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# THE STATUS OF MOTHER TONGUES AND LANGUAGE POLICY IN MOROCCO

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**Abstract.** The linguistic market in Morocco has been characterized by its richness and complexity, in that a number of local as well as foreign languages co-exist. Given this multiplicity and diversity in its linguistic landscape, Morocco has opted for Arabization as a language policy in education, its ultimate goal being, as it were, to safeguard and maintain its national identity (Ennaji, 2003). Achieving this goal, however, is far from being without glaring shortcomings. Arabization has, inter alia, marginalized mother tongues, the latter being relegated to daily communication only with a devalued and denigrated status. On this view, the present paper brings to the fore the status of languages in use in Morocco and, more precisely, brings into focus the impact of Arabization on the status of mother tongues. What is more, the study attempts to shed light on Moroccans' attitudes towards their mother tongues. In pursuance of this aim, the study addresses the following research questions, principally (i) What is the status of Arabic in Morocco? (ii) What is the nature of Moroccans' attitudes towards their mother tongues, namely Moroccan Arabic and Moroccan Amazigh? (iii) What is the impact of Arabization on the status of mother tongues in Morocco?

**Keywords:** Arabization; mother tongues; attitudes; language policy; education; multilingualism; linguistic human rights.

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## 1. The Functions of the Languages in Use in Morocco

Morocco is a multilingual society par excellence, in the sense that different local as well as foreign languages co-exist. There are two mother tongues, namely Moroccan Arabic (MA) and Amazigh, Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), the latter being the official language; other foreign languages are particularly French, Spanish, and English (see for example Ennaji, 1991, 2003, 2005; Youssi, 1989a). Rich though the situation may seem, this multilingual diversity is replete with controversies (Bensoukas, 2010). To ensure clarity of presentation and to make clear any claim made herein, it is deemed convenient to give a description of the multilingual context of Morocco.

The co-existence of these languages results in a linguistic situation called Triglоссия<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There are also other linguistic phenomena such as borrowing and code-switching (Bensoukas, 2010: 138).

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(Youssi, 1995); it is, broadly defined, as a situation where three languages exhibit a functional, usually hierarchical, relationship between each other. These languages are MA, MSA, and Classical Arabic<sup>2</sup>. To begin with, Classical Arabic is the language of Quran and revelation. Besides, a number of religious and literary texts are written in it. Given this fact, it enjoys a prestigious status in the Arab world in general and in Morocco in particular (Grandguillaume, 1990; Ennaji, 1991, 2003, 2005). Hence, it serves as the high variety. In actual fact, Classical Arabic is used by Muslims in prayers and many other Islamic liturgies, irrespective of what their mother tongue is. However, this language is never employed in everyday communication and it is nobody's mother tongues (Grandguillaume, 1990: 151). MSA, on the other hand, enjoys a middle status. Indeed, it is used particularly in formal spheres like media and administration and it is considered as the official language of Morocco. Similar to Classical Arabic, this variety has no native speakers either. As opposed to Classical Arabic, MSA is characterized by its phonological, morphological, and syntactic flexibility (for more details see Ennaji, 1988, 2005). Another aspect from which MSA departs from Classical Arabic is the fact that the former has heavily borrowed new lexical

<sup>2</sup> Youssi (1995: 30) labeled it Literary Arabic. For ease of reference, however, the term Classic Arabic will be used throughout.

item, namely from French (see Ennaji, 2005: 53 for examples).

MA has a low status and it is the mostly used spoken language in Morocco, or, for that matter, the lingua franca in Moroccan. However, the language is neither codified nor standardized and it is exclusively spoken. As a matter of fact, MA may be said to be as a blanket term that encompasses different varieties. These are 'urban', 'Bedouin', 'Jebli' and 'Hassania' varieties; the latter is conceived of as a quite different dialect, if not a different language (Bensoukas, 2010: 137). As a dominant language, MA is also used in formal domains like media<sup>3</sup> and education (see section 5).

