

Interference of Amazigh naming patterns in the Arabic toponymy in Morocco: The case of village names ¹

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ملخص

يتناول هذا البحث أثر الاتصال اللغوي على طوبونيميا العربية المغربية – الدارجة، وتحديدًا تداخل نظام الطوبونيميا الأمازيغية مع طوبونيميا العربية المغربية. وتسترشد الدراسة بنظرية الاتصال اللغوي مع الاستناد إلى مجموعة بيانات واسعة النطاق تتعلق بأسماء القرى. وتؤكد بعض البحوث في هذا المجال أن الطوبونيميا الأمازيغية وطوبونيميا العربية المغربية يشكلان نظامين متوازيين يمثل فيهما النظام الأمازيغي مصدر التأثير ونقل العديد من الخصائص البارزة. ولا يحدث هذا التدخل من جانب الأمازيغية بشكل مباشر بوصفه اقتراضًا معجميًا، وإنما يحدث بطريقة غير مباشرة من خلال التعريب وتبني أنماط منتجة من حيث تسمية الأماكن. وعلاوة على ذلك، لا يقتصر نظام طوبونيميا العربية المغربية على تبني هذه الأنماط، بل يبني أيضًا عليها في استنباط أسماء جديدة.

كلمات أساسية: الاتصال اللغوي، الأعلام المكانية، التداخل، التعريب، الأمازيغية، الدارجة المغربية.

Abstract

The present paper addresses the impact of language contact on the Arabic toponymy in Morocco, namely the aspects of interference of the Amazigh toponym system in the Arabic one. The study is based on an extensive data corpus of village names and it is informed by language contact theory. We argue that Amazigh and Moroccan Arabic toponyms constitute two parallel systems in which the Amazigh system is the source of influence and transfer of many salient characteristics. Such interference does not take place directly as lexical borrowing, but rather indirectly through Arabization and adoption of productive naming patterns. Further, the Arabic toponym system did not just adopt these patterns, but has also activated their productivity.

Key words: Language contact, toponyms, village names, interference, Arabization, Amazigh, Moroccan Arabic

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1. Introduction

A major observation which stands out when consulting an extensive set of Moroccan toponyms is one that relates to the linguistic identity of these items, in the sense that they can easily be categorized into two major classes, namely Amazigh and Arabic place names. Two main questions arise here. The first one relates to how these main categories of toponyms have been established in Morocco, and the second one pertains to whether these categories have developed independently from each other or are the result of language contact. The first question falls in the area of interest of historians and geographers, and is therefore not our direct concern. We are going to address the second question by comparing the two types of nouns to find out whether or not they exhibit any semantic and/or structural similarities.

Various studies have shown that long term contact between Moroccan Arabic and Moroccan Amazigh (henceforth MA & MAm) has induced mutual influence affecting different components and levels of the two languages (cf. Chtatou, 1997; Ennaji, 1997; Chafiq, 1999; Marouane, 2005; Bensoukas & Boudlal, 2012; Kossmann, 2013 among others). It has also been established that Moroccan toponymy is originally Amazigh, and that it has shared space with Arabic names introduced by both the movement and settlement of Eastern Arab tribes in the coastal plains and by the long Arabization process conducted by the consecutive dynasties which ruled the country (Skounti, 2012; Hart, 2000; Boukous, 1998, 2012; Benabbou & Behnstedt, 2001; Azayko, 2004; Allati, 1999; El Mountassir, 2012; among others). Today, Arabic toponyms enjoy a wide distribution in varying proportion with Amazigh names across the Moroccan territory, due to population mobility (Laaboudi & Marouane, forthcoming).

The present study is motivated by the need to fill a significant gap in the research on the impact of language contact on toponymy and Moroccan toponymy in general which is still a poorly investigated area. The purpose of this study is twofold. The first objective is to investigate how the long term language contact between MA and MAm has impacted the lexical category of toponyms in both languages despite their inherent property to resist change. More specifically, it focuses on village names and how they react to the influence exerted by language contact in Morocco. The second objective is to explore the different manifestations of interference exhibited by the village names in the Arabic speaking regions. The study is informed by language contact theory, which provides descriptive mechanisms to analyze and explain the different aspects of relatedness between Arabic and Amazigh toponyms (Thomason & Kaufman 1988; Thomason,

2001; and Weinreich, 1953 among others). We will argue that the shared properties between the Amazigh and Arabic toponym systems are contact-induced and achieved through different interference strategies. We will adopt the notion of interference as a cover principle which accommodates all manifestations of linguistic transfer such as translation, calquing and direct borrowing.

The remaining sections of the paper are organized as follows: section 2 provides background on toponyms and language contact; section 3 presents village names data and works out the aspects of Amazigh interference namely the adoption of *douar* label, the anthroponym pattern and Arabization. Finally, section 4 concludes the paper.

2. Background

2.1 Village names

Village names in Morocco represent a typical category of toponyms with salient characteristics which can distinguish them from other toponym categories. First, they are dominated by anthroponyms, as a result of the wide tendency for Moroccan villages to take the name of their inhabitants. Second, these names tend to bear the linguistic and ethnic identity of the village settlers. Third, they are typically assigned by the local population and not by any official administrative authority. Fourth, they are adopted as such in maps and documents to be official geographical names of the villages they refer to (Boujrouf & Hassani, 2008; Skounti, 2012).

We argue that Amazigh and Arabic village names in Morocco stand as two related toponym systems where the former is historically antecedent and serves as a reference base from which the latter has developed. This relatedness is motivated by a number of common properties shared by the two systems, such as the wide use of anthroponyms, the adoption of parallel naming patterns characterized mainly by the use of *ait* and *oulad*, market names, and semantic calques. We hypothesize that the development of the Arabic toponym system started with the launch of the Arabization process by the central government starting with Al Moravides in the 11th century (Al Bidaq, 1972, El Mountassir 2012). The Arabic toponym system was formed on the basis of an already existing local system and not brought by the Arab tribes. To test this hypothesis, we have analyzed a set of village names in Saudi Arabia to see whether there are any similarities or differences.

