

# Source-of-information applicatives in Tigrinya: A preliminary analysis of *il:-u/-a*

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This talk addresses the status of an apparent complementizer, *il:-u/-a*, in Tigrinya, shown in (1):

- (1) Naomi [Aman siga sarih-u **il:-a**] tə-ħasib  
Naomi [Aman meat cook-M **ILU-F**] AGR.ASP-think  
'Naomi thinks that Aman cooked meat.'

In addition to its apparent complementizer use, *il:-u/-a* also has an apparent function as a verb that means "to say", illustrated in (2):

- (2) Naomi Beylul məmbər gəzi?-a **il:-a**  
Naomi Beylul chair bought-F **ilu-F**  
'Naomi said Beylul bought a chair.'

That *il:-u/-a* can be used in both a context where it appears to be a verb and where it appears to be a complementizer seems unsurprising, given the strong cross-linguistic trend for complementizers to be grammaticalized forms of verbs of saying. We argue that this parallel is deceptive; *il:-u/-a* is not a complementizer, because in so-called complementizer uses like (1), the clausal complement lacks a CP. Further, *il:-u/-a* cannot be analyzed as a verb, because constructions such as (2), where *il:-u/-a* appears to be a matrix verb, can be shown to be monoclausal.

Instead, we suggest as a preliminary proposal that in (1) and (2), *il:-u/-a* is a functional head that introduces a source of information argument into the syntax. This type of applied argument has not been reported elsewhere in the literature, however this proposal not only gives a unified account for (1) and (2), but is supported by a third use of *il:-u/-a*, as a applicative marker:

- (3) Beylul ni-Mahari **il:-a** n-iti məts'ħaf ni-Almaz  
Beylul DOM-Mahari **ILU-F** DOM-DET book DOM-Almaz  
a-r?i?-at-o  
CAUS-see-3SG.F.SUBJ-3SG.M.OBJ  
'Beylul showed Almaz the book for Mahari.'

Finally, we discuss outstanding issues that this analysis encounters, especially relating to the agreement patterns of *il:-u/-a* in the benefactive use in (3), and its use in interrogative contexts.