Hamid Ouali

Agreement, Pronominal Clitics and Negation in Tamazight Berber

A Unified Analysis

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Preface

The work represented in this book is an extension of some proposals and analyses that have been made in Ouali (2008), (2005), and (2003). Some of the analyses developed and argued for in those articles and in this work originated in my Ph.D. dissertation which I did at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor in 2006. The main goals I hoped to have achieved then are the same goals I have here. Some of the arguments I made there are sharpened and strengthened here.

Goals

My broad goals are: 1) Describe some grammatical properties of Tamazight Berber and bring to light some novel facts which might have important implications about the current syntactic theory, 2) Unify three seemingly disparate phenomena namely: Subject-verb agreement, Clitics and Clitic-doubling, and Negation and Negative-Concord, as forms of Agreement, 3) Argue that Chomsky's (2005) feature inheritance theory according to which C is the locus of φ-features and T inherits these phi-features in the course the derivation allows three theoretically possible and empirically attested mechanisms: 1) T inherits C's phi-features, 2) T does not inherit C's phi-features, and 3) C and T share C's φ-features.

Symbols and Abbreviations

ACC	Accusative
Asp	Aspect
AspP	Asp Phrase
AOR	Aorist Aspect Form
Agr	Agreement
CL	Clitic
Comp	Complementizer
CP	Complementizer Phrase
DAT	Dative
f	feminine
Fut	Future
INFL	Inflection
IMP	Imperfective
m	masculine
Neg	Negation
NegP	Negation Phrase
NP	noun phrase
Par	Participle
PER	Perfective
p	plural
S	Sentence
s	singular
TP	Tense Phrase
VP	Verb Phrase
QTB	Quebliyeen Tamazight Berber

Chapter 1

Introduction

Despite a rich body of descriptive work on the different dialects of Berber, the grammatical properties of this language remain in many respects unexplored. This book will investigate Agreement Phenomena, one of the most notable aspects of the syntax of Tamazight Berber, especially the dialect spoken in the Quebliyeen region in Khemisset Province, Morocco, and to which I will refer from here on as Quebliyeen Tamazight Berber (QTB). I aim to present an accurate description of this system and to investigate its theoretical implications concerning the human language faculty. The major goal of this work is to propose a novel approach to Agreement and Anti-Agreement, given a Feature-Transfer model advanced in Chomsky (2004, 2005, 2006). Although most of the data is from QTB, cross-dialectal and linguistic comparison is invoked when necessary. However, the theoretical claims and predictions made in this work remain modest and are not necessarily claims for all the 500 or more Berber dialects and languages. A more detailed micro-comparative study would be needed to account for agreement in all Berber languages, which is beyond the scope of this book.

Agreement as a phenomenon refers, in part, to the ways in which grammars mark a relationship between a predicate and an argument; however, this is just one of the multiple ways in which agreement is manifested. As a formal notion, agreement has proven hard to define, as characterized by Anderson

> This is a quite intuitive notion which is nonetheless surprisingly difficult to delimit with precision. (1992: 103)[1]

In order to understand this phenomenon, one has to look at it from different angles and tease apart the different interpretations of the term

"agreement." First, at the morphological level, agreement is a morpho-phonemic manifestation. For example, looking at the two examples below from English and QTB respectively, the boldfaced parts of the verb are the *agreement morphemes* that indicate a *relation* between a/some feature(s) of the subject (e.g. in English, the subject is third person singular) and the verb:

(1) Mary read**s** lots of books. (*-s* is a third person singular marker)

(2) **θ**qra   Məryəm   θabrat (**θ-** is a third person singular feminine marker)
     3sf.read.PER   Meriam   letter
     "Meriam read the letter"

In a sense there is a "co-occurrence restriction" between the subject argument and the type of agreement affix realized on the predicate. Chapter 3 will have further discussion of agreement as a morphological notion.

From a syntactic angle, agreement refers to the *structural* relation under which the morphological agreement is obtained. In the generative linguistics tradition, this relation has received different analytic treatments. It was analyzed as requiring a "Government" relation in the Government and Binding (GB) theory (Chomsky 1981), as requiring a Spec(iffier)-Head (Spec-head) relation in Principles and Parameters theory and early Minimalism (Chomsky 1995),[2] and as an Agree relation in current Minimalism (Chomsky 2000, 2001a, 2004, 2005). Chapter 3 will put all these different analytic treatments in their historic perspective reviewing briefly the reasons for this evolution.

This book is concerned with the latter aspect of agreement, namely the syntactic configuration under which two lexical elements (for example the subject and the verb in (1) and (2)) come to *Agree,* that is **share certain features**. The elements that show some type of agreement are not restricted to arguments and predicates. Languages exhibit a variety of contexts where other elements must agree; such as clitic doubling. In clitic doubling contexts, as shown by the QTB example in (3), the pronominal clitic "her" must *agree* with the object *thrbat* [θərbat] "girl" in person, gender, number and (presumably) morphological Case.

