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Abstract

In the present study, I argue that post-posed topic specification (PTS) across the Sahara is an areal phenomenon and that in the case of Southern Tamazight (i.e., Tuareg and Zenaga) it is an innovation generated by pattern replication. On the other hand, the required matter for PTS formation in Southern Tamazight is generally provided by Tamazight itself by means of system-internal developments involving the following predominant grammaticalisation track, that is, [*modality markers > topic specifiers]. I also show that full convergence has taken place in these Southern Tamazight languages, which has affected their linguistic typology on the morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic level. Moreover, the study accounts for the significance of the functional parameter of contrast in the development of these topic specifiers and hence confirms the importance of system-based factors in language change.

Keywords: Areality, Contact, Contrast, Grammaticalisation, Sahara, Topicalisation

1 Introduction

Although quite some languages distinguish specific topic markers, their study has been largely overlooked in linguistics, despite their pragmatic significance, as they facilitate discursive coherence and dynamics. Indo-European examples of such markers are for instance the English “as regards”, “as for”, “concerning”, the French *quant à*, *pour ce qui est de*, *concernant*, and the Spanish, *en cuanto a*, *respecto a*, *por lo que toca a*, which generally occur in sentence-initial or clause-initial position. These markers add semantic and pragmatic values to the topic’s referent by specifying its general content or by creating more contrast between its properties and that of the previously instantiated topic. Combined with a

proper intonation pattern – generally engaging prosodic prominence – they clearly demarcate the topic from its relating comment. They may also serve to introduce new topics into the discourse or to reintroduce previously mentioned ones.

These markers are coined as "topic specifiers" in Lafkioui (2018), where they are investigated in detail for the major languages of North Africa, i.e., Tamazight (language family and branch of Afroasiatic, also called Berber) and Arabic (Semitic). The latter study shows that Northern Tamazight distinguishes "preposed topic specifiers", which were engendered by contact with Arabic, from which Tamazight replicated the grammatical pattern and borrowed certain material, with or without processing it. In certain Northern Tamazight languages, such as Taqbaylit (North Algeria), this contact phenomenon has led to full convergence through the systematic usage of dedicated preposed topic specifiers based on Tamazight material, such as in example (1) with *ma-d* as the topic specifier. Furthermore, Lafkioui's study on preposed topic specifiers shows that the functional factor of contrast is predominant in the creation of these pragmatic markers and so confirms the significance of system-based factors in language change.

(1) [**ma d** *aqcic,*]$_{T}$ *tebbwi-t yid-es*[1]
'As for the boy, she took him with her.'
(Dallet 1982: 476)

Even if preposed topic specification markers are observed in Tamazight, they are not widespread and they are mostly optional. In fact, topicalisation in Tamazight is primarily marked by an intonation dislocation, which generally involves an intonation break (Lafkioui 2002, 2011). Other – subsidiary – parameters that de-

[1] The original transcription of the cited examples is maintained, with minimal adjustments to enhance the examples' intelligibility. The English translation of most of the examples cited here are mine. In the transcription, the topic is put between square brackets and indicated by T (T1, T2 for multiple topics); the topic specifier is put in bold. Other abbreviations used here are PTS 'postposed topic specifier' and SG 'singular'.

termine the marked noun phrase topic are the independent noun state and fronting, with a left periphery predilection. Prosody also perfectly meets the needs of contrast demarcation in Tamazight. Even more so, prosodic prominence is required when topics are contrasted (Lafkioui 2010, 2014, 2018).

In Tuareg (Southern Tamazight), preposed topic specification markers are quite rare and often based on the conditional marker *ku* 'if' and its grammaticalised counterpart *ku-d* (and variants). Written proof of these markers goes back to the 19th century (Hanoteau 1896), where *ku-d* is categorized as a conjunction meaning 'as for', like in (2).

