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Preposed topic specification in Berber: An innovation induced by contact with Arabic[1]

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ملخص

تتطرق هذه الدراسة لظاهرة التخصيص القبلي للموضع في اللغة الامازيغية وتبين أن هذه الآلية التداولية ناجمة عن اتصال اللغة الامازيغية بالعربية. وتنسب المقالة نشأة هذا التخصيص القبلي إلى عملتين تقعيديتين ألا وهما النسخ التقعيدي المتماثل والتقعيد (العادي) الناتج عن الاتصال اللغوي (هاين وكوتيفا 2003). وتسفر العملية الأولى عن تكون النوع الأول من مخصصات الموضع والتي خضعت مادتها لمعالجة طفيفة أو كثيفة. أما العملية التقعيدية الثانية، فقد أدت إلى نشأة النوع الثاني من مخصصات الموضع والذي تمنح الأمازيغية من خلاله مادتها عبر تغيرات داخلية في نسق اللغة نفسها. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن الدراسة تعتبر وظيفة التباين سببا محتملا وراء عملية التحول هذه، وبذلك تعتبر دعما لفرضية ماتراس (1998) التي تقضي بأن التباين عاملا محفزا للاقتراض اللغوي.

Abstract

This article deals with preposed topic specification in Berber and demonstrates how this pragmatic phenomenon was engendered by contact with Arabic by means of two grammaticalisation processes: replica grammaticalisation (Heine and Kuteva 2003), which led to the Type-1 topic specifier, whose borrowed matter has undergone light or heavy processing, and (ordinary) contact-induced grammaticalisation (Heine and Kuteva 2003), which led to the Type-2 topic specifier, whose matter was provided by Berber itself by means of system-internal developments. Furthermore, the article accounts for the functional parameter of contrast as being the probable trigger of the whole innovation process and hence corroborates Matras' hypothesis (1998) regarding contrast as a motivating factor for borrowing.

Keywords: Topic specification, topicalisation, information structure, language contact and change, replica grammaticalisation, contact-induced grammaticalisation, Berber, Arabic

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1. INTRODUCTION

In many languages of the world, there are specific morphemes or expressions that mark the topic and add particular semantic and discursive values to its referent by specifying its general content or by creating more contrast between its properties and that of the previous topic. These particulars markers are called here topic specifiers. Together with appropriate intonation markers, topic specifiers also distinguish the topic from its generally succeeding comment. Some Indo-European examples of such commonly used topic specifiers, which appear in a sentence-initial position, are the English *as regards*, *as for*, *concerning*; the French *quant à*, *pour ce qui est de*, *concernant*; the Italian *per quanto riguarda*, *riguardo a*; and the Dutch *wat betreft*, and *aangaande*.

Although topic specifiers are attested in Berber, they are not widespread, and they are mainly optional. In fact, most accounts of their regular usage come from Taqbaylit (aka Kabyle Berber, North Algeria), where they precede the topic, as in example (1), where the composite marker *ma d* 'as for' specifies the subsequent topic *aqcic* 'boy'.

(1) ***ma d*** [*aqcic,*]$_{T}$ *tebbwi-t* *yid-es*
TS boy PROS take.away-PFV=3MSG with=3SG
'As for the boy, she took him with her.'
(Dallet 1982: 476)

The Tuareg languages (Sahara, North and Northwest Sahel) form an exception to this state of affairs, not only because they frequently employ topic specifiers but also because they employ them in postposed position primarily; the latter type being merely attested in Tuareg Berber. An example that accounts for this is given in (2):

(2) [*năk*]$_{T}$ ***-za*** *wər-* *əleɣ* *măwta*
me TS NEG have-PFV=1SG car
'As for me, I do not have a car.'
(Prasse, Ghubăyd ăgg-Ălăwjəli, and Ghabdouane 2003: 871)

This article will deal with preposed topic specification only, whereas postposed topic specification is dealt with in Lafkioui (forthcoming). Both preposed and postposed topic specification are contact-induced phenomena: preposed specification results from contact with Arabic, as will be demonstrated in this article, while postposed specification is an areal phenomenon, involving various languages from different language phyla. The article will focus on how both matter borrowing and pattern replication from Arabic, as the model language, into Berber, as the replica language, are at work with respect to preposed topic specification (replica and contact-induced grammaticalisation; Heine and Kuteva 2003). Accordingly, it will show how language change can be the result of a subtle interaction between system-external parameters (i.e. contact) and system-internal parameters (formal and functional factors).

In section 2, a comparison of the main mechanisms of topic specification in Berber and Arabic will be given, alongside their defining topicalisation features and structures. Section 3 will focus on the study of Arabic-based specifiers, while section 4 will be dedicated to Berber-based topic specifiers; both specifier types being affected by pattern replication from Arabic into Berber. Before concluding, the article will present, in section 5, a number of findings and contact-linguistic explanations regarding contrastive topicalisation and the relating development of dedicated topic specifiers, which to my knowledge has never been addressed in detail before.[2]

2. TOPIC SPECIFICATION IN BERBER AND IN ARABIC

Although preposed topic specification is not a generalized phenomenon across the languages of the Berber phylum, a number of dedicated specifiers are attested in certain Berber languages, and in some of them, such as in Taqbaylit (North Algeria), they are even common. These topic specifiers are generally used to enhance the contrast put on

[2] The original transcription of the cited examples is maintained. All English glosses and most English translations are the author's.

the referents of the topics compared, which goes hand in hand with prosodic marking and often also with fronting. In fact, prosody perfectly meets the needs of contrast demarcation in Berber. Even more so, prosodic prominence is required when topics are contrasted, as is shown in utterance (3) and the relating instrumental analysis in Figure 1.

