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A Grammar of Awjila Berber (Libya) : based on Umberto Paradisi's material

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Citation

Putten, M. van. (2013, October 1). *A Grammar of Awjila Berber (Libya) : based on Umberto Paradisi's material*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/21848>

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Title: A grammar of Awjila Berber (Libya) : based on Umberto Paradisi's material

Issue Date: 2013-10-01

Chapter 8

Prepositions and postpositions

8.1 Prepositions

There are two types of prepositional construction in Awjila. The first are the basic prepositions, and the second group are preposition-like constructions, which behave like prepositions in various degrees.

8.1.1 Basic prepositions

Basic prepositions often have different forms depending on whether they precede a noun or a pronoun. The table below gives an overview of the prepositions.

Before noun	Before pronoun	
id	idd-	‘with (comitative), and’
af	fəllí-	‘on, at’
ar	ɣar-	‘nearby, at’
s, s-ɣar, s-ar	s-ɣár-	‘from’
s	s-	‘with’ (instrumental)
n	ənn-	‘of’
i, y-	—	dative preposition
am	—	‘like’
ir	<i>Unattested</i>	‘until’
bèyn	<i>Unattested</i>	‘between’

8.1.1.1 *id* ‘with (comitative), and’

The pronominal form of the comitative preposition has default accent in all positions. Text XIII has a sentence where the accent is in the (unexpected) final position: *iddí* ‘with me’.

The primary meaning of this preposition is the comitative ‘with, and’. It can only be used in the coordination of two nominal or pronominal phrases. It can never be used to coordinate two clauses.

- (90) *Bəṣadèn y-əqqim i-rənni id=middən.*
then 3sm-stay:˘pf. 3sm-bid:impf. with=people

‘Then he started bidding along with the people.’ [PT:IV]

- (91) *ur=n-à=k=a* *ká bəʕəd a=t-qimà-t* *idd-í t-əʕəddi-t* *ká?*
 neg.=say.res.-1s=10.2sm=res. neg. when fut.-2s-stay:fut.-2s with-1s 2s-go-impf.-2s neg.
 ‘Did I not tell you that when you stay with me not to go (anywhere?)’ [PT:XIII]

- (92) *a=n-nəʕədd* *kull idd-ək.*
 fut.=1p-go:fut. all with-2sm
 ‘We will all go with you.’ [PT:II]

- (93) *Undú uši-γ=d* *ká, a=n-mhàsəb* *nək idd-əs yom əlqiyàma.*
 if come:*pf.-1s neg. fut.=1p-settle.the.score:fut. I with-3s day.of.resurrection
 ‘If I do not come, we —him (who suffers) and me— will settle the score at the day of resurrection.’ [PT:II]

- (94) *u=tafüt t-əhmà=ya* *fəlli-s u=t-əqqim* *(t)-tattà afiš=ənn-əs*
 and=sun 3sf-burn.res.=res. on-3s and=3sf-stay:*pf. 3sf-eat:impf. face=of-3s
id=əlgəfà=nn-əs
 with=neck=of-3s
 ‘and the sun burned on him and started eating at his face and neck,’ [PT:III]

8.1.1.2 *af* ‘on’

The preposition *af* can be used to mean ‘on’ in the physical sense. It can also be used to mark the object of a verb that has no power to affect the action. This often results in a malefactive implication. The latter use is similar to what Kossmann (1997: 223) calls the ‘implicative’ in Figuié. The 1sg. ending irregularly gets a *-w-* before the *i*.

- (95) *nək ʕəyyán-əx* *u=zmar-x* *ká a=ʕəddà-x* *af=ṭarin=n-úk*
 I be.sick:impf.-1s and=be.able:*pf.-1s neg. fut.=go:fut.-1s on=legs=of-1s
 ‘I am sick and I am not able to go on my legs’ [PT:V]

- (96) *lhùdi i-qəlləz* *fəlli-wi*
 Jew 3sm-lie:impf. on-1s
 ‘The Jew is lying about me,’ [PT:V]

- (97) *u=t-əqqás* *əlbàb fəlli-s*
 and=3sf-close:*pf. door on-3sg.
 ‘and she closed the door on him,’ [PT:III]

The verb *əxzár* ‘to look at’ uses the preposition *af* with nouns, but *yar* for pronouns:

- (98) *u=bəʕədèn y-əxzár af=əlḥəməl=ənn-əs wa zẓàk-ən dax*
 and=then 3sm-look:pf. on=load=of-3s PMPH:ms be.heavy-ptc. in.order.to
a=y-ərʕəʕt
 fut.=3sm-lift:fut.=DO.3sm
 ‘And then he looked at his load that was heavy to carry,’ [PT:III]

- (99) *U=t-əxzár yàr-əs təmìgni*
 and=3sf-see:pf. to-3s woman
 ‘And a woman looked at him’ [PT:III]

8.1.1.3 *ar* ‘to’

ar ‘to’ expresses motion towards or possession. The directional sense of this preposition is not attested very often in the texts, and it competes semantically with the locative clitic =*i* (see section 8.2). =*i* seems to be preferred.