(2) **ku** *terham eg'let* [**ku-d** *nek*]$_T$ *ad ek'k'imer'*
'Go if you like, as for me, I will stay.'
(Hanoteau 1896: 123)

As is displayed in (2), it is the composite and grammaticalised form *ku-d* (compared to *ku*) that plays the role of topic specifier, which highlights the contrastive semantic load of the topical referent it precedes. The same formal-functional logic attested in Taqbaylit (North Algeria) for *ma* as a conditional marker (among other functions) compared to *ma-d* as a topic specifier is attested in Tuareg, where *ku*, as a conditional marker (mainly), is in complementary distribution with *ku-d* as a preposed topic specifier.

Postposed topic specification markers (henceforth PTS) also occur in the world's languages but again are barely studied. They are commonly employed in African languages, including in the languages of the Sahara (North and Northwest Sahel included), where they are profusely developed. The following are examples of PTS markers expressed in two Afroasiatic languages of this region; example (3) stems from Tuareg (Southern Tamazight), while (4) stems from Hausa (Chadic).

(3) [*tagăyt*-**za**,]$_T$ *ḳannăn dăɣ-ăs ăṛătăn ăggôtnen*
'As for the Doum palm, they make a lot of things out of it.'
(Prasse & *al*. 2003: 871)

(4) [*Kànde* **fa** *(…),*]$_{T}$ *mun fi sôntà*
'As for Kande, we like her the most.'
(Newman 2000: 616)

From a comparative Tamazight perspective, the Southern Tamazight languages – i.e., Tuareg mainly (Sahara, North, and Northwest Sahel) but also Zenaga (Mauritania) – are quite exceptional, as they provide evidence of the systematic use of PTS markers. These latter markers are generally absent elsewhere in Tamazight or not developed into "dedicated" pragmatic markers. The present study aims at explaining where PTS in Southern Tamazight originates from by means of the following diachronic scenario; that is, Southern Tamazight (predominantly Tuareg and Zenaga) would have been subject to innovation triggered by system-external factors (i.e., areality) that are not only responsible for the introduction of new distributional variants for topic specification but also for the success of their diffusion in the contact area (i.e., the Sahara), where PTS is commonly attested. The morphological material of the Tamazight PTS variants, however, is in certain cases of Tamazight origin. In other words, the study will account for the areal nature of the phenomenon of PTS by showing how Southern Tamazight, and especially the Tuareg languages, which are important lingua franca's in the Sahara, have replicated the distributional template of PTS common in this linguistic area, yet without necessarily borrowing the specific morphological material, for which it is also contingent upon its internal system. PTS in Southern Tamazight has reached full convergence due to the systematic use of certain Tamazight-based variants.

In the following section 2, I will show how PTS works in Southern Tamazight. Section 3 will account for the syntactic replication of post-placing topic specifiers in Tuareg and Zenaga, as the borrowing languages, from those languages with which they are in close contact in the Sahara (mainly in Niger, Mali, Northern Burkina-Faso, and Mauritania) and for their various pragmatic purposes relating to topic and contrast marking. Section 4 will discuss cases based on Tamazight morphological material, which chiefly pertain to modality. The article will end with a number of areal linguistic conclusions.

2 Postposed topic specification in Southern Tamazight

Postposed topic marking is a specificity of Southern Tamazight, and particularly of Tuareg and of Zenaga, where it is commonly attested. Tuareg accounts for *za* and *dăɣ*/*da* (and variants, including suffixes) as the main PTS markers, like in (5) to (7) from Tamajeq (Tuareg of the Ayer region, Niger).[2]

(5) [*năk*-**za**]$_T$ *wər-əleɣ măwta*
'As for me, I do not have a car.'
(Prasse et al. 2003: 871)

(6) [*əqqâmin midawăn-net* **dăgh**]$_T$ *ur əssênan* [...]
'As for his contemporaries, they did not understand.'
(Aghali & Drouin 1979: 22/12)

(7) [*ash iggəz dənnəg-əlwaq* **da**]$_T$ *ilwəy-d iggəshən* [...]
'When it was dawn, he brought the horses.'
(Petites sœurs 1974: 159/26)

All PTS markers of these examples serve the purpose of contrast, even though the topics vary in terms of morphosyntax, e.g., a pronominal subject-topic (5), a NP subject-topic (6), and an adverbial clause as circumstantial-topic (7), respectively. PTS markers usually combine with all sorts of topics. Yet, Tamasheq (Mali) has also developed the particular PTS *ə̀ntɑ*, which corresponds to the invariable 3SG independent pronoun, and which only combines with independent personal pronouns as topics (except for the 3SG). Example (8) testifies to this: *næ̀kk* (1SG independent pronoun) is the topic, which is marked by *ə̀ntɑ* (PTS < *3SG independent pronoun).

