

= Central Atlas Tamazight =

Central Atlas Tamazight language (also known as Central Morocco Tamazight , Middle Atlas Tamazight , Tamazight , Central Shilha , and , rarely , Braber ; native name : ???????? Tamazight [tæmæʔzʔt] , [ʔæmæʔzʔʔ]) is a Berber language of the Afro @-@ Asiatic language family , spoken by 3 to 5 million people in the Atlas mountains of Central Morocco , as well as by smaller emigrant communities in France and elsewhere .

Central Atlas Tamazight is one of the most @-@ spoken Berber languages , along with Kabyle , Shilha , Riff , and Shawiya , and in Morocco it rivals Shilha as the most @-@ spoken . All five languages may be referred to as ' Tamazight ' , but Central Atlas speakers are the only ones who use the term exclusively . As is typical of Afro @-@ Asiatic languages , Tamazight has a series of " emphatic consonants " (realized as pharyngealized) , uvulars , pharyngeals , and lacks the phoneme / p / . Tamazight has a phonemic three @-@ vowel system , but also has numerous words without vowels .

Central Atlas Tamazight (unlike neighbouring Tashelhit) had no known significant writing tradition until the 20th century . It is now officially written in the Tifinagh script for instruction in Moroccan schools , while descriptive linguistic literature commonly uses the Latin alphabet , and the Arabic alphabet has also been used .

The standard word order is verb ? subject ? object but sometimes subject ? verb ? object . Words inflect for gender , number , and state , using prefixes , suffixes , and circumfixes . Verbs are heavily inflected , being marked for tense , aspect , mode , voice , person of the subject , and polarity , sometimes undergoing ablaut . Pervasive borrowing from Arabic extends to all major word classes , including verbs ; borrowed verbs , however , are conjugated according to native patterns , including ablaut .

= = Classification = =

Central Atlas Tamazight is one of the four most @-@ spoken Berber languages , in addition to Kabyle , Shilha , and Riff , and rivals Shilha as the most @-@ spoken Berber language in Morocco . Differentiating these dialects is complicated by the fact that speakers of other languages may also refer to their language as ' Tamazight ' . The differences between all three groups are largely phonological and lexical , rather than syntactic . Tamazight itself has a relatively large degree of internal diversity , including whether spirantization occurs .

Central Atlas Tamazight speakers refer to themselves as Amazigh (pl . Imazighen) , an endonymic ethnonym whose etymology is uncertain , but may translate as " free people " . The term Tamazight , the feminine form of Amazigh , refers to the language . Both words are also used self @-@ referentially by other Berber groups to replace local terms such as aʔʔlʔi or rifi , although Central Atlas Tamazight speakers use them regularly and exclusively .

In older studies , Central Atlas Tamazight is sometimes referred to as " Braber " / " Beraber " , a dialectal Arabic term , or its Tamazight equivalent " Taberbrit " . This is related to the Standard Arabic and English term " Berber " , used to refer to all Berber dialects / languages , though eschewed by many Berbers because its etymology is pejorative .

Tamazight belongs to the Berber branch of the Afroasiatic language family ; Afroasiatic subsumes a number of languages in North Africa and Southwest Asia including the Semitic languages , the Egyptian language , and the Chadic and Cushitic languages . Along with most other Berber languages , Tamazight has retained a number of widespread Afroasiatic features , including a two @-@ gender system , verb ? subject ? object (VSO) typology , emphatic consonants (realized in Tamazight as pharyngealized) , a templatic morphology , and a causative morpheme / s / (the latter also found in other macrofamilies , such as the Niger ? Congo languages .) Within Berber , it belongs , along with neighbouring Tashelhiyt , to the Atlas branch of the Northern Berber subgroup .

Tamazight is in the middle of a dialect continuum between Riff to its north @-@ east and Shilha to its south @-@ west . The basic lexicon of Tamazight differs markedly from Shilha , and its verbal

system is more similar to Riff or Kabyle . Moreover , Tamazight has a greater amount of internal diversity than Shilha .

