

## LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE AND LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN MOROCCO

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### ABSTRACT

Morocco is a multilingual country with a diverse linguistic landscape. The official languages of Morocco are Arabic and Amazigh, but French and Spanish are also widely spoken. The Moroccan Constitution of 2011 recognizes the diversity of Moroccan languages and cultures, and it states that Amazigh is an official language alongside Arabic. The most widely spoken language in Morocco is Moroccan Arabic, which is a colloquial variety of Arabic. Moroccan Arabic is used in everyday life, in the media, and in education. Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic are also used in formal contexts, such as government and religion. Amazigh is the native language of about 25% of the Moroccan population. It is spoken in a variety of dialects, including Tachelhit, Tamazight, Tarifit, Hassani and Hebrew. Amazigh is used in education and in the media, but it is not as widely spoken as Moroccan Arabic. French, English and Spanish are also spoken in Morocco, especially in urban areas. The linguistic situation in Morocco is complex and dynamic. The country's history and geography have contributed to its linguistic diversity. The study examines the linguistic situation in Morocco, taking into account all languages, national and foreign languages, their functions and status in the framework of different linguistic policies. The study also highlights the complexity of the linguistic situation in Morocco as well as the consequences of this multilingualism on the languages present in Morocco.

**Keywords:** Complexity, Language policies, Language revitalization, linguistic situation, Multilingualism, sociolinguistics.

### RESUME

Le Maroc est un pays multilingue avec un paysage linguistique diversifié. Les langues officielles du Maroc sont l'arabe et l'amazigh, mais le français et l'espagnol sont également largement parlés. La Constitution marocaine de 2011 reconnaît la diversité des langues et des cultures marocaines, et stipule que l'amazigh est une langue officielle au même titre que l'arabe. La langue la plus parlée au Maroc est l'arabe marocain, qui est une variété familière de l'arabe. L'arabe marocain est utilisé dans la vie quotidienne, dans les médias et dans l'éducation. L'arabe classique et l'arabe standard moderne sont également utilisés dans des contextes formels, tels que le gouvernement et la religion. L'amazigh est la langue maternelle d'environ 25 % de la population marocaine. Il est parlé dans une variété de dialectes, notamment le tachelhit, le tamazight, le tarifit et le hassanien. L'amazigh est utilisé dans l'éducation et dans les médias, mais il n'est pas aussi largement parlé que l'arabe marocain. Le français, l'anglais et l'espagnol sont également parlés au Maroc, en particulier dans les zones urbaines. La situation linguistique au Maroc est complexe et dynamique. L'histoire et la géographie du pays

ont contribué à sa diversité linguistique. L'étude examine la situation linguistique au Maroc, en prenant en compte toutes les langues, langues nationales et étrangères, leurs fonctions et statuts dans le cadre des différentes politiques linguistiques. L'étude met également en évidence la complexité de la situation linguistique au Maroc ainsi que les conséquences de ce multilinguisme sur les langues en présence au Maroc.

**Mots clés :** Complexité, Politiques linguistiques, Revitalisation linguistique, Situation linguistique, Multilinguisme, sociolinguistique.

## INTRODUCTION

A brief presentation of the linguistic situation in Morocco would be necessary for the theme of our research. We will recall the main criteria that characterize the Moroccan linguistic landscape in order to help us understand the different situations of linguistic diversity, especially those related to the place given to the French language.

Morocco has a varied linguistic landscape. This is mainly influenced by the presence of national languages, including standard Arabic, in its classical and modern forms, colloquial Arabic with its different dialects, Amazigh with its three variants (Tamazight, Tachelhit, Tarifit), and foreign languages, some of which, including French<sup>1</sup> and Spanish, have been established in the linguistic field since the colonial era, and others, especially English, have become established in certain sectors of social life, specifically those of education, technology, economy, and business. This hybrid and complex situation has given rise to a rather complex linguistic diversity. According to Ennaji, this linguistic diversity is "marked by four important ingredients: Berber, Arabic, French, and Islam. Berber and colloquial Arabic express popular culture, while classical Arabic, French, and Islam represent the culture of knowledge." (Ennaji, 2010). These languages are distinguished by their status, function, and use. This multilingualism, which characterizes the sociolinguistic situation in Morocco, has various effects in different important areas such as education, information, administration, culture, and, of course, the economy.

### 1- Arabic

There are undoubtedly several ways to describe the sociolinguistic landscape of Morocco. More specifically, it is at the level of the description of Arabic that opinions differ. The denominations are multiple: we find different names such as "classical Arabic", "standard Arabic", "modern Arabic", "median Arabic", "Moroccan Arabic", all of which attest to a complex linguistic reality in Morocco. For some linguists, two different forms of Arabic are in use in Morocco: the so-called "literary" Arabic or 'al fusha'<sup>2</sup>, and the Moroccan colloquial Arabic, generally called darija. Standard Arabic has a privileged status that is conferred by Islamic religion and secular power, it is the liturgical language of Moroccans and the official language of public institutions, and it is the language of writing and reading. Standard Arabic has no native speakers.

