

## Word Order Variations in Shabaki

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### Abstract

Word order types constitute the most well-established and frequently cited generalization in language typology. Basic or canonical word order tends to fall into two main types: SOV (about 48% of world languages) or SVO (about 41%). SOV is assumed to have been the predominant and unmarked word order in most of the oldest attested Indo-European languages, as well as in Iranian languages. This paper investigates the basic word order in Shabaki, a modern northwest language of the Indo-Iranian family spoken by the Shabaki minority in Iraq. This study also measures the word order variation and provides a typological description of this language. An examination of Shabaki data reveals that it follows SOV, OSV, SVO, VSO, OVS, and VOS word order patterns in mono-transitive sentences. The most frequent (predominant and unmarked) word order in declarative sentences in Shabaki is SOV where the initial position is occupied by a nominative noun phrase, but constituents can appear at any position, creating grammatical sentences with different discursive distributions. In ditransitive sentences, (S) DO V IO is proven to be three fold higher in number than (S) IO V DO. (S) DO IO V and (S) IO DO V were also found in data.

**Keywords:** Agreement, basic word order, case, clitics, Indo-Iranian languages, language typology, Shabaki

### Introduction

Grammatical relations in human languages, such as those between a noun phrase and the verb, are primarily expressed by means of three different morphosyntactic strategies: word order, case marking, and agreement (Croft 1990: 101). All

languages, rather than relying on just one of these mechanisms, use some combination of the three. In this paper, it is the intention to explore what elements of these three strategies Shabaki language employs to indicate the relationship that a noun bears to the verb in a clause. It also tries to explore the order of objects in ditransitive sentences.

Languages are typologized on the basis of the order in which Subject (S), Object (O) and Verb (V) typically occur in the simple sentences of the language. Almost all languages show a strong preference to put the words of a sentence into a particular order; this preferred order may be virtually rigid – with almost no departures allowed – or it may be little more than a statistical preference. This preference is the basic word order of the language. Basic word order is the most typical order of elements in the sentences in a language. All six logically possible configurations, SOV, SVO, VSO, VOS, OVS, OSV, are, in fact, found. The basic word order of English, French, Swahili and Chinese, among others is SVO. Other languages have different basic word orders. VSO is found in Irish and Welsh, SOV in Japanese, Turkish, Basque, Persian, Quechua and Georgian; and VOS in Austronesian Malagasy (Winkler, 2012). The Amazonian language Hixkaryana (Carib language of Northern Brazil) is OVS, and another Amazonian language, Apurina, may be OSV. German has SVO in main clauses and SOV in subordinate clauses. There are also languages, such as Dyirbal (Australian language of northeastern Queensland), that do not appear to have any basic word order. This, however, merely means that typology in terms of word order is limited to those languages that have a basic word order; just as tone-language typology is limited to tone languages (Crystal, 1997).

Among natural languages with a word order preference, SOV is the most frequent type on the planet followed closely by SVO and more distantly by VSO. VOS is decidedly uncommon, and OVS and OSV are, at best, very rare. SOV and SVO types account for more than 75% of natural languages with a preferred order (Crystal, 1997). No one knows if these observations represent important human preferences in grammatical structure or if they are merely historical accidents resulting from the survival and spread of some languages at the expense of others.

According to Tomlin (1986), the relative frequencies of the six possible orders are  $SOV = SVO > VSO > VOS = OVS > OSV$ . Tomlin establishes this relative frequency on the basis of data from 1,063 languages, and explains it on the basis of interaction among three principles: the Theme First Principle, the Verb-Object Bonding principle, and the Animated First Principle. The Theme First Principle (TFP) states that thematic information, i.e. information which is particularly salient to the development of the discourse, is likely to come first in simple main clauses. The Verb-Object Bonding (VOB) principle says that in general the O of a transitive clause is more tightly bound to the V than to S. The Animated First Principle (AFP) states that in basic transitive clauses, the NP which is most animated will precede others. The more of these principles which a constituent order allows to be realized, the more frequent the order.

The general aim of this paper, which is part of an ongoing project to study the morphosyntactic features of Shabaki, is to contribute toward clarifying the linguistic position of Shabaki in the Indo-Iranian family. The paper lays out the dimensions of typological analysis of Shabaki language: (1) word order variations; and (2) grammatical relations such as case-marking and agreement clitics.

