu* ‘I think: X’ vs. *ändä-X assəballähu* ‘I think (that) X’ which cannot be reduced only to the difference between the linkers (even though probably caused by them). I am careful not to treat such pairs as X *bəyye assəballähu* vs. *ändä-X assəballähu* as automatically very similar from the semantic point of view because my informants sometimes found substitution tests with, e.g. *bəyye əgəmmətallähu* as acceptable but not with *ändä-X əgəmmətallähu*.

The most general epistemificator of the three that I will be discussing in this section is X ብዩ አስባለሁ X *bəyye assəballähu* ‘I think: X’. It can take almost any type of complement, even one which may render an infelicitous sentence with the other two epistemificators. Basically, it combines with propositions which, after Danielewiczowa (2002: 158-159), I will call verificational and judgemental (i.e. non-verificational, introducing subjective judgements). Verificational propositions refer to states of affairs about which one can say whether they are true or false. In contrast, judgemental propositions refer to the speaker’s opinion, which can only be accepted or rejected but cannot be considered in terms of truth and falsity. Typical judgemental propositions are those containing deontic modal expressions, as in the following sentences:

- (30) እና አንዳንዴ በወላጆችም በኩል ልጆቻቸውን  
*anna andande bā-wälağ-očč-(ə)-mm bäkkuł lağ-očč-aččäw-(ə)-n*  
 and sometimes with-parent-PL-FOC regard.to child-PL-POSS.3PL-ACC

**መምከር**      **አለባቸው**                      **ብዬ**                      **አስባለሁ**<sup>[MA 2]</sup>  
*mämkär*      *all-ä-bb-acčäw*                      *bəyye*                      *assəb=all-ähu*  
 advise\VN      exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3PL      say\GER-1SG      1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘And sometimes, with regard to parents, **I think**: they should advise their children’

(31) **ይህ ስብሰባ ጠቃሚ ነው**                      **ብዬ**                      **አስባለሁ**<sup>7</sup>  
*yəh səbsäba təqami n-äw*                      *bəyye*                      *assəb=all-ähu*  
 this meeting useful COP-3SM say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘**I think**: this meeting is useful’

The second of the three epistemificators, X *bəyye amnallähu* ‘I believe: X’, can be used felicitously in such contexts, too:

(32) **ተጠያቂ ወጣቱ ነው ። ራሱን ማወቅ**  
*tätäyyaqi wättat-u n-äw. ras-u-n maṣwäq*  
 one.responsible young.man-DEF COP-3SM self-POSS.3SM-ACC know\VN  
**አለበት**                      **ብዬ**                      **አምናለሁ**<sup>[MA2]</sup>  
*all-ä-bb-ät bəyye amn=all-ähu*  
 exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM say\GER-1SG 1SG.believe\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘The one who is responsible is the young man. **I believe**: he should know himself’

In contrast, X *bəyye əgämmätallähu* ‘I assume: X’ (the third epistemificator in the list) is typically unacceptable with deontic and similar expressions:

(33) **\*ተጠያቂ ወጣቱ ነው ። ራሱን ማወቅ**  
*tätäyyaqi wättat-u n-äw. ras-u-n maṣwäq*  
 one.responsible young.man-DEF COP-3SM self-POSS.3SM-ACC know\VN  
**አለበት**                      **ብዬ**                      **እገምታለሁ**  
*all-ä-bb-ät bəyye ə-gämmät=all-ähu*  
 exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM say\GER-1SG 1SG.assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG

\*‘The one who is responsible is the young man. **I assume**: he should know himself’

(34) **\*ይህ ስብሰባ ጠቃሚ ነው**                      **ብዬ**                      **እገምታለሁ**  
*yəh səbsäba təqami n-äw bəyye ə-gämmät=all-ähu*  
 this meeting useful COP-3SM say\GER-1SG 1SG.assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG

\*‘**I assume**: this meeting is useful’

X *bəyye assəballähu* ‘I think: X’ and X *bəyye amnallähu* appear with sentences concerning any moral or esthetic assessment, e.g.:

(35) **ትላንተና ያየሁት ፊልም ቆንጎ ነው**                      **ብዬ**  
*təlantənna y-ayyā-hu-t film qonṅo n-äw bəyye*

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,3339005,00.html>. [Accessed: 18.06.2019]

yesterday REL-see\PFV-1SG-DEF film nice COP-3SM say\GER-1SG

**አስባለሁ**

*assəb=all-ähu*

1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I think: the film that I saw yesterday is nice’

In such contexts X *bəyye əgämmatallähu* cannot normally be used:

- (36) \*ትላንትና ያየሁት ፊልም ቆንጆ ነው ብዬ  
*təlantənnä y-ayyā-hu-t film qonǧo n-äw bəyy-e*  
 yesterday REL-see\PFV-1SG-DEF film nice COP-3SM say\GER-1SG

**እገምታለሁ**

*ə-gämmət=all-ähu*

1SG.assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG

\*‘I assume: the film that I saw yesterday is nice’

From the examples above it can reasonably be concluded that X *bəyye əgämmatallähu* cannot occur with judgemental propositions. This is corroborated by the fact that *əgämmatallähu* cannot appear in content questions:

- (37) ስለ ጉዳዩ ምን ታስቢያለሽ?  
*sälä gudday-u mən t-assəbiy=all-äs*  
 about matter-DEF what 2SF-think\IPFV=NPST-2SF

‘What do you think about the matter?’

- (38) \*ስለ ጉዳዩ ምን ትገምቲያለሽ?  
*sälä gudday-u mən təgämmäčī-y=all-äs*  
 about matter-DEF what 2SF-estimate\IPFV=NPST-2SF

\*‘What do you estimate/assume about the matter?’

There is, however, a difference between X *bəyye assəballähu* and X *bəyye amnallähu* in the context of judgemental propositions. X *bəyye amnallähu* indicates that the speaker has considered the content of her/his sentence, has some evidence, and is more committed to it than in the case of X *bəyye assəballähu*. Compare the following sentences:

- (39) አንዳንዴ ዶክተሮች ሊረዱኝ አይፈልጉም  
*andande doctor-očč l-i-räd-u-nñ a-y-fälləg-u-mm*  
 sometimes doctor-PL COMP-3PL-help\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.1SG NEG-3PL-want\IPFV-3PL-NEG  
 ብዬ አስባለሁ<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.ethiopianreporter.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=982:q-q&catid=102:2009-11-13-13-46-03&Itemid=623](http://www.ethiopianreporter.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=982:q-q&catid=102:2009-11-13-13-46-03&Itemid=623) [Accessed: 20.06.2019]

*bəyy-e*      *assəb=all-ähu*  
 say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I think: sometimes doctors don’t want to help me’

vs.

(40) **?**አንዳንድ ዶክተሮች ሊረዱኝ አይፈልጉም  
*andande doctor-očč l-i-räd-u-ññ a-y-fälləg-u-mm*  
 sometimes doctor-PL COMP-3PL-help\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.1SG NEG-3PL-want\IPFV-3PL-NEG  
**ብዬ አምናለሁ**  
*bəyye amn=all-ähu*  
 say\GER-1SG 1SG.believe\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ?‘I believe: sometimes doctors don’t want to help me’

Sentence (40) is less felicitous than (39) because it implies that the speaker has solid, unimpeachable grounds to reproach doctors for ignoring her health problems, and not merely an impression to that effect.

X *bəyye əgämmətallähu* favours verificational contexts, i.e. those which deal with establishing facts rather than opinions. This is connected with the basic, literal meaning of **ገመተ** *gämmätä*, namely ‘(mathematically) estimate’, reflected in the following sentence:

(41) **ፋይበሩ ብቻ ያለአክሰሰሪው ከ25 ሺህ እስከ 30 ሺህ**  
*faybär-u bəčča yalä-aksäsäri-w h25 ših əskä 30 ših*  
 fiber-DEF only without-accessory-POSS.3SM from-25 thousand up.to 30 thousand  
**ብር ሊደርስ ይችላል ብዬ**  
*bərr l-i-därs yə-čəl=all-ø bəyy-e*  
 birr COMP-3SM-reach\IPFV 3SM-may\IPFV=NPST-3SM say\GER-1SG  
**እገምታለሁ**<sub>[AA 870]</sub>  
*ə-gämmət=all-ähu*  
 1SG.assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I estimate: the fiber only, without any accessory, may reach from 25 thousand up to 30 thousand birr’

But the epistemificator is not used only in contexts concerning assessments of amount or number. In the following sentence the meaning of X *bəyye əgämmətallähu* is broader, indicating any type of assessment, not only mathematical:

(42) **ግን ይህን ሚስጥር ለምን በአደባባይ እንደማያውቁ**  
*gən yəb-(ə)-n mištir lämən bə-addäbabay əndä-mm-a-y-a-wät-u*  
 but this-ACC secret why in-public COMP-REL-NEG-3PL-reveal\IPFV-3PL  
**አላውቅም ። ብቻ በጣም ጠለቅ ያለ ሚስጥር**

*al-awq-(ə)-mm.*                      *bəčča bätam täläqq y-al-ä*                      *mistər*  
 1SG.NEG-know\IPFV-NEG    only    very    deep    REL-say\PFV-3SM    secret

**ያውቃለሁ**                      **ብዬ**                      **እንምታለሁ**<sup>9</sup>  
*y-awq=all-u*                      *bəyy-e*                      *ə-gämmət=all-ähu*  
 3PL-know\IPFV=NPST-3PL    say\GER-1SG    1SG.assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘But I don’t know why they don’t reveal this secret in public. Anyway, I assume: they know a very deep secret’

The epistemificator X *bəyye assəballähu* can also be applied to propositions where a certain amount is assessed, as in:

(43) **ምናልባት ከሦስት ሚሊዮን ብር በላይ ፈጅቶብኛል**  
*mənalbat kä-sost miliyon bərr bäləy fägğət-o-bb-(ə)-ññ=all-ø*  
 perhaps    from-three    million    birr    above    use.up\GER-3SM-MAL-OBJ.1SG=PF-3SM  
**ብዬ**                      **አስባለሁ**  
*bəyy-e*                      *assəb=all-ähu*  
 say\GER-1SG    1SG.think\IPFV-NPST-1SG

‘I think: perhaps it cost me more than 3 million birr’

On the other hand, X *bəyye amnallähu* does not go with propositions dealing with estimations:

(44) **\*ምናልባት ከሦስት ሚሊዮን ብር በላይ ፈጅቶብኛል**  
*mənalbat kä-sost miliyon bərr bäləy fägğət-o-bb-(ə)-ññ=all-ø*  
 perhaps    from-three    million    bərr    above    use.up\GER-3SM-MAL-OBJ.1SG=PF-3SM  
**ብዬ**                      **አምናለሁ**  
*bəyye*                      *amn=all-ähu*  
 say\GER-1SG    1SG.believe\IPFV=NPST-1SG

\*‘I believe: perhaps it cost me more than 3 million birr’

The epistemificator is used for expressing significant convictions rather than relatively trivial facts:

(45) **ኢትዮጵያ ቋንቋዎቿን ታደሰ ዘንድ ጊዜው አሁን**  
*Ityopya q<sup>w</sup>anq<sup>w</sup>a-(w)-očč<sup>w</sup>a-n t-addəs zänd gize-w ahun*  
 Ethiopia    language-PL-POSS.3SF-ACC    3SF-restore\IPFV    COMP    time-DEF    now  
**ነው**                      **ብዬ**                      **አምናለሁ**<sup>10</sup>  
*n-äw*                      *bəyy-e*                      *amn=all-ähu*  
 COP-3SM    say\GER-1SG    1SG.believe\IPFV=NPST-1SG

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.sendeknewspaper.com/sendeknews-my-ideas/item/3617>. [Accessed: 19.06.2019]

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/በአግርኛ-ቋንቋው-ስጥ-ቀውስ-አለን>. [Accessed: 20.06.2019]

‘I believe: now is the time for Ethiopia to restore its (lit. her) languages’

- (46) \*ነገ ኢይዘንብም ብዬ አምናሁ  
*nägä a-y-zänb-(ə)-mm bəyye amn=all-ähu*  
 tomorrow NEG-3SM-rain\IPFV-NEG say\GER-1SG 1SG.believe\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 \*‘I believe: tomorrow it won’t rain’

The latter sentence is acceptable with the epistemificators X *bəyye assəballähu* and X *bəyye əgämmətallähu*, as in:

- (47) ነገ ኢይዘንብም ብዬ አስባሁ  
*nägä a-y-zänb-(ə)-mm bəyye assəb=all-ähu*  
 tomorrow NEG-3SM-rain\IPFV-NEG say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I think: tomorrow won’t rain’

It is worth mentioning here that X *bəyye amnallähu*, despite its undoubted connection with the positively oriented expression ብ-sth./sb. አመኑ *bä- sth./sb. ammäna* ‘believe in sth./sb.’ (as in ‘I believe in you’), need not occur only in sentences indicating positive things:

- (48) የከፋ ችግር ውስጥ ገብኜያሁ ብዬ  
*yä-käffa čəggər wəst gäbäčč-e-(y)=all-ähu bəyye*  
 REL-be.worse\PFV.3SM problem in enter\GER-1SG-PF-1SG say\GER-1SG  
 አምናሁ  
*amn=all-ähu*  
 1SG.believe\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I believe: I have got into bad problems’

Summary:

X ብዬ አስባሁ X *bəyye assəballähu* ‘I think: X’: It is the most general mental verbal epistemificator which can be used with any kind of proposition, both verificational and non-verificational.

X ብዬ አምናሁ X *bəyye amnallähu* ‘I believe: X’: It, too, can be used with both verificational and non-verificational propositions. With this epistemificator the speaker expresses her/his conviction that the proposition is true—it disfavours contexts involving trivial facts in favour of more “significant” propositions.

X ብዬ እገምታሁ X *bəyye əgämmətallähu* ‘I assume: X’: It is used exclusively in verificational contexts.

For other insights into the semantics of these epistemificators see the discussion of dimensions in Section 5.2.

## 5.11. Complement types of lexical epistemificators

### 5.11.1. Introduction

As presented in Section 4.4.2.1, lexical epistemificators can occur with four types of complement clauses: *ändä*-, *änd*-, *bəyye* and nominalized clauses. Most mental verbal epistemificators appear with *ändä*- and *bəyye*-clauses while a small number of epistemificators can appear with a nominalized clause. Two epistemificators of the ‘fear’ type take an *änd*-clause alongside *bəyye*. In this section, I will examine in greater detail three of the four above-mentioned types of complement clauses: *ändä*-, *bəyye* and nominalized clauses, trying to shed some light on their semantics. These are illustrated by the following sentences:

- (1) **በዚህ ሁኔታ ተምራ በ1997 ዓ.ም. አዲስ አበባ**  
*bä-zzih huneta tämarr-e bä-1997 a.m. Addis Abäba*  
 in-this circumstance learn\GER-1SG in-1997 year.of.mercy PN  
**ዩኒቨርሲቲ ለመግባት በመቻሌ እድለኛ**  
*yuniwärsiti lä-mägbat bä-mäčal-e äddälännä*  
 university for-enter\VN by-be.able.to\VN-POSS.1SG lucky  
**እንደሆንኩ አስባለሁ**  
*ändä-hon-ku assab=all-ähu*  
 COMP-COP\PFV-1SG 1SG.think=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I think that, having learnt in these circumstances, I was lucky that I could enter Addis Ababa University in 1997 (year of mercy)’
- (2) **አዲሱ ተቋም ግራ መጋባትን ሊፈጥር ይችላል**  
*addis-u täq<sup>w</sup>am gra mägğabat-(ə)-n li-fätəṛ*  
 new-DEF institution confuse\VN-ACC COMP-3SM-create\IPFV  
**ይችላል ብዬ አስባለሁ<sup>1</sup>**  
*yə-čäl=all-ø bəyye-e assab=all-ähu*  
 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM say\GER-1SG 1SG.think=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I think : the new institution could cause confusion’
- (3) **በግሌ መምህርነት ትልቅ ሙያ መሆኑን**  
*bä-gall-e mämhərännät tälləq muya mäbon-u-n*  
 in-private-POSS.1SG being.a.teacher big profession COP\VN-POSS.3SM-ACC

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dw.com/am/የአፍሪቃ-ሀብረት-ሊቀመንበርና-አዲሱ-የሀብረቱ-ባለስልጣን/a-3999899>. [Accessed: 07.09.2018] (The sentence has been slightly changed.)

<b>አምናለሁ</b> [...]	<b>ግን አሁን ባለው</b>	<b>ነባራዊ</b>
<i>amn=all-ähu</i>	<i>gən ahun b-(yä)-all-ä-w</i>	<i>näbarawi</i>
1SG.believe/IPFV=NPST-1SG	but now in-(REL)-exist-3SM-DEF	objective

<b>ሁኔታ ምክንያት እጠላለሁ<sup>2</sup></b>
<i>huneta məknəyat ə-täla-w=all-ähu</i>
situation reason 1SG-hate/IPFV-Obj.3SM=NPST-1SG

‘Personally, I believe that being a teacher is a great profession [...] But now, because of the present reality I hate it’

Since *and*-clauses occur only marginally in the epistemic domain they will not be treated here. Additionally, I will discuss the complement types that occur with factive verbs, to the extent to which they can contribute to discussion of the complementation of epistemificators (non-factive verbs). Here a brief explanation should be made of the terms factive and non-factive verbs.

The domain of propositional epistemic verbs embraces two kinds of verbs which show different behaviour in respect to truth value. Factive verbs (Kiparsky & Kiparsky 1971) are verbs which presuppose the truth of the proposition which, in English, comes after “that”. For instance, in *He knows that Eve visited her parents this Easter*, the proposition *Eve visited her parents this Easter* is true. The verb “know (that *p*)” in the above sentence is a factive verb. The truth of the proposition is preserved even if the factive predicate is negated which in some cases may lead to self-contradiction.<sup>3</sup> For instance, in the sentence *He doesn’t know that Eve visited her parents this Easter*, the truth value of *Eve visited her parents this Easter* does not change: *p* is still true. Sentence (4) exemplifies a factive verb:

(4)	<b>ለወደፊት</b>	<b>ሕይወቱ</b>	<b>ጥንካሬውን</b>	<b>ከሚፈትኑት</b>
	<i>lä-(yä)-wädäfit</i>	<i>həywät-u</i>	<i>ṭənəkkare-w-(ə)-n</i>	<i>kä-mm-i-fättən-u-t</i>
	for-(GEN)-future	life-POSS.3SM	strength-POSS.3SM-ACC	from-REL-3PL-test/IPFV-3PL-DEF
	<b>የሕይወት ገጽታዎች</b>	<b>አንዱ</b>	<b>ልጅ</b>	<b>እንደሚሆን</b>
	<i>yä-həywät gäṣṣata-(w)-očč</i>	<i>and-u</i>	<i>läğ</i>	<i>ändä-mm-i-hon</i>
	GEN-life aspect-PL	one-DEF	child	COMP-REL-3SM-COP/IPFV

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.goolgule.com/the-suffering-of-ethiopian-teachers/>. [Accessed: 10.09.2018]

<sup>3</sup> This typically happens in the 1SG when a speaker says, for instance, \*‘I don’t know that he has come’. Instead of “that” the speaker usually should use “whether”.

ይገባኛል<sub>[HL 32: 16-18]</sub>

ya-gäba-ññ=all-ø

3SM-understand\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM

‘I understand that in his future life one of the aspects of life that will put his strength to the test is a child’

The behaviour of non-factive verbs differs in this point. A proposition embedded within a non-factive verb is not presupposed, as the following sentence demonstrates: *He assumes that Eve visited her parents this Easter*, where the truth of the embedded proposition remains open. Instead of saying that a factive verb presupposes knowledge we can equally well say that it entails knowledge, as opposed to a non-factive verb which does not entail knowledge. This phrasing will also be used in the analysis below.

One clarification concerning the usage of the phrases “*ändä*- clause” and “*bäyye* clause” must be given. As explained earlier, in this thesis I try to pin down the meaning of units which are typically larger than the individual lexemes found in dictionaries. When it comes to mental epistemic verbs this means that the verbs are investigated together with their arguments. Thus *ändä*- and *bäyye* “belong” not to the clause that precedes them but to the kernel of the epistemificator, in the sense that they constitute an integral, required part of the epistemificator. (This does not, however, mean that these complementizers or linkers are part of the epistemificator in terms of syntactic constituency.) Keeping this in mind, I will continue to employ the phrases “*ändä*- clause” and “*bäyye* clause” whenever I want to abstract from a specific epistemificator and to focus on whether it is accompanied by *ändä*- or *bäyye*.

Amharic non-factive epistemic verbs—which in this thesis means mental verbal epistemificators—and their complements have been comprehensively presented in Section 4.4.2.1. To make the picture complete let us add that the vast majority of mental verbal epistemificators may occur with both *ändä*- complementizer and the inflectable quotative linker *bäyye* ‘saying:’. In my impressionistic but warrantable estimation, the linker *bäyye* is used more frequently than *ändä*-. The verbal noun (which will be treated below) occurs only with selected epistemificators, most notably with the verbs መንገሩን እጠራጠራለሁ *mängäruns ättärattərallähu* ‘I doubt his tellings’ and መንገሩን አምናለሁ *mängäruns*

*amnallähu* ‘I believe his tellings’. The first of these, *mängärums atṭarattarallähu*, will play a significant role in elucidating the meaning of the verbal noun complement.

### 5.11.2. *Ḃndä-* and *bäyye* in direct and indirect speech

A first point to note concerning the *Ḃndä-* and *bäyye*-clauses is that the contrast between them exists not only in the sphere of non-factive verbs but also, and even more so, in the realm of indirect (*Ḃndä-*) and direct (*bäyye*) speech (and thus with verbs of speaking). Indirect and direct discourse are used to report not only someone else’s utterances (typically), but also the speaker’s own utterances, usually located in the past. Sentence (5) illustrates indirect speech where the speaker reports his own utterance:

- (5) **በግል ሥራ እንደምተዳደርና መሬት ገዝቼ**  
*bä-gäll sara Ḃndä-mm-ə-ttädaddär-(ə)-nna märet gäzäčč-e*  
 in-private work COMP-REL-1SG-make.a.living\IPFV-and land buy\GER-1SG  
**ጥሩ ቤት መሥራት እንደምፈልግ ነገርኩት<sup>4</sup>**  
*ṭaru bet mäsrat Ḃndä-mm-ə-fälləg näggär-ku-t*  
 good house build\VN COMP-REL-1SG-want\IPFV tell\PFV-1SG-OBJ.3SM  
 ‘I told him that I make a living from a self-employed work and that I want to buy some land and build a good house’

In sentences (6) and (7) the speaker again reports his own speech but this time he uses direct discourse. To indicate the fact that he uttered a sentence, the verb *alä* ‘say’ is employed.

- (6) **“ምነው አስጠበቅኸኝ?” አልኩት**<sub>[GQ 183: 5]</sub>  
*männäw astäbbäq-b-äññ al-ku-t*  
 why cause.to.wait\PFV-2SM-OBJ.1SG say\PFV-1SG-OBJ.3SM  
 “‘Why did you make me wait?’ I said to him’
- (7) **“ቂል አይደለሁም” አልኩት**<sub>[GQ 281: 28]</sub>  
*qil aydäll-ähu-mm al-ku-t*  
 fool NEG.COP-1SG-NEG say\PFV-1SG-OBJ.3SM  
 “‘I’m not a fool’ I said to him’

Sentence (8) also directly reports the speaker’s question but this time, in contrast to (6), the verb **ጠየቀ** *täyyäqä* ‘ask’ specifies what kind of speech act is made:

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/index.php/article/7824>. [Accessed: 10.09.2018] The sentence has been slightly changed.



different function than the (other) verbs of speech. It is more basic: it indicates only that an utterance has been performed. It does not specify what kind of speech act has been made—and it does not have to because it is clear from the quoted sentence itself. That is why it goes with both quoted questions (6) and statements (7). What particular kind of speech act has been performed can be indicated on top of that by explicitly adding an appropriate *verbum dicendi*.

Basically, the same principles apply to our epistemifiers; the epistemized can legitimately be seen as a kind of reported speech, whether direct or indirect. The only difference is that the presence of the mental verb (conceptualized as a verb of “saying”) is obligatory. Of course, in the case of epistemically modalized sentences the speaker will determine what kind of epistemic attitude s/he assumes towards the proposition. Some other important analogies to direct and indirect speech will be made in the course of analysis.

### 5.11.3. *Bəyye* complements: their grammar and semantics

After this general setting of the context, we can now turn to the analysis of *bəyye* and *əndä*-clauses. To show in a precise way the semantic difference between the two types of clauses is a daunting task. Actually, it is easy for anyone who has some idea about Amharic to intuitively say how the two types of complementation differ from each other: *bəyye* involves the speaker’s subjective point of view whereas an *əndä*-clause presents a more objective, balanced, serious assessment of the state of affairs. Here, however, I would like to address their semantics in a verifiable way, trying to examine what lies behind these heavy philosophical abstractions such as “subjective” and “objective”.

The general structure of modal sentences containing *bəyye* and *əndä*-clauses has been accounted for earlier in the thesis within the dimension of “Manner of integration” (Section 5.3). It has been shown there that the two complement clauses in question assume different values along this dimension, as their structure differs to some extent and so too the meaning they convey. A *bəyye* clause is illustrated by sentence (13). It consists of an independent sentence (*läwəṭ allä* ‘there is some change’) connected with the

epistemificator head (*assəballähu* ‘I think’) by means of the inflectable linker *bəyye* (‘saying:’),<sup>5</sup> functioning syntactically similar to quotation marks.

- (13) የችግሩን                      ያህል ብዙ ባይሠራም                      ጥሩ  
*yä-čəggər-u-n*                      *yahəl bəzu b-a-yə-ssärra-mm*                      *təru*  
 GEN-problem-DEF-ACC equal much although-NEG-3SM-be.done\IPFV-CIRC good  
 ነው ት                      ለውጥ አለ                      'ብዬ                      አስባለሁ  
*n-äw*                      *läwəṭ all-ä*                      *'bəyy-e*                      *assəb=all-ähu*  
 COP-3SM change exist-3SM say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘Although the problem has not been dealt with sufficiently, things are good; I think:  
 there is (some) change’

The term “linker” rather than “complementizer” is very much in place here because, as we can see, it does not serve to incorporate one sentence into another but just stands in between them. This allows the clause with the content of the thought to be formally independent from any other sentence components. In syntactic terms we can say that there are two *sentences* (not just two clauses): the sentence with the epistemificator and the adjoined sentence.

It might then seem that there should be two separate themes and two separate rhemes, one for each sentence. However, the syntactic independence of the two sentences need not imply semantic independence, and theme and rheme are semantic notions. Arguably we can view the entire utterance as having one main theme (what we are talking about) and one main rheme (what we are saying about the theme).

Now let us recall the sentence stress in sentences with *bəyye*. As noted in Section 4.4.2.1, the primary sentence stress falls on the quotative linker *bəyye* itself and then often comes a pause before the final unstressed epistemificator head. *Bəyye* takes the main sentence stress and so functions as the rheme of the whole sentence: what is said about something. (The theme is the epistemificator head.) Thus, in a sentence with *bəyye* (which is a 1<sup>st</sup>-person form) the speaker presents the state of affairs expressed in the adjoined

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<sup>5</sup> Frajzyngier notes that there are a number of languages in which complementizers originate in verbs of speaking (1991: 225).

sentence as being her/his individual view on the content of the sentence, and not someone else's. The subjective character of *bəyye* is better expressed by the following paraphrase:

When I say: *läwəṭ allä bəyye assəballähu* ('I think: there is some change')

I want to say: based on what I know I am ready to say:<sup>6</sup> *läwəṭ allä*

even though I know that someone else may be ready to say: ~ *läwəṭ allä*.

We can check whether this paraphrase works. To do this, let us insert into the paraphrase a statement that contradicts 'I know that someone else may be ready to say: ~ *läwəṭ allä*. If it renders a semantically unacceptable sentence it means that our paraphrase works.

- (14) \***ለውጥ አለ ብዬ አስባለሁ ስል**  
*läwəṭ all-ä bəyy-e assəb=all-ähu s-ə-l*  
 change exist-3SM say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG when-1SG-say\IPFV  
**ሰው ሁሉ በሐሳቤ ይስማማል ማለቴ ነው**  
*säw hullu bä-hassab-e yə-smamm=all-ø malät-e n-äw*  
 man all on-idea-POSS.1SG 3SM-agree\IPFV=NPST-3SM say\VN-POSS.1SG COP-3SM  
 \*'When I say: I think: there is some change I say that everyone agrees with my idea'

To recapitulate, if the speaker says *p: läwəṭ allä bəyye assəballähu* (I think: there is some change), s/he is ready to accept that another person may say ~ *p: läwəṭ yällämm bəyye assəballähu* (I think: there is no change). Thus the following sentence:

- (15) **ኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ ለውጥ አለ ብዬ አስባለሁ**  
*Ityopya wəṣṭ läwəṭ all-ä bəyy-e assəb=all-ähu*  
 Ethiopia in change exist-3SM say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 'I think: there is some change in Ethiopia'

implies sentence (16):

- (16) **ነገር ግን ሌላ ሰው ለውጥ የለም ብሎ**  
*nägär gən lela säw läwəṭ yäll-ä-mm bəl-o*  
 but another person change NEG.exist-3SM-NEG say\GER-3SM  
**ሊያስብ ይችላል**  
*l-i-(y)-assəb yə-čəl=all-ø*  
 COMP-3SM-think\IPFV 3SM-may\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 'But another person may think: there is no change'

<sup>6</sup> This paraphrase is based on Danielewiczowa's representation of the verb *myśleć, że* 'think that' in Polish (2002: 139).

It is significant that *bəyye* here is lexically bleached: the linker does not indicate, as in direct speech, that the speaker has actually uttered (in the form of speech) what is contained in the adjoined sentence.<sup>7</sup> What is involved is virtual, not actual, speech. That is why it is here glossed in a “minimalistic” way, as merely a colon. Sentence (17) underpins the argument, as it demonstrates that one can use an epistemic verb with *bəyye* without uttering a single word:

- (17) እሱ ትክክል አይደለም ብዬ አሰብኩ ነገር ግን  
*əssu təkəkəkəl aydäll-ä-mm bəyye assäb-ku nägär gən*  
 3SM right NEG.COP-3SM-NEG say\GER-1SG think\PFV-1SG but  
 ዝም ብዬው አለፍኩ  
*zəmm bəyye-e-w alläf-ku*  
 silent say\GER-1SG-OBJ.3SM pass\PFV-1SG

‘I thought he is not right but I said nothing to him (alternatively, ‘but I passed over (it) in silence)’

Thus, because *bəyye* here is devoid of lexical meaning, contributing nothing but a specification of person, number, gender, it is the appropriate part of the epistemificator to single out the speaker (1SG) as the one who thinks/believes/assumes: *p* while someone else may think/believe/assume: *~p*.

It is appropriate to pause here for a digression. As mentioned above, in direct speech the verb *alä* ‘say’ can either appear alone or can be followed by one of the ‘real’ speech act verbs. When *alä* is used alone and in any grammatical form that is not 1SG non-past tense, it indicates a direct quotation. Curiously, this is not the whole story if *alä* occurs in the 1SG non-past form, i.e. in the form *alällähu*. Consider the following sentence:

- (18) የአዲስ አበባን የድሮ ቤቶች ማፍረስ አይገባም  
*yä-Addis Abäba-n yä-dəro bet-očč mafräs a-yə-ggäbba-mm*  
 GEN-PN-ACC GEN-old house-PL destroy/VN NEG-3SM-be.proper\IPFV-NEG  
 'እላላሁ  
 'ə-l=all-ähu  
 1SG-say\IPFV=NPST-1SG

<sup>7</sup> It might be noted that the verb *alä* ‘say’ does not indicate speech but attains a purely grammatical function also in so-called composite (or compound) verbs in Amharic, see Wetter (2002: 1829-1839).

‘I say: it is not proper to destroy the old houses of Addis Ababa’

This is indeed a direct quote; but in saying *alallähu* here, I am not just reporting direct speech. Why should I need to *report* my own real-time present speech performance? Rather, I just say it. So, if I do use *alallähu*, it must have an additional function, namely an emphatic function: i.e., this is my opinion and I am telling it to you. One can ask the question: could this represent an intermediate stage between direct speech (with *alä*) and *bäyye* + epistemificator? Yes, because *alallähu* both literally reports direct speech, but also functionally expresses or implies “my opinion”, as *bäyye* does. (Recall that *bäyye* is functionally the unmarked form of *alä*, being far more frequent and far more bleached than *alallähu*.)

It is important to mention that, in contrast to *ändä*-, *bäyye* does not impose any restrictions on the preceding sentence, which is adjoined (not embedded) and hence can be expected to show more independence. For instance, the adjoined sentence can contain the epistemificator (*yänägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells, he might tells’:

- (19) **ምናልባት የሌ[ተናንት]/ኮሎኔል አጥናፉ ቁጥብ ባህሪ የበለጠ**  
*mənalbat yä-le[tänant]/colonel Aṭnafu quṭṭəb bahri yä-bällät-ä*  
 perhaps GEN-lieutenant/colonel PN reserved nature REL-be.more.than\PFV-3SM  
**አላቀራረባቸው ይሆናል ብዬ እገምታለሁ**<sup>[NB 290: 13-14]</sup>  
*al-aqqärarräb-aččäw yəhonall bəyy-e ə-gämmət=all-ähu*  
 NEG-bring.together\PFV.3SM-OBJ.3PL EPST say\GER-1SG 1SG-assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I assume: perhaps Lieutenant Colonel Aṭnafu’s reserved nature **may not have brought** them together more’

Furthermore, it can be preceded by a question:

- (20) **አንዳንዴ ሰዎች የሚሉትንና**  
*andande säw-očč yämm-i-l-u-t-(ə)-n-(ə)-nna*  
 sometimes person-PL REL-3PL-say\IPFV-3PL-DEF-ACC-and  
**የሚፅፉትን በደንብ ገብቷቸው**  
*yämm-i-šəf-u-t-(ə)-n bädänb gäbt-<sup>w</sup>-aččäw*  
 REL-3PL-write\IPFV-3PL-DEF-ACC properly understand\GER-3SM-OBJ.3PL  
**ነው ወይ ብዬ እጠራጠራለሁ**<sup>8</sup>  
*n-äw wäy bəyy-e ə-ttärattär=all-ähu*  
 COP-3SM Q say\GER-1SG 1SG-doubt\IPFV=NPST-1SG

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/MengistuMerhatsion/posts/1736225556646928>. [Accessed: 27.09.2018]

‘I doubt (wonder): do sometimes people properly understand what they say and what they write?’

Neither of these options—neither epistemically modalized sentences with (*yänägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəbonall* ‘he may tells, he might tells’ nor questions—is possible with the complementizer *ändä*-.

#### 5.11.4. *Ändä*- complements: their grammar and semantics

I now turn to the *ändä*-complement, which is illustrated by sentence (21). It consists of two clauses: the complement clause (*qäṭṭayu əqqəd ənnäzihən nägäročč yastäkakkəl*) and the matrix clause (*ändämm-assəballähu*) with the epistemificator. The complement clause is embedded (truly embedded, not adjoined) into the matrix clause by means of the complementizer *ändä*-. The main stress is placed on the epistemized head, i.e. on the verb that attaches to *ändä*-, which functions as the rheme; the theme (just as with *bəyye*) is the epistemizer.

- (21) ቀጣዩ            ዕቅድ            እነዚህን            ነገሮች            እንደሚገባቸው  
*qäṭṭay-u        əqqəd        ənnäzih-(ə)-n    nägär-očč        ändämm-i'-(y)-astäkakkəl*  
 next-DEF        plan            these-ACC        thing-PL        COMP-REL-3SM-put.in.order\IPFV  
 አሰባሰቡ<sup>9</sup>  
*assəb=all-ähu*  
 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I think that the next plan will put these things (issues) in order’

In sharp contrast to *bəyye* clauses, the rheme of such a sentence is always the main verb of the embedded clause and so this is the primary information that is to be conveyed. By using an epistemificator involving an *ändä*-clause the speaker indicates that s/he is concerned with her/his knowledge regarding the state of affairs expressed by the proposition (and not any alternative state of affairs). Because the speaker has chosen to say *p* (and not *q*) it means that s/he is committed to *p* more than in the case of sentences with *bəyye*, where the speaker merely quotes *p*. That is why my informants judge *ändä*- as more objective and epistemically stronger than *bəyye*.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/7942>. [Accessed: 18.06.2019]

To demonstrate that *ändä-* is indeed a more “objective” complementizer than *bäyye* it will be instructive to consider factive verbs. Amharic factive verbs can take two kinds of complements, an *ändä-* clause and a verbal noun (for verbal nouns see below), but they cannot be preceded by *bäyye*. Sentences (22) and (23) illustrate the factive verbs *ändä-X yawqall* እንደ-X ያውቃል ‘he knows that X’ and *ändä-X yägäbawall* እንደ-X ይገባዋል ‘he understands that X’ ‘he comprehends that X’ (here lit. ‘it enters me that X’), respectively:

- (22) **ዘይኔ ግን ከራዲዮኑ ጋር በቀላሉ እንዳልተለየ**  
*Zäyne gən kä-radiyon-u gar bäqällalu änd-al-täläyy-ä*  
 PN but with-radio-POSS.3SM with easily COMP-NEG-separate\PFV-3SM  
**'ታውቃለች'** [MBL 247: 6-7]  
*'t-awq=all-äčč*  
 3SF-know\IPFV=NPST-3SF

‘But Zäyne knows that he [her husband] didn’t easily part with his radio’

- (23) **‘ግንት’ ጣለት ፈረንጅኛ እንደሆነ**  
*“g<sup>w</sup>ant” malät färängəñña ändä-hon-ä*  
 glove say\VN foreign.language COMP-COP\PFV-3SM  
**'ይገባኛል** ጣልያንኛ ፣ እንግሊዝኛ ፣ ፈረንሳይኛ ፣  
*'yə-gäba-ññ=all-ø talyanəñña englizəñña färänsayəñña*  
 3SM-understand\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM Italian English French  
**ሩሲያኛ ፣ አረብኛ ይሁን አላውቅም** [GQ 171: 4-5]  
*rusiyañña arabəñña yə-hun al-awq-(ə)-mm*  
 Russian Arabic 3SM-COP\JUUS 1SG.NEG-know\IPFV-NEG

‘I understand that “g<sup>w</sup>ant”<sup>10</sup> is in a foreign language. I don’t know if it is Italian, English, French, Russian, (or) Arabic’

Note that with factive verbs the primary sentence stress always falls on the factive verb itself. The question that immediately comes to mind is why factive verbs do not go with the quotative linker *bäyye*, *bəlo* etc. The following sentence is unacceptable:

- (24) **\*ኮንፌረንሱ መቀሌ ውስጥ ይካሄዳል ብዬ**  
*konfäräns-u Mäqäle wəst yə-kkahed=all-ø bəyy-e*  
 conference-DEF Mekele in 3SM-take.place\IPFV=NPST-3SM say\GER-1SG  
**አውቃለሁ**  
*awq=all-ähu*  
 1SG.know\IPFV=NPST-1SG

<sup>10</sup> *G<sup>w</sup>ant* means ‘gloves’.

\*‘I know: the conference will take place in Mekele’

There are several ways one might approach this question, but they all lead to the same answer. First of all, as mentioned earlier in this section, all factive verbs, in contrast to non-factive verbs, entail propositional knowledge, though they typically also convey some additional components which differ from verb to verb. *Knowledge that* is transitive.<sup>11</sup> As Bogusławski says, “whoever ascribes knowledge to someone [else] thereby commits himself to the claim of his [own] equivalent knowledge. Therefore, when the speaker presents a certain subject as knowing that *p*, he of necessity presupposes, at the same time, his own knowledge that *p*, and more generally, the truth of *p* [...]” (1998: 104). Thus if I say about someone:

- (25) ኮንፌረንሱ      መቀሌ      ውስጥ      እንደሚካሄድ  
*konfäräns-u      Mäqäle      wəst      əndä-mm-i-kkahed*  
 conference-DEF Mekele      in      COMP-REL-3SM-take.place\IPFV  
 ያውቃል  
*y-awq=all-ø*  
 3SM-know\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘He knows that the conference will take place in Mekele’,

then I commit myself to the same claim. This transitivity means that the notion of a purely individual, personal point of view (which is the essence of *bəyye*) is excluded with factive verbs: if something is propositionally true for one person, then it should be true for everybody.

We can put the same issue differently. Recall that, in any *əndä*- clause, the speaker is concerned with the content of the proposition in terms of truth (knowledge), while in sentences with *bəyye* the speaker emphasises that it is her/his personal point of view that is at issue and so the question of the absolute, abstract truth value of the proposition is secondary. Now, in the case of factive verbs the truth is already presupposed and guaranteed. This automatically makes *əndä*- the appropriate complementizer to use; the notion of abstract truth is incompatible with the notion of personal point of view which is inherent in *bəyye*.

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<sup>11</sup>“Transitive” in the mathematical/logical, not the linguistic, sense.

By contrast, with non-factive verbs the truth is not an automatic “given” but is being sought for; to commit herself/himself to the truth the speaker must consider what speaks for and what speaks against the given claim. This gives the speaker more leeway in how s/he packages the epistemized. S/he may choose to bring out his/her own point of view (with *bəyye*), or to highlight the abstract truth-value which s/he is seeking (with *əndä*-).

After these considerations, the question arises whether there are any kinds of propositions that prefer *bəyye* or *əndä*- as its “introducer”. Are there any propositions that have a penchant for *bəyye* and its “personal” perspective? And the other way round: are there propositions which prefer *əndä*-? In fact, based on a number of substitution tests that I conducted, almost all propositions lend themselves to be employed with either *bəyye* or *əndä*- with appropriate change in meaning. Examples (26) and (27) should help to make this clear:

- (26) በግድ የሚሆን ነገር የለም ብዬ  
*bä-gədd yämm-i-hon nägär yäll-ä-mm bəyy-e*  
 by-force REL-3SM-COP\IPFV thing NEG.exist-3SM-NEG say\GER-1SG  
**አስባለሁ**<sup>12</sup><sub>[AA 227]</sub>  
*assəb=all-ähu*  
 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I think: there is nothing which can happen by force’

Sentence (26) says that specifically the speaker, rather than anyone else, thinks: *p* is the case; precisely the use of *bəyye* is what contributes this nuance. (In English, this might be expressed by stressing the pronoun *I*; Amharic either disallows or strongly disfavours this option.)

- (27) በግድ የሚሆን ነገር እንደሌለ አስባለሁ  
*bä-gədd yämm-i-hon nägär əndä-lell-ä assəb=all-ähu*  
 by-force REL-3SM-COP\IPFV thing COMP-NEG.exist-3SM 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I think that there is nothing which can happen by force’

In sentence (27) there is no such emphasis on the epistemizer. The speaker thinks that *p* is the case, and what anyone else may think is simply not at issue. This is what we would expect with *əndä*-. The focus is entirely on the state of affairs expressed by the epistemized.

<sup>12</sup> The sentence has been slightly changed.