The second mother tongue in Morocco is Amazigh (Berber). Like MA, Amazigh has various varieties, each of which is spoken in different areas in Morocco. To start with, Tarifit is generally spoken in the Rife Mountains. In particular, the major cities where Tarifit is spoken are Houceima, Nadour and Imzourn. The second variety is Tamazight which is widely spoken in the Atlas Mountains, a vast area that includes cities such as Khenifra and Khemissat. The third variety is Tashlit. This language is spoken in the south, more precisely, in the region of Souss Massa Daràa, its major cities being Agadir and Tata. More recently, Amazigh has been constitutionalized; hence, it has become an official language. Given this fact, a number of studies have been conducted in order to codify and standardize the language (see Boukhris et al. 2008 for example). For all this, however, the fact remains which variety, among the three major varieties of Amazigh, is the one to be codified and standardized and integrated into the educational system.

In addition, there are other foreign languages that are in use in Morocco, most important of which are French, English, and Spanish. To begin with, French is ostensibly the dominant language in that it is used both in formal and informal spheres; it is an essential element in private schools and economics. In this regard, French is argued to be a crucial means of social promotion (Ennaji, 1991: 17). In fact, French is the key to access to the job market. Equally obviously, French is conceived of, particularly by the ruling elite and the Moroccans, as a prestigious valued language (Ennaji, 1991, 2003). Along with French, English has been introduced into the Moroccan linguistic market on the grounds of its being an international language. In other

terms, with the advent of technology, English has become almost a prerequisite to adapt to the high demands of contemporary life. In much the same way, Sadiqi (1991: 106) states that:

*Policy makers in Morocco have certainly realized that international communication between Morocco and the rest of the world could not be achieved by French alone; they know that English is the key to communication in a very tangible sense.*

In contrast, the status of Spanish in Morocco cannot be said to be on a par with French and English. Its domains of use are restricted to areas formerly occupied by Spain, example of which is the north (Ennaji, 2003: 39).

## 2. The Arabization Policy

After its independence, Morocco has opted for Arabization as a language policy in education. Its ultimate goal is to safeguard and maintain its national identity (Ennaji, 2003). As Grandguillaume (1990: 153) states:

*Following their independence, each of the three states<sup>4</sup> planned their Arabization. Their ultimate goal was to advance the Arabic language as the official and national language. They conceived of this enterprise as a restoration of the national personality in opposition to the cultural alienation associated with colonizing during which Arabic has been pushed aside by French in important domains.*

The view expressed in the quote above clearly stresses the fact that Arabization is meant to give recognition to the Arabic language as a reaction against the ostensibly predominant language at that time, i.e. French. The policy also aims at preserving authenticity and Arab-Muslim values and beliefs (Ennaji, 2003: 40). This being the case, however, Arabization has denied any interest to mother tongues in Morocco. They are, so to speak, relegated to everyday use only with a devalued and denigrated status. In a similar vein, Ennaji (2005) maintains that this language policy has been set in motion by the people in power and by ideologists as a cultural fact of independence.

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<sup>3</sup> Various newspapers are published in MA, among which one may particularly mention: "Nishan" and "Lalla Fatima".

<sup>4</sup> These states, the author refers, are Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria.

Besides, Arabization remarkably overlooks the multicultural nature of Morocco, particularly Amazigh monolingual speakers.

Noteworthy along these lines is the fact that the job market does not value the Arabic language; rather it favors other foreign languages, most important of which is French. This language, it appears, dominates virtually all private sectors, including administration, business, the media and more importantly, education (Ennaji, 2005). In addition, Arabization, as the present argues, affects the status of mother tongues in Morocco, resulting in creating negative attitudes towards them.

From a Linguistic Human Rights (HLRs) perspective, the language policy marginalizes the status of mother tongues, as the latter do not enjoy their rights to be learnt and, hence, not being able to be passed down to the next generation. Undeniably, education plays a vital role in the development and maintenance of language. Besides, educational human rights are the most linguistic human rights as they maintain linguistic and cultural diversity. They preserve the transmission of the language. As it stands, a number of inalienable rights are violated, most important of which are the rights to use one's mother tongue as a language of instruction and to preserve one's own culture (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998). In the Moroccan educational system, for instance, children at a very early stage are introduced to MSA. This might be considered as an untoward move from a child's mother tongue, the language to which s/he is first exposed, to a foreign language, MSA. A question of considerable interest at this point should be raised: What about students whose mother tongue is Amazigh and who have never been exposed to Arabic and are taught by non-Amazigh speakers?

