

The Morphological Integration of Dialectal Arabic Borrowings into Chaoui: The Case of Feminine and Masculine Nouns.

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Abstract:

The thirteen centuries long and continuing contact between Arabic and Berber resulted in an Arabic influence on the different dialects of Berber. This language change is extremely tangible through the Berber lexicon that is constituted of an important amount of Arabic borrowings. This paper aims to analyze the processes of morphological integration of Dialectal Arabic borrowings into Chaoui. Emphasis is specifically placed on the integration of singular and plural feminine and masculine Dialectal Arabic nouns into Chaoui. The data of the study were retrieved through the recordings of casual conversations between native Chaoui speakers from Meskana. The findings of our study demonstrates that some Dialectal Arabic borrowings are integrated into Chaoui as they receive Chaoui modalities markers as well as morphological marked elements. On the other hand, some borrowings are partially berberized as they adapt to the Berber articulatory basis but maintain their Dialectal Arabic modalities markers.

Keywords:

borrowings, Chaoui, dialectal Arabic, morphological integration, nouns

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1. INTRODUCTION

In a situation where members of two different speaking communities, whose languages are mutually unintelligible, encounter on a regular basis, the speakers would initially learn to convey basic messages using the other language. Speakers would eventually incorporate some words from the other speaker's language into one's own referring to things that are new to speaker **A** but largely familiar and accounted for in speaker **B**'s language. In fact, borrowing is an efficient way of representing new realities Benmostefa Harig (2012), Benmostefa Harig (2014, p. 292) suggest the following scheme to explain how interference is privileged in linguistic contact zones:

language contact → lexical borrowings → linguistic interference.

Notwithstanding, Negadi (2015) explains that not all borrowings are motivated by linguistic gaps which challenges the most agreed upon interpretations of the phenomenon among scholars. This phenomenon is one of the most common and frequent linguistic outcomes of language contact and is identified as lexical borrowing. The borrowed lexical items are referred to as borrowings in the literature. Bates (2005, p. 53) asserts that "one of the most easily observable results of intercultural contact and communication is the set of borrowings that is imported into the vocabulary of each language involved." Berber has been in continuous contact with various languages: Punic, Greek, Latin, Germanic, Turkish, French, Spanish and even Hebrew -through the Jewish communities- Ancient Egyptian, Roman Languages (namely Catalan, Occitan and Italian dialects), and Black African Languages (namely Hausa, Shonghay, Fula and Manding) Chaker (2008). Some of these languages have impacted Berber to a certain extent while others have strongly influenced it. Such impact was mostly noticeable at the lexical level of Berber. However, among all the languages that were present in the Maghreb, Arabic is the only non-autochthonous language which was solidly and permanently established to an extent that the existence of Berber is threatened.

However, the current Algerian situation makes bilingualism vital for Algerian speakers (Belazreg, 2016) as Benhattab (2011) believes that borrowings reflect the liveliness of Berber. Even when borrowings are frequent, they systematically become an integral part of the receiving language (Bouchiba Ghlamallah, 2015). Regarding borrowings, Bendref (2014) considers language to be both homogeneous and heterogeneous. While some borrowings are left unaltered, an important number of borrowings are integrated in Berber and have become completely autonomous in regards with their original system. An important category of the unaltered borrowing is constituted of religious borrowings which are preserved in an effort to conserve the connotations of those very terms in Islam which may differ from the parallel concepts in other religions (Naceur, 2007). Furthermore, no effort is deployed to adapt a number of borrowings due to the similarity of the grammars of Chaoui and Dialectal Arabic in contrast with situations where contact occurs between typologically different languages grammars such as French and Dialectal Arabic (Ouahmiche, 2013). When borrowed, Dialectal Arabic words are introduced in a different linguistic system which is consequently disrupted. These changes occur mainly at the phonological and morphological levels. At the morphological level, these changes translate into the introduction of new morphological schemes as well as foreign modalities related to the borrowed signifier.

Chaoui is spoken in the Awres region. At the national level, Chaoui is also present through national channels such as The Fourth Channel that broadcasts programs which targets Chaoui speakers amongst other Berber speaking communities (Labeled, 2015).

2. Nouns

In Chaoui, nouns are composed of a lexical root and an obligatory marked element which indicates gender and number. Nouns are classified into two gender and number categories: feminine, masculine, singular and plural. In terms of use, the Chaoui noun can be placed within a sentence as a subject, a direct or indirect object depending on the modalities which are

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regularly added to it. Gender and number are obligatory modalities which are always combined with nouns.