Preposed topic specifiers, on the other hand, are optional. This has to do with the fact that topicalisation in Berber is primarily marked by an *intonation dislocation*, which generally involves an intonation break. Accordingly, a left dislocation construction, and hence a pre-predicative topicalisation construction, is marked by an intonation pattern with a pitch curve that reaches its apex on the ultimate syllable of the topic before changing its direction on the first syllable of the comment. On the other hand, a right dislocation construction, and so a post-predicative topicalisation construction, displays a prosodic configuration in which the pitch contour attains its peak on the last syllable of the comment before descending on the first syllable of the topic. In both topicalisation constructions, it is the intonation dislocation that is the only conclusive defining parameter of the marked topic (i.e. topicalised topic) when it occurs in utterances without prosodic emphasis (Lafkioui 2011).

Other parameters that determine the marked noun phrase topic in Berber are the independent noun state and the left periphery predilection. But these are subsidiary parameters, as there are a considerable number of nouns that do not distinguish the noun state opposition (e.g. kinship terms and nouns with a unique state) and pronouns do not make this distinction, either. Moreover, although the left periphery is the preferred position for topicalisation in Berber, right-peripheral and in-situ topicalisation also do occur in these languages (Lafkioui 2002, 2010, 2014).

The following instrumental analysis in Figure (1) of example (3) from Tarifit (North Morocco) accounts for intonation dislocation as a major distinctive feature of the marked topic in Berber.

(3)	[*wən*	*ɣa*	*yaḵān*	,]$_{T}$	*a*	*s-ikkəs*	*fus.*
	3MSG	REL	steal-AOR-PTCP	PROS	IRR	3SG=take.off-AOR-3MSG	hand

'The person who steals, he cuts off his hand.'

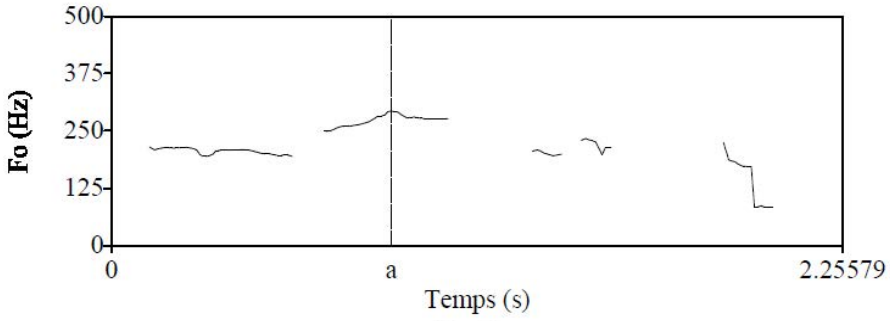

Figure 1. Fo pattern for the occurrence *wən ɣa yaḵān(,) a s-ikkəs fus.*

Figure (1) demonstrates that the complex topic *wən ɣa yaḵān* 'the person who steals' is delimited by a pitch apex of 293 Hz on its final syllable, immediately followed by a pitch fall starting on the initial syllable of the comment *a s-ikkəs fus* 'he cuts off his hand'. Pitch prominence not only identifies and highlights the topic but also marks contrast between the referent of this topic, 'the person who steals', and the previous topical referent, which is described in the narrative text as 'the person who respects common law and leads a correct life'.

Furthermore, in Berber, the semantic referent of the marked topic is usually reiterated in the comment by means of an anaphoric that plays different actantial roles in the related predicative structure, such as the role of the indirect object in utterance (3), which is resumpted as the pronominal indirect co-referent *s-* (3SG). The only condition for co-referentiality in Berber is that the co-referent has a notional connection with the predication, including the predicate itself. Circumstantial topics and topics referring to a generic notion, however, form an exception to this rule; various Berber languages block co-referring in these particular cases (Lafkioui 2014).

So, in order to enhance the contrastive load of the topical referents that are compared, Berber has developed a set of dedicated topic specifiers by contact with Arabic, along different paths of replication and borrowing, which will be accounted for in this study in sections 3 and 4. In fact, in all attested cases of preposed topic specification, Berber replicates from Arabic its specific syntactic-pragmatic pattern, which requires a dedicated marker preposed to a fronted topic. And in some cases, Berber also borrows

material from Arabic, from both its Standard and colloquial varieties, with or without processing it.

An important factor that probably facilitated the replication and borrowing of this phenomenon into Berber is the fact that "colloquial" Arabic and Berber have in common certain fundamental structural and functional traits concerning topicalisation. Indeed, just like in Berber, the colloquial Arabic varieties – not only those with which Berber is in close contact since remote times, i.e. the North African Arabic varieties, but also those used elsewhere, such as Levantine and Gulf Arabic – generally do not make use of topic specifiers (see e.g. Owens and Elgibali 2010, which deals with information structure in colloquial Arabic). And when they do, they mainly employ these specifiers for contrastive purposes and in specific contexts which relate to certain language registers and levels that reflect schooling and social status. Contrastive topic demarcation in colloquial Arabic, just as in many other languages of the world (including Berber), is usually rendered by means of fronting, as in (4) from Gulf Arabic, whose fronted NP *il-falt* 'scattering' is identified as a topicalised subject by Holes (2010: 71).

