

## The realization of gender morphemes in Kabyle and the Syntax/PF interface

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Some researchers have observed the prefixes are more loosely connected to the stems that they attach to than are suffixes (e.g. Hyman 2008, Bobaljik and Wurmbrand 2001). This asymmetry can be accounted for if one assumes (a) that syntax is the generative system that creates complex morphological structure and (b) morpheme order is determined by the syntax. In one version of this view, suffixes are attached to the stem via head movement and prefixes through some mechanism of morphological merger (e.g. Kayne 2015). We use these ideas to account for the realization of gender morphemes in Kabyle, a dialect of Berber, and to further relate this account to the nano-syntax of Case (Caha 2009).

Kabyle nominals appear in either the Free State (FS) or the Construct Case (CS) form. The FS form differs from the CS form in having the prefix *a-* as we can see in the feminine construction below.

- (1) t- **a-** qcic -t // t- qcic -t  
F- **FS-** child -F // F- CS.child -F 'girl'

Much of the work on Kabyle nominals has centred on the position and syntactic function of the FS morpheme and the gender marker (Guerssel 1987a,b, Achab 2003, Idrissi 2000). Given that the choice of CS or FS is determined by syntactic position, we follow Idrissi (Idrissi 2000), a.o, in assuming that the FS prefix is a case marker appearing in K and that FS is a full KP while CS is a DP. Further, given that the choice of preposition can determine whether or not the nominal is in FS or CS where 'light' prepositions select for CS and 'heavy' prepositions select for FS, we assume that light prepositions are, like the FS prefix, realizations of K – both selecting a DP. Note that a 'heavy' preposition can select either an FS or a light prepositional phrase, confirming the similarity of these two constructions.

- (2) a. iwd -x [<sub>PP</sub> al [<sub>KP</sub> **a-** jens n tsraft ]]  
reached -1SG until FS- inside of CS.silo  
b. iwd -x [<sub>PP</sub> al [<sub>KP</sub> **gher** jens n tsraft ]]  
reached -1SG until to CS.inside of CS.silo  
'I got inside the silo.'

Within this context, we explore two puzzles. The first puzzle is why the gender marker appears outside of the FS type K, but inside of the weak preposition-type K (see (3)). The second is why the masculine prefix *w-* appears in the CS but not the FS construction (see (4)).

- (3) a. s- t- zru -t  
Case- F- CS.rock -F.SG 'with small rock'  
b. t- a- zru -t  
F- FS- rock -F.SG 'small rock'
- (4) a- qcic // w- qcic  
**FS-** child // **M-** CS.child 'boy'

We propose that both puzzles can be solved by assuming that the FS K head has a feature that attracts the gender head to adjoin to it. Through this adjunction, the K is now a suffix on the gender head (5a), and the non-appearance of the masculine morpheme *w-* can be explained through allomorphy which is triggered by the suffixation of the FS morpheme (5b).

- (5) a. [ t<sub>j</sub> -a- ] t<sub>j</sub> zru -t  
F- **FS** rock -F.SG 'small rock' (cf. (3b))  
b. [ ∅<sub>j</sub> -a ] t<sub>j</sub> qcic  
M- **FS** child 'boy' (cf. (4))

Given that the two K heads have a different effect on the gender morpheme, we posit that they are in different syntactic positions, using the nano-syntax approach to Case proposed by Caha (2009). FS-K, as default Case, will be the lowest Case head in the tree, with weak prepositions (more featurally complex) realized higher Case heads. Movement to this lower head would explain why the gender morpheme will appear in a position before the former but after the latter.