



Impersonal Passive in Mesqan: a South Ethio-Semitic Language Spoken in Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

Mesqan is a South Ethio-Semitic language which is predominantly used in day-to-day communication by a population of about 179,737 people in the Gurage Zone, whose linguistic features were not well described. The central aim of this paper is to provide a comprehensive description and features of Impersonal constructions of the Mesqan language. The paper is descriptive in nature, since the study is mainly concerned with describing what is actually being in the language, and mainly relies on primary linguistic data. The linguistic data, i.e. the elicited grammatical data concerning Impersonal, was collected from native speakers of the language during 12 months of fieldwork conducted between 2011 and 2012 in four Mesqan villages and in Butajira, the administrative center of the Mesqan Woreda. The Impersonal marker in Mesqan for perfective verbs is the non-segmental feature labialization plus palatalization, i.e. ^{w/y}, which yields the labialization of the rightmost labializable consonant in a root and palatalization of the last root consonant. In addition, the Impersonal verb has to be marked by a heavy object agreement marker, which is most commonly the 3SG.M object marker -y. The changes in consonants in Impersonal construction can be categorized into labials alveo-palatals and post-palatals consonants in which they will appear everywhere or in the final position of a verb stem.

Keywords: Heavy Object Agreement Marker, Impersonal, Labialization, Palatization, Passive, Segmental

INTRODUCTION

The People

The etymology of the name Mesqan is unclear. Alämu et al. (1987) mention that elder people are of the opinion that the name Mesqan originates from the term *mäsk'äl* 'cross' as part of the name of the *Mäsk'älä Iyäsus* Church which was built at Bidara in the beginning of the 16th century. The Mesqan people call themselves and their home area by this name. They are also called by other ethnic groups by this name. The Mesqan live in the Southern Nation, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPRS) in the Gurage Zone, Haikochina Butajira Woreda, in the vicinity of the town Butajira which is the administrative center of the Gurage Zone.

The Mesqan have their own Woreda in the Gurage Zone, which comprises forty-one principle villages. The topography of the area is hilly in the west but plain in the east. The western part has plenty of rain for farming from *wäto* 'March' to *mäskäroß* 'September', while the eastern part rain is rare. The main town inside the Mesqan area is

Butajira. The Mesqan people meet frequently with their neighbors in markets within and in the close vicinity of their home area. Famous market places, besides Butajira, are Inseno and Dobbi.

According to the Central Statistical Agency (2007), the total number of Gurage is 1,280,483 of which 179,737 are Mesqan. Among them, 88,062 are female and 91,675 are male. Most of the Mesqan speakers are bi- or multilingual (cf. Shikur 1989; Meyer, 2007). Most often they know Amharic as second language, which is used as the working language in the administration and as the means of instruction in primary education in the Gurage Zone of Mesqan Woreda. Monolingual Mesqan speakers do exist but they are typically very old.

Besides Amharic, the Mesqan often know the languages of their immediate neighbors, like Dobbi, Silt'e, Mareqo, Mesqan or Säbat Bet Gurage varieties. The Mesqan make their living by cultivating plants, by breeding animals and by trade (Hassän, 1980). *Ensete edulis* or 'false banana' is the most common staple food of the area. The Mesqan also cultivate crops like barely, teff, beans and wheat. Cows, oxen, sheep and goats

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belong to the animals they breed. Among the different agricultural products, pepper plays a vital role in sustaining the local people. Besides the above consumable food items, Mesqan farmers obtain an enormous amount of money from khat, i.e. *catha edulis*. The number of Mesqan traders is very small compared to other Gurage. The reason for this is that the soil of the Mesqan area is very fertile so that most of them are engaged in farming.

Most of the Mesqan people are followers of Islam. As a result, the Islamic religion greatly influences the culture as well as the living style of the society. Only some Mesqan are Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, and a very few are Protestants. Beside the Mesqan-speaking area proper, a considerable number of Mesqan live in the capital Addis Ababa, where they earn their livelihood as merchants at the Merkato.

The Language

Mesqan is a Gurage language belonging to the South Ethio-Semitic division of the Ethio-Semitic language group. The Mesqan-speaking area is surrounded by Dobbi speakers in the north, by Wolane and Mesqan speakers in the west, by Mareqo speakers in the east and by Silt'e speakers in the south. The Mesqan language is said to have no regional dialectal variation (cf. Ernst-August 1980). It is not a written language, but predominantly used for oral communication.