2.2 MAm and MA contact and Mutual Influence

Contact between MAm and MA in Morocco not only dates many centuries back in the country's history, but is also very tight and has led to bilingualism of a historically varying proportion. This situation has resulted in considerable mutual influence and interference affecting the two languages at different levels of their structure. MAm to MA interference targets different aspects of the structure of the affected language. At the phonological level, there are a number of features of Amazigh which have been adopted by MA such as labialization and the loss of the glottal stop /ʔ/ in the sound inventory of MA (Elmedlaoui, 1992, 1995; Durand, 1998; Boudlal, 1998; Chtatou, 1997; Kossmann, 2013)². Bensoukas & Boudlal (2012) addressed the issue of the schwa vowel in both MA and Amazigh and found out that the reduced vowel displays a parallel behavior in both phonological systems with respect to prosodic constituency and stress assignment. Boudlal (in this volume) citing Bensoukas (2014)³ argues that labial dissimilation operating in Tashlhiyt has been transferred to MA.

At the morphological level, interference is typically illustrated by the adoption by MA of the highly productive circumfix *ta...t* which attaches to nouns to form names of occupations and other abstract nouns (Abdelmassih, 1971, 2009; Marouane, 2005; Zellou, 2011). The affix is, in fact, the Amazigh feminine morpheme and is said not to occur in any other spoken dialect of Arabic outside North Africa.

Lexical transfer has also been taking place from MAm to MA in the form of lexical borrowing and other forms of semantic and pragmatic borrowing (Chafiq, 1999; Allati, 1999 and Marouane, 2014)⁴. Taifi (1992) argues that the common origin of Arabic and Berber, and the degree of contact between them have contributed to the development of a common lexical

² Ech-charfi (personal communication) pointed out to us that the loss of the glottal stop may not be a direct outcome of Amazigh influence since the Eastern Arabic dialects which are not in contact with Amazigh lost this sound as well. Actually, many Arabic dialects, namely those of West Arabia, are claimed to have lost the glottal stop well before Islam (cf. Rabin, 1951).

³ Boudlal (1998: 57) states that the adoption of the labialization in the items like *q^wrafəl* 'kind of cake' *ɣ^wlaf* 'cover' and *k^wbaR* 'big, pl.' in what he referred to as Southern Moroccan Arabic is attributed to the interference of Tashlhiyt, the southern Amazigh variety exhibiting labialization of back consonants. The fact that labialization is not attested in the same forms as used in Northern Moroccan Arabic is attributed to the absence of labialization in Tarifit and Tamazight, the Amazigh varieties in contact with this variant of MA. Similarly, Chtatou (1997: 106) attributes the loss of the glottal stop from the MA items such as *fas* 'pick' and *far* 'mouse' originally occurring in their cognates from Classical Arabic *faʕs* and *faʕr* to the influence of Amazigh whose inventory of segments does not include the glottal stop.

⁴ Marouane (2014) analyzed MA utterances which have been calqued from Amazigh preserving both their denotative and connotative meaning and used in the same pragmatic context.

repertoire shared by the two languages, so much so that it is sometimes difficult to decide on the origin of certain items. Further support for this claim comes from Chafiq (1999) who states that there are certain items currently used in MA such as *sarut* ‘key’, and *nəggafa* ‘the aid to the bride’ which even Amazigh people would hardly think that they originate from the Amazigh *asaru* and *tanggift*. Boukous (1997: 53-4) points out that MA has adopted the register of the Amazigh names of fauna, flora and farming. This is illustrated by items such as *timijja* ‘salvia’, *tiyəšt* ‘saponin’, and *ttərfas* ‘truffles’. The words referring to animals can be illustrated by *bəRka<abrik* ‘duck’, and *siwan<asiwan* ‘red kyte’. Ennaji (1997: 27) states that MA speakers located in the contact regions with MAm tend to speak MA with a MAm accent. Sadiqi (1997) attributes the MA grammatical words *waxxa* ‘even if’ and *ašku* ‘because’ to MAm origins.

2.3 Toponymy and language contact

Toponyms are lexically considered as proper nouns with a special status in the sense that they do not generally bear conceptual meaning (Leech, 1981). They are different from common nouns in that they cannot undergo componential analysis, and cannot be segmented into semantic features. This is typically illustrated by semantically opaque nouns such as *Cambridge* in English toponymy or *Mru*, a village name in the Anti-Atlas in Morocco. Such names can be meaningful only when they are analyzed etymologically (Leidner, 2007).

Naming in toponymy is governed by two main semantic theories: description theory in which “a name’s semantic referent is determined by description association”; and causal theory which advocates that a name’s semantic referent is conditioned by a causal or historical connection (Kipke, 1972; Putnam, 1975). In Moroccan toponymy, there are a number of place names which are connected to their referents through description. For instance, the toponyms, *tag^wnit*, *lkodya* in MA, ‘hill’ and *tizi*, ‘mountain pass’, refer not only to particular places bearing the name but also to any geographical landscape with the descriptive properties of a hill and a mountain pass. Causal reference refers to cases where a toponym’s referent is rather a person, an incident or a historical event. This is illustrated by toponyms originally referring to people such as *Zerkouni*, a battle such as *anwal*, or weekly market like *khmis Hellouta*. It follows then that most toponyms tend to have a double reference in that they refer to both the particular place they are assigned to and to an original referent to which they were associated before they acquired the status of toponyms.