(3) urix-**as**   i-θərbat θabrat
     write.PER.1s-**her**   to-girl   letter
     "I wrote the girl a letter"

Different analyses have been proposed to deal with the phenomenon of clitic doubling. For example, Borer (1984) and Jaeggli (1986) argue that clitic doubling involves a co-indexation relation between the clitic and the noun it doubles. Chapter 6 reviews the major analyses proposed for clitic pronouns, and proposes an analysis of pronominal clitics in Berber. Chapter 7 discusses clitic doubling and analyzes this phenomenon as a form of agreement.

A third example of "agreement" is negative concord where two or three negative items agree by sharing the same negative feature as shown in the QTB example in (4).

(4) **sha**   **-ur**   iddi   **agidʒ**
    Neg2   -Neg1   go.PER.3s   no one
    "No one left"

Ouali (2003, 2005) provides an analysis of sentential negation that captures the variation in the strategies used to express negation across Berber dialects, and argues that the negation element *ur* is generated as the head of a Negation Phrase (NegP) and that *sha* is base-generated lower in the structure and then moves to Spec of NegP. Therefore, *sha-ur* is a derived order as opposed to French *pas-ne* "Neg2-Neg1," which was argued to be a basic/underlying order (Pollock 1989). I also propose that *sha* is licensed via c-command and so are negative expressions such as *agidge* "no one" and *walu* "nothing," extending in this respect Zanuttini's (1991, 1994) approach to Romance. I propose following Watanabe (2004) that negative licensing is an agreement relation. Chapter 8 discusses this topic in detail.

To summarize, these three different phenomena—that is, argument-predicate agreement, clitic doubling, and negative concord, as summarized above—have been analyzed as different and unrelated, requiring three different mechanisms: Spec-head relations, co-indexation and licensing via c-command respectively. One of the goals in this book is to show that explaining these three phenomena does not require disparate mechanisms as part of our computational system but reflect only one relation that is, Agree, as formally defined in Chomsky (2001a, 2004).

Another major goal of this book is to propose a significantly new approach to the so-called Anti-Agreement effect, in light of Chomsky's work (2004, 2005, 2006), where he hypothesizes that T inherits its φ-features from C. Subject-verb agreement results from T entering into a Probe-Match
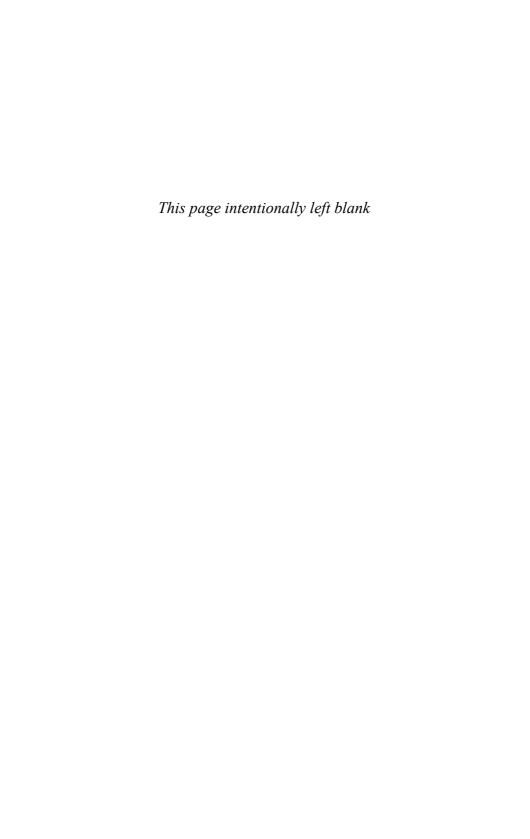
relation and Agree with the subject. I propose that the hypothesis that C is first merged bearing φ-features allows three logical possibilities namely: (a) T inherits its φ-features from C, (b) T does not inherit φ-features from C (C keeps these features and does not transfer them to T), and (c) T inherits φ-features from C but C keeps a copy of these features. I provide strong empirical evidence for all these options and argue that this proposal deduces the so-called Anti-Agreement effect, and solves the Probe-Goal dual activation puzzle in English wh-questions and negative sentences.