As has been pointed out above, this language policy overlooks the multicultural nature of Morocco. This suggests a blatant violation of educational human rights, principally the right to be taught by your mother tongue. The perplexing issue at this point is that even native speakers of both Moroccan Arabic (MA) and Amazigh have a negative attitude towards their mother tongues (see El Kirat et al. 2010 and Errihani, 2008 for Amazigh). The nature of this negative attitude may be said to be motivated by the fact these mother tongues, namely MA, are not officially recognized by the state.

Another conceivable assumption, yet dubious on linguistic grounds, is that people tend to claim that MSA and MA are not

considered to be two different languages. This follows from the fact that some Moroccans wrongly claim that MSA is their mother tongue. As such, Moroccan speakers feel reluctant to learn their mother tongues even if the LHRs are granted (Bensoukas, 2010: 145). In fact, the current unequal distribution of the languages in Morocco has resulted in language loss and endangerment of indigenous and small language communities (El Kirat, 2009; ECh-Charfi, 2004). This state of affairs stems from the negligent attitude the state is adopting.

### 3. Language Attitudes towards Mother Tongues in Morocco

A number of studies have reported that the majority of Moroccans have negative attitudes towards their mother tongues (see among others Errihani, 2008 and El Kirat et al. 2010). El Kirat et al. (2010), for instance, seek to investigate language attitudes towards the mother tongues and the languages used in Morocco among the students of Mohammed V University, Rabat- Agdal. The findings revealed that language choice and attitudes are determined by the students' language instruction. Equally importantly, the study demonstrated that a number of respondents have expressed an instrumental attachment to some languages through the use of social promotion, as is the case with French and English, and for communication in informal domains through the use of mother tongues (2010: 348).

### 4. Methodology

For validity and accuracy of the findings, the present study makes use of a triangulated approach that relies on both qualitative and quantitative research instruments with a representative population sample, the aim being to gain a deeper insight into the topic. These instruments are non-participatory observation and a survey. Noteworthy is the fact that the survey, formulated in English and Arabic (see Appendix), is divided into two parts: the first part contains open-ended questions. The other part, on the other hand, consists of close-ended questions where participants are provided with a set of a limited set of response options.

As far as the population sample is concerned, the number of the participants

having taken part in the present study totaled 100. They were divided into two groups. The first group comprises students from different departments (English, Science, and Islamic studies). The participants in the second group are people who do not belong to the university. The choice of these two groups is justified by the fact that the main focus of the study is to get a panoramic view of how Moroccans view their mother tongues, be they educated or non-educated people.

## 5. Non-participatory Classroom Observation

The classroom observation took place over the last week of April 2013, its main objectives being to see which language is being used as the language of instruction. This state of affairs enabled me to reveal afterwards both the teachers and the students' attitudes towards the use of mother tongues as the language of instruction. To meet this end, two schools were chosen, namely a primary school and a high school, both of which are located in the city of Salé. The first classroom observation was held on Friday the 19th of April 2017 in a primary school named "Abdurrahman El Kattani". As a matter of fact, no arrangements for the meetings had been made in both schools; all the teachers, both in the primary and the high school, were requested to attend their sessions on the grounds that I wanted to observe how the course was handled. In fact, I did not mention the real objectives of the observation, lest the teachers should pay more attention not to speak MA.

The first class I attended was an Arabic class. The students were supposed to read a text in Arabic. I sat in the back of the class with the understanding that my presence in the classroom would probably have bearings on the behavior of both the teacher and the students. The teacher, a female whose age ranges from 39 to 41, asked the students to open their books. The language she used, at that time, was Arabic. Then, she started asking the students to read one after the other and correcting their mistakes when necessary. After that, she asked what the main idea of the text was. Not surprisingly, her requests were performed in MA. Four students responded to her question; again, in MA; only one female little girl who did her best to speak in Arabic but in vain. No sooner had the course finished than I went to the teacher. As curious as I was, I asked her why she used MA instead of Arabic

which is the main language of the course. She replied, though in an apparently angry voice, that nobody would understand. She also said that even in classes of French, most of the teachers explain in MA.