Tamazight 's dialects are divided into three distinct subgroups and geographic regions : those spoken in the Middle Atlas mountains ; those spoken in the High Atlas mountains ; and those spoken in Jbel Saghro and its foothills . Although the characteristic spirantization of / b / > [β] ; / t / > [θ] or [h] ; / d / > [ð] ; / k / > [ç] or [ʃ] ; and / ʔ / > [ʔ] , [ʔ] or [j] is apparent in Berber languages in central and northern Morocco and Algeria , as in many Middle Atlas dialects , it is more rare in High Atlas Tamazight speakers , and is absent in Tamazight speakers from the foothills of Jbel Saghro . Southern dialects (e.g. Ayt Atta) may also be differentiated syntactically : while other dialects predicate with the auxiliary / d / (e.g. / d argaz / " it 's a man ") , Southern dialects use the typically (High Atlas , Souss @-@ Basin rural country , Jbel Atlas Saghro) auxiliary verb / g / (e.g. / iga argaz / " it 's a man ") . The differences between each of the three groups are primarily phonological .

Groups speaking Tamazight include : Ait Ayache , Ait Morghi , Ait Alaham , Ait Youb , Marmoucha , Ait Youssi , Beni Mguild , Zayane , Zemmour , Ait Rbaa , Ait Seri , Guerouane , Ait Segougou , Ait Yafelman , Ait Sikhmane , Ayt Ndhir (Beni Mtir) .

There is some ambiguity as to the eastern boundary of Central Atlas Tamazight . The dialect of the Ait Seghrouchen and Ait Ouairin tribes are commonly classed as Central Atlas Tamazight , and Ait Seghrouchen is reported to be mutually intelligible with the neighbouring Tamazight dialect of Ait Ayache . Genetically , however , they belong to the Zenati subgroup of Northern Berber , rather than to the Atlas subgroup to which the rest of Central Atlas Tamazight belongs , and are therefore excluded by some sources from Central Atlas Tamazight . The Ethnologue lists another group of Zenati dialects , South Oran Berber (ksours sud @-@ oranais) , as a dialect of Central Atlas Tamazight , but these are even less similar , and are treated by Berber specialists as a separate dialect group .

= = History = =

The Berbers have lived in North Africa between western Egypt and the Atlantic Ocean since before recorded history began in the region about 33 centuries ago . By the 5th century BC , the city of Carthage , founded by Phoenicians , had extended its hegemony across much of North Africa ; in the wake of the Punic Wars , Rome replaced it as regional hegemon . The Central Atlas region itself remained independent throughout the classical period , but occasional loanwords into Central Atlas Tamazight , such as ayugu , " plough ox " , from Latin iugum , " team of oxen " and a?alim " onion " < Punic

b?al @-@ im , bear witness to their ancestors ' contact with these conquerors .

Arabs conquered the area of modern @-@ day Morocco and Algeria around the 7th century , prompting waves of Arab migration and Berber adoption of Islam . Particularly following the arrival of the Banu Hilal in modern @-@ day Tunisia in the 11th century , more and more of North Africa became Arabic @-@ speaking over the centuries . However , along with other high mountainous regions of North Africa , the Middle Atlas continued to speak Berber .

Between the 12th and 15th centuries , the Central Atlas , along with the rest of Morocco , successively fell within the domain of the Berber Almoravid , Almohad , and Marinid dynasties . Since the 17th century the region has acknowledged the rule of the Alaouite Dynasty , the current Moroccan royal family . However , effective control of the region was limited ; until the 20th century much of the Central Atlas was in a condition of siba , recognising the spiritual legitimacy of royal authority but rejecting its political claims . The expansion of the Ait Atta starting from the 16th century brought Tamazight back into the already Arabised Tafilalt region and put other regional tribes on the defensive , leading to the formation of the Ait Yafelman alliance .

The 1912 Treaty of Fez made most of Morocco a French @-@ Spanish protectorate (under French and Spanish military occupation) , leaving the Alaouite monarchy but establishing a French military presence in the Atlas region and installing a French commissioner @-@ general . However , the Berber tribes of the Middle Atlas , as in other areas , put up stiff military resistance to French rule ,

lasting until 1933 in the case of the Ait Atta .