However, other contemporary linguists use new terms. According to Youssi (1983), three linguistic varieties are spoken in various Arab-speaking countries: modern standard Arabic on

<sup>1</sup> French is a particularly well-suited language for studying language contact and its resulting phenomena.

<sup>2</sup> The term "Fusha" is used most often by native speakers of Arabic.

the one hand and colloquial Arabic on the other hand, and between these two commonly accepted systems is the median Arabic that would have developed among the Arab-speaking intellectual community. This Arabic triglossia (Youssi, 1995) would thus consist of classical Arabic, modern Arabic, and colloquial Arabic, forming "a continuum" (Benzakour, 2010). Similarly, Louis-Jean Calvet presents the situation of Arabic in Morocco as follows:

«Nous pourrions dire, en restant cependant simplificateur, qu'il y a un arabe uniquement écrit (l'arabe classique, qui n'est la langue de personne mais que certains apprennent, une langue figée, « morte »), un arabe écrit oralisé (l'arabe médian, qui tend à prendre des formes locales et qui est également appris) et des arabes parlés (les « dialectes »), les seuls dont on hérite en famille» (Calvet, 1999).

[We could say, while still being simplistic, that there is a written Arabic only (classical Arabic, which is not the language of anyone but that some people learn, a frozen, "dead" language), an oralized written Arabic (median Arabic, which tends to take on local forms and is also learned) and spoken Arabs (the "dialects"), the only ones that are inherited in the family. Translation mine.]

Since our study focuses on texts written in French by Moroccans, the influence of the Arabic language cannot be ignored. We identify two main variants based on differences in levels of codification: Standard Arabic and Moroccan colloquial Arabic. This dichotomy of Arabic in Morocco is increasingly used to describe the Moroccan sociolinguistic landscape (Boukous 2005; Messaoudi, 2013a, 2013b,):

«Il est important de relever la diglossie séculaire qui caractérise le dédoublement de la langue arabe en, d'un côté, une variété savante, l'arabe standard (désormais AS) et d'un autre côté, en une variété « ordinaire», orale, non codifiée par écrit, utilisée dans les échanges langagiers spontanés que nous désignons par arabe dialectal marocain (désormais ADM) ou darija.» (Messaoudi, 2013a).

[It is important to note the secular diglossia that characterizes the doubling of the Arabic language into, on the one hand, a learned variety, standard Arabic (hereinafter AS) and, on the other hand, into a "ordinary" variety, oral, not codified in writing, used in spontaneous language exchanges that we designate as Moroccan colloquial Arabic (here in after ADM). Translation mine.]

#### **a- Standard Arabic**

"This is the codified variety, the "learned variety" (Messaoudi, 2013a). It is also the language of writing, in various fields (Messaoudi, 2013b) including legal and administrative and media. Standard Arabic is not the vehicular language of Moroccans who experience "linguistic insecurity" towards this variety. It is not spoken spontaneously by anyone, as Messaoudi notes: «L'arabe standard est soutenu par toutes les politiques linguistiques étatiques desdits pays et le Maroc ne fait pas l'exception. Certes, ce n'est pas une langue parlée spontanément par tous les citoyens, mais elle est, à des degrés divers, maniée par eux, à l'écrit et à l'oral (discours politiques, débats parlementaires, etc.) pour les sujets ayant trait à la vie publique et aux secteurs socioculturels et éducatifs» (Messaoudi, 2013a).

[Standard Arabic is supported by all state language policies in these countries, and Morocco is no exception. Of course, it is not a language spoken spontaneously by all citizens, but it is, to varying degrees, used by them, in writing and orally (political speeches, parliamentary debates,

etc.) for subjects related to public life and socio-cultural and educational sectors. Translation mine.]

Standard Arabic fulfills the functions of the language of religious institutions, religious education, and liturgical practices. It is the language of education from primary to higher education in most fields. It is also the language of the media, the press, and the administration; it is the language of symbolic power. Standard Arabic holds the prestigious functions of a formal official language. Boukous summarizes these functions as follows:

«L'arabe standard remplit les fonctions de langue des institutions religieuses et publiques. C'est donc à la fois la langue du champ du sacré, représenté par l'enseignement religieux et les pratiques liturgiques, et celle du domaine séculier, car c'est aussi la langue dominante dans le champ politique ; en effet, l'arabe standard est employé dans les cérémonies officielles et les institutions politiques et administratives, en particulier lors des sessions parlementaires et dans les administrations publiques. C'est également la langue du pouvoir symbolique, i.e., c'est le code de la culture savante, celle des élites.» (Boukous, 2005).