The main research goal in the present paper is to establish the most common permutation in Shabaki language through a corpus study

on scrambling and word order. The paper is organized as follows: the methodology section overviews the research questions, objectives, data, procedure, and coding. The following section, entitled “Results and Discussion”, presents the main results of this paper, as well as discusses the role of case and agreement markers in scrambling in Shabaki. Finally, conclusions are made in the last section.

## Methodology

Moving on to major methodological issues, which give a frame of reference to the present study, it is wise to begin by stating the research problem. Shabaki is spoken in the region of Mosul, Iraq. The exact genealogy of Shabaki is subject to hot debate. It has never been accepted as a language of its own. Shabaki, together with Zaza-Dimli, Gorani, Gaspian Dialects, South Dari and Hawramani, is classified as a modern Iranian northwest of the Indo-Iranian family. Among Indo-Iranian languages, Shabaki is under-studied except for a few pieces of Western research and therefore there is a great gap in knowledge about this language.

The study tries to find answers to the following questions:

What basic word order holds up in a Shabaki data set? What patterns are most commonly used, and what are their distributions? What is the ratio of sentences and clauses in which we find permutations of the basic clause patterns? What permutations are actually found in ‘real’ data?

What factors influence the scrambling behavior of clause elements? Should this variation be analyzed as random variation or can we identify certain factors (e.g. animacy, definiteness, case-marking, agreement clitics, etc.) which influence the scrambling of these elements?

In Shabaki, there are many factors that influence the order of constituents, some of which are strictly formal while others are functional. The

research in the present paper has the following objectives:

*i. To measure the word order variations in Shabaki mono- and di-transitive sentences.*

*ii. To examine the most relevant factors affecting word order in the sentence.*

To carry out the analysis, thirty seven native speakers of Shabaki language were recorded using mp3 player and Samsung Galaxy mobile phone during group meetings and family gatherings. The data covered a variety of styles. Care was not given to age, sex, and education of participants. The experimental material consisted of 1642 declarative mono-transitive sentences and 460 declarative di-transitive sentences of spontaneous speech. The corpus is restricted to a three-year period between 2014 and 2016. The selected sentences were analyzed carefully for word order permutations. The analysis is repeated after three months and the results are compared in order to validate the results. The statistical analysis consisted of categorizing the sentences into permutations and then counting their percentages. Finally, appropriate conclusions are drawn.

With regard to coding categories, data were divided into clauses that contained one verbal form. Clauses with two arguments were considered (subject and direct object). They were classified into the following categories: SOV, OSV, SVO, VSO, OVS and VOS. Clauses with three arguments were considered (subject, direct object and indirect object) and were classified into S DO V IO, S IO V DO, S DO IO V, and S IO DO V.

## Results and Discussion

This section aims at investigating and discussing the qualitative and quantitative nature of permutations in Shabaki. The following examples in (1) and (2) illustrate the word-order possibilities and the distribution of sentential constituents for mono-transitive and ditransitive

sentences in Shabaki, respectively.

(1)

a. Ahmad purtaqâl-aş wârd. (SOV)  
 Ahmad.NOM orange.ACC eat.PAST

Ahmad ate the orange.

b. Purtaqâl-aş Ahmad wârd. (OSV)  
 Orange.ACC Ahmad.NOM eat.PAST

Ahmad ate the orange.

c. Ahmad wârd-aş purtaqâl. (SVO)  
 Ahmad.NOM eat.PAST-AGREE orange.ACC

Ahmad ate the orange.

d. Wârd-aş Ahmad purtaqâl. (VSO)  
 eat.PAST-AGREE Ahmad.NOM orange.ACC

Ahmad ate the orange.

e. Purtaqâl-aş ward Ahmad. (OVS)  
 Orange.ACC eat.PAST Ahmad.NOM

Ahmad ate the orange.

f. Wârd-aş purtaqâl Ahmad. (VOS)  
 eat.PAST-AGREE orange.ACC Ahmad.NOM

Ahmad ate the orange.