There are different classifications of the Gurage languages among which Hetzron (1972) is commonly accepted until today. Hetzron (1972, but also 1977) divides the Gurage languages into two major typological groups, Gunnän-Gurage versus Eastern Gurage. Eastern Gurage contains Zay, Silt'e and Wolane. Gunnän-Gurage is further subdivided into two branches: Northern Gurage (mainly also a typological division) and Western Gurage. In genetic terms, Northern Gurage contains only Kistane, Dobbi and perhaps the extinct †Gälila. In typological terms, Mesqan is also included under Northern Gurage since all these languages have a different set of morphemes that are attached to the verb in affirmative indicative main clauses. The Western Gurage group, a genetic unit, contains Mesqan versus Central and Peripheral Western Gurage.

The Central Western Gurage group contains Chaha, Gumer, Ezha and Gura, while the Peripheral Western Gurage group contains Gyeto, Inor, Ener and Endegagn. The varieties as part of Central and Peripheral Western Gurage are generally believed to represent dialects belong to two languages. Hetzron's (1972) classification of Ethio-Semitic languages with some modifications

concerning the Gurage languages by Meyer, (2011), the position of Mesqan is also under Western Gurage group and put alone since it is a two tense group language. Leslau (1969, 1992) further states that Mesqan, Mesqan and Dobbi may form a separate division in Western Gurage.

Initially, Hetzron (1969) and afterwards also Hetzron, & Bender, (1976) propose that the Gurage languages are not a homogeneous group from a linguistic point of view because Northern Gurage, i.e., Kistane, Dobbi and †Gälila, form a unit in Outer South Ethio-Semitic which is nearer to †Gafat than to other Gurage languages. Furthermore, Eastern Gurage is nearer to Harari than to any other Gurage language. Thus, Hetzron (1969, 1972, 1996) proposes that the name Gurage is not a significant linguistic term but rather denotes the geographical region from the Gibe River in the west to Lake Zway in the east, and from the Awash River in the north to the Gibe River in the southwest. As such, it refers to the group of Semitic-speaking people who are surrounded by Cushitic-speaking people to the southwest of Addis Ababa. The genetic classification of Mesqan as West Gurage language is commonly accepted (cf. Cohen 1931; Bender 1971; Hetzron 1972, 1977, 1997) while Leslau (1969, 1992) is of the opinion that its sub-classification is still controversial.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

The study is qualitative and empirical in nature, and mainly relies on primary linguistic data. Since the researcher is not a speaker of Mesqan, native speakers of the language were consulted. The data were gathered from seven native speakers of Mesqan during 12 months of fieldwork conducted between 2011 and 2012 in Butajira, Misraq Imbor, Mirab Imbor, Misraq Mesqan and Mirab Mesqan. During my fieldwork, I had five male and two female language consultants whose first native language was Mesqan and who had a good knowledge of Amharic. They all were born within the speech community of Mesqan where they also obtained their primary and secondary school education. Besides their native language and Amharic, they speak English. During my fieldwork, I spent most of my time in Butajira which is the administrative center of the Mesqan Woreda, but I also undertook several shorter trips to Misraq Imbor, Mirab Imbor, Misraq Mesqan and Mirab Mesqan. I started my fieldwork by eliciting words and sentences. Next, I recorded free speech texts then datas were transcribed, edited and translated. The presentation of the data is not based on a single linguistic model or theory, but is intentionally eclectic descriptive. I used a structural approach for identifying phonemes and

morphemes. Morpho-syntactic phenomena were described on the basis of major findings in linguistics typology. Based on The Leipzig Glossing Rules, most of the data are presented in an interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme version with four lines. The first line represents the actual utterance. The second line contains underlying or hypothetical morphemes or morpheme combinations which are glossed in the third line; the fourth line is an English translation usually in a literary style.

IMPERSONAL PASSIVE IN GURAGE LANGUAGES

With regard to Gurage languages, Leslau, (1992) states that the Impersonal is formed from a regular verb base to which a special Impersonal marker is attached that replaces the regular subject agreement marker. In addition, an Impersonal verb is obligatorily marked by a heavy object agreement marker. According to Leslau, (1992) and Hetzron (1972; 1997), the origin of the Impersonal marker is the Proto Ethio-Semitic plural marker *-u that has developed into the non-segmental feature labialization ^w which attaches to the right-most labilizable consonant within a verb. Hetzron (1977) further mentions that this labialization entails the palatalization of the root-final consonant.

