
Accent on nouns in Siwi (Afro-asiatic) and its reference coding

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The aim of this presentation is to investigate how the place of the accent on nouns in Siwi (Berber, Afro-Asiatic) can function as a reference-tracking device. The analysis will be based on original data recorded by me from 2011 to 2014 in Siwa (Egypt).

From a phonological point of view, in Siwi the accented syllable features higher pitch as its only consistent cue (Louali & Philippson, 2004). Berber languages lack (in)definite articles but in Siwi, the place of the accent can code (in)definiteness (Vycichl 2005): if on the last syllable, the noun is indefinite; if on the penultimate syllable, the noun is definite.

maɾra di **azidí** / d tyátt // **azidí** kull yom
once there is jackal / and goat // jackal every day
'Once there was a **jackal** and a goat. **The jackal** every day (would go out)' (Schiattarella 2017)

Nevertheless, in a spontaneous discourse, the (in)definiteness coding on nouns is not the primary function of accent, but a consequence: accent is on the last syllable when a noun is introduced for the first time and is not referential or identifiable; accent is on the penultimate syllable, if the noun is referential or identifiable. In the latter case, it can also have an anaphoric function. The phonological nature of this marker makes it typologically interesting and raises questions on how the speakers manage this alternation with other tracking devices: the accent alternation alone is preferred when the same referent appears in close intonation units, while demonstratives and/or possessives follow the noun, when the referent reappears after several intonation units. The presentation will also deal with accent position in left/right detached constructions.

References: Louali, N. & Philippson, G. (2004): L'accent en siwi (berbère d'Égypte), *proc. XXVe Journées d'Études sur la Parole*, Fès, pp. 325-8. • Vycichl, W. (2005): A sketch of Siwi Berber (Egypt). *Berber studies* 10. Koppe, Köln. • Schiattarella, V. (2017): Berber texts from Siwa (Egypt). *Berber studies* 46. Koppe, Köln.