

# Ditransitive constructions in the Neo-Aramaic dialect of Telkepe

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## 1 INTRODUCTION TO DIALECT

Telkepe, North-eastern Neo-Aramaic, Aramaic, Semitic, Afro-asiatic.

Spoken in town of Telkepe, just north of Mosul in northern Iraq.

Accusative alignment (though seems to have gone through an ergative stage).

## 2 OUTLINE OF VERBAL SYSTEM

2 verb stems in simple (non-analytical) verb constructions: *CaCC-* (*qaṭl-*) and *CCəC-* (*qṭəl-*).

The *CCəC* (*qṭəl-*) stem- is used with subject suffixes (L-suffixes) in the past perfective tense:

*qṭəl-lə* 'he killed'

*qre-lə* 'he read' (weak verb)

*qṭəl-la* 'they killed'

*CaCC-* (*qaṭl-*) stem modified by prefixes to express present, future, various modalities, and also a suppletive past perfective form, which is ONLY used with pronominal objects. Subject is marked by a different set of suffixes:

*k-qaṭl-o* 'she kills'

*šud-qaṭl-ā-lux* 'may she kill you (ms.)'

*b-qaṭl-o* 'she will kill'

*kəm-qaṭl-i-lə* 'they killed him'

*b-qaṭl-i* 'they will kill'

*kəm-qaṭl-i-lux* 'they killed you (ms.)'

*b-qaṭl-i-lux* 'they will kill you (ms.)'

\*\* *kəm-qaṭl-i* 'they killed'

Inversion of suffixes:

*b-qaṭl-i-lux* 'they will kill you (ms.)'

*qṭil-i-lux* 'you (ms.) killed them'

## 3 ALIGNMENT WITH ONLY INDEFINITE NP OBJECTS

T not marked, R flagged with preposition *ta* 'to, for' (not used for goal). Order flexible:

(1) *wəl-lə pāre ta xa-məskeno*. 'He gave money to a (certain) poor person.'

gave-he money to a.certain-poor.person

(2) *wəl-lə ta xa-məskeno pāre*. 'He gave a (certain) poor person some money.'

gave-he to a.certain-poor.person money

(3) *qre-lə kṯāwə ta xa-zorə*. 'She read a book to a child.'

read-she book to a.certain-child

P is not marked:

(4) *wəl-lə pāre*. 'He gave money.'

gave-he money

(5) *qre-lə kṯāwə*. 'She read a book.'

read-she book

**With indefinite nominal theme and recipient, there is indirective alignment (P=T, R).**

## 4 PRONOMINAL OBJECTS ON *CaCC-* (*qaṭl-*) VERBS

Pronominal objects are usually expressed by affixes on verb: in *CaCC*-verbs the L-suffix:

(6) *b-qāṭəl-lə*. 'He will kill him.'

FUT-he.kill-OBJ.3MS

(7) *qṭol-lə*. 'Kill her!'

kill.IMPER-OBJ.3FS

#### 5 ALIGNMENT WITH BOTH PRONOMINAL OBJECT AND INDEFINITE NP OBJECT

Pronoun expressed with an L-suffix (like P), regardless of its role (T or R).

The indefinite NP unmarked if T, and tagged with *ta* if R.

(8) *kəm-qāṭəl-lə*. 'He killed him.' (P)

PAST-he.kill-OBJ.3MS

(9) *kəm-yāwəl-lə ta məskənd*. 'He gave it to a poor person.' (T)

PAST-he.give-OBJ.3MS to poor.person

(10) *kəm-yāwəl-lə hadiyə*. 'He gave him a present.' (R)

PAST-he.give-OBJ.3MS present

**The alignment as regards pronoun is neutral (P=T=R); NP: indirective (P=T, R).**

#### 6 ALIGNMENT WITH ONLY PRONOMINAL OBJECTS

Two suffixes on the verb: L-suffixes then enclitic *-l*-suffixes:

(11) *kəm-yāwəl-lan-ilə*. 'He gave it to us.'

PAST-he.give-R.1PL-T.3MS

(12) *kəm-yāwəl-lan-ila*. 'He gave them to us.'

PAST-he.give-R.1PL-T.3PL

(13) *kəm-yāwəl-lux-ila*. 'He gave them to you.'