Previous works on Mesqan focus only on data for its genetic and typological classification in relation to other Gurage languages, while the present study provides a comprehensive description of the Mesqan Impersonal Passive. The study will contribute to our understanding of the Mesqan language in particular and to Gunnän-Gurage languages in general.

Formation of Mesqan Impersonal Passive

Mesqan Impersonal passives are created by diverse alters on the base of verbs. Labialization and palatalization cause numerous varies of the morphology on Impersonal forms of Mesqan verbs. The labial and velar consonants in the third person singular masculine active perfective verb altered to labialized consonants in the Impersonal passive verbs; in contrast alveolar and velar consonants altered to palatalized consonants. The broad phonological changes in Mesqan language Impersonals are the insight of the trait labialization and palatalization.

In general, morphologies establish in the Impersonal passive forms of Mesqan can be classified into consonantal and vocalic varies in the Impersonal passive. The applicability of the labialization and palatalization procedure can be rely on the consonant and vocalic radicals of verb

root in one hand and on the position of radicals in the stem on the other hand.

The Impersonal marker for perfective verbs is the non-segmental feature labialization plus palatalization, i.e ^{w/y}, which yields the labialization of the rightmost labializable consonant in a root and palatalization of the last root consonant. In addition, the Impersonal verb has to be marked by a heavy object agreement marker, which is most commonly the 3SG.M object marker -y, as in the following examples:

- (1) *f^wäğğim.*
fägğ-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
finish.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has finished (it).'
- (2) *räkk^wäbim.*
räkkäb-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
find.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has found (it).'
- (3) *m^wezzänim.*
mezzän-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
weigh.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has weighed (him).'
- (4) *f^wärräğim.*
färräd-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
judge.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has judged (him).'
- (5) *käff^wäčim.*
käffät-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
open.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has opened (it).'

The Impersonal marker -^{w/y} triggers the labialization of the first root consonants *f* and *m* in (1 and 3) and the second root consonants *k* in (2), respectively. In (4) the first root consonant *f* and the final root consonant *d* are labialized and palatalized respectively. While in (5), the second root consonant *f* and the final root consonant *t* are labialized and palatalized respectively. This palatalization is lacking in (1) and (2) because in the former the geminated root-final consonant *ğ* is already a palatal consonant. In the latter case since root-final consonant *b* is a labial consonant it is not palatalized. Note that if two velar consonants found word-initially and medially, the medial is labialized (see 22 & 33 below).

In considering the above examples, Mesqan Impersonal is produced by varied amends on the base of verbs. ^{w/y} bring a number of alters of the morphology on Impersonal forms of Mesqan verbs. The labials and post-palatals in the third person singular masculine perfective verb changed to labialized consonants in the Impersonal verbs; in

contrast alveolar and post-palatals consonants change to palatalized consonants. The common phonological vary in the Mesqan language Impersonals are the realization of the feature w/y .

The changes in consonant sound in Mesqan Impersonal passive construction can be categorized into labials alveo-palatals and post-palatals consonant sounds in which they will appear everywhere or in the final position of a verb stem (Refer 1-5).

When the vowel radical *a* comes as final element in which it leads alveolar consonants in a verb base, it is altered to palatalized *e*, although it is not a sign of Impersonal passive, in the Impersonal passive form. As we have argued the preceded alveolars are also altered to their relevant palatalized form in the Impersonal structure, as in the following examples:

- (6) *b^wägğem.*
bädda- w/y -y-m- \emptyset
take.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has taken (it).'
- (7) *k^wäččem.*
k'tt'a- w/y -y-m- \emptyset
punish.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has punished (him).'

Palatal consonants found at the end of perfective verb root stay the same in the Impersonal, as in the following examples:

- (8) *f^wäčč'im.*
fäčč' $-w/y$ -y-m- \emptyset
grind.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has ground (it).'
- (9) *f^wägğ'im.*
fägğ' $-w/y$ -y-m- \emptyset
finish.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has finished (it).'

Verbs with palatal co-articulated final root consonant alter the feature palatalization to labialization in the Impersonal, as in the following example:

- (10) *zinägğ^wim.*
zinägğ^w- w/y -y-m- \emptyset
speak.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has spoken (him).'

There are exceptional verbs recorded regardless of the same feature both in the active perfective and Impersonal passive forms in which palatalization remains palatalization in the Impersonal form, as in the following example:

- (11) *wakk^yim.*
wakk^y- w/y -y-m- \emptyset

speak.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has spoken (him).'

