

Manual of Romance Languages in Africa

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Edited by

Günter Holtus and Fernando Sánchez-Miret

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Manual of Romance Languages in Africa

Edited by
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Manuals of Romance Linguistics

The international handbook series *Manuals of Romance Linguistics* (MRL) offers an extensive, systematic and state-of-the-art overview of linguistic research in the entire field of present-day Romance Studies.

MRL aims to update and expand the contents of the two major reference works available to date: *Lexikon der Romanistischen Linguistik* (LRL) (1988–2005, vol. 1–8) and *Romanische Sprachgeschichte* (RSG) (2003–2008, vol. 1–3). It also seeks to integrate new research trends as well as topics that have not yet been explored systematically.

Given that a complete revision of LRL and RSG would not be feasible, at least not in a sensible timeframe, the MRL editors have opted for a modular approach that is much more flexible:

The series will include approximately 60 volumes (each comprised of approx. 400–600 pages and 15–30 chapters). Each volume will focus on the most central aspects of its topic in a clear and structured manner. As a series, the volumes will cover the entire field of present-day Romance Linguistics, but they can also be used individually. Given that the work on individual MRL volumes will be nowhere near as time-consuming as that on a major reference work in the style of LRL, it will be much easier to take into account even the most recent trends and developments in linguistic research.

MRL's languages of publication are French, Spanish, Italian, English and, in exceptional cases, Portuguese. Each volume will consistently be written in only one of these languages. In each case, the choice of language will depend on the specific topic. English will be used for topics that are of more general relevance beyond the field of Romance Studies (for example *Manual of Language Acquisition* or *Manual of Romance Languages in the Media*).

The focus of each volume will be either (1) on one specific language or (2) on one specific research field. Concerning volumes of the first type, each of the Romance languages – including Romance-based creoles – will be discussed in a separate volume. A particularly strong focus will be placed on the smaller languages (*linguae minores*) that other reference works have not treated extensively. MRL will comprise volumes on Friulian, Corsican, Galician, among others, as well as a *Manual of Judaeo-Romance Linguistics and Philology*. Volumes of the second type will be devoted to the systematic presentation of all traditional and new fields of Romance Linguistics, with the research methods of Romance Linguistics being discussed in a separate volume. Dynamic new research fields and trends will yet again be of particular interest, because although they have become increasingly important in both research and teaching, older reference works have not dealt with them at all or touched upon them only tangentially. MRL will feature volumes dedicated to research fields such as Grammatical Interfaces, Youth Language Research, Urban Varieties, Computational Linguistics, Neurolinguistics, Sign Languages or Forensic Linguistics. Each volume will offer a structured and informative, easy-to-read overview of the history of research as well as of recent research trends.

We are delighted that internationally-renowned colleagues from a variety of Romance-speaking countries and beyond have agreed to collaborate on this series and take on the editorship of individual *MRL* volumes. Thanks to the expertise of the volume editors responsible for the concept and structure of their volumes, as well as for the selection of suitable authors, *MRL* will not only summarize the current state of knowledge in Romance Linguistics, but will also present much new information and recent research results.

As a whole, the *MRL* series will present a panorama of the discipline that is both extensive and up-to-date, providing interesting and relevant information and useful orientation for every reader, with detailed coverage of specific topics as well as general overviews of present-day Romance Linguistics. We believe that the series will offer a fresh, innovative approach, suited to adequately map the constant advancement of our discipline.

Günter Holtus (Lohra/Göttingen)

Fernando Sánchez-Miret (Salamanca)

April 2023

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1 Introduction

Language and culture – Africa is a continent rich in cultures, ethnicities, and languages. With more than two thousand languages spread over its area, multilingualism is a common reality. Paradoxically, the official languages are, with scarce exceptions, Indo-European, primarily English, French, and Portuguese. Many books address the situation of English on the African continent. This volume, therefore, focuses on the oft-neglected situation of the Romance languages. It is primarily aimed at scholars interested in their description but might also be useful for people concerned with the coexistence of languages in general. As languages of power in many African countries, Romance languages empower those who master them and discriminate against those who do not. Struggling worldwide against English domination, they themselves prevail over other languages, among which again various types of hierarchical relations exist as well. Understanding the origins of these power relations and describing their current manifestation is a special concern of this book. Yet, despite cultural contacts, on occasion, producing hierarchies and dominances that may result in human suffering and cultural impoverishment, they also have their merits. A no less strongly felt concern of this volume is to direct the attention to the cross-fertilization and mutual enrichment emerging from the encounter of cultures. In both concerns, languages often turn out to mirror societal developments. Their study, therefore, not only allows linguistic insights but also supplies precious information on extralinguistic evolutions.

Colonial heritage – The Romance languages were mostly brought to Africa in the era of colonization. Today, they are spoken by very few as vernaculars, at least on the mainland. In some countries, they are not even very common as second languages but nevertheless chosen for government issues, teaching, written media, and literature. Current attitudes towards them range from their rejection as colonial vestiges charged with causing alienation to their glorification as languages of the elite imbued with overt prestige and also include their simple acceptance as a given reality facilitated through cultural appropriation and indigenization. In order to grasp the wide panorama of the existence of Romance languages in Africa, the countries selected for this volume encompass areas that were once or are still ruled by Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal, or Spain and include almost all African countries that were not primarily colonized by Britain. It is evident that this choice will not do justice to every trace of the Romance languages in Africa. Countries like Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, or Tanzania did become British colonies but were first in contact with other European nations, including those that spoke Romance languages. Portuguese sailors, in particular, established a series of settlements, trading stations, and forts, which are not further considered in this volume, as the respective regions later came under the control of another European power that spread its language more sustainably. In addition to their emergence through colonization, Romance languages can also be identified in all African

countries due to migration to and from other African countries, tourism from Europe and the Americas, and expats or diplomats living in these countries, which is not a focus of this book either. With the exception of Italian, each of the Romance languages mentioned is the official language in at least one of the countries represented in this handbook.

Linguistic ecology – Linguistic ecology is one of the factors that determine the role of the Romance languages as vehicular languages in each country's daily life (cf. Mufwene 2001). This role tends to be weaker in countries with a single dominant vernacular. Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, Malagasy, or Shikomori are the almost undisputed vernaculars in Burundi, Rwanda, Madagascar, and Comoros. Various creoles are the first languages of many people in Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Mauritius, Réunion, and Seychelles. Other nations have a considerable variety of vernaculars, among which one takes up ample space in the oral sphere and stands out as an indigenous vehicular language: Sango, Wolof, and Guinea-Bissau Creole are spoken as first or second languages by most people in the Central African Republic, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau, respectively. The Romance languages are more widely used in plurilingual countries with vehicular languages that vary by region or lacking dominant indigenous languages: in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville (the Republic of the Congo with the capital Brazzaville), Congo-Kinshasa (the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the capital Kinshasa), Côte d'Ivoire, or Gabon, for instance. They are virtually unchallenged in the monolingual regions Madeira and Canary Islands.

Quantitative distribution – French and Portuguese are the most important Romance languages in Africa, with Portuguese present in fewer countries, where it is, however, more established. Accurate numbers of speakers are difficult to come by and even more difficult to compare when the numbers are based on different sources (cf. Reutner 2017a, 14–19). The individual chapters provide a more precise insight into the language distribution of the respective countries, while a rough overview may look as follows: Speakers of Portuguese as a first or second language range from 62 % in Guinea-Bissau, 70 % in Mozambique, and 72 % in Angola to 90 % in Cabo Verde, 91 % in São Tomé and Príncipe, and almost everyone in Madeira (cf. OLP 2015). French enjoys a high status in more African countries than Portuguese but is used in many of them as a lingua franca by minority segments only. Not even a quarter of the population can hold a conversation in French in Rwanda (6 %), Burundi (9 %), Chad (13 %), Mauritania (13 %), Niger (13 %), Mali (17 %), and Burkina Faso (24 %), not even half in Comoros (26 %), Madagascar (26 %), Senegal (26 %), Guinea (27 %), the Central African Republic (29 %), Equatorial Guinea (29 %), Algeria (33 %), Benin (34 %), Côte d'Ivoire (34 %), Morocco (36 %), Togo (41 %), and Cameroon (41 %). At least half of the population speaks French only in Djibouti (50 %), Congo-Kinshasa (51 %), Tunisia (52 %), Congo-Brazzaville (61 %), and at the top of the list of mainland Africa, Gabon (65 %), as well as in Seychelles (53 %), Mayotte (63 %), Mauritius (73 %), and Réunion (88 %) in the Indian Ocean (cf. OIF 2022, 30s.). Setting aside the areas belonging to Spain, Spanish is well established in one African country, Equatorial Guinea (74 %, cf. IC 2022, 8s), whereas Italian could not survive in the long run at all.

African states – National boundaries have typically been artificially drawn in Africa. They are, in many cases, relics of colonization, and therefore any classification based on them may be characterized as colonial as well. Borders are, however, decisive when it comes to describing the situation of the Romance languages, as the language policies applied vary by nation. In this optic, geographical classifications of Africa are unsatisfactory, as physiographic characteristics like climate, vegetation, and land formation do not coincide with national states and their policies. The same applies to linguistic classifications determined according to the spatial distribution of African languages and especially African *linguae francae*, as these usually transgress national boundaries, sometimes share their role with others, and often have the largest critical mass of speakers in one country only. Linguistic representations that differentiate between an officially French-, Portuguese-, or Spanish-speaking Africa and other parts can be based on the nations' constitutions but still present the challenge that some countries are officially bi- or multilingual or do not explicitly establish official languages at all. The Romance languages are, therefore, analysed state by state, and each state is classified with regard to the Romance language that influenced it most compared to other European languages.

Selected states – The areas selected for exploration here are thus nations with a longer historical presence of colonial powers speaking Romance languages. The result is a choice of thirty-eight countries: thirty-five African states and six territories belonging to France, Portugal, or Spain. Twenty-six states are considered in terms of French (twenty-five plus France, represented through two regions in the Indian Ocean), four in terms of Italian, six in terms of Portuguese (five plus Portugal, represented by one region in Northern Africa), and two in terms of Spanish (Equatorial Guinea together with Spain, represented by one region and two autonomous communities in Northern Africa). The twenty-five countries with a French past include Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia in Northern Africa, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Togo in Western Africa, and Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa, and Gabon in Middle Africa. The French-influenced states in Eastern Africa comprise Burundi, Rwanda, Djibouti, Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius, and Seychelles; the two French regions are the departments Réunion and Mayotte. In most of these areas, French was introduced through France, while Congo-Kinshasa, Burundi, and Rwanda were colonized by Belgium. Italy reached out for Libya in Northern and Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia in Eastern Africa, among which Ethiopia stands out as the only African country besides Liberia that avoided becoming a colony. The Portuguese-influenced zones are Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau in Western Africa, Angola and São Tomé and Príncipe in Middle Africa, Mozambique in Eastern Africa, and the northern African region of Portugal, Madeira. Spanish is the official language in the northern African areas that belong to Spain –Canary Islands, Ceuta, and Melilla– and one of the official languages in one Middle African country, Equatorial Guinea. Some of the countries or territories sharing a few crucial aspects of their evolution are combined in one chapter to respect the size limits of this book. Other combinations would be conceivable, too. The final grouping not only results

from factual considerations but also the authors' willingness to present more than one country or territory.

African georegions – The selected states are presented in a geographical order from Northern, via Western and Middle to Eastern Africa. The grouping of the countries in this book follows the United Nations geoscheme. This choice intentionally separates a few countries often treated together in linguistic studies in order to illustrate other relations within the georegion.

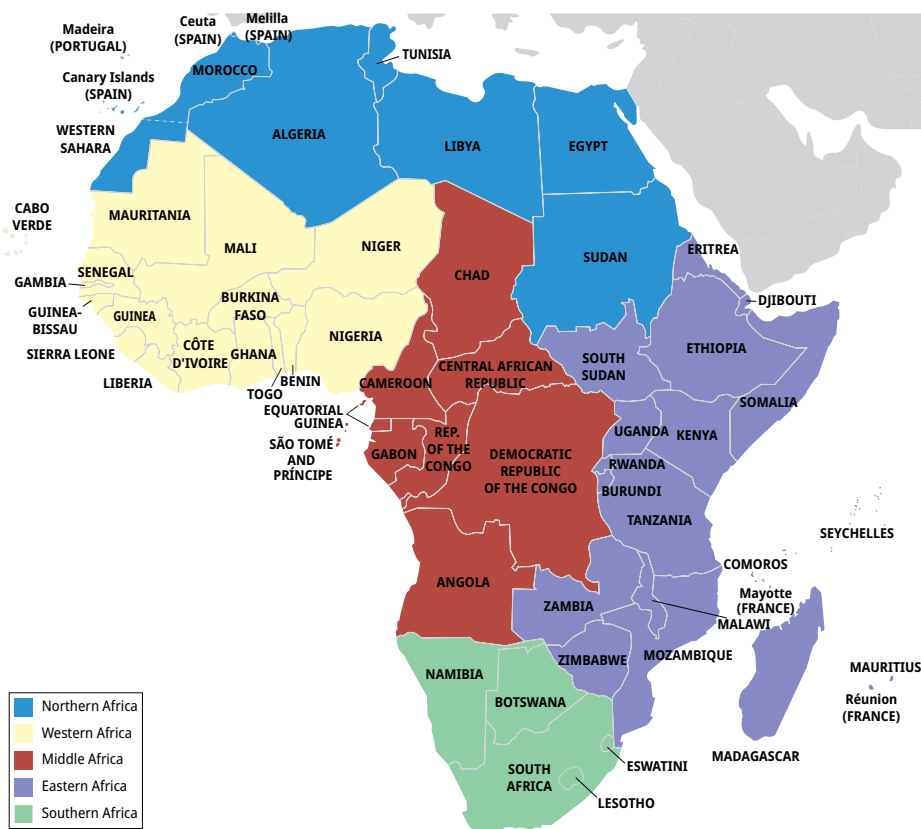


Figure 1: African georegions

Northern Africa – Northern Africa is represented with six states in the handbook. Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia are regarded in relation to French and the languages it came in contact with, and Libya with a view to traces of its Italian past. The official language of the four countries is Arabic, in Algeria and Morocco alongside Tamazight. Four northern African areas belong to Portugal or Spain: Madeira, the Canary Islands, Ceuta, and Melilla. They are presented with regard to Portuguese and Spanish, respectively. Spanish also left traces in modern-day Morocco and the disputed territory of Western Sahara.

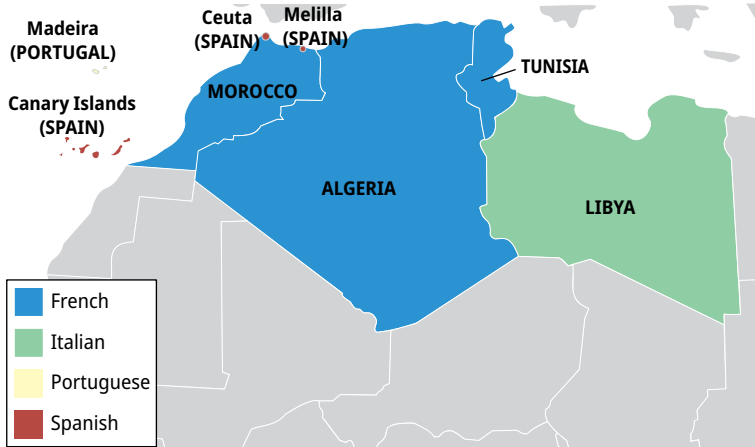


Figure 2: Romance languages in Northern Africa

Western Africa – The eleven Western African states discussed in this handbook encompass nine with a French colonial legacy: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Senegal, and Togo still declare French as sole official language, while Mauritania chose Arabic and Mali thirteen national languages. Benin, Guinea, and Niger also mention the intention to promote national languages in their constitution, and Senegal explicitly cites Jola, Maninka, Pulaar, Sereer, Soninke, Wolof, and all other codified languages. Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau are discussed with regard to Portuguese and its creoles.

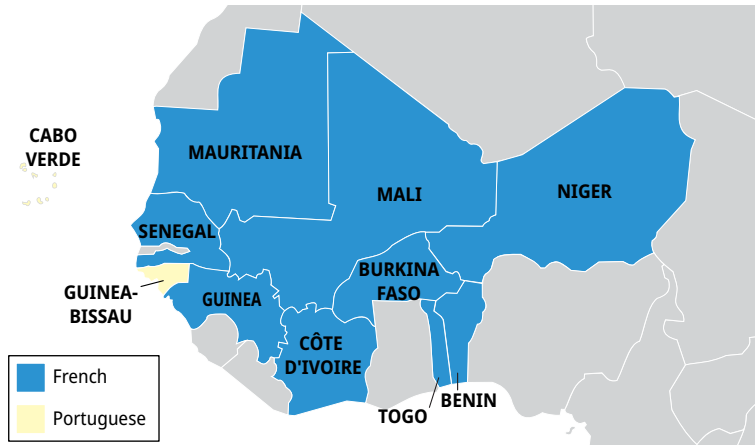


Figure 3: Romance languages in Western Africa

Middle Africa – Our presentation of Middle Africa includes nine countries, six of which have French as their official or co-official language. Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa,

and Gabon stipulate it as their sole official language but also mention national languages in their constitution. Congo-Brazzaville and Congo-Kinshasa are even specific about this. Both cite Lingala and Kikongo or Kituba, the latter adds Swahili and Tshiluba. In the three other countries, French is co-official with another language: in Cameroon together with English, in the Central African Republic alongside Sango, and in Chad with Arabic. Angola and São Tomé and Príncipe established Portuguese as sole official language. Equatorial Guinea is classified here according to its main official language Spanish, though French and Portuguese are declared official languages in its constitution too. The country also witnessed the emergence of a Portuguese-based creole on the island of Anobón, and other Portuguese-based creoles developed in São Tomé and Príncipe.

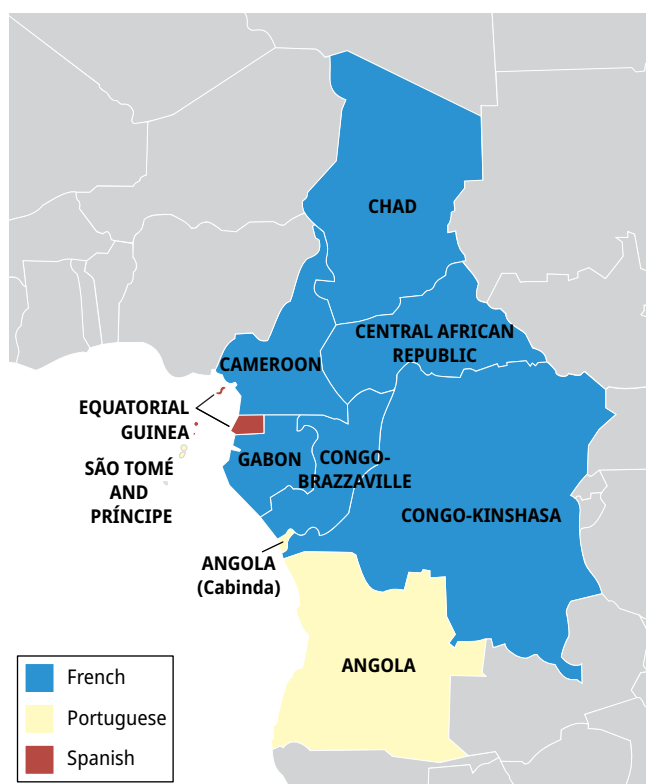


Figure 4: Romance languages in Middle Africa

Eastern Africa – Eastern Africa is present with eleven countries and the two French departments Réunion and Mayotte. Seven of the eleven countries are considered in view of French, which is cited as co-official in the constitution of the former Belgian colonies Burundi and Rwanda and the former French colonies Djibouti, Madagascar, Comoros, and Seychelles. French also plays a major role in Mauritius, which is de facto dominated by English. It shares its co-official status with Kirundi and English in Burundi, Kinyar-

wanda, English, and Swahili in Rwanda, Arabic in Djibouti, Shikomori and Arabic in Comoros, Malagasy in Madagascar, as well as Seychelles Creole and English in Seychelles. Other French-based creoles are essential means of oral communication in Réunion and Mauritius. Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia are discussed in relation to traces of Italian, and Mozambique regarding the situation of Portuguese.

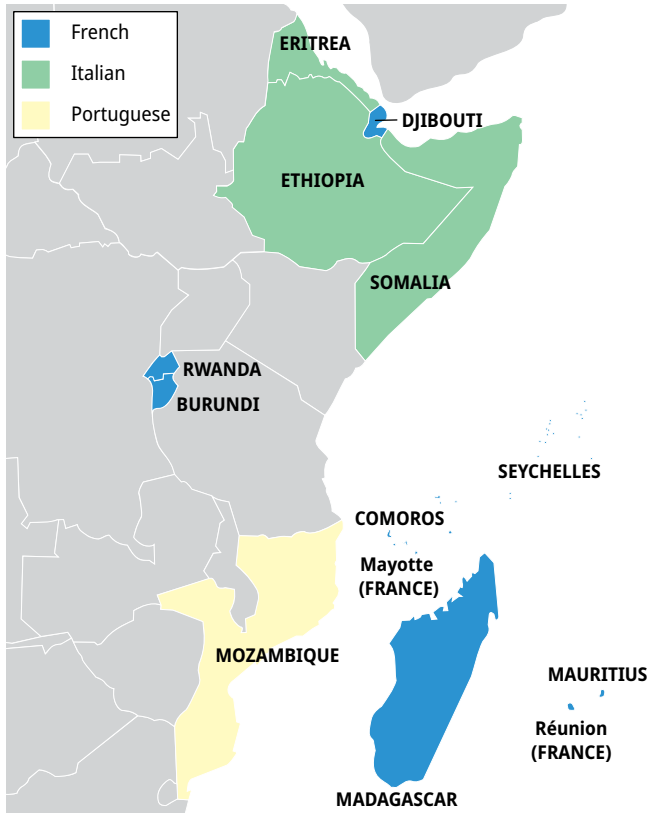


Figure 5: Romance languages in Eastern Africa

Africa – Southern Africa was not a focus of the colonial expansion of Romance-speaking countries, at least in its definition by the United Nations. As defined by the African Union, however, Southern Africa would include Angola. Figure 6 summarizes the panorama of Romance languages in Africa as presented in this handbook.

