Discourse-Configurationality and the Encoding of Semantic Macroroles in Taqbaylit Berber: Noun Phrases, Personal Affixes and Clitics

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Taqbaylit Berber (Afroasiatic) is spoken in the North of Algeria by about four million speakers, five if we include those living in Europe and America. It is generally presented as a VSO language, a claim against which we are going to argue in this paper.

Concentrating on the ‘subject’ and object NPs in relation to the verb and its affixes and clitics, we would first like to show that word order in Taqbaylit is quite flexible, and that it is based on topicality. Secondly, we would like to contest the assumption according to which NPs coreferential to subject affixes should be subjects, and to insist on the role of clitics and affixes as representatives of the core arguments of the verb. Taqbaylit will finally be presented as a discourse-configurational language, which retains traces of a former stative-active predicational system.

1. MORPHOSYNTAX
Typologically, Berber is head-marking at the level of the clause: the verbal stem is completed by an obligatory personal affix which refers to the main participant of the situation.

(1) ye-čča: 3SM-eat/P:PERF.: ‘he ate/has eaten’.1
Basic utterance = personal affix: ye- + stem: čča.
Stem = root (čč) + aspeclural scheme (here perfect/ive, realized -a).

It can be followed by clitics (dative and accusative), and a proximal or distal particle. The order of clitics is rigid.

(2) taqcieq te-fka yas ten iD
   girl 3FS-find/P:PERF DAT:3S ACC:3PM P:PROX.
The girl gave them to him/her.

Predicates can be verbal or non-verbal, but our focus in this paper will be on verbal predication. The verbal system is dominated by aspect, which is marked thanks to vocalic alternations, prefixation or consonant gemination.

1 Abbreviations are as follows: 1, 2 or 3 refer to person; S = singular, P = plural, F = feminine, M = masculine; DAT = dative clitic, ACC = accusative clitic; AS = annexion state; PERF = perfect/ive aspect, IMPERF = imperfective, AOR = aorist; CAUS = causative prefix; P.PROX = proximal particle, ANAPH = anaphoric particle, IRR = irrealis particle, CONC = concomitance particle.
Preverbal particles are used to modify the basic aspectual schemes and provide specific modal and aspectual values (*irrealis*, progressive). As far as the noun phrase is concerned, there are no articles, and NPs are either in the citation (unmarked) form, the ‘free state’, or in the ‘annexion state’ (marked). Independent pronouns form a special paradigm, with no state alternations. Possessors always follow possessees, and adjectives are placed after nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Verbal affixes</th>
<th>Ind.Pro.</th>
<th>Dative clitic</th>
<th>Accus. clitic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1S</td>
<td>———γ</td>
<td>nekk (i(ni))</td>
<td>(i)yi</td>
<td>(i)yi</td>
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<tr>
<td>1PF</td>
<td>n ———</td>
<td>nekknti</td>
<td>(y)γγ</td>
<td>(y)γγ</td>
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<tr>
<td>1PM</td>
<td></td>
<td>nekkni</td>
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<tr>
<td>2SF</td>
<td>t ——— d</td>
<td>kemmi(i(ni))</td>
<td>(y)am</td>
<td>(i)kem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2SM</td>
<td></td>
<td>kečč(i(ni))</td>
<td>(y)ak</td>
<td>(i)k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2PF</td>
<td>t ——— mt</td>
<td>kunnti</td>
<td>(y)ṣa(k)went</td>
<td>(i)kent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2PM</td>
<td>t ——— m</td>
<td>kunwi</td>
<td>(y)awen</td>
<td>(i)ken</td>
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<tr>
<td>3SF</td>
<td>t ———</td>
<td>neṭṭat</td>
<td>(y)as</td>
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<tr>
<td>3SM</td>
<td>i ———</td>
<td>neṭṭa</td>
<td>t</td>
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<tr>
<td>3PF</td>
<td>——— nt</td>
<td>nutenti</td>
<td>(y)asent</td>
<td>tent</td>
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<tr>
<td>3PM</td>
<td>——— n</td>
<td>nutni</td>
<td>(y)asen</td>
<td>ten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **TAQBABILIT BERBER AS A ‘FLEXIBLE WORD ORDER LANGUAGE’**

2.1. **WORD ORDER VARIATIONS**

Let us accept the provisional definition of subject and object as full NPs or independent pronouns coreferential to personal affixes or clitics (or directly governed by the verb in the case of postverbal objects). We will see below that this definition is questionable, but for the time being it allows us to use the standard terminology for word order variation.

