Aspects of the Morphosyntax of Tarifit Berber

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PREFACE

This book is an improved and refined version of my PhD dissertation completed in 2010, at the University of Queensland, Australia. The analyses in chapter five on the Construct State, chapter six on word order and chapter seven on clitics have been significantly improved. Chapter nine on the causative system makes use of a different analysis from an earlier version of my PhD. The current chapter is hoped to have more theoretical depth.

The aim

The main purpose of the book is twofold: (1) to provide a thorough description of the main aspects of the morphosyntax of the understudied Tarifit Berber, and (2) to bring these aspects within the range of current developments within the Minimalist approach to syntactic theory. More specifically, I show how the Distributed Morphology framework informs our understanding of some aspects of the morphology and syntax of Tarifit and how the data from this Berber language may contribute to a better understanding of the tenets of this theory. The importance of the book comes from the fact that it is not limited to a particular area of grammar, but it looks at the major grammatical aspects of Tarifit. This includes a general description of grammar, the morphology of noun classes, the Construct State, word order, the clitic system, and causatives.

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This project which started as a PhD benefited in various ways from a few people that I would like to acknowledge, starting with my committee members.

I would like to thank Rob Pensalfini. Rob is one of those people who will pinpoint to the problem and will provide alternatives to fix it. I am immensely grateful to Jamal Ouhalla. His expertise in Berber made all the difference. Jamal always finds time to answer my questions. I would like to thank Mary Laughren for reading my final draft and for her insightful comments. She always made herself available to discuss various issues related to the topics investigated.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1, 2, 3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person.
ABLAT	Ablative
AGR	Agreement
ALL	Allative
ASP	Aspect
AUX	Auxiliary
BENEF	Benefactive
CAUS	Causative
CL	Clitic
COMIT	Comitative
COMP	Complementiser
COMPAR	Comparative
CONJ	Conjunction
COP	Copula
DAT	Dative
DEM	Demonstrative
DP	Determiner Phrase
DIR	Directional (marker)
EPP	Extended Projection Principle
F/FEM	Feminine
FUT	Future
G	Gender
GEN	Genitive
IMPERF	Imperfective
INCHOA	Inchoative
INESS	Inessive
INSTR	Instrument
LF	Logical Form
LOC	Locative
M	Masculine
N	Noun/Nominal
NEG	Negation
NOM	Nominative
NUM	Number
OBJ	Object
PASS	Passive
PERF	Perfective
PL	Plural
POSS	Possessive
PP	Prepositional Phrase
PRT	Participle
PST	Past Tense
RECIP	Reciprocal
REFL	Reflexive
IMPERF	Imperfective
INCHOA	Inchoative
INESS	Inessive
INCHOA	Inchoative
INESS	Inessive
SG	Singular

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this book is to investigate the main aspects of the morphosyntax of the under-studied Tarifit Berber, spoken in northern Morocco. The data used are based on the author's knowledge of the language as a native speaker, but data are checked with other native speakers as needed. The IPA system is used for the representation of the data. The topics investigated in the book include a basic grammatical description of Tarifit, the morphology of noun classes, the Construct State (CS) phenomenon, word order, clitics and causativity. This chapter is a preliminary discussion of the topics investigated, which aims to provide the reader with a clear picture about the key issues examined in each chapter.

Following standard practice in the linguistic tradition when investigating a spoken/heritage language, the next chapter (i.e. chapter two) aims to familiarize the reader who has little or no prior knowledge of Berber, and Tarifit in particular, with some general background information on the history and sociolinguistics of this language. This includes a historical overview, the linguistic situation in Morocco and the sociolinguistic status of Berber compared to other languages spoken and used in that country. Some similarities and differences between Tarifit and other Berber languages are also discussed at the end of the chapter.

Chapter three outlines the main tenets of Distributed Morphology (DM) (Halle and Marantz 1993 et al.), which is the framework adopted for the investigation of some aspects of the morphosyntax of Tarifit. Many of DM's key proposals are illustrated by showing how Tarifit data are extremely amenable to analysis within this theory. One of the aspects I discuss in this chapter is the ambiguity of basic lexical roots between nouns and verbs an issue that was pointed out previously by other Berberists (Guerssel 1986, Ouhalla 1988). Under a lexicalist approach (i.e. generative lexicon) according to which lexical items must be specified for their grammatical category, the ambiguity of these roots between nouns and verbs may be problematic, such that they would have to be redundantly listed both as nouns and verbs. Conversely, I show that DM would not face the redundancy problem and provides a theory of Berber roots in that it eliminates even those rules replacing them with independently necessary

syntactic Merge. Other predictions of the theory having to do with morphology and semantics are also discussed in that chapter.

Chapter four provides a description of the morphosyntax of Tarifit, paving the way to an in-depth theoretical treatment of these aspects in subsequent chapters. The category-less hypothesis explored in the previous chapter is applied on the system of parts of speech in greater detail. This approach leads me to propose an optimal binary division of word class in Tarifit that is either nominal or verbal.