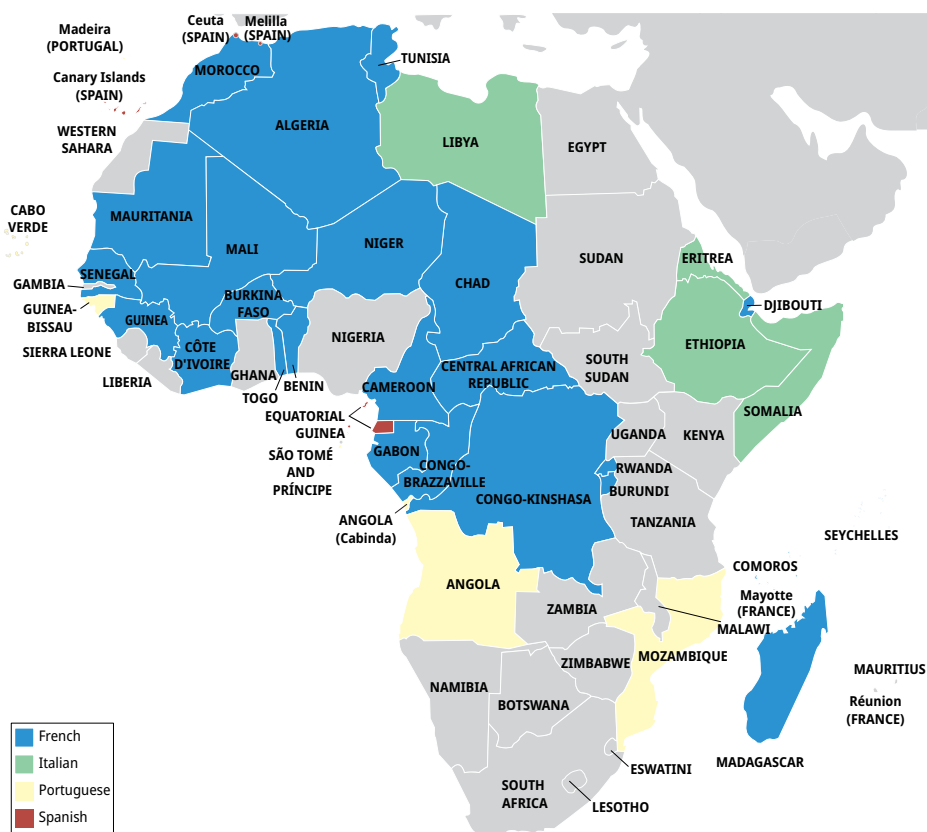


Figure 6: Romance languages in Africa

Roman Empire – The north African coastline was already coveted by the Romans, so the Romance languages introduced later encountered faint traces of their original language, Latin. The African part of the Roman Empire stretched from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea in the east and includes the coastal regions of what is today Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt: the former Roman provinces Mauretania Tingitana (with the capital Tingis, present-day Tangier), Mauretania Caesariensis (with Caesarea, today's Cherchell), Africa Proconsularis (with Carthage), Cyrenaica (with the ancient city Cyrene), and Aegyptus (with Alexandria). They form part of the *Romania submersa*, where Latin was not present long enough to evolve into the Romance languages but functioned as substrate for other languages and also left some linguistic traces in place names. In turn, most regions depicted in this handbook were unknown to the Romans and can partially be described as *Romania nova*. Nevertheless, even the country names *Egypt*, *Eritrea*, *Ethiopia*, *Libya*, *Mauritania*, and the continent's name *Africa* itself have Graeco-Roman roots. Other country names go back to the Romance languages and thus indirectly to Latin: *Cabo Verde* (< Pg. *cabo* 'cape', *verde* 'green'), *Cameroon* (< Pg. *cama-*

rões ‘shrimps’), *Côte d’Ivoire* (< Fr. *côte* ‘coast’, *ivoire* ‘ivory’), *Gabon* (< Pg. *gabão* ‘cloak’), *São Tomé and Príncipe* (< Pg. *São Tomé* ‘Saint Thomas’, *príncipe* ‘prince’), or *Sierra Leone* (Sp. *sierra* ‘mountain range’, It. *leone* ‘lion’). The list could easily be extended with numerous city names that testify to the labelling of several African places by people speaking Romance languages. Last but not least, it would have to refer to the replacement by autonyms, of which *Burkina Faso* ‘land of the upright people’ is certainly the most impressive (< Mooré *Burkina* ‘upright’, Dyula *Faso* ‘fatherland’, combined with Fula *bè* ‘person’ in *Burkinabè*).



Figure 7: Roman Empire under Hadrian

Chapter structure – The states are examined in separate chapters according to the following aspects: sociolinguistic situation, linguistic history, external language policy, linguistic characteristics, and internal language policy. The uniform application of this structure to the analysis of the linguistic situation in each country assists readers in easily finding the information they are looking for. Nevertheless, not all aspects will be available, and we ask for understanding in the event that the text does not supply a needed piece of information. Despite our attempts to treat each topic in each country uniformly, for various reasons, it has been difficult to completely avoid some disparities between sections and countries. First, several aspects might play a more prominent role in some areas than in others. Second, research on some countries is rather scarce and does not yet cover all relevant aspects. Third, authors might be more specialized in some

topics than in others, which can be reflected in the proportions dedicated to the different sections. In addition, the chapters on Libya, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia must deviate from the plan. Since Italian is not vital as an everyday language on the African continent, the reports on these countries cannot offer linguistic characteristics and internal language policies; hence our focus on the Italian traces in African languages and African influences on Italian.

Focus on plurilingualism – Our special interest lies in the relations of the Romance languages with the languages they coexist with. In almost all African states and regions, the Romance languages are embedded in autochthonous plurilingual environments or in contact with a creole based on one of them. The first section of each chapter thus responds to the following questions: Which languages are used in the country and where? Which social group uses which language? How many people speak and/or understand each language? The second part deals with historical aspects: What was the situation before the area came into contact with Europeans? How was the Romance language imported to and established in the country? Which historical events have contributed to its further development? The third section focuses on statutory aspects: Which languages are stipulated as official by the constitution? Are there any specific laws that have been promulgated in order to encourage the choice of the Romance language or to reinforce African languages? It describes which languages are used by public authorities, in the educational system, the media, and fine arts, and which factors are decisive for the language choice in each domain. Which languages are used by the government for legal texts, identity documents, stamps, and public signage? Which ones emerge in the oral and written communication of the administration? Which ones do politicians prefer in official speeches and election campaigns? Which ones appear in the judicial system? Which ones prevail in the context of cults and religion? Which are the teaching languages in public and private schools and which ones are taught? Which languages dominate in newspapers, on radio, television, and the internet? And which languages appear in oral and written literature, films, and song lyrics? The fourth segment is dedicated to the characteristics of the Romance languages in pronunciation, grammar, and lexicon. It portrays their internal development and the influences of African languages on them. The reader will find numerous examples of features not common in mainland Europe, some of which are spread in several African countries. The presentation focuses on stabilized features that form part of an endogenous norm but also discusses the impact of frequent learner varieties, which constitute an essential part especially of African French due to its predominant acquisition as a second language. Drawing the line between errors and general usage sometimes proves challenging. The same holds true for assigning the identified features to different types of norms and, in a second step, their countries to various degrees of pluricentricity. The fifth section, therefore, analyses the evaluation, codification, and social distribution of the African varieties. It first chronicles attitudes towards them and attempts at linguistic purism, then deals with their registration in dictionaries and grammars, and finally discusses their actual usage by public authorities,

in education, the media, and literature (for more details on these sections cf. Pöll 2017; Reutner 2017a).

Mono-, bi- and plurilingual states – The constitutions of twenty-three out of the thirty-eight nations with a notable Romance past suggest that the states are monolingual. Eleven are officially monolingual French (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, France: Réunion and Mayotte, and Togo only mention French in their constitutions; Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa, Gabon, Guinea, Niger, and Senegal also explicitly name national languages). Six are officially Portuguese-speaking (Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal: Madeira, and São Tomé and Príncipe), three Arabic-speaking (Libya, Mauritania, and Tunisia), and one each officially uses Spanish (Spain: Canaries, Ceuta, and Melilla), English (Mauritius, which does not explicitly stipulate an official language but declares English as working language of its Assembly), or Amharic (Ethiopia, whose constitution also avoids defining an official language but establishes Amharic as working language of its government; Afar, Oromo, Somali, and Tigrinya were declared additional working languages in 2020). Eight countries are officially bilingual: Arabic-Tamazight Algeria and Morocco, Arabic-French Chad and Djibouti, Somali-Arabic Somalia, English-French Cameroon, the Sango-French Central African Republic, and Malagasy-French Madagascar. Seven countries are officially plurilingual: trilingual Kirundi-French-English Burundi, Shikomori-French-Arabic Comoros, Spanish-French-Portuguese Equatorial Guinea, Creole-English-French Seychelles, Tigrinya-Arabic-English Eritrea (which also does not proclaim an official language but explains that the three languages are predominantly used in its commerce and government affairs), as well as Rwanda, officially quadrilingual Kinyarwanda-French-English-Swahili since 2017, and Mali, which relegated French to a working language in July 2023 and declared Bambara, Bobo (Bomu), Bozo, Dogon, Fula (Fulfulde), Hassaniyya, Kassonke (Xaasongaxango), Maninka, Minyanka (Mamara), Senufo, Songhay, Soninke, and Tamasheq official.

Recent coups – Major changes are currently taking place in the former French colonies in Western and Middle Africa, where eight successful coups took place between August 2020 and August 2023: Chad (2021), Guinea (2021), Burkina Faso (two in 2022), Mali (2020, 2021), Niger (2023), and Gabon (2023). Some of them may also have linguistic implications and could entail changes in official languages, for instance.

Languages in contact – Many more languages are in contact with the Romance languages than the ones mentioned in the constitutions. They primarily constitute vernacular, sometimes also vehicular languages, and are increasingly conquering spheres traditionally reserved for official languages. Some vehicular languages are even spread in several countries and might develop conspicuous pluricentricity in the process of their ongoing institutionalization. Most of the languages in contact with the Romance languages can be grouped into three of the four major language families established by Greenberg (1949/1950; 1954) – Afro-Asiatic, Niger-Congo, and Nilo-Saharan – even though the classifications have been revised several times since then (cf., e.g., Güldemann 2018; Vossen/Dimmendaal 2020, and Figure 8, p. 13). Other languages belong to the

Austronesian family or are creoles that emerged from the contact between Romance and African languages in the context of slavery. All of these languages would deserve much more attention than what can be given to them in this volume focusing on the Romance languages.

Creoles – Romance-based African creoles are derived from French and Portuguese: French-based creoles are spoken in Mauritius, Rodrigues, Réunion, and Seychelles. Portuguese-based creoles include the Upper Guinea and the Gulf of Guinea creoles: Upper Guinea creoles evolved in Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and the Senegalese Casamance, once coveted by Portugal. The Gulf of Guinea creoles emerged in Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe. Romance-based creoles appear in this volume only in their function as languages in contact with the Romance languages and are presented in more detail using the example of Guinea-Bissau Creole. Some scholars also describe Kikuba, Lingala, and Sango as creoles. Yet, calling each language that arose through the encounter of different cultures a creole would make almost all languages creole, as language evolution usually involves many kinds of language contact. English would ultimately also be considered a creole, which would not advance language classification but only ignore the special situation of real creoles. Therefore, we prefer to restrict the term *creole* to the languages which came up in the specific sociocultural context of plantation settlement colonies (cf., e.g., APiCS; Chaudenson 1992; Reutner 2005, 7s.; Mufwene 2020, 302; 2022, 217; 2023, 79).

Naming languages – Drawing boundaries between languages is a controversial undertaking, and some argue that the practice of delineating languages is itself a vestige of colonialism and coloniality (e.g., Pennycook/Makoni 2020, 47ss.). Though this argument may have merit, for the purposes of this volume it is necessary to recognize languages as, in principle, distinct from one another, which does not deny manifold phenomena of code-switching and code-mixing and the sometimes-blurring boundaries between languages and varieties. In this matter, we have adopted the language demarcation as described by Ethnologue (cf. Eberhard/Simons/Fennig 2023). There is a further problem of classification, however, which arises from the fact that many African languages bear different names depending on the group referring to them. Fula, for example, is named Peul by the French, and, stretching as a continuum of dialects across almost twenty countries, is referred to as Pulaar or Pular in the West of its territory and as Fulfulde in the East. Though no single reference will be perfect in every case when it comes to such a fluid and vibrant cultural expression as language, in the interests of clarity and consistency, we have chosen to use the language names as given by Glottolog (cf. Hammarström et al. 2023) unless there are well-established autonyms that deviate.

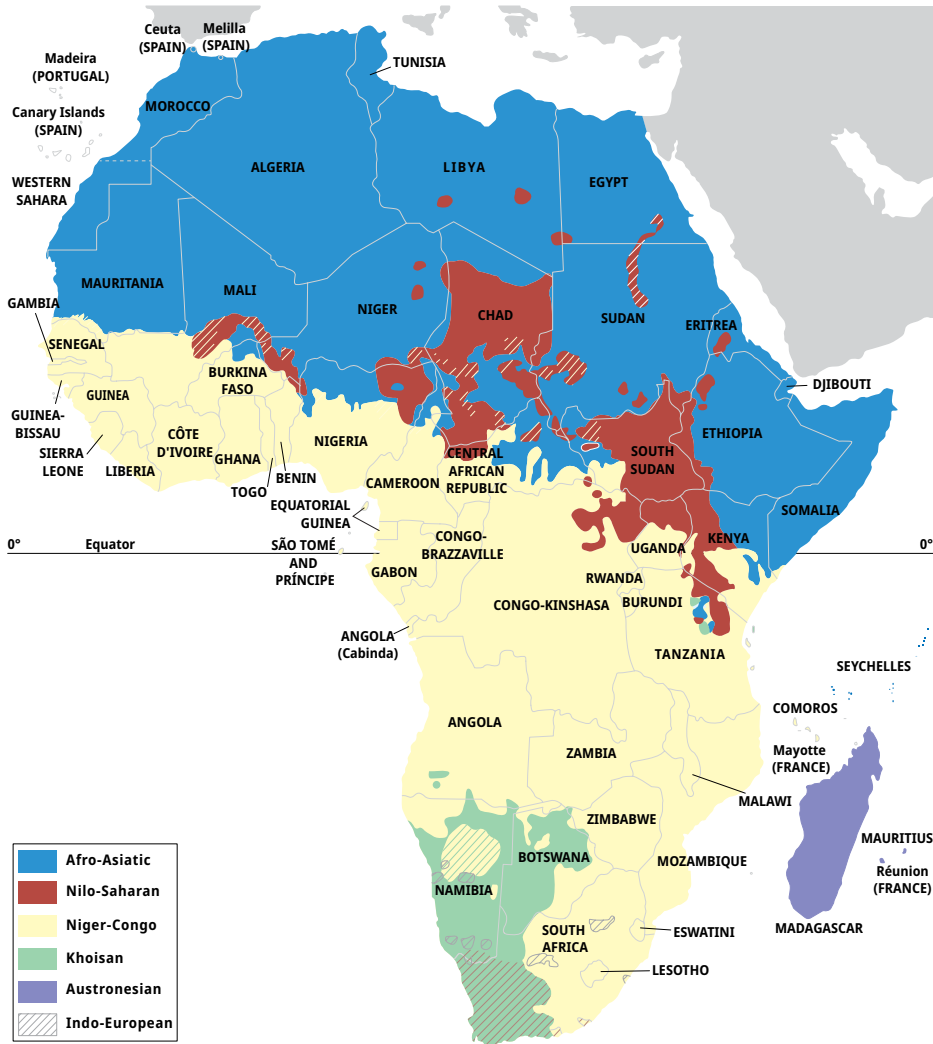


Figure 8: African language families

Country key facts – The overview of the countries at the end of the book lists the official languages alongside a selection of major other languages. The official languages are cited according to each country's most recent constitution as far as possible, the other languages according to Ethnologue and Glottolog. The data relating to the area and population of independent countries is drawn from the World Factbook (cf. CIA 2023) and that of dependent territories is supplied by the statistics institutes of France, Portugal, and Spain (cf. DREM 2022; INE 2022; INSEE 2022). The percentages of speakers are indicated according to the International Organization of La Francophonie, the Portuguese Language Observatory, and the Cervantes Institute (cf. OIF 2022; OLP 2015; IC 2022). For rea-

sons of consistency, comparable sources available for all states were selected. More precise or recent figures for the individual states can be found in the corresponding chapters. The overview also shows the respective flags, which are significant and often telling national symbols. Many of them use the Pan-African colours green, yellow, and red, for instance, some of them ideograms like five-pointed stars or the crescent.

Descriptions of Romance languages in Africa – Numerous monographs focus on one Romance language in one specific African country. Some also consider more African countries (e.g., Dumont 1990; Bamgboṣe 1991; 2000; Manessy 1994; Abolou 2012; Brandão 2018), as do countless conference proceedings. Reference books often encompass one Romance language in multiple African countries without necessarily treating all relevant African nations or all linguistic and sociolinguistic levels, and usually addressing zones outside Africa, too. Examples include the general handbooks for French by Holtus/Metzeltin/Schmitt (1990) and Polzin-Haumann/Schweickard (2015), the handbooks on the French-speaking world by Valdman (1979), Robillard/Beniamino (1993–1996), Pöll (2001), Reutner (2017b), and Hardy/Herling/Patzelt (2019), specialized books on French worldwide like Gess/Lyche/Meisenburg (2012) or Detey et al. (2016), and the language histories of Picoche/Marchello-Nizia (1989), Antoine et al. (1995; 2000), or Chaurand (1999). Works on the Italian language in more than one African country are rare but exist (e.g., Ricci 2005). Portuguese outside Portugal is widely explored as to its existence in Brazil. The general handbooks by Holtus/Metzeltin/Schmitt (1994) and Martins/Carrilho (2016) also take account of Portuguese in several African countries, as do specialized books on Portuguese worldwide like Álvarez López/Gonçalves/Ornelas de Avelar (2018), as well as grammars such as Vázquez Cuesta/Mendes da Luz (1989) or Raposo et al. (2013). Spanish is investigated as a world language including Equatorial Guinea in Herling/Patzelt (2013), whereas most publications on Spanish worldwide focus on its presence in Latin America and only refer to the Canary Islands as basis for Latin American Spanish, as, for example, Lipski (1994), López Morales (2005), and Eckkrammer (2021). Still others unite the Romance languages but only treat a selection of the relevant African countries or include countries outside Africa among them, as Ernst et al. (2003), for instance.

Features compared to other handbooks – Three aspects set this handbook apart from other descriptions of the Romance languages in Africa. They concern its scope, organization, and linguistic approach. The scope of this volume provides a fairly complete panorama of the Romance languages in contemporary Africa by presenting descriptions of all applicable Romance languages in all African countries where they have a certain tradition. The organization of the chapters is special in three aspects. First, it follows a coherent structure thanks to uniform criteria of analysis, which facilitates comparisons between the sections of different chapters. Second, it illustrates all phenomena cited as linguistic characteristics with examples, always provides their standard equivalents, and supplements both the regional and standard forms in the pronunciation part with IPA transcriptions to help students and second-language users of the Romance languages. Third, it systematically offers English translations for the examples and quota-

tions in other languages in order to make the information easily accessible to a wider audience than the scholars investigating one of the Romance languages. The linguistic approach allows examining the different countries from an integrative perspective, achieved by focusing on multilingualism. It combines the description of mere linguistic features with the discussion of language planning and other sociolinguistic aspects, which are often treated separately, though actually mutually dependent.

Features compared to the Handbook of the French-Speaking World – The idea of planning this handbook came up while working on the *Manuel des francophonies* (Reutner 2017b). This includes work on some African countries (cf. Boukari 2017; Daff 2017; Derradji 2017; Drescher 2017; Frey 2017; Kriegel 2017; Jablonka 2017; Randriamarotsimba 2017). However, a treatment of the complete French-speaking area in Africa was beyond its scope and thus suggested a separate handbook specifically for French in Africa. The proposal then arose to also deal with the other three Romance languages of interest for Africa and to describe the four of them in their African environments using English as publication language. The unique structure and coherent perspective developed for the *Manuel des francophonies* proved to be very helpful for a uniform representation of different countries and therefore was to be retained and applied to all pertinent African countries. In summary, three aspects distinguish the *Manual of Romance Languages in Africa* from the *Manuel des francophonies*. This handbook treats all African countries with French history, whereas the preceding one only presents a small selection. This new volume goes beyond the French-speaking world and also examines African countries with Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish history, as comprehensively as possible. Last but not least, though most authors have languages other than English as their first language, it uses English as a lingua franca to enable a smooth transfer of knowledge and to bridge the different Romance languages without privileging one of them (cf. Reutner 2021).