[Standard Arabic fulfills the functions of the language of religious and public institutions. It is therefore both the language of the sacred field, represented by religious education and liturgical practices, and that of the secular domain, because it is also the dominant language in the political field; in fact, standard Arabic is used in official ceremonies and political and administrative institutions, especially during parliamentary sessions and in public administrations. It is also the language of symbolic power, i.e., it is the code of the learned culture, that of the elites. Translation mine.]

These two main areas of use of standard Arabic allow us to understand that standard Arabic is the name given to a modern variant of the Arabic language, the one that is taught in schools, as opposed to ancient Arabic (the language of pre-Islamic poetry) and classical Arabic (the language of Arab-Islamic civilization)."

### **b- Modern Arabic**

Modern Arabic is a variety of Arabic that is similar to classical Arabic in its morphology and phonology. It is the standard Arabic that is spoken. According to some linguists, there is no distinction between classical Arabic and standard Arabic. However, others, such as Benzakour, believe that there are distinctions between the two:

«L'arabe moderne, s'il ne présente pas de différences morphosyntaxiques et phonologiques notoires avec l'arabe classique, se caractérise néanmoins par l'assouplissement de ses structures grammaticales. Son lexique s'est enrichi de toute une terminologie correspondant au monde moderne et imposée par le contact de plus en plus important, du fait du développement des moyens de communication et de diffusion. C'est cette langue qui est aujourd'hui utilisée dans la littérature moderne, dans la presse écrite et dans l'administration. Elle est employée sous forme orale dans les médias (radio et télévision) et l'enseignement.»<sup>3</sup>

[Modern Arabic, while it does not present any notable morphosyntactic and phonological differences with classical Arabic, is nevertheless characterized by the relaxation of its grammatical structures. Its lexicon has been enriched with a whole terminology corresponding

<sup>3</sup> Benzakour, Fouzia et autres, Le français au Maroc : lexique et contacts de langues, Actualités Linguistiques Francophones, Bruxelles, Duculot, 2000, p. 67- 68.

to the modern world and imposed by the increasingly important contact, due to the development of the means of communication and diffusion. It is this language that is used today in modern literature, in the written press and in the administration. It is used in oral form in the media (radio and television) and in education. Translation mine.]

This language constitutes an intermediate form between classical Arabic and Moroccan dialect. Today, modern Arabic finds its vocation in all areas of social life: education, administration, business, and the press. Boukous postulates that the median variety that corresponds to modern Arabic is found only in oral exchanges. He also believes that it is possible to conceive of Arabic as forming a continuum:

«[...] la diglossie arabe standard-arabe dialectal a tendance à se transformer en un continuum linguistique par l'émergence d'une variété médiane, un mésolecte s'intercalant entre les deux variétés distantes, il en résulte que le passage de la variété haute à la variété basse ou l'inverse se fait non plus de manière abrupte en quittant un système linguistique pour un autre, mais se déroule de façon douce et continue, car la base structurelle de l'arabe médian est en quelque sorte le commun dénominateur des structures des deux systèmes de base, celui de l'arabe standard et celui de l'arabe dialectal.» (Boukous, 2005)

[ [...] the diglossia of standard Arabic-dialectal Arabic tends to transform into a linguistic continuum by the emergence of a median variety, a mesolect interspersed between the two distant varieties, resulting in the passage from the high variety to the low variety or vice versa no longer occurs abruptly by leaving one linguistic system for another, but takes place in a smooth and continuous manner, since the structural basis of the median Arabic is in a way the common denominator of the structures of the two base systems, that of standard Arabic and that of the Moroccan dialect. Translation mine. ]

### **c- Classical Arabic**

Classical Arabic is a prestigious language associated with religion, literary culture. It is a second language that is not the mother tongue of anyone. Its norm is frozen and is only mastered by an elite of scholars who use it in strictly formal situations, mainly religious or political. Classical Arabic is associated with the Qur'an, the sacred book of Muslims. This liturgical language "perpetuates the religious tradition" (Benzakour, 2000) in Morocco and it does not constitute a vehicular language at all, but it helps to ensure mutual understanding between Arabic speakers as a heritage of the Arab-Islamic civilization. It enjoys a prestigious status because it is associated with religion and writing, but also because it is eloquent and respects the norms and good usage.

### **d. Moroccan colloquial Arabic dialect, or darija**

Darija is the mother tongue of non-Amazighophone Moroccans. It is essentially the vehicular language that serves as a means of communication for the majority of Moroccan speakers. It is used in informal situations (between family members, between individuals in their daily relations at work, in commerce, on television, in theater and cinema...).

However, it is worth noting that darija is beginning to be used in formal situations, ranging from the court, the mass media, through the mosque during the Khotba, to schools and even

universities. It is used exclusively in interviews and in official bodies. And, as Chatar-Moumni rightly points out: "Darija is today widely used in the written press, on television and on the radio, in programs and texts dealing with subjects that are both formal and informal, in political debates, interviews with officials, in parliament, etc."<sup>4</sup>

Moroccan Arabic is a well-individualized linguistic system, although it is not codified in writing. Moroccan Arabic is increasingly used in writing, particularly on the internet and social media. Although Moroccan dialectal Arabic is not officially recognized, it is experiencing a real functional expansion.