The morphology of nouns, which consists of number and gender, is generally argued to have a mix of concatenative morphology and non-concatenative morphology that affects the vocalic system inside the root. The alternation between singular and plural in (1) provides a basic picture of this morphology. For instance, nouns in (1a&b) make use of an affix-based morphology where singular is marked with a prefix and plural is marked with a prefix and a suffix. The noun in (1c) behaves similar to (1b) in that the plural in the suffix position is realized by *-an* but (1c) differs in that the noun displays what appears to be an ablaut marking that affects the last vowel of the root. A similar process is displayed by the noun in (1d) where the vowel /i/ that is part of the root becomes /a/ when in plural. The second plural marker with the noun in (1e) appears to be an infix but the same marking in (1f) proceeds by substitution. That is, the second vowel changes from /a/ to /u/. It is in this sense that cases like (1c, d, e, and f) are generally argued to display a non-concatenative kind of morphology.

(1)

	SINGULAR	PLURAL		SINGULAR	PLURAL
a.	**a**-βrið	**i**-βrið-**n**	b.	**a**-rʁm	**i**-rʁm-**an**
	SG-road	PL-road-PL		SG-camel	PL-camel-PL
c.	**ø**-iθri	**ø**-iθr-**an**	d.	**a**-jaθir	**i**-jaθ**a**r
	SG-star	SG-star-PL		SG-mat	$\text{PL-mat}_{\text{PL}}$
e.	**a-**mçan	**i-**m-**u**-çan	f.	**a**-faða	**i**-f**u**ða
	$\text{SG-place}_{\text{PL}}$	$\text{PL-place}_{\text{PL}}$		SG-cactus	$\text{SG-cactus}_{\text{PL}}$

Under a late insertion approach in which all vocabulary items compete for insertion with no form is derived from another, I argue for an affix-based marking of number. However, some independently motivated phonological processes may mask underlying regular morphological paradigms. More specifically, the insertion of vocabulary items may trigger some re-writing

rules that are phonologically motivated but bear no relevance to the morphological system.

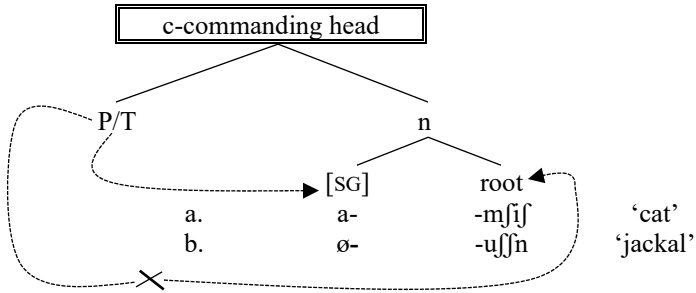
The Construct State (CS) received considerable attention in the Berber linguistic literature. Chapter six evaluates this literature and classifies these works into two camps: (1) a camp which associates CS with case and (2) another camp which associates it with DP, by arguing that the CS is a D-head. In this chapter, the two claims are disputed. Alternatively, I demonstrate that the phenomenon is simply a language-specific property having to do with syntactic constituency. More specifically, the CS is argued to be a syntactic phenomenon that arises from a structural relationship between a DP and an immediately c-commanding head that must be T or P. These two syntactic heads are then interpreted at PF as one phonological word. An illustration of the CS marking is represented as in (2):

(2)

FREE STATE	CONSTRUCT STATE
a. a-mʃiʃ	u-mʃiʃ
SG-cat	CS-cat
b. ø-uʃʃn	u-uʃʃn = /wuʃʃn/
NUM-jackal	CS-jackal

In (2a), the CS is marked on the initial position of the nouns. In (2b), however, the initial vowel is spared from this marking. Instead, the CS is added/prefixed to the noun. Descriptively, this set of nouns do not have an overt prefix number marking and the initial vowel in (2b) is part of the lexical root. By assuming the DM framework, I propose an analysis that formalizes this typology providing the CS with a theoretical basis. The approach relies on the fundamental argument that nouns have a complex structure, which is formed in the syntax. Therefore, investigating the relative hierarchical depth within the structure of nouns correctly predicts the exact position of the CS marking. The basic CS configuration is schematized as in (3):

(3)



The CS in that derivation is marked on the initial vowel of the noun. However, this vowel can only be a prefix as in (3a). When the vowel is part of the root and the number feature is not overtly marked, as in (3b), the CS morpheme is simply added/prefixed to the lexical root. In structural terms, the relevant marking consistently falls on the functional category-defining head. This is expected under the proposed theory, since the nominal functional head is the projection that contains grammatical information. The CS-marking cannot apply to the category-less root, in that its role in the derivation is to provide the noun with encyclopedic/semantic information but cannot take part in any syntactic relation. So, what appeared to be a morpho-phonological issue is argued to be syntactic.