(4) [*il-falt*]$_{T}$ *ya-bɣa* *akθar*
scattering-DEF need-IPFV-3MSG more
'Scattering requires more (fertilizer).' (Compared with diluting it with water)
(Holes 2010: 71)

Contrastive topicalisation in colloquial Arabic, as well as in Berber and in various other languages, is necessarily associated with prosodic demarcation, which may go together with sentence-initial non-dedicated contrast enhancers like conjunctions, prepositions and adverbs.

When topic specifiers are employed in colloquial Arabic, they appear as instances adopted straight from Modern Standard Arabic, or they appear as instances which are processed and accommodated to the local variety in question and its discursive routines.

A case in point which is frequently attested across North Africa is the topic specifier *bi n-nisbat-i ʔilā* 'as for' (in-the-relation-GEN-to) from Modern Standard Arabic. In Moroccan Arabic, for instance, this specifier is commonly attested as *b-ən-*

nəsba l- ‘as for’, whose preposition *l* ‘for’ generally takes a pronominal clitic (e.g. ‘as for me, you, him…’), which points to the interactive position the speaker takes vis-à-vis his or her discourse and its topical referents. This interactive position is usually of a contrastive kind, with a variable degree of intersubjective involvement by the speaker, and is embedded in specific language practices requiring competencies in certain language levels and registers (see also Caubet 1991: 221).

Regular contrastive topic specifiers in North African Arabic with a greater generalisation across the language levels are those that derive from the particles ***ʔammā*** ‘as for’ and ***ʔimmā*** ‘if’ from Modern Standard Arabic. These two markers are particularly important for the present study, since they are borrowed into Berber, as will be demonstrated in section 3.1. Example (5) presents a topic specifier derived from the Modern Standard Arabic ***ʔammā*** ‘as for’ and adjusted to Moroccan Arabic by phonetic accommodation, including a change of vowel quality and quantity.

(5) [*hiyya(,)*]$_{T}$ *gəlsət,* [***emma*** *huwwa(,)*]$_{T}$ *ma ṣbər š*
3FSG PROS sit.down-PFV-3FSG TS 3MSG PROS NEG be.patient-PFV-3MSG NEG
‘She, she sat down; as for him, he could not bear to be patient.’

The semantic referent of the first marked subject-topic *hiyya* ‘she’ is contrasted with the referent of the second marked subject-topic *huwwa* ‘he’, which is preceded by the specifier ***emma*** ‘as for’. This example shows that, just as in Berber, the presence of a specifier is optional – as in *hiyya(,) gəlsət* ‘she, she sat down’ – and that it is used to put more contrast on the topical referents compared. It also indicates that, when it comes to topicalisation, North African Arabic shares with Berber its predilection for both the left-periphery of the sentence and prosodic marking (i.e. intonation break with or without pause).

The coordinated utterances in (5) also account for topic co-referentiality marking in Arabic; another point that it has in common with Berber, although there are some distinctions concerning the semantic features of the referents and the ways wherein they are resumpted. For instance, Moroccan Arabic only allows highly determined referents to

be topicalised (see e.g. Caubet 1993: 18–20; Colin 1960), whereas the Berber topical referents can be less determined and even undetermined in certain cases (Lafkioui 2014).

In the light of these syntactic and pragmatic parallels between Berber and colloquial Arabic, the following sections will investigate the main dedicated topic specifiers in Berber engendered by pattern replication from Arabic, which can be combined with matter borrowing as well (Arabic-based topic specifiers; section 3) or with specific system-internal developments (Berber-based topic specifiers; section 4).

3. ARABIC-BASED TOPIC SPECIFIERS

In certain Berber languages (e.g. Tashelhiyt, Taqbaylit, Siwa Berber), when there is a need for shifting the contrastive topic, Berber speakers may not only replicate the preposed topic specification pattern from Arabic but also may borrow its formal instances (matter). A number of the most salient topic specifiers of this type will be examined in this section according to their degree of processing and integration into the Berber linguistic system.

3.1 Unprocessed and slightly processed specifiers

When Berber languages borrow topic specifiers from Arabic, they generally borrow them as unanalysed or slightly analysed discursive markers. This is the case, for instance, in (6) to (8) from Tashelhiyt Berber (South Morocco), extracted from the edited texts of Roux (2009). In these texts, the Moroccan Arabic particles ***amma*** ‘as for’ and ***imma*** ‘as for’ regularly occur as preposed topic specifiers; they derive from the Modern Standard Arabic forms **ʔammā* ‘as for’ and **ʔimmā* ‘if’, respectively. The former specifier may go together with the prefix *fa-*, which marks the ensuing comment. Hence, a Topic-Comment configuration with **ʔammā ... fa-...* in Modern Standard Arabic contains a marked topic, which is specified by means of **ʔammā* (see also Haywood and Nahmad 1965: 440). Given the formal and distributional features of *amma* ‘as for’ and *imma* ‘as for’ in Berber and in Arabic, it is very unlikely that they are pan-Berber; they probably are of Arabic origin. The following are examples:

(6) ***amma*** [*lbnya-w-wẓṛů,*]$_T$ *wa-nna* *ras-* *si-s* *ibennu*
TS building in stone PROS 3MSG IRR with-3MSG build-IPFV-3MSG
iġz *akäl,* *yawi-d* *aẓṛů* *ḫ-* *tuggugt,* […]
dig-AOR-3MSG earth PROS bring-AOR-3MSG-VENT stone from distance
'As for buildings of stone, the person who is going to build with it digs the earth and brings stone from a distance […]'
(Roux 2009: 12)

(7) [*tumẓĭn*]$_T$ *ar-tent kkerzen* *ġ-ĕlbur* *d-wasif* *d-urtän* *kra* *gi-sen.*
barley IRR 3FPL=cultivate-IPFV-3MPL on dry land at river at gardens some of=3MPL
imma [*asengär*]$_T$ *ur-* *a-* *t-kkerzen* *amer* *ġ iġunan*
TS corn NEG IRR 3MSG=cultivate-IPFV-3MPL only in plots of land
(ġ- imadaġen) *n-* *wasif.*
on side of river
'They cultivate barley on dry land at the river, and some gardens. But (as for) corn, they only cultivate in plots of land (beside) the river.'
(Roux 2009: 12)

In utterance (6), the process of construction in stone (*lbnya-w-wẓṛů*) is introduced as a new topic by the specifier *amma*, and at the same time it is also contrasted with the previously mentioned topic, which concerns construction in pisé. This new contrastive topic is delimited by means of prosody, probably an intonation rupture (with or without a pause), which in Roux's text is indicated by a comma. This topic has the notion of stone as its semantic core element, which serves as a referent for a chain of descriptive comments, in which it is reiterated. In the first comment, it is retaken as the indirect pronominal clitic-*s* (3SG) of the prepositional phrase *si-s* 'with him/her', whereas in the second comment, it is co-referential with the direct object *aẓṛů* 'stone'.

While the specifier *amma* in (6) is used to put in contrast a whole discursive paragraph – building in stone versus building in pisé –, the specifier *imma* in (7) has a more limited topical scope, as it is used to contrast the referential content of *asengär* 'corn' with that of *tumẓĭn* 'barley'; the latter topic not being preceded by any specifier.

Note however that most of the topic changes are not marked by this kind of specifiers in Roux's texts neither are they in Tashelhiyt in general. Moreover, their occurrence in these texts clearly relates to the Berber informants' language proficiency in Arabic as well as to the interaction context in which the texts were gathered by Roux. Indeed, Roux's texts were commissioned by the École des hautes études marocaines during the colonial period and were written down by its Berber-speaking language coaches, which had some command in Moroccan Arabic at least.

Consequently, Roux's texts are a good example of how grammatical and even discursive change in Berber may be generated by contact with Arabic in very specific settings, like that of the scholar or instructor carrying out fieldwork and interacting with multilingual informants who are proficient in Arabic, including Classical Arabic at times.

Evidence testifying to the impact of this particular interactive setting on the nature of the collected data is the text presented on pages 16-18 of Roux's text collection (2009), which reproduces (on request) the narration *lebnya-n-tgemmi* 'construction of a house' in the form of a dialogue; this is explicitly mentioned in note 4 on page 16. Compared to other dialogues in Roux's texts, this somehow elicited dialogue stands out by its abundant use of topic specifiers borrowed from Arabic, and in particular the specifier *amma*, which occurs at the beginning of almost every question, as in (8).

(8) Q. *amma* [*ifullusen*]$_{T}$ *mani-ḫ-* *a-* *ttezdaġen?*
TS hens where-on IRR live-IPFV-3MPL
'And the hens, where do they live?'

A. *ar* *kullu* *ttekkän* *tigemmi* *ula* *lḥuš,* […]
IRR all move.around-IPFV-3MPL house and enclosure
They all move around the house and the (livestock) enclosure.
(Roux 2009: 17)

It is worth mentioning that by borrowing these specifiers as unanalysed or slightly (mostly phonetically) analysed forms, Berber replicates their exact pattern at the same time, too.

3.2 Highly processed specifiers

Berber also possesses a remarkable kind of morphosyntactically hybrid specifiers, whose constituents are borrowed from Arabic and accommodated to Berber. A perfect case in point comes from Tashelhiyt, which accounts for the existence of the composite specifier ***ġ-ĕlžiht ĕn-*** 'as for', as is exemplified in (9). This specifier is based on a prepositional complex whose pattern is a replicate of the Modern Standard Arabic topic specifier *min žihat-i* (from-side-GEN 'with regard to, concerning, as for') and whose matter was borrowed and subsequently processed as follows: 1) the Berber demonstrative/preposition *ġ* 'this' (emphasis)/'in' has replaced the Arabic preposition *min* ('from'), and 2) the Berber preposition *n* 'of' has calqued the genitive case, which is absent in Berber.

(9) ***imma*** [*ti-n-umĕẓmiẓ*]$_{T1}$ ***ġ-ĕlžiht ĕn-*** [*tfellaḥt,*]$_{T2}$ *ar-* *kkerzen*
TS that-of-Amizmiz TS cultivation IRR cultivate-IPFV-3MPL
ayt-ġi-nn *tumẓl̊n,*[...]
those-of-there barley
But as for the people of Amizmiz, with regard to cultivation, the people there cultivate barley, [...]
(Roux 2009: 101)

Utterance (9) comprises a superposed topic whose core referent (i.e. the people of Amizmiz) is put in contrast with previous topical referents by means of the first slightly processed specifier *imma*. The second topic, on the other hand, is preceded by the highly processed specifier *ġ-ĕlžiht ĕn-*, which allows defining more precisely the general content of the first topic, that is, the subject of cultivation in Amizmiz.

