

Talk presented at New Ways of Analyzing Variation 42, October 20, 2013

## Language Ideology and Human Rights Doctrine in Morocco

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### 1. Purpose

This paper reports results from a study exploring changing language usage and attitudes among educated urban youth in Morocco (Anderson 2013). We describe the emergence of a new language ideology based on values from human rights discourse.

### 2. Languages of Morocco

**Modern Standard Arabic:** literacy, education, administration, media, religion (Youssi 1995: 29-30)

**Moroccan Arabic:** informal communication, some media; unwritten (; Ennaji 2005: 49)

**Tamazight:** informal communication, some media; despite recently developed orthography, literacy is rare

**French:** education, business, administration, media

**English:** business, media

**Spanish:** business, media

### 3. Tenets of the Arabization Ideology

- MSA unifies the country around Islam
- Foreign languages continue colonization
- Mother tongues are corrupt or vulgar
- MSA is “the language of my religion and the source of pride for me... I feel that it links me with a territory... that extends from the ocean to the Gulf... [I]t gives me the feeling of belonging to Arabness and knowing it means having a culture that unites... religiously and nationalistically.”

### 4. Tenets of the Westernization Ideology

- The worth of a language is gauged by its economic utility
- Arabization might be desirable for religious reasons, but it is ultimately impractical
- French and English are most practical and thus most valuable
- Mother tongues are impractical and unimportant
- “Tamazight is a local language against French, English... In studies and work one uses only international languages.”

### 5. Human Rights Doctrine

Exemplified in the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, which declares: “*all languages are the expression of a collective identity and a distinct way of perceiving and describing reality*” (Universal).

### 6. Tamazight Movement

Recent successes include:

- Limited introduction into schools in 2003 (Errihani 2008: 96).
- Recognition as official language in 2011 constitution (Laroui 2011: 72).

Utilizes human rights discourse:

“*The Amazigh people, like other people, have the right to fully enjoy all the human rights and fundamental liberties recognized by the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and international law relating to human rights*” (Lounes).

### 7. Methodology

- Mohammed V University in Rabat in 2012
- 89 surveys of 5 pages
- Available in French, English, and MSA
- Free response questions and multiple choice

### 8. Multilingualism

Advantage of multilingualism	% of responses
<b>Cultural understanding</b>	<b>39.29</b>
Relations to foreigners	26.19
Enrich knowledge	19.05
<b>Open up the world</b>	<b>16.67</b>
Business	14.29
Travel	10.71
<b>Tolerance</b>	<b>8.33</b>
Surroundings	4.76
School	4.76
Politics	2.38
Status	2.38
Evangelism	2.38
Everything	1.19

Table 1: Responses to “Why is multilingualism important?”

Multilingualism is “a great opportunity to avoid racis[m] and discrimination and... [to] boost... the tolerance towards the other religion[s] and cultures.”

“Multilingualism teaches us universal values like tolerance, acceptance, appreciation, and dialogue”.

Multilingualism is “a great opportunity to avoid racist and discrimination and boosting the tolerance towards the other religion and cultures.”

Multilingualism is important “in order... that you become a global human being believing in diversity and difference.”

## 9. Tamazight

Why is this language important?	% of responses
<b>Not important</b>	<b>38.98</b>
<b>Culture</b>	<b>38.98</b>
Informal communication	16.95
Religion	5.08
Business / employment	5.08
Education	1.69

Table 2: Responses to “Why is Tamazight important?”

“It should be studied because it's an important part of our Moroccan culture and each one of us[,] being a Moroccan proud of his/her Moroccaness[,] should know this language and be introduced to at least a little bit of it.”

“There is an amazing Amazigh culture and in order to communicate it and inherit it and preserve it forever it is obligatory that a language exists to carry out this task. Therefore, this language should be given space.”

Tamazight “carries [the] multilingualism and multiculturalism that distinguish Morocco.”

“I like [Tamazight] because I'm with multiculturalism.”

## 10. Moroccan Arabic

Moroccan Arabic has “a high degree of ‘covert prestige’ [as] the only language in which these young people can really feel confident and able to express themselves adequately” (Marley 2005: 39).

Why is this language important?	% of responses
<b>Informal communication</b>	<b>43.1</b>
<b>Culture</b>	<b>24.14</b>
Business / employment	17.24
Education	6.9
Religion	3.45
Not important	3.45

Table 3: Responses to “Why is Moroccan Arabic important?”

Moroccan Arabic is “used in an official way in Morocco and we cannot do without it because it’s the communication tool between Moroccans even for the rulers.”

“Darija = Morocco.”

Moroccan Arabic “makes me feel that I belong to my country and my region and my family environment... it’s my way to learn about the language of the culture of my ancestors.”

“People like to speak in darija because Morocco contains a prolific popular culture.”

Moroccan Arabic is “a language which is understood by everybody and they can express themselves through it freely.”

## 11. Localization

In conclusion, our study found that a new language ideology is emerging among educated urban youth in Morocco. Under this ideology of **localization**:

- Mother tongues are important because they are Morocco’s linguistic contribution to global culture.
- Every language is valuable because it represents a unique culture.
- Multilingualism is positive because it encourages global openness.

“We are Moroccan and we should not forget our origins... [D]arija and Tamazight are our mother languages in Morocco.”

“We don't want children who master foreign languages and know shit about their mother languages.”

“Languages broaden the scope of knowledge and open us to the cultures of the world.”

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