After Morocco 's independence in 1956 , a strong emphasis was laid on the country 's Arab identity , and a national Arabic language educational system was instituted , in which Berber languages , including Middle Atlas Tamazight , had no place . However , in 1994 the government responded to Berber demands for recognition by decreeing that Berber should be taught and establishing television broadcasts in three Berber languages , including Central Atlas Tamazight . For the promotion of Tamazight and other Berber languages and cultures , the government created the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture (IRCAM) in 2001 .

= = Geographic distribution = =

Central Atlas Tamazight is among the four most @-@ spoken Berber languages (the other three being Kabyle , Shilha , and Riff) , and rivals Shilha as the most @-@ spoken Berber language in Morocco . Central Atlas Tamazight is mostly spoken in the entire Middle Atlas and its outcroppings , reaching east to Taza and west to the region near Rabat . It is also spoken in the central and eastern High Atlas mountains in Morocco . It is thus spoken across areas with widely varying ecological conditions ? from the mountainous and forested regions of the Middle Atlas mountains to the oases of the northwestern Sahara (Tafilalt) . Berber in Morocco is spread into three areas : Riff in the north , Central Atlas in the center , and Shilha in the south / southwest . Central Atlas is mutually intelligible with the dialects Riff and Shilha ; but Shilha- and Riff @-@ speakers cannot understand each other , although transitional varieties exist between these dialects , creating a smooth transition .

Figures for the number of speakers of Berber languages are generally a matter of estimates rather than linguistic censuses . At least a third of Moroccans seem to speak Berber languages , . Tamazight is estimated to be spoken by about 40 ~ 49 % of Morocco 's Berber @-@ speakers , while Shilha commands 32 ~ 40 % and Riff 20 ~ 25 % .

= = Status = =

Tamazight , along with other Berber languages of Morocco , has a low sociolinguistic status , used mainly in the home , and rarely in official or formal contexts ; it is not an official language . However , media broadcasts and music are available in it , and there is a policy of teaching it in schools .

Of the Central Atlas Tamazight speakers , 40 ? 45 % are monolingual , while the others use Arabic as a second language . Monolingual speakers consist mostly of older generations and children . Women are more likely to be monolingual than men , since they typically stay in the village while the men go to work in the cities . Since Tamazight is the language of the home , girls grow up speaking Berber languages and pass them on to their children ? this gender stratification helps to preserve the language . Bilingual Berber speakers have learned Moroccan Arabic via schooling , migration , media , or through the government . Most rural Berber children are monolingual . They struggle to succeed in schools where the teachers do not speak Berber , and require them to learn both Arabic and French .

Rural Morocco , including the Central Atlas area , suffers from poverty . Tamazight along with its relative Shilha are undergoing " contraction " as rural families , motivated by economic necessity , move to cities and stop speaking Tamazight , leading many intellectuals to fear Berber language shift or regression . However , Tamazight speakers are reported to immigrate less than many other Berber groups . Moreover , Tamazight has a large enough body of native speakers not to be considered under risk of endangerment , although Tamazight speakers reportedly have a lower birth rate than the country of Morocco as a whole .

= = = Official status = = =

As of the Moroccan constitutional referendum , 2011 , the Berber languages are official in Morocco alongside Arabic . In 1994 , King Hassan II declared that a national Berber dialect would acquire a

formal status ; television broadcasts are summarized in Tamazight , as well as Shilha and Rif , three times a day ; and educational materials for schools are being developed . On October 17 , 2001 King Mohammed VI sealed the decree (Dahir 1 ? 01 ? 299) creating and organizing the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture (IRCAM) . IRCAM 's board is composed of Amazigh experts , artists , and activists , all of whom are appointed by the king . The institute , located in Rabat , has played an important role in the establishment of the Tifinagh script in Morocco . There are multiple political parties and cultural associations in Morocco that advocate for the advancement of Berber , calling for it to be recognized as an official language , used more extensively in the mass media , and taught more in schools .

A legal issue affecting Tamazight speakers is restrictions on naming - Moroccan law stipulates that first names must have a " Moroccan character " , and uncommon names , including some Berber ones used in the Central Atlas , are often rejected by the civil registry .