Palatal co-articulated consonants remain the same in the Impersonal when they emerge with other palatalized consonants. However, the consonant next to the palatal co-articulated consonants will have *y* or will be palatalized in the Impersonal, as in the following examples:

- (12) *g^yägğ^yäč'im.*
g^yägğ^yät- w/y -y-m- \emptyset
accompany.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has accompanied (him).'
- (13) *k^yäčč'im.*
k^yätt' $-w/y$ -y-m- \emptyset
exhaust.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has exhausted (it).'

Most verbs with labial and velar and with final root alveolar consonant excluding (*l*, *r*, *n*) can be palatalized or labialized in the Impersonal, as in the following example:

- (14) *m^wezzänim.*
mezzän- w/y -y-m- \emptyset
weigh.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has weighed (him).'

When consonants like labials and velars precede the alveolars (*l*, *r*, *n*), they will have a labialization feature in the Impersonal, as in the following examples:

- (15) *k'äbb^wärim.*
k'äbbär- w/y -y-m- \emptyset
bury.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has buried (him).'
- (16) *säbb^wärim.*
säbbär- w/y -y-m- \emptyset
weigh.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has weighed (him).'

In general, labial, velar and palatal co-articulated consonants form labialization in the Impersonal construction. As a result, the labialization process in the Impersonal is formed from velars (*k*, *g*, *k'*, *x*), labials (*b*, *m*, *f*) and palatal co-articulated consonants (*k^y*, *g^y*, *k^y*, *x^y*) yields (*k^w*, *g^w*, *k^w*, *x^w*), (*b^w*, *m^w*, *f^w*) and (*k^w*, *g^w*, *k^w*, *x^w*) respectively. Labialization appears with no restriction of position of the verb root, i.e. it can appear in the first, second, third or fourth roots, if the labial or the velar consonant is found alone. Furthermore, the alveolar as final root consonants in the perfective verbs are changed to palatals in the Impersonal verbs.

Synchronically, the Impersonal marker and the 3PL.M are two different morphemes in Mesqan: the former is $-w/y$, but the latter is $-o$. Consequently,

a perfective verb marked for a 3PL.M subject and a 3SG.M object can be clearly distinguished from the corresponding Impersonal verb, as shown in (17) and (18) vis-à-vis (19) and (20), respectively:

- (17) *k'äbbäroyim.*
k'äbbär-o-y-m-ø
bury.PFV-3PL.M.SBJ-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'They have buried (him).'
- (18) *mezzänoyim.*
mezzän-o-y-m-ø
weigh.PFV-3PL.M.SBJ-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'They have weighed (him).'

With imperfective and jussive verbs, the Impersonal marker also includes the third person *y-* or *yä-*, respectively:

- (19) *yim^wezzäni.* Imperfective
y-mezzän-^{w/y}-y
3-weigh.IPFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ
'One weighs/will weigh (him).'
- (20) *yäm^wezzänim.* Jussive
yä-mezzän-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
3-weigh.JUS-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One should weigh (him).'

The object marker is an obligatory part of the Impersonal construction. Therefore, the examples in (1)–(5), (19), and (20) are ambiguous with regard to the interpretation of the 3SG.M object marker *y-*. It might refer to an actual male individual or a non-human entity, which is indicated by the parenthesized personal pronouns in English translation. However, the object marker in these examples need not to have an actual referent; it can also be the morphologically default form, as object marking is an obligatory part of the Impersonal construction. In this case, the Impersonal construction in the above examples simply emphasizes the verbal action as such without reference to any of its arguments.

There are some verbs with reduplicated consonants in Mesqan. These consonants can apply palatalization/labialization on both consonants in the Impersonal passive form. The feature PAL/LAB is applied when the last two radical has the trait to be labialized or palatalized, as in the following examples:

- (21) *mürämm^wärim.*
mürämmär -^{w/y}-y-m-ø
examine.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has examined (him).'
- (22) *kišäkk^wäšim.*

kišäkkäs-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
fracture.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has fractured (it).'

As shown above the trait labialization/palatalization is applied when the last radical in the verb acquires palatalized or labialized. However, the labializable/palatalizable consonants obtain labialization and palatalization in the Impersonal passive as they emerge in the regular perfective template.

If the last two radicals in regular perfective verbs are similar alveolars, both are altered to the same palatalized consonants in the Impersonal passive, as in the following examples:

- (23) *k^wäššäšim.*
kässäs-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
accuse.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has accused (him).'
- (24) *g^wägğägim.*
gäddäd-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
prick.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has pricked (it).'