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[2] Alongside the PTS marker *za*, Tuareg of Burkina Faso (i.e., Tamasheq) also has *iš* as a morpheme expressing the same notions (Sudlow 2009: 185). Unfortunately, no examples of both morphemes are provided by Sudlow. Evidence of the suffix *-dăɣ* is also attested in this area, where it functions as an emphatic marker meaning 'this very, this same' (Sudlow 2001: 112).

(8) [*næ̀kk* **ə̀ntɑ**]$_T$ *əqqĭm-æγ-ə́dd*
‘As for me, I stayed’
(Heath 2005: 615)

In Zenaga, regular dedicated PTS markers are for instance *ha*, exemplified in (9), and *(i)ṣṣa*, exemplified in (10). The latter PTS fulfils varying and complex discursive functions in Zenaga, as well as in Hassaniyya Arabic (Mauritania and Sahara), where it is also commonly attested as a PTS, like in (11), for instance.

(9) [*niᵊk* **ha**]$_T$ *uɣjay-ak away in uθ̣nagan.*
‘As for me, I forget the language of Zenaga.’
(Baba Horma, Zenaga)

(10) [*niᵊk* **iṣṣa**]$_T$ *ma kint aḍ̣mag.*
‘As for me, I didn’t think.’
(Baba Horma, Zenaga)

(11) [*minattu* **ṣṣa**]$_T$ *naᶜrafha ’āna*
As for Minattu, I know her.
(Baba Horma, Hassaniyya)

Just as in Tuareg, the Zenaga and Hassaniyya PTS markers are typically employed to create more contrast between the semantic and pragmatic properties of the topic at hand and those of the previous topic as well as to emphasize them.

PTS is also recorded in coordinated NP sentences, as in (12) from Tamajeq (Tuareg, Niger). Here, strong contrast is marked by using two different PTSs, respectively *za* and *da*.

(12) [*Mokhammәd* **za**]$_T$ *eggur* [*Fatimata* **da**]$_T$ *tamarwalt*
‘So Mohammed, he was the jackal. As for Fatimata, she was the hare’
(Petites sœurs 1974: 47/3)

Emphasis or other pragmatic purposes such as inter-subjective (inter-personal) investment or distance, as well as narrative purposes like enhancing the dynamics of the described actions may also be prominent, such as in (13) from Tamajeq.

(13) [*ash isla əmnokal ənki*]$_{T1}$ [*arwada* **da**]$_{T2}$ *isshot-as ehəre wa yogələn ənki*
'When the king heard this saying, even more, he gave him even more herd.'
(Petites sœurs 1974: 153/63)

This sentence contains two topics. The first one, *ash isla əmnokal ənki* 'when the king heard this saying', is a circumstantial topic and is not marked by a PTS. On the other hand, the second circumstantial topic, *arwada*, and more particularly its semantic notion of "even more", referring to the previously mentioned discursive object of "wealth" as well as to the currently mentioned "herd", is stressed by the PTS *da,* so as to render the idea of "unbelievable and unconceivable amounts of wealth".

The marker *da* as well as its allomorph *de* also function as pragmatic sequence markers in Tuareg, mostly to indicate the boundary of an information/intonation minimal unit or the end of the whole sentence or discursive paragraph, to which testifies (14) from Tamajeq (Niger). The first *da* in (14) marks the circumstantial topic and so foregrounds the setting wherein in the ensuing comment takes place. The second *da*, on the other hand, is not a PTS but marks the end of the complex sentence and that of the event it describes.

