

The background image shows a town with various colored buildings (red, white, grey) situated in a valley. In the distance, there are rugged, brown mountains under a clear blue sky. A semi-transparent grey rectangle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the title text. Two thin white horizontal lines are positioned above and below the top part of the text box.

# **Anti-Agreement Effect in the speech of Arabic-dominant heritage speakers of Tashelhiyt Berber**

**Imane Bou-Saboun  
University of Maryland**

---

# Contents

1. Background
  2. Question
  3. Verbal AGR in Moroccan Arabic and Tashelhiyt
  4. AAE in Berber
  5. MDH
  6. Predictions
  7. Participants
  8. Materials
  9. Results
  10. Conclusions
  11. Bibliography
  12. Bonus Appendix
-



---

## **1. a. Heritage languages and speakers**

“A heritage language is a language spoken at home which is not a dominant language of the larger society. An individual qualifies as a heritage speaker if they have a command of the heritage language that is not comparable in level to that of native monolinguals of the same age” (Rothmann 2009)

---

---

## 1. b. Heritage agreement

Agreement is vulnerable in heritage grammars  
(Polinsky 2018)

This vulnerability is more prominent in the  
nominal domain than in the verbal one (Albirini  
et al 2013)

---

---

## 2. Question

Would subject-verb agreement be maintained if the two languages differ in its distribution?

---

---

### 3. Subject-verb agreement

Moroccan Arabic	Tashelhiyt Berber
Imra <span style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 2px;">ħzz-at</span> lwld woman 3FS.lift.PERF DET.boy The woman lifted the boy	tamyart <span style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 2px;">t-wll</span> wfrux woman 3FS.lift.PERF ACC.boy The woman lifted the boy
rraʒl <span style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 2px;">ħzz</span> lwld man 3MS.lift.PERF DET.boy The man lifted the boy	argaz <span style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 2px;">i-wll</span> wfrux man 3MS.lift.PERF ACC.boy The man lifted the boy

---



## 4. Anti Agreement Effect (Ouhalla 1993)

	tamɣart <b>t-wll</b> wfrux woman 3FS.lift.PERF ACC.boy The woman lifted the boy	argaz <b>i-wll</b> wfrux man 3MS.lift.PERF ACC.boy The man lifted the boy
AAE	tamɣart lli i-wll-n wfrux woman REL lift.PERF ACC.boy The woman that lifted the boy	argaz lli i-wll-n wfrux MSG.person REL lift.PERF ACC.boy The man that lifted the boy
NO SUBJECT EXTRACTION	afrwx lli-d <b>t-wll</b> tamɣart boy REL 3FS.lift.PERF woman The boy that the woman lifted	afrux lli-d <b>i-wll</b> argaz boy REL 3MS.lift.PERF man The boy that the man lifted
NO AAE	*tamɣart llid <b>t-wll</b> wfrux	*argaz llid <b>i-wll</b> wfrux

---

## **5. Markedness Differential Hypothesis (Eckman, 1977, 1985)**

“the areas of difficulty that a language learner will have can be predicted on the basis of a comparison of the grammars of the Native Language, the Target Language, and the markedness relations stated in universal grammar”<sup>1</sup>

---

---

## 6. Predictions

1. If AAE is only present in the Heritage Language (HL) and not in the Dominant Language (DL), then it will be difficult for the heritage speakers to implement the difference.
  2. Subject-verb agreement in Tashelhiyt will not be difficult for the heritage speakers because it is not marked.
-

---

## 7. Participants

### Main group:

27 heritage speakers of Tashelhiyt Berber

Born and raised in Casablanca

### Control group:

11 native speakers

Born and raised in majority Berber-speaking area

Started using Arabic everyday at ages 15-18

---



---

## 8. Materials (1)

The data collection was run in Moroccan Arabic.

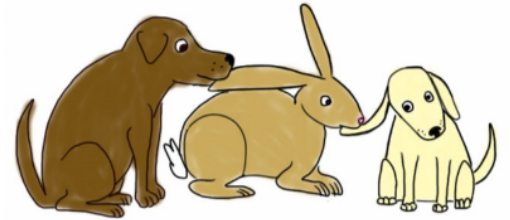
Elicitation of subject relative clauses through pictures of drawings.

9 pictures

18 questions

Goal: to test AAE agreement errors.

---



---

## 8. Materials (2)

Free narrative elicitation

For the purposes of speech rate

Measurements.

