The present study describes information structure in Sidaama, and shows
• that Sidaama has different strategies for marking topic and focus from other East Cushitic languages, and
• that Sidaama has two types of ways of marking predicate focus, which can be used for different sets of predicate-centered focus types in Tom Gültemann’s (2009) classification.

Organization of the presentation
1. Background Information on Sidaama
2. Previous Studies on East Cushitic Languages (Somali and Afar)
3. Focus Marking
4. Cleft Construction
5. Topic Marking
6. Conclusion

• Sidaama belongs to Highland East Cushitic.

Afro-Asiatic language phylum
- Ancient Egyptian
- Berber (Amazigh)
- Cushitic
- Chadic
- Semitic

North
- Somali
- Oromo
- Highland
- Omo-Tana

South
- Haddiyya
- Gedeo
- Sidaama
- Kambaata
- Burji
- Libido

Central
- Alaba
- Wolayta
- Oromo (Arsi)
- Oromo (Gujji)
- Gedeo

Grammars of HEC languages:
• Phonemes
  b, t, d, k, g, ’p’, t’, k’, d’, č’, š’, f, s, š, h, m, n, ř, l, w, y
  j, e, a, o, u

• Suffixing
  Verb suffixes
    subject person/number suffix, object person/number suffix,
    aspectual suffix, converb (connective) suffix, infinitive suffix,
    verbalizing suffix, passive suffix, reciprocal suffix, causative suffix,
    double-causative suffix, middle suffix

  Noun suffixes
    case suffixes, possessive pronominal suffix, definite suffix,
    nominalizing suffixes, abstracting suffixes

• Suprafix on the noun (when not (syntactically) modified) or its
  modifier (high pitch on the ultimate vowel)
  accusative/oblique, genitive

  • Word order: basically, SOV, but other orders are also possible.

(1) dagunj-u sagalé it-q-inó.
    leopard-NOM.M food.ACCOBL eat-3SG.M-D.PRF.3
    ‘The/a leopard ate (the) food.’

(2) (ise) (isó)
    sunk’i-t-inó-si.
    3SG.F.NOM 3SG.M.ACCOBL kiss-EP-3SG.F-D.PRF.3-3SG.M
    ‘She kissed him.’

• Nominative-accusative case system (marked-nominative in literature)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subj of</th>
<th>Subj of</th>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>trans. verb</td>
<td>intrans. verb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>ACCOBL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEM</td>
<td>high pitch on penultimate vowel</td>
<td>suprafixed (high pitch on ultimate vowel)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>sagalé</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC</td>
<td>high pitch on penultimate vowel</td>
<td>suprafixed (high pitch on ultimate vowel)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>dagunj-u</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC</td>
<td>dagunjó</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Different allomorphs of case suffixes, depending on whether or not the noun is modified
(accompanied by a modifier(s) and/or the possessive pronominal suffix).

• Noun-phrase clitics (NPCs)

One of the NPCs (=ta (FEM)/=ha (MASC)/=re (PL)) attaches to:
(i) a genitive noun phrase or a relative clause to form (part of) an
    argument noun phrase (e.g. (3), (4a)),
(ii) an adjective, a noun phrase, a genitive noun phrase, or a relative
    clause to form a predicate (e.g. (5), (6)), or
(iii) a clause to form a clausal complement (e.g. (4b)).

(The plural form =re is limited to (i).)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SG.FEM</th>
<th>SG.MASC</th>
<th>proper noun, Modified noun</th>
<th>PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCOBL</td>
<td>=ta</td>
<td>=ha</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>=re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM/GEN</td>
<td>=ti</td>
<td>=hu</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>=ri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRED</td>
<td>=te</td>
<td>=ho</td>
<td>=ti</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Definiteness expressed with the suffix -nni in limited contexts

(7) kúni min-i manč-ú-nni=ho.
  this.M.NOM house-NOM.MOD.M person-GEN.M-DEF=NPC.M.PRED
  ‘This house is the man’s.’

(8) íse buus-ú-nni=wa no.
  3SG.F.NOM bridge-GEN.M-DEF=place come.to.exist.D.PRF.3
  ‘She is by the bridge.’

• Pitch accent on the verb with an aspect suffix

High pitch occurs on the aspect suffix (the penultimate or ultimate vowel segment of the verb, depending on the person).

(9) 1st and 2nd person: penultimate 3rd person: ultimate
    mar-oó-c-a mar-t-inó
    go-D.PRF.2-2SG-F go-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
    mar-ú-mm-a mar-ø-í
    go-R.PRF.1-1SG-F go-3SG.M-R.PRF.3

• Intonation

(10a) áti bè’ro dikkó mar-oó-tt-o.
    2SG.NOM yesterday market. ACCOBL go-D.PRF.2-2SG-M
    ‘You (SG.M) went to the market yesterday.’

Extra high pitch on the aspect suffix in polar questions ending with a verb predicate
(10b) áti bè’ro dikkó mar-oó-tt-o?
    2SG.NOM yesterday market. ACCOBL go-D.PRF.2-2SG-M
    ‘Did you (SG.M) go to the market yesterday?’

ó of mar-oó-tt-o is higher than in its declarative counterpart (10a).

In WH-questions with a verb predicate, the verb has to have a flat pitch, and the main verb used in an answer to a WH-question also has to have a flat pitch.