(14) [*as d-yosa iga afus-net* **da**]$_{T}$ *wər t-illa ar goro iyən da*
'When the young man arrived, he put his hand (in it), and there was just one cola.'
(Petites sœurs 1974: 157/16)

The pragmatic markers *da* and *de* may also be combined, like in (15) from Tamajeq, where *de* closes up the sentence, while *da* creates contrast between the topic *ənta* 'he' and the topic *amnokal* 'king' of the preceding clause.

(15) [*amnokal*]$_T$ *ikk-e-du* [*ənta* **da**]$_T$ *issəlkəḍ i əmnokal ad d-əmmənəyən de*
‘The king, he went to him. And he, he (also) went to meet the king, until they met.’
(Petites sœurs 1974: 149/51)

Remarkably, Tuareg also allows to insert a PTS into a propositional and thus composite topic, such as the determinative clause *barar wa n arigullan* ‘this child of Arigullan’ in the following example (16). The PTS not only underlines here certain referential properties of the speech part it follows, i.e., the properties of being *barar* ‘child’, but also puts these properties in contrast with those of the subsequent topic *adəlâsəgh* (proper noun), which bears no PTS.

(16) [*barar* **za** *wa n arigullan*]$_T$ *ifrag tekle, amər* [*adəlâsəgh*]$_T$ *abəbbi a tu-təga təklit.*
‘As for the child of Arigullan, he, he could walk, whereas Adelasegh, he was worn by the servant astride her back.’
(Aghali & Drouin 1979: 52/15)

In example (16), it is not only the properties of the two boys that are contrasted and highlighted – those of Arigullan’s son compared to Adelasegh – but also the fact that Arigullan’s son is still a little child (*barar*). A similar pragmatic strategy is observed in next extract (17) from Tamajeq (Niger), but here the items put in contrast are part of one sole composite topic, i.e., *amədərghəl ənten ənəbdən* ‘the blind and the cripple’.

(17) [*amədərghəl* **da** *ənten ənəbdən*]$_T$ *əglən* [...]
‘The blind and the cripple, meanwhile, they left.’
(Petites sœurs 1974: 169/27)

In the following section 3, the areal nature of the PTS constructions discussed above will be accounted for.

3 Postposed topic specification and areality

It is always challenging to distinguish the phenomena that are the result of shared genetic archaisms from those that result from convergence due to an extended period of geographical proximity. Although this challenge also applies to the phenomenon of PTS, there is much evidence that points to its areal nature, regarding its syntactic patterning at least.

As is shown in section 2, only Southern Tamazight distinguishes PTS. Therefore, PTS' geolinguistic distribution does not corroborate an ancient genetic origin of the phenomenon. If it were a proto-Amazigh feature, one would expect to find at least some remnants in certain peripheral zones of Amazigh-speaking North Africa, which is not the case.

Moreover, Afroasiatic, the language phylum to which Tamazight belongs, does not provide conclusive proof of common genetic reflexes. Afroasiatic displays all kinds of devices for topic specification, including preposed, interposed, and postposed markers. Much variation in topic specification is also observed within the different language families. For instance, in Semitic, topic specifiers are preposed in (Moroccan) Arabic (18) and postposed in Amharic (19).

(18) [*hiyya(,)*]$_{T}$ *gəlsət,* [**əmma** *huwwa(,)*]$_{T}$ *ma ṣbər š.*
'She, she sat down, as for him, he could not bear to be patient'
(Lafkioui 2018)

(19) [*lijj-u-nï-***mma**]$_{T}$ *yï-wädd-äw-al.*
'(There is no question) as for his child, he likes him.'
(Demeke and Meyer 2007: 27)

Consequently, the areal origin of PTS in Southern Tamazight is the likeliest, also because the Tuareg languages are important lingua franca's of the Sahara. Tuareg is in regular contact with languages of different families belonging to the following three African phyla: Chadic of Afroasiatic (the same as Tamazight), Songhay of Nilo-Saharan, and Fula of Niger-Congo. Among these languages, Hausa (Chadic) is the main contact language of many Tuaregs, as it is another important lingua franca of this region, alongside Arabic. Wolof (Niger-Congo, Atlantic) is an important contact language for Zenaga-speaking people (Mauritania).

