

From Monolingualism to Multilingualism: Recent Changes in Moroccan Language Policy

Dawn Marley
University of Surrey, UK

Morocco is a multilingual country which for some forty years pursued a language policy – Arabization – with the apparent aim of creating a monolingual nation (Marley, 2000, 2002). In 2000, however, the Charter for Educational Reform recognized the value and necessity of other languages already present in Morocco, and set out guidelines for improving the teaching and learning of these languages in Moroccan schools. In this paper I propose to examine the impact of this reform, by reporting on a study conducted in 2002 among students and teachers in state schools. In order to place the study in its context I will first give a brief description of the way Morocco's complex sociolinguistic landscape has developed, then look briefly at the policy implemented after Independence, and the linguistic provisions of the 2000 Charter for Reform. I will then discuss the findings of the study and assess the future development of bilingualism in Morocco in the light of it.

1. The evolution of Morocco's sociolinguistic landscape

Morocco has for centuries been characterized by bilingualism and diglossia. Its strategic location at the crossroads of Africa, Europe and the Middle East has meant that for centuries Morocco has been open to a variety of cultural and linguistic influences, some of which seem to have left little trace, others have developed enormous importance. There are three languages or language groups which must be mentioned in any account of language issues in Morocco, Berber, Arabic and French.

1.1 Berber

Berber is the term used by Europeans to refer to the indigenous languages of the Maghreb, spoken not only in Morocco, but also in Algeria, part of Tunisia and parts of adjoining sub-Saharan countries. The term covers a number of related, but not all mutually intelligible languages of the Hamito-Semitic family, distantly related to Arabic. Berber speakers in Morocco belong mainly to three distinct groups: Tashelhit, Tamazight and Tarifit. The term Berber is not known or used by speakers of these languages, and in recent times the term Tamazight has been used as a generic name, as a means of drawing together and uniting otherwise disparate groups of people. Although the presence of these languages is attested some 5000 years ago, they have never been codified and the script (Tifinagh) is unknown in Morocco. They have therefore survived very much as the 'L' language in a diglossic relationship with Arabic for the last fourteen centuries (I use diglossic obviously in the extended sense, after Fishman, 1971). The Berbers embraced Islam when the Arabs brought it to Morocco in the seventh century, but they did not adopt the language of the conquerors for everyday use, and Tamazight remains 'une langue à valeur symbolique qui façonne l'imaginaire des berbérophones et définit leur identité culturelle collective face à l'altérité' (Boukous, 1995a: 11). In the twentieth century Tamazight has suffered the fate of so many minority languages around the world, despised as the language of backward peasants and marginalised in modern society. There are decreasing numbers of monolingual Tamazight speakers, and decline seemed irreversible, but in recent years the cultural movement has been gaining strength, not only locally, but at international level. Moreover, recent developments in Morocco, discussed below, give hope that these languages will not be further repressed and condemned to a slow death.

1.2 Arabic

Arabic, on the other hand, has always been a language of prestige in Morocco, but it is important to distinguish between different varieties of Arabic, as they are not all equally prestigious. The term 'Arabic' covers a whole continuum, with a wide range of terminologies (discussed, *inter alia*, in Youssi, 1995 and Laroussi and Madray-Lesigne, 1998). For the purposes of this paper we will make the simple and popular distinction between 'Classical Arabic', meaning the written, standardised form, and 'Dialectal Arabic', the spoken, non-standardised form. This means that another layer of diglossia (fitting Ferguson's original (1959) definition) exists, with Classical Arabic the 'H' language, used for religion, education and all official, written functions, and Dialectal Arabic acting as the 'L' language for all informal and spoken contexts. Moroccans, like most Arabic speakers, tend to see their dialect as a 'deviant' or 'impure' form of the 'pure' Arabic language and often dismiss it as not a real language at all, whilst the written form is revered. The differences between the two forms are great, in terms of vocabulary, grammar and phonology, and there is a recognition in Morocco in recent years that this causes problems, as children effectively learn to read and write in a foreign language.

However, some linguists, such as Boukous (1995b: 35), claim that a new form of Arabic, which he calls 'médian' ('intermediate') is emerging, used mainly by educated speakers in formal or semi-formal contexts, for example on radio or television. In such circumstances the Classical language can sound stilted and pedantic (it is also largely incomprehensible to many uneducated Moroccans), whilst Moroccan dialect may sound vulgar. It thus appears that the traditional diglossia is becoming triglossia.