International partners – Describing the language situation of thirty-eight countries wouldn't be possible without exchanges involving specialists from all over the world. Beyond advice from and discussion with a multitude of colleagues from different disciplines, this volume was created in collaboration with forty-four scholars working in twenty-two countries, who contributed as authors. Ten of them work in Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Chad, Ghana, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, and Togo: Moufoutaou Adjera from Benin's University of Abomey-Calavi (*Université d'Abomey-Calavi*), Karima Ait Dahmane from Algeria's University of Algiers (*Université d'Alger 2 Abu el Kacem Saâdallah*), Issa Djarangar Djita from Chad's University of N'Djamena (*Université de N'Djamena*), Komlan Essowe Essizewa from Togo's University of Lomé (*Université de Lomé*), Guilhem Florigny from the University of Mauritius, Gregorio Firmino from Mozambique's Eduardo Mondlane University (*Universidade Eduardo Mondlane*), Promise Dodzi Kpoglu from the University of Ghana, Gélase Nimbona from the University of Burundi (*Université du Burundi*), Joëlle Perreau from the University of Seychelles, and Dominika Swolkien from the University of Cabo Verde (*Universidade de Cabo Verde*). Four authors are employed in Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland: Elissa

Pustka at Austria's University of Vienna (*Universität Wien*), Anne-Catherine Simon at Belgium's University of Louvain (*Université catholique de Louvain*), Margot van den Berg at Utrecht University (*Universiteit Utrecht*) in the Netherlands, and Bruno Maurer at the Swiss University of Lausanne (*Université de Lausanne*). Two authors shared their work from Canada, Norway, and the United States of America, each: in Canada, Fouzia Benza-kour from Sherbrooke University (*Université de Sherbrooke*) and Bernard Mulo Farenkia from Cape Breton University; in Norway, Guri Bordal Steien from the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (*Høgskolen i Innlandet*) and Ingse Skattum from the University of Oslo (*Universitetet i Oslo*); in the United States, John M. Lipski from Pennsylvania State University and Lotfi Sayahi of the University of New York at Albany (SUNY Albany). Three authors work in Italy, Portugal, and Spain, each: in Italy, Béatrice Akissi Boutin and Oreste Floquet from the University of Rome (*Sapienza Università di Roma*) and Mauro Tosco from the University of Turin (*Università di Torino*); in Portugal, Nélia Alexandre and Tjerk Hagemeijer from the University of Lisbon (*Universidade de Lisboa*) and Aline Bazenga from the University of Madeira (*Universidade da Madeira*); in Spain, Dolores Corbella from the University of La Laguna (*Universidad de La Laguna*), as well as Gérard Fernández Smith and Luis Escoriza Morera from the University of Cadiz (*Universidad de Cádiz*). Seven authors contributed from Germany: Sabine Diao-Klaeger from the University of Koblenz-Landau (*Universität Koblenz-Landau*), Lutz Edzard and Silke Jansen from the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg (*Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg*), David Paul Gerards from the University of Mainz (*Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz*), Philipp Heidepeter and Ursula Reutner from the University of Passau (*Universität Passau*), and Benjamin Meisnitzer from the University of Leipzig (*Universität Leipzig*). Eight authors participated from France: Marc Chalier and Claude Frey from the University of Paris (*Université Sorbonne (Nouvelle) – Paris 3 and 4*), Samatar Abdallah Doualeh from the University of Montpellier (*Université Paul Valéry – Montpellier 3*), Julien Kilanga Musinde from the University of Angers (*Université d'Angers*), Gudrun Ledegen from the University of Rennes (*Université Rennes 2*), Jean-Alexis Mfoutou from the University of Rouen (*Université de Rouen*), as well as Nicolas Quint and Catherine Taine-Cheikh from the research units Language and Cultures of Africa (*Langage, langues et cultures d'Afrique – LLACAN*) and Languages and Cultures of Oral Tradition (*Langues et civilisations à tradition orale – LACITO*) of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (*Centre national de la recherche scientifique – CNRS*).

Personal note – This group of authors includes persons from Africa, Europe, and America alike, women and men, younger and older scholars, people from various ethnic affiliations, diverse sociocultural backgrounds, and with different ideological orientations. The present examination of the Romance languages in Africa is inevitably, in some respects, shaped by these factors. I hope that the wide range of contributing authors, the variety of quoted studies, and the abundant statements of interviewed people can, to some degree, address the limitations of our perspectives. For me, modern-day studies on Africa in humanities from all sides are a sign not only of interest in the continent but also of appreciation for African cultures and for what we can learn from

them. Yet, similar to some women who argue that mainly women can discuss certain women's issues, though other women may be delighted if women's issues are a focus of male research too, also some black people might have a strange feeling if scholars from other races talk about the language situation in areas with primarily black population and, consequently, promote "black linguistics" (e.g., Makoni et al. 2003). In linguistics, there have always been issues of ownership and how to meaningfully involve community studies. We all would definitively like to see more Africans investigating the language situation in Africa. Nevertheless, my hope is that we all agree that human beings cannot simply be assigned to monocultural blocks. In my mindset, people are composed of a variety of visible and, above all, invisible aspects, of the experiences they have had in their lives, and the exchanges they have had with others. Most Western authors involved with this volume, for example, have studied or worked in African countries, and so have many African authors in Western ones. These exchange between the Global North and South have influenced the academic approaches and research standards of both sides and contributed to the dehegemonization of knowledge. I am, nonetheless, well aware that a Western bias on African situations cannot always be avoided. I also acknowledge the historical debt some European countries bear in relation to Africa. I see the atrocities various Europeans committed on African people and feel deep empathy and –within the bounds of what is possible for an outsider– pain. Though Western or Western-influenced investigation on the presence of Romance languages in Africa runs the risk of being suspected of continuing the history of linguistic imposition, in my opinion, inter- and transcultural exchanges are preferable to avoidance. I firmly believe that they represent a better way to deal with the past than exclusion and are the best possible approach to finally create a more egalitarian future. Academic studies on the continent from various angles will help raise awareness of its importance and finally put Africa in the place it deserves according to its geographical size, its population numbers, its history, ethnic groups, cultural affluence, and in its role as the cradle of humankind.

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Northern Africa

French

Italian

Portuguese

Spanish

2 Algeria

Abstract: This chapter highlights several aspects of the sociolinguistic situation in Algeria during and after the colonial period. How is the French language represented in history and today? What languages are taught at school and at university? How to manage within the framework of Algerian multilingualism the relationship with the French language and the promotion of national languages (Arabic and Tamazight)? Will French disappear in the face of the emergence of English? These questions make it possible to put, on the one hand, language teaching policy back into a historical perspective and, on the other hand, to discuss the model of the monolingual state. To illustrate our point, we use legislative texts, school directives, surveys, and other official texts which define the linguistic and educational policies of the country since its independence, and we then focus on the linguistic characteristics of the French spoken in Algeria. Finally, we will have a look at linguistic representations, stereotypes, and attitudes towards languages.

Keywords: French, Algeria, multilingualism, Arabization, language policy

1 Sociolinguistic situation

The sociolinguistic situation in Algeria is complex. The coexistence of languages has its origin in the very history of the Maghreb. Three languages, Arabic, French, and Tamazight, as well as regional varieties of each, are in use in the country.

Algerian Arabic or Darija – Algerian Arabic is the main lingua franca in Algeria and used by 70 % to 90 % of the population. It does not benefit from an official status but has established itself as a common language of Algerians by the force of social dynamics and because it has many similarities with the Arabic spoken by the Maghreb people. It is spoken by 31.4 million people in Algeria, among which 27.1 million use it as a first language (cf. Eberhard/Simons/Fennig 2023). Algerian Arabic covers the whole territory of Algeria. In the West, we have the Oran variety, which dominates with that of Tlemcen, in the Centre, the language of the capital Algiers, in the East, three urban dialects: the variety of Sétif, capital of the High Plains (*Hauts Plateaux*), Constantine Arabic, and Annabi, which presents linguistic facts common to the other Arabic dialects of Algeria, but also a set of characteristics bringing it closer to Tunisian Arabic, as the city of Annaba is 600 km away from the capital Algiers, yet only 106 km away from the Tunisian border. These different varieties of Algerian Arabic are influenced by other languages (e.g. Tamazight, French, Spanish, Turkish, Italian). Thus, we can distinguish Algerian Arabic (especially influenced by Tamazight and Turkish), Oran Arabic (influenced by Spanish), Constantine Arabic (influenced by Italian), and Tlemcenaian Arabic (influenced by Spanish). All of these varieties are the vehicle for a rich and varied popular culture and

demonstrate a formidable resistance to the stigma and rejection that the dominant cultural norms convey towards them.

Modern Arabic – Modern Arabic is the national and official language of the country. It is taught at school and understood by 28.7 Algerians (Eberhard/Simons/Fennig 2023). It is the codified and learned variety that is used in writing. Institutional Arabic is not spoken spontaneously by anyone but is adapted to the educational and economic needs of the literary Arabic linguistic system. It is the language of the media, school, university (social, human, and legal sciences), diplomatic exchanges, and administration.

Classical Arabic – Classical Arabic was introduced in the Maghreb in the seventh century with the first wave of Islamization in urban centres, as the language of study of the Quran, then in the eleventh century with the Arab military conquest of the Maghreb. This language developed in the nineteenth century during the cultural movement *Nahda* ‘(lit.) awakening, Renaissance’, led by the modernist elites of the Middle East. It enjoys the status of a sacred language, that of classical literature, hadiths, and the interpretation of the Quran. Classical Arabic is used in literature and theology.

French – French was introduced to Algeria in 1830, during the military conquest of the country. At the moment of independence, Algeria inherited a French-speaking elite that maintained French as the language of economic, scientific, and technical power. Today, there are no reliable Algerian statistics on the exact number of French speakers, which amounts to several million:

‘We can estimate at several millions (around 8 million) the number of speakers who master the French language more or less correctly. Accurate quantitative assessment is certainly difficult to achieve when statistical data regarding the use of a particular language is deliberately obscured’.¹

According to the International Organization of La Francophonie (*Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* – OIF), Algeria has the second largest French-speaking population in the world with 14.9 million speakers (OIF 2022, 35), although Algeria is not a member of the OIF. French remains a working language. It is very present in the discourse of political leaders and the publication of books in the field of higher education. Geographically, French is spoken more often in large cities, coastal towns, and in Kabylia. French speakers are predominantly bilingual or multilingual. Many families in Algeria have parents in France, and often even parents of French nationality. It should also be noted that France remains the country’s main economic partner, which is why English does not really compete with French.

Tamazight – In Algeria, authorities prefer to use the word *Tamazight* ‘(lit.) free man’ instead of *Berber* that derives from *barbarian*. Today, *Tamazight* refers to the regional linguistic varieties Kabyle of Kabylia, Chenoui of the massifs of Chenoua, Chaouia, a

¹ “On peut évaluer à plusieurs millions (8 millions environ) le nombre de locuteurs maîtrisant plus ou moins correctement la langue française. L’évaluation quantitative précise est certes difficile à réaliser quand les données statistiques concernant l’utilisation de telle ou telle langue sont volontairement occultées” (Queffélec et al. 2002, 37).

spoken language used by groups of ancient Berber tribes who installed in the Aurès and represent part of the resistance to various conquests, Tumzabt (Mozabite) of Mزاب, and Tamahaq spoken by the Tuareg of Hoggar-Tassili. Tamazight, the historical language of the Maghreb, is attested by libyic inscriptions dating from the Neolithic period (cf. Ould-Braham/Souag 2021). Tamazight speakers are generally bilingual or trilingual, and they also use Algerian Arabic and/or French. People considered monolingual by the state are mainly illiterate persons living in remote areas. It is difficult to estimate the exact number of speakers because there are no systematic and reliable linguistic censuses in the country. Moreover, politically, the linguistic war waged by the partisans of the total Arabization of Algeria against French also excludes Tamazight. Any assessment of the actual use of Tamazight is problematic, even if officially, it is recognized as a national language and an official language in Algeria since 2016 (cf. C-DZ 2016). There are estimations of about 25 % of the population being Tamazight-speaking, representing seven to eight million people (cf. Derradji 2017, 432), or about 8.5 million native speakers (cf. Chaker 2008, 4311) out of a total of 31 or 32 million inhabitants in 2004 (cf. Chaker 2004, 17). Geographically, the main Tamazight regions are Kabylia (Tizi-Ouzou, Béjaïa, Bouïra, Boumerdès) and Algiers (the capital has the largest number of people of Kabyle origin with more than two million). The Chenoui (approximately 750,000 people) are present in the wilaya of Tipaza and on the coast of the wilaya of Chlef to the west of Algiers. The number of Chaouia-speakers is estimated at around one million people living mainly in Batna and Ain-Beida, that of Tumzabt is estimated at 200,000 people living mainly in Ghardaïa.

English – Globalization has played an important role in the expansion of English as the first international language. According to Euromonitor International (2012), it is spoken by 7 % of Algerians in 2012. The rising number of English learners can be explained by the fact that many Algerians emigrated to the United Kingdom during the black decade, while others are looking for work in the Gulf countries Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait.

Spanish – Spanish is a widespread language in the West of the country. Spanish military colonization of the coastal towns (Oran, Mers El Kébir, Bougie) in the fifteenth century, the proximity of the Oran coast to Spain, the significant flow of youth migration, and social and economic exchanges have helped strengthen the presence of this language in the Arabic and French dialects of this region. Algeria has 223,000 speakers of Spanish, and among those, 175,000 use it as a first language and 48,000 as a second language (cf. Eberhard/Simons/Fennig 2023).

2 Linguistic history

2.1 Establishment of French

In 1830, the presence of French soldiers brutally introduced French and drastically changed the situation in the country. Some officers' intended to restore the Christian faith in Africa by giving themselves a mission of Catholic reconquest. Others believed that they were participating in a broad movement for the emancipation of peoples. In either case, French spread in Northern Africa as the alleged bearer of civilization. Teaching Arabic and Tamazight languages to Europeans, and especially to members of missionary congregations and state agents (civil servants, teachers), was encouraged for pragmatic reasons, so as to enable them to understand the population and to be understood. The main objective was spreading French.

The decree of 14 July–6 August 1850 created six Arab-French schools for boys in Algiers, Constantine, Annaba, Oran, Blida, and Mostaganem, and four for girls in Algiers, Constantine, Oran, and Bône. Their study programme focused on reading and writing in Arabic and French. From 1883 to 1922, the attitude of the local population towards the French education system shifted from categorical refuse to demand for the right of education. During the 1930s, the Algerian bourgeoisie felt a special need to teach their children French.

The Algerian reformer Abdelhamid Ben Badis (1889–1940) still believed that bilingual Arabic-French education offered the Algerian youth the experience of an essential dual culture:

'Ben Badis was not afraid to undertake at the same time to change the language, to purify the mores, to restore the dogma to its purity, to abolish the animist, maraboutic, and Sufic superstitions. He showed the way for nationalists to escape the assimilation with which Europe threatens them'.²

However, in 1937, the association of Ulamas (*Association d'Oulémas*) imposed the creation of madrasas and Arab-Muslim schools to thwart the policy of assimilation with the slogan 'Islam is our religion, Arabic is our language, Algeria is our homeland' ('l'Islam est notre religion, l'arabe est notre langue, l'Algérie est notre patrie'). The colonial authorities worried about the threat posed by the madrasas. On 10 July 1951, a decree transformed the old madrasas into Franco-Muslim high schools (*Lycées d'enseignement franco-musulman*) and left students the choice of preparing for a high school exam (*baccalauréat*) or diploma oriented towards studies in Arabic and Islamic disciplines.

² "Ben Badis n'a pas craint d'entreprendre à la fois de changer la langue, d'épurer les mœurs, de rendre au dogme sa pureté, d'abolir les superstitions animistes, maraboutiques, et soufiques. Il a montré la voie aux nationalistes pour échapper à l'assimilation dont l'Europe les menace" (Desparmet 1933, 15).

2.2 Arabization

After a seven-year war of liberation which began on 1 November 1954, Algeria gained independence on 5 July 1962 and adopted a socialist economic system and an Arabization policy under the control of the Islamist National Liberation Front (*Front de Libération Nationale* – FLN). The regime in place decided to question the French domination by opting for the dissemination of Modern Standard Arabic.

The country adopted a policy of Arabization to respond to fundamental issues, such as the construction of national identity (Taleb-Ibrahimi 1995, 184) and cultural independence. Politically, it was all about becoming part of a dynamic of Arab nationalism (*al-Qawmiyya al-‘Arabiyya*), a political project of an Arab nation with a religious origin based on the concept of *ofumma* ‘Muslim community or nation’, according to which all Arabs are united by a common history, culture, and language. However, administrations and businesses continued to work in French. Staff were unable to speak or write Arabic correctly. They most often used French as the first language of communication in society.

Almost all of the texts governing the Arabization policy of several sectors of the State, the administration, and the school were promulgated in the 1970s (cf. 3.3). Throughout this period, Arabization intensified by creating conflicts between the elites. In April 1977, during a cabinet reshuffle, Mostefa Lacheraf was appointed Minister of Education, and Abdellatif Rahal Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research. These appointments show that:

‘President Boumedienne was undoubtedly sensitive to the tensions caused by the agrarian revolution and the Arabization, and eager to make prevail the progressive aspect of his action’.³

Arabization is based on the inseparable relationship between Arabity and Islam. This caused the indignation of several Algerian intellectuals, including Kateb Yacine, who wondered ‘if we are Arabs, why do they want to Arabize us?’ (“Si nous sommes arabes, pourquoi nous arabiser”). The elite was aware that this policy is directed “against” the French language, as Abaci underlines:

‘Algerian language policies were designed against French since their primary objective was to restore the Arabic language to its place and its glorious prestige, to eradicate French and reduce mother tongues’.⁴

Following the protest of 5 October 1988 in Algeria, a process of openness and democratization was put in place by the government in order to take into account the linguistic

3 “Le président Boumedienne était sans doute sensible aux tensions provoquées par la révolution agraire et l’arabisation, et désireux de faire prévaloir le volet progressiste de son action” (Grandguillaume 2002, 146).

4 “Les politiques linguistiques algériennes ont été conçues contre le français puisque leur objectif primordial a consisté à rendre à la langue arabe sa place et son prestige glorieux, éradiquer le français et minorer les langues maternelles” (Abaci 2012, 25).

and cultural diversity which characterizes the country. Algeria was a French colony for one hundred thirty-two years, but recovering the national language did not have to mean eliminating French; each language has its importance, its richness, and its degree of rooting in a geographic territory.

In the current context, the choice of the first foreign language contributes to fueling conflicts between the elites instead of resolving them. If the supporters of Arabization say that French is a “colonial language”, English is also far from being a neutral language in the African context. It should be remembered that the expansion of this language is closely linked to the role played by Great Britain as a colonial power for three centuries. Echoing Hagège’s words,

‘Anglo-American cannot be a true international language, that is to say a neutral instrument allowing everyone to communicate everywhere. It is the vector of a culture which risks swallowing up all the others by making them negotiable objects’.⁵

He explains that modernization, the era of globalization, and the internationalization of English are leading to the disappearance of many languages and cultures. The problem does not lie with English as a cultural language, but with the monolingual and assimilative models that can threaten all languages.

3 External language policy

3.1 Legislation

Immediately after independence, the Algerian government took political decisions and administrative measures to resolve the problems posed by the coexistence of several languages and dialects.

The Tripoli programme (*Programme de Tripoli*) attempts to fight against the predominance of French in Algeria by restoring the dignity of Arabic. Here is an excerpt from a text adopted by the first Congress of the National Liberation Front Party (FLN) in 1962:

‘Algerian culture will be national, revolutionary and scientific. Its role as national culture will consist, in the first place, in restoring to the Arabic language, the very expression of the cultural values of our country, its dignity and its effectiveness as a language of civilization’.⁶

5 “L’anglo-américain ne peut pas être une véritable langue internationale, c’est-à-dire un instrument neutre permettant à chacun de communiquer partout. Il est le vecteur d’une culture qui risque d’engloutir toutes les autres en faisant d’elles des objets négociables” (Hagège 2000, 364).

6 “La culture algérienne sera nationale, révolutionnaire et scientifique. Son rôle de culture nationale consistera, en premier lieu, à rendre à la langue arabe, expression même des valeurs culturelles de notre pays, sa dignité et son efficacité en tant que langue de civilisation” (art. 26, cited in Leclerc 2021).

In the first constitution, the Algerian authorities wanted to restore Arabic as the only official and national language without taking into account the multilingualism characterizing the country. The constitution opens with a preamble that emphasizes socialism, the democratic revolution, and other values opposed to those of the colonial system.

'Islam and the Arabic language have been effective forces of resistance against the colonial regime's attempt to depersonalize Algerians. Algeria must affirm that the Arabic language is the national and official language and that it draws its spiritual strength mainly from Islam'.⁷

'The effective establishment of Arabization must take place as soon as possible on the territory of the Republic. However, as derogation from the provisions of this law, French may be used provisionally besides Arabic'.⁸

In 1975, tensions worsened between students (Arabists and Francizers) after a national conference on Arabization. In a speech of 10 April 1975 on the occasion of the conference on Arabization, President Houari Boumedienne refers to French as a foreign language as opposed to Arabic:

'The Arabic language and the French language cannot be compared, since French is only a *foreign language* which benefits from a particular situation because of the objective historical considerations which we know'.⁹

The National Charter of 1976 renews the definition of the status of Arabic already mentioned in the constitution of 1963 and emphasizes that the state is committing the country to a new stage, that of the generalization of Arabization in official bodies:

'The Algerian people are attached to the Arab homeland of which they are an inseparable element. [...] the other constitutive elements of the Algerian nation were gradually added from the seventh century onwards, namely its cultural, linguistic and spiritual unity [...] the Islam and Arab culture were a framework that was both universal and national [...]. From now on, it is within this double framework [...] that the choice of our people will be determined and their development will take place'.¹⁰

7 "L'Islam et la langue arabe ont été des forces de résistance efficaces contre la tentative de dépersonnalisation des Algériens menée par le régime colonial. L'Algérie se doit d'affirmer que la langue arabe est la langue nationale et officielle et qu'elle tient sa force spirituelle essentiellement de l'Islam" (C-DZ 1963, Pmb.).

8 "La réalisation effective de l'arabisation doit avoir lieu dans les meilleurs délais sur le territoire de la République. Toutefois, par dérogation aux dispositions de la présente loi, la langue française pourra être utilisée provisoirement avec la langue arabe" (C-DZ 1963, art. 76).

9 "La langue arabe et la langue française ne sont pas à comparer, celle-ci n'étant qu'une *langue étrangère* qui bénéficie d'une situation particulière du fait des considérations historiques objectives que nous connaissons" (Boumedienne 1975, cited by Morsly 2015, 120).

10 "Le peuple algérien se rattache à la patrie arabe dont il est un élément indissociable. [...] les autres éléments constitutifs de la nation algérienne, à savoir son unité culturelle, linguistique et spirituelle [...] l'islam et la culture arabe étaient un cadre à la fois universel et national [...]. Désormais, c'est dans ce double cadre [...] que va se déterminer le choix de notre peuple et se dérouler son évolution" (CN 1976, 1.D).