= = Orthography = =

Until the 20th century Tamazight , like many other Berber languages but in contrast with neighbouring Tashelhiyt , was basically unwritten (although sporadic cases , using Arabic script , are attested .) It was preserved through oral use in rural areas , isolated from urban hubs . Scholars from the Middle Atlas , as elsewhere in North Africa , usually wrote in the more prestigious Arabic language , rather than their vernacular .

At present three writing systems exist for Berber languages , including Tamazight : Neo @-@ Tifinagh , the Latin alphabet and the Arabic script . To some extent , the choice of writing system is a political one , with various subgroups expressing preference based on ideology and politics . The orthography used for government services including schooling is Neo @-@ Tifinagh , rendered official by a Dahir of King Mohammed VI based on the recommendation of IRCAM . However , various Latin transcriptions have been used in a number of linguistic works describing Central Atlas Tamazight , notably the dictionary of Taïfi (1991) .

= = Phonology = =

= = = Consonants = = =

Central Atlas Tamazight has a contrastive set of " flat " consonants , manifested in two ways :

For front segments , pharyngealization : / t? d? s? z? l? n? r? /)

For back segments , labialization : / x? ?? q? ?? ?? /)

Note that pharyngealization may spread to a syllable or even a whole word . Historically Proto @-@ Berber only had two pharyngealized phonemes (/ d? , z? /) , but modern Berber languages have borrowed others from Arabic and developed new ones through sound shifts .

In addition Tamazight has uvular and pharyngeal consonants , as well as a conspicuous lack of / p / in its plosive inventory .

All segments may be geminated except for the pharyngeals / ? ? / . In Ayt Ndhir , which is a dialect of Tamazight with spirantization , the spirantizable consonants appear in their stop forms when geminated , and additionally the geminate correspondents of / ? , d? , ? , ? , w , j / are usually / q? , t?? , t ? ?? , d ? ?? , ??? , ?? / respectively . However some native Berber words have / ?? / (not / q? /) where other dialects have singleton / ? / , and similarly for / ?? , ?? / . In addition , in Arabic loans singleton non @-@ spirantized [b , t , t? , d , k , ? , q] occur (though [b t d] and to an extent [t?] often alternate with their spirantized versions in loans) , giving this alternation marginal phonemic status .

In the table below , when consonants appear in pairs , the one on the left is voiceless .

Phonetic notes :

^ 1 / k ? / are fricatives [x ?] in the Ayt Ayache dialect

^ 2 rare ? native speakers can freely substitute / ? ? /

^ 3 mainly in Arabic borrowings

^ 4 For a small number of speakers , / b / is sometimes lenited to [?] .

^ 5 / t / is aspirated [tʰ] .

== = Vowels == =

Tamazight has a typical phonemic three @-@ vowel system , similarly to Classical Arabic :

These phonemes have numerous allophones , conditioned by the following environments :

(# denotes word boundary , X denotes C [? flat ? / ? / ? / ? / ? /] , C ? denotes C [+ flat] , G denotes C , / ? / , and / ? /)

Phonetic Schwa

There is a predictable non @-@ phonemic vowel inserted into consonant clusters , realized as [? ?] before front consonants (e.g. / b t d ... /) and [?] before back consonants (e.g. / k ? ... /) . It is voiced before voiced consonants and voiceless before voiceless consonants , or alternatively it can be realized as a voiced or unvoiced consonant release . It also may be realized as the syllabicity of a nasal , lateral , or / r / .

The occurrence of schwa epenthesis is governed morphophonemically . These are some of the rules governing the occurrence of [?] :

(# denotes word boundary , L denotes / l r m n / , H denotes / h ? ? w j /)

Examples :

/ tbr??mnt / > [tbʔr??mʔnt] (' you (fp) turned ')

/ dat??adʔar / > [dat??adʔar] (' she is present ')

/ ?ad??rʔ / > [?ad??rʔ] (' to meet ')

However note that word @-@ initial initial / j , w / are realized as / i , u / before consonants . In word @-@ medial or -final position [?j] , [??] , and [?w] are realized as [ij] , [ij] , and [uw] respectively , and may become [i] and [u] in rapid speech .