2.1 Gender

Most Berber nouns carry an initial prefix which indicates the gender. Chaker (1983, p. 187) considers « ... le genre en berbère comme une véritable opposition car tout substantif est susceptible de se rencontrer au masculin et féminin. » [...] gender in Berber as a real opposition because any substantive is likely to meet in the masculine and feminine.]

2.1.1 Masculine

Most singular masculine Chaoui nouns start with the prefix ^ʔa- such as “a^ʔsabsi” (cigarette) and “a^ʔksum” (meat).

However, a significant number of singular masculine nouns start with a consonant such as “lod” (mud). Amongst these, some nouns and their correspondents in Kabyle derive from a common root; however, the Chaoui nouns do not take the initial and simply euphonic initial vowel of Kabyle. Unlike Chaoui, the initial a- dropping phenomenon is very rare in Kabyle. Mercier (1896 pp. 5-6) qualifies the typical Kabyle prefix a^ʔ- as “prosthetic” and considers it as a rather “simple rule” or a “euphonic habit” which does neither modify the article nor constitute the word since it does not determine the noun gender as it would normally would.

2.1.2 Feminine

Feminine is generally marked by the affix [t-] which is placed either as a prefix or a suffix in the Chaoui dialect as well as the other Berber dialects. Feminine is formed both regularly and irregularly. In order to form regular feminine, the masculine noun is put amid the prefix t- or ṭ- and the suffix -ṭ. For instance, in order to refer to the word girl, “a^ʔhu” (boy) is placed between the feminine inflectional affixes.

2.2 Number

Manaa (2004, pp. 214-215) strongly believes that the influence of

Arabic on Chaoui can be visualized through the morphology of number. As explained above, number is a noun modality which is compulsively combined with Chaoui nouns. Consequently, the adaptation of Arabic borrowings at the morphological level occurs through the addition of Chaoui marked elements to the word. At the phonetic level, Arabic borrowings are considered berberized if the morphemes are adapted to the articulatory basis of Berber and combined with the different Chaoui modalities elements.

2.2.1 The Plural of Dialectal Arabic borrowings in Chaoui

Prototypical Berber nouns as well as totally Berberized Arabic borrowings are combined with the morphological markers of Berber plural. On the other hand, partially Berberized Arabic borrowings keep their original plural markers (Manaa, 2004).

Arabic borrowings usually receive the Berber plural. For example the Arabic borrowing “amkan” (place) becomes “immukan” (places) and “eššari‘a” (Muslim laws and customs) becomes “eššari‘atn” (Haddadou, 1994, p. 266). On the other hand, a significant number of Arabic borrowings, particularly in northern Berber varieties, conserve their original plural form as in the following examples:

Singular	Plural
l-ḥajt (thing)	l-ḥwayaj
l-mrayt (mirror)	mrayāt

Table 1. *Singular and Plural Forms of Arabic Borrowing in Berber*

Manaa (2004) specifies that in the suffix addition, the internal plural formation of Berber nouns is very similar to the dialectal Arabic. In fact, the alternation between the vowels [a], [i] and [u] is identical in both Berber and dialectal Arabic. As for the process of external plural formation, the alteration of the vowel of the nouns’ last syllable is similar to the one in dialectal Arabic. Thus, the suffix [in] is borrowed and added as such to the nouns in both the genitive and accusative cases. However,

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the [in] transforms into [un] in the nominative case. These plural markers are used with masculine nouns only. Manaa (2004) further explains that only the genitive and the accusative cases were borrowed by Chaoui. However, this suffix is not frequently used in Chaoui and is not productive. It is rather used with some religious vocabulary as illustrated with the following examples:

Imumn (believer) → Imumn-īn (believers)

Imuslm (muslim) → Imuslm-īn (muslims) (Manaa, 2004, p. 218).

On the other hand, the Arabic suffix [āt] which is strictly used to form feminine plural nouns in Arabic is very productive in Chaoui. In Berber, the suffix [āt] is used to form feminine as well as masculine plurals as illustrated with the following examples:

	singular	plural
masculine	l-hktab (book)	l- ktabāt (books)
feminine	l-wilaya (state)	l-wilayat-āt (states)

Table 2. *Plural of Masculine and Feminine Nouns Using the Feminine Suffix [āt]*

During the process of morphological adaptation of borrowed Arabic nouns, some have kept their plural marker [āt] but abandoned their definite marker. In other words, the Chaoui dialect, as well as all the other Berber dialects, have only borrowed the plural marker [āt] but have not borrowed the definite markers. According to Manaa (2004, p. 220), it is due to the inexistence of the article in Chaoui that the definiteness modality is frozen. On the other hand, since the plural modality already exists in Chaoui, the maintenance of the Arabic plural marker [āt] has no influence on the Chaoui plural system.