- (100) *nək a=nṭər-əx=ku ká ir=a=nnə-ʕədd nək idd-ək ar=əlqədi.*
 I fut.=let.go:fut.-1s=DO.2sm neg. until=fut.=1p-go:fut. I with-2sm to=judge
 ‘I will not let you go until you and I go to the judge.’ [PT:V]

ar is mainly attested in possessive phrases. The sentence below illustrates this.

- (101) *Gan Abúdabr yàr-əs təmìgni*
 there Abu.Dabr to-3s wife
 ‘There once was (a man called) Abu-Dabr,’ [PT:XV]

The possessive use of the preposition can also be negated:

- (102) *u=yar-i ká təlàba.*
 and=to-1s neg. gown
 ‘and I do not have a gown.’ [PT:V]

8.1.1.4 *s, s-yar, s-ar* ‘from’

s, s-yar, s-ar is the ablative preposition. There seems to be free variation between the three variants, where *s-yar* is the most common. When the form of the ablative preposition is *s*, its complement can be followed by the locative clitic =*i*. This is similar to Ghadames, where the locative clitic is obligatory with the ablative preposition *s* (Kossmann 2013b: 112). The pronominal form only has the variant *s-yar*.

- (103) *Nək wa d=alá slī-x=a sar=middən ləwwəl kəddim-ən,*
 I PMPH:ms pred.=rel. hear:res.-1s=res. from=people formerly old:mp
 ‘This is what I heard from the old people once,’ [PT:II]

- (104) *Gan iwínan y-ərfiʕ=a af=təgíl=nn-əs əlhəml zək*
 there one:ms 3sm-lift.up:res.=res. on=head=of-3s load heavy:3sm
syār=ləmluxiyət
 from=mulukhiya
 ‘There once was a (man), he carried a heavy load of mulukhiya on his head,’
 [PT:III]
- (105) *uši-y=d=a s=ašəl=i nək id=ləhil=ənn-ùk.*
 come:res.-1s=come=res. from=village=loc. I with=family=of-1s
 ‘He said to him: I’ve come from the village, together with my family.’ [PT:XV]
- (106) *wàsa a=nzurrà-n syar-kim a=ʕəyyát-ən=dik talàta marràt;*
 rel. fut.=suffer:fut.-ptc. from-2pm fut.=call:fut.-3pm=10.1s three times
 ‘Whoever of you who will suffer, will call me three times.’ [PT:II]

s, s-yar, s-ar may be used to indicate the material something is made of:

- (107) *wàya sar=zzil*
 this:ms from=iron
 ‘This is of iron’ [P: s.v. di]

8.1.1.5 *s* ‘with’

The instrumental preposition is used to express the object by means of which a certain action is accomplished. Because the 3pl.m. and 3pl.f. suffixes start with *s-*, the forms are somewhat irregular, as the *s-s-* sequence has been simplified (see 6.1.4).

This preposition is homophonous to the *s-* variant of the ablative preposition *s, s-yar, s-ar* in front of nouns. The pronominal form is always different from the ablative preposition.

- (108) *u=y-əqqən=t s=ažikər*
 and=3sm-tie:pf.-3sm=DO.3sm with=rope
 ‘And he tied it with a rope’ [PT:VII]
- (109) *U=y-əfrəh Žhà s-ənat*
 and=3sm-become.happy:pf. Jha with-3pf
 ‘And Jha became happy with it’ [PT:V]

The preposition *s* is also used to express an amount of money:

- (110) *s=səbəʕa n=millim.*
 with=seven of=milliem
 ‘For seven milliemes.’ [PT:III]

8.1.1.6 *n* 'of'

Possessions is expressed with the preposition *n* 'of'. When it is followed by prepositional endings, the full complex of preposition + prepositional endings cliticizes to the preceding word. The prepositional endings of this preposition differ slightly from those found with other prepositions (pg. 116).