Still of “Timid

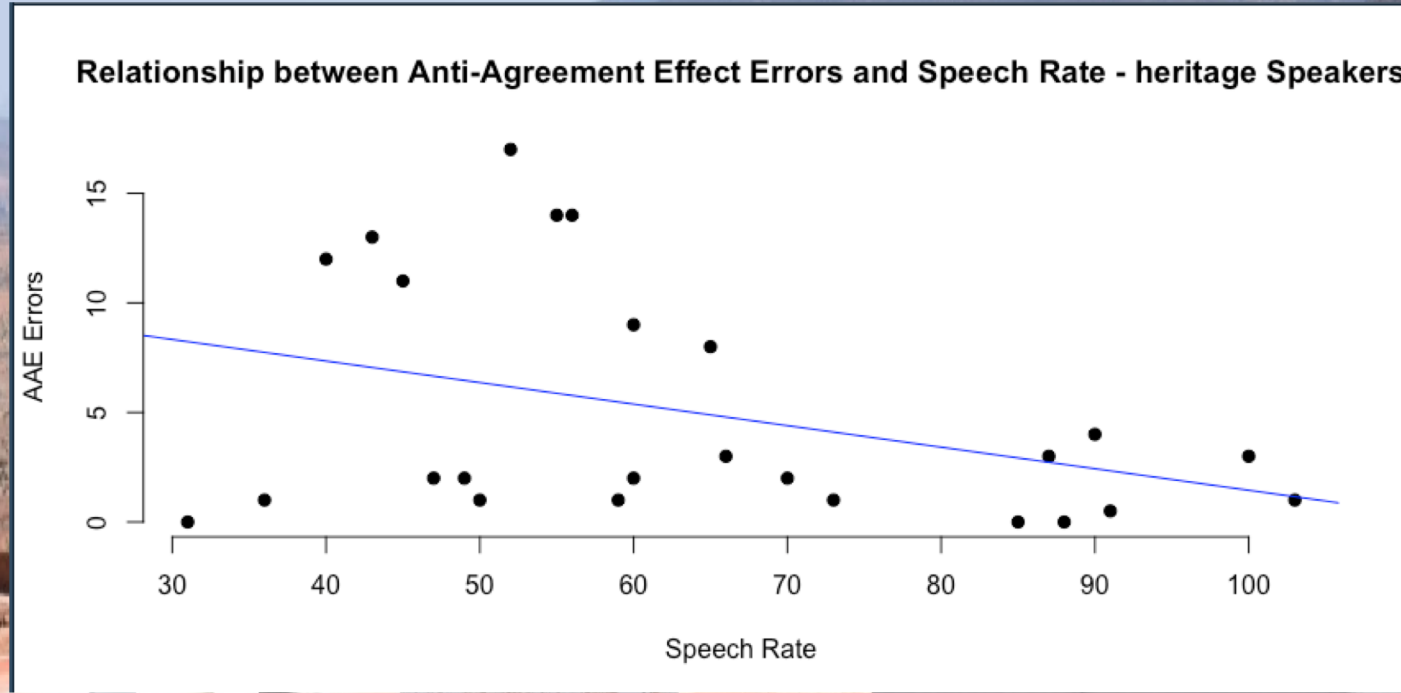
Tabby”, 3-minute video.



