

Tunisian Grammar

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Back to Main Page:

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Table of Contents:

Morphology:

- 2. Declension Categories
- 3. Nominal Morphology
 - 4. Personal / Object / Prepositional / Demonstrative Pronouns
 - 5. Interrogative / Relative / Quantitative
 - 6. Categorical Pronouns / Clitic-Doubling
 - 7. Clausal Pronouns (incé, indé, bi)
- 11. Adjectives
 - 12. Comparisons
- 13. Verbal Morphology

Syntax:

Morphosyntax:

- 16. Verbal Periphrasis: The Future Tense
- 17. The Infinitive
- 19. The Participle
- 23. The Gerund
- 24. Verb Modality: The Subjunctive
 - 26. The Hortative and the Weak Energetic
- 27. Verb Aspect: The Imperfect, the Perfect and its Auxiliaries

Sentence Structure / Noun and Verb Phrases:

- 28. Word / Clause Order
- 30. The Passive Voice
- 31. The Ethical Dative
- 33. Impersonal Constructions
- 35. Relative Clauses
 - 37. Resumptive Pronouns
- 38. The Embedded Infinitive

Discourse:

- 40. Constituent Order Variations (In progress)

Declension Categories

Tunisian has experienced a breakdown of the Latin nominal declension systems like in all other Romance languages. The result is three declension categories:

- Category 1: consists of all nouns from Latin's 1st and 5th declensions. These nouns are almost always feminine and end in "-a"
- Category 2: consists of all nouns from Latin's 2nd and 4th declensions. These nouns are almost always masculine and end in "-u"
- Category 3: consists of all nouns from Latin's 3rd declension. The gender of these nouns can be both masculine or feminine and end in "-e" regardless of gender.

This pattern is only assumed for nouns of Latin origin, and words borrowed from Semitic or Berberic languages are often quite unpredictable in their endings. A typological calque occurs in all borrowed words from these languages where the noun is assumed to be feminine and declines like feminine nouns. However, even the amount of morphologic change that a noun undertakes is dependent on the sociolect and ethnolect of the speaker. Due to the morphologic properties of a noun nucleus, borrowed noun can even use the morphologic processes that govern them in their native language instead of Tunisian. These borrowed words and the way they are used tell a significant amount about the social status of the speaker.

Nominal Morphology

Overview:

Like most Romance languages, Tunisian has lost all of Latin's pure declension system, with grammatical functions being determined by prepositions and clitics. Its nouns, adjectives, prepositions, and pronouns can be marked for gender and number. Nominal forms can possess two numbers (singular and plural) and two genders (masculine, feminine).

Grammatical Number/Gender:

Unlike most Romance languages (which have been situated in their demographic), Tunisian's lack of standardization resulted in no fixed rules regarding grammatical gender, though there are general tendencies, especially with borrowed words and calques. Despite this, most words in Tunisian still bear some form of their gender.

The definite article is unique to Tunisian in that it is embedded as a proclitic to the noun. The article is declined according to gender and number, but the core noun itself is not declined. The indefinite article, like almost all other Romances, is achieved using the Latin "unus" that precedes the noun. Like the definite article, only the indefinite article is declined according to gender and number. This rule can even be extended to demonstratives and numbers, preventing the core noun from being modified in any form.

The singular masculine declension is "su" while the plural is "sus". The singular feminine declension is "sa" while the plural is "sas".

Tunisian	English
su'nume	the name
sus'nume	the names
una'baka	a cow
unas'baka	some cows

Personal Pronouns:

Gu: I	Tu: You	Isa/Ise: She/He
Unus: We	Ubus: You (all)	Isas/Isus: They

Object Pronouns:

Mè: Me	Tè: You	Direct: Lu / La: It
Nus: Us	Bus: You (all)	Lus / Las: Them

Dative Pronouns (ad+ pronoun):

Mine: Me	Tine: You	Le/La: Him/Her
Nube: Us	Fube: You (all)	

Possessive Pronouns:

Personal pronouns agree with their possession in gender and number. Tunisian is unique in that it maintains a distinction between the anaphoric and non-anaphoric third person

Meyu / Meyā-: Mine	Teyu / Teyā-: Your's	Isi: his / her (non-anaphoric)
Neš-: Our	Beš-: Your "all"'s	Isuru : Theirs

Reflexive Pronouns (Anaphoric third person):

Oblique: Sè	Possessive: Seyu / Seya	Dative: Sibe
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Conjunctive Pronouns:

Mecusu: with me	Tecusu: with you	Lecusu / Iacusu: with him / her
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Demonstrative Pronouns:

_____ Like other Romance languages, Tunisian utilizes demonstratives in three relations: the immediate, distanced, and the far distanced. Demonstratives agree with their noun in gender and number.

Cušu/a: This

Cusu/a: That

Culu/a: That (distanced)

_____ Tunisian also possesses a set of animate demonstratives used exclusively for people:

Išu/a: This

Ilu/a: That

Interrogative/Relative Pronouns:

Berce: Because (refers to a strictly process-oriented causation)

Bu ita: Why

Cale: Which

Candu: When

Ce: That

Ci: Who

Cume: How

Ita: Because / indéed (Can only lead a sentence. Doesn't link clauses but formats information)

Ite: What

Nubi: Where

Quantitative / Negative Pronouns:

Albi: somewhere

Alice: somebody

Alicu: something

Áyenu: someone else's

Neúbice: nowhere

Neyunu: nobody

Nil: nothing

Tutibi: everywhere

Tutu: everything

Unya: everybody / each

The Categorical Pronoun “Tale”

In Tunisian, a derivative of the Latin “TALIS” is used as a categorical pronoun encompassing a noun with a defined attribute either previously mentioned or has been right-dislocated, having a meaning of roughly “this kind of ____, ____ like that”

English	Tunisian
Yesterday, I found / stumbled into a strange church. I don't like places / communities like that although I'm Christian	Icer acitáht-su unsa'cileša rara. Nu me gudit tale tamen ce siya cristianu.
Did you know that John and Mary never go out to eat? I hope I never have a situation / relationship like that	Išes ca Yanè i Mariya šemfe in dumu dan sa'cena? Isbihu ce nu tale aba màci.

Clitic Doubling:

Clitic doubling refers to a change in use of clitics when the 3rd person dative is paired with the direct object clitic “lu” or “la”. The format of this change may be considered a syntactic phenomenon, but it's reasons are governed by phonetic preference and a tendency to avoid a double derivative of “illum”. Clitic doubling is changed by replacing the indirect object clitic with “bi”. Note that in the first example, the clitic combination “bi + lu” forms the contraction “bi'l”. Due to Tunisian phonotactics, this contraction cannot occur at the end of the clause, and the final syllable must remain a vowel (ex. Imperative sentences)

Tunisian	English
Xediya ce tu <u>bi'l</u> dates.	I thought that you were going to give <u>it to him</u> .
Nah- <u>bi-lu</u> !	Tell <u>him it</u> !

