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The use of the bare aorist in figuig Berber (Eastern Morocco)

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The Use of the Bare Aorist in Figuig Berber (Eastern Morocco)

26

Maarten Kossmann

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Abstract

This article studies the use of the Bare Aorist in the Berber variety of Figuig, an oasis at the border of Morocco and Algeria. Like elsewhere in Berber, the Bare Aorist is used as a form that is neutral as to aspect, whose interpretation is provided by context. It is shown that the major types of occurrence that were established for other varieties (Mauri 2017) are also represented in Figuig Bare Aorists. Framed Aorists are found in main clauses that are preceded by a temporal/aspectual clause that provides the framing for its aspectual interpretation. With Chained Aorists, the framing is provided by verbs in preceding main clauses. It is shown, however, that Chained Aorists are subtly different in Figuig

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from the way they have been described for other varieties, as they mainly occur to express continuity at points where such a continuity is less expected.

This article studies the use of one specific morphological form, the Aorist, as a way to create clause coherence (Mauri 2017) in the variety of Berber spoken in Figuig. Figuig is an oasis on the Moroccan side of the Moroccan–Algerian border, with about 15,000 inhabitants. The study is based on recordings made in the early 1990s. The recordings were put into written text by the author with the help of a number of native speakers, and later on collated from the original, and once more retranscribed. The corpus mainly consists of traditional narratives; in addition to this, one longer recording was made, in which two older female speakers discuss traditional weddings, and the disappointing turn wedding practices have taken presently. The corpus consists of about 4.5 h of fast-pace speech, totaling about 38,000 words, produced by ten different speakers.

Figuig Berber has been the subject of a large number of studies, including a grammatical description (Kossmann 1997), a profound study of verbal morphology (Saa 2010), a study of dialect variation (Ben-Abbas 2003), and several dictionaries and word lists, most importantly Benamara (2013) and Yeou (2022). Moreover, Hassane Benamara has edited four volumes with texts (Benamara 2011, 2016, 2020; Benamara and Abbou 2021), and the present author has published a series of articles on different pragmatic and stylistic questions, based on the same corpus that is used in the present article (Kossmann 2015a, b, c, 2016; cf. also Kossmann 2000). Except for a few pages in Kossmann (1997: 348–351), no study of the uses of the Aorist has been undertaken so far, for this variety.

Introduction

Basics of the Figuig Berber System of Mood and Aspect

Berber languages express most of their aspectual and modal information by the choice of a specific form of the verb stem. In the Figuig Berber system, verbs have three different stems in affirmative sentences and two in negative sentences, the latter always combined with a negative particle. These stems will be called MAN (mood/aspect/negation), following Heath (1999: 154). In Figuig Berber, there are maximally five different stem forms, as illustrated below by means of the verb *atəf* “to enter”; there is, however, large-scale homonymy between certain MAN stems. The forms in the Table 25.1 are 3SG.M. (marked by *j-* ~ *i-*).

The Perfective is mainly used for dynamic punctual events in the past and for stative situations, irrespective of time; the Imperfective is used for a wide range of imperfective meanings, including iterative, habitual, and progressive. As for the Aorist, see the next section.

In addition to MAN stem choice, a number of other elements are used to convey aspectual and modal distinctions. One of these is found in the large majority of

Table 25.1 Overview of the aspectual stems in Figuig Berber

	Affirmative		Negative
Aorist	<i>j-atəf</i>		
Perfective	<i>j-utəf</i>	Negative perfective	<i>ul j-utif (faj)</i>
Imperfective	<i>i-t:atəf</i>	Negative imperfective	<i>ul i-t:itəf (faj)</i>

Berber varieties: the particle *ad*, which is used to express that the event has not yet been realized. This may imply a simple reference to future events about which one is relatively sure, but it can also be more modal in its usage. Moreover, it is regularly used to express habitual events, without any modal implications. In most Berber languages, *ad* can be combined, both with the Aorist (for punctual events), and, in modal and future contexts, with the Imperfective (for iterative or habitual events).

Many Berber languages also have supplementary devices, which differ from language to language. In Figuig Berber, there are three important modal/aspectual constructions in addition to MAN stem choice and *ad*-constructions:

sad + Aorist / Imperfective: – This is basically used in the same contexts as *ad* + Aorist / Imperfective. While its exact use remains to be analyzed in full, it seems that *sad* is more insistent in its pragmatic implication, suggesting a higher degree of certainty when the event is likely to occur, and suggesting more insistence when the verb is, rather, an adhortation. The label “Future” in Kossmann (1997) may be slightly misleading.

ili (“to be”) + Perfective / Imperfective – This is an auxiliary construction that focuses on the event as a situation, rather than on the event as a development. It is very common with Perfectives conveying states, and, in combination with the Imperfective, in progressives. These are, however, not the only contexts where the construction is found, and a precise analysis of its uses is still lacking.

q:im (“to sit”) + Imperfective. This is an auxiliary construction expressing an event of longer duration.

The constructions with *ili* and *q:im* can be used, both with full subject-agreement marking, and in truncated forms (Kossmann 1997: 367).

Morphologically, there is large-scale homonymy between the Perfective and the Aorist, depending on the formal structure of the verb. To provide some illustration, I counted the first 150 affirmative Perfective and Aorist verb forms in the story *N:ajər Bugr^əəm* as told by <A>. In this count, I excluded the high-frequency verb *ini* “to say,” auxiliary uses of *ili* “to be” and *q:im* “to stay,” as well as Imperatives. I found that 120 have a form that is, morphologically, ambiguous between Perfective and Aorist, while 30 mark the opposition morphologically – that is, only 20% of the cases. As there are many contexts where only the Aorist, or only the Perfective, is allowed, it is often possible to decide on the basis of context which aspect is meant, that is, which aspectual form would surface if one would substitute the verb with a verb showing the opposition. Thus, the Perfective cannot co-occur with the modal particle *ad*, while following certain auxiliaries, while in subordination the Aorist without *ad* is impossible. However, once a certain context allows for both aspects, it is impossible to differentiate between the two. In the following, homonymous forms, disambiguated by their syntactic context (e.g., after *ad*), are marked according to the

intended aspect, while in situations where the context provides no clue they are marked A = P.