Consequently, Manaa (2004, p. 221) asserts that the use of the borrowed Arabic plural marker [āt] does not alter the “phonic structure of

the neological lexeme”. Thus, the Chaoui lexicon has often been expanded by borrowings from richer languages such as Arabic and French. Additionally, He considers that the integration of the plural suffix [āt] as the “revitalization” of the old Berber plural marker [t] which dates back to the Semitic language and which has certainly integrated the Berber language under the influence of the Arabic language.

2.3 Articles in Chaoui

In his thorough account for the Chaoui grammar, Mercier (1896, p. 4) asserts that articles are entirely inexistent in the Chaoui variety as well as all the other Berber dialects. However, Torchon (1971) indicates that in Chaoui, only nouns which were borrowed from Arabic retain the privilege of being preceded by the article “*aʔl*” such as “*lamnam*” (dream) and “*lhal*” (weather).

Penchoen (1973) explains that most of these Arabic borrowings, which were not berberized, morphologically carry the Arabic definite article. This latter appears as an initial [l] or is assimilated through the germination of the initial consonant if it is apical, lateral, vibrant, sonorant or sibilant such as in “*rrsas*” (bullet), “*rray*” (opinion) and “*ttabtib*” (knocking).

Since articles in Chaoui are inexistent the Arabic definite article is not recognized as such. Consequently, this article morphologically forms part of the noun and does not add a distinction or a form to the word (Penchoen, 1973, p. 12).

Some Arabic borrowings have maintained their articles while others have received Berber affixes. In some infrequent cases, an Arabic borrowing might both conserve its article and receive a Berber affix such as the Dialectal Arabic borrowing “*l-ğta*” (lid) received the Berber prefix ‘*ta*’ as well as the suffix [t] and becomes *tal-ğt āt* (Haddadou, 1994, 266).

However, as a consequence of the long linguistic contact between Chaoui and Arabic, words are adopted from Arabic without being adapted

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both at the phonetic and grammatical levels. Thus, due to the weakening of Chaoui, it adopts novel morphemes without resistance. In that respect, some Arabic borrowings are completely berberized while other borrowings are partially berberized (Manaa, 2004, p. 214).

Manaa believes that borrowings are partially berberized if they undergo a phonetic accommodation but keep the marked elements of Arabic. Phonetically, partially berberized Arabic borrowings do not carry the initial vowels /a/, /i/, /u/, which are typical to Berber masculine nouns. The initial consonant of partially berberized borrowings is always a tense or non-tense consonant. The tenseness would correspond to the 'indefinite'. The following are some examples which illustrate this exception (ibid.):

Arabic borrowing	English equivalent
zziṭ	oil
rriḥṭ	smell
l-ḥafṭ	party
l-maḥrmṭ	scarf

Table 3. *The Tenseness of the Initial Consonant of Partially Berberized borrowing*

Consequently, Manaa (2004, p. 215) asserts that there is an opposition of the definite and the indefinite which are distinguished by the presence of the initial vowels and the absence of these vowels respectively. Berberists believe that words which do not carry the initial vowels /a/ /i/ /u/ are the proof of the existence of the definite and indefinite opposition at a given stage of the development of Berber. The non-adaptation of some Arabic borrowings is due to the existence of Berber words which do not carry an initial vowel at the time of the borrowing process. The borrowings only helped increase the number of this category of words.

3. The Morphological Integration of Dialectal Arabic borrowings into Chaoui

3.1 Method

The corpus of this study is composed of 157 Dialectal Arabic nouns. These latter have been extracted from a 6 hours recording of authentic conversations which took place in 3 houses of 3 native Chaoui families). The age range of the 11 informants was between 16 to 62 years old. The recordings were made by a member of each of the three families. The method used being unethical, it was necessary in order to guarantee the spontaneity of the participants. These latter were made aware of the recordings and their purpose at the end of the conversations. The tool used to collect the data consisted of an audio recorder.

The choice of the area is based on the particularity of its linguistic situation. Chaoui is the mother tongue to an important number of speakers in the region of Awres. Meskana is located in the Awres region where Chaoui is the mother tongue of an important part of its inhabitants. However, compared to other towns situated in the Awres region, the use of Dialectal Arabic is progressively prevailing in some small towns among which Meskana.