People tend to follow naming patterns in assigning toponyms with common referential or structural characteristics to similar places (Lehrer, 1999: 137). In the case of village names in Morocco, we have come across a highly productive use of anthroponyms in both Amazigh and Arabic speaking regions. There is also a tendency of a recurrent use of descriptive toponyms referring to the geographical features of places where villages are located. This is the case of many Amazigh villages bearing names such as *asaka*, *taghzut*, or *l3in* referring to ‘travelers’ passage’, ‘an irrigated place’ and ‘water source’ respectively.

Toponyms are generally inscribed on places to which they were first assigned and inherited as such by the people who inhabited the place. This explains the presence of some ‘alien’ and totally opaque names in the set of toponyms of a language. This in turn entails that in contact situations, toponyms are transferred from one language to another. In language contact theory, this transfer can fall under borrowing (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988; Sankoff, 2001). The authors adopt a large definition of borrowing which goes beyond the admission of a foreign lexical item into a language, and which they consider as “the incorporation of foreign features into a group's native language by speakers of that language” (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988: 37). Under this conception of borrowing any linguistic feature can be transferred from one language to another, including semantic properties. The scope of borrowing is conditioned by the degree of bilingualism of the borrowing community. Weinreich (1953) uses the term “interference” as a cover term of interlingual influence at different levels, i.e., phonological, syntactic, semantic, and lexical. He defines interference as instances of “deviation from the norms of either language which occurs in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language” (Weinreich, 1953:1).

There are two main reasons which require that Moroccan toponymy be investigated within language contact theory. First, Moroccan toponyms are linguistic items from two main languages, i.e. MA and MAm, which have been in close contact for many centuries. This contact situation is characterized by considering MAm as a source of influence in many lexical domains as has been stated in the section above. We expect that toponyms and village names in particular would be subject to mutual influence which might have resulted from such a long term contact. Second, there is an established tendency for toponyms to resist substitution, in the sense that places tend generally to preserve their initial names. This explains the opaque character of certain

toponym forms as they integrate into a linguistic system which is not theirs. Language contact theory is insightful in clarifying and explaining a number of linguistic aspects related to Moroccan toponyms, which would otherwise be unexplained.

We maintain that long term contact between MA and MAm resulted in deep substratal influence affecting the MA toponym system, which in fact was elaborated based on the MAm system. Therefore, we adopt the descriptive concept of borrowing in its conventional use to account for cases of lexical transfer, and use the concept of interference to describe cases of transfer affecting other entities such as the adoption of a foreign naming pattern.

3. Aspects of Amazigh interference in the Arabic village names

3.1 Village names data facts

The data consist of Moroccan village names from official exhaustive lists collected by the High Commissioner of Plan (HCP). The adopted set is the one established during the 1994 General Population Census and it consists of an exhaustive listing of all Moroccan villages sorted by province⁵. These official lists have been established based on field work during the national population census for which detailed topographic maps of regions were surveyed.

Arabic speaking regions whose village names are the focus of our analysis include the provinces located on the Atlantic coast stretching from El Gharb (the Gharb, Chrarda and Beni Hsen) in the north to Chiadma (South of Safi) to the south, and moving eastward to the regions of Sidi Kacem, Rommani, Ben Slimane, Khouribga, Ben Gurir, and Kalaat Sraghna. These regions are inhabited by the Arab tribes of Zair, Chaouiya, Rhamna, Abda and Chiadma. These are historically known as areas where most migrant Arab tribes have settled (Boukous 2008: 72-3). These facts have also been captured in the Moroccan language maps elaborated by many scholars starting from the first European conquerors. A recent official map is established by IRCAM and published in Boukous (2012: 17).

More recent evidence is provided by official demographic statistics. This area is delimited based on language performance statistics provided by HCP. The criterion used is the rate of speakers of the three varieties of Amazigh. The provinces located in the Arabic speaking region reveal a very low rate of Amazigh speakers ranging from 1.4% to 6.2 %, ⁶ as shown in table (1)

⁵ The Moroccan village list is issued and eventually updated every 10 years. We didn't use the most recent available list, i.e. that of 2004, because it is available only in Arabic transcription.

⁶ These rates include mainly Amazigh speakers who moved to the urban centers of these provinces.

below. The rate of Arabic speakers cannot stand as a criterion as most Moroccan Amazigh people are MA-Amazigh bilinguals. We selected provinces which cover large areas of rural territory and which generally include a high number of villages compared to urban provinces that generally have few or no villages.

(1)

Province	MA %	MAm %
Berrechid	99.6	6.2
Ben Slimane	99.6	4.2
El Jadida	99.7	2.5
Settat	99.7	1.9
Safi	99.8	1.4

Additionally, and for the sake of data comparison, we have surveyed an elaborate list of village names consisting of 1031 village names from different regions in Saudi Arabia obtained from an official guide of rural areas and villages elaborated by the Census Department of the Saudi Ministry of the Interior in 2010⁷.

3.2 Adopting the Amazigh naming patterns

The general tendency emanating from a first observation is that village names in the MA speaking areas are Arabic names and that those which are not genuine Arabic names, have been subject to adaptation to make them align with Arabic noun forms. Yet, a closer look would reveal a number of common features that the Arabic toponym system shares with the Amazigh system. We argue that the Arabic village names which are closer to Amazigh names share structural or background referential and semantic features of the latter. This is the outcome of Amazigh interference, due to long term contact of Arabic and Amazigh and an old Arabization process. This interference in fact has indirect and direct manifestations.

Quantitatively, the items displaying indirect interference features are very significant. These consist mainly of the names which have been assigned following productive naming patterns which are also used in Amazigh regions but not in the Eastern Arab countries. This is the case of the highly frequent use of anthroponyms and *oulad* names, the use of weekly market

⁷ The guide is available for public consultation in the website of the Saudi Ministry of the Interior at: <https://www.mcs.gov.sa/ImportantInformation/Documents/دليل%20المناطق%20الناحية>

names and other Arabized names. Direct interference, on the other hand, manifests as direct adoption of Amazigh items as village names, either through borrowing or maintenance of previously used Amazigh names of the places. These names are of two types: those which are maintained unchanged such as *tikni*, *tizi* and *tisane*. The second type consists of the adoption of adapted Amazigh names such as *azghar* and *lemghariyin*. This type of interference includes items referring to landscape and geographical and space entities.