Sentences (28) and (29) provide another example of the same point:

- (28) እናትዮዋ የሚሉት ነገር ይኖራል  
*annatəyyo-wa yämm-i-l-u-t nägär yə-nor=all-ø*  
 mother-DEF.F REL-3SPOL-say\IPFV-3SPOL-DEF thing 3SM-exist\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ብዬ አሰባለሁ<sup>[TS 3]</sup>  
*bəyy-e assəb=all-ähu*  
 say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I think: there will be something the mother will say’

- (29) እናትዮዋ የሚሉት ነገር እንደሚኖር  
*annatəyyo-wa yämm-i-l-u-t nägär əndä-mm-i-nor*  
 mother-DEF REL-3SPOL-say\IPFV-3SPOL-DEF thing COMP-REL-3SM-exist\IPFV  
 አሰባለሁ  
*assəb=all-ähu*  
 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I think that there will be something the mother will say’

### 5.11.5. Verbal noun complements: their grammar and semantics

Turning now to the meaning of the verbal-noun complement I find it convenient to start with factive verbs, in particular the prototypical factive verb *know*. Recall that factive verbs may take as their complement either an *əndä*-clause or a verbal noun, depending on the context. To elucidate the verbal-noun usage, I have chosen a passage from the Bible (John 9: 19-21) which clearly shows the meaning of the verbal noun in contrast to *bəyye* and *əndä*-. The essence of a verbal noun (in contrast to *bəyye* and *əndä*-) is that it packages a proposition as being thing-like, a “black box” with no (or little) accessible internal structure. This can apply very well to factive verbs in general, insofar as (by definition) they deal with facts, which can be seen as thing-like reifications of some proposition. In particular, it applies to the following example:

- (30) እነርሱም ፣ “ዐይነ ሰውር ሆኖ ተወልዶአል  
*ənnärsu-mm aynä səwwur hon-o täwäld-o-all-ø*  
 3PL-FOC blind COP\GER-3SM be.born\GER-3SM=PF-3SM  
 የምትሉት ልጃችሁ ይህ ነውን? ታዲያ አሁን  
*yämm-(ə)-ttə-l-u-t läğ-aččəhu yəh nəw-(ə)-nə tadiya ahun*  
 REL-2PL-say\IPFV-2PL-DEF son-POSS.2PL this COP-Q well.then now  
 እንዴት ሊያይ ቻለ?” አሏቸው  
*əndet l-i-(y)-ay čal-ä al<sup>w</sup>-aččəw*  
 how COMP-3SM-see\IPFV can\PFV-3SM say\PFV-OBJ.3PL

“Is this your son who you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?”  
they [the Jews] asked’

- (31) **ወላጆቹም**                    **እንዲህ ሲሉ**                    **መለሱ ፤**                    **„ልጁኝን**  
*wälaǰ-očč-u-mm*    *əndih s-i-l-u*                    *mälläs-u*                    *ləǰ-aččən*  
 parent-PL-DEF-FOC like.this when-3PL-say\IPFV-3PL answer\PFV-3PL child-POSS.1PL
- መሆኑንና**                    **ዐይነ ስውር**                    **ሆኖ**                    **መወለዱን**  
*mähon-u-n-(ə)-nna*    *aynä səwwur*    *hon-o*                    *mäwwäläd-u-n*  
 COP\VN-POSS.3SM-and blind COP\GER-3SM be.born\VN-POSS.3SM-ACC
- እናውቃለን ፤**                    **አሁን ግን**                    **እንዴት ማየት**                    **እንደቻለና**  
*ənn-awq=all-än*                    *ahun gən əndet mayät*    *əndä-čal-ä-nna*  
 1PL-know\IPFV=NPST-1PL now but how see\VN COMP-can\PFV-3SM-and
- ግዴኖቹን**                    **ማን እንደከፈተለት**                    **እኛ አናውቅም**  
*ayn-očč-u-n*                    *man əndä-käffät-ä-ll-ät*                    *əñña a-nn-awq-(ə)-mm*  
 eye-PL-POSS.3SM-ACC who COMP-open\PFV-3SM-BEN-OBJ.3SM 1PL NEG-1PL-know\IPFV-
- NEG

‘The parents answered like this, “We know he is our son [lit. his being our son], and we know he **was born** blind [lit. his being born blind]. But how he could see now, or who opened his eyes, we don’t know”’

The parents of the blind man confirm two things that were previously mentioned by the Jews: the blind man is indeed their son, and he was indeed born blind. They use the verbal nouns *mähon* ‘being (their son)’ and *mäwwäläd* ‘being born (blind)’ because these two issues have already been established and reified as themes that they are asked to talk about. The rheme is their knowledge that this is indeed the case and they want to stress that they are not ignorant of this fact. This kind of usage—re-mention of a proposition—is a prominent function of verbal nouns.

Let us consider one more example, now with the factive verb **መንገሩ ይገባኛል** *mängäru yəgäbaññall* ‘I understand his telling’:

- (32) **ባሁኑ ጊዜ በየሥፍራው የገንዘብ እጥረት መኖሩ**  
*b-abunu gize bä-yyä-səfra-w yä-gänzäb əträt manor-u*  
 in-now time in-DIST-place-DEF GEN-money shortage exist\VN-POSS.3SM
- ይገባኛል ።**                    **ይሁንና**                    **እውነተኛ**                    **የምጣኔ ሐብት**  
*yə-gäba-ññ=all-ø*                    *yəhunənnä əwnätäñña yä-məttane habt*  
 3SM-understand\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM however real GEN-economy
- ትብብር ወይም ደግሞ የትምህርት ትብብር ማድረግ**  
*təbəbbər wäyamm dägmo yä-təmhərt təbəbbər madrəg*  
 cooperation or also GEN-education cooperation make\VN

የሚገድ

*yämm-i-gädd*

REL-3SM-be.necessary\IPFV

አይመስለኝም<sup>13</sup>

*a-y-mäsl-äññ-(ə)-mm*

NEG-3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG-NEG

‘I understand that there is [lit. there being] a lack of money in every place at the moment. Be that as it may, it doesn’t seem to me that it is necessary to do real economic cooperation or educational cooperation’

The sentence stress falls on *yägäbaññall* ‘I understand’, which is the rheme; the theme is the thing that is understood. In the context, it has already been mentioned that money is scarce; hence the use of the verbal noun *mänoru* is quite natural.

Sentence (32) also illustrates another important point regarding the usage of verbal-noun complements. Very often a sentence with a verbal noun followed by a sentence containing a contrastive proposal and therefore starting with **ይሁንና** *yəhunənnə*, **ነገር ግን** *nägär gən* or a similar expression. Sentence (32) is a good example of this. The thing-like proposition, already expressed as a verbal noun, serves as the take-off point for a different, contrastive utterance. In (32) the speaker addresses the issue of the lack of money, which has been mentioned earlier in the discussion—then he evokes it once again and uses it as a point of departure for a further statement. (Another such case is example (3), at the beginning of this chapter.)

In contrast to factive verbs, in my corpus I have come across only two mental verbal epistemificators (necessarily non-factive) that frequently take a verbal noun as their complement: **መንገሩን አጠራጠራለሁ** *mängärun əttärattärallähu* ‘I have doubts about his telling’ (where the verbal noun is certainly the unmarked option) and **መንገሩን አምናለሁ** *mängärun amnallähu* ‘I believe his telling’ (where there is no such strong preference)—though in principle I do not exclude that other non-factive mental verbs might also take a nominalized complement. Is there some common denominator uniting *doubt* and *believe*? Let us first take a closer look at a sentence with the epistemificator *mängärun əttärattärallähu* ‘I have doubts about his telling’:

- |      |                 |                           |                |                |             |
|------|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| (33) | <b>ወዳጄ</b>      | <b>የያዘሁ</b>               | <b>በሽታ</b>     | <b>ፈፅሞ</b>     | <b>ጊዜ</b>   |
|      | <i>wädağ-e</i>  | <i>yä-yaz-ä-h</i>         | <i>bäššəta</i> | <i>fäššəmo</i> | <i>gize</i> |
|      | friend-POSS.1SG | REL-catch\PFV-3SM-OBJ.2SM | disease        | not.at.all     | time        |

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.dw.com/am/የአፍሪቃ-ቅርምት-ጉባኤ-125ኛ-አመት/a-4919247>. [Accessed: 27.09.2018]

<b>የሚሰጥ</b>	<b>አይደለም ።</b>	<b>እንዲያውም</b>	<b>ሀያ</b>	<b>አራት ሰዓት</b>
<i>yämm-i-sät</i>	<i>aydäll-ä-mm</i>	<i>ändiyawəmm</i>	<i>haya</i>	<i>aratt säʔat</i>
REL-3SM-give\IPFV	NEG.COP-3SM-NEG	in.fact	twenty	four hour

<b>ለመቆየት</b>	<b>መቻልህን</b>	<b>እጠራጠራለሁ</b> <sup>[AA 861]</sup>
<i>lä-mäqoyyät</i>	<i>mäčal-(ə)-b-(ə)-n</i>	<i>ə-ttärattär=all-ähu</i>
for-stay\VN	be.able\VN-POSS.2SM	1SG-doubt\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘My friend, the disease that you have caught does not give (anyone) any time at all.  
In fact, I doubt your being able to last for twenty-four hours’

The speaker expresses his doubt about something which he has thematized or is thematizing: the ill person is able to stay alive some 24 hours. It is as if the doubter is attacking a palpable, reified *thing*. This thematization is an essential part of the lexical semantics of *doubt*. In Amharic, the only device available for thematization is the verbal noun. Thus the following sentence with *ändä-* is incorrect:

(34) \***እንዲያውም ሀያ አራት ሰዓት ለመቆየት እንደምትችል**  
*ändiyawəmm haya aratt säʔat lä-mäqoyyät ändä-mm-(ə)-tə-čäl*  
 in.fact twenty four hour for-stay\VN COMP-REL-2SM-be.able\IPFV

**እጠራጠራለሁ**  
*ə-ttärattär=all-ähu*  
 1SG-doubt\IPFV=NPST-1SG

\*‘My friend, the disease that you have caught does not give (anyone) any time at all. In fact, I doubt that you can last for twenty-four hours’

A second example of the epistemificator *mängärün əttärattärallähu* ‘I have doubts about his telling’ is the following:

<b>ከተራራው</b>	<b>አናት ላይ</b>	<b>ያሳለፍነው</b>	<b>ጊዜ 30 ደቂቃ</b>
<i>kä-tärara-w</i>	<i>anat lay</i>	<i>y-asalläf-n-äw</i>	<i>gize 30 däqiqa</i>
from-mountain-DEF	top on	REL-spend\PFV-1PL-DEF	time 30 minute

<b>መሙላቱን</b>	<b>እጠራጠራለሁ</b>
<i>mämulat-u-n</i>	<i>ə-ttärattär=all-ähu</i>
elapse\VN-POSS.3SM-ACC	1SG-doubt\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I doubt that 30 minutes elapsed in the time that we spent on the top of the mountain’

Recall that with *mängärün əttärattärallähu* it is the epistemificator head (*əttärattärallähu*) which is stressed, never the epistemized head (*mängärün*). Thus the rhematic focus of the sentence is on *əttärattärallähu* ‘I doubt’. The complement of the verb, in the form of the verbal noun, functions as the theme of the sentence.

Here is an example involving the epistemificator *mängärun amnallähu* ‘I believe his telling’:

- (36) **ዋስትናችንና ኃይላችን የኢትዮጵያ ህዝብ ፍቅር መሆኑን ከልብ አምናለሁ**<sub>[AA 803]</sub>  
*wastanna-ččän-(ə)-nna hayl-aččän yä-Ityopya həzb faqər*  
 guarantee-POSS.1PL-and strength-POSS.1PL GEN-Ethiopia people love  
*māhon-u-n kə-ləbb amn=all-ähu*  
 COP\VN-POSS.3SM-ACC from-heart 1SG.believe\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I believe from my heart that our guarantee and our strength is the love of the Ethiopian people’

Here, the speaker wants to emphasize his/her belief in what the nominalized complement conveys. As with *doubt*, a belief is a reified, thematized *thing*. Indeed, *doubt* and *believe* are the epistemificators which best serve an unambiguously rhematic function.

As remarked, other epistemificators can sometimes also take a verbal-noun complement, and again such usages involve a pre-established context. Here is an example with *əgämmätallähu* ‘I assume’:

- (37) **ዛሬ በደንብ መዘጋጀትሽን እገምታለሁ**  
*zare bädänb mazzägağgät-š-(ə)-n ə-gämmät=all-ähu*  
 today properly prepare\VN-POSS.2SF-ACC 1SG-assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I assume that today you have been well prepared’

This sentence is not felicitous out-of-the-blue, but rather requires a context where the concept “preparing properly (for the class)” has already been thematized. For example, yesterday the teacher may have warned the student that her performance has been unacceptable and she has to do better; or, the student (with the teacher’s knowledge) may have spent a couple of hours studying the material.

As a final point, let me mention Danielewiczowa’s remark that one cannot initiate a communicative situation with (e.g.) a stranger by using a verb of doubting (2002: 182). This seems to be too strong; one can imagine a New Yorker opening a conversation with a complete stranger by saying (in anger and frustration) “I doubt that Trump is sane”; or, on an interminably long drive, one person may say to the other (with no preliminaries) “I doubt we’ll get home by nightfall”. Here, however, a great deal is presupposed in the way of common background and/or (assumed) beliefs; the utterance is certainly not made “out

of the blue”. But Danielewiczowa’s statement becomes much more plausible if we weaken it by explicitly adding the proviso “out of the blue”.

Amharic epistemifiers can occur with three different kinds of complement clauses: *bəyye*, *əndä*- and nominalized clauses (verbal noun). The three types of clauses can be placed on an epistemic cline from the most “subjective” to the most “objective”. Here the most “subjective” and personal is *bəyye*; intermediate (more objective, but still packaged with a verb) is *əndä*-; finally, the most “objective” (and objectified) is the verbal noun, because it packages the proposition as a thing.

It’s worth remarking that the verb *əttärəttärallähu* is exceptional in that it is involved in two different epistemifiers each with a different complementizer, but at opposite extremes of the cline: *bəyye*, and verbal noun. Even more remarkable is the fact that these two epistemifiers apparently demand two opposite translations in English: ‘doubt’ for the verbal noun construction and ‘suspect’ for the *bəyye* construction. Sentences (35) and (37) above illustrate the verb *əttärəttärallähu* accompanied by the verbal noun while sentence (38), below, exemplifies it with *bəyye*:

- (38) ይህን ሳስታውስ ምናልባት ለህይወቱ የሚያስጋ  
*yəh-ən s-astawwəs mənəlbət lä-həywät-u yämm-i-(y)-asäga*  
 this-ACC when-1SG.recall\IPFV perhaps for-life-POSS.3SM REL-3SM-threaten\IPFV  
 በሽታ እንዳለበት ያውቅ ይህን ብዬ  
*bäššəta ənd-all-ä-bb-ät y-awq yəhon bəyy-e*  
 illness COMP-exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM 3SM-know\IPFV EPST:Q say\GER-1SG  
 እጠራጠራለሁ<sup>14</sup>  
*ə-ttärəttär=all-ähu*  
 1SG-suspect\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘When I recall this, I suspect: perhaps he might know that he has an illness that threatens his life?’

Significantly, such examples often involve questions and modal sentences, which are not “facts” and hence cannot be packaged with verbal noun.

<sup>14</sup> /www.addistar.com/2017/05/02/ገክረ-አሰፋ-ጫቦ/. [Accessed: 27.09.2018]



## 6. INTERACTION BETWEEN EPISTEMIFIATORS AND OTHER NON-MODAL CATEGORIES

### 6.1. Interaction of epistemic modality and time

#### 6.1.1. Introduction

As discussed in Section 2.1, in this study epistemic modality will be understood as the speaker’s assessment of her/his non-knowledge in respect to the proposition. This implies that any utterance containing an epistemic modal expression involves two points in time. These are:<sup>1</sup>

- i. the moment of the sender’s epistemic assessment
- ii. the location in time of the state of affairs, which is expressed in the content of the proposition.

Consider the following example:

- (1) **ወ-ሎ አድሮ በፈጸሙት ጥፋት ይጸጸቱ**  
 [wəlo adro bə-fäṣṣäm-u-t təfat yə-ṣṣäṣṣät-u]P  
 sooner.or.later for-commit\PFV-3PL-OBJ.3SG.M wrongdoing 3PL-regret\IPFV-3PL  
**ይሆናል**<sub>[TS 4]</sub>  
 [yəhonall]<sub>EPSTR</sub>  
 EPST

‘Sooner or later they may feel sorry for any wrongdoing they have done’

The moment of the sender’s epistemic assessment is conveyed by the epistemificator (EPSTR), **ይሆናል** *yəhonall* ‘may’. The state of affairs, expressed in the content of the proposition (P), called here “the epistemized”, is localized in the future by the adverbial expression **ወ-ሎ አድሮ** *wəlo adro* ‘sooner or later’ while the imperfective (non-compound) form of the verb **ይጸጸቱ** *yəṣṣäṣṣätu* ‘they feel sorry’ indicates the non-past tense.

Within any modal epistemic sentence there are basically two things that may convey a temporal and aspectual meaning: the epistemized head and the epistemificator head. Typically, the epistemized head can take any temporal and aspectual characteristic

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<sup>1</sup> The present section is an improved and expanded version of my earlier article (Krzyżanowska 2016). Some parts (especially Section 6.1.2) have been taken over verbatim.

whereas the epistemificator head, encoding the moment of epistemic assessment, is much more constrained in this regard. This of course has to do with the fact that the moment of epistemic assessment is, by definition, anchored in the moment of speaking—formally expressed by the non-past tense (but see discussion in 6.1.2). There is, however, some variation among the Amharic epistemificators as to how the moment of epistemic assessment is expressed. The goal of this section is thus to discuss the temporal and aspectual characteristics of both the epistemized head and the epistemificator head in lexical, copular and grammatical epistemificators.

I will begin with a more general section concerning the moment of epistemic assessment, which may vary depending on the “speech genre” and which may be placed on the time axis at a point other than “now”. Subsequently, I will discuss the temporal and aspectual characteristics of lexical and copular epistemificators, which are relatively uncomplicated, and then I will move on to the more challenging area of grammatical epistemificators. Depending on their behaviour vis-à-vis the category of time, grammatical epistemificators can be divided into three types:

- i. Temporality marked on the epistemized head: **(ይነግር)<sub>S</sub> ይሆናል** (*yənägr*)<sub>S</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tell<sub>S</sub>, he might tell<sub>S</sub>’, **(ይነግር)<sub>S</sub> ይሆን** (*yənägr*)<sub>S</sub> *yəhon?* ‘might he tell<sub>S</sub>?’, **ሊነግር<sub>S</sub> ይችላል** *linägr*<sub>S</sub> *yəčälall*<sub>S</sub>, ‘he could<sub>S</sub> tell<sub>S</sub>, he may<sub>S</sub> tell<sub>S</sub>’ and **ማወቅ አለበት<sub>S</sub>** *mawäq alläbbät*<sub>S</sub> ‘he must<sub>S</sub> know, he should<sub>S</sub> know’
- ii. Temporality marked on the epistemificator head: **ሳይነግር<sub>S</sub> አይቀርም<sub>S</sub>** *saynägr*<sub>S</sub> *ayqärəmm*<sub>S</sub> ‘he surely/probably tell<sub>S</sub>/will tell<sub>S</sub>/told<sub>S</sub>’
- iii. Temporality frozen in the future: **መንገሩ<sub>S</sub> አይቀርም<sub>S</sub>** *mängäru*<sub>S</sub> *ayqärəmm* ‘he will definitely tell<sub>S</sub>’, ‘he is sure to tell<sub>S</sub>’

In the course of the section below, I will concentrate on types i and ii; since type iii has already been discussed in Dimension 8 (Section 5.9.2). Let me remind the reader that Dimension 8 is devoted to the category of time, more precisely to the discussion of those epistemificators which inherently convey the future tense. Here I will only touch briefly on some of these future-oriented epistemificators. It is convenient to start presenting the

two groups of epistemificators, lexical and copular vs. grammatical, in terms of the epistemificator head and only then turn to the epistemized head.

Before embarking on the discussion proper, one important remark is in order. The topic of this section assumes that we know what the grammatical categories of tense and aspect look like and how they work in Amharic. This is, however, not the case. There are several articles that deal with these categories and they do contribute to our understanding of them but none of them treats tense and aspect in Amharic in a way that could be definitive or directly applied here.<sup>2</sup> I will not try to propose a comprehensive picture of the categories of tense and aspect, as this is not the objective of my dissertation. Rather, I will strive to discuss the semantic category of time in a pragmatic way, to the extent it proves useful.

### 6.1.2. The moment of the sender’s epistemic assessment

What I want to describe, illustrate and discuss in this section is that for an epistemically modalized proposition the basic temporal reference point, that is, the moment of the sender’s epistemic assessment of the state of affairs, is “now”. Prototypically this “now” is a “deictic now”: it is the moment of speaking. Halliday (1970: 336) emphasises this feature, saying that epistemic modality is “outside the domain of tense”. What he means is that epistemic modality as a category is indeed anchored in time—prototypically the moment of speaking—but *within* this category there is no time opposition.<sup>3</sup> The neutralisation of the category of time results from the fact that epistemic expressions function as meta-operators (Wajszczuk 2005: 112):<sup>4</sup> they are the speaker’s current comment (uttered “here and now”) on the proposition. Sentence (2) illustrates an epistemic assessment at the moment of speaking:

(2) A: [ሻምበል] ነገስ ይመጡ ይህን?  
 [šambäl] nägä-ss yə-mät-u yəhon?  
 [captain] tomorrow-TOP 3SPOL-come\IPFV-3SPOL EPST

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Poláček (1972); Meyer (2016b).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Holvoet (1989: 20); Palmer (1986: 60); Palmer (1990: 10-11, 44-45).

<sup>4</sup> On epistemificators as metatextual expressions see also Section 2.1.

B: መቼም ከዚህ ቤት ጠፍተው አያውቁም ፤  
*mäčemm kä-zzih bet täft-äw a-y-aʷq-u-mm;*  
 never from-this house disappear\GER-3SPOL NEG-3SPOL-know\IPFV-3SPOL-NEG

ይመጡ ይሆናል [MAH 177: 9-11]  
*yə-mät-u yəhonall*  
 3SPOL-come\IPFV-3SPOL EPST

A: ‘How about tomorrow? Might he [the captain] come? B: He has never disappeared from this house; he may come’

The moment of sending (“now”), however, can be relativized—it does not have to be in the deictic present. This happens very commonly in narrative. Thus, in narratives (both fictional and non-fictional) the vantage point for an epistemically modalized proposition can be, and often is, localized in the past—a “narrative now”. In reported speech, epistemic modality can be expressed from a past or future point of reference as well as present. In the literature on epistemic modality these non-present reference points have not as yet been given sufficient attention. They are either mentioned in passing (as in Palmer 1990), relegated to a brief footnote (Holvoet 1989: 20) or simply presented as example sentences (Coates 1983: 155). A concise but to-the-point discussion on the temporal location of the epistemic judgement, mostly based on Palmer’s account, is provided by Depraetere (2012: 997-999).

Because a large number of example sentences in my corpus are culled from narratives, it was crucial for me to confront directly the issue of the narrative “now”. In his classic work on narratology, Gérard Genette (1980: 215), observes, “It is almost impossible for me not to locate the story in time with respect to my narrating act, since I must necessarily tell the story in a present, past or future tense.” Further on, he introduces four types of narrating, depending on the temporal relationship between the narrator and her/his act of narration, on the one hand, and the events in the story world, on the other: *prior* narrating, *simultaneous* narrating, *subsequent* narrating, and a mixed type called *interpolated* narrating (Genette 1980: 217). I will deal here only with subsequent narrating (i.e. narrating of events that are seen as already completed), which has always dominated in narrative (Genette 1980: 220). The following (invented) passage, containing epistemically modalized sentences, illustrates this type of narrating: “Inspector Ullendorff

was very confused. He had just heard Leslau’s theory about the murder and he didn’t know what to think. It might have happened that way or it might not have happened that way. The murderer might try to attack once again or he might not try.”<sup>5</sup> In both of the last two sentences the reference point for the assessment of epistemic modality (‘(it) might have’, ‘(it) might’) is localized in the narrative past; the main verbs themselves are in the past and the future respectively.

In English, a future-oriented modal sentence is encoded in a special way when presented from the perspective of a past moment of epistemic assessment: ‘may’ becomes ‘might’. This is illustrated by the following sentence: “The murderer **might** try to attack once again or he **might** not try.” Contrast, in non-narrative context: “He **may** try to attack once again.”

On the other hand, a past-oriented modal sentence in a past narrative context (past within the past) has no special coding: “It **might have happened** that way or it **might not have happened** that way.” Contrast, in non-narrative context, the following sentence that Inspector Ullendorff might say: “I **might have solved** the murder at that very moment if only I had focused on the really important evidence.” Here the moment of the epistemic assessment is the present while the state of affairs is localized in the past, yet the form of the main verb remains identical in the two cases: “might have Verb-ed”.

Now let me turn to Amharic. In the novel by Bərhanu Zārihun *Ma’əbäl* [The Wave] the detached narrator pushes forward the plotline in the past tense, while the protagonist’s own consciousness (mental state) and depiction of background facts about the narrated world are localized in the present tense. This pattern is much more common in Amharic than in English. In the examples below, I will translate the Amharic in two ways: first, following the tense usage of Amharic; second, following the tense usage of English.

(3)	<b>ለሥጋቱ</b> <i>lä-səgat-u</i> for-concern-POSS.3SM	<b>ብዙ</b> <i>bəzu</i> many	<b>ምክንያቶች</b> <i>məknəyat-očč</i> reason-PL	<b>ነበሩት ።</b> <i>näbbär-u-t.</i> exist\PFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM	<b>ሥራ</b> <i>səra</i> job
	<b>የለውም ።</b> <i>yäll-ä-w-(ə)-mm.</i> exist.NEG-3SM-OBJ.3SM-NEG	<b>እንዴት</b> <i>əndet</i> how	<b>ይኖራል?</b> [...] <i>yə-nor=all-ə?</i> 3SM-live\IPFV=NPST-3SM	<b>ይኖርበት</b> <i>yə-nor-(ə)-bb-ät</i> 3SM-live\IPFV-in-OBJ.3SM	

<sup>5</sup> Invented by Orin Gensler.

<b>የነበረው</b>	<b>ቤት</b>	<b>ሌላ</b>	<b>ሰው</b>	<b>እንደተከራየው</b>	<b>ጓደኞቹ</b>
<i>yä-näbbär-äw</i>	<i>bet</i>	<i>lela</i>	<i>säw</i>	<i>ändä-täkärayy-ä-w</i>	<i>g<sup>w</sup>addänn-očč-u</i>
REL-PST-DEF	house	another	person	COMP-rent\PFV-3SM-OBJ.3SM	friend-PL-POSS.3SM
<b>አይተው</b>	<b>ነግረውታል</b> # [...]		<b>ጓደኞቹ</b>	<b>ካላስጠጉት</b>	
<i>ayt-äw</i>	<i>nägr-äw-(ə)-t=all. [...]</i>		<i>g<sup>w</sup>addänn-očč-u</i>	<i>k-al-astägg-u-t</i>	
see\GER-3PL	tell\GER-3PL-OBJ.3SM=PF		friend-PL-POSS.3SM	if-NEG-take.in\PFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM	
<b>በስተቀር ሌላ</b>	<b>መግቢያ</b>	<b>የለውም</b> #		<b>እርግጥ</b>	<b>አፍ</b>
<i>bästaqär lela</i>	<i>mägbiya</i>	<i>yäll-ä-w-(ə)-mm.</i>		<i>ərgəṭ</i>	<i>af</i>
apart.from another	place.to.stay	exist.NEG-3SM-OBJ.3SM-NEG		of.course	mouth
<b>አውጥተው</b>	<b>እምቢ አይሉት</b>			<b>ይሆናል</b> #	<b>ከልብ</b>
<i>awṭət-äw</i>	<i>ambi a-y-l-u-t</i>			<i>yəhonall.</i>	<i>kä-ləbb</i>
open\GER-3PL	no	NEG-3PL-say\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM		EPST	from-heart
<b>ፈቃደኞች</b>	<b>ስለ</b>	<b>መሆናቸው</b>	<b>እርግጠኛ</b>	<b>አይደለም</b> [MBL 11: 7-21]	
<i>fäqadänn-očč</i>	<i>sälä</i>	<i>māhon-aččäw</i>	<i>ərgəṭännä</i>	<i>aydäll-ä-mm</i>	
volunteer-PL	about	COP\VN-POSS.3PL	sure	COP.NEG-3SM-NEG	

**Amharic-style:** ‘He had lots of reasons for his concern. He doesn’t have work. How is he going to live? [...] His friends have seen that somebody else rented the house where he used to live and told him so [...]. Unless his friends take him in, he has no place to stay. Of course, **they may not openly refuse him**. He is not sure whether their offer will be sincere’

**English-style:** ‘He had lots of reasons for his concern. He didn’t have work. How was he going to live? [...] His friends had seen that somebody else had rented the house where he used to live and had told him so [...] Unless his friends took him in, he would have no place to stay. Of course, **they might not openly refuse him (they probably wouldn’t openly refuse him)**. He was not sure whether their offer would be sincere’

Now let us change the temporal structure of this Amharic narration so that it consistently recounts the protagonist’s stream of consciousness from a vantage point (moment of epistemic assessment) located in the past. This, too, is a possible way to use tense in an Amharic narrative.

(4)	<b>ለሥጋቱ</b>	<b>ብዙ</b>	<b>ምክንያቶች</b>	<b>ነበሩት</b> #	<b>ሥራ</b>
	<i>lä-səgat-u</i>	<i>bəzu</i>	<i>məknəyat-očč</i>	<i>näbbär-u-t.</i>	<i>səra</i>
	for-worry-POSS.3SM	many	reason-PL	exist\PFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM	job
	<b>አልነበረውም</b> #		<b>እንዴት</b>	<b>ይኖራል?</b> [...]	
	<i>al-näbbär-ä-w-(ə)-mm.</i>		<i>ändet</i>	<i>yə-nor=all-ø? [...]</i>	
	NEG-exist\PFV-3SM-OBJ.3SM-NEG		how	3SM-live\IPFV=NPST-3SM	

<b>ይኖርበት</b> <i>yə-nor-(ə)-bb-ät</i> 3SM-live\IPFV-in-OBJ.3SM	<b>የነበረው</b> <i>yä-näbbär-äw</i> REL-PST-DEF	<b>ቤት</b> <i>bet</i> house	<b>ሌላ</b> <i>lela</i> another	<b>ሰው</b> <i>säw</i> person	<b>ተከራይቶ</b> <i>täkäräyt-o</i> rent\GER-3SM
<b>እንደነበር</b> <i>ändä-näbbär</i> COMP-PST	<b>ጓደኞቹ</b> <i>g<sup>w</sup>addäññ-očč-u</i> friend-PL-POSS.3SM	<b>አይተው</b> <i>ayt-äw</i> see\GER-3PL	<b>ነግረውት</b> <i>nägr-äw-(ə)-t</i> tell\GER-OBJ.3SM	<b>ነበር</b> <i>näbbär.</i> PST	
<b>ጓደኞቹ</b> <i>g<sup>w</sup>addäññ-očč-u</i> friend-PL-POSS.3SM	<b>ባያስጠጉት</b> <i>b-a-y-astägg-u-t</i> if-NEG-3PL-take.in\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM		<b>ኖሮ</b> <i>noro</i> COND	<b>ሌላ</b> <i>lela</i> another	<b>መግቢያ</b> <i>mägbiya</i> entrance
<b>አልነበረውም</b> <i>al-näbbär-äw-ə-mm</i> NEG-exist\PST-OBJ.3SM-NEG	<b>እርግጥ</b> <i>ərgət</i> of.course	<b>አፍ</b> <i>af</i> mouth	<b>አውጥተው</b> <i>awtət-äw</i> open\GER-3PL	<b>እምቢ</b> <i>ambi</i> no	
<b>አይሉት</b> <i>a-y-l-u-t</i> NEG-3PL-say\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM	<b>ይሆናል</b> <i>yəhonall</i> EPST	<b>፡፡ ከልብ</b> <i>kä-ləbb</i> from-heart	<b>ፈቃደኞች</b> <i>fäqadäññ-očč</i> volunteer-PL	<b>ስለ</b> <i>sälä</i> about	
<b>መሆናቸው</b> <i>mähonaččäw</i> COP\VN-POSS.3PL	<b>እርግጠኛ</b> <i>ərgətäñña</i> sure	<b>አልነበርም</b> <i>al-näbbär-ä-mm</i> NEG-COP\PST-3SM-NEG			

‘He had lots of reasons for his concern. He didn’t have work. How was he going to live? [...] His friends had seen that somebody else had rented the house where he used to live and had told him so [...] If his friends did not take him in, he would have no place to stay. Of course, they **would not openly refuse him**. He was not sure whether their offer would be sincere’

Note in particular that here, with the moment of epistemic assessment shifted to the past, if we wish to retain the temporal location of the state of affairs **እምቢ አይሉት** *ambi aylut* ‘they will not refuse’ in the future there is no choice but to leave the verb-form as it is. Turning **እምቢ አይሉት** *ambi aylut* into the negative perfective **እምቢ አላሉት** *ambi alalut* ‘they did not refuse’ would change the meaning: it would localize the situation of not refusing in the past.

If the narrator pushes the plotline forward in the past and the given state of affairs is itself localized in the past (relative to the time of narration, i.e. past-in-the-past) the form that the main verb takes is the gerund. The relevant modalized gerunds in example (5) are *abbäsačt<sup>w</sup>-at* ‘it annoyed her’ and *fälləg-a* ‘she wanted’.

- (5) ወደ ጫልቱ ቤት በሩጫ ተመለስኩ። የጫልቱ ቤት በር  
*wädä Čaltu bet bä-ruča tämalläs-ku yä-Čaltu bet bärr*  
 to PN house by-running return\PFV-1SG GEN-PN house door  
 ተዘግቷል። ምናልባት የእኔ ነገር አበሳጭቶታት  
*täzägt<sup>w</sup>=all-ø. mənalbat yä-əne nägär abbäsaçt<sup>w</sup>-at*  
 be.closed\GER-3SM=PF-3SM perhaps GEN-1SG thing annoy\GER-3SM-OBJ.3SF  
 ቶሎ መተኛት ፈልጎ ይሆናል<sup>[GQ 377: 21-23]</sup>  
*tolo mätäñnat fälləg-a yəhonall*  
 early sleep\VN want\GER-3SF EPST<sub>COP</sub><sup>6</sup>

‘I ran back to Čaltu’s house. The door to Čaltu’s house was closed. It may be that my behaviour annoyed her and she wanted to go to bed early’ / ‘My behavior might have annoyed her and she might have wanted to go to bed early’

From the analysis of the examples above we can see that, when the temporal reference point is localized in the past, the language has no way to unambiguously refer to a present/future state of affairs (future in the past) expressed by a proposition modalized with *yəhonall* ‘may’. This is another manifestation of the fact that English-style rules of sequence of tenses do not apply for Amharic. The charts below compare which modal forms are employed in English and Amharic with respect to two parameters: the moment of epistemic assessment and the temporal localization of the state of affairs.

TABLE 18. English “may”

Moment of epistemic assessment	Temporal localization of the state of affairs with respect to the moment of epistemic assessment	
	Present	Past
Present	may	might have
Past	might	might have

<sup>6</sup> The meaning of this gloss will be explained further on in Section 6.1.4.1 (ii. Excursus on clefting).



**English-style:** ‘As I was waiting for the moment that the priest would leave, the time seemed to be endless. I didn’t want to reveal my presence because I was afraid that he might talk to me.’

The analysis above was meant to examine how the temporal localization of the moment of epistemic assessment may be reflected in modal epistemic expressions. In English the modal verb can express tense, but this option does not exist in Amharic. In English when the modal verb changes its tense, the modal proposition changes its tense. In Amharic the choice of the tense form of the embedded proposition has nothing to do with the moment of epistemic assessment. It does not matter if the moment is deictic “now” or narrative. In English we do express this difference, by conjugating the modal verb for tense. In Amharic we do not have this option; the language can convey temporality differences only by appealing to the context. Context will tell us whether the moment of epistemic assessment lies in the present or the past; this difference is not realized by any formal marking.

### 6.1.3. Lexical and copular epistemificators vs. time

The interaction between lexical (verbal) epistemificators and time is fairly straightforward: one of the requirements for considering an epistemic expression as a modal epistemic expression (epistemificator) is that it should be morphologically in the present tense (compound imperfective, the copulas *näw* and *yəhonall*, the verb of existence *allä*) and that its lexical aspect should be stative (see Section 2.4.3). In view of this precondition any epistemic expressions in the past and future, and outside the stative lexical aspect, have been excluded from the status of epistemificators. Consider the following example:

- (7) “የጀርመን ራዲዮ” ሲባል የአባቴ ራዲዮ  
*yä-ğärmän radiyo s-i-bbal* *yä-abbat-e radiyo*  
 GEN-German radio when-3SM-be.said\IPFV GEN-father-POSS.1SG radio  
 ጀርመን አገር የተሰራ ይመስለኝ ነበር<sub>[GQ 91: 12-13]</sub>  
*ğärmän agär yä-täsärra* *yə-mäsl-äññ* *näbbär*  
 German country REL-be.made\PFV.3SM 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG PST  
 ‘When “German radio” was mentioned it seemed to me (habitually) that my father’s radio was made in Germany’

Sentence (7) contains **ይመስለኝ ነበር** *yämäslännäñ näbbär* ‘it used to seem to me’ which is the past habitual form of the non-copular epistemificator *yä-X yämäslännäñall* ‘it seems to me that X, it appears to me that X’. Both expressions, the one in the present and the one in the past, are epistemic; but only *yä-X yämäslännäñall* ‘it seems to me that X’ can be regarded as an epistemificator.

The temporal and aspectual rigidity of the epistemificator head contrasts with a relative flexibility of the epistemized head in this regard. This flexibility is dependent on the type of complement clause in which the epistemized head is involved. The greatest degree of flexibility is demonstrated by a complement clause introduced by the inflectable quotative linker **ብዩ** *bəyye*, for here what precedes the linker is an independent sentence able to express the whole spectrum of temporal and aspectual forms (as well as modal). Thus, sentence (8) contains an epistemized head in the future whereas sentence (9) has the epistemized head in the past.

(8) **በስልክ በሚደረገው የሎተሪ ጨዋታ ከፍተኛ**  
*bä-salk bä-mm-i-ddärräg-äw yä-loteri čäwata käffätännä*  
 by-phone in-REL-3SM-be.done\IPFV-DEF GEN-lottery game high  
**ገንዘብ ይሰበሰባል ብዩ እገምታለሁ**<sup>7</sup>  
*gänzäb yä-ssäbässäb=all-ø bəyy-e ə-gämmät=all-ähu*  
 money 3SM-be.collected\IPFV=NPST-3SM say\GER-1SG 1SG-estimate\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I estimate: a lot of money **will be collected** in the lottery game which is carried out by phone’

(9) **ቀድሞ ዝም ብለው የሚያዩዋቸው ወፎች የቱሪስት**  
*qädmō zəmm bäl-äw yämm-i-(y)-ay-u-(w)-aččäw wäf-očč yä-turist*  
 previously silent say\GER-3PL REL-3PL-see\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.3PL bird-PL GEN-tourist  
**መስህብ ስለመሆናቸው ግንዛቤ አስጨብጠናል**  
*mäshəb sälä-mähon-aččäw gənəzzabe asčäbbət-än=all*  
 attraction because-COP\VN-POSS.3PL awareness make.raise\GER-1PL=PF  
**ብዩ እገምታለሁ**<sup>8</sup>  
*bəyy-e ə-gämmät=all-ähu*  
 say\GER-1SG 1SG-assume\IPFV=1SG

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ethiopianreporter.com/index.php/kibur-minister>. [Accessed: 31.03.2019]

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/«የኢትዮጵያ ቱሪዝም ኢንዱስትሪ ትልቁ ክፍተት የተፈጥሮ ቱሪዝም በጣም እየሞተ መሆኑ ነው»>. [Accessed: 31.03.2019]

‘I assume: **we have raised** (their) awareness about the fact that birds at which they previously just looked indifferently are (now) a tourist attraction’

Slightly more restrictive in regard to temporal and aspectual flexibility is a complement clause introduced by *ändä-*, which requires either the perfective or the simple imperfective (non-finite) form. Using these two forms, alone or with the past auxiliary, we can express all temporal and aspectual configurations with the exception of the perfect (gerund + the auxiliary *allä*). In the following example the complementizer *ändä-* is attached to the past auxiliary *näbbär* and preceded by the main verb in the imperfective:

- (10) **ሆኖም ከደህንነት ጥበቃ አንጻር እዚያው እየተሰናዳ**  
*honomm kä-dāhənənnät təbbäqa anṣar ə-zziyaw əyyä-täsänadda*  
 however from-security protection perspective at-that PROG-be.prepared\PFV.3SM  
**ይቀርብላቸው እንደነበር እገምታለሁ**<sup>[NB 66: 35-36]</sup>  
*yə-qärb-(ə)-ll-aččäw ändä-näbbär ə-gämmät=all-ähu*  
 3SM-be.served\IPFV-BEN-3SPOL COMP-PST 1SG-assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘However, I assume: for security reasons [food] **was being prepared** there (and) was served to him’

The most restrictive type of complement clause temporally is that introduced by the complementizer *änd-*, which is always followed by an epistemized head in the imperfective form and which locates the epistemized in the future (or, with the progressive, in the present). For detailed discussion see Section 4.4.2.1; here two examples will suffice:

- (11) **ምናልባትም ዶ/ር ዐቢይ ዳያስፖራውን ለገንዘቡ ብቻ**  
*mənalbat-(ə)-mm do/r Abiyy dayaspora-w-(ə)-n lä-gänzäb-u bəčča*  
 maybe-FOC Dr. PN diaspora-DEF-ACC for-money-POSS.3SM only  
**ነው የፈለጉት ወደሚል የተሳሳተ**  
*n-äw yä-fälläg-u-t wädä-mm-i-l yä-täsasat-ä*  
 COP-3SM REL-want\PFV-3PL-DEF to-REL-3SM-say\IPFV REL-be.erroneous\PFV-3SM  
**መደምደሚያ እንዳይወስድን እሠጋለሁ**<sup>9</sup>  
*mädämdämiya änd-a-y-wäsd-än ə-säg=all-ähu*  
 conclusion COMP-NEG-3SM-take\IPFV-OBJ.1PL 1SG-worry\IPFV-NPST-1SG  
 ‘I worry **lest** we come to the erroneous conclusion: maybe Dr. Abiy wanted the diaspora only for its money’

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.ethiopianorama.com/?p=89197>. [Accessed 27.06.2019]

- (12) **ራሳችንን**                      **እያታለልን**                      **እንዳይሆን**  
*ras-aččän-(ə)-n*                      *əyy-atalläl-(ə)-n*                      *ənd-a-y-hon*  
 self-POSS.1PL-ACC    PROG-deceive\PFV-1PL    COMP-NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV

**እሠጋለሁ**<sup>10</sup>  
*ə-säg=all-ähu*  
 1SG-worry\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I worry **lest** we are deceiving ourselves’

The epistemized head can also be a verbal noun which, being an abstract, nominalized form, is inherently timeless (Kapeliuk 1988: 23). Nevertheless, it lends itself to being temporally interpreted through various means. First of all, its temporal nature can often be inferred from the meaning of the sentence taken together with the context of the utterance. Thus, in sentence (13) the verbal noun *malät* (in **አለማለታቸውን** *alä-malät-aččäw-ən*) is interpreted as located in the past because it is a part of a narration about a past incident:

- (13) **ሴትዮዋ**                      **አጠገቤ**                      **እንደ** **መቀመጣቸው**                      **መጠን** **ወራጅ**  
*setəyyo-wa*                      *attägäb-e*                      *əndä* *mäqqämät-aččäw*                      *mätän* *wärağ*  
 woman-DEF.F    next.to-POSS.1SG    as    sit\VN-POSS.3SPOL    extent    one.who.gets.off  
**አለማለታቸውን**                      **እርግጠኛ**                      **ነኝ**<sup>11</sup>  
*alä-malät-aččäw-(ə)-n*                      *ərgətännä*                      *n-änn*  
 NEG-say\VN-POSS.3SPOL-ACC    sure                      COP-1SG

‘Since the woman was sitting next to me, I am sure (of) **her not having said**, “I’m getting off (e.g. a bus)”’

In the next example, the future interpretation of *magñät* is inferred from the conditional structure of the sentence coupled with the entire meaning of the sentence.