As shown from the data, most parallel last radical verbs of alveolars have the like reduplicative palatalized complements in the Impersonal passive forms.

This type of alter will also role on labialized consonants. The verb form in the perfective form of the Impersonal is used interchangeably, as in the following examples:

- (25) *k'äff^wäf^wim.*
k'äffäf-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
cut the edges.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has cut the edges (it).'
- (26) *aβräg^wäg^wim.*
aβrägğäg-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
shock.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has shocked (him).'

However, both in palatalized and labialized cases, PAL/LAB changes do not function in all reduplicated alveolar and labial consonants, as in the following examples:

- (27) *t'ämmäm^wim.*
t'ämmäm-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
refuse.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has refused (it).'
- (28) *g^wättäčim.*
g^wättät-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
pull.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has pulled (it).'

As the process of identical last alveolar consonants in the active verb forms are palatalized in the Impersonal passive form do not work on sonorant consonants in all forms of Impersonal passive forms, as in the following example:

- (29) *wärrärim.*
wärrär-^{w/y-y-m-ø}
surround.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has surrounded (it).'

- (30) *at'allälim.*
at'alläl-^{w/y-y-m-ø}
filter.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has filtered (it).'

In the case of four radical verbs, if alveolar and bilabial consonants come together in one verb the change will be on the last and second radicals, as in (31) or the change will show only on the last radical, as in (32). This also works with alveolar consonants, as in (33):

- (31) *sib^wässäβ^wim.*
sibässäβ-^{w/y-y-m-ø}
gather.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has gathered (it).'

- (32) *č'ifäčč'äf^wim.*
č'ifäčč'äf-^{w/y-y-m-ø}
discharge.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has discharged (it).'

- (33) *kišäkk^wäšim.*
kišäkkäs-^{w/y-y-m-ø}
fracture.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One has fractured (it).'

Morpho-Syntactic Properties of Impersonal Passive

Perfective, imperfective and jussive forms of Impersonal passive have diverse Morpho-syntactic properties concerning subject marker. Mainly, there is no subject marker in the Impersonal passive verb form. However, the imperfective and jussive forms of Impersonals have default prefixes *y-* and *yä-* as subject marker, correspondingly. These two default markers are Morpho-syntactically necessary in imperfective and jussive forms of Impersonal passive, as in the following examples:

- (34) *yim^wezzäni.* Imperfective
y-mezzän-^{w/y-y}
3-weigh.IPFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ
'One weighs/will weighs (him).'

- (35) *yäm^wezzänim.* Jussive
yä-mezzän-^{w/y-y-m-ø}
3-weigh.JUS-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One should weigh (him).'

The Impersonal passive verb can also be formed with applicative marker either malefactive or benefactive instead of object agreement markers, as in the following examples:

- (36) *rawda yišäkičib^wä mädär wäräčč.*
rawda y-šäkt-^{w/y-b^w-ä}
Rawda 3-work.IPFV-IP-MAL-
3SG.M.OBJ
wär-äčč mädär
go.PFV- place
3SG.F
'Rawda went to the place at which she works.'

- (37) *ali yit'ok'išib^wä k'ar siyä.*
ali y-t'ok'äs-^{w/y-b^w-ä}
Ali 3-beg.IPFV-IP-MAL-3SG.M.OBJ
k'ar siy-ä
thing buy.PFV-3SG.M
'Ali bought a thing for begging.'

When *y-* emerges with consonant initial verbs in the imperfective verb form the epenthetic vowel (central vowel) *i* is inserted and when *yä-* appears with vowel initial verbs in the jussive form there is a deletion of *ä*, as in the following examples:

- (38) *yim^wezzäni.* Imperfective
y-mezzän-^{w/y-y}
3-weigh.IPFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ
'One weighs/will weighs (him).'

- (39) *yat'allälim.* Jussive
yä-at'alläl-^{w/y-y-m-ø}
3-filter.JUS-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One should filter (it).'

The subject position in the personal passive is taken over by the object of the allied transitive verb. Therefore, a noun with a patient role happens in the syntactic place of agents, which frequently defers a semantic pattern of the personal passive verb which may just be valid in definite discourse backgrounds. On the contrary, in the Impersonal passive, the number of arguments and their semantic roles are not altered. The subject remains the agent in the verbal affair, while it is faded out semantically, and the objects stay their patient role, as in the following examples:

- (40) *ali mät'af asiyä.*
ali mät'af asy-ä
Ali book sell.PFV-3SG.M
'Ali sold a book.'

