As far back as the 7th century C.E., (Moroccan) Amazigh (AM) (commonly referred to as Berber) and (Moroccan) Arabic (MA) got into contact (e.g. Aguadé, 2008; Boukous, 1995; Brugnatelli, 2011; Palva, 2006; Pereira, 2011; Versteegh, 2010). This has resulted in mutual contact-induced phenomena in both languages that are interesting to study from a language contact perspective. Nonetheless, with the exception perhaps of the treatment of the Arabic influence on AM (Kossmann, 2013a, b), there is a paucity of works devoted to the contact between the two languages, although the field of language contact has witnessed major developments lately (see for example Hickey, 2010a). The works we are aware of fall within three major categories: (i) overviews (e.g. Aguadé, 2008; Manfredi, 2018; Versteegh, 2010); (ii) general descriptions (e.g. Chtatou, 1997; Elmedlaoui, 1998, 2000; El Moujahid, 1995; Tilmatine, 1999, 2011); and (iii) treatments of specific aspects (e.g. Bensoukas, 2016; Bensoukas and Boudlal, 2012a-b; Boudlal, 1998; Laïkioui, 2013).

Particular difficulty in the analysis of the Amazigh-Arabic contact-induced phenomena at hand is two-fold. On the one hand, the two languages are genetically related, both belonging to the Hamitic-Semitic phylum (e.g. Chaker, 1990; Chaker and Mettouchi, 2009; Cohen, 1988; Crass, 2009; Heine, 2009; Lipiński, 1997; Sands, 2009; Vycichl, 1984, 1987; Zaborski, 2006).

We would like to extend our warm gratitude to the scholars without whose contribution we would probably not have been able to complete this 1st special issue of the International Journal of Arabic Linguistics: (i) our colleagues, for accepting to contribute to the collection, in the first place, and for their professionalism throughout the various stages of this project; and (ii) our anonymous reviewers, for their excellent and punctual reviews. The editors names appear in alphabetical order.
By virtue of their genetic relationship, the two languages have various characteristics in common, which makes it difficult to draw a clear-cut line between traits that are cognate and those that are the result of contact. On the other hand, the possibility of common features being areal traits makes decision difficult as to which traits belong to which language. Henceforth, the dividing line between cognate structures and borrowed ones is not always easy to draw.

By bringing together works on various specific aspects of Amazigh-Arabic language contact, focus being more on the impact of Amazigh on Arabic, this special issue of the *International Journal of Arabic Linguistics* (IJAL) is meant both to fill the gap in the literature and to take the analysis to the next level as far as specific aspects of Amazigh-Arabic contact are concerned. As such, the seven papers herein, mostly devoted to the effects of Amazigh on Maghrebi (North African) Arabic, as well as Maltese Arabic, deal with phenomena ranging over phonology, morphology, syntax, sociolinguistic reconstruction, toponymy and etymology, with data coming from various dialects of Amazigh-Algerian, Egyptian, Moroccan, and Tunisian. As to the Arabic dialects studied, MA is the main variety showing the impact of Amazigh. More specifically, the reader will find herein aspects of labiovelarization, labial/round dissimilation, sibilant harmony, vowel reduction, as far as phonology is concerned; morphological aspects relating to *id*-and *at*-plurals, agentive nouns, participles, and circumfixation; syntactic developments relating to topic specification; *ajt/oulad, imi/foum, tizi/ʃʒʃ* and *tía /ʃin* parallel toponyms; and the etymology of a number of Amazigh words in Maltese Arabic. In addition, different approaches and concepts are adopted in dealing with the phenomena in the various papers, such as “replica” and “contact-induced” grammaticalizations (Heine and Kuteva, 2003), “structural changes without morphemic borrowing” (Hickey, 2010b; Thomason, 2006), and “sociolinguistic reconstruction” (Croft, 2000; Romaine, 1982; Ross, 1996, 1997, 2005; Toulmin, 2009, 2012; Trudgill, 2010).

The first paper, by Abdelaziz Boudlal, presents an analysis of labial and round dissimilatory processes in MA and argues that facts pertaining to these processes can be taken as evidence for the existence of an Amazigh substratum in MA. The analysis defended is couched in the constraint-based framework of Parallel Optimality Theory (Prince and Smolensky 1993/2004; McCarthy and Prince 1993 and related works). The paper starts with what the author calls “lexical labialization”, which concerns the labiovelarized consonants /k, g, x, ɣ, q/ in derived forms of MA nouns. Then, the paper deals with cases of labial/round dissimilation, as in
diminutive data as well as borrowings integrated into MA. An interesting set of data to which the dissimilation process extends is the passive participle and nouns that refer to names of localities, consolidating the idea that the dissimilation phenomenon has some generality in MA. The author insists on the fact that MA labial/round dissimilation is a contact-induced phenomenon due to the influence of AM and that a thorough understanding of this process requires prior knowledge of the workings of AM labial/round dissimilation.