The Aorist

The Aorist occurs in three main types of constructions:

- (a) In combination with the modal particles *ad* and, in Figuiq, *sad*. In addition, in Figuiq and in other languages, it is found after the subordinator *ald* ~ *and* “until”
- (b) As an Imperative, receiving special Imperative inflectional markers
- (c) Without a modal particle and with normal inflection

The third construction will be called “Bare Aorist” here, following Belkadi (2013), Galand (2016), and Mauri (2017). Within “Bare Aorist” constructions, Mauri (2017) distinguishes three sub-types:

1. Free Aorist – a relatively rare construction, where an Aorist with normal inflection (i.e., which is not an Imperative) is used as an initial verb in a main clause. In Figuiq, this construction almost always expresses adhortative or injunctive mood (see also Kossmann 1997: 348).
2. Apodosis Aorist – a construction where the main clause has the Aorist when following a temporal/aspectual subordinate clause. As non-clausal types of temporal framing may also lead to the use of the Bare Aorist, I prefer to call this a Framed Aorist.
3. Chained Aorist – a construction where the Aorist is used in a non-initial main clause, continuing the aspect of a preceding verb. Chained Aorists are always affirmative in meaning, and therefore never follow a negative initial verb. One may note that, while this seems to be the case in most Berber languages, Adagh Tuareg may be an exception. Cf. the following sentence, where a Bare Aorist follows a negative verb: *wɛr tək:ən məd:ən vq:əlɛn-d* “nobody would pass (NI) (there) and come back (A)” (Ag Erless 1999: 26, line 2, transcription adapted). In this sentence, the Negative Imperfective *wɛr tək:ən* “they would not pass” is continued by the Aorist *vq:əlɛn-d* “they come back,” which receives its habitual interpretation from the preceding verb.

The last two categories are only found in non-initial position in an utterance. Both can take different aspectual interpretations. Thus, depending on the nature of the subordinate clause, the main clause Aorist, under the Framed condition, can be equivalent to a Perfective or an Imperfective (referring to a habitual, for instance), while the Chained Aorist can take most aspectual values available in the language, depending on the initial verb in the chain. As the Framed Aorist and the Chained Aorist both imply the presence of a preceding element providing the aspectual/temporal frame, Galand (2016; and elsewhere) is no doubt right in considering them two syntactic sub-types of the same larger phenomenon.

The use of the Framed Aorist seems to be general among those varieties that regularly use the Bare Aorist in the non-initial position; thus, it is attested in Tashelhiyt (Galand 2010: 230), Ayt Atta Central Moroccan Berber (Mauri 2017: 201); Kabyle (Manseri 1999: 52); Tuareg (Prasse 2009: 267–268; Kossmann 2011: 155), Ghadames (Kossmann 2013a: 172), and Zenaga (Taine-Cheikh 2016). There are dialectal differences as to whether conditional subordination can be followed by a Bare Aorist too. This is possible in Ahaggar Tuareg and in Zenaga, but not, for instance, in Figuig and Kabyle.

There are some major differences between languages when it comes to the distribution of the Chained Aorist (condition 3). In most languages of Morocco, the Chained Aorist can be used following any type of aspect/mood – Perfective, Imperfective, Imperative, *ad* + Aorist. In some languages, such as Tashelhiyt, this includes stative predicates (Galand 2010: 229). In Tuareg, a similar range of uses is attested, but the Chained Aorist is only rarely used as a continuation of a Perfective (Kossmann 2011: 154). In Ghadames, no examples of Chained Aorists continuing a Perfective verb were found (Kossmann 2013a: 171), while in Tarifiyt the use of the Chained Aorist is restricted to the continuation of Imperatives. As far as we know, the Chained Aorist is absent in Siwa and in Libyan varieties, other than Ghadames (Galand 2010: 231). The situation in Kabyle is complicated. The Bare Aorist seems to be used mainly as a continuation of the Imperative, but also appears – albeit rarely – in narrative contexts. In the latter function, its interpretation does not necessarily depend on the verb preceding immediately. According to Reesink (1979: 240), “[t]out ceci montre qu’en kabyle il ne s’agit pas d’une forme verbale liée ou enchaînée comme c’est le cas pour le chleuh, le touareg et le chaoui [. . .]”. While some authors have interpreted this as a sign that the Chained Aorist is a receding form (Chaker 1983: 227; Galand 2010: 230–231), Manseri (1999: 44) considers it “assez vivant” but it is not entirely clear from her formulation whether this includes injunctive usage of the Aorist.

There seem to be important dialectal differences in the frequency of the use of Chained Aorist forms. They are, for instance, very common in Tashelhiyt and, in the proper contexts, in Ghadames, where long series of Bare Aorists are easy to find. In such languages, it seems that a break in the series of Aorists is triggered, either by a change in aspectual reference, or indicative of a major break in the consecution of events. Put otherwise, the Chained Aorist merely indicates that the events are linked, and only a change in aspect, or another kind of strong break in the consecution of events, force one to abandon the series of Bare Aorists. Things may be different in other varieties. Thus, in Ghomara Chained Aorists, mainly (although not exclusively), appear as the last element of a chain of events (Mourigh 2015: 340). In this case, the Chained Aorist would rather function as a marker of a forthcoming break. The situation is rendered opaque, however, by the fact that in Ghomara (like in Figuig) most verbs use the same form for the Aorist and the Perfective. In Ghomara, the verb *d:u* ‘to go’ makes the difference between the two aspects. As this verb is often the closure of a series of events, it may be difficult to decide whether it is the final form after a series of Perfectives, or part of a longer series of chained Aorists.

Prasse (2009: 258) has observed that in Tuareg the Chained Aorist is incompatible with topicalization of an argument. The same is true in Figuig: there is no

example in the corpus, where the clause containing the Chained Aorist is preceded by a topicalized subject or object, which, in view of the high frequency of topicalization constructions in the language (Kossmann 2016), is probably not accidental. I have not been able to find references to this phenomenon for other Berber languages.

Most discussions concerning the Chained Aorist have concentrated on its structural interpretation. Thus, for Galand (1977, 2002 [1987], 2003, 2010, 2016; and elsewhere) the Chained Aorist is a major argument in favor of his general analysis of the Aorist as an aspectless form, which receives its aspectual interpretation from the linguistic context. From a different perspective, Mauri (2017) endeavors to integrate Chained Aorist constructions into typological models of clause chaining, arguing that it represents the rare type of initial-medial clause chaining, and formulates its use as a form of (syntactic) deranking – that is, a reduced predicate which extracts parts of its meaning from higher ranked predicates. The exact patterns of usage of the Chained Aorist have sparked less interest, the most explicit being the following, often cited, statement by Bentolila on Ayt Seghrushen (Central Morocco) (for a similar statement on Ahaggar Tuareg, see Prasse 2009: 258):

en effet, quand on emploie en SV₂ [that is, the non-initial verbal syntagma, MK] un “non-enchaîné” on rapporte les actions isolément : elles forment comme des îlots indépendants, sans relation, sans point de contact. Au contraire, quand on emploie un “enchaîné” le procès s’enchaîne au précédent, sans solution de continuité – ce qui peut produire un effet de rapidité – et se présente comme sa conséquence logique. (Bentolila 1981:153–154)

While the element of rapidity has been challenged by Galand (2010: 232), the idea that the Chained Aorist is especially used for close continuation seems to be generally accepted.

In the present article, I will present the Framed and the Chained Aorist as used by speakers from Figuig when telling traditional stories, and, in one case, giving a description of wedding traditions. My focus will be on the pragmatic meaning conveyed by such use, as opposed to non-Aorist forms, rather than on the general characterization of the Bare Aorist.