The next classroom observation, which was held on Monday the 29th and Tuesday the 30th, took place in a high school named "Mohammed Allama Sbihi" which, too, is located in Salé. Three classes were observed, principally History and Geography, Philosophy, and Mathematics. The observation revealed that MA was overwhelmingly used in all these subjects. For instance, in History and Geography, the teacher spoke only MA, except when she wanted to mention a major event, she would switch to Arabic. Students, too, were interacting and responding in MA. In Mathematics, only rules were reported in Arabic; explanation and questions were performed in MA. When the classes were finished, I went to the teachers and gave them the same question I had given to the primary school teacher: There seemed to be a unanimous answer, for they all said that students felt at ease and understood well when they were taught in their mother tongue. I simultaneously asked the students about their feedback about being taught in MA. Not surprisingly, all their answers went hand in hand with their teachers' reply. A question of considerable interest at this point should be raised: What about students whose mother tongue is Amazigh and who have never been exposed to Arabic and are taught by non-Amazigh speakers? As has been pointed out above, this language policy overlooks the multicultural nature of Morocco. This state of affairs, in my view, may push students to drop out.

## 6. Results: Discussion and Analysis

The data collected through the use of questionnaire which in turn has been analyzed via the use of the Software Package for Social Science (SPSS). In particular, the statistical measure adopted is frequency distribution. This first section is concerned with presenting the results of the first part of the questionnaire that includes four open-ended questions. Each of these questions is discussed separately. To be statistically measured, the study divided the respondents' responses into four categories. The first category involves the ones who favor this policy. The second includes those who do not. The third one includes those who are

neutral. The last category is devoted to those who do not understand the question.

### 1. How do you feel about Arabization as a language policy in education?

Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Don't understand
50%	45.5%	0%	4.5%

As the table indicates, (50%) of the respondents express their agreement towards this language policy, while (45.5%) disagree with it. The following responses are cases in point.

**Respondent1:** *It is a very important process which gives some priority to Arabic. Arabic is the language of the holy Quran and literature. Therefore, it is a must to make it the language of education.*

**Respondent2:** *I think it is necessary as a language policy. We live in an Arab country and we cannot do without Arabic.*

**Respondent3:** *It is a good policy because we are obliged to protect our language, so there is no need to study subjects in French while we could translate into Arabic. Besides, the language reflects our culture and our tradition.*

**Respondent4:** *Arabization subtracted the maternal languages such as Amazigh and Moroccan Arabic. These varieties are so important, especially if they are to be used as languages of instruction.*

**Respondent5:** *I agree with this language policy to the extent in which it reflects our identity, but at the same time I don't agree with it in that it is useless in the job market.*

**Respondent6:** *This language policy doesn't take into account other minorities such as Amazigh people who have never been introduced to Moroccan Arabic.*

These statements reveal the respondents' attitudes towards Arabization. These attitudes are characterized by some degree of ambivalence, in the sense that some of the respondents conceive of Arabic as their mother tongue within which they identify themselves. Therefore, it should be protected and used as the language of education. For them, mother tongues should be used only in everyday communication with the impression that these languages, if they thought of them as languages, are fruitless if they are to be used in formal spheres, especially in education. The results appear to go in conformity with Edward (1994). For him, the nature of attitudes is conditioned by two major factors, principally "standardization" and "vitality. The former

factor, as the name indicates, refers to the fact that if a given language is codified and recognized by the state as an official language, it will be more valued. Vitality is described as the set of functions served by the language. The coming questions validate this claim.

### 2. How do you feel about introducing mother tongues in primary schools as the language of instruction?

Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Don't understand
45.5%	45.5%	0%	9%

This table shows that the respondents' responses are equally distributed between who agree to introduce mother tongues in primary schools and those who do not. The following statements illustrate this state of affairs.

**Respondent1:** *The introduction of mother tongues in primary schools is not a good idea because mother tongues are not languages that have the same power as Arabic.*

**Respondent2:** *This is a silly policy that will create problems for students.*

**Respondent3:** *I think it is a wrong choice since mother tongues are not yet standardized and they don't have any formal structure such as grammar.*

**Respondent4:** *I personally disagree because they're just dialects and we use them in our daily life.*

**Respondent5:** *It will be useful and helpful especially for kids of different mother tongues. It will enable them to have access to knowledge in a straightforward way.*

**Respondent6:** *I agree because mother tongues are the only languages that may help a child achieve high cognitive skills.*

As should be obvious, the respondents' answers range from those who firmly believe that introducing mother tongues will have positive effects on students' academic performance. Yet, others believe that to be introduced, the mother tongues in question must be standardized first. Others, however, think that mother tongues are the only way to facilitate pupils' exposure to knowledge, in the very sense that they are the languages with which kids are much familiar.