3.2.1 (a-) *douar*: The Moroccan village

The term *douar*, today commonly used as the Arabic label for village throughout Morocco, is adopted in the official documents written in Standard Arabic and in French and geographical maps. The same term is also commonly used in MAm with an equivalent of *adouar* in Amazigh speaking regions. The term *douar* was not used to refer to village in Medieval Morocco according to historical documents. A case in point is Al-Idrissi and Ibn Sahib al-Salat Al-Baggi surveyed by Sedra (2009) who maintain that the name *douar* did not occur in names of villages in Medieval Morocco. In his study of historical documents which recorded the trip and pathways crossed by Almohade kings and soldiers from Marrakech to Ceuta on their way to Spain, the author inventoried a list of villages located on this way. These report terms such as *dsher*, *manzil* (a stop), *qaryat* ‘village’⁸. Further, Sedra (2009) states that Al-Idrissi in his book *Nuzha* identified at least eight main villages which also represent stops where soldiers used to spend the night.

Il s’agit, en partant de Marrakech et en suivant l’ordre établi dans la *Nuzha*, des localités suivantes: Tunīn, Tīqtīn, Ġafṣīq, Umm Rbīʿ, Iġīssal, Ankāl appelée aussi Dār al-Murābiṭīn, Makūl et enfin Ikssīs (Kssīs). Toutes ces localités sont qualifiées de *qarya-s* et sont globalement distantes l’une de l’autre d’une journée. (Sedra, 2009, p. 252).

The same itinerary was described later on by the historian Ibn Sahib al-Salat Al-Baġi who provided a more refined and complete list of resting villages according to Sedra. These consist of 11 villages, namely: Tansīft, Dšār al-Ḥaṭṭāba, Tunīn, Tūqtīn, Umm Rbīʿ, al-Ġīssal, Makūl et Wādī Wāsnāt ensemble, Wādī Kssās, ʿAyn Ġabūla et Marġal-Ḥamām ou Ḥammām (8) (cf. Sedra, M. 2009: 252).

⁸ The two appellations are attested today in toponyms for places located especially the north of Morocco such *Dsher Ben Dibane* (Tangiers) *Qaryat Ba Mohamed* (Taounate) and *Dcheira* (Agadir).

The term *douar* became later on a general and typical Moroccan village name used throughout Morocco irrespective of the language. In the MA speaking areas, the term is used in singular form as *douar* and in the plural as *dwawer*, while in the Amazigh speaking regions, the singular form is *aDwwar* and the form used to refer to many villages is *iDuran*. In the Amazigh region, the term is used along with a synonymous and a more Amazigh specific term namely *lmouD3*, used in the plural form as *lemwaDi3*.

If we consider the origin of the term *douar*, it would not be difficult to trace its origin to Arabic which can be considered as an old loan from the Arabic root *da:r* ‘turn’. Yet, amazingly the term is not used in the Arab countries to refer to villages. This supports the hypothesis that Arabic toponymy in Morocco is to a great extent a result of Arabization of Amazigh names (adopting Amazigh naming patterns), effected by the Amazigh speakers themselves. This Arabization is undertaken through different processes, which are based on Amazigh names or patterns of naming and preserve an Amazigh semantic or structural entity. The outcome of this Arabization also displays signs of imperfect learning of Arabic manifested in frequent literal calques which sound awkward in other Arabic dialects and sometimes in grammatically ill-formed structures, such as the use of the plural form of proper nouns.

It follows, then, that Douar could have originated from *ddour* or *dowwr* ‘turn, circle’ which can be considered as a calque from the Amazigh *tawala* which refers to a social organization consisting of a turn-based assignment of community tasks and duties to village dwellers especially providing food to the village mosque’s imam as well as other social obligations towards the village community as whole referred to as *nnawba* in the Northern Arabic dialect. Or it may have originated from a more popular interpretation according to which the term *douar* was first used to describe the circular shape in which tents are positioned as an early form of village settlement⁹. In addition, the fact that *douar* coexists with more original Arabic labels for village, namely *dsher* and *qarya* attested mainly in the northern regions of the country, historically Arabized before the central and southern regions, and that *douar* is not attested in the Eastern Arab countries lends evidence to a potential Amazigh interference in the adoption of this term.

⁹ This last interpretation of *douar* has been suggested to us by Ech-charfi (personal communication).

3.2.2 The anthroponym naming pattern

There is a striking tendency in Moroccan village names in MA and MAM to be anthroponyms for the reasons we outlined above relating to space appropriation; they refer to the place and its inhabitants. Therefore, we find analogous anthroponyms from both areas such as *ibraymin* and *lebraymiyine*.

Unlike Eastern Arab toponymy, village names in Morocco are characterized by wide occurrence of anthroponyms, which represent more than half of the village names in the Arabic speaking regions and attain 76% in Ben Slimane and 79% in Settât for instance. The most recurrent toponyms are *oulad* names which occur at high frequency rate in practically all provinces in this region (Laaboudi & Marouane (forthcoming)). Other recurrent names are those introduced by *ben* and *bni* “son/sons of”, *hel /ahl* “people of” and *moualîn* “owners of”¹⁰.