The analysis is couched within the Minimalist Program, an approach which, like any other scientific endeavor, seeks to increase explanatory depth over a wide range of empirical phenomena, and maximize explanatory depth through minimization and simplification of theories, by postulating the smallest and simplest, that is minimal, set of premises (see Epstein et. al. 1998, Brody 1995, Epstein and Hornstein 1999; Epstein and Seely 2002, 2006 and forthcoming; Frampton and Guttmann 1999; and references therein).[3] This book aims to provide evidence that a wide range of apparently different and seemingly irreconcilable empirical facts can be generated by a single mechanism, aspects of which are perhaps not specific to the language faculty but reduce to 3rd factor (e.g. minimal search, see Chomsky 2005).

This book is organized as follows: Chapter 2 provides a background on the Berber language. Chapter 3 discusses agreement as a morphological notion and as a syntactic notion and explores the latter as one primary focus of this book. I provide a short background on the different analytical treatments agreement has received in the generative tradition starting with GB and ending with very recent Minimalism. I will adopt a Probe-Goal Agree approach first advanced in Chomsky (2001a). Chapter 4 discusses the clause structure and some aspects of Berber syntax such as word order, Tense and Aspect and complex tense. Chapter 5 provides a theory of Agreement and Anti-Agreement. I adopt Chomsky's (2005, 2006) hypothesis that T inherits its φ-features from T and then show that this hypothesis should theoretically allow three logical possibilities namely: (a) DONATE: C transfers its φ-features to T and does not keep a copy of these features, (b) KEEP: C does not transfer its φ-features to T at all, and (c) SHARE: C transfers its φ-features to T and keeps a copy. I show DONATE generates declarative sentences, KEEP yields the so-called Anti-Agreement Effect, and SHARE yields both T-agreement and C-agreement. Chapter 6 analyzes

the distribution of object pronominal clitics in Berber and argues that these clitics are merged as clitic heads in the functional domain following Sportiche (1992). I argue against two hypotheses: the first claims that clitic distribution is derived by clitic head movement, and the second claims that it is derived by clitic XP-movement. In Chapter 7 I analyze clitic doubling as a form of agreement and show that, just as subject extraction affects agreement in Berber yielding AAE, indirect object extraction yields a ban of clitics. I provide an analysis that shows why this is the case. In Chapter 8 I analyze negative concord as another form of agreement. I argue that if one takes a widely accepted approach such as Zanuttini's (1996) who claims that Neg selects T universally, one will have to address the question of how C transfers its φ-features to T with a Neg-head intervening. I propose that C transfers its φ-features to Neg which transfers them to T and provide empirical evidence that supports this hypothesis.

Before we review the evolution in the treatment of agreement in the generative tradition and analyze agreement in Tamazight in light of the recent Minimalist assumptions, we deem it important to provide a short background on the Berber language. The reader who is familiar with this language can jump ahead to Chapter 3.

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Chapter 2

Background on the Berber Language

Berber is an Afro-Asiatic language spoken in North Africa namely in Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and the Oasis of Siwa in Egypt. It is a continuum of dialects, some of which are not mutually intelligible. In addition to these countries, it is also spoken in large parts of the Sahara in Mali, Niger, and Chad. The Berbers have inhabited North Africa for thousands of years and their language has survived different invasions and contact with the Roman, Vandal, Byzantine, and Arabic languages and civilizations. Today this language is still spoken in all the aforementioned countries, thriving is some and dwindling in others.

2.1 The People

The term widely used to refer to this population is "Berbers," a term that some Berbers dislike and take offense at because of its origins. Imazighen [imaziɣən] is the term they prefer to use, to identify themselves and Tamazight [tamaziɣt] is the language they speak.[1] The term Berber is of external origin and there are different theories as to the origin the word. Some argue that it is from the Greek word for "barbarian" which meant someone who spoke a foreign language. Ruedy writes:

> The word Berber goes back to the Greeks, who called the people they found living in the Maghreb at the dawn of history barbarians, a terminology subsequently adopted in various forms by Romans, Arabs, Europeans, and others. (2005: 9)

Others attribute the term to the language itself and the way it sounds. The Arab historian Ibn Khaldoun writes:

> Their language is not only foreign but of a special kind, which is why they are called Berbers. It is said of Ifriqish son of Qays son of Sayfi, [. . .] that he encountered this strange race with its peculiar tongue and struck with amazement exclaimed "what a *barbara* you have!" for this reason they were called Berbers. (cited in Brett and Fentress 1996: 4)

Ruedy (2005) argues that the literature on the origin of the Berbers is "full of problems" and "ambiguities." He states that the balance of opinion on this issue currently holds that the Berbers of history were the descendents of the Paleolithic group which was then mixed with other races from Western Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, and to a great extent with races from the northeast and the southeast. According to Brett and Fentress (1996) Imazighen people are "extremely heterogeneous."