Arabist students demonstrated in 1980 for an acceleration of Arabization in all sectors while, in the same year, major protests in favour of the Tamazight language and culture were organized in Kabylia. The Kabyles have always opposed the Arab-Muslim state from which they consider themselves excluded as an ethnic group. They say that Algeria is not Arab but Algerian. The first leaders of the country, all Arabic speakers, preferred to keep power for themselves rather than share it with French speakers or Tamazight speakers. For these leaders, the notion of Berberophony was perceived as a pure invention of French colonialism in order to divide the great Arab nation, pretending that Tamazight speakers didn't exist. The constitution of 1989 establishes Arabic as only national and official language.

'Arabic is the national and official language'.¹¹

In December 1990, the popular assembly, mainly FLN, adopted the law generalizing the use of Arabic and made the use of this language compulsory from 5 July 1992. This decision was not directly applied, especially after the assassination of President Boudiaf (29 June 1992), but had to be relaunched in December 1996 and was then applied on 5 July 1998.

Elected on 15 April 1999, Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika spoke French in some of his public statements in Algeria and abroad.

'it is unthinkable [...] to study exact sciences for ten years in Arabic when they can be studied in one year in French or in English'.¹²

It is interesting to identify the reasons why Arabic speakers have, since 1962, negative attitudes that push them to reject French in a multilingual country. The conflict is explained by political and ideological rather than by linguistic and cultural reasons, as Bouteflika explains in a presidential speech delivered on 18 May 1999 on the occasion of the national student day:

'The problem that was revealed at that time consisted of a conflict between Arabists and Francizers. This conflict was in no way linguistic or civilizational, we must say frankly to the Algerian people. It was in fact a power conflict between French-speaking leaders occupying key positions, and Arabists, who wanted to access the same positions. The conflict was therefore neither civilizational nor cultural, but political between those who tried to maintain their positions and those who wanted to reach it'.¹³

11 "L'arabe est la langue nationale et officielle" (C-DZ 1989, art. 3).

12 "Il est impensable [...] d'étudier des sciences exactes pendant dix ans en arabe alors qu'elles peuvent l'être en un an en français ou en anglais" (Bouteflika in *Le Matin d'Alger* 22/5/1999).

13 "Le problème qui était posé à cette époque consistait en un conflit entre arabisants et francisants. Ce conflit n'était en rien linguistique ou civilisationnel, nous devons le dire en toute franchise devant le peuple algérien. Il s'agissait en fait d'un conflit pour le pouvoir entre cadres formés en français et occupant des pos-

The successive charters and constitutions make no reference to Tamazight, which appears to be a language doubly threatened, by the expansion of Algerian Arabic linked to the rural exodus on the one hand and by that of standard Arabic predominant in education on the other. In this context, various actions were carried out to fight against the marginalization of the Tamazight language, in particular the demonstrations in Tizi-Ouzou, Béjaïa, and Algiers, and a school strike in 1994 massively attended in Kabylia. After decades of struggle, the Tamazigh language was incorporated into the text of the constitution of 1996 and recognized as a component of the historical and national identity of Algeria.

'1 November 1954 was one of the peaks of its destiny [the destiny of Tamazight]. The result of a long resistance to attacks against its culture, its values and the fundamental components of its identity which are Islam, Arabism, and Amazigh, 1 November have firmly anchored the struggles present in the glorious past of the nation'.¹⁴

Later, in 2016, Tamazight furthermore becomes a national and official language:

'Tamazight is also a national and official language. The state works for its promotion and development in all its linguistic varieties in use on the national territory. [...] The Academy [of the Tamazigh language] is responsible for establishing the conditions of the promotion of Tamazight in order to materialize, in the long term, its official language status'.¹⁵

3.2 Languages used by public authorities

The use of a given language in administration always conveys prestige to it, as it is associated with the power exercised by political and administrative structures. Law 91/5 of 1996 stipulates:

'The use of any foreign language in the deliberations and debates of official meetings is prohibited'.¹⁶

tes clefs et ceux, arabisants, qui voulaient accéder aux mêmes postes. La confrontation n'était donc ni civilisationnelle ni culturelle, mais politique entre les uns qui tentaient de se maintenir à leurs postes et les autres qui voulaient y parvenir" (Bouteflika 1999 in *Le Matin* 22/05/1999, cited by Bennadji 2000, 111).

14 "Le 1er Novembre 1954 aura été un des sommets de son destin [du Tamazight]. Aboutissement d'une longue résistance aux agressions menées contre sa culture, ses valeurs et les composantes fondamentales de son identité que sont l'Islam, l'Arabité et l'Amazighité, le 1er Novembre aura solidement ancré les luttes présentes dans le passé glorieux de la Nation" (C-DZ 1996, Pmb.).

15 "Tamazight est également langue nationale et officielle. L'État œuvre à sa promotion et à son développement dans toutes ses variétés linguistiques en usage sur le territoire national. [...] L'Académie [de la Langue Amazighe] est chargée de réunir les conditions de la promotion de Tamazight en vue de concrétiser, à terme, son statut de langue officielle" (C-DZ 2016, art. 4).

16 "L'utilisation de toute langue étrangère dans les délibérations et débats des réunions officielles est interdite" (Law 91/5, art. 5).

Despite this, the French language continues to be spoken by presidents, ministers, and elites.

‘Without being the official language, it conveys officiality, without being the language of instruction, it remains a language of the transmission of knowledge, without being the language of identity, it continues to shape in different ways and through several channels, the collective imagination. It is common knowledge that most of the work in central or local administration and management structures is carried out in the French language’.¹⁷

The use of this language by the president of the Republic and political leaders determines its degree of officiality. The legislative and regulatory texts like the Official Journal of the Algerian Republic, correspondences, or driving licences are translated into French. The websites of sovereign institutions are accessible to the general public in both languages Arabic and French. Civil status documents in French are optional and can be requested if they are required, for example, for a visa. French remains necessary in international relations and in large companies (for example Sonatrach, Sonelgaz, Saida, Air Algérie, banks, and hospitals). It is used in urban spaces for graffiti and signs, and in particular in the capital, is exploited by different socio-economic actors (e.g. traders, publicists, graffiti artists) who seek by all means to attract the attention of passers-by. Everyone uses the space and the Arabic, French, and Tamazight languages according to their interests. Most of the company and road signs (e.g. Air Algérie, Rue Didouche-Mourad, Saida), as well as advertising slogans (e.g. *ta famille t’attend* ‘your family is waiting for you’) are bilingual. On shop signs, inscriptions in French such as *cafétéria* ‘cafeteria’, *boulangerie* ‘bakery’, *imprimerie* ‘printing house’, or *supérette* ‘mini-market’ are present.

3.3 Languages used in education

The orientation of the educational policy depends largely on the adopted national language policy because one of the school’s missions is to disseminate the national culture, which should allow the transmission of the official ideology. The Algerian education system has experienced three periods.

Progressive Arabization of public school – In public primary school, if the first three years have been completely Arabized, the following three years were distributed according to the two languages of instruction: Arabic and French, which was introduced as the language taught in the third year of primary school. To solve the problem of supervi-

17 “Sans être la langue officielle, elle véhicule l’officialité, sans être la langue d’enseignement, elle reste une langue de transmission du savoir, sans être la langue d’identité, elle continue à façonner de différentes manières et par plusieurs canaux, l’imaginaire collectif. Il est de notoriété publique que l’essentiel du travail dans les structures d’administration et de gestion centrale ou locale, s’effectue en langue française” (Sebaa 2002, 85).

sion, it was necessary to launch an appeal to France and the Arab countries to send associate teachers. Hundreds of French, Egyptian, Palestinian, Syrian, and Iraqi teachers have supported Algeria's enormous educational effort. This double cooperation contributed to creating conflicts between Arabic- and French-speaking elites, between conservatives and modernists, between Berbers and Arabs. The Arabists were in favour of total Arabization, the Frenchists were in favour of Arabic/French bilingualism.

Total Arabization of public school – The country has moved from an exclusively French-speaking education to an exclusively Arabic-speaking public school, passing through an intermediate phase of transition of a few years, that of a bilingual school. The process of total Arabization was completed in 1986 and, at the start of the 1988–1989 school year, secondary education was completely Arabized. However, despite the quantitative progress in education, the quality of Arabization and French education had deteriorated. Therefore, towards the end of 1989, private schools were created in the big cities, very conducive to teaching in French. Thousands of parents had registered their children in these schools in order to offer them bilingual training guaranteeing a better command of French. But for the sake of harmonization and standardization of the system, these establishments were required to comply with new official texts. Thus, scientific subjects were again taught in Arabic with, however, the possibility of planning consolidation sessions in French outside of regular class hours. Arabization has not continued in technical and scientific disciplines at the higher level. This policy has negatively influenced the quality of teaching; the level of language proficiency continues to decline, and learners do not master Arabic, French, or English. This could be due to the failure of the educational policies pursued so far, to the lack of teachers, and to unsuitable methods. New high school graduates who enroll in scientific and technical fields experience enormous difficulties in continuing their studies because of the decrease in the practice of French in high school.

Oriental Law on National Education – The Oriental Law on National Educational (*Loi d'orientation sur l'éducation nationale*) of 2008 explains the place, roles, and objectives assigned by the legislator to languages in society and in the Algerian education system (art. 2) and states that education is provided in Arabic at all levels of education (art. 33). The teaching of foreign languages is addressed in the same law. Even if the teaching of French is provided as a first foreign language throughout the school curriculum (primary, college, secondary, university), no official reference text says so clearly (art. 4, 35):

'the Algerian school aims to train a citizen with indisputable national points of reference, deeply attached to the values of the Algerian people, capable of understanding the world around them, of adapting to it and of acting on it and to open up to universal civilization'.¹⁸

18 "L'école algérienne a pour vocation de former un citoyen doté de repères nationaux incontestables, profondément attaché aux valeurs du peuple algérien, capable de comprendre le monde qui l'entoure, de s'y adapter et d'agir sur lui et en mesure de s'ouvrir sur la civilisation universelle" (Law 8/4, art. 2).

'Education is provided in the Arabic language at all levels of education, both in public establishments and in private educational and teaching establishments'.¹⁹

'Allow mastery of at least two foreign languages as an opening to the world and means of access to documentation and exchanges with foreign cultures and civilizations'.²⁰

'The teaching of foreign languages is provided under conditions set by regulation'.²¹

3.4 Languages used in the media

Print media – Before October 1988, Algeria had only three French-speaking dailies, namely *El Moudjahid*, *Alger Républicain*, and *Horizons*, with a fourth, *Algeria News*, being a weekly. Today, the country has fifty-one titles in Arabic and forty-four in French. The number of weekly newspapers in these languages is twenty-three and twelve, respectively. A recent survey was carried out by the channel *Beur TV* (for the Media Television section) to measure the audience and the credibility of the Algerian media, on a sample of 2,165 elderly people, during the period from 26 February to 3 March 2012. It follows that, for the written press, there would be 12,491,425 newspaper readers, 61 % of whom are men. The ranking of French-speaking dailies is as follows: *El Watan* 8.65 %, *Liberté* 6.34 %, *Le Soir* 4.56 %, *Le Quotidien d'Oran* 4.47 %, *Le Buteur* 1.20 %, *El Moudjahid* 1.44 %, *L'Expression* 1 %. Arabic-language dailies are classified as follows: *Echourouk* 20.32 %, *El Khabar* 19.50 %, *Ennahar* 11.34 %, *El Hadeef* 10.50 % (cf. Miliani 2013, 181–191). The overall share of Arabic-language newspapers, if we take the eleven publications, represents more than 60 % of readers, while publications in French represent a little less than 30 %. It should be noted that the French-speaking press has suffered a real loss of readership since the 1990s for three main reasons: the process of Arabization of the administration, Arabized schooling, and the creation of online newspapers.

Audiovisual media – The Algerian media space has been enriched by the creation of the private channels *EnnaharTV*, *Echourouk TV*, *Al Djazairia*, *Dzair TV*, *Numidias News*, *HoggarTV*, and *KBC*, all Arabic-speaking. *Canal Algérie* is the only television channel that broadcasts programmes in French almost every evening. But the satellite dish has increased the interest of Algerians in French channels, in particular *TV5 MONDE*, *TF1*, *F3*, *M6*, and *France 24*. *Radio Chaîne 3* also offers programmes and political debates in French to the general public in Algeria.

¹⁹ "L'enseignement est dispensé en langue arabe à tous les niveaux d'éducation, aussi bien dans les établissements publics que dans les établissements privés d'éducation et d'enseignement" (Law 8/4, art. 33).

²⁰ "Permettre la maîtrise d'au moins deux langues étrangères en tant qu'ouverture sur le monde et moyen d'accès à la documentation et aux échanges avec les cultures et les civilisations étrangères" (Law 8/4, art. 4).

²¹ "L'enseignement des langues étrangères est assuré dans des conditions fixées par voie réglementaire" (Law 8/4, art. 35).

4 Linguistic characteristics

4.1 Pronunciation

The differences in the phonological systems of Arabic and French lead to interferences. They are usually due to the existence of French phones that do not exist in Arabic, such as the vowels [y], [e], [ɛ], and [ə] and the consonants [p], [v], [g], and [ŋ]. They are adapted by pronouncing phonemes of articulatory proximity existing in Arabic. These interferences are linked to an incompetence of the bilingual speaker in the second language and more evident in speakers who have limited knowledge of the language they are using. From this point of view, Hagège considers interference as

‘an involuntary crossing between two languages. On a large scale, interference denotes incomplete acquisition of a second language’.²²

Oral vowels – The difference between the Arabic and French phonological systems often affects the pronunciation of French vowels: [ɛ] is replaced by [a] as in *phénomène* [fenɔman] instead of [fenɔmɛn], [y] is confused with [i] for example in *surtout* [siʁtu] instead of [syʁtu], [ə] is often confused with [o] as in *menace* [monas] instead of [mɛnas], [y] is realized as [e] in *obtenu* [obtone] instead of [obtɔny]. The Arabic speaker may pronounce [i] instead of [e] as in *découvrir* [dikuvɔiʁ] instead of [dekuvɔiʁ], *television* [tilivizjɔ] instead of [televizjɔ], or *freiner* [frini] instead of [fʁene].

Nasal vowels – The nasal vowels [ã] and [ɔ̃] are frequently confused, even with [o]: *bonjour* is realized as [bãʒuʁ] or [boʒuʁ] instead of [bɔ̃ʒuʁ], *bon* as [bã] instead of [bɔ̃]. Also, [ɑ̃] is replaced by [ɔ] for example in *normalement* [nɔʁmalɛmɔ] instead of [nɔʁmalmã], and [ɛ] appears instead of [ɛ̃] as in *ceinture* [sentura] instead of [sɛ̃tyʁ] (the phoneme [a] marks the feminine).

Consonants – The fact that Arabic has more consonants than French, while some of the French consonants do not exist in Arabic, causes differences in pronunciation. For example, [r] and [ʁ] are considered in French as two variants of the same phoneme. In Arabic, these two phonemes stand in opposition to each other. In Algeria, true French speakers generally have a similar accent to that of native speakers, especially women. Men realize the rhotic consonant and the voiceless dental plosive consonant respectively as [ʁ] or [r] and [t] or [tʰ] (e.g. *table* [tʰable] instead of [tabl]). Furthermore, some Arabic speakers pronounce [b] instead of [p], as in *parebrise* [baʁbɔʁiz] instead of [paʁbɔʁiz], *poste* [bosta] instead of [post], and [f] instead of [v], as in *valise* [faliz] instead of [valiz].

²² “un croisement involontaire entre deux langues. À grande échelle, l’interférence dénote l’acquisition incomplète d’une langue seconde” (Hagège 2000, 239).

4.2 Morphology

According to Tabouret-Keller,

'linguistic interference determines disturbances in the interaction of syntax rules and in that of the specific functional marking of sentences'.²³

This involves the introduction of linguistic units from one language to another and happens when bilingual speakers transfer grammatical characteristics from their first language to their second language.

Gender – One of the characteristics of French spoken in Algeria is the confusion of gender when the gender of the equivalent in Arabic affects that of French. Some Arabic speakers may use *une accident* instead of *un accident*, as the Arabic word is feminine *haditha* with the phoneme /a/ marking the feminine, *le logique* instead of *la logique*, as the Arabic word is masculine *al mantaq*, or *un couleur* instead of *une couleur*, as the Arabic word is masculine *al lawn*.

Number – In Arabic loans, the plural can appear marked by the -s of the French language like in *harkis* instead of *harki* 'traitors' or *darkis* instead of *darki* 'gendarme'. The plural can also be formed according to the Arab system, as in *achahid* 'martyr' vs *chouhada* 'martyrs', *amoudjahid* 'Algerian fighter' vs *moudjahidin* 'Algerian fighters', or bear the marks of the two linguistic systems as in *cheikh* 'sheik' vs *chouyoukhs* 'sheiks' or *djoundi* 'soldier' vs *djounouds* 'soldiers'.

Determinants – Determination can also be made by the markers of the Arabic language (classical or dialectal) *al* and *el*, so that *amir el muminine* 'prince of believers', *al jihad* 'holy war', or *al idjtihad* 'effort of reflection in religious interpretation of the texts of the Sufi masters' may appear in French instead of forms with *le* or *la*.

Adverbs and prepositions – There is also confusion between some adverbs and prepositions. Examples of this are the use of *trop* instead of *très*, as in *il est trop fort* instead of *il est très fort*, of *de* and *à*, as in *Je l'ai emprunté de* [instead of *à*] *mon ami*, or of *chez* and *avec*, as in *Le livre est chez* [instead of *avec*] *Paul*. This happens due to direct translations from Arabic.

Word order – The Arabic may also transpose into French the structure of the Arabic verbal sentence that begins with a verb, which results in *Va le garçon à l'école* '(lit.) goes the boy to school' instead of *Le garçon va à l'école*.

23 "L'interférence linguistique déterminera des perturbations dans le jeu des règles de la syntaxe et dans celui du marquage fonctionnel spécifique de syntagmes" (Tabouret-Keller 2008, 10).

4.3 Lexicon

The particularities of the lexicon include preserved and innovated forms, which are sub-categorized in this chapter according to the system of Reutner (2017, 47), in those taking place without (internal) and with foreign influence (external). Internal innovation can affect the form or the meaning of a word, external innovation different types of borrowing.

Internal innovation of form – Internal innovations of form emerge as a result of word formation processes. The most common mechanisms are derivation by prefixation like in *inter-wilaya* (< *inter-* + *wilaya*), *inter-daïra* (< *inter-* + *daïra*), or by suffixation in words such as *algérianiser* ‘to algerianize’ (< *Algérie* + *-iser*), *hallaliser* ‘to make halal, religiously acceptable’ (< *hallal* + *-iser*), *digoutage* ‘disgust’ (< *dégout* + *-age*), or *parkingeur* ‘young unemployed person who is paid when showing a motorist a parking space in the neighbourhood’ (< *parking* + *-eur*), with suffixation being particularly productive (cf. Reutner 2017, 47; Derradji 2017, 448).

Internal innovation of meaning – Words evolve in their meaning and move away from French as a native language to designate what is really experienced by the speaking subject. If *halal* traditionally only refers to meat, nowadays it applies to a whole range of food products. The new uses of the adjective *halal* give the quality *halal* to the non-prohibited version of something usually prohibited for consumption by Muslims, such as *halalbeer*, called *halal* because of the absence of alcohol that authorizes its consumption by Muslims.

External innovation: loan words and xenisms – Another form of lexical innovation is borrowing which is considered as an enrichment of the target language. Indeed, during the conquest of Algeria, French soldiers borrowed many words from Algerian Arabic, like *bled* ‘country’, *caïd* ‘chief’, *casbah* ‘citadel’, *inchallah* ‘God willing’, *jihad* ‘Holy war’, *madrassa* ‘school’, *ramadhan* ‘month of fasting’, *toubib* ‘doctor’, or *zaouïa* ‘Koranic school’. These borrowings have become fully integrated lexical units in the French language, listed in the various French dictionaries after having undergone phonetic and/or phonological modifications in order to be easily pronounced by native French speakers. Xenisms include *zaemâ* ‘like what’ from Tamazight or *hchuma* or *hchouma* ‘modesty, respect, shame’ from Arabic (for more information cf. Cheriguen 2002).

Political and ideological positions – Many political and ideological positions are expressed by suffixation with *-ism* and *-iste*, as in *hirakiste* ‘person who defends the ideas of the hirak’ (< *hirak* ‘popular protest movement’ + *-iste*). The hirakists are positioned against the doctrine named *bouteflikism* ‘political doctrine of the former President Bouteflika’ (< proper name *Bouteflika* + *-isme*) and the people called *cachirists* ‘supporters of Bouteflika’ (< *cachir* ‘sausage made from beef or chicken’ + *-iste*). Algerians also invented the verb *vendredire*, in the context of the hirak, which means ‘to manifest joyfully and peacefully every week for change and prosperity, to bring down the dictatorial regime peacefully’ (< *vendredi* + *dire*).

French loans in Arabic – Several French words have also become Algerian (cf. Aït Amrane 2009), for example *biro* ‘office’ (< Fr. *bureau*), *fermli* ‘nurse’ (< Fr. *infirmière*), *foulara* ‘scarf’ (< Fr. *foulard*), *litra/ritla* ‘liter’ (< Fr. *liter*), *midity* ‘humidity’ (< Fr. *humidité*), or *table* ‘table’ (< Fr. *table*).

5 Internal language policy

5.1 Language attitudes

Our study (cf. Ait Dahmane 2015, 146) is based on a sociolinguistic survey that was conducted in 2015 among students of the University of Algiers 2 who, like most young people of the twenty-first century, are immersed in the world of information and communication technologies. The first results of our semi-directive survey show an evolution of representations vis-à-vis languages, in particular French. The Algerian school should primarily focus on the quality of teaching and the level of knowledge acquisition. In this perspective, it seems useful to remember that Algerian learners are qualified trilingual illiterates in the sense that they master neither the official national languages (Arabic or Tamazight) nor foreign languages (cf. 3.3). Some of the interviewed students see French as a ‘a language without future’ (“une langue sans future”). If the French language is not always mastered, especially in rural areas and the South, ‘it is because it is not taught (or is not taught well)’ (“ce n’est pas enseigné (ou ne pas bien enseigné”). This interview allows us to say that French is unlikely to disappear because it continues to be spoken in certain families for five generations already and in certain socio-professional circles in Algeria. According to the statements, French is ‘a language of literature’, ‘of culture’, ‘of sharing’ and ‘of exchange throughout the five continents’ (“une langue littéraire”, “de culture”, “de partage”, “d’échange entre cinq continents”).