(2)

a. Ali kitâb-aş dâ ba Ahmad-i. S DO V IO  
 Ali.NOM book.ACC give.PAST to Ahmad.IO

Ali gave the book to Ahmad.

b. Ali ba Ahmad-i dâ-ş kitâb-i. S IO V DO

c. Ali kitâb-aş ba Ahmad-i dâ. **S DO IO V**

d. Ali ba Ahmad-i kitâb-aş dâ. **S IO DO V**

A cursory study of Shabaki clauses shows that word order appears to be free. Taking simple transitive clauses, we find examples in the corpus of all possible orderings of subjects, objects, and verbs. The following table demonstrates the frequency of each permutation and its total numbers and percentages in mono-transitive Shabaki sentences.

Table 1: The overall frequency of word order variations of mono-transitive Shabaki sentences.

Permutations	Number of sentences	Percentage
<b>SOV</b>	898	54.68%
<b>OSV</b>	341	20.76%
<b>SVO</b>	177	10.77%
<b>VSO</b>	126	7.67%
<b>OVS</b>	96	5.84%
<b>VOS</b>	4	0.24%
Total	1642	100%

The most common permutation in the present data was SOV (54.68%), followed by OSV (20.76%), SVO (10.77%), and VSO (7.67%). The percentage rate of OVS was very low (5.84%). VOS was very rare (0.24%) (See Table 1 and Figure 1). Overall, the data show that the basic word order in Shabaki is SOV.

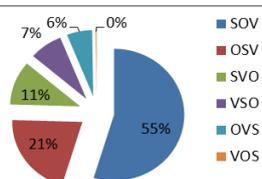


Fig. (1): The frequency of word order variation in mono-transitive Shabaki sentences.

Shabaki is, therefore, a free-constituent order language which most of the time obeys the SOV word order in conversation. The basic canonical word order is SOV and this order is verb final. The non-canonical word order variants can be explained functionally as encoding the pragmatic role of the nominal constituents of the

sentence. The constituents may easily change their position in the sentence with positional changes most often changing the meaning of the sentence. The closer the constituent is to the verb, the higher is the emphasis on that constituent. In particular, word order interacts with case marking in mono-transitive sentence. It is worth noting that grammatical relations are encoded through case and agreement morphology.

In Shabaki, there is only one class of verbs; one which allows both OV or VO order in both heavy and light verbs.<sup>3</sup> In most languages that allow both orders of object and verb, the factors conditioning the choice of order are usually pragmatic, although the length of object noun phrases is sometimes also a factor. It is very rare for the order to be determined lexically or semantically.

On the other hand, the frequency of each permutation and its total numbers and percentages in di-transitive Shabaki sentences are demonstrated in the following table.

Table (2) and figure (2) show that in Shabaki sentences with their arguments, the most common permutation is (S) DO V IO (68.913 %), followed by (S) IO V DO (22.826 %), (S) DO IO V (6.956 %), and (S) IO DO V (1.304 %).

Table 2: The overall frequency of word order variations of di-transitive Shabaki sentences.

Permutations	Number of sentences	Percentage
<b>(S) DO V IO</b>	317	68.913 %
<b>(S) IO V DO</b>	105	22.826 %
<b>(S) DO IO V</b>	32	6.956 %
<b>(S) IO DO V</b>	6	1.304 %
Total	460	100%

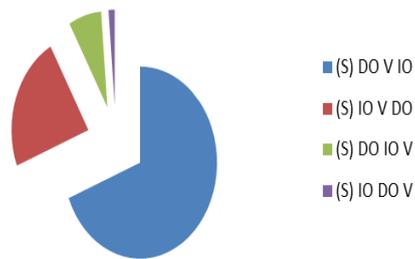


Fig. (2): Word order variation in di-transitive Shabaki sentences.

In summary, the present quantitative study shows that while marked DOs do have a strong preference for the V-DO-IO order, only bare single-word unmarked DOs have a comparable preference to appear adjacent to the verb. Crucially, they show that indefinite (unmarked) DOs group with marked DOs in preferring overall the DO-IO-V order, but show a less strong preference for this order.

Results to follow discuss the morphological and syntactic classification of Shabaki. Furthermore, case and agreement clitical markings are also taken into consideration in this discussion.