(2)	Village name	Province
	Beni Moussi	Ben Slimane
	Beni Mghit	Ben Slimane
	Beni Maati	Settât
	Beni Dghough	Safi
	Hel Loghlam	Ben Slimane
	Hel Lkodia	Safi
	Ahl Dar	Settât
	Moualine Laarsa	Ben Slimane

The rest of village names consist of proper nouns and common nouns referring to people in various plural forms. These are illustrated by the following table in (3):

(3)	Plural proper nouns	Location province	Plural common nouns	Location province
	Laghlimiyine	Ben Slimane	Lamsandyine	Ben Slimane
	Labraymiyine	Safi	Lhaddada	Safi
	Lmouhamadiyine	El Jadida	Trarza	Safi
	El Bouchtiyine	Settât	Lamalmine	Settât

Parallelism and productivity of the anthroponym naming strategy is evidenced by the use of proper nouns in singular plural, masculine and feminine form to assign Arabic names, as is also the case for Amazigh village names. This holds true for anthroponyms in periphrastic forms

¹⁰ We have adopted the transcription of the toponyms used in the HCP’s Listes Des Douars (village lists) which also corresponds to the official transcription of geographical names. We have, however, maintained capitalization only for the initial letter of the nouns (originally written in capital letters).

denoting Nisba as well as single word form both in Amazigh and Arabic areas. These proper names come not only in singular or masculine forms but also in feminine and plural forms.

The category of plural proper nouns includes plural forms which are morphologically ill-formed as these proper nouns are not used in the plural form in Arabic. These plural proper nouns are also recurrent and attested in more than one province or region. The same name is repeated in different provinces; a fact which indicates that this is a result of a productive naming process. Table (4) below illustrates the morphologically ill-formed plural proper nouns.

(4)

Toponym	Province
Laatamna	Ben Slimane, El Jadida and Safi
Rzazka	Ben Slimane
Rzazga	Settat
Lahsassa	Safi and Settat
El Kouassma	Ben Slimane
Lakouasma	Settat
Rhahla, Dhamna, Swalha	El Jadida

The plural forms above are ill-formed. They correspond to the singular forms *Atman*, *Rezzak*, *Hassan*, *Kassem* and *Rehhal*, which have undergone the broken plural formation. It should be noted that proper names do not undergo the broken plural formation in Arabic

Morphological ill-formedness attested in the plural forms above also occurs in the plural feminine proper nouns. This is illustrated by names such as *Lahcinate* (Settat) *Lahmidate* (El Jadida) *Saidate*, *Labroukate* and *Labziouate* (Safi). These names stand as ill-formed plural forms of *Lahcen*, *Hamid*, *Saida* and *Lebzioui* as these plurals are not attested in Arabic as pointed out above. This can be explained by the hypothesis of imperfect learning of the language hosting the toponym, which may have interfered in the process of its production¹¹. Evidence for this claim comes from Skounti (2012: 17) who maintains that according to an old tradition in Morocco, it is not the inhabitants of the village but rather the neighboring villages which assign names to villages by opting for an outstanding family name or nickname of the dominant family of the village¹².

¹¹ See Owens (2006) for an alternative account.

¹² The Amazigh interference can be corroborated further here by the fact that Amazigh village names include highly frequent broken plurals such as *Ijoukak* (Lhaouz) and *Igoudar* (Taroudant).

Singular proper nouns are also attested in village names, although much less commonly than plural nouns in those provinces. These refer mainly to nicknames such as *Lmajdoub*, *Laamair*, *El Aantri* and *Chouiref*, occurring in El Jadida province, and *Bouqebba* in Settât. There are also those which refer to common first names like *Haj Brahim*, *Bouchaib El Homri*, *Larbi Ben Lahbib*, *Kacem Bel Haj* in Safi. There are other recurrent singular proper nouns which are introduced by *Si* or *Sidi* “Mr.” followed by a name of a Saint, a religious scholar or a notable of a large family or a village such as *Si Amara* in Safi, *Si Moussa* in El Jadida, *Sidi Dahbi* in Settât and *Sidi Kamel* in Ben Slimane.

Most of the characteristics of the Arabic anthroponyms discussed above are shared with Amazigh toponyms on the basis of which they have developed, including the frequency of occurrence. Assigning anthroponyms as village names is a well-established tradition in the Amazigh toponymy. The rate of occurrence is similarly high in the sense that they represent the most recurrent type of toponyms compared to other types of village names¹³. They represent about 47% of all village names in Azilal, 42% in Lhawz, and 38% in Chtouka Ait Baha. These percentages include, in addition to the *ait* and *oulad* names, other anthroponyms with less frequency of occurrence such as those introduced with *Id-* or *Sidi* or plural proper nouns as illustrated in (5) below.

- | | | |
|-----|--------------|-------------------|
| (5) | Id Addi | (Essaouira) |
| | Id Aissa | (El Hawz) |
| | Sidi Belkhir | (El Hawz) |
| | Imzilne | (Taroudant) |
| | Imhilne | (Tiznit) |
| | Imjjad | (Chtouka Ai baha) |
| | Taabdite | (Azilal) |
| | Taben Aissat | (Taroudant) |

When compared to the village names attested in Saudi Arabia, the Moroccan Arabic toponym system exhibits a great divergence. It differs from the Eastern Arab naming traditions. In the 1031 village list from Riyadh and Tabouk regions we surveyed, we noticed that Saudi villages bear names of a rather different type compared to those common in Morocco. The list contains ‘odd’ items such as *hazra*, *Tacha*, *Najakh*, and *Sahout*. We have also noticed a low use

¹³ Other types of recurrent village names consist of those referring to landscape features such as *Agwni* ‘hill’, *Irg ou azaghar* ‘The field in a plain area’, others make reference to aspects of the local flora such as *Tafirast* ‘pearl’, *Tazarin* ‘a river bank covered by fig trees’, others refer to other properties which mostly characterize the place such as *Tanffit* ‘a hidden place’, *izergan* ‘a rock-mill like place’.

of proper names and anthroponyms in general as village labels. Some of the few proper names we have come across are *busairi* and *Antar*.

