

The syntax of clitic constructions in Taqballit Berber

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Berber languages display an unusually large number of clitic forms. Like clitics in other languages, Berber clitics are characterized by a range of distinctive features. One of their main properties is that they are stressless and do not constitute fully prosodic constituents. As a consequence, they are phonologically dependent on 'non-clitic' entities, which are content and function words. Most Berber clitics can further be described as the stressless counterparts of a range of phrasal constituents (DP, PP, AP...). Inside clauses, they replace or, in many cases, double the lexical complements of verbal predicates and, therefore, constitute arguments of verbs. However, Berber clitics do not occur in the position defined by the verb's argument structure in the same way as non-clitic arguments do. Characteristically, they occur in various positions, within and outside of the verbal complex boundaries. These positions are fully restricted to clitic forms and, lexical arguments may never occur in these positions without affecting the grammaticality of the sentence. (Ouhalla, 2005; van der Leeuw, 1997; Pineda & Meza, 2003; Gerlach & Grijzenhout, 2000)

All the studies focusing on clitic constructions in Berber languages (not a lot after all) have looked intensively at the question of clitic placement. Two main hypotheses have been brought forwards to account for the range of positions occupied by clitics.

The most influential one, proposed by Ouhalla (1989, 2005) and Boukhris (1997), holds that clitics do project their own phrases in exactly the same positions as their non-clitic counterparts — the position determined by the argument structure of the verb — but move to the positions in which they surface in order to attach to specific hosts, determined by the syntax. The second type of analysis, proposed by Ouali (2005), holds that clitics project their own phrases in the position in which they occur at surface structure. The various positions and the types of host the clitics attach to are, therefore, not derived by clitic movement. There are a few problems raised by the current analyses on clitic positions in Berber, which I will describe in this paper. I will also argue that clitics in Taqballit Berber are base-generated as heads of a CIP, which left-adjoins to TP, in exactly the same way as clitics in Wackernagel's languages do. The various orders in which clitics are found depend on a specific type of movement, T to C movement. Furthermore, I argue that the negation marker 'ur' found across Berber languages is also a clitic.