

Copula and Existential Constructions in Gwama

Andargachew Getu (andargachewgetu1@gmail.com)

University of Gondar, Ethiopia

Abstract

This paper presents the copula and existential constructions of Gwama, a Koman language spoken in Western Ethiopia. Gwama uses several strategies for expressing copula constructions: a copula verb, proclitic pronouns, locative predicates, and zero copula (juxtaposition) forms. Accordingly, the copula constructions fall into four types: nominal predication, adjectival predication, locative predication, and zero copula construction/juxtaposition. The main copula verb in the language is **wet**, which is primarily used in nominal predicative constructions. This copular verb can be inflected for number and person. Proclitic pronouns serve as copula markers in adjectival predicative structures. In locative predicates, no overt copular element is recorded. Zero copula or juxtaposition strategy has also been attested in sentences with possessive NP predicates, clauses containing the progressive aspect marker, and structures having presentative predicates. As in other Koman languages such as Komo and Uduk, Gwama has its own verbs to express the existence of an entity in a particular location or position both for affirmative **ze** ‘exist’ and negative **paŋ** ‘not exist’ existential structures.