Introduction to Kabyle Linguistics[*]

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SUMMARY

This short article provides an introduction to the volume, including background on the language and its speakers, information on the field methods classes and Kabyle projects at McGill University out of which these papers developed, and a short introduction to the articles contained in the volume.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce court article sert d'introduction au volume, incluant de l'information pertinente concernant le kabyle et ses locuteurs, des renseignements sur le cours de méthodes de terrain et sur les projets entourant le kabyle à l'université McGill parmi lesquels se sont développés les articles de ce volume, ainsi qu'une courte introduction à ces articles.

1.   THE KABYLE LANGUAGE

Kabyle, also known as Taqbaylit, is an Amazigh ("Berber") language of the Afroasiatic family. Kable is spoken primarily in the Kabylia region of northern Algeria, where it is the dominant language in both personal and official use (Chaker 2011). The language is spoken by around 5.5 million people, with 3–3.5 million of those speakers in Kabylia itself (Chaker 2011); this makes Kabyle the second most populous language in Algeria, after Algerian Arabic, the country's official language (Belkadi 2010:25). An additional 2–2.5 million people speak the language in diaspora, the majority of whom live in France (around 1 million, Chaker 2011). There is also a sizable population of Kabyle speakers in Montreal, where the data for the papers in this volume were

collected. There are several descriptive grammars (Chaker 1983, Nait-Zerrad 2001, Rabdi 2004), as well as a Kabyle-French / French-Kabyle dictionary (e.g. Dallet 1982).

2.   KABYLE AT MCGILL

The papers in this volume developed after two Linguistic Field Methods courses held at McGill University in Montreal. Jessica Coon and Morgan Sonderegger co-taught a course in the Winter 2016 semester, together with language consultant Karima Ouazar. Students in this first iteration of the course included volume contributors Alexander Elias, Lydia Felice, and Sarah Mihuc. At the end of the course, students presented their projects in a small workshop, which included invited guest and volume contributor Karim Achab, as well as members of the local Amazigh community.

Funding from a 2016 McGill Social Sciences and Humanities Development Grant allowed students to continue working on projects related to Kabyle grammar, and helped lead to a 2017 SSHRC Insight Grant: "Agreement and anti-agreement across languages" (#435-2017-0545; PI Jessica Coon). Nico Baier was hired as a postdoctoral research fellow in connection with the SSHRC grant in 2018, and he taught a second Kabyle Field Methods course in Winter 2019, this time with language consultant Sadia Nahi. The second course included a larger workshop held at McGill in spring 2019, including invited speakers and volume contributors Karim Achab, Khokha Fahloune, and Hamid Ouali. Contributors from this iteration of the course include course students Jurij Božić, Justin Royer, and Beini Wang.

3.   INTRODUCTION TO THE PAPERS IN THIS VOLUME

The papers in this volume include papers on topics in Kabyle phonetics and phonology (Elias, Wang); on morphology and syntax (Achab, Baier, Božić, Fahloune, Mihuc, and Ouali), and semantics (Royer). The titles are listed below.

1. Karim Achab – Anti-Agreement in Amazigh (Berber) as genitive constructions
2. Nico Baier – The Person Case Constraint in Kabyle
3. Jurij Božić – Finite control in Kabyle
4. Alexander Elias – Kabyle "double" consonants: Long or strong?
5. Khokha Fahloune – On the status of object markers in Kabyle: New evidence
6. Lydia Felice – On the case system of Kabyle
7. Sarah Mihuc – Anti-agreement and resumption in Kabyle
8. Sarah Mihuc – Kabyle noun-initial *a-* and the construct state
9. Hamid Ouali – Verb morphology, tense, and aspect in Tamazight
10. Justin Royer – Weak and strong definites in Kabyle
11. Beini Wang – Syllabification and schwa epenthesis in Kabyle

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