### 3. In your opinion, what is the expected outcome of teaching mother tongues in Moroccan schools?

For clarity of analysis, respondents' responses are divided into three categories. The first category includes those who are 'optimistic'. The second category involves those who are 'pessimistic'. The third one is devoted to those who are 'neutral'.

Optimistic	Pessimistic	Neutral
40%	50%	9.1%

The results of this table suggest that (50%) are pessimistic about the outcome of teaching mother tongues in Moroccan schools. (40%), on the other hand, are optimistic. The following statements provide interesting illustration to this dilemma.

**Respondent1:** *This will harm Arabic which should be promoted more in Morocco. I think Arabic must be the language of education in general and primary schools in particular.*

**Respondent2:** *The outcome will not be satisfactory.*

**Respondent3:** *Low proficiency in other languages.*

**Respondent4:** *I think it will improve the quality of education not to mention that it is going to improve the process of teaching.*

**Respondent5:** *1. Ease of understanding.  
 2. Illiteracy rate will diminish.*

### 4. What can be done to incorporate mother tongues in Education?

A scanty number of the respondents were able to respond to this question. First, the majority of those who do not favor using mother tongues in education left a blank space. Those who responded maintain that the language should be standardized first. Yet, others believe that Moroccans' attitudes towards their mother tongues should, of necessity, change. As an illustration, these statements were provided.

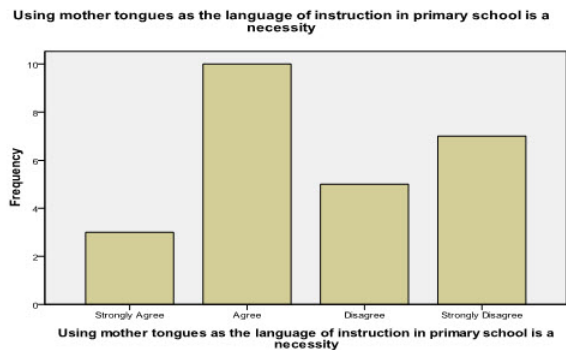
**Respondent1:** *I think it is the task of the state to take this decision. However, the incorporation involves many steps, namely standardization, officialization and implementation.*

**Respondent2:** *Moroccans need to change their attitudes first.*

The second part of this section is concerned with presenting the second part of

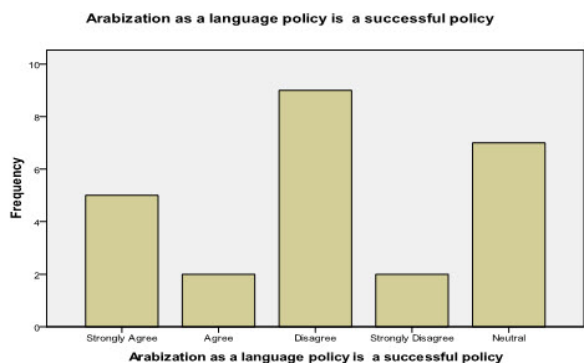
the questionnaire that contains close-ended questions. In fact, this part includes twelve questions. Each is analyzed and discussed separately.

Graph (1)



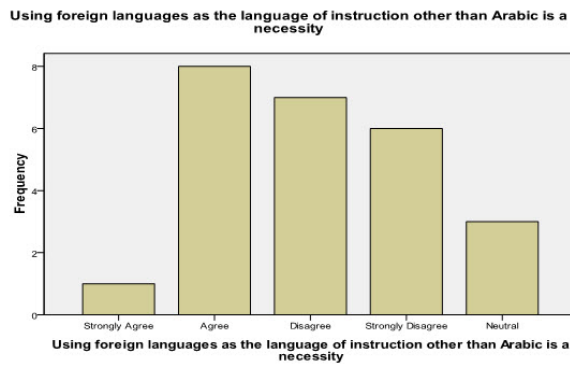
The first item in the questionnaire seeks to see whether Moroccans are in favor of using the mother tongues as the language of instruction in schools. The results show that (40%) of the respondents agree with this idea, followed by other respondents who strongly disagree and disagree, their percentages being (28%) and (20%), respectively. Besides, graph (1) also suggests that the Moroccans are aware of the importance of introducing mother tongues in primary schools.