Hausa makes extensive use of PTS for various pragmatic purposes. As a matter of fact, the topic in Hausa is set off by a PTS and/or an intonation marker, except in interrogative and exclamative sentences. PTS markers in Hausa generally relate to modal particles without vowel lengthening, such as for instance *dai* 'indeed', *fa* 'well', *kàm* 'really', *kùwa* or *kò* 'moreover', but also to all kind of expressive material (Newman 2000: 615-621). Evidence that accounts for this is given in (20) and (21). The latter example contains different PTS markers at once to put emphasis on the topicalised item.

(20) [*Audù* **dai** *(...),*]$_{T}$ *yanầ cîn nāmầ kullum*
'As for Audu, he eats meat every day'
(Newman 2000: 616)

(21) [*yầya* **fa dai kàm** *(...)*]$_{T}$ *bàn gayầ matà ba*
'My elder sister indeed certainly, I didn't tell her.'
(Newman 2000: 617)

Songhay (Nilo-Saharan) is another primary contact language of the Tuaregs. Many Songhay languages of its Northern branch are even strongly influenced by Tamazight. A case in point is that of Tadaksahak (Saharan), which is a mixed language spoken in the Menaka region in eastern Mali. In this language, the topic is introduced, contrasted, and intensified by means of the enclitics *dá* ('precisely, exactly'), *nóo-da* ('there precisely'), and *nó* ('there'), like in (22) and (23), which are often preceded by an anaphoric/emphatic pronoun referring to the topic.

(22) [*t-ə́-mgad-an*]$_{T1}$ [*íŋgi* **dá**]$_{T2}$ *íŋgi kaaṛád*
'The girls, as for them, they were three.'
(Christiansen-Bolli 2010: 230)

(23) [*i-kúufaṛ*]$_{T1}$ [*íŋgi* **nó**]$_{T2}$ *i=ddá hó sé aníyat*
'The Europeans, as for them, they pay attention to this.'
(Christiansen-Bolli 2010: 230)

There are Northern Songhay languages that prefer to merely use fronting or dislocation to mark the topic, just like in most Northern Tamazight languages (Lafkioui 2014). An example that attests to this is Kwarandzyey (Algerian Sahara), which is also heavily shaped by Tamazight, as is shown in (24).

(24) *iwa* [*lmahdi*]$_{T}$ *n-bəγ a-m-hnu-tsi?*
'So, the Mahdi, you want him to come forth?'
(Souag 2010: 465)

The Southern Songhay languages, on the other hand, are more in line with Southern Tamazight and so display the (areal) PTS feature instead, e.g., the PTS markers *bine* and *ta* in Koyra Chiini (Heath 1999: 201 + sections 8.4.1 & 8.4.3; Koyra Chiini, Mali). Examples (25) and (26) from Zarma Chiine account for it.

(25) [*Ǎy* **yaa**]$_{T}$ *cawandikò nôo.*
'As for me, I am a teacher.'
(Abdoulaye and Abdoulrazikou n.d.; Zarma Chiine, Niger, Nigeria)

(26) [*Nîi* **wôo**]$_{T}$ *zànkà hànno nò.*
'As for you, you are a nice kid.'
(Abdoulaye and Abdoulrazikou n.d.; Zarma Chiine, Niger, Nigeria,)

Fula (Niger-Congo, Atlantic) forms another significant contact language of the Tuaregs, especially of those living in Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, as well as of the Zenaga people (Mauritania). PTS commonly occurs in Fula, including in the context of topic-shifting and contrast-marking. In the following example (27) from Gaawoore (Niger), the PTS *yaa* not only marks the topic but also puts its referent in contrast with the referent of the previous topic.