Language seems to be the only badge of identity an Amazigh (a Berber) holds and the major factor taken into consideration when trying to figure out the number of Imazighen in North Africa. Today Berber speakers constitute about 40 percent of the Moroccan population of over 33 million people. They constitute 20 percent of the Algerian population of over 34 million people. In Tunisia, Libya, and the Oasis of Siwa in Egypt the number of speakers is very small and is dwindling every year. The Tuareg are found in large parts of the Sahara in Niger and Mali and their number is estimated between 600,000 and 1,600,000 (Brett and Fentress 1996).

2.2 The Language

Berber belongs to the Afro-Asiatic language family which comprises of: Berber, Semitic, Cushitic, Egyptian, and Chadic. The different Berber varieties have been characterized as languages by some authors and as dialects by others. There is not a clear criterion besides the mutual intelligibility or lack thereof as a dividing line between a dialect and a language.

I will use the term "dialects" without any preconceived definition for the term.

When the Arabs came from the Arabian Peninsula to Morocco and North Africa in general in the seventh century AD, they introduced Islam and Arabic to the Berbers. Arabic was mainly the language of worship and gradually became the language of literacy. The Berber language in North Africa was not written, unlike in Niger for example, but the Berbers have managed to maintain their language for generations (Idrissi 2003).

In the twentieth century, the situation changed drastically especially after Morocco gained independence from France in 1956. Getting an education required knowledge of Arabic and Berber children and youth started to view their language as a disadvantage. This language was completely marginalized in the education system and in the language policies of the government (Boukous 1998, 2003). Being a former French colony, the French language was also still dominant in this country. The winds of globalization introduced more pressure from the spread of the English language also especially through the internet. The language policy had always been strengthening the Arabic language on the expense of Berber.

In the twenty-first century, new changes are being introduced and this language is currently undergoing a remarkable transformation and resurgence in Morocco. The government of Morocco finally recognized Berber as one of the country's important languages and for the first time the Moroccan television started broadcasting Berber programs in three major dialects. The most significant development however, is the introduction of a legislation which requires every public school to teach the language by 2010. To achieve this goal, top Berber researchers were brought together under one roof with the creation of the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture (Boukous 1998, 2003). This task force decided on a writing script and on one standardized language instead of the current three major dialects (Tamazight, Tashelhit, and Tarifit) and their sub-varieties.

The task to standardize this language is by no means an easy one considering the big variation among the Berber dialects. It is hard to put a number to the different dialects and sub-dialects that are currently spoken in Morocco or in all the different countries for that matter. Some scholars

estimate this number to be around three hundred or more local dialects (Abdel-Massih 1971). Others, like Andre Basset, estimate the number to range from several hundreds to four or five thousand local dialects (cited in Penchoen 1973: 1). However, there seems to be a consensus among all Berberologists that there are four major dialectal groups. Abdel-Massih (1971) classifies Berber dialects into the following four groups:

I.   Tamazight: Spoken in the Middle Atlas Mountains in Central Morocco. It consists of these major tribal dialects:

> Beni Ouarain, Ayt Morghi, Ayt Alaham, Ayt Youb, Marmoucha, Ayt Seghrouchen, Ayt Youssi, Beni Mguild, Zaiane, Zemmour, Ayt Rbaa, Ayt Seri, Beni Mtir, Guerouane. Ayt Segougou, Ayt Morghad, Ayt Ayache, Ayt Hdiddou, Ayt Izdeg, Ayt Sokhmane, Ayt Atta.

II.   Tashelhit: Spoken in the High and Anti-Atlas and the Sous Valley in Southern Morocco.

III.   Zenatiya: it consists of the following major dialects:

> Tarifit: Spoken in northern northeastern Morocco.
> Taqbaylit: Spoken by the Qbayel tribes in Algeria.
> Zenatiya: Spoken by the Mzabites of Ghardaia in the Mzab region in Algeria.

IV.   Tamasheq: Spoken by the Tuareg tribes in Mauritania, Mali, and Niger.

<div align="right">(Abdel-Massih 1971: ix–x)</div>

Abdel-Massih (1971) focused on Tamazight of Ayt Ayache and Ayt Seghrouchen in Morocco, therefore he gave a detailed classification of the Tamazight dialectal family. The other three major dialects certainly consist of subgroups as well which are not reflected in his classification.

The focus of this book is on Quebliyeen Tamazight Berber (QTB), a Zemmour dialect which belongs to the Tamazight group. "Zemmour" is the term used to refer to the group of Berber speakers in and around Khemisset province, located about 40 miles west of Rabat the capital of Morocco. Quebliyeen is the name of the tribe that the author of this book belongs to and QTB is the major source of data in this work. Before discussing some grammatical properties and the clause structure of

QTB, in the next chapter we will take on the issue of agreement and the evolution of its treatment in the Generative tradition. The discussion in the next chapter will be familiar ground to those who know Generative literature and readers who do not need this background can skip to Chapter 4.