In that framework, Taqbaylit is usually characterized as a VSO language. This classification is problematic when tested on actual data. Indeed, many utterances display an SVO order; others display OVS, SOV, or OSV orders. The following example shows variations on the predications *Yunes* married *Tawes.*

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2 Actually, what is labelled V is the verb completed by its obligatory personal affix. Cl. stands for clitic (here ACC/3SF). *y-γγ* is analyzed as 3SM-marry/PERF.
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(3) yuy Yunes Tawes \(\Rightarrow\) VSO
Yunes yuy Tawes \(\Rightarrow\) SVO
Tawes yuy if Yunes \(\Rightarrow\) OV Cl. S
Yunes Tawes yuy -it \(\Rightarrow\) SOV Cl.
Tawes Yunes yuy -it \(\Rightarrow\) OSV Cl.

Though not all possibilities are equally felicitous and pragmatically motivated, all are nevertheless acceptable variants.

It therefore appears that Taqbaylit is not VSO, but in Givon’s (1988: 253) terms a ‘flexible word-order language’ belonging to type (i), that is to say a language ‘with flexibility of both OBJ and SUBJ positions’.

For those languages, pragmatic factors are of extreme importance in the motivation of word order. What factors may then explain the distribution of word order in Taqbaylit?

First of all, the study of a continuous narrative excerpt gave the following counts, out of a total of 110 verbal predications.\(^3\)

Table 2: word-order variation in a narrative excerpt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V</th>
<th>VS</th>
<th>SV</th>
<th>OV</th>
<th>VO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, almost half of the predications involve only a minimal utterance, made of a verb and its obligatory personal affix. This in itself might cast doubt on the heuristic value of word order combination comparisons involving only full NPs. As for SV and VS orders, they are almost equivalently distributed. Finally, objects tend to follow the verb.

2.2. PREVERBAL NPS

2.2.1. ‘SUBJECTS’

In order to select the factors triggering the various word orders, we have studied the linguistic contexts in which the various combinations occurred. We first focused on ‘subjects’, then on objects. Our findings did not exactly match Givon’s (1988: 276), who states that “in fully-flexible type (i) languages, such as Papago, Ute, Nez-Percé or Klamath, preposing a constituent may occur in a wide range of discourse contexts: importance, unpredictability due to referential distance, referential complexity or contrast-emphasis, thematic discontinuity.” Only contrast-emphasis and thematic discontinuity appeared to be factors triggering SV and OV orders in our corpus.

\(^3\) We have only considered verbs completed by 3\(^{rd}\) person affixes, and only full NPs and independent pronouns have been taken into account as S and O.

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In the following example, the mother and a friend of hers are holding the strings of the loom, while the little girl is going back and forth with the shuttle.

(4) Neṭṭat d yiwet ṭṭf-ent tisegra,  
She and one hold/PERF-3PF strings,  
She and one (of her friends) held the strings,  
neṭṭat la sent te-zzazzal.  
she CONC DAT-3PF 3SF-run/CAUS.IMPERF  
(while) she ran to and fro.

In the preceding example, the preposed ‘subjects’, two independent pronouns, are contrasted to each other. In numerous cases, what is marked is an articulation in the narration, a topical shift.

This is not related to newness of referent, since in the following case, ta-kurt, ‘the shuttle’ had just been mentioned. But we clearly have a shift in the narration: from then on, the little girl will follow the shuttle, never see her mother again, and live a number of adventures.

(5) Armi d yiwen ubrid, te-zwi  
Until COP one time/AS, 3FS-twist/PERF  
Until the moment when the mother twisted the shuttle  
yas yem-m-as takurt deg ufus.  
DAT.3S mother-her shuttle from hand/AS.  
from the little girl’s hand.  
Takurt te-grareb.  
The shuttle 3FS-roll-away/PERF  
The shuttle rolled away.