(27) [*Miin* **yaa**]$_{T}$ *mi wi'aay ma na-yi.*
'As for me, I didn't talk to you about cows.'
(Sow 2003: 104; Gaawoore)

So, the languages of the Sahara (including the North and North-West Sahel) with which Southern Tamazight (Tuareg and Zenaga mainly) interacts on a regular basis – that is, Hausa, Songhay, and Fula – clearly account for PTS, which is often combined with fronting. Even Hassaniyya Arabic attests to PTS in this area, which is remarkable, as the Arabic varieties typically use "preposed" topic specifiers, if at all (Lafkioui 2018). It is also worth reminding that Southern Songhay follows the areal PTS line, whereas Northern Songhay prefers fronting and preposed topic specification, which is in line with Northern Tamazight.

Taking into consideration all these findings and those discussed in previous section 2, it is more than reasonable to regard PTS as an areal phenomenon that triggered the replication of a grammatical pattern in Southern Tamazight (mainly Tuareg ad Zenaga), which is absent elsewhere in Tamazight. The fact that there is no evidence pointing to a system-internal development or to genetic inheritance, on the Tamazight or Afroasiatic level, only adds to the likelihood of the areal basis of PTS. Language contact due to areality has most probably triggered PTS in Hassaniyya Arabic, too.

Another reasonable inference is that areality may have impeded the further development of preposed topic specification in Southern Tamazight (especially in Tuareg), where it is marginal compared to PTS. Indeed, the attested material for preposed topic specification in Tuareg is not only scarce and outdated but also not quite developed into dedicated markers. Areal pressure, engaging the management and development of multilingual repertoires fitting the area of contact, may thus explain Southern Tamazight's shift from preposed to postposed specification. Interestingly, the opposite contact scenario, involving a shift from postposed to preposed topic specification, with or without material borrowing from Tamazight (or Arabic), is recorded in Northern Songhay, such as in Kwarandzyey (Algerian Sahara), which is under strong influence of Northern Tamazight. Tadaksahak (Northern Songhay), on the other hand, which is used more Southwards in the Sahara (Mali), accounts for an in-between scenario. Tadaksahak would have maintained the areal postposed pattern but borrowed some of its material from Tamazight; a potential borrow from Tamazight is the marker *dá*, which will be addressed in next section about the morphological origin of the primary PTS markers in Southern Tamazight.

4 Postposed topic specification and modality

Most “dedicated” PTS markers in Southern Tamazight relate to modality, often to conditional markers (see e.g., Prasse et al. 2003: 357; Sudlow 2001: 33, 2009: 185). This is in line with the findings concerning preposed topic specification in both Southern Tamazight and elsewhere in this language family (Lafkioui 2018).

The primary PTS markers attested in Tuareg are *da*/*dă*/*dăɣ* and their variants, which may occur as adverbs or may be amalgamated as clitics to the topic they follow and often emphasize. Emphasis is an important discursive function of these markers, which is clearly observable with *dăɣ* and its variants. For instance, in Tamasheq (Tuareg from North-East Burkina Faso), the conjunction *kud* ‘if’ and its composite variant *kud ... dăɣ* ‘even if’, which contains the emphasis marker *dăɣ*, are used for hypothetical purposes (Sudlow 2001: 331). The same findings are attested for Tamajeq (Tawellemmet and Tayert) from Niger, which distinguishes the conjunctions *ku*, *kud* ‘if’ and their composite variants *kud-dăɣ, kuddă* and *kudda* ‘even if’ (Prasse et al. 2003: 357). Tuareg also employs the anaphoric clitic *-dăɣ* (and variants), which in Mali is usually associated with a demonstrative and serves as an intensifier, e.g., *w-a-dăɣ* ‘this same one we were talking about’ (Heath 2005: 240).

Taking into consideration these findings and the fact that the markers *dăɣ* and its variants occur in similar forms with similar modal functions all over the Tamazight language family, even in languages that are geographically distant and typologically different from Tuareg (see examples 29 to 30), one can confidently infer that they have a morphological Amazigh origin. Consequently, PTS markers like *dăɣ* would be the outcome of system-based developments out of modality markers. The latter markers would have been developed into specific referential-marking devices, which would have led to PTS following the diachronic path displayed in (28).

(28) modality adverb > modality clitic > emphasis clitic > PTS

Cases in point attesting to the occurrence of *dăɣ* and its variants with similar functions in different Tamazight languages are presented in (29) and (30).