The paper by Mohamed Lahrouchi analyzes the Amazigh phonological and morphological structures borrowed by MA, using mostly the framework of Element Theory, and more particularly a strict CV approach (Backley 2011, 2012; Harris 1994; Lowenstamm, 1996; Scheer, 1996, 2004). As far as the phonology is concerned, the author starts by arguing that MA does not use long vowels, as is the case in Classical Arabic. The result of this evolution is the loss of contrastive vowel length. Concomitantly, the language has also developed a short central vowel- schwa- mostly resorted to in syllable structure assignment to split illicit consonant clusters. The paper also deals with the labio-velarization feature, which Amazigh uses, too. The claim in the paper is that a floating /u/ is retrieved, under proper morphological conditioning, as a secondary feature on the consonants characterized by the element [U]. The last phonological aspect of the contact analyzed in the paper is sibilant harmony, another feature claimed by the author to be a borrowing from Amazigh. As to morphological borrowing, the paper investigates the Amazigh feminine circumfix /ta-⋯-t/. The author claims that this affix is borrowed as an unanalyzed complex form, further showing how MA has constrained the function of this affix to the formation of profession and abstract nouns.

In the third paper, written by Karim Bensoukas, a lesser studied mode of pluralization, dubbed by the author (AM) *id*-pluralization and (MA) *at*-pluralization, is investigated. Quite distinct from the more common Afro-Asiatic (non-)concatenative pluralizations, this quite general process is resorted to in pluralizing various nouns (e.g. morphologically simple or complex words, items with expressive morphology, and loan-words). The paper tries to achieve two goals, the first of which is to systematically establish the structural similarities and differences between AM id-pluralization and MA at-pluralization and show they have parallels not only in essence but in much of their detail as well. The second goal is to claim that although id/at-pluralization is itself a cognate, Afro-Asiatic morphological feature, at-pluralization reveals subtle, substratal AM morphology, interpreted as a shift-induced interference (Hickey, 2010b)
resulting in the transfer of structural features without the morphemes that express them (Thomason, 2010).

The paper by Ahmed Ech-charfi probes into the history of Arabic-Amazigh contact, on the basis of a systematic comparison of MA participles and AM agentive nouns, and attempts a sociolinguistic reconstruction of the contact in question. The major thrust of the argument is that MA has developed a category of agentives transferred from Amazigh, for which the author provides four pieces of supporting evidence: (i) the extension of the ḥəʕʕal pattern, originally associated with occupations; (ii) the use of the prefix m- with active participles derived from trilaterals and (iii) participles derived from nouns; and (iv) the survival of variants amalgamating these processes. The account proposed consists in treating the agentive m- prefix as an early morphological transfer from Amazigh, only to be erased along with other salient Amazigh loans and supplanted with the ḥəʕʕal pattern on account of the latter being taken to be the correct Arabic participial form. What took place, the author claims, was actually just a copying of the Amazigh agentive class, a tendency that was further reinforced by later Hilali migrations.

The fifth paper, a contribution by Mena Lafkioui, deals with preposed topic specification in Amazigh and analyses data from various Amazigh varieties across North Africa. The major claim is that the use of preposed topic specifiers is an innovation resulting from contact with Arabic. A two-fold explanation is proposed by the author: (i) One type of specifiers originates from “pattern replication” in tandem with matter borrowing from Arabic, and (ii) the other originates from “pattern replication” only. The author claims that two types of grammaticalization are at play in the cases at hand, “replica grammaticalization” concerning the former type of specifiers and “contact-induced grammaticalization” with respect to the latter (Heine and Kuteva, 2003). The author concludes that the functional parameter of contrast may be the driving force behind the innovation, corroborating Matras’s (1998) hypothesis regarding contrast as a motivating factor for borrowing.

Co-authored by Mohamed Marouane and Daouia Laaboudi, the sixth paper addresses the impact of language contact on Arabic toponymy in Morocco. The authors specifically deal with the aspects of interference of the Amazigh toponym system in MA village naming patterns. The authors argue that AM and MA toponyms constitute two parallel systems in which the Amazigh system exerts subtle influence, in that many salient AM village naming characteristics are transferred to MA. The authors also bring to the foreground the fact that most of the AM
interference does not take place directly through mechanisms of lexical borrowing, but rather indirectly through the two mechanisms of (i) Arabization and (ii) the adoption of productive naming patterns. The latter mechanism made it possible for the MA toponym system to use the newly adopted naming strategies productively.

Finally, the paper by Lameen Souag starts with stating that the extent of Amazigh lexical influence on Maltese remains unclear, pointing out that many of the published etymological proposals are problematic. The bulk of the paper consists of providing an assessment of 70 existing etymologies of Maltese Arabic words of an Amazigh origin. The manuscript rejects 50 existing etymologies and not only accepts the remaining 20 but also proposes new Amazigh etymologies for another six Maltese items, including a suffix. The paper also examines semantic aspects of the loans and assigns them to specific, dominant semantic domains.

To conclude, we are totally aware that both the richness and complexity of the Amazigh-Arabic contact phenomena go far beyond the representations portrayed by the individual analyses in the papers in this collection. We hope, nonetheless, that this issue has succeeded in providing analyses of the various facets of the contact-induced changes that have emerged from this contact situation. We also hope that, by putting all the papers together, we have managed to launch serious reflection on this area, which still stays, to our minds, under-researched; and that more aspects of the contact will be taken up in the future.

References