Clausal Pronouns (incé, indé, bi):

When it comes to nominal morphology, the use of clausal pronouns in Tunisian is, by far, the most complicated aspect to discuss. The theories behind the use of these pronouns descends from the ability to transmit information across sentences or clauses. Often over-looked in the Romance languages, it encompasses something very important to discuss when talking about their evolution from Latin. Demonstrative pronouns across the Romance languages are not only used for specificity (this shirt, that car), but can be also used to refer to topics discussed earlier.

However, the Southern Romance languages do not have this syntax imbedded in their demonstrative pronouns, which are limited in function to pure adjectives and as a resumptive pronoun (which will be discussed in syntax). These grammar roles are achieved in Tunisian by the means of the three clausal pronouns: “inde”, “bi”, and “incé”. Unlike object / reflexive pronouns, these pronouns always precede the verb.

inde:

In general terms, “inde” (< Latin “INDE”) is the most straightforward clausal pronoun. It refers to a previous subject or topic focus with relation to the new clause. This origin is actually seen in other Romance languages (French: en, Italian / Catalan: ne), and roughly means the English translation “of ____” when it is relating to the predicate of a new clause. Without a quantifying adjective, “inde” takes a indéterminat noun form similar to “some” in English.

English	Tunisian
The dinner last night was delicious! We have talked much <u>of it</u> / <u>about it</u> today.	Sa'cena de icer en nuše fit rica rica! indé amus fabeháhtu meta hude.
There are many bottles of wine here, but I have drank little <u>of it</u> .	At meta sus'bute de binu, ma indé abu bebíhtu bacu.
Give me <u>some</u> !	De-m'inde!
I ate <u>some</u> of that cheese that Peter gave us; it tastes strange.	<u>Inde</u> abu mandicáhtu de cahsu ce nus hatdáhtu Betru; safet raru.

Additionally, “inde” can be used to serve a basic genitive function of source when the pronoun refers to some defining part of the following sentence.

English	Tunisian
The harvesting season for olives has begun. Alex has made much oil <u>of it / from it</u> .	Est cumensáhta sa'mese da'setu. Alicsa indé at fatu meta sa'hatim.

bi:

The main use of the pronoun “bi” (< Latin “UBI”) is to denote the location at which an object happened, more or less translated to “there” in the copular phrase “there are”. In most Romance languages, copular verbs naturally hold this function within them, but the Southern Romance languages do not have this aspect, using the pronoun to link copular verbs with their existential “substrate”. Note that the auxiliary verb does not agree with the object that it refers to.

Ex.))) B'aṭ dus bute in sa'mensa (There are two bottles on the table)

However, the pronoun “bi” can also refer to a clausal predicate, but one that is bound under the same subject. For the most part, it would serve as the “it” word for Continental Romance languages when referring to an infinitive from a previous sentence.

English	Tunisian
Does Michael want to learn how to shear the sheep? I don't think so. He is too young to want <u>it (to learn how to shear sheep)</u>	Bulet Micel rebehíh tusáh sa'sacre? Xedu ca nunu. <u>Bi</u> est čubu aburigítu de buléh.
She has said that she's going to fight in the war. What is she thinking? Her father won't allow her <u>to do it (Literally: Her father won't permit her to it)</u>	Isa at naráhtu de andáh bu sa'gera. Ite fensan est? No <u>bi</u> at a bemitih-la su'báde suyu.

incé:

Similar to the use of “bi”, the most basic use of “incé” (< Latin “HINC”) is its locality function, being used to refer to the source location of an event, a pronoun most evident when using verbs of movement.

Ex.))) incé s'est andáhtu icer su'fisnu.

Yesterday the boy left (from here).

From here, things get complicated. “incé” is the most complex clausal pronoun and contains the most information from previous content. It is a syntactic element used to help bridge two sentences in information necessary for the other to make sense. It also entails multiple dimensions of time and space, allow a semi-transitive aspect for a verb. In general, the parameters of “incé” can be defined by a pronoun that explains an entire clause (subject + predicate):

English	Tunisian
He tried to explain to me last night why he was late, but I didn't believe <u>it</u> (<u>his excuse to me</u>).	Ise at bufáhtu-me icer en nuše bu eséh tardu ma nu <u>incé</u> abu xedíhtu.
We live in a city where the king eats from a golden plate while the people starve. We need to protest <u>this/it</u> and demand that (<u>it</u>) change.	Bifimus en una'citate nubi sa'amre mandicat de unu'blatu de aru candu gamat sa'medina. <u>incé</u> demus cenixáh e de <u>incé</u> inbucamus cambiyáh
Did you hear that Jacob and Ishmael got into an argument yesterday? Yeah, <u>it</u> (<u>the argument that Jacob and Ishmael had</u>) got really violent.	Išes ca icer abetihán fin Yakub e Išmale? Emu, ca <u>incé</u> fit arcidusu.

How to Distinguish the Use of a Direct Object or “incé”

clausalally, it is still possible to figure out clausal parts of a sentence without total proper marking, but it can be difficult and is vague. Observe the following example.

Ex.))) He gave me an apple and explained that he had stolen the apple from the market. I hated it, but I liked it.

Technically, this can have two meanings. The amount of clausal depth in a clitic can help clarify the pronoun being used. So in the above example, “hate” most likely refers to the act (i.e, stealing the apple) but “like” refers to the object itself. If there is no depth to the predicate, a direct object pronoun can easily be used.

Ex.))) As acitatu su'bute dsu'binu ce abu mihsu in sa'mensa?
Emmu, ca lu abu bebihtu.

Have you seen the bottle of wine that I put on the table?
Yeah, I drank it.

How to Distinguish a Locality from “bi” or “incé”:

Although both pronouns can denote a locality with reference to a clause, but they differ in the depth of the reason the event occurred at the location. “Bi” simply confirms that an action occurred at a location whereas “incé” suggests that there is a reason the action occurred there.

English	Tunisian
Icer <u>bi</u> abiyat unsa'fisna bela in su'mercadu	Yesterday, <u>there</u> was a beautiful girl at the market.
Andáhtu su icer in su'mercadu ca <u>incé</u> buliya bitéh ilsa'fisna.	I went to the market yesterday because I wanted to see that girl (<u>there</u>).

In the first example, the sentence only makes an observation: there was a beautiful girl at the market. In the second example, the location of the girl is connected to the intentions of the speaker (i.e, the girl is at the market, so the speaker went to the market)

Adjectives:

Adjectives in Tunisian are nearly identical to the morphologic processes that occur in all other Romance languages. Adjectives are fit into three categories based on the Latin declension paradigm that they come from. Adjective declension systems have merged the same way as their nominal counterparts.