(11) A: áti bè’ro hiikk-ii-ra mar-oo-c-o?
    2SG.NOM yesterday where-GEN.M-ALL go-D.PRF.2-2SG-M
    ‘Where did you (SG.M) go yesterday?’
B: áni dikkó mar-oó-mm-o.
    1SG.NOM market.ACCOBL go-D.PRF.1-1SG-M
    ‘I (M) went to the market.’

• Afar seems to mark a focused constituent with the absolute case and relativization, and with a question marker in an interrogative sentence (Frascarelli & Puglielli 2007).

(14) òwka (y) huuri-h adda-l kullumta habte-m.
    boy.ABS 3SG boat-of inside-in fish leave.PST.3SG.F-COMP.NOM
    ‘THE BOY left the fish inside the boat.’
    (lit. ‘THE BOY (he is) that left the fish in the boat.’)

(15) ma selte ?
    QM finish.PST.2SG
    ‘Did you finish?’ (cf. selteè? [finish.PST.2SG])

But Sidaama uses neither strategy.

2. Previous Studies on East Cushitic Languages
(Somali and Afar)


According to Antinucci (1980: 2), in Somali,
(a) every main declarative sentence must contain one (and only one) focus marker,
(b) focus markers can mark only one of the major constituents of the sentence, i.e. either an NP or the verb.

    Axmed FOC came Axmed FOC came
    ‘AXMED came.’ ‘Axmed CAME.’

But Sidaama has no such particles.
3. Focus Marking

Five strategies ([F-1]: almost obligatory, [F-2]-[F-5]: optional):

[F-1] Word order: focused constituent right before the verb
[F-2] One of the focus clitics, =ila (lit. ‘only’) and =we, optionally attaches to a focused constituent.
[F-3] In polar questions, contrastive focus can be marked with a distinctive pitch accent pattern, with which the speaker’s surprise or unpleasant feeling is expressed.
[F-4] Predicate focus: the addition of the focus clitic =ila or =we to a verb in focus or the leftmost constituent of a focused predicate (both verb-focus and operator-focus)
[F-5] Predicate focus: placement of the verb at the beginning of a sentence (verb-focus, not operator-focus)

[F-1] Word order

• SOV basic word order
• New information has to come immediately before the verb.
• A WH-word and an answer in a WH-question must each occur immediately before the verb, regardless of the grammatical relation of the WH-word.
• When one corrects part of the previous speaker’s statement or gives a negative answer to a polar question with a full sentence, the corrected constituent always occurs immediately before the verb.
• When one adds new information to the previous speaker’s statement, the added constituent always occurs immediately before the verb.
• When one answers an alternative question, the answer always occurs immediately before the verb.

WH word/Answer to WH Q

(16) A: mánčo beettó-ho mād u-i-t-ino?
   person.NOM.F child-DAT.M what.ACCOBL give-EP-3SG.F-D.PFV.3
   ‘WHAT did the woman give to the boy?’

   B1: ise isí-ra sagalé u-i-t-ino.
   3SG.F.NOM 3SG.GEN-DAT food.ACCOBL give-EP-3SG.F-D.PFV.3
   ‘She gave her FOOD.’

   B2: #isí-ra sagalé isí-ra u-i-t-ino.
   3SG.F.NOM food.ACCOBL 3SG.GEN-DAT give-EP-3SG.F-D.PFV.3

   B3: #iske isí-ra mánčo sagalé u-i-t-ino.
   3SG.GEN-DAT person.NOM.F food.ACCOBL give-EP-3SG.F-D.PFV.3

(17) A: sagalé beettó-ho gì u-i-t-ino?
   food.ACCOBL child-DAT.M who.NOM give-EP-3SG.F-D.PFV.3
   ‘WHO gave the food to the boy?’

   B1: sagalé isí-ra mánčo u-i-t-ino.
   food.ACCOBL 3SG.GEN-DAT person.NOM.F give-EP-3SG.F-D.PFV.3
   ‘THE WOMAN gave the food to the boy.’

   B2: #mánčo sagalé isí-ra u-i-t-ino.
   person.NOM.F food.ACCOBL 3SG.GEN-DAT give-EP-3SG.F-D.PFV.3