1.3 French

The sociolinguistic situation is thus already complex, with layers of bilingualism and diglossia, and the situation became even more complex during the twentieth century, when the French Protectorate introduced a new 'H' language. Clearly French could not compete with Arabic in religious contexts, but it did become the language of education and administration, and was learnt by a small minority. During the Protectorate, 1912-1956, a knowledge of French was essential to obtaining and maintaining power, and so was learnt by the élite. Since Independence, a far greater percentage of the population has learnt French, with the democratisation of education, and despite its lack of official status it continues to be important in a number of domains, such as commerce and finance, science and technology, and the media. It is still seen as the language of social and professional success, and maintains a privileged position within state education and even more so in the private sector.

It is clear from this brief survey that Morocco has been a multilingual country for centuries, with many Moroccans being bilingual. After Independence, however, the government decided to implement a language policy which resolutely ignored this linguistic reality, focussing instead on an ideological goal of a linguistically united country.

2. The language policy adopted following Morocco's independence

Morocco, in common with Algeria and Tunisia, opted for a policy of Arabization, by which they meant replacing French, the language of the colonizer, with Arabic, the language of tradition and 'authenticity'. This section will attempt to explain briefly why Arabization was viewed as so important, and why it has not always been easy to implement.

First and foremost, Arabization is seen as the cultural counterpart of political and economic independence. Reinstating Arabic was a means of asserting the country's Arabo-Islamic identity, and its cultural independence from Western influence. The idea that Arabization restores authentic Moroccan identity was a popular one, which persuaded the mass of the population to support it. To the illiterate masses it was largely symbolic, since they had never learnt French or Classical Arabic, but they believed it would lead to greater equality of opportunity for them. In actual fact, this has not necessarily been the case, and a number of

commentators have observed that a powerful motivation behind the policy is the pursuit and maintenance of power: the élite promote Arabization from virtuous ideological motives, but in the knowledge that French continues to be necessary for social and professional success, and thus ensure that their own children are educated bilingually (cf. Boukous, 1999: 53, 77).

Another openly stated objective of Arabization is to unite the country, an idea common to language planning policies. Arabic already represents a unifying force, symbolising both Islam and the Arab nation, thus uniting Moroccans with the wider community of Muslims and Arabs. At national level, the language symbolises self-affirmation against foreigners, particularly the French, despite the fact that most people, immediately after independence, could not actually speak or understand Classical Arabic. One logical consequence of Arabization would be that all Moroccans would learn the national language and, with time, the vernaculars would disappear, following the French model. In France, linguistic unity has long been seen as synonymous with wider national unity, with the result that the other languages of France have been undermined to the point of near extinction, and are now seen by many as irrelevant anachronisms, despite flourishing movements to promote several of them. In the case of Arabic, its position as the language of Divine Revelation means that it is relatively easy to persuade people that it is the only appropriate language for a Muslim state. Ziri (2000) draws attention to the way language and religion have been conflated in official discourse, such that Moroccan identity is presented as Muslim and therefore Arab and Arabic speaking, whilst Berber language and culture is seen as a regional detail, synonymous with inferiority and ignorance.

Arabization has been presented as the means of uniting the country and enabling a return to an 'authentic' Moroccan identity. However, it ignores the multilingual nature of the country, and the desire for openings to the outside world, particularly Western Europe, offered by the French language, and therefore has only been partially successful. There is no time in this paper to look in detail at the implementation of Arabization over the past forty years (but see Marley, 2002), I will simply resume the situation until 2000 by saying that the government has put in place a legislative and operational framework to enable Arabization to take place, and that by the end of the 1980s the state education system was completely arabized, as were large sections of the administration. Despite this, French continued to be used in many important domains, and the Tamazight speakers, although nearly all bilingual by now, were becoming increasingly vocal in their demands for linguistic rights. It was thus apparent that the goals of Arabization were not being met, and a change was needed.

3. The change of policy in 2000

After more than forty years of pursuing the elusive goal of a linguistically united nation, the Charter for Educational Reform, produced in 2000, represents a dramatic change of policy. This Charter covers the whole range of educational reform, but for the purposes of this paper I will focus solely on the language provision, which occupies several articles (details). Article 110 states that Morocco will now be adopting a 'clear, coherent and constant language policy within education'. This policy has three major thrusts: 'the reinforcement and improvement of Arabic teaching', 'diversification of languages for teaching science and technology' and an 'openness to Tamazight'.