Previous studies have always maintained that Berber, regardless of its varieties, has a basic VSO order. In Chapter seven, I demonstrate that Tarifit has now shifted to a topic-prominent configurational system and that VSO is marginal. This can be seen from (4), where the subject is the topic. In (5), VSO is not completely grammatical but avoided by native speakers in favour of (4).

(4)	Nunʒa	ð-zra	a-qzin.	SVO
	Nunʒa	3F.SG-see.PERF	SG-dog	
	‘Nunja saw the dog.’			

(5)	? ð-zra	Nunʒa	a-qzin.	VSO
	3F.SG-see.PERF	Nunʒa	SG-dog	
	‘Nunja saw the dog.’			

In that chapter, however, I further show that the word order in Tarifit displays two additional properties which do not make it straightforward to

draw a conclusion about this issue. The first case can be seen from (6). The fact the object is realised as a clitic requires this pronoun together with verb to be in the initial position of the sentence. For instance, SVO is the preferred order when all arguments are lexical as in (4). By contrast, it is the verb together with the object pronoun that are required to be in the initial position when the internal argument is a clitic, as in (5):

(6)	ð-zri	-θ	Nunʒa.	$V_{[+OBJ-CL]}S$
	3F.SG-see.PERF	3M.SG.OBJ	Nunʒa	
	'Nunja saw him.'			

In my proposed analysis of this typology, I argue that the basic sentence in Tarifit requires the initial position to be filled with topic, on the basis of the fact that this Berber language is topic-prominent. This requirement is accomplished by the subject when all arguments are lexical, as in (5), and by the object clitic when the internal argument is a pronoun, as in (6). This argument rests on the fact that pronominal clitics are inherently topics. I further argue that the movement of the pronoun pied-pipes the verb with it and therefore predicting the surface ordering whereby the verb + object-clitic precede the lexical subject.

The verb-first requirement is found also with some embedded and wh-clauses, as in (7). In that sentence, it is the verb which is required to be in the initial position of the clause and not the verb. Evidence is provided which shows that alternations like these are the result of verb movement to C, unlike the marginal VSO which is simply a reflection of verb movement to T.

(7)	udʒi	n-	i-zra	u-mçsa.	VS
	sheep	COMP	3M.SG-see.PERF	CS-shepherd	
	'The sheep that the shepherd saw.'				

The last part of my study of word order in Tarifit deals with the fact that the movement of the verb to C/verb second (V2) with wh- and embedded clauses does not apply across the board. That is, some of these clauses require verb-fronting, as seen in (7), whereas others do not have this requirement. I propose to deal with this issue using Chomsky's (1993) copy theory of movement. More specifically, I argue that V2 in wh- and embedded clauses applies in the syntax regardless. For clauses which do not display this operation in the surface, This is due to a language-specific phonological constraint having to do with the prosodic form of the complementiser occupying C and is also dependent on whether C is overtly

filled or not. These PF constraints may trigger the pronunciation of the lower copy of the verb.

Clitic pronouns in Berber are generally assumed to follow the verb but obligatorily move to a functional category (complementiser, negation or tense/aspect) above the verb. Chapter eight takes the study of clitics a step further by investigating other adverbial clitics (directive clitic, locative clitics and preposition clitics). The fact that clitics move to a position preceding the verb when a functional category is present can be seen from (8). In that sentence, the clitic precedes the verb due to the presence of the future morpheme.

(8) að- **-θn** i-zar.
FUT. **3M.SG.OBJ** 3M.SG-see
'He will see them.'

However, this property does not apply to other similar sentences as can be seen from (9). That sentence involves a tense/aspect morpheme selecting the verb yet, the clitic object still follows the verb. This behavior contradicts the general claim found in the Berber linguistic literature by assuming that the clitics obligatorily move to a functional category.

(9) ataf i-zari **-θn**.
FUT.IMPERF 3M.SG-see **3M.SG.OBJ**
'He will be seeing them.'

Based on the fact that clitics in Tarifit are required to be adjacent to the verb (before or after it), it is argued that these are base generated within the VP then left-adjoined to the verb in the syntax for licensing purposes. The clitics then may be hosted by a phonological element to the left, which motivates the pronunciation of the higher copy, as seen in (8). When the clitic follows the main verb, this is due to the pronunciation of the lower copy of the clitic. This scenario is found in two cases: (1) in verb-initial sentences, and (2) in cases where some phonological elements to the left of the clitic may be prosodically weak to host the clitics or these elements are not part of the intonational phrase that contains the clitics and the verb. The latter case is represented by the construction in (9). In both scenarios, the clitics remain stranded in the initial position with no eligible host to the left, which motivates the pronunciation of the lower copy.

In an earlier version which was part of my PhD dissertation, it was observed in chapter nine investigating the system of valency that almost all transitive-

agentive verbs resist passivization in Tarifit. Some verbs cannot be passivized like the one used in (10) but other transitive verbs may either take a middle passive, as in (11), or an inchoative form, as in (12). The intransitive forms in (11b) and (12b) is away for these verbs to realize their passive. However, the middle and inchoative forms in these sentences cannot be equated with their transitive counterparts in that they both lack an agentive meaning. In the PhD version, the study focused mainly on the DM framework relative to the alternation between transitivity and intransitivity and how many properties that are generally argued to be lexical are in fact syntactic dependent on the syntactic context. However, the question of why transitive verbs resist the passive was not addressed.