Tamazight in fact has numerous words without phonemic vowels , and those consisting entirely of voiceless consonants will not phonetically contain voiced vowels .

[?] is written as ? ? ? in neo @-@ Tifinagh and as ? e ? in the Berber Latin alphabet . French publications tended to include [?] in their transcriptions of Berber forms despite their predictability , perhaps due to the French vowel system . This can cause problems because alternations such as / iʔ (?) rs / ' he slaughtered ' ? / uriʔris / ' he did not slaughter ' would then have to be conditioned morphologically .

== = Stress == =

Word stress is non @-@ contrastive and predictable ? it falls on the last vowel in a word (including schwa) .

Examples :

/ sal / > [?sal] (' to ask ')

/ dajt??adʔarʔ / > [dajt??aʔdʔarʔ] (' he is present ')

/ fsʔr / > [fʔs??r] (' to explain ')

/ tfsʔrnt / > [tʔfʔs??rʔnt] (' you (fp) explained ')

== = Grammar == =

Central Atlas Tamazight grammar has many features typical of Afro @-@ Asiatic languages , including extensive apophony in both the derivational and inflectional morphology , gender , possessive suffixes , VSO typology , the causative morpheme / s / , and use of the status constructus .

== = Morphology == =

Tamazight nouns are inflected for gender , number , and state . Singular masculine nouns usually have the prefix / a- / , and singular feminines the circumfix / t ... t . Plurals may either involve a regular change (" sound plurals ") , internal vowel change (" broken plurals ") , or a combination of the two . Masculine plurals usually take the prefix / i- / , feminines / ti- / , and sound plurals also take the suffix / -n / in masculine and / -in / } in feminine , although many other plural patterns are found too .

Examples :

/ axam / ? / i xam n / ' big tent (s) ' (m)

/ amazi ? / ? / i mazi ? n / ' Berber (s) ' (m)

/ ada ? u / ? / i du ? a / ' sandal (s) ' (m)

/ asrdun / ? / i s r d a n / ' mule (s) ' (m)

/ taxam t / ? / t i x a m i n / ' tent (s) ' (f)

/ tafunast / ? / t i f u n a s i n / ' cow (s) ' (f)

/ ta ? r t i l t / ? / t i ? r t a l / ' mat (s) ' (f)

/ tamazirt / ? / t i m i z a r / ' property (ies) ' (f)

Nouns may be put into the construct state (contrasting with free state) to indicate possession , or when the subject of a verb follows the verb . This is also used for nouns following numerals and some prepositions , as well as the conjunction / d- / (' and ') . The construct state is formed as follows : in masculines , initial / a / becomes / u , w ? , wa / , initial / i / becomes / i , j , j i / , and initial / u / becomes / w u / . In feminines , initial / ta / usually becomes / t / , initial / ti / usually becomes / t / , and initial / tu / remains unchanged .

Examples (in Ayt Ayache) :

/ babuxam / (? / axam /) ' head of the house'

/ i j ? s n t s l i t / (? / t i s l i t /) ' the horse of the bride'

Central Atlas Tamazight 's personal pronouns distinguish three persons , and two genders . Pronouns appear in three forms : an independent form used in the subject position , a possessive suffix (and a derived independent possessive pronoun) , and an object form affixed to the controlling verb .

Demonstrative pronouns distinguish between proximate and remote . When they occur independently , they inflect for number . They may also be suffixed to nouns , e.g. / tabardaja / ' this pack @-@ saddle ' .

Central Atlas Tamazight verbs are heavily inflected , being marked for tense , aspect , mode , voice , person , and polarity . Tamazight verbs have at their core a stem , modified by prefixes , suffixes , moveable affixes , circumfixes , and ablaut . The prefixes indicate voice , tense , aspect , and polarity , while the suffixes indicate mood (normal , horatory , or imperative) . Subject markers are circumfixed to the verb , while object marking and satellite framing are accomplished via either prefixing or suffixing depending on environment . Some verb forms are accompanied by ablaut , and sometimes metathesis .