PAST-he.give-R.2MS-T.3PL

First suffix set (the plain L-suffixes) expresses R (like P), second set T.

**With two pronouns alignment is secundative (P=R, T), except:**

When T is 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person, T marked by L-suffixes, R tagged by *ta* (*ṭāl-*) with pronominal suffixes:

(14) *kəm-yāwəl-li ṭāl-e*. 'He gave me to him.'

PAST-he.give-T.1SG to-3MS

(15) *kəm-yāwəl-lax ṭāl-e?* 'Did he give you (fs.) to him?'

PAST-he.give-T.2FS to-3MS

Cf. Haspelmath's (2004: 1) cross-linguistic generalization, 'Combinations of bound pronouns with the roles Recipient and Theme are disfavored if the Theme pronoun is first or second person and the Recipient pronoun is third person.'

Here: 'Combinations of bound pronouns with the roles Recipient and Theme are not allowed if the Theme pronoun is first or second person', without the second condition.

(Also available for 3<sup>rd</sup> person themes, but is less common.)

**This alignment, obligatory for 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person themes, is indirective (P=T, R).**

## 7 ALIGNMENT WITH DEFINITE OBJECTS

Definite NP objects can be marked with indexing on the verb and *ta* before the NP:

- (16) *b-qāṭəl-lə ta gorp.* 'He will kill the man.' (P flagged and indexed)  
FUT-he.kill-P.3MS DEF.OBJ man
- (17) *b-qāṭəl xa-gorp.* 'He will kill a man.' (P not flagged or indexed)  
FUT-he.kill a.certain-man
- (18) *kəm-qāṭəl-lə ta gorp.* 'He killed the man.' (P flagged and indexed)  
PAST-he.kill-P.3MS DEF.OBJ man
- (19) *qṭəl-lə gorp.* 'He killed a/the man.' (P not flagged or indexed)  
killed-he man
- (20) *kəm-yāwəl-lə ta aaxone pāre.* 'He gave his brother some money.' (R flagged, indexed)  
PAST-he.give-R.3MS to/DEF.OBJ his.brother money
- (21) *kəm-yāwi-lə kṭāwo ta ḡḏa-baxto.* 'They gave the book to a woman.' (T indexed only)  
PAST-they.give-T.3MS book to a.certain-woman
- (22) *\*\*kəm-yāwi-lə ta kṭāwo ta ḡḏa-baxto.* 'They gave the book to a woman.'  
PAST-they.give-T.3MS DEF.OBJ book to a.certain-woman (\*\*T indexed and flagged)

If both definite, either but not both can be indexed. Indexed noun must follow the verb:

- (23) *kəm-yāwəl-lə kṭāwo ta xāṭe.* 'He gave the book to his sister.' (T indexed)  
PAST-he.give-T.3MS book to his.sister
- (24) *kəm-qāre-lə ta xāṭe kṭāwo rābo.* 'He read to his sister a/the big book.' (R indexed)  
PAST-he.read-R.3FS to his.sister book big.MS
- (25) *\*\*kəm-yāwəl-ləu-ilə ta xāṭe kṭāwo.* 'He gave his sister the book.' (\*\*Both indexed)  
PAST-he.give-R.3FS-T.3MS to his.sister book

**Indexed object: secundative (P=R, T). Cf. Spanish (animate objects only): prep. *a*.**

**Non-indexed object: indirective (P=T, R). Flagged with *ta* if R, unmarked otherwise.**

Sometimes definite patients are indexed only, just like T:

- (26) *kəm-qāṭəl-lə bronə.* 'He killed the boy.'  
PAST-he.kill-P.3MS boy

**Here alignment is indirective (P=T, R), as also in the dialect of Alqosh.**

Strategy with *ta* is preferred in Telkepe, and this sentence might be interpreted thus:

- (27) *kəm-qāṭəl-lə bronə.* 'He was killed by the boy.'  
PAST-he.kill-P.3MS boy(SUBJ)

## 8 DITRANSITIVITY IN OTHER VERB FORMS

## 8.1 COMPOUND VERBS

Different object suffixes but alignment same as regards pronouns and indefinite nouns:

- (28) *ailə šqil-éy*. 'He has taken them.' (P pronoun)  
he.is taken-P.3PL
- (29) *ailə wil-éy ta xa-məskənə*. 'He has given them to a poor person.' (T pron., R indef. NP)  
he.is given-T.3PL to a.certain-poor.person
- (30) *ailə wil-éy xa-məndi*. 'He has given them something.' (R pron., T indef. NP)  
he.is given-R.3PL something
- (31) *aiwən biwāl-ax-ilə*. 'I am giving him to you.' (both T and R pronouns)  
I.M.am giving-R.2FS-T.3MS
- (32) *aiwən biwāl-ax t̄āl-e*. 'I am giving you to him.' (T 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person)  
I.M.am giving-T.2FS to-3MS

## 8.2 CCəC- (*q̄təl-*) VERBS

8.2.1 ALIGNMENT WITH ONE PRONOMINAL OBJECT (available for 3fs or pl; otherwise *kəm-CaCC-*)

All 3 expressed with infix:

- (33) *q̄t̄il-ā-li*. 'I killed her.' (P)  
killed-OBJ.3FS-I
- (34) *wil-ā-lə ta malkə*. 'He gave her to a/the king.' (T)  
gave-OBJ.3FS-he to king
- (35) \*\* *wil-ā-lə kalbə*. 'He gave her a dog.' (R) (some speakers)  
gave-OBJ.3FS-he dog
- (36) *kəm-yāwəl-lə kalbə*. 'He gave her a dog.' (suppletive *CaCC-* (*q̄at̄l-*) form)  
PAST-he.give-OBJ.3FS dog

**So 3fs./3pl. pronominal objects have indirective alignment (P=T, R).**

One speaker, however, did allow R to be expressed by infixing (**neutral alignment**):

- (37) *wil-ā-li pāərə*. 'I gave her money.' (N.B. money is pl.)  
gave-R.3FS-I money

Same in some other dialects:

- (38) *wil-ā-li xa-məndi*. 'I gave her something.' (Alqosh)<sup>1</sup>  
gave-R.3FS-I something
- (39) *hiw-in-ne pare* 'He gave me money' (J. Amadiya)<sup>2</sup>  
gave-R.1SG-he money

## 8.2.2 ALIGNMENT WITH ONLY PRONOMINAL OBJECTS

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<sup>1</sup> Coghill (2003: 177).

<sup>2</sup> Hoberman (1989: 108-9).

Two pronominal objects cannot both be expressed on the verb. In this case, T is marked by the infix (like P), while R is expressed by *ta* (*tāl-*) + pronominal affix. **This is also indirective alignment (P=T, R):**

- (40) *q̄til-ā-li*. 'I killed her.'  
killed-P.3FS-I
- (41) *wil-ā-lə t̄āl-i*. 'He gave her to me.'  
gave-T.3FS-he to-1SG

### 8.2.3 INDEXING DEFINITE OBJECTS ON *CCəC-* (*q̄təl*) FORMS

The infix on a *CCəC-* (*q̄təl-*) form can also index a definite object: in the case of P with an optional *ta*, in the case of T without *ta*, as with *CaCC-* (*qaʔl-*) forms. But R cannot be indexed:

- (42) *q̄til-ā-lə (ta) brāto*. 'He killed the girl.' (P indexed)  
killed-P.3FS-he (DEF.OBJ) girl
- (43) *wil-ā-lə brāto ta malko*. 'He gave the girl to the king.' (T indexed)  
gave-T.3FS-he girl to king
- (44) \*\* *wil-ā-lə ta brāto xa-məndi*. 'He gave something to the girl.' (\*\*R indexed)  
gave-R.3FS-he to girl something

### 8.2.4 GENERALIZATION:

**Alignment with *CCəC-* (*q̄təl-*) stem verbs is always indirective (except some speakers).**

## 9. SUMMARY

- ALL VERB FORMS:

ALIGNMENT WITH ONLY INDEFINITE NP OBJECTS (OR OBJECTS UNMARKED FOR DEFINITENESS)

Indirective: P=T, R

- CaCC-* (*qaʔl-*) FORMS AND IMPERATIVE:

ALIGNMENT WITH BOTH PRONOMINAL OBJECT AND INDEFINITE NP OBJECT (OR DEFINITE WITHOUT INDEXING ON VERB)

Pronoun: Neutral: P=T=R.