2.2.2. OBJECTS
Objects can also be preposed, as in the following example, where the patient, tameṭṭut, ‘woman’, is topicalized.

(6) tameṭṭut kecm-ent ṣ tismin f yell-is  
woman enter/PERF.3PF ACC/3SF jealousies on daughter-her  
Jealousy towards her daughter took hold of the mother.

The only morphosyntactic difference between preposing a ‘subject’ and preposing an object is that in the latter case, an accusative clitic appears after the verb, here ṣ. The pragmatic motivation for this word order is emphasis on the mother’s reaction to the moon’s acknowledging the fact that the little girl is by far the most beautiful.

A study of those preposed NPs’ referential and grammatical characteristics showed that they generally had definite reference, and were always in the citation form, traditionally called ‘état libre’, or ‘free state’.

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Those discursive and grammatical features clearly classify the preposed NPs as topics, in the sense of Li & Thompson (1976: 461-465). Berberologists had in fact noticed those properties, and Galand, in his seminal article on the simple sentence in Berber (1964: 42) insisted on the fact that in Berber, those NPs, even when they were coreferential with subject affixes, were in fact topics: "pour éviter toute confusion avec le ‘sujet’ des linguistes, je donnerai à l’élément initial de tels énoncés le nom d’‘indicateur de thème’".

2.3. POSTVERBAL NPs

2.3.1. ‘Subjects’
As for postposed NPs, Givon (1988) does not give many details on their properties. Summing up Payne’s (1985) findings, he states that ‘the correlation between post-verbal word-order and informational predictability in Papago is categorial’ (1988: 261), and that ‘the postverbal NPs were thematically unimportant in the subsequent discourse’ (1988: 261).

In many cases, the last property is not verified. Indeed, typically, postposed ‘subjects’ appear in locative-existential contexts, such as for instance the introduction of new protagonists, who by definition are thematically important in the subsequent discourse, as is the case for teqcict, ‘girl’, in the following example:

(7) Yiw en wass te-rna yup es teqcict, One day/AS 3SF-add/PERF to-her girl/AS
One day she gave birth to a girl (lit. a girl added to her),
t-if’ i f . te-zyen
3SF-surpass/PERF ACC/3SF 3SF/be-beautiful/PERF
who was more beautiful
axir is.
Better GEN-3SF
than she was.

More generally, a frequent context for postposed ‘subjects’ is thetic utterances, in the sense of Sasse (1987: 511): “categorical sentences contain a predication base about which some state of affairs is predicated, while thetic sentences are simple nonpredicative assertions of states of affairs”.

In our examples, the verb and the postposed ‘subject’ are treated as a unit, either in an event-type predication (with a possible gloss in ‘X appears/happens...’) or in collocations, the NP functioning as semantic filler for the predicate. In none of the cases is the ‘subject’ treated as a topic, or more generally, as the starting point of the predication.
In the preceding example, the VS predication could be glossed as ‘arrival of the ogre’. Very often, those predications involve so-called ‘inaccusative’ or ‘ergative’ verbs. However, these are not the only classes of verbs that trigger the VS word order.

The following example is the idiomatic expression of subsiding anger.

(9) As kkes-n wurfan.

His anger will subside.

In those expressions, the relationship between the verb and what has traditionally been called ‘complément explicatif’ or ‘expansion référentielle’ is very close, the verb being generally rather ‘empty’ semantically (or at least very frequent and apt to be complemented by a number of possible NPs) and the NP providing it with an anchor.

Predictability does not seem to be an issue: in ‘appearance’ predications the NP can be considered as unpredictable whereas it is utterly predictable in idiomatic expressions. Theticity seems to be a more central factor for the presence of a postverbal ‘subject’.

Grammatically speaking, postverbal ‘subjects’ are marked: they are in the ‘annexion state’, a case that is common to postverbal ‘subjects’, NPs following prepositions or numerals, and genitives. They do not refer to prototypical agents, and are not necessarily definite. Those properties seem to identify the utterances containing those postverbal NPs with “sentence-focus constructions” (Lambrecht 2000: 624): “SF [sentence-focus] marking involves cancellation of those prosodic and/or morphosyntactic subject properties which are associated with the role of subjects as topic expressions in PF [predicate-focus] sentences”.

