

DEBATING DARIJA:
LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY AND
THE WRITTEN REPRESENTATION OF
MOROCCAN ARABIC IN MOROCCO

by

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In loving memory of Lee DeForest Hall

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Notes on Transcription, Transliteration, and Translation

Transliteration of written Arabic examples used in this dissertation follows a modified version of the Arabic Romanization system provided by the American Library Association – Library of Congress (ALA-LC)¹ as seen below:

Letters of the Alphabet

Initial	Medial	Final	Alone	Romanization
ا	ا	ا	ا	omitted
ب	ب	ب	ب	b
ت	ت	ت	ت	t
ث	ث	ث	ث	th
ج	ج	ج	ج	j
ح	ح	ح	ح	ḥ
خ	خ	خ	خ	kh
د	د	د	د	d
ذ	ذ	ذ	ذ	dh
ر	ر	ر	ر	r
ز	ز	ز	ز	z
س	س	س	س	s
ش	ش	ش	ش	ch ²
ص	ص	ص	ص	ṣ
ض	ض	ض	ض	ḍ
ط	ط	ط	ط	ṭ
ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ	ẓ
ع	ع	ع	ع	‘
غ	غ	غ	غ	gh
ف	ف	ف	ف	f
ق	ق	ق	ق	q
ك	ك	ك	ك	k
ل	ل	ل	ل	l

¹ <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsa/romanization/arabic.pdf> (accessed 8 October 2014).

² In the ALA-LC table for the Romanization of Arabic <ش> is transliterated as “sh.” I have chosen instead to represent it with the diagraph <ch> throughout my dissertation for two reasons: 1) this is how the Arabic letter <ش> has commonly been transliterated in academic literature in the Maghrebi region; and 2) the diagraph <ch> is commonly used by Moroccans when transcribing the phoneme /š/ in adherence of French orthographic conventions as seen in the examples of text messages and online communication presented in the dissertation.

م	م	م	م	m
ن	ن	ن	ن	n
ه	ه	ه، ء	ه، ء	h
و	و	و	و	w
ي	ي	ي	ي	y

Vowels and Diphthongs

اَ	a	اَ	ā	اِ	ī
اُ	u	اِ	a	اَو	aw
اِ	i	اُو	ū	اِي	ay

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is used to represent my transcription of spoken Arabic and Tamazight. Transcription of French, English and Standard Arabic reflects respective standard orthographic norms unless otherwise indicated.

As this dissertation analyzes a wide variety of spoken and written texts (conversations, text messages, advertising, newspaper articles, online commentary, television scripts, etc.) conventions were adopted to distinguish between direct quotations of written text, transcriptions, transliterations and glosses. Direct quotations, whether from a written text or spoken utterance, are marked with double quotation marks. Single quotation marks are reserved for English glosses. < > are used to indicate written alphabet letters in both the Arabic and Roman scripts.

Moroccan Arabic appears in *italics*, Standard Arabic with double underlining, Tamazight in **bold font**, French with a single underline, and English in plain font. Text that is marked in *italics and with double underlining* can be understood as bivalent between Moroccan and Standard Arabic.

Abstract

For the past 15 years, Morocco has witnessed the emergence of new literacy practices in private and public space. This is occurring in part due to the liberalization and privatization of broadcast media and telecommunications, combined with the introduction of new media technologies. Moroccan Arabic, the colloquial, traditionally “unwritten” variety of Arabic, is now represented in written form in a number of new spaces such as non-formal education, SMS text messaging, street billboard advertisements, the scripts for dubbed foreign TV series, and a weekly news magazine. This dissertation examines these varied contexts and considers issues regarding when, how and by whom Moroccan Arabic literacy practices are performed in each site. Central to this analysis is the question of how particular literacy events are interpreted by interlocutors.

In doing so, this dissertation finds useful the analytic of ‘language ideologies,’ beliefs people have about language, in that they serve a mediating role between social structures and forms of talk. I argue that the emergence of Moroccan Arabic literacy practices may create a sense of ideological disjuncture for Moroccans who believe that Moroccan Arabic is solely an oral language that should not be written. I show that this ideological disjuncture is not experienced or reacted to in the same way in each context, due to the specificities of how Moroccan Arabic was represented, in association with which topics, and in opposition to which other languages. Ideologies linking Moroccan Arabic closely to notions of intimacy and *hchuma* ‘shame,’ figure centrally in how new forms of Moroccan Arabic are received.

The success of some written forms of Moroccan Arabic in certain domains opens the question as to a positive revaluing of Moroccan Arabic in these new contexts and a

possible shift away from diglossia as an ideology of language. This dissertation productively uses the term ‘fractal recursivity,’ the semiotic process by which an opposition at one level can be either embedded or expanded to another level, to understand how written representations of Moroccan Arabic are understood across these different contexts and linguistic forms according to an oral/written binary. I argue that individuals and institutions actively maintain Moroccan Arabic’s lower position in the linguistic hierarchy through the reproduction of already dominant language ideologies that frame mother tongue languages in Morocco as oral, even when represented in writing. I show that while the use of Moroccan Arabic in literacy practices associated with modernity and innovation may be seen as challenging hegemonic ideologies, recently, public debates about language policy in education reveal that Moroccans place a high value on diglossia and thus a future institutionalization of Moroccan Arabic literacy practices is ambiguous.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

“Without papers I don’t have anything to say”

In a small village outside Beni Mellal in Southern Morocco, Khalti Latifa and I waited patiently in the hot sun by the roadside outside her house for one of the charismatic white Mercedes sedans, or “grand taxis” as they were known locally, to pull over and squeeze us in for a ride into town. It was late March in 2009. As it was market day in a neighboring village, we had a long wait as taxi after taxi flew by us packed full with the standard four adults in the back seat, two in the front passenger seat and sometimes even a passenger squeezed in next to the window in the driver’s seat. Our village did not have its own market, so a member of each household typically went to one of the two nearby weekly markets to purchase vegetables, fruits and meat. Frustrated by the thought that we might have a long wait before we found room in a taxi, I commented that we perhaps hadn’t picked the best day to make this trip into Beni Mellal.

Khalti Latifa gave me a small smile and made no reply. She was dressed in a sky blue djellaba³ with a bright pink cotton headscarf wrapped around her graying hair and tucked tight under her chin. In her hands, she clutched a white and green plastic pharmacy bag in which she carried her most recent blood analysis test results and her national identity card, a small laminated document, now wrinkled and faded. When I

³ A djellaba is a traditional form of Moroccan dress consisting of a full length tunic and a large hood on the back. It is the most common form of dress among women in the village, particularly married women, when they travel outside of their immediate neighborhoods. *Djellaba* means ‘attractive’ in Moroccan Arabic.

first met Khalti Latifa in 2008, she guessed she was probably in her early sixties, but didn't know her exact age. She was widowed and had five living grown-up children and three grandchildren. Her hands and face were weathered by years of hauling well water, gathering firewood and working the family's fields in the harsh summer sun and bitterly cold winter winds. Her mother had died giving childbirth when Khalti Latifa was young and she grew up raising her younger siblings and taking care of the household. She thus had never been to school and did not know how to read or write. When I came to the village to begin my fieldwork, Khalti Latifa was a student in an adult literacy class that was considered unusual in that it promoted writing and reading in Moroccan Arabic as a way to learn Standard Arabic. Khalti Latifa invited me to come and live with her and her family during the course of my research.

As another full taxi swept by, Khalti Latifa asked me again if I had brought my phone and if I had the telephone number of Fatima. I double checked my pockets and assured her that I had. Though not dressed in a djellaba like other married women in the village, I wore a modest ankle length full skirt and thigh length long sleeve tunic with my hair wrapped up out of sight in a colorful scarf. Fatima, a close friend of Khalti Latifa's, worked as a nurse in the maternity ward at Beni Mellal's public hospital. I had met her a few weeks previously when she had come to the village to take in some of the clean country air and to visit Khalti Latifa, who had been ill. Fatima was frail looking, middle aged and unmarried. We were on our way to meet with her so that Fatima could take Khalti Latifa over to the general medicine ward to see her brother-in-law, a doctor. I had been encouraging Khalti Latifa to get her blood work done and see a doctor about the pain and general fatigue she had been experiencing since I had arrived in the village.

Khalti Latifa had been very sick that winter with body aches, dizziness and loss of appetite. She told me, as we waited for the taxi, that she had wanted one of her three grown sons to accompany her, but they had refused. They argued that her health was fine and that her issues were psychologically based. She sounded both sad and angry as she said this, and I knew from earlier conversations that she was hurt by her sons' casual dismissal of her health concerns. Privately, I was suspicious that they wanted to avoid having to tell their mom she had a serious disease.

After a thirty minute wait, we caught an empty taxi and arrived in town. The hospital was a far walk from the grand taxi stop, past the old medina and up a long hill. As we hurried along the path trying to make up for time lost waiting for a taxi, I noted the sweet smell of the orange blossom flowers in the air. Finally, when we reached the outer gates to the hospital ahead of us, Khalti Latifa paused and turned to me. 'You walk in first,' she said, 'and I'll follow right behind.' "Why?" I asked, confused. She didn't answer but rather motioned for me to continue through the gates where four guards stood. Three were occupied with vehicles wanting to enter the hospital grounds, while the fourth was observing the pedestrian traffic. Khalti Latifa and I passed through the gates without incident and headed for the maternity ward, a standalone building on the other side of the grounds.

Outside the maternity ward were dozens of women, some pregnant, some elderly, some with small children, waiting at the curbside to enter. A severe looking nurse stood blocking the ward's entrance, refusing entry until official visiting hours began. I dialed Fatima's number and handed the phone to Khalti Latifa. After a brief conversation in Moroccan Arabic, Fatima appeared at the door and escorted us inside. Following the

usual exchange of greetings and polite inquiries regarding health and family, Fatima grabbed my upper arm and pulled me next to her asking me if I would like a tour of the ward. I politely agreed, and she proceeded to lead me from room to room, introducing me to fellow co-workers and her manager. Although I spoke only Moroccan Arabic to Fatima, she spoke to me only in French. This was despite the fact that my Moroccan Arabic skills exceeded her French skills, and she often had to rephrase in Moroccan Arabic so that I would understand. She also introduced me in French to her co-workers even though it was clear from the talk around me that they usually conversed in Moroccan Arabic. Upon meeting her manager, Fatima exclaimed proudly that I spoke not only French fluently, but also Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight. Her manager did not look impressed, commenting off hand that Americans are good at learning languages and indicating that we needed to leave the floor. Besides engaging in the traditional exchange of greetings, Khalti Latifa remained silent during our tour. I felt embarrassed and uncomfortable as we headed out of the maternity ward down the hall. Through her insistence to speak to me and introduce me throughout the hospital using French, as well as her boasting of my language skills to her colleagues, it was clear that Fatima sought to draw on existing language ideologies valorizing French, perhaps in order to boost her image among her co-workers at the hospital. My unease increased as I became aware of the marginalized position Fatima's language use was placing Khalti Latifa.

Fatima, Khalti Latifa and I entered a small closet-like room in which sat a large, locked cabinet of medicine and medical supplies. Fatima pulled out a few boxes of medicine (penicillin) that she tucked into a plastic bag for Khalti Latifa to take home. The text on the outside of the medicine boxes was written in both French and Standard

Arabic. Having only completed 3 months of adult Arabic literacy classes, during which the focus was on Moroccan Arabic (and not Standard Arabic) literacy skills, Khalti Latifa could not read the writing on the outside of the medicine boxes, or understand the drug information leaflet tucked inside each box. Understanding this, Fatima started explained to me in French how the pills would help Khalti Latifa with her fatigue and what an appropriate dosage would be for her. Frustrated, I interrupted Fatima and asked that she please speak in Moroccan Arabic so that Khalti Latifa would understand, as it was her medication. Fatima obliged, but continued to address most of her comments to me. She then led us to another building on the hospital grounds where her brother-in-law had his office. Outside his door, we found a line of men and women waiting patiently on benches in the hallway to see him. Fatima found me a seat, left Khalti Latifa standing beside me, and entered the doctor's office with a knock.

As we waited for Fatima to come out, I asked Khalti Latifa why she had earlier made me walk through the hospital gates ahead of her. 'Am I not allowed to be here?' I asked. Though I was dressed and conducting myself appropriately as a young lady from the village would on an outing to town, I was sensitive to my position as a foreigner and researcher in the area and felt self-conscious. She looked at me and answered that she needed me with her "*hit bla luraq ma andi ma ngul*" 'because without papers I don't have anything to say.' Before I could ask her what she meant by that, Fatima opened the door and motioned Khalti Latifa to come inside the doctor's office while I waited in the hallway pondering the phrase.

What did Khalti Latifa mean when she said 'without papers I don't have anything to say?' When I questioned her later at home that evening, Khalti Latifa vaguely referred

to some kind of written language artifact that she believed would have provided her with a sense of a legitimacy or authority to enter the hospital grounds and request a doctor's help. 'In French or in Fusha [Standard Arabic]?' I asked her, trying to imagine what kind of paperwork she was talking about. Was it a medical prescription? Was it a paper confirming her doctor's appointment? 'In Arabic' she replied, but she did not elaborate further as her son came in and began asking about our visit.

At a broad level, her explanation to me that day touches upon issues of language and power and how they intersect with literacy practices. Lacking what she considered legitimate paperwork to show the guards, Khalti Latifa felt the need to have someone with more perceived social power, to provide her with access to the hospital. At her sons' refusal to accompany her, I had unknowingly assumed the role. This, along with Fatima's behavior during our visit to the hospital, highlights the fact that people have unequal access to and control of different language varieties and forms with different social and political consequences. The fact that the paperwork she felt she lacked would have been written in Standard Arabic, a language variety she could neither write nor read, is significant. Khalti Latifa viewed her experiences thus far in her Moroccan Arabic literacy class to be inadequate and unsuitable for the specific context of the hospital.⁴ Her request for my presence that day, was not only about the social prestige of my status as American foreigner, but as importantly about my ability to bridge the considerable gap between the beginning literacy skills Khalti Latifa was forming in and through Moroccan Arabic, and the everyday moments people encounter, particularly in institutional settings like a government hospital, that (are understood to) require a specific type of Standard

⁴ When I asked hospital employees at a later visit if there was particular paperwork needed to access hospital grounds, I was informed that it was a public hospital and anyone was allowed to enter the guarded gate. There was no required paperwork needed.

Arabic literacy. This dissertation will focus on this central tension between Moroccan Arabic and Standard Arabic inherent in literacy practices across a wide range of contexts. It will also look at how oppositions between French and varieties of Arabic are interpreted, negotiated and reproduced. In this sense, Khalti Latifa's utterance represents a number of different issues which have either become central themes of this dissertation or have revealed themselves to be representative "ah-ha!" moments about living and doing fieldwork in Morocco.

At a general level, this dissertation is about the relationships between written and spoken language varieties and linguistic practices in Morocco and the beliefs people, and particularly women like Khalti Latifa, have about them. More specifically, it looks at particular situations in which these relationships may be changing due to the prominence of new roles and forms of Moroccan Arabic, many of them written, in domains previously dominated by Standard Arabic. Since the early 2000's, Moroccan Arabic has emerged in new forms and domains such as non-formal education, SMS text messaging, street advertising, dubbed films and news magazines. This change in the sociolinguistic scene invites a number of questions: What happens when Moroccan Arabic appears in contexts that were previously reserved for Standard Arabic? What social, political or economic consequences are entailed when Moroccan Arabic assumes new written forms that were previously associated with Standard Arabic and French? How are these new forms and roles for Moroccan Arabic variously understood and interpreted by Moroccans?

This last question raises issues of language ideology, or beliefs people have about languages (a more thorough discussion is provided below). My dissertation looks at the

intersections of language and ideology, focusing on different moments of potential disjuncture between emergent linguistic practices and existing ideology, and discusses the associated (or assumed) political and social consequences. Rather than view such relationships as static, I approach them as complex, variable, contested and constantly being negotiated and reproduced, an approach that is reflected in the multi(sic)gh)ted design of my study. There is a widely shared belief in Morocco that Moroccan Arabic is essentially an oral language that should not be written. In each particular site of my dissertation, I question how this general ideology maps onto or contrasts with emergent literacy practices in Moroccan Arabic. I show that the types of alignment and disjuncture between ideology and practice, as well as contradiction within ideological discourses, cannot be assumed to be uniform across different contexts. People's reactions to viewing written representations of Moroccan in one context are in part shaped by other ideologies associated with language use and the particular media with which it occurs. Of significance are ideologies that tie Moroccan Arabic strongly to themes of orality, intimacy, and *hchuma* 'shame.' Also influential, are ideologies that associate linguistic form and use to particular notions of space and time and the (historical) power relations this may evoke. Such ideologies play an important role in the way new Moroccan Arabic literacy practices are constructed, negotiated and received in each setting.

I argue that the shifts in the economy of written and spoken language varieties in Morocco have become more salient recently due to political changes and the introduction of new media technologies that have occurred in the past 15 years. The success of new forms of Moroccan Arabic in many of these domains raises questions regarding a positive revaluing of Moroccan Arabic in these new contexts. This dissertation argues, however,

that individuals and institutions actively maintain Moroccan Arabic's lower position in the linguistic hierarchy in these new written contexts. This is done in part by drawing on semiotic processes through which dominant language ideologies that frame mother tongue languages in Morocco as oral are reproduced. Through a focus on the semiotic work entailed in addressing ideological disjuncture created by the representation of Moroccan Arabic in written form, I question if the new forms and roles of languages discussed in this dissertation can be seen as evidence of a more global change in people's attitudes towards the regime of value of linguistic varieties in Morocco.

“Sighting” Moroccan Arabic and research “sites”

I came to Morocco for pre-dissertation research in the summer of 2006 with the goal of defining a dissertation research project that would focus on literacy practices in Morocco. Official rates of illiteracy among adult women commonly reported in the media at the time were estimated to be about 40%, with higher numbers in rural areas.⁵ In addition, there was an alarming school dropout rate among girls, many of whom quit after elementary school. I was interested in the relationships between spoken and written varieties of Arabic amongst women and how this boundary was created, negotiated and reproduced both inside and outside the classroom. I thus spent the summer of 2006 speaking to women, urban and rural, from a range of socio-economic classes and

⁵ Accurate literacy rates are notoriously difficult to assess, in part due to differing definitions as to what “literacy” entails and how it should be measured. In 2009, I was informed by the literacy inspectors from the Moroccan Ministry of Education that as soon as a woman completes one year of literacy class she is considered “literate” for statistical purposes, regardless of her actual ability to read and write. This has resulted in inflated literacy rates that, though they may satisfy conditions tied to international development funding, work against women's best interest as once a village is labeled as “literate” future literacy instruction may cease. I also witnessed other issues involved in the creation of data for literacy statistics, including the fact that a number of women participating in a literacy class I was observing had enrolled using the identity of another family member. Since there was only one level of literacy instruction in the village, women were limited to a one-year enrollment. Women who wanted to continue participation had to come up with creative means to bypass this regulation.

education levels in the north and central regions of Morocco, about what their conceptions of “literacy” or “being literate” were and what role literacy played in everyday life.

In retrospect, Khalti Latifa’s comment echoes many I heard that summer among adult women who had had little or no schooling and were currently enrolled in literacy classes. These women confided that without control of the written word and spoken Standard Arabic, they felt that they couldn’t make their voices heard. For example, many women explained that they felt too uncomfortable to go to their children’s school to discuss their academic progress and behavior; to go to the local government building to request social services; or to go unaccompanied to the courts to file a complaint. Others mentioned that they felt unable to successfully navigate local transportation from the village to nearby urban centers when visiting family in the hospital or when heading to the intercity bus station. Many spoke of wanting to independently send and receive SMS text messages on mobile phones or read dosage instructions on a prescription insert.

During my pre-dissertation research, I learned about a pilot adult literacy program then under development by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Rabat and the Moroccan Ministry of Education. The program, called *Passerelle*, aimed to teach adult women to read and write in their mother tongue languages, either Moroccan Arabic or Tamazight, before transitioning them to learning Standard Arabic grammar and vocabulary. Aware of a dominant hegemonic ideology that associated Moroccan Arabic with orality, I was eager to observe if Moroccan Arabic literacy practices presented an ideological disjuncture to women, and if so, how they dealt with it. That is, how do women experience being taught to write and read in a

language that many considered shouldn't be written? I met with Moroccan and USAID literacy experts, program directors, and teachers, and was invited to observe and participate in program development and teacher training workshops. I focused on women's experiences in this program. I was interested in what it meant to them to read and write in Moroccan Arabic, a language with no traditional writing system and no tradition of being written in Morocco. I proposed to investigate how language ideologies, beliefs about language, become mobilized by governments, educators and laypeople to link notions of literacy and writing in powerful ways to ideas of gender, self-empowerment, and modernization in Morocco (Irvine and Gal 2000).

From 2008-2010, during the first two years of my dissertation fieldwork, I regularly attended and observed Passerelle literacy classes in central Morocco and realized early into my fieldwork that the Passerelle program was not being implemented as designed. Mother tongue languages were rarely, if ever, portrayed in written form in either the rural or urban literacy classrooms. Instead, they were embraced as the appropriate oral language for teaching adult women and Standard Arabic retained its position as the only language for writing and reading. Through my observations of daily literacy practices (including women's ideologies about those practices) I learned that while I had not identified significant mother tongue literacy practices connected with women's experiences in the Passerelle classroom, the women with whom I worked were engaging with and responding to a variety of other Moroccan Arabic literacy practices outside the classroom. Thus in 2008, I began recording daily observations regarding these new literacy practices and how men and women I encountered engaged (or not) with them.

This dissertation chronicles my journey in identifying these different roles and written forms of Moroccan Arabic, and less frequently Tamazight, initially within the Passerelle literacy context and later increasingly outside of it. In addition to the Passerelle literacy class, the other contexts that I identified as central to an understanding of shifts in Moroccan Arabic literacy practices are SMS text messages, billboard advertisements, dubbed soap operas and finally a weekly urban magazine. I have used these different “sightings” of new written representations and roles of Moroccan Arabic to provide the organizational structure for my dissertation. Chapters 2-6 each take as their focus one of these contexts and look at the different ways in which ideologies surrounding the form and role of written Moroccan Arabic in these contexts are negotiated, challenged and reproduced. I consider if and how the possible disjuncture between dominant ideologies associating Moroccan Arabic with orality and new literacy practices that represent it in a variety of forms is experienced in these different contexts.

Languages and writing systems in Morocco

Khalti Latifa’s comment and Fatima’s insistence on speaking French to me at the hospital both speak directly to the complicated power relationships that are continually being negotiated and reproduced through the use of written and spoken language varieties in Morocco. Morocco’s sociolinguistic scene is a fluid, rapidly changing arena in which oral and written varieties of Arabic, Tamazight, and French, among other languages, overlap and compete for social, cultural and economic capital. At least three main varieties of Arabic are recognized by linguists as in use in Morocco. They are, as follows, in a relationship from high to low status: Classical Arabic, Standard Arabic and Moroccan Arabic (Ennaji 2005).

Classical Arabic was introduced to Morocco at the end of the seventh century and is associated with the classical poetry, written history, the Monarchy and the Islamic faith, in particular the Qur'an. Viewed as sacred in character, not only in Morocco but across the Arab world, it is referred to as the language of miracles or the language of God (Haeri 2000). Classical Arabic is not a mother language of any speaker but rather has to be studied in Qur'anic schools and universities. Standard Arabic, described as a "relatively 'modern' version of Classical Arabic," is the only official language of Morocco and is associated with literacy, media, government, and education (Ennaji 2005; Sadiqi 2003b). Like Classical Arabic, it is also not a mother tongue in Morocco, nor anyone's exclusive language of communication. Standard Arabic is a mandatory second language for all children in public elementary school and is the medium of education in high school and university. Standard Arabic, the language through which religion is publicly expressed, is considered a "unifying language" for the Arab world (Sadiqi 2005). Sadiqi, however has argued that Moroccan women feel excluded from the spheres of public power and linguistic practices associated with religious rites, claiming that women have a limited "linguistic space" in Standard Arabic (2003a:7-8).

In contrast to most Moroccan linguists, the majority of the lay Moroccans I spoke with during my field research did not distinguish between a "Classical" and "Standard" variety of Arabic when discussing the usage of Arabic outside the realm of classical poetry. They referred to both varieties of Arabic as "al-arabiya al-fusha" 'Classical Arabic' or simply "al-arabiya" 'Arabic.' Following this view, throughout this dissertation I will use the term Standard Arabic to refer to both of these linguistic categories. These same Moroccans do however point to salient differences between

Standard Arabic and what they often term *Darija*,⁶ or as linguists term it, Colloquial Moroccan Arabic.

Colloquial Moroccan Arabic (hereafter Moroccan Arabic or Darija), the Arabic variety with the lowest status, is predominantly an oral language associated with informal, everyday contexts, intimacy, and the home. Moroccan Arabic is the mother tongue of approximately two thirds of the Moroccan population and it is the only spoken language in Morocco for which a standard writing system does *not* exist. Importantly, although the term *Darija* is a widely used and understood term in Morocco for referring to varieties of Colloquial Moroccan Arabic, I mainly heard the term employed when speakers were making a specific distinction between Colloquial Moroccan Arabic and another Arabic variety. When asked in general what language is spoken in Moroccan homes and in the market place, many Moroccans will respond that “al-arabiya” is spoken, which in this situation refers to a colloquial variety, not to Standard Arabic. By using the same word to refer to Classical, Standard and Moroccan varieties of Arabic, Moroccans index an ideology by which they view themselves as part of a geographically and temporally wide community of Arabic speakers and Arab culture more generally.

However, while some Moroccans voice a sense of national pride in Moroccan varieties of Arabic and others look for lexical and syntactic evidence which highlights Moroccan Arabic’s relatedness to a Classical Arabic spoken in a glorified historical past, many have a strongly negative view of contemporary varieties of Moroccan Arabic. For example, a man in Casablanca proclaimed strongly to me that Moroccan Arabic is ‘a

⁶ The word *Darija* is derived from the Standard Arabic verb /daraja/, which means ‘spread among’ or ‘proceed gradually’ (Sadiqi 2005).

bastardized form of Arabic.’⁷ Compared to Classical Arabic, little research attention has been paid to oral forms of Moroccan Arabic by Arabic grammarians who consider the dialect unworthy of linguistic study. Despite these negative perspectives, the past decade has witnessed an expansion in the role of Moroccan Arabic in public space. For example, in 2009 the national TV channel 2M began to broadcast for the first time foreign series and soap operas dubbed in Moroccan Arabic. Foreign television series had previously been dubbed either in Standard Arabic or in another Arabic vernacular such as Egyptian or Syrian. Moroccan Arabic has also emerged in new forms in the domains of non-formal education, telecommunications (SMS text messaging), online communication (email, chat, Facebook, Twitter etc.),⁸ street billboard advertising, and in print media, among others. The increasing roles and forms of Moroccan Arabic, particularly in domains linked to economic and political advancement, implies the rise of a local industry for Moroccan Arabic.

Though it is common for Moroccans and linguistic alike to speak in homogenizing terms of a “*Darija*” or “Moroccan Arabic” that serves as the lingua franca in Morocco, it is important to emphasize that there is significant variation within Moroccan Arabic. Similarly, the way speakers imagine this difference and draw boundaries between different varieties of Moroccan Arabic has significant social and political implications, all of which is worthy of analytic attention. Ennaji claims that a dominant point of variation within Moroccan Arabic is that between urban varieties, colloquially referred to as *mdini*, and rural varieties known as *rubi* (2005:59). He notes however that the broad categories of urban and rural varieties of Moroccan Arabic are

⁷ Field notes. March 2010.

⁸ The use of written Moroccan Arabic in online social media is discussed in Chapter 7.

becoming less representative of the physical locations in which people use the languages as massive urban migration over the past 50 years has resulted in rural varieties of Moroccan Arabic being spoken in urban centers such as Casablanca. Indeed, “*casawi*” ‘Casablancon Arabic’ is strongly associated with phonological and lexical features associated with ‘*rubi*’ varieties. In general, varieties of Moroccan Arabic considered ‘*rubi*’ are viewed as providing less social and economic capital to their speakers than *mdini* varieties.

In addition, Sadiqi has addressed gender variation within Moroccan Arabic, noting that there are observable differences between the varieties of Moroccan Arabic spoken by women and men (Sadiqi 1995; Sadiqi 2002; Sadiqi 2003a; Sadiqi 2003b; Sadiqi 2008). In a study of language variation in Fes, Morocco, she found that women are more likely than men are to use diminutives and tag questions. They also tend to use the consonant [q], aligning their speech with Standard Arabic, more often than men who tended to use the allophone [ʔ] instead (Sadiqi 2003b). Furthermore, research attention has been paid to regional variation in Moroccan Arabic (Cressier, et al. 1998; Heath 2002). For example, Boumans (2006) explains that the northern varieties of Moroccan Arabic, such as that spoken in Tangier, show a preference for the analytic genitive construction for expressing attributive possession in Moroccan Arabic (with the use of the possessive pronoun *dyal*, i.e. “*ddar dyal lmudir*” ‘the house of the director’) instead of the synthetic construction used in Standard Arabic and found in pre-Saharan varieties of Moroccan Arabic, such as Hassaniya, in the far south. He notes that the analytic genitive construction is also commonly heard in urban dialects. It is also common for scholars of Moroccan dialectology to distinguish between Pre-Hilali dialects and Hilali

dialects of Moroccan Arabic. Pre-Hilali dialects are spoken in the northwest and central mountains, and old cities such as Fes and Rabat. Hilali dialects developed during a period of language contact at the time of the Bedouin invasions in the 12th and 13th centuries, including that of Beni Hilal. They are widely spoken across Morocco, particularly in urban areas.

During my fieldwork, I often heard Moroccans reproduce stereotypes associating different regional varieties of Moroccan Arabic to specific qualities (imagined to be) represented by their speakers. For example, the variety associated with the town of Tangiers, is described by many as ‘sweet’ and ‘feminine’ whereas the variety associated with Casablanca is considered ‘rough’ and ‘coarse.’ Furthermore, the variety associated with Fes is often described as ‘sophisticated’ and ‘uptight,’ whereas the variety associated with Marrakech is described as ‘fun’ and ‘funny.’ Finally, detailed linguistic analysis has been done in describing Jewish Moroccan Arabic varieties and how they can be distinguished from Muslim Moroccan Arabic varieties (Heath 1989; Heath 2002).

Tamazight, the other prevalent first language in Morocco, is spoken by roughly 40-50% of the Moroccan population. Varieties of Tamazight in Morocco are generally considered lacking in social, cultural and economic capital and arguably comprise the most devalued language in Morocco (Ennaji 2005; Sadiqi 2007). They are associated with folklore, poverty, rurality and women (Hoffman 2006). In response to a long history of discrimination against Tamazight, the Moroccan King Mohammed VI created the Moroccan Royal Institute for Amazigh Culture charged with directing Tamazight language policy and cultural affairs. He also publicly recognized the Tamazight language as a valuable part of the cultural heritage of *all* Moroccans and adopted the Tifinagh

writing system, an alphabetic system based on a 5,000 year old script, with which to teach and to write a standardized variety of Tamazight (Errihani 2006). According to the new constitution voted for on July 1, 2011, Tamazight is now also an official language alongside Standard Arabic. Moroccan Arabic, by contrast, was not recognized in the constitution.

Errihani (2006) argues that the new Tamazight language policy in Morocco is seen by many Moroccan intellectuals as merely a symbolic and political maneuver by the Monarchy to appear responsive to Western, pluralist, identity politics and discourses of minority rights. He warns it will be ineffective in either teaching Tamazight to Moroccan Arabic speaking children or raising the cultural and economic value of Tamazight language varieties more generally. Furthermore, he notes that Tamazight, while a mandatory school subject, is never the medium of education and that by taking effect only in public schools it targets the poor and disadvantaged disproportionately, since children of the elite tend to enroll in private French or English medium schools where State education policies have limited reach. My experiences visiting public schools in the central region of Morocco support this view. I repeatedly heard teachers complaining that they did not have the training necessary to teach Tamazight and Tifinagh and that the amount of time, when spent on the subject at all, would have been better put towards French or English. One school I visited in the region of Beni Mellal had placed all the Tamazight educational materials received by the government directly into storage, and years later had yet to utilize them because according to the director, the children's parents were against the teaching of a standardized Tamazight to native Tamazight speaking

children. They viewed the Tamazight standard developed by the Moroccan government as a fake and inauthentic language imposed upon them for political purposes.

Due to Morocco's recent history as a French Protectorate during the period 1912 – 1946, French also plays a significant role in the sociolinguistic scene as the dominant second language in Morocco. Grandguillaume (1983) explains that in Morocco, the post-independence linguistic policy was to make standard Arabic the official language while maintaining French as the de-facto language in education, administration, the private sector and in the media. French is thus currently associated with urban areas, higher education, government and media and it is a mandatory second language for all children in public elementary school (Messaoudi and Jamiat Ibn 2003). Despite the fact that multilingualism with French is a lived reality for many urban Moroccans, official language policy since Moroccan independence has promoted Standard Arabic language and script as the dominant linguistic forms in the arenas of government and education in Morocco. Most recently, during the late 1990's, "Arabization" policies in Morocco have worked to remove French from the public sphere and replace it with Arabic (Ennaji 2005). As a result, Moroccans have witnessed language use shifts as exemplified by the abrupt transition of the medium of high school education from French to Standard Arabic⁹ and the changing of street names and traffic signs from the Roman to the Arabic script.

Following French, English is becoming increasingly valued as an important language, particularly in the domains of education and employment. It is associated with urban areas, education, business, wealth, media and technology. English is a mandatory

⁹ In secondary education, Arabization of the humanities occurred first, while Arabization of scientific subjects did not occur until 1983. Boutieri (2011; 2012) offers a detailed analysis of the history and lived reality of Arabization policies in Moroccan public education.

required subject on the Moroccan baccalaureate exam, a national exam required of all Moroccan students in order to graduate high school. More recently, new political support for increasing the role of English in Morocco emerged when Lahcen Daoudi, the Minister of Higher Education, announced in early 2014 that English proficiency would soon become a requirement for obtaining a PhD from Moroccan universities (Allilou 2014). This follows a proposal made in late 2013 in the published recommendations of an international colloquium on Moroccan education¹⁰ that English replace French as the principal language of instruction in scientific and technical fields.

It is clear that the languages of Morocco do not carry the same symbolic value, and it not surprising that neither do their writing systems. Both Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight are traditionally unwritten, oral languages whereas Classical Arabic, Standard Arabic, and French are associated with long and prestigious written histories. Given that recent literacy surveys suggest that half of Moroccan adults are “illiterate,” Sadiqi (2003b) makes a strong argument that for the majority of Moroccans “speech carries greater significance than writing in regulating everyday life, as communication is mainly channeled through unwritten languages,” specifically Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight. However, though orality may be an important factor in understanding the Moroccan sociolinguistic scene, attitudes towards these two languages are based in large part on standards of literacy and each language’s particular relationship to Islam.

Moroccan Arabic, for example, is commonly considered a deviant form of Classical Arabic, and some Moroccans feel quite strongly that the dialect itself is corrupt, and should not be written. Outside roles in religious texts and poetry, the use of the

¹⁰ The official recommendations of this colloquium and the debate that followed regarding other suggested changes to the language of instruction in Morocco are described in more detail in Chapter 7.

Arabic script in Morocco is regulated for writing Standard Arabic (Ennaji 2005; Sadiqi 2003b). This belief that vernacular dialects of Arabic should not be written is a widespread belief echoed across the Arab world. Haeri (2003) explains that in Egypt, written Classical Arabic is viewed by ordinary Egyptians as functioning to separate the sacred from profane, writing from speaking and religious material from personal communication with God. These views reflect a belief that the link between Islam and written Classical Arabic is sacred and should not be understood as arbitrary but rather the two should be seen as mutually constitutive (Haeri 2000; Ibrahim 1983), an ideological move that serves to naturalize the relationship between the two linguistic forms.

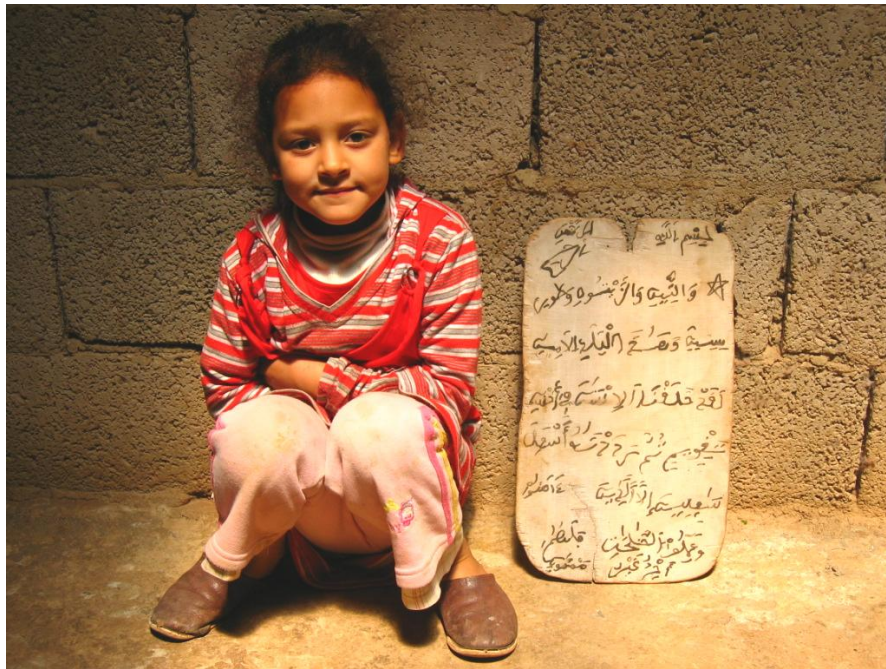


Figure 1 – Four year old Yasamin is crouching next to the wooden board that her mother had used to memorize verses of the Qur’an in Qur’anic preschool when she was the same age.

Ideologies, disjuncture and elision

In order to understand how individuals interpret the appearance of Moroccan Arabic in new forms and contexts, this dissertation finds useful the analytic of ‘language ideologies’ in that they serve a mediating role between social structures and forms of talk – a place where social and linguistic context and structure meet. Most current scholars who work with the term ideology note that there is no single, agreed upon definition for the term or unified body of research on the topic, with analysts using a variety of definitions, some that are compatible with each other and others that are not (Eagleton 1991; Friedrich 1989; Woolard 1998a; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994). In fact, Eagleton (1991:1) casually produces what he refers to as a “more or less random” list of no less than seventeen definitions including ones that focus on ideology as referring to sets of beliefs, ideas, and forms of thoughts; ones that focus on ideology as a process of meaning production or creating reality; ones that view ideology as implying a distorted, false, or illusory aspect; ones that focus on ideology as something that legitimates or links up to power; as well as ones that focus on links between ideology and identity formation or subject position. Despite, or perhaps because of, the term’s popularity in the social sciences, a number of critiques and objections have been lodged against the analytic or theoretical usefulness of the term ideology to the extent that some theorists have suggested we abandon the concept altogether in favor of something else, such as Foucault’s call for an analysis of “discourse” instead (Foucault 1991).

In arguing that the notion of ideology is useful in particular to an anthropology of language, and in an attempt, perhaps, to make sense of the variety of versions of ideology, Woolard (1998a) playfully offers the heuristic of the phonological contrast

between “‘id-eology’ ([I]deology)” and “‘idea-ology’ ([ay]deology)” as a way to think about what she terms “the great divide” in definitions or versions of ideology. Woolard places the position of the divide between the more critical, negative or pejorative uses which highlight issues of power and interest, represented by the first pronunciation “id-eology” and the more ideational or representational (also commonly referred to as neutral or descriptive) uses of the term ideology, represented by the second pronunciation “idea-ology.”

The mediating role of language ideologies is made clear in an article by Irvine (1989) in which she identifies a dialectic relationship between linguistic differentiation and social differentiation such that relationships between language use and large social systems such as villages, cities, regions, nations, internationally etc. are mediated by language ideologies. In this paper, she takes the position that language ideologies are “cultural (or subcultural) system[s] of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (255). Irvine emphasizes that linguistic ideologies function as mediators and warns not to assume a causative power to ideologies; there are times when they will change a social scene and there are other times when they will merely comment upon it. Following the calls of Silverstein and Geertz to look more closely at the semiotic nature of language ideologies, Irvine and Gal (2000) explain that this ideological mediation works by way of a semiotic process consisting of three parts that are both universal and productive, namely: 1) iconization, the process by which a linguistic form can seem to depict a social group’s nature or social form 2) fractal recursivity, the process by which an opposition at one level can become embedded within or expand to another level, resulting in a nesting of sorts and 3) erasure, the

process by which linguistic practice is made invisible or ignored. Bucholtz (2001) points out that because “this framework is semiotic and not exclusively linguistic, it may be expanded to include the interaction of nonlinguistic and linguistic ideologies as well as the process whereby the former give rise to the latter” (89). That is, ideologies of language can be mapped onto other types of ideologies (such as ideologies of backwardness and modernity) and vice-versa. This dissertation find particularly useful the notion of fractal recursivity in understanding Moroccan’s response to new written forms of Moroccan Arabic across different contexts and media and why these new literacy practices are viewed positively in some instances and not in others.

Thus, the semiotic processes of language ideologies are useful analytic tools for thinking about social distinctions and as well as social inequalities. Since they highlight issues of sociocultural variation, contention and power relations, looking at language ideologies in terms of semiotic mediation allows one to avoid relying on the bounded, static, homogeneous images of social groups, practices and ideas often conceived of under the rubric of “a culture.” For example, by reconceptualizing distinctions such as private/public, a distinction that arguably has been taken as a self-evident and natural social fact by many social analysts, as language ideologies - that is as products of semiotic processes such as indexicality and fractal recursivity - it is possible to identify a systematic logic through which social actors describe, experience, challenge and are positioned in their world. This is a theme that is reminiscent of Althusser’s (1969 [1971]) discussion of subject interpellation. It is also an argument made most recently by Susan Gal, who advocates viewing the public/private distinction as a “language ideology of differentiation” in that it “divides spaces, moralities, types of people, activities and

linguistic practices into opposed categories.” Though Gal does not apply the same pejorative image of ideological “false consciousness” or dangerous masking of power as seen in Marx and Engels’ (1845 [1998]) understanding of ideology, there is a shared focus on how ideologies can make distinctions created dialectically through semiotic processes seem natural. Through her research on Mexicano and Spanish language use, ideology, and boundary differentiation in Tlaxcala, Mexico, Messing (2003) argues that attention to the ideological construction of difference, particularly through the process of fractal recursivity, can shed light on language shift. Since through fractal recursivity oppositions can be projected onto different social contexts, she shows how “recursivity provides a highly productive means for understanding the semiotic resources speakers employ as they orient towards and against particular identities through discourses they create and tap into” (104).

Primarily deriving from the traditions of sociolinguistics (Labov 1979) and the ethnography of speaking (Bauman and Sherzer 1974; Hymes 1972), many current conceptualizations of language ideologies view them as embodied in explicit metapragmatics, often in the form of “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification for perceived language structure and use” (Silverstein 1979). Conversely, other recent treatments of language ideology, influenced by the work of Bourdieu (1977), Foucault (1972) and Gramsci (1971), have characterized ideology as pervasively implicit, both embedded in practices and reflexive of them, the most powerful of which being those that reside the most below conscious awareness (Silverstein 1981). This dissertation assumes that it is most productive to view language ideologies as falling on a continuum of explicitness and thus has adopted a

methodological approach that treats ideology both as explicit statements about language as well as implicitly evidenced in patterns and structure of linguistic form and practice.

This dissertation looks at language ideologies in both “private” (SMS text messaging) and institutional sites (government adult education, advertising, television dubbing, and magazine serials). Susan Philips has been particularly vocal in advocating institutional sites as rich arenas for studying language ideologies (Philips 1998; Philips 2004a). Indeed Philips, explicitly grounding her approach in present-day neo-Marxist conceptualizations of ideology and Gramscian notions of hegemony, argues that the increased attention to language ideologies as reproduced in and affected by public and state institutional settings in recent literature represents one of the most important shifts in our understanding of language and power. Philips (2004b) considers the configuration of ideological diversity in the Tongan Magistrate’s Courts as compared with the configuration of traditional and modern nationalist ideologies and other Tongan political domains in other Pacific nations. She critiques however Marx’s assumption that there will be only one ideological opposition in any given society and that the relationship between the ideological position of the ruling class and the subordinate is characterized by struggle. Instead, she shows how the configuration of multiple ideologies in the Tonga courts does not fit this model. Philips thus argues that an “ecology of ideas” might be a more useful way of thinking about the complexity of ideological diversity because it emphasizes why some new ideologies and not others may or may not “take root” in a particular discursive environment. In doing so, she offers a model for thinking about ideological change or shift in terms of how organisms may flourish or wither in different contexts. This notion will be revisited in the concluding chapter of this dissertation in a

discussion of how the notion of writing mother tongue languages “didn’t take root” in some contexts, such as government sponsored literacy classes and public education, but has proven very productive in other arenas, such as SMS text messaging and advertising.