Graph (2)



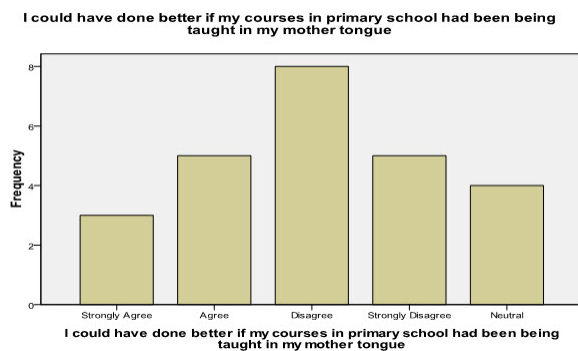
Graph (2) shows respondents' attitudes towards Arabization as a language policy in education. Not surprisingly, the majority disagree with this policy with a percentage of (36%), followed by those who choose to be neutral with a percentage of (28%). The other percentage is (8%) for both 'Agree' and 'Strongly Disagree'.

Graph (3)



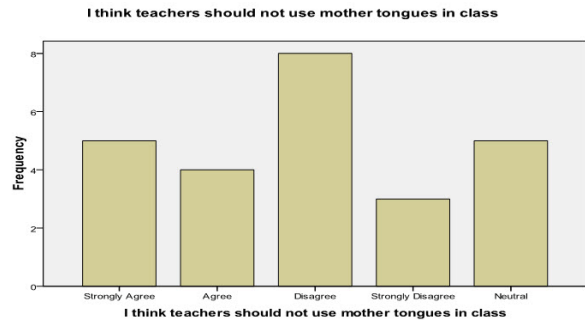
The third item attempts to see Moroccans' attitudes towards the use of foreign languages as the language of instruction other than Arabic. The results reveal that the majority opted for 'Agree' with a percentage of (32%), followed by those who disagree (28%), Strongly Disagree (24%), Neutral (12%), and Strongly Agree (4%). As should be obvious, the results are not significant, namely when one moves from 'Agree' to 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Agree'. This state of affairs may be justified, I assume, by the fact although Moroccans welcome other languages to be incorporated, the existence of Arabic in their educational system is inescapable.

Graph (4)



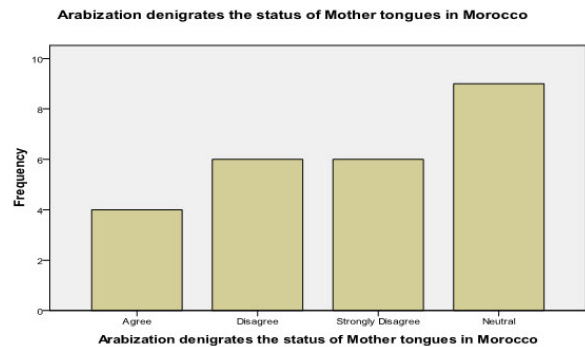
The purpose of this item has been to find out whether the respondents regret not having being taught in their mother tongues or not. The results reveal that the degree of disagreement is high with a percentage of (32%). Equally distributed options among the respondents are 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Agree', their percentages being (20%).

Graph (5)



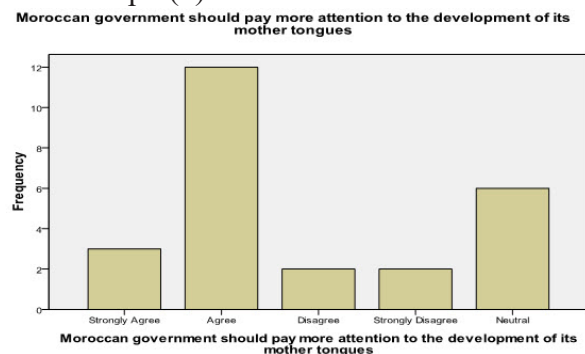
Concerning the statement that teachers should not use mother tongues in class, a considerable number of the participants disagree with this idea. A fair number of the participants either Strongly Agree (20%), Agree (16%), Strongly Disagree (12%) or are Neutral (20%).

Graph (6)



As it is shown in the chart above, the degree of neutrality is higher among the respondents. (24%) of the respondents either strongly agree and disagree. None of the respondents, it appears, opted for 'strongly agree' with this idea. If anything is to be inferred from this will be the fact that Moroccans believe that Arabization does not affect the status of their mother tongues.

