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A Grammar of Ghomara Berber

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Summary

Berber forms a branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family. Ghomara Berber is spoken in North-Western Morocco by about 10,000 people. The language is spoken in a number of villages along the Mediterranean coast in an area that is known as the *Jbala*. The dominant language in this area is Moroccan Arabic. All speakers of Ghomara Berber are bilingual in Berber and Moroccan Arabic. Ghomara Berber has been thoroughly influenced by Arabic resulting in parallel systems on almost all levels of its grammar. It is hard to determine which language is dominant on these levels. Therefore Ghomara Berber can be classified as mixed in most parts of its grammar. However, in the noun phrase Berber is dominant. In the basic lexicon Berber is slightly dominant as well, but Arabic is more dominant in the rest of the lexicon. The Berber part of the grammar shows a number rare or unique traits.

This grammar consists of a description of the phonology, the morphology and the syntax. In the appendices a number of texts and a word list are included. The data were collected on fieldwork trips between October 2009 and May 2013. The methods used were elicitation and text recordings. The texts were transcribed and translated with the help of informants in the field.

In the phonology the consonants, the vowels, assimilations and labialisation are treated. The Ghomara consonant system has the typical contrastive features of voice, pharyngealisation and length. Furthermore, Ghomara Berber has a number of spirantised consonants which contrast with their non-spirantised counterparts in certain positions in the word. Spirantisation is found in Berber as well as in the Arabic words. Labialised consonants form a part of the consonant inventory as well. In some positions the realisation of labialisation cannot be distinguished from **u**. The vowel system is typical for Northern Berber. The analysis of schwa is not different from other Northern Berber languages.

In the morphology the parallel systems are most evident. The Berber and Arabic systems are treated separately in most parts. In the first part the Berber-morphology noun is treated. The noun expresses gender, number and state. It distinguishes masculine and feminine gender, singular and plural and free (EL: *état libre*) and bound state (EA: *état d'annexion*). Depending on the word, the feminine can express feminine gender or diminutive. The plural is formed by affixation or by a combination of affixation and vowel apophony. The bound state is only used after prepositions. It is not used when the noun is the subject following the verb, as in many other Berber languages. The Arabic-morphology noun is taken over unchanged from Arabic. There are two possible plural formations; by

means of affixation or by means of apophony.

In the third chapter of the morphology, diminutive and augmentative formation are discussed. In Arabic it is possible to form diminutives by inserting a vowel pattern into the noun stem. This system has been adopted in Ghomara Berber. Arabic nouns in Ghomara Berber apply this system. In addition, native Berber-morphology nouns have also adopted this system of diminutive formation. The same patterns are taken over, meaning that this system has been added to the original system which forms diminutives by means of the feminine affixes. The two systems can to a certain extent be combined resulting in a four-way distinction in size. The augmentative is formed by means of Berber morphology.

In chapter four some interactions between the Berber and the Arabic systems are discussed. Collective nouns have Arabic morphology while unity nouns have Berber morphology. Some Berber-morphology nouns have Arabic-morphology plurals. In chapter five non-affix nouns are discussed. In chapter six verbal nouns are discussed.

The Berber-morphology verb, which is the subject of chapter seven, distinguishes three aspectual forms: the Aorist, the Perfective and the Imperfective. Some verbs in the Imperfective are formed by prefixing a **tt-**, geminating a consonant and deleting the first labial consonant, resembling a type of Imperfective formation in Tashelhiyt Berber. The causative is formed by prefixing an **ss-** to the Berber-morphology verb. This type of causative formation is not so productive. In chapter eight the Arabic-morphology verb is discussed. A number of basic verbs can only be conjugated using Arabic-morphology, such as **tkeyyef** 'smoke', **ṣṣaḍ** 'fish', **ḥṣem** 'be embarrassed', **ṣber** 'be patient', **εṭeš** 'be thirsty'. They distinguish a Perfect and an Imperfect form. Passives are always conjugated by means of Arabic-morphology.

Different from many Berber languages, the adjective forms a word class of its own. In chapter nine a number of criteria are given to define the adjective. This class is a combination of Berber stative verbs and Arabic adjectives. There are only four adjectives with Berber morphology. All the other adjectives have Arabic morphology. Both groups show common grammatical traits which makes it possible to define them as one word class; they can get the 'relative form', which is a typical verbal trait, and they can also function as the head of a nominal phrase.

Arabic Participles are taken over unchanged in Ghomara Berber. There is a difference between active and passive participles. Pronouns, discussed in chapter eleven, can be separated into a Berber-morphology part and an Arabic-morphology part. Only independent

pronouns are exclusively Berber. In this chapter the direct object, indirect object and a number of non-verbal pronominal suffixes are treated.

Numerals are all borrowed from Arabic, except for the numeral 'one'. The numerals are discussed in chapter thirteen. In chapter fourteen the prepositions are discussed. Again, there is a difference between prepositions that have Arabic-morphology and prepositions that have Berber-morphology. Berber-morphology prepositions are more numerous. In the final chapter of the morphology the adverbs are enumerated.

The syntax begins with the description of a number of traits of the noun phrase and the elements that can function in it. Subsequently, the non-verbal predicate is discussed in chapter two. Negation of the verbal predicate is discussed there as well. In chapter three, which treats the verbal predicate, the arguments are discussed first. After that, verbal valency and derivation are discussed. The valency can be increased by the causative derivation. The verb either gets an **ss-** prefix or it is replaced by another verb with a **cCc-** structure. This can be a suppletive verb. The aforementioned passive formation is discussed in this part as well. Ghomara Berber has a number of labile verbs. These are verbs which can change valency without any formal change of the verb. In the subsequent part the verbal clitics are treated. Clitics show complex behavior. Depending on the context they can be in preverbal or in postverbal position. Ghomara Berber is special in that it allows clitics in both positions at the same time. This chapter is concluded with a discussion of verbal negation.

Conjunctions are treated in chapter four. They can be grouped in coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. Relative constructions are the subject of chapter five. Relative constructions with Arabic-morphology verbs are different from those with Berber-morphology verbs because they have an optional relative marker **d**. Almost all interrogative elements are borrowed from Arabic. However, the way in which interrogative constructions are formed is typical of Berber. Topicalisation and focalisation are the subject of chapter seven. Verbal as well as non-verbal constructions are treated.

The chapter on mood and aspect shows the interaction of Arabic and Berber in the language once again. The aspectual system is an amalgam of the two languages. The Berber bare Aorist is a neutral form that is mainly used for style. The other aspectual forms, the Berber Perfective and Imperfective on the one hand, and the Arabic Perfect and Imperfect on the other hand basically cover the same aspectual meanings. The Arabic participle plays a special role in that it expresses pure state for most verb classes and it expresses the

progressive aspect for verbs of movement.

In the final chapter the behavior of the verb **II** 'to be' is discussed. In the appendices three texts with glosses and translation are included. The final part is a word list.