# Free State and Construct State in Kabyle

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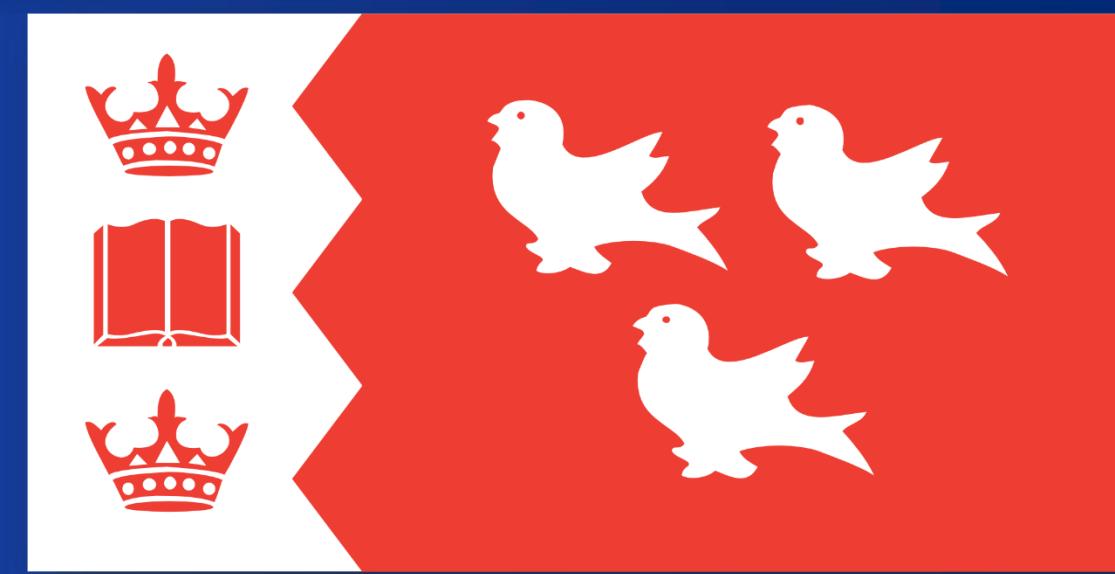
Kabyle

- Kabyle is one of a group of closely related languages, called Berber languages, that are spoken in northern Africa.

- It is spoken primarily in Algeria.

- Berber languages are members of the Afroasiatic language family, which includes languages such as Arabic and Hebrew.

- There are roughly 5,645 Kabyle speakers in Quebec.

- Many of these speakers live in Montreal.

- Montreal's Kabyle speaking community celebrates their culture at community centers, like the Centre Amazigh de Montreal.
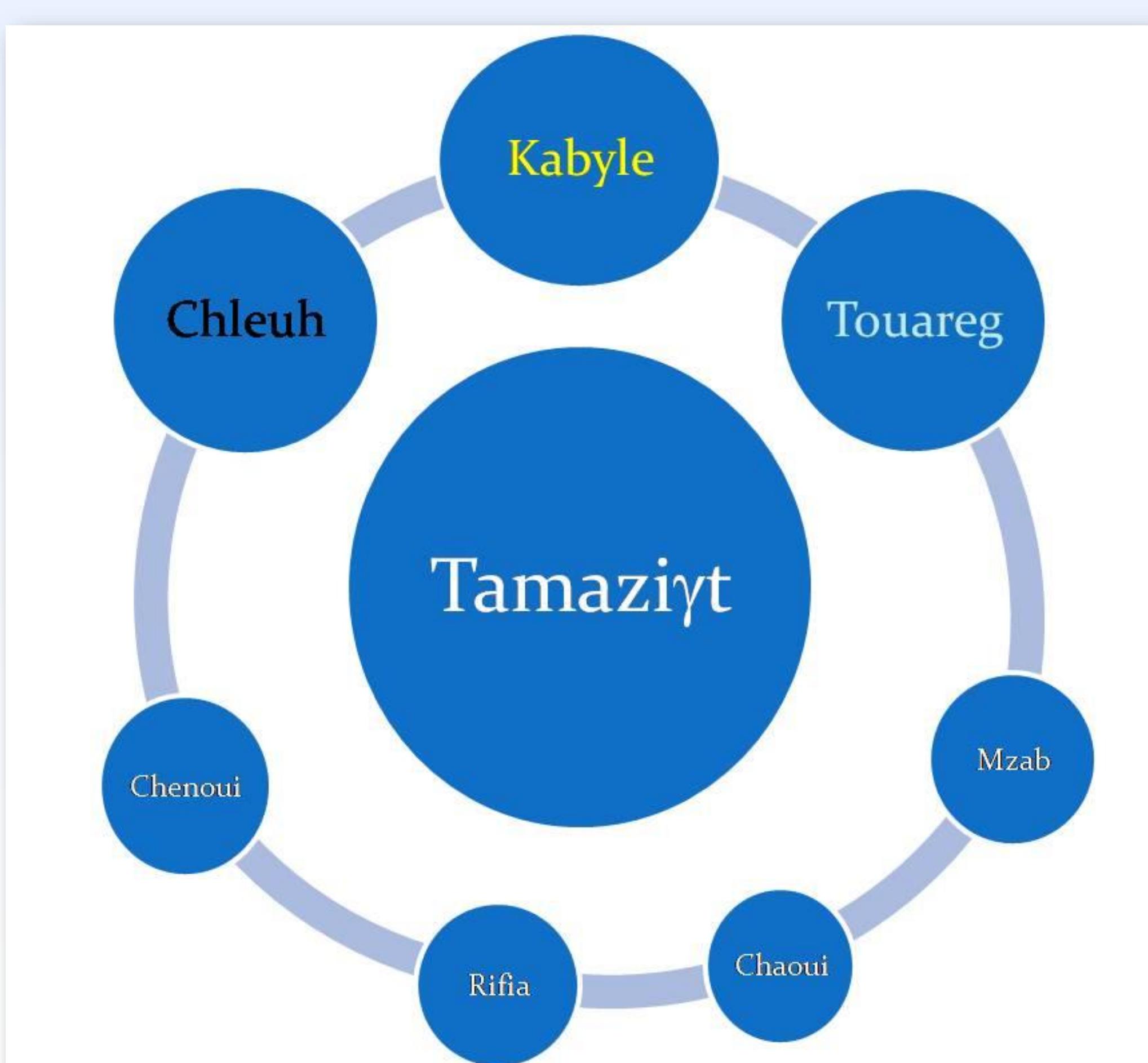
The Data