(10) ufi-n a-qzin.
find.PERF-3.M.PL SG-dog
'They found a dog.'

(11) a. i-z-nz ð-amur-θ ins.
3.M.SG-CAUS-sell.PERF. F-SG-land-F his/her
'He sold his land.'

b. ð-amur-θ ins ð-**m**-nz.
F-SG-land-F his/her 3.F.SG-**MID.VOICE**-sell.PERF.
'His house got sold.'

(12) a. a-frux -in i-hwr ymma-s.
SG-boy DEM 3.M.SG-bother.PERF mother-3.SG.POSS
'That boy bothered his mother.'

b. ymma-s ð-**n**-hwr.
mother-3.SG.POSS 3. F.SG-**INCH**-bother.PERF
'His mother became bothered.'

The current study of transitivity in chapter nine aims to do just that. I propose a theoretical treatment for the question as to why transitive verbs resist passivization. I adopt Pylkkänen's (2002, 2008) parameter-setting, according to which some languages have Cause and Voice as separate projections (Voice-splitting languages) whereas others have these projections bundled/embedded under a single syntactic node (Voice-bundling languages). This chapter provides support for this theory through the analysis of Tarifit data. Transitive verbs resisting passivization are captured straightforwardly if Tarifit is taken to be Voice-bundling language. This parameter disallows this operation in that readjusting Voice (from

active to passive) affects the causative since these two syntactic features are fused under the same syntactic node.

Two additional pieces of evidence are discussed in the literature in support of this theory, both of which receive support from Tarifit. The first one has to do with intransitive-unaccusative verbs like the one in (13):

(13) a-riθi i-gg^{w}a.
SG-dough 3M.SG-knead.PERF
'The dough is kneaded.'

I show that voice-splitting languages like Japanese allow the causative morpheme to co-occur with this set of verbs, in that this morpheme refers to a causing event but does not necessarily correlate with an agent which is introduced separately by Voice. By contrast, a voice-bundling language like Tarifit does not allow this morpheme to co-occur with these verbs as in (14). This prediction is borne out in that the causative morpheme encodes both Voice and Cause.

(14) *a-riθi i-s-gg^{w}a.
SG-dough 3M.SG-**CAUS**-knead.PERF

The second piece of evidence has to do with unergative verbs. For instance, Pylkkänen (2008) shows that some languages like Japanese can transitivize unergative verbs like 'cry' ('John cried the child') whereas English does not have this option. According to her, this parametric variation can be accounted for if Japanese is assumed to be a Voice-splitting language where Voice and Cause are separate projections, but English is Voice-bundling. According to this hypothesis, Japanese may transitivize unergative verbs since Cause (i.e. causing event) would project independently below Voice that the latter projection is responsible for introducing an agent-causer. However, English does not have this option since the functional projection selecting the lexical verb involves both Cause and Voice. I provide evidence in support of this hypothesis from Tarifit. Unergative verbs in this language are formed by combining the causative morpheme with a lexical root. Like English, this set of verbs cannot be transitivized, as in (15b). So, this behavior is predicted if Tarifit is a Voice-bundling language.

(15) a. a-frux i-s-ʁuj.
SG-boy 3M.SG-CAUS-cry.PERF
'The boy cried.'

b. *Nunʒa ð-s-s-ʁuj a-frux.
Nunʒa 3F.SG-CAUS-CAUS-cry.PERF SG-boy
'Nunʒa cried the boy.'

Furthermore, the chapter sheds light on some verbal properties having to do with transitivity alternation. Under a lexicalist approach to verbs that alternate between transitive – causative and intransitive, the intransitive form is generally assumed to be derived from its transitive counterpart by suppressing the causer in the lexical semantic representation (Levin and Rappaport 1995). I show that this approach is problematic for Tarifit in that transitive and intransitive morphemes are in complementary distribution, which makes it difficult to argue for one verbal form as derived from another. I show how a syntactic approach like DM predicts this typology if these verbal properties are assumed to be syntactically derived.

1

THE LANGUAGE AND ITS SPEAKER

1.1 Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to familiarise the reader who has little or no prior knowledge of Berber with some general background information on the history and sociolinguistics of this language.

Although Berber still has a large speaking population, it has never been codified with a standard grammar and a written form. This is one of the drawbacks that has prevented Berber from being promoted as an official language in any country where it is used. The existence of Berber as an oral language implies that native speakers cannot receive any form of education in their own language. Like many other spoken languages around the world, the stigmatised view of being a 'dialect' and not a 'proper language' has made Berber quite vulnerable. The impact of these social prejudices can be quite devastating, where the importance of speaking other languages outweighs the benefits of speaking Berber. At least in Morocco, for instance, prestige is generally associated with written languages that are formally taught in schools and these are Standard Arabic (SA) and French.