Interestingly, the Charter does not mention the word Arabization, an admission of the negative connotations of the term. According to Berdouzi, who quickly published an analysis of the Charter, it acknowledges that continuing to insist on the Arabization of science and technology in schools would be to consign millions of young Moroccans to a 'cultural and socio-economic ghetto' (Berdouzi, 2000: 21). The charter does provide for the creation of an Arabic language Academy, to oversee the modernisation of the language, but at the same time acknowledges that science and technology should be taught in schools in the most appropriate languages, preferably those used in higher education. French is never mentioned by name, although at present this is the language of science and technology in much of higher education. It is implied, however, that other languages could also be used, the obvious implication being English. The Charter thus appears to acknowledge tacitly the failure of Arabization in the area of

science and technology teaching and to herald at least a temporary return to bilingual education in this field.

The other new departure in this Charter is the ‘opening up’ to Tamazight: the recognition that not all Moroccans are Arabic speakers, and that their education could be greatly facilitated if their early years learning could be done through the medium of their mother tongue. Article 115 allows local authorities to use any local dialect in order to facilitate the learning of the national language. It also provides for the creation of research and development projects in some universities, and support for teacher training in Tamazight. Whilst not as far reaching as some activists might like, these measures at least recognize the existence of language variation in Morocco and accept that these languages will continue to exist alongside the national language.

Whilst not mentioning the word Arabization, the Charter nonetheless makes it clear that the state still sees Classical Arabic as the national language, and as such, it is important that it should be adequately taught and learnt. However, the ultimate goal is not to produce a monolingual nation, but a nation of talented linguists, able to use different languages for different purposes, as Moroccans have always done. As Berdouzi suggests (2000: 26), if the promises of the Charter are met, in the course of the second decade of the century, all young Moroccans will have a high degree of competence in Standard Arabic, and will be able to use this language correctly in a variety of domains. Moreover, they will have at least minimal competence in two foreign languages, which they will also be able to use in a variety of contexts. Young Moroccans of Amazigh origin will have learnt enough of their language to conserve and promote their own cultural and artistic heritage. He emphasizes, however, that this will not happen unless the government recognizes the fundamental importance of the linguistic issue, and adopts a carefully thought out linguistic policy.

Nobody expected the aims of this Charter to be met quickly. Within the Charter it is stated that the years 2000-2009 would be the decade of education and training (Article 20), and that only by the end of this time would there be any very obvious results. Nevertheless, provisions of the Charter did start to be implemented straight away, and two years on it seemed reasonable to undertake a short study to examine attitudes towards these provisions and towards language attitudes generally. The rest of this paper will present and discuss the findings of such a study, conducted in December 2000.

4. Responses to this policy: 2002 study with schoolchildren and teachers

In order to assess the impact of this major change in government policy, a study was undertaken involving language learners and teachers. The study was conducted among students, aged 14-19 and their teachers, at a number of state schools in Khouribga, a town in central Morocco. The objectives of the study were to discover how well the students thought they knew both French and Classical Arabic, how often they consider they use the two languages and their attitudes towards them. The teachers had a more open-ended questionnaire in which they were asked to express their views on a number of aspects of the 2000 Charter. The findings of this study will now be presented and discussed.

4.1 The student questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed to 159 students, half at ‘collèges’ (first cycle of secondary education) and half at ‘lycées’ (second cycle). The sample breaks down as follows for age and sex.

14-16	84.3%	(134)
17-19	14.5%	(23)
male	37.1%	(59)
female	59.7%	(95)

4.1.1 Language competence and usage

Students were first asked to evaluate their linguistic competence. Clearly a questionnaire of this type raises all the usual questions about the validity of a self-assessment of language ability (see Marley, 2000: 78-79), and in this case the problem is aggravated because the students were given no option other than yes/no responses, which yielded the following results:

	speak	understand	read	write
Classical Arabic	77.4% (123)	95% (151)	89.3% (142)	87.4% (139)
French	70.4% (112)	80.5% (128)	95.6% (152)	83% (132)
English	31.4% (50)	41.5% (66)	55.3% (88)	41.5% (66)
Other (specify)	5.7% (9)	9.4% (15)	3.8% (6)	4.4% (7)