It will be shown that the Framed Aorist is quite common, and similar in use as described for other languages. The Chained Aorist, while frequent, seems to have a far more restricted use than suggested by analyses such as that given by Bentolila (1981).

Framed Aorists

Figuig Berber often employs the Bare Aorist in a main clause preceded by a temporal/aspectual subordinate clause. This can be interpreted as a kind of temporal/aspectual framing: the time/aspect expressed in the subordinate clause provides an expectation as to what aspect would be appropriate in the main clause. When this expectation comes true, the Bare Aorist can be used.

This use of the Bare Aorist is only possible when the subordinate clause precedes the main clause. Different from Zenaga and Tuareg, the Bare Aorist is not acceptable in the apodosis of conditional subordinations.

Like in many other Berber languages (see Kossmann 2013b: 351ff., for an overview), the temporal/aspectual interpretation of a subordinate clause is mainly conveyed by the choice of subordinator and not by the choice of the verb form in the subordinate clause. Thus, for example, *mi* is used in clauses expressing a habitual or iterative event, while *i* is used in clauses expressing a single anterior event. Even though *mi* clauses, thus, semantically, correspond to imperfective events, while *i* clauses correspond to perfective events, the verb in the subordinate clause almost always takes the Perfective in both cases.

The Bare Aorist is found, both after *mi* clauses and after *i* clauses. After *mi* clauses, it expresses a habitual, durative, or iterative event, while after *i* clauses it expresses a single, perfective event.

After *mi* “when” and *daj mi* “every time that”

We will first study subordinations introduced by *mi* “when” and *daj mi* “every time that”. The particle *daj* (dialectally also *ndaj*) is the normal Figuig word for ‘just, only’. The same particle is attested in Ouargla *daj* (Delheure 1987: 61). There is no relationship, it seems, to the Middle Atlas preverbal particle *daj*, which is used in narrative contexts and is always followed by an Aorist (Bisson 1920: 110). Subordinations with *mi* and *daj mi* refer to events that are repetitive or that are general truths. The main clause, therefore, refers to an event, which in non-framed constructions would be expressed by an Imperfective. In such main clauses framed by a (*daj*) *mi* subordination, the Bare Aorist often appears.

- [1]. *akəd mi ɔ̄:-tus an: n tmət̄:ut sik: ijam taf m:is kulfi igər:əɫ daj d ifuf:a. təq:ar̄ d̄əx. . .*
 “And every time this woman would come back (P) from drawing water, she would find (A) her son full of vomit (A = P), all saliva. She would say (I) then. . .” <A>
- [2]. *iwa daj mik: r̄:ahən n fa n umfan, daj mi ɔ̄:-tus tini-jas. . .*
 “Well, every time they would go to some place (A = P), every time she would come (P), she would say (A). . .”
- [3]. *daj mi das-ɔ̄:-k:sən itəf*
 “Every time they would cut off for him a part (of the meat) (A = P), he would eat (A)” <C>

The speaker has the choice between a Bare Aorist and an explicitly marked durative, habitual, or iterative verb, that is, the Imperfective, *ad* + Aorist (in its habitual interpretation), or the *q:im* + Imperfective durative construction.

- [4]. *ja an: n təmz̄:a daj mi sat tr̄:ah l fir̄:a n umfan it:izar-it aju n ħdidwan*

“Well, this ogress, every time she intended to go (*sad* + A) to some place, Hdidwan went before her (I)” <Z>

[5]. *daj mi q̣:-usən ə: war:a n:əs at təybər*

“Every time her children would come (P), she would hide (*ad* + A)” <C>

[6]. *daj mi d ə: mi təf:əy d ṣ:qaaq q̣:im tʃajarənt-tət tqəj:arin*

“Every time she would go out (A = P) into the alley, the (other) girls would scold her (*q̣:im* + I)” <A>

These aspectually explicit verb forms seem to be roughly equivalent to the Bare Aorist in this context. Thus, exactly the same state of affairs that is expressed by *q̣:im* + I, in example [6] (from the Sarsara story, Kossmann 2000: 105–115), is expressed by a Bare Aorist in a version of the same tale told by another story teller:

[7]. *iwa daj mi təf:əy l ṣ:qaaq inint-as tqəj:arin*

“So, every time she would go out (A = P) into the alley, the (other) girls would say to her (A)” <C>

The use of the Bare Aorist in this construction is found with most narrators.

After *i* “when”

The subordinator *i* is used for anterior temporal subordinations. The main clause, therefore, expresses a punctual event, mostly with past reference. In non-framed contexts, the Perfective would be used for such a situation. In main clauses framed by *i* the Bare Aorist is often encountered.

[8] context: a boy has been eaten by an eagle, and the eagle is coerced to give him back in good shape.

i t-id-ijru izbəṛf idzal; in:a-jasən i ləl n:əs

“When he (= the eagle) had thrown him back (P) in good shape (A = P), he (= the boy) took an oath (A) and said (P) to his family” <A>

[9] *i das-iyərəs uk: un: n tʒərʒərt im:atər kulfi d aməl:al*

“When he had slaughtered (A = P) the gazelle, he saw (A) that everything was white” <A>

[10]. *ik: rəflən ja ik: iq:əs ja r:fəl nsən, nət:a jas-q̣: ij: iman n:əs t taməṭ:ut*

“When they married (A = P), when their wedding started (A = P), he came (A) and pretended (A) he was a woman”

The same construction is found when *i* is preceded by *al ~ an* “until”.

[11]. *təs:əwa-q̣: s:aləf n:əs jawkan an i dis juləj təm:atr-i d argaz, tən:a-jas*

“She let down (A = P) her hair and then (until) when he had climbed up (P) by it, she saw (A) that he was a man, and she said (P)” <A>

Among the older female story tellers, who use the Bare Aorist regularly in a sequence of perfective events (see below), the Bare Aorist is all but obligatory after a subordination with *i*, the exceptions being a few cases with *ini* “to say”. The other story tellers mostly use the Perfective, e.g.,

[12]. *i tənt-itʃu, tus-ɖ: jəm:atsənt*

“When he had eaten them (P), their mother came (P)” <D>

[13]. *i tədʳsʲu jawka im:utər taymās: ə: tadalt jisi-t:*

“When she laughed (P) he saw (P) her green tooth and took her (A = P)” <O>

Other Aspectual Framings

The framing by means of a subordinate clause is by far the most common type of context for a Framed Aorist. However, the same usage is sometimes found in contexts that have a similar effect, but that are not formally temporal/aspectual subordinate clauses (cf. for similar constructions in Central Moroccan Berber, Mauri 2015: 337). This is especially the case in distributional contexts, e.g.,

[14]. *iwa mərʳ:a mərʳ:a jawka jini-jas-ɖ: ja*

“Well, from time to time he would say to him (A)” <O>

[15]. *iwa daj aɣətʳ:uf irʳaħən, ə: iyərs-as əju n ʃmərʳ, aɣətʳ:uf irʳaħən inəy bab n:əs*

“Well, any palanquin that would go out (A = P), this Omar would slaughter them (A=P), any palanquin that would go out (A = P), he would kill (A) its master”

[16]. *si ɖ:-if:əy suk: jəz:ar wi s: m:a ilqan jini-jas*

“From the moment that he left the butcher, everyone who would meet him (A = P) said to him (A)” <M>

Chained Aorists

Introduction

In Figuig, Chained Aorists are found following initial verbs in the Perfective, in the Imperfective, in the non-realized (*s*)*ad* + Aorist constructions, and with an Imperative. I did not find unambiguous cases where the Aorist continues a verb in auxiliary constructions with *ili* “to be” or *q:im* “to keep on”.

