

# Tarifit

L. van der Zijden Holstvoogd en E. de Ruiter

## 1. Language description

Tarifit is also known under the names: Riffian, Rif Berber, Northern Berber, and Tamazight. Tarifit is spoken by at least 1.5-2 million Moroccans (ethnologue.com), but there are also sources that indicate there are many more speakers.

Tarifit is one of the Berber languages and belongs to the Afro-Asiatic language family, just like the Semitic languages. In Morocco, Tarifit is a minority language which only attained official status in 2011. Most people in Morocco speak Moroccan Arabic. French is also spoken in Morocco. Many Moroccans speak multiple languages. In Tarifit, you can find loan words from Arabic, French, and Italian.

There are 3 dialects in Tarifit. The dialects have both phonological and lexical variations (E-Rramdani, 2003).

Because of the many differences in phonology and lexicon, we were not able to find enough words that were pronounced the same way by all consulted native speakers. Therefore, the Tarifit version of Speakaboo only contains 27 words, and not all consonants occur in all positions in the test.

**Table 1**

*Consonant system Tarifit*

	Coronal					Dorsal								
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Faryngal	Glottal				
plosive	p <sup>1</sup>	b		t	d		k	g	q	ʔ				
emphatic				t <sup>ɛ</sup>	d <sup>ɛ</sup>									
nasal		m		n		(ɲ)	(ŋ)							
tap flap				r										
fricative		β	f	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ	x	ɣ	ħ	ʕ	h
emphatic				s <sup>ɛ</sup>	z <sup>ɛ</sup>									
liquid				l										
semi vowel	w		ʋ				j							

<sup>1</sup>probably only in loan words such as /æpulis/

In Tarifit, the consonants can be extended. This is indicated by a /:/ behind the consonant in IPA. Extending the consonant has an effect on meaning.

## 2. Phonological development

According Kosmann (2013), the following sounds are relatively rare:

/b/, /d/, /d<sup>ɛ</sup>/, /t/, /g/, and /k/

With the exception of certain contexts:

- when there is doubling, such as in /jæddaa/ 'he lives';
- when the sound follows a nasal, such as in /θandint/ 'city';
- only for /t/: when the sound occurs in a word-final cluster, such as in /θafunast/ 'cow'.

Assuming that complex and/or rare sounds are acquired later than common (and articulatorily simpler) sounds, it is assumed here that the above sounds are acquired at a later stage in the phonological development.

In addition, Kossmann (2013) describes the emphatic sounds as influential sounds: when a word contains an emphatic sound, all other sounds of that word are also pronounced emphatically. Because the emphatic sounds are so articulatorily complex, the sound are also assumed to be acquired at a later stage in the phonological development. Of the emphatic sounds in Tarifit, only /d<sup>ɛ</sup>/, /z<sup>ɛ</sup>/, and /r<sup>ɛ</sup>/ are common sounds in words with a Berber origin. This could mean that these sounds are acquired earlier than the other emphatic sounds.

Furthermore, no English literature about Tarifit was found.

### 3. Common phonological processes

No data available.

### 4. Lexical variation

No data available.

### 5. Results of typically developing Moroccan toddlers

No data available.

### 6. Sources

#### **Literature**

Campbell, G.L. (1995/2011). *Concise compendium of the world's languages*. London: Routledge.

Chtatou, M. (1982). *Aspects of the phonology of a Berber dialect of the Rif*. London: University of London/SOAS Ph.D. dissertation.

Kossmann, M.G. (2013). The Arabic influence on Northern Berber. *Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics*, 67. Leiden, Boston: Brill.

Laghzaoui, M. (2011). *Emergent academic language at home and at school: A longitudinal study of 3- to 6-year-old Moroccan Berber children in the Netherlands*. Oisterwijk: Boxpress.

McClelland, C. (2008). *A Phonology of Tarifit Berber*. München: Lincom.

Tabaouni (2009). *Spontane taalanalyse als alternatief voor een klassieke taaltest? Onderzoek bij successief tweetalige (Berbers-Nederlands) kleuter*. Bachelorscriptie logopedie en audiologie. Antwerpen: Lessius Hogeschool.

Yahya, E. (2003). *Acquiring Tarifit-Berber by children in the Netherlands and Morocco* (No. 3). Aksant Academic Pub.

***Other sources***

Dr P.H.F. Bos, universitair docent Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Expertise: Nederlands als tweede taal; Tweektaligheid; Taalverwerving; Marokkaans-Arabisch

Dr Abderrahman El Aissati, Universitair docent, Tilburg School of Humanities, Department of Culture Studies

Dr. M.G. Kossmann, universitair docent Universiteit Leiden, expertise: Berbertalen