- (14) **በየሠፈሩ**                      **ያለ**                      **እድሮች**                      **በዚህ**                      **«የትልቅ**  
*bä-yyä-säfar-u*                      *y-all-u*                      *əddər-očč*                      *bä-zziḥ*                      *yä-təlləq*  
 in-every-viceinity-DEF    REL-exist-3PL                      burial.society-PL                      in-this                      GEN-elder  
**ሰው» አሠራራቸው**                      **ከቀጠለ**                      **ወራሽ**  
*säw*                      *assärar-aččäw*                      *kä-qätṭäl-u*                      *wäraš*  
 man                      manner.of.working-POSS.3PL                      if-continue\PFV-3PL                      successor

<sup>10</sup> <http://ajebnew.org/sport/story-in-amharic/40674>. [Accessed: 18.04.2019]

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/9059>. [Accessed: 01.08.2018]

<b>ማግኘታቸውን</b>	<b>እጠራጠራለሁ</b> <sup>12</sup>
<i>magnät-aččäw-(ə)-n</i>	<i>ə-ttärattär=all-äbu</i>
obtain\VN-POSS.3PL-ACC	1SG-doubt\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I have doubts (about) burial societies, which exist everywhere, **having** any successors if they continue working in this “big man” style’

One way to specify the time reference of a verbal noun is to turn it into a headless relative clause followed by the copula in its verbal-noun form, which is a synonymous construction. The form of the relative clause, containing the imperfective or the perfective, is responsible for the temporal characteristic: present/future vs. past, respectively. In the following sentence (15) the complement of the epistemificator ‘raise doubts’ is basically the verbal noun *lä-mäqqänäbabär-u* ‘about its being organized’. This is then recast as *yä-täqänäbabbär-ä lä-mähon-u* ‘about its being what was organized’. The latter is the perfective relative form, which imposes the past interpretation.

(15) <b>የተፈጸመው</b>	<b>ወንጀል</b>	<b>ደግሞ</b>	<b>ረቀቅ</b>	<b>ያለ</b>	<b>ችሎታ</b>
<i>yä-täfäṣṣämm-ä</i>	<i>wänḡäl</i>	<i>däḡmo</i>	<i>räqäqq</i>	<i>y-al-ä</i>	<i>čalota</i>
REL-be.committed\PFV-3SM	crime	also	refined	REL-say\PFV-3SM	ability
<b>ባላቸው</b>	<b>ሰዎች</b>	<b>የተቀነባበረ</b>	<b>ለመሆኑ</b>		
<i>b-all-aččäw</i>	<i>säw-očč</i>	<i>yä-täqänäbabbär-ä</i>	<i>lä-mähon-u</i>		
by-exist-OBJ.3PL	person-PL	REL-be.organized\PFV-3SM	for-COP\VN-3SM		
<b>አያጠራጥርም</b> <sub>[MAH 103: 9-10]</sub>					
<i>a-y-attärattär-(ə)-mm</i>					
NEG-3SM-raise.doubts\IPFV-NEG					

‘Also it doesn’t raise any doubts about the crime which was committed **having been organized** by people who have refined abilities’

In the case of epistemificators involving the verbal noun መንገሩ *mängäru*<sub>S</sub> + the verb *qärrä*: መንገሩ አይቀሬ ነው *mängäru*<sub>S</sub> *ayqäre näw* ‘his tellings is inevitable’ and መንገሩ የማይቀር ነው *mängäru*<sub>S</sub> *yämmayqär näw* ‘his tellings is inevitable’, the verbal noun participates in conveying the future meaning as already discussed in 5.9.2.

#### 6.1.4. Grammatical epistemificators vs. time

We turn now from lexical to grammatical epistemificators. As mentioned earlier, the grammatical epistemificators can be divided into three types when it comes to their

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.danielkibret.com/2010/05/blog-post\\_07.html](http://www.danielkibret.com/2010/05/blog-post_07.html). [Accessed: 10.10.2017]

behaviour vis-à-vis the category of time. Here we will discuss each type in turn, paying more attention than in the previous section to the question of aspect.

#### 6.1.4.1. Temporality marked on the epistemized head

##### i. Grammatical epistemifiers and their temporal forms

Temporality is marked on the epistemized head in the following epistemifiers: **(ይነግር)<sub>s</sub>** **ይሆናል** (*yənägr<sub>s</sub> yəhonall* ‘he may tells<sub>s</sub>, he might tells’), **(ይነግር)<sub>s</sub>** **ይሆን** (*yənägr<sub>s</sub> yəhon?* ‘might he tells?’), **ሊነግር<sub>s</sub>** **ይችላል<sub>s</sub>** *linägr<sub>s</sub> yəčəlalls*, ‘he could<sub>s</sub> tells, he may<sub>s</sub> tells’ and **ማወቅ** **አለበት<sub>s</sub>** *mawäq alläbbät<sub>s</sub>* ‘he must<sub>s</sub> know, he should<sub>s</sub> know’. These forms occur in paradigmatic opposition to corresponding forms in the past and progressive, as presented in Table 20, as usual with a form of the dummy verb **ነገረ** *näggärä* (**መንገር** *mängär*) ‘tell’ or **አወቀ** *awwäqä* (**ማወቅ** *mawäq*) ‘know’ in the slot of the epistemized head. There are two formal features common to these epistemifiers: first and most important, the temporality of the epistemifier is expressed through the grammatical form of the epistemized head (simple imperfective *yənägr* / verbal noun *mawäq* vs. gerund *nägro* vs. progressive *əyyänäggärä*); second, a form of the copula appears prominently somewhere in the paradigm of all four epistemifiers. Even though in the present, these epistemifiers have rather diverse forms, in the past and in the progressive they have a common denominator which is captured by the following formula: GER/PROG + copula (+ epistemifier head *alläbbät* or *yəčəlall*), the last element only occurring in two of the four forms.

TABLE 20. Epistemifiers and their temporal forms

Present (habitual) /future	Past	Progressive
<i>yənägr<sub>s</sub> yəhonall</i>	<i>nägro<sub>s</sub> yəhonall</i>	<i>əyyänäggäräs yəhonall</i>
<i>yənägr<sub>s</sub> yəhon?</i>	<i>nägro<sub>s</sub> yəhon?</i>	<i>əyyänäggäräs yəhon?</i>
<i>linägr<sub>s</sub> yəčəlalls</i>	<i>nägro<sub>s</sub> lihon yəčəlall</i>	<i>əyyänäggäräs lihon yəčəlall</i>
<i>mawäq alläbb(ät)<sub>s</sub></i>	<i>nägro<sub>s</sub> məhon alläbbät</i>	<i>əyyänäggäräs məhon alläbbät</i>

This formula fits, first of all, to the epistemificators  $(yənägr)_s yəhonall$  and  $(yənägr)_s yəhon?$ , since the auxiliaries  $yəhonall$  and  $yəhon?$ , which they contain, are actually a frozen modalized copula. One could imagine that the past and progressive forms of these two epistemificators might look like these:  $nägro_s yəhon yəhonall$ <sup>13</sup> and  $əyyänäggäräs yəhon yəhonall$ ;  $nägro_s yəhon yəhon?$  and  $əyyänäggäräs yəhon yəhon?$ . But the accumulation of multiple  $yəhon$ 's in one construction would lead to a kind of formal stuttering and so the language avoids it. In the past and progressive forms of the epistemificators we deal with two slightly different formal patterns. With  $linägr_s yəcəlalls$ , 'he could<sub>s</sub> tells' and  $marwäq alläbb(ät)_s$  'he must<sub>s</sub> know' the basic pattern is augmented by the epistemized head in the gerund and in the progressive; while in  $(yənägr)_s yəhonall$  'he may tells' and  $(yənägr)_s yəhon?$  'might he tells?' the imperfective form  $yənägr$  is discarded and replaced by the epistemized head in the gerund and in the progressive.

As remarked, the past and progressive forms of these epistemificators contain the copula. Why? First of all, the epistemificator  $linägr_s yəcəlalls$  is intrinsically future-oriented, undoubtedly because of the complementizer  $lə-$ . This epistemificator cannot express the past or progressive in a direct way. To convey pastness or progressiveness, the temporal marking is localized not on the epistemificator head but on the epistemized head. The epistemized head takes the gerund and progressive forms, respectively; the slot after  $lə-$  is occupied by a semantically empty copula in its  $linägr$  form (i.e.  $libon$ ). The epistemificator  $marwäq alläbb(ät)_s$  behaves similarly. When a plain verbal noun occurs as the complement of a verb, it takes its temporal value from the temporal value of that verb. Here the verb is  $alläbbät$ , which is in the present; hence the whole construction is in the present and cannot directly express past or progressive. Therefore, as with  $linägr_s yəcəlalls$  the temporality is expressed on the epistemized head, and the complement slot of  $alläbbät$  is filled by an empty copula, here in its verbal noun form (i.e.  $məhon$ ). In both epistemificators it is impossible to have this gerund or progressive directly followed by  $yəcəlall$  or  $alläbbät$ ; a helping verb is needed—the copula.

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<sup>13</sup> It is a possible construction which is however reserved for indicating lower epistemic strength.

ii. Excursus on clefting

Epistemificators containing Gerund + COP (GER + *yəhonall*, GER + *yəhon*, GER + *libon yəčalall*, GER + *məhon alläbbät*) lend themselves in principle to two analyses: either as an epistemificator in a “plain” sentence, or an epistemificator in a cleft or a reduced cleft sentence. In the cleft interpretation, the copula does double duty: it is part of the epistemificator, but at the same time it is also the copula which is an intrinsic part of any cleft. In the case of reduced cleft sentences, it can sometimes be hard to decide whether we are looking at a plain sentence or a reduced cleft, since they have the same form; only an appeal to context can guide us in this decision. We have already talked about *yəhonall* as a modalized copula in cleft sentences (doing double duty) in Section 5.3.4. In GER + *yəhonall* sentences, I will distinguish these two types in the glossing: when the copula *yəhonall* appears purely as part of the epistemificator, in a non-cleft sentence, I will gloss it as “EPST”; when it is in a cleft sentence, I will gloss it EPST<sub>COP</sub>. In the constructions *nägros libon yəčalall* and *nägros məhon alläbbät*, where the copula is mechanically inserted as a semantically empty copula, I will not make an analogous [+/- cleft] distinction in the glossing; the gloss will be simply COP.

What should be stressed here is that the choice between cleft and non-cleft interpretation does not affect the modal semantics, which remains the same in both cases. Here are some examples: “plain” sentence (16) contains a modal auxiliary *yəhonall*; sentence (17) is a cleft with appropriately glossed *yəhonall*; sentence (18) is a reduced cleft; and (19) is a cleft sentence.

(16)	<b>ኤልፓም</b>	<b>ተመሳሳይ</b>	<b>ችግር</b>	<b>አለበት ።</b>	<b>ኤሌክትሪክ</b>
	<i>ELPA-mm</i>	<i>tämäsassay</i>	<i>čaggər</i>	<i>all-ä-bb-ät.</i>	<i>elektrik</i>
	PN-FOC	similar	problem	exist\PFV-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM	electricity
	<b>ወደ</b>	<b>ጎረቤት</b>	<b>አገራት</b>	<b>በማስተላለፍ</b>	<b>የውጭ</b>
	<i>wädä</i>	<i>goräbet</i>	<i>agär-at</i>	<i>bä-mastäläläf</i>	<i>yä-wəčč</i>
	to	neighbour	country-PL	by-transmit\VN	GEN-foreign
	<b>ምንዛሬ</b>				
	<i>mənəzzare</i>				
	<b>አገኛለሁ</b>		<b>እያለ</b>	<b>ለበርካታ</b>	<b>ዓመታት</b>
	<i>agäññ=all-ähu</i>		<i>əyyä-al-ä</i>	<i>lä-bärkatta</i>	<i>amät-at</i>
	1SG.gain\IPFV=NPST-1SG		PROG-say\PFV-3SM	for-many	year-PL
	<b>እቅዱን</b>	<b>ሲናገር</b>		<b>ሰምታችሁ</b>	<b>ይሆናል</b> <sub>[AA 848]</sub>
	<i>əqqəd-u-n</i>	<i>s-i-nnaggär</i>		<i>sämt-aččəhu</i>	<i>yəhonall</i>
	plan-POSS.3SM-ACC	when-3SM-talk\IPFV		hear\GER-2PL	EPST

‘ELPA<sup>14</sup> has got a similar problem. You **might have heard** when it talked for years about its plan saying, “I will gain foreign currency by transmitting electricity to neighbouring countries”’

- (17) የፕሮግራሙ ባለቤቶች ገንዘብ ወይም ስም  
*yä-program-u baläbet-očč gänzäb wäyämm səm*  
 GEN-programme-DEF owner-PL money or name
- እናገኝበታለን ብለው ይሆናል  
*ənn-agänn-(ə)-bb-ät=all-än bəl-äw yəhonall*  
 1PL-gain\IPFV-APPL-OBJ.3SM=NPST-1PL say\GER-3PL EPST<sub>COP</sub>
- ያቀዱት<sub>[AA 836]</sub>  
*yä-aqqäd-u-t*  
 REL-plan\PFV-3PL-DEF

**Amharic-style:** ‘That the owners of the programme planned it might be (because) they thought, “We will gain money and fame (lit. name) through it”’

**English-style:** ‘The owners of the programme planned it because they might have thought, “We will gain money or fame through it”’ OR

‘The reason why the owners of the programme planned it might be that they thought, “We will gain money and fame through it”’

- (18) ምናልባት በክፍል ውስጥ ለሕፃኑ የተሰጠው ተግባር  
*mənalbat bə-kəfl wəst lä-həšan-u yä-täsätt-ä-w təgbar*  
 perhaps in-class in for-child-DEF REL-be.given\PFV-3SM-DEF task
- አስቸጋሪና ተስፋ አስቆራጭ ሆኖበት ወይም  
*asčaggari-(ə)-nna täsfa asqorač hon-o-bb-ät wäyämm*  
 difficult-and discouraging COP\GER-3SM-MAL-OBJ.3SM or
- ቤተሰባዊ ችግር ኖሮበት ወይም ሌላ ችግር  
*betäsäbarwi čaggər nor-o-bb-ät wäyämm lela čaggər*  
 family problem exist\GER-3SM-MAL-OBJ.3SM or another problem
- ገጥሞት ሊሆን ይችላል<sup>15</sup>  
*gätm-o-t l-i-hon yə-čəl=all-ø*  
 happen\GER-3SM-OBJ COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘Perhaps the task which was given to the child in the class could have been too difficult for him and discouraging, or there could have existed a problem at home or another problem could have happened to him’ [Reduced cleft in context]

<sup>14</sup> Ethiopian “Electric Light and Power Authority”.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/1767>. [Accessed: 16.04.2019]

(19)	<b>በእርግጠኝነት</b>	<b>የአካባቢውን</b>	<b>ሰው</b>	<b>ጨርሶ</b>	<b>መሆን</b>
	<i>bä-ərgätäññännät</i>	<i>yä-akkababi-w-(ə)-n</i>	<i>säw</i>	<i>čärräs-o</i>	<i>mähon</i>
	in-certainty	GEN-vicinity-DEF-ACC	people	finish.off\GER-3SM	COP\VN
	<b>አለበት</b>	<b>ከፍየል</b>	<b>ጋር</b>	<b>ትግል</b>	<b>የጀመረው!</b> <sup>16</sup>
	<i>all-ä-bb-ät</i>	<i>kä-fəyyäl</i>	<i>gar</i>	<i>təgəl</i>	<i>yä-ğämmär-ä-ጥ</i>
	exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM	with-goat	with	battle	REL-begin\PFV-3SM-DEF

**Amharic-style:** ‘With certainty, that he began a battle with goats must be (that) he finished off the people in the vicinity’

**English-style:** ‘With certainty, it must be because he finished off the people in the vicinity that he began a battle with goats’

### iii. Location in time of the state of affairs (epistemized)

This section deals with the location in time of the state of affairs which is expressed by the content of the grammatically epistemized proposition. As mentioned, there are three forms that the main verb can take in modal contexts: the imperfective, the gerund and the progressive. There has been much discussion about whether one should examine the temporal structure of Amharic in term of tense or of aspect (see references in Section 6.1.1 ftn. 2). Typically the various “tense/aspect” forms of the Amharic verb express sometimes tense, sometimes aspect, sometimes both, and I do not want to get into the debate about whether the one or the other is more “basic” or “essential”. I would like to sidestep this discussion, which in any event has focused on main indicative clauses, as much as possible, concentrating instead on saying in plain language (without a rigorous, comprehensive, and consistent theoretical approach) what is needed to present the temporal structure of epistemic modal utterances. Progressive seems unavoidably an aspectual category, and I will not dispute this. For convenience (and hopefully for the sake of clarity), the forms called “imperfective” and “gerund” will be presented here primarily in terms of tense, though with different analyses for stative and non-stative verbs.<sup>17</sup> It should be stated explicitly, however, that the imperfective also frequently has a clearly aspectual nuance (habitual), as well as a clearly tense-oriented nuance (future). As for the verbal noun, it has

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.shukshukta.net/index.php?postid=11107>. [Accessed: 15.04.2019]

<sup>17</sup> In Krzyżanowska (2016a), I analysed the temporal relations of epistemic expressions in terms of relative tense. This no longer seems to me necessary, since the point of reference is always “now”.

no temporal value of its own but takes the temporal value of either the preceding or the following verb.

The Amharic temporal distinctions which, in the indicative, are available in abundance and are fairly sharply profiled have an intrinsic tendency to some degree of blurring in the modal context which results from the fact that states of affairs are conceptualized as unreal. As a corollary to that, temporal distinctions are more difficult to pin down. As demonstrated in Table 21 below, Amharic has seven main temporal constructions in the indicative, some of which become neutralized with the epistemificators (ይነግር)ያ ይሆናል (*yənägr*)ያ *yəhonall* ‘he may tells, he might tells’, (ይነግር)ያ ይሆን (*yənägr*)ያ *yəhon?* ‘might he tells?’, ሊነግር ይችላል *linägr*ያ *yəčəlall*ያ, ‘he couldያ tells, he mayያ tells’ and ግወቅ አለበት *mawäq alläbb(ät)*ያ ‘he mustያ know, he shouldያ know’. The three neutralizations are as follows: the distinction between the present and past habitual is neutralized to *yənägr yəhonall*; the distinction between different past tenses is neutralized to *nägro yəhonall*; and the distinction between present and past continuous is neutralized to *əyyänäggärä yəhonall*.

TABLE 21. Tense/aspect in the indicative and in the epistemic modal context (with the action verb *näggärä*)

Indicative	Epistemic modal
<b>ይነግራል</b> <i>yənägrall</i> ‘he (habitually) tells’, ‘he will tell’	<b>ይነግር ይሆናል</b> <i>yənägr yəhonall</i> ‘he may (habitually) tell’, ‘he may tell’
<b>ይነግር ነበር</b> <i>yənägr näbbär</i> ‘he used to tell’	<b>ይነግር ይሆናል</b> <i>yənägr yəhonall</i> ‘he may have (habitually) told’
<b>ነግሯል</b> <i>nägr<sup>w</sup> all</i> ‘he has told’, ‘he told’	<b>ነግሮ ይሆናል</b> <i>nägro yəhonall</i> ‘he may have told’
<b>ነግሮ ነበር</b> <i>nägro näbbär</i> ‘he had told’	<b>ነግሮ ይሆናል</b> <i>nägro yəhonall</i> ‘he may have told’
<b>ነገረ</b> <i>näggärä</i> ‘he told’	<b>ነግሮ ይሆናል</b> <i>nägro yəhonall</i> ‘he may have told’
<b>እየነገረ ነው</b> <i>əyyänäggärä näw</i> ‘he is telling’	<b>እየነገረ ይሆናል</b> <i>əyyänäggärä yəhonall</i> ‘he may be telling’
<b>እየነገረ ነበር</b> <i>əyyänäggärä näbbär</i> ‘he was telling’	<b>እየነገረ ይሆናል</b> <i>əyyänäggärä yəhonall</i> ‘he may have been telling’

It may (or may not) turn out that an analysis in terms of grammatical aspect is “better”, but this thesis is not devoted to this question. *Lexical* aspect (Aktionsart) is certainly relevant and important in my analysis, above all to distinguish between stative and non-stative verbs. What I will try to avoid is reference to the grammatical aspectual opposition between “perfective” and “imperfective” aspect, which in my opinion does not improve the clarity of presentation as compared to a tense-oriented analysis. I want to stress that my reason for doing this is not theoretical but for the sake of rhetorical clarity (both for myself and (hopefully) for the reader).

With both stative and non-stative verbs, the imperfective conveys future time, habituality or general truth. With gerunds, by contrast, the temporal semantics of stative vs. non-stative verbs are clearly quite different. For non-stative verbs, the gerund conveys past time; to express present time, the progressive is used. For stative verbs, the gerund primarily conveys present time; in appropriate contexts (grammatical or real-world), it may convey the past. We will now survey the main lexical aspectual types (already mentioned briefly in passing).

The verbs that appear in this study belong to two major lexical aspectual types, that is, stative and non-stative. However, a given verb, as a lexeme, may be assigned different lexical aspects depending on its valence and form<sup>18</sup> (imperfective, gerund, progressive). For instance, አሰሰ *assäbä* ‘think’ may be an inceptive state verb as well as an action verb. For this reason a verbal lexeme that is given here as an example of one type of lexical aspect may also belong to another type. The lexical aspectual types that will be examined in this study are as follows:<sup>19</sup>

#### A. Non-stative verbs

- a. Actions – verbs which refer to a change over a period of time, and which do not have a beginning and terminative point, e.g., ሠራ *särra* ‘work’, ሄደ *hedä* ‘go’, ዘፈነ *zäffänä* ‘sing’, ጮ *roṭä* ‘run’, ከሰሰ *näsännäsä* ‘spread’.

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<sup>18</sup> On this topic see Croft (2012).

<sup>19</sup> For the construal of (some) Amharic aspectual types I have referred to the works of Croft 2012 (esp. 31-57) and Sasse (1991).

- b. Achievements – verbs referring to an instantaneous change, e.g., **ደረሰ** *därräsä* ‘reach’, **ዘጋ** *zägga* ‘close’, **መጣ** *mätta* ‘come’, **ገባ** *gäbba* ‘enter,’ **ነቃ** *näqqa* ‘wake up’.

## B. Stative verbs

- a. Inceptive states (inchoative-stative verbs) are verbs which have the potential to be interpreted either as states or as achievements, depending on the grammatical form and the context. To this class belong the Amharic verbs of emotion, e.g. **ቀኘ** *qänna* ‘be(come) jealous’, **አዘኘ** *azzänä* ‘be(come) sad’, **ወደደ** *wäddädä* ‘(start to) like’; verbs of cognition, e.g. **አወቀ** *awwäqä* ‘(get to) know’, **አሰበ** *assäbä* ‘(start to) think’, **አመኘ** *ammänä* ‘(start to) believe’; verbs of physical experience:<sup>20</sup> **አመመ(ው)** *ammämä(w)* ‘be(come) ill’, **በረደ(ው)** *bärrädä(w)* ‘be(come) cold’, **ሞቀ(ው)** *moqä(w)* ‘be(come) warm’; postural verbs, such as **ተቀመጠ** *täqämmätä* ‘sit (down)’, **ቆመ** *qomä* ‘stand (up)’, **ተኛ** *täñña* ‘lie (down), sleep’, the verb **ሆነ** *honä* ‘be(come)’ and many others.
- b. Inherent states – verbs which refer to a state that is a stable property of an entity. The salient example is *näw*: (**ኢትዮጵያዊ**) **ነው** (*Ityopyawi*) *näw* ‘he is (an Ethiopian)’.

In my analysis below I will refer to the larger categories of stative and non-stative verbs, and only when necessary to a finer division into actions, achievements, states and inceptive states. In my presentation I will first make a division between stative and non-stative verbs, and then, for each of these, give the tense/aspect forms and interpret them.

I will treat  $(yänägr)_S yəhonall$  and  $(yänägr)_S yəhon?$  as fundamentally the same construction. Hence I will indiscriminately give examples of the one or the other. Additionally, I will give examples for the epistemificators  $linägr_S yəcälall_S$  and  $mawäq alläbb(ät)_S$ .

## I. Non-stative verbs

- i. Imperfective: non-stative verbs are primarily interpreted with future (not present) meaning:

(20)	<b>እስከዚያ</b>	<b>የሚሆነው</b>	<b>ምን</b>	<b>ይታወቃል?</b>	<b>ወይ</b>
	<i>askä-zziya</i>	<i>yämm-i-hon-äw</i>	<i>mən</i>	<i>yə-ttawwäq=all-ø</i>	<i>wäy</i>
	till-that	REL-3SM-COP\IPFV-OBJ.SM	what	3SM-be.known\IPFV=NPST-3SM	or

<sup>20</sup> Verbs whose actions are out of the experiencer’s control.

**ተጠርተው**                      **አዲሳበ**    **ይሄዱልህ**                                              **ይሆናል**<sub>[DB 85: 6-8]</sub>  
*tätärt-äw*                      *Addisaba*    *yə-hed-u-ll-(ə)-b*                                              *yəhonall*  
 be.called\GER-3SPOL    PN                      3SPOL-go\IPFV-3SPOL-BEN-OBJ.2SM                      EPST

‘What is known [i.e. who knows] what will happen until then? Or he may be called and may go for your benefit to Addis Ababa’

(21) **ከዚህ**    **በኋላም**                      **የተሻለ**                                              **ነገር**  
*kä-zzih*    *bäh<sup>w</sup>ala-mm*    *yä-täšal-ä*                                              *nägär*  
 from-this    after-FOC                      REL-be.better\PFV-3SM                      thing

**ሊያደርጉላት**                                              **ይችላሉ**<sub>[TS 4]</sub>  
*l-i-(y)-adärg-u-ll-at*                                              *yə-čäl=all-u*  
 COMP-3SM-do\IPFV-3PL-BEN-3SF                      3PL-could\IPFV=NPST-3PL

‘Afterwards they could do something better for her’

They can also convey the meaning of habituality or a general truth:

(22) **አንዱ**    **[ደራሲ]** **ዝናን**                      **ለማትረፍ**    **ይጽፍ**                                              **ይሆናል** # **ሌላው**  
*and-u*    *däras*    *zənnan*    *lä-maträf*    *yə-šəf*                                              *yəhonall. lela-w*  
 one-DEF    writer    fame    for-gain\VN    3SM-write\IPFV    EPST                      another-DEF

**ጥበብን**                      **ስለሚያፈቅር**                                              **ብቻ**    **ሊጽፍ**  
*ṭəbäb-(ə)-n*    *sälä-mm-i-(y)-afäqər*                                              *bəčča*    *l-i-šəf*  
 wisdom-ACC    because-REL-3SM-love\IPFV                      only    COMP-3SM-write\IPFV

**ይችላል**<sub>[BŠ 191: 10-12]</sub>  
*yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 3SM-may\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘One [writer] may write to gain fame. Another may write only because he loves wisdom’

ii. Verbal noun

I could not find an example which would illustrate a non-stative verb taking a verbal noun form. Any attempt to create an example failed: a non-stative verb as a verbal noun followed by *alläbb(ät)*<sub>s</sub> yields a deontic interpretation, not epistemic. (A non-exact but suggestive comparison is to English: *She must be working* (epistemic), vs. *She must work* (necessarily deontic), where the progressive arguably converts the action *work* into the on-going state *be working*.)

iii. Gerund: with non-stative verbs, the gerund has a past-tense reading.

(23) A: **ሚላት**    **የት**    **ቀረች?**                                              B: **ዳቦ**    **ልትገዛ**  
*Melat*    *yät*    *qärrä-čč?*                                              *dabbo*    *l-(ə)-ttə-gäza*  
 PN                      where    remain.behind\PFV-3SF                      bread    COMP-3SF-buy\IPFV



- (27) በኩረን በጣም የሚያሰኝቀው ከምሠራው  
*Bäkurä-n bätam yämm-i-(y)-abäšq-äw kä-mm-ə-sära-w*  
 PN-ACC very REL-3SM-make.annoyed\IPFV-DEF from-REL-1SG-do\IPFV-DEF  
 ድርጊት ይልቅ ዝምታዬ ነበር መሰለኝ ። ምን  
*dərgit yələq zəmmata-ye näbbär-ø mässäl-ä-ññ mən*  
 deed rather silence-POSS.1SG COP\PFV-3SM seem\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG what  
 እንደማሰብ ባለማወቁ እየተሰላጩ  
*ändä-mm-assəb bə-alä-mawäq-u əyyä-täbäsaččä*  
 COMP-REL-1SG.think\IPFV by-NEG-know\VN-POSS.3SM PROG-be.annoyed\PFV.3SM

**ይሆናል** [GQ 352: 30-32]  
*yəhonall*  
 EPST

‘I think it was rather my silence than what I did that was annoying Bäkürä. He might have been annoyed by/because of not knowing what I thought/was thinking’

- (28) ልጆቻችንን አዮዲን የሌለው ጨው  
*lağ-očč-aččən-(ə)-n ayodin yä-lell-ä-w čäw*  
 child-PL-POSS.1PL-ACC iodine REL-exist.NEG-3SM-OBJ.3SM salt  
 እየመገብን ሊሆን ይችላል<sup>22</sup>  
*əyyä-mäggäb-(ə)-n li-hon yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 PROG-feed\PFV-1PL COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘We may be feeding our children with salt which does not have iodine’

If the progressive occurs together with the epistemificator *mawäq alläbb(ät)<sub>S</sub>* ‘he must<sub>S</sub> know, he should<sub>S</sub> know’, the state of affairs can have, as mentioned above, either a present or a past interpretation. Additionally, the progressive form may refer to a continuous situation or habitual (usually indicated by adverbs of frequency as in (29)).

- (29) በጣም ታዋቂ ስለሆንክ በየቀኑ ብዙ ደብዳቤዎች  
*bätam tarwaqi səlä-hon-k bə-yyə-qän-u bəzu däbdabe-(w)-očč*  
 very famous because-COP\PFV-2SM in-DSTR-day-DEF many letter-PL  
 እየደረሱህ መሆን አለበት  
*əyyä-därräs-u-h məhon all-ä-bb-ät*  
 PROG-arrive\PFV-3PL-OBJ.2SM COP\VN exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM  
 ‘Because you are very famous, many letters must be coming to you every day’

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/ጥራቱን-ያልጠበቀ-የጨው-ምርት-ገበያውን-ማጥለቅለቁ-ጥያቄ-አስነሱቷል>. [Accessed: 08.04.2019]

TABLE 22. Temporal distinctions of modalized non-stative verbs

Present (habitual) /future	Past	Progressive
<i>yänägrs yəhonall</i>	<i>nägroş yəhonall</i>	<i>əyyänäggäräs yəhonall</i>
<i>yänägrs yəhon?</i>	<i>nägroş yəhon?</i>	<i>əyyänäggäräs yəhon?</i>
<i>linägrs yəčəlalls</i>	<i>nägroş lihon yəčəlall</i>	<i>əyyänäggäräs lihon yəčəlall</i>
<i>(mängär alläbb(ät)s)</i>	<i>nägroş mähon alläbbät</i>	<i>əyyänäggäräs mähon alläbbät</i>

The form *mängär alläbb(ät)s*, as already noted (see Section 4.2.2.2), cannot itself occur with an action verb, hence the parenthesis in the above table; in the corresponding past and progressive forms, it is the stative verb *məhon* which is filling the slot of *mängär*.

## II. Stative verbs

- i. Imperfective: stative verbs are primarily interpreted with the meaning of general truth.

- (30) **ለነገሩ የዚህ ሃገር ሰው ለምን ዝም እንደሚል**  
*länägaru yä-zzih hagär säw lämän zəmm ändä-mm-i-l*  
 by.the.way GEN-this country man why silent COMP-REL-3SM-say\IPFV  
**አይታወቅም ። ምናልባት ጥቁር አይወድ ይሆናል**<sup>23</sup>  
*a-y-tawwäq-(ə)-mm. mənalbat təqur a-y-wädd yəhonall*  
 NEG-3SM-be.known\IPFV-NEG perhaps Black NEG-3SM-like\IPFV EPST  
 ‘By the way, it is not known why the people of this country keep silent. I thought that perhaps **they may not like Blacks**’
- (31) **እኔም የማላውቀው ምስጢር ሊኖር**  
*əne-mm yämm-al-awq-äw məstir li-nor*  
 1SG-FOC REL-NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-DEF secret COMP-3SM-exist\IPFV  
**ይችላል**<sub>[TS 6]</sub>  
*yə-čəl=all-∅*  
 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘There **could be** a secret that I don’t know’
- (32) **ሌላው የበቀል ምክንያቱ እኛው እንሆን ይሆናል**<sub>[MBL 214: 24]</sub>  
*lela-w yä-bäqäl məknəyat-u əñña-w ənnə-hon yəhonall*  
 another-DEF GEN-revenge reason-POSS.3SM 1PL-DEF 1PL-COP\IPFV EPST  
 ‘Perhaps **we ourselves may be** another reason for his revenge’

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.assimba.org/Articles/Cherkos1.pdf>. [Accessed: 16.04.2019]

If stative verbs in the imperfective are accompanied by a future time temporal adverbial, as in sentences (33, 34), they convey the future. In sentence (35) the temporal subordinate clause functions like a future time adverbial. In (36) the futurity is conveyed only by the context.

- (33) **ማን ያውቃል ፣ ከዘመናት በኋላ ከናንተ**  
*man y-awq=all-ø; kä-zämän-at bäh<sup>w</sup>ala kä-nnantä*  
 who 3SM-know\IPFV=NPST-3SM after-year-PL after from-you
- መላል አንዱ የምናገረውን ያምን ይሆናል<sup>24</sup>**  
*mähal and-u yämm-(ə)-nnaggär-äw-(ə)-n y-ammən yəhonall*  
 amongst one-DEF REL-speak\IPFV-DEF-ACC 3SM-believe\IPFV EPST
- ‘Who knows; after many years one of you may believe in what I am saying’

- (34) **ማን ያውቃል አዲስ አበባችን በዚህ የአስመራ**  
*man y-awq=all-ø Addis Abäba-ččən bə-zzih yä-Asmära*  
 who 3SM-know\IPFV=NPST-3SM Addis Abäba-POSS.1PL by-this GEN-Asmara
- ዝና አንድ ቀን ትቀና ይህን ይሆናል<sup>25</sup>**  
*zanna and qän tə-qäna yəhon yəhonall*  
 fame one day 3SF-be.envious\IPFV EPST EPST
- ‘Who knows, one day our Addis Ababa may be envious of this, Asmara’s fame’

- (35) **ምናልባት ሲደርሱብህ ይገባህ**  
*mənalbat s-i-därs-(ə)-bb-(ə)-h yə-gäba-h*  
 perhaps when-3SM-happen\IPFV-APPL-OBJ.2SM 3SM-understand\IPFV-OBJ.2SM
- ይሆናል<sup>26</sup>**  
*yəhonall*  
 EPST
- ‘Perhaps you may understand when it happens to you’

- (36) **ሁሌ አብረን ወደሥራ ስንገባ ካየን አንድ**  
*hulle abrän wädä-səra s-(ə)-nnə-gäba k-ayyā-n and*  
 always together to-work when-1PL-enter\IPFV if-see\PFV.3SM-OBJ.1PL one
- አካባቢ ነው የሚኖሩት ብሎ**  
*akkababi n-äw yämm-i-nor-u-t bəl-o*  
 area COP-3SM REL-3PL-live\IPFV-3PL-DEF say\GER-3SM

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=15175](http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=15175). [Accessed: 18.04.2019]

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/diretube/posts/10153484646084587?fref=nf>. [Accessed: 18.04.2019]

<sup>26</sup> <https://newawdemi.wordpress.com/2012/06/29/የፍቅር-ለይኩን-አላማ-ማኅበረ-ቅዱሳንን-መ/>. [Accessed: 18.04.2019]

**ሊያስብ**

*li-(y)-assəb*

COMP-3SM-think\IPFV 3SM-may\IPFV=NPST-3SM

**ይችላል**

*ya-čəl=all-ø*

‘If he sees us always coming to work together, **he may think**: they live in the same area’

ii. Verbal noun: stative verbs with the verbal noun indicate a general truth, as in

(37) **እንዴ በቡድኑ ውስጥ ቆይተዋል! አንዳንዶቹን**  
*ənde bə-budən-u wəst qoɣɣət-äs=all-ø andand-očč-u-n*  
 oh.really in-team-DEF in stay\GER-2SF=PF-2SF some-PL-DEF-ACC

**መሪዎች ግወቅ አለብሽ**<sub>[MBL 235: 4-8]</sub>  
*märi-(w)-očč maɣwäq all-ä-bb-(ə)-š*  
 leader-PL know\VN exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.2SF

‘Oh really you have stayed in the group!>? **You must know** some of the leaders’

iii. Gerund: with stative verbs, the gerund can be interpreted either in the present or in the past, depending on the context. Additionally, the gerund of a verb of inceptive state can be interpreted either as expressing the achievement reading or the stative reading. I will not go here into the factors that determine this choice. Sentences 38-40 take present time interpretation whereas sentences 41-42 take past time interpretation:

(38) «**ይልቅ ደውይለትና አስተዋውቂን ፤ ምን**  
*yələq dəwwəɣ-(ə)-ll-ät-(ə)-nna astäwawəq-i-n; mən*  
 rather call\IMPER.2SF-APPL-OBJ.3SM-and introduce\IMPER-2SF-OBJ.1PL what

**እንዳስብ ከእሱ ልስማ ደግሞ» ሰምሃል ደወለች ።**  
*əndä-assäb-ä kə-əssu lə-sma dägmo Sämhäl däwwäl-äčč*  
 COMP-think\PFV-3SM from-3SM 1SG-hear\JUUS also PN phone\PFV-3SF

**ስልኩ አይነሳም ። «ስለደከመው**  
*səlke-u a-ya-nnäsa-mm. səlä-däkkäm-ä-w*  
 phone-POSS.3SM NEG-3SM-be.picked.up\IPFV-NEG because-be.tired\PFV-3SM-OBJ.3SM

**ሻወር እየወሰደ ወይም ተኝቶ ይሆናል»<sup>27</sup>**  
*šawär əɣyä-wässäd-ä wäyamm täññat-o yəhonall*  
 shower PROG-take\PFV-3SM or sleep\GER-3SM EPST<sub>COP</sub>

“Rather, call him and introduce us [to each other]; let me hear also what he has thought.” Sämhäl called. He does not pick up the phone (lit. his phone is not picked up). “It may be that he is taking a shower or **he may be sleeping**”

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=17032](http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=17032). [Accessed: 18.04.2019]

- (39) **ምናልባት እሱ ከደረሰበት ባለመድረሳችን**  
*mənalbat əssu kə-därräs-ä-bb-ät bə-alä-mädräs-aččən*  
 perhaps he from-attain\PFV-3SM-at-OBJ.3SM by-NEG-attain\VN-POSS.1PL

**ቀንተን ይሆናል**<sub>[KB 38: 13-15]</sub>  
*qänt-än yəhonall*  
 be.envious\GER-1PL EPST<sub>COP</sub>

‘Perhaps we may be envious of not attaining what he has attained’

- (40) **መቼም ሻለቃ ዳመነ ወይ የወንጀለኞቹን ተባባሪ**  
*mäčämm šaläqa Dammänä wäy yä-wänğälänñ-očč-u-n täbabari*  
 at.any.rate major Dammänä or GEN-criminal-PL-DEF-ACC accomplice

**ሆኖ ይሆናል ፤ ያለዚያም**<sub>[MAH 414: 22-23]</sub>  
*hon-o yəhonall; yaläzziyamm [...]*  
 be\GER-3SM EPST<sub>COP</sub> otherwise

‘At any rate, Major Dammänä might be either an accomplice of the criminals or [...].’

- (41) **የመጀመሪያ ጊዜ ገመምተኛ ስለነበርክ ድካም**  
*yä-mäğämmäriya gize gämämtännä sälä-näbbär-k dəkam*  
 GEN-beginning time convalescent because-COP\PFV-2SM tiredness

**ተሰምቶህ ሊሆን ይችላል**<sub>[MBL 303: 6-9]</sub>  
*täsämt-o-h li-hon yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 feel\GER-3SM-OBJ.2SM COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘Because you were a convalescent for the first time, you might have felt tired’

In the following sentence a temporal adverbial reinforces the pastness:

- (42) **ያን ዕለት ምናልባት ሁለቱም ተደናግጠው ይሆናል**<sub>[GQ 29: 9]</sub>  
*yan əlät mənalbat hulätt-u-mm tädänagt-äw yəhonall*  
 that day perhaps two-DEF-FOC be.astonished\GER-3PL EPST

‘On that day perhaps both of them might have been astonished’

TABLE 23. Temporal distinctions of modalized stative verbs

Habitual /future	Present/Past
<i>yawqs yəhonall</i>	<i>awqos yəhonall</i>
<i>yawqs yəhon?</i>	<i>awqos yəhon?</i>
<i>liyawqs yəčälalls</i>	<i>awqos lihon yəčälall</i>
<i>mawäq alläbb(ät)s</i>	<i>awqos mähon alläbbät</i>

iv. Other temporal and aspectual distinctions

As mentioned above some temporal distinctions present in the indicative are neutralized whenever one of the grammatical epistemificators (**ይነግር**)<sub>s</sub> **ይሆናል** (*yənägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells, he might tells’, (**ይነግር**)<sub>s</sub> **ይሆን** (*yənägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhon?* ‘might he tells?’, **ሊነግር** **ይችላል**<sub>s</sub> *linägr*<sub>s</sub> *yäčälalls*, ‘he could<sub>s</sub> tells, he may<sub>s</sub> tells’ and **ማወቅ አለበት**<sub>s</sub> *mawäq alläbb(ät)*<sub>s</sub> ‘he must<sub>s</sub> know, he should<sub>s</sub> know’ appears. However, I have found a few examples in the corpus which demonstrate that the speakers may try to circumvent such limitations by adding the past auxiliary *näbbär* after the imperfective (43) or the gerund (44) and before the modal *yəhonall* in order to convey an unambiguously past reading.

(43) **ኃይሉ ገበረዮሐንስ አረፈ ። [...]** **ምናልባት ብዙዎች በአይወት**  
*Haylu Gäbräyohannəs arräf-ä [...]* *mənalbat bəzu-(w)-očč* *bä-həywät*  
 PN pass.away\PFV-3SM perhaps many-PL in-life  
**መኖሩን አያውቁም ነበር ይሆናል**<sup>28</sup>  
*mänor-u-n a-y-awq-u-mm näbbär yəhonall*  
 exist\VN-POSS.3SM-ACC NEG-3PL-know\IPFV-3PL-NEG PST EPST  
 ‘Haylu Gäbräyohannəs has passed away. [...] Perhaps many **may not have known** of his existence’

(44) **ሰለኬኒያ ሲያነሱ “ኬኒያ ከደረሱ**  
*sälä-Keniya s-i-(y)-anäs-u* *“Keniya kä-därräs-u*  
 about-Kenya when-3SPOL-mention\IPFV-3SPOL Kenya if-arrive\PFV-3PL  
**ወደ ኢትዮጵያም መዘለቃቸው አይቀርም”**  
*wädä Ityopya mätzläq-aččäw a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 to Ethiopia stop.by\VN-POSS.3SPOL NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV-NEG  
**በሚል ትንሽ እርዳታ ተሰምቷቸው ነበር ይሆናል**<sup>29</sup>  
*bä-mm-i-l tənnäš affoyta täsämt-o-<sup>w</sup> aččäw näbbär yəhonall*  
 by-REL-3SM-say\IPFV little relief feel\GER-3SM-OBJ.3PL PST EPST  
 ‘When she [Hillary Clinton] mentions Kenya they **may have felt** (may have come to feel) a certain relief by saying: “If she arrives in Kenya, for sure she will stop off in Ethiopia”

<sup>28</sup> <http://zabraham.blog.com/2014/11/11/701/>. [Accessed: 10.06.2019]

<sup>29</sup> <http://ethiopiazare.com/component/content/article?id=1788:hillary-clinton-in-addis-ababa>. [Accessed 10.06.2019]



epistemificators above. The expectation might be that if one wants to put it into the past it should be done directly on the epistemized:

- (47) መጥቶ ሳይሆን አይቀርም  
*mätət-o s-a-y-hon a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 come\PFV-3SM when-NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘He surely/probably came’

But as it turns out, the language uses this past structure only in cleft sentences and not in plain sentences, where *saynägrs alqärrämmṣ* is applied instead. What is even more unusual about this epistemificator is that, just like the epistemificators discussed above, the distinction between the temporal behaviour of stative and non-stative verbs also holds here, but now the consequences of the aspectual type of the epistemized head are reflected by the choice of temporal form of the epistemificator head (necessarily so, since the epistemized head *saynägrs* is frozen in the imperfective form). Like the previous group of epistemificators, this epistemificator too involves a highly reduced number of temporal distinctions. Basically, no compound temporal forms are available. The only two forms that are available (whether to indicate a temporal distinction, or for any purpose whatsoever) are the negated simple imperfective in *ayqärämmṣ*, and the negated perfective in *alqärrämmṣ*.