- (111) *d=əlʕədəd n=ažəvu n=ažit=ənn-ùk*,
 pred.=number of=hairs of=donkey=of-is
 'It is the number of hairs of my donkey' [PT:VIII]

The preposition *n* is also used for some specialized meanings. It is placed in front of a quantified noun that is preceded by a numeral (see section 9.1). It is used in some preposition-like constructions (see sections 8.1.2.1, 8.1.2.2, 8.1.2.4, 8.1.2.5).

It is also used to describe the material an object is made of, note that *s-*, *s-ar*, *s-γar* 'from' may also be used in this function:

- (112) *ayiz n=ùrəγ*
 necklace of=gold
 'a golden necklace' [P: s.v. di]

8.1.1.7 *i* 'to, for'

This preposition marks the indirect object. For the pronominal marking of the indirect object, the indirect object clitics are used (see section 6.1.3).

- (113) *Bəʕədèn y-aški əlhùdi w=i-n=ìs yə=Žhà: ayid*
 then 3sm-leave:*pf. Jew and=3sm-say:*pf.=10.3s dat.=Jha bring:imp.
əlbarat=ənn-ùk
 money=of-is
 'Then the Jew came out and said to Jha: Bring my money (back)' [PT:V]
- (114) *u=i-tənn=ìs i=kùll amàdən*
 and=3sm-say:impf.=10.3s dat.=each person
 'and (started) saying to each person:' [PT:XIII]

The preposition *i* is usually substituted by the indirect object clitics, but once we find the preposition *i* followed by the independent pronoun *ku* 'you':

- (115) *nək wa əhdəf-x=tit=a i=kú*
 I PMPH:sm threw:res.-is=DO.3sf dat.=you
 'I am the one who has thrown it to you' [PT:V]

8.1.1.8 *am* ‘like’

The preposition *am* ‘like’ is used to make comparisons. Like the preposition *i*, it is followed by the independent pronoun, rather than the prepositional suffixes. The uses of this preposition will be discussed in more detail in section 10.7.4.

- (116) *nəttìn məqqár am=nək*
 he big:sm like=I
 ‘he is as big as me’ [P: s.v. come]

8.1.1.9 *ir* ‘until’

This preposition is not attested very often, and is never found in front of a pronominal form. This is unsurprising, as in many Berber languages, this preposition can only be placed in front of nouns (e.g. Kossmann 1997: 229).

- (117) *u=nəttìn i-ddəhwàr ir=i-tùg Žhà.*
 and=he 3sm-go.around:impf. until=3sm-meet:*pf. Jha
 ‘and he continued to go around until he met Jha.’ [PT:VIII]

There is one example in the dictionary, where *ir* is used together with the locative particle *i*

- (118) *nəttìn y-əʕidd=a (ir=)tfilli=yi*
 he 3sm-go.res=res. until=house=loc.
 ‘he has gone to the house’ [P: s.v. a]

8.1.1.10 *bèyn* ‘between’

bèyn ‘between’ is not attested in the texts, and Paradisi provides no example sentences. Little more can be said about this preposition.

8.1.2 Preposition-like constructions

Several nouns or noun-like words, may be used to express location or direction, similar to functions that the basic prepositions have. These preposition-like elements all behave differently. Some use prepositional endings, while others do not. Some of these constructions can be placed directly in front of the noun they modify, while others cannot.

Some of these preposition-like constructions use the Arabic preposition *minn-* in combination with the preposition-like element to pronominalized it. The preposition *minn-* is never used outside of this context. This preposition takes the regular Berber pronominal endings.

8.1.2.1 *agùr* ‘near, on the side’

The word *agùr* ‘near, on the side’ is only attested combined with pronouns. Pronominal prepositional endings cannot directly follow it, and are either combined with the Berber preposition *n* ‘of’ or the Arabic preposition *minn-* ‘from’.

- (119) *u=y-əqqim y-əvdid=a agur=ənn-əs ir=a=y-ùš*
 and=3sm-stay:*pf. 3sm-stand.res.=res. besides=of-3s until=fut.=3sm-come:fut.
əbulis.
 police
 ‘and he stayed and stood beside her until the police would come.’ [PT:III]

The constructions with *minn-* are only attested in the word list: 1sg. *agùr minn-i* 2sg.m. *agùr minn-ək*.