5.2 Description of linguistic characteristics

Algerian French dictionaries are rare and inaccessible. The Algerian Arabic-French bilingual dictionaries essentially have a federative vocation (cf. Aziri 2012; Tadjer 2013). At present, we see that the French language retains borrowings belonging to a political-religious theme such as *halal*, *hijab*, *sharia*, *imam*, *jihadist*, *salafist*, or *fetwa* (PR, s.v.). These are words newly used by French speakers, especially in the media. These linguistic signs appeared at the same time as certain events, such as the fight against terrorism in the world, the Arab Spring, or the attacks in France. There are also words of Algerian origin that have just joined French dictionaries, in particular *Le Petit Larousse illustré*, for example *taxieur* ‘taxi driver’ and *cuissettes* ‘shorts’ (PLI 2020, s.v.).

5.3 Usage of linguistic characteristics

Variety used by public authorities – While Arabization has been a nationalist claim formulated since the 1970s, the idea of suppressing the use and dissemination of French has never seriously crossed the minds of Algerian leaders and politicians. On the contrary, it is obvious that, in practice and in absence of the media, many of them continue to use French with typical Algerian forms and code switching. Examples of this are the usage of words that have a religious meaning like *Saha* ‘thank you’ or *Salam*, which is the shorthand for the expression *Assalamou alaykoum wa Rahmatou allahi wa Barakatou* ‘Peace, mercy, and blessings of God be upon you’.

Variety used in education – The teaching of French follows official instructions from the Ministry of National Education, which are passed on to teachers by education inspectors. The official texts insist on the comprehension of texts, normative grammar, and vocabulary. The inspectors ask the teachers to allow the pupils the use of general dictionaries in their French classes in order to check the meaning of the words and to correct their “mistakes”. Some classics of French literature such as Victor Hugo, Émile Zola, or Antoine de Saint-Exupéry appear in Algerian textbooks to open up to French-speaking cultures. Teachers also use authentic and current documents (e.g. newspapers, literary texts, French songs, poems), which are important for discovering the specificities of the culture of the Other because they include socio-cultural elements (e.g. language, architecture, town planning, habits, or clothing) and information on the cultural, social, economic, and political development of a foreign country. However, Algerian French is not excluded from the school either, since the texts of renowned French-speaking Algerian writers are also used as teaching aids with reference to the Algerian socio-cultural context.

Variety used in the media – Algerian journalists have become aware of the importance of linguistic issues in establishing an identity specific to their writing. The particular use of the French language in most of the media manifests itself through borrowings, coding alternation, and very rich language creativity. Especially users of social networks use a hybrid language, the result of crossbreeding between several varieties, even if the main medium is French.

Variety used in literature – Literary creation in Algeria uses the two national languages, but also French: big names in Algerian literature like Mohamed Dib, Kateb Yacine, Mouloud Mammeri, Mouloud Feraoun, Assia Djebar, Tahar Djaout, or Rachid Mimoun transmitted the love of French to the generation of independence writers like Yasmina Khadra, Mustapha Benfodil, or Kamel Daoud, who also chose to write in French. Their works have received international literary awards. The authors write in French because it is their language of training, while trying to assert their identity by using words belonging to their first language such as *Allah* ‘God’ *saïem* ‘hello’, *cheikh* ‘Master’, *harki* ‘traitor’, *bled* ‘country’, or *yemma* ‘mother’. They play on all registers to find the right expression. An example of a neologism reflecting this creativity is the popular feminine expression *avoir la koulchit* ‘to have pain everywhere’ or *koulchay* ‘every-

thing'. Literary and artistic creation is rooted in one, two, or three languages (dialectal Arabic, Kabyle, or French). Writers play with the languages that mark their sociolinguistic space in order to enhance them.

Conclusion – Finally, the Algerian linguistic situation is certainly complex, but it is not fixed. It would be useful to keep the knowledge of French, to teach it better in order to make it coexist in a complementary way with the national languages.

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3 Morocco

Abstract: This chapter describes French in Morocco in its social reality. It begins with the complex sociolinguistic situation in a country where French appears as a language in contact that competes with several local languages. The historical overview serves to improve the understanding of the survival and development of French despite the Arabization policy implemented after the country's independence. The chapter also outlines Morocco's language planning policies. It refers to linguistic legislation and especially to the use of languages, particularly focusing on the turpitudes of French as a language of instruction. To conclude the analysis of French in an area of contact, the chapter identifies characteristics of French in its local multicultural and multilingual environment and discusses their evaluation.

Keywords: French, Morocco, sociolinguistics, education, langue policy

1 Sociolinguistic situation

Physical geography – Morocco is located in the North-West of the African continent; it covers an area of 446,550 km² without Western Sahara, extends along the Atlantic coast over a distance of about 3000 km, and is separated from Spain by only about 14 km. Bordered to the east by Algeria and to the south by Mauritania, it also has two maritime borders, the Mediterranean Sea to the north (512 km) and the Atlantic Ocean to the west (2934 km). This geographical situation is at the origin of Morocco's multiple contacts. As a country that is at the same time Maghrebian, Arab, Muslim, Saharan, African, Mediterranean, and Oceanic, it constitutes a link between Africa and Europe. This situation explains why it was and still is a crossroads where ethnic groups, cultures, and languages, as diverse as they are, meet, cohabit, and clash (Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 13). Powerful mountain ranges (the Rif ranges in the North, the Middle Atlas and High Atlas Mountains in the Centre, and the Anti-Atlas in the South) divide its territory. Morocco is also characterized by the extent of its plains (developed along its Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts) and its pre-Saharan and Saharan plateaus. Its highly varied climate includes four climatic zones: the Atlantic zone in the mild and humid West, the mountain zone, which is characterized by microclimates (cold, rain, frost, and snow in the winter, storms in the summer), the very continental eastern zone, and the Saharan zone marked by low rainfall and significant thermal differences. From an administrative point of view, Morocco has been divided into regions since 2015, which are subdivided into wilayas, themselves again subdivided into provinces and prefectures.

Demolinguistic data – According to data from the Office of the High Commissioner for Planning (*Haut-Commissariat au Plan* – HCP) and the latest official census, Moroc-

co's current population is estimated at about 33.8 million inhabitants. Population growth has dropped considerably over the past three decades to a rate equivalent to the world average: from 2.58 % per year between 1960 and 1971 to 1.25 % between 2004 and 2014. The population is characterized by its youth. About 28.2 % of Moroccans are under 15 years of age, 62.4 % are between 15 and 59 years, and only 9.4 % are 60 years and older (HCP 2014, 9–15). Though in the twentieth century primarily a country of emigration, Morocco has also taken in an increasing number of foreigners from sub-Saharan Africa due to numerous agreements since the 2000s. Of the 86,001 foreigners registered in 2014, sub-Saharan nationals represent about 26.2 %, Europeans 40 % (63.5 % of whom are French), Arabs 20 %, North Africans 13 %, and Americans 2.3 % (HCP 2018, 13). The Moroccan population is very unevenly distributed across the territory, currently divided into twelve economic regions. The Centre and North-West concentrate more than half of the population, while the rest of it is spread between the southern, north-central, eastern, and south-central regions. The urban population has increased significantly, from 42.8 % in 1982 to 60.4 % in 2014. The rural population, which is clearly decreasing, is expected to reach only 25 % by 2022 (HCP 2014, 12).

Economy – The primary sector occupies a dominant position in the Moroccan economy, with 39.6 % of the gross domestic product (GDP). It is followed by the tertiary sector including public administration with 39.2 %. The secondary sector represents 21.2 % of the GDP (Dupret et al. 2015, 117). The national unemployment rate is quite high (9.7 % in 2015). However, it is higher in urban areas with a rate of 14.6 %, compared to only 4.1 % in rural areas. Young people are the most affected by unemployment, with a rate of 13.9 % among 15–24 years old (HCP 2018, 150ss.).

Politics – Morocco is a constitutional monarchy and forms the Arab Maghreb Union (United Maghreb) with Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Mauritania. Even if political differences weaken this Union, the common history of these states, their geographical location, and the deep links between their people sharing the same culture make the Maghreb a common reality.

Languages – The linguistic situation in Morocco is generally presented as complex, diverse, and heterogeneous. The presence of several languages in Morocco makes its linguistic area a prototypical place for languages in contact. This situation has its origin in a history of conquest and domination. Today, several languages and varieties, mastered to varying and unequal degrees, cover the Moroccan linguistic field. These are, on the one hand, the national ethnic languages: Amazigh, manifested through dialectal varieties, and Arabic practised in form of a continuum consisting of Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, and Moroccan Arabic or Darija. On the other hand, there are the colonial foreign languages: French rooted in the Moroccan society but whose status stays opaque, and, to a lesser extent, Spanish present in the northern and southern border areas. In short, French in Morocco is a component of a bouquet of languages that interpenetrate one another, but where each of them tries, through legitimacy, historicity, or modernity, to rebuild or consolidate a comfortable place in an unfinished identity recon-

struction project. In the following section, we present the status and place of each of the languages in contact.

1.1 First official language: Arabic

Arabic – Arabic is the official language of the State. It has de jure status, but the most recent constitutional text does not explicitly explain what variety of Arabic is meant: Modern Standard Arabic, Classical Arabic, or Moroccan Arabic.

Modern Standard Arabic – Modern Standard Arabic has appeared due to the impulse of intellectuals. It is propelled into an area of linguistic contact and influenced by both spoken Arabic and French. It is characterized by a certain structural flexibility, by many words borrowed from French, and, more particularly, by a terminology that immediately connects it to the modern world (for example, *at-tiknulūžīyya* ‘the technology’ < Fr. *la technologie*, *as-strātižīyya* ‘the strategy’ < Fr. *la stratégie*, *at-telvaza* ‘the television’ < Fr. *la télévision*). It has also adopted the Subject-Verb-Object order instead of the basic Verb-Subject-Object order of Classical Arabic, for example *al-bint ta-qum-u ‘alā as-sā’a as-sābi’a* ‘the girl gets up at seven o’clock’ < *la fille se lève à sept heures* instead of *ta-qum-u al-bint-u fī as-sā’a as-sābi’a* ‘gets up the girl at seven o’clock’ (Chatar-Moumni 2015, 78). The evolution of Modern Standard Arabic led to many subvarieties. These varieties are employed in domains in which Classical Arabic cannot be used. Modern Standard Arabic is an urban language. It is the working language of writers, journalists, teachers, and administrators. It is used orally in the media and mastered by the educated social group, but it is not its daily talk.

Classical Arabic – Classical Arabic is also an urban language and only mastered by the most educated speakers (Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 63–67). It functioned and still functions as a reference language because it is the language of the Koran. It is the prerogative of the Arab-Islamist elites and not the daily idiom of any social group, but confined to religious and cultural domains like liturgy and other specific aspects of Arab-Muslim culture.

Moroccan Arabic: Darija – Moroccan dialectal Arabic is spoken by most of the population (Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 63–67). It is, like other Arabic dialects of the Maghreb, the daily language of the masses except in the Amazigh-speaking areas. It functions as vernacular language of the majority and also plays the role of a vehicular language, as it allows communication at the national level between speakers of Arabic and Amazigh. Being a local language, Moroccan dialectal Arabic is used in all informal domains and in everyday life. It is unevenly distributed across the country and takes the form of distinct varieties: urban or rural, Bedouin, and Hassaniyya spoken in southern Morocco. Essentially oral, lively and popular, it is socially marked in the sense that it is the sole idiom of the social groups with low and medium economic power, which have no other language than Darija. Currently, it is experiencing a certain revaluation as a language of popular cultural heritage.

1.2 National and co-official language: Amazigh

Amazigh language – The term *Amazigh* ‘(lit.) language of the free men’ is recent and considered more appropriate than *Berber*. Amazigh is used by about 40 % of the population (Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 63–66), but was for a long time confined to the informal domain. For decades, intellectuals have fought for its official recognition because it is linked to identity values that have been marginalized by the Arabization policy following French decolonization. The awareness of Amazigh speakers has gradually led to a language policy that promotes its emergence in official domains, traditionally reserved to Modern Standard Arabic and French. Thus, the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture (*Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe* – IRCAM) was created on 17 October 2001. Under the king’s supervision, IRCAM is responsible for safeguarding, promoting, and strengthening the place of Amazigh culture in the national educational, sociocultural, and media space as well as in the management of local and regional affairs (IRCAM 2020). Article 5 (annexed) of the constitution recognizes two official national languages, Arabic and Amazigh, as a common heritage for all Moroccans without exception. Amazigh is mostly used in its dialectal forms: Tarifiyt or Riffian is present in the North-East in general and in the Rif mountain range in particular. Tamazight occupies an area comprising the Middle Atlas and the eastern part of the High Atlas. Tachelhit is spoken in the southern part of the High Atlas, the whole Anti-Atlas and the Sous plain.

1.3 Main imported foreign language: French

French was only truly imposed upon Morocco with the establishment of the protectorate, which made it the official language of its institutions. More than sixty years after the end of the protectorate, it is still present in Moroccan life and society not only as a residue of colonial domination but also as a language of modernity and openness to the Western world. French is spoken by those who have attended schools (Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 70–73). Its situation has fluctuated with the Arabization policy, though the effects of this policy are limited. The status of French remains its weak point, since there is no official document clarifying it; hence its ambiguous perception. The National Charter of Education and Training (*Charte nationale d’éducation et de formation du Maroc* – CNEFM), promulgated in 1999, devotes two articles to the mastery of foreign languages, but only indirectly implies that French is the first foreign language. The constitution merely states that learning and mastering foreign languages is necessary. French therefore enjoys a de facto status but not a de jure one. The difference between its concrete reality and opaque status can be read as an indication of the ever-stifled sociolinguistic conflict between French-speaking technocrats, Francophobic Arab elites, and Amazigh-speaking militants, driven by the desire to obtain full official recognition of their language and culture. This latent conflict is at the heart of many other issues. In the foreground, there are power issues but also ideological struggles, as well as cultural and

identity claims. The statutory discomfort of the French language in Morocco, as in the other Maghreb countries, has not prevented it from taking root in this former colonial region. Institutional French is used as a school language, mainly in academic and official domains. French is mainly spoken in major Moroccan cities like Casablanca, Rabat, Fez, Marrakech, and Tangier. It is poorly distributed in rural areas and marginalized in urban peripheries, though it is taught in rural and peripheral public schools. Even in the spheres of the French-speaking elite, French is rarely used in informal situations, at home, or between friends. French-Arabic code-mixing, with a French predominance, is frequent. In everyday life, French exists in the form of varieties: basilectal, mesolectal, and elitist French (cf. 4).

Percentage of French speakers and criteria used – How many French speakers are there in Morocco? Statistics differ according to organizations, surveys, and polls. According to the International Organization of Francophonie (*Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* – OIF), 31 % of Moroccans who are 10 years old or older can read and write French (OIF 2022, 27). According to the 2014 census, 36 % of Moroccans who are 10 years old or older can speak and write French (HCP 2014, 27). This corresponds to 67.8 % of literate people. The differences are probably due to the criteria and the sources of information used. First, we have to agree on what a French speaker is. Linguistically, a French speaker can be defined as any person with sufficient skills to conduct a conversation in French. This definition implies other parameters such as the way French is learned and its practice in everyday life. In the case of Morocco, French is above all the language of school. The institutional nature encourages surveys to be limited to literate people. Yet, there are many Moroccans, such as unofficial tourist guides or domestic workers serving French people living in Morocco, who have learned French on the job and are able to conduct a conversation in French, even if the variety they speak is a very limited French. On the other hand, there are literate people, especially Arabists and even some who learned writing in rural public schools, who are unable to communicate in French since the practice of the language was limited to the classroom. Briefly, for statistics closer to reality, these parameters should be considered, which brings us to a range of 30 % to 40 % of French speakers in Morocco. These figures are evolving insofar as a new reform concerning the refrancization of scientific subjects in the Moroccan educational system could soon be introduced.

1.4 Other imported foreign languages: Spanish and English

Spanish – The Franco-Spanish Treaty (1912) established the Spanish protectorate and strengthened the presence of Spanish in the northern and southern areas of the country. As the official language of the protectorate's institutions, it functioned as a lingua franca between the communities of different religions or nationalities. Since independence (1956) and the recovery of the southern areas, Spanish has steadily declined due to the French- and then Arabic-speaking option of the unified Moroccan education. It only re-

tains a small presence in the southern and northern border cities. However, it remains dominant in Ceuta and Melilla occupied by Spain (####8 Spain: Ceuta and Melilla). If many northern Moroccans today still speak this language relatively well, they mainly owe it to border relations with Ceuta and Melilla. In the rest of Morocco, Spanish only has the status of a foreign language after English.

English – English has no connotation related to a colonial past in Morocco and thus enjoys the status of a pure foreign language. It functions as a language of access to technology and modernity, which makes it a strong competitor to French. Its presence in the Moroccan linguistic area is weak but dynamic. It is mainly present in the great metropolis of Casablanca and in the country's major cities. The first important contact of Moroccans with English only dates back to World War II with the establishment of American bases in Northern Africa. Not being in direct competition with local languages, English is becoming increasingly popular and is asserting itself in strategic domains like education, media, and higher education. British and American cultural centres provide English classes for both young people and adults (Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 72).

2 History

2.1 Establishment of the French and Spanish protectorates

Under the reign of Sultan Mulay Abderrahmane (1822–1859), Morocco's relations with Europe became more and more difficult. The occupation of Algeria by France in 1830 was felt as a direct threat also in Morocco and revived the spirit of holy war. The sultan answered the call of the people of Tlemcen but was defeated in Oujda. He had to sign the Treaty of Tangier (1844) with France, under which the Moroccan government promised in the most formal way not to grant any assistance or relief to any enemy of France. Encouraged by the success of the French and British, who had signed a trade treaty with the sultan in 1856, Spain took advantage of his death in 1859 to launch a major attack. After the conquest of Tetouan, it imposed a peace treaty in 1860, which provided for the expansion of the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, the relocation of Spanish missionaries and consuls to the former capital Fez, and Morocco's commitment to sign a trade treaty with Spain. In 1907, the General Act of the Algeciras International Conference (convened by Sultan Mulay Abdelaziz, the successor of Mulay Abderrahmane) adopted as principles the maintenance of the sultan's sovereignty and territorial integrity but required reforms in the organization of the police and the creation of a state bank. France, under the pretext of maintaining order, obtained control of Rabat, Mazagan, and Safi, and Spain that of Tetouan and Larache. The control in Tangier and Casablanca was Franco-Spanish, as France and Spain intervened militarily after violent fires. Casablanca and Chaouia were finally occupied by France. In 1909, Mulay Abdelhafid, who became sultan in 1908, was forced to accept the General Act of the Algeciras International Conference in return for the recognition of his regime. Parallel with the French occupation, Spain in-

vaded parts of the Rif. In 1911, Fez was attacked and besieged; the sultan decided to ask France for help. France, having obtained Germany's neutrality through the Berlin Agreement of 1911, which gave it full freedom of action in Morocco in return for transferring part of the Congo, forced the diplomatically isolated Sultan Mulay Hafid to sign the Treaty of Fez officially named Organization of the French Protectorate in the Sherifian Empire (*Organisation du protectorat français dans l'Empire Chérifien*) that imposes the French protectorate in 1912. General Lyautey was appointed resident-general of the French Republic in Morocco. The status of the Spanish in Morocco was settled by negotiations that led to the Franco-Spanish Treaty of Madrid (1912). The treaty stipulated the division of Morocco into two protectorate zones (the French protectorate zone and the Spanish protectorate zone). As for the city of Tangier, it remained under international supervision. The protectorate Treaty of Fez (1912) preserved all the attributes of the sultan's prestige and spiritual power. The resident-general of France in Morocco represented Morocco on the international scene, commanded the army, led the administration, promulgated the decrees signed by the sultan, and was responsible for the French community residing in Moroccan territory (Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 28).

2.2 Independence

The occupation gave rise to a political struggle in the cities. A nationalist movement driven by intellectuals began in Fez. Their actions were mainly based on contesting the deviations imposed on the spirit and letter of the Treaty of Fez (Kenbib 1996, 313). The most serious event that enabled the various opposition forces to unite was the Berber Decree (*Berber Dahir*) in 1930. Its promulgation provoked a vast protest movement in all cities and even shook the Spanish occupation zone. To support their movement, the nationalists decided to act on French and Moroccan public opinion. The magazine *Maghreb* was created for this purpose in 1932 in Paris. It published articles setting out the objectives of the nationalist movement. For the same purpose, the French-language newspaper *L'Action du peuple* was published in 1933 in Fez. In 1934, the Moroccan nationalists created the first political party, the Moroccan Action Committee (*Comité d'action marocaine*). In the same year, a reform plan was presented to the sultan, the resident-general of France, and the Quai d'Orsay in Paris. This document required the strict application of the protectorate Treaty of Fez and the non-interference of direct administration (Kenbib 1996, 314). The Action Committee, later split into two streams, was dissolved by the residence in 1937. In 1944, the Nationalist Party of Independence (*Istiqlal*), which emerged from the Action Committee, presented its manifesto in which it demanded that Morocco should be fully independent and governed by Sultan Mohammed Ben Youssef Ben Mohammed. The Palace and the nationalist movement closely collaborated. In 1951, the resident-general faced the sultan with an ultimatum to disown the Istiqlal party, otherwise he would be dismissed. In 1953, the sultan and the crown prince were arrested and then taken into exile for more than two years. As a consequence, France faced internal popula-

tion uprisings and diplomatic problems abroad (Lugan 1992, 271). In 1955, after twenty-seven months of exile, the sultan returned to Morocco. He became king under the name of Mohammed V. In 1956, France signed a document that officially recognized Morocco's independence and unity, thus ending the French protectorate. In 1956, Spain renounced its sovereignty over the northern part of the kingdom and the Tangier area was reintegrated into Morocco.