Just as in Section 6.1.4.1 I will now show which temporal distinctions are conveyed by *saynägrs ayqärämmṣ* and *saynägrs alqärrämmṣ* with non-stative and stative verbs.

I. ሳይነገር አይቀርም *saynägrs ayqärämmṣ* ‘he surely/probably tells<sub>s</sub>/will tell<sub>s</sub>/told<sub>s</sub>’

i. Non-stative verbs: the epistemificator refers to an action in the future.

- (48) እንዲያውም እስከ መጋጨት ስለ ተዳረስን አንድ  
*əndiyawmm əskä mäggačät səlä tädarräs-(ə)-n and*  
 in.fact up.to clash.with.each.other\VN because be.close\PFV-1PL one  
 ነገር ሳያደርጉብኝ አይቀሩም [BŠ 126: 12-13]  
*nägär s-a-y-adärg-u-bb-(ə)-ññ a-y-qär-u-mm*  
 thing when-NEG-3PL-do\IPFV-3PL-MAL-OBJ-1SG NEG-3PL-remain\IPFV-3PL-NEG  
 ‘In fact, because we were close to clashing with each other surely they will do something bad against me’

- (49) እማማ በቅርብ ቀን ለሕክምና ወደ እንግሊዝ አገር  
*əmma bä-qərb qän lä-həkəmməna wädä İngliz agar*  
 mother in-close day for-medical.treatment to England country

**መሄዷ**                      ነው ።                      እኔም                      አብሬአት  
*mähed-wa*                      *n-äw.*                      *əne-mm*                      *abərr-e-at*  
 go\VN-POSS.3SF    COP-3SM    1SG-FOC    be.united\GER-1SG-OBJ.3SF

**ሳልሄድ**                                              **አልቀርም** [KB 69: 1-2]  
*s-al-hed*                                              *al-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 when-NEG.1SG-go\IPFV    NEG.1SG-remain\IPFV-NEG

‘The mother is going to England for medical treatment in a few days. I **will** surely go with her’

(Note carefully the difference between the NEG.1SG IPFV form *al-qär-(ə)-mm* and the superficially similar NEG.3SM PFV form *al-qärrä-mm*. In the imperfective the negative prefix has the form *al-* only in the 1SG.)

Additionally, the epistemificator may refer to a past state of affairs (action) if it has just happened and continues to influence the state of affairs at the moment of speaking (as in sentence (50)), or to a past habitual action, as in (51).

(50) **የወሰን**                      **እናት**                      **ሳቃቸው**                                              **እንደመጣ**                      **ሁሉ**                      **አፋቸውን**  
*yä-Wäsän*                      *ənnat*                      *saq-aččäw*                                              *əndä-mätta*                      *hullu*                      *af-aččäw-(ə)-n*  
 GEN-PN    mother    laughter-POSS.3POL    as-come\PFV.3SM    all    mouth-POSS.3SPOL-ACC

**ያዙ ።**                                              **ምን**                      **እንዳሳቃቸው**                                              **አላውቅም ።**  
*yaz-u*                                              *mən*                      *ənd-asaqq-aččäw*                                              *al-awq-(ə)-mm*  
 hold\PFV-3SPOL    what    COMP-make.laugh\PFV-OBJ.3SPOL    NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG

**ስለ**                      **እኔ**                      **ሜዳ**                      **ላይ**                      **መተኛት**                      **ጠጅ**                      **ሻጭዋ**                      **ሳትናገር**  
*sälä*                      *əne*                      *meda*                      *lay mätännät*                      *täğ*                      *šač-wa*                      *s-a-ttä-nnagär*  
 about 1SG    field    on sleep\VN    mead    seller-DEF.F    when-NEG-3SF-talk\IPFV

**አትቀርም** [GQ 47: 2-3]  
*a-t-qär-əmm*  
 NEG-3SF-remain/IPFV-NEG

‘Wäsän’s mother held her (own) mouth as soon as her (own) laughter came. I don’t know what made her laugh. The mead seller **probably** talked about my sleeping in the field’

(51) **እኔ**                      **ከእናቴ**                                              **ጡት**                      **የበለጠ**                                              **ጣቶቼን**  
*əne*                      *kä-ənnat-e*                                              *tut*                      *yä-bällät-ä*                                              *tat-očč-e-n*  
 1SG    from-mother-POSS.1SG    breast    REL-be.more\PFV-3SM    finger-PL-POSS.1SG-ACC

**ሳልጠባ**                                              **አልቀርም** [GQ 85: 29-30]  
*s-al-täba*                                              *al-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 when-NEG.1SG-suck\IPFV    NEG.1SG-remain\IPFV-NEG

‘I **probably** used to suck my fingers more than my mother’s breast’

ii. Stative verbs: the epistemificator expresses habituality of a state of affairs or a general truth as in

- (52) **ሁለቱ ይመሳሰላሉ። ወንድማማቾች**  
*bulätt-u yə-mmäsassäl=all-u. wändəmmačč-očč*  
 two-DEF 3PL-resemble.each.other\IPFV=NPST-3PL brothers.to.each.other-PL  
**ሳይሆኑ አይቀሩም** [BŠ 142: 3-5]  
*s-a-y-hon-u a-y-qär-u-mm*  
 when-NEG-3PL-COP\IPFV-3PL NEG-3PL-remain\IPFV-3PL-NEG  
 ‘The two resemble each other. **They are surely** brothers’
- (53) **አሮጌ ባጃጅ ሳይሻል አይቀርም**  
*aroge bağağ s-a-y-ššal a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 old three.wheeler.taxi when-NEG-3SM-be.better\IPFV NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘An old three-wheeler taxi **is surely** better’
- (54) **ዕድሜዋ ወደ ሰማንያው ሳይጠጋ**  
*ədme-wa wädä sämanya-w s-a-y-ttäga*  
 age-POSS.3SF to eighty-DEF when-NEG-3SM-be.close\IPFV  
**አይቀርም** [TFT 85: 18]  
*a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘Her age **is surely** close to eighty’
- (55) **የትናንቱ እግራ የተናጋ አጥንት**  
*yä-tənant-u əgr-e yä-tänagga aṭənt*  
 GEN-yesterday-DEF leg-POSS.1SG REL-be.dislocated\PFV.3SM bone  
**ሳይኖረው አይቀርም** [BF 55: 2-3]  
*s-a-y-nor-äw a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 when-NEG-3SM-exist\IPFV-OBJ.3SM NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘My leg of yesterday **surely has** a dislocated bone’ (i.e. sth. happened to my leg yesterday now it turned out that it surely has a dislocated bone)

The main verb can refer to a progressive action, in which case the slot after the conjunction **ስ- sə-** (which requires the imperfective) is filled by a semantically empty copula.

- (56) **ምናልባት ቤት ውስጥ ብቻዬን ስለሆንኩ ማውራት**  
*mənalbat bet wəst bəčča-ye-n səlä-hon-ku maʷrat*  
 perhaps home in only-POSS.1SG-ACC because-COP\PFV-1SG talk\VN  
**እየረሳሁ አይሆን አይቀርም** [TFT 166: 1-2]  
*əyyä-rässa-hu s-a-y-hon a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 PROG-forget\PFV-1SG when-NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘Perhaps because I am alone at home **I am probably** forgetting (how to) talk’

II. ሳይነገር<sub>S</sub> አልቀረም<sub>S</sub> *saynägr<sub>S</sub> alqärrämm<sub>S</sub>* ‘he surely/probably told<sub>S</sub>’

i. Non-stative verbs: the epistemificator expresses a past action.

- (57) ሌሊቱን ወንዙ ሞልቶ ኃይለኛ ጎርፍ አውቶሞሊላችንን  
*lelit-un wänz-u molt-o hayläñña gorf awtomobil-aččän-(ə)-n*  
 night-ADV river-DEF fill.up\GER-3SM strong torrent automobile-POSS.1PL-ACC  
 ሳይወስዳት አልቀረም<sup>[DB 25: 33-34]</sup>  
*s-a-y-wäsd-at al-qärr-ä-mm*  
 when-NEG-3SM-take\IPFV-OBJ.3SF 3SM-remain\PFV-3SM-NEG  
 ‘During the night the river filled up and a strong torrent surely took our automobile’

- (58) አማካሪያቸውም ይህንኑ ሳያስጨብጣቸው  
*ammakari-(y)-aččäw-(ə)-mm yəbənn-(ə)-n-u s-a-y-asčäbbət-aččäw*  
 advisor-POSS.3SPOL-FOC this-ACC-DEF when-NEG-3SM-grasp\IPFV-OBJ.3SPOL  
 አልቀረም<sup>[NB 23: 26-27]</sup>  
*al-qärr-ä-mm*  
 3SM-remain\PFV-3SM-NEG  
 ‘His advisor surely made him grasp this’

ii. Stative verbs: the epistemificator expresses a present state or, alternatively, the entrance into a state which, by implication, holds at the moment of speaking.

- (59) መቼም እስተዛሬ ስለኔ ብዙ ነገር ሳታውቅ  
*mäčem astä-zare sälä-ne bəzu nägär s-a-tt-awq*  
 anyway until-today about-1SG many thing when-NEG-2SM-know\IPFV  
 አልቀረህም<sup>[MAH 15: 24-26]</sup>  
*al-qärr-äh-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG.1SG-remain\PFV-2SM-NEG  
 ‘Anyway, you surely know (or ‘have got to know’) many things about me by now’

- (60) ችግሩ ሳይገባህ አልቀረም<sup>[KB 79: 8-9]</sup>  
*čəggər-u s-a-y-gäba-h al-qärr-ä-mm*  
 problem-DEF when-NEG-3SM-understand\IPFV-OBJ.2SM NEG-remain\PFV-3SM-NEG  
 ‘You surely understand (or ‘have got to understand’) the problem’

The epistemificator can also refer to past states which have nothing to do with the moment of speaking, if the context prompts that interpretation:

- (61) የኃይል ሚዛንን በማዛባት በኩል ከፍተኛ ሚና  
*yä-hayl mizan-(ə)-n bä-mazabat bəkkul käffätäñña mina*  
 GER-power balance-ACC in-distort\VN regard.to dominant role  
 ሊኖራቸው እንደሚችሉ ሻለቃ  
*l-i-nor-aččäw əndä-mm-i-čäl-u šäläqa*  
 COMP-3SM-exist\IPFV-POSS.3SPOL COMP-REL-3SPOL-could\IPFV-3SPOL major

መንግሥቱ ሳይገምቱ

Mängästu s-a-y-gämmät-u

PN

when-NEG-3SPOL-assume\IPFV-3SPOL

አልቀሩም [NB 22: 22-24]

al-qärr-u-mm

NEG-remain\PFV-3SPOL-NEG

‘With regard to the distortion in the balance of power, Major Mängästu **surely assumed** that he could play a dominant role’

- (62) አንድ ትንሽ ርግብ መጣና ሊቀላቀላቸው ሲል  
*and tännäš rəgb mäṭta-(ə)-nna l-i-qälaqqäl-aččäw s-i-l*  
 one small pigeon come\PFV-and COMP-3SM-join\IPFV-OBJ.3PL when-3SM-say\IPFV
- በንክሻ አባረሩት ። ልጃቸው ሳይሆን  
*bä-nəkša abbarär-u-t läğ-aččäw s-a-y-hon*  
 with-bite chase.away\PFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM child-POSS.3PL when-NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV

አልቀረም [BŠ 92: 3-4]

al-qärr-ä-mm

NEG-remain\PFV-3SM-NEG

‘A small pigeon came and when it wanted to join them (i.e. the other pigeons) they chased it away with a bite. **It was probably** their child’

Leslau (1995: 338) says that this construction can also be used in reference to a present and future state of affairs. He provides an example with an active verb: ነገ ሳልሄድ አልቀረሁም *nägä salhed alqärrähumm* ‘it is more likely (than not) that I will go tomorrow’. The Amharic native speakers whom I asked found this sentence unacceptable in present or future contexts.<sup>31</sup> However, as shown above, *saynägrs alqärrämm*s can indeed have a present meaning with stative verbs.

### 6.1.4.3. Temporality frozen in the future

The epistemificator which refers exclusively to the future and not to any other time is መንገሩ አይቀርም *mängärus ayqärəmm* ‘he will definitely tell’, ‘he is sure to tell’. The temporal nature of this epistemificator has already been discussed in Section 5.9.2.

<sup>31</sup> The other two examples given in the same paragraph do not support Leslau’s claim, either. In the first of these examples the state of affairs took place in the past, whereas the second sentence actually contains the construction *saynägrs ayqärəmm*s, not *saynägrs alqärrämm*s.

## 6.2. Epistemic modality and negation

### 6.2.1. Introduction

Negation has already been treated briefly in Section 5.4; here I will discuss it in greater depth, and from a partially different point of view. In an epistemic expression there are in principle two things that might be negated: the epistemificator head and the epistemized head. These are quite distinct. With some epistemificators only the epistemized head can be negated; with others, only the epistemificator head. With still other epistemificators the negation of the epistemificator vs. the epistemized yields different sentence meanings. They become congruent in cases of NEG-raising, where a negation which logically belongs to the epistemized nonetheless surfaces on the epistemificator. There is one epistemificator that does not occur with negation but has a suppletive negative form. Additionally, some epistemic expressions cannot undergo negation at all, because the epistemificator itself already incorporates formal negation. The idea expressed above can be schematized in the following way:

- i. epistemized head                      epistemificator head  
      NEG
- ii. epistemized head                      epistemificator head  
      NEG                                      → NEG
- NEG                                      ←
- ii. epistemized head                      epistemificator head  
      NEG                                      → NEG
- NEG                                      ←
- iii. epistemized head                      epistemificator head  
      NEG                                      → NEG
- NEG                                      ←
- iv. suppletive negative form
- v. no negation whatsoever (a purely formal negative is already present structurally)

It should be emphasized that in Amharic modal epistemic expressions, the negator need not always apply semantically to the clause within which it appears. If the negator appears on the epistemized clause, it always applies semantically to the epistemized. If it appears on the epistemificator, it may apply to the epistemificator; but in certain types of epistemificators, it applies to the epistemized. There are two types of such semantic mismatches: one is NEG-raising (iib), where the negator may appear on either clause; and a second type (iia), for which I have no name, where the negator must appear on the epistemificator.

The reader should bear in mind that this schema does not exhaust all the possibilities, because it can happen that the epistemificator and the epistemized are both negated at the same time, independently of each other, as in the following example:

- (1) እንደ ፌዴሬሽን የፋይናንስ ችግሩን ለመፍታት ብዙ ሥራ  
*andä federešən yä-faynans čəggər-u-n lä-mäftat bəzu səra*  
 as federation GEN-finance problem-DEF-ACC for-solve\VN much work  
 አልሠራንም ብዬ አላስብም<sup>1</sup>  
*al-särra-n-(ə)-mm bəyy-e al-assəb-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG-do\PFV-1PL-NEG say\GER-1SG NEG.1SG-think\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘I don’t think: as a federation we didn’t do much work to solve the problem of finances’

But in general I will pay little attention to such instances of double negation, which seem rather uncommon. For reasons of space, I will consider and illustrate only the major types of epistemificators vis-à-vis negation: a detailed discussion of every single individual epistemificator would take many more pages than envisaged.

Epistemificators of type (i), where the negated element is the epistemized, involve auxiliary epistemificators, the quasi-auxiliary epistemificator ሊነግርያ ይችላልያ *linägrs yəčəlall*, ‘he couldያ tells, he mayያ tells’, the copular epistemificators ሊነግርያ ነው *binägrs näw* ‘he probably tellsያ, will probably tells’ and ሊነግርያ ይሆናል *binägrs yəhonall* ‘it may be that he tellsያ, it may be that he will tells’, adverbial and particle epistemificators, and

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/የኢትዮጵያ-እጅ-ኪስ-ትንግኤ>. [Accessed: 24.11.2018]

parentheticals. Collectively, these constitute roughly the type we called “abstract epistemificators” in Section 5.4. An example is sentence (2):

- (2) **ሌላው ሐመር ግን ለቀጥር የሚታከት አዳዲስ ጨረቃ**  
*lela-w Hamär gän lä-q<sup>w</sup>ətər yämm-i-takkət adaddis čäräqa*  
 another-DEF Hamar but for-number REL-3SM-be.tired.of\IPFV new.PL moon
- ወጥቶ እንኳን ላይሳካለት**  
*wätət-o ənkw<sup>w</sup>an l-a-y-ssakka-ll-ät*  
 come.out\GER-3SM even COMP-NEG-3SM-be.successful\IPFV-BEN-OBJ.3SM
- ይችላል**<sub>[DW 121: 12-13]</sub>  
*yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 3SM-may\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘But other Hamars<sup>2</sup> may **not be successful** even after a long period of time’ (lit. ‘after the new moon appears so many times that one gets tired of counting’)

In epistemificators of type (iia) it is the epistemificator head which is subject to negation, even though it applies to the epistemized. This group embraces some mental noun epistemificators, such as X **የሚል ሐሳብ አለኝ** X *yämmil hassab allänn* ‘I have a thought: X’, and non-copular epistemificators of seeming as in (3).

- (3) **ይኼ የሚያዋጣ አይመስለኝም<sup>3</sup>**  
*yäbe yämm-i-(y)-awwatta a-y-mäsl-änn-(ə)-mm*  
 this REL-3SM-be.beneficial\IPFV NEG-3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG-NEG
- ‘It doesn’t seem to me that it is beneficial (i.e. that this is a good idea)’

Type (iib) encompasses a small group of mental verbal epistemificators with both *ändä-* and *bäyye* that show, in an unusual way, so-called NEG-raising. What is unusual is that epistemificators with *ändä-*, for instance **እንደ-X እገምታለሁ** *ändä-X əgämmətallähu* ‘I assume (that) X’, tend to have the negator in the embedded clause whereas the corresponding epistemificator with *bäyye* (with the same mental verb), for instance X **ብዬ እገምታለሁ** X *bäyye əgämmətallähu* ‘I assume: X’, most often has the negator in the matrix clause. The location of negator does not affect the semantic target of the negation: in both cases, what is semantically negated is the epistemized. Consider the following examples:

<sup>2</sup> The Hamar are an Omotic people living in southwestern Ethiopia.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/ስፖርቱ-ፖሊሲው-የሚናበቡት-መቼ-ነው>. [Accessed: 19.12.2018]

- (4) **ቤተሰቡ ለልጅቷ ጥላቻ እንደሌለው**  
*betäsäb-u lä-ləǧət-w a tälacä andä-lell-ä-w*  
 family-DEF for-girl-DEF.F hatred COMP-exist.NEG-3SM-OBJ.3SM

**እገምታለሁ**

*ə-gämmät=all-ähu*  
 1SG-assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I assume that the family **doesn’t** have hatred towards the girl’

vs.

- (5) **ቤተሰቡ ለልጅቷ ጥላቻ አለው ብዬ**  
*betäsäb-u lä-ləǧət-w a tälacä all-ä-w bəyy-e*  
 family-DEF for-girl-DEF.F hatred exist-3SM-OBJ.3SM say\GER-1SG

**በፍጹም አልገምትም** [TS 3]  
*bäfəšsum al-gämmät-(ə)-mm*  
 not.at.all NEG.1SG-assume\IPFV-NEG

‘I **don’t** assume at all: the family has hatred towards the girl’<sup>4</sup>

To type (iii) belong epistemificators in which the NEG may appear either on the epistemificator head or on the epistemized head, with a change in meaning. These include **እንደ-X እርግጠኛ ነኝ** *andä-X ərgətäñña näññ* ‘I am sure (that) X’, **መንገሩን እጠራጠራለሁ** *mängärün əttärattärallähu* ‘I have doubts (about) his telling’, and epistemificators that take the value “good” or “bad” from the dimension of axiological judgement. Here are two examples:

- (6) **እንጃ! ብቻ ያም ሆነ ይህ የዘጠኝ ወር ከአምስት ቀን ፍጡር**  
*ənǧa bəčča yam honä yəb yä-zätäññ wär kä-amməst qän fətur*  
 I.don’t.know only in.any.case GEN-nine month with-five day creature

**እንዳልሆኑ እርግጠኛ ነኝ** [TFT 184: 13-14]  
*and-al-hon-u ərgətäñña n-äññ*  
 COMP-NEG-COP\PFV-3SPOL sure COP-1SG

‘I don’t know! Only, in any case, I am sure that **he is not** a creature of nine months and five days’

- (7) **የዘፈኑን ግጥም በትክክል መከተቤን እርግጠኛ**  
*yä-zäfän-u-n gəṭəm bätəkəkəkəl mäkättäb-e-n ərgətäñña*  
 GEN-song-DEF-ACC lyrics correctly write\VN-POSS.1SG-ACC sure

<sup>4</sup> In Amharic, *əgämmätallähu* ‘I assume’ is a NEG-raising predicate; in English this is less clear (see Quirk and Greenbaum 1978: 346).

**አይደለሁም**<sup>5</sup>  
*aydäll-ähu-mm*  
 COP.NEG-1SG-NEG

‘I am not sure of my writing properly the lyrics of the song’

Epistemificators of types (iia), (iib) and (iii) for the most part cover lexical epistemificators; they correspond roughly to what we earlier called “concrete epistemificators” (Section 5.4).

There is only one epistemificator that represents type (iv); it involves the highly suppletive negative form of **ማወቅ አለበት**<sub>S</sub> *mawäq alläbb(ät)*<sub>S</sub> ‘he must<sub>S</sub> know, he should<sub>S</sub> know’, namely **ሊያውቅ አይችልም**<sub>S</sub> *liyawq<sub>S</sub> ayčälämm<sub>S</sub>* ‘he can’t<sub>S</sub> know<sub>S</sub>’. It is illustrated with sentence (8).

- (8) **ነገሩ ከባድ ሊሆን አይችልም**  
*nägär-u käbbad li-hon a-y-čäl-(ə)-mm*  
 issue-DEF difficult COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV NEG-3SM-can\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘The issue **can’t** be difficult’

Epistemificators of type (v) encompass all modal epistemic expressions which contain the verb **ቀረ** *qärrä* ‘remain’ and its derivatives, all of which already involve a negative and hence cannot take a second negative. Note that this structural negation is purely formal, but not semantic. These are exemplified with sentence (9):

- (9) **የሚወዷት እናት ሳትኖርዎት አትቀርም**  
*yämm-i-wädd<sup>w</sup>-at ännat s-a-t-nor-wot a-t-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 REL-2SPOL-love\IPFV-2SPOL-OBJ.3SF mother when-NEG-3SF-exist\IPFV-OBJ.2SPOL  
 [BŠ 158: 1]  
 NEG-3SF-remain\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘You **surely have** a mother who you love’

To this group also belong the epistemificators with pleonastic negation and the complementizer *änd-*, such as **እንድ-NEG.X እሠጋለሁ** *änd-NEG.X äsägallähu* ‘I worry lest X, I am worried lest X’ and **እንድ-NEG.X ሥጋት አለኝ** *änd-NEG.X sägat allänn* ‘I have a worry lest X’. However, I prefer to talk about them in Section 6.2.5, instead of

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.zehabesha.com/amharic/archives/7560>. [Accessed: 31.12.2018]

6.2.7, together with two other epistemifications lexically tightly related to them X ብዬ እሠጋለሁ X *bəyye əsägallähu* ‘I worry (that): X, I am worried (that): X’ and X የሚል ሥጋት አለኝ X *yämmil səgat allänn* ‘I have a worry: X’.

Note that here again, as with the dimension of manner of integration (Section 5.3), I will use the term “epistemized head” and “epistemificator head” to refer to the head verb of the epistemized and the head verb of the epistemificator, respectively. These two terms prove to be very handy, as they allow us to abstract from the different types of epistemized head and epistemificator head and to focus solely on the location of the negative marker. For instance, instead of talking about a quasi-auxiliary verb vs. a main verb, and a mental epistemic verb (or its kernel) vs. the main verb of the complement clause, we can operate on a more abstract level with the two terms in question.

By way of general introduction, it remains to show the reader how negation is expressed with the different verbal forms presented in Section 1.2.2.4.

- i. The markers of the negative perfective are the prefix *al-* and the suffix *-(ə)mm* added to the perfective stem of the verb. It should be mentioned here that the suffix *-(ə)mm* appears in main clauses, as in (10) but is omitted in subordinate clauses.

(10) አልነገርኩም ‘I didn’t tell’  
*al-näggär-ku-mm*  
 NEG-tell\PFV-1SG-NEG

- ii. The negative simple imperfective and the jussive are expressed by prefixing *a-* to the verbal stem. The simple imperfective prototypically appears in subordinate clauses; hence in its negative form it never has the suffix *-(ə)mm*, e.g.

(11) አይነገር ‘(that) he doesn’t/won’t tell’  
*a-y-nägr*  
 NEG-3SM-tell\IPFV

Note that, deviating from the usual pattern, the subject agreement marker of the 1SG for the negated form is portmanteau *al-*, glossed as NEG.1SG, e.g.

(12) አልነገር ‘(that) I don’t/won’t tell’  
*al-nägr*  
 NEG.1SG-tell\IPFV

iii. When negating the compound imperfective the tense auxiliary *-allä* is dropped. The negative markers, i.e. the prefix *a-* and the suffix *-(ə)mm* are attached directly to the verbal stem. Note that the formal difference between negated simple and compound imperfective is only the respective absence and presence of the suffix *-(ə)mm*, e.g.

(13) **አይነገርም** ‘he doesn’t/won’t tell’  
*a-γ-nägr-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG-3SM-tell\IPFV-NEG

iv. The gerund (simple and compound) has no negative form (except in the variety of Gondar and Goğgam) and thus its negative counterpart is expressed by the negative perfective. Note that the suffix *-(ə)mm* is omitted when the simple gerund is negated (14), in contrast to the compound gerund (15):

(14) **ነገሮ** → **አልነገረ** ‘he having told → he not having told’  
*nägr-o* *al-näggär-ä*  
 tell\GER-3SM NEG-tell\PFV-3SM

(15) **ነገሯል** → **አልነገረም** ‘he has told → he didn’t tell’  
*nägr<sup>w</sup>-all-ø* *al-näggär-ä-mm*  
 tell\GER-3SM-PF-3SM NEG-tell\PFV-3SM-NEG

v. The negative marker of the verbal noun is the prefix *alä-*, rarely *yälä-* (in free variation), e.g.

(16) **አለመንገር** ‘not/without telling’  
*alä-mängär*  
 NEG-tell\VN

vi. The negative form of the copula **ነው** *näw* ‘be’ is suppletive **አይደለ** *aydäll-* ‘not be’. When conjugated, the negative copula is followed by the subject marker, e.g.

(17) **አይደለሁም** ‘I am not’  
*aydäll-ähu-mm*  
 COP.NEG-1SG-NEG

vii. The negative form of the verb of **አል** *äll-* ‘exist’ is a fused portmanteau verb **የል** *yäll-* ‘not exist’. When conjugated, the negative existential is followed by the subject marker, e.g.

(18) **የለሁም** ‘I am not, I don’t exist (here)’  
*yäll-ähu-mm*  
 exist.NEG-1SG-NEG

If the verb of existence is used to express possession it is followed by the object pronoun. Its negative form is the same as in (18), e.g.

- (19) የለኝም                                    ‘I don’t have it’ (lit. ‘there is not it to me’)  
 yäll-ä-ññ-(ə)-mm  
 exist.NEG-3SM-OBJ.1SG-NEG

viii. The verb አለ *ällä* ‘exist’ also has a special negative relative form -ሌሉ- *-lell-*, e.g.

- (20) የሌለኝ                                    ‘which I don’t have’  
 yä-lell-ä-ññ  
 REL-exist.NEG-3SM-OBJ.1SG

With this general introduction out of the way, I will now embark on my discussion of the six types given at the beginning of this section. I will start with type (i) involving negation of the epistemized head.

### 6.2.2. Negation of the epistemized head (type i)

Although in principle the epistemized head can be negated in many epistemic sentences, there are epistemifiers in which *only* the epistemized head (and not the epistemifier) can be negated. This will be our theme in this subsection. As mentioned, to this group belong auxiliary epistemifiers, the quasi-auxiliary epistemifier ሊነግርያ ይችላልያ *linägrs yäčälalls*, ‘he could<sub>s</sub> tells, he may<sub>s</sub> tells’, the copular epistemifiers ሊነግርያ ነው *binägrs näw* ‘he probably tells<sub>s</sub>, will probably tells’ and ሊነግርያ ይሆናል *binägrs yəhonall* ‘it may be that he tells<sub>s</sub>, it may be that he will tells’, adverbial and particle epistemifiers, and parentheticals.

All these epistemifiers are intrinsically resistant to negation, that is, they do not come under the scope of negation. What can be negated within a sentence which is modalized by such an epistemifier is the epistemized head, but not the epistemifier itself. The relation of these epistemifiers to negation follows from their semantics and role in the sentence: they express purely the speaker’s epistemic evaluation of the content of the proposition (the epistemized) and so, by their very nature, are always positive. Additionally, they are outside the rheme of the sentence—the only part which is subject

to negation—and thus, just like the theme, cannot be negated. As mentioned earlier in the thesis (see e.g. 4.4.6), because they are never rhematic they do not carry sentence stress.

In what follows I will give an overall analysis of epistemificators of type (i) with their epistemized head negated, proceeding in order through the list. I will consider forms which locate the modalized state of affairs in the present as well as in the past.

The first types in the list, in which the epistemificator head is itself a verb—the auxiliary epistemificators **(ይነግር)<sub>S</sub> ይሆናል** (*yənägr*)<sub>S</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells<sub>S</sub>, he might tells<sub>S</sub>’ and **(ይነግር)<sub>S</sub> ይሆን** (*yənägr*)<sub>S</sub> *yəhon?* ‘might he tells?’; the quasi-auxiliary epistemificator **ሊነግር<sub>S</sub> ይችላል<sub>S</sub>** *linägr<sub>S</sub> yəčälalls<sub>S</sub>*, ‘he could<sub>S</sub> tells<sub>S</sub>, he may<sub>S</sub> tells<sub>S</sub>’ as well as the copular epistemificators **ሊነግር<sub>S</sub> ነው/ይሆናል** *binägr<sub>S</sub> näw/yəhonall*—have as their epistemized head (i.e. main verb) the simple imperfective form of the verb. To negate the imperfective, the prefix *a-* is added, as usual, to the verb stem: **አይነግር** *aynägr* ‘(that) he doesn’t/won’t tell’. Consider examples (21), (22), (23) and (24) containing the epistemificators listed above:

- (21) **ምናልባት ብዙዎቹ ከአኛ የተሻለ እንቅልፍ**  
*mənalbat bəzu-(w)-očč-u kə-əñña yä-täšäl-ä ənqalf*  
 perhaps many-PL-DEF from-1PL REL-be.better\PFV-3SM sleep  
**ስለሚያጣጥሙ የጊዜ መሮጥም ናይ**  
*sälä-mm-i-(y)-atṭatəm-u yä-gize märot-(ə)-mm*  
 because-REL-3PL-take.delight.in\IPFV-3PL GEN-time run\VN-and  
**መንቀረፈፍም አይታወቃቸው ይሆናል**<sub>[AA 932]</sub>  
*mänqärfäf-(ə)-mm a-yə-ttaawwäq-aččäw yəhonall*  
 be.slow\VN-and NEG-3SM-be.known\IPFV-OBJ.3PL EPST

‘Maybe because the majority take better delight in sleep than we do, the speeding and dragging of time may **not be known** to them’

- (22) **ሌላስ ጥላን ሊኖር አይችል ይሆን?**<sub>[DB 17: 9]</sub>  
*lela-ss plan l-i-nor a-y-čäl yəhon*  
 another-TOP plan COMP-3SM-exist\IPFV NEG-3SM-could\IPFV EPST:Q

‘**Couldn’t** there exist another plan?’

- (23) **ምስጢሩን ለንደኛዎ ጠቅላይነት ነገረው ናይ**  
*məštir-u-n lä-g<sup>w</sup> addäñña-wa b-(ə)-ttə-nägr-äw*  
 secret-DEF-ACC to-friend-POSS.3SF if-3SF-tell\IPFV-OBJ.3SM  
**እሱ ምስጢሩን ላያወጣ ይችላል**<sub>[TS 6]</sub>  
*əssu məštir-u-n l-a-y-awäta yə-čäl=all-ø*  
 3SM secret-DEF-ACC COMP-NEG-3SM-reveal\IPFV 3SM-may\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘If she tells the secret to her friend, he may **not reveal** the secret’

- (24) የኔን ወዳጅነት ባትሻው ነው<sup>[MBL 69: 15-16]</sup>  
*yä-ne-n wädağännät b-a-ttä-ša-w n-äw*  
 GEN-1SG-ACC friendship if-NEG-2SM-want\IPFV-OBJ.3SM COP-3SM

‘It is probably because **you don’t want** my friendship’

Suppose now we were to try to negate, not the epistemized head, but the auxiliaries (*yəhonall* and *yəhon*), the quasi-auxiliary (*yəčälall*) and the copula *näw* in the examples above—what would be the semantics of such sentences? It turns out that sentences with negated *yəhonall* (cf. (21)), *yəhon* (cf. (22)) and *näw* (cf. (24)) are unacceptable, as with *yəttawwäqaččäw ayhonəmm* in sentence (25), which corresponds to *a-yə-ttawwäq-aččäw yəhonall* in (21):

- (25) \*ምናልባት ብዙዎቹ ከእኛ የተሻለ እንቅልፍ ስለሚያጣጥሙ የጊዜ መሮጥም ፣ መንቀረፊናም ይታወቃቸው አይሆንም<sup>[AA 932]</sup>  
*mənalbat bəzu-(w)-očč-u kə-əñña yä-täšal-ä ənqəlf*  
 perhaps many-PL-DEF from-1PL REL-be.better\PFV-3SM sleep  
*sälä-mm-i-(y)-atṭatəm-u yä-gize märot-(ə)-mm*  
 because-REL-3PL-take.delight.in\IPFV-3PL GEN-time run\VN-and  
*mänqärfäf-(ə)-mm yə-ttawwäq-aččäw ayhonəmm*  
 be.slow\VN-and 3SM-be.known\IPFV-OBJ.3PL NEG.EPST

\*‘Maybe because the majority take better delight in sleep than (we do), the speeding and dragging of time **may not** be known to them’

As mentioned above, the unacceptability of (25) results from the fact that epistemic *yəhonall*, *yəhon*, and *näw* are here the epistemizer’s comments on a given state of affairs which have no extralinguistic reality, and as such are not subject to negation.

By contrast, sentence (23), reformulated with a positive main verb but negated epistemificator (26), will be well-formed, but not in an epistemic reading. Sentence (23) also has a dynamic reading, and it is this sense which is carried over to (26). This has already been demonstrated on an analogous pair of sentences in Section 2.4.5. Here, in sentence (23) *ayčäləmm* indicates that it is not possible that the subject might reveal the secret, i.e. he is trustworthy.

- (26) **ምስጢሩን ለጓደኛዋ ብትነግረው ፣**  
*məstīr-u-n lā-g<sup>w</sup>addännā-wa b-(ə)-ttə-nägr-äw*  
 secret-DEF-ACC to-friend-POSS.3SF if-3SF-tell\IPFV-OBJ.3SM
- ሊያወጣ አይችልም**  
*l-i-(y)-awäta-w a-ya-čäl-(ə)-mm*  
 COMP-3SM-reveal\IPFV-OBJ.3SM NEG-3SM-can\IPFV-NEG
- ‘If she tells the secret to her friend, he **can’t** reveal it’

As discussed in Section 6.1, if an epistemically modalized state of affairs with the epistemificators *(yänägr)<sub>s</sub> yəhonall* ‘he may tells, he might tells’ and *(yänägr)<sub>s</sub> yəhon?* ‘might he tells?’ takes place in the past, the epistemized head in the positive sentence occurs in the gerund form **ነግሮ** *nägro* ‘(he) having told’. Thus:

- (27) **ጂልቱ ሻይ ቤት ንብታ ለጠጣችው ቡና**  
*Čaltu šay bet gäbt-a lā-(yä)-tätta-čč-(ə)-w bunna*  
 PN tea house enter\GER-3SF for-(REL)-drink\PFV-3SF-DEF coffee
- ኪሳብ ክፍላ ይሆናል**  
*hissab käfl-a yəhonall*  
 bill pay\GER-3SF EPST
- ‘Čaltu, having entered a café, may **have paid** the bill for the coffee that she drank’
- (28) **አምና ይሆን?**  
*amn-a yəhon*  
 believe\GER-3SF EPST:Q
- ‘Might she **have believed?**’

The gerund (here simple gerund) does not have its own negative form but instead uses the negated perfective, **አልነገረ** *alnäggärä* ‘he not having told’, as in the following sentences:

- (29) **ጂልቱ ሻይ ቤት ንብታ ለጠጣችው ቡና ኪሳብ አልክፈለች**  
*Čaltu šay bet gäbt-a lā-(yä)-tätta-čč-(ə)-w bunna hissab*  
 PN tea house enter\GER-3SF for-(REL)-drink\PFV-3SF-DEF coffee bill
- አልክፈለች ይሆናል**  
*al-käffäl-äčč yəhonall*  
 NEG-pay\PFV-3SF EPST
- ‘Čaltu, having entered a café, may **not have paid** the bill for the coffee that she drank’
- (30) **አላመነችም ይሆን?**<sub>[FLG 9]</sub>  
*al-ammän-äčč-(ə)-mm yəhon*  
 NEG-believe\PFV-3SF-FOC EPST:Q

‘Might she not have believed?’<sup>6</sup>

Here *alkäffäläčč* is the negative of *käfla* ‘she having paid’ and *alammänäčč* of the gerund *amna* ‘she having believed’.

In the past tense form of the epistemificator *linägrs yäčälalls* ‘he could<sub>s</sub> tells, he may<sub>s</sub> tells’—i.e. *nägrs libon yäčälalls*, with *linägr* replaced by *nägro libon*, so that it is now the copula *yəhon* that appears after the complementizer *lə-* (recall Section 6.1.4.1)—it is not the gerund form that is targeted by the negation but the copula, that is, *lə-yəhon* negates to *l-a-yəhon*, with the gerund left intact.

- (31) እመት በዕድልሽ ወርቅ ፣ ዕድሉን ካገኙ ካፋቸው  
*ammät Bäʾəddələš Wärq, əddəl-u-n k-agänn-u k-af-aččäw*  
 Mrs. PN chance-DEF-ACC if-get\PFV-3SPOL from-mouth-POSS.3SPOL  
 የደረሰውንና የፈለጉትን  
*yä-därräs-ä-w-(ə)-n-(ə)-nna yä-fälläg-u-t-(ə)-n*  
 REL-arrive\PFV-3SM-DEF-ACC-and REL-want\PFV-3SPOL-DEF-ACC  
 ጥያቄ ያነሳሉ። አስበውበት  
*təyyaqe y-anäs=all-u assəb-äw-(ə)-bb-ät*  
 question 3SPOL-raise\IPFV=NPST-3SPOL think\GER-3SPOL-about-OBJ.3SM  
 ላይሆን ይችላል<sub>[AB 15: 29-30]</sub>  
*l-a-y-hon yə-čəl=all-ø*  
 COMP-NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV 3SM-may\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘If Mrs. Bäʾəddələš Wärq gets a chance, she asks any question that comes to her mind (lit. to her mouth) and that she wants to. It may **not be** that she has thought it over’

Proceeding with our list, in the case of the epistemificator *ቢነግር<sub>s</sub> ነው* *binägrs näw* ‘he probably tells<sub>s</sub>, will probably tells<sub>s</sub>’ and *ቢነግር<sub>s</sub> ይሆናል* *binägrs yəhonall* ‘it may be that he tells<sub>s</sub>, it may be that he will tells<sub>s</sub>’ the negation is always attached to the epistemized head, *binägr* → *baynägr*. The pastness of the state of affairs expressed by the epistemized head can be obtained only indirectly and only if it is part of a cleft sentence

<sup>6</sup> The suffix *-mm* in sentence (30) is a focus marker (appropriate in the context of this sentence) and not the negative marker, which has just the same shape. Negative *-mm* would not be appropriate in a subordinated context, which is what we have in (30).

or a reduced cleft sentence.<sup>7</sup> In that case the subject of the cleft sentence is itself a clause, and the verbal form (perfective) of this clause indicates that the whole state of affairs took place in the past (see exx. (24 and 32))<sup>8</sup>:

- (32) የኔን                      ወዳጅነት              ባትሻው                      ነው<sub>[MBL 69: 15-16]</sub>  
*yä-ne-n*                      *wädağännät*              *b-a-ttä-ša-w*                      *n-äw*  
 GEN-1SG-ACC              friendship              if-NEG-2SF-want\IPFV-DEF              COP-3SM  
 [እንዲህ ያደረገችው]  
 [əndih *y-adärräg-äčč-(ə)-w*]  
 like.this              REL-do\PFV-3SF.DEF  
 ‘It is probably because **she didn’t/doesn’t want** my friendship [that **she did** like this]’

- (33) ያኔ                      ባይግባቡ                      ይሆናል  
*yanne*                      *b-a-yə-gbabb-u*                      *yə-hon=all-ø*  
 then                      if-NEG-3PL-understand.each.other\IPFV-3PL              3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 የተለያዩት  
*yä-täläyayy-u-t*  
 REL-separate.from.each.other\PFV-3PL-DEF  
 ‘It is because they may **not have understood** each other at that time **that they separated**’

In sentence (33), pastness is expressed both by the clausal subject of the cleft sentence (with its perfective relative verb) and the temporal adverb *yanne* ‘then, at that time’.

I have found no example sentence that would illustrate any of the negated epistemificators in question being used in the progressive aspect. My informants could not come up with a sentence like ‘She may not be coming now’.

As mentioned earlier in Sections 4.4.6 and 4.4.7 dealing with epistemic adverbs and particles, these two classes of epistemificators cannot be negated. As “rhematizers”, that is, as comments on the rheme, they occur only in the positive form. What can, of course, be negated in a sentence containing an epistemic adverb or particle is the main verb. Here are three examples in which the main verb of the clause is negated and the epistemificator,

<sup>7</sup> In a reduced cleft sentence the subject can be reconstructed from the context, as in example (32). The originally attested sentence did not have the bracketed addition.