   B3: #isí-ra mánčo sagalé u-i-t-ino.
   3SG.GEN-DAT person.NOM.F food.ACCOBL give-EP-3SG.F-D.PFV.3
### Answer to alternative question (selection from choices)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Correct Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: kaameelá</td>
<td>faáyyo=nsó</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correct**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(18) A:</th>
<th>íse</th>
<th>buná</th>
<th>ag-á</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3SG.F.NOM</td>
<td>coffee.ACCOBL</td>
<td>drink-INF.ACCOBL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hasiɗ-ɗ-inó.</td>
<td>come.to.want-3SG.F-D.PRF.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘She came to want/wants to drink coffee.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1:</td>
<td>deé’ni,</td>
<td>buná</td>
<td>ag-á</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no,</td>
<td>coffee.ACCOBL</td>
<td>drink-INF.ACCOBL</td>
<td>15G.NOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hasi'r-o-ɔ-o-mm-o.</td>
<td>come.to.want-D.PRF.1-1SG-M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘No, I (M) came to want/want to drink coffee.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition</td>
<td>B2:</td>
<td>eé,</td>
<td>buná</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes,</td>
<td>coffee.ACCOBL</td>
<td>drink-INF.ACCOBL</td>
<td>3SG.M.NOM=also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hasi'r-o-î-inó.</td>
<td>come.to.want-3SG.M-D.PRF.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Yes, HE ALSO came to want/wants to drink coffee.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Addition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(19) A:</th>
<th>kaameelá</th>
<th>ádi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hidɗ-i-t-ino.</td>
<td>car.ACCOBL</td>
<td>buy-EP-3SG.F-D.PFV.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faayyo.NOM</td>
<td>Dancile.NOM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘WHO bought a car, Faayyo or Dancile?’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: (kaameelá)</td>
<td>faáyyo</td>
<td>hidɗ-i-t-ino.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>car.ACCOBL</td>
<td>Faayyo.NOM.F</td>
<td>buy-EP-3SG.F-D.PFV.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘FAAYYO bought a car.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(20) A:</th>
<th>íse</th>
<th>buná</th>
<th>ag-á</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3SG.F.NOM</td>
<td>coffee.ACCOBL</td>
<td>drink-INF.ACCOBL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hasiɗ-ɗ-inó.</td>
<td>come.to.want-3SG.F-D.PRF.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘She came to want/wants to drink coffee.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B:</td>
<td>deé’ni,</td>
<td>buná</td>
<td>ag-á</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no,</td>
<td>coffee.ACCOBL</td>
<td>drink-INF.ACCOBL</td>
<td>15G.NOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hasi'r-o-ɔ-o-mm-o.</td>
<td>come.to.want-D.PRF.1-1SG-M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘No, I (M) came to want/want to drink coffee.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Optionally used focus clitics, =lla (lit. ‘only’) and =we**

- =lla: usually indicates the speaker’s irritation over the addressee’s lack of knowledge about the focused constituent or the addressee’s repeated questions about it. Its use is often impolite.
- =we: indicates the speaker’s irritation over the addressee’s lack of knowledge about the focused constituent or the addressee’s repeated questions about it. Its use is often impolite.

### F-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Correct Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(21) A:</td>
<td>faáyyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faayyo.NOM</td>
<td>car.ACCOBL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Faayyo bought a car.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B:</td>
<td>deé’ni,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG.F.NOM</td>
<td>cow.ACCOBL=FOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hasi'r-o-î-inó.</td>
<td>saá=lla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cow.ACCOBL</td>
<td>buy-EP-3SG.F-D.PRF.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘No, she bought A COW.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(also, saá=lla=we/saá=we=lla)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(22) A: faayyo mat’aañí argat-i-ra
   Faayyo.NOM.F book.ACCOBL Argata-GEN.M-DAT
   give-EP-3SG.F-D.PFV.3
   ‘Faayo gave the book to Argata.’

B: deé‘ni, ise
   no, 3SG.F.NOM
   * halaal-i-ra=lla/halaal-i-ra=we
   Halaala-GEN.M-DAT=FOC/Halaala-GEN.M-DAT=FOC
   Halaala-GEN.M-DAT give-EP-3SG.F-D.PFV.3=FOC
   give-EP-3SG.F-D.PFV.3=FOC
   ‘No, she gave it TO HALAALA.’ (cf. halaal-i-ra Halaala-GEN.M-DAT)
   (also, deé‘ni, ise halaal-i-ra u-i-t-inó=we.)

(23) A: mánco amaló ledo t’aad-d-inó=gede
   person.NOM.F Amalo.ACCOBL CMT meet-3SG.F-D.PRF.3=COMP
   kul-t-inó.
   tell-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
   ‘The woman said that she met Amalo.’

B1: deé‘ni, (di=t’aad-d-ino=gede=ná)
   no
   * wošš-i-t-ino=gede=lla/wošš-i-t-ino=gede=we
   call-3SG.F-D.PRF.3=COMP=FOC/call-3SG.F-D.PRF.3=COMP=FOC
   kul-t-inó.
   tell-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
   ‘No, the woman said that she CALLED Amalo.’
   (cf. wošš-i-t-ino=gede: informationally unmarked)

B2: deé‘ni, wošš-i-t-ino=gede
   no
   * call-3SG.F-D.PRF.3=COMP tell-3SG.F-D.PRF.3=FOC
   ‘No, the woman said that she CALLED Amalo.’

<= PRED focus?

   child-NOM.M yesterday come-3SG.M-D.PRF.3
   ‘The boy came yesterday.’

B: deé‘ni, beétt-u
dee‘ni, child-NOM.M
teččo da-φ-inó=we
   today=FOC today=FOC come-3SG.M-D.PRF.3=FOC
   ‘The boy came TODAY.’

B in ‘Not A but B’

(25) di=faayyo=na
   NEG=Faayyo.NOM.F=and
   ‘k’амиč’e=k’амиč’e=we
dag-g-inó.
   K’amuc’e.NOM.F=FOC K’amuc’e.NOM.F=FOC
   dag-g-inó=we.
   K’amuc’e.NOM.F=FOC K’amuc’e.NOM.F=FOC
   ‘Not Faayyo but K’AMUC’E came.’
   (=we: SP irritated ‘You (addressee) should know it.’)