In the next case (10), the same Modern Standard Arabic topic specifier *min žihat-i* (from-side-GEN 'with regard to, concerning, as to') as in (9) is replicated and borrowed into Tashelhiyt but processed differently. Here, only the noun phrase *žihat* 'side' is borrowed and adapted to Berber in terms of phonology, including vowel and syllable accommodation, as well as in terms of morphology, which primarily involves dropping the genitive case and inserting the Arabic definite article *l-*. Both of these morphological

adjustment strategies fit the general model of noun borrowing in Berber from Arabic. Furthermore, the Berber demonstrative and preposition *daġ* 'this (emphasis), in' is added to the processed expression *lžiht* and, as a result, forms the composite marker ***lžiht daġ***, which introduces the fronted topic.

(10) ***lžiht daġ*** [*ěl-leksib ěl-lebhäym d- wulli*]$_T$ *ad -äk daġ melġ*
TS livestock larger animals and sheep IRR 3MSG IRR show-AOR-1SG
leqyäs-ělli där-sen gi-s ittilin.
amount=DEICT by=3MPL in=3MSG be-IPFV-PTCP
'Also concerning the livestock, the larger animals and sheep, I will show you how much they have.'
(Roux 2009: 12)

A similar case of borrowing from Arabic, but with less accommodation to Berber, is attested in Siwa Berber (West Egypt), a minority language spoken thousands of miles away from Tashelhiyt Berber (South Morocco) and which is completely surrounded by Arabic-speaking communities. As pointed out by Souag (2013: 222), Siwa Berber distinguishes the specifier ***bənnisba i***, which replicates the Modern Standard Arabic specifier *bi-n-nisbat-i ʔilā* (in-the-relation-GEN-to 'as for') and adapts it to Berber by dropping the genitive case and inserting the preposition *i* ('for, to'), which calques the Arabic *ʔilā* 'to':

(11) ***bənnisba i*** [*wənn i-rəššḥ-in-a*]$_T$ [...]
TS 3MSG put.forward-RES-3MPL
'As for the one they've put forward [...]
Souag (2013: 222)

Although it is not that surprising to find this kind of specifier in a language like Siwa Berber, which is heavily influenced by Arabic, one might wonder how much the interaction setting had an impact on the data collected or more precisely on activating a specific language register which calls for specific language practices that often contain more and particular Arabic borrowings. My numerous linguistic and ethnographic fieldwork investigations in North Africa and its diaspora pointed out that discursive

interference, including calquing of language registers, is quite a common phenomenon in multilingual interactions, especially when taking place in specific settings requiring certain language levels (see Lafkioui 2015 for geolinguistic methodology). Roux's texts and extracts presented in this section clearly reflect this interference phenomenon as well.

Another interesting case of topic specification borrowed from Arabic regularly appears in the Berber languages of South Tunisia, where it is conveyed as ***kanək səg*** 'as for' and its variants, like for instance *kanəg səg* and *kan səg* (and variants), as is exemplified in (12) from Douiret Berber and in (13) from Cheninni Berber.

(12) ***kan saggi*** [*tarbibtis*]$_{T}$ *tifham.*[…]
TS stepdaughter=3FSG understand-PFV-3FSG
kanik siggi *yillis* *wil-* *tuki* *š*
TS daughter=3FSG NEG understand-NPFV-3FSG NEG
'As for her stepdaughter, she understood. […] But as for her daughter, she did not understand.'
(Gabsi 2011: 158)

(13) ***kanek seg*** [*insi*]$_{T}$ *yeffeɣ* *seg* *taḥnayt*
TS hedgehog go.out-PFV-3MSG of hole
u *kanek seg* *uccen*]$_{T}$ *u* *igged* *c* *a* *yeffeɣ*
and TS jackal NEG can-PFV-3MSG NEG IRR go.out-AOR-3MSG
'As for the hedgehog, it got out of the hole. But as for the jackal, it could not get out.'
(Auguste Bossoutrot, unpublished texts; retranscribed by Vermondo Brugnatelli)

These specifiers, which demarcate topical contrast, relate to the Tunisian Arabic topic specifier *kānək ʕal-* 'as for', a grammaticalised construction based on the Arabic copula **kāna* 'to be', which is often followed by a pronominal clitic, such as in *kānək ʕal-ayya* 'as for me', for instance.[3] As regards the variant *kān ʕal-* 'as for, if it were to be', it is commonly attested elsewhere in North Africa (especially in its western parts)

[3] Grammaticalised instances similar to *kānək* are also attested in Hassaniyya Arabic, where they express various modal notions, such as doubt, for instance (Taine-Cheikh 2014).

and generally specifies a topic when it has an animate semantic referent. The Berber expression *kanək səg* 'as for' is the outcome of certain phonetic modifications (including vowel reduction) applied to the borrowed Arabic expression *kānək ʕal-* as well as of a calquing of its preposition *ʕal-* 'on' by Berber instances, such as the preposition *səg* 'of, from'.