The French-language weekly *Telquel* launched the debate on *darija* in 2002, with its issue 34 entitled "Darija, Our National Language". This debate sparked reactions, such as the creation of the weekly *Nichane*<sup>5</sup> in 2006, which is written partly in *darija* and in Arabic script. Since then, *darija* has become increasingly visible in the urban and media landscape. It is also used in advertising and on materials for the public, such as the traffic code. *Darija* is emerging and has an increasingly large presence in the linguistic landscape in Morocco. Journalists are increasingly using *darija* in writing, sometimes for a stylistic function. However, there is no institutional recognition of the expansion of *darija*. *Darija* is a language that was considered exclusively oral a few years ago. However, thanks to writing, it has become more visible. The shift to writing promotes the "demarginalization" and "recognition" of this language (Miller, 2011).

*Darija* has become a language of creation (Caubet, 2005) and an emblem of modern and current cultural and artistic expression in Morocco. It is used in many fields, from educational to religious, from private to public, from artistic to cultural, from political to virtual.

With the advent of new technologies, the use of Moroccan Arabic has developed, whether online on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, or thanks to the widespread use of mobile phones. Even Microsoft has launched into *darija* in partnership with Buzzef, launching the first digital campaign in *darija* to promote the new version of Internet Explorer 9. This campaign targets young people and uses *darija* expressions such as "jarrabni-daba" (try me now) and "tconekta u bikheer" (connect and everything is fine). The fastest changes are taking place on the Internet, with the development of what some call "e-*darija*"<sup>6</sup>. *Darija* is gaining visibility in the urban and media landscape, which can be seen as a reconciliation of Moroccans with their vernacular language.

In general, the dubbing of Turkish, Mexican, and Indian series in *Darija* has contributed to the diversification and popularity of the language on television, allowing viewers to connect with content in their vernacular language and fostering a stronger bond between the public and the media.

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<sup>4</sup> Nizha CHATAR-MOUMNI : Vers une Standardisation de L'arabe Marocain ?, in, *Echo des études romanes* XI/1, 2015, MoDyCo, UMR 7114, Université Paris Descartes. p75.

<sup>5</sup> *Nichane* was not the first attempt at a newspaper written in *Darija*. For example, there were the newspapers *Khbar Bladna* and *Al-Amal*. However, *Nichane* was the weekly "scandal sheet". The famous dossier on Moroccan jokes had serious consequences and cost the newspaper a ban by the Prime Minister's decision, just a few months after its launch.

<sup>6</sup> ZIAMARI Karima & DE RUITER Jan Jaap, 2015, « Les langues au Maroc : réalités, changements et évolutions linguistiques », in *Le Maroc au présent : D'une époque à l'autre, une société en mutation*, [en ligne], <http://books.openedition.org/cjb/1068>, p.441-442 (consulté le 25.12.2022).

In the field of marketing, we can cite the Coca-Cola advertising campaign, launched in early 2014, which used Darija to create personalized bottles<sup>7</sup>, zzaz (beauty), 3chiri (my friend), supersat (superman), supersata (super woman). A source of economic wealth, Darija competes with, among others, Modern Standard Arabic. Marketers speak to consumers in their language, regardless of script, Latin or Arabic, which allows for a stronger connection with the public. Darija has always been strong as a national oral communication language, the lingua franca of the Kingdom, and it is strengthening its presence on the linguistic market, especially at the expense of other languages, such as French.

## 2- Amazigh

Amazigh is one of the different linguistic varieties that exist in the Moroccan linguistic field. This language is divided into three varieties: Tamazight spoken in the center of Morocco, Tachelhit spoken in the south, and Tarifit spoken in the north. The three varieties are characterized by both their complementarity and their linguistic particularities. The differences between these three major dialectal groups are found in phonetic, morphological, and lexical aspects.

The constitutionalization of Tamazight in Morocco offers this language unprecedented opportunities and prospects in terms of recognition, protection, revitalization, promotion, and social appropriation within the framework of an institutionalization process framed by the organic law provided for in paragraph 3 of article 5 of the Constitution<sup>8</sup>.

The Moroccan Constitution of 2011, among its many contributions to the democratization of institutions, enshrined Tamazight as an official language alongside Arabic. This new status is stipulated in article 5 of the Constitution as follows:

“The Arabic language remains the official language of the State. The State works to protect and develop the Arabic language, as well as to promote its use. Similarly, Tamazight is an official language of the State, as a common heritage of all Moroccans without exception. An organic law defines the process of implementing the official status of this language, as well as the modalities of its integration into education and the priority areas of public life, in order to enable it to fulfill its function as an official language in the long term.”