- Category 1 ends in “-a”
- Category 2 ends in “-u”
- Category 3 ends in “-e”

English	Tunisian
The <u>broken</u> branch.	<u>sa'</u> rama <u>frača</u>
A <u>short</u> wall	Unu muru <u>čuncu</u>
The yellow cat	<u>sa'</u> ascada <u>rage</u> (from Tamazight Berberic: awrag)

Tunisian uses three adjectives to mark the quality of the adjective, one for negative (mancu = not very, not that), neutral (bàsicu = a little), and positive (meta = very) highlighting. Unlike many other Romance languages, Tunisian does not use the Latin “issimus” ending to describe extreme quality - this can be accomplished by adding “manu” after the adjective or doubling the adjective.

English	Tunisian
This is it? It's <u>not</u> even <u>that tall</u> !	Cušu bi est? Ne <u>mancu altu</u> est!
He seems to be <u>a little shy</u> .	Paret facen <u>bàsicu timidu</u> .
I'm <u>very worried</u> about the test.	<u>Meta aburáhtu</u> su de su'esamine.

The diminutive in Tunisian is “-isu/a” and descends from the Latin diminutive “-ittus”. It's main use is to show endearment and familiarity with others, most often used when addressing children or lovers. Though it is translated as “a little”, it cannot be used in the same way as “bàsicu” with positive adjectives when addressing the direct quality of something. It can, however, be used with inherently negative adjectives in an effect very similar to the use of “meta” (very close, very short, very small, very slow, etc) .

Comparisons:

The basic formula for adjective comparisons in Tunisian is made by “blus + adj + de” for positive comparisons and “mancu + adj + de” for negative comparisons. Comparisons of equality are made using “adj + ce”. This format of comparisons also work for object relationships to a verb, but “blus” is placed in the front of both objects.

English	Tunisian
Your cat is <u>fatter than mine.</u>	Sa'sicada tuya est <u>blus arasa de sa meya.</u>
I think that she is <u>less crazy than her mother.</u>	Xedu ce isa est <u>mancu macuca de sa'mama suya.</u>
He's <u>as fast as you.</u>	Ise est <u>lazu ce tu.</u>
The boy <u>eats more sweets than fruits.</u>	Su'fisnu <u>mandicat blus de sas'zulce de sas'frutu.</u>

Comparisons of verbal phrases are made in a different format. Positive and negative comparisons are made using “blus/mancu + ce + no” while comparisons of equality are made using “cantu” to bridge the two phrases.

English	Tunisian
John's very lazy, he <u>sleeps more than he works.</u>	Meta fixu est Yane; durmit blus ce nu atamet.
The king <u>has more money than the town has people.</u>	Sa'amre <u>bi at blus dinari ce nu sa'cite abitante.</u>
He's <u>as stupid as his father was smart.</u>	Ise <u>est bulufu cantu fit abišu su'bade seyu.</u>

Verbal Morphology:

Tunisian maintained three of the four Latin conjugations, the 1st “-are”, 2nd “-ere.”, and 4th “-ire”. 3rd Conjugation verbs are distributed to the 2nd and 4th. Tunisian verbs conjugate with respect to number, person, tense, aspect, and mood. Voice is formed grammatically.

Conjugation: “-áh”

Example Verb: (fabeháh: to speak/talk)

<u>Indicative:</u>		<u>Subjunctive:</u>	
<u>Present:</u>		<u>Present:</u>	
Fabeh-u	Fabeh-amu	Fabeh-e	Fabeh-emu
Fabeh-as	Fabeh-asi	Fabeh-es	Fabeh-esi
Fabeh-at	Fabeh-an	Fabeh-et	Fabeh-en
<u>Imperfect:</u>		<u>Imperfect:</u>	
Fabeh-àlam	Fabeh-àlamu	Fabeh-àrem	Fabeh-àremu
Fabeh-àlas	Fabeh-àlasi	Fabeh-àres	Fabeh-àresi
Fabeh-àlat	Fabeh-àlan	Fabeh-àret	Fabeh-àren
		<u>Imperative:</u>	
			Fábeh-emu
		Fábeh-e	Fábeh-ed

Non-finite Forms:

Fabeh-áh: Infinitive	Fabeh-áhtu: Participle	Fabeh-án: Gerundive
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Conjugation: “-éh”
Example Verb: (igéh: to lack)

<u>Indicative:</u>		<u>Subjunctive:</u>	
<u>Present:</u>		<u>Present:</u>	
Ig-u	Ig-emu	Ig-a	Ig-amu
Ig-es	Ig-esi	Ig-as	Ig-asi
Ig-et	Ig-en	Ig-at	Ig-an
<u>Imperfect:</u>		<u>Imperfect:</u>	
Ig-iya	Ig-iyamu	Ig-erem	Ig-eremu
Ig-iyas	Ig-iyasi	Ig-eres	Ig-erisi
Ig-iyat	Ig-iyen	Ig-eret	Ig-eren
		<u>Imperative:</u>	
			íg-amu
		íg-a	íg-ad

Non-finite Forms:

Ig-éh: Infinitive	Ig-éhtu: Participle	Ig-én: Gerundive
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Conjugation “-íh”:
Example Verb: (rebehíh: to learn)

<u>Indicative:</u>		<u>Subjunctive:</u>	
<u>Present:</u>		<u>Present:</u>	
rebeh-u	rebèh-imu	rebeh-a	rebèh-amu
rebeh-is	rebèh-isi	rebeh-as	rebèh-asi
rebeh-it	rebeh-en	rebeh-at	rebeh-an
<u>Imperfect:</u>		<u>Imperfect:</u>	
rebeh-iyam	rebèh-iyamu	rebeh-irem	rebèh-iremu
rebeh-iyas	rebèh-iyasi	rebeh-ires	rebèh-iresi
rebeh-iyat	rebeh-iyán	rebeh-iret	rebeh-iren
		<u>Imperative:</u>	
			rébeh-amu
		rébeh-a	rébeh-ad

Non-finite forms:

rebeh-íh: Infinitive	rebeh-íhtu: Participle	rebeh-ín: Gerundive
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Morphosyntax:

Periphrasis: The Future Tense

_____As previously noted, there exists a total of six verbal conjugations which encompass the present, preterite, and imperfect in both indicative and subjunctive moods. Like all other Romance languages, auxiliary verbs are used with non-finite forms to produce Latin tenses that fell into obsolescence, like the future and perfect tenses.

A key feature to the Southern Romance languages (as well as Romanian) is the archaic formation of the future tense. In the majority of Continental Romance languages, the future tense is formed by suffixation of “habere” to the infinitive of the verb. However, in Southern Romance and Romanian, this formation is still maintained by an *a priori* conjugation of an auxiliary verb + infinitive.

Ex. “I will go to the market”

Romanian: Voi merge la piață. Auxiliary verb: “vrea”-“to desire to”	Sardinian: Apo a andare a mercadu. Auxiliary verb: “aere”-“to have”	Tunisian: Abu andáh a mercatu. Auxiliary verb: “abere”-“to have”
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A simple future construction can also be made in Tunisian with “esere + de + infinitive”, a translation roughly equivalent to “going to”.