<sup>8</sup> The same analysis holds for positive as well as negative sentences.

as expected, retains its positive meaning. The epistemificators are respectively *bä-ərgəṭäññännät* (34), *bärgəṭ* (35) and *mənalbat* (36).<sup>9</sup>

- (34) አንድ መኪና ያለሹፊር ሞተር ተነስቶ  
*and mäkina yalä-šufer motär-u tänäst-o*  
 one car without-driver engine-POSS.3SM start\GER-3SM  
 ቢለቀቅ ፤ በእርግጠኝነት ቀጥ ብሎ ለመጓዝ  
*b-i-lläqqäq bə-ərgəṭäññännät qät bəl-o lä-mäg<sup>w</sup>az*  
 if-3SM-be.released\IPFV in-certainty straight say\GER-3SM for-travel\VN  
 አይቻለውም<sup>10</sup>  
*a-y-čcal-äw-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG-3SM-be.capable\IPFV-OBJ.3SM-NEG  
 ‘A car without a driver, if its engine is released to start, in certainty will not be capable of moving straight ahead’

- (35) እኔም በበኩሌ በዲያቆን ትህትና የተሸፈነ ኩራት  
*əne-mm bə-bäkull-e bə-diyaqon təhətənnä yä-täšäffän-ä kurat*  
 1SG-FOC in-part-POSS.1SG by-deacon humbleness REL-be.covered\PFV-3SM pride  
 ተሰምቶኛል ። በርግጥ ከጉራና ከፉኩራ  
*täsämt-o-ññ=all-ø bərgəṭ kə-gurra-(ə)-nna kə-fukkära*  
 be.felt\GER-3SM-OBJ.1SG=PF-3SM clearly from-boast-and from-bragging  
 ወይም ከትዕቢት ደረጃ አልደረሰም [DB 71: 19-21]  
*wäyyəmm kə-təʾbit dərägğə al-därräs-ä-mm*  
 or from-vanity level NEG-reach\PFV-3SM-NEG  
 ‘Me, for my part, I felt pride subdued with (my) deacon’s humility. Clearly, it did not reach the level of boasting, bragging or vanity’

- (36) ምናልባት ጥሩ ገቢ አላገኝበትም ይሆናል  
*mənalbat tərū gäbi al-agäñ-(ə)-bb-ät-(ə)-mm yəhonall*  
 perhaps good profit NEG.1SG-gain\IPFV-by-OBJ.3SM-NEG EPST  
 ብዬ አልተወወም [AA 227]  
*bəyy-e al-täw-äw-(ə)-mm*  
 say\GER-1SG NEG.1SG-quit\IPFV-OBJ.3SM-NEG  
 ‘I will not quit saying: perhaps I may not gain from it good profit’

<sup>9</sup> Note that sentence (36) has two epistemificators: *mənalbat* and *(yənägr)<sub>s</sub> yəhonall*.  
<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ethpress.gov.et/addiszemen/index.php/environment/item/14325-2017-10-02-19-34-40>.  
 [Accessed: 25.06.2018]

The adverb **ያለ ጥርጥር** *yalä tärätṭar* ‘undoubtedly, doubtless, without any doubt’ is worth separate mention. It contains the preposition *yalä* ‘without’ which actually serves for negating what is conveyed by the nominal that follows. In this prepositional phrase, *yalä* ‘without’ negates the meaning of lack of certainty conveyed by the noun *tärätṭar* ‘doubt’. Thus, it negates and counteracts the negative import of *tärätṭar* ‘doubt’ and, as a result, the adverb has a positive meaning: the speaker has no doubt about the content of the proposition. Note that it is ungrammatical to say \***በጥርጥር** \**bätärätṭar* ‘with doubt’. Consider the following example:

- (37) **ያለጥርጥር ቆሻሻዎቹ ከመደብሩ እንደወጡ**  
*yalä-tärätṭar qošaša-(w)-očč-u kə-mädäbbär-u ändä-wätt-u*  
 without-doubt garbage-PL-DEF from-shop-DEF COMP-come.out\PFV-3PL  
**ያስታውቃል**<sup>11</sup>  
*y-astawwəq=all-ø*  
 3SM-be.clear\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Without any doubt it is clear that the garbage comes from the shop’

*Yalä tärätṭar* can be also used with a negated main verb:

- (38) **በምዕራቡ ርዕዮተ ዓለም ግድግዳ ላይ ሄዶ መለጠፍ**  
*bä-Məʾrab-u rəʾyotä aläm gədgadda lay hed-o mälätṭäf*  
 in-Western-DEF world view wall on go\GER-3SM glue\VN  
**ያለጥርጥር አዋጅ ሊሆን አይችልም**<sup>12</sup>  
*yalä-tärätṭar awaḡ l-i-hon a-y-čäl-(ə)-mm*  
 without-doubt decree COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV NEG-3SM-can\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘In the Western world view, without any doubt, to go and glue (something, e.g. a poster) on the wall **cannot** be a decree’

In the same way as the epistemic adverbs and particles, a parenthetical cannot be negated either. This is so despite the fact that it is a “mini-sentence” and as such contains a verb which potentially could be negated. But again, the parenthetical lies outside the main proposition and provides a non-negatable comment on it. As Wierzbicka aptly says, the parenthetical “can qualify the speaker’s commitment to the statement in some way but

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/6327>. [Accessed: 30.07.2018]

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/index.php/article/3489>. [Accessed: 04.08.2018]

cannot cancel this commitment altogether” (2006: 255). Of course, a parenthetical epistemificator can occur in a sentence where the main verb is negated:

- (39) አርግጠኛ ነኝ ብዙዎቻችን አናውቀውም<sup>[NB 114: 29-30]</sup>  
*ərgətäñña n-äññ bəzu-(w)-očč-aččən a-nn-awq-äw-(ə)-mm*  
 sure COP-1SG many-PL-POSS.1PL NEG-1PL-know\IPFV-OBJ.3SM-NEG  
 ‘Many of us, I am sure, **don’t know** it’

### 6.2.3. Negation of the epistemificator head (type iia)

In the epistemificators discussed in the present section the negator applies semantically to the epistemized but occurs on the epistemificator head. This group is rather small, encompassing only two classes of epistemificators: some mental noun epistemificators, e.g. X የሚል ሐሳብ አለኝ X *yämmil hassab alläññ* ‘I have a thought: X’; and non-copular epistemificators of seeming, e.g. የ-X ይመስለኛል *yä-X yämäsläññall* ‘it seems to me that X, it appears to me that X’.

Mental noun epistemificators of this type are: X የሚል ሐሳብ አለኝ X *yämmil hassab alläññ* ‘I have a thought: X’, X የሚል እምነት አለኝ X *yämmil əmnät alläññ* ‘I have a belief: X’ and X የሚል ግምት አለኝ X *yämmil gəmmət alläññ* ‘I have an assumption: X, I have a guess X’. Note that the nouns, *hassab* ‘thought’, *əmnät* ‘belief’ and *gəmmət* ‘assumption’, correspond to the verbs *assəballähu* ‘I think’, *əmnallähu* ‘I believe’ and *əgəmmətallähu* ‘I assume, I guess’ of the epistemificators from the next section (6.2.4). These mental noun epistemificators are structurally similar to the epistemificators with *bəyye*, discussed below, in the sense that they too are preceded by an adjoined sentence and contain the verb አለ *alä* (but now in the relative form *yämmil*); moreover, as with *bəyye*, the stress falls on the epistemificator. Not surprisingly, then, these epistemificators require the negator to be on the epistemificator head (just like the epistemificators with *bəyye*). Consider the following examples:

- (40) ሁሉም የፖለቲካ እስረኞች ይፈታሉ የሚል  
*bullumm yä-polätika əsräññ-očč yə-ffätt=all-u yämm-i-l*  
 all GEN-politics prisoner-PL 3PL-be.released\IPFV=NPST-3PL REL-3SM-say\IPFV

**ግምት የለኝም**<sup>13</sup>  
*gəmmət yäll-ä-ññ-(ə)-mm*  
 assumption exist.NEG-3SM-OBJ.1SG-NEG

‘I don’t have an assumption: all political prisoners will be released’

But not:

(41) \***ሁሉም የፖለቲካ እስረኞች አይፈቱም**  
*hullumm yä-polätika asräññ-očč a-yə-ffätt-u-mm*  
 all GEN-politics prisoner-PL NEG-3PL-be.released\IPFV-3PL-NEG

**የሚል ግምት አለኝ**  
*yämm-i-l gəmmət all-ä-ññ*  
 REL-3SM-say\IPFV assumption exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

\*‘I have an assumption: all political prisoners won’t be released’

One more example:

(42) **በምዕራባውያን የተፈበረከ መድኃኒት ለኢትዮጵያውያን**  
*bä-Məʾrabaʾə-(y)-an yä-täfabärräk-ä mädhanit lä-Ityopyaʾə-(y)-an*  
 by-Westerner-PL REL-manufacture\PFV-3SM medicine for-Ethiopian-PL

**መርዝ ይሆናል የሚል እምነት የለኝም** [AA 230]  
*märz yə-hon=all-ø yämm-i-l əmnät yäll-ä-ññ-(ə)-mm*  
 poison 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM REL-3SM-say\IPFV belief exist.NEG-3SM-OBJ.1SG-NEG

‘I don’t have a belief: a medicine which has been manufactured by Westerners may be poison for Ethiopians’

The two non-copular epistemificators of seeming: **የ-X ይመስላል** *yä-X yəməslall* ‘it seems that X, it appears that X’ and **የ-X ይመስለኛል** *yä-X yəməslännäll* ‘it seems to me that X, it appears to me that X’ require the negator, even though it applies semantically to the epistemized, to be placed exclusively on the epistemificator head; I do not understand why.<sup>14</sup> See the following examples:

(43) **አማርኛው በእንግሊዝኛ ቅላጭ የታጀበ ነው ።**  
*amarəñña-w bä-ənglizəñña qəlləṣe yä-tağğäb-ä n-äw*  
 Amharic-POSS.3SM by-English rhythm REL-be.accompanied\PFV-3SM COP-3SM

**ሲያወራ የወፍ ቋንቋ የሚያወራ እንጂ አማርኛ**  
*s-i-(y)-awära yä-wäf q<sup>w</sup>anq<sup>w</sup>a yämm-i-(y)-awära əngi amarəñña*  
 when-3SM-speak\IPFV GEN-bird language REL-3SM-speak\IPFV but Amharic

<sup>13</sup> <http://wazemaradio.com/መንግስት-በእስረኞች-መፍታትና-አለመፍታት/>. [Accessed: 21.11.2018]

<sup>14</sup> Note that in some other languages ‘seem that’ is a NEG-raising verb and in some others in not (Horn 1978: 187-188).

**የሚያወራ**                      **አይመስልም** [AA 942]  
*yämm-i-(y)-awära*      *a-y-mäsl-(ə)-mm*  
 REL-3SM-speak\IPFV      NEG-3SM-seem\IPFV-NEG

‘His Amharic is accompanied by English rhythms. When he speaks **it doesn’t seem** that he is speaking Amharic but that he is speaking bird language’

- (44) **በትንሹ**      **በቀላሉ**      **በወራ**      **በውይይት**      **ብቻ**      **የሚፈታ**  
*bätännäšu*    *bäqällalu*    *bä-wäre*    *bä-wəyayyat*    *bäčča*    *yämm-i-ffätta*  
 easily            simply            by-talk            by-disussion            only    REL-3SM-be.solved\IPFV
- ነገር**      **ያለ**                      **አይመስለኝም** #                      **ከበድ**  
*nägär*    *y-all-ä*                      *a-y-mäsl-änn-(ə)-mm*                      *käbädd*  
 thing      REL-exist-3SM      NEG-3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG-NEG      serious
- ያለ**                      **ነገር**      **ነው** [MA 2]  
*y-al-ä*                      *nägär*      *n-äw*  
 REL-say\PFV-3SM      thing      COP-3SM

‘**It doesn’t seem to me** that it is something which (can) be solved easily, simply, by talking, by discussing. It is a serious matter’

- (45) **ይኼ**      **አካሄድ**      **ግን**      **ብዙ**      **የሚያዘልቅህ**  
*yäbe*    *akkahed*    *gən*    *bəzu*    *yämm-i-(y)-azälləq-(ə)-h*  
 this    way.of.doing    but    much    REL-3SM-bring.through\IPFV-OBJ.2SM
- አይመስለኝም**<sup>15</sup>  
*a-y-mäsl-änn-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG-3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG-NEG

‘But **it doesn’t seem to me** that this conduct will get you very far’

**6.2.4. Negation of either the epistemized or the epistemificator: NEG-raising (type iib)**

In many languages of the world, ‘I think that’ and similar epistemic expressions allow a phenomenon often referred to as NEG-raising (Horn 1989: 308, 312) or NEG-transport (Givón 2001: 394). With NEG-raising predicates, the negator occurs in the matrix clause but actually applies to the subordinate clause: ‘I don’t think he will come’ in the meaning ‘I think he won’t come’. Furthermore, the negator can occur either upstairs in the matrix clause (negating the epistemificator head) or downstairs in the subordinate clause (negating the epistemized head) and the meaning of the sentence does not (significantly) change: ‘I don’t think he will come’ equals ‘I think he won’t come’. Whether a given verb is a NEG-raising trigger or not is language-specific. For instance, Hebrew *xošev* ‘think

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/index.php/article/13723>. [Accessed: 21.11.2018]

(that)’ is a NEG-raising predicate whereas Hindi *soocnaa* ‘think (that)’ is not (Horn 1978: 188). In Amharic, NEG-raising triggers include mental verbal epistemicators with *bəyye*: X ብዬ አሰባለሁ X *bəyye assəballähu* ‘I think: X’, ‘I reckon: X’, X ብዬ አምናለሁ X *bəyye amnallähu* ‘I believe: X’, X ብዬ እንምታለሁ X *bəyye əgämmətallähu* ‘I assume: X’ and ብዬ እጠብቃለሁ *bəyye əṭəbbəqallähu* ‘I expect: X’; and their counterparts with *əndä*:- እንደ-X አሰባለሁ *əndä-X assəballähu* ‘I think (that) X’, ‘I reckon (that) X’, እንደ-X አምናለሁ *əndä-X amnallähu* ‘I believe (that) X’, እንደ-X እንምታለሁ *əndä-X əgämmətallähu* ‘I assume (that) X, I guess (that), I speculate (that)’ and እንደ-X እጠብቃለሁ *əndä-X əṭəbbəqallähu* ‘I expect that X’.

If the language permits NEG-raising, so that ‘I don’t think he will come’ is semantically near-equivalent to ‘I think he won’t come’, this means that there exists a choice as to how to package the self-same negative statement: the negator may appear either upstairs or downstairs. In Amharic, however, this choice involves an extra twist: when the negator appears upstairs, the linker *bəyye* is strongly favoured; when the negator appears downstairs, it is the complementizer *əndä*- which is favoured. Thus, in regard to the location of the negation the two constructions (with *bəyye* and *əndä*-) appear in complementary distribution. The following two pairs of example sentences, (46) and (48) with *bəyye*, and (47) and (49) with *əndä*-, will make this point clear:

(46) **ጉዳዩ**            **ወደ**    **ዓለም አቀፍ ግጭትነት**    **ይሻገራል**  
*gudday-u*    *wädä*    *aläm aqäf*    *gəččətənnät*    *ɣə-ššaggär=all-ø*  
matter-DEF    to            international    conflict            3SM-develop\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
**ብዬ**                    **አልገምትም**<sup>16</sup>  
*bəyye-e*                    *al-gämmət-(ə)-mm*  
say\GER-1SG            NEG.1SG-assume\IPFV-NEG  
‘I don’t assume: the matter will develop into an international conflict’

(47) **ጉዳዩ**            **ወደ**    **ዓለም አቀፍ ግጭትነት**    **እንደማይሻገር**  
*gudday-u*    *wädä*    *aläm aqäf*    *gəččətənnät*    *əndä-mm-a-ɣ-ššaggär*  
matter-DEF    to            international    conflict            COMP-REL-NEG-3SM-develop\IPFV  
**እንምታለሁ**  
*ə-gämmət=all-ähu*  
1SG-assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.dw.com/am/የአስቸኳይ-ጊዜ-አዋጁ-እና-ኢትዮጵያ/a-36092854>. [Accessed: 07.11.2018]

‘I assume that the matter **will not develop** into an international conflict’

- (48) በጥቅሉ ግን የአፍሪቃ ቡድኖች ትልቅ ፣ በጣም ትልቅ ስኬት  
*bätəqəllu gən yä-Afrika budən-očč talləq bätam talləq saket*  
 on.the.whole but GEN-Africa team-PL big very big success  
 ያገኛሉ ብዬ አልጠብቅም<sup>17</sup>  
*y-agäññ=all-u bəyye al-täbbəq-(ə)-mm*  
 3PL-achieve\IPFV=NPST-3PL say\GER-1SG NEG.1SG-expect\IPFV-NEG

‘But on the whole, I **don’t expect** that African teams will achieve a big, very big success’

- (49) በጥቅሉ ግን የአፍሪቃ ቡድኖች ትልቅ ፣ በጣም ትልቅ ስኬት  
*bätəqəllu gən yä-Afrika budən-očč talləq bätam talləq saket*  
 on.the.whole but GEN-Africa team-PL big very big success  
 እንደግልጽ እጠብቃለሁ  
*ändä-mm-a-(y)-agäññ-u ə-täbbəq=all-ähu*  
 COMP-REL-NEG-3PL-achieve\IPFV-3PL 1SG-expect\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘But on the whole, I **expect** that African teams **will not achieve** a big, very big success’

This constellation of facts has a plausible functional explanation. When the linker is *bəyye*, we are highlighting the epistemizer’s evaluation; when the linker is *ändä-* we are highlighting the epistemized proposition (see Section 5.11). Plausibly, the negator should preferentially appear in the part of the sentence which is highlighted. Then with *bəyye*, where the epistemizer is highlighted (the sentence stress falls on *bəyye*), it is reasonable that the negator should appear in the epistemificator. And with *ändä-*, where the epistemized is highlighted (the sentence stress falls on the epistemized head), it is reasonable that the negator should appear in the epistemized. This is exactly the preferred pattern, as noted above.

It should be stressed here that the slight semantic difference between sentences with *bəyye* and *ändä-* expounded in Section 5.11 holds here as well. Therefore, we cannot talk about an absolute equivalence of such sentences. In connection to this, the question arises whether there ever is truly an absolute equivalence between sentences with a downstairs and upstairs negation even in those languages in which NEG-raising is claimed to occur

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,5683588,00.html>. [Accessed: 03.08.2018]

without any further twists. Thus, are the English examples below, from Zeijlstra (2017: 18), absolutely equivalent?

(50) I don't think you're right.

(51) I think you're not right.

Some linguists have argued that there is a slight difference regarding the strength of the assertion in the two sentences (Poutsma 1928: 105, as well as D. Bolinger in a letter to G. Lakoff December 1967; mentioned in Horn 1989: 131). Leaving this question open, we can conclude that some Amharic predicates do trigger NEG-raising, although the epistemificator will generally be accompanied by two different linkers, thereby bringing about some change in meaning.

As explained above, in the case of Amharic mental epistemic verbs the NEG-raising strongly tends to involve a change of the linker. If the linker stays the same, either *bəyye* or *əndä-*, the sentence with the negator in the disfavoured position (a downstairs position for *bəyye* and an upstairs position for *əndä-*) is generally strongly dispreferred, and for some speakers is judged as unacceptable. Consider the following examples:

(52) ኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ ፍትሐዊና ነፃ የሆነ ምርጫ  
*Ityopya wəst̪ fətəhawwi-(ə)-nna nəša yä-hon-ä mərça*  
 Ethiopia in just-and free REL-COP\PFV-3SM election  
 ተካሂዷል ብዬ አላስብም<sup>18</sup>  
*täkahid<sup>w</sup>=all-ø bəyy-e al-assəb-(ə)-mm*  
 be.conducted\GER-3SM=PF-3SM say\GER-1SG NEG.1SG-think\IPFV-NEG  
 'I don't think: a just and free election has been conducted in Ethiopia'

vs. unacceptable

(53) \*ኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ ፍትሐዊና ነፃ የሆነ ምርጫ  
*Ityopya wəst̪ fətəhawwi-(ə)-nna nəša yä-hon-ä mərça*  
 Ethiopia in just-and free REL-COP\PFV-3SM election  
 አልተካሄደም ብዬ አስባለሁ  
*al-täkahed-ä-mm bəyy-e assəb=all-ähu*  
 NEG-be.conducted\PFV-3SM-NEG say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/index.php/content/«ዘላቂ-መፍትሔ-የሚገኘው-ኢ.ሕ.ዲ.ግ-ከልቡ-አምኖ-መሠረታዊ-ማሻሻያ-ሲያደርግ-ነው»>. [Accessed: 14.11.2018]

\*‘I think: a just and free election hasn’t been conducted in Ethiopia’

- (54) እንቅስቃሴያችን ከልብ ከሆነ [ጉዳዩ] ከባድ  
*ənqəsqqase-(y)-aččən kǎ-ləbb kǎ-hon-ä gudday-u kǎbbad*  
 movement-POSS.1PL from-heart if-COP\IPFV-3SG matter-DEF difficult  
 እንደማይሆን እገምታለሁ<sup>19</sup>  
*ändä-mm-a-y-hon ə-gämmät=all-ähu*  
 COMP-REL-NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV 1SG-assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘If our movement is from the heart I assume that [the matter] **will not be** difficult’

vs. unacceptable

- (55) \*እንቅስቃሴያችን ከልብ ከሆነ [ጉዳዩ] ከባድ  
*ənqəsqqase-(y)-aččən kǎ-ləbb kǎ-hon-ä gudday-u kǎbbad*  
 movement-POSS.1PL from-heart if-COP\IPFV-3SG matter-DEF difficult  
 እንደሚሆን አልገምትም  
*ändä-mm-i-hon al-gämmät-(ə)-mm*  
 COMP-REL-3SM-COP\IPFV 1SG-assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG

\*‘If our movement is from the heart I **don’t** assume that [the matter] will be difficult’

This is strongly corroborated by a final argument against such an analysis, namely by the evidence from the corpus, or rather the lack thereof. In my corpus I came across only four examples of sentences with the epistemifiers in question that contained a negated epistemized head, and two of them were judged by informants as being less felicitous than their counterparts with the negated epistemifier. The two acceptable sentences where the negation (contrary to the usual pattern) is in the epistemized clause are these:

- (56) በተጨማሪም ፈጣሪም ያለ ምክንያት ወደዚህ ሥፍራ  
*bätäčämmarimm Fätari-mm yalä məknəyat wädä-zzih səfra*  
 additionally Creator-FOC without reason to-this place  
 አላመጣኝም ብዬ አስባለሁ<sup>20</sup>  
*al-amätta-ññ-(ə)-mm bəyy-e assəb=all-ähu*  
 NEG-bring\PFV.3SM-OBJ.1SG-NEG say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘Additionally, I think that the Creator **did not bring me** to this place without reason’

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/ «ከፌዴሬሽኑ-ጀምሮ-የእነነት-ስሜት-ወደ-አትሌቶች-ሠርዖ-እንዲገባ-አልተሠራም»](https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/«ከፌዴሬሽኑ-ጀምሮ-የእነነት-ስሜት-ወደ-አትሌቶች-ሠርዖ-እንዲገባ-አልተሠራም»). [Accessed: 07.11.2018]

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/index.php/article/9234>. [Accessed 26.07.2019]

- (57) መቼም ልጅ የወለደ አይጨክንም  
*mäčemm läḡ yä-wälläd-ä a-y-čäkkən-(ə)-mm*  
 after.all child REL-have.child\IPFV-3SM NEG-3SM-be.cruel\IPFV-NEG
- ብዬ አስባለሁ<sup>[TS 7]</sup>  
*bəyye assəb=all-ähu*  
 say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG
- ‘After all, I think: **one** who has a child **is not** cruel’

In both (56) and (57), the speaker is epistemically evaluating sentences which for her/him make sense precisely because they are negated. The corresponding positive predications would be psychologically jarring. The sentences are, so to speak, ‘quoted’ by him in the expected negative form and s/he wants to evaluate them in this particular form.

Nevertheless, it has become perfectly evident that the epistemificators with *bəyye* shows a very strong tendency to occur with a negated epistemificator head and thus always to involve NEG-raising.

The picture is even clearer with mental verbal epistemificators involving the complementizer *ändä-*, such as **እንደ-X አስባለሁ** *ändä-X assəballähu* ‘I think (that) X’, ‘I reckon (that) X’ and **እንደ-X አምናለሁ** *ändä-X amnallähu* ‘I believe (that) X’: all my informants agreed that the only plausible position of the negator is on the epistemized head (downstairs), with no possibility of raising it to the upstairs clause. Thus, whereas sentence (58) is correct, sentence (59) is unacceptable.

- (58) አዝባችንን በዚህ ወቅት ከገጠመው  
*həzb-aččən-(ə)-n bə-zzih wäqt kə-(yä)-gättäm-ärw*  
 people-POSS.1PL-ACC in-this period from-(REL)-happen\IPFV-OBJ.3SM
- የባሰ ፈታኝ ሁኔታ ሊገጥመው  
*yä-bas-ä fättan huneta li-gätm-ärw*  
 REL-be.bad\IPFV-3SM challenging situation COMP-3SM-happen\IPFV-OBJ.3SM
- እንደማይችል አስባለሁ<sup>21</sup>  
*ändä-mm-a-y-čäl assəb=all-ähu*  
 COMP-REL-NEG-3SM-can\IPFV 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I think that a more (lit. worse) challenging situation than has happened to our people in this period **cannot** happen to them’

<sup>21</sup> <http://ethiofact.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/RenaissanceofBreadBasket.pdf>. [Accessed: 07.11.2018]

(59) *ሕዝባችንን	በዚህ	ወቅት	ከገጠመው
<i>həzb-aččən-(ə)-n</i>	<i>bä-zzih</i>	<i>wäqt</i>	<i>kä-(yə)-gättäm-ärw</i>
people-POSS.1PL-ACC	in-this	period	from-(REL)-happen\PFV-OBJ.3SM
የባሰ	ፈታኝ	ሁኔታ	ሊገጥመው
<i>yä-bas-ä</i>	<i>fättañ</i>	<i>huneta</i>	<i>l-i-gätm-ärw</i>
REL-be.bad\PFV-3SM	challenging	situation	COMP-3SM-happen\IPFV-OBJ.3SM
እንደሚችል		አላስብም	
<i>ändä-mm-i-čäl</i>		<i>al-assəb-(ə)-mm</i>	
COMP-REL-NEG-3SM-can\IPFV		NEG.1SG.think\IPFV-NEG	

\* ‘I don’t think that a more (lit. worse) challenging situation than has happened to our people in this period can happen to them’

As mentioned above, a possible explanation of this phenomenon involves the position of the sentence stress. With *ändä*-sentences, the emphasis is on the content of the speaker’s thought, which takes the main stress and is the rheme; this is the part we are paying attention to, hence this is the part that preferentially is the site of the negation. It seems pragmatically odd to negate precisely the part of the sentence that we are not highlighting. In contrast, with *bəyye* sentences, the emphasis is on the fact that the speaker thinks in a certain way; the content of his thought is like a “black box”, presented as a quotation and not to be manipulated. Hence the negation shows a strong preference for the epistemificator (*bəyye* + verb), which is the part of the sentence that is highlighted.

### 6.2.5. Negation of either the epistemized or the epistemificator: meaning difference (type iii)

Under this heading, I will deal with epistemificators in which either the epistemized head or the epistemificator head can be subject to negation, each time with a different meaning. My discussion will revolve around four groups of epistemificators, each having its own characteristic semantic features when negated. These are:

- i. **እንደ-X እርግጠኛ ነኝ** *ändä-X ərgəṭännä näññ* ‘I am sure (that) X’ and **መንገሩን እጠራጠራለሁ** *mängärunṣ əṭṭärəṭṭärallähu* ‘I have doubts (about) his tellings’ and other epistemificators lexically related to them

- ii. እንደ-X ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ *ändä-X täsfa adärgallähu* ‘I hope (that) X’, X ብዬ ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ *X bəyye täsfa adärgallähu* ‘I hope: X’; እንደ-X እተማመናለሁ *ändä-X attämammänallähu* ‘I am confident that X’ and X ብዬ እተማመናለሁ *X bəyye attämammänallähu* ‘I am confident: X’
- iii. X ብዬ እሠጋለሁ *X bəyye əsägallähu* ‘I worry (that): X, I am worried (that): X’, X ብዬ እፈራለሁ *X bəyye əfärallähu* ‘I am afraid (that): X, I fear (that): X’; X የሚል ሥጋት አለኝ *X yämmil səgat allänn* ‘I have a worry: X’, X የሚል ፍራቻ አለኝ *X yämmil fəračča allänn* ‘I have a concern: X’
- iv. እንደ-X እጠረጥራለሁ *ändä-X ətärättärallähu* ‘I suspect that X’, X ብዬ እጠረጥራለሁ *X bəyye ətärättärallähu*<sup>22</sup> ‘I suspect: X’

As pointed out earlier, in this section I will also treat the epistemificators: እንደ-NEG.X እሠጋለሁ *änd-NEG.X əsägallähu* ‘I worry lest X, I am worried lest X’ and እንደ-NEG.X እፈራለሁ *änd-NEG.X əfärallähu* ‘I am afraid lest X, I fear lest X’, እንደ-NEG.X ሥጋት አለኝ *änd-NEG.X səgat allänn* ‘I have a worry lest X’, እንደ-NEG.X ፍርሃት አለኝ *änd-NEG.X fərbat allänn* ‘I have a fear lest X’ and እንደ-NEG.X ፍራቻ አለኝ *änd-NEG.X fəračča allänn* ‘I have a concern lest X’ in order to compare them semantically with the formally similar epistemificators in (iii). (Strictly speaking, however, these epistemificators do not meet the definitional criterion for this section but belong in Section 6.2.7.)

With all the epistemificators (i-iii), the position of the negation marker, either in the main or in the complement clause, is decisive for the semantics of the negated sentence; to give a concrete example, *I’m sure he won’t come* (‘I’m sure that it is true that he won’t come’) is definitely not the same as *I’m not sure he will come* (‘It is not true that I’m sure that he will come’). So-called NEG-raising, which involves insertion of the negative marker either in the main or in the complement clause without (significant) change of the meaning of the sentence, does not apply to these epistemificators at all.

I will start with an analysis of two epistemificators that behave in polar opposite ways with respect to negation: እንደ-X እርግጠኛ ነኝ *ändä-X ərgətäñña näññ* ‘I am sure (that) X’ and መንገሩን እጠራጠራለሁ *mängärün፣ əttärättärallähu* ‘I have doubts (about)

<sup>22</sup> Note that *ətärättärallähu* in (iv) is not the same verb as *əttärättärallähu* in (i).

his tellings’. The reason for discussing them together is that the positive and negative forms of these two epistemificators are semantically complementary: if I doubt that he has told (it) then I am not sure that he has told (it), and if I don’t doubt that he has told (it) then I am sure that he has told (it). This semantic relation between the two epistemificators is well reflected in the kind of complements that they preferentially take. The negative of *ändä-X argəṭäñña näññ* ‘I am sure that’ shows a predilection for taking a verbal noun as its complement, just like the positive *mängärums aṭṭärəṭṭärallähu* ‘I have doubts (about) his tellings’;<sup>23</sup> conversely, the negative of *mängärums aṭṭärəṭṭärallähu* always takes an *ändä*-clause, just like the positive *ändä-X argəṭäñña näññ*. Let us examine the two cases in closer detail, beginning with negation of the epistemificator head. Subsequently, we will move on to the case where the epistemized head is negated.

The epistemificator *ändä-X argəṭäñña näññ* ‘I am sure (that) X’ can be negated by turning the copula *näññ* ‘I am’ into the negative form *aydällähummm*. As just indicated, *argəṭäñña aydällähummm* ‘I am not sure’ tends to take the verbal noun as its complement (60), sometimes preceded by the preposition **ሰለ-** *sälä-* ‘about’ (61), just like *mängärums aṭṭärəṭṭärallähu* ‘I have doubts (about) his tellings’ (also *sälä-mängärums aṭṭärəṭṭärallähu* ‘I have doubts about his tellings’; there may be a slight semantic difference).<sup>24</sup> As with other epistemificators that have the verbal noun as their complement, the sentence stress falls on the kernel of the epistemificator (*argəṭäñña*). Consider the following examples:

- (60) **ጥልቅ ፍቅር ውስጥ በዚህ ፍጥነት መግባት መቻሉን**  
*ṭəlq fəqər wəst bə-zzih fəṭnät mägbat mäčal-e-n*  
 deep love in in-this speed enter\VN be.able\VN-POSS.1SG-ACC  
**‘እርግጠኛ አይደለሁም**<sup>25</sup>  
*‘argəṭäñña aydäll-ähu-mm*  
 sure NEG.COP-1SG-NEG

<sup>23</sup> The preference for the verbal noun with verbs of doubting was discussed earlier in Section 4.4.2.2. The identical considerations apply to “not being sure”.

<sup>24</sup> I do not mean that *mängärums* and *sälä-mängärums* are synonyms. In fact, I have found sentences in which they are not interchangeable. However, I will not investigate the semantic difference between them in this dissertation.

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=21575:ሰለ-ጥልቅ-ፍቅር-ውስጥ-በዚህ-ፍጥነት-መግባት-መቻሉን-አይደለሁም&Itemid=234](http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=21575:ሰለ-ጥልቅ-ፍቅር-ውስጥ-በዚህ-ፍጥነት-መግባት-መቻሉን-አይደለሁም&Itemid=234). [Accessed: 31.07.2018]

‘I am not sure (of) my being able to fall deeply in love at this speed’

- (61) አጉዌሮ ከእኛ ጋር ስለመቆየቱ 'እርግጠኛ አይደለሁም'<sup>26</sup>  
*Agüwero kä-ñña gar salä-mäqoyyät-u 'ərgätännä aydäll-ähu-mm*  
 PN with-1PL with about-stay\VN-POSS.3SM sure NEG.COP-1SG-NEG

‘I am not sure about Agüero’s staying with us’

*Ərgätännä aydällähumm* ‘I am not sure’ can also, though rarely, be preceded by the complementizer *əndä*- ‘that’. Preceded by the perfective or the imperfective, *əndä*- allows for specifying the time of the state of affairs: past (62) or non-past (63). This is not the case with the verbal noun: the state of affairs that it refers to is not located in time and the location in time must be inferred from the context. Compare sentences (63) and (64):

- (62) የናስ ለቀበሌ ለጻፈው ደብዳቤ መልስ  
*Yonas lä-qäbäle lä-(yä)-şaf-ä-w däbdabbe mäls*  
 PN for-municipality for-(REL)-write\PFV-3SM-DEF letter answer  
 እንግግኛ እርግጠኛ አይደለሁም  
*ənd-agännä-ä ərgätännä aydäll-ähu-mm*  
 COMP-receive\PFV-3SM sure NEG.COP-1SG-NEG

‘I am not sure that Yonas received an answer to the letter which he wrote to the municipality’

- (63) አሁንም ቢሆን መዝፈን እንደምችል እርግጠኛ  
*ahun-(ə)-mm bihon mäzfän əndä-mm-ə-čəl ərgätännä*  
 now-FOC even sing\VN COMP-REL-1SG-can\IPFV sure  
 አይደለሁም<sup>[YG 2/11]</sup>  
*aydäll-ähu-mm*  
 NEG.COP-1SG-NEG

‘Even now I am not sure that I can sing’<sup>27</sup>

- (64) አሁንም ቢሆን መዝፈን ስለመቻሌ እርግጠኛ  
*ahun-(ə)-mm bihon mäzfän salä-mäčal-e ərgätännä*  
 now-FOC even sing\VN about-can\VN-POSS.1SG sure  
 አይደለሁም  
*aydäll-ähu-mm*

‘Even now I am not sure about my being able to sing’

<sup>26</sup> <https://ethioaddissport.com/2017/02/13/አጉዌሮ-ከእኛ-ጋር-ስለመቆየቱ-እርግጠኛ-አ/>. [Accessed: 31.07.2018]

<sup>27</sup> This and the next sentence are ambiguous in that *əndämməčəl* ‘that I can’ and *mäčale* ‘my being able’ lend themselves to being interpreted as either an ability or a permission.

It should be added here that the complementizer *ändä-* typically and most often appears with *ərgəṭännä aydällähum* in sentences with question words, such as **ለምን** *lämən* ‘why’, **የት** *yät* ‘where’ and **እንዴት** *ändet* ‘how’ — which, however, lie outside the scope of epistemic modality.

As discussed in Section 4.4.5.1 the epistemificator *ändä-X ərgəṭännä nänn* ‘I am sure (that) X’ is controversial: some scholars would consider it as an expression which entails knowledge and some, to the contrary, as an expression which does not entail knowledge but is close to it. This borderline status of the epistemificator, straddling knowledge and non-knowledge, results in a quite idiosyncratic way of negating this epistemificator. Mental verbal epistemificators with *ändä-* take the negation on the epistemized head. Mental verbal epistemificators with *bəyye* take the negation on the epistemificator head (see above). With *ändä-X ərgəṭännä nänn* both constructions are possible, but with a difference in meaning. When the epistemized head is negated, the speaker is sure that the state of affairs will not (or does/did not) take place. When the epistemificator head is negated, the speaker is not sure whether the state of affairs will (or does/did) take place at all. This last behaviour stands in contrast to factive verbs, where the construction \**ändä-X* followed by a negative (factive) verb *alawqəmm* ‘I don’t know’ is unacceptable:<sup>28</sup>

- (65) \***በሩ ክፍት እንዴት አላውቅም**  
*bärr-u kəft ändä-hon-ä al-awq-(ə)-mm*  
 door-DEF open COMP-COP\PFV-3SM NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG  
 \*‘I don’t know **that** the door is open’

In order to claim ignorance in regard to a state of affairs, Amharic uses disjunction (both items appearing in the jussive; in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person, the first, positive component occurs in the imperative form and the second, negative component in the jussive):

- (66) **በሩ ክፍት ይሁን አይሁን አላውቅም**  
*bärr-u kəft yə-hun a-y-hun al-awq-(ə)-mm*  
 door-DEF open 3SM-COP\JUUS NEG-3SM-COP\JUUS NEG.1SG-know\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘I don’t know whether the door **is open or is not**’ (lit. ‘be it open or be it not open’)

<sup>28</sup> On this see also Danielewiczowa (2002: 223).

Note the difference in the English translations: ‘know that’ vs. ‘know whether’. This same disjunctive construction can be used with *ərgəṭäñña aydällähummm* ‘I am not sure’:<sup>29</sup>

- (67) ይባል                      አይባል                      ግን እርግጠኛ አይደለሁም [AA 851]  
*yə-bbal*                      *a-y-bbal*                      *gən ərgəṭäñña aydäl-ähu-mm*  
 3SM-be.said\JUUS NEG-3SM-be.said\JUUS but sure NEG.COP-1SG-NEG  
 ‘But I am not sure whether **one says** (like this) **or does not say**’

In the above discussion I have presented three different types of complements of *ərgṭäñña aydällähummm*. These are: *ändä-X ərgəṭäñña aydällähummm* ‘I am not sure that’, *(sälä)mängäru(n) ərgṭäñña aydälähummm* ‘I am not sure (about) his telling’ and *yəngär ayəngär ərgṭäñña aydälähummm* ‘I am not sure whether he will tell or not’. There are undoubtedly semantic differences between them which are not clear to me at the moment and which I will not study here. My present aim is just to register them and put them forward as a subject for further investigation. This also applies to some other forms of epistemificators that will be mentioned below. The semantic difference between the *ändä*-clause and the nominalized clause in positive sentences is treated in Section 5.11.

Thus far we have dealt with the case of the negated epistemificator *ändä-X ərgəṭäñña näññ* ‘I am sure (that) X’. Now we consider the negation of its mirror-image epistemificator, *mängärunṣ əṭṭärəṭṭärallähu* ‘I have doubts (about) his tellings’. Here the verb *əṭṭärəṭṭärallähu* is affected by negation (becoming *al-(ə)-ṭṭärəṭṭär-(ə)-mm*) while the complement changes from the verbal noun to an *ändä*-clause:

- (68) የሆነው ሆኖ በፈጠራዊ ዓይነትና መልክ ማቅረብ  
*yähonäw hono bə-fätärəwi aynät-(ə)-nna mälk maqräb-u*  
 one.way.or.another in-creative kind-and manner present\VN-POSS.3SM  
 ጠቃሚነት እንደሚኖረው አልጠራጠርም [DB 15: 26-27]  
*ṭäqaminnät ändä-mm-i-nor-äw al-(ə)-ṭṭärəṭṭär-(ə)-mm*  
 usefulness COMP-REL-3SM-exist\IPFV-OBJ.3SM NEG.1SG-doubt\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘One way or another, I **don’t doubt** that it has the benefit of presenting it in a creative way and manner’

<sup>29</sup> Danielewiczowa shows clearly where the above two ways of negating the epistemizer come from. It is not possible to explain this issue here without providing much theoretical background; hence I refer the Polish-speaking reader to her book (2002: 228-229).

Note that the *ändä*- clause occurs also with the epistemificator *ändä-X ərgətäñña näññ* ‘I am sure that X’ which is the positive counterpart of *ändä-X aləttäraṭṭärəmm* ‘I don’t doubt that X’.

The relationship between the two epistemificators, in their positive and negative forms, can be schematically presented as in Table 24:

TABLE 24. The relationship between the epistemificators of certainty and doubt

<b>strong epistem.</b>	<b>POSITIVE</b> <i>ändä-X ərgətäñña näññ</i> ‘I am sure that X’	<b>NEGATIVE</b> <i>ändä-X aləttäraṭṭärəmm</i> ‘I don’t doubt that X’
<b>weak epistem.</b>	<b>NEGATIVE</b> <i>mängärun/sälä-mängäru</i> <i>ərgətäñña aydälləhummm</i> ‘I am not sure about his telling’  <i>ändä-X ərgətäñña aydälləhummm</i> ‘I am not sure that X’	<b>POSITIVE</b> <i>mängärun/sälä-mängäru</i> <i>əttäraṭṭäralləhu</i> ‘I have doubts about his telling’

In the above discussion we were concerned with negation of the epistemificator. Now let us consider cases in which the epistemizer head is negated. In sentence (69) with the epistemificator *ändä-X ərgətäñña näññ* negation affects the epistemized head, yielding *änd-al-asqoyy-at* ‘that has not made her wait’:

- (69) **ቀጥሎ ካለው ቢሮ ፀሃፊዬ ብቻዋን**  
*qäṭṭəlo k-(yə)-all-äw biro ṣähafi-ye bəčča-wa-n*  
 next from-(REL)-exist-DEF office secretary-POSS.1SG alone-POSS.3SF-ADV  
**ተቀምጣለች ፤ ሥራ እንዳላስቆያት**  
*täqämməṭ-a=all-äčč səra änd-al-asqoyy-at*  
 sit\GER-3SF=PF-3SF work COMP-NEG-make.wait\PFV.3SM-OBJ.3SF  
**እርግጠኛ ነኝ<sup>30</sup>**  
*ərgətäñña n-äññ*  
 sure COP-1SG

<sup>30</sup> <http://asharaye.net/2015/02/14/ቀይ-ለባሾቹ/>. [Accessed 07.07.2019]

‘In the next office (lit. from the office which is next) my secretary is sitting alone; I am sure that the work **has not made her wait**’

I came across a single example in which *ərgəṭännä nänn* is preceded by a verbal noun with the negative marker *alä-*:

- (70) **ሴትዮዋ አጠገቤ እንደ መቀመጣቸው መጠን ወራጅ**  
*setəyyo-wa atṭägäb-e andä mäqqämät-aččäw mäṭän wäraḡ*  
 woman-DEF.F next.to-POSS.1SG as sit\VN-POSS.3SPOL extent one.who.gets.off  
**አለማለታቸውን እርግጠኛ ነኝ<sup>31</sup>**  
*alä-malät-aččäw-(ə)-n ərgəṭännä n-änn*  
 NEG-say\VN-POSS.3SPOL-ACC sure COP-1SG

‘Since the woman was sitting next to me, I am sure (of) **her not saying**, “I’m getting off (e.g. a bus)”’

As for the epistemificator *mängärunṣ atṭärattärallähu* ‘I have doubts (about) his tellings’ I have not found any example sentence in which the epistemized head is negated. A sentence containing *atṭärattärallähu* ‘I doubt’ and a negated epistemized head sounds very awkward, both in Amharic and in English,<sup>32</sup> e.g. ‘I doubt that he will not come’. This is perhaps because ‘doubt’ already is inherently negative in its semantics.

Finally, epistemificators which call for mention in the present discussion are those involving causative *yattärattärall* ‘it raises doubts’: **እንደ-X ያጠራጥራል** *andä-X yattärattärall* ‘it raises doubts that X’ and **መንገሩ ያጠራጥራል** *mängärunṣ yattärattärall* ‘his tellings raises doubts’. Both appear fairly frequently in the negative form **አያጠራጥርም** *ayattärattärəmm*, as the two examples below demonstrate. When the epistemized head is expressed as a verbal noun, it is most often preceded by the preposition *lä-* ‘for’.