Also, the list does not display equally important naming patterns as is the case in Morocco. The attested patterns consist of composed nouns which are introduced by a nisba particle such as *abu* ‘father of ’ and *aal* ‘affiliated to’ or by another noun such as *wadi* ‘river’, *bir* ‘well’ or *ras* ‘head’. The recurrent items along with their frequency of occurrence are reproduced in the following table.

(6)

Total n of villages	Um- names		Wadi- names		Abu- names		Bir- names		Aal- names		Ras- names		Ein- names	
1031	38	3.6 %	22	2.2 %	13	1.2 %	11	1.06 %	7	0.6 %	2	0.1 %	3	0.2 %

Full names illustrating the patterns in the table above are presented in (7) below.

- (7) Um Haidar
Um hachim
Wadi chowar
Abu chakir
Aal murra
Bir Alarak
Ras Ezzour

We have noted that the recurrent village names which serve as a base for naming patterns are different from those attested in Morocco illustrated above (tables 1-5). We have also noted that the naming patterns in (7) above, especially the anthroponym type, are less productive than their counterparts in Morocco, namely *oulad* and simple proper names patterns. The Um-names for example which represent the most recurrent village names represent only 3.6% of the 1031 surveyed names. The rate of occurrence of all types of anthroponyms in the surveyed data is below 10% of the total village names while most Arabic anthroponyms in Morocco exceed 60% of frequency of occurrence.

3.2.3 Naming by Arabization

The vast Arabization process was launched by the central government in Morocco starting from the Al Moravides dynasty in the 11th century (Al Baydaq 1971) where the Arabization of local place names was undertaken by Amazigh notaries who drafted official documents for the central government (El Mountassir, 2012: 143). El Mountassir cites some interesting cases of Arabized toponyms reported in *Diwān Qabāʾil Sous (The guidebook of the Souss tribes)* by Ibrahim Ben Ali El Hassani in 1580, some of which are provided in (7) below:

(8)

Arabic name	Amazigh (Tashlhiyt)
Haqlat Iburk	Taghult n-Iburk ‘the field of Iburk’
Ahl HiSn Echikh	Ait Ugadir n-chikh
Asfal Iwad	Aguns n-wasif
Aljorfa	Tagganza
A3la Asbo3	Agerd n-uDaD
Saqya assanhjiyin	Targ ^w a Iznagn
Alghiran	Ifran
Adduru3	Ighalln
Hajar ArriH	AZru waDu
Banu Baha	Ait Baha
Al widan	Issafn

The author also reports the Arabization of other recurrent toponyms such as *Tafrawt*, *AgrD*, and *Tizi* Arabized as *mizab*, *3nq* and *fjja*, respectively. One can notice that Arabization does not affect proper nouns such as *Iburk*, *Assanhajiyyin* or *Baha*, it rather affects names referring to geographical landscape such as *isaffn* ‘rivers’, *Taghult* ‘field’.

The Arabization in fact consists of a literal translation of Amazigh geographical names. The translation sometimes sounds awkward and meaningless. Most of the Arabized items are unattested as Arabic toponyms elsewhere in Arabic speaking areas, and may not be accepted as such. This historical fact supports our hypothesis that the Arabic toponym system in Morocco is based on the Amazigh place naming patterns.

3.2.3.1. Productive *ait* and *oulad* pattern

It should be noted that *oulad* is analogous to *ait* with respect to its semantic content and use. Statistically this pair of names exhibits a higher rate of frequency of occurrence than any other village name (Laaboudi & Marouane, forthcoming). In addition to that, to support the claim

that the pattern status and productivity of this naming strategy is calqued on the Amazigh usage, we will demonstrate that *oulad* is attached, as a nisba word, to entities other than human parents. Likewise, *ait* is used to refer to the people of a village as well as geographical entities, as in *ait Taghzout* (the people of Taghzout).

The occurrence of *oulad* names as village names in Morocco enjoys a high frequency based on official lists of village names (cf. Laaboudi & Marouane, forthcoming). They represent the most recurrent Arabic village names compared to other names. *oulad* names are not an Arabic original appellation term that refers to tribal or residential groups in the Arab countries as shown in (6) above.

The *oulad* toponyms in MA are most probably calqued on their Amazigh *ait* equivalents. This is supported by the perfect symmetry that both toponyms display when referring to the same paternal affiliation, as is illustrated in (8) below:

(9)	Oulad	Ait
	Oulad Hammou	ait Hammou
	Oulad Mbarek	ait Mbarek
	Oulad lhaj	ait Lhaj
	Oulad brahim	ait Brahim
	Oulad I3ich	ait idder

Further evidence in favor of this symmetry comes from cases where *oulad* and *ait* names refer to affiliation relation of the inhabitants of the place as well as other elements such as aspects of the geographical landscape, as illustrated by the data in 10 (a & b).

(10) a. **Oulad-name**

Oulad Terfaya	‘people from Terfaya’	(Ben Slimane)
Oulad lHiT	‘wall people’	(Eljadida)
Oulad El Koura	‘ball people’	(Taroudant)
Oulad Ain Nass	‘people from the water source’	(Beni Mellal)
Oulad Siba	‘people of anarchy’	(El Kelaat Sraghna)
Oulad Anou	‘well people’	(El Kelaat Sraghna)
Oulad El Ain	‘people from the water source’	(Safi)

b. **Ait- names**

Ait taghzout	“the people from Taghzout”	(Chtouka ait Baha)
Ait ougni	“people from Agni”	(Chtouka ait Baha)
Ait tagmout	‘people from tagmoute’	(Tiznit)
Ait doulberj	“people from down the high wall”	(Essaouira)
Ait tagant	“people from the forest”	(El Haouz)
Ait Tighdouine	“people from Tighdouine”	(El haouz)

Generally, *oulad* does not semantically collocate with items other than proper names that literally mean ‘sons of’, while *ait*, meaning ‘people from’, seems to be more tolerant with respect to nouns it can co-occur with. This backs up the hypothesis that Arabization based on neology with *ait* reflects a degree of imperfect learning.