Unlike some of the earlier Marxist inspired theorists, including Raymond Williams, who seem to view ideology as being homogeneously shared over social group (usually based on class), in my approach to ideologies I build upon Hill and Mannheim (1992) who argue that language ideologies are always “partial, contestable, and contested.” Irvine (2007) discusses the issue of what she terms ideological “coherences,” or the potential of ideological sites to be characterized by disjuncture or contradiction instead of coherence. In this paper, Irvine explains that “to speak of ‘ideology’ at all is to imply that there is a disjuncture somewhere between it – whatever one is calling ideology or ideologized – and some other aspect of the world we live in” (2). She outlines a partial list of 6 different directions in which one can identify potential sites of ideological coherence and disjuncture. She considers a range of results of ideological disjuncture from semiotic processes that work to deny a contradiction by means of either changes in ideology or changes in linguistic or social relations. Meek has also found useful the notion of disjuncture in her analysis of Kaska language revitalization efforts. She defined disjuncture as “the everyday points of discontinuity and contradiction—between social or linguistic groups, within discourses, practices, or between them, even between indexical orders—that interrupt the flow of action, communication, or thought” (Meek 2010:x). This dissertation builds on the notion of disjuncture by considering how the semiotic process described by Irvine and Gal (2000), particularly the parts of fractal recursivity and erasure, address perceived disjuncture

created by new Moroccan Arabic linguistic practices and previously existing language ideologies.

The notion of ideological disjuncture implies the possibility of ideological shift given that, as Irvine (2007) notes, people may change their ideology to be more in-line with the types of practices understood to be happening in daily life. It is been suggested that this might be the case in Morocco. In her monograph *We Share Walls: Language, Land, and Gender in Berber Morocco*, Hoffman (2008), drawing on the work of Moroccan scholar Ahmed Boukous (1995), comments in passing that an “ideological elision” is occurring between Moroccan Arabic and Standard Arabic in which the former is being seen as adopting positive connotations of the latter. Indeed, it was this observation that sparked my interest in the topic of ideological shift and challenged me to ask if and how the broadening use of Moroccan Arabic in contexts previously reserved for Standard Arabic may indicate that ideologies of Moroccan and Standard Arabic were eliding, and/or if new uses of Moroccan Arabic triggered significant semiotic work to be done to maintain existing ideological hierarchies.

The idea of ‘elision’ can be useful in highlighting the dynamic, shifting nature of ideologies. However, thinking in terms of elision also risks promoting a view of ideologies as unified, shared entities instead of multiple, diverse and continually contested. When I use this term it is to focus on its usefulness in thinking about ideological change. In general linguistics, the term elision most commonly refers to the use of a speech form that lacks a final or initial sound found in a variant speech form. In describing meter, it refers to “the reductions of two adjacent syllables to one for purposes of metrical syllable count” (Hanson 2006:100). Both of these definitions are useful in

thinking about ideologies of Moroccan Arabic with respect to Standard Arabic. The first general sense of term elision, which highlights a situation in which one variant is lacking in something another variant possesses, is an analogy which reflects common ideologies that depict Moroccan Arabic as lacking in the positive associations and symbolic capital that Standard Arabic is imagined to possess. It does not however capture Hoffman's use of the term to emphasize the reduction of ideological difference between two varieties. The second definition, instead of highlighting difference, focuses on the utility of the process of elision, the reduction of two things to one, to achieve a sense of meter and rhythm. In Hoffman's use of the term elision, she is referring to the merging of two ideologies – in which negative associations of Moroccan Arabic are erased and the exclusivity of Standard Arabic in certain domains is reduced to allow space for Moroccan Arabic to thrive. My dissertation will argue that while it may appear that there is an ideological elision occurring between Moroccan and Standard Arabic, based on the fact that new written representations of Moroccan Arabic are appearing in domains usually reserved for Standard Arabic, the semiotic process of fractal recursivity serves to redefine Moroccan Arabic as oral even in written contexts, thus maintaining existing linguistic regimes of value.

Notions of time and space

Beliefs about how language form and use connect to particular depictions of time and space play an important role in how people understand and relate to social and political contexts. Chronotope is a term developed by Bakhtin and described in the essay 'Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel' (Bakhtin 1975 [1981]). Bakhtin portrays the chronotope "as the primary means for materializing time in space" (250).

Chronotopes are a way of articulating both “real” time and space as well as how they are constructed in relation to fictional times and spaces. Chronotopes exist in dialogic relation to one another. In some chronotopes, the articulation of time and space may not appear balanced as either time or space may take precedence over the other. McIntosh (2010), while not referencing Bakhtin’s notion of chronotope, offers another way of conceptualizing ways of thinking about time-space. She talks about the importance of analyzing “nested spatial extensions as well as different temporalities” in relation to how people in her research thought about language and the meaning of text-messaging performances in Malindi Kenya (340). I find this approach to be useful both because it draws attention to the recursive nature of how space and time can be defined and because the notion of “extension” implies movement and directionality to chronotopes. She also uses the term “tempolitics,” which highlights the power dynamics in how at given moments ideologies of language are negotiated, maintained and challenged.

Diglossia and shift

An analysis of language ideology in Morocco necessitates a background understanding of how the relationship between Standard and colloquial varieties of Arabic has commonly been conceptualized Arabic speaking contexts. The situation in which a high form of Arabic coexists with one or more lower forms of Arabic, was famously described as “diglossia” by Charles Ferguson in his seminal paper in 1959. Ferguson offered the following definition of diglossia that became highly influential for research in Arabic speaking communities:

“Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large

and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any section of the community for ordinary conversation” (Ferguson 1959 [1971])

When he introduced the term, the concept of diglossia quickly came to dominate how scholars understood the Arabic language contexts. In more recent years, there have been substantial critiques to this structuralist notion, in particular for its dichotomizing approach which implies a static sociolinguistic situation that masks a very complex and messy on-the-ground reality. It has also been critiqued for its use of power laden terms such as High/Low which embed the way speakers think about language into the theory itself and reproduces existing power structures (Dorian 2002; Williams 1992). Despite these critiques, it is still a common way for Moroccan linguists to talk about Arabic language varieties in Morocco and is present in the media talk about language as well. Educated Moroccans I spoke with, particularly those who work in the field of education, used the term when explaining to me issues in the education system in Morocco. Indeed, Walters (2003) has argued that Ferguson’s term should be recognized for its “prescience” and for how the theory has (relatively) accurately predicted certain changes in the sociolinguistic scene in Tunisia. My attention to the term in this dissertation should be understood as recognition of the local saliency and meaningfulness of the term as a way educated Moroccans often make sense of their language use. As an ideology of language, diglossia is widely shared among Moroccans from very different socioeconomic classes, regions and linguistic backgrounds and most Moroccans believe strongly in it.

Although Ferguson is most well-known for the term, the one of the first applications of the term diglossia to describe the Arabic language was made by the

French Arabist William Marçais who wrote about "la diglossie arabe" in a journal article published in *L'Enseignement* in 1930. He describes diglossia as a type of competition (*une concurrence*) between a learned written language and a vernacular language, which may exist exclusively in spoken form. Marçais distinguishes between two different aspects of the Arabic language: a literary (also called regular, literal or Classical) language of written Arabic and the spoken dialects (*idiomes*) that have never been written (401). He notes that written Arabic is closely associated with the Qur'an, is the language of the Islamic civilization, and as the only version of Arabic worth serious academic study, has been thoroughly documented and analyzed by grammarians, lexicographers and Arab literary scholars. In contrast, spoken Arabic is the language of communication, and he argues that the dialect of North Africa ("arabe parlé maghrébin"), is the dialect that has diverged the most from the literary language (405). The latter is still a pervasive ideology in Morocco (recall for example the man from Casablanca quoted above who labeled Moroccan Arabic "a bastardized form of Arabic"), and in its defense, many speakers point to the history of language contact with Tamazight, French and Spanish as having had important grammatical and lexical impacts on Moroccan Arabic.

As indicated by his interest in the social conditions for the emergence and change of diglossic language situations, Ferguson's point in introducing the term diglossia is not to offer scholars simply a convenient, yet arbitrary typology to aid in the categorization of diverse sociolinguistic situations, but rather, as he states in his own words, its purpose is to move "toward a more general theory of language in society" in which "the relations between linguistic structure, language use, common language attitudes on the one hand and phenomena of social organization in communicative functions on the other" can be

identified and analyzed (Ferguson 1991). In doing so, Ferguson made a great contribution to Arabic linguistics, a tradition that had thus far tended to ignore the social side of language and how it could be viewed as a cultural resource or type of social action. More importantly however, Ferguson's framework has been critical in moving linguistic discussions of Arabic away from a characterization of Qur'anic Arabic as representing "the norm" and all other varieties being mere deviations. Through his encouragement, scholars began to focus carefully on the relationships between specific varieties and sets of linguistic practices and their contexts.

This is a goal later re-emphasized by Joshua Fishman. He sought to define a single theoretical framework for diglossia that could be applied both to bilingual speech communities and to "monolingual" speech communities that were distinguished by a linguistic diversity in the form of repertoires or registers within a single language. Whereas Charles Ferguson focused on diglossia between two closely related languages, Joshua Fishman pointed towards a type of diglossia between non-related languages in bilingual contexts which he termed "extended diglossia" (1967). He describes diglossia as being able to refer to not only "multilingual societies which officially recognized several 'languages' but, also... societies which are multilingual in the sense that they employ separate dialects, registers or functionally differentiated language varieties of whatever kind" (30). Fishman discussed the relationship between bilingualism, which he views as an essentially individual linguistic behavior, and the phenomena of diglossia, which he views as characterized by linguistic organization at the socio-cultural level. Fishman identifies Arabic speech communities as representing communities where both diglossia and bilingualism are present and provides the example of Egyptian, Syrian,

Lebanese, and Iraqi upper middle-class males who use both a classical or vernacular form of Arabic as well as a third, Western language such as French or English, the latter most often for purposes of intragroup, scientific or technological communication. According to Fishman's model, the sociolinguistic situation in Morocco can be described as diglossic (there are minimally two varieties of Arabic in use: Standard Arabic and Moroccan Arabic) and as bilingual (Arabic, French and in some areas Spanish are spoken).

Like Ferguson, Fishman saw diglossia as a relatively stable state and emphasized that there exist extensive examples of stable diglossia (according to his definition) co-occurring with widespread bilingualism. This claim, along with his elaborated concept of diglossia, immediately sparked a lot of interest in issues of "extended diglossia" and its relation to language shift (Tsitsipis 1998). By broadening the concept of diglossia to include other kinds of stable functional differentiation of linguistic repertoires, Fishman launched fresh debate on how to define diglossia and on what types of typologies it suggested. His approach to diglossia, however, is limited in that it reduces the dynamics of contact and conflicts between language varieties to a set of static relations. It can thus be argued that Fishman's diglossia fails to take into account the circulation of minority speech communities, the employment of multiple linguistic codes, and the possibility of hybrid or intermediate forms of the language (Jaffe 1999a).

Miki Makihara's study (2004) investigates the issues of diglossia and hybrid language forms. Although not focusing on Arabic, her research provides an interesting counterpoint to Morocco because it introduces the term "colonial diglossia," which she uses to argue that the diglossic situation is in fact not stable as Ferguson and Fishman

emphasized it as being, but that it actually can shift quite dramatically. She notes that this diglossic shift does not necessarily result in the shift from one language to another and that the presence of code-switching does not necessarily lead to language shift. Instead, her study argues that syncretic linguistic practices can emerge in diglossic situations that in turn become effective political tools that can be used to challenge unequal power relations and help prevent language shift and death. Syncretism refers to issues of mixing and multivocality in languages use and is an active and strategic practice by which “speakers, who draw on their understandings of the historical associations of linguistic materials to control meaning and to produce new histories by variably suppressing and highlighting these histories through linguistic means” (Hill 1999:246).

I highlight diglossia here not because I find it the best model with which to interpret linguistic practices in Morocco, but rather because I believe its influence in the way Moroccan scholars and educated laypeople think about Arabic language varieties is implicit in many of the ways they talk about languages. As revealed in this dissertation, when differentiated at all, varieties of Arabic in Morocco are described as belonging either to spoken Moroccan Arabic, which is used in everyday, informal, private interactions or Standard Arabic, used in official, formal, public settings and the variety sanctioned for writing. Varieties or registers of Arabic (Classical vs., Standard Arabic, Educated Moroccan Arabic, etc.) that arguably fall between (or outside) these two poles are erased in common discourse about language use.

Literacy practices

This dissertation takes as its focus people’s relationships and ideas about spoken and written language in Morocco – many of which are tied up with the notion of

“literacy.” Literacy is a contested term that both shapes and is shaped by our understandings of divisions among individuals, social groups and institutions. Many earlier approaches to literacy treated it as a neutral technology or skill: the simple ability to read and write. Indeed, there have been trends in both academia and development discourse to represent literacy as a problem of technology in which literacy learning is viewed as a straightforward and unproblematic process of an individual’s acquiring and applying decoding skills to matching a string of sounds to their graphic symbols and vice versa (Schieffelin and Charlier Doucet 1998; Wagner 1993). The technical skills needed to read and write are imagined as neutral and universally applicable regardless of the particularities of the cultural or social environment in which they are being deployed. This trend, commonly referred to as the “autonomous model” of literacy acquisition, has been repeatedly shown to inform literacy projects developed by international organizations (Street 1984; Street 1995).

Literacy has been widely assumed to cause cognitive differences between individuals and has been argued to be the basis of a “great divide” between cultures – so called “oral cultures” and “literate cultures” - and as such has frequently been used to mark the difference between the "civilized" and "uncivilized." These early approaches to literacy are perhaps most famously represented more recently by the theorists Jack Goody, David Olson and Walter Ong. Goody believes that writing practices lead necessarily to changes of consciousness and to more intricate organization of social behavior (Goody 1977). Similarly, building on Goody, Olson argues that learning to read and write literally restructures cognition and ways of thinking and perceiving reality (Olson 2001). In fact, one of Olson’s main claims is that writing itself actually creates

and influences the categories upon which we understand spoken language and thus understand our world, a position that challenges the more generally held belief by linguists that it is speech that organizes our conceptual framework and writing is merely a visual representation of the signs of language. Finally, Ong, in his article “Writing is a Technology that Restructures Thought,” describes literacy as an “imperious” force that establishes itself as the cognitive foundation of human expression and thought (Ong 1986). He argues that “functional literate human beings... are beings whose thought processes do not grow out of simply natural powers but out of these powers as structured, directly or indirectly, by the technology of writing” (24). The view of literacy held by international organizations and development projects has emerged from these earlier positions. They tend to discuss literacy as a material that can be measured, bought or sold as part of a market economy and posit that a certain level of literacy is necessary in order for a nation’s economy to develop and compete in the global market.

Over the past two decades, numerous scholars have argued for a historical approach to understanding literacy that pays explicit attention to how literacy practices shape and are shaped by discourses of power, identity and subject formation. New Literacy Studies theorists, and most particularly Brian Street, are the most commonly cited critics of autonomous models of literacy. Street claims that all models about literacy, particularly those that posit literacy as a universal, individual skill, are embedded in particular power relations. In the context of the developing world moreover, these are power relations that often favor Western models of orality, literacy, rationality, and logical thought. Indeed, even the claim that literacy is a neutral technology reveals

particular ideologies about language and its relationship to power (Blommaert 2005; Blommaert, et al. 2006; Collins and Blot 2003; Street 1995).

Instead, Street argues for an ideological approach to “literacies” that aims to arrive at definitions of literacy inductively reached through careful ethnographic research in situated contexts rather than on the basis of reified notions of divisions between what constitutes literacy vs. orality or of “expert” categories or tests. This marks a shift in perspective from the effects or consequences of literacy to how it is actually used by people in everyday life and what is accomplished through its use; in other words, the introduction of more practice oriented models to the study of literacy. By doing so, Street was able to demonstrate a large variety and high complexity of literacy practices across cultures. His focus on literacies in a plural sense is derived from the observation that all literacy practices, as well as analysts’ and experts’ models about literacy (especially those that posit literacy as a universal, individual skill), are embedded in particular social, economic, and historically embedded power relations. Street’s ideological model builds on the assumption that the meaning of literacy is dependent in part on the social institutions in which it is ideologically embedded as well as an attention to structures of social differentiation in which different literacy practices or events may take place and others not occur. Despite the importance of the notion of multiple literacies in challenging autonomous models of literacy, Street acknowledges that speaking about literacies may potentially cause analytical pitfalls of its own by encouraging researchers to create “reified lists” that match each individual culture with its own unique type of literacy (Street 1995). Instead, Street argues for the recognition of “dominant literacies” vs. “marginalized literacies” as a way to highlight the ways in

which particular literacy practices always represent a negotiation of relations of power and identity.

Importantly, Street offers the notion of “literacy practices,” whose definition is not restricted to individual events of reading or writing but rather includes “the conceptions of the reading and writing process that people hold when they are engaged in the event” (Street 1995:133). Thus, Street argues that in learning to read and write, learners internalize not only the meaningful conventions of reading and writing particular to a given culture, they also internalize the ideological underpinnings and power structures embedded in such conventions. In their commentary on Street’s model, Collins and Blot (2003) highlight two consequences of this approach. Firstly, they argue that since there are no ideological neutral instances of literacy practices, as literacy can only be known in already ideologically grounded forms, “autonomous” versions of literacy cannot exist in social practice. Therefore, any position advocating literacy as neutral should be critically interrogated. Secondly, they argue, that it is through the learning processes of writing and reading that such practices gain their meaning for users. In this dissertation, literacy has been approached both theoretically and methodologically in light of the work of Street and later researchers influenced by the New Literacy Studies approach.

In a similar vein, Woolard also advocates approaching literacy as “not an autonomous, neutral technology but rather [as] culturally organized, ideologically grounded, and historically contingent” diverse sets of practices (1998a:23). Her recognition of the ideological framing of literacy as well as a plural notion of literacies was influenced by Street’s ideological approach to literacy, however, she instead

emphasizes a historical approach to understanding the power relations embedded in literacy practices. Collins and Blot echo Woolard's call to focus on historical contexts, arguing that despite the improvements with situated accounts of literacy there is still a need for accounts of "power-in-literacy which [capture] intricate ways in which power, knowledge, and forms of subjectivity are interconnected with 'uses of literacy' in modern national, colonial, and postcolonial settings" (2003:66). This dissertation aims to offer such an account by showing how emergent Moroccan Arabic literacy practices, as situated in different domains (e.g. text messaging vs. public education), are understood to either enable or limit social, economic or political advantages for its users. I argue throughout the dissertation that notions of power and value ascribed to different types of Moroccan Arabic literacy practices are historically tied to French protectorate language policies dating back to the early 20th century, the post-independence Arabization policies that followed, as well as Classical Arabic's revered textual history as a language as religion and poetry.

Into the field

My dissertation can be understood as comprising three phases of research over a period of 24 months. The first phase, 9 months of ethnographic fieldwork in the rural village of Tafza¹¹ in the region of Beni Mellal, was conducted from December 2008-August 2009 with the support of a David Boren Graduate Fellowship. The second phase, 9 months of ethnographic fieldwork in the urban setting of Mohammedia outside Casablanca, took place from October 2009-June 2010 with the support of a Wenner-Gren

¹¹ This village name is a pseudonym. In my dissertation, I have changed the name of the village where I conducted the rural phase of my fieldwork to respect the privacy of those who participated in my research project.

Foundation Dissertation Fieldwork Grant. The third and final phase, 6 months of ethnographic research from July-December 2010, examined the longer-term impacts and ideological consequences entailed in Passerelle mother tongue literacy programs. It was funded by a National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant. During this period, I revisited sites from my pre-dissertation research and interviewed and conducted focus groups with a select set of women who participated in USAID/ALEF's pilot Passerelle literacy program in 2006-2007. From January 2011 – May 2011, I resided at my university to teach and begin analysis of my data. In June 2011, I returned to Casablanca where I completed data analysis and wrote my dissertation. During the process of writing this dissertation, I changed the names and identifying details of all research participants in this project, except those who hold public office or specifically requested that I use their real name, to maintain their anonymity.

My dissertation project design was influenced by Marcus' inspiring collection of essays arguing for anthropologists to embrace a "multi-sited research imaginary" to doing and writing ethnography that emphasizes an "understanding of cultures as increasingly in circulation" (1998:5). He calls for a move beyond anthropology's traditional site-specific approach to field research, in which a group of people in a circumscribed geographic culture area is studied, to a more multi-sited and creative way of thinking about ethnography that encourages the discovery of unimagined connections and relationships within the process of fieldwork and writing itself. My project's initial focus on language ideologies in the context of Passerelle literacy methodology is particularly suited to such an imaginary. Passerelle itself is a product of multiple actors and consumers: it originated as part of the educational development mission of USAID Morocco under the

purview of Project ALEF, was funded by the U.S. Middle East Partnership Initiative, and during the course of my research was adopted by the Moroccan Ministry of Education as the new normative methodology for adult literacy education. Since 2005, Passerelle methodology has been disseminated through official meetings, workshops, literacy classes and informal conversation to a diverse Moroccan and international community.

While my initial focus on the Passerelle literacy class first sparked my interest in literacy practices in Morocco, it quickly became obvious to me that limiting my analysis to the classroom would obscure connections between mother tongue literacy practices across different contexts. My pre-dissertation and dissertation research, by purposefully juxtaposing multiple field sites and tracing and describing the relationships and connections between them, served to dislocate me from comfortable and taken for granted ways of thinking about literacy and languages in Morocco. It also heightened my receptivity to the unexpected relations that emerged in my field research. This openness led me to follow the circulation of new (primarily written) forms of Moroccan Arabic outside the literacy classroom into the mediums of text messages, billboard advertisements, dubbed foreign TV series, magazines and to question the ideological work at play in and across these contexts. It also drew my attention to online reactions in social media to a debate that took place in late 2013 over a proposal to institutionalize Moroccan Arabic literacy practices in public education. My interest in these different sites led me from my rural fieldsite to the urban centers of Casablanca and Rabat where the companies and policy makers behind these mediums are located. It was only through a juxtaposition of these different sites that the main themes of this dissertation came into focus.

The first two phases of my dissertation research took place in two interrelated sites in Central Morocco where the Moroccan government recently introduced Passerelle literacy training: the rural village of Tafza located outside the small city of Beni Mellal, and the urban center of Mohammedia, located in a main factory zone between the cities of Casablanca and Rabat. My main criteria for selecting an appropriate rural site included: presence of a local association committed to implementing the Passerelle approach; location in a region where Passerelle was a novel idea; a small size amenable to systematic investigation; and a location where I could easily obtain local research clearance and affiliation with the regional education ministry branch. Tafza fit all these criteria. In terms of adult education, there were no records of adult literacy courses in Tafza before 2007. Passerelle methodology was introduced in 2008 at the time I began research, and until the summer of 2009, there were no trade schools within 18km of the village.

Though I would have preferred otherwise, I came to Tafza, my fieldsite during the first phase of research, in a top-down fashion. In 2008 when I entered the field, the Passerelle literacy program was in its first year of implementation by the Moroccan government in only four provinces in Morocco. Most government run literacy programs that year were following the normative government program, and only a few scattered locations offered Passerelle. Thus, in order to choose an initial fieldsite where I was assured I would be able to observe mother tongue literacy education in practice, I had to start in Rabat at the Moroccan Ministry of Non-formal Education, the office in charge of the Passerelle program. From there, I was introduced in a trickle down fashion to regional education offices, local education boards, the local association, the local school

director and finally to the Passerelle literacy teachers themselves. I entered the field through personal networking with people at each of these nodes.

The main benefit of this approach was that I was guaranteed to work in a village where a legitimate Passerelle program was being implemented and overseen by a responsible and reliable association. The drawbacks were that I had limited choices regarding which region I worked in and my arrival into the village was facilitated by the regional director of education who was viewed as an outsider and a man of position and power in the village. This had the undesirable effect of people treating me as an honored guest for the first few weeks I was there, as well as creating suspicion regarding my presence and motives for living in the village, perhaps fearing I was gathering information to report back to the government.¹² Furthermore, since the exact locations of the Passerelle literacy classes were not chosen by the government until two weeks before the classes began, I was unable to move to my fieldsite and observe social and linguistic relations on the ground prior to the introduction of mother tongue literacy. I also did not establish contacts and adjust to life at my fieldsite independent and outside of the literacy classroom. My presence was furthermore associated with the introduction of Passerelle literacy in the village because I transported the Passerelle literacy materials used in class from Rabat to Tafza and other neighboring programs.

I chose and was introduced to my second fieldsite in a similar manner. My choice of Mohammedia as my urban research site for the second phase of my project was shaped

¹² Not all residents were suspicious of my motives for residing in the village. Indeed, there were many women very interested in ensuring that linguistic specificities of the village would meet my perceived research needs. It had been told to the women during literacy class on the day of my arrival that I would be studying mother tongue literacy classes and practices and that I already had knowledge of both Moroccan and Standard Arabic. A group of women, concerned that I might change research sites if I knew the village had both monolingual Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight residents (I was already aware of this fact), collectively chose to speak only Moroccan Arabic around me for over a week.

by my desire to find an urban location of special meaning or significance, especially in terms of literacy practices, for residents of Tafza. As I became involved in the extended social and family networks of literacy learners in Tafza, it became clear that many of them had strong ties to the region of Grand Casablanca.¹³ These ties included seeking medical services in the public hospitals; work opportunities (a 30 year old, single woman I met went to work in a chocolate factory near Mohammedia); and marriage (marriage to a man working in Casablanca was considered a very lucky catch). In fact, many women cited their desire to independently navigate large urban zones as a leading motivation for acquiring literacy skills. Mohammedia emerged as an excellent choice for the following reasons: 1) literacy learners and residents in Tafza had extended social network and kinship ties to the area, 2) key players in the Regional Education Academy based in Mohammedia were enthusiastic about supporting my research, and 3) unlike in Tafza, personnel of the local association Al Amal in charge of administering literacy classes had been trained directly by USAID/ALEF in Passerelle methodology in 2007.¹⁴ It was during this phase of my research that I discovered and began taking detailed observations of a Moroccan telephone company billboard campaign that used written Moroccan Arabic in its ads as well as a weekly news magazine famous for publishing in Moroccan Arabic.

For the third and final phase of my research I visited women who had completed Passerelle literacy training in sixteen associations from the four provinces of Grand

¹³ The label “Grand Casablanca” describes the administrative region that includes the city of Casablanca, the economic capital of Morocco, as well as nearby towns and smaller cities such as Mohammedia, Bouskoura and Mediouna.

¹⁴ This last characteristic is advantageous as it allowed me to identify contrasts between Passerelle classes offered by educators who had been trained by directly by USAID/ALEF (Mohammedia) vs. those that participated in workshops run independently by the Moroccan government itself (Tafza).

Casablanca, Meknès-Tafilalt, Oriental and Chaouia-Ouardigha that had participated in the 3 year pilot phase of USAID/ALEF's Passerelle program from 2005-2008. I chose the associations based on personal connections I had made previously with teachers and literacy directors during the pre-dissertation phase of my research. During the bulk of data analysis and dissertation writing stages of my dissertation, I resided in a middle class neighborhood in central Casablanca.

Throughout the active research phases of my dissertation, I resided in home-stays in each region, with women who were enrolled in Passerelle literacy classes. In the first stage of my research, in the village of Tafza, I found a homestay by presenting myself to the women's literacy class I would be observing and explaining my desire to reside with one of them as a way to learn about the language, customs and daily life experiences of adult women in Passerelle literacy classes. During my homestay, I participated in daily house life, such as waking early with the daughter-in-law of the house to knead and bake fresh bread for breakfast and assisting in the morning chores, as much as my research schedule would permit. During the second stage of my research, in a peri-urban town outside Casablanca, I chose to live with a middle class Moroccan family in Casablanca and commuted daily to my research site by local transportation. Though I would have preferred to live with a woman as I had in the village, this proved impossible (and culturally inappropriate) as the average residences of women in the city were much smaller (often consisting of only a single bedroom, tiny living room, small kitchen and a shared bathroom) and were formed of nuclear families (the wife, husband and their children) rather than the extended family living arrangements found in Tafza. For the

final stage of my research, I resided mainly with literacy teachers whom I had met on previous visits and through training workshops.

Data and methodology

In order to investigate the form and function of language ideologies in the contexts of education (Heath 1983), I developed an approach designed to account for variations in the explicitness in manifestations of ideologies in use. A wide variety of data collection methods was employed to gather mostly qualitative and some quantitative data. Recognizing that qualitative anthropological field research is necessarily an iterative process in which data gathered and observations made in early stages guide the methodology and research activities chosen in later stages (Becker 1998; Becker 2009), in-the-field data analysis comprised a central part of my work as I looked to see if the type and quality of the data I gathered met my research needs so that I might adjust accordingly. Flexibility and a willingness to regularly revisit my assumptions, methodology, and goals were central to conducting ethnographic research that is sensitive to its context. Analysis and dissertation writing while in the field allowed me to revisit my hypotheses and to think about how the specialized knowledge I gathered speaks back to current theory and how it addresses larger issues of contemporary social or intellectual concern. The drawback to this approach however, was that it became nearly impossible for me to stop collecting data and to write based on the data I had collected. Writing while still in the field emphasized how in some respects the observations one makes are mere snapshots of an incredibly complex and shifting field of practice and ideology.

Phase 1 & 2: Tafza and Mohammedia

My first priority in both Tafza and Mohammedia was to conduct a door-to-door survey of reading and writing habits using random sampling. This was a data collection technique I designed during my pre-dissertation research on USAID's Passerelle program with the goal of establishing basic correlations between locally defined, salient social identities (such as, but not limited to, age, gender), mother tongue language, education, and literacy practices in my research communities. It provided an opportunity to introduce myself and my project to the residents of my field sites. Questions of interest included: What types of literacy materials are in the house and where? Who has access to them? What literacy practices are performed inside/outside the house and by whom? Given Tafza's small size, I was able to randomly select 20 households from the total number of households for my study. In Mohammedia, given its large population, it was necessary to randomly choose households from an area cluster sample by focusing on the specific neighborhoods in which the literacy learners in the class I observe lived (Bernard 2005).

For the first two phases of my research, I relied on data elicitation techniques of participant-observation (Maxwell 2004) and semi-structured interviews (Agrosino 2002; Ervin 2000). In each field site, I engaged in regular classroom observation and audio tape recording of teachers' and learners' speech in a local government-run Passerelle program. In Tafza, I observed a class of 50 women literacy learners and in Mohammedia I worked with a class of 40 women. Drawing from methods developed in conversation analysis (Clayman and Maynard 1994; Sidnell 2007), I looked at how conversation is organized and locally managed in classrooms settings as a way to identify implicit ideologies regarding language. Understanding the literacy classroom as an

institutionalized site of “metadiscursively evidenced ideological formations” (Silverstein 1998) about both language and social life more generally, I transcribed recordings with the aid of research assistants in each site, noting any patterns of rationalizing discourses that may indicate ideological embeddedness (Schieffelin 2001). I collected samples of Passerelle literacy training materials, such as modified excerpts of the 2004 Moroccan Family Code, a law that radically expanded women’s marital and property rights. I also collected samples of neo-literate writing for discourse analysis in order to analyze choices Passerelle learners make in representing their mother tongue in Standard Arabic orthography. For example, I was offered samples of neo-literate writing in Tafza in the form of recipe cards of popular regional dishes that were written by literacy learners in the final weeks of their class. Interestingly, although these women had fully transitioned to studying Standard Arabic and all written use of mother tongue languages had been eradicated from class by that point, almost all of the women chose to write their recipes in Moroccan Arabic (one in Tamazight) instead of Standard Arabic (see Chapter 2).

Based on the rapport I developed with some of these women and their interest in participating in my research, I collected life histories from a small subset of women interviewed and recruited some of them in a case study analysis. By tracing their wider social and familial networks and observing the patterns and intricacies of their everyday life activities, I developed a more nuanced understanding of the role of literacy and education in their lives, including aspects of their lives that did not emerge in an interview setting. I also made contextual descriptions and transcribed recordings of “literacy events” (Marcus 1998; Street 2001) in order to observe literacy practices already present in the community and if/how they may have been altered following the

introduction of Passerelle. These included reciting the Qur'an, helping children with homework, paying utility bills, going to marketplace, using cellular phones and traveling on buses. I described the social life of textual materials presented in Passerelle literacy classes and how they were entextualized in verbal discourse and written texts. I compared this with the circulation of other locally meaningful texts such as framed excerpts of the Qur'an and medical paperwork.

Most of my time spent during research, however, was in documenting instances of mother tongue written material outside the classroom in Tafza, Mohammedia and elsewhere in Morocco. I focused on the form and meanings behind written representations of Moroccan Arabic in both private and public space. I noted who produced a particular text, for what intended audience, about what, and in which alphabet it was produced. It was through this approach that I came to appreciate the vibrant presence of written Moroccan Arabic in a variety of contexts, and to carefully document the different forms, meanings and ideologies associated with it. Friends in Tafza patiently taught me how to properly compose text messages in their mother tongue language and Khalti Latifa's daughter and friends shared metacommentary on Moroccan Arabic dubbed television series. I carefully photographed and annotated images of written Moroccan Arabic used in urban billboard ad campaigns and conducted archival research on an out-of-print "Moroccan Arabic" magazine.

Phase 3: Multi-sited comparative study

Unlike in Phases 1 & 2, my research goals in the final phase were not to develop a single site-specific and in-depth knowledge of literacy practices and ideologies among a limited group of women Passerelle learners and educators. Rather, I aimed to get a

broader sense of the relationship between literacy practices and systems of ideology by speaking with a larger sample of women representing a more diffuse time-space (Marcus 1998). Phase 3 recognized that a thorough understanding of ideologies surrounding Passerelle methodology, and the degree to which identified ideologies may be assumed to be generalized or shared amongst program participants, or subgroups thereof, requires a multi-sited research approach. Such an approach encouraged me to flow between sites, following paths of both people (literacy learners, educators and their social networks) and ideas (such as the value of mother tongue literacy). I noted how the detailed observations I made in my two main field sites, Tafza and Mohammedia, compared with the experiences of a wider sample of women learners. I identified regional contrasts as well as more general tendencies and patterns across groups, which will in turn highlight shared interconnections and ideologies between place, language, literacy and ideology.

Organization of chapters

This dissertation examines the recent emergence of written representations of Moroccan Arabic in a variety of contexts and considers the ideological implications of these changes. My dissertation has been organized into six main chapters representing the six “sightings” of Moroccan Arabic in new forms and contexts. It questions if such changes are producing ideological disjuncture, and if so, with what consequences. It looks at the roles, if any, of fractal recursivity and erasure that is entailed in denying the disjuncture. By comparing the form, role and interpretations of written Moroccan Arabic across contexts, I argue that speaking of ideological disjuncture must be grounded in specific literacy practices and situated moments. That is, the overall disjuncture, drawn from the observation that Moroccan Arabic is increasingly being represented in written

form despite the fact that many Moroccans believe it should not be written, is resolved in some contexts and not others. My dissertation will show that this difference can be linked to a recursive application of the oral/written opposition; ideologies of intimacy and things considered *hchuma* ‘shameful’; notions of time and space; and how Moroccan Arabic is opposed to other language varieties and forms in each setting.

Chapter 2 begins with an exploration of language ideologies surrounding new forms and uses of mother tongue languages (Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight) in the domain of adult education. It takes adult women’s mother tongue literacy classrooms as a site to understand how education planners, teachers, and literacy students use mother tongue languages. Chapter 2 reveals the different types of ideological disjuncture embedded in the Passerelle literacy project. Education is firmly considered the domain of Standard Arabic. The creation of a legitimate role for Moroccan Arabic in the literacy classroom was experienced as an ideological disjuncture by a number of literacy learners and their educators. This chapter illustrates how the disjuncture was creatively responded to by multiple actors through strategies of hybridity as well as through the semiotic processes of fractal recursivity and erasure. I show that although most people explicitly support the use of mother tongue languages in the adult literacy context, and although the Passerelle program dedicated a central role to writing Moroccan Arabic in the classroom, in practice teachers avoided modeling the writing of Moroccan Arabic. Instead, they reproduced in practice dominant ideologies associating Moroccan Arabic with orality and Standard Arabic with writing. Furthermore, in the classroom, Moroccan Arabic was associated with a sense of “temporariness” and rural areas, whereas Standard Arabic was

associated with knowledge, a religious (and moral) history and future, as well as increased access to geographic and social spaces.

I argue that in the context of education, Standard Arabic is firmly grounded as the dominant language, and alternative ideologies that place value on writing Moroccan Arabic cannot take root. The erasure of written literacy practices in Moroccan Arabic in the classroom became a strategy for Passerelle teachers to deal with ideological disjuncture. What became important to teachers and students in Passerelle classes was the legitimization of Moroccan Arabic as an oral medium of instruction in the classroom to enhance a sense of intimacy and engagement amongst learners (i.e. the idea that the use of mother tongue languages is “okay” in the classroom), rather than Moroccan Arabic literacy as an educational goal in itself.¹⁵ Observations outside the classroom revealed the practice of writing Moroccan Arabic was not adopted by women literacy learners in their everyday lives.

In Chapter 3, I look at a new site of mother tongue literacy practices: SMS text messaging. This chapter discusses how the introduction of new media technologies, in this case the cellular phone and SMS text messaging capabilities, to Morocco in the early 2000’s, created a unique opportunity for mother tongue languages to expand in a new domain and become the unmarked language in contrast with Standard Arabic. Whereas Chapter 2 discusses how ideologies supporting the writing of Moroccan Arabic in an education setting did not successfully take root, Chapter 3 shows a context in which

¹⁵ I do not want to imply that mother tongue languages were not already used in practice in classrooms throughout Morocco. On the contrary, it is common for teachers to talk to students in Moroccan Arabic in classroom settings, however, there is a strong, shared, prescriptive ideology amongst Moroccans that Standard Arabic should be the only language used in the classroom. The use of Moroccan Arabic by teachers is viewed by many as presenting an obstacle to students’ acquisition of Standard Arabic, which in turn is seen as the gateway to greater knowledge. Most people, however, will admit the use of Moroccan Arabic is regrettably necessary at times to ensure students’ comprehension and encourage open communication in the classroom.

written varieties of mother tongue languages became the dominant form of expression. This was able to happen, I argue, through the semiotic process of fractal recursivity which serves to divide the category of “written language” into that which is “more like speech” (written Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight) and that which is “more like writing” (written Standard Arabic). I show that the alignment of this language ideology with media ideologies, which define SMS text messages as being a medium more like “talk” than “writing,” allows Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight to be seen as the most appropriate varieties for texting despite arguments that have traditionally privileged Standard Arabic as *the* written language. Thus, unlike in the context of adult literacy education, in SMS text messaging the disjuncture is primarily resolved through a rescaling of an ideological binary, rather than through the practice of erasure.

Furthermore, in Chapter 2 I suggest that mother tongue languages assume a dominant role in SMS text messaging due both to the novelty of the medium as well as to the form of the text messages. Attention to the form of text messages and how sounds are represented creatively with Roman characters shows how this medium is understood as particularly suited to representing oral languages that, at the time of my research, did not have a standardized writing system. The creativity and playfulness of the form is iconic of ideologies of Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight as being lighthearted, informal and the language of intimacy, friends and the everyday. Unlike other chapters whose focus is more on oppositions between Moroccan and Standard Arabic, or varieties of Arabic and French, this chapter looks at relationships between oral mother tongue languages and “written languages” as well as between Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight.

Chapter 3 also highlights two central themes: issues of intimacy related to notions of public/private and *hchuma*. I consider media ideologies regarding the telephone and SMS text messages that alternatively identify the telephone as either a private or a public medium of communication. When viewed as private, Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight are positively valorized as the languages of choice. However, when viewed as public these same languages become risky, potentially revealing and open to regulation by other family members. This is in part due to the fact that communication in mother tongue languages is viewed as more intimate and personal than in Standard Arabic or French. Finally, this chapter also looks at code-switching patterns in the text messages, which show that while Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight are the unmarked languages for this domain, there are however, some topics for which they are inappropriate mediums. These include words considered *hchuma*, i.e. too intimate, when expressed in mother tongue languages, including among others those pertaining to love and sexual relationships. To express such ideas, French or less commonly English were the main languages of choice.

Chapter 4 looks at a third site of written representations of Moroccan Arabic, but this time in a public setting and in a different form. It analyzes a major ad campaign run in Casablanca in 2010 by a telecommunications company who, during their rebranding period, published street billboards in Moroccan Arabic. In this chapter, I look at the form and use of language and written script in these billboard ads and the relative hierarchy of languages being presented. Unlike in the text messages of Chapter 3, where Moroccan Arabic was written in Roman script, in the billboard campaign, under analysis Moroccan Arabic was represented in Arabic script. As in the mother tongue literacy classroom, I

anticipated the representation of Moroccan Arabic in Arabic script in these ads to cause a significant ideological disjuncture for viewers. Notably, however, the Moroccans I spoke with did not express interest or unease in how Moroccan Arabic was being portrayed in written form in this kind of public space (an observation that contrasts sharply with those I made in other contexts such as weekly news magazines, a topic I turn to in Chapter 6). The use of Moroccan Arabic, believed to encourage feelings of intimacy and closeness, in written advertising campaigns, was generally viewed as a creative and effective way for companies to reach out to customers and increase product sales.

In Chapter 4, I analyze the reactions of Casablanca residents from a wide spectrum of the socio-economic ladder to the billboard campaign. I show that despite the emergence of Moroccan Arabic written in Arabic script in public ad space, the way the ads portray Moroccan Arabic with respect to Standard Arabic recalls the same binary distinctions commonly made between the two varieties and thus reproduces existing language hierarchies. Through fractal recursivity, telephone conversations transcribed in Moroccan Arabic on the billboards become interpreted as “oral language,” and stand in contrast to the “written language” Standard Arabic, which was used to represent the official information. Thus, while in some respects billboards such as these arguable raise the value of Moroccan Arabic and make claims for an expansion of its role and form in public space, Moroccan Arabic’s positioning as an inherently oral language with less status than Standard Arabic or French is still emphasized.

In Chapter 5, I turn my analytical attention to a setting in which Moroccan Arabic has recently assumed a newly popular, and at first glance “*oral*” role in public space: as a language used to dub foreign films for broadcasting on the national television station 2M.

I look at some of the media practices surrounding the reception and production of these shows and consider how they intertwine with other social practices. By focusing on the production of these dubbed series, I reveal how a “hidden” Moroccan Arabic transcript exists which mediates between the original language of the scripts and the dubbed versions on TV. I consider how the process of moving from the written to oral version of the script is negotiated by sound technicians and voice actors and what language ideologies are evidenced at play. I argue that the success of Moroccan Arabic in this new domain is largely due to ideologies that highlight its oral role as the language of dubbing and thus help erase awareness of its presence in the translated script. Indeed, in order for the series to be a success, the hidden script, whose existence is necessary for creating a dubbed version, must be simultaneously be erased in its own performance.

I show that Moroccan Arabic dubbed foreign series present an additional and different type of ideological disjuncture to viewers in the use of Moroccan Arabic to represent taboo topics on public television. In Chapter 3, topics such as love and sex in text messages were often represented in French or English, a pattern that is similar to how women reported exchanging terms of endearments with their spouses in everyday life. In contrast, topics normally considered *hchuma* are presented in the dubbed foreign series directly in Moroccan Arabic. I argue a disjuncture is thus experienced by viewers when they hear taboo topics discussed in Moroccan Arabic in dubbed foreign series. This sense of disjuncture can work to dislocate viewers from a position of ignoring evidence of dubbing conventions, which, when successful, allow viewers to imagine that the characters on the screen are actually speaking in Moroccan Arabic. At these moments, when viewers gain critical distance from the language used in the dubbing, the existence

of a written script and the context of its translation comes to the forefront. I thus argue that Moroccan Arabic dubbed series problematize approaches that place language use and literacy practices into neatly opposing categories of oral and written language. Finally, I discuss the Moroccan government's reaction to the rapid rise in popularity and airtime of these shows, which was to develop quotas for the amount of television broadcasting required and allowed in the different languages. The theme of the regulation of new forms of Moroccan Arabic, and the political interests such as regulation reflects, thus shifts the focus in this chapter from the family (discussed in Chapter 3) to institutions such as recording studios and the government.