English	Tunisian
<u>I am going to go</u> to Jacob’s house.	<u>Su de andáh</u> a dumu de Yakube.
<u>Are you going to buy</u> that cow?	<u>Es de cumburáh</u> cusa baca?

The Infinitive and its Inflections

The abstract and generally subjective view of subordinate clauses in Latin and the ways to form them have been reduced in a near-consistent manner across the Romance languages. There were a variety of verbal nouns and non-finite verb in Latin that helped connect clauses and complex structures. However, Latin's system was very complicated with infinitives and participles for past, present, and future in both active and passive voice as well as a gerunds and supines for most grammatical cases. Almost all of these verbal dimensions have been lost in the Romance languages, being reduced to only a participle (declined to gender and number), the infinitive (-re stem to root), and the gerundive (-nd stem to the root).

Of these three, the infinitive and gerundive are the most interesting to note in their usage and origin. The present "infinitive" in Latin was coincidentally the nominative gerund while the other grammatical cases all bear the similar stem. [ex. facio > facere (nominative), faciendi (genitive), faciendo (dative), faciendum (accusative), faciendo (ablative)]. It is extremely important to note that the gerund is used with relation to the compliment of the main verb. Thus, infinitives are linked with their accusative compliment.

English	Latin
I already know <u>that I am right</u> (literally, have reason)	<u>Habere rationem</u> iam scio.
I think <u>that she is coming here</u>	<u>Eam hinc</u> puto <u>venire</u> .

Although most of the features of the infinitive have been lost since Latin, the Southern Romance languages can use the infinitive to bridge a nominative gerund to the predicate. However, Tunisian can only bridge an infinitive with the same reference as the main clause whereas Sardinian can bridge accusatives in some infinitive constructs,

English	Tunisian
I believe that <u>I can do it / you can do it.</u>	Xedu <u>de incé budéh / ce tu incé budes.</u>
She says that <u>she's coming right now / he's coming right now.</u>	Isa narat <u>de beníh ya / ce ise ya benit.</u>

Luckily enough, there exists inflections that, when added to the infinitive, can act as an accusative alignment for another subject. For the inflected infinitive, the terminal -e is dropped from the infinitive and declined accordingly to the new subject:

-u	-as	-at
-amu	-asis	-an

Its use is still interchangeable with “ce + subordinate clause” however, so its usage just depends on how heavy the subordinate clause is and which flows better. In the following examples, the first phrase would be the generally preferred one based on clause weight.

English	Tunisian
I'm glad <u>that you're here.</u>	Gudit-me meta <u>eseras inuce / ce inuce es.</u>
He said <u>that you want to speak with me about it.</u>	Narásit <u>ce indé ceres faháh mecusu / indé narásit ceheras faháh mecusu..</u>

The Participle

Across all the Romance languages, the participle from Latin has been reduced from its multiple conjugations of tense and voice to one form (perfect passive) that is used as an adjective and as a complement to some auxiliary constructions with “abere” or “esere”. In this light, it operates the exact same as most Romance languages.

English	Tunisian
It's true that I've <u>seen</u> the child before.	Beru est ce abu <u>bisu</u> antis su'fisnu.
I believe that he has already <u>left</u> .	Xedu ce ise ya incé s'est <u>andáhtu</u> .

The participle also has extended uses in subordinate clauses, more so than other Romance languages. In fact, the infinitive is limited in use to only extending to nominal gerunds. The participle is used to connect participle phrases with relation to the subject. This can be defined in a three ways:

Temporal participles:

Temporal participles are defined as a prepositional phrase that incorporates a relational aspect of time. This feature is unique to the Southern Romance language family in that all Continental Romance languages use the infinitive to bridge these constructs. Additionally, these temporal phrases do not need to be linked with an additional preposition.

English	Tunisian	Spanish
Before telling the story, I told him that he wasn't going to like it.	Antis naráhtu su'cuntu, le at náhtu ce nu abilat a gudih.	Antes de contar la historia, le dije que no le iba a gustar.

Due to the compressed nature of the temporal participle, it can be shifted to a position within the sentence. This is more typical in the spoken language whereas the pure left-dislocation is customary in written language.

Ex.))) Le abu náhtu antis náhtu ce nu abilat a gudíh su'cuntu.

It is also important to note that, like the Continental Romance group, these participles are not used when the subject of the clause is not the same as that of the main clause.

English	Tunisian
I sold the car <u>after he gave it to me.</u>	Abu isbacáhtu sa'macina <u>abusti ce ise me la at dáhtu.</u>

However, there is a small exception to this subject-exclusive principle. With intransitive verbs or a reflexive format, an adjacent noun can be added to the phrase that inadvertently implies a different subject. In the case of the reflexive, the participle is declined according to the noun.

English	Tunisian
<u>After her mother died</u> , she returned home to care for her sister.	<u>Abusti murta sa'mama suya</u> , bultu est a dumu bu curatu ad sa'sure.
<u>Before I left</u> , you tried to tell me something.	<u>Antis esitu gu</u> , me est tentáhtu naráh alicu.
<u>After the chores were done</u> , I left.	<u>Abusti fatas sas'facena</u> , incé me esíhtu su.

Other than pure temporal prepositions, the participle can be combined with “ad” to form a referential completed action that translates roughly to (upon ____, when ____). This usage is very consequence-oriented (Event 2 happens because of Event 1).

English	Tunisian
I went to talk to Peter <u>when I learned that his mother had died.</u>	Andáhtu su faháh cun Betru <u>a cusifáhtu murta sa'mama suya.</u>

The Prepositional Participle:

Outside of a pure temporal aspect, there are pleonastic uses to the participle that, when combined with a preposition, hold various syntactic functions. For the most part, this refers to small segments that hold a relation to both the subject and the object of the main clause.

English	Tunisian
I bought the car <u>without seeing it beforehand.</u>	Cumfurasi sa'macina <u>sine bisu frima.</u>
She only has the ring <u>because she stole it.</u>	Isa tenet sa'halca tamen <u>ber furáhta.</u>
I am going to go out with her <u>so that I can talk to her about last night.</u>	Abu andáh cun isa <u>bu faháhtu de icer en nuše.</u>

This prepositional participle has additional functions when added purely to the verb “esere”. The three prepositions used are “de”, “sine”, and “bo”, and are used as grammatical aspects that are generally anti-agent.

De: Momentane Aspect: A construction to denote the previous status of something

Don't worry, <u>it's been washed already / has been washed before</u>	Nu timas, ca <u>est de labáhta.</u>
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Sine: Pure negative aspect: A construction that defines something with an anti-attribute. It is important to note that this construction cannot be used when there is an implied agent.