The most common item used to refer to this paternal relation in Eastern Arabic is *abna*’ or *banu*. In the 16th century Morocco, *ait* was translated into Arabic as *banu* or *ahl*, not *oulad*, as in the case of *ait baha* Arabized as *banu baha* in the “The guidebook of the Souss tribes” referred to above (El-Mountassir 2012: 143). *Bni* is also used mostly as a tribe name; e.g. *Bni meskin*, *Bni Mtir*, and eventually as a toponym. Similarly, Azayko in an article in *Ma’lamat Al Maghrib* reported that Al Bidaq, the 11th century historian, frequently Arabized *ait* as *banu* and that the latter has replaced the former in the name of many Arab population groupings, especially those who settled in the plains (*Ma’lamat Al Maghrib*, vol.3., 1991: 120). This is also corroborated by the absence of *oulad-names* in the list of Saudi villages we surveyed, and the presence of accurate *nisba* words such as *aal* ‘people from the family of’, also attested as *hel* in limited frequency in Morocco.

3.2.3.2 *imi / foun pattern*

There is a tendency in the Amazigh speaking areas to identify certain places as being entrances or gates to other places and thus introducing them with the Amazigh noun *imi*, literally meaning ‘mouth’ and referring to entrance or gate in this context. This is illustrated by the following items:

(11)	Village name	Province
	Imi ntizeght	Tiznit
	Imi ougni	chtouka ait Baha
	Imi nougni	Azilal
	Imi nisk	Azilal
	Imi Mquorn	Chtouka ait Baha
	Imi n-talat	Azilal
	Imi n’tizi	Essaouira
	Imi n’tizgui	Chichaoua
	Imi nwassif	Chichaoua)

This naming pattern is adopted in the Arabic speaking regions through introducing the Arabic toponyms via *foun* which is the literal equivalent of the Amazigh *imi* ‘mouth’, as the examples in (12) show:

(12)	Village name	Gloss	Province
	Foum louad	“mouth of louad/river runway”	Tata
	Foum Tlit	“mouth of Tlit”	Tata
	Foum Oudi	“mouth of Oudi”	Beni Mellal
	Foum l3ensser	“mouth of l3enser/water source”	Beni Mellal
	Foum Azmezgui	“mouth of Azmezgui”	Guelmim
	Foum agni	“mouth of agni”	Guelmim

Foum is used to introduce toponyms such as *foum lhiSn*, ‘the entrance to the castle’ which is a literal arabised form of *imi o’gadir* also attested as an Amazigh toponym referring to the same village in Tata province in the south of Morocco (cf. El Mountassir, 2012: 144). Yet, *foum* is not an accurate equivalent in view of the fact that *Imi* in Amazigh is used to mean either mouth or entrance, as in the common expressions of *imi n tfunast* and *imi n tgemmi* meaning ‘the cow’s mouth’ and ‘the house’ front door’, respectively. Arabic, however, uses two words to express these meanings, viz. *foum* for ‘mouth’ and *bab* for ‘entrance’¹⁴. Thus, and strictly speaking, the reference of *foum* here should be restricted to the literal meaning of mouth, and the toponym *imi o’gadir* should rather be interpreted as *bab lhiSn* ‘the entrance of the castle’. This would bring the term semantically in line with other toponyms attested in the northern region of Morocco such as *bab taza* and *bab berred* where *bab* is used instead of *foum*. The same explanation is valid for the other symmetrical expressions such as *imi ouassif* and *foum lwad* ‘the river runway’ in (10) and (11) above. Again, this incongruence can be explained by imperfect learning and imperfect bilingualism of the local speakers who Arabized the expression.

3.2.3.3 Weekly market names

It is a common tradition in rural Morocco to name the village in which or close to which a weekly market is held using a compound noun consisting of the day and the name of market place such as *jem3at fDalat*, meaning ‘Friday market of the Fdalat’ also corresponding to a village name in the province of Ben Slimane. This naming tradition is common to both MA and Amazigh speaking areas. Consider the following MA village names in (12) below:

¹⁴ Note also here the attested extended use of *foum* in *foum DDar* ‘the house front door’ used along with *bab DDar* meaning the same thing as a calque from Amazigh *imi n tgemmi*.

(13)

Village name	Gloss	Province
Tlat oulad fares	Oulad Fares' Tuesday market	Settat
Tnin Twale3	Twale3 Monday market	Ben Slimane
Jem'at mellila	Mellila Friday market	Ben Slimane
Sebt oulad nemma	Oulad Nemma Saturday market	Beni Mellal
Jem3a Fdalat	Fdalat Friday market	Ben Slimane
Khemis Mettouch	Mettouch Thursday market	El Jadida
Had Bkhati	Bkhati Sunday market	Safi
Khmis d'Amezri	Amezri Thursady market	Taounate

These village names have equivalents in the Amazigh speaking regions illustrated by the items in (14) below.

(14)

Village name	Gloss	Province
Tlata n-fougerD	Fougerd Tuesday market	Chtouka ait Baha
Letnin n- w-aday	Aday Monday market	Chtouka ait Baha
Lhad n-thala	Thala Sunday market	Tiznit
Ljem3a n-idaw semlal	Idaw semlal Friday market	Tiznit
Tlata n-tghermt	Tghermt Tuesday Market	Essaouira

The extensive occurrence of this type of names in both Amazigh and MA areas grants them the status of a productive naming pattern, in the sense that every village where a weekly market is held is expected to bear a name of such a pattern. In addition, the items in (12) and (13) above share a syntactic structure consisting of the day's name as a modifier followed by the preposition "of" viz. n- in Amazigh and unrealized in MA, followed by the name of the place of the market. They also share their referential function as they refer to both the market and to the village attached to the market. Again, the symmetry exhibited by this naming pattern and the non-occurrence of such village names in the Eastern Arab countries may suggest the influence of the Amazigh naming system and bring this category of toponyms into the same line of development as the previous categories of names dealt with above.