Graph (7)



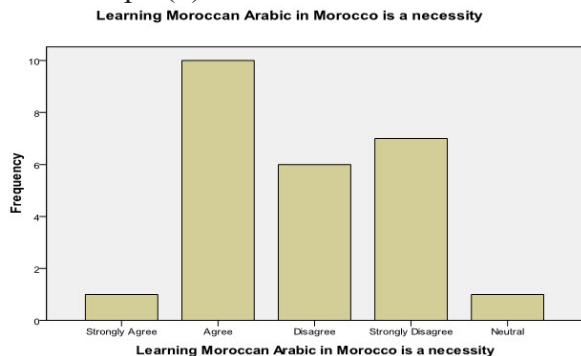
The aim underlying this question has been to see not only whether Moroccans are



aware of the fact that their mother tongues have a devalued status as compared with other languages, of which Arabic and French are only ones, but also, and most importantly, that the government should pay more attention to the development of mother tongues. The results demonstrate that (48%) of the respondents agree with this idea, followed by (24%) who are neutral; others either strongly agree, disagree, or strongly agree, their percentages being (12%), (8%) and (8%), respectively.

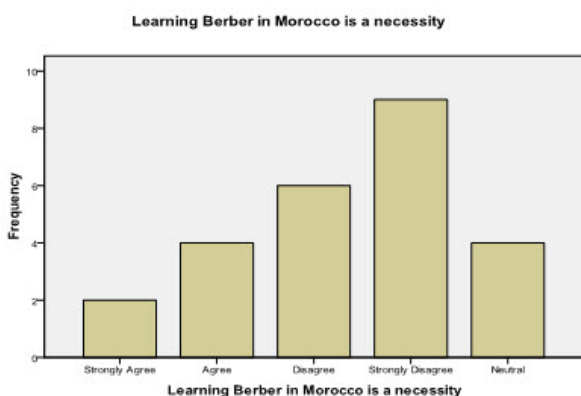
To push the lines of this research further, this study attempts also to shed some light on Moroccans' attitudes towards the languages in use, most important of which are Moroccan Arabic, Amazigh, Arabic, English, and Spanish.

Graph (8)



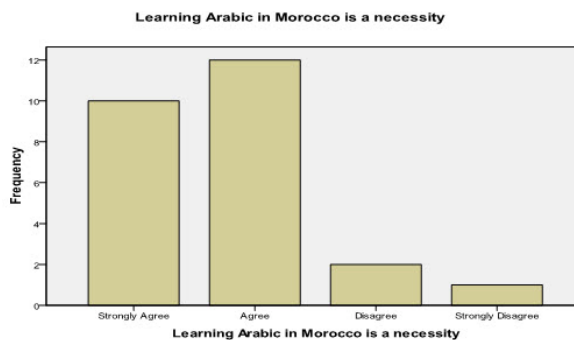
The majority of the respondents show a positive answer to this statement, about (40%) for 'Agree', (28%) for 'Strongly Agree', (24%) for 'Disagree', (4%) for both 'Strongly Agree' and 'Neutral'.

Graph (9)



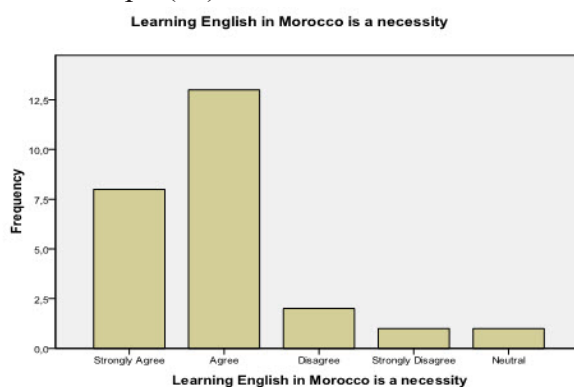
As opposed to MA, Amazigh has not been favored by the majority of the respondents. (36%) are 'Strongly Agree'. Only (16%) of the respondents agree with this idea (see Errihani, 2008; El Kirat et al. 2010 for similar results).

