

**Last Resort Structure Building: Agreement and Argument Licensing in Senaya**

**1. Introduction:** In the Neo-Aramaic language Senaya, the auxiliary *be* (which carries a  $\varphi$ -probe) may be added to a derivation's structure in order to license a DP that would otherwise fail to enter into a (required)  $\varphi$ -agreement relation. This presents a new case of so-called 'overflow', which typically manifests in the verbal inflection domain (tense, voice, etc.). Classical overflow is amenable to treatment with last-resort auxiliary insertion to host a stranded inflectional (bound) morpheme (Bjorkman 2011). We show that Senaya's  $\varphi$ -overflow necessitates a more powerful last-resort mechanism whereby a dummy item can be inserted to build a new structural DP-licensing configuration.

**2. Data:** Both subjects and definite/pronominal objects in Senaya obligatorily trigger agreement within the verbal complex. There are three canonical aspects expressed through the verbal complex—perfective, imperfective, and progressive—and each aspect has a fixed number of agreement slots.

The aspects we are concerned with here are the imperfective and progressive, exemplified in (1)–(2) (agreement bolded) with temporal modifiers that distinguish the aspects. Note that the verbal complex in the progressive consists of the imperfective plus an enclitic auxiliary, *y/ii*.

(1) IMPERFECTIVE: 2 agreement slots

Aana (qoome / \*da&aana) on talmiide molp-**an-uu**.  
 I tomorrow / \*right.now the students teach.**IMPF-S.1FS-O.3PL**  
 'I (will) teach the students (tomorrow).'  $\not\sim$  \*'I teach the students right now.'

(2) PROGRESSIVE: 3 agreement slots

Aana (\*qoome / da&aana) on talmiide molp-**an-uu=y-an**.  
 I \*tomorrow / right.now the students teach.**IMPF-S.1FS-O.3PL=be-S.1FS**  
 'I am teaching the students (right now).'  $\not\sim$  \*'I am teaching the students tomorrow.'

There are two agreement slots in the imperfective (both on the verb base), and the progressive adds one more agreement slot, via the auxiliary, which in this instance doubles the subject agreement.

Ditransitives are surprising in several ways. First, even when the meaning of a ditransitive is imperfective, the ditransitive must be expressed using the progressive verbal complex, i.e., with an enclitic auxiliary. Second, this enclitic auxiliary agrees with the direct object. Third, ditransitives (and only ditransitives) are ambiguous between an imperfective and progressive interpretation.

(3) DITRANSITIVE: ambiguous imperfective/progressive

Aana (qoome / da&aana) oo ksuuta maxw-**an-ox=ii-laa**.  
 I tomorrow / right.now the book show.**IMPF-S.1FS-IO.2MS=be-DO.3FS**  
 'I (will) show you the book (tomorrow).'  $\sim$  'I am showing you the book (right now).'

We present an analysis of this puzzling data following a brief overview of 'overflow'.

**3. Overflow in the inflectional domain:** There are two basic types of auxiliary use crosslinguistically, termed by Bjorkman (2011) the 'additive pattern' and the 'overflow pattern'. Additive auxiliary use is exemplified by the English passive and progressive, both of which require the presence of *be*, e.g., *The bike was stolen* (PASSIVE), *She is stealing the bike* (PROGRESSIVE); when a passive progressive is formed, correspondingly, two *bes* are required: *The bike was being stolen*.

Overflow is exemplified by Standard Arabic past tense and imperfective aspect, which on their own do not require *be*, but together do (Bjorkman 2011:27–28, from Benmamoun 2000):

(4) a. Darasa. PAST TENSE  $\leftrightarrow$  be  
 study.PST.PRF.3MS  
 'He studied.'