Given that Classical Arabic is the medium of instruction in schools, and French is usually introduced in the third year, it would be expected that all participants in this study, still at school at age 14 and beyond, would claim competence in both languages. The fact that they do not is significant as it indicates the lack of confidence and awareness of inadequacies in the teaching and learning of languages. Such responses are in fact only to be expected, in the light of reports on language teaching and learning made shortly after the publication of the Charter. One document produced by the Ministry for Education in 2000 claimed that Moroccan school leavers are increasingly '*nilingue*' (non-lingual) as they do not have an adequate grasp of either Arabic, the national language, or French, the first foreign language. A report prepared for the government by the International Literacy Institute (Maamouri, 2000: 10) suggests that Arabic-French bilingual education leads to what linguists have described as 'double semilingualism', meaning that both their French and Arabic are deficient on a number of levels.

Students were then asked when they had started to learn each of the languages in question. Their answers confirm that in fact they have all learnt both languages for a number of years, and that their reticence in answering the first question stems from their awareness that they do not master either language as well as they feel they could or should.

At what age did you start to learn	Classical Arabic?	0	1	0.6%
		2-4	53	33.3%
		5-7	98	61.6%
		8-10	7	4.4%
	French?	2-4	44	2.7%
		5-7	28	17.6%
		8-10	84	52.8%
		11-12	1	1.3%
		13-16	1	0.6%
	English?	2-4	1	0.6%
		5-7	1	0.6%
		8-10	6	3.8%
		11-12	8	5%
		13-16	75	47.2%
		No response	68	42.8%

Having ascertained that the students had a certain level of competence in both French and Classical Arabic, the questionnaire asked if they used either of these languages in a variety of situations. The responses indicate that neither language, on its own, is widely used in everyday situations. Similar numbers – around a quarter – claim to use each language 'always' with teachers, and nearly 50% claim to use CA 'always' in science classes. Around half the informants claimed that they never use CA in shops or with friends, whilst the figures for French

were only 39.6% and 28.3% respectively. Over 40% said they ‘always’ use CA for reading newspapers and literature, and writing letters, whilst the figures for French are nearer 20%. French appears to be marginally more used than CA for watching television, whilst figures for listening to music are very mixed. It is difficult to draw any conclusion from these figures, other than the obvious: neither French nor CA are the normal language of everyday use for Moroccans, although both are used, to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the activity and a number of other factors, which were not taken into account here. Another factor which was not taken into account, largely because it would have introduced an unnecessary degree of complication, was the concept of codeswitching. Educated Moroccans use a large number of French words and expressions in their everyday speech, the proportion varying depending on a number of variables, such as subject matter and interlocutor. They may equally use a certain amount of Classical Arabic in certain types of interactions (this would be the case particularly in school). To gain a more meaningful picture of actual language use, it would be valuable to undertake a study of the type conducted by Sarah Lawson in Tunisia (Lawson and Sachdev, 2000: 1351-1354).

Classical Arabic:

	rarely	sometimes	often	always	never	Do not know
Watching television	26.4% (42)	32.1% (51)	18.2% (29)	18.9% (30)	0.6% (1)	3.8% (6)
Reading newspapers	13.2% (21)	29.6% (47)	10.7% (17)	43.4% (69)	3.1% (5)	
Listening to music	27.0% (43)	28.9% (46)	15.1% (24)	17.6% (28)	6.9% (11)	4.4% (7)
Reading literature	9.4% (15)	21.4% (34)	11.9% (19)	43.4% (69)	10.1% (16)	3.8% (6)
Talking to friends	23.3% (37)	11.3% (18)	6.3% (10)	9.4% (15)	48.4% (77)	1.3% (2)
Writing letters	4.4% (7)	30.8% (49)	13.2% (21)	44.7% (71)	5.7% (9)	1.3% (2)
In shops	14.5% (23)	17.6% (28)	10.1% (16)	2.5% (4)	51.6% (82)	3.8% (6)
With teachers	10.1% (16)	50.9% (81)	7.5% (12)	24.5% (39)	6.3% (10)	0.6% (1)
In science classes	10.1% (16)	21.4% (34)	11.9% (19)	49.1% (78)	5.7% (9)	1.9% (3)