Nouns in Kabyle may be in the Free State (FS) or Construct State (CS).

(1) **a**- qcic   (2) **w**.qcic
    FS-child   **CS**.child
    'boy'   'boy'

Nouns in the Free State appear...
(i) As preverbal subjects
   (5) **a**- **rgaz**   y-   ecca
     FS- man   3M.Sg- ate
     'The man   has   eaten'

(ii) As objects of a verb
   (6) y-   sbe6   **w**.rgaz
       t- **a**- **xxam**-**t**
     3M.Sg-paint   CS.man
     F-**FS**-room-**F**
     'The man painted the room'

(iii) With some prepositions
   (7) al   **a**- jens
      until   **FS**-inside
      'until the inside'

Nouns in the Construct State appear…
(i) As postverbal subjects
   (8) y-   ecca   **w**.rgaz
     3M.Sg- ate   **CS**.man
     'The man has eaten'

(ii) With other prepositions
   (9) gher   **w**.jens
      to   **CS**.inside
      'to the inside'

Methodology: Fieldwork

- Data was collected from a language consultant.

- A language consultant is a native speaker of the language being studied.

- Linguists ask language consultants questions about their language, like...
  - "How do you say "boy" in Kabyle?"
  - "Is *argaz yecca* an acceptable Kabyle sentence?"

- This data is used to describe and analyze the language's grammar.

- Linguists study a variety of languages to understand what human languages have in common, and the ways in which they can differ.

Research Question

Is the Free State/Construct State distinction similar to case in languages like Latin?

What is Case?

- Nouns take different inflected forms based on their grammatical function in the sentence.
  - This phenomenon is called "Case".

- Example: Latin
*naut.**a***   *in scaph.**am***   *salit*
sailor.**NOM**   in boat.**ACC**   jump
'The sailor is jumping into the boat'

Case in Kabyle

- The state distinction in Kabyle does not line up with case in other languages.

  - It does not distinguish the subject from the object, as evidenced in (5) and (8).

- In Kabyle, nouns can appear in positions where they are not assigned case.

- When this happens, they are assigned case by the Free State vowel.

- This accounts for the distribution of the nouns.
  - Nouns in the Construct State appear where they are assigned case from an external licenser.
  - Nouns in the Free State appear where they are not assigned case from an external licenser.

Implications for Case Theory

- This analysis does not contradict what we already know about case.

- The Free State vowel is just a different kind of licenser from the licensers in well-studied case systems, like that of Latin.

- Similar systems are attested cross-linguistically (for instance, in Zulu).