(26) A: ise buná ag-á
   3SG.F.NOM coffee.ACCOBL drink-INF.ACCOBL
   hasiɗ-ɗ-inó?
   come.to.want-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
   ‘Did she come to want/Does she want to drink coffee?’

B: deé‘ni, buná
   no, coffee.ACCOBL drink-INF.ACCOBL
   * ani=lla/ani=we
   hasi’t-r-oó-mm-o.
   1SG.NOM=FOC/1SG.NOM=FOC come.to.want-D.PRF.1-1SG-M
   ‘No, I (M) came to want/want to drink coffee.’
The clitic =lla can also attach to a WH-word. Both =lla and =we can mark the focused constituent in an answer to a WH-question (=we causes no ambiguity).

(27) A: faayyo kaameelá hidd-i-t-inó?

Faayyo.NOM car.ACCOBL buy-3SG.F-D.PRF.3

‘Did Faayyo buy a car?’

B: deé’ni, (íse)

no, 3SG.F.NOM

‘No, she bought A COW.’

The clitic =lla can also attach to a WH-word. Both =lla and =we can mark the focused constituent in an answer to a WH-question (=we causes no ambiguity).

(28) A: bé’ro beett-u hiikk-ì-ra=lla ha’r-ø-i?

yesterday boy-NOM.M where-GEN.M-ALL=FOC go-3SG.M-R.PRF.3SG.M

‘Where did the boy go yesterday?’ (cf. hiikk-ì-ra)

B: ilaá=lla=we

mountain.ACCOBL=FOC/mountain.ACCOBL=FOC go-3SG.M-D.PRF.3=FOC

‘He went TO THE MOUNTAIN.’ (ambiguous with ‘only’)

=lla:

‘He went TO THE MOUNTAIN.’ (Speaker irritated)

=we: ‘He went TO THE MOUNTAIN.’ (also, ilaá=lla=we/ilaá=we=lla)

[F-3] Contrastive focus in polar questions marked with a distinctive pitch accent pattern

A high pitch on the (final) vowel of the aspect suffix on the verb is shifted to the vowel right before it (or the second vowel before it, depending on the suffix), and the focused constituent immediately preceding the verb gains a flat pitch contour (Often, the speaker’s surprise or unpleasantness/anger is also expressed.)

(30a) bé’ro dikkó áti[FLAT] mar-ìt-t-o?

yesterday market.ACCOBL 2SG go-3SG.M-2SG-M

‘Did YOU (SG.M) (rather than anyone else) go to the market yesterday? (áti ‘you’: contrastively focused)

Compare:

(30b) áti bé’ro dikkó mar-ìt-t-o?

2SG.NOM yesterday market.ACCOBL 2SG go-3SG.M-2SG-M

‘Did you (SG.M) go to the market yesterday?’ (informationally unmarked)

(30c) bé’ro dikkó áti mar-ìt-t-o?

yesterday market.ACCOBL 2SG.NOM go-3SG.M-2SG-M

‘Did YOU (SG.M) go to the market yesterday?’ (áti ‘you’: focused)
Normally not preverbal constituent (subject, adjunct)
- Flat pitch of focused constituent & pitch shift on the verb (30a), (31a)
- Focused constituent in preverbal position (30c), (31d)
- Normal word order & normal pitch accent pattern (30b), (31c)

Normally preverbal constituent (object, adjunct)
- Flat pitch of focused constituent & pitch shift on the verb (32a), (32c), (34)
- Preverbal and sentence-initial & normal pitch accent pattern (32d) (somewhat) focused
- Normal word order & normal pitch accent pattern (32b) unmarked

(32a) faáyyo argat-i-ra uddanó [FLAT] u-i-t-inó?
Faayyo.NOM Argata-GEN.M-DAT clothes ACCOBL give-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
‘Did Faayyo give Argata THE CLOTHES (rather than anything else)?
(uddanó ‘clothes’: contrastively focused)

(32b) faáyyo argat-i-ra uddanó
Faayyo.NOM Argata-GEN.M-DAT clothes ACCOBL give-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
‘Did Faayyo give Argata THE CLOTHES to Argata?
(uddanó ‘clothes’: unmarked)

(33) A: faáyyo argat-i-ra maá u-i-t-íno?
Faayyo.NOM Argata-GEN.M-DAT what ACCOBL give-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
‘What did Faayyo give to Argata?’
B1: uddanó u-i-t-inó.
‘She gave THE CLOTHES to him.’
B2: #uddanó [FLAT] u-i-t-inó.

(34) faáyyo ilaala [flat] had-d-íno?
Faayyo.NOM.F mountain ACCOBL go-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
‘Did Faayyo go TO THE MOUNTAIN?’
(‘Why did Faayyo go TO THE MOUNTAIN?’)

The focused constituent in this construction may carry the focus clitic =lla (but not =we).

(35) faáyyo uddanó=lla=we u-i-t-íno?
Faayyo.NOM.F clothes=FOC/clothes=FOC Argat-i-ra?
Argata-GEN.M-DAT
did Faayyo give Argata THE CLOTHES?’
(‘Why did Faayyo give Argata THE CLOTHES?’)
Predicate focus: placement of the verb at the beginning of a sentence

Action expressed by the verb contrasted with other actions.

Lexical content of the verb

    3SG.F.NOM food.ACCOBL discard-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
    'She discarded the food.'