Chapter 6 analyzes a case in which Moroccan Arabic assumed a significant written role in the biweekly magazine called *Nichane* that was renowned for being published in Moroccan Arabic. The written representation of Moroccan Arabic in the journalism context previously reserved for Standard Arabic, about topics normally considered taboo, produced a number of ideological disjunctures. These occurred even though for the most part only the titles, subtitles and some vocabulary items of the magazine were in Moroccan Arabic, whereas the bulk of the main text of the articles remained in Standard Arabic. This indicates powerful linguistic ideologies at play for readers in which even a small percentage of written Moroccan Arabic in a text can mark the entire text as being in Moroccan Arabic. This, I argue is achieved through fractal recursivity and erasure which work to rescale the opposition Moroccan Arabic vs. Standard Arabic so that *Nichane* the "Moroccan Arabic" magazine is critically compared to traditional "Standard Arabic" magazines.

As in Chapters 2 and 4, the Arabic script instead of the Roman was used to represent both varieties of Arabic in the magazine. While in some respects using the same script for the two varieties may suggest that they are equally valued, the additional use of short vowels in only the Moroccan Arabic portions of the text implies that unlike Standard Arabic, Moroccan Arabic is awkward to represent in written form. Extra measures are needed to represent it so that it can be easily understood. Perhaps the most marked ideological disjuncture created by *Nichane* was the publishing of stories about topics such as sex and politics that are normally considered *hchuma* for public conversation in Moroccan Arabic, though permissible if done in French. I argue that this ties back into an earlier discussion in Chapter 3 about how Moroccan Arabic is viewed as an intimate, uniquely direct and unmediated channel of communication that can reach directly to readers. Finally, this chapter continues the discussion of broader issues of language regimentation and institutions raised in Chapter 5 by discussing the history of *Nichane*, which, only four years after beginning, was reportedly run out of business by the Moroccan government for printing politically and socially sensitive subjects in Moroccan Arabic.

Chapter 7 reflects on the controversy surrounding a late 2013 debate regarding a proposal made to the King of Morocco to make Moroccan Arabic a language of instruction in early primary education. I discuss the form and content of reactions to the proposal collected from personal observation, news sources and online social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The complex and recursive nature of the embedding of text and spoken language in social media destabilizes oral/written dichotomies and juxtaposes Moroccan Arabic in interesting ways to other languages and forms. An

analysis of reactions to the debate reveals that Moroccans are overwhelmingly *not* in favor of an official role for Moroccan Arabic in public. The suggestion to institutionalize literacy practices in Moroccan Arabic, is viewed as a threat to the political, social, economic and religious future of Morocco, as it is believed it would significantly weaken Moroccan's command of Standard Arabic. My analysis reveals that a historical approach to uncovering the power relations embedded in current Standard Arabic and French literacy practices in education is critical to understanding how new Moroccan Arabic literacy practices are received across different contexts.

In Chapter 8, the conclusion, I present a discussion of this dissertation's contributions to linguistic anthropology and studies of Morocco and Arabic literacy. This includes the analysis of the role of fractal recursivity in mediating ideological disjuncture, and to ethnographic research on Arabic language and newly emerging literacy practices in Morocco. I offer concluding thoughts on how Moroccan Arabic is associated with intimacy, *hchuma*, and orality. I believe that despite the success of certain Moroccan Arabic literacy practices in the domains of text messaging, advertising and dubbed foreign series, the future of Moroccan diglossia is ambiguous given the overwhelming support for the maintenance of Standard Arabic as the language of instruction in public schools. Indeed, as revealed in Chapter 7, Moroccans as a whole are strongly committed to diglossia as an ideology of language. I suggest that the domains of public education and social media are fertile contexts for future research on Moroccan Arabic literacy practices and the themes raised in this dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO

Building Bridges: Mother Tongue Literacy as a Road to Standard Arabic

In December 2008, in a cold, drafty elementary school classroom, in a village outside the city of Beni Mellal in Central Morocco, a group of over 50 adult women gathered nightly for their local literacy class. Among them were women who had dropped out of elementary school as well as women who had never been enrolled in school. Most of the women were in their thirties and forties, the youngest being 16 years old and the oldest over 65. None of them professed being able to read or write in Arabic and many had never held a pencil or knew how to sign their names.

Literacy class began the same way each night, with the teacher introducing the new letter of the day to be learned and asking the students to offer words they knew which contained the sound represented by that letter. During one of the first classes, for example, the women studied the Arabic letter < ب > “ba” representing the phoneme /b/, and were asked to offer words with the sound /b/ in them. Fatima, a married woman in her 40’s, offered the word /br:ad/ ‘teapot’ and Naima, a bright young girl to her right, offered the word /byit/ meaning ‘I want.’ Moroccans recognize these two words as specifically pertaining to Moroccan Arabic and not to Standard Arabic. The teacher accepted both of those words as good examples and asked for more examples from the class. Khadija, a married woman in her late 20’s, shouted out the word “babun” /babun/ meaning ‘door’ but the teacher shook her head. *‘That word is from Fusha [Standard*

Arabic]’ she said. ‘*Now we are working in Darija,¹⁶ not in Fusha. How would we say that word in Darija?’ “Bab” someone else shouted. ‘*Good,*’ said the teacher¹⁷ and wrote the word <باب> on the board in Arabic.*

For many Moroccans, an interchange like this between a teacher and student in a classroom setting strikes them as wrong, backward or in the least as very strange. In Morocco as in other Arabic speaking countries, Standard Arabic is viewed as the language of education and literacy; the place of dialects such as Moroccan Arabic is in the home. Many believe that Moroccan Arabic should not be taught in the classroom, as it is “merely a dialect” and not a language of institutions. One would expect then to see these women admonished for using Moroccan Arabic in the classroom and encouraged to only use Standard Arabic, not the other way around. These women, however, were not in a normative literacy program. Rather they were among the first women to participate in the launch of a new adult literacy methodology called *Passerelle* that was developed, in part, by international education specialists, and had been adopted by the Moroccan government. This chapter takes the *Passerelle* literacy project in Morocco as a rich site to interrogate ideologies surrounding new forms and uses of mother tongue languages in the domain of adult education.

“Bridging the gap”: The *Passerelle* approach

Discourses on literacy that posit it as an autonomous skill are often echoed by education experts in Morocco. Former Moroccan Minister of Education Anis Birou was once quoted as describing illiterate Moroccans as “handicapped individuals” who

¹⁶ “Darija” is a term used by Moroccans to refer to spoken Moroccan Arabic. In other Arab countries, the variety of colloquial Arabic spoken is more commonly referred to as “al-‘mia.”

¹⁷ Audio recording December 15, 2008. My translation from Moroccan Arabic.

reproduce cycles of illiteracy, thereby stalling the overall development and progress of Morocco as a “modern nation” (Gattioul 2006). Similarly, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Rabat has argued in public reports that “Morocco’s educational growth and economic development are constrained by ... high illiteracy rates, especially for women” and thus views women’s illiteracy as a challenge to development and to Morocco “opening to the world.”¹⁸ Statements such as these reflect growing anxieties about Morocco’s high illiteracy rates and the nature of their relation to Morocco’s role in a rapidly changing global economy. In doing so, they assert a potentially transformative power to literacy as an effective instrument in the formation of nations and citizens. They also reveal how language ideologies, beliefs about language and literacy, are mobilized by the Moroccan government, educators, and laypeople alike to link literacy to ideas of gender, economic development, and nationhood in ways that are neither neutral nor unpositioned, but are rather embedded in and constitutive of existing power relations (Irvine and Gal 2000). Literacy programs in Morocco, particularly those targeted at women, can thus be understood as explicit moral and political projects.

The literacy program that is the focus of this chapter is an example of one such project. In 2005, an innovative approach to adult literacy acquisition, called “Passerelle”, was designed by Moroccan and American educational and policy professionals as part of a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) project named “Advancing Learning and Employability for a Better Future” (ALEF) based in Rabat, Morocco. “Passerelle,” a French word that refers to a foot bridge linking two bodies of land together over a ravine, is a new methodology that aims to teach adult Moroccan

¹⁸<http://www.usaid.gov/ma/programs/ed.html>, accessed October 5 2006.

women Standard Arabic through mother tongue literacy education. Women in Passerelle classes learn to identify and represent phonemes in either Moroccan Arabic or Tamazight using Standard Arabic orthography before transitioning to Standard Arabic grammar and vocabulary.

In 2005-2007 USAID/ALEF ran a two year pilot study to evaluate the design and effectiveness of the Passerelle methodology in four regions of Morocco: Grand Casablanca, Chaouia Ourdigha, Meknès-Tafilalt, and Oriental. During the first pilot year, 1,600 women participated in the study. During the second test year, enrollment increased to a total of 8,240 women. An evaluation of second test year of the Passerelle approach conducted in 2006-2007 showed that adult learners enrolled in Passerelle-based classes had higher retention rates and outperformed students who had been enrolled in the normative government program (El Harras 2007). Due to these and other positive progress reports prepared by ALEF and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Moroccan Ministry of Non-formal Education and local nonprofit organizations in Morocco adopted Passerelle methodology in 2008 as the official first phase of adult women's literacy training and expanded its area of implementation to two additional regions in Morocco: Beni Mellal and Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer.

An underlying assumption behind the Passerelle program is that mother tongue literacy education is cognitively easier for learners. This assumption suggests that USAID's approach of teaching women to write based on their native language competency in some ways steps outside culturally independent views of literacy and recognizes, in part, the cultural and linguistic situatedness of literacy practices. Of course, USAID is not alone in making assumptions about the natural, cognitive ease of

mother tongue literacy, and in fact, their position builds directly from a statement made at a 1953 UNESCO literacy conference on vernacular literacy acquisition for children. At the conference it was claimed, “It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child to read is his mother-tongue. Psychologically, it is the medium of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding” (UNESCO 1953). Though the focus of this conference was on children’s literacy, its acknowledgment of the importance of taking into consideration mother-tongue language skills in literacy acquisition contexts has been repeatedly picked-up by adult literacy campaigns across the world. Although UNESCO has long encouraged the use of mother languages in teaching literacy as a good pedagogical choice and mother tongue literacy education has successfully been implemented in a wide array of diverse linguistic settings, the Passerelle literacy approach represents the first time in the Arab world that mother tongue literacy has been officially endorsed for the acquisition of Standard Arabic. In doing so, the Passerelle literacy program in Morocco becomes an interesting site to interrogate what ideological issues on the part of policy makers, educators and adult learners come into play when the idea of writing Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight in Arabic script is addressed.

This chapter argues that the idea to teach Standard Arabic literacy through mother tongue literacy education in Morocco, though innovative, proved to be an ideologically contentious initiative as reflected in the design of Passerelle literacy primers and in the experiences of teachers and adult literacy learners in the classroom. I show that the ideological disjunctures were resolved in practice by relegating Moroccan Arabic to the role of “oral language” and when that was not possible, to utilize strategies of

simultaneity. In order to shed light on the complex ideologies surrounding the Passerelle program, this chapter opens with a brief overview of adult literacy education in Morocco and a discussion of what it means to be *qari* 'literate' in Morocco.

Adult literacy education in Morocco

In October 2003, Mohammed VI King of Morocco declared October 13th to be National Literacy Day and vigorously promoted the development of new strategies and tactics in what had been termed the “fight against illiteracy.” What followed was a general period of innovation and expansion in adult literacy programs in Morocco, all of which shared the goals of dramatically increasing enrollment, improving program retention rates, and engaging additional government ministries and local non-profit organizations in the effort (Yacine 2009). It was during this period of innovation that the Passerelle program emerged. What distinguishes the Passerelle approach from other literacy programs, such as the Moroccan government’s normative literacy program, is its official incorporation of mother tongue languages in the teaching of sound to letter correspondences and in its emphasis on dialogue between teacher and student.

The normative government adult literacy program in Morocco places strong emphasis on Standard Arabic both as the language of teaching and of literacy acquisition. Although in practice, oral communication between teachers and students in government literacy classes may be conducted in Moroccan Arabic or Tamazight, the use of spoken and written Standard Arabic classroom is expected. This contrasts with language norms in children’s primary school, where students still report teachers hitting them with a ruler for speaking in Tamazight, and less often in Moroccan Arabic, in the classroom. The normative government literacy program takes 360 hours to complete. The introductory

level literacy primers present linguistic elements specific to Standard Arabic grammar and pronunciation from the first days of class.

These government literacy programs have historically been plagued by low enrollment and retention rates among adult women and recently, increased attention and effort has been made to determine the causes. In the first published, empirically based study of adult literacy in Morocco, Boukous and Agnaou (2001) argue that language difficulties constitute one of the primary factors contributing to both the high drop-out rate among adult literacy learners and the failure of Moroccan literacy programs to prepare non-literate adults to take advantage of opportunities and resources in a literate environment. Indeed, many Moroccan education policy makers are convinced that a linguistic gap exists between Standard and Moroccan Arabic, as well as between Standard Arabic and Tamazight, which manifests as a cognitive block to Standard Arabic literacy acquisition. As one adult literacy policy planner in the Grand Casablanca Education Academy explained to me during an interview, it is “un choc psychologique” ‘a psychological shock’ to women to be brusquely ripped from one linguistic milieu (that of Moroccan Arabic or Tamazight) and be thrown into Standard Arabic.¹⁹ He elaborated that there are great differences between Standard Arabic, which he characterized as organized and orderly, and Moroccan Arabic, which he associated with mythology and disorder. He furthermore argued that it is cognitively too difficult for adult learners in Morocco, and particularly for those monolingual in Tamazight, to acquire both literacy skills and the Standard Arabic language at the same time. This view was one I commonly heard echoed when questioning ordinary Moroccans about their attitudes

¹⁹ Interview in French with government literacy program development specialists in the Education Academy of Grand Casablanca.

towards different languages in Morocco. It is clearly aligned with the autonomous views of literacy discussed in Chapter 1, which assume that reading and writing skills can create cognitive divides between individuals.

What does it mean to be qari?

*Qari*²⁰ is an adjective in Moroccan Arabic that means ‘educated’ or ‘literate.’ It is often applied to describe people who have completed elementary school and passed their 5th grade exam. In his rich ethnography *Literacy, Culture, and Development: Becoming Literate in Morocco*, Wagner (1993) steps outside of Western based conceptions of what it means to be “literate,” and instead develops an ethnographically based conception of literacy in Morocco that goes beyond mere reading and writing, to include “many types of skills, behaviors and attitudes” (259).

When I first was introduced to the women in the Passerelle literacy class in Tafza, I was repeatedly told “*Ana ma qariach*” which I initially understood as ‘I don’t know how to read or write.’ As the women were all enrolled in an introductory literacy class, this made sense to me. Many of them had never attended public school, and those that had begun school had dropped out by the age of 10 or 11. However, as I got to know the women and their family members individually, I learned that what it means to be *qari* can have much broader associations than merely the skills of reading or writing in Arabic.

One clear example is illustrated by a woman in the class named Soumia. Soumia was in her mid-20’s, married, with two small children, and living at her mother-in-law’s house. Soumia’s parents were Amazigh, but like many children in Tafza, she had grown up speaking both Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight as a child. When I first met Soumia,

²⁰ The feminine form of the adjective is *qaria*.

she described herself as “*maqariach*,” what I understood at the time to mean ‘illiterate,’ and held up one of my pens joking “*hada walu*” by which she meant ‘I know nothing of this.’ It caught me by surprise weeks later when she picked up a newspaper clipping I had in Standard Arabic, and began to fluently read out loud an article on international commerce. ‘But I thought you couldn’t read or write!’ I exclaimed. “*Wa la! Ana maqariach ulakin tenqra mezyan*” ‘But no! I am not educated, but I can read well.’

Soumia explained to me that at the age of four years old her parents had sent her to Qur’anic school to study the Qur’an. There she recounted learning to read all the letters and diacritics of the Arabic alphabet and memorizing the verses of the Qur’an. Though she was also taught to write some letters with chalk on small boards, she said the emphasis was on memorization and oral recitation, not on writing. Thus, she quickly forgot how to write when her parents took her out of the school at age 6. The oldest of her siblings, Soumia never attended public school, but rather stayed home and helped her mother with the household chores and in caring for her younger brothers and sisters, all of whom studied well into secondary school. Like her mother, who also was not educated, Soumia was bright, with a clever tongue and keen interest in current events. When I would visit for lunch, we would often watch the mid-day news in Standard Arabic and she would translate news stories that I didn’t understand into Moroccan Arabic.

Soumia was comfortable manipulating a wide variety of literacy artifacts. As she was often the one to answer the door, it was she who usually collected the utilities bill that arrived each month and told her mother-in-law how much the family owed. Soumia had a small book of traditional Moroccan cookie recipes that she once got out to make a

specialty cookie for her cousin's wedding. Though she did not understand everything she read, she could decipher medication dosages and would read medicine inserts out loud at the request of her neighbors, usually translating the Standard Arabic words into Tamazight. Despite these skills, Soumia and her immediate family considered her to be “*maqariach*” ‘uneducated’ and that is why she was attending literacy class. ‘I want to learn to write well and to tell people I went to school,’ she told me.

The word *qari* was also frequently used with the word *wa‘i*, meaning ‘aware’ or ‘conscientious.’ Another woman in our class once proudly told me “*wakha ana ma qariach, ana wa‘ia*” ‘even though I am not educated, I am aware.’ She said this to me while recounting her experiences fighting her husband for custody of their two sons in family court. She was emphasizing the fact to me that while she may not be educated or literate, she was aware of her rights and did not get taken advantage of by her husband's family during the divorce. She confided an amazing story of a trip she had had to make alone to Rabat, carrying her infant son on her back, during which she successfully navigated for the first time public transport and assured the payment of alimony by her husband's employer, the Moroccan National Guard. As seen in this example, the term *wa‘i* can also index someone who is ‘street smart.’

At the end of my time with the women in Tafza, I asked them if they now considered themselves either *qaria*, *wa‘ia*, or both. Most of the women did not believe they had become *qaria* by the end of the literacy school year and some asked me to intervene with the local governmental branch of the education ministry to help them get more literacy classes in the future. Most did however place great value on the symbolic importance of literacy learning and the feeling of being ‘schooled,’ objectives that can

often take priority over the acquisition of functional literacies (Robinson-Pant 2004). They also reported having learned many useful things about health, education and women's rights during our discussions in class. This alone, they argued, did not make someone *wa'i*; *wa'i* was rather an innate quality that one is born with.

The Passerelle literacy approach

In developing the Passerelle methodology, educators and policy planners involved with USAID's project ALEF aligned with the view that it is easier for adult women to learn to memorize letters in Standard Arabic by means of one's mother tongue language than it is for them to begin directly with Standard Arabic. The notion that using Moroccan Arabic or Tamazight allowed for a more direct, personal and immediate connection to a speaker than did a foreign language or Standard Arabic was a widely held ideology amongst the people I worked with. Thus, one of the hallmarks of the Passerelle literacy approach is that it incorporates what is considered a temporary, though foundational, stage of mother tongue literacy education into the already existing government program in order to help bridge the linguistic and psychological gap adult learners are believed to face in acquiring Standard Arabic. Instead of spending the entire academic year solely immersed in Standard Arabic, students in Passerelle based literacy programs use their mother tongue as the dominant language of communication and instruction in the classroom.

Adult women spend the first 60 contact hours of class working with two "pre-literacy" primers that teach them how to correspond sounds in their mother tongue languages to letters in the Arabic alphabet, followed by a period of 300 hours in which they complete the two Standard Arabic primers of the normative government literacy

program. The primers were designed to be visually appealing to the women with bright blue covers, professional quality paper stock, and full color drawings at the beginning of each chapter that introduce the theme of the unit.²¹ The primers were lightweight and short so as not to, in the words of an ALEF educator, “overwhelm” beginning adult learners. During the “pre-literacy” phase, women are taught a simplified version of the Arabic writing system in which only the letters of the Arabic alphabet and numbers are introduced. The diacritics of the Arabic script, including those that indicate short vowels and consonant length, are not taught until learners begin the Standard Arabic primers in the “literacy” phase. It is believed that by teaching the letters separately from the diacritic marks, adult learners will be able to learn to encode and decode sound/letter correspondences in their mother tongue language more quickly.

²¹ See Meek & Messing (2007) for a discussion of how the production value of language learning materials (full color vs. black and white text, for example) can function as powerful social index. They suggest that the plainness of a black and white text promoting a minority language may in fact undermine well-meaning aims to valorizing the language through its written publication, especially when compared to higher quality, colored texts present in majority language publications (112).



Figure 2: Two Passerelle literacy teachers in central Morocco admire the efforts of one of their students to practice the different shapes of the Arabic letters on the main door of their house. Notice this student is practicing writing the letters without diacritics.

In contrast to the Passerelle approach, normative government literacy classes teach each letter of the Arabic alphabet along with each of eight diacritic marks resulting in a different pronunciation for each letter and diacritic combination from the first day of class. I had the opportunity to observe normative government literacy classes during pre-dissertation research I conducted in the fall of 2007. I remember clearly as the teacher began class by writing the date in the center of the chalkboard, and under it the letter <ﺏ> > “ba” eight times. To each of the letters, she added one of eight diacritic marks which phonemically represent the short vowel phonemes /a, i, u/, consonant length, and also grammatically represent the nominative, accusative and genitive cases. In learning the form of the letter <ﺏ> the women would repeat in unison after the teacher as she

repeatedly read out loud the various forms of <ب> “ba” as follows: <بُ> /bu/, <بَ> /ba/, <بِ> /bi/, <بُن> /bun/, <بَن> /ban/, <بِن> /bin/, <بْ> /b/, <بِْ> /b:/. In a following class, the women were taught the three positional variants for the letter <ب>, thus adding an additional layer of difficulty to the task.

What was striking to me as I observed the class, was not only the complexity of what was being taught in the very first lesson, but also the complete lack of explanation provided by the teacher as to why this letter could have so many different “names” as the women often understood it. Shockingly, none of the women questioned this, perhaps because many of them were familiar with hearing these short vowels in recitations of the Qur’an and by children working on their homework. In school, children begin immediately to distinguish between words they use to name things at home and how the same words sound when they are in school. A common habit I observed among children and adult literacy learners alike is to mark all nouns with the definite, nominative case, as that is the case most practiced in the lower levels.

This was illustrated to me one evening in December 2008 while sipping tea with Khalti Latifa and her son Abdelali. As the tea was being poured, I asked Khalti Latifa if she could please help me learn more “*Darija*” ‘Moroccan Arabic’ vocabulary and to correct me when I made mistakes speaking. She argued that she was not “*qaria*” ‘educated’ and couldn’t offer me anything. While trying to convince her that of course she knew many things in Darija (as indeed our conversation was in Moroccan Arabic!), I pointed to the door and asked ‘*what’s that?*’ to which she responded /babun/ ‘door.’ The lexical morpheme /bab/ exists in both Standard and Moroccan Arabic, but by adding the indefinite nominate case marker /un/, Khalti Latifa marked the word as Standard Arabic.

‘No, she wants Darija!’ her son cut in. “*Haka*” ‘I get it’ responded Khalti Latifa, emphasizing her understanding with a rising and falling intonation.

When I had initially requested that she teach me vocabulary, Khalti Latifa had misunderstood my request to mean words in Standard Arabic. Despite not having ever attended school, she was familiar with the grammatical suffix /un/ and associated it with words learned in a formal educational setting. Khalti Latifa’s response reveals her alignment with the ideology that Moroccan Arabic is not something learned in education. It also supports a comment made by Haeri, citing Jakobson (1957 [1971]), that “pieces of grammar can acquire iconicity as sounds” (2003:108). I argue that the /un/ suffix for Khalti Latifa, and many other women I met through the literacy class, is iconic of education and “proper” Arabic.

Importantly, mother tongue languages were also incorporated into Passerelle literacy training though an emphasis on using dialogue and discussion as a way to inductively elicit classroom material based on the interests and knowledge of student learners. Since the idea of the Passerelle literacy approach emerged immediately following important amendments made in 2004 to the Moudawana, the Moroccan Family Legal Code, ALEF educators decided that Passerelle primers should juxtapose literacy lessons with drawings that illustrate the new legal rights of women and children. Abdellah Khaloub, the director of the Passerelle literacy program at ALEF explained to me that they had explicitly tried to incorporate a Freirian based teaching approach into the program. Their literacy goals for the women were not simply reading and writing skills, but rather to offer women “literacy as a set of tools for improving their lives.” In this sense, the Passerelle literacy approach aims not only to bridge the gaps between

mother tongue languages and Standard Arabic, speech and writing, and illiteracy and literacy, but in doing so to also transform uneducated adult women into aware and active citizens.

Literacy, gender and development

As noted in post-colonial and gender studies, there has long been a pattern of homogenizing and victimizing discourses, particularly in international agencies and NGO's, that highlight the need of Western nations to intervene on behalf of "third-world women" and "save" them (Spivak 1988 ; Wood 2001). Robinson-Pant, editor of the collected work *Women, Literacy and Development: Alternative Perspectives* (2004), notes in her introduction that it is common for women's literacy programs, in particular, to become the gateway for other development interventions such as family planning or child nutrition. Collins and Blot note that literacy projects are not power neutral and argue that,

the interconnectedness of literacy, power and identity formation are unavoidable in thinking about relationships between colonizers and colonized. Colonized discourses often emphasize the "inherent" goodness of bringing education, enlightenment and civilization to formerly savage peoples – literacy becomes a legitimizing narrative for other colonial projects (2003:21)

Such positions were evident in U.S. government discourses about literacy and development during the time the Passerelle program was being developed. This can be seen for example, in a speech made in 2006 by Dr. Paula Dobriansky, the former U.S. Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs, in which she advocated for better education for adult women in developing contexts. In her speech, Dobriansky argued that women and girls should be viewed as "untapped resources" and "vital sources of human capital" for future economic and social growth (Dobriansky 2006).

Thus, in addition to gender, of central importance to understanding the power structures and ideologies underpinning USAID's Passerelle methodology, is a consideration of how discourses about literacy often link it up to notions of social and economic development. Collins and Blot (2003) identify these discourses as forming the "Literacy Thesis" and note that different versions of the thesis make a number of interesting and appealing claims about the relationship between literacy and social and economic development. They explain that,

the central claims of the [literacy] thesis are that writing is a technology that transforms human thinking, relations to language, and representations of tradition, a technology that also enables a coordination of social action in unprecedented precision and scale, thus enabling the development of unique social and institutional complexity (Collins and Blot 2003:17)

Numerous critiques of the literacy thesis (many emerging from the New Literacy Studies tradition referred to earlier) have since questioned whether literacy can in fact be viewed as a universal, unitary skill that is determinate of social realities or if it is rather embedded in and shaped by the particular, historically contingent cultural contexts in which multiple literacies can occur. In a detailed and historically grounded critique of the literacy thesis, Graff offers the convincing argument that although a necessary and linear relationship is often assumed between literacy acquisition and various types of development including social, political, economic, industrial, and urban development the relationships between them "are much more complicated, often contradictory, and require more sustained attention and more subtle understanding than preciously permitted" (Graff 1987). Despite Graff's and other more recent challenges to the literacy thesis, its

pervasiveness in academic literature, development agendas and the pedagogy of local literacy programs in Morocco is striking.

Given the 2004 Free Trade agreement between the U.S. and Morocco, the emphasis on relationships between literacy and economic forces by U.S. officials, such as former U.S. Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Dr. Paula Dobriansky, is not unexpected. Prendergast (2003) for example, has argued that since literacy is usually acquired in relation to institutions, it is necessary to consider what other functions these institutions serve. A significant portion of American financial and pedagogical support for adult literacy education in Morocco is funneled through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), as illustrated by the Passerelle program. Among USAID's "strategic objectives and goals" in 2006, was the goal of "Democracy and Economic Freedom in the Muslim World," a plan, which "[confronts] the intersection of traditional and transnational challenges... [combining]... diplomatic skills and development assistance to act boldly to foster a more democratic and prosperous world integrated into the global economy."²² Thus, any literacy promotion by USAID in Morocco should be considered in light of its broader mission statements and how increased literacy in Morocco is being imagined to align advantageously with them.

USAID's role and interest in promoting literacy in Morocco, can also viewed as a form of literacy sponsorship (Brandt 2001). Brandt explains that sponsors of literacy should be understood as "any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, and model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold, literacy – and gain advantage by it in some way" (19). In Brandt's view then, USAID in Rabat can

²² U.S. Department of State website: <http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/dosstrat/2004/23503.htm> (accessed 14 December 2014).

be seen as one type of literacy sponsor in Morocco who, because they adhere to the literacy thesis, imagine themselves as providing Moroccans a potentially powerful economic and social resource by teaching illiterate women to read and write.²³

Furthermore, Brant notes that, “in whatever form, sponsors deliver the ideological freight that must be borne for access to what they have” (20). In addition to transmitting ideological freight, perhaps indirectly, regarding language varieties and scripts, USAID also explicitly imposes ideological frameworks regarding notions of gender roles and human rights through the inclusion of Moudawana content in the Passerelle classroom.

Discourses of “saving” third world women, however, are not limited to the U.S. government, but have been picked up by female Moroccan academics as well. For example, Fatima Agnaou argues that literacy is “a *liberating* and *empowering* means through which the socially disadvantaged learners, particularly women, are made aware of their conditions of subordination and the factors that create their subordination” (2004:26). She continues, claiming that teaching literacy skills to non-literate women “would convince them of their own value and their ability to take part in public life and decision-making” (26), a stance that highlights potential links between discourses of literacy, gender and agency. Agnaou’s position on universal literacy education combines: 1) an ideological approach to literacy, which shows how literacy practices in Morocco have been used to empower particular social groups and disadvantage others; with 2) a version of the literacy thesis, that claims that once enlightened to hidden

²³ However, though I believe it is useful to view USAID as a literacy sponsor in order to foreground how literacy skills can be both promoted and exploited at both local and international levels, I argue that the women who participate in Passerelle programs would likely not associate USAID as their literacy sponsor, but rather with the local NGO who has the primary responsibility of implementing the program or their local teacher. In other words, Brandt’s notion of sponsorship centers in large part on the learners’ experiences and memories of the powerful figures involved in their literacy learning, and in the case of USAID, it plays a very “behind the scenes” role that literacy learners are unaware of.

workings of power, newly literate women will naturally and necessarily engage in organized, social development projects aimed at gender equality. Though she doesn't cite him directly, Agnaou appears to align with Paulo Friere's belief that through education, "people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but a reality in process" and thus transformable (Freire 1970).

The Passerelle classroom experience

A typical Passerelle literacy class would begin with a discussion either of one of the family rights topics introduced in the primers, such as the recent change in the minimal legal marriage age for girls to 18 years old, or a unrelated topic currently of interest to the women such as voting in the upcoming elections or the importance of milk in one's diet. According to the final report produced by ALEF, the use of the mother tongue languages in this fashion "allows the beneficiaries to get by certain psychological obstacles/blocks and engage spontaneously and enthusiastically in discussions" (2008). The use of mother tongue languages in the literacy classroom is believed to create a more intimate learning experience for the women, in which they feel more comfortable learning.

Following discussion of the Moudawana or another sociocultural topic of interest to the students, Passerelle teachers typically present the letter to be studied that day and ask students to recall words from the discussion that contain the sound represented by that letter. Discussions are conducted entirely in the mother tongue language of the women and the words women offered could be in Moroccan Arabic, Tamazight or

Standard Arabic. Words would be chosen to be written on the board by the teacher who would highlight the placement and shape of the letter being studied that day.

A description of a Passerelle class session in Tafza adapted from my field notes will illustrate typical language use and activities:

12-19-2008

Cold and windy. Wood stove burning in back corner. Women wrapped in layers of pajamas, djellabas, and jackets stroll in. Shoulders wrapped in colorful beach towels. There are four small children, each one wrapped tightly to his or her mother's back. One is crying, one sleeping. The women are chatting as they wait, some in MA [Moroccan Arabic] some in T [Tamazight]. Wafae [the teacher] asks in MA if there is a wedding in the village because there are so many women absent. No one knows of anything. I think it is the cold.

Wafae is in front of the class. She picks up a copy of the students' book and asks the women to take out their Passerelle books and open to page 21. She holds up the book to show the correct page and walks around the room helping students find it. 'Look at the first picture' she tells them in MA, 'tell me what you see.' The women answer in MA that they see a boy with a backpack. Wafae asks the women what is the building in the background? They say a school. Wafae asks how the boy feels. 'He doesn't want to go to school' Saadia answers. 'How do you know?' asks Wafae. 'Because he is running away from the school and looks upset' says another woman. Wafae asks about the second picture. The boy is talking to a friend. There is a man and a woman turned away from the boy in bubble over his head. They look angry with each other. One woman says his parents don't want this child to go to school.

Wafae looks frustrated because that is not the answer she is looking for. She explains to them, the problem is that parents are fighting and no one is paying attention to the child's education. There is no communication between the boy and his parents.

Wafae starts a discussion in MA with the woman in the class. Her voice is loud, almost aggressive. 'Do you take your kids to school?' she asks a woman in the front row? (Wafae knows the answer already, the woman is her neighbor). 'No, I don't,' the woman answered, 'my kids walk alone to school.' Wafae: 'Whose responsibility is it to watch over the kids? Can the woman do it herself?' 'No!' Saadia shouts out. Wafae: 'Why not?' No answer. Another woman speaks up, 'It is the woman's responsibility to take care of the house and the children and the man's job to work outside the home. Children are responsible for studying.' Wafae questions, 'But if you don't take your children to school, how do you know if they really go? What if they run away and do something else? You have to walk them there, go in, say hello to the director and their teacher. Ask if they are studying. Their teacher will tell you if they are doing well, the same or worse.' She turns to another woman, 'How do you know how your child is doing in school?' The woman replies, 'My son brings a notebook home with notes from the teacher.' Wafae: 'Can you read it?' 'No.' 'Then who reads it for you?' 'His

father does, but he is in Spain now. I ask my other son to read it.’ Wafae: ‘You need to go and talk to the teacher.’

Wafae picks up the teacher’s guide to teaching Passerelle – and announces to the women “hadchi li hna... li ma qrinach... hadi maghanqrawehch... darija kayn hna walaken sma‘u ach kengul ‘alech asasiya li bghina lyum herf dal u dhal”²⁴ ‘this that is here, that we didn’t read, this we won’t study. Darija is here. But listen to what I say because what we want today is the letters dal and dhal.’ [“dal” is the name for the Arabic letter <ﺩ>, which represents the phoneme /d/, and “dhal” is the name for the Arabic letter <ﺫ>, which represents the phoneme /ð/.] I am interested in this chapter in the Passerelle book because the Standard Arabic phoneme /ð/ does not exist in MA and common words in Standard Arabic such as /haða/ ‘this’ are pronounced /hada/ in MA. How will the Passerelle book introduce an Arabic letter for a sound that does not exist in MA?!

Wafae reads a short dialogue in MA from the teacher’s guide that introduces the boy in the pictures as Khalid and Daoud. Khalid asks his friend why he has started skipping school and Daoud answers that he doesn’t care about school. Besides, Daoud explains, his parents don’t know if he goes or not.

Wafae puts the teacher’s guide down and asks the class, what letters are we studying today? Students answer in unison ‘Letters dal and dhal.’ What words have this sound in them? Students call out the words “Khalid, Daoud, idara, mudir, walidi, mdrasa” and Wafae writes those words on board in chalk. Someone says “cartable” ‘backpack’ and Wafae rejects it: ‘that is French and besides it doesn’t have the right sound in it.’ Wafae reads words to students one by one spelling out letter by letter. No one offers a word with the letter dhal. Women are asked to say where in word the letter dal is. They then repeat after Wafae as she points to each word on the board with a meter stick. The class repeats the list of words in chorus six times. Wafae then spot checks a few of the women, randomly pointing to a word on the board out of order and seeing if the woman can “read” it. The first two women begin by reciting the words in order, eliciting a loud smack on the board by Wafae’s ruler, and I suspect they are not trying to sound out the words but rather have memorized the 6 words in order.

Wafae highlights the letter dal in each word on the board in colored chalk and demonstrates to the women how to write it. Students complete the letter writing activity in their Passerelle books, first tracing the letters and then writing them on their own. Then she has the women take out their whiteboards and practice copying words from the board. Wafae introduces the second part of the Passerelle lesson, the numbers 10, 11, 12 and pronounces them in Moroccan Arabic without case endings. The women repeat each number out loud after her. The women practice writing the numbers in their Passerelle books.

40 minutes into class the call to prayer sounds. Women put down their work and file, chatting, out of the classroom to a clean grassy area in the center of the school to pray. It’s a 20 min break. While the women pray, Wafae erases the vocabulary on the board and copies the next few lines of a sura from the Qur’an the women are memorizing. Unlike the simple, clear handwriting she used

²⁴ Audio recording December 19, 2008, min. 13:30.

before, now she writes with an artistic style, adding flourishes to letters such as spirals and long tails. She writes short vowels and case endings on all words and indicates verse numbers.

When the women come back into class, they chant in chorus the sura they are learning up to the new verses. Wafae reads out loud the new lines to the women. Then word by word she reads aloud and asks the women to repeat. The women do not copy the verse into their notebooks – everything is done orally. Wafae explains the meaning of the sura to the women in MA and then switches to T when one of the older women asked a question. The next 45 minutes are spent repeating and chanting the sura. Wafae focuses on the pronunciation of difficult words such as those that have sounds that do not exist in MA or T but exist in Standard Arabic such as / θ, ð/. She does not enter into discussion with the students about why the two sounds are pronounced differently in the two language varieties. Students are tested one by one if they can repeat the new lines of the sura. At the end of the hour, the women pack up and a different sura is chanted that grants safe passage to the women as they walk home in small groups in the dark. Wafae leaves with a group of women heading towards her home. As they walk through the school's courtyard, the group I am with begins an animated debate in Tamazight about rumors to move the local market to a location farther from the village.

As is clear from my field notes, Wafae, the literacy class teacher, mainly spoke to the women in Moroccan Arabic. She employed Tamazight rarely when explaining a difficult concept, such as a verse from the Qur'an, or when chatting informally with the women before or after class. Wafae's highlighting to the women that the story she would be reading from the teacher's book was Moroccan Arabic, which was something they would "not" be studying, underscored her position that while it was useful to use Moroccan Arabic as the primary medium for communication in the classroom, it was not the goal of study in of itself. Indeed, though she wrote words on the board that were collected from class discussion in Moroccan Arabic, she was careful to only write words that were included in the Passerelle literacy primers or were proper names or words that also existed in Standard Arabic. The following section will discuss her approach in more detail and show how it was in fact a strategy used by literacy teachers as well as the

education developers of the Passerelle program to avoid ideological conflicts embedded in the Passerelle program.

Passerelle literacy primers

Passerelle literacy primers are potent sites for investigating beliefs about language use and form not only because of their explicit focus on language and literacy instruction, but also because they represent the end results of some of the first debates among language and literacy experts, both Moroccan and international, regarding the possibility of an “officially sanctioned” role for mother tongue literacy using Standard Arabic orthography in Morocco. Interestingly, although designers of the Passerelle program continuously emphasized the utility and necessity of using mother tongue languages in literacy training, they simultaneously expressed substantial concern that the use of Tamazight and Moroccan Arabic be restricted to the pre-literacy phase and not spill over into the “literacy phase.”

This concern belies an ideological disjuncture many Passerelle planners and educators openly identify in that while they support the writing of mother tongue languages in adult literacy classrooms as a bridge to Standard Arabic literacy, once learners have transitioned to learning Standard Arabic, the use of mother tongue literacy skills is suddenly viewed inappropriate. Some ways of addressing this disjuncture is evident in the lexical and orthographic choices that went into the design of the two primers used in Passerelle literacy classes.

An analysis of Passerelle literacy primers reveals that although they are designed to teach the Standard Arabic script through the use of mother languages, orthographic representations of linguistic forms unique to Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight are not

clearly represented in the primers. Indeed, the only markedly Moroccan Arabic lexical items present in the Passerelle primers were the two nouns <مرأا> ‘woman or wife’ and <راجل> ‘man or husband.’ The expected written form of ‘woman’ and ‘man’ in Standard Arabic is <امرأة> or <مرأة> and <رجل> respectively. What is striking about how these two forms were represented in the first Passerelle primer is that they reflect the pronunciation of these words in Moroccan Arabic as /mra:/ and /ra:žel/ rather than in Standard Arabic as /emra:ʔa/ or /mra:ʔa/ and /ražul/. While the written form <راجل> does exist in Standard Arabic, its meaning is not ‘man’ but rather it represents the noun ‘pedestrian’ and the adjective ‘walking.’

It is notable that these two lexical items are repeated in the second literacy primer but have been rewritten in accordance to Standard Arabic phonetic and orthographic conventions. This change is assumedly made to reflect the growing Standard Arabic competency of learners who may now distinguish between colloquial and standard forms of these words. Linguistic forms unique to Tamazight were not represented in the Passerelle primers. Informal interviews with ALEF educational consultants revealed that consultants from the Moroccan Royal Institute for Amazigh Culture recommended against the representation of Tamazight with the Arabic script, as doing so would potentially undermine the efforts of Amazigh activists who had then recently achieved victory when the Moroccan King endorsed Tifinagh as the writing system for Tamazight.

Instead of directly addressing the political and ideological issues of representing mother tongue languages in Standard Arabic script in the literacy primers, the authors of the Passerelle primers instead drew on strategies of simultaneity. They purposefully choose to include lexical items that could be considered bivalent, meaning they could be

understood as belonging to two linguistic systems, Moroccan Arabic or Tamazight and Standard Arabic (Woolard 1998b; Woolard and Genovese 2007). These include what Passerelle designers described as “basic” or “core” vocabulary such as <باب> ‘door,’ <شمش> ‘sun’ and <تين> ‘hay’ as well as vocabulary from religious, political or economic realms in which Standard Arabic is the dominant language, such as <إمام> ‘Imam/religious leader,’ <تيمم> ‘absolution with a stone or sand,’ and <إحسان> ‘charity or good deeds.’

The terms simultaneity and bivalency were put forth in Kathryn Woolard's 1998 article entitled "Simultaneity and Bivalency as Strategies in Bilingualism," which marked an important change in the direction of scholarly literature on codes and code-switching for many reasons. In this piece Woolard builds off of the concepts of heteroglossia, polyphony and voicing that were introduced by the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. He made the argument in the 1930's that “a unitary language is not something that is given, but is in its very essence something that must be posited” (Bakhtin 1975 [1981]:270). Bakhtin argues that all societies are heteroglossic; even in monolingual contexts, there exists stratified linguistic diversity. Individual utterances carry with them the “echo” or imprint of their use by previous speakers in different contexts, places and times (as well as the possibility of their future use) resulting in “double- voicing.” The main thrust of Woolard's argument is that rather than choosing between elements in mutually exclusive or contrasting linguistic systems, speakers instead may draw on the tension between codes, through a type of simultaneity she calls bivalency, or the use of linguistic elements that can be viewed as being simultaneous members of two different linguistic codes (1998b:8).

Woolard grounds her discussion of bivalency in the notion of the political economy of languages and argues that bivalency should not be viewed as a neutral phenomenon, because “the opposition between linguistic codes is almost always socially and ideologically activated... even as it is challenged” (11). Thus, Woolard argues that bivalency should be seen as a "strategic" resource for speakers and that it is a way of choosing both languages and what they socially index at once. A focus on the strategic possibilities of bivalency is a theme that Woolard has more recently revisited in a paper she co-authored with Nicholas Genovese in which they examined a set of literary texts from early modern Spain that they argue were written through a conscious and strategic manipulation of bivalent linguistic forms, in ways that were positively valued, so that they could be read by both speakers of Latin and Spanish (2007). The types of linguistic phenomenon drawn on by these Spanish writers included lexical, morphological, syntactic and orthographic elements, revealing that bivalency can be exploited at any level of linguistic fact, more so, perhaps than code-switching. By drawing on bivalent elements, Woolard and Genovese claim that the authors of the texts exploited these overlaps and tensions for political purposes, in this case, to argue a case for Spanish, “the vernacular,” as coeval with or even of higher quality than Latin and thus suitable as a national language. Bivalency, when viewed as a phenomenon of language ideology, not only provides an additional way of understanding the construction, negotiation and erasure of linguistic boundaries by both linguists and interactants, but also offers an additional site for analyzing the semiotic processes involved in language ideologies themselves.