Due to the geographical dispersion of its speakers that are scattered in the North African countries, the evolution of the language within these areas both in isolation and through its interaction with other languages used have contributed to the evolvement of different varieties that are not necessarily mutually intelligible. Despite some differences, which are mainly phonological though sometimes lexical, Berberists generally argue for a structural unity of a single language. However, I show that these similarities are now decreasing.

This chapter is organised as follows. Section 2.2 provides a brief history of the language. Section 2.3 discusses some sociolinguistic background. Section 2.4 focuses on the linguistic situation in Morocco and the existence of Berber in a multilingual environment. Section 2.5 discusses the Berber varieties spoken in Morocco. Section 2.6 examines Tarifit and its sub-

varieties. Section 2.7 sheds more light on some dialect differences. Section 2.8 concludes.

1.2 Historical overview

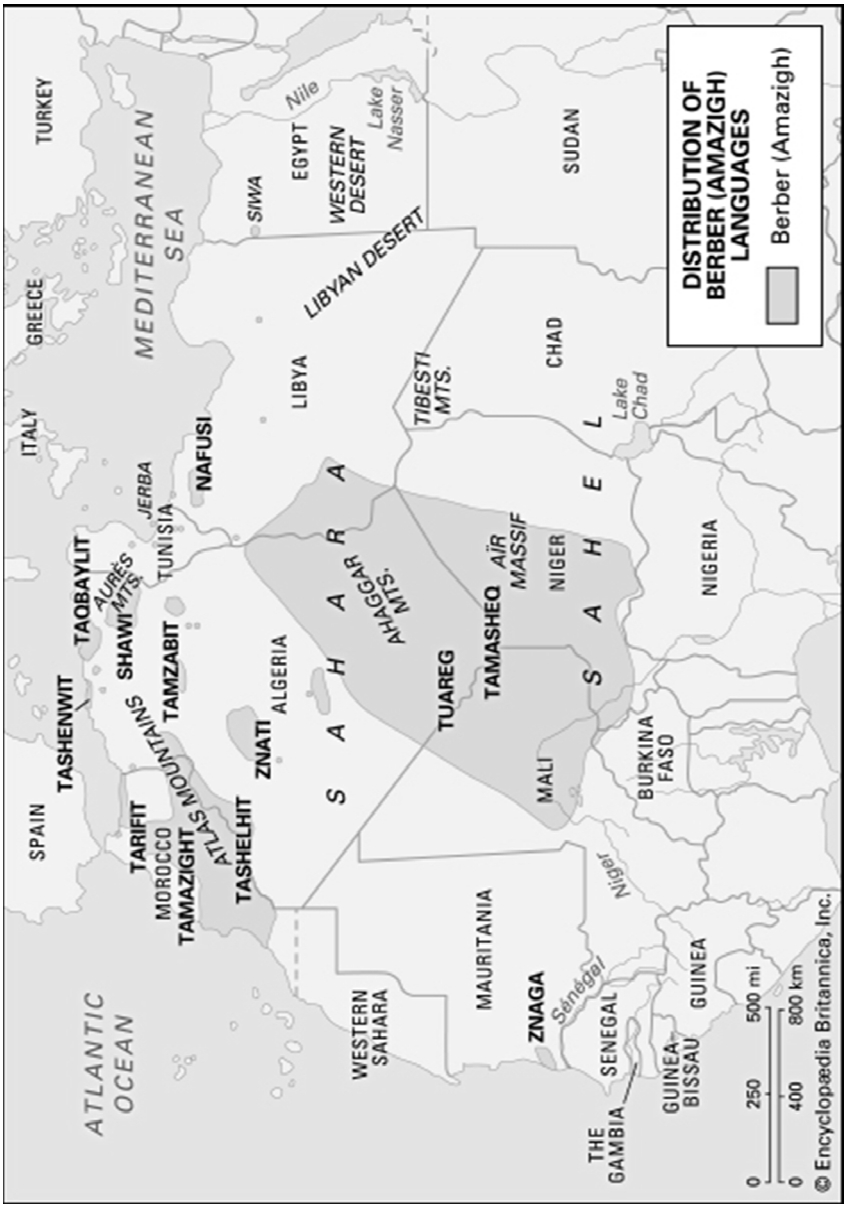
The existence of Berbers in North Africa dates to some 5000 years ago (Boukous 1995b among others). Other studies in anthropology document Berbers to have lived in the area with records dating back to some 10000 years (Ilahian 2006). Note that 'Berber' is used as a generic term to refer to these related languages spoken in the area, so Berber was never codified as a unified language. Due to its oral tradition, it appears that history never favoured Berber as a language which always found itself in desperately embattled situations against the official languages in these countries.