French:

	rarely	sometimes	often	always	never	Do not know
Watching television	17.6% (28)	39.6% (63)	15.7% (25)	20.8% (33)	4.4% (7)	1.9% (3)
Reading newspapers	13.2% (21)	24.5% (39)	11.3% (18)	25.2% (40)	23.9% (38)	1.9% (3)
Listening to music	16.4% (26)	47.2% (75)	15.1% (24)	11.3% (18)	6.9% (11)	3.1% (5)
Reading literature	26.4% (42)	26.4% (42)	17.0% (27)	15.1% (24)	12.6% (20)	2.5% (4)
Talking to friends	32.7% (52)	27.0% (43)	6.9% (11)	2.5% (4)	28.3% (45)	2.5% (4)
Writing letters	11.3% (18)	25.8% (41)	8.2% (13)	25.2% (40)	26.4% (42)	3.1% (5)
In shops	14.5% (23)	27.7% (44)	10.1% (16)	5.0% (8)	39.6% (63)	3.1% (5)
With teachers	10.1% (16)	41.5% (66)	17.0% (27)	26.4% (42)	3.1% (5)	1.9% (3)
In science classes	29.6% (47)	39.6% (63)	17.6% (28)	4.4% (7)	6.3% (10)	2.5% (4)

4.1.2 Language attitudes

Finally, students were asked to say if they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements relating to languages in Morocco, with the following results. The categories were complete agreement = 1, slight agreement = 2, slight disagreement = 3, complete disagreement = 4, do not know = 5.

		1	2	3	4	5
1	Moroccan Arabic represents Moroccan national identity	64.2% (102)	24.5% (39)	3.8% (6)	4.4% (7)	3.1% (5)
2	French is very useful for working in Morocco	45.3% (72)	40.9% (65)	7.5% (12)	3.8% (6)	2.5% (4)
3	I like learning French	73.6% (117)	13.8% (22)	8.2% (13)	3.1% (5)	1.3% (2)
4	Children in Morocco should learn French	76.1% (121)	9.4% (15)	7.5% (12)	4.4% (7)	2.5% (4)
5	French is easier than Classical Arabic	23.3% (37)	28.3% (45)	23.3% (37)	13.8% (22)	11.3% (18)
6	Classical Arabic is useful for science and technology	25.8% (41)	16.4% (26)	20.1% (32)	29.6% (47)	8.2% (13)
7	Classical Arabic is useful for working in Morocco	14.5% (23)	27.0% (43)	22.6% (36)	31.4% (50)	4.4% (7)
8	Arabic-French bilingualism offers advantages to Moroccans	62.9% (100)	20.8% (33)	5.0% (8)	8.2% (13)	3.1% (5)
9	English is more useful than French in the world	67.9% (108)	17.0% (27)	6.3% (10)	3.8% (6)	5.0% (8)
10	French represents part of Moroccan patrimony	15.7% (25)	19.5% (31)	11.9% (19)	34.0% (54)	18.9% (30)
11	Tamazight is a useful language in Morocco	19.5% (31)	21.4% (34)	22.0% (35)	28.3% (45)	8.8% (14)
12	Arabic-Tamazight bilingualism has advantages	10.1% (16)	25.8% (41)	18.2% (29)	32.7% (52)	13.2% (21)
13	French is useful for science and technology	62.3% (99)	22.6% (36)	5.0% (8)	6.3% (10)	3.8% (6)
14	Classical Arabic is a language of culture	79.9% (127)	10.7% (17)	3.8% (6)	3.8% (6)	1.9% (3)
15	I like learning Classical Arabic	57.9% (92)	30.2% (48)	8.2% (13)	1.3% (2)	2.5% (4)
16	It is always an advantage to speak two languages	81.1% (129)	12.6% (20)	1.3% (2)	2.5% (4)	2.5% (4)
17	Classical Arabic represents Moroccan national identity	42.1% (67)	31.4% (50)	8.2% (13)	13.2% (21)	5.0% (8)
18	French is a language of culture	48.4% (77)	26.4% (42)	8.8% (14)	13.2% (21)	3.1% (5)
19	In the future French will disappear in Morocco	9.4% (15)	6.9% (11)	11.3% (18)	47.8% (76)	24.5% (39)
20	In the future all Moroccans will be bilingual in French and Arabic	23.3% (37)	25.2% (40)	8.8% (14)	13.8% (22)	28.9% (46)