Indeed, the use of the ‘annexion state’ in clausal contexts could be considered as a detopicalizing device, together with the postverbal position of the NP, and its prosodic fusion in the verb’s intonational curve. Galand (1964: 40) had noticed this typical intonational contour “la courbe de l’intonation varie avec le contenu sémantique et affectif, mais sans être jamais interrompue. Comme l’opposition d’état, l’opposition d’intonation renseigne donc sur le degré de cohésion de l’énoncé”.

Finally, it is to be noted that preverbal NPs in the free state and postverbal NPs in the annexion state are also used in nonverbal predications, as in the following example:
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(10) argaz nni d babas.
man ANAPH. COP father-his
The man is his father.
d babas  urgaz nni.
COP father-his man/AS ANAPH.
The man is his father.

This shows that those NPs are not syntactic arguments in the traditional sense of the term.

Postverbal ‘subjects’ therefore seem to correlate with antitopic or focus, whereas preverbal ‘subjects’ (and objects) are unambiguously reconstructed as topics. This would qualify Taqbaylit Berber as a discourse-configurational language, in the sense of Kiss (2001: 1442): “We call a language discourse-configurational if it links either or both of the discourse-semantic functions topic and focus to particular structural positions.”

2.3.2. DIRECT OBJECTS
Apart from those postverbal NPs marked in the annexion state, there are postverbal NPs that are in the ‘free state’. These are the objects of transitive verbs. They cannot be confused with the other unmarked NPs because the latter, as topics, are preposed.

(11) Taqcict t-thee takurt.
Girl 3SP-follow/PUTF shuttle
The little girl followed the shuttle.

Those objects are either true patients, as in the previous example, or simply specifiers of activity-types, as in the following one. They can either be definite or indefinite, and are very close to the verb, either because they represent a core argument, or because they are semantic fillers.

(12) f-sedda  a D  y-ecc
3SM-pass/PUTF IRR P.PROX 3SM-eat/AOR supper.
He started to eat his supper.

Semantic fillers are normally not topicalized, and we can therefore state that the object clitic which appears in cases when the object NP is topicalized, represents an argument of the verb, corresponding to the macrorole Undergoer.4 But object clitics do not only appear when objects are topicalized. They can also announce an antitopic, as in the following example:

4 We use the terms Actor and Undergoer in their macrorole acception (Van Valin & La-Polla 1997: 141): semantic macroroles are ‘generalized semantic roles’, and they are thus called ‘because each of them subsumes a number of specific argument-types (thematic relations). The generalized AGENT-type role will be termed actor, and the generalized PATIENT-type role will be called undergoer”.

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(13) cegge-en t uqcic.\footnote{This example is borrowed from Galand (1964: 44).}  
send-3PM/PERF ACC/3SM boy/AS  
They sent the boy (litt. they sent him, the boy).

In the preceding example uqcic, ‘boy’ is a referential expansion of the accusative clitic t. It could have appeared without a clitic, but in that case would have been in the ‘free state’ (unmarked), and could have been interpreted as an indefinite:

(14) cegge-en aqcic.  
send-3PM/PERF boy  
They sent a/the boy.

We infer from this comparison that the ‘annexion state’ is a dependency mark, and that accusative clitics seem to imply definiteness of their coreferential NP.

2.3.3. OBLIQUES  
The third type of postverbal NP is exemplified below: uwayzniw, ‘ogre’, is introduced by preposition i, thus forming an oblique expression coreferential to the dative clitic as. The difference with the preceding example is that the ‘annexion state’ is triggered by the preposition itself (almost all prepositions assign that case to their dependents), and not by the dependency relation with the dative clitic.

(15) ġğa-n as ayla-s i uwayzniw.  
leave-3PM/PERF DAT/3S part-his to ogre/AS  
They left a portion for the ogre.

We shall see below that those oblique PPs cannot appear in the utterance if there is no dative clitic.