I argue that the authors of the Passerelle literacy primers used bivalency as a strategy to *subtly* make a case for Moroccan Arabic as suitable and useful in adult literacy acquisition, in a way that served to avoid anticipated negative reactions that might have occurred had the primer displayed significant amounts of markedly Moroccan Arabic text. However, in order to employ bivalency as a strategy in the Passerelle primers, it was necessary to ignore certain phonetic differences between Moroccan Arabic and Standard Arabic, given that the two languages differ in both their consonant and vowel phonemes. Take for example the letters <ﺩ> and <ﺪ> presented in the Passerelle session described from my fieldwork above. The Standard Arabic voiced dental fricative /ð / does not exist in Moroccan Arabic and bivalent lexical items that contain / ð / in Standard Arabic are pronounced with the voiced dental plosive /d/ in Moroccan Arabic. The phonemic system of Standard Arabic contains both / ð / and /d/ and the two phonemes each corresponds to a unique letter in the Arabic script: <ﺩ> and <ﺪ> respectively. In Passerelle primers, bivalent words that contain / ð /, such as the word meaning ‘this’, which is pronounced /hada/ in Moroccan Arabic, and /haða:/ in Standard Arabic, were orthographically represented according to their pronunciation in Standard Arabic, in this case as <ﻫﺬﺍ>. This example reveals how the Passerelle primers align with a value hierarchy that privileges the norms of Standard Arabic orthography over alternative representations. By choosing to include bivalent lexical items in the primers, Passerelle authors reinforced the existing power hierarchy between Standard Arabic and the mother tongue languages.

Language use in the classroom

Passerelle planners were not the only ones who had to contend with differing ideologies regarding the exact role mother tongue literacy should play in the adult literacy classroom; literacy learners and teachers had to as well. As discussed above, in the Passerelle classes observed outside Casablanca and Beni Mellal, mother tongue languages were for the most part restricted to oral functions such as discussions of that day's particular topic, lesson instructions, clarifications and informal interactions between learners. Although some oral activities were conducted in Standard Arabic, they were almost always those that involved reading out loud a written text, such as during a dictation exercise or in memorizing a verse from the Qur'an. In the urban class, the majority of adult learners spoke Moroccan Arabic as their mother tongue language, and classroom communication was conducted entirely in Moroccan Arabic. In the rural class, however, the great majority of adult learners spoke a variety of Tamazight as their mother tongue and a significant number of them did not understand Moroccan Arabic. Despite this fact, Moroccan Arabic was the dominant language of communication in the rural classroom and Tamazight use was restricted to casual conversations and in addressing specific questions from learners. Adult women monolingual in Tamazight, particularly those who were older, thus found it challenging to follow Passerelle literacy lessons and participate actively in class discussion and many expressed frustration that class was conducted primarily in Arabic.

While the choice to utilize mother tongue languages in oral activities aligns with Passerelle methodology, the preference given by literacy teachers in the rural classroom of Tafza for Moroccan Arabic over Tamazight, despite the fact that there was a

significant number of monolingual Tamazight speaking women in the class, belies the deeply held ideology that Arabic is the proper language of education. This belief, however, was not unique to teachers, as was revealed in focus group conversations with monolingual Tamazight learners who studied in Tamazight medium classrooms during USAID/ALEF's pilot Passerelle study.

Aïcha is an example of one of the women who holds this view. I got to know her well while on an extended visit to the small town of Tinejdad in Eastern Morocco. Aïcha is a married woman in her early 60's who has 7 grown children (the youngest is married with her own children) and runs a coffee shop with her husband and oldest sons on the ground floor of her house. She is Amazigh and speaks a central variety of Tamazight. She understands a significant amount of Moroccan Arabic, but is not comfortable speaking it. As a child, Aïcha spent her time shepherding her father's animals in the field, learning to knead and bake the morning whole-wheat flat, round loaves of bread by hand and helping her mother take care of her younger siblings. Aïcha never went to school, as her father believed that the local school was a dangerous place where young girls could develop inappropriate behaviors and enter into illicit relationships with young men.

Aïcha found out about the pilot Passerelle literacy class through her daughter's friend, who came by one day to inform her that she was going to teach an adult women's class for learning to read the Qur'an and write basic words. Aïcha confided in me that the first few times she was embarrassed to go to school and walk down the dirt roads of the town, holding her plastic bag in which she carried her chalk board, notebook and writing instruments. She thought people were looking at her and making fun of her

because she was going to school like a child. Once she learned to write her first word, however, Aïcha claims she found a deep seated pride in participating in the literacy class. She stood up in front of me and demonstrated how she now walks proudly when she leaves the house to learn, carrying the black, ALEF logo book bag over her shoulder that she received during the first week of class.

The only thing Aïcha complained about regarding her Passerelle literacy classes was the language in which her teacher taught those first two months. Her teacher, who had obtained a university degree in law from nearby Fes, primarily spoke to the class in Tamazight, even though she was fluent in Moroccan Arabic. Unlike the women I worked with in the rural village of Tafza, Aïcha preferred that teachers use Arabic in the classroom instead of Tamazight, despite the fact she might not understand. In fact, Aïcha felt quite strongly that ‘the one who should teach us should not speak Tamazight. [The teacher should be] a person who doesn’t speak any Tamazight, [someone] who will teach us Arabic. And if you want to speak Tamazight with her, she wouldn’t understand and so you will be forced to speak Arabic and then you will learn [Arabic].’²⁵ When Aïcha explained her position, she did not specify the variety of Arabic she expected the teacher to use, but rather spoke of “*al arabiya*” ‘Arabic’ as if it were a single, homogeneous entity. This underscores how many adult literacy learners, especially those whose mother language is Tamazight, may not make a distinction between Moroccan Arabic and Standard Arabic or between spoken and written varieties in the context of education. Such women likely do not experience Passerelle methodology as a conflict of ideology, as do those who hold the belief that the variety of Arabic one speaks at home should not be used in the classroom. As Khalti Muhu, an Amazigh woman in Tafza who recently

²⁵ Audio recording July 16, 2010, Tinejdad, Morocco. My translation from Tamazight.

immigrated from the countryside outside Ouarzazate, replied to me when asked what she thought about learning to read and write using Moroccan Arabic instead of Standard Arabic, ‘isn’t it all just Arabic?’

Teaching Passerelle

Differences in the extent to which teachers in the urban and rural classrooms chose to incorporate mother tongue languages were particularly salient during class activities in which students were asked to suggest words that contained the sound represented by the letter studied in that day’s lesson. Adopting the strategy of bivalency implicit in the choice of lexical items orthographically represented in the Passerelle primers, most teachers purposefully chose to only write words on the blackboard that were common to both Standard Arabic and Moroccan Arabic. As illustrated in the opening vignette of this chapter, lexical items offered by learners that were clearly marked as belonging to either Moroccan Arabic or Tamazight, such as /byit/ ‘I want’ or /imi/ ‘mouth’, were often either ignored or rejected by the teacher for inclusion on the board.²⁶ The act of writing the mother tongue languages was not explicitly modeled by teachers thereby reinforcing the ideology that mother tongue languages should not be written and were in many ways inferior to Standard Arabic. This rejection of words from mother tongue languages arguably exaggerates the very gaps between women’s home languages and Standard Arabic and between the knowledge of illiterate adults and that of literate adults that the Passerelle methodology aims to bridge.

Interestingly, focus group sessions revealed that the only Passerelle teachers who either approved of or admitted to writing lexical items from Moroccan Arabic or

²⁶ Field notes. January 2010, November 2010.

Tamazight on the board were those who had received multiple, intensive training workshops in the Passerelle approach and methodology conducted by USAID/ALEF educators during the pilot test phase of the program. These teachers appeared to be more open to the idea of an expanded role for mother tongue languages in the classroom, including the writing of Tamazight. Their openness was perhaps a result of having had opportunities during the workshops to address any ideological conflict they experienced as Passerelle teachers. These opportunities included exercises such as small group discussions on the utility of orthographically representing mother tongue languages in the classroom, as well as in the act of practicing writing Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight during simulated Passerelle lessons. Notably, the teachers observed in the urban and rural classroom settings had received comparatively limited Passerelle training through the Moroccan government and each discouraged the writing of the mother tongues in their own literacy classrooms.

One of the aspects of the Passerelle methodology with which many teachers expressed disagreement regarding the most appropriate time at which to teach the vowel and case ending diacritics of the Arabic script. As discussed above, Passerelle primers present only the letters of the alphabet and students do not learn the diacritic marks until they begin working with the government designed primers. All of the teachers observed in the urban and rural settings did in fact experiment with delaying the introduction of diacritic marks during their first year of teaching under the Passerelle approach. In subsequent years, however, they returned to teaching each letter of the alphabet vocalized with each of the diacritics from the beginning. These teachers questioned the assumption made by Passerelle planners that it is easier for adult learners to learn to decode and

encode sounds using a simplified version of the Arabic script. Classroom observation revealed that this may be partly be due to the fact that class activities often consisted either of mechanical exercises, such as word level dictations or of pronunciation drills, each of which place stress on the correct identification of vowel sounds.

I observed repeatedly that many adult women arrived at their first day of literacy class with preconceived notions as to what language in the classroom should sound like. This was often the result of previous schooling or of overhearing their children prepare lessons for school in Standard Arabic. During the first days of class, some literacy students tended to add the indefinite nominative case ending of Standard Arabic to all words they said, even words from Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight, and expressed frustration when trying to decode the sounds of word written without diacritics. Teachers pointed to this tendency as support for their position that when students are not taught how to correctly encode and decode vowels and consonant length from the beginning, it is difficult for them to learn to correctly pronounce and thus understand what is written.

I asked my friend Rabiaa in my rural fieldsite in Beni Mellal what she thought about having a literacy book that didn't teach writing with the diacritic marks, which we referred to in class as the "harakat." Rabiaa was married and in her early thirties, with three children aged 3-9 when I met her. When I first arrived in the village looking for a place to live, Rabiaa was one of the few to immediately offer me a place in her home. Her husband even went to the market later that week and bought an extra sheep²⁷ to

²⁷ Sacrificing an extra sheep for Eid Al-Kebir is considered to bring the family ajr with God, that is, to bring them special blessings. Given the exorbitant cost of sheep compared to the average income of families in the village, this was an extraordinarily generous gesture towards me and I felt extremely uncomfortable about it. I learned later that Rabiaa's husband had in part made in the gesture in the hopes that I would choose to reside with them during my fieldwork. Rabiaa's husband was crippled as a result of an injury sustained while in the military and was unable to find full-time work in the village.

sacrifice in my honor for the Muslim holiday Eid Al-Kebir, one of the biggest and most sacred religious holidays celebrated in Morocco. Rabiaa is a warm hearted and direct person with an easy, rich laugh and inquisitive mind. Being close in age, we bonded quickly and I would stop by her house a few times every week to visit her over a lunch of *trid*, a stew like dish of lentils and beans served over Moroccan *rghaif* bread, or over tea and *mekhmer*, a type of Moroccan soft bread served with honey and olive oil.

During my conversation with Rabiaa that day about her literacy book, I wanted to know if she found it strange to see Arabic, specifically Moroccan Arabic, written without marking the short vowels. Below is a short excerpt from a conversation we had towards the end of March 2009, when Rabiaa had just finished the Passerelle portion of her literacy class.

Jenny: *wach kan ghrib chwiya bach tchufi ddarija mektuba?*

was it a little strange to see written Moroccan Arabic?

Rabiaa: *druk mezyana ghir l'qel baqi chwiya. kun nqra bla harakat. druk ila mchiti lbeni mellal matetlqach lharakat fil kiteba, kayna? ma tetseybi lharakat la. fin ma mchiti lkhiyyat u la lqahwa u la ma tetseybich lharakat.*

now it is good, only I am not smart. now if I could only read without harakat... if you went to Beni Mellal you wouldn't find the harakat in writing, right? no, you wouldn't find the harakat. no matter where you went, to the seamstress or the coffee shop or... you wouldn't find the harakat.

Rabiaa's response to my question brings up a point that, surprisingly, is rarely made by Passerelle literacy teachers during the mother tongue literacy portion of the class. The reality is, as Rabiaa pointed out, written Arabic in public space is almost never

written with the harakat. This includes everything from newsprint media, to billboards, street signs, government documents, and store fronts. Unlike the teachers, who appeared uncomfortable with teaching women to write their mother tongues without the diacritic marks, Rabiaa saw a benefit to beginning reading without them as she felt it gave her the ability to immediately begin making sense of the written Arabic she saw outside the house when travelling. This included weekly 15-kilometer trips from the village to the city to shop or long voyages to her brother's house in the city of Dakhla on the southern Moroccan coast, more than a two-day and two-night bus ride from the village.

A Passerelle literacy artifact

Throughout my time in Tafza, I was very interested in what types of literacy practices and artifacts were present and emergent in the households of the women who were enrolled in the Passerelle literacy class. From the first day I arrived in the village on a bus from Casablanca, I was very aware of how little signage and few literacy artifacts I encountered in comparison to the city. There were no cafés, newspaper sellers or school book stores in the village and most local establishments operated from storefronts that lacked any signage or name on the outside. Instead, stores would often advertise their wares by hanging exemplars outside their shops to attract the attention of passerbys. Omar, the village car mechanic stacked automobile tires outside his shop, my friend Khadija, a seamstress, hung samples of her newest pajama sets from her door frame, and Khalid the butcher would hang the legs of freshly butchered beef, lamb and goat above his counter. The only establishments in the village with written language signs were the local elementary school, whose name was written in Arabic above the main gate, and the pharmacy, whose sign was in both Arabic and French.

Most literacy artifacts encountered in daily life at my rural field site consisted of government issued identification cards, utility bills, children's notebooks and books for school, doctors' ordinances and blood analyses, prescription medication packaging, food labels (sweets, soda and milk products being the most commonly seen in the house), money, and the Qur'an. The Qur'an was the most ubiquitous literacy artifact in the village, present in every household I visited, regardless of income. Those families who could afford it hung either simple posters or elaborately framed suras of the Qur'an in the reception area of the house where guests were received. After the Qur'an, the most frequent literacy artifacts I saw were the usually short lived SMS text messages people would send and receive on their mobile phones (see Chapter 3). I saw very few novels, magazines or newspapers in any of homes I frequently visited in the village. Women enrolled in the Passerelle literacy class each received two Passerelle literacy primers and a blank notebook. Most of these examples were located inside the house, school and local shops. They were not on public display and village residents did not have the habit of seeing written language outside of their homes.

In Khalti Latifa's house, paper of any kind other than the Qur'an, of course, was of primary value as a fire starter for the bath house and the earthen oven in the garden where her daughter-in-law would bake fresh bread each morning. Old school notebooks, cartons, paid utilities bills, etc. were collected and kept in a bag in the kitchen. I had been asked when I had arrived to contribute by placing any papers I didn't need in the bag. On the day before Khalti Latifa and I went into Beni Mellal together to see the doctor at the hospital, I remember her searching frantically for some blood analysis results she had obtained a few months earlier that she wanted to take with her. We found out later, after

questioning her youngest daughter, that her lab work had been used a few days earlier that same week to start the oven. Outside the house, paper was informally recycled in the village by the local peanut seller. He would wait outside the school and trade peanuts to children for their old notebooks. He would then use the individual pages to wrap customers' peanuts.²⁸

Women did very little writing in the classroom and through practices of bivalency, were discouraged from writing in their mother tongues. Most activities that involved writing consisted of copying words from the black board that the teacher had preselected and written. During the Passerelle period of class, students were instructed to write without marking internal vowels with diacritics. Later when they began their transition to Standard Arabic, correct diacritic marks became a central focus of the teachers in commenting on their students' writing. Throughout my time observing classes in Tafza and Mohammedia, I did not witness the teacher give the students free choice of what or how they wrote. Writing activities always involved copying from the teacher or another official source such as their school literacy primers or the Qur'an.

Towards the end of my stay in Tafza, this made me curious about how women would choose to express themselves in writing if given a choice. During my final month in Tafza, I asked the women to produce a sample of writing for me to keep. My plan was to collect sample writing that would serve both as neo-literacy artifacts that I could later analyze, but also something I could convert into a surprise gift to give back to the women to thank them for their friendship and participation in my research. I explained to the women that I did not know how to cook any Moroccan dishes, and asked those who were

²⁸ The recycling of paper by the peanut seller is also a practice seen in the urban areas as well. Once when buying peanuts outside my apartment in Casablanca, I discovered my peanuts wrapped in a photocopy of a page from a linguistic anthropology article I had thrown away in my dumpster months before!

willing to please write for me by hand any simple family recipe they knew. I impressed upon them that they each had unique and important cooking knowledge that I would be grateful if they shared with me in whatever manner was easiest for them to write.

Students were told there were no restrictions on how they wrote; there was no “right or wrong” way to write their recipes. I gave them one week to brainstorm and practice their recipe at home without writing it. The following class, I asked them to draft their recipes with the help of their teacher and classmates and then make a final copy to give to me.

At this point in their literacy class, students had finished the Passerelle stage and had studied the entire Standard Arabic alphabet with diacritics and a set of basic Standard Arabic vocabulary words with case endings. I did not specify to students how I wanted them to write or in what language; I simply asked them to write recipes in any way that felt comfortable to them. At the end of class, I was offered recipes from 44 students. I took these recipes, photocopied them, bound them together and created a cook book with a personalized cover that I then offered to each of the women in the literacy class as a “thank you” gift. Most of the women were happily surprised by the gift, many of them not recognizing their own handwriting and recipes when they encountered them in a bound format.

In reviewing the 44 recipes I received, the first thing apparent is that all the women, even those who were Tamazight speakers, chose to write their recipes in Moroccan Arabic. The only Standard Arabic included in the cookbook was the opening letter of introduction and two recipes written by the two Passerelle literacy teachers. Though the teachers were present when the students drafted their recipes in class, I specifically asked them not to encourage the students to write either in Moroccan Arabic

or in Standard Arabic, but rather help the students to write what and as they wanted to. Given that writing in Tamazight was never modeled in class, I did not anticipate receiving any recipes written in Tamazight. I was a bit surprised that the women wrote their recipes in Moroccan Arabic, since writing in class had been restricted to words bivalent with or in Standard Arabic and the amount and type of writing was very limited to copying simple words from the literacy lessons. I thought it possible that women would choose to express themselves in Moroccan Arabic because it was the language most of our literacy class had been conducted in and also because it was the language I was most comfortable with, and I had told the women that I was the intended audience for the recipes. However, I also thought it possible that a number of women would feel uncomfortable writing in Moroccan Arabic, indicating they aligned with dominant ideologies associating Standard Arabic with written language, and instead ask their literacy teachers to help them translate and write their recipes in Standard Arabic. Both teachers, having prepared their contributions the day before we presented the project to the women, chose to write their recipes and the cookbook's preface in Standard Arabic, showing that they personally viewed Standard Arabic as the most appropriate medium.²⁹

Given that not a single woman chose to write her recipe predominantly in Standard Arabic, suggests that the women did not experience a sense of ideological disjuncture with the act of writing Moroccan Arabic at the conclusion of their literacy class. I have argued however elsewhere in this chapter that many of the women were well aware of dominant ideologies associating Moroccan Arabic with orality and intimate communication and Standard Arabic with writing and public, more official contexts. I

²⁹ Both the literacy teachers were very familiar and comfortable with the use of cookbooks and recipes and would often copy new recipes they were interested

therefore think that Moroccan Arabic was chosen by women in their recipes because the act of sharing recipes in the village was a practice done entirely orally amongst the women in the literacy class, thus women were most comfortable exchanging recipes in either Moroccan Arabic or Tamazight. The written representation of recipes was interpreted by the women as a practice more closely aligned with spoken than written language, and thus the act of writing in Moroccan Arabic was not experienced as an ideological conflict. This is a theme that will be revisited in Chapter 3 in which I analyze another type of writing practice in Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight that is associated with speaking more than writing.

Below in Figure 3 is an excerpt from a recipe for a potato omelet that was given to me by one of the women. The heading for the excerpt: “potato omelet” was not written by the student, but rather by her literacy teacher who insisted on adding section headings to the entire recipe book to make it more like a “real” cookbook.

طرطة بالبطاطة
 بطاطا والبطاطة تساقوهم
 من بعد تسقوة نهر سما لبيضات
 نصعشق ديل لكمون نمعشق ديل
 ليزا نمعشق ديل لملح نمعشق ديل
 نسكنجير وهد سفقو نخلها هذا كلشي
 مع لبيضا والبطاطة والبطاطا نسفت زيت
 قلمولة ونرميو هذا كلشي فلقولة

Figure 3: Excerpt of a recipe for a potato omelet from the Tafza Passerelle literacy class cookbook, p. 25.

Like all of the recipes given to me, this recipe was written in Moroccan Arabic and was spelled as it was spoken. Take for example the transliteration of the following phrase: “nhrsha 4 liḡat [sic]³⁰ nš‘šq dil lkmun nš‘šq dil lbzar” /nhersha arbaʕ lbayḡat nšʕašq dyal lkmun nšʕašq dyal lbzar/ ‘one breaks 4 eggs, half a spoon of cumin, half a spoon of pepper’ is marked Moroccan Arabic by the form of the verb /nhersha/ ‘one breaks’; by the possessive marker /dyal/; and by the absence of the written letter <ل>, a letter not pronounced in Moroccan Arabic but forms part of the definite article which is written <ال> in Standard Arabic.

With a few exceptions, students for the most part chose not to write diacritics. The choice not to use diacritics aligns both the classroom practice of not writing diacritics during the Passerelle phase of class during which words bivalent in Standard and

³⁰ The student to write the letter <ب> /b/ in the word /bidat/ ‘eggs.’

Moroccan Arabic were written and copied by students. The few exceptions were the occasional word that was markedly Moroccan Arabic for which they expressed concern about it being understood correctly. These were usually verbs. For example, one woman added the diacritic marks *sukun* and *fetha* to the Moroccan Arabic verbal phrase <نُسْفُوْهَا> [sic]³¹ ‘one sifts it’ as seen in Figure 3 above.

As the women began drafting their recipes, a number of them quickly realized that they were lacking a letter for writing a phoneme unique to Moroccan Arabic. The letter they were missing was one to represent the sound /g/ found in common ingredients like /gerʕa/ ‘walnut’ or /guza/ ‘nutmeg.’ During our recipe writing session, Wafae showed the students how to write the phoneme /g/ using the modified Arabic letter <گ>. An example of a student’s recipe with the letter <گ> is seen in Figure 4 below. In Figure 4, the word ‘beef,’ written in Standard Arabic as <لحم البقرة > and pronounced /leħəm albaqara/ is written as <لحم بگري> according to its Moroccan Arabic pronunciation /lħəm bəgri/ with the letter <گ> to represent the Moroccan Arabic phoneme /g/.

Figure 4: Excerpt of a recipe for beef tajine from the Tafza Passerelle literacy cookbook, p. 10.

The following excerpt also has an example of the use of the letter <گ> in the word <سکرگلاصي> ‘powdered sugar.’

³¹ The verb ‘to sift’ is pronounced with /s/ and should have been written <ص> instead of <س>.

١٥٥ غ الدقيق + ١٥٥ غ سكر ثلاصي + ٢ أبيض
البيض + ملعقة كبيرة كريم فريش
٣٥٥ غ شكلاط أبيض

Figure 5: Excerpt of a recipe for chocolate cookies from the Tafza Passerelle literacy class cookbook, p. 20.

The excerpt in Figure 5 is also notable for its use of French borrowings, a feature common in Moroccan Arabic. For example, the aforementioned ingredient <سكر غلاصي> ‘powdered sugar,’ commonly referred to in Moroccan Arabic as /skkar glase/, is a borrowing from the French word “sucre glacé” /sykʁ glase/. Similarly, the word <كريم فريش> ‘whipping cream’ /krim friš/ is from the borrowed French word “crème fraîche” /kʁɛm fʁɛʃ/. It is interesting in this example that while the word /glase/ was written in Arabic script according to its Moroccan Arabic pronunciation, with a word initial /g/ and emphatic /s/ (the latter of which does not exist in French), the Moroccan Arabic word /skkar/ ‘sugar’ was written according to Standard Arabic writing conventions. In Moroccan Arabic the word ‘sugar’ is pronounced with a long vowel /a/ and one might expect it to be written as <سكار> in Arabic script. Another word that is written according to Standard Arabic writing conventions is the word <دقيق> ‘flour’ which in Moroccan Arabic is more commonly pronounced /dgig/ and would be more accurately reflected in writing as <دگيگ>. It is likely that this student wrote both of these words with their Standard Arabic spelling because they are both words that she studied during the Standard Arabic portion of her literacy class a few months earlier. On that day, the literacy teacher Ghita highlighted for the women the difference in the Moroccan

Arabic pronunciation and what she called the “*mezyan*” ‘good’ pronunciation of such common words in Standard Arabic. Ghita stressed to the women that they already knew a lot of Arabic vocabulary; they just needed to change how they spoke to sound more educated.³²

A future for Moroccan Arabic neo-literacy?

Before entering the field, I wondered if the innovative idea of teaching adult Moroccan literacy learners to encode and decode their mother tongues using the Arabic script could potentially encourage the development of novel forms and uses of mother tongue literacy outside the literacy classroom. Through my observations in Tafza and Mohammedia, as well as follow-up visits to ALEF Passerelle sites, I concluded that the roles played by Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight in the Passerelle context essentially reproduced existing linguistic hierarchies and no spontaneous mother tongue literacy practices emerged. I found it significant therefore that when women in Tafza were asked to transcribe a family cooking recipe for me, they independently chose to write using Moroccan Arabic. I argue that this was because recipe sharing is an oral practice in the village and thus aligns with ideologies of Moroccan Arabic as an oral and domestic language. Although the women wrote their recipes in class, the activity was not seen by most as a school related exercise but rather as a personal gift they were able to offer me before I left the field. Writing a recipe, therefore, did not cause an ideological disjuncture for the students the way writing a formal letter may have, for example. It is possible that practices of mother tongue literacy may start to change, however, as plans are underway to incorporate Passerelle methodology into the nationwide normative government literacy

³² Field notes. February 2009.

program. In the coming years, an increasing number of educators will debate the utility of mother tongue literacy education, more teachers across Morocco may receive extensive training in Passerelle methodology, and increasingly more adult learners may begin acquiring the Arabic script through the use of Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight.

Chapter 3 will build upon the discussion surrounding the appropriateness and possible domains of written representations of mother tongue languages in Morocco by looking at the realm of digital mediated communication. Unlike in the domain of education, where Standard Arabic is still considered the dominant language, I will show how in the domain of mobile phone text messaging, Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight have become the unmarked and preferred languages of communication.

CHAPTER THREE

‘I Write What I Say’: SMS Text Messages and Mother Tongue Languages

It was bitterly cold in Tafza in late January, 2009. Older women in the literacy class would arrive wearing thick djellabas or wrapped in colorful beach towels to ward off this chill. Younger women sported fashionable, puffy, thigh length jackets with faux-fur trimmed hoods that they had bought from the Thursday market in Beni Mellal. Veils were pulled tight across faces to protect against the biting wind sweeping down from the snow-capped mountains above the village. This kind of wind (*'aj*) would pick up with it debris that would sting when it hit chapped cheeks.

On the last Friday that January, I arrived early to literacy class to find eight other women already there, huddled near the wood burning stove in the corner of the classroom. Ghita (their teacher) had not arrived yet and I thought it would be a good opportunity for me to talk to the women on my own³³ and learn a bit more about their personal goals for participating in the literacy programs. When the women paused for a moment in their chatting, I asked a young girl sitting next to me named Hanane why she wanted to learn to read and write (be *qaria*) in Arabic. Rachida, who overheard my

³³ When I first arrived in the village I was rarely allowed to walk around on my own unaccompanied. This did not indicate that people there were suspicious of me, but rather was reflective of an elaborate hospitality code that placed the responsibility of maintaining both my honor and security, which in their view was the responsibility of my husband, in the hands of my host family and the literacy teachers. Married women from the village do travel alone without their husbands and although people understood my role of student, they had a hard time understanding why my husband would let me live 5 hours away apart from him for months at a time. With time, I became a familiar face and was able to assume the more liberal behaviors of married women, which include traversing the village alone to visit family and friends and to go to the market.

question, shouted ‘It isn’t really Arabic we need Khadija,³⁴ we can memorize the Qur’an; we need to learn French! Can you teach us?’³⁵ ‘Why French?’ I asked. ‘So we can understand our mobile phones,’ she replied.

Puzzled, I asked the women to explain and thus began an excited conversation about the importance of learning “French” so that they could read text messages they had received from family abroad or boys they had met. As I listened, I realized it wasn’t the French language the women wanted to learn, but rather the Roman alphabet and basic French spelling conventions. They wanted to be able to read text messages written in Moroccan Arabic or Tamazight using the French telephone keypads. When Ghita arrived, the women pleaded that she take a break from the Passerelle books and instead teach them the French alphabet. Ghita agreed to give a quick overview of the French alphabet while waiting for the rest of the class to arrive. She wrote the alphabet in a grid on the board in big capital letters with thick white chalk. Following traditional Moroccan pedagogy (Wagner 1993), she then read each letter out loud and then asked the women to chant in unison after her the names of each of the letters. Upon reaching the letter <z,> she erased the board and said ‘OK, good. But we are not here to learn French; we are here to learn Arabic so we can read the Qur’an.’ When the women protested she agreed to continue the lesson another day and suggested in the meantime they ask a younger school aged relative to help them read and compose their own text messages.

³⁴ This was the name given to me by the local school director upon my arrival in Tafza. He thought the name “Jenny” would be too hard for some of the women to adjust to and would mark me as a foreigner. Given my interest in literacy and writing, this name later proved appropriate as I was informed over and over again by village women that “Khadija” was a wife of the prophet Mohammed and if there was no one named Khadija living in a house, then the name must be written on the wall.

³⁵ It was commonly assumed that due to being a foreigner in Morocco that I commanded the French language and I was frequently asked to provide assistance in French for tasks such as varied as deciphering medicine dosing instructions, editing job and internship resumes and, in this case, writing SMS text messages.

That night, as I took notes in my fieldwork journal and tried to capture the exchange between the women and Ghita, I was struck by a subtle irony in the situation. In the Passerelle stage of the literacy program discussed in Chapter 2, Wafae and Ghita endorsed teaching the women to read and write in their mother tongue languages, either Moroccan Arabic or Tamazight, using the Arabic script because it held as an end goal the ability to read Classical/Standard Arabic, the language of writing and of the Qur'an. However, in this exchange, it was clear that while she sympathized with the women's desires to learn the French alphabet, she did not want to spend class time teaching them to write their mother tongues using French orthography for the purposes of text message communication. I began to wonder what this situation implied about ideologies surrounding digital media of communication and their relationship to languages in Morocco. Was Ghita's refusal to devote class time to text message literacy practices indicative of an ideology that relegates both mother tongue languages and text messages to the private, home domain? Was she implying that it was okay to use mother tongue languages to further Arabic literacy but not French? Alternatively, was her refusal a moral one because she disapproved of the women's acquisition of phone literacy skills for fear they would engage in inappropriate conversation or behavior with men?

This chapter analyzes the form and role of mother tongue languages in short message service (SMS) text messages. It begins with an overview of the emergence and dramatic rise in popularity of mobile phones and the use of text message technology in Morocco. Through a case study of a group of multilingual university students, I show that in the domain of written text messages, both Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight are the preferred languages of communication among educated young adults whose patterns of

social relations have changed with the emergence of this new media. I provide an analysis of the form of written representations of both mother tongue languages in text messaging and provide a comparative analysis to distinctive features of text messages identified in other languages, particularly English. I argue that the intersections of language ideologies defining Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight as oral languages that are associated with the private, with media ideologies locating text messaging as representative more of spoken language than written language, allows for dominant hierarchies of languages to be partially overturned in this domain and mother tongue languages to assume the role of unmarked code in this context. This chapter concludes with a consideration of code switching practices and how they articulate with notions of identity, prestige and the structural limitations present in the medium itself.

The emergence of mobile phones in Morocco

Mobile phones are a relatively new addition to the Moroccan social scene. They were introduced in the mid-90's but the penetration of mobile phones really took off in the past 8-10 years following the privatization of the telephone industry in Morocco (Ilahiane 2011). In 1999 there were only 364,000 mobile phone contracts in Morocco, but this number had already increased dramatically to almost 23 million in 2008, a mere decade later, when I first arrived at my field site in Tafza (ANRT 2010). More recently, in a January 2012 press release, the National Regulatory Agency for Telecommunications announced that the rate of new mobile phone subscriptions rose by 14.29% from 2010 to 2011, bringing the end of the year total to 36.5 million with a penetration rate in the population of 113.57% (ANRT 2011:2). Over 95% of the 36.5 million phone

subscriptions in Morocco last year were prepaid plans. Currently, there are three mobile telephone companies in Morocco: Maroc Telecom, Medi Telecom and Wana Corporate.

Historically, rates for cell phone calls in Morocco have been relatively high. In fact, calling with mobile phones was so expensive to most university aged students that they would prefer to either “beep” or receive calls (which costs nothing), or send text messages with their mobile phones. The practice of “beeping” refers to calling a friend or acquaintance and disconnecting after the first or second ring. People use beeping for various reasons, the most common of which is to indicate to the receiver that it is time to meet at a prearranged location, to let a friend know you are thinking of him or her, to indicate to someone you are watching a particularly interesting TV program or as a request for someone (who likely has a monthly vs. a pay-by-the-minute phone plan) to call you back (similar to a page). When a situation demands a voice phone call, these were often made from fixed lines in local telephone booths, which cost significantly less than mobile phone calls. Such calls, however, are not private and thus are inappropriate for intimate conversations, as the owner of the phone booth as well as other customers can usually hear the caller’s conversation clearly.

Sending text messages has increased greatly in popularity since the past ten years and in 2010 alone, almost 4 billion text messages were sent in Morocco (ANRT 2010: 26). Text messaging is seen by many as offering a balance between convenience, affordability, and relative privacy. They are more convenient than voice calls because the receiver does not have to be present when the text message is received, and can read the message later from the phone’s memory. Subscribing to and accessing voice mail messages on mobile phones is expensive in Morocco, and most phone subscribers disable

the voice mail feature on their phone. Text messages are also cheaper than voice calls and can offer a modicum of privacy between the sender and receiver.

Hind, a nurse I met in Casablanca, remembers that when she was engaged to her fiancé in 2010 he never called her, but instead they would send daily text messages back and forth, sometimes over 30 a day. She explained to me that it was considered culturally inappropriate for the two of them to spend much time alone without a chaperone, but through text messaging, they could communicate even intimate thoughts discreetly even if there were other family members in the room. Hind recalls that although the price of sending text messages has increased over time, it did not deter her from using SMS, as it was still cheaper than calling. When mobile phones were first available through Maroc Telecom in 2001, sending and receiving a text message was free for the first 6 months (Caubet 2004), but its price has risen gradually, having now reached 1 Moroccan dirham. Not all of the text messages these days are sent from mobile phones, however, as some internet websites (including that of Maroc Telecom) and more recently smart phone applications now offer free text messaging services.

Mobile phones, texting and social relations

Research has shown that mobile phones allow for new types of communication amongst people as, unlike fixed lines which require you to be in the house to answer the phone, with a mobile phone you can communicate more easily over space (Horst and Miller 2006; Ling 2004; Thurlow and Poff 2012; Wellman 2001). Recently, scholars have begun looking at the effects that this new technology may be having on social relations in Morocco. Ilahiane (2011), for example, shows how urban micro-entrepreneurs in Morocco are able to expand their business opportunities and enhance

their social networks through the use of their mobile phones. He argues that particularly for “bricolage” workers, those who patch together various ad hoc and small jobs to supplement their income, the mobile phones greatly help them expand the size and scale of their work activities. Mobile phones helps them to bring “together disjointed social ties, both local and extra-local relations, [and] to pursue temporary income-generating opportunities” (Ilahiane 2011: 41). He notes, however, that many of the interviewees he worked with did not use text messages due to their “low levels of education and the tradition of voice in communication exchanges” (Ilahiane and Sherry 2012:18).

Kriem (2009) also argues that new communication patterns have emerged through the use of mobile phones, including text message practices, which allow for the maintenance, transformation and development of social rituals. She states that, “the fast-paced nature of mobile phone communication promotes the exchange of messages rather than the negotiation of relations and cultural meanings,” which in turn is transforming Moroccan sociality (617). One traditional social practice that she argues is now being mediated through mobile phones is that of silatu rahim, or maintaining the bonds of kinship. Instead of spending religious holidays visiting in person all of their immediate family and close friends, many Moroccans are now using text messages to greet their family without having to travel across space. This observation was echoed by Yassine, a soldier in the Moroccan National Guard, who explained that in sending an SMS to a family member during a religious holiday it is as if ‘I went to their house, said *mabruk* and came back.’ Similarly, Yassine remarks that he tends to text a lot during religious or national celebrations because ‘it is cheaper and more practical due to the fact that you can

send the same message to many friends at the same time.’ These comments emphasize how mobile phones are imagined by users to allow them to transcend time and space.

In her work on mobile phone use in Malini, Kenya, McIntosh (2010) has argued that the use of the local vernacular Kigiriyama simultaneously indexes both a sense of localness and respect to a Giriama cultural heritage and a bid for inclusion as part of a global cosmopolitan culture. She explains that in this sense, the characteristics of rapid code-switching and use of abbreviated English in texts allow youth to perform new ways of being Giriama. McIntosh argues, “the very use of the vernacular in this technology militates against its marginalization, asserting the right of a marginalized people to invoke their ethnic identity even in a technologically mediated space dominated by dreams of assimilation” (350).

In addition, other scholars such as Bowen, et al. (2008) and Caubet (2004) have looked at mobile phones and their relationship to romance and changing social patterns of courtship in Morocco. They argue that mobile phones are transforming traditional spatial and associational boundaries between young men and women and that this new technology offers young Moroccans access to both the status and Western patterns of romance. Mobile phones facilitate behavior that young people are exposed to through Western media on satellite TV, but that they know violates Moroccan social norms which dictate that unmarried women should not have contact, particularly un-chaperoned, with men outside her immediate family.

Such behavior was frequent, though rarely talked about, in Tafza where contact between men and women outside their immediate family was carefully monitored. For example, like many of the young women in the village who had completed elementary

school and either owned or had access to a family mobile phone, Ghita and Wafae were avid texters and would often invest extra change as small as 10 or 20DH (\$1.25 – \$2.5) on a recharge card for their telephone. As the prices for voice calls were high and reception poor in the village, particularly inside the cement walled houses and school buildings, text messaging was the preferred method for communicating with friends, distant relatives and work colleagues at the school.

In addition to texting friends and family, both girls also texted men in whom they had a romantic interest. They told me stories of texting romances they had with neighboring men, teachers, and sometimes male cousins of theirs, some of whom were already married and had a baby with their first wife but were unhappy and interested in having a second wife. In the wee hours of the morning, while spending the night at Wafae's house once a week, she and I would often stay up late reading the "naughty" text messages she was sending to and receiving from Redouane, a young man who lived next door.

Although some of the women in the village of Tafza excitedly shared with me messages they sent and received on their mobile phones, unfortunately none of them would allow me to record them on paper or in my computer for research purposes. The women considered these messages potentially dangerous and would often delete a message from a male within minutes of receiving it. In many cases, the women shared a single mobile phone with other family members and it was understood that at any time a male sibling or father could ask to use the phone and look at its contents. Some of the girls feared physical rebuke if they got caught text messaging inappropriate content with a man.

Although the majority of my participant observation of text messaging behaviors is drawn from the intimate relationships I developed with Ghita, Wafae and the other women in the village of Tafza I recorded relatively few of text messages that they shared with me, and none of the texts which included taboo subject matter or language. This choice was made in respect of the privacy of the girls who so openly shared their texting practices with me.³⁶ The bulk of data from this chapter is drawn therefore from a different source. While living in Casablanca after my time spent in Tafza, I engaged the assistance of Sanaa, a young, multilingual, Moroccan public university educated woman, to aid me in the transcription and translation of the hours of digital audio recordings I had made during my fieldwork in Moroccan Arabic, Tamazight and French. While we were working together transcribing one day, Sannaa mentioned to me that three of her best friends that she had met during her studies at Université Ibn Zohr of Agadir had transcribed almost every text message they had received from each other since 2004. She generously offered to provide me access to these data and to help arrange interviews and focus group conversations with her friends and colleagues on the topic of mobile phone and languages. This chapter will look specifically at the form and style of text messages sent amongst this group of university friends.

³⁶ Shryock (2004) offers a nuanced discussion of how anthropologists have dealt with and been swept up in issues of public/private with regard to conducting and publishing ethnography. As he notes “our subjects must often come to terms with the harsh realization that written accounts of fieldwork invest more in protecting what is dear to us than what is dear to those who befriended us or antagonized us” (8). Out of respect for the women who did share such intimate messages with an outside researcher, I have chosen not to elaborate on the content of messages, such as those passed between Wafae and Redouane.

Text messaging among university students

Since the early 2000's, at the University of Agadir in Southern Morocco, it has not been unusual to find students sending and receiving text messages with their mobile phones like the one below:

M1: salut manik antgit istfijjt mbrok najah meme si j suis en retard j'ai ps d solde. thla frask bizaf achlicht, abzaf ortgant zond nki. bye.”

Ahmed to Sanaa: July 20, 2004, 15:33:27

hello how are you happy congratulations on passing (the final exam) even if I am late (in congratulating you) I don't have any credit (on my phone). take very good care of yourself “a-chlicht” don't sleep too much like me. bye.

Ahmed, who was then a 3rd year Bachelor's student in the department of Economics, sent this text message to his friend and classmate Sanaa, a 2nd year student in the department of English, who had just received her final grades for the 2003-2004 academic year. The final exams had been particularly stressful that semester and Ahmed wanted to extend his congratulations to Sanaa even though she had already left Agadir and had returned to her parents' home for the summer vacation. In his message, Ahmed drew upon a vast array of linguistic resources and creatively incorporated lexical and grammatical items from five languages: French, Tashelhit (the geolect of Tamazight spoken in the southwest of Morocco), Moroccan Arabic, German and English. Although never having studied German himself, he and his friends had stumbled upon the German word <schlicht>³⁷ meaning 'simple or plain' and used it frequently as a humorous nickname among themselves because it reminded them of the Tashelhit word <jlixt> meaning 'dirty,' in both a literal and figurative sense. Ahmed wrote this word in his text with the nonstandard spelling <chlicht>, to represent how he and his friends actually

³⁷ Notes on transcription: < > are used to indicate written alphabetic letters, // indicated phonemes, and ‘ ’ indicates English glosses.

pronounced the word with the vowel /a/ in the beginning. The /a/ is a morpheme in Tashelhit that here means ‘you are.’³⁸ Ahmed creatively incorporated this German borrowing into a Tashelhit grammatical construction, thus highlighting the indexical relationship it has with the similar sounding <jlixt>.

What is interesting about messages like these, however, is not only the linguistic complexity and creativity at play, but also the implicit claims being made about the hierarchical relationships between languages in the domain of text messages. As discussed in Chapter 1, two of the languages represented in this message, Tamazight and Moroccan Arabic, the two main mother tongue languages of Morocco, are not traditionally written languages. Rather, both are considered primarily oral languages whose domains of use include informal and private spaces such as the home, the market and between friends and family. Moroccan Arabic does not have a standardized writing system, and until the recent adoption of Tifinagh in 2003, Tamazight did not have an official writing system either. In contrast, Standard Arabic and French both have long literate traditions and are the languages most associated in Morocco with formal contexts, literacy, education, government and public space. Outside of digital mediated communication, it is unusual to see either Tamazight or Moroccan Arabic in written form. However, the creation of short message system (SMS) technology along with other new forms of digital mediated communication such as e-mail, chat rooms and social networking sites, have provided new contexts in which these two languages can expand in form and use. A similar situation has recently been reported in Algeria, where

³⁸ Instead of /a/ the morpheme /tgit/ could be used instead also with the meaning ‘you are.’