These responses suggest that young people are very conscious of the different values assigned to different languages present in their society. Although Classical Arabic is the national language, and has been the primary medium of instruction throughout their education, they are firmly in favour of French-Arabic bilingualism and believe that French is far more useful than Arabic in working life in Morocco. Given that the study took place in a non-Tamazight speaking region, it is perhaps not surprising that so few should have felt that Tamazight was useful. Nevertheless, their response here is in direct contradiction to the overwhelming majority who believe that 'speaking two languages is always an advantage'! It implies that they do not really consider Tamazight to be a language on a par with French or Arabic. Interestingly, it is not the national language, but their dialect which most clearly represents national identity for these

young people, whilst French is not even acknowledged as part of their ‘patrimony’ by the majority.

4.2 The teacher questionnaire

The teachers’ questionnaire was far more open-ended, and therefore more difficult to quantify. However, they had, in many cases, a great deal to say on the subject of educational reform and it is thus more interesting to look in some detail at their responses. Their questionnaire was divided into four sections, dealing with the following four areas: the return to the use of French (or possibly English) in teaching science and technology in secondary schools; the introduction of more foreign language teaching at primary school level; the use of Tamazight as a medium of instruction; the validity of Arabization as a language policy, and the linguistic future of Morocco. I will summarise the views expressed on each subject in tabular form, and then try to give an idea of the breadth of opinion across the sample, by looking at some of the more detailed answers. Many informants had simply given yes/no type answers to most questions, but some had written a short (and sometimes long) paragraph relating to each subject area. In the latter case, it was not always possible to find an answer to a specific question, hence the ‘no response’ category in some cases.

4.2.1 possible return to teaching science and technology in French

The first section pointed out that the decision to offer specialized sections teaching science and technology in a foreign language represents a significant change from the 1980s and 1990s, when teaching was increasingly in Arabic.

- In your opinion, what are the factors that motivated this change of policy?

Failure of Arabization	16% (4)
Low level of French among students	24% (6)
Gap between language of school and university	20% (5)
Political factors	28% (7)
other	12% (3)

- Do you think that science teaching will be improved as a result?

Yes	64% (16)
No	20% (5)
maybe	16% (4)

- Should all science and technology be taught in French?

yes	60% (15)
no	16% (4)
maybe	20% (5)
No response	4% (1)

- Would it be better to improve science teaching in Arabic?

yes	48% (12)
no	28% (7)
maybe	12% (3)
No response	12% (3)

- In the long term, will English be more useful than French?

yes	68% (17)
no	20% (5)
maybe	12% (3)

Many of the teachers had a great deal to say on this subject, in several cases mentioning two or even three factors which had led to the change in policy. Many of them were disappointed by the consequences of Arabization, which they felt had been too hasty, with serious repercussions for their pupils, and they were forthright in their criticism of government policy. 'Let's not be afraid to say it: several generations have been the victims of a lack of forethought in this matter, a fact amply borne out by the decline in standards in schools,' said one. 'Morocco is already backward in science and technology and Arabization only accentuates this backwardness' said another. Clearly the decline in standards was close to many of their hearts, unsurprisingly. One claimed that 'the majority of pupils, on reaching the *baccalauréat* (school leaving certificate, at age 18) are still at the stage of deciphering; they still stumble over basic points (of the French language)'. They are also concerned by the fact that Arabization in schools has not been followed by Arabization in universities, and students are therefore unprepared for higher studies. Moreover, as they see it, knowledge of French is a necessity if young people are to participate in a 'globalized society'. It would be a fair generalization to say that the majority believe that Arabization of science in schools was a mistake, and that the Charter is simply correcting that error, recognizing that 'rushing into Arabization and sterile monolingualism has resulted in a clear decline in the standard of our pupils and the quality of teaching.' There were some, however, who were convinced that the change was purely political, not didactic or pedagogical, but they did not specify what those political motivations were.

Several teachers acknowledged that improvement in standards would not be automatic and that a 'gigantic task' lay ahead, requiring 'a serious commitment from teachers', but the majority were in favour of a return to teaching sciences in French. They were not unanimous, however: one claimed that in other Arab countries sciences are taught in Arabic with excellent results, whilst another claimed that Arabic was quite capable of being used for sciences, it simply needed to be properly used. Others thought that teaching in Arabic should be improved, but still felt that it was more useful to teach sciences in French, if only because there is a lack of documentation in Arabic.