The democratic opening that Morocco has experienced in recent years has largely contributed to the establishment of a reflection on the question of the Amazigh language and culture. Amazigh is currently experiencing a certain revitalization, thanks to the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture, IRCAM<sup>9</sup>. Founded in 2001 by the dahir, this institute is dedicated to giving Amazigh "a new impetus as a national treasure and source of pride for all Moroccans" (Royal Speech of Ajdir, 2001). The Decree of Ajdir<sup>10</sup> establishing the IRCAM came to support the

<sup>7</sup> Using only Latin and Tifinagh scripts, Coca-Cola avoided the Arabic script, which did not get a chance in this marketing stunt.

<sup>8</sup> BOUKOUS, A. L'officialisation de l'amazighe, Enjeux et stratégies. Asinag, Revue de l'IRCAM, Numéro 8, TOP PRESS – Rabat 2013

<sup>9</sup> This is a consultative body attached directly to the royal cabinet. Provided with significant human and material resources, this institution constituted, on a political level, already in 2001, the official recognition of the Amazigh dimension of Morocco. Its mission, in practical terms, is to design and implement the scientific and technical conditions and means that can promote the Amazigh language and culture. The I.R.C.A.M. is composed of several structures: Rectorate, board of directors composed of personalities from the associative field, representatives of public institutions (ministries, university, academy, etc.), research centers (six research centers in which several permanent researchers work and contractual), and administrative services."

<sup>10</sup> Also known as the Ajdir Speech, a small Berber town where King Mohammed VI delivered a speech on October 17, 2001 announcing the creation of this institution.

provisions already outlined in the Charter of Education and Training (2000) to consolidate the position of Amazigh in the education system, and led, a few years later, to its constitutionalization in July 2011<sup>11</sup>.

Amazigh is experiencing an unprecedented dynamic after being ignored, marginalized, stigmatized, and used for political and ideological purposes in order to minimize or even eradicate it for centuries. Amazigh "is the mother tongue of 28% of the population according to the results of the last census (2004); it is spoken more in rural areas than in urban areas" (Boukous, 2007). According to Chaker (2009), 40% of the population speak Amazigh as their mother tongue. Benzakour (2000) estimates that the figure is between 35 and 45%. The Moroccan government's 2004 census estimates that 28.2% of the population speak Amazigh as their mother tongue. These figures are rejected by Amazigh activists, who cite the figures of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, which estimate that there are 12 million Amazighs in Morocco, as opposed to the Moroccan government's estimate of 3 million. Amazigh activists also estimate that 60% of Moroccans are Amazigh (Pouessel, 2011).

In 2003-2004, the introduction of Amazigh language instruction in the Moroccan school system became a reality, "reflecting the integration of Amazigh identity into Moroccan identity, an Amazigh identity that, from that point on, officially belongs to all and can no longer be the prerogative of a particular 'ethnic' group" (Pouessel, 2011). Thus, some 300 public schools have introduced Amazigh into their curriculum (Abouzaid, 2011) as a "language-subject" and not as a "language-medium" of instruction (Abouzaid, 2013). Amazigh will eventually become a compulsory subject in all primary and secondary school classes. The IRCAM is also responsible for the normalization and standardization of Amazigh. The Institute is developing educational materials for the three varieties of Amazigh, but it tries as much as possible to use words and constructions that are identical or almost identical in the three varieties.

In parallel with education, the use of Amazigh has developed in new contexts, thanks to publishing and the press in particular. An important cultural product that has not yet received institutional encouragement (theater, novels, poetry, films) has also developed.

However, the diffusion of Amazigh through the media is currently gaining momentum. The recognition of Amazigh on television dates back to August 24, 1994. Since that date, the country's first television channel has been broadcasting a daily twelve-minute news program, repeating the same information three times with a different presenter for each of the three dialects (Tamazight, Tarifit, and Tachelhit). In December 2009, the first television channel exclusively in the Amazigh language was launched: Amazighia. The creation of this channel is a major novelty (Miller, 2010). The opening of the media to the Amazigh language is one of the concrete proofs of the evolution of the media linguistic landscape in Morocco. Despite this, some researchers point to a still insufficient presence of Amazigh in the audiovisual field (Saib, 2013). In the political sphere, some Moroccan ministers and deputies "respond" in Amazigh during plenary sessions of parliament. This constitutes a revolution compared to the linguistic practices that prevailed before. This language is also much more visible than it was before on the web, even if it remains modest.

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<sup>11</sup> Through concrete actions in this direction: adoption of the Tifinagh trace (2003), gradual introduction of its teaching in the public sector (from 2003), increasingly significant presence in the media and audiovisual landscape: radio, television, advertising, films...



### 3- French

French is officially considered the first foreign language in Morocco. This language has various functions that fluctuate, as Messaoudi (2010) has found, between the elitist and the utilitarian, and allows access to scientific and technical knowledge. Of all the languages present in the country, French enjoys an ambiguous and opaque status. The paradox of this language, according to el Youssi, is that it remains the only language that in this fragmented linguistic landscape is spoken, read, and written.