Berber speakers are found in scattered locations across North Africa, as can be seen from the map (1) below[1]. Historically, the area which is inhabited by the Berber speaking population starts from the oasis of Siwa (Egypt) in the east and extends westward to the Canary Islands (Spain) off the Atlantic coast and from the Mediterranean Sea in the north to the sub-Saharan countries in the south. However, most speakers are found in isolated mountainous areas in Morocco and Algeria. A considerable number consisting mainly of Tuaregs are also found in Sub-Saharan Africa in countries such as Niger, Mali, Mauritania, and Burkina Faso. Other pockets of speakers are also found in Tunisia, Libya, and the oasis of Siwa in the eastern part of Egypt, but no speakers are reported in the Canary Islands.

The geographical dispersion of these speakers and the presence of political borders have led to the evolution of Berber into separate languages in that they are not mutually intelligible. While the language is generally known in the Western linguistic tradition as 'Berber', which is of Greek origins, another common term used in the broad Berber tradition to refer to this language group is 'Tamazight'. Although the lexical root 'mazigh' appears to be a native cognate, it is not clear what this term means in that it does not occur elsewhere in the vocabulary of this language group[2]. Note that the term is also used as the name of another Berber dialect spoken in the Middle Atlas area in Morocco.

[1] The map is adopted from Encyclopeadia Britanica.

[2] Recently, the term *amazigh* 'Berber person' is claimed by the cultural and linguistic Berber movement to mean 'free man'. The meaning appears to be based on some hypothesis, which attempted to trace the etymology of the word by looking at some words that have similar form in Tuareg.



MAP (1): BERBER SPEAKING POPULATION.

With respect to the number of Berber languages and varieties, there are no accurate statistics. Abdelmasih (1968) and some other unofficial sources (Wikipedia-online) claim that there are as many as 300-500. However, it is not clear how these statistics are obtained and should therefore be received with caution. For instance, it is not clear whether these claims make any distinction between mutually intelligible varieties and the ones that are not. As for the number of its speakers, there are no reliable and accurate statistics. According to Ennaji (1999), Berber speakers in Morocco make up to 40% out of an approximate population of 30 million while an approximate 8.5 million speakers are found in Algeria. These are just approximate estimates though and Berber scholars often cast doubts on the reliability of such statistics, since this linguistic issue was never part of any official census at least in Morocco (Errihani 2006, Ilahian 2006). From an anthropological perspective, Ilahian argues that between 80% and 90% of the population is of Berber origins but a large part of this population has been Arabicized and therefore lost its linguistic and ethnic identity.

Berber's linguistic affiliation is classified as Afroasiatic together with Chadic, Cushitic, Egyptian, Omitic and Semitic. It should be noted that Berber's genetic affiliation forms its own subfamily in that it is directly derived from Afroasiatic. By contrast, languages like Arabic and Hebrew for instance are assumed to be derived as 'Semitic' then split at some stage in history becoming two different languages. As Achab (2012) points out, this classification was not based on any clear historic and linguistic evidence which showed that these languages were indeed derived from a would be proto-language called 'Afroasiatic', but it was only an assumption made based on some linguistic similarities that these languages share. The term 'Afroasiatic' was first introduced by Greenberg (1950) as an alternative to 'Hamito/Shamito-Semitic', which is still used to describe this language group. This term was used by early European Orientalists but dismissed by Greenberg as having no linguistic basis, in that it refers to a biblical mythology which claims that Ham and Shem were supposedly sons of Noah. According to him, this kinship relation had been taken to reflect some linguistic unity of this language group. Alternatively, 'Afroasiatic' is used to refer to the geographical area where these languages are spoken; part of Africa (Afro) and part of Asia (Asiatic). Whether the linguistic similarities from which the term is borne out indeed reflect a common source at some stage in history or are the result of language contact remains an open question.

1.3 Some sociolinguistic background

One of the main problems that Berber has always faced is the stigmatised view of being a 'dialect' and not a 'proper language' since it is used as a spoken language only. The debate as to what constitutes a 'dialect' and a 'language' is not new. There are two different definitions, which stem from two different and conflicting views of language. The first definition, which is often assumed by non-linguists, makes the distinction between 'language' and 'dialect'. According to this view, what is perceived as a 'proper language' is the one which usually has a standard grammar and a written form. This is generally the language of the speakers that hold the economic and political power. So, the present view defines language using social rather than linguistic criteria and these are often charged with biases and prejudices. Accordingly, 'dialects' are often perceived as less sophisticated and therefore downgraded to a lower scale in their social prestige. This indeed explains that until recently, Berber was largely a taboo subject in most north african countries where it is spoken. Opposing this view is another definition assumed by linguists, which argues that 'language' is simply the super-ordinate term for a collection of 'dialects'. This definition does not consider 'language' versus 'dialect' as relevant, in that it makes the claim that any natural human communication system fully complies with the definition of language. Like many spoken languages, Berber has often been defined along non-linguistic lines and therefore viewed as a spoken 'dialect' and not a 'proper language'. Following standard practice in linguistics, I will keep using the term 'dialect' in the sense of a variety of the same language.