2.3 Colonial French

French as the official language of the protectorate was not widely spread among the indigenous population, at least in its institutional aspect. The overall results of the French educational policy were limited. Only a very small number of Moroccan Muslim children were able to go to school. On the eve of independence, the number of Moroccan executives trained in the school system set up by the protectorate was very low: only 269 high school graduates among 8 million Moroccans (Brignon et al. 1968, 15). These poor results did not prevent French schools from playing a decisive role in the educational system of independent Morocco. Selective and discriminatory, it had formed few but highly qualified Moroccans. These graduates of the French school represented the modern elite of a country that was officially independent but deeply Francized in its administrative structures. They significantly contributed to maintaining the French language and culture. As strong advocates of a policy of bilingualism, they consistently opposed the Arab elite, which had been trained in traditional schools and was often *de facto*, though not officially, excluded from power (Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 57–61; Benzakour 2007, 45). Yet, under the protectorate, French not only spread through school but also through informal acquisition methods: direct contact with French and European settlers of different social and geographical origins in business relations, trade, military service, and domestic work. The multiplication of popular schools, which occurred later, also contributed to the spreading of French, especially in major cities and their suburbs, where 93 % of the French settlers lived. The situation was reversed after independence. Massive schooling extended the knowledge of French to a greater number of people but favoured an institutionalized French, whose mastery was increasingly deficient, over spontaneous French (Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 57–61). At the same time, it uncovered various symbolic issues related to a colonial language that had been experienced by each group in different ways.

2.4 Becoming French after independence: attempts at Arabization

Throughout the protectorate period until independence (1912–1956), Morocco was subject to a strong policy of Francization. Since independence, Arabization has become an officially affirmed political option. It aimed at substituting French through Arabic in or-

der to decolonize the country culturally and to restore the nation's identity. The discourse on Arabization focused on legitimizing Arabic as a language not only of the Arab-Muslim heritage but also, at least potentially, of modernity (Boukous 1995, 76). Language policy was, therefore, Arabization policy. As early as 1956, measures were adopted to allow the use of Arabic in the domains that were up to then dominated by French. However, French was so strongly anchored in society that the change of language was not only a linguistic operation but also had social, political, and cultural consequences, which made this issue very conflictual (Grandguillaume 1983, 70–94). In 1960, Morocco created the Institute of Studies and Research for Arabization (*Institut d'Études et de Recherches pour l'Arabisation* – IERA) to respond to the desire to promote and implement the Arabization policy in the country's two key sectors: education and administration. Ideally, in a multilingual society, glottopolitics, that is the definition of the status of languages, the recognition of one or more official languages, and the possible distinction between national and official languages, should take into account sociolinguistic data. But many extralinguistic factors can work against the current, such as historical, ideological, and sociodemographic factors like urban concentrations or rural exodus. These factors are relevant not only for the country in question but also for cooperation with and development policies pursued by former colonizing countries or other powerful Western states. All these parameters were not taken into consideration when the decision was made to Arabize the country. As a consequence, the attempts were a failure, and this for various reasons. From the outset, multiple questions arose and differences in design appeared. Should there be a total or a partial Arabization of education? An immediate or a long-term Arabization? An “Arabization-translation” (which would have consisted in translating the contents of modern education into Arabic) or an “Arabization-conversion”, which would have implied the desire to refer to the local culture different from the one conveyed by French (Grandguillaume 1983, 31). These divergent options mask political and social issues. Depending on the mode of Arabization, different social groups are favoured or disadvantaged. To clarify these issues, the Arabization policy was the subject of several official symposia. Even if education was and still is the main issue and the sensitive sector of the Arabization policy, the process was not restrictive. It also affected the administration and the environment in various ways. Ultimately, the aim was to apply the Arabization process to all forms of social and intellectual life, but with a focus on the education sector. The stakes were high: The intention was to reduce French to a foreign language with a special status and to legitimately make Arabic a language of modernity, capable of competing with French on its own territory. This policy very quickly gave rise to heated debates between the strongest supporters of Arabization and the most hostile critics of its realization (El Gherbi 1993, 55; cf. Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 59). In reality, the different positions dictated by ideologies specific to each side are more complementary than irreconcilable. Theoretically, the maintenance of Arabic-French bilingualism is unanimously accepted by all parties but in different proportions: bilingualism with French predominance on the one side, and bilingualism where Arabic would be dominant on the other. In any case, between the three trends that appeared in

the aftermath of independence (pure and simple Arabization, sharing between French and another vehicular language, and maintaining the status quo), the circumstances imposed a cautious Arabization that in no way affected the spreading of French, which was promoted by the generalization of schooling. This balanced and median position is mirrored by the official position, which advocates a certain form of bilingualism in education.

3 External language policy

3.1 Legislation

The various Moroccan constitutions that have been adopted since the proclamation of independence say nothing about the status of French in Morocco. The latest constitution of 2011 specifies that Arabic is the official language of the State. It stipulates that Amazigh is also the official language of the State but only ‘as the common heritage of all Moroccans without exception’.¹ Concerning international foreign languages and especially French, the constitution simply emphasizes that their learning and mastery is a necessity. In other words, apart from Arabic and Amazigh, the other languages used in Morocco only have a de facto status.

3.2 Languages used in the public sphere

The Arabization of the administration was promoted very early. Already in 1956, a number of measures were taken in this direction, but they were neither consequently continued nor global: Some sectors, such as justice, were completely Arabized, while others, such as education, remained and still remain bilingual, but with an increasingly obvious domination of Arabic, and still others, as the financial sector, for instance, are more Francized than Arabized.

Official texts – Official documents (constitution, laws, decrees, ministerial decrees) are promulgated in Arabic and French. Though French is only an unofficial language, the texts are first produced in French as most of the authors have been trained in this language, and only then translated into Arabic. The Official Bulletin of the Kingdom of Morocco (*Bulletin Officiel du Royaume du Maroc*) is published in two versions: in Arabic (bi-weekly) and French (bi-monthly). Yet, texts from political parties are written exclusively in Arabic.

Administration – Despite the implementation of an Arabization policy for the administration, some officials also use French. Nevertheless, the use of Arabic is becoming

1 “[...] en tant que patrimoine commun à tous les Marocains sans exception” (C-MA, art. 5).

more and more dominant. In their oral contacts with administrative officials, people generally use Darija. Communication also occurs in Amazigh if both the citizen and the administrator are Amazigh speakers. When the interlocutors have a high social position and/or when they are in a formal situation, they use French and sometimes French-Arabic code-mixing, and this especially when they are unable to translate some aspects into French. Mixed discourse is frequently used between literate speakers in informal situations. Administrative correspondence is written in Modern Standard Arabic; the use of French is tolerated in some domains but completely excluded in the areas of Justice and Islamic Affairs. In other areas less affected by Arabization, such as the Ministry of Public Health or the Ministry of the Interior, French remains important.

Justice – The texts specify that only Arabic should be used in the drafting of all documents of the legal sector. Verdicts must be pronounced in Arabic. The language of oral communication is either Modern Standard Arabic or Darija. Plaintiffs, defendants, and witnesses communicate in Darija; if they are Amazigh speakers, they may use Amazigh if the judge understands this language and authorizes them to do so. Otherwise, they are assisted by a translator. French is no longer accepted as a language of communication, even though there are French-speaking judges and lawyers. Pleadings must be in Arabic, and a lawyer who does not speak Arabic may be replaced by an Arabic-speaking colleague.

Religion – In the religious field, the use of Classical Arabic is almost exclusive. Religious instruction is provided in this language. In mosques and especially in rural areas, except for Friday preaching, which is in Classical Arabic, the imam can also communicate with the faithful in Darija or Amazigh to explain the Koran and the precepts of Islam, if he understands it and if his interlocutors are Amazigh speakers. Religious radio and television broadcasts are broadcast either in Modern Standard Arabic or Darija (Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 85ss.).

Advertising – Advertising is well appreciated by the public and tries to identify different kinds of customers: bilinguals, French and Arabic speakers, formally educated and non-literate persons, and people living in urban and in rural areas. Advertising messages are primarily broadcast in French, Darija, and Arabic, less so in Amazigh.

3.3 Languages used in education

The presence of two languages of instruction in the Moroccan school system, Arabic in primary and secondary schools and French in technical and scientific university education, is the source of all kinds of controversies for many reasons. The Arabization of primary and secondary education has not reduced the cultural and identity divide by simply giving the Arabic language the place it had before the protectorate. Worse still, it has only increased the learners' academic difficulties. By maintaining French as the language of instruction in higher education while primary and secondary schools operate exclusively in Arabic, the students' mastery of French has naturally been reduced, even

though the time allocated to its teaching as a subject has been strengthened in both cycles of basic education. This linguistic choice constitutes a serious handicap, since the linguistic and communicative competence of French is the *sine qua non* for pursuing scientific and technical university studies. This dysfunction is not unrelated to the school failure and the unanimously recognized crisis, which currently affects the educational system. It has also provoked student revolts, denouncing that Arab diplomas do not offer the same opportunities on the labour market as French diplomas, and above all gave rise to the king's highly critical speech of 2013 devoted exclusively to the failures of Moroccan education. The discontent with Arabized education and the enthusiasm for private education operating in foreign languages, which persists despite the high tuition fees, are another proof of the distrust in Arabized public education. The documented, studied, and unanimously diagnosed deficiency of the current educational system has led to the proposal to refrancize scientific subjects from primary school onwards. This option is supported by the minister of National Education, who clearly expressed, at a press conference held in 2019, the need to teach scientific subjects in standard French from primary school onwards in order to reduce the gap between public and private education. In response to calls for the Arabization of higher education, the responsible minister warned against isolating Morocco from international dynamics because scientific and technological knowledge is not produced in Arabic but mainly in English and French. The refrancization of scientific subjects is increasingly necessary as partnerships between Morocco and France are multiplying in the field of education. More and more French institutions of higher education are setting up in Morocco (e.g., *Polytechnique, Centrale, École Supérieure des Sciences Économiques et Commerciales/ESSEC, Sciences Politiques/Sciences Po*). These French schools of excellence are highly valued by the Moroccan authorities.

Conclusion – In short, marginalized in higher scientific and technical education and probably soon replaced by French in the teaching of scientific subjects at primary and secondary level, Arabic is confined to its function as the language of Arab-Muslim tradition and limited as a language of modernity. Its mastery only allows access to traditional religious professions or professions related to justice (magistrates, lawyers, notaries), while French opens up the entire modern labour market (engineers, company executives, etc.). The gap created by the current choice of different teaching languages in primary and secondary on the one hand, and scientific higher education on the other, imposes high investments on the learners, which are often difficult to pay for. Moreover, teaching French as a subject with more hours, alongside Arabic as the language of instruction, introduces a Western way of thinking, society, and culture. This does not fit well with the Eastern mode of thinking conveyed by standard Arabic.

3.4 Languages used in the media

Print media – After independence, the French press continued to appear on the Moroccan market for more than ten years with two major daily newspapers: *Le Petit Marocain* and *La Vigie Marocaine*. This survival of the foreign press had the effect of stimulating French-speaking national products in order to compete with the colonial press. The maintenance of French immediately after independence is due to ideological, practical, and technical reasons: Journalists were primarily trained at French schools, printing in Arabic was more expensive, and material of the French-speaking press was still present in the country. When the colonial press gradually disappeared, the French-speaking Moroccan press continued to exist and develop. Its large distribution explains why information is still bilingual in Morocco and even multilingual, as French-speaking dailies, such as *L'Opinion* for example, regularly include pages in English and Spanish intended for readers in the former Spanish areas. Periodicals in English such as *Morocco Today*, which appears episodically, can also be found. In general, preference is given to Arabic, but French has a privileged place. This linguistic plurality shows that the official language does not have to be the only language of information, especially as there is no legislation that regulates the use of foreign languages in the media (Charnet 1985, 117). Yet, the use of French is far from being innocent; it is intentional, willed, and deliberate. French is no longer perceived as the language of the colonizer but as the language of the bilingual journalist addressing a bilingual readership. It is an acclimatized idiom that seeks to reach the target audience but above all to compete with the foreign press distributed in Morocco, particularly the French one (*Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *L'Équipe*, *Paris Match*, *Jeune Afrique*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Elle*, etc.). Currently, the Moroccan press publishes daily newspapers, weeklies, and magazines mainly in Arabic and French. French publications adopt either a title in French, as in the case of *Libération*, which echoes the French newspaper, or in Arabic, as in *Al Bayane* '(lit.) the manifesto', to better mirror the specificity of Moroccan French, a variety adapted to the use of local readers. In 1992, there were 262 titles in Arabic and 144 in French (HCF 1993, 445). While there are no daily newspapers in Amazigh, there are magazines, periodicals, and weeklies devoted to Amazigh culture written in French, Arabic, or Amazigh. In recent years, Moroccan newspapers and the most important magazines have added an online version. In summary, it would be inappropriate to attribute excessive importance to the French press in the diffusion of French, as it only concerns a socially influential but limited competent readership and has no major impact on the general public (Charnet 1985, 118). Moreover, whatever the language, press consumption remains low, the majority of Moroccans is more willing to turn to other media, particularly radio and television.

Radio – Radio is a means of information and entertainment that reaches a very wide audience: Almost all Moroccan households, both in urban and rural areas, have a receiver. The language used on radio, therefore, has a wide impact. For a long time, the radio landscape was dominated by the national chain, Moroccan Radio and Television (*Radiodiffusion Télévision Marocaine* – RTM), which offers two channels, one in Modern

Standard Arabic (rarely in Darija) and the other one in French with daily programmes also in English and Spanish. Regional stations broadcast in Modern Standard Arabic, Darija, and Amazigh dialects. The year 2002 marked a turning point in the field of audiovisual communication with the creation of the High Authority for Audiovisual Communication, the abolition of the state monopoly on radio and television broadcasting, and the publication of a law on audiovisual communication. This change resulted in 2006 in the High Authority issuing licences for establishing and operating new radio services, which would enrich the existing panorama, among them *Atlantic Radio*, *Hit Radio*, and *Radio Sawa*. Other stations have been set up since then and broadcast in Modern Standard Arabic, Darija, French, Spanish, and English. The radio station *Mediterranean International (Medi 1)*, a private station with Moroccan and foreign capital and a 12.3 % share of the Moroccan audience, broadcasts in French and Arabic. The bilingualism practised by this radio station is special in that the presenter passes very frequently and without transition from one language to another. Foreign radio stations are mostly listened to by the intellectual elite, RFI in French and BBC in Arabic, for instance.

Television – Television is perfectly established in Morocco. It is even present in rural areas without electricity in the homes of somewhat wealthy farmers, who connect the device to a battery. It is perceived as an access to the world of entertainment, education, and information and is received in a very diversified panorama since the proliferation of satellite dishes and access to internet networks, whose costs are increasingly affordable.

Television: TVM – Moroccan Television (*Télévision marocaine* – TVM), which has long held a monopoly as a single channel, offers programmes in Arabic and French: French films, American films translated into French, Latin American, Turkish, and, more rarely, Indian serials dubbed in French or Darija, documentaries in French or Modern Standard Arabic. Egyptian songs and cinema, which have long held a prominent place in the programming, are increasingly being replaced by Moroccan songs and cinema, more rarely by songs and cinema from other Maghreb countries. Popular songs in Darija and Amazigh dialects are often programmed on television. Newscasts are mainly given in Modern Standard Arabic. Newscasts in French, Spanish, and Amazigh are presented after the Arabic version.

Television: SNRT – The National Moroccan Broadcasting and Television Company (*Société nationale de radiodiffusion et de télévision* – SNRT, formerly RTM) currently has a network of eight channels: *Al Aoula* (formerly TVM, a general public channel), *Laayoune TV* (a regional channel for the Moroccan Sahara), *Arryadia* (a 100 % sports channel), *Athaqafia* (a knowledge and culture channel), *Al Maghribia* (satellite channel for Moroccans abroad), *Assadissa* (Mohammed VI channel of the Koran), *Aflam TV* (a channel dedicated to fiction) and *Tamazight* (a general Amazigh television, offering entertainment programmes, newscasts, political debates, reports, and religious programmes in Amazigh).

Television: 2M International and Medi 1 – SNRT is competing with two other channels, *2M International* and *Medi 1 TV*. *2M International* was founded in 1989. First pri-

vate and encrypted, it was nationalized and decrypted in 1997. As a result, its audience has considerably increased. The programmes include one newscast in French and two newscasts in Arabic. A large part is devoted to American and European cinema: the diffusion of films, the broadcasting of award ceremonies, and the presentation of new films and reviews. The channel gives way to modern Western and Eastern music, as well as Egyptian, Maghrebian, sub-Saharan African, Lebanese, and Palestinian films. *Medi 1 TV*, a private Moroccan news channel, was created in 2006 under the name *Medi1 Sat* by the French and Moroccan public authorities to promote French and Maghrebian cultures throughout the Mediterranean basin. It became totally Moroccan in 2008 and took the name *Medi 1 TV*. Since its creation, it has been oriented towards the Maghreb and, since 2016, towards French-speaking Africa. The channel is now generalist and available in French and Arabic. As on both channels programmes in French are not subtitled in Arabic, viewers who have not attended school only have the visual message.

Television: international channels – All Moroccan channels can be watched free of charge live on the internet. Foreign channels like TV5, the French channels *TF1*, *France 2*, *La Cinquième*, *ARTE*, *Canal Horizon*, and other European, American, Arab, and Asian channels are received by satellite and increasingly by internet (Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 98).

Internet – Social media has ‘exploded’ in Morocco, in terms of importance and usage, in a very short period of time. User numbers of Facebook and other social networks are constantly growing. Websites are proliferating. This enthusiasm for the internet is a golden opportunity for the development and dissemination of local oral languages and speakers, and particularly for Darija. Many spontaneous productions are written in Darija, especially on Facebook. Both Arabic and Latin alphabets are used, sometimes separately, sometimes in alternance. Modern Standard Arabic is practically absent, but French is widely used.

4 Linguistic characteristics

French appears in the form of a continuum of varieties in Morocco: marginalized varieties, which may be more or less deviant from standard French, standard French itself, and a mesolectal Moroccan variety, which is more suitable to local culture than standard French.

Basilectal French – French in Morocco is first and foremost a school language, acquired as a language of knowledge rather than a language of communication. However, there is a rudimentary French, learned on the job, which serves as an idiom of communication for staff with little or no school education: domestic servants, gardeners, and service agents of private Franco-Moroccan companies serving a French-speaking population, for instance. It is an approximate French with limited functions, marked by phonetic variation, a simplified or erroneous syntax, and a very limited vocabulary. Since the beginning of the Arabization policy, another low variety has emerged: the French of

Arabized literates. It is characterized by systematized and fossilized deviant structures, a mixture of researched expressions, erudite constructions, traces of Arabic, extreme or incorrect turns, and simplifications.

Elite French – The French of the urban elite is standard French (“bon usage”). It is the language of the educational institutions, which are oriented towards the exogenous norm, and mirrors a foreign environment, far removed from the concerns of the majority of Moroccan French speakers. The reproduction of this model shows a desire to preserve a language inherited from colonialism as it is. In the Moroccan speaker’s imagination, it is associated with the culture and way of life of Western society. It is the property of the ruling social elite and inaccessible to most French speakers. Elite French is not a collective language and only generates linguistic insecurity and demotivation among those who do not master it. It has recently been reduced due to various factors: linguistic isolation, the Moroccanization of teaching staff, and the increased access to higher education for the urban proletarian milieu (Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 114; Benzakour 2001, 77).

Mesolectal French – The variety practised by the majority of the French-speaking literate Moroccan population is an idiom in close contact with local languages. It is a variety in constant adaptation with its sociocultural environment that exhibits significant deviations from the exogenous norm. According to its users, it is therefore felt to be less French. It is a remodelled variety and more in line with the requirements of the local area than standard French. This local French or acclimatized French emerged to describe Moroccan society in all its sociocultural and environmental richness. It constitutes the daily language of many speakers and is characterized by specific accents, a morphosyntax that slightly deviates from the standard and especially by significant and obvious lexical particularities. The mesolectal variety is regularly enriched with neologisms of all kinds, which give it a real local colour. Different communicative, connotative, or simply playful needs have greatly contributed to transforming French that, as writing and speeches progress, exchanges its status as a foreign language for a more identity-based idiom with a strong proportion of migrant words, mainly from Arabic. The linguistic features presented below concern mesolectal French.

4.1 Pronunciation

The difference between the phonological and phonetic systems of Arabic and French may explain some vocalic features more typical of mesolectal French than of elite French.

Absence of /e/ – The absence of /e/ in the vocalic system of Arabic often results in the more or less marked closure of /e/ into /i/. This trend can be observed even among users who have a good knowledge of French. It explains the frequent confusion of the pronouns *il* ‘he’ and *elle* ‘she’, both pronounced [il]: *Rachida, elle [il] vient de partir* ‘Rachida, she has just left’ (cf. 4.2, *Gender pronouns*). It occurs more frequently in a phonetic enviro-

onment where /e/ precedes or follows /y/, another phoneme missing in Arabic, that is often also pronounced as /i/, as in *minutieux* [minisjø] ‘meticulous’ instead of /minysjø/, *multitude* [myltitid] or [miltityde] ‘multitude’ instead of /myltityd/, or *inutile* [ynitil] or [initil] ‘useless’ instead of /inytil/.

Nasal vowels – Jablonka (2017, 465) also points out that, due to the fact that Arabic has only oral vowels, it may happen that nasal consonants are inserted between the nasal vowel of French and the consonant that follows, as in *présente* [pʁɛzɑ̃t] ‘present’ instead of [pʁɛzɑ̃]. In some cases, the nasal vowel is even replaced by an oral vowel, as in *vient de* [vjɛ̃dɑ] ‘comes from’ instead of [vjɛ̃dɑ̃].

Final consonants – The systematic pronunciation of certain final consonants, which are partially silent in current Parisian French, seems to be a recurrent feature of Moroccan mesolectal French. This is the case for example of *t* in *but* [byt] ‘goal’, *août* [ut] ‘august’, or *exact* [ɛgzakt] ‘exact’, and of *s* in *détritus* [dɛtʁitys] ‘waste’, *ananas* [ananas] ‘pineapple’, or *os* [ɔs] ‘bones’ in the plural. The *s* is also pronounced in *plus* [plys] ‘more’ in its comparative function or in locutions like *ni plus* [plys] *ni moins* ‘neither more nor less’. The final *l* in *persil* [pɛksil] ‘parsley’ and *baril* [baxil] ‘barrel’, as well as the *f* in *bœufs* [bœf] ‘beefs’ in the plural form are consistently pronounced.