French is a language of social prestige and has long enjoyed a privileged status. Being associated with knowledge and openness to others, especially Europe, French is present in several areas other than education. It is used in the economic sector, banks, insurance, among others, in the media, advertising, and the press. French is the exclusive language of higher education in science and technology, such as engineering, medicine, pharmacy, architecture, finance, and business management. Not to mention the literary field, where Moroccan literature in French is occupying increasingly important dimensions. French in Morocco is the language of writing for many famous writers such as Tahar Ben Jelloun, Driss Chraïbi, Ahmed Sefrioui, Abdelkébir Khatibi, Mohammed Khair-Eddine, and others.

### 4- English

Among the foreign languages present, English enjoys a special status. This is not an inheritance of colonialism, unlike French or Spanish, which gives it the status of a "neutral" foreign language, far from any negative connotation (Ennaji, 2005).

It is commonly considered that the English language enjoys a very exceptional position, that of an international communication language. "There has never been a language so widely spread or spoken by so many people as English" (Crystal 1997). The gravitational model (Calvet, 1999) represents the situation that characterizes the languages of the world. They all evolve around a central language, English. Calvet describes this linguistic organization with precision:

([...] In the center, we have an "hypercentral" language, English, which is the pivot of the entire system. Its speakers tend to be monolingual. Around this hypercentral language, there are a dozen "supercentral" languages (Spanish, French, Hindi, Arabic, Malay, etc.), whose speakers, when they acquire a second language, learn either English or another language of the same level, that is, another supercentral language. They are in turn the pivot of the gravitation of one hundred to two hundred central languages around which finally six to seven thousand peripheral languages gravitate. In this three-dimensional and pyramidal organization, whose cement is constituted by bilingualisms, we will easily understand that the most threatened languages – those whose transmission is the most random – are the peripheral languages [...]) (Calvet, 2007).

English is associated with modernity, science, technology, and globalization. It is increasingly competing with French, especially in the education and tourism sectors<sup>12</sup>. Currently, English in Morocco is a major language in the department of English language and literature, and a language of instruction in various foreign English-language institutions such as Al Akhawayn

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<sup>12</sup> Ziamari, Karima et Jan Jaap De Ruite, (2016) Les langues au Maroc : réalités, changements et évolutions linguistiques, EDNA pp :441-462

University in Ifrane, American Language Centers (ALC), and the British Council. The International University of Rabat (UIR) and the Mohammed VI University offer programs that are taught exclusively in English. In addition, in 2004, English was introduced into public education in middle school and primary school in the private sector, when it was previously only taught in high school. Furthermore, an English option for the international baccalaureate was implemented in the 2014-2015 school year, which will undoubtedly give this language more weight in Morocco's linguistic future. The competition between French and English is therefore real, and the presence of English tends to manifest itself in areas that were previously occupied by French. This implies that these two languages are at least potentially in a conflict situation. Today, this language is becoming increasingly important in professional sectors. However, some, such as Grin, argue that the exclusive use of English has many disadvantages, particularly on the economic level (Grin, 2005).

English is also becoming increasingly popular, particularly among the younger generation and in the tourism and economic sectors. Many Moroccans are learning English as a foreign language and it is increasingly being used in the fields of technology, industry, and business.

### 5- Spanish

The Spanish language was introduced to Morocco during the Spanish protectorate established by the Treaty of November 27, 1912. It is a historical language linked mainly to the arrival of Moorish and Jewish refugees after the end of the Reconquista of Spain by the Christians, at the end of the 15th century (Boukous 2005).

Spanish was the language of the Spanish protectorate institutions in Morocco in the northern and southern regions. Since independence, it has lost considerably in importance and vitality<sup>13</sup>, to the benefit of French, to the point of maintaining only a rather limited presence in the border towns of the north and a few regions of the south. The Spanish language has retreated drastically:

"Spanish has seen its positions decline as a working language in education, administration, the media, economic and cultural life." (Boukous, 2008).

However, it remains dominant in the two Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, which are still under Spanish occupation.

"Except in the Moroccan enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, which are still under Spanish domination, Spanish has only a weak presence in the regions formerly under the Protectorate, especially in Tetouan and Nador, which maintain close commercial and cultural relations with Ceuta and Melilla. (...) If, even today, many Moroccans from the north express themselves relatively well in this language, they owe it to their age (they knew the Spanish Protectorate) or to the border relations with the presidios." (Benzakour et al. 2000).

Today, its status is that of the third foreign language, it is present in the press, radio and television. The Al Oula's TV news<sup>14</sup>, as well as that of the 2M channel, broadcast a daily news bulletin in Spanish. Spanish is taught in high schools as an optional subject and at university

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<sup>13</sup> The vitality of a language is one of the attributes, alongside standardization, autonomy and historicity, that sociolinguistic literature has provided to establish a typology of languages coexisting within the same linguistic community (v. Boukous, A., (1995), *Société, langues et cultures au Maroc, enjeux symboliques*, Rabat, Publication de la Faculté des Lettres, Série Essais et études (8).pp. 25-29).