Chained Aorists do not have to be close to each other, or to the initial verb, and many elements may come between them as long as they are not verbs in another aspect. Moreover, as will be clear from many of the following examples, there is no need for subject continuity. From this point of view, the link between the initial verb and the following Aorist is rather weak.

Chained Aorists only continue affirmative statements. I have not found any unambiguous cases where a stative verb appears in a Chained Aorist construction.

Note that the use of consecutive stative Aorists has been described for Tashelhiyt (Galand 2010: 229) and Ayt Atta (Mauri 2015) but is unknown in Tuareg (Prasse 2009: 259), and Kabyle (Galand 2010: 230, citing Manseri 1999). The following examples illustrate the use of the Chained Aorist after different initial verb forms.

PERFECTIVE:

- [17]. *jawkan tuy-i təmsi. jas-ḡ: n jəm:as in:a-jas. . .* “Then he got (P) fever (lit. fever passed at him). He went (A) to his mother and said (P). . .” <A>
- [18]. *i tud'a təsxəf, i ḡ:-usən ajətmas usən-ḡ: usən-ḡ: walu u dasən-ḡ:-təj:i ləmʕaf, usən-ḡ: walu. afən-t: tud'a*
 “When she had fallen down (P) unconscious (P), when her brothers came (P), they came (P), came (P), to no avail, she had not made (NP) them their food, they came (P) to no avail. They found (A) that she had fallen down (P)” <O>

IMPERFECTIVE:

- [19]. *mukud təḡ:in zʕ:rʕudʕəj:a s:irdən-t:, awjən-tət-ḡ: i f:warijat*
 “Then they (habitually) grind (I) carrots, wash them (A = P), and bring (A) them in bags” <B; description>
- [20]. *mukud tʕər:ən ḡ:unəjt tʕʕədʕ.*
 “Then everybody would pick (I) and grind (A)” <B; description>

AD + AORIST AND SAD + AORIST

- [21]. *a ḡ:-tas ja s lyiwan, at təs:bingər ja, tas-ḡ: tadən ayənsu n:əs, tas-ḡ: ja s lyiwan*
 “She (the bride) comes (*ad* + A) with singing, she puts on her veil (*ad* + A), she comes (A) and covers (A) her face, she comes (A) with singing” <B; description>
- [22]. *tan a fək-t:əf tətʕ-iji*
 “Look, she will eat you (*ad* + A) and eat me (A)” <A>
- [23]. *irʕa a ḡ:-nawj aʕəq:a nawəj-ḡ: Jaja Ambrʕuka a kidəm trʕaħ*
 “Wait (IMPT), we will bring (*ad* + A) a necklace, we will bring (A) Yaya Ambrouka, so that she will go (*ad* + A) with you” <C>
- [24]. *sat trʕaħəd at tafəd pʕ:atnəx itʕ:əsʕ, sa das-tqəs:əd tmart n:əs, thəs:nəd tqəs:d-as af:arən n:əs təj:d-as tisijt z:atəs*
 “You must go (*sad* + A) and you will find (*ad* + A) our father asleep (P), you must cut (*sad* + A) his beard, cut his hair (A = P), cut (A = P) his nails, and put (A) a mirror in front of him” <A> (As the wider context and interpretation do not allow for a Perfective, one can be sure that *thəs:nəd* and *tqəs:d-as* are Bare Aorists.)

IMPERATIVE

Imperatives are normally in the Aorist. What is called here a Chained Aorist after an Imperative is the use of a non-Imperative second person Aorist verb after an initial Imperative.

- [25]. *j:ət azʕyal, ad iħma qbala tadərm-as dis fus n:əs a dawəm-təfd'əħ*
 “Prepare (IMPT) soup, let it get very hot (*ad* + A) and put (A) her hand into it so that she will reveal it to you (*ad* + A)” <E>

In none of the abovementioned contexts, the use of an Aorist is obligatory. Its use is relatively rare with *ad* + Aorist and with *sad* + Aorist. Cases like the following example ([26]) are much more frequent in the corpus than are cases with Chained Aorists:

- [26]. *am:ən: jif: n jumajən nix təlt ij:am iwa ad j:ən dəx miq:ən id-w. . . id-sʕ:luħat.*
a s:-ij: abəʕda urgaz d aməzwar, ad j:ən amənsi qaʕ i lkaʔilt n:əs, ləl n:əs, d at xalis, d at ʕəm:is ja d sʕ:ləħ.
mi dəx jif: n təlt ij:am nix rʕbəʕ ij:am ad ij: dəx pʕ:as ə: ajən: . . . ad ij: dəx pʕ:as n təsləjt dəx aju n umənsi am:u.
a dasən-jini dəx ik: at tiq:art: (. . .)
ad ʕəj:dʕən dəx i ləl n:ə: . . . i ləl nsən d at xalitsən d at ʕəm:itsən,
iwa ad q:imən miq:ən ja i tiq:art nsən.
taməʕʕ:ut, twafunt at təq:im i tiq:art n urgaz n:əs.
 “Like this, two or three days later, people prepare (*ad* + A) ritual meals.
 First the husband does it (*ad* + A), they make (*ad* + A) dinner for all of his family, his relatives, the family of his maternal uncle, the family of his paternal uncle, as a ritual meal.
 Some three or four days later, the father makes (*ad* + A) this. . . the father of the bride makes (*ad* + A) this dinner like this.
 He says (*ad* + A) to the people of the house: (. . .)
 They invite (*ad* + A) the relatives of. . . their relatives, and the family of their maternal uncle and their paternal uncle,
 and the people stay (*ad* + A) in their house.
 The woman, the girl, stays (*ad* + A) in the house of her husband” <B; description>

This long passage about the weeks following the wedding has the construction with *ad* + Aorist (in its habitual usage) throughout. While there is no question about the consecution of the described events, there is not a single Chained Aorist in this fragment. With Perfectives and Imperatives, the Chained Aorist seems to be more common, while our corpus has too few instances of Imperfectives followed by another verb with Imperfective aspectual meaning to make any statements about the frequency of the Bare Aorist vs. the Imperfective in these contexts.