8.1.2.2 *tammàst* ‘in the middle’

This preposition-like construction is only attested in a single example sentence in Paradisi’s word list. *tammàst* may modify a noun with a genitive construction with the preposition *n* ‘of’:

- (120) *tammàst n=tfilli*
 middle of house
 ‘in the middle of the house’ [P: s.v. mezzo (in)]

8.1.2.3 *zùt* ‘above’

This word functions as a preposition in front of noun. It is placed directly in front of the noun it modifies:

- (121) *ərfəʕ=i zùt ləktuf=ənn-ək*
 carry:imp.=DO.1s on.top.of shoulders=of-2sm
 ‘He (the ogre) said to him: Carry me on your shoulders.’ [PT:XV]
- (122) *u=y-ərfəʕ=ət zùt ləktuf=ənn-əs*
 and=3sm-carry:*pf.=DO.3sm on.top.of shoulders=of-3s
 ‘and he carried him on his shoulders’ [PT:XV]

Paradisi’s word list shows that this preposition cannot receive prepositional pronominal endings. *zùt* is combined with Berber preposition *fəll-* ‘on’ or the Arabic preposition *minn-* ‘from’: 1sg. *zùt minn-i*, *zùt fəlli-wi* 2sg.m. *zùt minn-ək*. The pronominal forms are not attested in the texts.

zùt may be combined with the prepositions *ar* ‘to’ and *s-ar* ‘from’ to form adverbial phrases *ar-zùt* ‘upward’, *s-ar-zùt* ‘from above’:

- (123) *U y-əlbáb nəttin idd-əs ar=zùt*
 and 3sm-climb:pf. he with-3s to=up
 ‘And he climbed up with him’ [PT:VI]

- (124) *Bəʕədèn y-àxzər Žhà sar=zùt*
 Then 3sm-look:seq. Jha from=above
 ‘Then Jha looked from above’

The antonym *ùta* ‘below’ is also combined with the prepositions *ar* ‘to’ and *s-ar* ‘from’ to form adverbial phrases *ar-ùta* ‘downward’ and *s-ar-ùta* ‘from below’. *s-ar-ùta* is only attested in the word list (s.v. sotto).

- (125) *w=əfiwa t-ənə-d=dik irəš ar=ùta?*
 and=why 2s-say:*pf.-2s=10.1s descend:imp. to=below
 ‘And why did you tell me to come down?’

One would expect that *ùta* can also be used independently like *zùt*, but there is no evidence for this.

8.1.2.4 *dəffər* ‘behind, after’

This preposition-like construction is often a preposition in Berber languages, cf. Kabyle *dəffir*, Touareg *dəffər*. In Awjila it can only combine with a noun using a genitive construction:

- (126) *dəffər n=tfilli*
 behind of=house
 ‘behind the house’ [P: s.v. dietro]

In front of pronouns, a set of Arabic pronominal endings is used (see section 6.1.4):

- (127) *u=y-əqqən=t s=ažikər u=y-əʕədd w=ažit*
 and=3sm-tie:*pf.-3sm=DO.3sm with=rope and=3sm-go:*pf. and=donkey
dəffər-a (or: *dəffər-ah*).
 behind-3sm
 ‘And he tied it with a rope and went and the donkey (was) behind him.’ [PT:VII]

In Paradisi’s word list, a few forms with Berber prepositional suffixes are attested, for example *dəffər-əs* ‘behind him’.

8.1.2.5 *dīt* ‘in front of’

To modify nouns, this word uses a genitive construction:

- (128) *u=y-əħdǝf=tənət* *dīt* *nə=Žħà sar=ərròšən.*
 and=3sm-throw:*pf.=DO.3pf front of=Jha from=window
 ‘And he put them in a bag and threw it in front of Juha from a window.’ [PT:V]

When used pronominally *dīt*, like *dǝffār*, uses Arabic pronominal endings (see section 6.1.4):

- (129) *I-ggì=t* *dīt-a*
 3sm-put:P=DO.3sm in.front-3sm
 ‘He put it in front of him’ [PT:II]

The word list contains some forms of this word where it combines with Berber prepositional endings. These forms are unattested in the texts

The antonyms *dīt* and *dǝffār* are the only two prepositions that are attested with Arabic prepositional suffixes.

dīt may be combined with the preposition *ar* ‘to’ to form adverbial phrase *ar-dīt* ‘forward’:

- (130) *žìgǝž* *ar=dīt*
 walk:imp. to=front
 ‘Walk forward!’ [P: s.v. andare]

8.2 The locative postposition =*i*

Besides a large amount of prepositions, Awjila has one postposition =*i*, which expresses location or movement towards a location. It is cliticized directly to the noun it modifies.