Liaison – The voiceless [s] is also frequently used in liaison instead of the voiced [z]: *plus ou moins* [plysumwɛ̃] instead of [plyzumwɛ̃] ‘more or less’.

/p/ and /v/ – One can suppose that some consonants such as /p/ and /v/, non-existent in Arabic, are realized by their respective voiced/unvoiced variant /b/ and /f/, as in *potable* ‘potable’, pronounced [bɔtabl] instead of [pɔtabl], and *véhiculé* ‘conveyed’, pronounced [feikyle] instead of [veikyle]. These variants, operated in basilectal French of people who gained their literacy in Arabic and primarily speak Arabic, are rather rare among speakers of mesolectal French since the interference effect comes mainly from dialectal Arabic. But even Darija integrated /p/ and /v/ through French loans such as *télévision* ‘television’, pronounced [tilivizjɔ̃] instead of [televizjɔ̃], *valise* ‘suitcase’, pronounced [valiza] instead of [valiz], *vélo* ‘bike’, pronounced [vilo] instead of [velo], or *pare-prise* ‘windscreen’, pronounced [parbriz] instead of [paʁbbʁiz].

Pronunciation of Arabic loans – The borrowing of words raises another problem. The continuum between the different varieties of French spoken in Morocco makes the pronunciation of many words borrowed from Arabic variable. In particular, it may vary depending on the situational context, the partners involved in the interaction, and their level of formal education. Thus, many loans, which are common and perfectly integrated into mesolectal French, can keep their original pronunciation, and thus add new consonants to French. This is the case in *mâalem* ‘master-artisan’, pronounced [mʁalam] with the Arabic [ʁ] or [maalam], where /a/ replaces /ʁ/, or *qacida* ‘lyric poem put into music’, pronounced [qasida] or [kasida]. The phonetic variation is mirrored by a multiple and unstable spelling, as in *alem* ‘savant, scholar in theology’, spelled <aâlem> or <alem>, and *djellaba* ‘traditional long dress’, written <jellaba> or <jallaba>. This variation does not affect the old loanwords from Arabic, attested in French dictionaries and totally or partially integrated in the French lexicon, such as *ramadan* ‘Ramadan’, *souk*

'souk', or *casbah* 'kasbah'. Their pronunciation and graphical form are already firmly adapted to standard French (Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 122).

Origin of this variation – The variation in the pronunciation of borrowings from Arabic is due to the coexistence of two types of French speakers. There are, on the one hand, those who have perfectly internalized the phonetic system of French and therefore practise standard French pronunciation. Bilingual speakers, on the other hand, who are more accustomed to the phonetic system of their first language, prefer the Arabic pronunciation. Ar. *caïd* 'head, chief', for example, is pronounced [kaid] by the French-speaking elites but may be pronounced [kaid] or [qaid] by bilingual speakers.

4.2 Morphosyntax

Several sensitive syntactic points separate mesolectal from standard French.

Relative clause – A first feature results from the phenomenon of fossilization: the regularization that affects the relative subordinates. It is reinforced by an anaphora in the relative, which takes up the antecedent, as in *le pays que je l'aime bien* 'the country that I like it' instead of *le pays que j'aime bien* 'the country that I like', a sentence that can be heard on Moroccan national radio. This process is certainly supported by the deviations from the norm observed in popular French, where the relative pronoun is generalized in *que* 'that', like in *mon mari que je suis sans nouvelle* 'my husband that I have no news' instead of *mon mari dont je suis sans nouvelle* 'my husband from whom I have no news' (Guiraud 1965, cited in Akouaou 2001, 184). However, in Moroccan French, it can be mainly explained as interference effect. The syntax of Arabic is a syntax of juxtaposition, which only presents subordination with one relative, *que* 'that', followed by an anaphora in the relative. The regularization reinforced by anaphorization is done in accordance with this syntactic structure in Moroccan French (Akouaou 2001, 187).

Gender pronouns – The pronouns *il(s)* 'he, they' and *elle(s)* 'she, they' are sometimes used as variants. This variation could have a phonetic origin, as the absence of the vowel /e/ in Arabic leads to replace the /e/ of *elle* 'she' by the closed neighbouring sound /i/ and therefore to realize *elle* 'she' as *il* 'he': *Les femmes, ils ont beaucoup de choses à nous dire* 'women, they [masc.] have a lot of things to tell us' instead of *Les femmes, elles ont beaucoup de choses à nous dire* 'women, they [fem.] have a lot of things to tell us' (cf. 4.1, *Absence of /e/*).

Prepositions – Even speakers with a good knowledge of French sometimes have trouble choosing the right preposition due to both the limited nature of the prepositional system in Arabic and the persistent fossilization. The variation mainly affects the pairs of prepositions *sur/dans* 'on/in' (e.g. *il dort sur son lit* 'he sleeps on his bed' instead of *dans son lit* 'in his bed'), *dans/en* 'in/to' (e.g. *il est parti dans l'Afrique* 'he went in Africa' instead of *en Afrique* 'to Africa'), *de/à* 'from/to' (e.g. *il commence de comprendre* 'he begins from understanding' instead of *à comprendre* 'to understand'), *dans/à* 'in/on' (e.g. *j'ai entendu la nouvelle dans la télévision* 'I have heard the news in television' instead of

à la télévision ‘on television’), and *pour/de* ‘for/about’ (e.g. *il se plaint pour sa situation* ‘he complains for his situation’ instead of *de sa situation* ‘about his situation’).

Dislocated structures – Mesolectal French from Morocco also presents the almost systematic use in both written and oral forms of dislocated structures, where the detached component is a proper noun, a pronoun, or a nominal phrase, and the element representing it a pronoun, like in *Nous, on se souvient pas de ce que lui, il a dit* ‘We, we don’t remember what he, he has said’ instead of *de ce qu’il a dit* ‘what he has said’.

Existential – Jablonka (2017, 466) reports the very frequent use of an invariable present and in particular of *(il) y en a* ([lʲāna]) with its variants, as in *(il) y en a des gens qui parlent bien français* ‘There are people who speak good French’ or *(il) y en a des choses qu’on peut pas les dire en arabe* ‘There are things that cannot be said in Arabic’.

Grammatical gender – The grammatical gender of lexemes borrowed from Arabic is quite well controlled. The gender markers generally comply with the system of French and are taken from the original language, as in *une fetwa* ‘a legal consultation based on sharia’ and *un minbar* ‘a pulpit of a mosque reserved for the preacher’. However, there are some variants, as in *un/une djellaba* ‘a traditional long dress’. The gender of adjectives derived from lexemes borrowed from Arabic conforms with the rules of French (e.g., *un arrêté viziriel* ‘a ministerial decree’, *une décision vizirienne* ‘a ministerial decision’). Yet, sometimes the adjective keeps the form of the Arabic feminine, like in *jebli*, which in the feminine shows the Arabic feminine marker *-a* instead of the French *-e*: *un vêtement jebli/une robe jebli* ‘a dress worn by a woman from a mountainous area’ instead of **une robe jebli*. It can finally become invariable, as in *halal* ‘not prohibited by Islam’ (e.g., *un produit halal* ‘a halal product’, *une viande halal* ‘a halal meat’).

Grammatical number – The grammatical agreement in number is more problematic. Many integrated loans may take plural forms from either the original language, French, or both languages as alternatives or hybrids. The Arabic plural marker is usually used, for example, with *alem* ‘erudite man, scholar in theological sciences and Muslim law’ or *cheikh* ‘chief of a tribe or urban or rural territorial division’: *des oulama* and *des chioukh*. Other nouns use the marker of the French plural in *-s*, as *imam* ‘imam’ or *chaouch* ‘service agent(s) in an administration or a private company’: *des imams* and *des chaouchs*. Again others admit the two plural forms. These forms may occur as alternatives, as in *cherif* ‘honorary title given to any descendant of the prophet’ or *hammam* ‘establishment of public baths’: *des cherifs* or *des chorfa* and *des hammams* or *des hammamat*. Yet, the plural forms of both systems can also be combined as in the case of *adel* ‘auxiliary of Islamic justice in charge of the procedure’ and *cheikha* ‘artist who is both a singer and a dancer’: *des adouls*, *des cheikhates*. Some borrowings can also appear in the three plural forms. This is the case with the already mentioned noun *cheikh*: *des cheikhs*, *des chioukh*, *des chioukhs*.

Article – The definite Arabic article *al* also raises some problems. Many borrowings are attested with the Arabic article. Some may be used with either the French or the Arabic article: *le mouloud* or *al mouloud* ‘the celebration of the Prophet’s birth’. However, loans from Classical Arabic, especially those referring to the Islamic religion, are only

used with the Arabic article, even if they are frequent: e.g. *Al Icha* ‘night Muslim prayer’ (cf. 4.3, *Religion*). Coming from a sacred language, they are perceived as invariable, which explains the difficulty in integrating them into the system of a secular language such as French. The French article, however, tends to replace the Arabic article when the locution appears in a phrase: *la prière du Fajr* ‘the prayer of the Fajr’ (Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 122s.).

Grammatical recategorization – In mesolectal French, grammatical recategorization can be observed. A transitive verb can become intransitive, as, for example, *inviter* ‘to invite’ in *il invite beaucoup dans son riad, surtout au mois de ramadan*.² It can also be recategorized as a pronominal verb, as, for example, *s’accaparer* ‘to monopolize’ in *rien n’a vraiment changé, c’est toujours les fils de riches qui s’accaparent du marché de l’emploi moderne*.³

Periphrastic future – We observe the almost systematic use of the periphrastic future form *aller* + infinitive, both orally and in writing (i). We also note the regular use of the conditional or the periphrastic future after the hypothetical *si* ‘if’ (ii):

- (i) “ainsi les Casablancais vont pouvoir apprécier des spectacles [instead of *pourront apprécier*] qui vont être donnés [instead of *qui seront donnés*] vendredi prochain à partir de 19h par des troupes populaires” (*Liberation*, 14 March 2008).⁴
- (ii) “La rencontre va être [instead of *sera*] intéressante si les hooligans ne vont pas se mêler [instead of *ne se mêlent pas*]” (*L’Opinion*, 31 January 2003).⁵

4.3 Lexicon

Mesolectal French is a language with a multiple identity, which mirrors a local culture as rich as it is diversified (cf. Benzakour 2012). Its lexicon is the living expression of the permanent dialogue with the native languages involved. The generous welcome given to borrowed and hybrid words is an eloquent example of this. A glance at the lexicon of French as it is used today in Morocco, or even better, a click on the Panfrancophone Lexicographical Database of Morocco (*Base de données lexicographiques panfrancophone Maroc* – BDLP-M) is enough to bring out the soul of an entire society that is expressed in its cultural words.

Words not filling lexical gaps – To give an idea, let us have a look at some of the words that strongly characterize Moroccan mesolectal French. We notice that the words

2 “he often invites in his riad, especially in the month of Ramadan”.

3 “nothing has really changed, it is always the children of the rich who monopolize the modern labour market”.

4 “Thus the people of Casablanca will enjoy the shows that will be given by popular troupes next Friday from 7 p.m.”.

5 “The meeting will be interesting if the hooligans do not mingle”.

borrowed from Arabic that are used together with their equivalents in standard French function as a kind of relevant sociocultural indicator due to their connotative richness. They are often internal images, full of sociocultural references drawn from the territory and nourished by memories. They convey a deep impression of the local sociocultural experience and the popular imagination and mirror a whole set of values that the speakers associate with the borrowings based on their personal or shared experience of the referent (Benzakour 2000, 318–322). In other words, the borrowings are semantically more loaded than the French terms, which are limited to their denotative function. They have a very strong evocative power, which explains their vitality and their integration into Moroccan French. The lexeme *makhzen*, for instance, that is borrowed from Darija, forms a pair with the French word *autorité* ‘authority’. Yet, it also evokes an enforcement officer, armed with a baton and ready to strike, and thus connotes the idea of fear of authority and repression: a whole experience transmitted through a simple word. The lexicon relating to the Moroccan cultural universes is marked by multiple aspects and is especially nourished by the two national languages: Amazigh and Darija. Of all Maghreb countries, Morocco is the one that stands out most for its jealously guarded traditions: clothing, culinary, artistic, and craft traditions, but also for its historical vestiges, its ethnic and linguistic diversity, the importance of the Muslim religion that guides the daily life of the whole society. Borrowings and hybrids derived from borrowings constitute the main part of Moroccan French and are typical of this former colonial region. An examination of the Moroccan lexicon provides a concrete way of illustrating the encounters of languages and cultures within the acclimatized French that describes them.

Words filling lexical gaps – Various quotes from a variety of sources attest to and illustrate, for example, the frequent use of *khôl* ‘blush used by women to blacken their eyelids, eyelashes, or eyebrows’, borrowed from Moroccan Arabic, even in standard French. They appear in newspapers, literary writings, and the media and show a total integration of a Moroccan cultural word into international French. This also applies to other words that came up in Morocco and then expanded all over the French-speaking world, in the terminology of Reutner (2017, 37) original diatopisms, (*diatopismes d’origine*), among which some of the statalisms and religious terms.

Statalisms – Statalisms like *baladia* ‘municipality’, *mokataâ* ‘administrative district’, *wissam* ‘decoration awarded by the king to a personality to reward services rendered to the nation’, or *chergui* ‘drying east wind, hot in summer and cold in winter’ are Moroccanisms in the official or public domain.

Religion – The field of religious rituals shows words such as *imam* ‘worship leader in a mosque’, the names of the five obligatory prayers *Salat Fajr* ‘first prayer, observed at dawn’, *Salat Dhuhr* ‘second prayer, observed at the early of afternoon’, *Salat Asr* ‘third prayer, observed at the middle of afternoon approximately’, *Salat Maghrib* ‘fourth prayer, observed at sunset’, and *Salat Icha* ‘fifth and last prayer, observed at night’, *habous* ‘institution under Muslim law dealing with the management of endowments’, *Achoura* ‘commemoration of the death of Hossayn, grandson of the prophet Mohammed, which takes place on the tenth day of Moharram [first month of the Islamic ca-

lendar]’, or *nuit sacrée* ‘sacred night during which the Koran was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed; celebration of this night’ (cf. i).

Traditional arts, handicrafts, and religious rituals – A typical lexical field containing local items is that of traditional arts and crafts with words such as *halqa* ‘circle formed by the crowd in a public square around a fairground artist [storyteller, singer, or snake charmer], preacher, or charlatan’ (cf. ii), *gnaoua* ‘dancer or mystical singer of black origin organized in a popular brotherhood who uses trance and exorcism in his or her ceremonies’ (cf. iii), *zellige* ‘mosaic tileworks’ (cf. iv), or *zlaïgi* ‘master craftsman who lays the tiles’. The importance and diversity of the quotes show the extent and anchoring of these borrowings in a variety of French that has become a language of interculturality and linguistic plurality. Through its hypertext and hypermedia links, the database BDLP-M reveals even better the whole cultural universe particular to this region. The images, sounds, texts, and references that accompany, for example, the term *gnaoua*, all contribute to immersing us into the Morocco of popular arts so different from that of Amazigh Morocco or Arab-Muslim Morocco.

- (i) “Le Mausolée du Sultan Alaouite Moulay Abdallah à Fès a abrité, lundi soir, une grande cérémonie religieuse organisée au lendemain de la nuit sacrée”.⁶
- (ii) “Il se souvient d’un récit qui court de contour en contour sur le souk, les halqas formés autour d’eux par des spectateurs émerveillés”.⁷
- (iii) “Les danseurs et musiciens noirs, les gnaouas devaient venir de Marrakech”.⁸
- (iv) “Bois et plâtre sculptés, marbre, zellige, rien n’a été trop beau pour cette mosquée”.⁹

Clothing – The lexicon of traditional clothing offers a real parade that takes us from *caftan* ‘traditional long and loose dress, decorated with a kind of braid made of gold or silk threads’ to *djellaba* ‘traditional long dress with sleeves and hood worn by men and women’ and *babouche* ‘traditional embroidered leather shoe without quarter or heel, worn by men and women’. Many Arabisms furnished by Moroccan French spread out in front of us long and loose traditional outfits which Moroccan women use when going out to protect themselves from prying eyes, such as *haik* ‘long piece of cloth in which Muslim women drape themselves and hide their shapes to get out’, as well as long and wide traditional clothes of men, such as *burnous* ‘traditional coat’, and veils used by men, like *li-tham* ‘piece of cloth with which men cover their faces in the desert to protect themselves from sandstorms’.

Cultural role of borrowings – The lexical gap, which is often doubled by a phonetic gap (cf. 4.1), allows those people who have chosen French as their working or writing

⁶ “On Monday evening, the Mausoleum of the Alaouite sultan Mulay Abdallah in Fez hosted a major religious ceremony organized the next day of the sacred night’.

⁷ “He remembers a story that runs from narrator to narrator on the souks, the halqas formed around them by marvellous spectators’.

⁸ “The black dancers and musicians, the gnaouas, were expected to come from Marrakech’.

⁹ “Sculpted wood and plaster, marble, zellige, nothing has been too beautiful for this mosque’.

language to open up to a familiar cultural universe, named by Arabic borrowings that they have long tried or are still trying to ignore. The image of the language mirrored in this variety seems to be closer to the daily life and social reality of Moroccans than that of standard French, which mirrors a very foreign universe even for the urban elite. Cultural words quite naturally occupy a prominent place in Moroccan French and find a certain legitimacy due to the number and diversity of their usage. Their power to evoke a cultural universe that elite French fails to describe can only plead in favour of the legitimization of this variety of the territory. Can acclimatized French, which has become a language of the multiple, be recognized by the French-speaking elite? The future will tell (cf. Benzakour 2012).

5 Internal language policy

An important point raised by mesolectal French is that of its legitimacy: Is it stigmatized or rather admitted and recognized as an expression of plural identity and cultural diversity?

5.1 Linguistic purism

Elite French is high-quality French, an academic language; it is represented and disseminated through the classical literary language. This inaccessible model is assumed to be the language of the educational institutions, which are supposed to spread the exogenous academic standard. Its reproduction shows a desire to assimilate to native speakers from France and, more particularly, to the culture of Paris. Such an attitude leads to maintaining French in an original, almost mythical purity. It turns French inherited from colonialism into a purely foreign language, one that must be mastered to preserve the social prestige it provides. The most important consequences concern education. Elite French occupies the highest pole on the continuum of varieties of French used in Morocco. Its usage goes along with fundamental symbolic issues. It is a high variety that continues to hold the key to the modern job market and represents the vehicle for science and technology, and it competes in this regard with Modern Standard Arabic, which also invades the domains of education, administration, the press, modern literature, and, especially in its oral form, the media. Yet, it seems difficult to speak about both languages as two high varieties that coexist equally. Arabic has an explicit legal status as the official language of the country and enjoys a strong Islamic aura. It is quite the opposite of French, which finds itself in an uncomfortable situation, as it is affected both by its colonial past and its never explicitly clarified status as first foreign language. Yet, in the imagination of the Moroccan speaker, French also remains associated with the culture and lifestyle of Western society. It is perceived as the language of social prestige, self-esteem, and the affirmation of a Western sociocultural status. It is the language of

the social elite: executive managers of public affairs and directors of private companies or companies with foreign capital inflows. Does it play the role of the dominant language compared to standard Arabic, which it strongly competes with? The situation seems more complex, and it may be more judicious to consider it in terms of the mechanisms of regulation, adaptation, and accommodation that speakers develop to manage situations of linguistic contact in their communication experience (cf. Jablonka 2017, 468). But nothing is really stable. Thus, elite French as a source of linguistic insecurity for those who do not master it has recently declined in favour of mesolectal French. The reasons for such a process are multiple: First, elite French is linguistically isolated because it requires significant financial and intellectual investments; it is not a cultural enrichment for all, and affects only a small part of society, even if this small part constitutes an economically and politically privileged social group. Second, the teaching staff consciously or unconsciously transmit a locally marked French. Third, higher education is increasingly opening up to the urban proletariat. Finally, speakers begin to become aware of the recently recognized and formalized linguistic and cultural diversity (Benzakour 2008, 87; cf. also 4, *Elite French* and *Mesolectal French*, and 5.2).

5.2 Description of linguistic characteristics

On first observation, there has been no effort in the past to codify an endogenous standard of French in order to manage the different varieties practised in Moroccan society. Concerning the lexicon used in Morocco, there are no general dictionaries other than those of standard French, like the *Petit Robert* (PR), *Petit Larousse* (PL), or *Trésor de la langue française* (TLF). Certainly, the *Dictionnaire universel francophone* (DUF) is largely opening up its nomenclature to the lexical particularities of African communities, but it is, on the one hand, a French dictionary of France, so that the lexical particularities of African French are only defined by their comparison with those of France and, on the other hand, it is rarely used in Morocco. The only differential lexical inventories that have attempted to describe the lexicon of endogenous French and especially that of the mesolectal variety are the project of Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec (2000) and the BDLP-M. The realization of the first has the merit of having undermined the cliché of a unitary and universal language and having shown that a language can be fragmented into several subsystems. It made its authors aware of the possible existence of a local subvariety. Furthermore, as it describes a variety in its social life, the question arose whether it would be able to change, at least slightly, the perception of local French speakers and lead the elite to have another look at an idiom in its real and daily practices instead of systematically considering French as a mythical language to perpetuate. When it was published, discordant voices were raised around the variety of French it describes. Some speakers (journalists, essayists, writers, etc.) expressed their support for the codification of this variety with which they could easily identify themselves because they have adapted and used it. Others, especially educators and researchers, were instead denoun-

cing a French infested with words borrowed from Arabic which would harm the mythical French standard (cf. Benzakour 2008, 92). The existence of two opposite attitudes within a micro-sample of intellectuals suggests that a local norm has already emerged. The positive perception among journalists has announced the birth of a social norm that is developing and strengthening an endogenous linguistic norm, which is still in the early stages and already threatened by an entirely conservative core group with strong power of legitimization. The difficulty of the paper-based lexical inventory is its low distribution and limited access. The online availability of the BDLP-M and the research perspectives it offers have made it possible to ensure that knowledge about endogenous French is more widely distributed among the French-speaking Moroccan population and also reaches the younger generations. Increasing its visibility, especially among those who are still trying to deny its existence, remains a challenge. Yet, the inclusion of local lexicon in a panfrancophone database could perhaps help to change the value system. It gives some legitimacy to the local variety, which is widely practised by the French-speaking population and in informal communication situations even by the elites, though many of them refuse to recognize it. The paper and online lexicons have probably given some recognition to the acclimatized variety. They are a small step towards the awareness of the existence of an endogenous French, even if it is still seeking legitimacy (cf. Benzakour 2008, 95s.).