Bare Aorists in Chains Without a Clear Initial Verb

While the immediate consecution of the initial verb and the Aorist verb is, by far, the most common situation, there are a number of examples where the aspectual matrix of the Aorist is provided by a verb that is further away from it, or where it is not obviously continuing a preceding form (cf. Mauri 2015: 336, for similar constructions in Central Moroccan Berber), e.g.,

- [27]. *imsək:ar-ǰ: akidəs iwd'a ǰ^w: un n tasa. təq:jəm təls'əg dis l'afəjt. tali iq:ar: "(. . .)". iwa ir'əy din iwa tr'əj:əh xfas*
 “He got up angry (A = P) with her and fell (A = P) into the pitfall. There was (*q:im* + P) fire there. Then he started to say (I) “(. . .)”. Well, he got burned (A) there and she (had) got rid (A = P) of him” <F>

In this fragment, if *ir'əy* “he burned” were a continuation of the preceding verb (*iq:ar*), it should be interpreted as an Imperfective. This is not entirely inconceivable, but the more probable interpretation is that *ir'əy*, just like *tr'əj:əh xfas* “she (had) got rid of him,” constitutes a concluding statement for the scene which would normally be expressed by a Perfective.

- [28]. *iwa k:rən z'wan l ləxla, isin qa kulfi, t:an luqid. yərsən i tfunas:, səlxən-t:, irzan maj z:əg ala s:ənwən ul ufin. iwa q:im t:əq:lən, m:atrən amz'a uk: d'r'ar'.* . .
 “So, they went (*k:ər* + A = P) to the desert, they took (A = P) everything with them, they forgot (A = P) the matches. They slaughtered (A = P) the cow, they skinned (A = P) it, they sought (A = P) with what they would be able to cook it (*ad* + A), but they couldn't find it (NP). So, they started to look (*q:im* + I) and saw (A) an ogre on the mountain. . .” <C>

In example [28], the immediate context of the Aorist *m:atrən* “they saw” is the durative construction *q:im t:əq:lən* “they looked for a long time”. There is no doubt that *m:atrən* is meant to convey a punctual event without any specific duration. One could argue that the auxiliary verb *q:im* (here in a truncated form) is formally a Perfective, and therefore, the aspectual continuity is not broken, but this seems to be strained.

- [29]. *k:urənt k:urənt and awd'ənt jif: ə: n sənt n trəgwin. if: n tərğa n uyi d jif: n tərğa. . . ħafak n ngət'r'an. . . . tək:ur tək:ur tən:a-jas jawkan awd'ənt, tən:a-jas. . .*
 “They walked (I) and they walked (I) until they arrived (*ald* + A) at two irrigation canals. One canal with buttermilk, and one canal – excusez le mot – with tar. . . She walked (I) and walked (I), she said (P), then they arrived (A) and she said (P). . .” <D>

Example [29] is complicated, as the storyteller corrects himself. In the second sentence, he starts with *tən:a-jas* “she said,” and then rephrases it by means of *jawkan awd'ənt tən:a-jas* “and then they arrived (A) and she said (P),” followed by the speech verb and the direct speech. In this constellation, it is highly improbable that the Aorist *awd'ənt* would be a continuation of the preceding Perfective *tən:a-jas*, which it corrects. In fact, it is not clear how the Aorist *awd'ənt* in this sentence should be analyzed as continuing any preceding main verb form, as all other verbs are (durative) Imperfectives.

- [30]. *iwa idʒən n was: dəx, tən:a-jas: “ax-am at təs:irdəd u... ulman.” təq:im təs:irid ulman təq:im tfət:sr-in i... i s^ʕ:d^ʕuħ. im:atər-tət-ɟ: idʒən n ə: n m:is n uzəl:id, ik:ər iwtu-ɟ: idʒən n uxəlɣal ʕlaħsab d^ʕa... d^ʕar^ʕ n:əs*
 “So, one day, she said (P) to her: ‘here you are, you should wash (*ad* + A) the warp threads’. So, she started to wash the warp threads (*q:im* + I), she started to spread them out (*q:im* + I) on the roof terrace. A son of the king saw her (A), and he made (P) an anklet in the size of her foot” <O>

Like in the earlier examples, the immediately preceding verbs are durative in aspect (*q:im* + I), while the event described by the Aorist (*im:atər-tət-ɟ:* “he saw her”) is a punctual, perfective event. One remarks that the verb immediately following the Aorist, *iwtu-ɟ:* “he hit, he fabricated,” which describes a direct consequence of the seeing, has the Perfective form, combined with the semantically bleached verb *k:ər* “rise,” which is often used to convey the beginning of a new series of events.

What Does the Chained Aorist Express?

The optionality of the use of the Chained Aorist confronts us with the following question: how does its use relate to that of fully specified aspectual marking in similar contexts? For this problem, we will compare the use of Chained Aorists in the two contexts for which it is amply attested in our corpus – situations where the initial verb is an Imperative and situations where it is a Perfective.

The Chained Aorist in Orders

As mentioned above, Chained Aorist forms of Imperatives are characterized by the fact that they take normal second person marking, rather than Imperative forms. Normal second person Aorist forms are not used in initial position.

When several orders are given, three different constructions are possible. In the first construction, Imperatives are used throughout, e.g.,

- [31]. *r^ʕuħ awj-iɟ: taqəɟ:it:, s^ʕiwd^ʕ-iɟ: amr^ʕəl^ʕ:a*
 “Go (IMPT), bring me (IMPT) meat, bring me (IMPT) a lot” <C>

In the second construction, the Imperative is followed by *ad* + Aorist. Different from the Bare Aorist, *ad* + Aorist can also be used in (polite) orders in initial position, so this is essentially a series of two different types of order. It is not possible to start the series of orders by *ad* + Aorist, and continue with an Imperative.

- [32]. *r^ʕuħ a xəfnəx təz^ʕwid*
 “Go and get away from us” <O>

In the third construction, the Imperative is followed by a Chained Aorist (see ex. [25] above).