This section addressed Type-1 preposed topic specification in Berber, which is the result of "replica grammaticalisation" (Heine and Kuteva 2003), that is, the grammaticalisation process in which contrastive topic specifiers were transferred from Arabic, as the model language, into Berber, as the replica language. In the next section, Type-2 topic specification in Berber will be examined, which is the outcome of "ordinary contact-induced grammaticalisation" (Heine and Kuteva 2003), a process wherein the grammatical concept of specifying topics is transferred from Arabic into Berber, while the latter provides the material.

4. BERBER-BASED TOPIC SPECIFIERS

The main dedicated preposed topic specifiers that belong to this category are based on the invariable morphemes ***ma*** and ***ku***, which typically also mark modality when preceding a verb, mostly in the irrealis mood and its hypothetical and conditional dimensions. When these morphemes function as dedicated topic specifiers, they usually do as conglomerates, as will be shown below. Their origin is probably Berber. Prasse et al. (2003: 357) suggest an Arabic etymological origin for *ku*, which would relate to the Arabic instance **kawn* 'to be, being' and to its colloquial forms *kūn* and *kū*. One could not entirely exclude this assumption, since specifiers relating to the Arabic *kāna* 'to be' were developed in certain Tunisian Berber languages (see examples 12 and 13 above). However, numerous forms similar to *ku* with similar functions – mainly discursive sensitive expressions relating to modality and to scalarity – are attested across the Berber phylum, even in languages that are geographically distant and typologically different from Tuareg Berber, on which Prasse et al. based their assumption; cases in point are attested in Tamazight of Central Morocco, for instance (Sadiqi 2004: 186–87, Taifi 1991: 322).

In addition to these dedicated specifiers, Berber also distinguishes various elements, such as conjunctions (e.g. the connector ***i*** 'and') and presentational markers (e.g. those based on ***ha***, ***qa***, and their variants), which depending on the linguistic context also function as optional (non-dedicated) topic markers, as in example (14) from Mzab Berber (Algerian Sahara) and in (15) from Nefusa Berber (Libya).

(14) ***ha*** [*nəšš,*]$_T$ *w-a* *yi təgibəm* *na?*
TS T NEG 1SG=see-PFV-2MPL or (not)
'And me, you haven't seen me, have you?'
(Delheure 1984: 73)

One of the most widespread "non-dedicated" topic specifiers in the Berber phylum is the unit *d*, which is also one of the most difficult ones to pinpoint, as it is a highly used allomorph with various morphosyntactic and discursive roles, including the role of determiner, predicator, conjunction, and preposition. Consequently, its use as a topic specifier strongly depends on the linguistic context at hand, as is shown in the next example (15):

(15) *Iml asent : « Tesekmemet dah aitli u [sic] ioudan* ***d*** *nit ah'aram; sis erouelnet tououdadin. Sah iseknakmet ajellid amok'ran* [***ouasi oul ibbi oui n ioudan***]$_T$ *asisekhkher mai illan af oudem n tamourt' d ijenouen* ***d*** [***ouas iitebbi oui n ioudan***]$_T$ *oul itaf an ajellid amok'ran echchan.*
'He told them: You have brought into the property of others what is unlawful; that is why the beasts fled. The Supreme King showed by this means that **he who does not pick the good of people** may have at his disposal what is on earth and in heaven [...]. But **as for he who does pick the good of others**, he will not find in the Supreme King a high rank'.
(Calassanti Motylinski 1898: 76-77)

[*ouasi* *oul* *ibbi* *oui* *n* *ioudan*]$_T$ *a* *sisekhkher* *mai*
3MSG NEG pick-PFV-3MSG DEM of people IRR 3MSG=give-AOR-3MSG what
illan *af* *oudem* *n* *tamourt'* *d* *ijenouen*
be-PFV-3MPL on face of earth and heaven

d [*ouasi itebbi oui n ioudan*]$_T$ *oul itaf an ajellid*
TS 3MSG pick-IPFV-3MSG DEM of people NEG find-IPFV-3MSG in king
amok'ran echchan.
great high rank/benediction
'He who does not pick the good of people may have at his disposal what is on earth and in heaven [...], but as for he who does pick the good of others, he will not find in God a high rank'.

Once more, contrast is at work here. It involves two embedded and complex argument-topic constructions: the indirect object-topic *ouasi oul ibbi oui n ioudan* 'he who does not pick the good of people', which occupies the first position of the comparison and whose referent is resumpted in the pronominal clitic *as-* (3SG); and the subject-topic *ouasi itebbi oui n ioudan* 'he who does pick the good of others', which fills the second position and has the subject marker *i-* (3SG) as co-referent. The contrasted references of these topics receive a more prominent demarcation by means of the marker *d*, which precedes the second topic.