3.2.2.4 More analogous naming patterns

We have also come across less productive and less outstanding Amazigh and MA naming patterns but which can still be said to be related; reference is made here to the pairs *tiT/ain*-names ‘eye’ and *tizi/fej*-names ‘mountain pass’.

a. *tiT/ ain*-names

tiT and *ain* tend to introduce village names located in an elevated castle-like place used for watching and defense, in the case of *tiT* ‘eye’; or those situated by a water spring in the case of *ain* ‘water spring’. This means that the referential correspondence of the two items is not straightforward, because the Amazigh name introduced by *tiT* ‘eye’ has only one referent; i.e. the elevated castle-like place; while the Arabic *ain* has two referents: ‘the eye’ and ‘the water spring’.

Evidence for this comes from village bearing names such as *tiT n’Blal* in Beni Mellal and *tiT Ourmass* which used to serve as watch guard positions. While in the MA speaking regions, we find names such as *ain bouhechchad* and *ain tizgha* in Ben Slimane and *ain Tabroukte* and *ain Moulay Thami* in Safi. We also found that in the MA speaking coastal province of Mediouna and its borders with Ben Slimane, there is a coexistence of both names viz. *tiT Mellil* and *ain Bouhechchad*. If we take into consideration that these coastal areas are historically known as being subject to foreign attacks, and that they were not known for abundant water sources, we can deduce that some occurrences of *ain*-names in these MA speaking regions should be considered as referring to castle-like places and are thus Arabized forms of the Amazigh *ain*-names.

b. *Tizi/fej*-names

The village names introduced by *tizi* and *fej* can also be said to form a toponym pattern as they both refer to villages located in mountain pass. *Tizi* names are frequent in Amazigh mountainous regions such as *tizi nktikaa* and *tizi imgharen* in Chtouka Ait Baha, and *tizi imouchiwn* in Tiznit. MA equivalent names are attested in Taounate (*fej Nader*), Sefrou (*fej Azrar*), and in Taza (*fej Taher*) and (*fej Khlaoua*). Although we haven’t come across village names of this pair in the coastal regions considered as typical Arab speaking areas, except for one in Safi, i.e. *foum-tizi*, we argue that there is an Amazigh interference by considering *fej* as an arabised equivalent of *tizi*. Furthermore, we stipulate, based on the fact that the regions where *fej* names are attested (Taza and Touanate) also host toponyms with Arabised *bab* instead of *foum*

names, e.g. *bab berred* and *bab Taza*, that the northern regions in Morocco were Arabized earlier and more extensively than the southern regions where *foum* and *tizi-names* are still used.

3.2.2.5. Adoption of Amazigh names

The Arabic toponym system has also accommodated Amazigh village names based on real presence of villages with Amazigh names inside large groups of villages with Arabic names. These villages stand as islands in the village map and do not generally host Amazigh speaking dwellers and the latter may not have an explanation for having such a name. These Amazigh village names can be divided into two categories: those which have preserved all their Amazigh properties and those which have undergone a certain degree of adaptation. This is illustrated by the following items:

(15) a.

Village name	Province
Tikni	El Jadida
Tihouna	El Jadida
Taounza	Settat
Tamadroust	Settat
Tafrant	Ben Slimane
Tafrant	Taounate
Tihli	Kenitra

(15) b.

Village name	Province
Azghare	Kenitra
Lamgharate	El Jadida
El Azzaba	El Jadida
Zghaghra	Safi
Zgharienne	Kenitra
Zgharienne	Taounate

Two main explanations can be given to the presence of these Amazigh village names in the MA speaking regions. These names can either be old names assigned to places where the villages were established by the original inhabitants and were later on preserved and inherited as such. Alternatively, they could be due to a more recent Amazigh population movement and settlement. But it is evident that the population living in these villages consider these toponyms as Arabic names and may not be aware of their origin.

Both sets of the village names above illustrate lexical borrowing and they are thus a case of direct interference of Amazigh into MA lexical toponym system. Quantitatively speaking, this category of names is limited, which may be due to the fact that their adoption is accidental rather than the outcome of intentional borrowing. They may also be considered structurally and semantically opaque for the MA speakers, which may explain why a name such as *azghar* in (13.b) has not undergone any significant change, and why all items in (14.a) have undergone no change at all.

4. Conclusion

We have, throughout this paper, tried to investigate the impact of language contact on the MA toponyms. We have surveyed an extensive data of village names mainly from regions where MA is largely dominant, and which we have analyzed based on language contact theory. For the sake of comparison, we have also consulted official toponym data from Saudi Arabia to see how far the Moroccan toponym system is an extension of the Arab system. We have found out that the MA toponym system is much closer to the Amazigh system than to the Arabian Peninsula one.

We have argued that the Amazigh and MA toponyms constitute two parallel systems in which the Amazigh system is the source of influence and transfer of many of its salient characteristics. Most of this Amazigh interference does not take place directly through direct lexical borrowing, but rather indirectly through Arabization and adoption of productive naming patterns such as the anthroponym pattern, the *ait/oulad* pattern and the *imi/foum* pattern. The MA toponym not only adopted these patterns but has equally activated their productivity.

There is yet need for extending this study to categories of toponyms other than village names to check whether they display the same characteristics. It would also be interesting to consider that toponyms are just one linguistic component where deep semantic and pragmatic influence between MAm and MA takes place. We should thus expect that such an interaction may equally affect other components and aspects of the two languages as a result of the long term active contact between them.

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