1.4 The linguistic situation in Morocco

Because Tarifit is spoken in Morocco, this section discusses some relevant sociolinguistic aspects in that country. The linguistic situation in Morocco is quite complex and interesting due to the presence a few languages. There are generally four languages used which may be divided into two categories. On the one hand, there is a category that is 'official' used in formal situations such as education and media represented by Standard Arabic (SA and French. On the other hand, there is another category which is seen more like a 'dialect' in that it belongs to an oral tradition used for everyday life represented by Moroccan Arabic (MA) and Berber. Ironically, this socio-linguistic situation shows that what are considered as 'dialects' (Berber and MA) are the only natively spoken languages in Morocco. Conversely, the so-called 'languages' (SA and French) are not the native languages of any Moroccan but are only formally learned, typically as second languages. In

this sense, it is reasonable to say that SA and French are the standard languages whereas MA and Berber are seen more like local or indigenous languages. Consequently, this linguistic diversity has given rise to a sociolinguistic hierarchy between all the languages used; this is discussed next.

SA is the undisputed official language of the country and used mainly in education, media, and religion. The language was first introduced in Morocco between the seventh and eighth century when North Africa became part of the Arab-Muslim empire. Since the majority of Moroccans are Muslims, regardless of their linguistic background, the importance of SA is due to this religious reason being considered as the language of Divine Revelation. This view which is also politically motivated is so dominant that its validity has become difficult to question even among Berber speakers, many of whom see themselves as Arabs due to an acculturation that has occurred over a lengthy time span. In his suggestively titled chapter 'The Arabic Language Unites Us', Suleiman (2003: Chapter 4) discusses at length this perception which is fairly common across the Arab World. Adding to the importance of SA is the strong Arabicization that was carried out in various sectors in the 1960s, following the independence of Morocco, whose main purpose was to restore Morocco's Arab-Muslim identity (Sadiqi 2006). This gave more legitimacy to SA at the expense of Berber. One of the socio-linguistic factors that play some role in this is that linguistic unity, represented by SA, is equated with national unity. Such a social attitude neither advances the cause of linguistic diversity nor does it help to maintain the survival of Berber as a language.

French comes second in this sociolinguistic ranking in that it is used in education, trade and as a language of communication with the outside (non-Arab speaking) world. This language was introduced in Morocco when the country became a French protectorate in (1912). French still holds high prestige and is commonly spoken by the educated middle class in the main urban centres. It is worth noting that French in many ways is more than a second language in that it is introduced as one of the main subjects in primary school. Until recently, part of the curriculum (mainly, scientific subjects) were taught in French and this method is still maintained at the university level. The importance of French also comes from the fact that Morocco is a member of *La Francophonie*, which is an international organisation representing French speaking countries. This organisation which promotes the French language and culture consists mainly of countries that were colonised by France. The status of French as a prestigious language is found in the areas of education, business, and trade.

After SA and French comes MA which is the lingua-franca in Morocco. MA is often associated with the mainstream but is considered as reflecting the national identity of Moroccans. Boukous (1995b) and (Ennaji 1999) also note an emerging middle ground variety between MA and Standard Arabic used mainly by the educated class. Although MA is seen as a deviation from Standard Arabic, as is generally the case in many Arab speaking countries (Marley 2004), it has adopted many Berber linguistic features "…to the extent that Middle East Arabic speakers can hardly communicate with Moroccans unless they resort to the classical variety of Arabic … Moroccan Arabic is phonologically and morphologically more distant from Classical Arabic or the Middle East colloquial varieties than it is from Berber" (Chtatou 1997: 101).