4.1 Specifiers based on *ma*

Apart from marking modality, the pan-Berber element *ma* fulfils various morphosyntactic functions, generally connected with interrogation and subordination (see e.g. Lafkioui 2007 for Tarifit, and Prasse et al. 2003 for Tuareg Berber).[4] Furthermore, the morpheme *ma* is frequently attested as part of amalgamated morphemes, such as the topic specifiers ***ima*** (**i* + *ma*) and ***uma*** (**u* + *ma*) from Berber of the Middle Atlas (Central Morocco), where they precede all kinds of non verbal elements or sentences, like for instance the noun phrase in (16) and the pronominal construction in (17). Despite certain similarities with the Moroccan Arabic forms *imma* and *amma*, the specifiers *ima* and *uma* are probably of Berber origin, which is confirmed by the fact that they do not

[4] No conclusive evidence is found regarding a common Afro-asiatic origin of the element *ma* as such, let alone as part of a discursive marker like the topic specifier.

contain the geminate properties of the corresponding bilabial consonant in the Arabic forms, while gemination is a well known distinctive feature in Berber morphophonology.

(16) *ssuter* *i* *ṛebbi* ***uma*** [*lɛebd*]$_{T}$ *ur* *-aš* *tegga* *ša*
ask-AOR-IMP-SG to God TS mankind NEG 2SG= do-IPFV-3MSG NEG
'Ask God for help, as for men, they cannot do anything for you.'
(Taifi 1991: 398)

(17) *waddeġ* *ukan,* ***ima*** [^{w}*unnaġ*]$_{T}$ *ur* *irewi*
PROX-MSG rather TS DIST-MSG NEG be.good-PFV-3MSG
'Rather this one here, as for the other one there, he is not good.'
(Amaniss 2012: 270)

As displayed in these examples, the specifiers *uma* and *ima* are used to create more contrast between the topical referents, and more precisely between the subject-topic referents *lɛebd* 'mankind' and *ṛebbi* 'God' in (16), and ^{w}*unnaġ* 'the other one there' and *waddeġ* 'this one here' in (17). Note that an appropriate intonation pattern would suffice here to mark contrast between the topics.

Taqbaylit (North Algeria) also makes use of a dedicated preposed topic specifier drawn on *ma*, which is combined with the particle *d* and which results in *ma-d*, *mad*, or *ma d* (**ma* + *d*), and their assimilated variants (like in 19). The following are examples:

(18) ***ma d*** [*nekk*]$_{T}$ *ur* *ẓṛiɣ* *ara*
TS 1SG NEG see-PFV-1SG NEG
'As for me, I did not see (anything).' = 'As for me, I don't know.'
(Dallet 1982: 476)

(19) ***ma t_*** [*tura*]$_{T}$ *ḥliɣ*
TS now cure-PFV-1SG
'As for now, I am cured'
(Dallet 1982: 476)

Again, the topic specifiers indicate more contrast between the topical referents that are compared. In (18), alternatives for the subject-topic are contrasted with the referential alternative of the fronted topic *nekk* 'I', which is resumpted in the subject marker *-ɣ* (1SG), encoded on the verb complex *ẓṛi-ɣ* 'I saw' of the ensuing comment. On the other hand, in (19), circumstantial alternatives are put in contrast with the fronted topic *tura* 'now', without any resumption in the comment.

4.2 Specifiers based on *ɣas*

Taqbaylit (North Algeria) is one of the Berber languages wherein topic specifiers are most developed as dedicated markers. Apart from the specifiers based on the morpheme *ma*, there is also the specifier *ɣas ar* 'as for' in Taqbaylit, which is less generalised and diffused as the aforementioned specifiers, but nonetheless appears in certain varieties so as to mark topical contrast, such as in (20).

(20) *ɣas ar* [*tameṭṭut,*]$_{T}$ *seg-wakken* *tugad* *a* *ţ-yennaɣ*
TS wife PROS because be.afraid-PFV-3FSG IRR 3FSG=kill-AOR-3MSG
wergaz […]
husband
'As for the wife, because she was afraid that her husband would kill her' […]
(Zellal 1999: 64)

The etymological origin of *ɣas ar* is probably Berber. Its first part most likely relates to modality – again – and functions as an adverb meaning 'only, simply, with the sole purpose' in Tuareg Berber (Prasse et al. 2003: 305) as well as in other Berber languages, such as in Tamazight of Central Morocco (Taifi 1991: 206). Its second part is indisputably a pan-Berber element, which plays various roles (e.g. preposition, particle, conjunction) and signifies 'to', 'till', and all kinds of notions connected with modality.

4.3 Specifiers based on *ku*

Preposed specifiers drawn on *ku*, like *ku-d*, *kud*, and *ku d* are merely attested in the Southern Berber languages, and more particularly in Tuareg Berber, of which written proof goes back to the 19th century with Hanoteau's (1896) grammatical notes and texts, which classify them as conjunctions meaning 'as for'. A case that perfectly accounts for the complementary formal and functional distribution of the conditional marker *ku* and its grammaticalised counterpart *ku d* (and variants) is provided in (21).

(21) ***kou*** *terham* *eg'let* ***kou d*** [*nek*]$_T$ *ad* *ek'k'imer'*
if wish-AOR-2MPL go-AOR-IMP-2PL TS 1SG IRR stay-AOR-1SG
'Go if you like, as for me, I will stay.'
Hanoteau (1896: 123)

As is displayed in this example, it is the composite and grammaticalised form *kud* (compared to *ku*) that plays the role of topic specifier, which highlights the contrastive semantic load of the topical referent it precedes. Consequently, the same formal-functional logic attested in Taqbaylit (North Algeria) for *ma* as a conditional marker (among other functions) compared to *ma-d* as a topic specifier is followed in Tuareg Berber, where *ku*, as a conditional marker (mainly), is in complementary distribution with *ku-d* and *kud* as preposed topic specifiers.