In longer series of orders, it is possible (but not obligatory) to start with several Imperatives, and then continue with Chained Aorists, e.g.,

- [33]. *a r^ʕuḥ l ud^ʕr^ʕar^ʕ, s:əḥma din jif: n tyunt s:əḥma-t: mliḥ, təj:əd s waḍ:wəs abərda, taljəd s uzən:a n ud^ʕr^ʕar^ʕ tək:zəd s uqəlqul*
 “Go (IMPT) to the mountain, heat up (IMPT) a stone, make it (IMPT) very hot, put (A) sand underneath, go up (A) to the top of the mountain and jump down (A = P) with your head (downwards)” <D>

There are no strict rules governing the choice between these constructions, but there are strong tendencies. The IMPT – *ad* A construction is mainly found following the Imperatives (*a*)*r^ʕwaḥ* “come!”, *r^ʕuḥ* “go!”, and *k:ər* “get up”. All three are special verbs, albeit for different reasons. (*a*)*r^ʕwaḥ* only exists in the Imperative – The reason to consider it a verb form is that it has different forms with singular and plural addressees and functions as a suppletive Imperative to *as-q:* “to come”; *r^ʕuḥ* has been borrowed in its Imperative form from Maghribian Arabic, while all other verb forms are based on a different Arabic stem form, *r^ʕaḥ* (see Kossmann 2013b: 267). It is the only verb in the language that has a special Imperative stem that is different from the Aorist. Finally, *k:ər* is often used as a verb indicating the beginning of a new event, which does not necessarily mean any focus on the action of getting up. *K:ər* often occurs in this way in narrative sections, but also plays a role in Imperatives, e.g.,

- [34]. *k:ər at tʕəd^ʕr^ʕəd!*
 “Come (IMPT) eat lunch (*ad* + A)!” (lit. get up and you shall eat lunch) <E>

The IMPT – *ad* A construction is particularly common with (*a*)*r^ʕwaḥ*: over half of the attestations of the construction are with this verb. There are only very few cases in the corpus where (*a*)*r^ʕwaḥ* is followed by another Imperative, and there are no attestations in the corpus where it is followed by a Chained Aorist. It is not clear why this is the case, and why (*a*)*r^ʕwaḥ* “come!” is much more common in the IMPT – *ad* A construction, than the semantically similar Imperative verb *r^ʕuḥ* “go!”.

As regards the choice between the IMPT – IMPT and the IMPT – A construction, there does not seem to be such a strong lexical determination. The main difference between these two constructions lies in the proximity of the two orders in the syntactic string. IMPT – IMPT constructions are almost exclusively found when the second order immediately follows the initial Imperative, with the possibility of having some discourse markers in between, e.g.,

- [35]. *aw-awim, aju n təjdət: ḥd^ʕat-tət əj:t-as ndaj ajk: ixəs*
 “Here you are, this dog, guard it (IMPT) and give to it (IMPT) just what it wants” <F>
 [36]. *wa, awəj-t-id*
 “Go down (IMPT) and bring it (IMPT)” <M>

The construction is common when the first verb is the Imperative *r^uh* “go!”, which, being an intransitive verb, is of course often constructed with a following order without any element intervening, e.g.,

- [37]. *r^uh p:ab-t-id*
 “Go (IMPT) and carry him here (IMPT) on your back!” <D>

Once a series of Imperatives is started, it is possible to have successive orders in the Imperative, with elements intervening, e.g.,

- [38]. *r^uh isi fəm: . . . aɣjul, isi dis iqlilən, j: iman n:əm təl: id t^u:əf:nəd*
 “Go (IMPT) and take (IMPT) . . . a donkey, put (IMPT) pitchers on it, and pretend (IMPT) you are passing by (*ili* + I)” <E>

In example [38], the first two Imperatives follow each other immediately (*r^uh* and the first *isi*), but the other Imperatives (the second instance of *isi* and *j:*) are separated by intervening elements.

The construction with a Chained Aorist, on the other hand, is almost exclusively used when there are elements separating the initial Imperative from the later order(s), e.g.,

- [39]. *ɣərs uk: ufriɣ, tisid-ɣ: aqəlqul, d jiləm, təs:əwit-tən i təzɣawt d aməzwar*
 “Slaughter (IMPT) a ram, take (A = P) its head and hide, and let them first down (A=P) (into the well) in a basket” <A>

The number of elements in between the two orders can be considerable, as in example [40]:

- [40]. *uft-as qaɣ an: n nəksəwt (n:iɣ-awəm) uk: un: n urgaz, uk: un: n urgaz nə:: ɣ: ɣərɣəm il:a jus, Məx:ad^ɣ. iwa tufm-as an: n twafunt nɣəm (. . .)*
 “Give (IMPT) all the clothes (I tell you) to that man, to that man ehh that has come to you, Churner. Then give to him (A = P) your daughter (. . .)” <A>

All in all, the choice between the IMPT – IMPT construction and the IMPT – A construction can, to a very large degree, be predicted from the absence, or presence, of intervening elements. It should be noted that the correlation is not perfect, as shown by the following two exceptions – from the same scene, told by the same storyteller – where two Imperatives are separated by an intervening direct object:

- [41]. *a jəm:a awj-iɣ: afuħ n wudi. jr-i-t-id i təħrirt*
 “Mother, bring me (IMPT) some butter and throw it (IMPT) into the soup” <Z>
- [42]. *awj-iɣ: a jəm:a afuħ n wudi jr-iɣ: dis i ə: . . . i təħrirt inu*
 “Bring me (IMPT) some butter, mother, and throw it (IMPT) into it e: . . . into my soup” <Z>

The Chained Aorist Continuing a Perfective

The use of the Chained Aorist when continuing a Perfective is linked to a number of factors. In the first place, there are clear differences among storytellers. In order to study this, a full-scale comparison of the ratio between Bare Aorists and Perfectives was undertaken (Of course, only those forms that formally distinguish between Aorist and Perfective were included, and only those Aorists that continue a Perfective event were counted.). While among Aorists only the Chained forms were included, any Perfective was counted, as long as it was not part of a subordinated clause. Therefore, it is no wonder that all storytellers opt more for Perfectives than they do for Bare Aorists. Moreover, as we will see later, the extremely frequent verb “to say” has a strong tendency to appear in the Perfective, thus further skewing the results toward the Perfective. As far as I can see, these caveats have a bearing on the numbers, but not on their relative frequency among speakers. I do not have the impression that some speakers would have fewer consecutive situations, or fewer instances of “to say” than others.

The results are highly revealing. Among the older female storytellers, , <C>, and <F> had ratios between one Bare Aorist to 4 Perfectives to one Bare Aorist to 6 Perfectives. Only the older female storyteller <A> had a lower ratio, with one Bare Aorist to 12 Perfectives; this may be due to her specific stylistic choices in using this construction (see below). The other story tellers used the Bare Aorist much less frequently in this context. The stories by <O>, for example, only have one Bare Aorist to 40 Perfectives. Among the male storytellers, Bare Aorists were even rarer. The reason behind these differences seems to lie, to a large extent, in story telling experience. The highest ratios are found among the most experienced storytellers. Only <A>, a blind lady in her fifties (in 1990), well-known in her community as a storyteller, has a slightly lower ratio, but still has a score over three times higher than <O>. Most of the other narrators had much less experience in telling stories; or had long not done so when recorded. Thus <O>, when recorded, did not live in Figuig anymore and, even though she knew the stories very well and delivered them with great delight, her performance was less confident than that of, for example, <A>, as shown by many corrections and abundant stopgaps. The same is true for most of the male performers, who would not typically be telling this type of stories (see for a similar effect of narrative experience on another grammatical feature, Kossmann 2015b: 220).