# 9. Results - heritage speakers

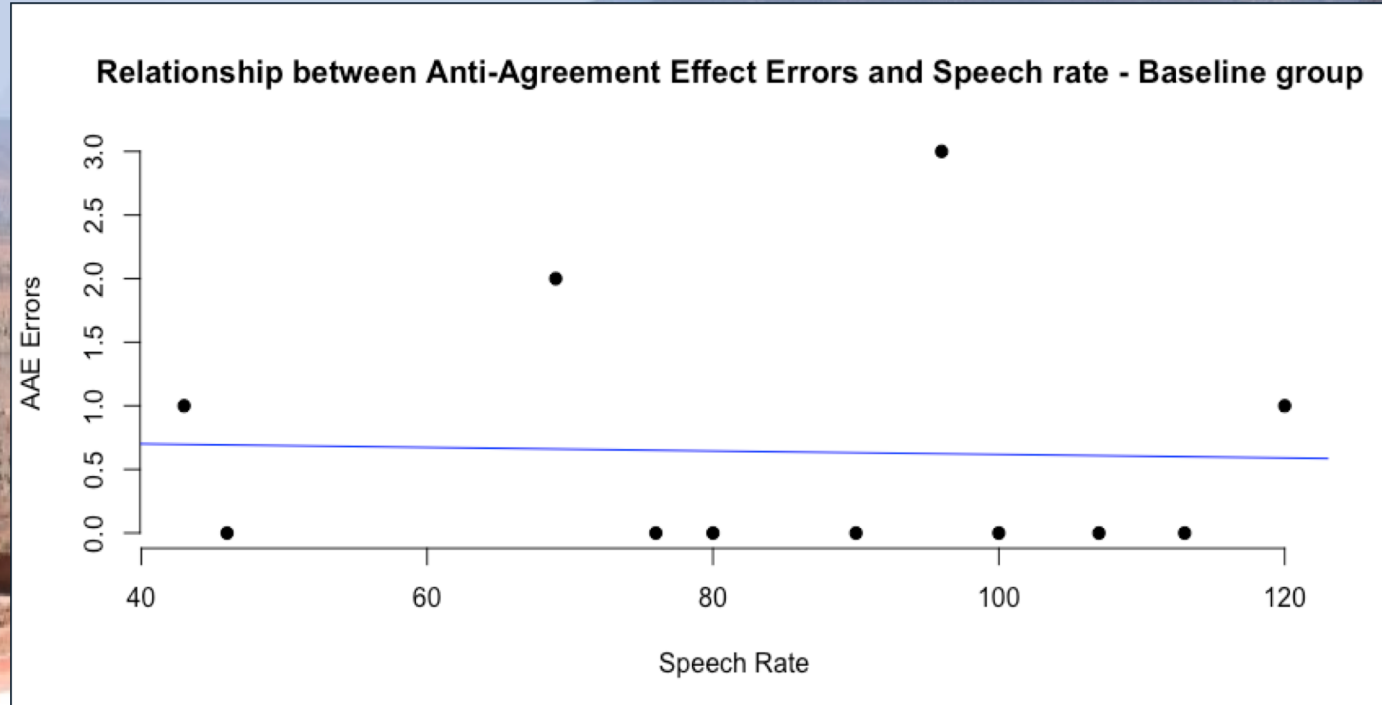
R = -0.3744665

P-value = 0.0651



# 9. Results - Berber native speakers

R = -0,03504677





---

## 10. Conclusions

- 1) All heritage speakers make *some* AAE mistakes, regardless of proficiency. This follows our predictions based on MDH.
- 2) The rate of errors can be predicted to some degree by fluency (here measured in terms of Speech Rate).

Fluency is in turn influenced by length and frequency of exposure and age of interruption of the heritage language, amongst other factors.

---

# 11. Bibliography

Albirini, A., Benmamoun, E., & Chakrani, B. (2013). Gender and number agreement in the oral production of Arabic Heritage speakers. *Bilingualism*, 16(1), 1.

Brustad, K. (2000). *Spoken Arabic*. Georgetown University Press.

Eckman, F. R. (1985). Some theoretical and pedagogical implications of the markedness differential hypothesis. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 289-307.

Eckman, F. R. (1985). Some theoretical and pedagogical implications of the markedness differential hypothesis. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 289-307.

<sup>1</sup> Mehrdad, A. G., & Ahghar, M. R. (2015). Markedness and Syllabus Design in SLA. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 177, 104-108.

Ouhalla, J. (1993). Subject-extraction, negation and the antiagreement effect. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 11(3), 477-518.

Polinsky, M. (2018). *Heritage languages and their speakers* (Vol. 159). Cambridge University Press.



Thank You!  
Tammirt!

شكرا لكم!

---

## 12. Appendix (1): Markedness

A phenomenon A in some language is more marked than B if the presence of A in a language implies presence of B, but presence of B does not imply presence of A. (Eckman 1977)

Anti-Agreement effect is more marked than normal subject-verb agreement

- AAE in Tashelhiyt Berber implies the presence of Subject-Verb Agreement
  - Subject-Verb Agreement in Arabic does not imply the presence of AAE.
-



## Appendix(2): The AAE does NOT apply in MA

	Imra <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">hzz-at</span> lwld DET.woman 3FS.lift.PERF DET.boy The woman lifted the boy	rrazl <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">hzz</span> lwld DET.man 3MS.lift.PERF DET.boy The man lifted the boy
SUBJECT EXTRACTION	Imra lli <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">hzz-at</span> lwld DET.woman REL lift.PERF DET.boy The woman that lifted the boy	rrazl lli <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">hzz</span> lwld DET.man REL lift.PERF DET.boy The man that lifted the boy
OBJECT RELATIVE CLAUSE	lwld lli <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">hzz-at</span> -uh Imra boy REL 3FS.lifted-him DET.woman The boy that the woman lifted	lwld lli <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">hzz</span> -uh rrazl boy REL 3MS.lifted-him DET.man The boy that the man lifted
AAE	*Imra lli hzz lwld	*rrazl lli hzz lwld