- (41) *mät'afi tasiyä.*
mät'af-i tä-asy-ä
book-DEF PASS-sell.PFV-3SG.M
'The book was sold.'

- (42) *mät'afi asiyim.*
mät'af-i asy-^{w/y-y-m-ø}

book-DEF sell.PFV-IP-
3SG.M.OBJ-
CNV-PRS
'One has sold the book.'

The passive in (41) holds extra semantic information additionally to stressing the object *mät'af* 'book', while the Impersonal passive in (42) emphasizes on the verbal affair counting the object.

Arguments and adjuncts are marked by diverse Morpho-syntactic way on a verb. Regarding arguments, subjects are obligatorily marked by subject markers on verbs, whereas the marking of objects with object markers on verbs is fewer firms. Likewise, the marking of adjuncts by a grouping of applicative and object markers on verbs is elective. Besides the subject, only one other argument or adjunct can be marked per verb. Arguments and adjuncts need not be overt phrases; however can only be represented by agreement marking on a verb. Mesqan Impersonal passive constructions are used with arguments and adjuncts of a verb. In such formations of Impersonal passive the human actor as subject of a verb will not be seen, as in the following examples:

(43) *gäße yarim mät'afi yasiyi.*
gäße y-ar-^{w/y}-y-m
market 3-go.IPFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV
mät'af-i y-asy-^{w/y}-y
book-DEF 3-sell.IPFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-
CNV
'When one goes to market one will sell
the book.'

(44) *bägäße iskrībito bät'aff'im mät'afi yisiyi.*
bä-gäße iskrībito bā-t'aff-^{w/y}-y-
m-ø
LOC-market pen COND-miss.
PFV-IP-
3SG.M.OBJ-
CNV-PRS
mät'af-i y-sy-^{w/y}-y
book-DEF 3-sell.IPFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ
'If a pen is not found in the market one
will buy the book.'

(45) *tägobbewta ge yinäb'ari.*
tä-gobbe-äwta ge
COM-brother-POSS.3SG.M with
y-näbär-^{w/y}-y
3-live.IPFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ
'One lives with (one's) brother.'

(46) *yärami sär b'äddem.*
yä-äram-i sär bädda-^{w/y}-y-m-
ø
GEN-cow-DEF grass take.PFV-IP-
3SG.M.OBJ-
CNV-PRS

'One took the cow's grass.'

From above, the performer is not identified clearly except the sentence entails that the verbal act is confirmed by a human unit. Hence, the Impersonal passive cannot be produced from verbs which cannot have a human unit as subject. As in (43) and (44) the Impersonal passive in Mesqan shaped, typically from transitive verbs with a human player. Though, there is no recognized subject, by default there is 3SG.M default human player. Therefore, it is identified by default, that the pronoun 'one' in the Impersonal passive signifies 3SG.M default human performer. The Impersonal passive can be also created from intransitive verbs as in (45) which are marked by a default 3SG.M object marker or applicative. As in (46) ditransitive verbs obligatorily signify their dative object or use applicative markers; they cannot mark the direct object on the verb.

Remarkably the verb *barä* 'He said' states the reference by the third singular masculine object markers in the Impersonal structure, as in the following example:

(47) *äga «t'ämm'em» baräčče.*
äga t'amma-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
water be_thirsty.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-
CNV-PRS
bar-äčč-e
say.PFV-3SG.F.SBJ-1SG.OBJ
'She said that, "one is thirsty."'

Therefore, the verb *barä* 'he said' appears following the Impersonal verb form to prove the reference in the Impersonal structure. The verb by itself has Impersonal form, which holds, *b'arim* 'one said', as in the following example:

(48) *äga «t'ämm'em» b'arim.*
äga t'amma-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
water be_thirsty.PFV -IP-3SG.M.OBJ-
CNV-PRS
bar-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
say.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
'One said that, "one is thirsty."'

The Impersonal verb *b'arim* 'one said' also utilize as object marker in a sentence. The object marker, too, can submit to the addressee to whom somewhat has been held, as in the following example:

(49) *rawda yägğ amäl nännäfa b'arim.*
rawda yä-ägğ amäl
Rawda GEN-hand character
bar-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
say.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
nänn-ä-b-a
exist.PRS-3SG.M.SBJ-MAL-3SG.F.OBJ
'One said that Rawda is a thief'

(lit. one said Rawda has a character of stealing).’