2.4. SYNTHESIS  
Preverbal NPs are topics, regardless of their referent (agent, patient, recipient, etc.). They are simply coindexed with a subject affix, or with accusative or dative clitics. They are unmarked for case (‘free state’).  
Postverbal NPs are either argument-adjuncts or direct objects.  

As argument-adjuncts they bear the ‘annexion state’, and are coindexed with a subject affix or an accusative clitic, or introduced by a preposition, the prepositional phrase being an adjunct to a dative clitic.  

As direct objects they are in the ‘free state’, and are directly governed by the verb, without any coreferential affix or clitic.
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Those facts not only point towards discourse-configurationality, as stated above, but also underline the complex interplay of position and morphological marking. The data show a clear distinction between government (direct object) and dependency (postverbal ‘subjects’, obliques). As far as arguments are concerned, the ‘annexion state’ is limited to postverbal NPs that are the dependents of affixes, clitics or prepositions. Conversely, the ‘free state’ is a default indicator of the syntactic independence of the NP if it is preverbal, and its government by the verb if it is postverbal.

3. AFFIXES AND CLITICS

3.1. AFFIXES
Taqbaylit Berber subject affixes are often circumfixes (see table 1), which convey information about person, gender and number. Contrary to English or French basic utterances, which must contain at least an unstressed pronoun (*leaves, or *part are not acceptable utterances), Taqbaylit basic sentences are composed of an affix and a stem (see example 1).

We have argued against the idea that those affixes should be considered as mere agreement markers (Mettouchi, forthcoming), on the basis of the fact that neither full NPs nor independent pronouns are grammatically necessary. Indeed, basic sentences composed of a verb and its affix without any ‘subject’ NP or independent pronoun are extremely frequent. In our narrative, 57% of 3rd person predicates involved no NP or pronoun, 43% being completed either by a preverbal NP or by a postverbal one (see table 2).

As early as 1964, Galand had claimed that the affixes, being the sole obligatory argument markers, were the true subjects.6 His claim was based on Martinet’s definition of the subject as the necessary appendage of the predicate “l’élément qui, dans tout énoncé non injonctif et non mutilé, accompagne nécessairement le prédicat” (1962: 76).

Leaving aside the dative and accusative clitics for the moment, we would like to concentrate on personal affixes in order to investigate further their semantic and pragmatic properties.

The narrative sequence below shows on which basis the reference-tracking system of personal affixes is organized. Affixes that are not directly coindexed with a NP or pronoun are in bold.


6 See Mettouchi (forthcoming) for more details, and bibliographical complements.
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y-cedda!", I-cedda ad y-ečč imensi. Y-nna yas: “Ay amšš, ig y-lha imensi bbwassa!”

She climbed in the attic. As soon as the ogre arrived, he told him: “Mmm, cat, he stinks olive marc, beware I should have to go upstairs!”. He told him: “He arrived some pedlar, I bought a comb and a mirror.” He told him: “He is close, I will catch him and eat him!”. He told him: “Oh, only this morning did he come!”. He started, he ate supper. He told him: “O cat, how good today’s supper is!”.  

This strategy is frequent in languages where affix markers are considered to be the true arguments of the verb, such as Central Pomo, a native Californian language whose referent-tracking system is thus analysed by Mithun (1993: 134): “A mechanism for indicating continuing or contrasting reference between third persons in successive clauses is simply the presence or absence of an overt nominal. As long as the primary participant remains the same from clause to clause, and there is no shift in the line of discussion, no additional identification is necessary: absence is interpreted as coreference”.

In Taqbaylit also, referential continuity is taken in charge by verbal affixes (once the protagonist has been introduced), and only in marked cases (topical shift, new protagonist) does a NP or independent pronoun appear. Interestingly, protagonist alternations do not imply the use of full NPs, despite the potential ambiguities. This might be due to the possibility of impersonating the various protagonists’ cues thanks to changes in voice quality, to the broader context of the narrative, as well as to the high potential for adjustment that characterizes oral communication.