5.3 Usage of linguistic characteristics

Variety used by public authorities – The exogenous norm is used with statalisms and other necessary lexical particularities (cf. *baladia*, *mokataâ*, *wissam*, or *chergui* in 4.3). It is especially common when the interlocutors have a high social position and/or when they are in a formal situation. French can also be replaced by the predominantly French-Arabic code-mixing, particularly when the speakers fail to translate some concepts into French. Code-switching is frequently used between cultivated speakers in informal situations too (cf. Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 86s.).

Variety used in education – The school system is constrained by dogmatism and the imposition of foreign standards, which extinguish any creative and innovative effort. Instead of meeting the expectations of learners by making them acquire language skills, the teaching of standard French only engenders linguistic insecurity, discouragement, and demotivation, which in the 1990s resulted in disaffection with school (Benzakour 2001, 79). This situation was aggravated by a hesitant Arabization policy which led to a dysfunction in the teaching of standard French in certain scientific pathways, hence the attempts to refrancize them. In any case, the teaching of languages, whether French, Arabic, or any other language, is not accompanied by real internal language planning that is explicitly specified in texts emanating from Moroccan language policy. Even the National Charter of Education and Training says nothing about the management of languages and their varieties. Teaching of standard French follows the official instructions

from the Ministry of National Education. They are available on the ministry's website and passed on to teachers by regional education inspectors and coordinators. The instructions of the academic institution recommend the teaching of normative grammar. The reference dictionaries to use are those of standard French. The teaching of literature was, for a long time, mainly devoted to the classics of French literature. Authors like Victor Hugo, Balzac, Zola, Saint-Exupéry, Verlaine, and Rimbaud are listed in school textbooks most often drawn up on the French model by education inspectors, which allows for an opening towards French culture and civilization. Yet, over the past two decades, we have noted the introduction of renowned Maghrebian and, incidentally, African texts, such as *La boîte à merveilles* 'The marvelous box' (1954) and *La mémoire tatouée* 'The tattooed memory' (1971) by the Moroccan authors Ahmed Sefrioui and Abdelkebir Khatibi, or *Le fils du pauvre* 'The son of the poor' (1950) by Mouloud Feraoun from Algeria and *L'enfant noir* 'The black child' (1953) by Camara Laye from Guinea. Even if these books are primarily introduced because of their content (Laye, for example, is taught and read at school when poverty is the topic of discussion), they also bring along a certain exposure of the students to African French varieties.

Variety used in the media – Mesolectal French is widely used in the written press which therefore also constitutes an important basis of Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec (2000) and the BDLP-M. Orally, local French is heard in the audiovisual media when the invited interlocutors take part in lively debates of programmes in French. On television in French, the newscasters and the hosts are preferably either Franco-Moroccans or graduates from French schools. They are supposed not to speak the local mesolectal French but standard French. As to the internet, the lexical particularities of mesolectal French are very frequent in social media. Exchanges usually use mesolectal or approximate French, while academic and/or elitist varieties are less common.

Variety used in literature – Literature in French is flourishing in Morocco. It has produced and continues to produce original works both in terms of writing and themes. These writings are part of interculturality and bilingualism, as evidenced by the title of the novel *Amour bilingue* (1983) by Khatibi. The readership of Moroccan literature continues to grow, and it is an integral part of Moroccan culture. Its interest and survival are the multiple, the plural (cf. Benzakour/Gaadi/Queffélec 2000, 100s.). The literature makes extensive use of cultural words from mesolectal French. They give the text an authentic local colouring, name universes unknown in France, anchor the texts in the Moroccan soil, and thus find there a certain legitimacy. Moroccan lexicon is used by renowned authors such as Ben Jelloun or Sefrioui without further comments or as lexical particularities indicated as such by the use of italics, quotes, glosses, or explanations in footnotes and at the end of the book (cf. Reutner 2023, 256–261). An example of the natural use is *NUIT sacrée*, which constitutes the title of Ben Jelloun's prix Goncourt winning novel *La nuit sacrée* (1987), examples of a marked usage are *Achoura* and *djellaba* (i–ii, cf. also 4.3):

- (i) Marrakech appartenait aux enfants, du moins depuis ce matin et pour quelques jours. La ville célébrait pour eux la Achoura (Ben Jelloun 1981, 141).¹⁰
- (ii) Ce jour-là ma mère m'expédiait à l'école avec, pour vêtement, une simple chemise sous ma djellaba (Sefrioui 1954, 15, 187s.).¹¹

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Lotfi Sayahi

4 Tunisia

Abstract: French in Tunisia has a long history that harkens back to the second half of the nineteenth century and the French occupation of the country (1881–1956). Today, French continues to have a strong presence in the education system, but it remains a second language that has not been indigenized. Levels of proficiency vary greatly depending on levels of education and even fields of specialization and professions. While we cannot speak of a local, stable, and clearly distinguishable variety of French in Tunisia, we can identify features that are common among learners of French in the country, which include instability of the vowel system and some morphosyntactic features such as restriction in mood selection. As French continues to play a major role in the education system, English as the global language of technology, entertainment, and digital media is increasingly attracting the attention of the younger generations.

Keywords: Tunisia, French, Tunisian Arabic, diglossia, bilingualism

1 Sociolinguistic situation

1.1 Geographical distribution of languages

On account of its limited geographical extension (163,610 km²) and relatively small population (around 11.5 million people in 2019), Tunisia shows a level of ethnolinguistic diversity that is far from the higher levels often encountered elsewhere on the African continent. Unsurprisingly, the linguistic profile of Tunisia is closer to that of other Arabic-dominant speaking nations than to the situation in the majority of African countries. As is the case in the rest of the Maghreb region, the autochthonous language is Berber, also referred to as Amazigh and Shilha in Tunisia. Tunisian Berber today, however, shows a severe decrease in its use and transmission. Areas where it is still spoken are reduced to smaller enclaves in the south of the country, including on the Island of Djerba and in some inland villages such as Chenini, Douiret, and Zrawa. Historically, several factors have led to the displacement of Berber in Tunisia, including lack of official status, urbanization, migration, and the spread of Arabized education. Estimates of the number of Tunisian Berber speakers vary greatly, although solid proof of the existence of monolingual speakers today is still to be produced. References usually state that about 1% of the general Tunisian population speak Berber (cf. Daoud 2011, 10; Gabsi 2003, 19; 2011, 142), but there are still no definitive empirical studies that can confirm or refute such statements. The negative attitude towards Berber by Tunisian institutions has not only limited its maintenance and description but even the simple task of gathering accurate data about its ethnolinguistic vitality in a rapidly changing society. What is certain is

that, despite recent attempts to revive it (cf. Bahri 2019, 100), since the introduction of Arabic at the beginning of the eighth century, speakers of Berber in Tunisia have been shifting to Arabic to a degree that Berber is currently a much-endangered language.

Tunisian Arabic, on the other hand, is the native language of Tunisians nationwide. It exists within a classical diglossic situation that makes it the language of informal and extemporaneous communication. Tunisian Arabic shows significant divergence from standard Arabic that is comparable to what we find in the case of other Arabic dialects throughout the region. Conversely, the standard Arabic variety is the one used in education and formal domains, although recent studies have shown an increased overlap in domains of use between both vernacular Arabic and standard Arabic (cf. Sayahi 2019, 229s.).

With regards to French and other European languages, they are introduced primarily through education. Hence, their distribution across the geography of the country has to do with levels of literacy which tend to be higher in urban settings than in more remote rural areas. The capital region area and the coastal cities in general show a stronger presence of French, and increasingly English, given the higher rates of literacy and the impact of tourism and digital media. Nonetheless, the fact that Tunisia has one of the highest rates of literacy in the continent (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2019) and an educational system that mandates children to stay in school until their teenage years has meant higher exposure to the French language among the generations born after independence from France in 1956. This exposure has not, however, translated into the indigenization of French or even higher proficiency levels in this language by the general population, as will be discussed below.

1.2 Social distribution of languages

Language proficiency and language use in Tunisia is closely tied to literacy and educational attainments. Tunisian Arabic is not recognized officially nor used in literacy development (cf. Sayahi 2015, 5). Historically, when they first begin attending school, Tunisian children start learning standard Arabic and two or three years later French, while other European languages are introduced in middle school and high school. Starting from the school year 2019–2020, the Ministry of Education has reinstated the onset of the teaching of French to the beginning of the second year of primary education (around the age of 7), while English is introduced during the fourth year of primary education (around the age of 9). As will be discussed in section 3.3, in the Tunisian educational system, French is used as language of instruction for science and technology starting from high school. This becomes even more pronounced at the university level where all instruction for careers in health, engineering, and the hard sciences is delivered predominantly in French. As a result, while standard Arabic serves as the language of initial literacy, it falls behind in terms of instrumental value both in the advanced stages of the educational system and also in the job market. Tunisian citizens who are better posi-

tioned socioeconomically tend to be competent in French and they tend to make some usage of the language at work. This engenders a system where the language of instruction directly contributes to social divisions or what we may call a process of stratification by language of instruction.

With regards to age, since independence, changing policies that oscillate between more extensive bilingualism and stronger Arabization proposals have created significant differences in levels of proficiency in French. It is true that older Tunisians tend to be less educated, but those who attended school did so in a bilingual system that helped them develop higher levels of competence in French. On the other hand, younger Tunisians, born after 1970, are more educated while their level of competence in French is less advanced overall. Add to this the role of individual factors and language attitude in the acquisition of a second language and the result is that there is a wide range of competences in French within each generation of Tunisians. Today the younger generations tend to have less competence in French than their peers from previous generations, both for the impact of Arabization and the role social media and digital communication play in increasing the exposure to English and the motivation to learn it.

Finally, with regard to gender, a few studies have shown that women tend to develop higher levels of competence in French and make more usage of perceived prestigious features than men (cf. Dhaouadi 1996, 112s.; Trabelsi 1991, 91). Walters (2011, 104) argues that French is gendered in Tunisia in terms of native-like levels of competence being associated more with female speakers than male speakers to the degree that many Tunisians believe women to be generally more competent in French than men. Generally speaking, Tunisian women are performing well in the educational system, outnumbering men in many higher education institutions, which can be indirectly translated into higher levels of proficiency in French as well.

2 Linguistic history

2.1 Establishment of French

Given its history and geographical position, the presence of European languages in Tunisia dates back to the Roman Empire. Even with the arrival of Arabic, contact with Romance varieties never ceased leading to the appearance of *Lingua Franca* in what was known then as the Barbary Coast around the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (cf. Selbach 2008, 32). Before the French colonial period and during its earlier phases, other Romance varieties were also used in Tunisia by substantially large communities including Italian and Sicilian. Alberti Russell states that in the second half of the nineteenth century “Italians greatly outnumbered the French and that Italian was the *lingua franca* among Europeans” (1977, 12). The presence of French in Tunisia and Northern Africa in general changed dramatically with the beginning of the colonial period. The Treaty of

Bardo in 1881 placed Tunisia under the direct control of France within the framework of a protectorate. French became the *de facto* language of administration. In addition, France established an elitist system that favoured the education of a certain sector of the population who were meant to serve in the lower ranks of the colonial administration while marginalizing the majority of the indigenous population. In fact, in 1931, merely 25 years before independence, a meagre 6.6 % of the Muslim population in Tunisia were educated (cf. Vermeren 2002, 16). This means that while French dominated the colonial administration and education, it did not permeate the different social layers given the limited rates of schooling. At the same time, Arabic continued to be used in unofficial Koranic schools providing some basic literacy skills for those who were able to attend them.

The importance of French education during the protectorate period resides in the number of students who attended universities in France. This group of students, including the first president of independent Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba, formed an elite that shaped public life in Tunisia leading up to and following the independence from France. In addition, young Tunisian men were forced to serve in the French Army as part of the indigenous troops (*les troupes indigènes*), which also saw them becoming familiar with the French language, as were people who worked with French colonial settlers and administrators. Levels of competence, however, varied greatly and as a result, Arabic, and Berber in certain cases, remained the native language of the indigenous population and French was never nativized except among other Europeans, especially Maltese, and Jewish populations (cf. Manzano 2011, 63). The colonial period did not produce native speakers of French, but it did produce variable levels of familiarity with the language and, more importantly, an elite that was eager to install French as language of instruction in the postcolonial educational system.

2.2 Milestones of its further development

Paradoxically, the independence from France made it easier for French to spread in Tunisia. This was the result of the democratization of education and the push for a bilingual education system by the early postcolonial governments. Although the Tunisian constitution of 1959 declared Arabic the official language of Tunisia, French continued to be used in education and in public administration, except in the case of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice, which were Arabized early on (cf. Hamzaoui 1983).

The Tunisian Minister of Education in 1967, Mahmoud Messadi, clearly described the vision that the French-educated political elite had with regard to French, that of a medium for socioeconomic development:

‘French still has an important role to play in some Third World countries. We belong to the developing countries and we need to catch up with industrialized countries. For that we have French, which is both a language of work and culture. For us, it is less about learning a foreign language than to

use an instrument that will allow us to cross the centuries of delay that keep us apart from the developed world. It will allow us to access modernity'.¹

As a result, and as put by Foster: “By 1967 the Tunisians had succeeded in achieving what the French had failed to do, that is to make almost the whole of Tunisian education Francophonic” (cited in Payne 1983, 264). The successful democratization of education in the immediate period after independence saw French proficiency reach its highest level among educated Tunisian citizens. However, calls for Arabization leading to the limitation of the use of French became more successful during the last quarter of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, even today, there continues to be a rupture between elementary and secondary education, where the use of Arabic is much more robust, and tertiary education, where French dominates almost exclusively in areas of health sciences, natural and mathematical sciences, engineering, and technology fields in general.

One important development in the attempts to retain the status of French in Tunisia is the hosting of the 2022 congress of the International Organization of La Francophonie (*Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* – OIF) in Djerba on the organization’s fiftieth anniversary for the first time in Northern Africa. This is a significant development that signals both the awareness of the need to counter the growing interest in English in the Maghreb (cf. Daoud 2011, 21s.) and the threats that French faces in the region in general, especially since a key player like Algeria is not even a member of the OIF.

3 External language policy

3.1 Legislation

The 2014 Tunisian constitution, a product of the Revolution of 2011, led to the establishment of a democratic system and confirmed Arabic as the only official language of the country. It does not give French, or Berber for that matter, any official status. Nonetheless, the Tunisian Ministry of Education (2017) recognizes French as the first foreign language in the Tunisian educational system and describes the objectives of its teaching as follows:

1 “Le français a encore un rôle important à jouer dans certains pays du tiers monde. Nous appartenons aux pays en voie de développement et nous devons rattraper notre retard sur les pays industrialisés. Pour cela nous disposons du français qui est à la fois une langue de travail et une culture. Pour nous, il s’agit moins d’apprendre une langue étrangère que d’utiliser un instrument qui nous permettra de franchir les siècles de retard qui nous séparent du monde développé. Il nous permettra d’accéder à la modernité” (Messadi 1967, cited in Belazi 1991, 53).

‘As the first foreign language studied by the Tunisian student, French should contribute to his intellectual, cultural, and scientific training. For the students, it will be an additional means to:

- Communicate with others;
- Discover other cultures and civilizations and position themselves in relation to them;
- Access scientific and technical information’.²

It is worth highlighting that this description by the Ministry of Education does not mention the historical presence of French in the country or the historical and socioeconomic ties with France itself as reasons for choosing French and not English to meet these objectives.

3.2 Languages used by public authorities

Since Arabic is the only official language of the country, politicians and public authorities use it as their medium of communication. Up to the Revolution of 2011, when all communication by political figures, including the presidents, was rare and often limited to highly formulaic speeches delivered on specific occasions as opposed to regular press conferences, standard Arabic dominated. The first president made some use of French and vernacular Tunisian Arabic (cf. Boussofara-Omar 2006, 63), but it is safe to state that French has not played a meaningful role in Tunisian political life. This changed to some extent following the Revolution (cf. Sayahi 2019, 229), since with the instalment of a democratic system, there has been more room for extemporaneous communication by public figures in the form of interviews and press conferences. The result is an increased use of Tunisian Arabic in the political domain where previously it was more limited. The increase in the use of Tunisian Arabic sometimes carries with it some insertions from French, especially if the discourse delivered is not a scripted text. In the case of scripted texts, even if they are produced in Tunisian Arabic, there are usually no insertions from French, as evidenced by recent speeches by some political figures and written communication by governmental agencies (cf. Sayahi 2019, 231).

In the case of language use by public authorities outside the political arena, a difference exists between written and verbal communication. Currently, the majority of written communication occurs in standard Arabic, although some agencies may produce bilingual documents, as is the case with utilities companies. For example the national electric power company, *Société Tunisienne de l'Électricité et du Gaz*, provides bilingual bills while the national water supply company, *Société Nationale d'Exploitation et de Distribution des Eaux*, does not. While government-issued personal identification

² “Étant la première langue étrangère étudiée par l’élève tunisien, le français devra contribuer à sa formation intellectuelle, culturelle et scientifique. Il sera pour l’élève un moyen complémentaire pour:

- communiquer avec autrui;
- découvrir d’autres civilisations et cultures et se situer par rapport à elles;
- accéder à l’information scientifique et technique” (Tunisian Ministry of Education 2017, 3).

cards are in Arabic only, Tunisian citizens can request a birth certificate in French from their city hall. In written communication, other public authorities, such as police officers and employees in the judicial system, communicate in standard Arabic. Verbal communication between public authorities and Tunisian citizens usually happens in Tunisian Arabic, including in the court system, customs, and the health system. If a policeman stops a motorist for a traffic violation, they will not use French but rather Tunisian Arabic. As is the case with political discourse, the use of Tunisian Arabic can lead to insertions from French especially lone noun insertions, as will be discussed below. While public figures may be able to use French if need be, levels of competence in the language tend to vary significantly, with the majority of lower-ranking civil servants having only a rudimentary proficiency in the language more often limited to understanding the communication but struggling to speak exclusively in French. Nonetheless, a monolingual French speaker in Tunisia would not have major problems communicating with public authorities for basic needs, especially in more urban settings.

3.3 Languages used in education

When Tunisian children start their elementary education, instruction is officially in standard Arabic with the purpose of developing literacy in that variety first. Although Tunisian Arabic does not figure formally in the language-in-education policies, it is used for class management and among the students themselves. French is introduced as a second language starting from second grade for a total number of eight hours per week. This stays the same until middle school when French is used as language of instruction for computer science in seventh grade and throughout ninth grade. As students start high school, several more subjects are taught in French before students are separated into different streams. Mathematics, physics, chemistry, life sciences, biology, and technology are all taught in French in tenth grade. At this stage, French is still taught as a subject at the rate of five hours per week, the same number of hours as standard Arabic. Once students are separated into the different streams, those who choose the following tracks continue to use more French as language of instruction than those who follow the humanities track: mathematics, economics and business administration, computer science, experimental sciences, and technical sciences. All sections lead to the specialized national baccalaureate exams that the students take around the age of 18. By that time, the impact of education on competence in French has already started to materialize. Students in science and technology fields have acquired additional competence in French that others have not acquired.

At the tertiary education level, French still dominates in the majority of the fields outside the humanities, law, and social sciences. Arabic is used predominantly in fields such as history and Islamic studies, while both French and Arabic are, for example, used in sociology and psychology. But in fields such as computer science,

engineering, and medicine, French is the only language of instruction, as mentioned above.

3.4 Languages used in the media

With regards to print media, there has been a decline in the number of newspapers in general and those published in French in particular. Today two major historical monolingual French publications still continue to appear in print: *La Presse de Tunisie*, started in 1936, and *Le temps*, which was started in 1975. Their impact has been limited further with the advent of digital media and multiplatform journalism, especially since the online presence of traditional publications remains rudimentary. Nonetheless, the presence of French in Tunisian media has benefitted somewhat from digital journalism as several media outlets opt to have their websites both in Arabic and French, allowing users to choose in which language to access the site. An example would be the websites of the different radio stations, including the most popular station in Tunisia *Mosaique FM*. Although these radio stations do not broadcast in French, their websites have a French version and their programming is more open to code-switching between Tunisian Arabic and French. Other news outlets have emerged benefitting from the freedom of the press that was enshrined in the constitution of 2014. These include bilingual news sites such as <http://kapitalis.com/> and <https://www.leaders.com.tn/>, which publish a wide range of materials in French on their websites. Additionally, the presence of media outlets that publish in English in Tunisia has also begun to become noticeable and more competitive. In sum, while the use of French in the print press has declined, as has the print press in general, some new types of media organizations opt to have bilingual websites that sustain the use of French alongside an increasing presence of English-speaking media.

With regard to audiovisual media, and looking at government-sponsored media first, it is clear that Arabic is the overwhelmingly dominant language. The state-owned national television company doesn't broadcast in French, and the national radio company has one station that broadcasts in French, *Radio Tunis Chaîne Internationale*, with smaller periods of broadcasting in other European languages. None of the private radio stations has programmes exclusively in French. Programming on public television stations and private ones alike is often in Tunisian Arabic except when it is in scripted standard Arabic, as is the case with the news and other similar programmes. When using Tunisian Arabic, speakers may insert French elements, most often in the form of lone nouns (Poplack et al. 2015, 184s.). Although this may give the impression that French is highly present in Tunisian media, in reality, its use beyond single insertions is limited. In advertisement, Tunisian Arabic dominates, although insertions from French are typical and most often consist in nouns or verbs adapted to the structure of Tunisian Arabic.

In the 1980s and the early 1990s, the presence of French media reached its peak in Tunisia as French channels were very popular at the time. However, with the increase in