An Impersonal form of *b^warim* ‘one said’ is also serving to stress on something and to wonder in discourse, as in the following example:

- (50) *ali čäññäm b^warim.*
 ali čäññ-ä-m-ø
 Ali come.PFV-3SG.M-CNV-PRS
 bar-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
 say.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
 ‘Did one say Ali has gone?’

Impersonal passive structures are also used to state universal truth. Consequently, it is uttered by means of the imperfective form of the Impersonal form of the verb, as in the following example:

- (51) *säb yäroššä änsisawu yib^wari.*
 ali yä-rošš-ä
 Ali REL-accustomed.PFV-3SG.M
 änsisa-wu y-bar-^{w/y}-y
 animal-COP.3SG.M 3-say.PFV-IP-
 3SG.M.OBJ
 ‘Man is said to be domesticated animal.’

The Mesqan people employ diverse types of greetings depending on the time of the day or in different situations. The greetings in the language are also use Impersonal passive form, as in the following examples:

- (52) *fäyya addärim?*
 fäyya addär-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
 good spend_the_night.PFV-IP-
 3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
 ‘Good morning! (lit. Did one spend the night well?)’

- (53) *fäyya walim?*
 fäyya wal-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
 good spend_the_day.PFV-IP-
 3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
 ‘Good afternoon! (lit. Did one spend the day well?)’

- (54) *fäyya am^wäššim?*
 fäyya amäšš-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
 good spend_the_evening.PFV-IP-
 3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
 ‘Good evening! (lit. Did one spend the evening well?)’

From the above examples, Impersonal passives used for greetings are not affirmatives rather interrogatives. This kind of structures mainly the matter of discourse. When one requests one’s healthiest condition the way he/she speak the words may have, yet, tone. In the real discourse situations the number and gender of the addressee depends on the situation, however in the

Impersonal passive structures the addressee is (52)-(54) constantly unknown second person. On the other hand, typically third person is disguised in the Impersonal passive forms.

In addition, there is another way of asking greetings with Impersonal passive form. That is using one of the WH question pronoun *bä-mîn* (INST-what) ‘how’, as in the following example:

- (55) *bämîn addärim?*
 bä-mîn addär-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
 INST- spend_the_night.PFV-IP-

what 3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
 ‘Good morning! (lit. How did one spend the night?)’

As shown above, the Impersonal passive structures of the verb in greetings are used lacking any social space. In other words the structure does not explain how far the contact is socially. However, if the speaker and addressee do not recognize each other this kind of structure serve as the only way to ask greetings. The following examples are words to say goodbye:

- (56) *bäfäyya wajim!*
 bä-fäyya wal-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
 INST- spend_the_day.IMP-IP-
 good 3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
 ‘Have a good day! (lit. one spend the day in a good manner)’

- (57) *bäfäyya amšim!*
 bä-fäyya amš-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
 INST- spend_the_evening.IMP-IP-
 good 3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
 ‘Have a good evening! (lit. one spend the evening in a good manner)’

- (58) *bäfäyya ädärim!*
 bä-fäyya ädär-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
 INST- spend_the_night.IMP-IP-
 good 3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
 ‘Have a good night! (lit. one spend the night in a good manner)’

- (59) *bäfäyya sänbičim!*
 bä-fäyya sänbit-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
 INST- spend_the_week.IMP-IP-
 good 3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
 ‘Have a good week! (lit. one spend the week in a good manner)’

In the language, location and instrument nouns are productively derived from relative verbs with an Impersonal subject. Furthermore, they are marked by the applicative suffix *-b^w* followed by an invariable 3SG.M object agreement marker. Most commonly the relative verb in location and instrument nouns are in the imperfective aspect, as in the following examples:

- (60) *zäyba yäsäč' b^wä mädär wäräčč.*
zäyba y-säč' -^{w/y}-b^w-ä
Zeyba 3-drink.IPFV-IP-MAL-
3SG.M.OBJ
mädär wär-äčč
place go.PFV-3SG.F
 'Zeyba went to a place at which she drinks.'

- (61) *ali yiwärb^wä k'ar siyä.*
ali y-wär-^{w/y}-b^w-ä
Ali 3-go.IPFV-IP-MAL-3SG.M.OBJ
k'ar siy-ä
thing buy.PFV-3SG.M
 'Ali bought a thing which serves for traveling.'