Chafe (1994: 146-152), analysing the information structure of Seneca, a native language of New York State, and comparing it with English, explicitly states the differences between the two languages as far as pronominal affixes and unstressed pronouns are concerned: “instead of being used to express given information, the Seneca prefixes refer to the core participants of events and states — referents that are obligatorily included in an event or state idea. When a Seneca speaker chooses to categorize an event or state in a particular way, that categorization dictates the presence of one, two, or occasionally three participants which are obligatorily expressed with a pronominal prefix. Their activation cost is irrelevant. Whereas English uses pronouns to verbalize given referents, Seneca uses pronominal prefixes to verbalize core participants.” (Chafe 1994: 149).

7 As soon as the ogre arrived, he told the cat: “Mmm, Cat, it stinks in here, beware I should have to go upstairs!” The cat replied: “Some pedlar came by, I bought a comb and a mirror”, the ogre said: “He is close by, I will catch him and eat him!”, the cat replied: “It’s only this morning that he came by”. The ogre started to eat his supper, and told the cat: “O Cat, how good today’s supper is!”.  

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A study of the various referents of personal affixes (clitics will be briefly studied below), showed that they referred to the main participant of the predication. This participant can be an Actor or an Undergoer, a topic or an antitopic. The fact that affixes are linked neither to semantic role, nor to pragmatic function makes them a good candidate for the subject function.

Indeed, if we accept to define the grammatical entity ‘subject’ as implying neutralisation of semantic roles (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 266), affixes can be considered as subjects.

There are however some restrictions to the purely syntactic dimension of affixes. First, affixes almost never code impersonal subjects. And secondly, they are constrained semantically with quality verbs and ambitransitive predications.

As far as impersonal predications are concerned, Taqbaylit Berber encodes them thanks to a non-verbal predicate, or, when verbal expressions are used, a postposed NP in the annexion state is obligatorily coreferent to the personal affix, as shown in the example below:

\[(17) \quad d \quad ageffur \quad = \quad ye-kkat \quad ugeffur\]
\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{COP} \quad \text{rain} \\
\text{It's raining} \\
\end{array}
\begin{array}{l}
3SM \text{-rain/IMPERF} \\
\text{rain/AS} \\
\text{It's raining} \\
\end{array}\]

It appears therefore that the personal affix cannot be non-referential.

Concerning the semantic constraints on the system of affixes, Taqbaylit Berber has a class of verbs called ‘quality verbs’, which correspond semantically to states (in the perfect/ive) and to accomplishments (in the imperfective). There are approximately 110 verbs in that class, and examples are zeggway ‘be-red/redden’, meqqwer ‘be-grown/grow’, etc. Their morphological peculiarity, in the perfect/ive only, is to appear with a Ø marker in the third person singular masculine, with a suffixed (instead of prefixed) marker in the second and third person singular feminine, and to have a common suffix for all plurals, regardless of person.

\[(18) \quad meqqwer-t \quad teqciic.\]
\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{be-big-3SF/PERF} \\
\text{girl/AS} \\
\end{array}
\begin{array}{l}
The girl was tall.
\end{array}\]

This verb class underlines the existence of a split case-marking system in relation to aspect: the imperfective is marked with the standard affixes, and the perfective is marked thanks to a different subset of affixes. This underlines the influence of the semantic macrorole in relation to dynamicity or stativity. The special set of affixes is used when the main participant is more of an Un-

\[8\] An inventory can be found in Chaker 1978: 117-118.
dergoer than of an Actor. Conversely, the standard set is used when the main participant is an Actor.

The interpretation of subject affixes is also dependent on communication perspective, in the sense of the way the speaker construes the event or state (s)he is referring to.

Indeed, in Taqbaylit, a few hundred verbs are ambidiathetical (or ambi-transitive), in that they allow both the dynamic and the stative reading, the dynamic reading being correlated to transitivity, and the stative one to intransitivity. For instance, krez can mean either "plough" or "be-ploughed", without the addition of any valency or voice marker. For those numerous verbs, which are potentially transitive, the selection of the main participant depends on the choice of the argumental format, which is realised by the affix-clitic configuration: if it is the stative-intransitive predication that is chosen, only the affix appears, if it is the dynamic-transitive, an accusative clitic (or a direct object NP) appears, and the affix refers to the Actor macrorole.