Algerian Arabic has become the dominant language of communication in text messages (Mostari 2009).³⁹

As mentioned in the introduction, unlike Moroccan Arabic, which currently has no official status in Morocco, Tamazight has slowly been gaining public recognition and institutional status over the past 10 years. In 2002, the Royal Institute for Amazigh Culture (IRCAM) was founded in Rabat and was charged with standardizing a variety of Tamazight and developing pedagogical materials for it to be taught as a mandatory subject in Moroccan public schools.⁴⁰ Tifinagh, a 39 letter alphabet based on multiple, ancient Lybico-Berber alphabets, was chosen as the official writing system for Tamazight language instruction.⁴¹ More recently, in the July 2011 national referendum, the people of Morocco approved a new constitution which redefines Morocco as a linguistically and culturally plural state. In the words of his majesty King Mohamed VI, the new constitution “provides for the promotion of all linguistic and cultural expressions in Morocco”.⁴² Whereas the preamble of the earlier 1996 version of the constitution defined the kingdom of Morocco as “an Islamic and fully sovereign state whose official language is Arabic,” the new constitution does not directly address the question of an official state language until Article 5. The first sentence of Article 5 stipulates that “Arabic remains the official language of the state,” however it continues to add that “Tamazight

³⁹ Interestingly, the patterns and availability of mobile phone usage in Algeria is quite different than in Morocco. In Algeria mobile phones are mainly an item of the elite, whereas in Morocco, mobile phone owning and usage has crossed all income and education levels (Caubet 2004).

⁴⁰ http://www.ircam.ma/doc/divers/presentation_of_ircam.pdf (accessed 1 March 2011).

⁴¹ Choices made about writing systems are never neutral but rather are always politically and socially loaded. In a 2004 interview, Salem Chaker spoke out against Morocco’s decision to use Tifinagh as the official writing system of Tamazight in Morocco, calling it a “hasty and badly founded decision” that is “part of a strategy which aims at reducing Amazigh, as a social and political factor, to nothing or next to nothing” (Chemakh and Ferkal 2004). He instead advocated what he considered a more functional writing system based on the Roman alphabet.

⁴² <http://moroccotomorrow.org/2011/06/18/full-transcript-of-king-mohammed-vis-speech-june-17-2011/> (28 March 2012).

[Berber/*amazighe*] constitutes an official language of the state, as the common heritage of all Moroccans without exception” (Ruchti 2011). Silverstein (2011) notes that there has been some concern that the choice to use of the definite article when naming Arabic “*the* official language” in contrast to the choice of the indefinite article naming Tamazight “*an* official language” was not haphazard, and serves to reinforce the dominant view that Tamazight is secondary and less valued than Arabic.

However, despite the introduction of Tamazight in the national education system and the recent official recognition of it as a national language, Tamazight varieties are still viewed by Moroccans as generally lacking in social capital and are strongly linked to rural areas, the home and private space. Moroccan Arabic, on the other hand, has been conferred a higher status and is expanding in its domains, particularly in urban contexts previously dominated by Standard Arabic (Boukous 1995), such as written advertisements, literature and some government institutions.⁴³ This chapter takes a look at the form of written Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight, in this case varieties of Tashelhit, in SMS text messages.⁴⁴ It argues that the choice to use Moroccan Arabic and Tashelhit when writing to other Amazigh friends is closely linked to media ideologies held by the students that the form of text messages should represent language as it is spoken and that correct interpretation by the receiver is the responsibility of the sender. Gershon defines media ideologies as “the metalanguage that emphasizes technology or bodies through which we communicate” and attends to issues of “authorship, remediation, entextualization, knowledge storage, referentiality, address, and publics” (2010:283).

⁴³ Currently, the Ministry of Transportation offers a computerized drivers’ license exam in Moroccan Arabic. The exam questions are posed in Moroccan Arabic and written in the Arabic script with full diacritic markings. To my knowledge, the exam is not available in Tamazight.

⁴⁴ While there is a growing scholarship on the form and role of Moroccan Arabic in SMS, I am unaware of similar research on Tamazight.

She argues that an attention of ideologies of media as separate from language ideologies is necessary, as the former requires an attention to the materiality of media. She notes that the two do not always align, but when they do, they often generate or support locally persuasive perspectives on what selves and social interactions should be” (284).

Data and methodology

The main observations made in this chapter are drawn from a corpus of over 700 text messages sent between a group of Amazigh multilingual Moroccan students at the University Ibn Zohr of Agadir between 2004 and 2006. The majority of these messages were sent between three girlfriends, Sanaa, Naima and Jamila, who were all Bachelors’ students in the department of English and who were aged 20-22 at the time they were sending and receiving these messages. Sanaa and Jamila are from both from the countryside: Sanaa lives near Tiznit on the coast and Jamila lives near Agadir, Morocco. Both have Tashelhit as their mother tongue and speak Tashelhit with friends and family. They are both also fluent in Moroccan Arabic, French and English. Naima is originally from Tinejdad, in the southeast of Morocco and grew up in Ouarzazate. She understands the Tinejdad variety of Tamazight spoken by her parents at home, which she views as her mother tongue language, as well as the varieties of Tashelhit spoken in Ouarzazate and Agadir. Unfortunately, according to her, she cannot speak or maintain conversation in any of the varieties of Tamazight. She speaks primarily in Moroccan Arabic, which she learned in school, and is also fluent in French and English.

The remaining text messages from this corpus were sent to Sanaa from male friends of hers, primarily from Abdelkader, Khalid, Yassine, Ahmed and Hicham who were also university students in the departments of economics, English, history and

geography. All of the men are multilingual in a variety of Tamazight and Moroccan Arabic, and all have studied both French and English. Except for Hicham, the other four men are all from the region of Agadir and their mother tongue and preferred language of communication is Tashelhit. Hicham, however, is from near Tinghir in the southeast of Morocco and speaks a variety of Tamazight considered by Sanaa and her friends to be partially unintelligible. For the most part, Hicham hung out with friends from his home region and when he spoke to Sanaa, with whom he had a short-term romance via text message and chat, he would speak very slowly and code-switch to English and Moroccan Arabic.

In order to honor their close friendships and preserve memories of their university years, since 2004, the three women have painstakingly recorded text messages from each other by hand into notebooks, and more recently on the computer. Sanaa, for example, has handwritten over 1,500 messages in a notebook from her best friends at the time. Naima has also recorded over 1,000 messages (both typed and hand written on loose leaf paper), but has only recorded those from Sanaa and Jamila. Jamila has also hand recorded hundreds of text messages from her two best friends but I was not able to analyze these for this chapter. None of the women transcribed messages from family or acquaintances on a regular basis.

The data focused on in this study is based on the women's transcriptions of their original SMS text messages from 2004-2006. Unfortunately, the original messages have long since been deleted due both to mobile phone storage limitations at the time as well as a concern that archived, private messages might be read by someone else at a later time. As has been stressed by numerous researchers regarding transcriptions (Bucholtz

2000; Haviland 1996; Urban 1996; Woolard 1998a), the processes and decisions that go into transcribing are never ideologically or power neutral. As Bucholtz argues, “all transcripts takes sides, enabling certain interpretations, advancing particular interests, favoring specific speakers, and so on. The choices made in transcription link the transcription to the context in which it is intended to be read” (2000). Although Sanaa and Naima claim that they deliberately tried to render faithful copies of their original messages, consciously maintaining any errors or nonstandard variations in punctuation, spelling, and capitalization, it is likely that they unintentionally altered some of the messages when they transcribed them. For example, it was discovered that while none of the three girls put spaces after punctuation marks in their text messages, each of them added a space after a period, comma, semicolon, and exclamation point in their written transcriptions, thus conforming to standard writing conventions in French and English.

In addition, Sanaa and her friends intentionally changed the names and grammatical morphemes indicating gender for all references to men in the handwritten transcription they made. For example, “Said” became “Saida,” and “Hassan” became “Hasnae.” The following text message illustrates how grammatical morphemes marking the subject and object pronouns were changed in the transcribed messages.

M2: *sbah lkhir awabhradnkrh skrh kati3am d Fati kmikaybkan. tfou orsnh makh lihkn t hmlh hta raw3a art3jabtnayit oulala khonhkm but tra ayitr'r jamila tnawa sanaa*

Jamila to Sanaa: June 14, 2004 [07:35:57]

good morning I have just woken up I am not speaking to Naima you are the one left. tfou⁴⁵ I don't know why I like you two even “Raw3a” told me she doesn't get it oh la la I cheated on you but she wanted to call me Jamila and she said hey Sanaa

⁴⁵ “Tfou” is an exclamation meaning ‘shit or crap.’ Its verbal root means ‘spit.’

Based on the knowledge that the person nicknamed <raw3a> is a male student that Sanaa had a crush on and later began a text based romantic liaison, it is clear that the morphemes indicating gender that are attached to the verbs have been altered to make it seem as if he were female. For example, the verb <tra> is composed of two morphemes: /t/, which marks the 3rd person feminine singular subject and /ra/ the verb stem of ‘want.’ It is certain that in the original version of this message, this verb was written as <ira> with the first morpheme originally having been /i/ to mark the 3rd person masculine singular subject. The women took measures such as these so that an “eavesdropper,” someone neither inscribed, not ratified, nor acknowledged (Goffman 1974), reading the notebook would not understand who was being talked about. This person would specifically not know that the girls were engaging in text correspondence with male friends, a behavior that used to be universally considered *hchuma* ‘shameful,’ but is now more tolerated, as explained above. As Sanaa explained, “it is [sic] my secrets and I want them to remain private.”⁴⁶

Since the original text messages are unavailable, Sanaa and I sometimes had to go through lengthy processes of recreating the form and content of the original messages, sometimes by means of comparing messages sent between the three girls on a particular date and looking for a dialogue structure to aid in interpretation. Due to these limitations on the data, I have also collected and analyzed a smaller set of more recent text messages sent between these friends to compare to the transcribed data set from 2004-2006. I have also drawn upon extensive participant observation and data gathered during focus groups and informal interviews conducted with the original authors of the text messages under

⁴⁶ As in other chapters of this dissertation, the names and identifying details of participants in this research project have been changed to maintain anonymity.

study, as well as with other 20-35 year old Amazigh men and women living in Casablanca, Morocco on the topic of mobile phone use and text messaging. Finally, this data is also considered in light of over 100 text messages I have recorded that were sent to me in Moroccan Arabic from Wafae, Ghita and other friends while in Tafza in 2008-2009.

The written representation of Moroccan Arabic and Tashelhit in SMS

Mostari argues that a “spontaneous form of orthographic development has accompanied the adoption of SMS technologies” (2009:382) in North Africa. In his focus on speakers of Algerian Arabic, he notes that unlike Arabic speakers from the Middle East, Algerians prefer to represent their local variety of Arabic in text messages using the Roman alphabet, even when they have the option of using the Arabic alphabet on their phones. Similarly, Caubet’s (2004) research as well as my own observations have revealed that young adults in Morocco greatly prefer to write and receive Moroccan Arabic text messages using the Roman alphabet rather than the Arabic alphabet. This contrasts with orthographic choice for representing mother tongue languages in other digital format such as social networking sites and internet chat websites where script choice is more varied and examples of Moroccan Arabic written with the Arabic alphabet are commonplace. This may be in part due to the fact that computer keyboards are more likely to have the Arabic script marked on the keys and there are free programs online that can aid writers in locating and utilizing the Arabic alphabet. In contrast, many mobile phones in Morocco do not have the Arabic alphabet marked on the keypad and some phones cannot display received messages written in Arabic script, whereas all phones can display messages in Roman script.

With regard to writing in Tashelhit, the university students I met did not originally have the choice to use Tifinagh as the input language for text messaging in Tashelhit. Indeed, in 2002, the year most of the students started school and purchased their first mobile phones, Tifinagh had yet to be officially adopted as the official script of Tamazight.⁴⁷ As with those writing in Moroccan Arabic, students composing SMS messages had the choice of representing Tamazight with either the Arabic or Roman alphabet. All of the Tashelhit SMS examples in my data set were written in the Roman alphabet using the French letter keys. This is partly due to the fact that text messages written in Arabic script have a maximum character limit of 70 and those written in Roman script have a maximum character limit of 160, thus allowing for longer messages. The only messages I collected that are written in Arabic script were holiday greetings in Standard Arabic that were forwarded around the Islamic holy days of Ramadan and Eid El Kebir.

When possible, sounds in Moroccan Arabic⁴⁸ and Tashelhit that had a close equivalent in French were written with the Roman alphabet according to French spelling conventions. For example, /b/ was written as and the voiceless, palatal fricative /š/ (written ش in Arabic script) was written as the diagraph <ch>. However, because both Tashelhit (Boumalk 2003) and Moroccan Arabic have more consonant phonemes than French, a number of new conventions have had to be developed to represent these sounds in text message format. For example, Moroccans make use of the Roman numerals <3, 7, and 9> to represent the Tashelhit and Moroccan Arabic phonemes /ʃ, ḥ and q/ (written as

⁴⁷ Even if these students had had the option of text entry in Tifinagh it is highly unlikely that they would have chosen to do so. None of them had mastered the alphabet and many do not feel like Tifinagh is an authentic script of Tamazight, but was rather part of a strategic political maneuver.

⁴⁸ See Caubet (2004) for a full analysis of the orthographic representation of Moroccan Arabic in text messages.

ع, ح, ق in Arabic script) respectively. However only <3>, which represents the voiced uvular stop /ʕ/, was used consistently in my data. The phoneme /q/ was more often represented with the Roman letter <k>, which also represents the phoneme /k/, and the phoneme /ħ/ was most often written as <h> which also represents the phoneme /h/. Both languages also have a number of emphatic consonants including /t̤, d̤, s̤/ (ط, ض, ص in Arabic script), which were most often written in Roman script like their non-emphatic counterparts as <t, d, and s>.⁴⁹ Furthermore, both languages have two uvular fricatives: the voiced one /ɣ/ (written غ in Arabic script) is alternatively represented as <r, R, or gh>⁵⁰ and the unvoiced one /x/ (written خ in Arabic script) is represented as <x> or more commonly with the diagraph <kh>.

Tashelhit has four additional emphatic consonant phonemes that do not exist in Moroccan Arabic, including /ɾ, z/ and are written like their non-emphatic counterparts <r, z>. There is also an emphatic voiced alveolar fricative that is written like its non-emphatic counterpart <j>, and an emphatic voiced velar fricative written like its non-emphatic counterpart <g>. Furthermore, Tashelhit also has two secondary types of distinctive articulation for consonants: labialization⁵¹ and length. Labialization was not represented graphically in the text messages and consonant length was only occasionally indicated, usually by doubling the consonant such as <dssa> the imperative form of ‘laugh.’

⁴⁹ In Tafza in 2008 I occasionally received text messages in which emphatic consonants were represented with capital letters for example <T, D, S>, though this practice was not reflected in the text message corpus from the university students.

⁵⁰ I have heard of Moroccans writing /ɣ/ as <4> but I have not seen this practice myself.

⁵¹ Labialization occurs when a consonant, usually /k, g/, is pronounced with a rounding of the lips [ʷ] right after the consonant (Sadiqi and Ennaji 2004). It can be both distinctive and nondistinctive in Tashelhit.

The following text message from Hassan to Sanaa exemplifies a number of the writing conventions discussed above. Note that in the second transcription, the emphatic consonants and /ʕ/ were indicated with their IPA symbols and displayed in a bold font to distinguish them from the other phonemes. It is clear that in the text messaging conventions used for writing Tashelhit among this group of friends, no distinction is made in the representation of emphatic and non-emphatic consonants.⁵²

M3: *dima dima 3otla...nkni nsthnakn akrayat ka. kihtin ranachkh rasad slihdarnh ochkan kra midn. rihadli amnawih tsawr. tsnt mayiskr osmid ntmazirt hrgn igozan ino. a+*

Hassan to Sanaa: Mon 10 Jan 2005 [19:16:59]

dima dima ʕotla...nkni nsthnakn aqrayat ka. kihtin ranachkh yaʕad slihdarnh ochkan kra midn. rihadli amnawih tʕawr. tsnt mayiskr oʕmid ntmazirt hrgn igozan ino. a+

always always vacation... we don't care (about exams) just study. I was going to come today but some people came (to my house). So I wanted to bring you pictures. Do you know what the cold of home did to me it burned my cheeks. Till later

Distinctive features of text messages

Crystal, whose work focuses primarily on English medium text messages, has identified a number of features that make texting a distinctive form of writing and gives it an “impression of novelty” (2008:37). Among these are logograms (using a single letter or number to represent a word or word part),⁵³ initialisms (the reduction of words to their initial letter), omitted letters (dropping a letter from the middle of a word), nonstandard spellings and shortenings (leaving off the end of a word). In the text messages I

⁵² Many of the texts showed inconsistencies in how individual sounds were represented within the message itself.

⁵³ Androutsopoulos (2000) labels homophone spellings of this type as “lexical substitutions” in which “a graph, combinations of two graphs or a number replaces a homophone word or word part” (521).

analyzed, all of the distinctive features discussed by Crystal were present in the French or English portions of the texts. Consider the following examples:

M4: salut ihd ifor supr vipi 2 mtab3am ola hati rakmchkmhi Raw3a alah
bhrajokim thnih mayi tskrt ahyata ayhhkm hmlh tfou “a big ma...h for y”
Jamila to Sanaa: July 15, 2004 [21:21:28]

hello if the job announcements (for public school teachers) **is posted beep two consecutive times or I will tell Raw3a God⁵⁴ I only now feel free of you I don't know what you have done to me to make me love you tfou** “a big kiss for you”

M5: slt hobi, we're going to fac (*mama & khalto*) are u coming? if yes I'll wait u alone & tell them to go without me answer now. mah 3lik.
Naima to Sanaa: July 12, 2004 [14:10:04]

hello my love, we're going to the department (my mother and my aunt) are you coming? if yes I'll wait for you alone and tell them to go without me answer now. kiss for you.

M6: **Nki mis u 2 much achko orila makmirwas rdsnit. isokan tfijjt btitiwit 7 cpr slam f l3aila.** enjoy urself nicedreams
Yassine to Sanaa: August 4, 2004 [22:12:024]

I miss you too much there is no one like you on this earth. are you ok do you have interest in CPR (the teachers' job announcements) **greet your family** enjoy yourself nice dreams

M7: *Hobi twhchtk. ana mchrola bzaf had layam hit 3ndna problems flkra. Safi bdlna chambre oranrhlo rda inchallah. Jtm bcp tant que dnya olbhr. olma... “Mah 4 hobi” jamila!!!*
Jamila to Sanaa: November 2, 2005 [10:34:57]

My_love I miss you. i am very busy these days because we have problems with our rent. we have finally changed the room and will move tomorrow God willing. I love you a lot as much as the world and the ocean and the water... “Kiss for my dear” jamila!!!

In the first example (M4), we see a nonstandard spelling of <vipi>, which was originally a borrowing of the English word “beep” into French. There is also the

⁵⁴ As in an exclamation or sigh meaning ‘good’.

presence of initialism in <y> for ‘you’ and the logogram <2>, which in this example could represent ‘the number two’ in any of the four languages in this text message. It would be left to the receiver to decide how to read the logogram out loud. In the second example (M5), we can observe the features of omitted letters as seen in the opening greeting <slt> for “salut” as well as the shortening of “faculté” to <fac>. In the latter case, the shortening of “faculté” to “fac” is not unique to text messaging or other forms of CMC, as the abbreviation is used commonly in both spoken French and Moroccan Arabic, where it is a borrowing. In the third example (M6), there are examples of shortening, initialism, and logograms. Finally, in the fourth message (M7), there are additional examples of initialisms and shortentings in <jtm> “je t’aime” (‘I love you’) and <bcp> “beaucoup” (‘a lot’). Notice that the <2> in M6 clearly stands for the word “too” in English, unlike in M4 where it stood as the number “two.” Similarly the <4> in M7 can only stand for the English word “for” and not the number “four.”

What was striking about the entire corpus of messages I examined was a relative lack of the distinctive text message features described by Crystal in the Tashelhit and Moroccan Arabic portions of text. Though there were some examples of omitted letters observed, in general there was a striking imbalance between the use of text features in the English and French portions of the text messages, and those in the Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight portions. Interviewees often argued that there was already a large amount of ambiguity embedded in the text writing conventions of Tashelhit and Moroccan Arabic, for example, the lack of distinction between emphatic and non-emphatic consonants, and that omitting additional letters or using initialisms would be too confusing. They readily cited numerous minimal pairs in Tashelhit based on emphasis as evidence, including the

two possible readings of the word <ijja>, which with a non-emphatic consonant means ‘a good smell’ and with an emphatic consonant means ‘a bad smell.’ When questioned about the lack of text features in Moroccan Arabic text messages, the students responded that Moroccan Arabic is a language with few vowels to begin with and to them it seemed natural to represent Moroccan Arabic words with few if any vowels.

McIntosh (2010) analyzed ideologies underlying code-switching and orthographic manipulation of Giriama text messages sent in Malindi, Kenya. Similar to my data, she found that orthographic condensation occurred only in the English medium portions of the texts and that Kiswahili and Kigiriama were never abbreviated. She argues that the different ways of representing these two languages has metapragmatic significance for young people who use the different styles to embody contrasting personas.

The following message written primarily in Moroccan Arabic, with limited code-switching to French and English, demonstrates the feature of omitting letters, probably the most common text feature witnessed in Moroccan Arabic. This is exemplified in the word <lw> ‘before’ in M7, which when pronounced has a vowel in the first syllable /luwwl/. Note that the <N.> towards the end of the message is an initialism for the name of the girl that was being discussed “Naima.”

M8: Hbiba ta3i ca va m3a lkhdma ojra!ana hayra bzaf:lmawqif dyali men Rabi3a mabayn.naima qerrat matbqach m3aha ki lwl,mabritch nkon brhocha surtout hit mahdert la scene.qlbi kaygolia ntol 3liha,mé khayfa tbqa tji 3ndi fach matkon N,saraha thnit mnha had lyam,en meme temps mamrtaha!tell me what to do.smhili

Jamila to Sanaa: March 23, 2012 [19:49:15]

My darling, how are you with work? Busy? I am very confused: my situation with Rabia isn't clear. Naima decided not to behave towards her like before. I don't want to be childish especially since I didn't witness the scene. My heart tells me to check on her (Rabia), but I am afraid that she will keep coming over (to see

me) when Naima isn't there, in truth I feel free of her these past days,at the same time I am not comfortable!tell me what to do.forgive me (for bothering you with this)

Caubet (2004) argued that the reduced occurrence of text features in Moroccan Arabic text messages may also be due to the already transgressive medium of the message itself. She argues that in France often young adults use “coded French,” by which she refers to features such as initialism and non-standard spellings to index group membership. She suggests that in Morocco, a similar phenomenon is at play; however, the index is not achieved through text features, but rather in the choice to represent Moroccan Arabic in written form. She states, “it is undoubtedly a pleasure to communicate by writing in Moroccan Arabic” (255) as one cannot possibly make any errors since it isn't a written language and has no standard referent. While my observations lead me to agree that the text message authors I spoke with enjoy the freedom and novelty of writing in Moroccan Arabic, they do not report feelings of having transgressed, as to them, Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight are the unmarked codes in this domain. Ideologies of media that define text messaging as more speech like than writing like, expressed to me by Sanaa, Jamila and Naima, align in this case with language ideologies associating mother tongue languages with oral expression, thus creating a situation where the taken for granted language variety for text messages should be the one(s) spoken by the parties sending and receiving the texts. The university students I interviewed offered a similar argument for writing Tamazight in Roman script. They confided that although they knew about Tifinagh and that a system for representing varieties of Tamazight was in the process of standardization, it did not feel like an

authentic script for them to use. Therefore, in their minds, for Tamazight, like Moroccan Arabic there was no right or wrong way to represent it orthographically.

Language choice and code-switching

Code-switching can be defined as “an individual’s use of two or more language varieties in the same speech event or exchange” (Woolard 2004:73-74). Earlier research on codes and code-switching tended to fall into either one of two theoretical camps: on one hand, those that drew on scholarly literature from the field of linguistics on quantitative analysis of linguistic change that tended to focus on the importance of grammatical constraints in code-switching (Clyne 1987; Weinreich, et al. 1968), and on the other hand, those that emerged from research in the ethnography of communication that approach switching as a skilled and socially meaningful practice that is often used by speakers to create systematic communicative effects and manage social difference (Gumperz and Hymes 1972). This second approach was pioneered by John Gumperz.

In his 1982 article “Conversational Code-switching,” John Gumperz argues that approaches to code-switching that focus primarily on linguistic data could not account for all instances of code-switching. He further notes that the lines between code-switching and borrowing in such models become particularly blurred, a point he demonstrates with examples from Hindi and English where even grammatical features and lexical roots can themselves be borrowed. Gumperz instead argues for a definition of what he terms “conversational code-switching” that foregrounds the “*meaningful* juxtaposition” (my emphasis) of segments of speech from “two different grammatical systems or subsystems” (59, 66). Gumperz notes that the semantic effect of this type of code-switching is governed by the internal rules of these two systems (though the knowledge

of these rules may be either conscious or subconscious to the speaker), as well as the speaker's (or hearer's) evaluation of the code juxtaposition with relation to background knowledge, social presuppositions and context.

Through analysis of code-switching examples from three linguistically and socially distinct contexts (bilingual Slovenian and German speakers in a village along the Austrian -- Yugoslavian border; bilingual Hindi and English college students in the city of Delhi; and Spanish and English bilingual speakers in Chicago), Gumperz attempts to identify "strategies" by which speakers employ code-switching for semantic effect in actual examples of language in action. As an introductory analysis, he isolates a number of conversational functions of code-switching, including reported speech, the signaling of a particular addressee, sentence fillers and interjections, reiterations or clarifications, qualifications and the degree of speaker and involvement in a message. However, through his discussion of these functions, he rejects them as sufficient to predict code occurrence and argues for a more semantic approach to switching in which message interpretation and the grammar of codes would be viewed as independent phenomenon.

In this article, Gumperz distinguishes between *situational* switching and *metaphorical* switching. In the former, a code is associated with a particular type of activity so that it can either reflect or entail a change in the definition of the speech event, the main example of this type of switching being diglossia. By contrast, in metaphorical code-switching, only a shift in contextualization cues occurs and there is an absence of topical shift or other extralinguistic context markers. Gumperz's notion of metaphorical switches was detailed an article he co-authored with Blom in 1972 on the alternation of linguistic elements from local and standard varieties of Norwegian in the village of

Hemnesberget, Norway. In this article they show how metaphorical switches, often by violating assumptions regarding the rules of participation or context for using different codes, can create a “semantic effect” in which interactants can allude to other social relationships they hold without changing the definition of the speech event itself (Blom and Gumperz 1972).

As alluded to above, Gumperz’s analysis of code-switching is also notable for its focus on issues of in-and out-group boundary making in bilingual contexts by which code-switching can be understood as a strategy or resource. In fact, in bilingual situations he notes a tendency “for the ethnically specific, minority language to be regarded as the ‘we code’ and become associated with in-group and informal activities, and for the majority language to serve as the ‘they code’ associated with the more formal, stiffer and less personal out-group relations” (66).

When Peter Auer’s edited volume *Code-Switching in Conversation* appeared in the late 1990s, it marked a break with approaches to code-switching that emphasized either grammatical constraints or social meaning and instead offered new directions for researchers. Unlike earlier approaches which relied on pre-existing linguistic categories and assumed the existence of distinct ‘codes’ that could then be viewed as alternating or switching, the articles collected under Auer’s volume aimed at arriving at definitions of codes as emerging from and embedded in verbal action. Similar to Gumperz, Auer’s volume reflects a concern for the fact that what linguists assumed as codes may not match the views of participants. Auer argues for an approach to analyzing code-switching in a given community that emphasizes an attention to its role in creating and

negotiating conversational and social meaning for co-participants within the particular emergent interactional context of its production.

In his introduction, Auer begins by exploring how the particular conversational structure of a given interaction is connected to its larger, “*ethnographically reconstructed*,” social and cultural structures. Auer notes that dominant perspectives for analyzing code-switching tend to focus exclusively on either the macro-sociolinguistic dimensions in language choice seen in some of Gumperz’ work (such as how participants use code-choice to index group membership) or on the syntactic factors involved (such as restrictions on intrasentential/intersentential switching). In order to illustrate possible alternatives to these two approaches, Auer considers three examples of (what he emphasizes are *not* mutually exclusive) types of code-switching: 1) ‘discourse-related code-switching’, where code-switching helps define the meaning of a particular utterance by indexing elements of a wider socio-cultural context; 2) ‘discourse-related insertions’, which tend to function intertextually by linking up the present insertion to earlier conversational interactions; and 3) ‘preference-related switching’, which is a type of switching that often results in the sustained phases of divergent languages between participants and calls for an account of why a participant is performing the switching given the larger political and social context of the interaction. This third type of code-switching differs from discourse-related code-switching in that the use of a new language does not create a shift in footing (Goffman 1979) or frame that is then shared by all participants. From the position of participants’ understanding of why a code-switch occurred, there is a further difference between types 1 and 3. In discourse-related code-switching, participants look within the conversation itself for explanation whereas in

preference-related code-switching they look for explanations that are tied to the individual(s) in the interaction.

For the authors of the text messages analyzed in this chapter, the choice of which language to use in composing text messages was largely connected to notions of Amazigh identity, feelings of intimacy, as well as on the perceived linguistic capabilities of the intended receiver. During interviews it became clear that in general, participants associated the language(s) with which they text to someone with the language(s) with which they speak to them. All of them said that they strongly preferred to speak Tashelhit when in the company of other Tamazight speakers and that they felt awkward when put in the position to speak another language, usually Moroccan Arabic or French, with those they knew understood Tamazight. As one interviewee stated, “We are Amazigh and our language is Tamazight. Why would we speak or write anything else?”

Yassine illustrated this point, saying that even if he was in a room full of monolingual Moroccan Arabic speakers and there was just one Tamazight speaker, he would turn to that person and begin speaking in Tashelhit even if the others “*ghadi itnuwaw*,” meaning they would become suspicious and think they were being talked about. Hind also described a hypothetical situation in which she might be talking to a friend in Tashelhit and third woman approaches to join the conversation. Until the new person lets it be known that she is also Amazigh, Hind and her friend would assume she was Arab and continue their conversation in Tashelhit, ignoring the newcomer. If however, the new woman spoke a word of Tamazight they would immediately become friendly towards her and try to include her in the conversation. Even as she was relating the story to me, Hind’s body language mirrored how she would linguistically shut out or

accommodate the third person. She hunched her shoulders and turned away from me as she discussed how she would block out an outsider to her conversation by speaking in Tashelhit, and then lifted her chest and expanded her arms to show how she would welcome the newcomer if she proved to be Amazigh. Hoffman describes a similar type of language use in the Sous Valley plains in southern Morocco as expressing an “ideology of solidarity” by which “individuals may demand use of Tashelhit [a Tamazight variety] within the group context, and may even scold or chastise those who speak Arabic within it” (2008:153).

Similarly, when texting, participants said they preferred to text to another Amazigh in Tashelhit and would write in Moroccan Arabic only if the person they were texting with did not speak Tamazight. Naima is a good example of someone whose mother tongue was Tamazight, but who as an adult passively understands multiple varieties of Tamazight and cannot speak in any of them. Both Sanaa and Jamila, as well as other friends and family, therefore text her primarily in Moroccan Arabic, though they would often tease her for not knowing Tashelhit. For example, in a recent text message, Jamila recounted to Sanaa how she had tricked Naima into believing the Tashelhit word for almonds meant ‘devil.’

Since a high number of messages were sent between the three girls containing English and/or French, the identity of the receiver is only one part of the puzzle regarding which languages are used in a particular text message. Focus group participants also reported using European languages for their prestige factor. As one girl explained, “you sound smarter, urban and more educated when you write in French or English,” though she cautioned that texting only in French can give off the impression that you are a snob.

Furthermore, since many of the girls' friends were students in the department of English together, it is not surprising that frequent code-switching into English occurred particularly when texting about exams, teachers or things that happened at school. Using English in text messages with each other indexed in-group belonging, and frequently English phrases from class became decontextualized and would reappear in texts in the form of jokes. For example, the phrase "fresh air! I can't bear," became a popular way of opening and closing text messages for a few weeks, following the scene an English teacher made when opening the window in a stuffy classroom. Some students enjoyed the creative play of texting in English and using "textisms" as seen in the message from Naima⁵⁵ below:

M9: I receivd ur nice card, thanks. Its up t us t do such a nice gesture.. Anyway, w/all mis u, always at our tongues, in our minds. Nxt time u mst com t Fac t see u. bye...

Naima to Sanaa: February 13, 2005 [18:09:03]

I received your nice card, thanks. It's up to us to do such a nice gesture.. Anyway, we all miss you, you are always talked about and thought about. Next time you must come to the (English) department to see us. bye...

Naima's message is peppered with the distinctive features that Crystal identifies as characteristic of text messages in English including initialisms, omitted letters, nonstandard spellings and shortenings.

Another reason participants offered for why they would code-switch to other languages was to express intimate or romantic feelings. Most focus group participants said that they prefer using French with their significant other, though two mentioned they would also use Moroccan Arabic. Abdelhaq remembered being taught that "such things as romance were very taboo, so even linguistically speaking, we [Tamazight speakers]

⁵⁵ Incidentally, Naima is now a teacher of English.

don't find enough expressions to express our feelings.” In fact, each time the topic came up in an interview or focus group session, participants would laugh as they tried to imagine their spouses and significant others expressing desire or love in Tamazight. Many participants cited the widespread popularity of French and English medium television series and music as reasons why they are comfortable hearing topics pertaining to love discussed in other languages but not in Tashelhit. French and English phrases such as “je t'aime” and “I love you” are widely understood and even abbreviated versions <jtm> and <i luv u> were employed frequently in the data set. In messages sent between each other, the girls would often create playful mixed forms of these phrases such as <I hb u> which is a combination of the English pronouns ‘I’ and ‘you’ and the Arabic verb stem ‘love.’ Another creative example is in the beginning of a message from Jamila to Naima that said <slt tajetimt *diali*> or ‘hi my love.’ <tajetimt> is formed with a nonstandard spelling of the French phrase “je t'aime” ‘I love you’ prefixed with morpheme /ta-/ and suffixed with the morpheme /-t/, which together indicate a feminine noun. It is followed by the Moroccan Arabic word <*diali*> indicating first person possession or ‘my’ and preceded by the French greeting “salut” in which the vowels have been omitted.

An additional reason for code-switching identified by focus group participants pertained to the desired intensity the sender wanted the message to have. Commenting on the relationship between language and affect, Hassan observed that sometimes the same idea doesn't have the same feeling is sent in a different language and sometimes by merely translating the idea into another language you can make the message sound softer or harder. He offered the example of telling someone that you are mad at them, claiming

that if he were only slightly mad he would say it in Tashelhit, but if he were really mad he would write it in English so that it would sound *qasha* or ‘harsh’. For Hassan, Tashelhit indexed a sense of intimacy and friendliness he had with the receiver that would serve to buffer an angry message. English, which was not associated with a perceived intimacy between sender and receiver, would have the opposite effect.

Finally, because text messages have a message buffer that is limited to 160 characters, a number of participants claimed that they would code-switch to another language if the word it had for the idea they wanted to express was shorter. Unlike chat speak, whose primary conventions are: “1) write as you speak and 2) write as fast as you can” (Vandekerckhove and Nobels 2010:659), the SMS conventions this group of friends agreed upon were 1) make the most of the 160 character spaces and 2) write so you can be understood. To capitalize on the 160 character allowance, greetings and closings, such as <hi> ‘hi’, <slt> “salut”, and <a+> “a plus tard”, as well as conjunctions such as <mé> “mais” and <but> ‘but’ were used in lieu of their Moroccan Arabic or Tashelhit counterparts. For example, the following message sent from Jamila to Sanaa which is exactly 160 characters shows a code-switch from Moroccan Arabic to English in the word <sorry.> I was able to ask Jamila shortly after she sent this text message why she wrote ‘sorry’ in English and not in Moroccan Arabic. She answered that she had already written out the entire message in Moroccan Arabic through the final word <ma> before she realized that it was over 160 characters. Since she didn’t want to send two messages and be charged twice, she changed the first word she came to moving from the end of the message backwards which was <smehilia> to the shorter form <sorry> thus saving her 3 character spaces.

M9: *Salam hbibti.wach lbarh jbti lkhobz 3nd tzama ola la!wach ratkhrji m3a
13h?tqdri tjibih?si non njibo ana.odik lkebda wach wakha ntyebha ftajin?sorry 3l
iz3aj ma*

Jamila to Sanaa: March 26, 2012 [12:00:57]

*Hello my darling. Did you bring bread yesterday from the “Tzama” corner store
or not! Are you leaving at 1pm? Could you bring it? If not, I will bring it. And
that liver, is it ok if I cook it in a tajin? Sorry for the disturbance kiss*

Mother tongue language texting

Researchers have documented that in other parts of the world there is intense anxiety, panic and speculation over the effect text messaging may have on the today’s spoken and written languages. Crystal (2010) notes that people worry text messaging conventions will result in the deterioration of language as we know it and (Thurlow) shows how media articles focusing on the negative effects of the intersections of technology, language and literacy portray CMC as a “[scapegoat] for a range of adult anxieties about newness, change and perceived threats to the status quo” (2006:27). To my knowledge, these types of discourses are not widespread in Moroccan media and most people I spoke have not expressed concern about the form of the language in text messages, particularly those in Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight, languages that are not usually written. I believe this is due in part to text messages being seen as more “speech like” than “writing” as well as the practice of using the Roman alphabet to represent mother tongue languages. This latter practice serves to sidestep the common ideology in Morocco that the Arabic script, given that it is the form in which Muslims read and access the word of God in the Qur’an, is inherently sacred in nature and should not be used to represent varieties of Arabic, such as Moroccan Arabic, that are viewed as deviant in form. A similar lack of anxiety over written representations of mother tongue

languages will also be addressed in the following chapter, which looks at the emergence of urban street billboards that utilize written representations of Moroccan Arabic in the rebranding advertising campaign of the mobile phone operator Inwi.

CHAPTER FOUR

‘Now it is Possible’: Moroccan Arabic in Billboard Advertising

After my excitement ebbed upon discovering the lively world of written Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight in personal SMS text messages, I began to keep a lookout for instances of written Moroccan Arabic in public space or in formal contexts. If writing mother tongue languages in Morocco was unacceptable in the context of adult education but flourishing in the realm of private SMS text messages, could it be that the act of writing Moroccan Arabic in *public* space was what was at issue? What were some of the other, more public contexts in which Moroccan Arabic was being written?

As mentioned in Chapter 2, I did not come across many examples of writing in *any* language in public space in Tafza. It wasn't until I began the comparative stage of my Passerelle literacy class analysis in a suburban town outside Casablanca that I stepped back into the world of written language in public space. In metro Casablanca, written language can be found everywhere. Street signs, advertising, newspapers, store signs, etc. Casablanca and its neighboring town of Mohammedia are literally buzzing and pulsating with written language that flashes on giant TV screens in major intersections, rotating billboards, and huge advertisements that can stretch the height of a seven story apartment building.

This chapter analyzes a major ad campaign run in Casablanca in 2010 by a telecommunications company who, during their rebranding period, published street billboards in Moroccan Arabic written in the Arabic script. In this chapter, I look at the

form and use of language and written script in the Inwi billboard ads and the relative hierarchy of languages being presented. I also analyze the reactions to the campaign of Casablanca residents from a wide spectrum of the socio-economic ladder. I argue that despite the emergence of Moroccan Arabic in written form in public ad space, which may support the notion of an ideological elision occurring between Moroccan Arabic and Standard Arabic, the way the ads portray Moroccan Arabic with respect to Standard Arabic in written form recalls the same binary distinctions commonly made between the two varieties and thus reproduces existing language hierarchies. In other words, while in some respects billboards such as these arguably raise the value of Moroccan Arabic and make claims for an expansion of its role and form in public space, particularly in comparison to Tamazight, at the same time, Moroccan Arabic's positioning as an inherently oral language with less status than Standard Arabic or French is what is still emphasized. Thus, possible ideological disjuncture created by representing Moroccan Arabic in public space using Arabic script is diffused by the reproduction of its status as an oral, informal language in the written text of the ad space itself. This chapter builds on the arguments presented in Chapter 3 by showing that ideologies which reinforce a perception of Moroccan Arabic as an oral language when represented in writing, are at play both in what Moroccans view as a private domain, SMS text messages, as well as a public setting, billboard street advertisements.

History of written advertising in Morocco

Although Moroccan Arabic has been used orally in television advertising since the 1970's, it was not until the past decade that it has made an appearance in written billboard ad campaigns (Akalay 2010). Written advertising has historically been a

domain of French or Standard Arabic. As one Moroccan advertising creative from Casablanca commented to me, the notion of writing Moroccan Arabic for public display had before been considered unthinkable. “You should not write the language of the street,” he argued. “Only Standard Arabic is suitable for writing things that are public and official.” As explained in the introduction, this explicit ideology that Moroccan Arabic should not be used on billboard advertising is in part reflective of the historical period in which Moroccan Arabic television advertisements emerged: during a period of intense Arabization instituted by the Moroccan State in which Standard Arabic replaced French in public space as the dominant language of government and social institutions. The indexical links between Standard Arabic, the Qur’an, and other Arabic speaking nations were emphasized during this time in an attempt to establish the place and status of Standard Arabic as the official and unifying language of the Moroccan state. In doing so, the place and importance of the Arabic script as the only appropriate means for representing Arabic was reinforced. Finally, at the same time, efforts were made to “modernize” Standard Arabic so that it could replace the European colonizing language French, particularly in the realms of government and education (Grandguillaume 1991).

Emergence of Moroccan Arabic in public advertising

In the early 2000’s, some of the first billboards advertisements to represent Moroccan Arabic in written form appeared. These earlier advertisements were not solely in Moroccan Arabic, but rather embedded a single lexical item in Moroccan Arabic into a larger French utterance. For example, Fatima, a secretary in Casablanca, remembered an ad for a new digital camera by SONY in 2003 as being the first billboard she noticed in which Moroccan Arabic was being represented in written form. In fact, she was so struck

by the fact Moroccan Arabic was written in this ad, that she couldn't even describe for me the image or background of the ad – just the slogan. In this ad was written the slogan “faites du choufing” meaning ‘go out and look’ with the understanding that ‘look’ in this context also carried the meaning ‘to check out girls.’⁵⁶ The entire phrase was written in the Roman alphabet according to French orthographic conventions. Here, the Moroccan Arabic verb stem “*chouf*” ‘to look’ is embedded in the French command “faites du” ‘do’ and is suffixed with the English progressive morpheme “–ing.” In a country where multilingualism can index a higher social class and urban local, this ad which combines multiple languages is designed to appeal to a (or an aspiring) cosmopolitan urban consumer. By embedding the Moroccan Arabic word in the utterance and writing it in the Roman script, it also links Moroccan Arabic to a sense of playfulness and creativity. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of written Moroccan Arabic with a new and exciting form of technology links it with notions of modernity and future innovation.

The first public display of written Moroccan Arabic that I encountered while in the field in 2009 was in an ad for summer sales by the Moroccan kit home furnishing store KITEA in Casablanca. The products for sale and layout of KITEA reminded me of IKEA and I enjoyed visiting the giant superstore outside Casablanca every once in a while to feel connected to the USA.⁵⁷ While in a taxi heading down a busy boulevard in Casablanca one day, my eye was caught by a picture of gigantic baby face peering at me through oversized round sunglasses (the high fashion of the last decade) with the words

⁵⁶ I later found reference to the text of this ad in a 2010 Telquel article by Aïcha Akalay entitled “Publicité. La Révolution Darija”. Accessed August 23, 2011 at www.telquel-online.com/archives/412/mag1_412.shtml.

⁵⁷ Ironically, since IKEA is European in origin.

above his head “Soldes hada machi la3b drari” ‘These are sales, not child’s play.’⁵⁸ The background of the sign was bright white and the text, written in the Roman alphabet, was displayed in bold black letters. The sign was bordered in bright red and at the bottom of the sign was a large red band with the company’s slogan “A chacun son KITEA” ‘To each his/her KITEA.’

When I saw the sign, I asked the taxi driver to pull over and I got out my phone so I could try to take a snapshot of the billboard. It was so exciting to me to see an ad written in Moroccan Arabic! After months of sending and receiving text messages in Moroccan Arabic written in the Roman script, reading the KITEA ad came to me as easily as reading other French advertisements. At first glance, it didn’t even strike me as strange that the words were in Moroccan Arabic. The taxi driver also found the ad amusing and during the ride, we encountered another sign from the same advertising campaign. In the second sign was an image of a bar code in which the bars in the middle and end of the code were falling down. Under the bar code from left to right were written percentages 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, and 50%. Above the bar code in bright red capital letters was the word “SOLDES” ‘sales.’ The “D-E-S” of the word were falling down along with the bars upon which they were perched. At the top of the sign was the text “Hada soldes machi tfelya!” ‘These are sales, not a joke!’