Graph (10)



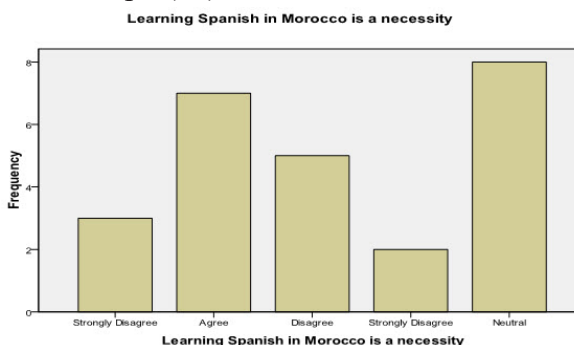
A close examination of the chart reveals that virtually all the respondents have a strong positive attitude towards Arabic, although it is not their mother language. (48%) and (40%) both 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' with the idea that learning Arabic is a necessity in Morocco. (8%) and (4%), though a scanty number, 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with this. None of the respondents opts for 'Neutral'.

Graph (11)



A cursory look at this item reveals that almost all the participants favor the idea that learning English in Morocco is very important. (52%) and (32%) both 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' with this idea. This implies that English enjoys a prestigious status in Morocco, for the evident it is the world *lingua franca*.

Graph (12)



The chart demonstrates the fact that the majority of the respondents are 'Neutral' with this statement. This can be justified, in my view, by the fact that Spanish is more favored in the North. Besides, Spanish is used there for economical purposes, in the sense that Moroccans in the ex-Spanish zones interact daily in Spanish, as much of their trade is with Spain (Ennaji, 2003: 40).

## 7. Attitudes and How to Change Them?

As Hohenthal (2003, cited in Ouakrime, 2010: 128) elucidates, attitudes are crucial in language growth or decay, restoration or destruction. Attitudes, furthermore, determines the fate of the language, its status, maintenance and revitalization. As has been pointed out, Moroccans have a negative attitude towards their mother tongues. A question of interest at this point is how to change this attitude? As a matter fact, there are numerous ways of achieving that goal, challenging though it may seem. One way is to use the language, as stated above, as a subject not as a medium of instruction on a par with other foreign languages (As Bensoukas (2010: 148) rightly points out, the LHRs are granted as far as the enrichment-oriented LHRs are concerned. Yet the more fundamental and inalienable rights are not granted). Another important way to achieve this goal is introduce mother tongues as a perquisite in the job market. Another strategy to implement is for the state to incorporate the element of prestige planning into any language planning efforts. This is motivated mainly by the fact that the success of any language policy is crucially contingent upon the state's efforts in implementing an image or prestige planning. This involves socio-economic incentives in language policy, which are meant to bridge the gap between the educative role of mother tongues and the economic returns it guarantees (Loutfi and Noamane, forthcoming).

For a language, along with its culture, to be preserved, that language needs to be able to be passed down to the next generation. One way to achieve this is via using it in education, not as a medium of instruction but as a subject on its own, for the evident reason that education plays a vital role in the development and maintenance of language. Moreover, educational human rights are the most linguistic human rights as they maintain

linguistic and cultural diversity. Indeed, they preserve the transmission of the language, let alone the remarkable positive repercussions on the students' educational as well as personal development (Another over-arching advantage is the promotion of one's sense of belonging and culture. See Ouakrime (2010) for more details about the advantages of using one's mother tongues in teaching) (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998; Ouakrime, 2010). Teaching a language distinct from one's mother tongues, then, may constitute a challenge to the learner. This will, in most cases, affect the learners' academic performance.

## 8. Conclusion

The aim of the paper has been to investigate the status of language in use in Morocco the status and, more precisely, the impact of Arabization on the status of mother tongues. The study attempted to shed light on Moroccans' attitudes towards their mother tongues. The findings in the present paper reveal that Moroccan's attitudes towards their mother tongues are not that strong, if not negative. The majority of the respondents appear to disfavor the idea of introducing mother tongues in education on the grounds that these languages might devalue the status of Arabic. For them, Arabic is the language which represents them and with which they project their identity in the world. This being the case, however, reality shows the reverse. As the classroom observation indicated, MA is overwhelmingly used as the language of instruction, both in the primary school and high school. Teachers, in this respect, believe that students feel at ease and have access to the information being delivered easily. The nature of this negative attitude is motivated by the fact these mother tongues, namely MA, are neither officially recognized by the state nor the language guarantees economic returns.

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