- (71) **መንግሥቱ ይህንን ክህሎቱን የወረሰው ከአባቱ**  
*Mängəstu yəhənn-(ə)-n kəhəlot-u-n yä-wärräs-ä-w kə-abbat-u*  
 PN this-ACC skill-DEF-ACC REL-inherit\PFV-3SM-DEF from-father-POSS.3SM  
**ከአለቃ ለማ ኃይሉ እንደሆነ አያጠራጥርም** [DB 218: 15-16]  
*kä-aläqə Lämma Haylu andä-hon-ä a-y-atṭärattär-(ə)-mm*  
 from-aläqə PN PN COMP-COP\PFV-3SM NEG-3SM-raise.doubts\IPFV-NEG

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/9059>. [Accessed: 01.08.2018]

<sup>32</sup> French does allow a negative epistemized head in this context, *Je doute qu’il ne vienne*, but the negation is pleonastic; the sentence means ‘I doubt that he will come’.

‘There is no doubt that the one from whom Mängəstu inherited this skill was from his father, from *Aläqa* Läm̄ma Haylu’

- (72) **ወንጀሉ አስቀድሞ የታሰበበት**  
*wängäl-u asqädm-o yä-tassäb-ä-bb-ät*  
 crime-DEF anticipate\GER-3SM REL-be.thought\PFV-3SM-about-OBJ.3SM  
**ለመሆኑ አያጠራጥርም** [KB 163: 25-26]  
*lä-mähon-u a-y-attärattär-(ə)-mm*  
 for-COP\VN-POSS.3SM NEG-3SM-raise.doubts\IPFV-NEG

‘There is no doubt about the crime having been planned beforehand’

At this point I want to draw the reader’s attention once again to Table 24 which juxtaposes the two epistemificators, *ändä-X ərgəṭännä nänn* ‘I am sure (that) X’ and *mängäruns əṭṭärattärallähu* ‘I have doubts (about) his tellings’, with their negated counterparts. We can see that *ändä-X ərgəṭännä nänn* ‘I am sure that X’ is assigned the value “strong” (on the dimension of epistemic strength) while *mängäruns/sälä-mängärus ərgəṭännä aydällähum* ‘I am not sure (of)/about his tellings’ and *ändä-X ərgəṭännä aydällähum* ‘I am not sure that’ are assigned the value “low”. The same goes for the epistemificator *mängäruns əṭṭärattärallähu* and its negative counterpart. Thus, when negated the meaning of these epistemificators changes in respect to the dimension of epistemic strength. However, it would be inconvenient to regard the negative forms as actually being different epistemificators from their positive counterparts; it would further increase the already-large catalogue of epistemificators. Suffice it here simply to register the inversion of epistemic strength that accompanies the negation of the epistemificator.

The next group of epistemificators, where either the epistemized head or the epistemificator head can be negated with a change of meaning, involves **እንደ-X ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ** *ändä-X täsfa adärgallähu* ‘I hope (that) X’, X **ብዬ ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ** X *bəyye täsfa adärgallähu* ‘I hope: X’, **እንደ-X እተማመናለሁ** *ändä-X attämammänallähu* ‘I am confident that X’ and X **ብዬ እተማመናለሁ** X *bəyye attämammänallähu* ‘I am confident: X’. These epistemificators take the value “good” from the dimension of axiological judgement (see Section 5.8.2). The speaker wants the state of affairs expressed by the epistemized to happen and, at the same time, he considers this state of affairs as good. Thus, if the epistemificator head is negated it means the speaker does not hope/is not

confident that something which is not good has happened or will happen. Consider sentences (73)-(75):

(73) ነገር ግን አዲስ አበባ ጎዳና ላይ ካለው የቆሻሻ  
*nägär gän Addis Abäba godana lay k-(yä)-all-ä-w yä-qošaša*  
 but PN street on from-(REL)-exist-3SM-DEF GEN-garbage  
 ክምር እንደምትገላገል ተስፋ አላደርግም  
*kəmmər andä-mm-(ə)-tä-ggälaggäl täsfa al-adärg-(ə)-mm*  
 pile COMP-REL-3SF-get.rid.of\IPFV hope NEG.1SG-make\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘But I don’t hope (have no hope) that Addis Ababa will get rid of the piles of garbage which are on the streets’

(74) ከአንግዲህ ከኢትዮጵያዊያን ጋር የደስታ ማዕድ  
*kä-əngdih kä-Itiopyawi-(y)-an gar yä-dästa ma ʾəd*  
 from-now with-Ethiopian-PL with GEN-joy table  
 ይቋቋሉ ብዬ ተስፋ አላደርግም  
*yə-q wq waddäs=all-u bəyy-e täsfa al-adärg-(ə)-mm*  
 3PL-share\IPFV=NPST-3PL say\GER-1SG hope NEG.1SG-make\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘I don’t hope (have no hope): from now on they will share a table of joy with the Ethiopians’

(75) ይህ ጫማ ክረምቱን ያወጣኛል  
*yəb čamma kərämt-u-n y-awäta-ññ=all-ø*  
 this shoe rainy.season-DEF-ACC 3SM-cause.to.spend\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ብዬ አልተማመንም  
*bəyy-e al-(ə)-tämmän-(ə)-mm*  
 say\GER-1SG NEG.1SG-confident\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘I am not confident: these shoes will get me through the rainy season’

In (73)- (75), the negator cannot be placed on the epistemized head, because it would create a semantic anomaly: in Amharic one can only be “confident” of a good thing. Compare sentence (74) with the following, infelicitous sentence:

(76) \*ከአንግዲህ ከኢትዮጵያዊያን ጋር የደስታ ማዕድ  
*kä-əngdih kä-Itiopyawi-(y)-an gar yä-dästa ma ʾəd*  
 from-now with-Ethiopian-PL with GEN-joy table  
 አይቋቋሉም ብዬ ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ  
*a-yə-q wq waddäs-u-mm bəyy-e täsfa adärg=all-ähu*  
 NEG-3PL-share\IPFV-3PL-NEG say\GER-1SG hope 1SG.make\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 \*‘I hope: from now on they will not share the table of joy with the Ethiopians’

Negation of the epistemized head is felicitous only when the speaker hopes/is confident that the state of affairs will not happen, because if it does happen it will be bad:

(77) **እንደዚህ ስልህ** **መቼም** **ጎረርኩብኝ**  
*ändäzzih s-ə-l-(ə)-h* *mäčämm* *gorär-k-(ə)-bb-(ə)-ññ*  
 like.this when-1SG-say\IPFV-OBJ.2SM in.any.case brag\PFV-2SM-MAL-OBJ.1SG  
**እንዳማትለኝ** **ተስፋ** **አደርጋለሁ**<sup>33</sup>  
*ändä-mm-a-ttə-l-ään* *täsfa* *adärg=all-ähu*  
 COMP-REL-NEG-2SM-say\IPFV-OBJ.1SG hope 1SG.make\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘When I say to you like this, in any case I hope that you **won’t** say: you’ve bragged to me (lit. against me)’

(78) **ጉዞው ላይ መጥፎ ነገር አይከሰትም ብዬ**  
*guzo-w lay mäṭfo nägär a-ya-kkässät-(ə)-mm* *bəyye*  
 journey-DEF on bad thing NEG-3SM-happen\IPFV-NEG say\GER-1SG  
**ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ**  
*täsfa adärg=all-ähu*  
 hope 1SG.make\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I hope: **nothing** bad **will** happen on the journey’

(79) **ግን ከአንግዲህ ወዲያ ብዙ ጊዜ እንደማይፈጅ**  
*gən kə’əngədih wädīya bəzu gize ändä-mm-a-y-fäḅ*  
 but henceforth onwards much time COMP-REL-NEG-3SM-take\IPFV  
**እተማመናለሁ**<sup>[MAH 77: 1-2]</sup>  
*ə-ttämammän=all-ähu*  
 1SG-be.confident\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘But I am confident that from now on **(it)** **will not** take much time’

(80) **እሱ አይተውኝም ብዬ እተማመናለሁ**  
*əssu a-y-täw-(ə)-ññ-(ə)-mm* *bəyye* *ə-ttämammän=all-ähu*  
 3SM NEG-3SM-abandon\IPFV-OBJ.1SG-NEG say\GER-1SG 1SG-be.confident\IPFV=NP-1SG  
 ‘I am confident: **he** **won’t** abandon me’

Like the previous epistemificators, the following constructions take a value from the dimension of axiological judgement, but, in contrast, the value is “bad” (see Section 5.8.3). These epistemificators, of the “worry” type, are: X **ብዬ እሠጋለሁ** X *bəyye əsägallähu* ‘I worry (that): X, I am worried (that): X’, X **ብዬ እፈራለሁ** X *bəyye əfärallähu* ‘I am afraid (that): X, I fear (that): X’, X **የሚል ሥጋት አለኝ** X *yämmil sagat allään* ‘I have a worry: X’, X **የሚል ፍርሃት አለኝ** X *yämmil fərhat allään* ‘I have a fear: X’, X **የሚል ፍራቻ አለኝ** X

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/9538>. [Accessed: 02.11.2018]

*yämmil fəračča alläññ* ‘I have a concern: X’. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, I will discuss here the group of epistemificators involving pleonastic negation:<sup>34</sup> እንድ-NEG.X እሠጋሁ *and*-NEG.X *asägallähu* ‘I worry lest X, I am worried lest X’, እንድ-NEG.X እፈራለሁ *and*-NEG.X *əfärallähu* ‘I am afraid lest X, I fear lest X’, እንድ-NEG.X ሥጋት አለኝ *and*-NEG.X *səgat alläññ* ‘I have a worry lest X’, እንድ-NEG.X ፍርሃት አለኝ *and*-NEG.X *fərhat alläññ* ‘I have a fear lest X’, እንድ-NEG.X ፍራቻ አለኝ *and*-NEG.X *fəračča alläññ* ‘I have a concern lest X’. They should actually have been dealt with in Section 6.2.7, dealing with non-negatable epistemificators, because, as we will see, the epistemized head is always formally negated and the epistemificator head cannot be negated at all. Notwithstanding this, they will be discussed here together with their lexical relatives in order to better understand the semantics of all these epistemificators under negation. We will begin with the first group, i.e. those not involving pleonastic negation.

First of all, the speaker may negate the epistemificator head, thereby expressing her/his lack of worry or fear concerning the state of affairs contained in the epistemized, as in the following sentences:

- (81) ራሳቸውን                      ችግር    ውስጥ    ያስገባሉ                      ብዬ  
*ras-aččäw-(ə)-n                      čəggər    wəst                      y-asgäb=all-u                      bəyy-e*  
 self-POSS.3PL-ACC    problem in                      3PL-get\IPFV=NPST-3PL    say\GER-1SG  
 አልሰጋም<sup>35</sup>  
*al-säga-mm*  
 NEG.1SG-worry\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘I don’t worry (that): they will get themselves into trouble’
- (82) እኔም                      የእርሷን                      ታሪክ    ፅፌ                      በሆነው                      መንገድ  
*əne-mm                      yä-ərs<sup>w</sup> a-n                      tarik                      şəff-e                      bä-(yä)-hon-äw                      mängäd*  
 1SG-FOC    GEN-3SF-ACC    story    write\GER-1SG    in-(REL)-COP\PFV-DEF    way  
 ለህዝብ                      ለማቅረብ                      ሳስብ                      ጉዳት  
*lä-həzb                      lä-maqräb                      s-assəb                      gudat*  
 for-people    for-present\VN    when-1SG.think\IPFV    harm

<sup>34</sup> Whenever possible I will try to translate the pleonastic negation with “lest”.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.ethiopianorama.com/?p=84459&print=pdf>. [Accessed: 02.11.2018]



- (86) ነገሩ ፍሬያማ አይሆንም ብዬ  
*nägär-u fəreyamma a-y-hon-(ə)-mm bəyy-e*  
 matter-DEF fruitful NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV-NEG say\GER-1SG

**እሰጋለሁ**

*ə-säg=all-ähu*

1SG-worry\IPFV=NPST

‘I worry: the matter **won’t** bear fruit’

- (87) ሕዝቡ ከአንግዲህ ከዚህ በላይ አይታገስም  
*həzb-u kä-əngədih kä-zzih bälāy a-y-taggäss-(ə)-mm*  
 people-DEF from-now from-this above NEG-3SM-be.patient\IPFV-NEG

**ብዬ እፈራለሁ**<sup>39</sup>

*bəyy-e ə-fär=all-ähu*

say\GER-1SG 1SG-fear\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘I fear: from now on the people **won’t** be patient any more’

- (88) እርዳታው በጊዜ አይመጣም የሚል ሥጋት  
*ərdata-w bä-gize a-y-mäta-mm yämm-i-l sägat*  
 aid-DEF on-time NEG-3SM-come\IPFV-NEG REL-3SM-say\IPFV worry

**አለኝ**

*all-ä-ññ*

exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘I have a worry: the aid **will not** come on time’

- (89) ግድቡ ለጥቂቶች ዝናና ጥቅም ከሆነ  
*gəddəb-u lä-(yä)-təqit-očč zənnə-(ə)-nna təqəm kä-hon-ä*  
 dam-DEF for-(GEN)-few-PL fame-and profit if-COP\IPFV-3SM
- የሚታደገውም ኃይል አይኖርም የሚል  
*yämm-i-ttaddäg-(ä)-w-(ə)-mm hayl a-y-nor-(ə)-mm yämm-i-l*  
 REL-3SM-save\IPFV-DEF-FOC power NEG-3SM-exist\IPFV-NEG REL-3SM-say\IPFV

**ፍርሃት አለኝ**<sup>40</sup>

*fərhat all-ä-ññ*

fear exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘If the dam is for the fame and profit of (only) a few, I have a fear: there **will be no** power to defend it’

The epistemized head is also negated formally in the epistemificators that involve pleonastic negation: እንድ-NEG.X እሠጋለሁ and-NEG.X *əsägallähu* ‘I worry lest X, I am worried lest X’, እንድ-NEG.X እፈራለሁ and-NEG.X *əfärallähu* ‘I am afraid lest X, I fear

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.dw.com/am/ፍርሃትና-አልገርባይነት-በካቡል/a-18654480>. [Accessed: 20.08.2018]

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.ethioshengo.org/files/articles/nile.pdf>. [Accessed: 08.12.2017]

lest X’, እንድ-NEG.X ሥጋት አለኝ *and-NEG.X səgat allänn* ‘I have a worry lest X’, እንድ-NEG.X ፍርሃት አለኝ *and-NEG.X fərhat allänn* ‘I have a fear lest X’, እንድ-NEG.X ፍራቻ አለኝ *and-NEG.X fəračča allänn* ‘I have a concern lest X’. In these constructions *əsägallähu*, *əfärallähu*, *səgat allänn* etc. take as their complement a negated imperfective verb preceded by the complementizer *and-*. Here the negator does not negate the state of affairs but rather underscores that the state of affairs expressed by the proposition is considered as bad for the speaker. Thus, the speaker wishes that the state of affairs expressed by the epistemized head will not take place. This pleonastic negation that accompanies the epistemized head harmonizes axiologically with the meaning of the epistemificators, which have a negative import: ‘I worry, I fear’.

- (90) ታሪኬን መደበቅ ይኖርብኝ ይሆን  
*tarik-e-n mädäbbäq yə-nor-(ə)-bb-(ə)-ññ yəhon*  
 story-POSS.1SG-ACC hide\VN 3SM-exist\IPFV-APPL-OBJ.1SG EPST:Q  
 ብልም ከሌላ ሰው  
*b-ə-l-(ə)-mm kə-lela säw*  
 although-1SG-say\IPFV-CIRC from-another person  
 እንዳይሰሙት ደግሞ እሰጋለሁ<sup>41</sup>  
*and-a-y-säm-u-t dägmo ə-säg=all-ähu*  
 COMP-NEG-3PL-hear\IPFV-3PL-OBJ.3SM also 1SG-worry\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘Although I say: “Might I have to hide my story?” I also worry lest they hear it from someone else’

- (91) ያላንተ መኖር አልችልም ። እንዳላጣህ  
*yäl-antä mänor al-čäl-(ə)-mm. and-al-aṭa-b*  
 without-2SM live\VN NEG.1SG-can\IPFV-NEG COMP-NEG.1SG-lose\IPFV-OBJ.2SM  
 እፈራለሁ<sup>[AA 822]</sup>  
*ə-fär=all-ähu*  
 1SG-fear\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I can’t live without you. I fear lest I will lose you’

- (92) ስለሆነም የጠቅላይ ሚኒስትሩ አዲስ የሰላምና የዕርቅ  
*sälähonämm yä-täkläy ministər-u addis yä-sälam-(ə)-nna yä-ərq*  
 therefore GEN-prime minister-DEF new GEN-peace-and GEN-reconciliation  
 መንገድ ሳይሳካ እንዳይቀር ሥጋት  
*mängäd s-a-yə-ssakka and-a-y-qär səgat*  
 way when-NEG-3SM-succeed\IPFV COMP-NEG-3SG-remain\IPFV worry

<sup>41</sup> <http://ethiopikalink.net/news-articles/item/171-21>. [Accessed: 21.01.2018]

አለኝ<sup>42</sup>

*all-ä-ññ*

exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘Therefore, I **have a worry lest** the new peaceful and reconciling way of the prime minister will not succeed’

(93) የትራፊክ መጨናነቅ ወይ ፍተሻ ኬላዎች እንዳይኖሩ

*yä-trafik mäččänanäq wäy fattäša kella-(w)-očč and-a-y-nor-u*

GEN-traffic be.congested\VN or inspection checkpoint-PL COMP-NEG-3PL-exist\IPFV-3PL

ፍርሃት አለኝ

*fərhat all-ä-ññ*

fear exist-3SM-OBJ.1SG

‘I **have a fear lest** there will be traffic congestion or inspection checkpoints’

Here let me highlight the semantic difference between negating the epistemized head in sentences with the linkers *bəyye* and *yämmil*, as in (86)-(89), and in sentences with the complementizer *and*-NEG.X, as in (90)-(93). The two types of negated sentences are contrary to each other. With *bəyye* and *yämmil*, the NEG is a true negative; with *and*-, the negative is pleonastic. Thus sentences of the type *aymäṭamm bəyye əfärallähu* ‘I fear he will not come’ indicate that the speaker fears that something will NOT happen. Sentences of the type *andaymäṭa əfärallähu* ‘I fear lest he will come’ (lit. ‘I fear lest he not come’) indicate that the speaker fears that (or lest) something will happen and that it will be bad for her/him. Thus, if in sentence (87) we replace the complementizer *bəyye* by *and*- (94) it renders a sentence which inverts the speaker’s original intention:

(94) \*አዝቡ ከአንግዲህ ከዚህ በላይ እንደይታገስ

*həzb-u kä-əngədih kä-zzih bälāy and-a-y-taggäss*

people-DEF from-now from-this above NEG-3SM-be.patient\IPFV-NEG

እፈራለሁ

*ə-fär=all-ähu*

1SG-fear\IPFV=NPST-1SG

\*‘I fear lest from now on the people **won’t be patient** any more’

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/11570>. [Accessed: 24.11.2018]

A sentence with *ənd*-NEG.X is in fact positive, in the sense that the speaker worries/fears that something will take place, and the sentence’s meaning is very close to that of a corresponding positive sentence with *bəyye*. Compare the following two sentences: a positive sentence in (95), and the equivalent with *ənd*- and pleonastic negation in (96).

- (95) **ራሳቸውን ችግር ውስጥ ያስገባሉ ብዬ**  
*ras-aččäw-(ə)-n čəggər wəst̩ ɣ-asgäb=all-u bəyye*  
 self-POSS.3PL-ACC problem in 3PL-get\IPFV=NPST-3PL say\GER-1SG  
**እሠጋለሁ**  
*ə-säg=all-ähu*  
 1SG-worry\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I worry: they will get themselves into trouble’
- (96) **ራሳቸውን ችግር ውስጥ እንዳያስገቡ**  
*ras-aččäw-(ə)-n čəggər wəst̩ ənd-a-ɣ-asgäb-u*  
 self-POSS.3PL-ACC problem in COMP-NEG-3PL-get\IPFV=NPST-3PL  
**እሠጋለሁ**  
*ə-säg=all-ähu*  
 1SG-worry\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I worry lest they get themselves into trouble’

In the construction with the *ənd*-NEG.X complement, it is impossible to truly negate any part of the sentence. Thus, sentence (97) with a negated epistemificator is unacceptable:

- (97) **\*እንዳይመጣ አልሠጋም**  
*ənd-a-ɣ-mäta al-säga-mm*  
 COMP-NEG-3SM-come\IPFV NEG.1SG-worry\IPFV-NEG  
 \*‘I don’t worry lest he come’

And the epistemized, too, cannot “really” be negated; the fact that a pleonastic negation is automatically present precludes the possibility of having an additional “true” negation marker.

The next two epistemificators also take the value “bad” along the dimension of axiological judgement. These are **እንደ-X እጠረጥራለሁ** *əndä-X ətärätṭərallähu* ‘I suspect that X’ and **X ብዬ እጠረጥራለሁ** *X bəyye ətärätṭərallähu* ‘I suspect: X’. As with the ‘worry’ and ‘fear’ epistemificators, here too the proposition of the epistemized must be evaluated by the speaker as something bad. This badness may be expressed either via formal negation

of a “good” epistemized, or directly by giving a “bad” epistemized. But the positive/negative polarity of the epistemized cannot be reversed: a formally negative epistemized must remain in its negative form and a non-negative (but bad) epistemized cannot be negated. On the other hand, the epistemificator head can freely be negated, with the straightforward expected meaning. Schematically: do(not) suspect [bad], \*do(not) suspect [good]. The following examples illustrate all four possible combinations involved in the above scheme.

i. Suspecting [bad]

- (98) እሳቸው የውጭ ኢንቨስትመንቶችን ውለዱ  
*assaččäw yä-wäčč invästmänt-očč-(ə)-n wäläd-u*  
 3SPOL GEN-outside investment-PL-ACC bring.in\IMPR-2PL  
 እንደሚሉም እጠረጥራለሁ<sup>43</sup>  
*ändä-mm-i-l-u-mm ə-tärättər-all-ähu*  
 COMP-REL-3SPOL-say\IPFV-3SPOL-FOC 1SG-suspect\IPFV-NPST-1SG  
 ‘I suspect that he says: “Bring in foreign investments”’

- (99) በሽተኛዎ በሰዓቱ መድኃኒቷን እንዳልወሰደች  
*bäššətännä-wa bä-säʔat-u mädhānit-wa-n ənd-al-wässäd-äčč*  
 patient-DEF.F in-hour-DEF medicine-POSS.3SF-ACC COMP-NEG-take\PFV-3SF  
 እጠረጥራለሁ  
*ə-tärättər-all-ähu*  
 1SG-suspect\IPFV-NPST-1SG  
 ‘I suspect that the patient **didn’t** take the medicine on time’

- (100) ታዲዮስ ዛሬ ከትምህርት ቤት ለምን ቀረ?  
*Tadiyos zare kä-təmhərt bet lämən qärr-ä?*  
 PN today from-school why remain\PFV-3SM  
 የቤት ሥራ አልሠራም ብዬ እጠረጥራለሁ  
*yä-bet səra al-särra-mm bəyy-e ə-tärättər=all-ähu*  
 GEN-homework NEG-do\PFV.3SM-NEG say\GER-1SG 1SG-suspect\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘Why didn’t Tadios come to school? I suspect: **he didn’t** do (his) homework’

ii. Not suspecting [bad]

- (101) በርቦሬ ሲሻግት በጤና ላይ የሚፈጥረው  
*bärbäre s-i-šaggat bə-tena lay yämm-i-fätr-äw*  
 berbere when-3SM-get.mouldy\IPFV on-health on REL-3SM-create\IPFV-DEF

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/article/10227>. [Accessed: 09.11.2018]

**ችግር እንደሚኖር አልጠረጥርም<sup>44</sup>**  
*čaggər əndä-mm-i-nor al-tärättär-(ə)-mm*  
 problem COMP-REL-3SM-exist\IPFV NEG.1SG-suspect\IPFV-NEG

‘I don’t suspect that there is any health problem which berbere<sup>45</sup> creates when it gets mouldy’

(102) **የሥራ ባልደረባዬ ዋሸታኛለች ብዬ**  
*yä-sära baldäräba-ye wašt-a-ññ=all-äčč bəyy-e*  
 GEN-work mate-POSS.1SG lie\GER-3SF-OBJ.1SG=PF-3SF say\GER-1SG

**አልጠረጥርም**  
*al-tärättär-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG.1SG-suspect\IPFV-NEG

‘I don’t suspect: my workmate has lied to me’

iii. \*Suspecting [good]

(103) **\*ጥሩ ደሞዝ የሚያስገኝልኝ ሥራ**  
*ṭəru dämoz yämm-i-y-asgäñ-(ə)-ll-(ə)-ññ sərə*  
 good salary REL-3SM-bring.in\IPFV-BEN-OBJ.1SG job

**እንደምቀጠር እጠረጥራለሁ**  
*əndä-mm-ə-qqättär ə-tärättär=all-ähu*  
 COMP-REL-1SG-be.employed\IPFV 1SG-suspect\IPFV=NPST-1SG

\*‘I suspect that I will have a job that brings in a good salary’

(104) **\*በርበሬ ሲሻግት በጤና ላይ የሚፈጥረው**  
*bärbäre s-i-šaggət bə-ṭena lay yämm-i-fäṭr-äw*  
 berbere when-3SM-get.mouldy\IPFV on-health on REL-3SM-create\IPFV-DEF

**ችግር እንደማይኖር እጠረጥራለሁ**  
*čaggər əndä-mm-a-y-nor ə-tärättär-all-ähu*  
 problem COMP-REL-NEG-3SM-exist\IPFV 1SG-suspect\IPFV-NPST-1SG

\*‘I suspect that there is no health problem which berbere creates when it gets mouldy’

iv. \*Not suspecting [good]

(105) **\*የቤት ሥራ ሠራ ብዬ አልጠረጥርም**  
*yä-bet sərə särra bəyy-e al-tärättär-(ə)-mm*  
 GEN-homework do\PFV.3SM say\GER-1SG NEG.1SG-suspect\IPFV-NEG

\*‘I don’t suspect: he did (his) homework’

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/content/አፍላቶክሲን-አደገኛው-የጤና-ጠንቅ>. [Accessed: 09.11.2018]

The sentence has been slightly changed.

<sup>45</sup> Berbere is a mixture of several spices, including chili peppers, garlic, Ethiopian cardamom and ginger.

In the epistemificator X ብዩ እጠራጠራለሁ X *bəyye atṭärattärallähu* ‘I suspect’, the verb *atṭärattärallähu* can also undergo negation as the following example shows:

- (106) እግዚአብሔር አሳፍሮኝ አያውቅም ፤ ወደፊትም  
*ገgziʾabəher asaffər-o-ññ a-y-awq-(ə)-mm wädäfit-(ə)-mm*  
 God shame\GER-3SM-OBJ.1SG NEG-3SM-know\IPFV-NEG in.the.future-FOC  
 ያሳፍረኛል ብዩ አልጠራጠርም<sup>46</sup>  
*y-asaffər-äññ=all-ø bəyy-e a-lə-tṭärattär-(ə)-mm*  
 3SM-shame\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM say\GER-1SG NEG-1SG-suspect\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘God has never shamed me (lit. ‘He does not know to having shamed me’); I don’t suspect: he will shame me in the future’

### 6.2.6. Suppletive negative form

The epistemificator ማወቅ አለበት<sub>s</sub> *mawäq alläbb(ät)<sub>s</sub>* ‘he must<sub>s</sub> know, he should<sub>s</sub> know’ stands out from other grammatical epistemificators in that it does not itself occur in the negative. Instead, there is a suppletive negative form ሊሆን አይችልም<sub>s</sub> *lihons ayčälamm<sub>s</sub>* ‘it/he can’t be’.<sup>47</sup> Thus, if we want to negate the epistemificator *mawäq alläbbəs* ‘you must know’ in sentence (107) we have to replace it with *lətawqi atčiyamm* ‘you can’t know’ as in (108):

- (107) እንዴ በቡድኑ ውስጥ ቆይተዋል! አንዳንዶቹን  
*ənde bä-budən-u wəsṭ qoyyat-äs=all-ø andand-očč-u-n*  
 oh.really in-team-DEF in stay\GER-2SF=PF-2SF some-PL-DEF-ACC  
 መሪዎች ማወቅ 'አለብኝ'<sub>[MBL 235: 4-8]</sub>  
*märi-(w)-očč mawäq 'all-ä-bb-(ə)-š*  
 leader-PL know\VN exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.2SF  
 ‘Oh really, you (F) have stayed in the group!?! You (F) must know some of the leaders’

<sup>46</sup> <http://ethpress.gov.et/addiszemen/index.php/editorial-view-point/item/11520-2017-03-03-17-58-36>.

[Accessed: 01.08.2018]

<sup>47</sup> The suppletive form also occurs in other languages that have an equivalent of the Amharic *mawäq alläbb(ät)<sub>s</sub>*, such as English ‘must’ (suppletive ‘can’t’), German ‘müssen’ (‘kann nicht’) and Polish ‘musieć’ (‘nie móc’). Note also that in English the regular suppletive form of ‘must’ is ‘can’t’, not ‘cannot’ (Coates 1995: 63).

- (108) መሪዎቹን ልታውቁ 'አትችይም'  
*märi-(w)-očč-u-n l-(ə)-t-awq-i 'a-t-čəy-(ə)-mm*  
 leader-PL-DEF-ACC COMP-2SF-know\IPFV-2SF NEG-2SF-can\IPFV-NEG  
 ምክንያቱም በቡድኑ ውስጥ ተራ አባል ነሽ  
*məknəyatumm bə-budən-u wəst tära abal n-äš*  
 because in-group-DEF in ordinary member COP-2SF  
 'You can't know the leaders, because you are [just] an ordinary member of the group'

Further examples:

- (109) ድምጽዋ መሆን 'አለበት'<sub>[HL 153: 24-25]</sub>  
*dəms-wa mähon 'all-ä-bb-ät*  
 voice-POSS.3SF COP\VN exist-3SM-APPL-OBJ.3SM  
 'It must be her voice'

- (110) ይህ የሷ ድምጽ ሊሆን 'አይችልም'  
*yəb yä-ss<sup>w</sup>a dəms l-i-hon 'a-y-čəl-(ə)-mm*  
 this GEN-3SF voice-POSS.3SF COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV NEG-3SM-can\IPFV-NEG  
 'This can't be her voice'

The following pair of examples illustrates the epistemificator (positive and suppletive negative) with a state of affairs located in the past:

- (111) A: ሶስና የት አለች?  
*Sosanna yät all-äčč?*  
 PN where exist-3SF  
 B: ትምህርት ቤት ሄዳ መሆን 'አለበት'  
*təmhərt bet hed-a mähon 'all-ä-bb-ät*  
 school go\GER-3SF COP\VN exist-3SM-APPL-3SM  
 'A: Where is Sosanna? B: She must have gone to school'

- (112) B: ትምህርት ቤት ሄዳ ሊሆን 'አይችልም'  
*təmhərt bet hed-a l-i-hon 'a-y-čəl-(ə)-mm*  
 school go\GER-3SF COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV NEG-3SM-can\IPFV-NEG  
 'She can't have gone to school'

Note that the main stress in both the positive sentence (with *mähon alläbb(ät)<sub>s</sub>*) and the negative sentence (with *libon<sub>s</sub> ayčäləmm<sub>s</sub>* 'it/he can't be'), as indicated in the examples above by means of ('), falls on the epistemificator head.

Explicitly negating the epistemificator head itself, i.e. *alläbb(ät)<sub>s</sub>*, is possible but it brings us out of the realm of epistemic modality into that of deontic (113) or dynamic (114) modality. The negative form is *yälläbbätəmm*.

- (113) መሪዎቹን                      ማወቅ                      የለብኸም  
*märi-(w)-očč-u-n    maɣwäq    yällä-bb-(ə)-š-(ə)-mm*  
 leader-PL-DEF-ACC know\VN exist.NEG-APPL-OBJ.2SF-NEG  
 ‘You don’t have to know the leaders’

- (114) ካንሰር    የትልቅ    ሰው    በሽታ    ተደርጎ                      መታየት  
*kansär    yä-tälləq    säw    bäššəta    tädärg-o                      mättayät*  
 cancer    GEN-elder person disease be.made\GER-3SM be.seen\VN  
 የለበትም<sup>[AA 865]</sup>  
*yällä-bb-ät-(ə)-mm*  
 exist.NEG-APPL-OBJ.3SM-NEG  
 ‘Cancer **should not** be seen as a disease of old people’

6.2.7. Non-negatable epistemificators

The behaviour of two grammatical epistemificators, *ሳይነግር<sub>S</sub> አይቀርም<sub>S</sub> saynägrs ayqärəmm<sub>S</sub>* ‘he surely/probably tells<sub>S</sub>/will tells<sub>S</sub>/told<sub>S</sub>’ and *መንገሩ<sub>S</sub> አይቀርም<sub>S</sub> mängäru<sub>S</sub> ayqärəmm* ‘he will definitely tells<sub>S</sub>’, and two lexical epistemificators, *መንገሩ<sub>S</sub> የማይቀር ነው<sub>S</sub> mängäru<sub>S</sub> yämmayqär näw* ‘his tellings<sub>S</sub> is inevitable’ and *መንገሩ አይቀራ ነው<sub>S</sub> mängäru<sub>S</sub> ayqäre näw* ‘his tellings is inevitable’, vis-à-vis negation is crucially conditioned by the fact that these constructions already contain a purely formal negative. This is surely the reason that they cannot be negated at all, even though semantically they express a positive concept. Recall that the meaning of *qärrä* in *saynägrs ayqärəmm<sub>S</sub>* is ‘remain’ (the original meaning of this word) while in the other three epistemificators it is ‘fail’ (after reanalysis). In the latter instance *qärrä* has an intrinsically negative lexical meaning but not in the former. Note that in all four epistemificators the verb *qärrä* appears in the negative form. Note also that the meaning ‘remain’ occurs in the epistemificator whose complement has a negative form, too (*s-a-y-nägr* ‘when-NOT-3SM-tell\IPFV) while the meaning ‘fail’ appears with the epistemificators that take a complement in the positive.<sup>48</sup> Here are three examples:

- (115) የሌላ                      አገር                      ሰዎች                      አንዳንድ ጊዜ                      አፍሪካውያን                      «በዛፍ ላይ»  
*yä-lela                      agar                      säw-očč                      andand                      gize                      Afrikawə-(y)-an                      bä-zaf lay*  
 GEN-another                      country                      man-PL                      some                      time                      African-PL                      in-tree on

<sup>48</sup> More on the meaning of *qärrä* in Section 4.2.2.4.





a positive form *yänägrs*, resulting in a potential construction *\*yänägrs ayqärəmm* ‘he will not remain to tell’. But Amharic does not use this. Similarly, in *mängäru<sub>s</sub> ayqärəmm*, *mängäru<sub>s</sub> yämmayqär näw* and *mängäru<sub>s</sub> ayqäre näw* we might expect that the verbal noun could take a negator *alä-* (*alämängäru<sub>s</sub>*); but this possibility is also ruled out. It seems that these epistemificators have “used up” negation in construing an epistemic meaning and so negation cannot be applied to them in the conventional way. It should be added here that in the case of the adjectival epistemificator, *mängäru<sub>s</sub> ayqäre näw*, and the adjectivalized epistemificator *mängäru<sub>s</sub> yämmayqär näw*, it is not possible to negate the copula, either. Thus, a construction such as *mängäru<sub>s</sub> yämmayqär aydällämm* is unacceptable.

Given that none of the epistemificators containing the negative form of *qärrä* can refer in their proposition to a negated state of affairs, we may ask which epistemificator is used instead by Amharic native speakers to express the same modal nuance but with a negated proposition. My informants would use lexical epistemificators: for *saynägrs ayqärəmm* the epistemificator *yä-X aymäslännəmm* ‘it doesn’t seem to me that X’ (non-copular); for *mängäru<sub>s</sub> ayqärəmm* the epistemificator *ändä-NEG.X ərgəṭännä näññ* ‘I am sure that NEG.X’. Consider the following pairs of sentences:

- (119) አሮጌ ባጃጅ                      ባይሻል                      አይቀርም  
*aroge baḡaḡ*                      *s-a-y-ššal*                      *a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 old three.wheeler.taxi when-NEG-3SM-be.better\IPFV NEG-3SM-remain\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘An old three-wheeler taxi is **surely** better’
- (120) አሮጌ ባጃጅ                      የሚሻል                      አይመስለኝ  
*aroge baḡaḡ*                      *yämm-i-ššal*                      *a-y-mäsl-änn-(ə)-mm*  
 old three.wheeler.taxi REL-3SM-be.better\IPFV NEG-3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG-NEG  
 ‘It **doesn’t** seem to me that an old three wheeler-taxi is better’
- (121) አለቃችን ስለ ፕሮጀክቱ መጠየቁ                      አይቀርም  
*aläqa-ččän salä proḡäkt-u mäṭäyyäq-u*                      *a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 boss-POSS.1PL about projekt-DEF ask\VN-POSS.3SM NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘Our boss will **definitely** ask about the project’
- (122) አለቃችን ስለ ፕሮጀክቱ እንደማይጠይቅ                      እርግጠኛ ነኝ  
*aläqa-ččän salä proḡäkt-u ändä-mm-a-y-ṭäyyäq*                      *ərgəṭännä n-änn*  
 boss-POSS.1PL about projekt-DEF COMP-REL-NEG-3SM-ask\IPFV sure COP-1SG

‘I am sure that our boss won’t ask about the project’

Probably other possibilities exist as well.

### 6.2.8. Conclusion

The study of epistemic negation has yielded a number of unexpected results. Most basic is the fact that the two epistemic linkers *ändä-* and *bəyye* show a very clear difference in their preference for which clause is to be negated: epistemificators with *ändä-* prefer the epistemized to be negated, whereas epistemificators with *bəyye* (which highlight the speaker’s opinion per se) prefer negation on the epistemificator. Usually the negation applies semantically to the clause in which the negator appears; but there do exist some NEG-raising verbs (NB: not congruent with the set of English NEG-raising verbs), where the negator applies semantically to the epistemized but may appear either in the upstairs or in the downstairs clause. Here there is a twist: when the negator appears downstairs, the epistemic linker is *ändä-* (as expected), but when it appears upstairs, the linker is *bəyye*. With a few epistemificators there is a further unexpected possibility, which might be termed “obligatory Neg-raising”: the negation applies semantically to the epistemized, but it *must* appear on the epistemificator, not on the epistemized.

There are some epistemificators which cannot be negated at all because the formal expression of the epistemificator itself already contains a negative; we might say that with such expressions, negativity is saturated in advance. These all involve the phrase *ay-qärə-* (*mm*), literally ‘it does not remain’. This is the meaning when the epistemized is negative, thus literally ‘it does not remain without V’, i.e. ‘surely’; but if the epistemized is a (positive) verbal noun, the lexical meaning seems to be inverted: ‘it does not fail’.

A priori, it might seem reasonable that an epistemificator and the negative of that epistemificator should both be possible simultaneously and yield opposite epistemic meanings (*likely ~ unlikely*). And yet in Amharic, this is not the typical case; only a few epistemificators can truly be negated with a reversal of meaning (note that this excludes NEG-raising).



## CONCLUSION

In the present thesis I have tried to come to grips with the highly demanding but also highly interesting grammatical category of epistemic modality in Amharic. The thesis covers, to greater or lesser extent, some 70 epistemificators which have been classified into a few different morphosyntactic groups. This considerable number and wide range of epistemic modal expressions came from the fact that I was entering into *terra incognita* and so, it was not possible to know in advance which and what kind of expressions would turn out to convey an epistemic meaning. Given the broad spectrum of epistemificators, I could only devote limited space to individual expressions; I favoured those which seem to occur more frequently in Amharic texts. Nevertheless, I am convinced that in a pioneering and preliminary work on Amharic epistemic modality, the large number of expressions is rather an asset since it fosters an unbiased overview of the whole terrain and gives glimpses into regions still to be explored. I strongly believe that one virtue of this thesis is its primary reliance on a corpus of real data in tandem with an intelligent informant.

As presented in the thesis, the category of epistemic modality in Amharic is dominated by verbal expressions with a modest contribution on the part of adjectives, adverbs and particles. There is no neatly defined class of modal auxiliaries. In these respects Amharic differs much from Polish with its rich repertoire of epistemic particles<sup>1</sup> and from English with its plethora of adverbs<sup>2</sup> and its morphosyntactically definable class of modal verbs. What the three languages do have in common is the existence of some polysemous modal verbs which convey epistemic, deontic and dynamic meanings. In Amharic these are *linägr* ገጅረላላፍ, ‘he could<sub>s</sub>/may<sub>s</sub> tell<sub>s</sub>’ and, less frequently used *marwäq alläbb(ät)*ፍ ‘he must<sub>s</sub> know’. Although the two epistemificators differ from the morphosyntactic point of view from the English modal verbs, both Amharic and English modals resemble each other in the way they modalize a past state of affairs, namely by adding an auxiliary. It would be interesting to further research such modally polysemous verbs in all their formal and semantic manifestations.

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<sup>1</sup> See the *Słownik gniazdowy partykuł polskich* [The nested dictionary of Polish particles] (Grochowski *et al.* 2014) which contains many epistemic particles.

<sup>2</sup> See Wierzbicka (2006: 247-296).

One shortcoming of this thesis is its lack of emphasis on diachronic and comparative aspects. This is probably unavoidable given that I have devoted much space to a purely synchronic analysis. But some diachronic generalizations are possible. The sources of Amharic grammatical epistemificators are in part quite different than those in English. The most frequent epistemificator, *(yənägr)ᵣyəhonall* ‘he may tellᵣ’, originates from the future form of the verb *honä* ‘be(come)’. Another important source is the verb *qärrä* ‘remain’ with its curious reanalysis of meaning to ‘fail’. As I have showed in Section 4.1.2.4 in the epistemificator *saynägrᵣ ayqärämmᵣ* the verb *qärrä* means ‘remain’ whereas in the epistemificator *mängärurᵣ ayqärämm* and its derivatives have an opposite meaning ‘fail’. (Another such case, but in the lexical domain, is the epistemificator head *əṭṭärəṭṭärallähu*, which is sometimes translated as ‘I doubt that’, sometimes as ‘I suspect that’. Clearly, further analysis is needed for both of these cases.) The epistemificator head of *mawäq alläbb(ät)ᵣ* ‘he mustᵣ know’ comes from yet a different source: the verb of existence *allä* followed by the applicative infix *-bb-*, ‘on, upon’ with the semantic nuance of burden of necessity. Finally, *linägrᵣ yəcälallᵣ* ‘he couldᵣ tellᵣ’ goes back to *čälä* ‘be able, can’. And even where the source of a given epistemificator seems clear, the question remains whether the diachronic development occurred within the history of Amharic, or whether it involved the transition from Ge‘ez (or a Ge‘ez-like precursor of Amharic) to Amharic.

As for lexical means of expressing epistemic modality I want to draw attention to the mental verbal epistemificators of the form ‘I think that’. In Amharic there are two parallel sets of such epistemificators, one with the quotative linker *bəyye* and one with the complementizers *ändä-* or *änd-*, as in *X bəyye assəballähu* ‘I think: X’ vs. *ändä-X assəballähu* ‘I think (that) X’, and *X bəyye əsägallähu* ‘I worry (that): X’ vs. *änd-NEG.X əsägallähu* ‘I worry lest X’. Additionally, some epistemificators take as their complement a verbal noun, such as *mängärurᵣ əṭṭärəṭṭärallähu* ‘I have doubts (about) his telling’. In Section 5.11 I have tried to elucidate the rich field of semantic differences that exist between such pairs, while in Section 5.10 I have dealt with the semantics of selected epistemificators of this type (with *bəyye*), presenting the above mentioned epistemificator, *X bəyye assəballähu*, as the least restricted. A mental epistemificator that competes, and in

all likelihood wins, with *ändä-X* and *bəyye assəballähu* in frequency of usage is *yä-X yəməslännəll* ‘it seems to me that X, it appears to me that X’. It is a telling fact that based upon my data *yä-X yəməslännəll* appears as the main, if not the sole, expression referring to ‘I think that something’ in the broadest sense, rather than *X bəyye / ändä-X assəballähu*, in all versions of the Amharic Bible. The increasing frequency of mental verbal epistemificators, such as *X bəyye assəballähu*, *X bəyye amnallähu*, *X bəyye əgəmmətallähu* ‘I think/believe/assume:’, seems to be a recent phenomenon.