According to Greenberg (1966), languages can be classified according to structural similarities with respect to morphological, syntactic, and morpho-syntactic criteria. Morphologically, the Shabaki language can be classified as agglutinative. The present study shows that, in this language, words contain several morphemes that are differentiable from one another and each morpheme represents only one grammatical meaning and the boundaries between those morphemes are easily demarcated. Because clitics are extremely invariant and easily segmentable, Shabaki is very close to the end of the agglutinating continuum. Accordingly, it is similar to Finnish, Hungarian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, and Turkish. Its clitics have single semantic meanings and they are simply connected linearly as in (3).

- (3) a. Yána.gal.mân  
 house.s.our  
 Our houses.

The non-configurational characteristic of Shabaki is a frequent replacement of nominal arguments with pronominal clitics. It is relatively common to find clauses consisting of just verbs with cliticized arguments. The agglutinative and inflectional morphology results in an infinite number of word forms in Shabaki language. The affixes are affixed to the end of the word one after another and the part-of-speech of a word may change several times in a single surface form due to its rich derivational structure. Almost all of the function words are represented as clitics in Shabaki.

- (3) b. Tit-an-m-aş.  
 See.PST-ASPECT-S-OD  
 I have seen him.

In sentences such as the above one can consist solely of the verb. In cases such as these, there is obviously nothing to the left of the verb within the VP. When this happens, the distribution of the clitics becomes extremely erratic.

Figure 3 summarizes the order of the constituents in Shabaki sentences. However, order of the constituents may change rather freely.

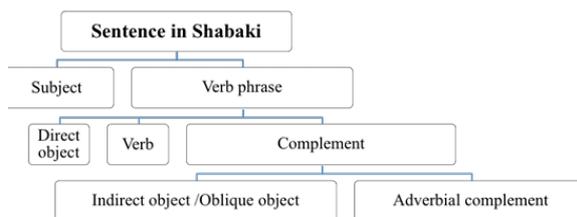


Fig. (3): Typical order of constituents in Shabaki.

There are two types of morphological properties – agreement and case-marking. In the Shabaki language, there are morphological signals on the verb to indicate the presence of an object (i.e. agreement). It also encodes its objects by using case morphology (i.e. case-marking). In this language, agreement and case-marking are in complementary distribution, i.e. when one appears in one permutation the other disappears in another permutation.

The nominative subject in Shabaki obligatorily triggers agreement on the following item, be it a direct object (in an SOV word order) or a finite verb (in an SVO word order). The agreement marker appears only once and the positions where it appears are in complementary distribution, i.e. when it appears on the direct object it disappears from the verb and vice versa. The inflections appear as pronominal finally-positioned clitics on either the direct object or the verb root. The appearance of agreement clitics in these two positions supports our view that they count as direct object markers. This double function of clitics is of maximum importance for both syntactic freedom and pragmatic structuring in this language.

Subject noun phrases are never overtly case-marked, but object noun phrases always obligatorily are. All six possible word orders are grammatical when objects are overtly case-marked, but none are grammatical when objects lack overt case-marking. Morphosyntactically, Shabaki can be categorized as nominative-accusative.

The Shabaki language does not have a unified accusative alignment in all tenses. The alignment associated with past transitive clauses is adrift from the rest of the grammar like the entirety of Iranian languages. The case marking and agreement patterns associated with past transitive verbs were identical to those of the present tenses in the Old Iranian period before two to three thousand years.

- (4) a. Aman Ahmad-i matit-i.  
 I-NOM Ahmad-ACC see-PRES  
 "I see Ahmad."  
 (4) b. Aman Ahmad-am tit.  
 I-NOM Ahmad-ACC see-PAS  
 "I saw Ahmad."

The direct object in two-argument sentences is marked with accusative case marker only in present SOV. However, it is marked with agreement clitic in past SOV.

It is worth noting that marked direct objects (bare or indefinite) with agreement occur preverbally but unmarked direct objects (definite or indefinite) with case occur in post-verbal syntactic positions in the past simple tense. Therefore, it seems that marked direct objects occur in two distinct syntactic positions at spell out, whether base-generated or as a result of a movement to use.

In Shabaki, the genitive and dative cases are syncretic, that is, the same form is used to indicate both the possessor and indirect object in noun phrases.