As shown above, location nouns is morphologically similar to instrumental nouns, the only differences among them is that location noun, as in (60) uses the optional noun *k'ar* 'thing' while the instrumental noun, as in (61) uses the optional noun *mädär* 'place' which is used as head of the relative verb.

Impersonal passive can be also used with reciprocal verbs. However, it is identified that the performer is human and the speaker can have pre-knowledge concerning the doer of the event, as in the following examples:

- (62) *täk'w'it'ätt'ärim*
tä-k'it'ätt'är-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
PASS-kill.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
 'kill each other'
- (63) *täšim^wämm^wähim*
tä-šimämmäh-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
PASS-support.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
 'support each other'

Semantically, the hidden subject in the Impersonal passive stands for a human entity. Mainly, the Impersonal passive forms are believed to be established in verbs which have a human agent as a subject. Though, some verbs do not form Impersonal passive construction. The verbs can have syntactical Impersonal passive structure except they are not semantically, meaningful. So, the Impersonal structure does not at all happen with verbs whose subject cannot be a human. Consider some of the following verbs with no human subject:

- (64) *nätt'ärä*
nätt'är-ä
Melt.PFV-3SG.M
 'melt'

- (65) *räggäfü*
räggäf-ä
fall down.PFV-3SG.M
 'fall down (leaves)'

Although this type of verbs do not have human subject and do not give up Impersonal passive, we can outline Impersonal passive by adding a prefix *a-*, which gathering as a causative marker. Afterward it explains the act completed is caused by another external agent, as in the following examples:

- (66) *anätt'ärim*
a-nätt'är-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
CAUS.D-Melt.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
 'One caused to melt'
- (67) *aräggäf^wim*
a-räggäf-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
CAUS.D-fall down.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
 'One caused to fall down (leaves)'

Several verbs in the language can also form Impersonal passive when they come with the passive marker, as in (68):

- (68) *täkäbb^wärim*
tä-käbbär-^{w/y}-y-m-ø
PASS-respect.PFV-IP-3SG.M.OBJ-CNV-PRS
 'One become respected'

About semantics property of Impersonal passive there are verbs with dissimilar understandings or meanings, as in the following example:

- (69) *yifärb^wä*
y-bär-^{w/y}-b^w-ä
3-eat.IPFV-IP-MAL-3SG.M.OBJ
 i. 'instrument which serves for eating'
 ii. 'item of food that complements another'

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the findings from the previous section on the introduction and Impersonal passive of Mesqan – a language which has not been well studied previously. Thus, the major aim of this study was to present a comprehensive Impersonal description of this language. To this effect the study is divided into two main sections: section one is introduction which contains the people and their language, and research methodology, section two is Impersonal passive in Gurage languages which contains formation of Mesqan Impersonal passive and Morpho-syntactic properties of Impersonal passive.

Labial, velar and palatal co-articulated consonants form labialization in the Impersonal structure. Thus, labialization and palatalization are investigated as they are Impersonal passive markers in the language. Labialization appears with no restriction of position of the verb root, i.e. it can appear in the first, second, third or fourth roots, if the labial or the velar consonant is found alone. Furthermore, the alveolar as final root consonants in the perfective verbs are changed to palatals in the Impersonal verbs.

There are other consonantal and vocalic (vowel) sound changes when the active verbs are changed to the Impersonal passive forms, in which labialization or palatalization features are realized. Morphologically, the different verb forms of Mesqan Impersonals do not have subject markers. But the imperfective and jussive templates have default subject markers. Impersonal passive verbs in the language imply different usages. They can be used to form instrumental nouns, location nouns, general facts, greetings, etc. Semantically, verbs in the Impersonal passive should have human agent as a subject but sometimes non human actors are emerged as a subject. The subject involves neither gender nor number. In general, the Mesqan Impersonal passive verb entails several morphologies in order to behavior diverse purposes. The common Impersonal passive markers in the language are labialization and palatalization features and the feature realization on other sounds. Therefore, Mesqan Impersonal passive structure is morphological with unidentified subject.

To conclude, this study provides a comprehensive description of the main Impersonal features of Mesqan. However, the study does not treat properties, types and impersonal passive constructions in different languages – this remains a task for further research.

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

†	extinct
*	hypothetical/ungrammatical form
∅	zero morpheme
3	third person
CAUS.D	direct causative
CNV	converb
IP	Impersonal
IPFV	imperfective
M	masculine
OBJ	object
PASS	passive
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PRS	present
SBJ	subject
SG	singular

w	labialization
y	palatalization

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