NP: Indirective: P=T, R

ALIGNMENT WITH ONLY PRONOMINAL OBJECTS

Secundative: P=R, T

EXCEPT OBLIGATORILY WITH 1<sup>ST</sup>/2<sup>ND</sup> PERSON T (and optional with 3<sup>rd</sup> person) :

Indirective: P=T, R

ALIGNMENT WITH A DEFINITE OBJECT INDEXED ON VERB

Indexed object: secundative: P=R, T

Non-indexed object: indirective: P=T, R

- COMPOUND VERB FORMS

Same as above, except not yet ascertained alignment with a definite object indexed on verb.

• CCəC- (qʔəl-) FORMS

Always indirective (P=T, R), except:

ALIGNMENT WITH BOTH PRONOMINAL OBJECT AND NP OBJECT

Some speakers = Pronoun: neutral: P=T=R. (Indexing?).

10 BEHAVIOUR

10.1 PASSIVIZATION OF DITRANSITIVE VERBS

Only P and T can be passivized.

10.2 RELATIVIZATION

All 3 relativized. The relative clause follows the head and usually contains the indexing of the head. This is not obligatory with P or T, but is obligatory with R.

**Alternation between indirective and neutral alignment:**

- (45) *kelə kθāwə d-kəm-zonət-tə?* 'Where is the book which you sold?' (P indexed)  
 where.is book REL-PAST-you.MS.sell-P.3MS
- (46) *kelə kθāwə d-zwən-nux?* 'Where is the book which you sold?' (P not indexed)  
 where.is.3MS book REL-sold-you.MS
- (47) *kelə kθāwə d-kəm-yāwət-tə ʔāl-a?* 'Where is the book that you gave her?' (T indexed)  
 where.is.3MS book REL-PAST-you.MS.give-T.3MS to-3FS
- (48) *kelə kθāwə d-wəl-li ʔāl-ux?* 'Where is the book that I gave you?' (T not indexed)  
 where.is.3MS book REL-gave-I to-2MS
- (49) *kelə aāyi-baxto d-kəm-yāwət-to kθāwə?* 'Where is the woman you gave the book to?'  
 where.is.3FS this-woman REL-PAST-you.MS.give-R.3FS book (R indexed)
- (50) *\*\*kelə aāyi-baxto d-wəl-lux kθāwə?* 'Where is the woman you gave the book to?'  
 where.is.3FS this-woman REL-gave-you.MS book (\*\*R not indexed)

10.3 CONSTITUENT QUESTIONS

All 3 questioned. Zero tagging for P and T, *ta* for R: **indirective**. Indexing is not allowed:

- (51) *mā qre-lux?* 'What did you read?' (P)  
 what read(PAST)-you.MS
- (52) *mā kəm-qāre-lə* 'What did he read to her?' (T)  
 what PAST-he.read-R.3FS
- (53) *ta man kəm-qāre-lə kθāwə?* 'To whom did he read the book?' (R)  
 to who PAST-he.read-T.3MS book

10.4 REFLEXIVITY AND RECIPROCITY

Expressed with pronouns. All three objects, except possibly T in the case of reciprocity. Reflexivity not allowed with R in the case of *yw/I* 'to give'.

Zero tagging for P and T, *ta* for R: **indirective**.

An R can also be expressed as a pronominal suffix, esp. a benefactive R, marginally others.

(54) *kəbən-ni barāni*. 'I want for myself my ram.'

I.M.want-R.1SG my.ram

#### 11. DITRANSITIVE VERBS IN THE LEXICON

##### **Physical transfer:**

*yw/I* 'to give (to)'

*ʔθy III* 'to bring (to)'

*šdr II* 'to send (to)'

*ḏʔr III* 'to return (tr.) (to)'

*zbn II* 'to sell (to)'

*ax/III* 'to feed (to)'

##### **Mental transfer:**

*ʔmr I* 'to say (to)'

*qry I* 'to read (to)'

*kθw I* 'to write (to)'

*yp III* 'to teach (to)'

*bqr II* 'to ask (of)'

*xwy III* 'to show (to)'

##### **Beneficiary:**

*šq/I* 'to take, get (for)'

*bʔy I* 'to want, need (for)'

*zwn I* 'to buy (for)'

*ʔwḏ I* 'to do (for)'

*gny I* 'to steal (for)'

etc.

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