Table 3: Morphological case in Shabaki

		Trombel (car)	Yâna (house) Harôşa (rabbit)
<b>Subject / Nominative</b>		Zero	zero
<b>Direct object / Accusative</b>	Marked with case: VO	-i	-y
	Marked with agreement OV	-am, -aş, -at, -şân, tân	-am, -aş, -at, -şân, tân
<b>Indirect object / Dative</b>		-i	-y
<b>Oblique object</b>	Goal	-i	-y
	Instrumental	-i	-y
	Benefactive	-i	-y
<b>Genitive</b>		-i	-y
<b>Ablative</b>		-i	-y
<b>Vocative</b>		Zero	zero

In Shabaki, there is no case marking for nominative, and vocative arguments. When arguments are marked for case, the case marker ‘-i’ is added to consonant-final accusative direct object, dative indirect object, goal oblique object, instrumental and benefactive oblique object, genitive, and ablative. However, the case marker ‘-y’ is added to vowel-final arguments instead.

Shabaki has a rich morphology dominated by a clitical system. In this language, there is no grammatical gender. Noun phrases are marked for number and case; but adjectives do not inflect according to the number and person of the head noun. Verbs can express tense, aspect, and mood, and agree in person and number with the subjects. Number can be singular or plural and person can be first, second and third person. In Shabaki, pronominal clitics have grammatical roles. Tensed clauses need not have an overt subject. It is either partially or fully pro-drop. Therefore, it is a null subject language.

Clitical agreement allows the constituents to freely change their default place in sentences without much reliance on the case endings. This situation results in redundancy allowing some pronouns to drop, and others remain. Shabaki allows either or both the subject or/ and object pronouns to be omitted since they can be inferred from the context. Person and number are usually expressed by a single clitic as in the following sentences:

(5) Simple past

- a. Aman aw-am tit. (SOV)
- b. Tit-m-aş. (VSO)  
(Subject and Object pronoun drop)
- c. Aman tit-m-aş. (SVSO)  
(Object pronoun drop)
- d. Tit-am aw-i. (VSO)  
(Subject pronoun drop)

(6) Simple present

- a. Aman aw-i ma-tit-i. (SOV)
- b. Ma-tit-i-ş. (VSO)  
(Subject and Object pronoun drop)

- c. Aman ma-tit-i-ş. (SVSO)  
(Object pronoun drop)
- d. Ma-tit-i aw-i. (VSO)  
(Subject pronoun drop)

Sentences in (5a & 5c; and 6a & 6c) involve a grammatical phenomenon called subject indexation, where a clitic pronoun is co-referential with the free nominal subject appends to the verb. Subject indexation occurs when a co-indexed clitic is placed on the verb beside the overt nominative noun phrase in the clause. In the above transitive clauses, the obligatory subject agreement markers ‘-(a)m’ in (5a & 5c) and ‘-i’ in (6a & 6c) which are co-referential with the subjects are also joined to the verb. It is noteworthy that this grammatical phenomenon is not optional in Shabaki.

In Shabaki, animacy and definiteness do not play any role in word order. Shabaki has a definite enclitic ‘-i’, which is grammaticalized from the Old Iranian demonstrative ‘this’. Shabaki has an overt form for indefiniteness: the indefinite enclitic ‘-e’, which is derived from the numeral ‘ike’ (one), but which differs in distribution. The bare noun without any suffix or determiner can be interpreted as indefinite or definite depending on the context (7a).

(7)

- a. ketâb ‘book, a (or some) book(s), the book (in question)’
- b. ketâb-e  
book=INDEF
- c. ek ketâb-e  
book=INDEF  
‘a book, whatever book, a certain book’

Subject-marking on the verb is universally agreed to be agreement. Agreement on the verb can have argument status and renders the subject itself an optional element. To reiterate, as a free word order with basic SOV language, Shabaki distinguishes subjects from objects by using case-marking on the objects while

the subjects are left unmarked. Verbs show agreement with subjects and with objects; and pronominal subjects and objects can be pro-dropped as stated before.

The direct object can be realized by the absolut(ive) without case endings (as in 8a) or by the accusative with the case ending ‘-e’ as in 8b). A direct object with a case marker, like ‘kitâb-i’ (as in 8c), is a definite noun phrase in Shabaki, while a direct object without the case marker and with the indefinite article is indefinite noun phrase. This means that the case marker by its own marks specificity, rather than definiteness.