It has often been claimed that in some languages the use of the Chained Aorist in perfective contexts is receding. This is suggested, for example, by Galand (2010: 230–231) for Kabyle, and by Bououd (2014: 122) for Ayt Sadden Central Moroccan Berber. The Figuig situation could be interpreted in the same way, as the oldest performers have a higher incidence of Bare Aorists than younger performers. As the Chained Aorist in perfective contexts seems to be a form that is strongly correlated to some types of narrative style, I prefer to interpret the differences as reflecting the degree of knowledge of stylistic conventions. The fact that the two young men in the corpus hardly used any Bare Aorists in Perfective consecution would, thus, not so much, be caused immediately by an age-gradient in the variation, but rather due to a

lack of experience in the genre. Of course, one interpretation goes hand in hand with the other. When a certain construction is strongly related to a specific genre, and the genre in question gets less commonly performed – as is no doubt the case with traditional narratives in Morocco – it will become more and more marginal.

In addition to stylistic preferences (and maybe competence), the use of the Chained Aorist in Perfective consecution is also restricted in the case of one specific verb. The verb *ini* “to say” is among the most frequent words in the corpus, as it is the normal introduction to direct speech. Much of the direct speech is, of course, part of a series of events, and, moreover, dialogue, itself, often includes series of direct speech events. Because of this, one would expect *ini* to appear regularly in the Chained Aorist. This is, in fact, the case when repetitive events are described. Thus, in the following passage, a repeating dialogue is reported, starting by the (suppletive) Imperfective form *q:ar^s* “to say,” followed by a Chained Aorist:

- [43]. *daj mi d ə: mi təf:əy d s^s:qaq q:im tʃajarənt-tət tqəj:arin:*
 - *r^suh xəfnax a Sarsara-wəq:ər-səbʃa!*
tas-ɖ: n jəm:as til: təq:ar^s-as:
 - *a jəm:a, mar diq:-q:ar^sənt Sarsara-wəq:ər-səbʃa?*
tini-jas:
 - *a jəl:i hən:a a ndaj.*
 “Every time she would go out (A = P) into the alley, the girls would scold her (I):
 - Go away from us, Sarsara-that-made-seven-stray!
 She would go (A) to her mother crying (A = P = I). She would say to her (I):
 - Mother, why do they call me Sarsara-that-made-seven-stray?;
 and she would say (A):
 - Well, my daughter, that’s the way it is” <A>

However, when the dialogue is a single event that is not repeated, the Chained Aorist is hardly ever used. This is illustrated by the following dialogue from a story by <F>, a storyteller who, otherwise, uses the Chained Aorist regularly (example [44]). In order to make the example easier to process for the reader, false starts have been substituted by [***]. None of them appear in a context that is relevant to the issue at stake.

- [44]. *iwa təq:jəm til: al axtən kud tas-ɖ: lal:as tən:a-jas:*
 - *maj ʃəm juɣən til:əd?*
tən:a-jas:
 - *a maj diq:-in:a m:is n buhəp:u [***], a maj diq:-in:a izmər, a maj diq:-in:a.*
tən:a-jas:
 - *ini-jas: isəm:ən:-ək u ikəp:ər-ək [***] ndbəh-lik. u nakül ləhm-ək u nəgʃəd ʃla idurt-ək.*
*iwa təq:jəm ja al ajətfə tərgəb [***] ja tən:a-jas:*
 - *ja jəl:is n nan:a.*
tən:a-jas:
 - *ja m:is n buhəp:u, isəm:ən:-ək, u ikəp:ər-ək, u nakül ləhm-ək u nəgʃəd ʃla idurt-ək.*

“So, she started to cry (*q:jəm* + I). Until a certain moment, then her mistress came (A) and said (P):

- What’s the matter with you that you are crying?

She said (P):

- This is what the son of Buheppu said to me. This is what the lamb said, this is what he said.

She said (P):

- Tell him: He will fatten you and make you big, and I will slaughter you and eat your meat and sit on your skin. [formulaic sentence in Arabic]

So, she waited (A = P) until the next day and she looked down (A = P) (from her window) and he (the lamb) said (P) to her:

- O, daughter of my mistress!

And she said (P):

- He will fatten you and make you big, and I will eat your meat and sit on your skin”
<F>

In order to compare the use of the Chained Aorist as opposed to the use of the Perfective under similar conditions, it is therefore necessary to focus on the older female story tellers, and also to leave the verb “to say” out of the equation.

As mentioned before, Bentolila, in his analysis of the use of Ayt Seghrushen consecutive forms considers them as marking continuity (especially in fast succession) and logical succession (Bentolila 1981: 153–154). Applying Bentolila’s analysis to our Figuiq data, one would expect the Chained Aorist (when continuing a Perfective) to be especially common in simple chains of events, and to be less frequently found when there is a conceptual break in the chain, for example, when something unforeseen happens. Moreover, even though Bentolila does not mention this, one could imagine that a serious pause in the performance would lead to a break in the chain, and, thus, would not be likely to be followed by a Chained Aorist (cf. also Galand 2016: 452).

These predictions are not confirmed in the Figuiq corpus, cf. the following passage:

[45]. *iwa ald itf qa tafunas:, ip:r-in ik: iləm, jas:əs xəfsən, ir^saħ irəq:za-ḡ: ad ə:: mani tən ala is:nəw. [4 seconds pause] jas-ḡ: iqməf*

“Well, until he [= the ogre, MK] had eaten (*ald* + A) the entire cow, then he stuffed them (A = P) into the skin, he sewed (A) them in, and he went (A = P) searching (I) to ehh, where he would cook (A) them. [4 sec pause]. Then Iqmec came (A). . .” <C>

In this passage, the Chained Aorist *jas-ḡ:* “he came” is preceded by a pause in the story telling. Moreover, the event described by *jas-ḡ:* represents a break in the chain of events. First, we hear about the way the ogre treats the members of a certain family. After this, a brand-new protagonist is introduced, *Iqməf* (a nickname of Hedgehog), who starts a new chain of events. There is no indication that the arrival of *Iqməf* would be shortly after the ogre left; in fact, one would rather expect a certain

time lapse in between the two events. Thus, this passage, told by a confident story teller, shows a use of the Chained Aorist which is quite different from what Bentolila describes.

In fact, at least one storyteller, <A>, seems to use Chained Aorists in Perfective contexts, preferably, when there is some kind of break in the chain of events. This is illustrated in example [46] and [47].

[46]. context: A girl has been buried alive by her brother.