A2: ise sagalé hun-t-inó?
    3SG.F.NOM food.ACCOBL discard-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
    'Did she discard the food?'

B: deé'ní, it-t-inó ise sagalé.
    no eat-3SG.F-D.PRF.3 3SG.F.NOM food.ACCOBL
    'No, she ATE (rather than discarded) the food.'

Truth value

(39) A1: ise sagalé dín-it-t-inó.
    3SG.F.NOM food.ACCOBL NEG=eat-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
    'She did NOT eat the food.'

A2: ise sagalé dín-it-t-inó?
    3SG.F.NOM food.ACCOBL NEG=eat-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
    ' Didn't she eat the food?'

A3: dín-it-t-inó ise sagalé.
    NEG=eat-3SG.F-D.PRF.3 3SG.F.NOM food.ACCOBL
    'She DID NOT EAT the food.'

A4: dín-it-t-inó ise sagalé?
    NEG=eat-3SG.F-D.PRF.3 3SG.F.NOM food.ACCOBL
    ' Didn'T she EAT the food?'

B: deé'ní, it-t-inó ise sagalé.
    no eat-3SG.F-D.PRF.3 3SG.F.NOM food.ACCOBL
    'No, she ATE the food.'

This construction cannot be used in an affirmative answer unless the previous statement or question has the verb at the beginning.

(40) A: ise sagalé it-t-inó?
    3SG.F.NOM food.ACCOBL eat-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
    'Did she eat the food?'

B1: #ée, it-t-inó ise sagalé.
    yes eat-3SG.F-D.PRF.3 3SG.F.NOM food.ACCOBL
    'Yes, she ate the food.'

B2: èe, it-t-inó.
    yes eat-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
    'Yes, she ate the food.'

(41) A: ise dag-g-inó?
    3SG.F.NOM come-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
    'Did she come?'

B1: #ée, dag-g-inó ise.
    yes come-3SG.F-D.PRF.3 3SG.F.NOM
    'Yes, she came.'

B2: èe, dag-g-inó.
    yes come-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
    'Yes, she came.'
[42] A: dag-g-ínó  íse?
    come-3SG.F-D.PRF.3 3SG.F.NOM
    ‘Did she COME?’
B: ée, dag-g-ínó  íse.
    yes come-3SG.F-D.PRF.3 3SG.F.NOM
    ‘Yes, she CAME.’

    NEG=sell-3SG.F-D.PRF.3 person.NOM.F child-DAT.M book.ACCOBL
    ‘The woman DID NOT SELL the child the book.’
A2: di=hir-t-inó  mánčo  beectó-ho  mat’aafá?
    NEG=sell-3SG.F-D.PRF.3 person.NOM.F child-DAT.M book.ACCOBL
    ‘DIDN’T the woman SELL the child the book?’
B: deé’ni, hir-t-inó  íse  isi-ra  mat’aafá.
    no sell-3SG.F-D.PRF.3 3SG.F 3SG.M.GEN-DAT book.ACCOBL
    ‘No, she SOLD him the book.’

[F-5] Predicate focus: the addition of the focus clitic =lla or =we to a verb in focus or the leftmost constituent of a focused predicate

 Correction/Additional statement to a negative answer
    2SG.NOM clothes.ACCOBL dry-D.PRF.2-2SG-M
    ‘You (SG.M) dried the clothes.’
A2: áti  uddánó  moošt-ótt-o?
    2SG.NOM clothes.ACCOBL dry-D.PRF.2-2SG-M
    ‘Did you (SG.M) dry the clothes?’
B: deé’ni, haišt-óó-mm-o=illa/haišt-óó-mm-o=we.
    no wash-D.PRF.1-1SG-M=FOC/wash-D.PRF.1-1SG-M=FOC
    ‘No, I (M) WASHED them.’
    (also, haišt-óó-mm-o=illa/haišt-óó-mm-o=we=illa)

This construction is used to focus only on a verb (not a verb plus any other constituent).

[44] A: beéto  maá  ass-ì-t-u?
    child.NOM.F what.ACCOBL do-EP-3SG.F-R.PRF.3SG.F
    ‘What did the girl do?’
B: #hit-t-inó  waasá.
    hit-3SG.F-R.PRF.3 waasa.ACCOBL
    to mean, ‘She ATE WAASA.’

[45] A: dancile  aé-ra  maá  ass-ì-t-ìno?
    ‘What did Mary do to whom?’
B: #gan-t-inó  amaló.
    hit-3SG.F-R.PRF.3 Amalo.ACCOBL
    to mean, ‘She HIT AMALO.’

[49] A: áti  bê’ro  dikkó  mar-oó-tt-o?
    2SG.NOM yesterday market.ACCOBL go-D.PRF.2-2SG-M
    ‘Did you (SG.M) go to the market yesterday?’
B: deé’ni, k’alamé=illa/k’alamé=we  buur-oó-mm-a.
    no paint.ACCOBL=FOC/paint.ACCOBL=FOC smear-D.PRF.1-1SG-F
    ‘No, I (F) PAINTED IT.’ (lit. ‘smeared paint’)
Answer to “What happened?/What did X do?”