As for the usefulness of French in relation to English, the majority felt that English would overtake French in the long term, but for the moment French is the more useful language in Morocco.

4.2.2 foreign language teaching in primary schools

The second section focussed on plans to introduce foreign language teaching at a very early stage in primary schools. Answers to the questions are summarized in the following tables.

- Does this represent an important change of policy?

Yes	84% (21)
maybe	4% (1)
No response	12% (3)

- Will the early introduction of foreign language teaching jeopardize acquisition of Arabic?

yes	4% (16)
no	68% (17)
maybe	4% (1)
No response	12% (3)

- Will this teaching be beneficial for children?

Yes	94% (24)
No response	4% (1)

- In your view, why is such importance being given to early years language teaching?

For better results	24% (6)
Children learn more easily	36% (9)
Openness to the outside world	12% (3)
other	8% (2)
No response	20% (5)

- Should French be the only language, or should others be encouraged?

French	24% (6)
French and English	36% (9)
English and Spanish	12% (3)
other	28% (7)

- Do you think that Arabic-French bilingualism offers advantages to Moroccan children?

yes	84% (21)
No response	16% (4)

The overall reaction to the early teaching of foreign languages was very positive. Several teachers, however, wondered whether it would be possible to do this in a 'balanced' way, without prejudicing children's acquisition of Arabic. One teacher felt that it certainly would be harmful, as 'children are always attracted by novelty', whilst another feared 'the risks of acculturation or damaging the social, religious and economic identity of children'. Others, however, took their own experience as proof that this was not a risk, one saying explicitly that his generation (he is 46) emerged unscathed from a bilingual education. Another pointed out that in the sixties all children were confronted with two languages from the outset of their education. This teacher concluded that 'learning a foreign language will be enriching, not alienating. Knowing only one language is to live on the edge of society; we should encourage bilingualism.' All those who expressed an opinion believed that bilingualism was advantageous, although some commented that it was more advantageous to certain social classes.

4.2.3 The teaching of Tamazight in relevant areas

- Do you think it is a good idea to allow the use of languages other than Arabic in primary schools?

yes	52% (13)
no	40% (10)
Do not know	4% (1)
No response	4% (1)

- Will the use of Tamazight make it more difficult to learn Arabic?

yes	36% (9)
no	40% (10)
maybe	8% (2)
Do not know	8% (2)
No response	8% (2)

- Do you think that Tamazight represents an important part of Moroccan cultural heritage?

yes	68% (17)
no	20% (5)
Do not know	4% (1)
No response	8% (2)

- Will there be any problems in teaching Tamazight?

yes	88% (22)
maybe	4% (1)
Do not know	8% (2)

- In your opinion, should Arabic-Tamazight bilingualism be encouraged?

yes	40% (10)
no	48% (12)
maybe	4% (1)
Do not know	4% (1)
No response	4% (1)

Given that Khouribga is in a non-Berberophone area, it is perhaps not surprising that opinions are divided on this subject. Many of the teachers believed that teaching in local languages would present problems, due to lack of qualified teachers, and the essentially oral nature of these languages. Some were resolutely against the idea, seeing these languages as being of limited use and interest. It is seen by some as a waste of time, and even a retrogressive step, potentially detrimental to the acquisition of Arabic, and liable to cause regional and social divisions. Some, however, did acknowledge that using mother tongues for early years teaching was useful, even essential, but only one said explicitly that these languages were an integral part of Moroccan cultural heritage. One simply claimed to be unable to make any comment on the subject, knowing nothing about it.

4.2.4 Arabization and the linguistic future of Morocco

- Is Arabization still a valid language policy for Morocco?

yes	52% (13)
no	40% (10)
maybe	4% (1)
Do not know	4% (1)

- Does Arabic-French bilingualism create problems for Moroccans?

Yes	20% (5)
no	64% (16)
maybe	8% (2)
do not know	4% (1)
No response	4% (1)

- How do you see the linguistic future of Morocco?

