

## **Exploring the Feminization of Tachelhit Language Transmission through Contemporary Amazigh Pop Songs**

A recent report found that out of thirty-two Amazigh language varieties in North Africa, there are only four that are not in danger of disappearing. Both top-down and bottom-up approaches to linguistic revitalization are necessary for the survival of Amazigh languages in Morocco.

Bottom-up approaches are dependent on the community maintaining language vitality through documentation, use, and intergenerational transmission to guarantee its vitality and survival. The bottom-up process of Amazigh language revitalization, however, is gendered, and the process of Tachelhit language transmission has become a highly feminized one, placing the burden of linguistic and cultural survival on Tachelhit-speaking women

This paper will explore the feminization of Tachelhit language transmission through the medium of contemporary Amazigh pop songs in Morocco, showing how contemporary Amazigh music contributes to reinforcing the gendered processes of language revitalization and maintenance. Using Tachelhit-language songs released in the past 5 years, my research demonstrates how women are still seen as crucial to the reproduction of the countryside, of Tachelhit language and of Amazigh identity, as well as bearing the brunt of performing authenticity.

The feminization of Tachelhit language transmission, which links Tachelhit authenticity to monolingual women and rurality, places the burden of language survival on Tachelhit-speaking women but also ultimately is harmful to efforts to revitalize and regenerate Amazigh language varieties in contemporary Morocco. Linking Tachelhit to rurality and tradition complicates our ability to imagine Tachelhit as an urban, contemporary language, which is essential to any language revitalization effort. In order to ensure the survival of Amazigh languages in Morocco, we must move away from stereotyping Tachelhit as a language of rural, monolingual women, particularly in popular culture, and create new possibilities that place Tachelhit at the center of contemporary Moroccan life.

### **Keywords:**

Amazigh, Tachelhit, Gender, Morocco, Women, Music