- (8) a. Ahmad kitâb ma-wân-o.  
 Ahmad book-ACC PRST-read-3SG.  
 “Ahmad reads **the** book.”
- (8) b. Ahmad kitâb-e ma-wân-o.  
 Ahmad book-a PRST-read-3SG  
 “Ahmad reads **a** book.”
- (8) c. Ahmad kitâb-i ma-wân-o.  
 Ahmad book-ACC PRST-read-3SG.  
 “Ahmad reads **the** book.”

In Shabaki the subject and object of a sentence occur in pre-verbal position, but they may attach themselves as clitic pronouns to the post-verbal position and form a one-word sentence. Like some European languages, clitics in Shabaki never occur in a sentence **in the** initial position even when word order changes from SOV (as in 9a) to VSO (as in 9b), to SVO (as in 9c) or to VSO concantative sentence where the subject and object are encliticised to the verb (as in 9d).

- (9) a. Am Ali-m pek-â. SOV  
 1SG.NOM Ali.ACC beat-PST  
 I beat Ali.
- (9) b. Pek-â-m Ali. VSO  
 beat-PST-1SG.NOM Ali.ACC  
 I beat Ali.

- (9) c. Am pek-â-m Ali. SVO  
 1SG beat-PST-1SG.NOM Ali.ACC  
 I beat Ali.

- (9) d. Pek-â-m-aş. VSO  
 Beat-PST-1SG.NOM-ACC  
 I beat him.

- (9) e. Am-naş tit.  
 1SG-3SG see.PST  
 He saw me.

In Shabaki nominals, clitics can densely pack several morphosyntactic details into just a small amount of text. Shabaki object pronoun clitics are enclitic to finite verbs and remain enclitic to non-finite forms. These forms were gradually less and less used, and then substituted for by other simplified forms. Although Shabaki is SOV, some verbs may appear in sentence-initial positions. In these cases, proclitics are disallowed as in (9a). It is observed that Shabaki tends to have its focused components in clause-initial position as in (9e).

Izafa clitic is used to link the members of the nominal syntactic phrase. As shown in the following example in (10), the izafa clitic relates the head noun to the following constituents such as adjectives and possessors. This clitic is probably a part of the dependent, and may be cliticized onto the head. One evidence to support this hypothesis comes from archaic form of izafa linker. Shabaki people have another alternative to express izafa which is ‘hin’, a form which was once common in Old Iranian languages. Morphologically, it was a free functional item but underwent grammaticalization into a clitic. It is still common among Shabaki people to use ‘hin’ particularly when they use complex NPs with determiners and adjectives. Another way of looking at this phenomenon is to suppose that ‘hin’ was completely dropped out and the case marker on the dependent emigrated to the head.

- (10) a. Kitâb-i nawa hin Ali  
 book-izafa new izafa writer  
 Ali’s new book

- b. Kitâb-i Ahmad-i.
- c. Kitâb-gal-i Ahmad-i.
- d. Kitâbi hin Ahmad-i.
- e. Kitâbi ko hin Ahmad-i.
- f. Kitâb-gal-i qarmaz hin Ahmad-i.

In Shabaki, in a genitive construction involving two definite nouns, both the possessor and the possessed are marked, *Izafa* is used to mark the possessed noun and the case is used to indicate the role of possessor nouns. In *izafa* constructions like (10.b), a linker is realized on the head rather than on the dependent. The *izafa* clitic can be used in a variety of constructions. The elements of the *izafa* construction do not form a tight unit, which means that *izafa* marker can be separated by some clitics, such as the plurality marker. This indicates that *izafa* marker in Shabaki belongs to the head (the leftmost element in the examples in (10.c)) rather than the dependent.

Remarkably, clitics in Shabaki have various distributions. They can attach to nominal, verbs, prepositions, pronouns and other clitics. This may be the rationale behind the various word order possibilities in Shabaki which arise out of the complex, dynamic interaction of clitics and basic clause elements.