Other Tuareg data from that period provide evidence of the occurrences *ku* and *kud*, and their variants like *kudit*, but as conditional markers only (Calassanti Motylinski 1908:51). The problem of Motylinski's reports is that no geolinguistic specification is given. Motylinski's accounts are however corroborated by current Tuareg findings, such as those from Tamasheq of Northeast Burkina Faso. In this language, the conjunction *kud* ('if') is used for hypothetical purposes, whereas *kud ... dăɣ*, with the suffix *-dăġ* as an emphasis marker, conveys the notion of 'even if' (Sudlow 2001: 331). Similar findings are attested in Tamajeq (Tawellemmet and Tayert) of Niger, which distinguishes the conjunctions *ku*, *kud*, and their composite variants *kud-dăġ, kuddă*, and *kudda* 'even if' (Prasse et al. 2003: 357). It should be noted though that Tuareg Berber primarily employs postposed topic specification, which is an areal phenomenon (Lafkioui forthcoming). The

pressure of areal diffusion across the Sahara and the North and Northwest Sahel, where the Tuareg peoples still lead a nomadic life, may have delayed and even blocked the grammaticalisation of preposed topic specifiers out of conditional markers in Tuareg Berber.

One can confidently infer that the kind of preposed topic specifiers discussed in this section were engendered by system-internal transformations, as far as their (morphosyntactic) material is concerned, for the following main reasons: 1) their geolinguistic spread covers diverse languages from distant regions of North Africa; 2) they were primarily formed by a parallel grammaticalisation path, i.e. [*modality markers > topic specifiers], which is distinct from what is attested in Arabic, as is demonstrated in section 3.

5. DISCUSSION

Preposed topic specification in Berber is an innovation generated by contact with Arabic following two transformation pathways which, respectively, gave birth to two specifier types:

1) Type-1 is the outcome of pattern replication mediated by matter borrowing from Arabic (model language), which subsequently led to a light or heavy processing of the material according to Berber's linguistic structural requirements (replica language). These processed specifiers are thus the outcome of replica grammaticalisation (Heine and Kuteva 2003).

2) Type-2 is the result of pattern replication only, while the necessary matter was provided by Berber itself by means of system-internal developments involving various diachronic transformations which generally share a predominant grammaticalisation track, that is, [*modality markers > topic specifiers]. Type-2 thus perfectly instantiates the concept of (ordinary) contact-induced grammaticalisation (Heine and Kuteva 2003). Furthermore, full convergence is taking place in certain Berber languages, such as Taqbaylit (North Algeria), where a set of dedicated preposed topic specifiers are commonly used for contrastive purposes. In this respect, pattern replication may bring

about significant changes in Berber's linguistic typology, since it affects its morphological, syntactic and pragmatic features and structures.

The principal question to which this contribution's discussion amounts is the following: Why have certain Berber languages developed dedicated preposed topic specifiers?

Prosody and constituent order (fronting) perfectly meet the need for contrastive topicalisation, for which most Berber languages account, even those that have adopted the innovated topic specifiers. Furthermore, when these specifiers are fully grammaticalised and have become dedicated specifiers, as in Type-2, they do not index social status and prestige.

So, whereas system-external conditions (e.g. social status) and effects (e.g. interference) may dictate or enable the creation of the Type-1 specifiers, they do not explain the motivation behind the formation of the Type-2 specifiers.

A probable motivation that triggered the whole process is the functional parameter of contrast, since the development of both topic specifier types is strongly connected with the expression of contrast, as was repeatedly demonstrated in the preceding sections. In doing so, the Berber findings confirm Matras' hypothesis (1998) which regards contrast as a factor that motivates borrowing, an assumption that was tested on a cross-linguistic sample.

Consequently, the need for signifying enhanced contrastive semantic loads, combined with other functional parameters relating to interactive routines and strategies in specific contexts, including stance (e.g. taking contrastive positions), formulation, turn-taking, and attention seeking and keeping, along with certain system-external factors (e.g. social status, interference), probably engendered the Type-1 specifiers. Subsequently, Type-2 was created by convergence, which brought about certain formal and functional generalisations and simplifications, which facilitate the construction and exchange of verbal interactions between Berber speakers, especially when they have a multilingual repertoire to manage and develop.

6. Conclusion

The study presented in this article has argued that preposed topic specification in Berber is an innovation induced by contact with Arabic, from which Berber took over both a number of topic specifiers (with or without processing them) and the grammatical concept of topic specification, which in certain Berber languages, such as Taqbaylit (North Algeria), has lead to full convergence through the regular usage of dedicated preposed topic specifiers based on Berber material. Furthermore, the article has demonstrated that the functional parameter of contrast plays a pivotal role in the creation of these topic specifiers and hence testifies to the importance of system-based factors in language change.

Abbreviations

1	first person	NEG	negation, negator
2	second person	NPFV	negative perfective
3	third person	PFV	perfective
AOR	aorist	PL	plural
CONJ	conjunction	PROS	prosody
DEICT	deictic	PROX	proximal
DIST	distal	PTCP	participle
DEM	demonstrative	REL	relator
F	feminine	RES	resultative
IMP	imperative	S	subject
IPFV	imperfective	SG	singular
IRR	irrealis	TS	topic specifier
M	masculine	VENT	ventive

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