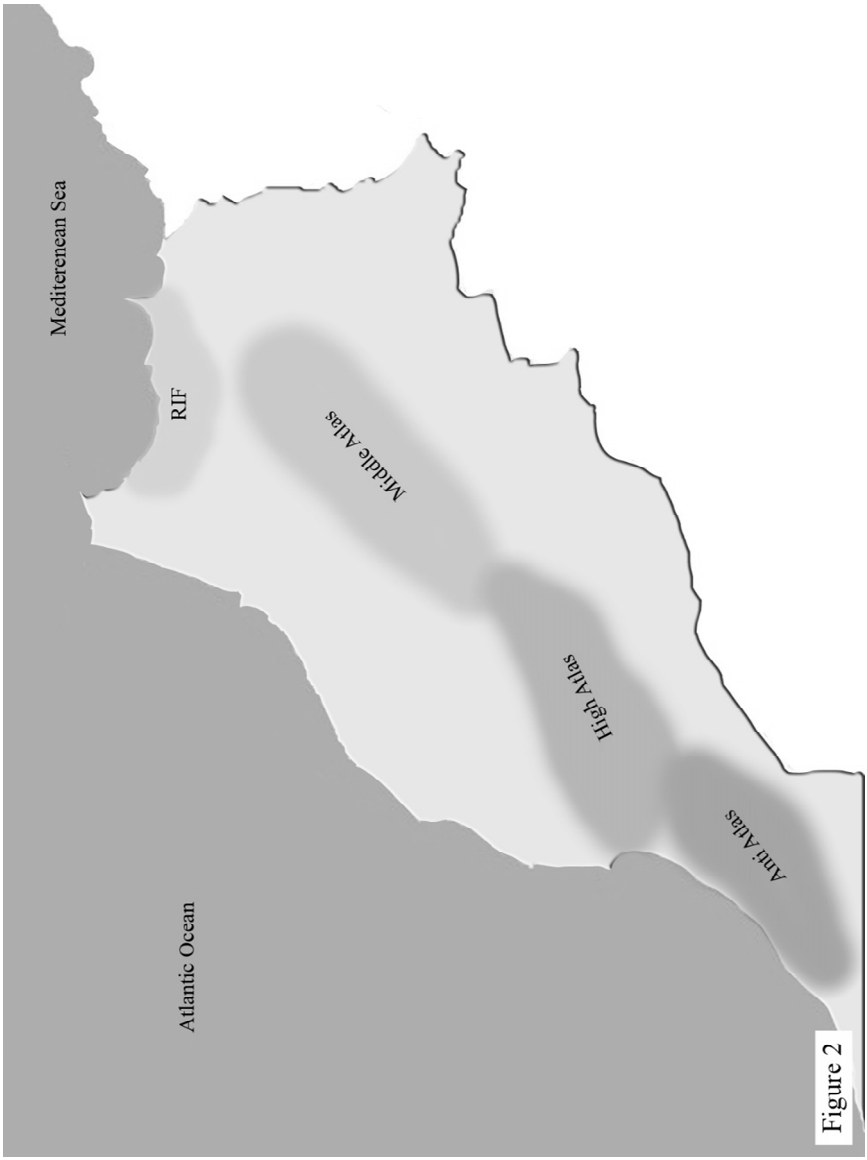
Berber comes last in this scale in that it is seen as serving no real purpose except for the fact that it happens to be a system of communication used by some parts of the population. Until recently, Berber was a taboo subject associated with social division. Marley (2004) conducted some field work in an Arabic speaking area, in the city of Khouribga (Morocco), where she shows that the majority of speakers holds a fairly negative attitude towards Berber and is seen as "… potentially detrimental to the acquisition of Arabic" (Marley 2004: 43). Her subjects, however, still recognise that Berber is part of the cultural heritage of the country. This sociolinguistic situation associates Berber with ethnic or tribal rather than national identity like many other indigenous languages throughout the world. This is major problem that Berber has always faced, in the sense that it does not have a standard status so there is no language called 'Standard Berber'. In view of this, Berber speakers cannot receive any form of education in their own native tongue which may have an impact on their school performance. Such socio-linguistic environment usually puts the speakers of the so-called 'dialects' in a disadvantaged situation. These misconceptions have devastating linguistic effects. They lead to lexical borrowing by abandoning native words and by avoiding the use of Berber due to its low sociolinguistic status as a non-standard language. For instance, borrowing and code-switching using Arabic words/expressions are common among Berber speakers. This often motivates some other grammatical changes including the decline of the morphological system and the disappearance of structural complexity. Berber manifests a numberof these changes which are often argued to be among the properties of endangered languages (Hale 1991). Although Berber may not be endangered, due to its large speaking population, these factors make it vulnerable though. This negative attitude which has affected Berber for a long time is now changing. Berber was recognised in the recent new constitution (2011) as one of Morocco's official languages and was

also introduced in schools[3]. However, there is an ongoing debate regarding the challenges faced by the implementation of this language policy. Tifinagh alphabets, Phoenician in origin, are adopted as the official writing system of the language. These scripts which were used in Old Libyan Berber in pre-Roman times surprisingly survived and maintained by some Tuareg communities in Sub-Saharan Africa (Dalby 2004).

1.5 The Berber languages spoken in Morocco

There are three main Berber languages spoken in Morocco and are generally distributed according to some geographical organisation, as can be seen from Map (2) below. Tarifit is spoken in the Rif area in the northern part of the country, Tamazight in the Middle Atlas and Tashelhit in the High Atlas and the Anti-Atlas region in the south. Berber speakers are also found in major cities (Boukous, 1995a), due to the exodus from the rural areas in search for education and work opportunities. Like many other Berber languages, the ones spoken in Morocco also are different from each to the extent that they are not mutually intelligible. Hart's (1976) anthropological study provides a historical perspective regarding the emergence of this linguistic split. According to him, Tarifit diverged from Tamazight of the Middle Atlas approximately 1000 years ago whereas Tamazight and Tashelhit diverged 2000 years ago. This would explain the fact that Tarifit, for instance, is closer to Tamazight than it is to Tashelhit given the geographical continuum between the Rif Mountain range and the Middle Atlas range (see the map below).

[3] Note that Tamasheq spoken by the Tuaregs was also recognised as a regional national language in Mali and Niger (Dalby 2004, Ilahian 2006).



MAP (2): BERBER SPEAKING AREAS IN MOROCCO