

A contested topic among linguists is the purpose of the distinction between the Free State (FS) and the Construct State (CS) in Berber (see e.g. Mettouchi 2015; Guerssel 1992; Ennaji 2001). In Kabyle Berber, nominals may appear in the FS (1a, 2a); or CS (1b, 2b). FS nominals are characterized by the presence of the prefix *a-*. CS nominals lack this prefix; feminine CS nouns lack any additional prefix, as in (2b), and masculine CS nouns are prefixed by the morpheme *w-* (1b).

|                     |                   |                         |                       |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1a) a- <i>qcic</i> | (1b) <i>wqcic</i> | (2a) t-a- <i>qcic-t</i> | (2b) t- <i>qcic-t</i> |
| FS-child            | child.CS          | F-FS-child-F.Sg         | F-CS.child-F.Sg       |
| 'boy'               | 'boy'             | 'girl'                  | 'girl'                |

I propose that the prefix *a-* is an intrinsic case licenser that occupies  $K^0$  and licenses Case to the nominal, much like the augment vowel in Zulu (Halpert 2015). This proposal accounts for the full distribution of FS and CS nominals and has implications for our understanding of Case.

Nominals in the FS appear as (i) preverbal subjects, (ii) objects of a verb, and (iii) complements of certain so-called prepositions. Nominals in the CS appear as (i) postverbal subjects and (ii) complements of other prepositions. The distributions of the FS and CS nominals do not form obvious natural classes; as illustrated in (5) and (6), subjects may appear in the FS or CS, depending on where they appear with respect to the verb. In addition, while some prepositions select FS complements (7), others select CS complements (8).

|                      |                |                      |               |                   |              |                      |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| (5) A- <i>rgaz</i>   | <i>y-ecca.</i> | (6) Y- <i>ecca</i>   | <i>wrgaz.</i> | (7) <i>al</i>     | <i>ajdir</i> | (8) <i>γer wjdir</i> |
| FS-man               | 3M.Sg-ate      | 3M.Sg-eat            | man.CS        | until             | cliff.CS     | to cliff             |
| 'The man has eaten.' |                | 'The man has eaten.' |               | 'up to the cliff' |              | 'to the cliff'       |

The distribution of the FS and the CS suggest that the distinction is syntactically conditioned. I assume, following Guerssel (1992), that the FS morpheme is a case marker occupying  $K^0$ . Building on Guerssel's insights, as well as Halpert's analysis of augmented nominals in Zulu, I propose a new account of the FS/CS distinction as a difference in the size of the nominal projection. Nominals in the CS are bare DPs (contra Guerssel 1992) that must receive structural Case from elsewhere in the clause, while nominals in the FS are KPs that receive Case from an intrinsic licenser, the FS morpheme *a-*. I propose that this analysis accounts for the full distribution of Free State and Construct State nominals.

An outstanding problem is that preverbal subjects appear in the FS, while postverbal subjects appear in the CS. I assume, following Shlonsky (1987), that preverbal subjects are base-generated clause externally and coindexed with a pronoun in the (postverbal) subject position. Berber is a pro-drop language, so this pronoun is null when the subject is dislocated. I bring new evidence from Kabyle to bear on this claim. Postverbal subjects receive structural case in their base positions, and thus surface in the CS. Preverbal subjects are generated in a position where structural case is unavailable. To avoid a case filter violation, they must be licensed via an inserted  $K^0$ , the FS vowel *a-*.

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Selected References: Guerssel, M. 1992. On the Case System of Berber. *CJL* 37. • Halpert, C. 2015. *Argument Licensing and Agreement*. New York: Oxford UP. • Shlonsky, U. 1987. Focus Constructions in Berber. *MITWPL* 14.