He said that <u>it hasn't been washed.</u>	Ise narasit ca <u>est sine labáhta.</u>
*He said that it <u>hasn't been washed by the child</u>	*Ise narasit ca <u>est sine labáhta ber su'fisnu.</u>

Bo: Prospective Aspect: A construction that denotes the impendent status of something

The name of the winner <u>is about to be</u> <u>anounced</u>	su'nume dsa'bincédure est <u>bu istáhtu</u> <u>nuntiyatu.</u>
---	--

Like previous examples, the infinitive is also used, but only in active voice settings. All in all, these prepositional participles are strongly dependent on their appropriate context with the subject of the independent clause. Tunisian uses the past participle considerably more in this context than any of the other Romance languages.

The Gerund

The gerund, like all other Romance languages, is mainly used from Latin as the present participle. Due to the nature of the present participle, it operates mostly under the rules of an adverb. The most popular of these is the typical progressive tense when paired with a copular verb (derivatives of “essi” or “stare”). In the case of Tunisian, the gerund is matched with “ešere” and typically precedes the copular verb. This model also follows with the verb for continuation.

English	Spanish	Tunisian
<u>I am getting the house ready</u> for the party.	<u>Estoy preparando la casa</u> para la fiesta.	<u>Amaniyén su su'dumu</u> bsa'feša.
I'm going to <u>keep talking to</u> <u>her.</u>	Voy a <u>seguir hablando con</u> <u>ella.</u>	Abu a <u>bacáh fabehán lacusu.</u>

The Continental Romance languages are mostly limited in their usage of the gerund outside of this function. The Southern Romance languages are unique in that the gerund is expanded beyond a pure adverbial function in that they can be semi-nominal. The most prominent example of this relates to the verbs of perception, which most Romance languages use the infinitive instead.

English	Spanish	Tunisian
I heard the girls <u>singing.</u>	Oi <u>cantar</u> las chicas.	Atitehsu su <u>cantán</u> sas'fisna

Verb Modality

Uses of the Subjunctive:

The use of the subjunctive mood in Tunisian is considerably more frequent than other Romance languages and still has many of the old uses that dominated Latin. Most of the uses span from emphatic constructions of some degree, but are mostly used in circumstantial clauses.

Negative Clauses:

The subjunctive's use is centered on its irrealis properties. Thus, it is the traditional mantra for Romance languages to use the subjunctive in pure negative clauses, whether it be through negation or uncertainty.

English	Tunisian
I don't know if <u>I'm going to go</u> to the market today.	Nu išu si <u>aba andáh</u> hude a mercatu.
It's impossible that <u>he has already returned</u> .	Imbouibile est ce ya se incé <u>syat giráhtu</u> .
I doubt that <u>she told the truth</u> .	Dubu ce <u>isa syat nahtu su'beru</u> .

Optative:

Another common feature to all Romance languages, the optative subjunctive refers to the desires and hopes of the speaker with relation to the world.

English	Tunisian
I hope that <u>you can come tomorrow</u> .	Amentu-me ce <u>busas beníh xas</u> .
Man, if only <u>we bought the land</u> when it was cheap.	Frače, si <u>cumburàremu</u> sa'tera candu era raxa.

Imperative:

Whereas most Romance languages have a unique conjugation for the traditional imperative, Tunisian uses the strict subjunctive for imperatives. Clitics are attached as suffixes on positive commands while negative commands cannot; all clitics are fronted.

English	Tunisian
<u>Give</u> it to me!	<u>De</u> -mi-lu!
<u>Don't tell</u> him it!	<u>Nu</u> bi le <u>nares</u> !

Jussive:

_____The jussive in Tunisian is used to convey indirect commands. It is most similar to the English equivalent "Let + object + infinitive"

English	Tunisian
<u>Let he</u> who has an ear <u>listen</u> !	<u>Intenda</u> su ci adiyat!
<u>Let them pass</u> !	<u>Basen</u> isus!

Deliberate:

The deliberate in Tunisian is used to convey the decision-making process of an action. It is used in direct or indirect questions in a meaning similar to English "should ____" or "whether or not to ____". Paired with another subjunctive, it translate to "either to __ or ____".

English	Tunisian
I'm so confused, what <u>should I do</u> ?	Ita dudusu so, ite <u>faxa</u> ?
He said that I <u>either sell it or keep it</u> until it is worth more.	Ise at naráhtu ce gu <u>lu benda u lu duxe</u> finya ce blus balhsa.

Uses of the Hortative:

The hortative is a verbal construction that is used to denote the “strong energetic mood”, meaning that the speaker has personal interest in the action. The closest translation to English would be “May + object + infinitive” or “should + infinitive” when inferring opinion or a weak volition. This construction is formed by “ad + infinitive”. The intended object can be included, but it can usually be inferred from context.

English	Tunisian
May you find peace.	A' cusifáh salam.
I hope she's happy with him.	A' eséh (isa) cuntenta lecusu.
You should clean your room (because I want you to).	Ad bulíh sa'xurfa.

Uses of the Weak Energetic:

The weak energetic is a verbal construction that is used to denote a minimized opinion that is exerted by the speaker. This minimized opinion can be seen as the speaker making a logical deduction or an assumption about something. It's closest translations in English can be seen as “probably”, “apparently”, “guess that”, and “should” in a passive context.. This construction is formed by the impersonal 3rd person singular of “abere” with the dative of interest that corresponds to the predicate and the infinitive for the action.

English	Tunisian
<u>I'm guessing that he's (probably)</u> at the market right now.	<u>Le at</u> èséh cumu in mercatu.
John is acting strange today. He <u>apparently sold</u> all of his possessions.	Yanè hude faxén-est rarú. Le <u>abilat</u> bendéh tutas sas'casa suyas.
<u>You should clean</u> your room (because it's dirty).	<u>Te at bulíh</u> sa'xurfa.

Verb Aspect:

Uses of the Imperfect:

Tunisian's use of the imperfect tense is very traditional in regards to other Romance languages and even that of Latin. The imperfect is defined as having neither a fixed start or end point or is based at an ambiguous reference within an event. Thus, the imperfect can be used to describe habitual actions in the past or the overall frame of an event.

English	Tunisian
I <u>used to go</u> to my grandparent's farm every summer.	Unya saife <u>andala</u> a šal de sus'mazure meyus.
When I <u>was sitting</u> on the couch, Abraham entered the house.	Ibrahim inčásit in dumu candu <u>gu era</u> in sa'sufa.

Choice of Auxiliary Verb

Tunisian uses two different auxiliary verbs for the perfect, and their usage depends on the properties of the verb. The first, *èsere*, applies to stative and intransitive verbs. The second, *ábere*, applies to dynamic and transitive verbs.

English	Tunisian
<u>I arrived</u> here at 8.	<u>Fertu su</u> inuce ad sas'ustu.
Careful, <u>the water has already boiled</u> .	Ahada, ca <u>ya est ferbihta</u> sa'aga.
<u>He sent</u> the letter earlier.	Is'incé at axitáhtu antes sa'carta.
Don't worry, <u>I talked</u> with her about it.	Nu timas, ca indé <u>abu fabeháhtu</u> lacusu..