*iz^ʕwa iʕaf-it. jawəj-ǧ: R^ʕəp:i idzən n ə: n. . . n. . . n nmalik isəl: i n:dir jawka
jud^ʕa-ǧ: xʕəs*

“He went away (A=P), he ignored her (A=P). The Lord brought (A) a en king who heard the moaning and found (A=P) her” <A>

[47]. *iwa ə: r:ən-ǧ: ja qa ləhwajəz n:əs, jaləj d lmalik*

“So, they gave back to him (A=P) all his belongings, and he ascended (A) to be the king” <A>

In example [46], a king arrives “out of the blue,” marked by a Chained Aorist. In example [47], while the focus remains on the same person, the fact that the hero of the story ascends to the status of a king is, not obvious from the preceding context, nor a necessary consequence of the general direction of this particular story.

When there is a simple chain of logically coherent consecutive events, <A> uses Perfectives rather than Chained Aorists, e.g.,

[48]. *təj:u jawkan tir^ʕəd^ʕ ayəd nət:ata ləksəwt jir^ʕd^ʕ-in jumas, tənju uk: jis təz^ʕwa*

“She did (P) (like that), she also put on (A = P) clothes that her brother had worn, she mounted (P) the horse and went away (P)” <A>

The difference between Perfective, for expected continuations, and Chained Aorists, for unexpected continuations, is also relevant in example [49].

[49]. *tədwəl-ǧ: t tamət^ʕ:ut n:əs, iwa tur^ʕəw-ǧ: akidəs. juʕ-as R^ʕəp:i səbʕa, nət:ata an:
n nwaʕfun tur^ʕəw-tən-ǧ: təm:atr-i ja an idzən n umul:u it. . . it^ʕr^ʕək xəʕsən ə:
lma.. lmal suk: un: n umʕan, r^ʕ:z^ʕəq, akəj:əl. usən-ǧ: yəldin, q:imən tkəj:lən din
təm:atər jumas*

“She became (A=P) his wife, and she got children (P) with him. The Lord gave (A=P) her seven, she gave birth (P) to these children. Then she saw him (A). . . One day they [her brothers, MK] ran out of stuff, wealth, things to buy. They came (P) there, they started to buy (q:im + I) and she saw (A) there her brother” <A>

In this passage, the logical consequence of marrying – begetting children – is marked by the Perfective (*tur^ʕəw-ǧ:; tur^ʕəw-tən-ǧ:*). On the other hand, when a great switch takes place in the story – the main character accidentally, and unexpectedly, spots her brother, who has come from elsewhere – the Chained Aorist is used (*təm:atər*). The storyteller first mentions the fact that the main character saw her

brother, and then chooses to explain why he was away from his home, followed by a second mention of her seeing him. In both cases, the event of seeing is expressed by means of a Chained Aorist.

This use of the Chained Aorist to mark unexpected developments in the chain of events may be an idiosyncrasy of <A>'s story telling. It is not as obvious in the stories by other experienced narrators, who seem to be as likely to use the Bare Aorist with expected, as they may with unexpected events (One may note, however, that my corpora for the other experienced female story tellers are much smaller than that of <A>.).

This is not to say that cohesion is unimportant in the meaning of the Bare Aorist. In fact, one way to interpret <A>'s use of the Aorist is that it marks cohesion exactly in contexts where cohesion is not obvious. That is, it occurs when a real break in the flow of events could be envisaged, and signals that this is not the case.

The idea that the Chained Aorist is used to mark cohesion is exacerbated in narrative passages following direct speech. In traditional stories, dialogues, and other instances of direct speech, provide a specific rhythm for the narrative. Within the main chain of events, which is focused on a development from action to action (and more often than not from location to location), they constitute islands where no further action than the speech act takes place (Kossmann 2000: 63–65). As such, they are quite different from the rest of the story. In many cases, the action following a dialogue starts in a Perfective, which could be interpreted as showing a full break in the narration. It is quite possible that the preference for the Perfective with *ini* “to say” is also related to the independence of direct speech vis-à-vis the narrative parts of the story.

There are, however, many instances where the narration following a dialogue starts in a Chained Aorist. In all of these instances, the action is a direct consequence of what was said in the dialogue: as such, it would count as marking cohesion at a point where context would make one expect a full break.

[50]. *in:a-jasən*: “*xsəx-t:*.” *jawj-it*

“He said (P) to them: “I love her.” He married (A) her” <A>

[51]. *jən:a-jas*: “*ukan fəm:in, ndaj wik: iwjəy axtən tʃajəbd-i-t-id.*” *iny jəm:as*

“He said (P) to her: “So you vilify anybody that I marry.” (So) he killed his mother” <F>

[52]. *alaxtən dəx tədʕən lgaflət tini-jas:*

- *a dik l-gafta, la fikūm Yusf wəld ʕəm:-i?*

in:a-jas:

- *a-ni, a-ni.*

iwa jas-ḡ:

“Then a caravan came by (A = P) and she said (This is one of the rare instances where the verb *ini* “to say” takes a Bare Aorist in a sequence of perfective events.) (A):

- O caravan, isn't my cousin Yousef among you? [formulaic sentence in Arabic]

He said (P):

- Here I am, here I am. [formulaic sentence in Arabic]

So, he went there (A)” <F>

Conclusion

In this article, the main uses of the Bare Aorist in Figuig have been described. Generally speaking, these uses are similar to what has been described for other northern Berber languages. The Chained Aorist is a marker of text cohesion, which indicates that the event in question is to be seen as linked to the preceding text. The Framed Aorist functions in a similar fashion, deriving its aspectual interpretation from an expectation set by the subordinate clause.

However, in the details of its usage, the situation seems to be different in Figuig from what has been described for other Berber languages. It was shown that the use of the Bare Aorist in non-subordinate contexts is not simply a matter of strong coherence. In fact, it seems that the Bare Aorist is especially common as a marker of coherence, when coherence is less obvious from the context. This is the case of Imperatives, where the Bare Aorist hardly ever does occur immediately following the initial Imperative, and of narrative sequences, where at least one story teller uses the Bare Aorist, preferably, in contexts where coherence is not automatically implied. Thus, we may conclude that in Figuig, the Aorist is, first and foremost, a marker that signals coherence where it might be less expected.

Transcription and Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used: A: Aorist; F: feminine; *ɔ* IMPT Imperative; I: Imperfective; M: masculine; MAN: Mood-Aspect-Negation; NI: Negative Imperfective; NP: Negative Perfective; P: Perfective; sg: singular. The story tellers are identified by an anonymizing abbreviation between <> following the example. At the time of the recordings, A, B, C, F, and O were middle-aged and old women, Z a young woman, M a middle-aged man, and D and E (the latter only in dictated texts) young men. All story tellers cited in the article are from the village Zenaga, except F, who is from the village Elmaiz. In the transcription, dialectal and idiolectal differences (Ben-Abbas 2003) have not been homogenized, which leads to variation in the form of certain elements.

Following the style sheet of this volume, the transcription uses IPA symbols. It should be stressed, however, that this is not a phonetic transcription, and that many salient phonetic features are not represented. Thus /t/ is in most positions affricated ([tʃ]), and there is large-scale allophony with the vowels.

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