- (131) *w=ižìgǝž* *dzənqìn=i n=ašàl*
 and=3sm-walk:impf. street=loc. of=village
 ‘and he would walk in the street of the village’ [PT:III]
- (132) *y-ùna* *ammùd=i*
 3sm-enter:seq. mosque=loc.
 ‘He entered the mosque’ [PT:II]

Brugnatelli (2005: 375ff.) suggests that the locative clitic indeed influences the accent, but from the data available this is not obvious. All but three nouns that have the locative particle =*i* end in the sequence |vc|. The default accent of both the sequence

|vc| and |vc=i| falls on the final vowel of the noun. Compare the two example sentences below. The first sentence shows *ašâl* without the locative particle with accent on the ultimate syllable. The second sentence has the same word, but this time with the locative clitic behind it. The accent still falls regularly on the final vowel of the noun.

- (133) *Gan iwínan n=amàdən ašâl n=awilən.*
 there one:ms of=man village of=Aujilan.people
 'There once was a man in the village of Aujila' [PT:II]

- (134) *u=y-əqqim i-ddəhwàr ašâl=i kkùll*
 and=3sm-stay:*pf. 3sm-go.around:impf. village=loc. whole
 'A scholar left to go around outside, and he started going around the whole village' [PT:VIII]

In the texts, we find two forms that provide contradictory evidence. One has antepenultimate accent, which implies the =i has no influence, the other appears to have attracted accent, which implies that the =i is considered part of the accentual word unit. Neither of the words are found without the clitic =i, so nothing can be said with certainty about the accent in either case.

- (135) *Žhà y-əskìn=a lšállì=yi*
 Jha 3sm-live:res.=res. high=loc.
 'Jha lived in a high (place)' [PT:VI]

- (136) *w=i-ggì=tət škárət=i.*
 and=3sm-put:*pf.=DO.3sf bag=loc.
 'Then he bought some vegetables and put them in a bag.' [PT:XII]

The example Brugnatelli cites, comes from the word list, and this word is attested both with, and without the locative particle in the word list: *tfilli* 'house' is attested with a retracted accent in the example sentence below.

- (137) *nəttìn y-əšidd=a (ir=)tfillì=yi*
 he 3sm-go.res=res. until=house=loc.
 'he has gone to the house' [P: s.v. a]

In one case, the locative particle itself is accented. This gives the impression that =i is perhaps an independent word, rather than a clitic. This may also explain why =i does not have effect on the accent in one of the examples above.

- (138) *y-uyá y-əkrí s=ìs ssùq=í*
 3sm-take:pf. 3sm-return:*pf. with-3s market=loc.
 'he took (it) and returned with it to the market' [PT:VII]

The locative clitic =*i* cannot be combined with the possessive pronominal clitics. In sentences where we would otherwise expect the locative particle, it is absent if the noun has a possessive clitic. In such cases, there is no other marking of the locative.

- (139) *U=bəʕadèn y-əʕədd nəttin əlxərbuš=ənn-əs*
 and=then 3sm-go:pf. he garden=of-3s
 ‘And then he went to his garden’ [PT:XV]
- (140) *Y-ušá=d, y-uná nəttin idd-əs amakan=n-əsìn*
 3sm-come:pf.=come 3sm-enter:pf. he with-3s place=of-3pm
 ‘He came and entered their place with her’ [PT:XV]

The locative postposition is only found in one other Berber language: Ghadames, in western Libya (Lanfry 1968: 366, Kossmann 2013b: 103). Unlike in Ghadames, the locative clitic is always =*i*, and does not undergo infixation.

Morphosyntactically, the locative particle behaves differently in Awjila and Ghadames. In Ghadames the locative marker stands at the end of a noun phrase, unless the noun phrase is determined by a deictic clitic, in which case the locative clitic is attached to the deictic clitic. Awjila places the locative marker after the noun, rather than after the entire noun phrase. There are no examples of a determined noun phrase with a locative postposition in Awjila. Compare:

Ghadames

- (141) *tali n təmzen=i*
 room of barley=loc.
 ‘in the room of the barley’ (Kossmann 2013b: 107)
- (142) *dáž=e=den n ašle*
 house=ANP:S=LOC of groom
 ‘in this house of the groom’ (Kossmann 2013b: 108)

Awjila

- (143) *dzəŋqìn=i n=ašəl*
 street=loc. of=village
 ‘in the street of the village’ [PT:III]