⁵⁸ “*L’ab drari*” is an expression in Moroccan Arabic often used to mean ‘we’re not playing around.’



Figure 6: Photograph of KITEA advertisement from 2009.

Despite the overt claim made in the two ads, the nature of the 2009 KITEA ad campaign did in fact evoke a joking and playful register, perhaps with the goal of indexing a happy feeling KITEA wanted customers to associate with shopping their sales. The silly image of a smiling baby face with oversized sunglasses induced laughter and much discussion among the women in the Mohammedia literacy class with whom I shared photos of the ads I had taken on my cell phone the previous day. Even though there was a KITEA store in Mohammedia, neither I, nor any of the women, remembered spotting the ads in the streets of Mohammedia, though they were ubiquitous in Casablanca. Of all the women present in class that day, only two, both young women in their early twenties who were avid text messengers, were able to read the ad. None of the other women were able to decipher the ads since the text of the ads was written in the Roman alphabet and the literacy class studied the Arabic alphabet only. When I asked one of the younger women to read the text to the class out loud everyone laughed and commented on the cuteness of the baby. No one made direct reference or drew attention neither to the fact that the ad was in Moroccan Arabic nor to the fact that it was represented in Roman script. This may be because the women were used to hearing ads

in Moroccan Arabic on the radio and television. Also, since they were unable to decipher the text of the ads themselves, having the ads read out loud to them drew attention away from the fact Moroccan Arabic had been represented in writing, thus erasing a possible sense of ideological disjuncture at encountering a public example of written Moroccan Arabic.

The KITEA advertising campaign of 2009 went a step beyond earlier billboard advertisements that embedded isolated words from Moroccan Arabic into larger French utterances. The KITEA ads by contrast embedded isolated French words, in this case the word soldes ‘sales,’ into a larger Moroccan Arabic text. When I spoke with my research assistant and her friends at the time about the KITEA ads, they highlighted that because the advertisements were written in Roman script they were easy to understand. “We are used to texting in [Moroccan Arabic] and reading it in the French alphabet,” one woman explained to me. The others agreed, commenting that it was easy and natural to read Moroccan Arabic that way. Another woman continued, “If it had been written in Arabic script it would have been *taqil* ‘heavy’” and thus would have felt more serious in nature. Using Standard Arabic and the Arabic script would have indexed a more serious and official register for these women that would have undermined the explicitly lighthearted and playful feeling the advertisements arguably sought to evoke in the viewer. Code-mixing French and Moroccan Arabic in the ads, and representing both languages in Roman script, instead indexed the informal, personal and fun associations of Moroccan Arabic’s new role in text messaging that was described in Chapter 3.

Inwi telephone company - Rebranding campaign of 2010

When the telecommunications company WANA⁵⁹ rebranded to “Inwi”⁶⁰ in February 2010, one of the main billboards of its teaser campaign was a simple quote written in Arabic that read “جَا وَقْتُ التَّغْيِيرِ”, ‘the time for change has arrived.’



Figure 7: Photograph of the main text on the first billboard I saw from Inwi's teaser campaign.

These Arabic words were written in white script on a rectangular, horizontal billboard with a vibrant purple background. Framing the words were two giant single quotation marks, also in white. The new name of the company “Inwi” was not present on the teaser billboard. I would later realize after seeing other ads by Inwi that the two quotation marks were drawn to replicate exactly the design of the two letter “i’s” in the official image of the brand name “inwi” (see below) on their products, advertisements and website.



Figure 8: Inwi's logo.

⁵⁹ At the time of the rebranding campaign, WANA was the third largest telecommunications company in Morocco and had been offering mobile phone services since 2007. It's brand name “WANA,” meaning ‘and me,’ is a phrase that is arguably bivalent in Standard and Moroccan Arabic. When read as /wa ana/ it would be identified as Standard Arabic. When read as /wena/ it would be considered Moroccan Arabic.

⁶⁰ The new brand name “Inwi” is represented in all lowercase instead of capital letters. “Inwi” is a Standard Arabic imperative verb /inwi/ meaning ‘wish.’ It's name is also closely resembles the Moroccan Arabic form of the imperative verb /nwi/.

The only other writing besides this sentence was a French language web address⁶¹ that was placed at the bottom right hand side of the billboard:

www.ilesttempsdechanger.ma. Interestingly, the web address listed on the teaser campaign billboards was a translation of the Arabic message on the billboard itself suggesting perhaps that there would be people who would not understand the message. Though the link isn't active anymore, in 2010 it would have redirected you to Inwi's official site www.inwi.ma.

What was remarkable about this ad, which served to introduce the new brand to the Moroccan public, was that it was written entirely in Moroccan Arabic. The use of Moroccan Arabic was iconic in relation to the message of the billboard, as writing Moroccan Arabic in Arabic script and in public, a place where Moroccan Arabic is usually not written, is indeed representative of a major change. To ensure correct interpretation of the words as well as to highlight the fact that it was Moroccan Arabic that was written, the letters in the ad were written with diacritics, which indicate the short vowels. In most contexts excluding religious texts, poetry and children's school materials, the Arabic script rarely appears with short vowels. The act of writing diacritics on this new Moroccan Arabic billboard campaign by Inwi thus drew increased notice and attention to the ads. The "change" referred to can be viewed as four-fold: the company WANA rebranded to Inwi; Moroccan Arabic was the main language of the ad campaign; it was written in the Arabic script instead of Roman script; and diacritics were used in a commercial ad. The use and form of Moroccan Arabic in the ad visually indexed that the

⁶¹ Unfortunately, I accidentally cropped out the web address when taking the original photograph. I recorded the web address in my field notes.

telecommunication services offered by the newly rebranded company would also be different, innovative and break from earlier traditions.

The TIC TAC campaign

Shortly after the teaser campaign was released, Inwi drew attention to their rebranding and new products by heavily advertising their new pay-as-you-go phone plan called “TIC TAC” in large urban centers throughout Morocco. It was one of my long bus trips back to my apartment in Casablanca when I first noticed the new TIC TAC advertisements. Surprisingly, it was not the in-your-face shade of purple billboards posted around the city that caught my attention so much as the language of the ads themselves. After over two years of pre-dissertation and dissertation fieldwork analyzing and observing the development and implementation of Passerelle literacy programs, I was particularly primed to noticing Moroccan Arabic in written form in any context or location. Furthermore, months of taking personal field notes in Moroccan Arabic and transcribing audio recordings in Arabic script had improved my reading speed in the language as well. As the vast majority of written advertising in Casablanca was in Standard Arabic or French, I was stunned to find a billboard campaign that used Moroccan Arabic as a primary language in the campaign. However, beyond the fact that the dominant language of the ads was in Moroccan Arabic, what was even more interesting was that unlike the KITEA and Sony campaigns, these ads were written entirely in Arabic script.

The name of the campaign “TIC TAC” is an onomatopoeia likely chosen for its phonetic resemblance to the ticking sound of a second hand on a watch. It was thus an appropriate image for Inwi’s new phone plan in which customers are charged by the

second instead of by the minute as the other major phone companies offered.⁶² By mounting 4-6 billboards at once in major intersections throughout Casablanca, Inwi's advertising visually dominated the intersections and drew the attention of the public. The TIC TAC ad campaign sported the same bright purple billboards with white lettering that had been introduced in the teaser campaign. The billboard campaign was released in two languages: half of the billboards were written in French using Roman script and half were written in Arabic with Arabic script. An example photograph a billboard in each language can be seen below. I took both of these photographs in the same major intersection in Casablanca in March 2010.



Figure 9: An example of both an Arabic (left) and French (right) language ad from Inwi's Spring 2010 TIC TAC campaign.

⁶² Katherine Hoffman remarked that a phone plan that charges by the second instead of by the minute or in larger units recalls other types of informal market transactions common in Morocco in which some products can be purchased in smaller quantities than traditional packaging. For example, street vendors will sell individual cigarettes; shopkeepers will sell individually wrapped piece of “La Vache Qui Rit” cheese or instant coffee packs; and spices can be bought in very small quantities (personal communication, June 30, 2012).

At the top of each of the billboards was the name of the phone plan “TIC TAC” framed on either side by the two white single quotation marks that are iconic of the brand name Inwi and are indexical of quoted or reported speech. Next to the plan name was its description ‘the mobile phone without a contract,’ i.e. a pay-as-you-go plan. Centered in the main body of the ad, in a larger font, was the transcription of a very brief phone conversation between two speakers consisting of a single adjacency pair. At the end of the conversation was listed the amount of seconds such a phone call would have lasted and the amount in Moroccan dirhams that the call would have cost. In each of the five ads I documented in Casablanca, the conversations lasted less than 5 seconds and the price of the call was always less than ½ a Moroccan Dirham (less than a U.S. nickel). This was significantly cheaper than other telephone operators charged and was even less than the price of sending a text message at the time (about 1 dirham). The bottom of both of the two billboards was identical, regardless of the dominant language and script of the ad itself. At the bottom right corner of both the ads, in a smaller font, was the brand name Inwi written in Roman script and immediately below it in Arabic and written in Arabic script the slogan “والآن...ممكن” ‘Now it is possible.’ Finally, in the bottom left corner of each ad was the website “www.inwi.ma” printed in small font. There were no images or pictures on the ads and the only colors used were the bright purple of the background, which has since become symbolic of Inwi, and the white of the text.

Linguistic form of ads in the TIC TAC campaign

I will begin by briefly describing the linguistic form and content of the French ad and will then focus on describing the Arabic ad. The main text of the French ad (Figure 9, ad on the right), distinguished by its larger font and placement in the middle of the ad,

is marked as spoken language. In the image above, the first interlocutor, the caller, asks, ‘hello... so movie or restaurant?’ and the person answering responds, ‘movie at 20:30’.

The words for ‘restaurant’ and ‘cinema’ in French are represented in the spoken, abbreviated forms “resto” and “ciné” respectively, as is commonly heard in casual conversation with French speakers in Casablanca. Similarly, the opening greeting made by the first speaker “allo” is marked as a spoken language and is not something usually seen in written form. A dash “-” is used at the beginning of each speaker’s turn and helps to further mark that selection of text as reflecting oral language in contrast to the other text of the ad, which is meant to be interpreted as written language. There is no discernible difference in form between the language used in the transcribed conversation and the language at the top of the ad, which describes the phone plan, as both are written in the same font. With the exception of the plan name “TIC TAC” and the abbreviation “DH/TTC” ‘dirhams inclusive of tax,’ the entire ad is written in lower case letters. The choice to use lower case letters reflects the informal tone of the ad and the casual nature of the conversation. The only indices that this ad is being displayed in an Arabic speaking environment are the Arabic slogan written in Arabic script, the mention of dirhams, and the ending to the website address .ma, a country-code top-level domain that indicates that the website is assigned to Morocco. Besides the company’s slogan in the bottom right corner, the entirety of the ad is written in the French language with Roman script. There is minimal punctuation aside from ellipsis, representing a pause in conversation, and a question mark. Full stops are not used.

The layout and content of the Arabic version of the campaign ads are very similar to the French version. As in the French ad, the text in the middle of the Arabic ad above

(Figure 9 – ad on the left) represents a short conversation between two unnamed interlocutors and is comparable in length and content. The first interlocutor, the caller, asks “- ألو... فين غادي نْتَلَقَاوْ؟” ‘hello... where are we going to meet?’ and the respondent answers “- فُرَاسْ الدَّرْبْ؟” ‘at the head of the street.’ The same greeting /alo/ is used in both the Arabic and French versions, which is not surprising given that this is the standard greeting in phone conversations in Morocco regardless of language. As in the French ad, the only punctuation is the ellipsis, the question mark, and the dashes at the beginning of each speaker’s turn. Besides the company name Inwi and the website address located in the lower left corner, which are written in lowercase Roman script, the rest of the ad including the phone plan name, is written entirely in Arabic script.

What is interesting about this ad in comparison to the French ad is that there are two varieties of Arabic represented on it. The first thing most viewers notice when looking at the ad for the first time is the conversation between the two speakers and that fact that this conversation is represented in Moroccan Arabic and not Standard Arabic. An analysis of the form of the text of the conversation in the Arabic ad shows that it is clearly marked as belonging to Moroccan Arabic and not to Standard Arabic. For example, when asking “where are we going to meet?” the caller uses the interrogative adverb “فين” /fin/ ‘where’ and a verb phrase in the simple future tense which is expressed with the auxiliary “غادي” /vadi/ ‘going to’ followed by the imperfect form of the verb ‘to meet’ inflected for person and number “نْتَلَقَاوْ” /ntlaqaw/ ‘we meet’ (here first person plural). Each of these items are viewed by native speakers as being clearly marked as Moroccan Arabic, as alternative Standard Arabic forms are readily identifiable for each

one. For instance, the simple future auxiliary “غادي” is very different from its Standard Arabic counterpart, the auxiliary verb “سَوْفَ” /sawfa/.

However, while the conversation in the ad is expressed entirely in Moroccan Arabic, the description of the phone plan being advertised, “الهاتف النقال بدون اشتراك”, ‘the mobile phone without a contract’ is written in Standard Arabic. This is clear in the choice of the Standard Arabic phrase “الهاتف النقال” /alha:tif anaqa:l/ ‘mobile phone’ instead of the more commonly heard terms in Moroccan Arabic /mobil/ or /portabl/ ‘mobile phone’ or simply /tilifun/ ‘telephone’. Similarly, the Standard Arabic preposition “بدون” /bidun/ ‘without’ was chosen instead of the Moroccan Arabic equivalent “بلا” /bla:/.

In addition to the fact that the main body of the ad is in Moroccan Arabic instead of Standard Arabic, the other thing that immediately strikes viewers is that four of the words of the ad have diacritic marks representing short vowels and consonant length. In the ad above, the very first word of the telephone conversation “ألو” is written with a diacritic mark that indicating that the vowel should be lengthened when pronounced. Additionally, the imperfect verb “نتتلاقو” /ntla:qa:w/ ‘we meet’ has four diacritic marks on it, one of which is “َ” fetha, which indicates that the short vowel /a/ follows the consonant /q/, and three of which are “ْ” sukun, indicating that there is no vowel following the consonant. The sukun marks on the first two consonants of “نتتلاقو” /ntla:qa:w/ indicate a syllable-initial consonant cluster, something not allowed in Standard Arabic. Finally, the phrase “فُرس الدرب” ‘at the head of the street’ is written with diacritics including sukun, fetha and the diacritic “َ” shadda. The latter of indicates a syllable initial geminate consonant on the letter “د” dal, also something not allowed in

Standard Arabic. The choice to include diacritics only on these four words and not on every word in the conversation is odd for Standard Arabic readers and draws attention in and of itself to the unusualness of the written text. When diacritics are used to write Standard Arabic in most other contexts, they would be included for each word in a text, not only for an apparently random selection of them. The use of diacritics in the text of the conversation therefore serves to visually distinguish it from the text at the top of the ad, which describes the phone plan.



Figure 10: Example of Arabic language ad from the Inwi 2010 TIC TAC campaign.

All of the other Arabic ads from the same campaign that I documented also show similar characteristics in form. In one ad, for example, the caller asks:

“Hello... Mehdi.. don't forget the bread!” and the respondent answers “صافي شريتو” ‘It's ok I bought it’ (Figure 10 above). In this example, grammatical and syntactic forms specific to Moroccan Arabic are used, such as the verbal negation of the second person imperfect verb “مَتَّنَساشْ” ‘don't forget’ which is indicated with the prefix /ma-/, written as “م” in the ad, and the suffix /-š /, written as “شْ”. In Standard Arabic the phrase, ‘don't forget’ would be written “لا تنسى” /la: tansa:/. Furthermore, the conversation included the Moroccan Arabic expression “صافي” ‘it's ok, enough,’ a word that has a different meaning in Standard Arabic.



Figure 11 : Example of Arabic language ad from the Inwi 2010 TIC TAC campaign.

Similarly, in another ad, the caller asks “ألو... فينك أصاحبي؟” ‘Hello... where are you my friend’⁶³ and the respondent answers “أنا كُنْطاسيُوني!” ‘I am parking!’ What is most interesting about this ad is the Moroccan Arabic imperfect verb “كُنْطاسيُوني”

⁶³ The word “أصاحبي” in Moroccan Arabic can be translated literally as ‘my friend’ but in normal usage, its meaning is closer to ‘dude.’

/kanʃasyu:ni:/ ‘I am parking,’ whose verbal root /ʃasyu:ni:/ is a borrowing of the French word stationner. The use of a borrowed French word reinforces that this conversation is occurring in Moroccan Arabic, as a commonly held ideology of Standard Arabic in Morocco is that it resists foreign borrowings. The fact that the word for ‘parking’ has been nativized into Moroccan Arabic is made clear by the manner in which Inwi chose to transcribe the verb, using the Arabic letter [ط] which represents the emphatic alveolar stop /ṭ/ instead of its non-emphatic counterpart [ت] which represents /t/ and is phonetically closer to the sound in the French word stationner. Heath (1990) has demonstrated that such pharyngealization commonly occurs in French borrowings into Moroccan Arabic.

Hierarchy of languages in the TIC TAC ads

As discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, Moroccan Arabic is generally considered by Moroccans as being an oral language and the writing of it inappropriate, particularly in Arabic script, in any public or official context. The question can be raised again, in this new context of public billboard advertisements, if the representation of Moroccan Arabic in written form is experienced as an ideological disjuncture by Moroccan viewers. Not only is Moroccan Arabic being represented in writing, it is being represented in the Arabic script, and in public space. This type of representation is different from its use in text messaging which, as I argue in Chapter 3, is a context understood as private, informal space and the texts themselves are viewed as more like oral than written language. Can it be surmised that the Inwi campaign gives equal value to Moroccan and Standard Arabic in these ads?

A close analysis of how Moroccan Arabic is being juxtaposed with Standard Arabic in the TIC TAC ad campaign reveals that despite the written format, ideologies that identify Moroccan Arabic as an oral language suitable for informal contexts are reproduced in the ads themselves. The choice to use Moroccan Arabic only in the text of the casual phone conversations and to use Standard Arabic for the phone plan description and company slogan emphasizes Standard Arabic's role as the dominant language of commercial and official business as compared to Moroccan Arabic. Through the semiotic process of fractal recursivity (Gal 2002; Irvine and Gal 2000), the oral/written dichotomy that is commonly used to distinguish between these two varieties of Arabic is reproduced on a smaller scale within the written text of the ad itself. The oral/written distinction should thus be viewed as an ideological distinction in that oral and written as opposing categories "do not simply describe the social world in any direct way; they are rather tools for arguments about the world" (Gal 2002:79). As such, what it means to label a text as "oral" may shift according to the interactional context. In this example, the context of a phone call, despite its written representation, serves to characterize the represented speech as oral.

Moreover, the choice of using diacritics on certain words in the Moroccan Arabic text of the ads and not on the Standard Arabic text served to visually highlight differences between the two varieties. The use of diacritics serves the function of bringing to viewers' attention the fact that Inwi is deliberately violating norms by representing Moroccan Arabic in writing. Blommaert has argued that not only are ideologies of purity often applied to public displays of writing, such as in advertisements, but expected transgressions of such norms as are found in forms of publicity must conform to

ideologies of vernacular correctness as well (2013). As he puts it succinctly, “nothing is less cool than a failed public attempt at coolness” (447). I argue that this is a primary reason why the designers of the Inwi billboards chose to use diacritics in the Moroccan Arabic text of their teaser and TIC TAC campaigns. Since Standard Arabic is normally represented in public writing without the use of diacritics, a similar representation of Moroccan Arabic may have risked an interpretation of the ads as poorly written Standard Arabic. By marking the short vowels, consonant length and consonant clusters with diacritics, Inwi focused viewers’ attention on the correct vocalization of the words and the fact that they were representative of spoken Moroccan Arabic. As illustrated in Chapter 3, SMS text messaging norms clearly associate the Latin alphabet vs. the Arabic alphabet with the representation of Moroccan Arabic in a telecommunications context. By representing Moroccan Arabic in Arabic script with marked diacritics, Inwi set out to establish new norms. Inwi was unable to use the Roman script SMS text messaging conventions because in doing so they would have risked marking the speech as a text which, given that they were specifically trying to represent a phone conversation, would have contradicted their goal.

That the presence of diacritics in an Arabic text signaled that correct pronunciation (and understanding) of the text is important was something I learned early in my research from my experiences observing Passerelle literacy classes. For example, all versions of the Qur’an are written with harakat, since as the literal word of God, it is taken as imperative by Muslims to recite and memorize perfectly the verses. The difference in one short vowel can radically change the meaning of a word, and thus an entire phrase. At the same time, diacritics in orthography are also associated with

children and adults with low levels of Arabic literacy who need the diacritics in order to understand the texts they read. Thus, the presence of diacritics in an Arabic text can point simultaneously to the most revered written word in Morocco, and one meant to be recited and heard, on one hand, and to simplified texts written for sections of the Moroccan public who are less educated and literate on the other hand. In the Inwi TIC TAC ads, I would argue that the use of diacritics serves both functions. It places emphasis on the correct interpretation and pronunciation of the words in the conversation, thus reinforcing an association of Moroccan Arabic with oral language. In addition, unlike the French version ads, which target a multilingual and cosmopolitan consumer, the Arabic ads make an appeal to a wider audience, including the large segment of the population who would be interested in a pay-by-the-second plan and who might not have the Arabic literacy skills to read advertisements on a usual basis.

“*Ma dinahch fiha*” - ‘We didn’t notice them’

Given how interested I had become in the use of Moroccan Arabic in public billboard advertising, it never occurred to me that the average Moroccan might not be taking such an interest in the phenomenon. After first noticing the campaign when it came out in March 2010, I waited to see what unsolicited commentary I would hear from my friends and acquaintances regarding the campaign. I started to realize slowly however, that although many people were talking about Inwi and the fact that WANA had rebranded, no one in my immediate circle was talking about the language of the ads, let alone the TIC TAC ad campaign itself. Curious, I began randomly asking all sorts of people I ran into during daily life activities over the following months about their reactions to the TIC TAC campaign. In Casablanca, I spoke to a range of people

including my neighborhood shop owners and vegetable cart pushers, parking guards, the peanut man who sells hot nuts outside my apartment door, strangers waiting in line with me at the post office or government insurance claims office, business people (from security guards to front desk staff to company executives to whom I taught business English), groups of university students at private and public Moroccan institutions, taxi drivers and fellow bus and train passengers, etc.

In general, I found that very few people I spoke with informally had taken a strong interest in the campaign at all, let alone the fact that Moroccan Arabic was used in it. The people I spoke with who were fluent in French (this included most of my friends, the business people, and the university students), all reported that they hadn't even noticed the Arabic ads because their attention had been automatically drawn to the French versions instead. One friend of mine fluent in Moroccan Arabic, Tashelhit, French and Standard Arabic explained to me that given the choice she would always prefer to read in French instead of Arabic. Reading in French is faster for her and she has more practice in it since she did her university studies in French. Another friend, who had just completed her university studies in French in a Moroccan public university and had an entry level job in an international pharmaceutical company, commented that when on the street she would automatically read French ads, but ignore for the most part Arabic ads. French language ads, she argued, advertised luxury items such as cars, electronics and jewelry that although out of her price range, were fun to look at. In contrast, she associated the Arabic ads with household staple items such as oil, flour and microloans – things in which, as an unmarried woman still living with her parents, she wasn't as interested.

Amongst those who did not have a comfortable reading level in French, I never found anyone who had paid much attention to the ads or could remember the fact that Moroccan Arabic was written on them. They were ideologically unremarkable to them. When pressed to consider the topic, it was not uncommon for the person I was speaking with to switch the conversation from talking about written advertising to talking about the concurrent television ads that Inwi was running for the same TIC TAC plan, which used Moroccan Arabic exclusively. Since it had become standard to use Moroccan Arabic usage in TV and radio ads, particularly when advertising Moroccan products, many people I talked to argued that it was natural for the use of Moroccan Arabic in advertising to spread from oral to written media.

A male literacy teacher in Mohammedia likened the text of the Inwi TIC TAC campaign to the representation of spoken language in other types of print media such as newspapers and advertisements. This was interesting to me because, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, Moroccans are generally accustomed to seeing conversations that they know would have taken place in Moroccan Arabic or Tamazight transcribed in print media as if they had in fact taken place in Standard Arabic. It is rare to see Moroccan Arabic transcribed in newspapers or magazines, even in the context of direct quotations. In a study of reported speech in articles from six different Moroccan daily newspapers, Fakhri (1998) argued that the language presented as reported speech did not accurately reflect actual sociolinguistic variation. Most reported speech was presented in Standard Arabic. The choice of using Standard vs. Moroccan Arabic was more a reflection of the reporter's wish to index the formality of the topic being reported (quotes on political topics tended to be in Standard Arabic, whereas mundane topics such as the

market price of sheep, contained some Moroccan Arabic) and also the socioeconomic level of the person speaking (lower status interviewees were more likely to have their speech reported in Moroccan Arabic). It is possible therefore that for this man the everyday topics represented in the TIC TAC ads (remembering to pick up bread, planning where to go out, arranging a meeting, etc.) aligned neatly with ideologies that associate Moroccan Arabic as indexing mundane topics and a lower socioeconomic class.

While few of the Moroccans I spoke with expressed any sense of ideological disjuncture with language use in the Inwi billboard ads,⁶⁴ there were some who disapproved of the new trend, citing its potential negative effects on Standard Arabic acquisition. One business man told me that *“fel mdina keyhdru bel fransawiya ktar u ktar leha mabqinach kanteqnu: al‘arabiya al fusha. u daba bda al ichhar keytktb be ddarija u nnivo dyal l‘arabiya al fusha gha yebda iyetdahwar”* ‘in the city [Casablanca] they are speaking French more and more and because of this we don’t master Classical Arabic anymore.’ And now advertisements in Moroccan Arabic have started and the level of Standard Arabic is going to worsen.’⁶⁵ A customer in his shop, though agreeing that the practice would be detrimental to the average Moroccan’s Standard Arabic fluency, countered that ads in Moroccan Arabic were ok when they were addressing a section of the population with low educational levels. He offered as an example an ad for small bank loans written in Moroccan Arabic.

⁶⁴ Interestingly, contacts I made with Arabic speaking residents from Tunisia did find the Inwi ads startling in their use of written Moroccan Arabic. They claimed the representation of Tunisian Arabic in written billboard advertisement is unheard of and if done would be publicly frowned upon.

⁶⁵ Field notes. January 2011.

Interpolating the masses with Moroccan Arabic

“Etre audacieux, être proche, être simple.” When the telecommunications company WANA rebranded itself in 2010 – these were the three words chosen to publicly represent the company’s core values on its newly launched website www.inwi.ma. ‘Be audacious, be close, be simple’ it reads in French.⁶⁶ Interestingly, and I would argue not accidentally, these adjectives accurately describe the choice to prioritize the use of written Moroccan Arabic in its billboard campaigns. To be the first company to use Moroccan Arabic extensively and written in Arabic script in a series of billboard campaigns starting in 2010 was indeed a daring move designed to capture attention and create an impact. Furthermore, the choice to write in Moroccan Arabic was interpreted by many Moroccans I spoke with to be a strategic effort on the part of Inwi to both create a new corporate identity separate from WANA and at the same time to reach out to a new type of consumer: one who holds their mother tongue language dear and may or may not be highly educated or even literate but would connect to the message of inclusiveness, intimacy⁶⁷ and simplicity that Inwi was trying to convey. “It’s a democratic approach” is the description I heard frequently when discussing Inwi’s brand launch and TIC TAC campaign. In support of this view, people would highlight the pay-per-second phone plans, the free distribution of Inwi SIM cards, and the use of Moroccan Arabic in their billboard and TV advertising which made becoming an Inwi phone service user accessible to all Moroccans regardless of income, linguistic ability, or education level.

⁶⁶ In my knowledge, to date there has been no Arabic version, either Standard or Moroccan Arabic, of their website published. Thus, Inwi’s public persona on the internet is mainly in French.

⁶⁷ Chapter 5 expand upon the common ideology that Moroccan Arabic creates an intimate, unmediated and direct connection between an social actor and the subject being discussed.

I had the opportunity to discuss some of these ideas in December 2010 with Yasser, a young man who at the time I met him, was working for a firm that rented the billboard spaces to Inwi and had been involved in the logistical aspects of launching Inwi's rebranding campaign. I met Yasser through an American friend of mine who worked for Inwi and was close friends with Yasser. We met a few times for coffee to discuss my research and, due to his desires to improve his English and continue his studies overseas, we have since maintained friendly contact through Facebook and email. On that particular day in December, Yasser and I met in a coffee shop on a busy boulevard near central Casablanca that happened to be located between two major intersections, which, in March earlier that year, had both sported multiple billboards from Inwi's rebranding campaign.

As we drank our cafés au lait and chatted about the role of Moroccan Arabic in public advertising, through the window to our left we could just barely make out down the street the bright purple background of one of Inwi's newer ads written in Moroccan Arabic. These ads, unlike the TIC TAC ads were written with the Roman script that was marketing a promotion called "*sa3a sa3ida*"⁶⁸ 'happy hour' in which Inwi customers received an hour of free communication day or night with other Inwi customers every day the promotion lasted. As Yasser explained to me, the translation of the promotion's name 'happy hour' should not be understood in the English sense of "after work low cost drinks and appetizers." Rather, the name happy hour has two associations: 1) literally that it is a happy hour when you get to enjoy talking with friends and family for free, and 2) the expression "*sa3a sa3ida*" is a greeting people use when leaving a gathering of friends to mean simply 'goodbye' or 'have a nice rest of the day.' As a greeting, this

⁶⁸ Note the text message conventions of representing /s/ with the number 3 was used in the campaign.

latter association with the phrase nicely indexes gatherings and communication with loved ones, the very image Inwi is trying to portray through its campaign with its motto “être proche” ‘be close.’ My first impression of this promotion name was that it was Standard Arabic, as I had learned that in Moroccan Arabic the word for ‘happy’ most commonly used was /ferħan/. My research assistants and Yasser, however, insisted on an interpretation the use of this phrase to refer to the Moroccan Arabic greeting and not to Standard Arabic.

Though Yasser was born and raised in Casablanca, much of his family was still in the south of Morocco. His mother tongue is Tashelhit and he speaks French, Moroccan Arabic and English fluently. Yasser studied in bilingual Moroccan private schools up through his baccalaureate degree, after which he attended a private business school and graduated with his BA in 2006. When I met him, he was single and interested in pursuing an MBA degree in English, preferably abroad but if not, at the British Council or a private university in Casablanca. Yasser worked closely with the advertising agency SAGA, who was subcontracted by Inwi to design the billboards used in the rebranding campaign. He recalled that when he first saw the designs for the ads he was surprised. He had never seen Moroccan Arabic written before in public space. I asked him if he liked the Inwi campaign and if he thought it had been a good move for them to use Moroccan Arabic. He said that he himself was not personally drawn to the Moroccan Arabic version of the campaign because in his opinion, there were too many words in the ads. He described the choice to put only written language and no pictures on the ads as “overkill” and argued that no one would read it. He claimed not to have any ideological objections to writing Moroccan Arabic in billboard ads, but felt that it simply wasn’t

appealing to him. To him it seemed that Inwi was using Moroccan Arabic to make their ads sensational or different in some way in order to draw attention to the rebranding campaign. Furthermore, he later suggested that the choice to use Moroccan Arabic was additionally “due to two parameters: First the brand wants to be closer to people independently [sic] of the social class. The second is due somehow to a lack of creativity from agencies.”⁶⁹

At one point in the conversation, he stopped to iterate clearly, “You know, [Moroccan Arabic] is an oral language and is about speaking.” Upon saying that, however, he sat back in his chair and continued, “Actually, Arabic in general, despite a long literate tradition, is also an oral language, even the Qur’an.” Though I was quite familiar with academic literature discussing the Qur’an as an oral text, it was the first time I had heard someone in Morocco talk about both Classical and Moroccan Arabic as both being oral languages and thought I had misunderstood. So far in my research, most people I spoke tended to polarize descriptions of Arabic varieties by highlighting the oral nature of mother tongue languages in Morocco in contrast to the written character of Standard Arabic, the most referenced example of the latter being the Qur’an. Yasser, however, wanted me to understand that the Qur’an is something one should memorize and read out loud. It was not something one should read silently to oneself, but should rather be recited and heard. This point of view is supported by Nelson in her study of Qur’anic recitation in Egypt, in which she noted that “to most Muslims, the Qur’an is equally the written text and its oral rendition, and many have more intimate knowledge of the latter than the former” (2001:xviii). Nelson additionally points out that while most

⁶⁹Personal communication, December 8, 2010. I found it ironic that Yasser found the use of Moroccan Arabic in Inwi ads to signal a lack of creativity, as in many ways the choice to represent Moroccan Arabic in Arabic script on public billboards was a very innovative strategy.

Western scholars tend to approach the Qur'an as a written text, "the Qur'an is not the Qur'an unless heard" (xiv). As we continued our discussion, Yasser also pointed out that people who have memorized the whole Qur'an become well respected individuals whose opinions are often sought after by those in the community.

As I thought about my conversation with Yasser, I realized how this point of view shed light on my understandings of how the Qur'an was taught in the Passerelle literacy classes in Tafza and Mohammedia. As mentioned in Chapter 2, I had found the Qur'anic studies portion of our literacy classes particularly frustrating, as in my mind, the women were not working necessarily on "literacy" skills, but rather on memorization skills. Though well versed in Street's arguments regarding literacy events and taking a broader notion of literacy, I couldn't help feeling critical of 1) the combination of Passerelle methodology with reading excerpts of grammatically complex and detailed phrases of Classical Arabic from the Qur'an in the same class and 2) the fact that most women would simply hold the Qur'an and run their fingers down the page during which they would not in fact "read" the verses but rather recite them from memory. Yasser's view of the Qur'an, the standard of the written Arabic language, as "oral" focused my attention once again on the ideological division of oral vs. written language in Morocco and made me think about how the two are intricately embedded in one another in practice. The concept "oral language" is a shifter in different contexts: Standard Arabic becomes the unmarked oral language through which one should receive the Qur'an but Moroccan Arabic or Tamazight are the unmarked oral languages for casual conversations. Yasser's comments also made me question my assumption that there is a distinction between "memorization" and "real learning," in so far as memorizing a text did not constitute real

knowledge. While the majority of the women in the Passerelle literacy class may not have become able to independently read the Qur'an, the practice of opening the sacred book, identifying the verse being studied and reciting it out loud with improved pronunciation and understanding of its meaning was a proud event for them that represented a critical moment in their literacy education.

“Express yourself as you wish”



Figure 12: Inwi's 2013 slogan.

In 2013, Inwi changed their primary slogan from ‘now... it’s possible’ to “عبر كبعيتي” ‘express yourself as you wish.’ At the time I am writing this conclusion, this new slogan is prominent on Inwi’s billboard and mobile advertisements (see Figure 12) and is usually the last words heard in their television and radio advertisements. The change is notable in part because it is in Moroccan Arabic. Earlier in this chapter, I discussed Inwi’s old slogan in Standard Arabic, ‘now it is possible,’ and argued that it was representative of a pattern in how Inwi represented written language in their billboard campaign. Specifically, spoken language was written in Moroccan Arabic and text that described the fine print of phone plans and other official information was in Standard Arabic. This thus reinforced the existing hierarchy of languages in which Moroccan Arabic was associated with the informal and Standard Arabic with the formal.

Inwi's new slogan, however, is in Moroccan Arabic as evidenced in the markedly Moroccan Arabic verb “كَبِغْتِي” ‘as you wish’. The choice to change their slogan from Standard Arabic to Moroccan Arabic is significant. On the one hand, it advertises that with Inwi, users can communicate in multiple ways: voice calling, video calling, chat, email, SMS texting, etc. It also sends the message to the Moroccan public that “You can express yourself in any language and Inwi will make it easy for you to do so.”

This chapter analyzed the form and role of written Moroccan Arabic in billboard ads produced by Inwi during their rebranding campaign in 2010. As in Chapters 2 and 3, although Moroccan Arabic was argued to have assumed new written forms and roles, semiotic processes such as fractal recursivity, served to reinscribe it as an oral language in contrast to Standard Arabic, which was portrayed as a written language. However, unlike in Chapter 3 where Moroccan Arabic is seen as the unmarked variety of Arabic in SMS text messages, in Chapter 4 it is clear that in the context of written street billboards, Moroccan Arabic remains the marked language and its lower status is reinforced. Chapter 3 argued that media ideologies associating text messages as a private, oral medium of communication align with language ideologies that similarly view Moroccan Arabic as both private and oral. This alignment allows Moroccan Arabic to assume a dominant, unmarked role in this context. By contrast, street billboards are understood as both public and more official in nature. As language ideologies of Standard Arabic also position it as public and formal, it remains the unmarked and dominant language in public billboard advertisements, and Moroccan Arabic emerges in this new context as the marked variety. Of course, the alignment of media and language ideologies in these two contexts does not account for the whole story. Part of how Moroccan Arabic has

emerged dominant in SMS messaging and marked in public billboards may also have to do with the fact that written billboard advertising in Standard Arabic has a relatively long tradition compared to SMS text messaging, which as discussed in Chapter 3, is a relatively new medium in Morocco in which no language had previous dominance.

Since the rebranding of Inwi in 2010, the written representation of Moroccan Arabic in billboard ads, both in Roman and Arabic scripts, has increased exponentially. In fact, it would be rare to look around a major intersection in Casablanca and not see an example of Moroccan Arabic. In addition to Inwi, the two other main telecommunication companies, Maroc Telecom and Meditel, also now frequently display Moroccan Arabic in written form in public billboard advertisements, often inserting a single Moroccan Arabic word in a larger Standard Arabic text. Fast food restaurants such as McDonald's, banks and supermarkets also started to commonly sport Moroccan Arabic in ads. Reminiscent of their earlier ads in which a French word is inserted into a larger Moroccan Arabic phrase, in December 2013, KITEA launched a major billboard ad campaign for their end-of-the-year sales. The ads displayed one of the following phrases: “*K'N7MA9 3la Soldes dial KITEA*” ‘I go crazy for KITEA’s sales,’ “*K'NBGHI Soldes dial KITEA*” ‘I like KITEA’s sales,’ or “*K'NMOUT 3la Soldes dial KITEA*” ‘I die for/adore KITEA’s sales.’

For over the past 4 years, Inwi has continued to incorporate Moroccan Arabic in innovative ways as an integral part of their advertising strategy. In addition to launching campaigns simultaneously in two languages, and two different scripts, they have now also launched campaigns that combine scripts and language varieties in the same ad. In July 2013, for example, they launched a new ad campaign for their outdoor, high-speed

internet service in central Casablanca. As seen in Figure 13 below, the written language in the ad is represented both in Roman script “wifi 7dak” ‘wireless near you’ and Arabic script, for example, “في الدار البيضاء” ‘in Casablanca,’ written on the bus windows. The phrase “wifi 7dak”⁷⁰ is in Moroccan Arabic and incorporates the SMS text feature of representing /h/ with the number 7. As in the TIC TAC ads discussed earlier in this chapter, what may be characterized as the more official information, a description of the service “wifi 7dak” is in Standard Arabic and, with the exception of the word “wifi,” written in Arabic script on the purple background. This playful mixing of scripts serves to distinguish between different language varieties in the advertisement. In addition, the use of the Roman script serves as an index of an international community that can be accessed by internet in the Moroccan context, which is represented by the city name Casablanca in Arabic script.



Figure 13 – A mobile advertisement for Inwi’s “wifi 7dak” campaign launched in July 2013.⁷¹

⁷⁰ “wifi” is a French borrowing.

⁷¹ Image accessed 24 August 2014 from <https://www.facebook.com/GEEKoWAY>. Permission to reproduce this image in my dissertation was granted by Salah-Eddine Bentalba, page administrator.

This increase in the use of Moroccan Arabic in both Roman and Arabic script billboards over the past 5 years indicates that the written representation of Moroccan Arabic is indeed a successful advertising strategy among the Casablanca public. It would be of interest to explore if this phenomenon has occurred in other parts of Morocco, if so, in what form, and with what public reaction.

CHAPTER FIVE

Dubbing in Darija

In June 2009, a seemingly bizarre pattern of behavior emerged among the women in our literacy classes. In only one week's time, a significant percentage of the women began suspiciously complaining either of various "illnesses" that made it impossible to attend class or of unexpected company that they had to stay home to host.⁷² A number of women, who did make it to class, started offering creative excuses to leave early and would rush out the door as soon as the class had finished the routine recital of Ayat al-Kursi, a popular verse of the Qur'an commonly recited as a prayer for protection among village residents when embarking on a journey or travel.

At first, Wafae, Ghita and I attributed the strange behavior to the muggy summer time weather and increased day-time work in the fields that was encouraging the women to stay home in the evenings and rest instead of come to class. It wasn't until later that week, when literacy class was cancelled due to an after-school children's event, that we discovered the real reason why so many of our students were skipping school. The women in our classes had suddenly become glued to their TV sets. What had captured

⁷² Traditionally in Morocco, people visit friends and family without notifying them ahead of time or checking to see if anyone is home. In fact, in some areas it is considered rude to call in advance as it implies that the visitor thinks the host would not be prepared to receive guests without warning. From the host's part, it is to tell a visitor that he/she has to leave in order for the host to attend to other business. If someone comes to your house you are expected to give them your full attention and make them feel comfortable for as long as they would like to stay, or minimally three days. Hospitality roles are very important in Moroccan culture and being known as a welcoming and gracious host is a role both men and women practice and embrace. Thus, this was a particularly popular "white lie" excuse among women who did not want to attend literacy class.

their attention was a new foreign television drama series that was dubbed,⁷³ not in Standard or Syrian Arabic as most foreign series were, but rather in Moroccan Arabic. For these women, it was the first time they had heard a foreign series dubbed in a locally spoken language.⁷⁴

Though a growing number of households in Tafza had satellite television, many families still use simple, often homemade, antennas⁷⁵ and hear programming on the two main channels, RTM and 2M, that got good reception in the village. These stations broadcast a variety of programs: the news, sports, cooking shows, talk shows, reality TV, and television drama series. Earlier in 2009, reality, competition based Arabic language TV shows that were modeled on “American Idol” started to become popular on the satellite stations. Two of the most popular Moroccan shows that school year in Tafza had been “Lalla Laarosa,” a show in which Moroccan couples compete for a dream wedding, and “Comedia,” a competition based show in which comedians would try to outperform each other for a prize. The shows broadcast on RTM and 2M represent a wide range of languages: the news is broadcast in Standard Arabic, Tamazight and French; sports shows in a mixture of Standard and Moroccan Arabic; cooking shows in Moroccan Arabic; talk shows in Standard Arabic, French and Moroccan Arabic; and foreign television series, many of them dubbed, in Standard, Syrian, Lebanese Arabic or French.

⁷³ Dubbing is a process by which the original voice track of a film or TV show is replaced by voice track that has been translated in a different language variety and that aims to mimic the lip movements and timing of the original. The goal is for viewers to have the impression that the onscreen characters are speaking in the dubbing language.

⁷⁴ Following Richardson and Queen’s (2012) criticism that the verb “watch” is predominantly used when referring to television and film reception, thus minimizing the auditory aspect of reception, I also use the word “hear” in this chapter. This highlights the fact that while these women were well accustomed to “watching” foreign TV series, it was an utterly new experience to “hear” them in Moroccan Arabic.

⁷⁵ Throughout Morocco, “bricolage” TV antennas are common and in Tafza homemade television antennas were fashioned with bits of scrap metal, wood and wire and then cemented to the roof (see Figure 10). Poindexter (1991) cites a newspaper article by Haski in 1989 which described a homemade TV antenna craze that occurred in Rabat in which people attached a typical Moroccan couscous cooking pot to a TV antenna in order to receive foreign broadcast emissions.

Locally produced movies are filmed in varieties of Moroccan Arabic, Tamazight and French and foreign movies are either broadcast in their original language if a dialect of Arabic or dubbed in French or Standard Arabic. Original French language films are often subtitled in Standard Arabic and Moroccan Arabic films are often subtitled in French. The ability of Moroccan viewers to understand the language variety of a particular program varies widely. Though most people report being able to understand shows in Moroccan Arabic, comprehension of other national varieties of Arabic or of Standard Arabic in Tafza can vary among members of the same household; younger school-age generations tend to claim an understanding of a wider range of Arabic varieties than older (particularly unschooled) family members. That said, some varieties of Arabic that are frequently broadcast on both Moroccan and satellite stations, such as Egyptian Arabic, are more widely familiar to residents and relatively well understood.