More diversified	16% (4)
unclear	44% (11)
very good, open	20% (5)
Do not know	8% (2)
No response	12% (3)

Responses on Arabization were divided, although almost all teachers recognized that the policy needs to be rethought in detail, since it has clearly not succeeded in improving the general level of education. Those in favour of Arabization commented that it is ‘a national principle’ or ‘reflects our essence’. Others were in favour of Arabization *and* bilingualism: one commented that Arabization represents the desire for autonomy and the need to give value and status to the national language, but that this need not exclude knowledge of foreign languages. At the other extreme some were totally opposed to Arabization, pointing out the negative results it had produced in schools. One even claimed that it had devalued Arabic, since pupils today were not even capable of constructing a text in Arabic. Another claimed that over several generations Arabization had led to a decline in cognitive and interactive capabilities in the majority of pupils and students.

There was more of a consensus concerning bilingualism, however, with most teachers saying it did not cause any problems, but rather represented a benefit. As one expressed it: ‘bilingualism does not present any problems for Moroccans, on the contrary it allows them to enjoy exchanges with other cultures, to explore new horizons and perspectives, and is enriching. It is a privilege.’ Others again spoke of their own experience: ‘Look at the seventies: Arabic-French bilingualism didn’t give Moroccans any problem then. Teaching in both languages was beneficial.’ Some teachers did say that bilingualism could be problematic, but the only specific problem mentioned was that Arabization had led to poor expression in French. Indeed, many of the teachers seem primarily exercised by the fact that their pupils have a poor level of French, and seem convinced that their own experience of bilingualism in the sixties and seventies was superior to anything offered since then.

When it came to the sociolinguistic future of Morocco, many believed it was very unclear, largely due to their lack of confidence in the ability of the system to improve, whilst others were more optimistic. Nobody foresaw Arabic as the only language in use, but views on the role and status of other languages varied. The most optimistic obviously believed the promises of the

Charter would be met, and that Arabic would be safeguarded and defended, whilst the country would be 'enriched' by other languages - French, English, Spanish and Italian. At the other extreme, one said 'in the current climate, I see no future, we are heading for a linguistic catastrophe.' Several repeated that the future looked good as long as Arabization of science teaching were discontinued.

5. Conclusion: assessment of future development of bilingualism in Morocco

The students' responses to the two questions on the future were not terribly clear, these were the only questions where 'do not know' scored above 20%: 24.5% said they did not know if French would disappear from Morocco in the future, and 28.9% did not know if all Moroccans would be bilingual (French-Arabic). 47.8% were totally convinced that French would not disappear, but only 23.3% were sure that all Moroccans would be bilingual (25.2% fairly sure). Such responses suggest that these young people have little confidence in the capacity of their education system to produce the kind of results the Charter aims to achieve.

As for the teachers, it is clear that they generally welcome a return to bilingualism within education. Many of them have fond memories of their own bilingual education, and feel angry and disappointed that subsequent generations have been denied the kind of opportunities offered to them. Despite their obvious attachment to French, they accept that in the long term English will probably take its place in Morocco. What is important for them is that their young pupils receive an education that will equip them to work in a globalized society, and they see that a monolingual Arabic education will not do that. There is a pride in the Arabic language, and a desire to see it promoted as national language. Nevertheless, they believe that Arabization has not succeeded in giving this language its true value, and a reform of language teaching is desperately needed in order to improve standards and equip young Moroccans for the modern world.

Both teachers and students see bilingualism as a necessity in modern Morocco, and bilingualism and openness to other languages and cultures as the keys to a successful future. Having said this, it is clear that 'bilingualism' is generally shorthand for 'Arabic-French bilingualism' and Arabic-Tamazight bilingualism is viewed quite differently. There is a widespread perception that bilingualism is beneficial, but this appears to be true only if the languages concerned are prestigious.

This study suggests that there is no question about the multilingual future of Morocco: both teachers and learners are convinced of the benefits of retaining a European language alongside Arabic, and are open to learning other languages too, as and when necessary. Local vernaculars are not seen as particularly important, but it is significant that the students see their vernacular rather than the national language, as representative of national identity; a similar study in a Tamazight region might have yielded very different results in this respect. It is perhaps too early to assume that the vernaculars will not at some stage be given greater status. This study indicates a desire to move on, to learn from and leave behind the errors of the past, and construct a future in which all Moroccans will be confident in at least two languages.

(Total word count: 5240, excluding tables.)

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ISB4: Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism

edited by James Cohen, Kara T. McAlister,
Kellie Rolstad, and Jeff MacSwan

Cascadilla Press Somerville, MA 2005

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ISBN 978-1-57473-210-8 CD-ROM
ISBN 978-1-57473-107-1 library binding (5-volume set)

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