Pronominal complement markers cliticize to the verb , with the indirect object preceding the direct object , e.g. / izn z @-@ a s @-@ t / " he sold it to him " .

Attributive Adjectives after the noun they modify , and inflect for number and gender . Adjectives may also occur alone , in which case they become an NP . Practically all adjectives also have a verbal form used for predicative purposes , which behaves just like a normal verb .

/ argaz am ? dur / ' the foolish man ' (lit . ' man foolish ')

/ tam t ? u t t a m ? d u r / ' the foolish woman'

/ i r g z e n i m ? d a r / ' the foolish men'

/ t a j t ? i n t i m ? d a r / ' the foolish women'

/ i @-@ m m u ? d r u r g a z / ' the man is foolish ' (lit . ' 3ps ? foolish man ')

/ argaz i @-@ m m u ? d r @-@ n / ' the foolish man ' [using a non @-@ finite verb]

Prepositions include / x f / (' on ') , / q b l / (' before ') , / ? r / (' to ') , and the proclitics / n / (' of ') and / d / (' with , and ') . These may take pronominal suffixes . Some prepositions require the following noun to be in the construct state , while others do not .

== Syntax ==

Word order is usually VSO (with the subject in construct state) but sometimes is SVO (with the subject in free state) , e.g. (/ if?? umazi? / vs. / amazi? if?? / ' the Berber went out ') . Tamazight also exhibits pro @-@ drop behavior .

Tamazight may use a null copula , but the word / ? / ' to be , to do ' can function as a copula in Ayt Ayache , especially in structures preceded by / aj / ' who , which , what ' .

wh- questions are always clefts , and multiple wh @-@ questions do not occur . Consequently , Tamazight 's clefting , relativisation , and wh @-@ interrogation contribute to anti @-@ agreement effects , similar to Shilha , and causes deletion of the verbal person marker in certain situations .

== Vocabulary ==

As a result of relatively intense language contact , Central Atlas Tamazight has a large stratum of Arabic loans . Many borrowed words in Berber also have native synonyms , e.g. / lbab / or / tflut / ' door ' , the latter used more in rural areas . The contact was unequal , as Moroccan Arabic has not borrowed as much from Berber languages , though Berber has contributed to Moroccan and Algerian Arabics ' very reduced vowel systems .

Arabic loans span a wide range of lexical classes . Many nouns begin with / l- / , from the Arabic definite prefix , and some Arabic feminines may acquire the native Berber feminine ending / -t / , e.g. / l?afit / for / l?afia / ' fire ' . Many Arabic loans have been integrated into the Tamazight verb lexicon . They adhere fully to inflectional patterns of native stems , and may even undergo ablaut . Even function words are borrowed , e.g. / blli / or / billa / ' that ' , / waxxa / ' although ' , / ?ir / ' just ' , etc .

The first few (1 ? 3 in Ayt Ayache and Ayt Ndhir) cardinal numerals have native Berber and borrowed Arabic forms . All higher cardinals are borrowed from Arabic , consistent with the linguistic universals that the numbers 1 ? 3 are much more likely to be retained , and that a borrowed number generally implies that numbers greater than it are also borrowed . The retention of one is also motivated by the fact that Berber languages near @-@ universally use unity as a determiner .

Central Atlas Tamazight uses a bipartate negative construction (e.g. / uriffi? ?a / ' he did not go out ') which apparently was modeled after proximate Arabic varieties , in a common development known as Jespersen 's Cycle . It is present in multiple Berber varieties , and is argued to have originated in neighboring Arabic and been adopted by contact .

== Examples ==

Universal Declaration of Human Rights :

???????? , ????? ? ???? ?????? ? ?????????? ?????? ? ????????? ? ????????? @-@ ??? ???
????????? ? ?????? ? ?????????? ?? @-@ ???? ????????? ??? ????? .

Imdanen , akken ma llan tlalen d ilelliyen msawan di l? we?ma d yizerfan- ghur sen tamsakwit d lâquel u yessefk ad @-@ tili tegmatt gar asen .