3.1 The integration of dialectal Arabic feminine singular nouns into Chaoui

We have noticed that in some cases of singular feminine nouns, the initial prefix *t-* is dropped. For example, in the case of the word “*t-rbaqa*” (flip-flop), the initial *t-* is dropped and the word receives, surprisingly¹, the initial vowel *a-* which Mercier qualifies as “prosthetic” as it does not determine the gender.

¹ the initial vowel *a-* is typical to masculine singular nouns and might be misleading although is

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it purely euphonic in in this case

The definite marker in this category of feminine singular nouns is not maintained. Instead, the euphonic a°- is placed at the beginning of the word and it, as explained above, does not affect the word at the morphological level. The following examples illustrate this process:

Integrated borrowing	Arabic borrowing	English equivalent
a°qer°iṭ	l-qar°a	bottle
a°šent	ššahna	plate
a°trbaqṭ	tterbaqa	flip-flop
a°ašwiṭ	la°chia	afternoon
a°sabhiṭ	ssbaḥ	morning
a°manchfeṭ	l-manšfa	towel

Table 4. *The Morphological Integration of Feminine Singular Borrowings.*

We have noticed that the assignment of gender to borrowings is done in accordance with the original gender of the word except in some extremely rare cases such as:

« sbaḥ » (masculine) → « a°sebḥiṭ » (feminine)

In this specific case, we hypothesize that gender was changed for the sake of parallelism with the word “a°ašwiṭ” (afternoon) / “a°sbhiṭ” (morning). Furthermore, a native Chaoui speaker has provided us with the Modern Classic Arabic translation of the word “a°sbhiṭ” as “sabiḥa” (feminine) rather than “sabaḥ” (masculine).

Another example is the word “ḥobz” (bread) which becomes “taḥbziṭ” in Chaoui. The borrowing receives the feminine inflectional affixes t- and -ṭ. In Chaoui, the word “a°ḡrum” which refers to the traditional Chaoui bread is feminine. We consequently hypothesize that the feminine is assigned to the borrowed word “ḥobz” (bread) by analogy

to the gender of the already existing feminine word “a^ogrum” (traditional bread).

A certain number of feminine singular nouns maintain the Dialectal Arabic definite marker ‘l’. These borrowings also receive suffix –ṭ as the feminine gender marker. The following examples illustrate this process:

Integrated borrowing	Arabic borrowing	English equivalent
l-ḥadmṭ	l-ḥadma	work
l-mḍalṭ	l-mḍala	sun hat
l- ^c amaliyṭ	l- ^c amaliya	surgery
l-hadṛṭ	l-hadra	speech
l-ḥatṛṭ	l-ḥatra	time (as in “this time”)

Table 5. *The Maintenance of the Dialectal Arabic definite marker in Feminine Borrowings*

In some very rare cases in the corpus of the study, we have come across feminine nouns borrowings whose feminine prefix is dropped and replaced by an aspiration (h). We suspect that borrowings from Table 4 have undergone, through time, an alteration of the feminine prefix ṭ- which produces free variants of the nouns as follow:

ṭaqer^ci_{ṭ} → haqer^ci_{ṭ} → aqer^ci_{ṭ}
 ṭa^cešwi_{ṭ} → ha^cešwi_{ṭ} → a^cešwi_{ṭ}

Similarly, feminine borrowings maintain the definite marker ‘l’ which they originally carry when this latter is preceded by a coronal letter. This results in the gemination of the first letter as illustrated in the following examples:

Arabic borrowing	Arabic borrowing	English equivalent
ssel ^c e _{ṭ}	ssel ^c a	goods
tteswi _{ṭ}	tteswira	photograph
ssaḥe _{ṭ}	ssaḥa	health

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Table 5. *The Maintenance of the Arabic Article in Feminine Borrowings(2)*

Oppositely, certain borrowings do not maintain the definite article and receive the feminine suffix –t such as in the following examples:

Arabic borrowing	Integrated Arabic borrowing	English equivalent
qrayeṭ	l-qraya	studies
jma ^e ṭ	jjma ^a	a group of people
dqiqṭ/dqiqṭ	dqiqa	minute
ħkayeṭ	l-ħkaya	story
tbibṭ	tbib	doctor