(29) *idda-d* **diγ**
'He came again'
(Amaniss n.d.: 43; Tamazight of Central Morocco)

(30) **daγ** *keççˤ…*
'You again...'
(Dallet 1982: 148; Kabylia, North Algeria)

A Tamazight origin probably also applies to *za*, another primary PTS marker, whose variants (e.g., sa, zi, si) are recorded in various Tamazight languages. Instances of it as a modality marker are even retrieved in Tamazight's ancient texts, such as those of old Tashelhiyt (South Morocco). For example, the modality marker *za* is attested in the text of M. Awzal (d. 1749, Ocean of Tears, Islamic Verse; dogma & practices) as an adverb (*za*/*a*), which may occur as a clitic – just like with the PTS – in the conglomerate forms *iγ-za* 'if… nevertheless' and *ini-za* 'if… nevertheless', where it adds modal values (e.g., still, nevertheless) to the conditional 'if'. Next example (31) accounts for this.

(31) **iġ-za** *yusy ajmil* [...]
'If one is nevertheless grateful to [...]'
(Van den Boogert 1996: 294)

Concerning Zenaga Tamazight, the regular PTS *ha* is most likely of Amazigh origin, in terms of morphology, and relates to the presentational. It occurs in Northern Tamazight as well, but as a "preposed" topic specifier (see Lafkioui 2018 for more detail); example (32) from Mzab (Algeria) illustrates this. The fact that Zenaga postposes the marker *ha* corroborates PTS as an areal phenomenon, as far as its syntactic pattern is concerned. It also testifies to the great areal pressure to which the languages are subject in the Sahara. So, areality would have caused the change in word order in Zenaga by substituting the typical preplacement of *ha* by its postplacement, as is shown in (33).

(32) [**ha** *nəšš*,]$_{T}$ *w-a yi tərgibəm na?*
'And as form me, you haven't seen me, have you?'
(Delheure 1984: 73)

(36) [*bāba* **ha**,]$_{T}$ *war-t uθ̣ra-g d-aṣṣ-að̣*
'As for Bāba, I didn't see him today.
(Baba Horma, Zenaga)

Another common PTS in Zenaga – as well as in Hassaniyya Arabic – is *(i)ṣṣa* (see example 10), which reveals divergent and complex discursive functions. Its origin is unclear, although it is recorded elsewhere in Tamazight (e.g., Tarifit, North, Northeast, and Northwest Morocco). A thorough study of this marker within its variable discursive contexts in Zenaga and in Hassaniyya – and compared to other Tamazight languages – is needed but out of the scope of this study.

5 Conclusion

In view of the findings presented in previous sections, one can positively conclude that PTS across the Sahara is an areal phenomenon, which triggered a specific pattern replication in Southern Tamazight (i.e., Tuareg, Zenaga) that marks the topic by means of postplaced devices. The morphological material of the PTS markers, on the other hand, is usually of Tamazight origin. In other words, PTS in Southern Tamazight is an innovation generated by contact through pattern replication. The necessary matter commonly stems from Tamazight, as it is also retrieved in geolinguistically and typologically diverse languages of this family. Moreover, the development of PTS markers primarily follows a parallel grammaticalisation path, i.e. [*modality markers > topic specifiers]. Remarkably, this same modal diachronic path is also attested for preposed topic specification in Northern Tamazight (Lafkioui 2018). Consequently, full convergence has come about in Southern Tamazight. A set of dedicated PTS markers based on Tamazight material are commonly used for various discursive purposes engaging topic, contrast, and emphasis marking. Most PTS instances strongly involve the expression of contrast, as was shown in previous sections. Contrast is also the leading factor in the development of preposed topic specification in Northern Tamazight (Lafkioui 2018). Accordingly, contrast marking seems to facilitate borrowing (Matras 1998). Note that the requirement for denoting increased contrastive semantic loads in Tamazight generally goes together with other func-

tional factors pertaining to the management of the speakers' multilingual repertoires and interactions, such as conveying stance (e.g., taking contrastive positions), turn-taking, and attention seeking and keeping.

6 References

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