(51) A: bors-ikk maá ikk-ø-i?
   bag.NOM.M.MOD-2SG.POSS what.ACCOBL become-3SG.M.R.PRF.3SG.M
   ‘What happened to your bag?’

B: hu’n-oo-mm-o=we/hu’n-oo-mm-o-lla.
   lose-D.PRF.1-1SG.M-FOC/lose-D.PRF.1-1SG.M-FOC
   ‘I LOST it.’

(52) A: beéck maá ass-ø-ino?
   child-NOM.M what.ACCOBL do-3SG.M-D.PRF.3
   ‘What did the boy do?’

B: beéck da-ø-ino=we/da-ø-ino=lla.
   yes come-3SG.M-D.PRF.3=FOC/come-3SG.M-D.PRF.3=FOC
   ‘The boy CAME.’
   (da-ø-ino=lla: ‘The boy only came.’)

Additional statement to an affirmative answer

(53) A: dti uddánd haišš-od-tt-o?
   2SG.NOM clothes.ACCOBL wash-D.PRF.2-2SG.M
   ‘Did you (SG.M) wash the clothes?’

B: ée, haišš-od-mm-o=we/haišš-od-mm-o-lla.
   yes wash-D.PRF.1-1SG.M-FOC/wash-D.PRF.1-1SG.M-FOC
   ‘Yes, I (M) WASHED them.’

Addition

(54) A: mančo amaló gan-t-inó.
   person.NOM.F Amalo.ACCOBL hit-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
   ‘The woman hit Amalo.’

B: deé’ni, no
   neg chase-EP-3SG.F-D.PRF.3(-3SG.M)=also=FOC/chase-EP-3SG.F-D.PRF.3(-3SG.M)=also=FOC
   ‘No, she ALSO CHASED HIM.’

Truth value

   boy-NOM.M NEG=come-3SG.M-D.PRF.3
   ‘The boy did not come.’

   neg boy-NOM.M come-3SG.M-D.PRF.3=FOC/come-3SG.M-D.PRF.3=FOC
   ‘No, the boy DID NOT COME.’

   neg boy-NOM.M come-3SG.M-D.PRF.3=FOC/come-3SG.M-D.PRF.3=FOC
   ‘No, the boy DID NOT COME.’

(56) A: beéck di=da-ø-ino?
   boy-NOM.M NEG=come-3SG.M-D.PRF.3
   ‘Didn’t the boy come?’

B: deé’ni, beéck di=da-ø-ino=we/da-ø-ino=lla.
   neg boy-NOM.M come-3SG.M-D.PRF.3=FOC/come-3SG.M-D.PRF.3=FOC
   ‘No, the boy DID NOT COME.’
A: átí uddanó díhaišš-oo-t-t-o.
2SG.NOM clothes.ACCOBL NEG=wash-D.PRF.2-2SG-M
‘Don’t wash the clothes.’

B: deé’ni, haišš-oó-mm-o=lla/haišš-oó-mm-o=we.
no wash-D.PRF.1-1SG-M=FOC/wash-D.PRF.1-1SG-M=FOC
‘No, I did wash them.’

A: átí uddanó díhaišš-oo-t-t-o?
2SG.NOM clothes.ACCOBL NEG=wash-D.PRF.2-2SG-M
‘Did you wash the clothes?’

B: deé’ni, haišš-oó-mm-o=we/#haišš-oó-mm-o=lla.
no wash-D.PRF.1-1SG-M=FOC/wash-D.PRF.1-1SG-M=FOC
‘No, I did wash them.’

A: máńco amaló la’-’-inó.
person.NOM.F Amalo.ACCOBL see-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
‘The woman saw Amalo.’

B1: deé’ni, dí=la’-’-ino,
no NEG=see-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
la’-’-annó=lla/la’-’-annó=we.
see-3SG.F-IMPFV.3=FOC/see-3SG.F-IMPFV.3=FOC
‘No, she did not see him, she IS GOING TO see him.’
(also, la’-’-annó=lla=we/la’-’-annó=we=lla)

B2: deé’ni, dí=la’-’-ino=we/*dí=la’-’-ino=lla,
no NEG=see-3SG.F-D.PRF.3=FOC
la’-’-annó.
see-3SG.F-IMPFV.3
‘No, she DID NOT see him, she is going to see him.’

Aspect

A: máńco baak’eela it-t-inó.
person.NOM.F beans.ACCOBL eat-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
‘The woman ate the beans.’

B: deé’ni, dit-t-ino=we/*dit-t-ino=lla.
no NEG=eat-3SG.F-D.PRF.3=FOC/NEG=eat-3SG.F-D.PRF.3=FOC
‘No, she DID NOT eat them.’

Adjective predicates

A1: ann-í-se min-i jáwá=ho.
father-GEN.M.MOD-3SG.F.POSS house.NOM.M.MOD big=NPC.M.PRED
‘Her father’s house is big.’

A2: ann-í-se min-i jáwá=ho?
father-GEN.M.MOD-3SG.F.POSS house.NOM.M.MOD big=NPC.M.PRED
‘Is her father’s house big?’