Table 6. *The Dropping of the Arabic Article in Feminine Borrowings*

3.2 The integration of dialectal Arabic masculine singular nouns into Chaoui

In the corpus of the study, almost all masculine singular borrowings which were integrated to Chaoui have received the inflectional masculine prefix a- as illustrated in the following examples:

Arabic borrowing	Arabic borrowing	English equivalent
a'man	l'ma	water
a'barradt	barrad	teapot
a'fenjal	fanjal	coffee cup
a'ħadmi	ħodmi	knife
a'tiyar	from the verb “ytir” (to fly)	bird
a'frouħ	farħ	bird

Table 7. *The Morphological Integration of Singular Masculine Borrowings*

A small number of the integrated masculine singular borrowings have not received the prefix a- such as in the following example: šħir

(snoring) → šhar.

The masculine singular Dialectal Arabic noun “l-katan” initially refers to a certain type of fabric. This borrowing has received the Chaoui masculine inflectional affix i-. This borrowing does not maintain its Dialectal Arabic marker “l’” and carries the initial vowel “i”. We believe that the article has been abandoned since “iketān” is a collective noun: l’ketān → iketān. At the lexical level, a semantic extension of the word “iketān” has occurred at the level of dialectal Arabic through which the meaning of the word “l’ketān” included the type of fabric it initially refers to as well as clothes in general. This semantic extension has been imported to Berber as well.

A number of masculine singular nouns have been partially berberized, i.e., they have not received Chaoui gender inflectional affixes but have been adapted to the Berber articulatory basis. In the following examples, the consonant [t] has been substituted by the sound [θ] as follows:

l-^oebd (person, one) → l-^oebθ

l-waqt(time) → l-waqt

naftaḥ → naftaḥ

zzit → zzit

Since the prefix a- is the only inflectional affix characterizing the masculine singular Chaoui nouns, the rest of the masculine singular nouns of the corpus of the study in which the initial a- was dropped were classified as morphologically not integrated to Chaoui. Some of these borrowings do not carry the definite article as illustrated with the following examples:

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Arabic borrowing	English equivalent	Arabic borrowing	English equivalent
ssog	market	ġsil	laundry
ħbar	news	ramdan	Ramadan
mgass	scissors	maġrab	Maghrib
kawkaw	peanut	šor	pre-dawn meal
mahas	mortar	đđohr	Dhuhr
°sal	honey	ħanut	shop
ša°ban	Chaaban	đo	light
m°alam	boss	šihā	teacher

Table 7. *The non-integration of Singular Masculine Borrowings*

Some unberberized masculine singular nouns carry the Arabic article such as the following examples:

Arabic borrowing	English equivalent	Arabic borrowing	English equivalent
lahmis	Thursday	laktab	book
l-ṭnin	Monday	lgat	cat
l-marga	Soupe	limam	Imam
l-bab	door	rrahj	poison
l-ħaq	right	ssyam	fast
lahwa	air	ššitan	devil
l-jib	pocket	l'hħal	solution

Table 8. *Definite Article Maintenance in Singular Masculine Borrowings*

3.3 The Plural of borrowings

Regarding the plural of Dialectal Arabic borrowings in Chaoui,

most of the borrowings have imported the number modality of Arabic, i.e. the suffix [āt], they carry to Chaoui as illustrated in the following examples:

jad (ancestors) → lejḍud (ancestors)

ddwa (medications) → ddwawāt (medications)

la[°]šiya (afternoon) → la[°]šiyāt (afternoons)

The adaptation of the borrowing to the Berber articulatory basis also applies to plural nouns since the consonant /t/ is substituted by the consonant /ð/ in “lejḍud” and by the consonant /θ/ in “ddwawāt”.

4. CONCLUSION

This paper examined the processes of morphological integration of Algerian Dialectal Arabic singular nouns into Chaoui and precisely the cyclical affixes determining gender and number as well as the maintenance and dropping of the definite marker. It was noticed that the Chaoui gender inflectional patterns can be fully or partially applied to both feminine and masculine singular borrowings. On the other hand, the maintenance of the Dialectal Arabic definite marker has been noticed in an important number of the borrowings of the study corpus. Some of the borrowings were partially berberized by adapting to the articulatory basis of Berber without receiving any inflectional affixes of gender or number. Regarding the number modality, the majority of the borrowings have maintained their original Dialectal Arabic marker. To conclude, borrowing from Dialectal Arabic to Chaoui have not impacted the number and gender modalities or the word classes. Given the fact that the participants equally master the two varieties, they indeed deploy little effort to adapt the words they borrow from Dialectal Arabic to Chaoui.

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