My approach to the semantics of epistemic modality drawing upon the terms and tradition of Polish semanticists permitted a better analysis of epistemificators than any other approach I have seen. It will have an ancillary advantage of introducing to the Western reader a semantic approach which is little known outside the Slavic-speaking world. In practical terms this approach had the disadvantage of requiring near-native speaker knowledge of the language to be used properly. One must also be well-versed in formalisms and concepts of logical semantics.

I have presented much of my semantic analysis in terms of dimensions. However, I was only able to do this *post facto*, after having already attained a fairly good understanding of the semantics of the epistemificators in ordinary language. This seems unavoidable, unless one subscribes to the (perhaps unattainable) idea that there really exists a pre-given, completely universal comprehensive list of abstract semantic features for epistemificators that “are just waiting” to be applied to whatever language one pleases. The dimensions are secondary. They give us a good way of presenting results, but they cannot either provide or replace a meticulous semantic analysis. In fact, in seeking to set up a list of dimensions, it is difficult to find common denominators that can apply to more than a handful of epistemificators. The dimensions that I did use tend to be rather language specific, even though they often have the potential to be expanded to other languages.

In the course of writing this thesis I have encountered a range of vexing problems that I have not managed to resolve. First and foremost, although I have made a sincere effort to semantically analyse the epistemificators as fully as I could, and have provided some insights into semantics, I am far from considering the results to be comprehensive and

satisfactory. Another problem was how to treat the role of negation in formulating epistemificators: if an epistemificator E is established, is  $\sim E$  to count as a distinct epistemificator, especially in view of the fact that sometimes  $\sim E$  does not exactly behave semantically in a predictable way as the “negation of E”? To have done so would have meant doubling the already very long catalogue of epistemificators. Even more problematical was the whole question of aspect. Unquestionably lexical aspect (Aktionsart) is a necessary concept, but what about grammatical aspect ([+perfective])? Different linguists have different views even on the applicability of (im)perfective to the “easy case” of Indicative mood, let alone to the more difficult and fuzzy field of modal utterances. I hope I may be excused for trying to avoid this issue as much as possible. There was also a problem in how to treat stative verbs: often a stative predicate can (a priori) be conceptualized either as a pure state or as an inceptive state (e.g. “believe” vs. “come to believe”). Which is the “right way” for Amharic? Neither I nor my informants (including some quite sophisticated informants) were able to give a convincing, unambiguous answer to this question.

A final problem involved translation of my examples sentence into English, and especially how best to translate the Amharic modal expressions. I would have preferred a one-to-one correspondence between a given Amharic modalizer and an English equivalent, but this was often impossible: concepts and oppositions that are relevant in the grammar of one language cannot automatically be expected to be relevant to another language, and even where they are, stylistic considerations often got in the way. And there is a diachronic problem. Different sources of different epistemificators will leave different lexical traces behind in the synchronic meaning of two epistemificators, traces which should be reflected in an “ideal” translation.

This thesis should be useful on several levels. Of course, it will enrich the grammatical description of the Amharic language. It could also be an impetus to analogous research into other Ethiosemitic languages, notably Gəʿəz, or into Ethiosemitic in general. It will provide foundational data for typological (or areal) studies of epistemic modality. And (my own favourite area) I very much hope that it will contribute to improvement in the area of Amharic language pedagogy.

# LEXICON OF AMHARIC MODAL EPISTEMIC EXPRESSIONS (EPISTEMIFIATORS)

In this lexicon, I present a proposal for how epistemificators could be registered in a projected general-purpose Amharic-English and Amharic-Polish dictionary which targets English- and Polish-speaking users.<sup>1</sup> The first column contains the lexical entry from which an epistemificator is ultimately derived. This lexical entry is a stem, not a root; a derived stem with a prefix (e.g. *tä-*) will be presented as a separate entry (preceded by →), but is alphabetized under its root. The lexical entries are arranged according to the order of the *Habu* alphasyllabary. In the second column, epistemificator(s) (one or more) that include this lexical entry are presented as subentries. A small number of epistemificators play the role of both dictionary headword and subentry. The third and fourth columns provide a translation into English and Polish. In contrast to the sometimes rough but maximally literal translations given in Chapter 4, here I will give more weight to the target language and seek translations which are both close and natural equivalents. Hence, for instance, the epistemificator X የሚል ፍርሃት አለኝ X *yämmil färhat allänn* will not be translated here as ‘I have a fear: X’ but as ‘I fear (that)’, which sounds natural. Whenever there is a dummy verb *näggärä* or *awwäqä* in the Amharic epistemificator, it is always translated into the two languages in order to show the temporal characteristic of the epistemificator. The subscript ‘S’ on a verb indicates that the verb shows subject agreement. In the last column, I provide the main pages on which the reader can find more detailed information on the given epistemificator.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that I have not included clefting constructions in the lexicon.

Lexical entry	Epistemificator (subentry)	English translation	Polish translation	Pages
<b>ሆኑ</b> <i>honä</i> be(come)	NOM <b>ይሆን</b> <sub>S</sub> NOM <i>yəhon</i> <sub>S</sub> ?	might he/it be NOM?	czy to może on jest NOM?  czy on może jest NOM? co może być NOM?	165-166, 239, 266
	<b>ይነገር</b> <sub>S</sub> <b>ይሆን</b> <i>yənägṛ</i> <sub>S</sub> <i>yəhon</i> ?	might he tell?	czy może powie/ (zwykle) mówi?	128-134, 145- 146, 152, 238, 245, 265, 388- 392
	(PST) <b>ነገሩ</b> <sub>S</sub> <b>ይሆን?</b> <i>nägros</i> <i>yəhon</i> ?	might he have told?	czy mógł (był) powiedzieć/mówić?	
	(PROG) <b>እየነገረ</b> <sub>S</sub> <b>ይሆን?</b> <i>əyyänäggäräs</i> <i>yəhon</i> ?	might he be telling?	czy może mówi?	
	NOM <b>ይሆናል</b> <sub>S</sub> NOM <i>yəhonall</i> <sub>S</sub>	he/it will/may be NOM	to (pewnie) będzie NOM, może jest NOM	164-165, 239, 250-251
	<b>ይነገር</b> <sub>S</sub> <b>ይሆናል</b> <i>yənägṛ</i> <sub>S</sub> <i>yəhonall</i>	he may/might tell	może powiedzieć/ (zwykle) mówić, może powie/ (zwykle) mówi	128-134, 145- 146, 149-152, 238-239, 245, 255-257, 269-
	(PST) <b>ነገሩ</b> <sub>S</sub> <b>ይሆናል</b> <i>nägros</i> <i>yəhonall</i>	he may/might have told	mógł (był) powiedzieć/ (zwykle) mówić może (był) powiedział/ (zwykle) mówił	270, 274, 277- 278, 299, 305- 314, 316, 347- 353, 361-362,
	(PROG) <b>እየነገረ</b> <sub>S</sub> <b>ይሆናል</b> <i>əyyänäggäräs</i> <i>yəhonall</i>	he may/might be telling	może mówić, może mówi	366-375, 388- 392, 394
<b>መሰለ</b> <i>mässälä</i> seem, appear	(PAREN) <b>መሰል</b> <i>mässäl</i>	it seems	zdaje się	225-226, 241, 265
	(PAREN) <b>መሰለኝ</b> <i>mässälänñ</i>	it seems to me, I think	wdaje mi się, zdaje mi się	226-228, 253, 255, 263, 279
	ADJ <b>ይመስላል</b> <sub>S</sub> ADJ <i>yəməslall</i> <sub>S</sub>	sb./sth. seems ADJ	ktoś/coś wydaje się ADJ	175-176, 264, 283, 289
	<b>የ- ይመስላል</b> <sub>S</sub> <i>yä- yəməslall</i> <sub>S</sub>	sb./sth. seems (to be)	ktoś/coś wydaje się (być)	138-141, 179-180, 240, 249, 264, 284, 286-287
	<b>የ- ይመስላል</b> <i>yä- yəməslall</i>	it seems that, it appears that	wydaje się, że	138-141, 181, 237, 240, 284, 397-398

መስለ <i>mässälä</i> seem, appear	(PAREN) ይመስለኛል <i>yəməsläññall</i>	it seems to me	wydaje mi się, zdaje mi się	224-225, 238
	NOM ይመስለኛል <sub>s</sub> NOM <i>yəməsläññall<sub>s</sub></i>	sb./sth. seems to me NOM	ktoś/coś wydaje mi się NOM	176-177, 236, 262, 278, 283
	የ- ይመስለኛል <sub>s</sub> <i>yä- yəməsläññall<sub>s</sub></i>	sb./sth. seems to me (to be)	ktoś/coś wydaje mi się (być)	138-141, 180, 284-285, 287
	የ- ይመስለኛል <i>yä- yəməsläññall</i>	it seems to me that	wydaje mi się, że	138-141, 180-181, 250, 263, 279, 284-286, 288, 383, 397-398
	እንደሚመስለኝ <i>əndämmimäsläññ</i>	as it seems to me	jak mi się wydaje, jak mi się zdaje	229, 238
ምናልባት <i>mənalbat</i> maybe	ምናልባት <i>mənalbat</i> (usually with ይነግር <sub>s</sub> ይሆናል or ሊነግር <sub>s</sub> ይችላል <sub>s</sub> )	maybe, perhaps	może, być może	48-49, 137-138, 219-223, 242, 255-256, 267, 270-271, 273-277, 394
ሰማ→ ተሰማ(ው) <i>täsämma(ግ)</i> feel	እንደ- ይሰማኛል <i>əndä- yässämmaññall</i>	I feel that	czuję, że	206-207, 237, 263, 282, 291-292
	NOM ሆኖ ይሰማኛል <i>bono yässämmaññall</i>	I feel that sth. is NOM	czuję, że coś jest NOM	207
	NOM መስሎ ይሰማኛል NOM <i>mäslo</i> <i>yässämmaññall</i>	I have the impression that NOM	mam wrażenie, że NOM	207-208
ሠጋ <i>sägga</i> worry (V)	እንዳይ- እሠጋለሁ <i>ənday- əsägallähu</i>	I worry lest, I am worried lest	obawiam się, (że)by	194-195, 282, 293-294, 296-297, 303-304, 356-357, 418, 420
	ብዬ እሠጋለሁ <i>bəyye əsägallähu</i>	I worry (that), I am worried lest	obawiam się, że/czy	195, 259, 296-297, 304, 414-415, 417, 420
ሥጋት <i>səgat</i> worry (N)	እንዳይ- ሥጋት አለኝ <i>ənday- səgat alläññ</i>	I worry lest	mam obawy, (że)by	202, 297, 303, 418-419
	የሚል ሥጋት አለኝ <i>yämmil səgat alläññ</i>	I am worried (that)	mam obawy, że/czy	202, 297, 417

<b>ቀረ</b> <i>qärrä</i> remain	<b>ሳይነገር<sub>S</sub> አይቀርም<sup>(S)</sup></b> <i>saynägr<sub>S</sub> ayqärämm<sup>(S)</sup></i>	he surely/probably tells/will tell/told	pewnie/prawdopodobnie powie/będzie mówił mówi/powiedział/mówił	134-137, 142, 146, 158-160, 248, 256, 258, 261, 266, 271, 274-275, 278, 290-291, 301, 313-317, 375-378, 385, 425-428
	<b>ሳይነገር<sub>S</sub> አልቀረም<sup>(S)</sup></b> <i>saynägr<sub>S</sub> alqärrämm<sup>(S)</sup></i>	he surely/probably told	pewnie/prawdopodobnie powie/będzie mówił	160, 275, 316, 375-376, 379-380
	<b>መንገሩ<sub>S</sub> አይቀርም</b> <i>mängäru<sub>S</sub> ayqärämm</i>	he will definitely tell, he is sure to tell	na pewno powie/będzie mówił	134-137, 142, 160-163, 239, 246, 258-259, 272, 281-282, 300-302, 380, 425-428
	<b>መንገሩ<sub>S</sub> አይቀራ ነው</b> <i>mängäru<sub>S</sub> ayqäre näw</i>	it is inevitable that he will tell	jest nieuniknione, że powie/będzie mówił	210-211, 267, 300, 425, 428
	<b>መንገሩ<sub>S</sub> የማይቀር ነው</b> <i>mängäru<sub>S</sub> yämmayqär näw</i>	it is inevitable that he will tell	jest nieuniknione, że powie/będzie mówił	136, 211, 241-242, 267, 300, 425-426, 428
	<b>ረገጠ</b> <i>räggätä</i> step on, tread on	<b>(PAREN) እርግጥ ነው</b> <i>ərgət näw</i>	it is true, granted, indeed,	to prawda, owszem
<b>እንደ- እርግጥ ነው</b> <i>ändä- ərgət näw</i>		it is certain that, it is sure that	jest pewne, że	80, 204-205, 241, 255, 264
<b>መንገሩ<sub>S</sub> እርግጥ ነው</b> <i>mängäru<sub>S</sub> ərgət näw,</i>		it is certain that he told /he tells /will tell	jest pewne, że powie/będzie mówił/mówi/ powie/będzie mówił	81, 205-206, 280
<b>በእርግጥ <i>bä</i> ለርግጥ <i>bärgät</i></b> <b>(በርግጥ <i>bärgät</i>)</b>		clearly, evidently	z pewnością, najwyraźniej	216-217, 393-394
<b>በእርግጠኝነት</b> <i>bä'ərgätännännät</i> <b>(በርግጠኝነት</b> <i>bärgätännännät)</i>		for certain, for sure, with certainty	z pewnością	49, 213-216, 252-253, 255, 279-280, 393-394
<b>(PAREN) እርግጠኛ ነኝ</b> <i>ərgätännä näññ</i>		I am sure, I am certain	jestem pewny/pewien	229-230, 236, 396
<b>እንደ- እርግጠኛ ነኝ</b> <i>ändä- ərgätännä näññ</i>		I am sure that, I am certain that	jestem pewny/pewien, że	208-209, 236, 254, 263, 272, 384-385,

<b>ረገጠ</b> <i>räggätä</i> step on, tread on	(NEG) <b>(ስለ)መንገሩ-(ግ)S</b> <b>እርግጠኛ አይደለሁም</b> <i>(sälä)mängäru(n)S</i> <i>ärgätännä aydällähum</i>	I am not sure that/whether, I am not certain that/whether	nie jestem pewien, że/czy	405-411, 428- 429 (cont. from page 438)
<b>ብ-</b> <i>bä-</i> if	<b>ቢነግርS ነው</b> <i>binägrS näw</i>	he probably tells/will tell	prawdopodobnie mówi/ powie/będzie mówił	49, 172-174, 249, 266, 275, 278, 388-390, 392-393
	<b>ቢነግርS ይሆናል</b> <i>binägrS yəhonall</i>	it may be that he tells/will tell	może być tak, że mówi/powie/będzie mówił	174-175, 270, 388, 392-393
<b>ተስፋ</b> <i>täsfä</i> hope (N)	<b>እንደ- ተስፋ</b> <b>አደርጋለሁ</b> <i>ändä-</i> <i>täsfä adärgallähu</i>	I hope (that)	mam nadzieję, że	193, 293-296, 412-414
	<b>ብዬ ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ</b> <i>bəyye täsfä</i> <i>adärgallähu</i>	I hope (that)	mam nadzieję, że	193, 295-296, 412-414
	<b>የሚል ተስፋ አለኝ</b> <i>yämmil täsfä allänn</i>	I hope (that)	mam nadzieję, że	201, 282, 295- 296
<b>ቻለ</b> <i>čalä</i> be able, can, may	<b>ሊነግርS ይችላልS</b> <i>linägrS yäčälallS</i>	he could/may tell	może powiedzieć/mówić	77-78, 153- 156, 239, 248, 257, 270, 274, 305-313, 362, 367-373, 383, 388-392
	(PST) <b>ነግርS ሊሆን ይችላል</b> <i>nägroS lihon yäčälallS</i>	he could/may have told	mógł (był) powiedzieć/ mówić	
	(PROG) <b>እየነገረS ሊሆን ይችላል</b> <i>əyyänäggäräs lihon</i> <i>yäčälall</i>	he could/may be telling	może mówić	
<b>አለ</b> <i>allä</i> exist	<b>ማወቅ አለበትS</b> <i>mawäq allä-bb(ät)S</i> (NEG) <b>ሊያውቅS</b> <b>አይችልምS</b> <i>liyawqS</i> <i>ayčäləmmS</i>	he must/should know	musi wiedzieć, powinien wiedzieć	79, 156-158, 245-246, 271- 272, 276, 281, 289-291, 363, 368-372, 385, 423-425
	(PST) <b>ነግርS መሆን</b> <b>አለበት</b> <i>nägroS mähon</i> <i>allä-bbät</i>	he must/should have told	musiał (był) powiedzieć/ mówić	
	(PROG) <b>እየነገረS መሆን አለበት</b> <i>əyyänäggäräs mähon</i> <i>allä-bbät</i>	he must/should be telling	musi mówić	

አመነ <i>ammänä</i> believe	እንደ- አምናለሁ- <i>ändä- amnallähu</i>	I believe (that)	sądzę, że wierzę, że	191, 247, 273, 280
	ብዬ አምናለሁ- <i>bəyye amnallähu</i>	I believe (that)	sądzę, że wierzę, że	191-192, 287, 318-323
	(PAREN) እንደማምነው- <i>ändämmamnäw</i>	as I believe	jak sądzę, jak wierzę	229
እምነት <i>əmnät</i> belief	የሚል እምነት አለኝ <i>yämmil əmnät alläññ</i>	I believe (that)	sądzę, że wierzę, że	201, 236, 252, 397
ተማመነ <i>tämammänä</i> be confident	እንደ- እተማመናለሁ- <i>ändä- əttämammänallähu</i>	I am confident (that)	jestem przekonany, że	193, 295-296, 412, 414
	ብዬ እተማመናለሁ- <i>bəyye əttämammänallähu</i>	I am confident (that)	jestem przekonany, że	193-194, 295- 296, 412-414
አሰበ <i>assäbä</i> think	እንደ- አሰባለሁ- <i>ändä- assəballähu</i>	I think (that)	myślę, że	191, 254, 282, 294, 325, 335, 338-339, 403- 404
	ብዬ አሰባለሁ- <i>bəyye assəballähu</i>	I think (that)	myślę, że	191, 235, 262, 275-276, 284- 285, 287-288, 318-323, 325, 331-332, 338- 339, 382, 401- 403
	(PAREN) እንደማስበው- <i>ändämmassəbäw</i>	as I think	jak myślę	228, 235
ሐሳብ <i>hassab</i> thought (N)	የሚል ሐሳብ አለኝ <i>yämmil hassab alläññ</i>	I think (that)	myślę, że	200-201, 254, 282
አየ → ታየ <i>tayyā</i> be seen	NOM መስሎ ይታየኛል NOM <i>mäslo</i> <i>yəttayyāññall</i>	sth. appears to me (to be) NOM	coś wydaje mi się (być) NOM	207, 237
ገመተ <i>gämmätä</i> estimate	እንደ- እገምታለሁ- <i>ändä- əgämmətallähu</i>	I assume (that), I guess (that)	przypuszczam, że	192, 234-235, 258, 272-273, 356, 384, 399- 400, 402

ገመተ <i>gämmätä</i> estimate	<b>ብዬ እገምታለሁ</b> <i>bəyye əgämmätallähu</i>	I assume (that), I guess (that)	przypuszczam, że	192, 251, 318- 323, 334, 355- 356, 384, 399
	(PAREN) <b>እንደምገምተው</b> <i>əndämməgämmätäw</i>	as I assume	jak przypuszczam	229
<b>ግምት</b> <i>gəmmət</i> estimation, assumption	<b>የሚል ግምት አለኝ</b> <i>yämmil gəmmət alläññ</i>	I assume (that), I guess (that)	przypuszczam, że	201, 276, 396- 397
<b>ጠረጠረ</b> <i>tärättärä</i> suspect	<b>እንደ- እጠረጥራለሁ</b> <i>əndä- ətärättərallähu</i>	I suspect (that)	podejrzewam, że	195-196, 282, 295, 297-298, 420-422
	<b>ብዬ እጠረጥራለሁ</b> <i>bəyye ətärättərallähu</i>	I suspect (that)	podejrzewam, że	196, 297, 420- 422
<b>ጥርጥር</b> <i>tərəttər</i> doubt	<b>ያለ ጥርጥር</b> <i>yalä tərəttər</i> (ያለጥርጥር <i>yalätərəttər</i> )	undoubtedly, without any doubt, doubtless	bez wątpienia, niewątpliwie	218-219, 265, 395
<b>ጥርጣሬ</b> <i>tərəttare</i> suspicion	<b>የሚል ጥርጣሬ አለኝ</b> <i>yämmil tərəttare alläññ</i>	I suspect (that)	podejrzewam, że	203-204, 297
<b>ተጠራጠረ</b> <i>tätärättärä</i> suspect	<b>ብዬ እጠራጠራለሁ</b> <i>bəyye əttärättärallähu</i>	I suspect (that)	podejrzewam, że	196-197, 344, 423
<b>ተጠራጠረ</b> <i>tätärättärä</i> doubt	<b>መንገሩን እጠራጠራለሁ</b> <i>mängärun əttärättärallähu</i> (NEG) <b>እንደ- አልጠራጠርም</b> <i>əndä- aləttärättärəmm</i>	I have doubts whether he tells/told/will tell	wątpię, żeby powiedział/mówił; wątpię, czy powiedział/ mówił/mówi/powie/ będzie mówił	197-198, 235, 246, 341-342, 357-358, 405- 406, 409-412
<b>አጠራጠረ</b> <i>əttärättärä</i> raise doubts	<b>እንደ- ያጠራጥራል</b> <i>əndä- yəttärättərall</i>	it raises doubts that	budzi wątpliwości (to), że	198, 240-241, 247, 411-412
	(ለ)መንገሩና <b>ያጠራጥራል</b> <i>(lä)mängäruፍ yəttärättərall</i>	his telling raises doubts, it raises doubts whether he tells/told/will tell	to, co mówi/mówił/ powie, budzi wątpliwości; budzi wątpliwości (to), czy	199, 281, 358, 411-412

<b>አጠራጠረ</b> <i>aṭṭaraṭṭärä</i> raise doubts	<b>መንገሩ የሚያጠራጥር</b> <b>ነው</b> <i>mängäruṣ</i> <i>yämmiyattäraṭṭar</i> <i>näw</i>	it is doubtful whether he told/tells/will tell	jest wątpliwe, (że)by/czy powiedział/mówił/mówi /powie/będzie mówił	210, 241-242, 264-265
<b>ጠበቀ</b> <i>ṭäbbäqä</i> wait	<b>እንደ- እጠብቃለሁ</b> <i>ändä- aṭäbbäqallähu</i>	I expect (that)	oczekuję, że	194, 302-303, 400
	<b>ብዬ እጠብቃለሁ</b> <i>bäyye aṭäbbäqallähu</i>	I expect (that)	oczekuję, że	194, 302-303, 400
<b>ፈራ</b> <i>färra</i> be afraid, fear	<b>እንዳይ- እፈራለሁ</b> <i>änday- aḫärallähu</i>	I am afraid lest, I fear lest	boję się, żeby	195, 297, 303- 304, 418, 419
	<b>ብዬ እፈራለሁ</b> <i>bäyye aḫärallähu</i>	I am afraid (that), I fear (that)	boję się, że	195, 297, 414- 417
<b>ፍርሃት</b> <i>fərbat</i> fear (N)	<b>እንዳይ- ፍርሃት አለኝ</b> <i>änday- fərbat alläññ</i>	I am afraid lest, I fear lest	boję się, (że)by	202-203, 297, 303, 419
	<b>የሚል ፍርሃት አለኝ</b> <i>yämmil fərbat alläññ</i>	I am afraid (that), I fear (that)	boję się, że/czy	202, 297, 416, 417
<b>ፍራሻ</b> <i>fəračča</i> concern (N)	<b>እንዳይ- ፍራሻ አለኝ</b> <i>änday- fəračča alläññ</i>	I have a concern lest	mam obawy, (że)by	203, 297, 303
	<b>የሚል ፍራሻ አለኝ</b> <i>yämmil fəračča alläññ</i>	I have a concern that	mam obawy, że/czy	203, 297-298, 416

## LIST OF THE CORPUS

The corpus consists of three groups of sources: works of literature, items from the press, and spoken texts. Each source has been assigned a unique identifier, usually an acronym of the title, which is placed after an example sentence.

The Ethiopian year of publication is given in parentheses and is followed by E(thiopian) C(alendar).

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- ASS          Səbhat Gäbrä Əgziabəher. 2007 (2000 EC). *Amməst səddəst səbatt ənna ...* [Five, six, seven and ...] Addis Abäba: Mahlet Asattami Dərəğğət.
- BBS          Mäsfən Habtämaryam. 2007/2008 ? (1999 EC ?). *Yäbunna bet sə'al oččənna leloččəmm wəgočč* (1976-1999) [Pictures in a pub and other stories]. Addis Ababa: MI Printers.
- BF            Alämayyāhu Gälagay. 2015 (Ṭər 2007 EC). *Yäbərhan fäləgočč* [Tracks of light]. Addis Ababa: Printed privately.
- BŠ            Fəqadu Kəfle. 2012/2013 (2005 EC). *Bä'əmba šäləqo* [In the gorge of tears]. Addis Abäba: Shama Books.
- DB            Mängəstu Lamma. 1996 (1988 EC). *Dämamu Bə'əwäñña (gəllä tarik)* [The handsome writer (autobiography)]. Addis Ababa: Mega Publishing Enterprise.
- DW            Fəqrəmarqos Dästa. 1994/1995 (1987 EC). *Käbuska bästäğärba, dəngəl wəbät* [Behind Buska, the virgin beauty]. Addis Abäba: Yänəgd Mattämiya Bet.
- GQ            Addam Rätta. 2004/2005 (1997 EC). *Gra čč a qa č əločč* [Grey bells]. Addis Abäba: Shama Books.
- HL            Hirut Hagos Abbay. 2010/2011 (2003 EC). *Hawaryaw ləğe* [My son the Apostle]. Addis Abäba: Shama Books.
- KB            Bə'alu Gərma. 1969/1970 (1962 EC). *Kadmas baššaggär* [Beyond the horizon]. Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Book Centre.

- MAH Mamo Wəddənäh. 1989 (Ṭəqəmt 1982 EC). *Mahbärtännöçcu. Tarik qämmäsä ləbbwälläd* [The club members. A historical novel]. Addis Abäba: Nəgd Mattämiya Bet.
- MBL Bərhanu Zäryəhun. 1983 (1975 EC). *Ma'əbäl: yä'abyot magəst* [The wave: The wake of the revolution]. Addis Ababa: Ethiopia Book Center.
- MQ *Məşhaf Qəddus* [The Holy Bible]. 1987/1988 (1980 EC). Revised version of the edition from 1954/1955 (1947 EC). Addis Abäba: Bərhanəna Sälam Mattämiya Bet.
- MQA *Məşhaf Qəddus. Addis mädäbäñña tərg<sup>w</sup>əm* [The Holy Bible. New standard translation]. 2001/2002 (1993 EC). Addis Ababa: International Bible Society.
- MW Taddälä Bəṭul Kəbrät. 1998/1999 (1991 EC). *Məşhafä wəyayyət kädärası doktär Käbbädä Mika'el Mäkuriya gar* [Interview with the writer Doctor Käbbädä Mika'el Mäkuriya]. Addis Abäba: Printed privately.
- NB Gäsət Täçane (Zännäbä Fälläqä). 2010/2011 (2003 EC). *Nəbbär. Kəfəl 1* [It was. Part 1]. 7<sup>th</sup> printing. Addis Abäba: Nəgd Mattämiya Dərəğğət. First published in 2004/2005 (1996 EC).
- NKJV *New King's James Version*. 1982. Thomas Nelson Publishers. Available online at <https://www.biblestudytools.com/nkjv/>.
- NRSV *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*. 2010. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. fully revised, edited by Michael D. Coogan. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- QB Yətbaräk Gədəy. 2002 (?). *Yäqəne bet bahəlanna yähəywäte gätəmänn* [The school of poetry and the events of my life]. Addis Ababa: Artistic Printing Enterprise.
- ŠA Şəggayye Gäbrä Mədhən. 1959/1960 (1952 EC). *Yäšoh aklil* [Crown of thorns]. Addis Abäba: Bərhanəna Sälam Mattämiya Bet.
- TK Səbhat Gäbrä Əgziabəher. 2007/2008 (2000 EC). *Təkusat* [Fever]. Addis Abäba: Mahlet Asattami.  
The book was written in the 1960s and published for the first time in an incomplete form in 1997/1998.
- TFT Asamnəw Barəgga. 2001/2002 (1994 EC). *Yä-Troy färäs ənna leločč*

- a č a č ě ar tarikoč ě* [The Trojan Horse and other short stories]. Addis Abäba: Megga Mattämiya Enterprise.
- YIT Bahru Zäwde. 2010/2011 (2003 EC). 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. *Yä'ıtyo p ya tarik kä1847 askä 1983* [History of Ethiopia from 1847 to 1983]. Addis Abäba: Addis Abäba University Press
- YWN Haylä Mäläkot Mäwa'äl. 2009/2010 (2002 EC). *Yäwädiyanäš*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Addis Abäba.

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- AA *Addis Admas*. Available online at: <http://www.addisadmassnews.com/>
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- AA 818 *Addis Admas*. Mäskäräm 8 No. 818, 2015 (2008 EC).
- AA 819 *Addis Admas*. Mäskäräm 15 No. 819, 2015 (2008 EC).
- AA 820 *Addis Admas*. Mäskäräm 22 No. 820, 2015 (2008 EC).
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- AA 848 *Addis Admas*. Miyazya 8 No. 848, 2016 (2008 EC).
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- AA 932 *Addis Admas*. Hədar 16 No. 932, 2017 (2010 EC).
- AA 942 *Addis Admas*. Tər 16 No. 942, 2017 (2010 EC).
- BKR *Bäkur*. Available online at  
<https://amharamassmediaagency.wordpress.com/bekur-magazine/>.
- BKR 12 *Bäkur*. Yäkkatit 27 No. 12, 2017 (2009 EC).
- BKR 14 *Bäkur*. Mäggabit 11 No. 14, 2017 (2009 EC).
- REP *Ethiopian Reporter*. Available online at  
<https://www.ethiopianreporter.com/>.
- REP 1740 *Ethiopian Reporter*. Tahsas 23 No. 1740, 2016 (2009 EC).
- REP 1742 *Ethiopian Reporter*. Tahsas 30 No. 1742, 2016 (2009 EC).
- REP 1755 *Ethiopian Reporter*. Yäkkatit 15 No. 1755, 2017 (2009 EC).
- SQ *Sändäq*. Yäkkatit 18 No. 494, 2015 (2007 EC).
- BQ *Yäkkatit* 11-12, 1990/1991 (1983 EC).

#### SOURCES OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE

- FLG (1) *Filega* [fälläga ‘search’]: radio drama
- TS 1 Talk show: Radio Fana, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2009
- TS 2 Talk show: Radio Fana, 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2009
- TS 3 Talk show: Radio Fana, 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2009
- TS 4 Talk show: Radio Fana, 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2009
- TS 5 Talk show: Radio Fana, 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2009
- TS 6 Talk show: Radio Fana, 21<sup>th</sup> February, 2009
- TS 7 Talk show: Radio Fana, 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2010
- H1 *Hakim käFana qätətata yäsälk wəyəyyət* [Doctor with Fana, a direct telephone conversation], 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2010
- TS 7 Talk show: Radio Fana, 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2009
- TS 8 Talk show: Radio Fana, 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2010
- MA 1 *Məhbərəwi Attäyay* [People’s view, polemical programme], 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2010

- MA 2 *Mahbärawi Attäyay* [People's view, polemical programme], 14<sup>th</sup>  
January, 2010
- TF 1 *Täbäb Fana* [Art on Radio Fana], 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2010
- YG *Yegna* [yännä 'ours']: radio drama, series 1 and 2, episodes 1-13



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## SUMMARY

This thesis is devoted to a description and analysis of the category of epistemic modality in contemporary Amharic. Thus far this category has only been occasionally and superficially treated in works on Amharic grammar and, in fact, on the grammar of any Ethiosemitic language. The present study is thus a first attempt at a systematic and in-depth investigation of epistemic modality in this language. It is based on a corpus of written and spoken texts that come from both printed and electronic media, which have been interpreted and analyzed with the help of Amharic-speaking informants. Each example is reproduced in the Ethiopic script, transliterated, glossed and translated into English, as in the following sentence containing the Amharic modal epistemic expression

**ሊነግር ይችላል** *linägr yäčälall* ‘he could tell, he may tell’:

- (1) **ምናልባት ስለ ጉዳይ ለአባቱ ሊነግረው**  
*mənalbat sälä gudday-u lä-abbat-u li-nägr-äw*  
 perhaps about issue-DEF for-father-POSS.3SM COMP-3SM-tell\IPFV-OBJ.3SM  
**ይችላል**  
*yä-čäl=all-ø*  
 3SM-may\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Perhaps he **may** tell his father about the issue’

The dissertation consists of an introduction and six chapters, followed by a conclusion and a lexicon of Amharic modal epistemic expressions provided with English and Polish translations.

In Chapter 1, I present the Amharic language to the reader, first primarily from a sociolinguistic point of view, then from a formal descriptive point of view, providing a sketch grammar of the language. Amharic, an Ethiosemitic language of the southern branch, is the most widely-spoken language of Ethiopia, with relatively low dialectal diversity in comparison to its broad distribution. Typologically, Amharic is a synthetic-fusional language. Typically for Semitic languages, it has a nonconcatenative (non-linear) root-and-pattern morphology, especially in the verbal domain. The Amharic (unmarked) word order is very consistently Subject-Object-Verb. As is typical for strict S-O-V languages, modifiers always precede their head and subordinate clauses precede the main

clause. Atypically for strict S-O-V languages, Amharic has both postpositions and prepositions and even discontinuous circumpositions. Also atypically for S-O-V languages, in subordinate clauses any subordinating conjunction is positioned immediately *before* the clause-final verb. Amharic, like many Semitic languages, has an all-purpose subordinator *yä-* which serves both as a noun subordinator (English “of”) and a verb subordinator in a relative clause (English “which, who” etc.). The Amharic relative clause occurs very often as a headless relative clause. It is noteworthy that such a formally headless relative clause can sometimes function not as a headless relative clause but as a *that*-clause (not *I know what he said*, or *I know who came*, but rather *I know that he came* (see ex. 6 below)—all expressed in the same way, as a headless relative clause: *yä-Verb*). Cleft sentences are very important for Amharic grammar. In a cleft one element is cut (cleft) out of the sentence as the rheme; it is combined with a copula and the original sentence is recast as a relative clause, for example, *It is John who came* or *The one who came is John*. Time distinctions in Amharic involve both tense and aspect, in a way which is often difficult to disentangle, and different linguists have different, conflicting approaches to this issue. A particularly knotty question is whether Amharic should be seen as having a perfective-imperfective aspectual opposition—an issue which is complicated by the established Semitist tradition of naming the two main Amharic tense-aspect forms as “perfect(ive)” and “imperfect(ive)”.

In Chapter 2, I introduce the approach to epistemic modality in Amharic that I have taken in this thesis. Following Bogusławski (1998: 21, 81) I consider propositional knowledge, i.e. knowing that *p*, as the most neutral epistemic state. At the other extreme from propositional knowledge is ignorance. What falls between these two extreme epistemic states I have termed “non-knowledge”. The semantic category of epistemic modality falls precisely in the realm of non-knowledge. Thus, epistemic modality is understood as the speaker’s assessment of her/his non-knowledge in respect to the proposition. A few terms that I use throughout the thesis are introduced here, such as epistemificator (modal epistemic expression), epistemizer (the sender of an epistemically modalized sentence), epistemized (the epistemically modalized sentence), epistemized

head (the head verb of the epistemized) and epistemificator head (the head verb of the epistemificator). Because I approach epistemic modality in terms of both semantics and syntax, I use two parallel levels of analysis and layers of terminology—notably, “proposition” belongs to the realm of semantics, whereas terms like “sentence” and “head” clearly belong to syntax.

Next, I present the research procedures that I have applied for my semantic investigation: tests of falsification/verification and substitution, the concept of epistemic dimensions and their values, and the method of analysing sentences in terms of thematic-rhematic structure. At this stage some conventions used in the thesis are explained: first, in the citation form of epistemificators, if the subscripted letter ‘S’ appears, it indicates that a linguistic item agrees grammatically with the subject of its sentence; second, the action verb **ነገረ** *näggärä* ‘tell’ and the stative verb **አወቀ** *awwäqä* ‘know’ serve in these descriptions as dummy verbs, appearing in the complement of Amharic epistemificators; and, finally, a component of an epistemificator which can be substituted by another form is given in parenthesis as in *(yänägr)<sub>s</sub> yäbonall*.

Subsequently, I classify all epistemificators into grammatical, lexical, copular (an intermediate category), and parenthetical, according to their degree of grammaticalization/lexicalization. Amharic has two types of grammatical epistemificators: auxiliary and quasi-auxiliary. The main difference between them is that with auxiliary epistemificators (see ex. 2 below) there is a tight formal unity between the auxiliary and the main verb—they clearly belong to one and the same clause (VP)—whereas quasi-auxiliary (see ex. 3 below) involves a biclausal construction where the main verb is introduced by a complementizer or appears as a verbal noun which can easily be separated from the quasi-auxiliary by a conjunction. The group of copular epistemificators falls between grammatical and lexical epistemificators. It contains expressions which include the words **ይሆናል** *yäbonall* ‘be(come)’ (or variants; in non-auxiliary use) or **ይመስላል** *yämäslall* ‘seem’ (or variants). While both serve as a copula, *yäbonall* is more grammatical in nature and *yämäslall* is more lexical in nature. *Yäbonall* and *yämäslall* are often involved in a cleft sentence in which they can either be conjugable or remain

invariant (appearing only in the impersonal 3SM; see exx. (4) and (5) below). The next group embraces lexical epistemificators, which, due to their complex structure, are often difficult to assign to a traditional part of speech. These are: non-copular epistemificators of seeming, mental verbal and mental noun epistemificators, impersonal verbal epistemificators, adjectival and adjectivalized epistemificators, adverbial and particle epistemificators (see exx. 6-10 below). The last group of epistemificators is represented by parentheticals, which are added to a basic utterance but bear no syntactic relation to it; between the parenthetical epistemificator and the basic utterance there is nothing more than a relation of co-occurrence. The vast majority of parenthetical epistemificators are verbs or verbal phrases (see ex. 11 below).

In the next section of this chapter I deal with the issue of identifying the objects of my research—epistemificators. I consider them as units of language in the sense proposed by Bogusławski (see e.g. 1976, 1988): each such unit should bear a distinct meaning and occupy a place in the system of the language. For a proper identification of epistemificators, I propose three principles: an epistemificator should be investigated together with the arguments that it takes; (as a modal epistemic verb) it should have a stative lexical aspect and occur in the present tense; (as a modal epistemic verbal phrase, noun phrase or an adjectival phrase) it must have a 1<sup>st</sup>-person notional subject. Additionally, some modal expressions have more than one meaning, not always in the realm of epistemic modality; these should be carefully distinguished. Prosody (sentence stress) also plays a vital role in separating epistemificators from formally similar non-epistemificator expressions and in investigating the thematic-rhematic structure of modal epistemic sentences.

Chapter 3 is devoted to a survey of the literature on modality in logic and linguistics, and on modality in Amharic. I begin by presenting some notions and problems which pertain to the study of modality within modal logic, and show discrepancies between the apprehension of modality by logicians and linguists. Next, I discuss how the notion of modality is understood by linguists. The most common apprehension of it is as the relation between the speaker and the contents of the proposition. In practice, however,

linguists tend to separately study particular types of modality—epistemic, deontic and dynamic—without seeking to come up with a general working definition of the category as a whole. Of the three types, it is epistemic modality that is the topic of this dissertation, and accordingly I discuss it most comprehensively, trying to single out problems and present the different approaches linguists have taken. Some of the issues are: the semantics of epistemic modality—in what terms it can be captured and how to analyse it; the notion of epistemic scale and problems that it poses; the question of subjectivity vs. objectivity; and performativity vs. descriptivity involved in modal meanings. Additionally, I touch upon two other categories connected to epistemic modality: evidentiality and mirativity, and present some historical strands of thought on modality that developed from antiquity to Jespersen. The last section of this chapter provides a review of research on epistemic modality in Amharic. In this survey I take into consideration selected grammars and mono- and bilingual dictionaries,<sup>1</sup> trying to answer the following general questions: which epistemificators are registered, how they are registered and how their meanings are presented. It turns out that the most frequently registered epistemificator is *yänägr yəhonall* ‘he may tell’, which is, however, at times mistranslated. Leslau’s *Reference Grammar of Amharic* (1995) registers the largest number of epistemificators. The coverage of grammatical epistemificators in both mono- and bilingual dictionaries is rather sparse, with some mistranslations.

Chapter 4 contains a list of 70-odd Amharic epistemificators, together with their morphosyntactic descriptions and their meanings as suggested by appropriate English translations. Grammatical epistemificators are presented first, then copular, followed by lexical and parenthetical; each epistemificator is illustrated with at least one example sentence (drawn from my corpus). In what follows I will present the main classes of epistemificators. Grammatical epistemificators divide into auxiliary, such as (**ይነግር**)<sub>s</sub> **ይሆናል** (*yänägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘he may tells, he might tells’ in (2) and quasi-auxiliary, such as **ሳይነግር**<sub>s</sub> **አይቀርም**<sub>s</sub> *saynägrs ayqärəmm*<sub>s</sub> ‘he surely/probably tells<sub>s</sub>/will tell<sub>s</sub>/told<sub>s</sub>’ (3):

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<sup>1</sup> There is only a handful of articles devoted to epistemic modality in Amharic.

(2) **ግን ማን ያውቃል** **መድኃኒት ይኖር** **ይሆናል**<sub>[MBL 301: 24-25]</sub>  
*gən man y-aʷq=all-ø* *mädhanit yə-nor* *yəhonall*  
 but who 3SM-know\IPFV=NPST-3SM remedy 3SM-exist\IPFV EPST  
 ‘But who knows; there **may** be a remedy’

(3) **የሚወዷት** **እናት ሳትኖርዎት**  
*yämm-i-wädd<sup>w</sup>-at* *annat s-a-ttə-nor-wot*  
 REL-2SPOL-love\IPFV-2SPOL-OBJ.3SF mother when-NEG-3SF-exist\IPFV-OBJ.2SPOL  
**አትቀርም**<sub>[Bš 158: 1]</sub>  
*a-t-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 NEG-3SF-remain\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘You **surely** have a mother whom you love’

Copular epistemificators are illustrated here with cleft sentences (the clefted constituent is underlined), which occur very frequently in Amharic texts. Sentence (4) contains the epistemificator *yəhonall* ‘be(come)’ while sentence (5) contains *yəmäslall* ‘seem’. In both examples the copula remains invariant (3SM).