Lexical content

B1: deé’ní (a) siiíma=ho=lla/(b) siiíma=ho=we.
no small=NPC.M.PRED=FOC/small=NPC.M.PRED=FOC
‘No, it IS SMALL.’ (cf. siiíma=ho small=NPC.M.PRED)

B2: deé’ní, (a) dí=jawa=ho=we/(b) *dí=jawa=ho=lla.
no NEG=big=NPC.M.PRED=FOC/NEG=big=NPC.M.PRED=FOC
‘No, it IS NOT BIG.’
Other constructions to look at

[1] =di construction

The negative proclitic =di can be used as an emphatic (predicate focus?) marker. (It does not have high pitch in this use.)

When =di is used this way, the speaker is irritated with someone’s action, and wants the addressee to feel the same way as himself/herself.

(63) A: isi gott-ø-i?
3SG.M.NOM sleep-3SG.M-R.PRF.3SG.M
‘Has he gone to sleep?’
B: =di=it-ø-nni=lla no.
EMPH=come-3SG.M-INF-MANNER=FOC come.to.exist.D.PRF.3
‘He is (still) eating (to my irritation).’
(not interpreted as: ‘He is not eating.’)

When =di is used this way, the speaker is irritated with someone’s action, and wants the addressee to feel the same way as himself/herself.

(64) A: beét-u =di=da-ø-ino.
child-NOM.M NEG=come-3SG.M-D.PRF
‘The boy did not come.’
B: deé’ni, beét-u =da=ø-ino(=lla).
no child-NOM.M EMPH=come-3SG.M-D.PRF(=FOC)
‘Yes (lit. No), the boy did come (to my irritation).’
(not interpreted as: ‘... the boy did not come.’)

(65) A: íse baak’eelá gaf-f-inó.
3SG.F.NOM beans.ACCOBL cook-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
‘She cooked the beans.’
B: deé’ni, díit-t-inó.
no EMPH=eat-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
‘No, she ate them (to my irritation).’
(not interpreted as: ‘... she did not eat them.’)

However, it is not clear how productive this use of =di= is.

[2] =yyə construction

The enclitic =yyə attaches to a verb when the speaker’s surprise is expressed.

2SG.NOM clothes.ACC.OBL dry-D.PRF.2SG-2SG-M
‘Why are you (SG.M) wearing your clothes like that?’
(lit. ‘How did you (SG.M) put on your clothes?’)
B: alba baDDé k’ol-ø-é
face.ACCOBL.back.ACCOBL turn-1SG-CON
udd-i-’r-ø-ð-mm-øyya.
pull.on-EP-MID-D.PRF.1-M-?
‘(Oh, I was wearing my clothes backwards.’

(67) A: šamizé hiissité udd-i-’r-ø-òt-t-o.
‘Why are you (SG.M) wearing your clothes like that?’
(lit. ‘How did you (SG.M) put on your clothes?’)
B: alba baDDé k’ol-ø-é
face.ACCOBL.back.ACCOBL turn-1SG-CON
udd-i-’r-ø-ð-mm-øyya.
pull.on-EP-MID-D.PRF.1-M-?
‘(Oh, I was wearing my clothes backwards.’

(68) A: faáyyo kaameelá-kki argid-ð-inó?
Faayyo.NOM.F car-2SG.POSS borrow-3SG.F-D.PRF.3
‘Did Faayyo borrow your car?’
B: deé’ni.
no
‘No.’
A: hidd-i-t-inó=yya.
buy-EP-3SG.F-D.PRF.3=?
‘(Oh, then) she bought it.’
4. (Pseudo-)clef and related constructions

- Contains two forms of one of the noun-phrase clitics (NPCs)
  1) presupposition clause
     NOM: =tl (F)/=hu (M)/=ri (PL)
  2) focused constituent (subject NP, object (DO/IO) NP, adjunct)
     PRED: =te (F, Unmodified noun)/=ho (M, Unmodified noun)/
          =tl (proper noun and Modified common noun
          arguments, adjuncts)

When the focused constituent is the subject (or object: in the case of some speakers) of the presupposition clause, the subject (or object), the subject suffix (or object) on the verb and the noun-phrase clitic at the end of the presupposition clause have to agree in gender and number with the focused constituent.

When the focused constituent is not the subject (or object: in the case of some speakers) of the presupposition clause, =hu and =tl are used for a presupposition clause and a focused constituent, respectively, regardless of the gender of any constituent in the sentence.

When the focused constituent is the subject (or object: in the case of some speakers) of the presupposition clause, the subject (or object), the subject suffix (or object) on the verb and the noun-phrase clitic at the end of the presupposition clause have to agree in gender and number with the focused constituent.
5. Topicalization

Three (optional) methods for topicalizing a subject NP:

[T-1] Addition of the clitic =no (lit. ‘also’) to a topicalized constituent (a subject NP)

[T-2] Use of a high pitch on the vowel at the end of a topicalized noun phrase (a subject NP) as well as a pause immediately following it

[T-3] Use of the nominal predicate construction that starts with ‘X y-a-a [say-INF-LV]’ to topicalize a subject NP