Figure 14: A homemade TV antenna next to wheat grains drying in the winter sun on the roof of a house in Tafza. In the background, satellite dishes can be seen on the roofs of wealthier neighbors.

May 2009, however, marked an important change in the languages used to dub foreign television series. Earlier that year, the Moroccan television broadcasting company 2M contracted the sound company “Plug-in,” based in Casablanca, to dub an American produced, Spanish language drama series called *Las Dos Caras de Ana* into Moroccan Arabic. While the company had previously performed two other dubbings into Moroccan Arabic, a National Geographic documentary and a movie in 2008, “*Ana*,” as it was referred to by women in the village, was the first time a drama series had been dubbed into Moroccan Arabic. Though particularly popular among young adult women in the village, older women in their 50’s and 60’s and children of all ages, became dedicated followers of the daily serial.

The popularity of the series across generations became clear to me one day in late May while having tea with Rabiaa and her mother Khalti Fatima. When I asked Rabiaa, who at the time was in her early 30’s, what had happened the previous day to the male hero Ignacio in *Ana*, her seven year old daughter Selwa broke into the conversation. She animatedly explained to me how Ana had been crying because there was another beautiful woman who looked like her, but was richer, and who was going to steal her boyfriend. After Selwa finished her summary, her grandmother sent her out of the room on the pretense of bringing more bread to the table. When Selwa was out of earshot, Rabiaa’s elderly mother Khalti Fatima leaned over to me and explained that Selwa hadn’t understood the scene correctly and proceeded to outline for me in detail how the two beautiful women are actually the same person and that Ana was purposefully manipulating Ignacio.

Part of what was interesting about this exchange, was not only that both Selwa and her grandmother shared an interest in the same TV series, but also that both of them could follow and basically understand it. Though Khalti Fatima spoke some Moroccan Arabic, her native language was Tamazight and she reported not being able to understand other varieties of Arabic except Egyptian and Moroccan Arabic, though for both of which she would sometimes need translation help from younger family members. Before moving to Tafza from a monolingual Tamazight village outside Ouarzazate, Khalti Fatima had had little exposure to any Arabic and had only been actively using Moroccan Arabic for a few years. Like her daughter, Khalti Fatima had never been to school and had never learned to read or write in Arabic. Unlike her daughter, however, who had married into an Arabic speaking family as a teenager, Khalti Fatima felt insecure with her understanding and use of most varieties of Arabic. She had told me on a previous visit, months before the release of *Ana*, that she had often felt left out when the family would follow a television series in the evenings that was in Standard Arabic or another variety such as Syrian because she couldn't understand it. She remarked that *Ana* was exciting to her precisely because the series was dubbed in Moroccan Arabic and she could independently understand it. She also felt she could relate to the characters more intimately. As Selwa skipped back into the room and quickly reclaimed her seat directly in front of the television screen, Khalti Fatima looked at me smiling and insisted “*ana, ana*” ‘I, I’ while poking hard at her chest and then pointing at the television screen. Her gesture underscored her pride in watching and understanding *Ana* herself, without needing help from family members to follow the story line. The double meaning in her

words, the Moroccan Arabic word “*ana*” ‘I’ and the title of the series *Ana*, highlights how meaningful such series became to women and children across Morocco.

This chapter will begin by reviewing the history of broadcast media in Morocco before turning to a discussion of reactions to early Moroccan Arabic dubbed series in both rural and urban locations. I will show how there was a range of reactions to dubbing in Moroccan Arabic, including fear and apprehension regarding the negative effects it could have on viewers behavior and language use, as well as praise for the positive effects it might have on the status of Moroccan Arabic vis-à-vis other varieties of Arabic. As in Chapter 3 in which code-switching patterns from Moroccan Arabic to English and French were observed when discussing romantic topics, this chapter also brings to focus the ideologies of morality and *hchuma* ‘shame’ that are associated with Moroccan Arabic, but this time in a primarily oral and public role. I argue that a disjuncture was experienced by many Moroccan viewers of the series when they witnessed foreign cultural traditions, ways of speaking and behaviors, some of which are taboo in Moroccan society, presented in Moroccan Arabic. Moments when pieces of the oral script draw viewers’ attention to the form of the utterance itself, and remind viewers that the story onscreen is not taking place in Moroccan Arabic, viewers also become critically aware the conventions of the dubbing context and the existence of a written Moroccan Arabic script. I argue that the Moroccan dubbed series were understood as successful by viewers insofar as they were able to remove attention away from the very script whose existence is a necessary basis for which to create a dubbed series in the first place.

Despite this erasure of written Moroccan Arabic in the dubbing context, the production of the spoken performance and creation of the scripts reshape roles previously

assigned to Moroccan Arabic. In the second half of this chapter, I thus then shift from a focus on the reception of Moroccan Arabic dubbed series, to their production. I will discuss issues regarding the dubbing of foreign series into Moroccan Arabic including translation and recording in studio. In this chapter, I will examine the form and content of the “hidden” Moroccan Arabic scripts used to dub these series and the relationship between these transcripts and the oral text of the series. It is shown that extensive negotiations and modifications are made both during the translation process from the original language script as well as in the recording studio itself. This brings to light issues of regulating Moroccan Arabic both in its written and oral forms in this context and raises questions regarding who is and should be responsible for lexical and grammatical choices in the Moroccan Arabic dubbing of foreign series and the effects these choices might have on language use in Morocco.

Broadcast media and dubbed television dramas in Morocco

From the beginning of the 20th century through the 1950’s, early radio and broadcast media in Morocco were largely controlled and transmitted by French colonial powers and foreign expatriate residents. Following Moroccan independence, the first national broadcast system, *Radiodiffusion et Télévision Marocaine (RTM)*, was established in 1962 in Rabat as a subsidiary of the Ministry of Communication (Zaid 2009). It was modeled after a French national broadcast system. Zaid explains that from the 1960’s-80, the television media was closely regulated by the government and “mostly repression was the rule” (21). Television journalism served both to inform the public of government policies and spread development initiatives, but was also employed as a weapon of the state as footage was used by Moroccan secret police to persecute citizens.

Zaid argues that the main role of RTM was not to provide entertainment, but rather “to promote nationalism, reinforce the sacredness of the monarchy... discredit communist and anti-monarchy/republican ideologies” (106) and stress the “territorial integrity of the nation” (110). In the early years, RTM broadcast 4-5 hours a day and in 1986 it was extended to 12 hours.

It was not until 1989 that the first private television channel in Morocco, 2M Soread, was launched out of Casablanca and RTM ceased to be the only television station in Morocco. 2M’s goal was to provide entertainment to the Moroccan public (Zaid 2009). Pointdexter (1991) shows that in early 1990, 2M quickly became known as the “French,” “entertainment” and “elitist” station, offering predominantly French language, imported soap operas and movies, most of which required the expensive rental of a descrambler box. In contrast, RTM aired mostly Arabic language programming. 2M became public in 1996 (Lamnadi 1999). In August 2002, the then recently ascended King Mohamed VI created the *Haute Autorité de la Communication Audiovisuelle (HACA)* and charged it with the establishment of a legal framework for the liberalization of the broadcast media in Morocco.

During the summer of 2009, when the first foreign television series dubbed in Moroccan Arabic were broadcast by 2M, Moroccans with a satellite and receiver had access to hundreds of “free-to-air Arabic language television stations” from across the world (Salamandra 2012). These included shows in varieties of Arabic from across North Africa and the Middle East in addition to those in Standard Arabic. Prior to the release of *Ana*, the Dubai-based MBC4 station made the unprecedented release of a 154-episode Turkish soap opera entitled *Noor* that had been dubbed in a variety of Syrian

Arabic. *Noor* was an immediate and huge success, a fact which sparked a media panic across the Arab world. Arabic language news media began attributing cases of domestic violence and divorce to the behavior and appearance of the handsome and romantic lead character Muhannad and women viewers' (real and imagined) idolization of him (Salamandra 2012). "Noormania" still reverberated in Tafza, Morocco when I arrived a year following its release, as evidenced in the choice of the name Muhannad for a stray kitten that was adopted in Khalti Latifa's house. Khalti Latifa's daughter and friends were shocked upon hearing that I had been unaware of the series. 2M's international broadcasting of the Moroccan Arabic foreign series *Ana*, following a mere year after *Noor*, symbolically positioned Moroccan Arabic as a language of power in relation to Syrian Arabic, as well as other varieties of Arabic.⁷⁶

Media reception

Though the data in this chapter is not intended to represent a thorough study of media reception, I will draw on some fieldwork observations that center on television reception as well as on metalinguistic commentary obtained through casual conversations and interviews regarding the languages used on RTM and 2M. Although there has been an increase in the number and scope of anthropological studies of media reception, Ginseberg, Abu-Lughod and Larkin have argued that they tend to focus on similar topics, primarily that of identity construction. Besides Lamnadi (1999) and Zaid (2009), there have been few qualitative studies conducted on Moroccan television. The other studies that have been done on television in Morocco have focused on quantifiable measures

⁷⁶ Older generations of Moroccans remember viewing 1970's Indian movies dubbed in Moroccan Arabic. Younger generations do not share this association, however, and the release of *Ana* in 2009 was received by many as an innovative and daring venture. There were likely scripts written in Moroccan Arabic for these dubbed movies. A comparative analysis of these scripts with data in this dissertation would be interesting.

such as audience ratings and the data has been collected not by researchers, but by private and government agencies (Zaid 2009).

Outside Morocco, Abu-Lughod studies television melodramas in Egypt and argues that, similar to other postcolonial contexts, they can be understood “as particularly effective instruments of social development, national consolidation, and ‘modernization’” (2000:8). She looks at television serials produced in Egypt for an Egyptian audience and argues that such serials “work with modernist projects at two levels: intentionally, through disseminating moral messages inflected by local political ideologies...; but also more subtly, though popularizing a distinctive configuration of narrative and emotionality” (88). Abu Lughod makes a critical distinction between the forms and subjects of Egyptian television melodramas, and their social and economic contexts of production and reception. She argues that they differ in important ways from the Western soap operas as well as from the “folk” or traditional forms of Egyptian melodrama that had been popular in rural areas. The present chapter touches upon some of these themes in addressing a new form of television melodrama in Morocco.

“It will encourage women to wear jeans”

It was quite common when I was invited over to tea in the house of one of the women in my literacy classes, whether in the village or in the city, to be immediately escorted to the main receiving area of the house and asked to sit. Sometimes I would be led to a brightly patterned Moroccan sofa on a hand carved wooden frame, but more often I was made comfortable on a bed of thick, sheep skin hides and hand woven rugs on the floor. Usually a low standing, round table would be set in the middle of the room. After inquiring about each other’s health and families, my host would invariably stand up and

turn on the television, before excusing herself to go and prepare the afternoon tea. Many times I would find myself completely alone watching the station she had set for me, usually 2M, for a half an hour or more before my host and other household members would return with a piping hot kettle of tea, cake, tea cookies, peanuts and warm, freshly homemade bread or *msemen*⁷⁷ with local olive oil, honey or hand churned butter for dipping. Though I was focused on chatting with my hosts, it was not uncommon for younger, unmarried family members, particularly teenagers and women in their early twenties, to disengage from the conversation and sit themselves off to the side a bit in order to send and receive text messages on their mobile phones with a modicum of privacy, while gazing intermittently at the television in the background.

As we sipped our hot tea and spoke of literacy class, children, and local events, the television would remain on and provide a constant background symphony of different languages, commercial jingles, news and sounds from places around the world. Indeed, the practice of turning on the television when having a meal, tea or entertaining a guest was so embedded in the daily lives of the women I worked with that rarely do I have an audio recording made inside the home that did not capture these sounds in the background. Conversations in these settings would naturally turn to observations about a particular show, news story or commodity advertised on TV. More than once, discussions would get heated when the topic of foreign melodramas was brought up, particularly when the company around the table was co-ed or cross generational. Thus, although at the time I was not focusing on the use of languages in television media as a focus of my dissertation research, my field notes and recordings are littered with

⁷⁷ *Msemen* is a traditional pan-fried, multi-layered Moroccan version of a pancake.

metalinguistic commentary and reactions to the different programs and channels popular at the time.



Figure 15: The art of pouring Moroccan tea (April 2009). Notice the prominent placement of the TV on a wooden stand in the front of the room, the only other piece of furniture besides the small wooden table in the foreground of the picture, where we would gather to eat our meals.

In the summer of 2009, as literacy classes slowly wound down and I began spending more of my time visiting with friends and neighbors and participating in annual household summer projects such as weaving new rugs for winter, I also found myself watching an increasing amount of television. It was oppressively hot at my fieldsite and late afternoons through the early evening were often spent napping on the floor of the living room and watching TV until it was cool enough to get up and prepare a late night dinner around 9 or 10pm. During these lazy days, I caught up on what was happening on the various TV series being broadcast that summer and first and foremost, I got swept up in the *Ana* hysteria that had captured the attention of the literacy students. My interest in the show at the time was primarily as a tool to improve my comprehension, vocabulary

and pronunciation of spoken Moroccan Arabic, as well as an additional avenue for relating with my female friends and acquaintances in the village. Though I was exposed to a lot of TV watching during my time in the field, much of the melodrama I saw was in a Standard, Syrian or Egyptian variety of Arabic, none of which I was fluent in. When 2M began airing *Ana* however, I found I could easily follow the main story line, laugh at some of the jokes and really participate in conversations about the characters and plot with fellow viewers.

One of the first field note entries I wrote about the Moroccan Arabic dubbed foreign series was made on May 25, 2009. Miriam, the fifteen year old daughter of the home where I lived, and I were watching an episode of *Ana* in the living room of the house. She was propped against the cool cement block walls, holding a pillow in her lap as she intently followed the conversation between Ana, the heroine, and Gustavo, Ana's true love. I sat directly in front of the TV with a notebook and pen in my hand, peppering Miriam every few minutes with requests to repeat a phrase or translate a word I didn't understand so I could write it down and review it later. At a particularly dramatic and pivotal moment in the episode Gustavo leans over to Ana, looks directly into her eyes and says "*Ana kanbghik*" 'I love you.' At this, Miriam burst out laughing and at my startled look, covered her face with the pillow in her lap until she could stop. "*lach ketdhak?*" 'why are you laughing?' I asked. "*Hit dakchi jani ghrib*" 'because that sounded strange to me' she answered.

The Moroccan verb stem /bya/ most commonly means 'to want' or 'to like' something, but can also be used to express romantic love to a spouse or boyfriend. As Cheikh and Miller (2011) note, it has been recorded in oral proverbs collected by

Westermarck in the beginning of the 20th century, for example in the following: “*Lli bghak, bghih, u-lqalbek xuzu*” ‘the one who loves you, love him, and in your heart criticize him’ (cited in Iraqui-Sinaceur 1993:102, my translation). In the present day context of Tafza however, expressing feelings of romantic love, even to a spouse, had an air of *hchuma* ‘shamefulness’ around it. As discussed in Chapter 3, in SMS text messages in Darija or Tamazight many young people prefer to express their feelings by using the French expression je t’aime or the English “I love you.” Based on late night gossip sessions with my girlfriends in Tafza, I learned that it was a common practice among youth in the village to use the French expression when speaking to their significant other face to face as well.

Cheikh and Miller (2011) have examined the different ways of expressing love and sexuality in Darija based on a variety of sources (radio, songs, proverbs and interviews) based in Tangier, Morocco. They argue that the situation in Morocco “conduirait les couples à délaisser la darija, vulgairement virile, pour un autre langage jugé plus délicat, à savoir une langue étrangère pour exprimer l’amour” ‘drives couples to abandon Darija, strongly vulgar, for another language considered more delicate, to know a foreign language in order to express love’ (176). Indeed, this was a practice I noticed frequently years later when I began listening regularly to a Casablanca morning radio show “Le morning de Momo” on Hit Radio. Most days as part of the show, the morning host Momo would take live calls and play audio recordings from station fans expressing their feelings towards a family member or romantic partner. One morning in May 2013, for example, a man named Hamid called into the radio station and had Momo surprise conference call his fiancée so he could tell her he loved her. The three of them

spoke only in Moroccan Arabic until the moment when Hamid began to tell his fiancée that ‘he wanted to declare to everybody listening to the radio that his life would have no sense without her in it’ and that ‘he loved her more than anything else in the world,’ at which point he switched to French. His fiancée started both crying and laughing on the phone, and there were pregnant pauses in which, as a listener, I waited for her to respond. Finally, Momo broke in and interpreted for his audience that Hamid’s fiancée “*hchmat*” ‘she felt embarrassed/shy’ by the public declaration, underscoring the link between expressing romantic feelings and *hchuma*. Hamid then began to openly doubt the wisdom of having made the call, until Momo reassured him that he was *w’ir* ‘awesome,’ commenting that few Moroccan men have the courage to declare their love and speak from their heart. Note that in describing Hamid’s declaration, both men switched back to speaking in Moroccan Arabic. Hamid’s fiancée appeared to remain too choked up to participate further in the exchange and the phone call ended.

When Miriam burst out laughing upon hearing the expression “*Ana kanbghik*,” I interpreted her reaction at the time as her being uncomfortable hearing those types of emotions expressed due to the social context of the village, her young age and her limited contact with young men. Miriam was the youngest of Khalti Latifa’s five children and had yet to be engaged to be married, despite her mother’s desires that she be wed well before her 18th birthday. Miriam is tall, slim and usually wore ankle length skirts, long loose tops that reached modestly below her hips and her hair pulled back in a neat braid. She is fluent in both Tamazight, which she speaks mainly with her family and neighbors, and in Moroccan Arabic, which she speaks with her peers and those from outside the community. Miriam was a dutiful daughter who woke early in the morning to help her

sister-in-law Kaoutar prepare the family's breakfast, make the beds, and get her niece and nephew off to school.

When Miriam had finished 6th grade her older brothers withdrew her from school and forbid her from attending either the local high school located 5 kilometers away in a neighboring town or a school in Beni Mellal. Khalti Latifa once explained to me that Miriam's brothers were afraid she would get too much attention from the boys on the bus or while commuting by foot; there was a risk that Miriam and a boy would start 'going together.' As she said this, she held up her right hand in front of my face and rubbed her index and middle fingers forward and backward to illustrate,⁷⁸ indexically highlighting the sexual encounters that she believed should only happen between married couples. For the most part, Miriam was expected to remain in her house or in the company of other relatives. Halfway through the year I lived with her family, however, Miriam began secretly attending an all-girls sewing class run by a local seamstress in order to learn some basic techniques she could later use to help support herself. Her mother Khalti Latifa and her oldest brother, who lived in a city a few hours away, endorsed the classes as long as Miriam was discreet in her movements through town and didn't take the main road to the seamstress so as to avoid the gazes of men. I was admonished that her youngest brother Abdelali, the one who was the strictest with her of the three brothers, and Abdelaziz, the middle brother, were never to know that she was attending the classes.

When the episode had ended, I asked Miriam to explain more about why she found the expression "*ana kanbghik*" strange. She explained that she was used to watching foreign television melodramas dubbed in Standard Arabic or occasionally

⁷⁸ Field notes May 11, 2009.

Syrian Arabic, the latter of which she viewed as sharing the most characteristics with Standard Arabic of any of the Arab countries' dialects. In her opinion, series dubbed in Standard Arabic had a certain sophistication and class to them and the way the characters spoke of love and relationships was *zwin* 'beautiful' and *nqi* 'clean.' She explained that such series never resort to using foreign languages to talk about love, but rather draw on older, more traditional, and in her opinion, beautiful, ways of talking about romance. In contrast, the same topics spoken about in Moroccan Arabic seemed "*ghrib*" 'weird' and awkward to her. The way she described it, the variety of the dubbing language itself could either neutralize an otherwise *hchuma* 'shameful' topic such as sex or love between unmarried couples, as is the case of Standard Arabic, or it could alternatively mark such moments in conversation and draw attention to them, as is the case of Moroccan Arabic. Thus the perceived vulgarity of Moroccan Arabic became linked to the immoral behavior and language represented in the foreign series. Since topics such as relationships, love and sex were usually not talked about openly in either Moroccan Arabic or Tamazight, to hear them expressed in Moroccan Arabic on TV was both shocking and titillating to Miriam.

Like Miriam, other viewers also found dubbed series humorous, though for many of them it was not simply that love was expressed in Moroccan Arabic that made it funny, but also that Moroccan Arabic was being used in this new role. This was a reaction I heard repeatedly in conversations with women in both Tafza and in urban cities like Casablanca and Mohammedia.⁷⁹ One young woman in the Mohammedia Passerelle class told me that 'personally she burst out laughing the first time she heard a Western series dubbed in Moroccan Arabic and that she wasn't the only one in her family because

⁷⁹ Field notes June 2009. My translation from Moroccan Arabic.

everyone in the world finds it funny.’ She conceded, however, that ‘but it is good because at least we understand better.’ Her classmate added that she found the dubbed series ‘so stupid that there was nothing to do but laugh.’ She continued that ‘films made directly in Moroccan Arabic didn’t pose any problem but the dubbed series made everyone laugh; the characters can even be crying and it is funny. We feel too clearly that the image and the words don’t go together at all.’⁸⁰ In Tafza, a teenage neighbor of Khalti Latifa told me that it was the expressions they used in the series that made him explode with laughter and he offered the example of one man yelling at another “*nod a lbali:d daba nwerri:k choghlek*” ‘get up you idiot I am going to show you how it is.’ He explained that some of the expressions used in the series were awkward and clearly translations from another language and cultures, not representative of authentic Moroccan speech. These examples of metacommentary surrounding the dubbed series reveal that some felt that the use of Moroccan Arabic could not successfully allow for full viewer engagement with the dialogue. Instead, the juxtaposition of foreign series’ images and script (including characters, dress, behavior, language, story line, subject matter, etc.) with Moroccan Arabic and ideologies associated with it, prompted some viewers to maintain a critical distance while watching the series instead of allowing themselves to be drawn into the fictional storyline.

The reactions to the dubbed Moroccan Arabic television series point to specific challenges that dubbed translations, unlike source language versions, pose to viewers.

Petrucci explains that both subtitled and dubbed translations of film and television series

⁸⁰ In saying ‘films made directly in Moroccan Arabic,’ Miriam was not implying that Moroccan original language films are not scripted. Rather, she was contrasting Moroccan Arabic films that were originally made to be in Moroccan Arabic to Moroccan Arabic dubbed series, which were translations from another language.

require “some degree of suspension of audio-visual disbelief” (2012:234) by which the characters on screen are seen as actually talking in the target language. In the case of dubbing, Gottlieb argues the goal is to create “the perfect illusion” in which viewers take the target language to be the original (and only) language of production (1997:54). Palencia Villa (2002) explains viewers of dubbed films and series tacitly agree to ignore the various conventions involved in creating a dubbed translation (including timing, synchrony, appropriateness of the dialogue, coherence between the audio and video, etc.) in order to enjoy the viewing experience more fully. Additionally, she adds that there is a genre-effect at play in that target language viewers will grow accustomed to the use of particular dubbing conventions associated with a genre after multiple exposures, and will be less likely to question them in new productions. In the reactions of Moroccan viewers described above, there is evidence of a rupture of illusion in which viewers get a kick out of questioning the credibility of dialogue. It would be interesting to see if in future years the genre-effect described by Palencia Villa will be observed in Morocco, and regular viewers of Moroccan Arabic foreign series will get used to the specific dubbing conventions of the genre to the point that the illusionary effect is achieved.

In the middle of my conversation with Miriam that day, we suddenly heard the lock of the main door to the house slide open and Miriam jumped up to change the channel of the TV to a news program, something that would be considered an appropriate show for her to be watching. In walked Miriam’s brother Abdelali, and he wasn’t fooled by our charade. ‘I heard the film from outside’ he said, ‘you weren’t watching the news.’ Caught in the act, Miriam looked at me for support and I tried to cover for us both, explaining to Abdelali that I thought watching the dubbed shows would improve my

Moroccan Arabic and I had asked Miriam to help me with translations. Abdelali didn't respond to this but headed instead into the kitchen and left us alone to watch the news in the living room. That evening during the family dinner, he was reserved with me and did not bring the incident up.

The next day, I had the opportunity after lunch to ask Abdelali about the incident and I inquired if he was upset with Miriam or me for watching that type of television series. I had known Abdelali to be a serious fan of American and French comedies, dramas and romance movies that addressed similar topics and included quite graphic images, so I had been a bit surprised at his reaction the previous day.⁸¹ He said he wasn't upset at me as I was American and these shows were part of my culture. He pointed out that I had been taught how to evaluate what I saw in them and make decisions regarding my own behavior accordingly. He didn't want Miriam watching the Turkish and Mexican films, however, because the female characters on these shows display all types of behavior considered inappropriate in Morocco. Women in Morocco, he claimed, are more susceptible to foreign ideas and influences than I am. He said it was shameful for women to watch these series because the types of topics and scenes depicted in them would serve as a type of improper sexual education for many. He therefore tried to regulate what Miriam and his sister-in-law watched on the family TV, encouraging them to watch cooking shows, news programs or listen to recitations of the Qur'an instead of to foreign series. Despite Abdelali's disapproval, Miriam and her sister-in-law watched the dubbed series on the sly when Abdelali was not present and would gossip about what

⁸¹ Abdelali once asked me to bring back from Casablanca a DVD copy of the film *Titanic*, a film with romance scenes and nudity, so he could watch a version that had not been censored for public television.

happened in the episodes with other young neighborhood women while waiting to bake bread in the communal earthen oven or while out in the fields collecting the harvest.

Abdelali explained that it is especially risky for young women to watch series like *Ana* because they were dubbed in Moroccan Arabic and, in his opinion, would have a greater impact on the Moroccan viewer than series dubbed in a foreign variety of Arabic. He gave the example of characters dressing immodestly in *Ana* and voiced his concern that Miriam will begin to desire such styles for herself. Such shows ‘encourage women to wear jeans!’⁸² he exclaimed. Abdelali’s sisters and sister-in-law were forbidden from wearing Western style jeans or traditional Moroccan styled clothing made from denim or denim-like materials. Jeans were viewed as iconic of a sexually uninhibited and immoral lifestyle that he associated with Americans and Europeans. I argued with him, stating my opinion that Miriam understood quite well that what was being displayed on TV was coming from a different place and culture not necessarily compatible with her own. I also emphasized that she knew that such series do not depict realistic images of everyday life but rather are exaggerated, imagined scenes that even viewers in the country of the series’ origin don’t necessarily align with.

Abdelali didn’t respond to me directly but rather shifted the conversation to what he termed “*muchkila dyal globalisation*” ‘the problem of globalization’⁸³ which he argued was causing Morocco to lose its traditions. He directed my attention to the rug weaving activities his mother and older sister Khadija had been engrossed in earlier that evening. He called it dommage ‘a pity’ that the younger generations, represented by his sister Miriam, are not learning any of the traditional skills that for centuries, he claimed, have

⁸² Field notes. June 2010.

⁸³ Though our conversation took place in Moroccan Arabic, he codeswitched and spoke this word in French.

been passed down from generation to generation of women. His older sister Khadija, he argued, knows how to make a rug by hand the true way because ‘she had been raised close to her mother.’ By this, he implied that she had not attended much schooling and had not been allowed to watch TV or have associations outside the family circle when young. Though he himself watched a significant amount of TV and each of his brothers each had a small screen TV in their own rooms in the house,⁸⁴ he blamed the television as being the primary agent of globalization in the village, constantly streaming unregulated foreign images and ideas into his house through the two main channels RTM and 2M. Abdelali’s view of women being the bearers of Moroccan, and in his case more specifically Amazigh, tradition is similar to ideological positions documented in the High Atlas Mountains among Amazigh communities (Hoffman 2008; Petrucci 2012).

In a grand taxi ride one day on a bumpy national road running from Beni Mellal to Casablanca, I got into a conversation with the driver and another male passenger about the dubbed television series. Both men were married, in their late 30’s and from Casablanca. Similar to Abdelali, one of them explained that in his opinion, ‘what was most disturbing was to show the world to Moroccans in a language through which they can understand what they see... it might give them ideas.’⁸⁵ By this, he insinuates that it would be better to keep the public isolated from images from abroad, particularly those that run against what he views as Islamic or Moroccan values. It also implies that there is a big difference between Moroccan Arabic and other varieties of Arabic including Standard Arabic, as TV series had been being translated in those varieties for a long time

⁸⁴ The women of the house did not have private bedrooms but rather slept together in the Moroccan salon and shared the living room TV. In Abdelali’s house, when one of the sons married he portioned off a section of the house to create living quarters for his wife and future children who he would bring to live with him in his mother’s house.

⁸⁵ Paraphrase from field notes. June 2010.

before. In the view of these two men, Standard Arabic and foreign varieties such as Syrian, which many Moroccans claim to be the closest dialect to the Standard, work as a filter between the viewer and the content on TV. When people watch a film in Standard Arabic they know it is about another culture as the language serves to remind the viewer that what they are watching is external to their own reality. ‘When they hear [Standard] Arabic they understand ‘this isn’t me’ the driver said. The two men’s comments are reminiscent of Miriam’s view of Standard Arabic working as a filter; in both cases Standard Arabic was seen as neutralizing or distancing otherwise shameful or taboo subjects.

Moroccan Arabic, by contrast, is cast as dangerous as the dubbing language as it is believed to create a direct and unmediated link between the viewer and the content, in part because it indexes a sense of intimacy. The male passenger laughed as he recounted the story of a housemaid he knew in Casablanca who, when she first saw a Moroccan Arabic dubbed Mexican series, commented that it must have been filmed in Ain Diab, a wealthy bourgeois neighborhood in Casablanca renowned for beach clubs and nightlife. For this woman, despite the characters’ Mexican names, the fact that it was dubbed in Moroccan Arabic indexed that it was a local production. Given the severe socioeconomic inequality that exists in Casablanca, the lavish and outrageous behaviors of the characters in *Ana* may have aligned for this woman with imagined lifestyles of the Casablanca social elite. The story of the housemaid and Abdelali’s monitoring of the viewing choices made by the women in his household reveal a gendered bias in how dubbed TV series’ negative impact on society is imagined. This was made clear in an article published in Standard Arabic online, in which the author states:

وأتساءل حقا إن كانت لجنة ما تراقب ما يروج له في هاته الأعمال السخيفة من أفكار و سلوكيات، و أتمنى أن أسمع رأيا لهؤلاء المختصين في علم الاجتماع والسلوكيات والتنمية الذاتية ممن يقدمون نصائح وأفكار عبر أثير الإذاعات الخاصة، أتمنى أن يدلوا بدلهم و يحدثوا النسوة اللواتي يستمعن لهم بخطورة إدمان هاته المسلسلات خصوصا صحبة الأطفال والمراهقين⁸⁶.

I wonder really if there is a committee that monitors what is going on in these ridiculous affairs: ideas, behaviors, etc. and I wish that those specialists in social behavioral science and self-development who preach on private radio stations, could sensitize their audience of women who listen to their ideas and pieces of advice about the dangerous impact of these series especially on kids and teenagers.

Finally, numerous people in both the country and in the city voiced the fear that the resurgence of Moroccan Arabic in audio-visual communications would negatively impact the level and use of Standard Arabic in Morocco. The variety of Moroccan Arabic used in the series was viewed by many as “very low and vulgar” (Miller 2010) and it was often referred to as “*ddarija dyal zzenqa*” ‘street language.’ In an online article published on *Morocco World News*, one man wrote that,

The Moroccan context itself does not match the content of the aforementioned series [Turkish and Mexican series], especially when we take into account the heinous and abominable linguistic register used in them when dubbed into Moroccan Arabic; a hocus-pocus register overloaded with asinine and hollow love expressions. It is enough to rely on our intuition to see to what extent such programs ridicule and dehumanize us.⁸⁷

A linguist at Université Hassan II in Casablanca joked to me that it threatens “les gardiens du temple de l’arabe classique” ‘the guards of the temple of Classical Arabic.’⁸⁸ Indeed, 2M’s decision to air foreign series dubbed in Moroccan Arabic attracted a lot of media attention and critique. A friend of Abdelali claimed to me ‘with the propagation of Moroccan Arabic there will be no more Arabic [Standard Arabic] or even Tamazight

⁸⁶ <http://ar.morocoworldnews.com/?p=44746> (accessed 2 August 2014).

⁸⁷ <http://www.morocoworldnews.com/2012/08/52066/the-negation-of-style-in-media/> (accessed 8 October 2014).

⁸⁸ Field notes. December 2010. The linguist requested not to be mentioned by name.

because [Moroccan Arabic] is a blend of the two.’⁸⁹ This fear that Moroccan Arabic would lower standards of Standard Arabic in Morocco was echoed by language policy changes put in place by the Moroccan government in 2011 that are discussed later in this chapter.

A “clean” Arabic

In their commentary, Miriam, her brother Abdelali and the taxi driver each compared the use of Moroccan Arabic versus Standard Arabic in dubbed foreign series and agreed, though for different reasons, that Moroccan Arabic was the less suitable choice. In contrast, other Moroccans with whom I watched series like *Ana* organized their comments not at the level of Moroccan versus Standard Arabic, but rather focused their attention on the particular variety of Moroccan Arabic that was chosen to dub the series. Some of them highlighted potential positive effects of this new role for Moroccan Arabic. For instance, a number of women I spoke to in Casablanca have emphasized that the Moroccan Arabic used to dub the foreign series on 2M is a ‘clean, good’ (*nqia*, *mezyana*) variety of Moroccan Arabic that one can hear in the nicer, urban areas such as Casablanca. These women recognized multiple registers of Arabic in Casablanca. For these women, the variety used in dubbing contrasts with “*ddarija dyal zzenqa*,” a variety they associate with foul language, rudeness and a lack of education. They explain that spreading a “clean” register of urban Moroccan Arabic by means of popular TV series will have a positive influence on listeners, particularly children and those who do not have a strong command of Moroccan Arabic.

⁸⁹ Field notes. July 3, 2010.

Youssef, the brother of a woman studying Arabic literacy in Mohammedia, argued that the dubbed shows, while he did not always approve of the content, were a chance to make Moroccan Arabic better. “Ça va aider beaucoup mieux améliorer Darija... c’est une occasion de réparer Darija... pour avoir une bonne Darija” ‘It will greatly help to improve Moroccan Arabic... it is a chance to repair Moroccan Arabic... to have a good Moroccan Arabic.’ He argued that foreign languages were having too great an influence on Moroccan Arabic and as such, it needed to be ‘cleaned and fixed.’ He gave the example of the words “*tomobil*” ‘car’ and “*cusina*” ‘kitchen’ as examples of French influence in Moroccan Arabic. “Tout le monde disent *tomobil*, *meme les alphabets*⁹⁰” ‘everyone says *tomobil*, even the literate.’ By this he insinuates that those literate in Arabic should know better and instead use a word of Standard Arabic origin such as “*siya:ra*” to refer to car when speaking in Moroccan Arabic.

Soumia, a 30 year old house maid and nanny who grew up in Casablanca, said that her first impression of the variety of Moroccan Arabic used to dub TV shows represented the speech of “*hadu lli m’allmin u saknin fe villa*” ‘those people who are educated and live in villas,’ or the urban elite.⁹¹ She distinguished this form of talk from the *ħreš* ‘rough’ Moroccan Arabic that she associated with the poor *brarek* ‘tin roof housing’ areas within and surrounding Casablanca. Though Soumia in general did not like to watch dramatic television series, preferring the news or religious oriented shows in Standard Arabic, she would often humor me and join me in watching new series as they were released. One afternoon as Soumia and I watched a rerun episode of the Mexican series *Diablo* dubbed into Moroccan Arabic on 2M, she pointed out to me how a newly

⁹⁰ The French word *alphabet* does not mean ‘literate’ as Yassine was using it. It means ‘the alphabet.’

⁹¹ Audio recording and field notes. March 9, 2011.

married woman in the show “properly” referred to her mother-in-law as *‘hma:ti*’ instead of as “*duza*’ or worse “*guza.*’ The latter two index for Soumia a rural background and lack of education.

Soumia’s ideologically driven commentary on the different varieties of Moroccan Arabic is certainly influenced by: her family’s rural background; her move at 5 years old to work in an urban household and be raised by a distant relative in Casablanca; and her current work as a housemaid in a European style apartment on a fashionable street in Casablanca where she makes a decent and regular paycheck and works respectable hours. Dressed usually in a loose djellaba and a tightly fitting veil, Soumia does not aspire to dress or behave like the women in the foreign series she watches, behavior she describes as *hchuma*. She does, however, identify with the variety of Moroccan Arabic used to dub the series, one that indexes for her the positive aspects of living in the city. Interestingly, over the time we discussed the dubbed series, from 2010-2014, Soumia’s views on the register of Moroccan Arabic in them have reversed. She has more recently stated that the language of the shows now resembles ‘street language’ and is in her view inappropriate. Soumia’s current disapproval of the variety of Moroccan Arabic used to dub foreign series is likely due to her later observation that such series often deal with topics that are considered shameful in Moroccan society, such as homosexuality and other types of illicit or illegal sexual relations.

Offering a different perspective, Miller argues that the dubbing of foreign films into Moroccan Arabic “fits very well with a certain patriotic discourse praising the ‘new Morocco’” as it proves Morocco capable of generating its own market instead of depending on foreign countries (2010:169). Lamya, a college student friend of mine in

Casablanca, echoed this patriotic sentiment from a linguistic standpoint, arguing that the dubbing of foreign series in Moroccan Arabic and airing them to national and international audiences serves to revalorize her language against other varieties of Arabic. She believes, “it is better [to dub] in Darija [Moroccan Arabic] than in Syrian, Lebanese or Egyptian. Already some [foreign] words and expressions have become common in the speech of some Moroccans. We don’t say ‘*zwina*’ but ‘*jmi:la*,’ ‘*bzzaf*’ has become ‘*kti:r*’ and that makes “*jmi:la kti:r*.”⁹² Though the Arabic words “*jmi:la*” and “*kti:r*” are arguably bivalent with the Standard Arabic words /*jami:la*/ and /*kaθi:r*/, the way Lamya pronounced them with a shortened vowel in the first syllable indicated that she was imitating a Syrian or Lebanese variety of Arabic.

Whereas purist ideologies are often employed when discussing the “potentially destructive” effects of Moroccan Arabic loan words into Standard Arabic, it was less common to hear Moroccans express a purist ideology towards the maintenance of Moroccan Arabic. What is interesting in Lamya’s argument, however, is that while she finds it problematic that lexical items and expressions from other national varieties of Arabic are being borrowed in to Moroccan Arabic, she welcomes both the borrowing of words from and code-switching with Standard Arabic. Remembering one of her favorite television series from her high school years, she argued, “before, they [foreign series] were in Standard Arabic and we could at least learn correct words and phrases through them.” Thus, despite her view that the use of Moroccan Arabic to dub foreign series serves to revalorize the language, when compared to Standard Arabic, she maintains the ideology that Moroccan Arabic is “incorrect” and less valued.

⁹² *zwi:na* means ‘beautiful’ in Moroccan Arabic and *bzzaf* means ‘a lot, very.’ “*jmi:la kti:r*” means ‘very beautiful.’

Creating dubbed series in Moroccan Arabic

A critical actor in regulating the lexicon and register of the language variety used to dub foreign shows into Moroccan Arabic is the dubbing house Plug-in Studios (originally under the name Plug & Play). Plug-in is located in Casablanca and was founded in January 2007 by Hicham Chraïbi and Jérôme Boukobza. It is the first multimedia firm in Morocco that specializes in the translation and dubbing of television series, films and advertising from Spanish and English into French and Standard Arabic. Inspired by the fast and successful growth of call centers in Morocco, they opened their studio with the goal of providing locally based professional dubbing services for foreign films at 40% the cost of similar services abroad (Bervas 2010). Prior to Plug-in's opening, most translation and dubbing work was outsourced to European companies, mainly in France and more recently in Belgium. In 2009, Plug-in was approached by 2M to begin dubbing foreign television series in Moroccan Arabic (Lamrani 2010). The first two Mexican television melodrama series dubbed into Moroccan Arabic and broadcast on 2M, *Ana* and *Ayna Abi*, quickly became popular, reaching audience viewer rates of 54% and 59% respectively (Khalfallah 2010). The company grew quickly in response, soon housing more than a dozen recording studios and recruiting over 50 voice actors. Boukobza explained that "a series requires some fifteen actors for main roles, twenty to thirty for secondary roles, five engineers and three translators" (cited in Khalfallah 2010, my translation).

From 2011-2013, I visited Plug-in numerous times for interviews and observations during which I spent time with Hind Zkik the Production and Operations Manager. Ms. Zkik recounted that she began working at Plug-in shortly after it was

founded and was present when the move to offer Moroccan Arabic dubbing services was put into place. She confided that working with Moroccan Arabic ‘in fact, it was personal for her’ as she had ‘played with the idea’ since arriving at Plug-in but it wasn’t until a client specifically requested this service that they were able to put it into action. She doesn’t see the work of Plug-in as participating in a ‘Darija revolution,’ but rather emphasizes that Plug-in is a business at the service of its clients. She and employees I spoke with at Plug-in, viewed the changing roles of Moroccan Arabic as a “fashion trend” that is being initiated by youth.⁹³ Ms. Zkik explained, “C’est la jeunesse qui a imposé Darija dans le paysage de la communication et l’audiovisuel” ‘It is the youth who have imposed Moroccan Arabic in the realm of communication and audiovisual.’

Ms. Zkik likened the work of dubbing into Moroccan Arabic at Plug-in to advertising in Moroccan Arabic, emphasizing that both are targeted towards the youth. Moroccan Arabic use in advertising, she claimed, is about creativity and originality, themes that emerged in my data in Chapter 4 about text messaging. Ms. Zkik also drew comparisons between advertising and text messaging, highlighting the shared “funny characters” used in Roman transliterations of Moroccan Arabic such as the numbers 3 and 7 as well as with a “youth” or “street talk” vocabulary that included words like “*wa’ra*” ‘cool/rad’ and “*na:yda*” an adjective used to describe something that is ‘hip’ or ‘happening.’ Though I agree that dubbing and advertising in Moroccan Arabic both index “youth” in some way, I would argue that Ms. Zkik’s categorization of “youth” erases important social differences such as the fact that advertising targets an “urban

⁹³ This is a sentiment echoed in the documentary *Casanayda* (2009) which outlines a youth music movement in Morocco. It was written by Catherine Miller.

youth” and not young women like Miriam who do not have access to urban centers where such advertising is popular.

From a production standpoint however, Ms. Zkik draws a distinction regarding the language used and the issues involved between advertising in Moroccan Arabic and dubbing. From her perspective, advertising has more freedom than the dubbing industry. For one, the advertising industry can draw on a wider selection of voice actors than the dubbing industry. This is because the dubbing industry in Morocco is viewed by many as undermining the local film industry, and as such, many film actors don't want to be associated with the dubbing of foreign imported films. It can thus be a challenge to find qualified and experienced voice actors for dubbing in Moroccan Arabic. Another difference is that unlike advertising agencies that place ads in privately owned locations, Plug-in has less freedom because its Moroccan clients are diffusing on public broadcast stations. This can have important impacts on the variety and lexical choices surrounding the dubbing language, a topic that will be discussed in greater detail below.

Translation to Moroccan Arabic

Indeed, Ms. Zkik explained that Plug-in was not entirely free in the choice of language it used in dubbing in Moroccan Arabic. Ismail,⁹⁴ a voice actor at Plug-in who I met on one of my visits, explained to me that during the first year he began dubbing at Plug-in there were specific guidelines from their client, the broadcasting station 2M, regarding register and lexical choice. For example, during recordings he said that he had been specifically told not to use the word “*tomobil*” a frequently used word for ‘car’ because it was a clear French borrowing. The term “*siya:ra*” ‘car’ was preferred due to

⁹⁴ Ismail requested that I not reveal any specific details about him or the work he did for Plug-in.

its Standard Arabic origin. Ismail interpreted these guidelines as both a desire by 2M to create a truly “Moroccan” dubbing in that linguistic reminders of a French colonial influence had been minimized. He also saw it as a nod to viewers who use other varieties of Arabic and who may not understand French borrowings into Moroccan Arabic.