<sup>14</sup> First channel of the National Radio and Television Company (SNRT)

as a major in some faculties of arts and humanities. This language, whose history of presence is linked to that of Morocco, is still present, to a lesser extent, in some regions of the north as a language of everyday life. However, it is experiencing a resurgence through the various centers of the Instituto Cervantes<sup>15</sup>, established in several Moroccan cities including Tetouan, Tangier, Rabat, Casablanca, Fez, Marrakech, and Agadir, which promote Spanish language and culture.

## 6- Other foreign languages

Due to the cultural diversity of Morocco and its colonial history, other foreign languages may also be present, but on a more limited scale. For example, Italian, German, and more recently Portuguese in higher education for undergraduate, master's, and doctoral studies, for example, at the Faculty of Letters and Humanities in Rabat. These languages are also taught in cultural institutes such as the Goethe-Institute (German language institute) and the Instituto Italiano di Cultura (Italian cultural institute). The Chinese language is also present thanks to the bilateral cooperation between Morocco and China, notably through trade exchanges that have developed significantly since the 2000s. In Morocco, the Confucius Institute has been established for a few years. The result of a partnership between Mohammed V University-Agdal and the Peking University for International Studies, this Chinese language-learning center was inaugurated in December 2009. This institute was created to promote the presence of Chinese language and culture and to consolidate the cooperation ties between Morocco and China. In 2012, another Confucius Institute was inaugurated at Hassan II University in Casablanca. In 2013, for the first time in Morocco, Mohammed V University opened a Bachelor's degree program in Chinese literature.

## 7- Hebrew

Hebrew has a long history in Morocco, dating back centuries. Before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Morocco was home to a significant Jewish community, with an estimated population of over 250,000 people. This Moroccan Jewish community spoke primarily Judeo-Arabic, a form of Arabic dialect mixed with Hebrew and other local languages. The Hebrew language is an integral part of their religious and cultural life. These communities retain their distinct Jewish identity while absorbing local Moroccan cultural elements.

Hebrew itself was primarily used for religious and study purposes, as a liturgical language and a language of study of the sacred texts of Judaism. Levy (2013) notes that "Hebrew is not a spoken language for Moroccan Jews: the status of Hebrew was, in the past, that of a language of scholarly culture, that of study, of the elementary school (şla), of the yeshiva, the language of texts, of prayer"<sup>16</sup>. However, Hebrew is not absent from higher education. It is taught as a complementary language in a few faculties of letters and humanities, such as the one in Rabat. After the establishment of the State of Israel, many Moroccan Jews immigrated<sup>17</sup> to Israel. However, a small Moroccan Jewish community still exists in Morocco, mainly in the cities of Casablanca, Rabat, Essaouira, Marrakech, Safi, etc., and maintain a connection with the

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<sup>15</sup> Information available on the page:

[http://www.cervantes.es/sobre\\_instituto\\_cervantes/direcciones\\_contacto/sedes\\_mundo.htm#ufr](http://www.cervantes.es/sobre_instituto_cervantes/direcciones_contacto/sedes_mundo.htm#ufr)

<sup>16</sup> LÉVY, S., (2013), « Les parlers arabes des Juifs du Maroc », in Langage et société, n°143, 2013/1, pp.41-51.

<sup>17</sup> This emigration has significantly reduced the Jewish population in Morocco, leading to a decline in the common use of Hebrew.

language through religious ceremonies, celebrations, and cultural events. In these communities, Hebrew continues to be used in religious rituals and in Jewish schools.<sup>18</sup>

It is important to note that the linguistic situation can vary depending on the regions and communities in Morocco. For example, the Amazigh language is more spoken in some regions than in others. Similarly, the use of French and English can vary depending on geographical and socio-economic contexts.

## **2- Multilingualism and its consequences for the languages in presence**

Morocco is a multilingual state where several languages and linguistic varieties coexist. This coexistence of several languages can have an impact on how languages are used and perceived in society. Due to this complex linguistic situation, languages come into contact. Linguistic interference<sup>19</sup> occurs in this "language market" of Morocco (Boukous, 2008), especially on the lexical level. According to Weinreich, interference is defined as "those cases in which languages deviate from their norm and which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with one or more other languages, i.e. as a result of language contact<sup>20</sup>" (Weinreich, 1953).