(19) i-krez
    3SM-plough/PREF
    It (= the field) is ploughed

(20) i-krez    it
    3SM-plough/PREF  ACC/3SM
    He (= the farmer) [has] ploughed it.

In the minimal (intransitive) configuration, the subject can therefore only be an Undergoer, while in the transitive configuration, it can only be an Actor. Affixes thus seem to have retained some semantic distributional features. This might be explained by hypothesising that the present-day system of Taqbaylit is the grammaticalization of a former stative-active (or ergative) system.

3.2. CLITICS
Unlike affixes, clitics are not bound to the verbal stem. They are however rigidly positioned, either before the minimal utterance (in irrealis, progressive, negative and relative clauses), or after it: the accusative clitic comes first, followed by the dative clitic, and by the proximal particle.

Accusative clitics appear when an object that is not directly governed by the verb is referred to: either the coreferential NP or independent pronoun is topicalized, or it is to be developed as an antitopic, or else it has been mentioned earlier. They are therefore anaphoric or cataphoric. They cannot refer to activity-type complements (‘eat dinner’, etc.): the referent must have full argument status.

Dative clitics appear either when the argument structure of the verb contains a recipient (with ini ‘tell’, efk ‘give’, etc.), or when a participant is affected by the situation or event. They are therefore associated with dative predications, in the sense of Frązyngier (in press) “the term ‘dative predica-
tion' designates the predication that occurs when something is done for the benefit or detriment of another argument. Interestingly, unlike accusative clitics, dative clitics are obligatory even if the recipient is explicitly mentioned. They cannot be omitted. This and the fact that, if they are expressed, recipients must necessarily be introduced by a preposition, is an argument in favour of the primacy of the dative clitic in the encoding of the dative predication.

In our corpus, among the 33 verbal predications (out of 110) that contained a dative clitic, two-thirds introduced a recipient-type argument, and one third were triggered by semantic orientation (affectedness by the event or state). The following example encodes a malefactive effect:

\[
(21) \text{Azekka } nni, a s te-ssimes azuliy. \\
\text{Tomorrow ANAPH IRR DAT/3S 3SF-be-dirty/CAUS.AOR mud} \\
\text{At other times, she would dirty the child with mud.}
\]

To conclude with clitics, it must be noted that they can function as ‘actualizers’ in non-verbal expressions. Most of the time, it is the accusative clitic that is used:

\[
(22) \text{ulaš-it aql-iyi} \\
\text{Negative-existential-ACC/3SM here-predication-ACC/1S} \\
\text{He isn’t home/here Here I am}
\]

But those nonverbal expressions can also be actualized by a dative clitic, as in:

\[
(23) \text{berka-yas} \\
\text{Enough-DAT/3S (S)he is fed up}
\]

Those facts show that clitics are also used for their semantic role, referring either to themes, as in (22) or to recipients/benefactives,\(^9\) as in (23).

3.3. SYNTHESIS

It appears that affixes and clitics do in fact refer to the core arguments of the predication. Personal affixes embody most of the properties associated to the syntactic function of subject. They nevertheless retain some semantic features: sensitivity to Aktionsart for some verb classes, and referentiality. Those semantic features are even more perceivable for clitics: accusative clitics tend to be associated with patients and dative clitics with recipients or benefactors.

\(^9\) Themes are defined as “things which are located or are undergoing a change of location (motion)”, recipients as “someone who gets something”, and benefactives as “the participant for whose benefit some action is performed” (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 85-86).
CONCLUSION
In this paper, we hope to have shown that the true arguments of the verb are its personal affixes and clitics, and that their presence in the utterance is directly linked to the construal of the situation or event by the speaker. Personal affixes are mainly syntactic, they embody the subject function, whereas clitics are mainly semantically-motivated. The appearance of full NPs or independent pronouns is motivated by pragmatic factors: position with respect to the verbal core interacts with case marking to signal the topic/focus or antitopic opposition, and the syntactic relation to the affixes or clitics (dependency) or to the verb (government).

Taqbaylit Berber can therefore be considered as a discourse-configurational language which is probably the product of the grammaticalization of a stative-active predication system still perceivable in the behaviour of some grammatical categories.

REFERENCES