

Complement Clauses

Basic Structure:

There seem to be two basic structures for complement clauses in Balti. One option requires an overt complementizer that is placed after the complement clause and directly before the matrix verb phrase. This is the more common structuring for complement clauses. The other option places the matrix clause before the complement clause without any use of an overt complementizer. Consider the following examples.

- (1) η a-s piter klæs-iŋ gor-uk zεrε \int εrə taŋ-əd
1SG-ERG Peter class- in late-POT COMP bet-PRES
‘I bet Peter will be late to class.’
- (2) η a-s \int εrə taŋ-əd piter klæs-iŋ gor-uk
1SG-ERG bet-PRES Peter class-in late-POT
‘I bet Peter will be late to class.’

Complementizers

The Balti complementizer is [zεrε], a grammaticalized form of the verb [zerba] ‘to say.’ There does appear to be a degree of phonological variation as it sometimes manifests as [zeret], but the conditioning environment for this remains unclear and [zεrε] appears with overwhelming frequency. The complementizer additionally may appear as [zerbo] in factive constructions, as discussed in subsequent sections.

Infinitival Clauses

In English, we express infinitival complement clauses differently than other types of complement clauses that take an overt complementizer and have an inflected verb. Balti does not make this distinction. The same structure and complementizer is used in these infinitival structures. Consider the following examples of infinitival complement clauses:

- (3) η i amo-s η a-la bo-la za t \int εs min zεrε zεr-s
1SG.POSS mother-ERG 1SG-DAT cow-DAT food give COMP say-PST
‘my mother told me to feed the cow.’

Nested Complement Clauses

In sentences that take multiple complement clauses, the lowest/ most embedded clause appears first, then subsequently higher clauses appear until the matrix clause appears last. This is the only acceptable word order, and complementizers are always mandatory for each complement clause. This would suggest that though there are two different structures for complement clauses, the form that requires the overt complementizer is the base case.

(4) aleks-i xmöl jot zere Joao-is səm-ət zere liəm-i zɛr-s
 Alex-GEN money AUX COMP Joao-ERG think-HAB COMP Liam-ERG say-PST
 ‘Liam said that Joao thinks that Alex has his money.’

(5) *liəm-i zɛr-s zuwaw-is səmət aleks-i xmöl jot
 Liam-ERG say-PST Joao-ERG think-HAB Alex-GEN money AUX
 Intended: ‘Liam said that Joao thinks that Alex has his money.’

Factive Verbs

Factive verbs are verbs that presuppose the truth of their complements. In Balti, factive contexts allow for the complementizer to appear as [zɛrbo] in addition to [zɛrɛ]. It is not altogether clear what triggers this, but it feels strikingly similar to derived noun forms found in dependent clauses. Consult the section on verbal morphology for further discussion of this. In both cases we see words which have been derived from verbs into other parts of speech, and which appear with morphology and context reminiscent of definite marking. I will not go so far as to classify this as a definite complementizer, but the intuition of a factive context does not rule out this possibility. Regardless, [zɛrbo] appears to be a complementizer used optionally but exclusively for factive contexts. [zɛrɛ] is nearly as frequent with factive verbs which suggests that [zɛrbo] may be an older form that is falling out of use.

(6) (a) jaŋ-la tʃa toŋsi mɛd zɛrbo ŋa-la itu jot
 2SG-DAT tea drink NEG COMP 1SG-DAT remember AUX
 ‘I remembered that you don’t like tea’

(b) jaŋ-la tʃa toŋsi mɛd zɛrɛ ŋa-la itu jot
 2SG-DAT tea drink NEG COMP 1SG-DAT remember AUX
 ‘I remembered that you don’t like tea’

(7) (a) ŋi amo-la ŋa-s zon taŋmi in zɛrbo rtaxpa
 1SG.POSS mother-DAT 1SG-ERG lie verb.? AUX COMP know AUX
 jot
 ‘My mother knows I lied to her’

(b) ŋi amo-la ŋa-s zon taŋmi in zɛrɛ rtaxpa
 1SG.POSS mother-DAT 1SG-ERG lie verb.? AUX COMP know AUX
 jot
 ‘My mother knows I lied to her’

(8) Here we see that [zerbo] is *not* permissible in non-factive contexts.

(a) η i amo-s η a-la bo-la za tʃes min zere zer-s
 1SG.POSS mother-ERG 1SG-DAT cow-DAT food give COMP say-PST
 ‘my mother told me to feed the cow.’

(b) * η i amo-s η a-la bo-la za tʃes min zerbo zer-s
 1SG.POSS mother-ERG 1SG-DAT cow-DAT food give COMP say-PST
 ‘my mother told me to feed the cow.’

Indirect Questions

Indirect questions are expressed through the use of complement clauses. They allow some degree of variation in word order outside of the complement clause but clause-internally maintain the word order of the corresponding direct question. An overt complementizer is mandatory. Consider the following direct/indirect question pairs.

(9)

(a) jan parti onget-a
 2SG party come-Q
 ‘Will you come to the party?’

(b) mo-s jan parti onget-a zere tri-s
 she-ERG 2SG party come-QCOMP ask-PST
 ‘She asked if you will come to the party’

(10)

(a) jan gar gwen jot pi in
 2SG where go.PTCP AUX.COP COP
 ‘Where are you going?’

(b) mo-s jan gar gwen jut pi in zere tri-s
 she-ERG 2SG where go.PTCP AUX.COP COP COMP ask-PST
 ‘She asked where you will be going’