Furthermore, W. Mackey defines the phenomenon of interference in a simple way by considering it as "The use, when speaking or writing in one language, of elements belonging to another language"<sup>21</sup>. Specialists in bilingualism, including Weinreich<sup>22</sup>, have focused on the study of interference in bilingual communities. As seen previously, bilingualism is a common reality among Moroccans. In addition, Moroccans are generally aware that the language they use, whether it is Arabic or a foreign language is not the only language in the country. Linguistic diversity in Morocco is a reality, and Moroccans have an understanding of this linguistic plurality. Furthermore, the hierarchical ranking of languages in Morocco has an influence on both the languages present and the bilingual language behavior of Moroccans.

Boukous addresses the issue of language competition in Morocco. He notes that the different languages present in the country compete to occupy linguistic spaces and specific social functions (see Diagram (1) on the following page).

Overall, the linguistic situation in Morocco is complex and cannot simply be reduced to a strict diglossia between two varieties of Arabic. It is true that the notion of diglossia has long been used to describe the linguistic situation in Morocco. Despite this, the actual practices of speakers, the presence of Berber languages and other languages, as well as the representation of languages in various fields of society, call into question the relevance of diglossia as the only adequate description of the Moroccan linguistic situation. In the second chapter of this part, we

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<sup>18</sup> Jewish schools, called "madrassas", played an essential role in teaching Hebrew and religious studies to the Jewish community. These schools provided instruction in Hebrew and focused on Jewish religious texts, including the Torah and the Talmud.

<sup>19</sup> Interference was originally a concept in physics before first appearing in a linguistic framework thanks to the work of Weinreich (1953), one of the first linguists to address sociolinguistic situations of language contact.

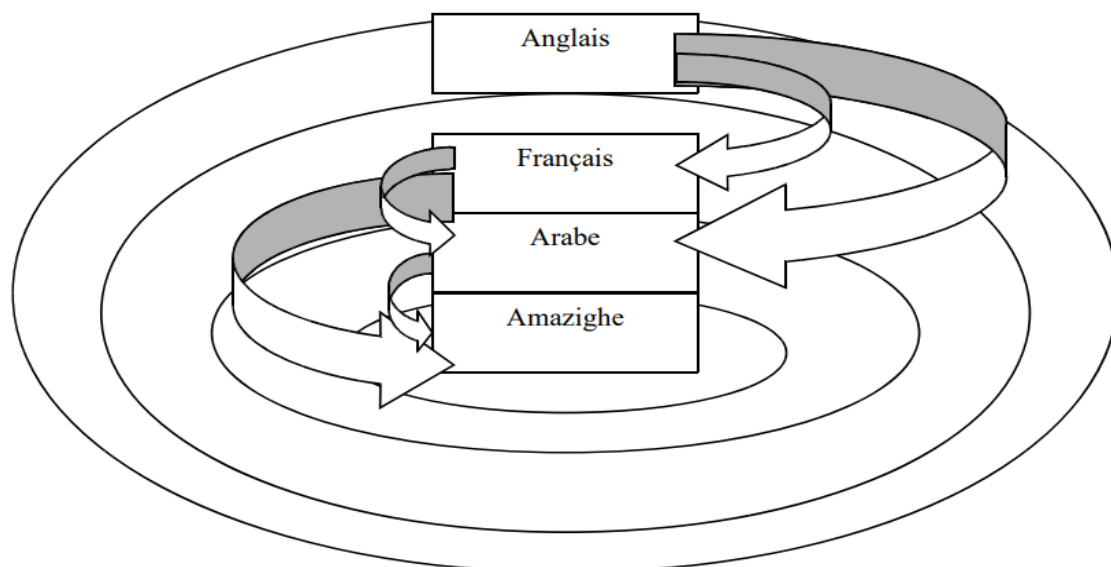
<sup>20</sup> "Those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language, i.e. as a result of language contact, will be referred to as interference phenomena." (Weinreich, 1953: 1).

<sup>21</sup> W. Mackey, «Interference is the use of elements of one language while speaking or writing another» in bilingual interference its analysis and measurement, Québec, 1965.

<sup>22</sup> Weinreich, « Languages in contact », Mouton, 1953.

will focus on theoretical approaches to diglossia, and we will propose a conclusion regarding the case of the languages of Morocco.

**Figure 2 Schéma des interactions des langues en présence au Maroc (Boukous, 2008 : 34)**



This representation illustrates the hierarchical structure of the language market. It also reveals that this hierarchical structure reflects the competition between languages present in terms of their nature and the volume of their interaction, and in terms of language functions and fields of use.

## CONCLUSION

The coexistence of languages on the territory implies the establishment, in a more or less spontaneous way, of links that manifest themselves through transfers. Arabic is seriously challenged by French, which is an important source of words for Arabic as well as for the Amazigh language.

English stands out from languages that do not have a privileged international status. It potentially competes with French and Standard Arabic in the functions and uses that are those of strong languages, notably in the fields of economy, technology, and education. The hierarchy as presented by Boukous allows us to conceive only the transfers that take place between high languages and low languages, that is to say the vertical dynamics that characterize the sociolinguistic situation of the country. We note that according to this model, Arabic interacts with all the other languages present in the country.

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