## Conclusion

After analyzing the typology of Shabaki, the researcher has reached the following findings:

1. Structural classification: Shabaki is genetically an Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European proto-language. Like English, it is a non-tone language.
2. Morphological classification: Shabaki is agglutinating (a word typically consists of a neat linear sequence of morphemes, all clearly recognizable, as in Turkish or Swahili).
3. Grammatical classification in terms of basic word order:
  - a. The most frequent order in declarative sentences in Shabaki is the verb- final construction where the initial position is

- occupied by a nominative noun phrase (SOV), but constituents can appear at any position, creating grammatical sentences with different discursive distributions.
- b. Shabaki is non-configurational. It tends to demonstrate the basic SOV order. While the default word order is SOV, constituent ordering is flexible and permutations are permitted. Major constituents can scramble.
  - c. Like German and Dutch, Shabaki is SOV combined with V2 word order. The non-finite verb (infinitive or participle) remains in final position, but the finite (i.e. inflected) part of the verb appears in second position.
  - d. Nouns have a rich case system. Word order within the noun phrase concerns the relative order of adjective (A), noun (N), genitive (G), and relative clause (Rel). For A and N, Shabaki is obviously NA (like French; Welsh). But unlike French, Shabaki is intolerant of any exceptions. It places demonstrative adjectives before the nouns they modify.
  - e. The nominal inflectional categories coded on the verbs include person-number, tense-aspect, case, and possession, evidentiality, and transitivity.
  - f. Case endings like different clitics allow speakers to permute word order (cf Sultan, 2014). This feature enhances expressiveness and more information load can be driven from each of its sentences. Verb endings can provide information about the tense and subject of a sentence. In Shabaki subjects can be freely omitted; there are not any distinctions between nouns and noun phrases; and the main clause is located before a subordinate clause. Modifiers usually come after the nouns which they modify. There is no question particle used in yes/no questions to appear at the beginning of sentences. Low-high intonation is used, instead, to formulate a yes/no question which is in-situ. Shabaki uses prepositions to indicate the indirect objects. The object marker “-i”

is added to the end of the direct object. Pronominal clitics are grammaticalized forms of full pronouns and when they are added to direct objects or verbs they function as object markers, agreement markers and allow null subjects in this language.

- a. Auxiliaries precede their main verbs. Auxiliated verbs do not change the basic word order to SVO.
- b. Genitive noun phrases precede the possessed noun,
- c. A title or honorific precede a name (“hâpo Ali” uncle Ali and “Malâ Ali” clergy Ali).
- d. Adverbs appear to the left of verbs and adjectives.
- e. Subordinators precede subordinate clauses.
- f. The genitive and dative cases are syncretic, that is, the same form is used to indicate both the possessor and indirect object in noun phrases;
- g. Articles are postposed, that is, both the definite and indefinite articles follow the noun;
- h. The presence of the infinitive, *tašte badam kê bori* (*Give me something to drink*) give me something to drink.

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## Notes

- a. Â â as in *apple*; A a as in *about*; Ç ç as in *church*; Ş ş as in *shoe*; Ž ž as in *vision*; X x as in *Loch* (in Scottish). The voiceless uvular fricative in English, Ġ ġ, corresponds a voiced uvular fricative in Shabaki. The voiced and the voiceless

pharyngeal fricatives replace *a* and *h* in some Shabaki words respectively. The last two sounds are not part of Shabaki's phonology.

- b. The abbreviations for the glosses and attributes used in this paper are **1** = First person, **2** = Second person, **3** = Third person, **ACC** = Accusative, **AUX** = Auxiliary, **OB** = Oblique **CAUS** = Causative, **CONJ** = Conjunction, **DAT** = Dative, **DEF** = Definite, **ERG** ergative, **EZ(AFE)** = A morpheme used to express relation, **FUT** = Future, **GEN** = Genitive, **IMPF** = Imperfective, **IND** = Indefinite, **INF** = Infinitive, **LV** = Light verb, **LVC** = Light verb construction, **NEG** = Negation, **Nom** = Nominal, **Ono** = onomatopoeic, **PL** = Plural, **PPL** = Participle, **PRST** = Present, **PST** = Past, **PV** = Pre-verb, **REFL** = Reflexive, **SG** = Singular, **VP** = Verbal phrase.
- c. Most verbal constructions in Shabaki are made up using light verbs such as *kar* ('do', 'make'), *dâ* ('give'), *pek* ('hit', 'strike'). The number of verbs that can be used as light verbs is limited, but these constructions are extremely productive in Shabaki.

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