Many Tunisian verbs undergo a semantic process in the preterite form, shifting their meaning from habitual aspects to a momentane event (ex. *iših*, to know → to learn; *conošeh*, to be familiar with → to meet; *bofah*, to try → to confirm; *acitah*, to find → to succeed in doing something.

Sentence Structure / Verb and Noun Phrases

Word / Clause Order

_____The default characteristic of all Romance languages is a canonical word shift away from the traditional SOV order of Latin. Most Continental Romance languages have shifted towards a V2 preference and thus a canonical SVO order, but the Southern Romance languages have maintained an accepted VSO order that was popular in the early Middle Ages with many Romance languages. Questions always experience a verb-initial word ordering, a feature common to nearly all Romance languages. Tunisian has considerable flexibility in its constituent order, being able to support a SVO, VSO, and even a VOS and OVS under special circumstances. The parameters of word order, however, are complicated and considerably subjected to phrase weight and properties of the predicator.

Phrase Weight:

Tunisian tends to move heavier noun phrases towards the end of the sentence. This can result in the dislocation of constituents. In the case of a dislocated subject, the speaker raises tone on the subject. Note that dislocated noun phrases contain some sort of grammatical element that refers to its syntactic function. In the case of multiple weighted noun phrases, the constituent positions depends on content the speaker deems important. Thus, examples 3 and 4 are equally valid.

English	Tunisian	Literal Translation
The man milked the cow (that he bought)	su'hòmine murgésit sa'baka (ce at comboratu)	SVO (The-man milked the-cow [that he-has bought])
The man that we talked to yesterday milked the cow.	Murgésit sa'baka su'hòmine ce eris le fabehasimu.	VOS (Milked the-cow the-man that yesterday him we-talked)
The man that we talked to yesterday milked the cow that he bought.	Murgésit su'hòmine ce eris le fabehasimu ad sa'baka ce at comboratu.	VSO (Milked the-man that yesterday him we-talked to the-cow that he-has bought)
The man that we talked to yesterday milked the cow that he bought.	su'hòmine ce eris le fabehasimus murgésit sa'baka ce at comboratu.	SVO (The-man that yesterday him we-talked milked the cow that he-has bought)

Predicator Properties:

The order of constituents in a sentence also depends greatly on the predicator of a sentence (i.e, the core verb). The greatest dichotomy of predicator position is that between copular and non-copular verbs. Copular verbs and especially the existential verb “esere” are unique in that they are the only case in Tunisian of a verb-final word order; copular verbs are otherwise placed at the front of the predicate phrase.

English	Tunisian	Literal Translation
She is the owner of this store.	Sa'tage de cuša boteca est.	The-proprietor of store she-is.
He thinks that you're at the market.	Xedet ce a mercadu es.	He-believes that to market you-are.
There are three pigs in the barn.	B'at čes helufa in su'basasu.	To-there-have three pig in-the-barn.

Outside of the direct properties of a verb (direct and indirect objects) are verbal arguments that are related to the predicator verb. A key grammatical rule of Tunisian is that these cannot be adjacent to one another in a sentence - they must be separated by some core element of the predicate. Thus, multiple arguments are arranged in a Head-Central fashion that orders information based on the depth of the information. An example is shown below, where evidential information proceeds mental/emotional information. Adverbs are likewise affected by this Head-Central property of verbs. In general, adverbs of time, place, degree, and frequency precede the verb while adverbs of manner, purpose, and overall adverbial clauses follow the verb:

English	Tunisian	Literal Translation
The child waited at the door for his father	Ašetáht-est in sa'borte su'fisnu bu su'bače suyu..	V(Adv1)S(Adv2) (He-waited in-the-door the-child for-the-father his.)
Have the neighbors left (from their house) for the winter?	S'an bartihtu de dumu sus'fičinu bu su'hibernu?	V(Adv1)S(Adv2) (They-have left-self from house the-neighbors for-the-winter)

The Passive Voice

The traditional passive voice, like in all other Romance languages, is achieved using a periphrastic construction of “esere” + participle. The use of this construction, however, is considered very formal and can be replaced with more colloquial forms.

The Pseudo-Passive Reflexive:

Many Romance languages are able to use the 3rd person reflexive clitic to reduce the overall valency of the verb of interest. This reduced valency greatly resembles the syntactic process that happens in the passive voice, but their uses slightly vary. Above all, the main difference between the pseudo-passive and the passive is that the pseudo-passive does not take a causative agent: it merely refers to the action having occurred.

English	Tunisian	Literal Translation
Many houses <u>were built</u> along the river.	<u>Ribu ribu s'est fabricáhta</u> metas dumu.	River-river they-built-self many houses
The house <u>was built</u> by the carpenter.	Sa'dumu <u>fabricáhta fit ber</u> su'falímanen.	The-house built was by the-carpenter

Object Dislocation:

Due to a flexible word order, Tunisian's most common replacement of the technical passive is a left dislocation of the object and moving it towards the head of the sentence. Because the main purpose of the passive is to usually emphasize the object experiencing an action, this dislocation requires no grammatical changes and is perfectly accepted.

English	Tunisian	Literal Translation
The house <u>was built</u> by the carpenter.	Sa'dumu, l'at fabricáhta su'falímanen	The-house, he-built-it the-carpenter
Our (olive) oil was bought by Peter.	Sa'hatim neša, l'at tagíhtu Bretu.	The-oil, he-bought-it Peter

The Ethical Dative

The ethical dative is a periphrastic construction used to denote an actor of concern that may not inherently be connected to the sentence or the main verb. The ethical dative is used the exact same way as the normal dative, but its use is implied towards external characters. Thus, the dative can be formed by use of an object clitic (*le/la*) or a fronting of a prepositional *ad* + *actor*. This dative can also be used in an informal request (i.e, please) by adding an initial *ad+mine* to the sentence. Note however that the ethical dative cannot be used when the dative is an inherent verbal argument. Thus in the examples below, the last would be considered incorrect (correct form in parentheses)

English	Tunisian
I put the food on the table <u>for you</u> .	Busi- <u>te</u> su'cibu in sa'mensa.
I said that I'd sell my property <u>for her</u> .	<u>Ad isa</u> abu níhtu ce me abilat bendéh sa'tera
Could you wash the clothes <u>for me</u> ?	<u>A mine</u> lafas sa'cunde?
Mary gave me the clock <u>for you (on your behalf)</u> .	<u>Ad tine</u> m'at dáhtu su'relusu.(At datu-me su'relusu bu tine.)

Prepositional phrases can use the ethical dative for an emphatic emphasis on location with respect to a specific actor. With this construction, the traditional *ad* + *actor* is mandatory.

English	Tunisian
I saw the tree <u>in front of them</u> .	<u>Ad isus</u> abu bistu su'arble acara. (Abu bišu su'arble acara de isus.)
The water fell <u>on top of me</u> .	<u>A mine</u> sa'aga s'est cáhsa acaba.