(After hearing the listener explain why he has been unavailable.)
Waadára: k’árru di=no. áni=nó, problem-NOM.M NEG=come.to.exist.D.PRF.3 1SG.NOM=TOP jaâl-i-‘yá “katamá-ho loosó friend-NOM.M.MOD-1SG.POSS city-LOC.M job.ACCOBL af-oó-mm-o-he=ná, hakkó find-D.PRF.1-1SG-M-2SG=because there nó-o=re baalá agur-t-té come.to.exist.D.PRF.3-LV=NPC.PL.ACCOBL all stop-2SG-CON ámo”, y-e-e=nna-‘é, ha’r-ø-á-nni come.IMP.2SG say-CON-LV=and-15SG leave-15SG-INF-ABLINS n-oó-mm-o. come.to.exist.D.PRF.1-1SG-M ‘No problem (with your explanation). As for me, my friend (M) said to me, “Because I found a job for you in the city, stop leave all the things there, and come”, so I (M) am leaving.’ (conversation 2015.7)

(After hearing the listener say that he would leave his family to live in a different place)
Ošónka: insá-ra ái loos-ø-é 3PL.GEN-DAT who.NOM work-3SG.M-CON

it-i-s-ø-annó-he-yya? eat-EP-CS-3SG.M-IMPFV.3-2SG-Q,

af-u-mm-ø=n=ná=gedé come.to.know-R.PRF.1-1SG-M=EMP=NPC.F.PRED=like

k’aakk’ull-u=nó, loosó-ho di=ill-i-t-ino. children-NOM.M=TOP work-DAT.M NEG=reach-EPI-3PL.D.PRF.3

‘Who is going to work and feed them (= your children and wife) for you? From what I know (lit. as I know), as for the (your) children, they have not reached the working age.’ (conversation 2015.7)
[T-2] High pitch

Optional usage for contrastive topic.

(77) A: kúri man-i [flat] maá ag-g-ino?
   these.NOM.M people-NOM.M what.ACCOBL drink-3PL.D-PFV.3
   ‘What did these people drink?’

   B: geeřč-u manč-i waá
      old-NOM.M person-NOM.M.MOD.TOP water.ACCOBL
      drink-3SG.M-CON-LV=and child-NOM.M.TOP beer.ACCOBL
      drink-3SG.M-D.PRF.3
      ‘As for the old man, he drank water, and as for the boy (young man), he drank beer.’


Topicalization by means of high pitch is possible with at least subject NPs.

But adjuncts cannot be topicalized.

(79) *goda-hó, dangurá la’-oó-mm-o=nná,
   cave-LOC.M.TOP Dangura.ACCOBL see-D.PRF.1-1SG-M=and
   tullo-té, buné la’-oó-mm-o.
   mountain-LOC.F.TOP Bune.ACCOBL see-D.PRF.1-1SG-M
   to mean, ‘In the cave, I (M) saw Dangura, and in the mountains, I (M) saw Bune.’

Correctly, godá-hó ...., tuló-te .....
But an ACC/OBL NP seems to be topicalized in the following sentence.

(81) argát-i
kaameélá-sí
bat-ø-anno.
Argata-NOM.M
car.ACC/OBL-3SG.M.POSS
come.to.like-3SG.M-IMPFV.3
yesterday
Arga likes his car. Yesterday, as for his car, I (M) saw him wash, polish, and repair it.

There are cases where a non-contrastive topic NP has a high pitch at its end.

(82) A: bé’ro
beect-ø-á
(,) ísi
hiikk-i-í-ra
yesterday
child-NOM.M.TOP
3SG.NOM
where-GEN.M.MOD-ALL
ha’r-ø-ino?
go-3SG.M-D.PRF.3
‘As for the boy, where did he go yesterday? ’ (beect-u: unmarked)
B: beect-ø-á
ilaalá
child-NOM.M.TOP
mountain.ACCOBL
go-3SG.M-D.PRF.3
‘As for the boy, he went to the mountain.’

(84) A: argát-i/argáta
y-á-a
(isi)
áe-e-á?
Argata-NOM.M/Argata
say-INF-LV
3SG.M.NOM
who-LV=NPC.PRED.MOD
‘As for Argata, who is he?’ (isi: perfectly grammatical)

B1: argát-i/argáta
y-á-a
(isi)
argáta
father-1SG.POSS-LV=NPC.PRED.MOD
‘The person who I mean by) Argata is my father.’
(isi: a little redundant, though grammatical)

B2: argát-i
áanna-’ya-a=tlí.
Argata-NOM.M
father-1SG.POSS-LV=NPC.PRED.MOD
‘Argata is my father.’

(86) A: buša
manco [flat]
y-á-a
bad
person(MOD)
say-INF-LV
who-LV=NPC.PRED.MOD
‘As for the bad person, who is it?’

B: buša
manco
y-á-a
dancile-e-á.
bad
person(MOD)
say-INF-LV
Dancile-LV=NPC.PRED.MOD
‘As for the bad person, she is Dancile.’
6. Conclusion

- Sidaama has different topic- and focus-marking strategies from Somali and Afar.

- The predicate focus marking strategies in Sidaama are used for different sets of predicate-centered focus types.

- Focus marking in Sidama, specifically, the (at least argument/adjunct) focus marking with =we and the use of the verb-initial construction for predicate-centered focus, can be associated with the speaker’s surprise or unpleasant feeling, unlike topic marking.

Abbreviations

| ACCOBL | accusative/oblique |
| D.PRF | Distant perfect |
| IMPFV | imperfective |
| mod | modified |
| MOD | Modified (accompanied by a modifier(s) and/or the possessive pronominal suffix) |
| NPC | Noun phrase clitic |
| R.PRF | Recent perfect |

References