(4) **ምናልባት ብር በኪሴ** **ስለሌለ** **ይሆናል**  
*mənalbat bərr bə-kis-e* *sälä-lell-ä* *yə-hon=all-ø*  
 perhaps birr in-pocket-POSS.1SG because-exist.NEG-3SM 3SM-COP\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
**በራስ መተማመኔ** **የጠፋው**<sub>[AA 820]</sub>  
*bä-ras mättämamän-e* *yä-täffa-w*  
 in-onself be.confident\VN-POSS.1SG REL-lose\PFV.3SM-DEF  
 ‘Perhaps **it may be** because there is no money in my pocket that my self-confidence has disappeared’

(5) **እርምጃውን የወሰደው** **በሷ** **ቆስቋሽነት** **ወይም**  
*ərməǧa-w-(ə)-n yä-wässäd-ä-w* *bä-ss<sup>w</sup>a* *qosq<sup>w</sup> ašənnät* *wäyämm*  
 step-DEF-ACC REL-take\PFV-3SM-DEF by-POSS.3SF urging or  
**አደፋፋሪነት ሳይሆን** **በራሱ** **ውሳኔ**  
*addäfafarinnät s-a-y-hon* *bä-ras-u* *wəssane*  
 encouragement when-NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV in-own-POSS.3SM decision  
**ይመስላል**<sub>[IT 146: 1-2]</sub>  
*yə-mäsl=all-ø*  
 3SM-seem\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘That he took the step **seems** (to have been) by his own decision and not at her urging or encouragement’

To lexical epistemificators belong non-copular epistemificators of seeming, mental verbal epistemificators, mental noun epistemificators, adjectival and adjectivalized

epistemifiers, adverbs and particles. The non-copular epistemifiers of seeming የ-X ይመስላል *yä-X yämäslall* ‘it seems that X, it appears that X’ and የ-X ይመስለኛል *yä-X yämäslännäll* ‘it seems to me that X, it appears to me that X’ are unusual in that their verbal complement, translated into English as a ‘that’-clause, has the form (though not the meaning) of a headless relative clause. Here is an example:

- (6) **ያንተም አስተያየት ከዚህ የመነጨ**  
*y-antä-mm astäyayyät kä-zzih yä-mänäčč-ä*  
 GEN-2SM-FOC standpoint from-this REL-arise\PFV-3SM  
**ይመስለኛል**<sub>[BŠ 232: 29]</sub>  
*yä-mäsl-änn=äll-ø*  
 3SM-seem\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM  
 ‘It seems to me that your standpoint arises from this’

It is noteworthy that whenever a formally headless relative clause functions a noun clause then the relative verb cannot take a definite article (unlike normal relative clauses).

Amharic has a number of mental verbal epistemifiers that require two core arguments: a 1SG epistemizer in the slot of the subject and a complement clause in the slot of the object. These can take four types of complement clauses:

- i. introduced by the complementizer እንደ- *ändä*- ‘that’

- (7) **ወደፊት ጥሩ እንደሚሆን አስባለሁ**<sub>[AA 227]</sub><sup>2</sup>  
*wädäfit ṭaru ändä-mm-i-hon assäb=äll-ähu*  
 in.the.future good COMP-REL-3SM-COP\IPFV 1SG.think\IPFV-NPST-1SG  
 ‘I think that it will be good in the future’

- ii. introduced by the complementizer እንደ- *änd*- ‘lest (with NEG)’

- (8) **ራሳችንን እያታለልን እንዳይሆን**  
*ras-aččän-(ə)-n äyy-atäll-(ə)-n änd-a-y-hon*  
 self-POSS.1PL-ACC PROG-deceive\PFV-1PL COMP-NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV  
**እሠጋለሁ**<sup>3</sup>  
*ə-säg=äll-ähu*  
 1SG-worry\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I worry lest we are deceiving ourselves’

<sup>2</sup> The original sentence has been slightly modified.

<sup>3</sup> <http://ajebnew.org/sport/story-in-amharic/40674>. [Accessed: 18.04.2019]

iii. introduced by the inflectable quotative linker ብዬ *bəyye* ‘I saying:’ (though inflectable, this is always in 1SG when occurring with mental verbal epistemificators)

- (9) መቼም ልጅ የወለደ አይጨክንም  
*mäčemm ləḅ yä-wälläd-ä a-γ-čäkkən-(ə)-mm*  
 after.all child REL-have.child\PFV-3SM NEG-3SM-be.cruel\IPFV-NEG
- ብዬ አስባለሁ<sup>[TS 7]</sup>  
*bəyye assəb=all-ähu*  
 say\GER-1SG 1SG.think\IPFV=NPST-1SG
- ‘After all, I think: **one** who has a child **is not cruel**’

iv. nominalized clauses

- (10) እንዲያውም ሀያ አራት ሰዓት ለመቆየት መቻልህን  
*əndiyawəmm həyā aratt säʾat lä-mäqoyyät mäčal-(ə)-b-(ə)-n*  
 in.fact twenty four hour for-stay\VN be.able/VN-POSS.2SM-ACC
- እጠራጠራለሁ<sup>4</sup>  
*ə-ttärattər=all-ähu*  
 1SG-doubt\IPFV=NPST-1SG
- ‘In fact, I doubt **your being able** to stay for twenty-four hours’

As for parenthetical epistemificators, they can appear in the initial, medial or final position of the basic utterance. Here is an example sentence with the parenthetical መሰለኝ *mässälänn* ‘it seems to me, I think’ occurring sentence-medially, after the subordinate clause:

- (11) ከትምህርት ቤት ሲመለስ መሰለኝ # ሰላም ብሎ  
*kä-təmhərt bet s-i-mmälläs mässäl-ä-ññ sälam bəl-o*  
 from-school when-3SM-return\IPFV seem\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG greeting say\GER-3SM
- ነው ያለፈው  
*n-äw y-alläf-ä-w*  
 COP-3SM REL-pass.by\PFV-3SM-DEF
- ‘When he returned from school, **I think**, he passed by, saying a greeting’

In Amharic there are many verbal epistemificators whereas adverbial epistemificators and particles are rather few in number.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=18519](http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=18519): “ከአንባኛ ከዘመን-ማን-ያሸንፋል?” ቢለው ፫- “ከሁሉም አሳ-ሙልጭልጭ ነው” አለው.&Itemid=101.  
 [Accessed: 26.06.2019]

Chapter 5 deals with the semantics of epistemifiers, which is studied mainly with the help of dimensions, each having two or more different values. In this way I try to locate each epistemic expression in a multidimensional semantic space. There are all together eight dimensions that I have made use of, of which five are semantic and three are formal. Of the dimensions some are obligatory while some are optional. Some are privative (two values pinned down as + and –), while some are equipollent (several positive values). Some of the dimensions are bivalent/dichotomous, while some are multivalent. The list of dimensions is as follows: (1) Explicit vs. implicit epistemizer; (2) Manner of integration of epistemized and epistemifier into the sentence; (3) Concrete vs. abstract epistemifiers; (4) Personal vs. non-personal epistemifiers; (5) Degree of epistemic strength; (6) Epistemic assessment; (7) Axiological judgement; (8) Time orientation.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the dimensional analysis, for selected epistemifiers (both grammatical and lexical) I provide prose semantic sketches that go beyond the dimensions, which hopefully may be useful in the future for a more comprehensive semantic description. Subsequently, I examine in greater detail three types of complement clauses: *andä*- ‘that’, *bəyye* ‘I saying:’ and nominalized clauses (see exx. 7, 9 and 10), trying to shed light on their comparative semantics.

The subsequent Chapter 6 discusses the interaction between epistemic modality and two other categories, namely time and negation. In dealing with the category of time I note that any utterance containing an epistemic modal expression involves two points in time: the moment of the sender’s epistemic assessment and the location in time of the state of affairs. The moment of epistemic assessment is typically “here and now” but it may vary depending on the “speech genre” (notably in the case of narrative). Within any modal epistemic sentence there are basically two possible loci for indicating the location in time of the state of affairs: the epistemized head and the epistemifier head. Typically, the epistemized head can take any temporal and aspectual characteristic whereas the epistemifier head, encoding the moment of epistemic assessment, is much more

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<sup>5</sup> The formal dimensions actually rest on semantic foundations, although I have not been able to develop this idea here.

constrained in this regard. The interaction between lexical (verbal) epistemificators and time is fairly straightforward since one of the requirements for considering an epistemic expression as a modal epistemic expression (epistemificator) is that it should be morphologically in the present tense and that its lexical aspect should be stative. By contrast, the behaviour of grammatical epistemificators in regard to the category of time varies and can be divided into three types:

i. Temporality marked on the epistemized head

- (12) ከጊዜ በኋላ አመለካከታቸው ተለውጦ ሊሆን  
*kä-gize bäh<sup>w</sup>ala ammäläkakkät-aččäw täläwəṭ-o l-i-hon*  
 after-time after point.of.view-POSS.3PL change\GER-3SM COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV  
**ይችላል**<sub>[TS 2]</sub>  
*ya-čäl=all-ø*  
 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘After some time their point of view could **have changed**’

In sentence (12) the past tense is conveyed by the presence of the gerund (*täläwəṭo*).

ii. Temporality marked on the epistemificator head

- (13) በልባቸው ግን ወንድሜን ሳይጠሉት  
*bä-ləbb-aččäw gən wändəmm-e-n s-a-y-ṭäl-u-t*  
 at-heart-POSS.3PL but brother-POSS.1SG-ACC when-NEG-3PL-hate\IPFV-OBJ.3SM  
**አልቀሩም**<sub>[DB 81: 29-30]</sub>  
*al-qärr-u-mm*  
 NEG-remain\PFV-3PL-NEG  
 ‘But at heart **they probably** hated my brother’

iii. Temporality frozen in the future

- (14) የጊዜ ጉዳይ ነው እንጂ ነገሩ አባትዬው ጋር  
*yä-gize gudday n-äw ənḡi nägär-u abbatäyye-w gar*  
 GEN-time matter COP-3SM but issue-DEF father-DEF at  
**መድረሱ አይቀርም**<sub>[TS 6]</sub>  
*mädräs-u a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*  
 reach\VN-POSS.3SM NEG-3SM-fail\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘It is a matter of time but the issue **will definitely reach** the father’

For the temporal analysis of grammatical epistemificators I use the categories of lexical aspect (stative verbs vs. non-stative verbs) and tense. The category of grammatical aspect

in terms of “perfective” and “imperfective” has not been involved due to its controversial status.

In the section on negation, I point out that in an epistemic sentence there are in principle two things that might be negated: the epistemificator head and the epistemized head. I distinguish and discuss different patterns of behaviour of epistemificators in regard to negation. With some epistemificators only the epistemized head can be negated; with others, only the epistemificator head. With still other epistemificators the negation of the epistemificator vs. the epistemized yields different sentence meanings. The two become congruent in cases of NEG-raising, where a negation which logically belongs to the epistemized nonetheless surfaces on the epistemificator. There is one epistemificator that does not occur with negation but has a suppletive negative form. Additionally, some epistemic expressions cannot undergo negation at all, because the epistemificator itself already incorporates formal negation. Finally, I demonstrate that the two epistemic linkers *andä*- ‘that’ and *bəyye* (‘I saying:’) show a very clear difference in their preference for which clause is to be negated: epistemificators with *andä*- (15) prefer the epistemized to be negated, whereas epistemificators with *bəyye* (16) prefer negation on the epistemificator.

- (15) **ጉዳዩ ወደ ዓለም አቀፍ ግጭትነት እንደማይሻገር**  
*gudday-u wädä aläm aqäf gaččätənnät andä-mm-a-y-ššaggär*  
 matter-DEF to international conflict COMP-REL-NEG-3SM-develop\IPFV  
**እገምታለሁ**  
*ə-gämmät=all-ähu*  
 1SG-assume\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘I assume that the matter **will not develop** into an international conflict’

- (16) **ጉዳዩ ወደ ዓለም አቀፍ ግጭትነት ይሻገራል**  
*gudday-u wädä aläm aqäf gaččätənnät ya-ššaggär=all-ø*  
 matter-DEF to international conflict 3SM-develop\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
**ብዬ አልገምትም<sup>6</sup>**  
*bəyye-e al-gämmät-(ə)-mm*  
 say\GER-1SG NEG.1SG-assume\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘I **don’t assume**: the matter will develop into an international conflict’

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.dw.com/am/የአስቸኳይ-ጊዜ-አዋጅ-እና-ኢትዮጵያ/a-36092854>. [Accessed: 07.11.2018]

In the conclusion, I characterize briefly the category of epistemic modality in Amharic, in comparison to English and, to a lesser extent, Polish. I indicate advantages and problems involved in applying a semantic approach based upon the terms and tradition of Polish semanticists, and I point out some important issues which are to be raised in future studies. What is needed, first and foremost, is a more comprehensive semantic analysis of epistemificators.

## STRESZCZENIE

Celem rozprawy jest opis i analiza modalności epistemicznej we współczesnym języku amharskim. Ponieważ do tej pory tą kwestią zajmowano się jedynie pobieżnie w pracach dotyczących gramatyki amharskiego, jak i innych języków etiosemicznych, niniejszą dysertację można uznać za pierwszą próbę systematycznego i pogłębionego studium tej kategorii w amharskim. Korpus językowy w niej wykorzystany został zaczerpnięty z tekstów pisanych i ustnych, w okresie między 1974 a 2019, w większości na terenie Etiopii. Teksty te, pochodzące z materiałów drukowanych jak i opublikowanych w internecie, zostały zinterpretowane i przeanalizowane z pomocą amharskojęzycznych informatorów. Każde analizowane zdanie podane jest w piśmie etiopskim, przetranskrybowane, opatrzone anotacją gramatyczną i przetłumaczone na język angielski, jak ilustruje następujący przykład, zawierający amharskie epistemiczne wyrażenie modalne **ሊነግር ይችላል** *linägr yəčälall* ‘może powiedzieć/mówić’.

- (1) **ምናልባት ስለ ጉዳዩ ለአባቱ ሊነግረው ይችላል**  
*mənalbat səlä gudday-u lä-abbat-u li-nägr-äw*  
perhaps about issue-DEF for-father-POSS.3SM COMP-3SM-tell\IPFV-OBJ.3SM  
**ይችላል**  
*yə-čäl=all-ø*  
3SM-may\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
‘Perhaps he **may** tell his father about the issue’

Praca składa się ze wstępu, sześciu rozdziałów, podsumowania, streszczenia w językach angielskim i polskim oraz słowniczka modalnych wyrażen epistemicznych z tłumaczeniem na język angielski i polski. Rozprawa zaopatrzona jest również w wykaz skrótów, tabeli i schematów, wykaz materiałów korpusowych oraz zasady transliteracji i anotacji zdań.

Rozdział 1 jest poświęcony ogólnemu przedstawieniu języka amharskiego: najpierw z punktu widzenia socjolingwistycznego, a następnie opisowego w postaci zarysu jego gramatyki. Amharski, należący do południowej gałęzi języków etiosemicznych, jest najbardziej rozpowszechnionym językiem Etiopii, który charakteryzuje relatywnie niewielkie różnicowanie dialektalne zważywszy na jego szerokie rozprzestrzenienie.

Typologicznie, amharski posiada cechy języka syntetyczno-fuzyjnego. Podobnie jak inne języki semickie wykazuje nielinearną morfologię opartą na spółgłoskowym rdzeniu, przenoszącym znaczenie leksykalne, oraz afiksach, przenoszących znaczenie gramatyczne (*root-and-pattern morphology*), szczególnie w strukturze czasownika. Podstawowym szykiem wyrazów w języku amharskim jest S-O-V, charakteryzujący się dużym stopniem stabilności. Typowo dla języków o sztywnym szyku S-O-V, wyraz określany jest zawsze poprzedzony określnikiem a zdanie nadrzędne jest poprzedzone zdaniem podrzędnym. Odmiennie aniżeli języki o tego typu szyku zdania, amharski posiada zarówno poimki jak i przyimki oraz nieciągłe cyrkumpozycje. Inną nietypową cechą amharskiego, jako języka S-O-V, jest to, że prawie wszystkie spójniki podrzędne występują bezpośrednio przed czasownikiem. Podobnie jak wiele języków semickich, w amharskim występuje wielofunkcyjny wykładnik upodrzedniający *yä-*, który służy do upodrzedniania rzeczownika (angielskie „of”) oraz czasownika w zdaniu względnym („który, kto” itp.). Zdanie względne w języku amharskim bardzo często ma postać zdania względnego niezawierającego poprzednika (*headless relative clause*; np. *który przyszedł*, a nie *ten, który przyszedł* lub *człowiek, który przyszedł*). Warto nadmienić, że takie formalnie bezpoprzednikowe zdanie względne może być czasami użyte przed niektórymi czasownikami jako dopełnienie z włącznikiem<sup>1</sup> *że* (a więc, nie *Wiem, co on powiedział*, ani *Wiem, kto przyszedł*, ale *Wiem, że przyszedł* (zob. przykł. 6 poniżej): we wszystkich tych trzech zdaniach złożonych występuje bezpoprzednikowe zdanie względne). Bardzo ważną rolę w gramatyce amharskiej odgrywają zdania rozszczerzone (*cleft sentences*). W zdaniu jeden ze składników jest wyniesiony do pozycji orzecznika kopuli, będącego rematem zdania, podczas gdy pozostałe składniki oryginalnego zdania tworzą zdanie względne. Na przykład, *It is John who came* or *The one who came is John*<sup>2</sup>. W języku amharskim trudno jest określić, czy niektóre z form czasownikowych przenoszą znaczenia czasowe czy raczej aspektualne. Językoznawcy mają na ten temat podzielone

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<sup>1</sup> Używam tutaj terminu zaproponowanego przez J. Wajszczuk (1997: 39-46), który odpowiada ang. *complementizer*.

<sup>2</sup> W przeciwieństwie do angielskiego w języku polskim tylko druga z tych konstrukcji jest możliwa: *Tym, który przyszedł jest Jan*. Równoważnym zdaniem do *It is John who came* jest *To Jan przyszedł*.

zdania. Szczególnie złożoną kwestią jest to, czy w amharskim istnieje opozycja aspektualna dokonaności i niedokonaności. Tradycja opisu języków semickich, według której dwie główne formy czasowo-aspektowe noszą nazwy „dokonana” (*perfective*) i „niedokonana” (*imperfective*) czynią to zagadnienie jeszcze bardziej zawiłym.

W rozdziale 2 przedstawiam podejście do modalności epistemicznej, które przyjął w niniejszej pracy. Za Andrzejem Bogusławskim (1998: 21, 81) przyjmuję, że wiedza propozycjonalna, „wiedzieć, że”, jest najbardziej neutralnym stanem epistemicznym. Na drugim krańcu znajduje się ignorancja (brak wiedzy). Pomiedzy tymi dwoma ekstremalnymi punktami rozciąga się obszar, który (za Magdaleną Danielewiczową 2002) nazywam „polem niedostatecznej wiedzy”. Kategoria semantyczna modalności epistemicznej przypada właśnie na pole niedostatecznej wiedzy. Modalność epistemiczną rozumiem jako ocenę przez mówiącego jej/jego niedostatecznej wiedzy w stosunku do propozycji (*proposition*). Następnie przedstawiam terminy, którymi posługuję się w dalszej części dysertacji: epistemifikator (modalne wyrażenie epistemiczne), epistemizujący (*epistemizer*, nadawca wypowiedzenia zmodalizowanego epistemicznie), epistemizowany (*epistemized*, treść wypowiedzenia zmodalizowanego), nadrzędnik epistemizowanego (*epistemized head*, czasownik nadrzędny epistemizowanego), i nadrzędnik epistemifikatora (*epistemificator head*, czasownik nadrzędny epistemifikatora). Ponieważ w niniejszej pracy opisuję modalność epistemiczną zarówno w terminach semantyki jak i składni, przeprowadzam dwa równoległe poziomy analizy i używam terminologii właściwej obu dziedzinom: np. „propozycja” należy do dziedziny semantyki podczas gdy terminy takie jak „zdanie” i „czasownik główny” należą do składni. W dalszej kolejności prezentuję procedury badawcze, które stosuję do analizy semantycznej epistemifikatorów. Są to testy falsyfikacji/weryfikacji i substytucji, pojęcie wymiaru i cechy oraz metoda analizy zdań w terminach struktury tematyczno-rematycznej. Wyjaśniam tutaj również niektóre z konwencji zapisu, które stosuję w całej pracy. Po pierwsze, w formie cytacyjnej epistemifikatorów, litera „S” zapisana w indeksie dolnym oznacza, że dany czasownik zgadza się pod względem osoby, liczby i rodzaju z podmiotem zdania. Po drugie, w

tychże formach cytacyjnych epistemifikatorów, dopełnienia czasownika są przedstawione za pomocą czasownika czynnościowego ነገረ *näggärä* ‘powiedzieć, mówić’ lub czasownika nieczynnościowego አወቀ *awwäqä* ‘wiedzieć’. Po trzecie, ten składnik epistemifikatora, który może zostać zastąpiony inną formą jest podany w nawiasie okrągłym, jak np. w (*yänägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall*.

Następnie klasyfikuję wszystkie epistemifikatory na gramatyczne, leksykalne, łącznikowe (kopularne; stanowiące kategorię pośrednią) i parentetyczne, podług stopnia ich gramatyzacji/leksykalizacji. Amharski posiada dwa rodzaje epistemifikatorów gramatycznych: czasownik posiłkowy (*auxiliary*) i czasownik quasi-posiłkowy (*quasi-auxiliary*). Główna różnica pomiędzy nimi jest taka, że czasownik posiłkowy (zob. przykł. 2 poniżej) jest ściśle, formalnie i semantycznie, związany z czasownikiem głównym, przy czym oba czasowniki ewidentnie należą do tej samej frazy czasownikowej. Czasownik quasi-posiłkowy natomiast (zob. przykł. 3 poniżej) należy do innej frazy aniżeli jego czasownik główny wprowadzany za pomocą włącznika lub mający postać rzeczownika odwerbalnego, które mogą być łatwo oddzielone od czasownika quasi-posiłkowego za pomocą spójnika. Grupa epistemifikatorów łącznikowych mieści się między epistemifikatorami gramatycznymi i leksykalnymi. Zawiera ona epistemifikatory z wyrażeniami ይሆናል *yəhonall* ‘być’ (lub wariantami; *yəhonall* nie jest tu czasownikiem posiłkowym) or ይመስላል *yəməslall* ‘wydawać się’ (lub wariantami). Podczas gdy oba wyrażenia służą jako łącznik, *yəhonall* jest bliższy wyrażeniom gramatycznym a *yəməslall* leksykalnym. *Yəhonall* i *yəməslall* występują często w zdaniach rozszczepionych, w których mogą odmieniać się lub pozostać niezmienione w 3SM (zob. przykł. 4 i 5 poniżej). Kolejna grupa obejmuje epistemifikatory leksykalne, które często trudno przypisać do tradycyjnie wyznaczonych części mowy z powodu ich złożonej konstrukcji. Są to epistemifikatory: nielącznikowe wydawania się (*non-copular epistemificators of seeming*), mentalne czasownikowe, mentalne rzeczownikowe, bezosobowe czasownikowe, przymiotnikowe i uprzymiotnikowane (*adjectivalized*), przysłówkowe i partykułowe (zob. przykł. 6-10 poniżej). Ostatnia grupa epistemifikatorów jest reprezentowana przez wyrażenia parentetyczne, które są dodane

do wypowiedzenia, ale nie wchodzą z nim w jakiejkolwiek związki składniowe. Oznacza to, że pomiędzy epistemifikatorem parentetycznym a wypowiedzeniem zachodzi jedynie relacja współwystępowania. Spora część epistemifikatorów parentetycznych to czasowniki i frazy czasownikowe (zob. przykł. 11 poniżej).

W kolejnej części rozdziału zajmuję się kwestią wyodrębnienia obiektów mojej analizy, tj. epistemifikatorów. Każdy epistemifikator powinien być jednostką języka w sensie zaproponowanym przez Andrzeja Bogusławskiego (zob. np. 1976, 1988), która niesie odrębne znaczenie i zajmuje określone miejsce w systemie języka. Poprawnemu wydzieleniu takich jednostek języka mają służyć trzy zaproponowane przeze mnie reguły: epistemifikator powinien być rozpatrywany łącznie z argumentami, które przyjmuje; (w przypadku czasownika) ze względu na aspekt leksykalny powinien odnosić się do stanu (a nie czynności) i mieć formę czasu teraźniejszego; (w przypadku frazy czasownikowej, rzeczownikowej lub przymiotnikowej) musi posiadać pierwszoosobowy podmiot semantyczny. Ponadto niektóre wyrażenia mogą przenosić więcej aniżeli jedno znaczenie modalne. W takim przypadku tylko ich znaczenie epistemiczne powinno zostać wzięte pod uwagę. W odróżnianiu znaczenia modalnego epistemicznego od innych znaczeń modalnych istotną rolę odgrywa akcent zdaniowy. Jest on również ważny dla badania struktury tematyczno-rematycznej wypowiedzeń zmodalizowanych epistemicznie.

Rozdział 3 stanowi przegląd literatury dotyczącej modalności zarówno w logice jak i językoznawstwie, który pokazuje stan badań nad tą kategorią. Przeglądowi poświęcam odrębny rozdział ze względu na bogactwo literatury na temat modalności, a szczególnie na temat modalności epistemicznej. Część tę rozpoczyna prezentacja wybranych pojęć i problemów związanych z badaniem modalności w obrębie logiki modalnej. Pokazane są również rozbieżności między pojmowaniem tej kategorii przez logików i lingwistów. W kolejnym fragmencie tego rozdziału dokładniej omawiam jak językoznawcy rozumieją modalność. Najczęściej jest ona ujmowana jako relacja między nadawcą wypowiedzi a treścią zdania. W praktyce jednak lingwiści zajmują się badaniem poszczególnych typów modalności — epistemicznej, deontycznej i dynamicznej — nie

czyniąc wysiłków, aby zaproponować ogólną, roboczą definicję tej kategorii. Z wymienionych trzech typów moja rozprawa traktuje o modalności epistemicznej, toteż ją omawiam najszerzej, próbując wyodrębnić problemy i zaprezentować różne podejścia jakie lingwiści wobec nich przyjmują. Wśród kwestii, które omawiam, znajdują się np. semantyka modalności epistemicznej – w jakich terminach i jak można ją analizować; pojęcie skali epistemicznej i problemy badawcze jakie stwarza; kwestia wykorzystania takich terminów jak subiektywność vs. obiektywność oraz performatywność vs. deskryptywność w opisach znaczeń epistemicznych. Ponadto krótko przedstawiam dwie inne kategorie blisko związane z kategorią modalności epistemicznej, tj. ewidencjalność i miratywność oraz prezentuję niektóre historyczne koncepcje modalności, które rozwijały się od czasów starożytnych do Jespersena. Ostatnia sekcja tego rozdziału zawiera przegląd badań nad modalnością epistemiczną w języku amharskim. W przeglądzie tym biorę pod uwagę wybrane gramatyki języka amharskiego oraz jedno- i dwujęzyczne słowniki, podejmując próbę odpowiedzenia na następujące ogólne pytania: które z epistemifikatorów zostały zarejestrowane, jak zostały one zarejestrowane i jak zaprezentowane zostało ich znaczenie. Okazuje się, że najczęściej odnotowywanym epistemifikatorem jest *yänägr yəhonall* ‘może powie/mówi’, który jednak czasami został błędnie przetłumaczony. Największą liczbę epistemifikatorów rejestruje Wolf Leslau w *Reference Grammar of Amharic* (1995). Epistemifikatory gramatyczne w słownikach jedno- i dwujęzycznych występują raczej rzadko a w niektórych przypadkach są niepoprawnie przetłumaczone.

Rozdział 4 zawiera listę około 70 amharskich epistemifikatorów, łącznie z ich morfosyntaktycznym opisem oraz znaczeniem sugerowanym przez odpowiednie tłumaczenie na język angielski. Najpierw zaprezentowane są epistemifikatory gramatyczne, następnie kopularne, potem leksykalne oraz, jako ostatnie, parentetyczne. Każdemu epistemifikatorowi towarzyszy co najmniej jeden ilustrujący je przykład zaczerpnięty z mojego korpusu. Przedstawię teraz główne klasy epistemifikatorów omawiane w tym rozdziale. Epistemifikatory gramatyczne dzielą się na czasowniki posiłkowe, np. (**ይነግር**)<sub>s</sub> **ይሆናል** (*yänägr*)<sub>s</sub> *yəhonall* ‘może powie/mówi’ w przykładzie



**ይመስላል**<sub>[TT 146: 1-2]</sub>

*yə-mäsl=all-ø*

3SM-wydawać.sie\IPFV=NPST-3SM

‘To, że on przedsięwziął ten krok wydaje się jego własną decyzją (dosł. poprzez własną decyzję) a nie (pochodzi) z jej namowy albo zachęty’

Do epistemifikatorów leksykalnych należą niełącznikowe epistemifikatory wydawania się, mentalne epistemifikatory czasownikowe, mentalne epistemifikatory rzeczownikowe, bezosobowe epistemifikatory czasownikowe, epistemifikatory przymiotnikowe i uprzymiotnikowane oraz epistemifikatory przysłówkowe i partykułowe. Niełącznikowe epistemifikatory wydawania się የ-X **ይመስላል** *yä-X yəməslall* ‘wydaje się, że X’ and የ-X **ይመስለኛል** *yä-X yəməslännhall* ‘wydaje mi się, że X’ są wyjątkowe, ponieważ ich czasownikowe dopełnienie, tłumaczone za pomocą włącznika *że*, ma formę, choć nie znaczenie, bezpoprzednikowego zdania względnego. Oto przykład:

- (6) **ያንተም አስተያየት ከዚህ የመነጨ**  
*y-antä-mm astäyayyät kä-zzih yä-mänä čč-ä*  
GEN-2SM-FOC stanowisko z-to REL-wypływać\PFV-3SM

**ይመስለኛል**<sub>[BŠ 232: 29]</sub>

*yə-mäsl-änn=all-ø*

3SM-wydawać.sie\IPFV-OBJ.1SG=NPST-3SM

‘Wydaje mi się, że twoje stanowisko wypływa z tego (właśnie)’

Warto zauważyć, że jeśli formalnie bezpoprzednikowe zdanie względne funkcjonuje jako zdanie nominalne to czasownik względny nie przyłącza rodzajnika określonego.

W języku amharskim istnieje wiele mentalnych epistemifikatorów czasownikowych, które otwierają miejsca dla dwóch argumentów: dla pierwszoosobowego epistemizującego w pozycji podmiotu i dla zdania w pozycji dopełnienia. Epistemifikatory takie, mogą przyłączać cztery różne typy dopełnień:

- i. wprowadzanych za pomocą włącznika **እንደ**- *ändä*- ‘że’

- (7) **ወደፊት ጥሩ እንደሚሆን አስባለሁ**<sub>[AA 227]<sup>5</sup></sub>
- wädäfit tǝru ändä-mm-i-hon assəb=all-ähu*  
w.przyszłości dobrze COMP-REL-3SM-COP\IPFV 1SG.myśleć\IPFV-NPST-1SG

<sup>5</sup> Zdanie oryginalne zostało w niewielkim stopniu zmodyfikowane.

‘Myślę, że w przyszłości będzie dobrze’

ii. wprowadzanych za pomocą włącznika **እንድ** - *and*- ‘żeby (z NEG)’

- (8) **ራሳችንን**                      **እያታለልን**                      **እንዳይሆን**  
*ras-aččän-(ə)-n*                      *əyy-atalläl-(ə)-n*                      *and-a-y-hon*  
siebie-POSS.1PL-ACC      PROG-oszukiwać\PFV-1PL      COMP-NEG-3SM-COP\IPFV

**እሠጋለሁ**<sup>6</sup>

*ə-säg=all-ähu*

1SG-obawiać.się\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘Obawiam się, żebyśmy siebie sami nie oszukiwali’

iii. wprowadzanych przez odmienne cytacyjne wyrażenie łączące **ብዬ** *bəyye* ‘ja, powiedziawszy’ (choć odmienne, w mentalnych epistemifikatorach czasownikowych wyrażenie to zawsze przyjmuje 1SG)

- (9) **መቼም**      **ልጅ**      **የወለደ**                      **አይጨክንም**  
*mäčemm*      *läğ*      *yä-wälläd-ä*                      *a-y-č äkkən-(ə)-mm*  
w.końcu      dziecko      REL-mieć.dziecko\PFV-3SM      NEG-3SM-być.okrutnym\IPFV-NEG

**ብዬ**

*bəyye*

powiedzieć\GER-1SG      1SG.myśleć\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘W końcu, myślę: ten, kto ma dzieci, nie jest okrutny’

iv. zdania znominalizowane

- (10) **እንዲያውም**      **ሀያ**                      **አራት**      **ሰዓት**      **ለመቆየት**  
*əndiyawəmm*      *haya*                      *aratt*      *säʔat*      *lä-mäqoyyät*  
tak.naprawdę      dwadzieścia      cztery      godzina      dla-pozostać\VN

**መቻልህን**

*mäčal-(ə)-h-(ə)-n*

być.w.stanie\VN-POSS.2SM-ACC

**እጠራጠራለሁ**<sup>7</sup>

*ə-ttärattər=all-ähu*

1SG-wątpić\IPFV=NPST-1SG

‘Tak naprawdę (to) wątpię, żebyś był w stanie pozostać (przy życiu) dwadzieścia cztery godziny’

Jeśli chodzi o epistemifikatory parentetyczne, to mogą się one pojawiać w antepozycji, postpozycji lub interpozycji względem wypowiedzenia podstawowego. Oto

<sup>6</sup> <http://ajebnew.org/sport/story-in-amharic/40674>. [Data dostępu: 18.04.2019]

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=18519](http://www.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=18519): “ከእንሰላና-ከጠሆን-ማን-ያሸንፋል?” ቢለው ፤ “ከሁሉም አሳ-ሙልጭልጭ ነው” አለው.&Itemid=101.

[Data dostępu: 26.06.2019]

przykład zdania z epistemifikatorem parentetycznym መሰለኝ *mässäläññ* ‘wydaje mi się’, który występuje w interpozycji, za zdaniem podrzędnym.

- (11) ከትምህርት ቤት ሲመለስ መሰለኝ # ሰላም  
*kä-təmhərt bet s-i-mmälläs mässäl-ä-ññ sälam*  
 z-szkoła kiedy-3SM-wracać\IPFV wydawać.się\PFV-3SM-OBJ.1SG greeting  
 ብሎ ነው ያለፈው  
*bəlo n-äw y-alläf-ä-w*  
 powiedzieć\GER-3SM COP-3SM REL-przejsć\PFV-3SM-DEF  
 ‘Kiedy wracał ze szkoły, **wydaje mi się**, to przeszedł i przywitał się’

W amharskim występuje wiele epistemifikatorów czasownikowych, natomiast epistemifikatory przysłówkowe i partykułowe są nieliczne.

W rozdziale 5 skupiam się na semantyce epistemifikatorów, którą badam głównie przy pomocy wymiarów epistemicznych, posiadających dwie lub więcej różnych cech. W ten sposób próbuję umieścić każde wyrażenie epistemiczne w wielowymiarowej przestrzeni semantycznej. W sumie posługuję się ośmioma wymiarami, z których trzy mają charakter formalny, a pięć – semantyczny. Niektóre z tych wymiarów są obligatoryjne, inne opcjonalne. Niektóre są prywatywne (z dwoma wartościami + i –), podczas gdy inne ekwipolentne (z kilkoma pozytywnymi cechami). Jeszcze inne są dychotomiczne (dwuwartościowe) lub wielowartościowe. Lista wymiarów przedstawia się następująco: (1) eksplicytny vs. implicytny epistemizujący; (2) sposób włączenia się epistemizowanego i epistemifikatora w zdanie; (3) epistemifikatory konkretne vs. abstrakcyjne; (4) epistemifikatory osobowe vs. nieosobowe; (5) stopień siły epistemicznej; (6) źródło oceny epistemicznej; (7) ocena aksjologiczna; (8) zorientowanie czasowe. Obok analizy za pomocą wymiarów, proponuję również szkice semantyczne niektórych epistemifikatorów (zarówno gramatycznych jak i leksykalnych), które mogą okazać się przydatne w przyszłości dla bardziej wyczerpującego opisanie ich znaczeń. W ostatniej części tego rozdziału poddaję bardziej szczegółowemu badaniu trzy typy zdań dopełnieniowych: z *ändä-* ‘że’, *bəyye* ‘ja powiedziawszy’ i dopełnieniem znominalizowanym (zob. przykł. 7, 9 i 10), starając się przejaśnić ich znaczenie.

Rozdział 6 pracy poświęcony jest interakcji między modalnością epistemiczną a dwiema innymi, niemodalnymi kategoriami czasu i negacji, które zostały omówione w

dwóch odrębnych sekcjach. W pierwszej części, badając kategorię czasu, zwracam uwagę na to, że w każdym epistemicznie zmodalizowanym wypowiedzeniu można wyróżnić dwa punkty w czasie: moment dokonania oceny epistemicznej przez nadawcę oraz lokalizację w czasie stanu rzeczy, do którego odnosi się zmodalizowana propozycja. Momentem dokonania oceny epistemicznej jest zwykle „tutaj i teraz”, choć może się on zmieniać w zależności od „gatunku mowy” (zwłaszcza w przypadku narracji). W obrębie każdego modalnego zdania epistemicznego istnieją dwa potencjalne *loci*, za pomocą których wskazuje się na lokalizację w czasie danego stanu rzeczy, są to: nadrzędnik epistemizowanego (*epistemized head*) oraz nadrzędnik epistemifikatora (*epistemificator head*). Zwykle nadrzędnik epistemizowanego może przyjąć dowolną charakterystykę temporalną i aspektualną, natomiast nadrzędnik epistemifikatora, który koduje moment oceny epistemicznej, ma znacznie bardziej ograniczone możliwości w tym względzie. Jeśli chodzi o interakcję między leksykalnymi (czasownikowymi) epistemifikatorami a czasem, to jej opis nie następuje problemu, ponieważ jednym z wymagań, jakie stawia się wyrażeniu epistemicznemu, aby mogło uchodzić za epistemifikator jest to, że powinno być czasie terażniejszym i odnosić się do stanu, a nie czynności. Bardziej zróżnicowana jest interakcja epistemifikatorów gramatycznych z kategorią czasu/aspektu, dzieląca się na trzy typy:

- i. temporalność jest zaznaczana na nadrzędniku epistemizowanego

(12) ከጊዜ በኋላ አመለካከታቸው ተለውጦ  
*kä-gize bäh<sup>w</sup>ala ammäläkakkät-aččäw täläwəṭ-o*  
 po-czas po punkt.widzenia-POSS.3PL zmienić.się\GER-3SM  
 ሊሆን ይችላል<sub>[TS 2]</sub>  
*l-i-hon yə-čəl=all-ø*  
 COMP-3SM-COP\IPFV 3SM-could\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ‘Po jakimś czasie ich punkt widzenia mógł się **zmienić**’

W przykładzie (12) znaczenie czasu przeszłego jest niesione przez imiesłów (*gerund täläwəṭo*).

- ii. temporalność jest zaznaczana na nadrzędniku epistemifikatora

(13) በልባቸው ግን ወንድሜን ሳይጠሉት  
*bä-läbb-aččäw gən wändəmm-e-n s-a-y-täl-u-t*  
 w-serce-POSS.3PL ale brat-POSS.1SG-ACC kiedy-NEG-3PL-nienawidzieć\IPFV-OBJ.3SM

አልቀሩም [DB 81: 29-30]

*al-qärr-u-mm*

NEG-pozostawać\PFV-3PL-NEG

‘Ale w swoim sercu **prawdopodobnie** nienawidzili mojego brata’

iii. epistemifikator może odnosić się tylko do stanów rzeczy w przyszłości

(14) የጊዜ ጉዳይ ነው እንጂ ነገሩ አባትዬው ጋር  
*yä-gize gudday n-äw ənጅi nägär-u abbatäyye-w gar*  
GEN-czas kwestia COP-3SM ale sprawa-DEF ojciec-DEF u

መድረሱ አይቀርም [TS 6]

*mädräs-u a-y-qär-(ə)-mm*

dojść\VN-POSS.3SM NEG-3SM-nie.powiedzieć.się\IPFV-NEG

‘To kwestia czasu, ale ta sprawa **na pewno** dojdzie do ojca’

W analizie temporalnej epistemifikatorów gramatycznych posługuję się kategorią aspektu leksykalnego (czasowniki oznaczające stan vs. czynnościowe) oraz czasu. Nie posługuję się natomiast kategorią aspektu gramatycznego w terminach „dokonanośc” i „niedokonanośc” z powodu jego kontrowersyjnego statusu w opisach gramatycznych języka amharskiego.

W drugiej części rozdziału, dotyczącej negacji, wykazuję, że dwa obiekty mogą podlegać przeczeniu w wypowiedzeniu zmodalizowanym epistemicznie: nadrzędnik epistemizowanego i nadrzędnik epistemifikatora. Następnie wyróżniam i omawiam różne typy relacji między epistemifikatorami a negacją. W przypadku niektórych epistemifikatorów tylko nadrzędnik epistemizowanego może zostać zaprzeczony, w przypadku innych, tylko nadrzędnik epistemifikatora. W jeszcze innym przypadku, kiedy epistemifikator zostanie zanegowany, niesie inne znaczenie aniżeli w sytuacji, gdy negacji podlega epistemizowany. Pewna grupa epistemifikatorów przejawia tak zwane *NEG-raising*, które polega na tym, że negacja, która logicznie przynależy do epistemizowanego, pojawia się na epistemifikatorze. Jeden z epistemifikatorów daje się zaprzeczyć tylko za pomocą innego, supletywnego epistemifikatora. Ponadto niektóre z epistemicznie zmodalizowanych zdań nie podlegają w ogóle przeczeniu, ponieważ zawarty w nich epistemifikator już jest formalnie zaprzeczony. Na koniec wykazuję, że wyrażenia łączące *andä-* ‘że’ i *bäyye* ‘ja powiedziałwszy’ mentalnych epistemifikatorów czasownikowych przejawiają wyraźną różnicę, jeśli chodzi o preferencję co do tego, który

z nadrzędników może podlegać przeczeniu: w przypadku epistemifikatorów z *ändä-* zaprzeczony zostaje nadrzędnik epistemizowanego (15), podczas gdy w epistemifikatorach z *bäyye* negacji zwykle podlega nadrzędnik epistemifikatora (16).

- (15) ጉዳዩ ወደ ዓለም አቀፍ ግጭትነት  
*gudday-u wädä aläm aqäf gə čč atənnät*  
 sprawa-DEF w międzynarodowy konflikt  
 እንደማይሻገር እገምታለሁ  
*ändä-mm-a-y-ššaggär ə-gämmat=all-ähu*  
 COMP-REL-NEG-3SM-przerodzić.się\IPFV 1SG-przypuszczać\IPFV=NPST-1SG  
 ‘Przypuszczam, że ta sprawa **nie przerodzi się** w konflikt międzynarodowy’

- (16) ጉዳዩ ወደ ዓለም አቀፍ ግጭትነት ይሻገራል  
*gudday-u wädä aläm aqäf gə čč atənnät ya-ššaggär=all-ø*  
 sprawa-DEF w międzynarodowy konflikt 3SM-przerodzić.się\IPFV=NPST-3SM  
 ብዬ አልገምትም<sup>8</sup>  
*bäyye-e al-gämmat-(ə)-mm*  
 powiedzieć\GER-1SG NEG.1SG-assume\IPFV-NEG  
 ‘**Nie przypuszczam**, że(by) ta sprawa przerodziła się w konflikt międzynarodowy’

W podsumowaniu zwięźle charakteryzuję kategorię modalności epistemicznej w języku amharskim w porównaniu z angielskim i, w mniejszym stopniu, z polskim. Wskazuję na korzyści i problemy, które wynikają z zastosowania podejścia do analizy znaczenia opartego na tradycji polskich semantyków i wymieniam niektóre ważne kwestie, które wciąż wymagają dalszych badań w przyszłości. Za najpotrzebniejszą uważam wyczerpującą i adekwatną analizę semantyczną epistemifikatorów.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.dw.com/am/የአስቸኳይ-ጊዜ-አዋጅ-እና-ኢትዮጵያ/a-36092854>. [Data dostępu: 07.11.2018]