_____ Like many other Romance languages, Tunisian treats parts of the body as an innate aspect of the entity of concern (body parts do not need a possessive noun attached) and labels this subject with the dative. Due to the inanimate properties of one's own body, complete verbs

cannot be used to describe body parts but rather a copular construction of *Ad + actor + est + adj + body part*. In the case of the first person, the dative can be removed and the copular is assumed to refer to the subject.

This construction ultimately derives from the possessive dative that was commonly implemented in Latin. It is maintained in its pure form in to Tunisian, but is considered more stylistic and formal.

English	Spanish	Tunisian
<u>His arm</u> hurts.	Le duele el brazo. (Literal: The arm hurts him)	<u>Ad ise</u> su'fracetu adulu est (Literal: The arm is in-pain <u>for him</u>)
<u>My back</u> itches.	Me pica la espalda (Literal: The back itches me)	Est fiticusa sa'sena (Literal: The-back is itchy)
She stole <u>my car</u> !	iHa robado mi coche / carro! (She-has stolen my car)	<u>A mine</u> m'at furatu sa'macna! / At furatu sa'macna meya! (Literal: <u>To me</u> she-stole the-car) (She-stole the-car mine)

Impersonal Constructions:

The impersonal construction is a phenomenon that occurs in all Romance languages, but only to a very small degree in most. It is characterized by the use of a zero-theta verb, meaning that it does not have a object nor a subject. The most common use of zero-theta verbs is for verbs of weather which can be occasionally paired with dummy subjects.

English	Spanish	French	Sardinian	Tunisian
(It) is raining	Esta lloviendo	(Il) pleut	Est proende	Fluben est.
(It) is snowing	Esta nevando	(Il) neige	Est anniande	Aniban est.

This is due primarily to the fact that weather is assumed to not be an action controlled by an actor (excluding metaphysical ideas) but rather a condition of a location or event relative to the speaker. Thus, the speaker must state the location where the weather is occurring or it is assumed to be happening at the speaker's locality.

The definity of involved actors in a scene, therefore, can dictate the usage of the impersonal construction. An indefinite subject lacks referentiality and cannot be used without the locative particle “bi”. Note that the presence of either a definite subject or object makes the locative particle unnecessary (with one exception that will be discussed). Note that the impersonal construction always uses the 3rd person singular verb conjugation.

English	Tunisian
The farmer bought the property.	Su'fala at cumburáhtu sa'tera.
A farmer bought the property.	Unu'fala at cumboratu sa'tera.
The farmers bought property.	Us'fala an cumburáhtu una'tera.
<u>Some farmers</u> bought property (<u>there</u>).	<u>Bi</u> at cumburatu unus'fala sa'tera.
Those girls have arrived.	An aribáhtu cusas'fisna
Three girls arrived (<u>there</u>).	<u>Bi</u> at aribáhtu čes fisna

The exception to the above is a construction called the impersonal dative. Rather than assigning the substrate as the subject, it is moved to a dative position to describe the context in which the predicate takes place. The impersonal dative is typically reserved for attributive clauses or divalent verbs where the direct object is incorporated into the dative.

English	Tunisian
“The soldier’s equipment in poor condition, sir.” “I know, we need a blacksmith badly.”	“Sayid, sas'armača sun in mancáhta” “Emu ce <u>bi</u> ceret meta unu'hidad.” (Literal: indéed that [<u>to it</u>] it-is necessary much a-blacksmith)
“John is terrible at talking to women, it’s a joke!” “It must be because he’s too shy.”	“Ita afruncat Yanè cun sas'femna!” (Literal: Such he-stumbles John with the-women) “<u>Bi</u> le debet de faxeh timidu” (Literal: <u>To it</u> it-owes-him of doing shy)
“Did you wear my coat? It’s missing a button!”	“A mine abas duša sa'guba? <u>Bi</u> mancat unu'butune!” (Literal: [<u>To it</u>] is-absent a-button)

The properties of the impersonal dative are used especially with verbs of possession to contrast circumstantial differences. The impersonal dative is added as a marker to imply an overall context versus a situational context.

English	Tunisian
I have a hundred dollars. (I have one hundred dollars on my person)	Abu centu dinar.
I have a hundred dollars (I have one hundred dollars to my name)	<u>Bi</u> abu centu dinar.

Relative Clauses:

Tunisian possesses a very flexible accessibility hierarchy that allows components of speech to be relativized into many positions in both finite and nonfinite formats. Clitic usage is extremely important in relative clauses in Tunisian, as formal writing always requires the appropriate pronoun to identify case usage. There are two traditional relativizers in finite relative clauses: *pronoun + ce* or *pronoun + cale*. Their usage slightly differs, as the latter is reserved for more technical applications or when the relative function needs to be specified, and is always separated from its antecedent by a comma.

Relativization	English	Tunisian
Nominative (Definite article)	The man <u>that talked to us</u> walked to the market.	Su'hume <u>su ce nus at fabeháhtu</u> andáhtu est a mercadu.
Accusative (Direct Object)	The man <u>that I talked to</u> walked to the market.	Su'hume <u>lu ce abu fabeháhtu</u> andáhtu est a mercadu.
Dative (Indirect Object)	The man <u>that I gave the car to</u> walked to the market.	Su'hume <u>le ce abu datu sa'macina</u> andáhtu est a mercadu.
Oblique (Preposition + clausal Object "Bi")	The man <u>that the dog jumped over</u> walked to the market.	Su'hume <u>suba bi ce at salsu su'calbe</u> andáhtu est a mercadu.
Comparison (De + Definite Article)	The man <u>that I am taller than</u> walked to the market.	Su'hume <u>de su ce su blus altu</u> andáhtu est a mercadu.

There exists a relative infinitive that is used in Tunisian as well. The infinitive relative is used extensively as a direct noun modifier, and refers mainly to general attributes rather than entailing a full clause.

Relativization	English	Tunisian
Nominative (ad + infinitive)	That is a man <u>[who] deserves a reward</u> for everything he's done.	Cusu est unu'hume <u>a meritah su aru</u> beri su fatu suyu.
Accusative (de + infinitive)	The <u>books to read</u>	Sas'citabe <u>de legeh</u>
Dative (de + indirect object + infinitive)	The boy <u>to give the candy to</u>	Su'fisnu <u>de le dunah su'zulce</u> .
Oblique (preposition + clausal object "bi" + de + infinitive)	The car <u>to jump over</u> .	Sa'macna <u>suba bi de salsah</u>

The usage of the finite or infinitive relative clause depends on speaker choice, but there are some underlying themes in each of their usage, such as embedded clause weight, the grammatical function of the antecedent, and the subject of the relative clause. In the below examples, the preferred relative clause is in bold.

English	Tunisian (finite)	Tunisian (infinitive)
We just received a letter from the prince <u>who is sending us weapons</u> .	A nube est una'carta axitáhta abes sa'amre <u>ce nus mandat sas'armača</u>.	A nube est una'carta axitáhta abes sa'amre <u>a mandah-nus sas'armača</u>
Where did you put <u>the pepper [that I need] to add to this food?</u>	Nubi as tuncáhtu <u>sa'ibsa ce abu de buneħ</u> in cušu cibú?	Nubi as tuncáhtu <u>sa'ibsa de buneħ</u> in cušu cibú?
I saw <u>the boy that you talked to yesterday</u>	Bišu su <u>su'fisnu lu ce icer as fabeháhtu</u>.	(Construction not possible in Tunisian infinitive relative clause)
I'm going to go have dinner with <u>that woman [who I need] to give the present to</u> .	Abu imensih cun <u>sa'femna la ce abu de dunah sa'hadya</u>	Abu imensih cun <u>sa'femna de la dunah sa'hadya</u>
I'm confused, which rucksack was the one <u>that [I] put the money in?</u>	Abfáhtu su, cale matca est in <u>bi ce abu casnáhtu su'dinar?</u>	Abfáhtu su, cale matca est in bi de eseh casnáhtu su'dinar?

Resumptive Pronouns:

Resumptive pronouns refer to the relabelling of a topic head in clauses where the original reference is likely to no longer be known or has become vague and the speaker wishes to clarify the reference. Their usage in most Romance languages is very rare, and only occur when the speaker has made a mistake in sentence creation and needs to backtrack their reference. Tunisian utilizes a very unique form of resumptive pronouns, a system that more resembles the Arabic system of relative clauses. In Arabic, resumptive pronouns are much more common in relative clauses, as there exists much more agreement asymmetry between NP's and their complement VP's. Though the usage of these pronouns is often redundant in relative clauses in Tunisian, the system can hold considerably larger sentences that would, in other Romance languages, result in syntactic islands. Islands are avoided by the usage of a construction known as the double-resumptive. In most situations, the syntax of Tunisian clitics is never fully realized, but deeper constructions show how the double-resumptive prevents islands.

Tunisian relative clauses mark the antecedent with a clitic that relates to its lowest accessibility in the entire sentence. This first resumptive pronoun marks the ultimate function of the antecedent and the second resumptive pronoun marks where the antecedent lies. These resumptive pronouns can also take an adjunct / interrogative function so long as the appropriate prepositions are doubled with it. The following examples show a completely functional Tunisian sentence (resumptive phrases are underlined) matched with its English complementary, which are confusing or even impossible sentences. Note that only one resumptive pronoun occurs at the front of the relative clause; the other is either internalized within a clause or occurs at the front of the sentence as a wh-question. Note that in example four, the antecedent can even be referenced outside of its main clause so long as its syntactic function is different than its bottom accessibility.

Tunisian	English	Literal
Cunišimu sa'sabga <u>li ce</u> t'ímbricas de su ci <u>li</u> hat a arašnáh.	We know the woman you are wondering who will meet <u>her</u> .	We-know the-woman to-her that you-question of the who to-her they-have to to-meet
? <u>Ber ite</u> has giráhtu a dumu <u>ber lu ce</u> has de facéh?	<u>What</u> did you go home because you needed to do?	For what you-have returned to home for it that you-have of to-do?
? <u>A ite</u> išíht-as sa'daua de <u>lu</u> <u>ce</u> hat ačimgáhtu?	<u>What</u> did you hear the claim that Fred solved?	To what known-you-have the-claim of it that he-has solved?
Cunišimu sa'sabga <u>li ce</u> la ímbricas de su ci <u>li</u> hat a arašnáh	We know the woman <u>that</u> you asked who will meet <u>her</u> .	We-know the-woman to-her that her you-ask of the who to-her they-have to meet.

The Embedded Infinitive:

Tunisian syntax allows for a great variety of simple noun phrases to replace more complex clauses. One of the best examples of this is the embedded infinitive, a construction used as a bare Noun Phrase that can often replace entire subordinate clauses. Because of its syntactic properties, the embedded infinitive always acts as an entirely separate event from the current reference of the speaker.

As a bare noun phrase, the embedded infinitive must be pre-licensed to all constituents, and can be modified in every way that a traditional noun phrase can be. Likewise, auxiliary verbal phrases (constructions that use “habéh” and a participle).

Definite / indefinite Articles:

The most common use of the embedded infinitive is with the definite article “su”. In a definite noun phrase, the infinitive is able to reference an isolated event or, more frequently, is used to replace nominalizations. In indefinite noun phrases, the infinitive is used to distance or even non-specify the event from the current time of the speaker.

English	Tunisian	Literal
I have many memories from that night: <u>sneaking out of the house, meeting up with that girl</u> who stole my heart.	Abu meta amentu de cula nuxe: <u>su fucáh abes sa’dumum su habéh culáhtu cun ila fisna</u> ci m’at furáhtu sa’care.	I have many memories from that night: <u>the-sneaking-out of the house, the-having-met-up with that girl</u> who stole my heart.
Today, we’ll talk about the Tunisian language and <u>[how] to learn it.</u>	Hude amu ad fabáh de sa’linga cartaga e de <u>su imbaláh-la.</u>	Today we’ll talk about the Tunisian language and about <u>the-learning-of-it.</u>
How do I know that man? Well, <u>[one time] he drank with me, bet on a horse race, and he backstabbed me</u> when he was short on money.	?Cume le cunušu a’ ilu humye? Bè, <u>unu bibéh mecusu, unu cimráh in sas’fàras. e unu habéh-me cezáhtu</u> candu le màncalat su’dinar.	How do I know that man? Well, <u>a-drink-with-me, a-gamble on the-race-horses, and a-having-backstabbed-me</u> when he was-lacking money.

Plural Noun Phrases:

The plural embedded infinitive can be used to emphasize the amount of times an event has occurred and not necessarily the event itself.

English	Tunisian	Literal
Why in God's name would I give you more money? <u>I have lent you money four times</u> and you've never paid me back!	?Bercé beri sa'llá me te abat dunáh blus dinar? <u>!De cator adináh-te</u> e mací m'as ardáhtu!	Why through God would I give you more money? <u>Of four-lend-me-money</u> and you've never paid me back!

Demonstratives:

The demonstrative embedded infinitive in Tunisian is the least used of the noun phrases, but still allows for referencing of a nominal antecedent.

English	Tunisian	Literal
Even though we don't have more people, I think <u>that this house painting is going really good.</u>	Tamen ce ni bi àbamu blus medna, xedu ca <u>andat meta bene cušu defingáh-la sa'dumu</u>	Even though we don't have more people, I believe that <u>going really well this-painting-it the-house.</u>

Constituent Order Variations:

Despite the canonical SVO order common to Romance languages, Tunisian allows considerable flexibility in word order to emphasize particular parts of a sentence. In terms of overall frequency, Tunisian tends to gravitate towards VSO. Poetry is famous for shifting to VOS, but is very elegant and considered strange for average talk. There are minor exceptions to these tendencies, as the Martane dialect uses SVO much more often.