Not only the broadcasting company, but the Moroccan government also regulated language aired by 2M by means of its “cahier de charges.” The cahier de charges outlines requirements and specifications regarding the content, quantity, schedule, language, etc. of programming for 2M. In May of 2012, the ministry updated the cahiers de charge for 2M and Al-Oula.⁹⁵ When the initial announcement of a new cahier de charges for the two main television channels was released in late March 2012, it was rumored that they would stipulate how many hours of programming must be in Standard Arabic, thereby increasing Standard Arabic programming and reducing the total numbers of hours in Moroccan Arabic, Tamazight and foreign languages. Voice actors at Plug-in questioned if this decision was made in response to fears over the rapidly rising popularity of foreign series dubbed into Moroccan Arabic and the effects they may be imagined to have on language use among the Moroccan public. Minister of Communications Mustapha Khalifa, nominated to the position in January 2012, was publicly criticized for pushing an Arabization agenda at the expense particularly of French language broadcasting and not openly consulting with broadcast station directors before drafting his proposals (Jouhari 2012; Mansour 2012). According to a voice actor at 2M, in response to the new cahier de charges, 2M chose to make changes to some of its programming. During a visit at Plug-in, one actor explained to me that earlier in the summer of 2012, he had begun recording a new dubbed series in Moroccan Arabic and

⁹⁵ Al-Oula is the current name for RTM.

had had to restart the recordings from the beginning with a Standard Arabic script instead.⁹⁶ In the end, the final version of the cahier de charges for 2M that was set in place did not in fact increase the amount of Standard Arabic from the earlier 2009 cahier de charges. The 2012 version stipulated that 70% of programming on average each year must be in Standard Arabic, Tamazight or other varieties of Moroccan Arabic between the hours of 8:00 and 13:00 (HACA 2012).

Plug-in was able to make the change between languages used for dubbing so quickly because they did all their translation and dubbing work in-house. The process was also arguably simplified due to the fact that no institution exists in Morocco that is responsible for the regulation of Moroccan Arabic, nor is there a standard form of Moroccan Arabic to which Plug-in translations could be compared. This contrasts, for example, with situations in countries in which there is language policy in place that aims to revalorize local languages. In a discussion of Catalan, Basque and Galician dubbing in Spain, Agost (2004) shows that due to the need to follow specific conventions regarding language form and use, the process of dubbing translation becomes considerably complex, involving multiple stages of revision and re-revision between the translators, the dubbing house and the TV broadcast station. Such a multistep method often proves expensive.

Plug-in's team included translators who wrote scripts in Moroccan Arabic, Standard Arabic and French. Plug-in co-director Chraïbi explained that "Nous avons dû 'créer' un nouveau langage... une nouvelle darija, qui ne soit ni trop casablancaise, ni trop fassie, ni trop chamalie, ni trop vulgaire" (Ziraoui 2009), 'we had to create a new language... a new Moroccan Arabic, that isn't too Casablancon, too Fessi, too Northern

⁹⁶ Notes from an interview with a voice actor for Plug-in, November 2012.

or too vulgar' (my translation). For example, curse words in the original language recording were not translated into the curse words commonly associated with the speech of inner city Casablanca residents, but instead were changed or removed altogether. This ideology that the work at Plug-in consisted of creating a neutral or an unmarked variety of Moroccan Arabic that "everybody" could listen to and understand was one I heard repeatedly from voice actors and staff at Plug-in. It was a position that aligned with the generally held ideology discussed in Chapter 1 that Moroccan Arabic was the lingua franca of Morocco. As shown earlier in the present chapter, however, the observation was made by viewers that the variety of Moroccan Arabic used in dubbing was not neutral, for various reasons, including that it was marked too strongly as Casablancon and that the lexical items chosen were 'dirty' and 'rough.' Indeed, the fact that there are no ideologically "neutral" translations, in that all translations involve the negotiation and discursive construction of social and linguistic relations of power, is one that has long been recognized by linguists and anthropologists (Jaffe 1999b). The basic assumption by Plug-in that a Moroccan Arabic translation would be understood by "all" Moroccans, erased a significant body of viewers who were monolingual Tamazight speakers. My question to employees at Plug-in if serious consideration was ever given to creating a Tamazight translation of a foreign series was met with laughter and incredulity.

Ismail was one of Plug-in's lead voice actors in 2012. He confided to me that what was sometimes frustrating about working with the Moroccan Arabic scripts at Plug-in was that the translation work was not always "professional." He claimed that the translators he worked with while dubbing a Mexican film did not have any formal training in translation or linguistics, though most held a Bachelor's in English or Spanish.

The film with which Ismail was involved was dubbed directly from Spanish into Moroccan Arabic, though he reported that some films were delivered to the company already dubbed into French. This latter case resulted in a Moroccan Arabic version of the film that was a secondary translation. Ismail reported that the translators would sometimes even rely on Google Translate⁹⁷ to translate from Spanish to French phrases that they didn't understand. Then they would translate the French versions into Moroccan Arabic.

This sometimes resulted in translations that were too literal, in that each word in the source language is translated individually into the target language instead of the general meaning of the utterance being translated. Ismail gave an example from a Moroccan Arabic recording he did for Ramadan in 2010. A female character said in English, “she has a big mouth” which was translated literally into Moroccan Arabic as /fumha kbir/, meaning the physical size of her mouth is big. However, the figurative meaning of this phrase in English is rather ‘she talks/gossips a lot’ which can be better rendered in Moroccan Arabic as /fiha lhedra bzzaf/, literally translated back to English as ‘she has a lot of talk in her.’ When Ismail saw the original Moroccan Arabic translation of the phrase, he knew it was faulty and called a translation staff member into the recording studio to review it. In the end, the translator agreed with Ismail’s critique and Ismail recorded the scene with his own translation.

The issues that Ismail raises regarding the Moroccan Arabic translated text for the dubbed series can be thought of in relation to the distinction of “overt” vs. “covert” translations. House (2001) puts forth these terms as ways to bring into focus if linguistic

⁹⁷ Google Translate is a free online translation engine renowned in part for the poor, awkward, nonnative sounding, translations it sometimes provides.

choices made in a translation reflect the specificity of the original culture or the targeted culture. An overt translation is one that points to the original text in such a way that it is clearly viewed as a translation and not mistaken for an original text. These translations are original culture specific. Covert translations, on the other hand, attempt to conceal the cultural context of the source language. Dubbing is a technique that when compared to subtitling, for example, aims at being received as a covert translation. Plug-in, by attempting to create, as explained to me, a “new” register of Moroccan Arabic for dubbing and by not code-switching to other languages to discuss romance, is unable to maintain the covertness and the translation is interpreted as overt. This places the Moroccan viewer in a position of awareness of the translation context and thus the existence of a written script in Moroccan Arabic. As House explains, in overt translation “the translator puts target culture members in a position to observe and/or judge this text ‘from outside’” (141).

For the most part, code-switching to foreign languages was avoided in the Moroccan Arabic dubbed translations. This was striking, because in Casablanca it is common to hear code-switching between Moroccan Arabic, French and Tamazight, often intersententially (Heath 1990; Sadiqi 2003a). There were very few words in French in the Moroccan Arabic script, and most of those that were included were arguably borrowings. For example, “مدام” pronounced /mədam/ is a word in Moroccan Arabic that was borrowed from the French word madame (Kenstowicz and Louriz 2009). It is used instead of the Arabic title *lalla* when addressing a married woman or the lady of the house. For example, when a the female lead character in the series *Amarte Así*, who works at a hair salon, is forced by her manager to apologize to a client she responds

“سمحيليا أ مدام... سمحيليا أ مدام.” ‘forgive me Madam, forgive me Madame.’⁹⁸ This was a translation of the Spanish original text “perdón señora... perdón señora.” More than simply a sign of respect, the word /mədam/ in Morocco can also index foreigners or the Moroccan French speaking elite.

One example of code-switching that was heard repeatedly in the Moroccan Arabic dubbed series is the French endearment “chérie” ‘darling.’ For example, in an earlier line in the same episode of *Amarte Así* a husband said to his wife in Moroccan Arabic

“سمحيليا شيري, مكرهتش نتغدى معاك اليوم و لكن, ياله يقدني الوقت باش ندوش و نمشي طابر للخدمة”

‘I am sorry darling, I would love to eat with you, but I only have time to take a shower and rush to work.’⁹⁹ The transcription of the French word chérie /ʃeʁi/ in the Moroccan Arabic script as “شيري” /ʃiri:/ implies that the word is a borrowing into Moroccan Arabic. Both the French vowels /e, i/ in the word were transcribed with the letter <ي> that represents the vowel /i:/ in Moroccan Arabic, indicating that they had been adapted to the Moroccan Arabic phonological system.¹⁰⁰ Instead of pronouncing this word as borrowing however, the voice actor chose to pronounce the word as /ʃeʁi/ as in French, thus marking it as an instance of code-switching. The choice to code-switch to a French term of endearment is not surprising given the commentary discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 in which young women and men expressed that they preferred to use foreign terms to refer to their significant others when text messaging as well as when speaking to them directly.

⁹⁸ *Amarte Así*, line 938.

⁹⁹ *Amarte Así*, line 527.

¹⁰⁰ The French phoneme /e/ is commonly pronounced as /i/ by monolingual Moroccan Arabic speakers who have not studied French. This practice is commonly associated with lower class speakers and those with little or no education. It may be that the voice actors for the higher socioeconomic characters in *Amarte Así* were careful to pronounce French words according to the French phonetic system to reinforce their character’s identity as belonging to the elite.

Moroccan vs. Standard Arabic

In the spring of 2012, I had the opportunity to spend time with another principal voice actor for Plug-in. Earlier that year, as Sanaa and I were painstakingly transcribing a focus group interview with a group of elderly Amazigh women from Tinjedad, our attention was caught by a conversation in the recording about the dubbing of foreign films into Moroccan Arabic. Sanaa said she might know a girl from one of her university English classes who worked as a voice actor for Plug-in. A few Facebook messages later, Sanaa and I had an appointment to meet with Sofia to interview her about her work with Plug-in and her ideas about the use of Moroccan Arabic in public space.

The three of us met at a popular coffee shop in the upscale neighborhood of Gauthier, Casablanca.¹⁰¹ Sofia arrived wearing a colorful headscarf of red, pink, orange and dark blue stripes wrapped loosely over her hair, a long sleeved grey sweater over a black, white and teal plaid shirt, another scarf around her neck in a bright flower colored pattern and medium wash skinny style jeans with flat shoes. Sofia had attended the same Moroccan public university as Sanaa and they had been undergraduate classmates together in the department of English. Sofia is fluent in Standard Arabic, Moroccan Arabic, French and English and was finishing a Master's degree in translation at a Moroccan public university.

As a voice actor at Plug-in, Sofia had had opportunities to dub television series, radio and television advertisements both in Moroccan Arabic as well as in Standard Arabic. Sofia argued that the experience of animating a text and recording in the studio in the two different languages is not the same. For example, she found dubbing in

¹⁰¹ Sofia preferred that I not record any of our conversations but welcomed me to take notes on what she said so I could accurately represent her words in my research. Most of our conversations took place in English, though we both did codeswitch to Moroccan Arabic fluently.

Moroccan Arabic to be significantly easier than in Standard Arabic, because dubbing in the latter required that she both perform the role of her assigned character and “respect the grammar” at the same time. What she was referring to by “respecting the grammar” was the correct voicing of the internal vowels and case endings on words in Standard Arabic that are indicated in Arabic script by a set of diacritic marks. There is a perfectionist ideology associated with oral forms of Standard Arabic that makes many people feel uncomfortable and under scrutiny when speaking in Standard Arabic, particularly in a public or official situation in which speakers feel pressure to pronounce all words perfectly without mistakes. She claims that when she works in Standard Arabic the sound engineers are very worried that the public will catch any mistakes or errors “*u gha ddaḥku ‘lina*” ‘and they are going to laugh at us.’ She felt there was less pressure when dubbing in Moroccan Arabic and she felt more confident working in that language. Sofia and the sound editors I spoke with at Plug-in expressed a proprietary feeling towards their work in Moroccan Arabic, a feeling they did not express in reference to their work with Standard Arabic.¹⁰²

Sofia also found recording in Standard Arabic more technically challenging than recording in Moroccan Arabic. She claimed that the Standard Arabic translations of the original script tend to be longer than the Moroccan Arabic translations. Since dubbings are limited by the time it took the actor to speak the line in the source recording, it can be challenging to fit the Standard Arabic translation in the time provided while still matching the movement of the character’s mouth. Moroccan Arabic, in contrast, is easier she claimed, as she can effortlessly speak more quickly or slowly to fit the whole idea in

¹⁰² Haeri (2003) reports that while Egyptians also feel proprietary towards Egyptian Arabic, they perceive themselves as mere custodians, not owners of Classical Arabic. They associate feelings of insecurity with Classical Arabic.

the time provided. She can also alter more naturally her use of pauses and intonation in Moroccan Arabic to match facial expressions and even suggest changes to the Moroccan Arabic script if needed.

“Hidden” scripts¹⁰³

As discussed in this chapter’s introduction, when the first Moroccan Arabic dubbed foreign series was aired on 2M it was an immediate success and attracted significant media attention. What was overlooked in the hype surround this new oral role for Moroccan Arabic was its new underlying *written* role as the transcripts for the series. As previously described, Plug-in creates its own Moroccan Arabic scripts for dubbing on-site. These scripts are written on Excel with a transcription in the original language of an episode (or sometimes a French translation) in a column on the left, and the Moroccan Arabic translation on the right. Plug-in translators did not work from the original scripts, but rather from transcriptions of the originally broadcast episodes (or, in some cases, their French dubbed translations). For example, transcripts of CSI New York Season 8 were made by a company called Brocato Transcription Services. There is no standard system in Morocco for representing Moroccan Arabic in writing. Plug-in did not establish a standard amongst its translators and each had its own way of writing.

In the scripts created by Plug-in, the Moroccan Arabic translation was written with the Arabic alphabet. Miller (2010) reports that the choice to write in Arabic characters was made so that professional Moroccan actors, who were used to reading in Arabic, could easily read the scripts. For the most part, words were written without

¹⁰³ I am using the word “hidden,” not to suggest that Plug-in was literally “hiding” their Moroccan Arabic scripts, but rather that the material existence of scripts is usually below the level of awareness of Moroccan viewers.

diacritics, though these were occasionally added in words that contain clusters of three or more consonants. Moroccan Arabic differs phonetically from Standard Arabic in this respect, as Standard Arabic allows no more than two consecutive consonants. For example, in the Moroccan Arabic translation of an episode from CSI New York, the word “يُثَبِّتُهَا” ‘he proves it’¹⁰⁴ is marked with four *sukun* marks “ ْ ”, diacritic marks that represent an unvoiced consonant. Without these diacritic marks, this word would likely have been pronounced incorrectly. Diacritics were also used on in instances of code-switching in the text to Standard Arabic, often for scientific or technical words for which there is no Moroccan Arabic equivalent. For example, in the same CSI episode, CSI agent Bonasera discusses DNA analysis done with “الخلايا الظهارية” ‘epithelial cells’¹⁰⁵ and later a doctor explains that “أنا عالم فالكيمياء الحيوية” ‘I am a bio-chemist.’¹⁰⁶ Both of the phrases “الظهارية” ‘epithelial’ and “عالم فالكيمياء الحيوية” ‘bio-chemist’ are written with short vowels assumedly because the translator questioned if voice actors would be familiar with them and wanted to guarantee their proper pronunciation during the recording.

For Sofia, the fact that there are rarely words in the Moroccan Arabic script written with diacritics was an additional reason why dubbing in Moroccan Arabic was much easier for her than in Standard Arabic. In order for the actors to properly vocalize the Standard Arabic text, Sofia explained that all the diacritics have to be marked in the script from which the actors read. For Sofia, reading a script with diacritics feels constricting and formal and it adds the additional pressure of pronouncing each word perfectly. “When you are reading with *chekkel* [diacritics] you can’t feel spontaneous

¹⁰⁴ CSI: NEW YORK - “Consequences” - Eps. #308, Plug-in transcript line 396.

¹⁰⁵ CSI: NEW YORK - “Consequences” - Eps. #308, Plug-in transcript line 453.

¹⁰⁶ CSI: NEW YORK - “Consequences” - Eps. #308, Plug-in transcript line 857.

and when you dub in Darija [Moroccan Arabic] you feel like you are talking to someone else. It feels more authentic and natural.” The scripts she works from written in Moroccan Arabic allow her to focus on the meaning of the lines instead of grammar and pronunciation. Her explanation of why she likes to record in Moroccan Arabic reveal an ideological positioning that meaning and grammar are distinct. Like Sofia, none of the other actors I spoke with at Plug-in reported feeling any sense of disjuncture in working with scripts that represented Moroccan Arabic in writing. There was an obvious practical necessity to having a written script for their work and they all agreed that the choice to use the Arabic alphabet was a good one in that most of the sounds of Moroccan Arabic could be easily represented with few modifications to the Arabic script.

In addition to marking diacritics in certain words, depending on the translator, emphasis may be indicated in the Moroccan Arabic transcript using bold font. For example, in line 1391 from the 7th episode of *Amarte Así*,

“شتي نت راسك قاصح بزاف, مكننتيش غتخليني نمشي, ياك؟”

‘**You see, you are very stubborn**, you were not going to let me go, right?’

bold font was used to indicate to the voice actor that she had to raise the volume of her voice on the first half of the line.

Erasing taboos

A comparison of the original English transcriptions of CSI New York episode #308 with its dubbed translations into Moroccan Arabic shows that adaptations were sometimes made to the content, often due to culturally or religiously inappropriate references, such as to alcohol and sex. Given that similar television series have been

long broadcast by 2M in French that discuss taboo subjects,¹⁰⁷ it can be argued that the translation and dubbing of the series into Moroccan Arabic causes a sense of disjuncture that is not (as) present when translated into French.

In the following excerpt, CSI investigators have just arrived to a paintball field to question players about their knowledge of the recent murder of their lead player Kym Tanaka. Detective Danny Messer and Stella Bonasera are questioning a player named Evan. The excerpt is arranged by speaker turn with the original (orig.) English transcription first (normal font), followed by the Moroccan Arabic (MA) translation (Arabic script), which is then followed by my own back translation (BT) into English (in italics).

Example 1:

1. Danny Orig: When was the last time you saw him? (line 394)

 MA: ففاش آخر مرة شفتيه فيها؟

 BT: *When was the last time you saw him?*

2. Evan Orig: Uh, last night around 9:30. We were at this club, playing pool. You know, drinking beers. He was the first one to leave. He said he had some place to go. Uh, actually he said he had something to prove. (lines 396-401)

 MA: لبارح فالليل مع داك 9:30، دوزنا العشيّة مع بعضنا غير حنا الصحاب مشينا لواحد القهوة لعينا النيار، أو بقينا جالسين شوية، أو هو الاول فينا لي مشى بحالو، كان خصو يدير شي حاجة مبقيش عاقل، أه قال بلي ، عندو شي حاجة خصو يُبَيِّنْهَا

 BT: *Last night at about 9:30, we spent the afternoon together just us friends we went to a coffee shop and played pool, and stayed hanging out a bit, and he was the first of us to leave, he had something to do I don't remember anymore, oh he said that he had something he had to prove.*

¹⁰⁷ It is my understanding that many of the French dubbed series that are aired in Morocco are not produced locally, but rather are imported directly from French speaking countries, usually France.

In this example, it is clear that some changes were made in the content when translating to Moroccan Arabic. “Drinking beers” was translated as “hanging out a bit” and “club” was changed to “a coffee shop,” the latter being an expected and culturally appropriate place for men to socialize in the evenings.

The next excerpt is from the same episode and takes place in the visitor’s room of a New York State prison. CSI Detective Don Flack has arranged an interview with male prison inmate Lamont Tyson to get details regarding the amount of cocaine had had stored in his apartment to deal on the night Detective Flack had arrested him. When Lamont sees Detective Flack enter the room, he greets him.

Example 2:

1. Lamont Orig: Is this a conjugal visit? Huh? You trying to screw me again?
(lines 1112-1113)

MA: شنو جيتي تدبير هنا أه؟ توحشتيني

BT: *What did you come here for? Did you miss me?*

In the original transcription of the English version of this episode, the American English idiom “to screw someone” has a double meaning. On the one hand, the incarcerated drug dealer Lamont is referring to his feelings of anger and frustration towards Detective Flack’s role in catching him and having him convicted. On the other hand, this idiom can also refer to sex, which in this case would be homosexual sex between two men. The second meaning of the idiom is what is most clearly implied by the preceding line “is this a conjugal visit?” As is clear in the example, the reference to homosexual sex was removed from the Moroccan Arabic translation and was replaced by a less culturally

offensive, though still clearly sarcastic utterance, “did you miss me?” Homosexuality is a very taboo topic in Morocco that is not considered appropriate to air on television.

Sofia informed me that this was not the only time mention of homosexuality was deleted or written out of a dubbed script. She claimed that in other projects whole scenes had been deleted and that in cases where mention of homosexuality couldn't be deleted, the relationship was written in Moroccan Arabic as to appear to be between two brothers. For example, in the 7th episode of *Amarte Así* some bantering between two male friends includes a reference to homosexuality that was excluded from the Moroccan Arabic translation of the script. In this scene, Juan and Vicente are discussing Vicente's unrequited love for the film's beautiful heroine Margarita. Though Vicente has hinted at his feelings for her in earlier scenes, he has not declared his love openly. Vicente has just recounted an earlier conversation to Juan in which Margarita admitted to Vicente that she harbors only sisterly feelings towards him.¹⁰⁸

Example 3:

1. Juan Orig: **Entonces Vicente, estas acabado... mira, cuando una mujer prefiere que la acompañes a comparar ropa íntima, en vez de cenar bajo la luz de la luna, solo puede pasar dos cosas.** (line 1427)

BT: *So Vicente, you are finished... look, when a woman prefers that you go with her to check out lingerie, instead of dining under the moonlight, only two things can be happening.*

MA: هي صافي أ بسنت, مشيتي فيها... شوف, مني شي بنت كتفضل شي واحد يمشي معاها باش تشري الحوايج ديالها, فيبلاصة ز عما متمشي تتعشا معاها تحت ضوء الشموع, ميقدرو يوقعو غير جوج الحوايج.

BT: *It's over Vincent, you messed it up... look, when a girl prefers someone to go with her to buy her clothes, instead of you know going to dine with him in candle light, only two things can be happening.*

¹⁰⁸ *Amarte Así* episode 7, line 1234.

2. Vicente Orig: **¿Qué?** (line 1430)
- BT: What?
- MA: آشنو؟
- BT: What?
-
3. Juan Orig: **Una, cree que eres gay, porque solo un gay puede opinar sobre ropa intima femenina...** (line 1433)
- BT: *One, she thinks you are gay, because only a gay man can give an opinion about lingerie...*
- MA: لولة، غتولي دايراك بحال خوها، حيث هو يقدر يمشي مع ختو باش تختار حوايجها و يعطيها الرأي ديالو فيهم...
- BT: *First, she will consider you like her brother, because a brother can go with his sister to choose the clothes to buy and give her his opinion on them.*
-
4. Vicente Orig: **Y la segunda.** (line 1436)
- BT: *And the second.*
- MA: و الحاجة الثانية.
- BT: *And the second thing.*
-
5. Juan Orig: **O que eres gay por qué no te has atrevido a invitarla a cenar bajo la luz de la luna.** (line 1439)
- BT: *Or that you are gay because you haven't tried to invite her to dine under the moonlight.*
- MA: غادة تعتابرك بحال خوها نيت حيث كاعما ز عمتي و عرضتها لشي عشا رومانسي تحت ضوء الشموع.
- BT: *Indeed, she is going to view you as her brother because you were never brave enough to ask her out to a romantic dinner by candlelight.*

In the original Spanish version of this scene, Vicente's friend Juan explains to him that by not declaring his love to Margarita she can only interpret his friendly, though platonic, behavior towards her as evidence that he is homosexual. In the Moroccan Arabic translation of this scene, the references to homosexuality were rewritten to express a fraternal relationship. Juan claims that Margarita considers him “بحال خوها” ‘like her brother.’ To make the change to a brother-sister relationship work in the context of this scene, the explicit mention of women's lingerie had to be changed to a more general word for “clothes.” In Morocco, it would be inappropriate for a brother to shop for undergarments with his sister. The reference to dining in the moonlight was also changed to candlelight, perhaps reflecting the commonly held view, particularly in rural areas, that dating before marriage is inappropriate.¹⁰⁹ A candlelight dinner suggests a more discreet event, one that may occur indoors, whereas dinner in the moonlight necessarily involves an outdoor activity, likely open to the (disapproving) gaze of others.

In the studio

In 2013, I had the opportunity to observe a recording session in one of the studios at Plug-in. The studio I visited consisted of a small room with carpeted walls and ceilings that had a double-glass, soundproof door leading to a smaller inner room where the recording took place. In the outer room, the sound technician, Fatima Zahara, sat at a table with two large computer monitors and sound and editing machines. On one computer screen was displayed the original audio tracks with the new audio recordings adjacent. On the other screen was an excel file transcript including the original script, a French translation and the Moroccan Arabic translation created by a translator at Plug-in.

¹⁰⁹ Alternatively, it could also reflect the well-known French expression “dîner à la chandelle” ‘dining by candlelight.’

In the upper left hand corner of the second screen was also a small video of the original language episode to be dubbed. This second screen was projected on a flat screen TV in the inner room where the voice actor, Tarek, used it to match the rhythm and turn length of his lines to the action on the screen.

It was Ramadan during my visit and I was impressed by the speed at which Fatima Zahra and Tarek were working. Most of the lines Tarek recorded on the first take, even though he had not reviewed the script beforehand. As is the case for most voice actors, Tarek had also not viewed the original episode beforehand either. Voice actors working on the same script did not review together or practice their scripts in advance, but would rather each and often simultaneously record their individual lines in separate studios. The series Tarek was dubbing was a Mexican series called *Censures Fuerza del Destino*.

During my observations in the recording studio, what was immediately apparent was the fluid relationship between the written and oral texts. Not simply was the written text vocalized and recorded by the voice actor and sound technician, but as they worked through each line of script, decisions had to be made regarding word choice, translation, intonation, timing and nonverbal sounds. Words were added, deleted and entire lines changed in order to fit with the time to talk on screen. Thus the ‘author’ of the final recorded version of the Moroccan dubbed episodes was a very complex thing - conflating the roles of author and animator (Goffman 1981). Changes made during recordings were not reflected or updated in the scripts and thus the only record of them is the broadcast audio version. It struck me that the script was viewed by the actor and technician as very open to manipulation, a view which contrasts starkly with my experiences with how the

women in the literacy class perceived the written word. In Tafza, the woman associated all writing in Arabic strongly with the Qur'an – a text that for them was perfect, whole and inviolable. For them, a written text lost value if changed and great attention was placed on correct replication if written and correct pronunciation and intonation if vocalized.

Frequently, changes were made in studio to the Moroccan Arabic script because the voicing of the Moroccan Arabic translation proved to be too long or too short to fit in the time allotted in the original film. This was mainly a problem when the camera stayed on a character for the entire utterance and the observer could easily note a disjuncture between the movements of the characters mouth and the audio. For example, at one point in the original language version of the script, Tarek's character meets a man and says "encantado" 'nice to meet you' in Spanish which was translated to Moroccan Arabic as "salam" 'hello.' When recording "salam," Tarek found the word had too few syllables and was thus too short to naturally stretch over the length of time the filmed character says the word "encantado" 'nice to meet you.' After consulting with the sound technician, they agreed to change the line to "mtcherfin asidi" 'nice to meet you sir.' Incidentally, the new line in Moroccan Arabic better matches the meaning of the original line, though this was not the stated reason they changed the line. At another point, Tarek's character asked a question of a hotel concierge about parking near the hotel. As Tarek recorded the line, "wach kayn fin nestasioni tomobil hda lfunduk?" 'is there a place to park my car next to the hotel?' he noticed that it was too short to match the lip movement of the onscreen actor. He immediately asked the sound technician to rerecord and he added the imperative phrase "gul lia" 'tell me' to the beginning of his question.

Occasionally he and the sound technician would disagree about changing a word in the script. At one point Tarek tripped over the word “*mamwellfinch*” ‘not accustomed to’ and had to pause in the recording of the scene to practice saying it smoothly. In this case, the sound technician suggested changing to a shorter word, but Tarek preferred keeping “*mamwellfinch*” and instead pronounced it more quickly so it would fit the lip movements of his character. Tarek explained that long words in Moroccan Arabic are frequently hard to read, which he claims is not the case in Standard Arabic. Sometimes he would pronounce long words incorrectly and wouldn’t realize the awkwardness of the utterance until Fatima Zahra and he reviewed his recording later in the studio. Tarek considered as an integral part of his job the adaptation of the script, as needed, so that the dialogue sounded more natural.

While Tarek appeared to enjoy this aspect of his work, he admitted that the translators sometimes expressed frustration at not always being included in recording process. Miller (2010) interviewed Imam Larjjam who was one of the first translators who worked for Plug-in. Larjjam believed that the focus at Plug-in was on the economic profit that could be made off of the dubbed translations rather than promotion of Moroccan Arabic in a new public role. He expressed that he felt frustrated that translators were not present during recordings so they could modify their translations as necessary. As Miller paraphrases, Larjjam thought, “the company did not want to spend too much money, arguing that most of the viewers were little educated and more concerned by images than words!” (174). Not surprisingly, in an article in *Telquel*, Chraïbi, a co-director of Plug-in, downplayed the economic gain of the series in

interviews, and instead underscored the considerable manpower and expertise it takes to dub series into Moroccan Arabic (Ziraoui 2009).

Stylistic Variation in Moroccan Arabic Dubbing

As presented earlier in this chapter, there was a range of viewers' reactions to and opinions regarding the language used to dub foreign series on 2M. Some found the language to represent a "clean, educated" Moroccan Arabic, others described it as "street language," and still others were struck most by a prevalence of Casablancon varieties of Moroccan Arabic in the series. These varying opinions reflect the how linguistic features can implicate different pre-existing social variability such as age, gender, social class and region. In an analysis of the transferability of linguistic stylistic variation in American scripted films dubbed into German, Queen (2004) found "for the most part stylistic variation is erased in dubbed films, particularly in cases of regional variation" (533). The main exception she noted was male, urban, young African American English speaking characters who were mapped to a German linguistic variety associated with urban youth and the working class.

Ziamari and Barontini (2013) looked at linguistic stylistic variation in episodes of the Moroccan Arabic series *Ana*. They concluded that in general there was indeed a predominance of linguistic features that indexed Moroccan Arabic varieties spoken in Casablanca. This is evidenced for example in the use of particular terms considered rural such as /maga:na/ 'watch' instead of /sa:ʃa/ or /zga/ 'stop' instead of /rʃa/ (131). Hachimi has shown that "'*rubi*" [rural] speech is often imputed to the city's [Casablanca's] popular neighborhoods where rural in-migrants have historically settled... that is poor working class areas... it is precisely the linguistic specificities of these popular

neighborhoods that have come to index local Casablancon identity” (2010:327).

Similarly, Miller (2010) argues that despite the economic and demographic dominance of Casablanca in Morocco, the Casablancon variety of Arabic is for the most part associated with popular or rural registers and are not viewed as a “refined urban vernacular” (180).

Ziamari and Barontini also emphasized that the linguistic styles of voice actors chosen to dub characters in *Ana* reflected some of the sociolinguistic diversity of the city and the different linguistic features were used to mark character traits. Youth, for example, were associated with expressive terms such as “awwa:h” (2013:129). The presence of affrication on the consonants /t/ and /d/ was also associated with young characters as well as with those who exuded masculinity and toughness. The speech of the lead villain, for example, in *Ana* was marked by affrication of /t/. The variety the villain spoke was recognized as common to a poor working class neighborhood in Casablanca called Hay Hassani. Ziamari and Barontini also noted that some characters showed linguistic features indicating region such as the absence of distinction for gender in the second person singular imperative verbs, a feature strongly associated with Arabic varieties from Fes in Central Morocco, were present in the speech of characters from high socioeconomic classes and positions of power (130).

In addition to noticing variation in linguistic features in Moroccan Arabic, Ziamari and Barontini also noted variation between Moroccan and Standard Arabic in the series. They show that Standard Arabic had a significant presence in the translations, particularly as a strategy for mediating taboo words that might offend listeners. They claimed that “on emprunte la racine à l’AMS [Standard Arabic] en marocanisant le mot (au niveau morphologique et aussi phonétique)” (124) ‘the root of the Standard Arabic

word is borrowed and the word is Moroccanized (at the morphological level and also phonetic).’ Standard Arabic was also used in an ironic way for a humorous effect. Context and register changes were also sometimes marked by a change between Moroccan and Standard Arabic. Finally, Standard Arabic was also associated with particular, formal, contexts such as in a court house. In contrast, code-switching to French was less common, though frequently associated with the expression of romantic feelings. French was also present in the form of borrowings into Moroccan Arabic.

In an analysis of episodes 100 and 119 of *Ayna Abi*, I did not identify any significant variation in the speech of the voice actors. In these episodes, the characters spoke with what Hachimi describes as “a leveled variety where one’s regional origin would be difficult to guess based on linguistic cues alone, that is a supralocal variety usually defined in the negative by what it is not rather than by what it is” (2012:326-7). Indeed, those with whom I watched the series in Tafza when it first aired and in Casablanca in the form of reruns years later claimed they noticed little if any regional variation in the speech of the characters. Miller, however, reports from an interview with Imam Larjjam, one of the initial voice actors hired by Plug-in who happens to be from Fes, that Plug-in told him that “his Darija was looking too old, like a Darija of a grandmother,” and that “speaking Casawi [Casablancon] was looking more modern” (originally quoted in Miller 2010: 180). Through fractal recursivity, the old/modern opposition is reproduced within Moroccan Arabic, so that some varieties are viewed as “old” and others “modern.” It is possible that after the filming of *Ana* in 2009, Plug-in made changes to its voice actor casting accordingly.

Of note in these two episodes was the high frequency of French code-switching for terms of endearment, particularly the term “chérie” which was used in place of the Moroccan Arabic term /ləḥbiba/ or the borrowed term /širi:/. Notably, when using a word from French, the elite characters in the series clearly pronounced the words as they would be said in French instead of as borrowed words in Moroccan Arabic, the latter of which would index low education. This is also seen in the example the father of the household referring to “les valises” ‘the suitcases’ instead of /lvaliza:t/. It was also seen in the French pronunciation of the term “hôpital” instead of the borrowed /sβɛtɑ:r/ in Moroccan Arabic.

Standard Arabic terms would also commonly be heard in the series. For example, the male hero Ignacio was a medical doctor and his speech was peppered with health terms that were marked as Standard Arabic. For example when he tells his fiancée that she has anemia, he refers to it with the Standard Arabic phrase /faqr əddəm/¹¹⁰ instead of the more commonly Moroccan Arabic term heard term in Casablanca /mərɔ əddəm/ and the blood tests as /təḥli:l basi:t/ instead of /təḥli:l sa:həl/. These lexical choices index a higher education level that reinforces viewers’ presupposed notions of doctors as highly educated.

Dubbing since *Ana*

The dubbing of foreign series into Moroccan Arabic has proven a widely popular and successful move the past five years. Since *Ana*, foreign drama series and cartoons from a variety of countries including France, Brazil, the United States, Japan, India and Croatia, have been dubbed in Moroccan Arabic and aired on 2M. Despite their

¹¹⁰ While Moroccans recognize this word as belonging to Standard Arabic, they also note that the pronunciation of the vowels is more like they would be said in Moroccan Arabic.

popularity, however, this chapter has argued that viewers' reactions to the series reveals concerns about the consequences of such language use. I demonstrated that many viewers experienced a sense of ideological disjuncture at hearing varieties of Moroccan Arabic used to dub series that presented speech, behaviors and opinions that were oftentimes viewed as being morally corrupt. Some of this concern stemmed from the fact that by translating foreign series into Moroccan Arabic, instead of Standard or Syrian Arabic, the content was made more immediately available and tangible to a very large section of Moroccan viewers, including those who have little or no formal education, those who are primarily Tamazight speakers, as well children and the elderly. Ideologies of Moroccan Arabic as a transparent and direct medium that connects viewers to the series' content were frequently expressed. Disjuncture was also commonly expressed at hearing Moroccan Arabic in use to translate romantic expressions normally represented in Standard Arabic, and actions such as forbidding family members to watch such series revealed a common way of dealing with the disjuncture. Over time, the sense of awkwardness felt in this situation has reduced for many viewers who are now growing accustomed to this new role for Moroccan Arabic in series on 2M. In the future, it would be interesting to investigate how this dramatic increase in Moroccan Arabic dubbed series, as well as other types of emissions such as cartoons for children, may impact (or not) language ideologies associated with such practices.

CHAPTER SIX

Nichane: Saying it Straight

During my first few years of fieldwork in Morocco, I came across isolated examples of written Moroccan Arabic: in the literacy classroom, cell phone text messages, the INWI ad campaign, and Moroccan Arabic transcripts used to dub foreign films. While focusing on mother tongue literacy education, I also collected examples of “simplified Arabic,” prepared by the Ministry of Education and local associations that were targeted for a neo-literate audience,¹¹¹ such as pamphlets dealing with nutrition and illustrated children’s stories. During the final months of dissertation research in 2010, Meriem, a university student I met in Casablanca, told me about a reportedly extended example of written Moroccan Arabic in public space.¹¹² It came in the form of a weekly news magazine called “*Nichane*” whose name means ‘straight, honest and upfront’ in Moroccan Arabic. Though she had never read a copy herself, she said her older brother and his friends would buy a copy each week to share amongst each other. *Nichane* is “written in Moroccan Arabic,” she said. “Some like it and say it is fun, but I think it’s *hchuma*.”

¹¹¹ There are many government and local association publications written in a “simplified” Arabic for neo-literates that focus on issues of civics, religion, health and education. When I took the driving test in French, I noticed that the Ministry of Transportation had also written a version of the Moroccan driving exam in Moroccan Arabic. The test is administered using an overhead projector and test takers both read the questions in Moroccan Arabic and hear a recording in which a narrator reads each question and answer choices.

¹¹² Although *Nichane* was in circulation while I was conducting field research in Tafza and Mohammedia, I did not encounter a copy of it. My focus at that time was on adult literacy acquisition among women and I rarely encountered newspapers or magazines in my day-to-day life.

What does it mean to say a magazine or an article is “written in Moroccan Arabic?” What are the consequences of publishing in Moroccan Arabic? Why is this magazine characterized by many as *hchuma*? What are the relationships between the language, its use and form, and the topics of the magazine? Does representing Moroccan Arabic in written form, in a publicly available magazine, in relation to topics considered taboo in nature, create a more significant ideological disjuncture than in other contexts addressed already in this dissertation?

In this chapter, I look at a medium that has a long history – magazine writing – and a long textual history in Standard Arabic. I identify and analyze the form of written Moroccan Arabic in the magazine *Nichane* and show that while there are numerous examples of text that can be identified as markedly Moroccan Arabic, the majority of the text is actually in Standard Arabic. Despite this, Moroccans consider this the “Moroccan Arabic” magazine and when questioned, remember most of the text as being in Moroccan Arabic. This chapter also returns to the theme of Moroccan Arabic and taboo subjects by looking at the types and subjects of the articles chosen for publishing in the magazine and the political and economic consequences such choices had. As will be discussed, *Nichane* was repeatedly sanctioned by the Moroccan authorities and was eventually run out of business.

Background on *Telquel* and *Nichane*

Nichane was founded in 2006 by Ahmed Benchemsi and Driss Ksikes. It is reputed to be the first “Moroccan Arabic” magazine published and widely distributed in Morocco. *Nichane* was the smaller, sister publication of *Telquel*, a French language, weekly news magazine that enjoys great popularity in Morocco, particularly in urban

settings. Between 2006 and 2010, *Nichane* was distributed in major cities in Morocco including Casablanca, Rabat, and Marrakech. It had a circulation of 21,769 in 2008 and was sold for 10 Moroccan dirhams an issue during its final year of publication. The majority of staff and contributors to the magazine were young and a number of the writers for *Nichane* also collaborated with writers at *Telquel*.

Unlike other Moroccan Arabic and “simplified” Standard Arabic texts written in Arabic script that I collected during my research, *Nichane* was not targeted to a neo-literate or uneducated audience, but rather to a public educated in Arabic and to Arabic speakers who likely do not command French. During its early years, the editorial board at *Telquel* had repeatedly been told that their message needed to be communicated not only to French speakers but also to Arab speakers (Benchemsi 2010). It was claimed that the magazine “ne touchait qu’un lectorat francophone, donc forcément élitiste dans un pays dont le français n’est pas la langue” ‘only reached the Francophone readers, thus necessarily the elites in a country where French is not the language’ (19).

Both *Nichane* and *Telquel* sought to offer critical and entertaining views on political, social and other current events. They positioned themselves as progressive and politically leftist. *Telquel*’s motto, “Le Maroc tel qu’il est,” and *Nichane*’s motto, “المغرب كما هو” both mean ‘Morocco as it is,’ and suggest to the reader that the magazines aim at providing a realistic or accurate portrayal of Morocco. For the past few years, *Telquel* has been the most widely read French language magazine in Morocco. *Telquel* was founded in 2001 in a new political environment characterized by liberalization of the press. Articles in *Telquel* aim to present a view of Morocco that is diverse, democratic, and where individuals’ views and rights can be expressed. Considered ‘*hchuma*’ by

many and ‘entertaining’ by others, both magazines can be described as sensationalistic in the stories they chose to publish, the photos displayed on the cover, the opinions represented and in *Nichane*’s case, in the very act of publishing in Moroccan Arabic. In the editorial of the first issue of *Nichane* on September 9, 2006 entitled “علاش نيشان” ‘*Why Nichane?*’,¹¹³ Ksikes¹¹⁴ (2006) articulated *Nichane*’s two main goals: to spread progressive ideas such as freedom of expression and democratic debate among a non-French reading public, and to support the creation of a “new” Arabic language that breaks away from the academic and formal style of writing in Standard Arabic and is closer to the spoken language of the street .

Finding *Nichane*

Due to the fact that the magazine went out of business in 2010, it was a challenge to find copies of *Nichane*. In 2011, I visited *Telquel* to search the *Nichane* archives and photocopied an issue from December 9-15, 2006 whose cover story was a famous and controversial article about Moroccan jokes. In a popular business park in the south of Casablanca, I located a newspaper seller who had saved six random issues of *Nichane* and who lent them to me to make photocopies for my analysis. He told me that the magazine had been very popular, particularly among young men, and he would usually sell out of his copies before the end of the week. The six issues he gave me were: Issue 198 from April 24-30, 2009; Issue 224 from October 30 - November 5 2009; Issue 226 November 13-19, Issue 231 December 18-24, 2009, and Issue 249 from April 23-29,

¹¹³ To clarify the variation between Standard Arabic and Moroccan Arabic in *Nichane*’s text, words marked as Moroccan Arabic will be shown in *italics* in the English gloss and words marked as Standard Arabic will be double-underlined. Words that are bivalent will be both in *italics* and double-underlined.

¹¹⁴ Driss Ksikes was the editor in chief of *Nichane* for the first 6 months of its publication. He then left the magazine and Ahmed Benchemsi became chief editor and he remained until its closing in 2010.

2010. The analysis of this chapter is based on those seven issues, which span from 2006-2010, in addition to cover images of *Nichane* obtained through online sources.

What it means to publish in Moroccan Arabic

Nichane is acclaimed as being the first popular, and widely read magazine to publish in Moroccan Arabic. This editorial choice can be viewed as an ideological move on many different levels. To begin, by publishing in Arabic instead of French, *Nichane* aimed to interpolate a wider readership that may not control or want to control a reading level in French. It also served to index the magazine as being Moroccan and to symbolically distance it from a French protectorate history and culture that is understood to be embedded in texts edited and published in French and/or by the French. Furthermore, by choosing to incorporate significant amounts of Moroccan Arabic in its articles, *Nichane* distinguished itself from all other mainstream national and international Arabic magazines, which avoid and limit local dialects of Arabic. By utilizing Moroccan Arabic, *Nichane* signaled its intended audience to be the Moroccan public, rather than a pan-Arabic speaking mass. This fit with widely held Moroccan ideologies I often heard while conducting research. I was told repeatedly that Moroccan culture and people are inherently different from those in other Arab and Muslim countries because of Morocco's geographical location on the extreme west of the political grouping of the "Middle East and North Africa," and the unique blend of Amazigh, Arab and European cultures, languages and histories. In addition, many Moroccans further point towards the fact that Morocco never formed part of the Turkish empire, an important historical period that they view as playing a critical role in distinguishing Morocco culturally from the rest of the Arab world. Finally, they commonly claim that their language is unintelligible to

most other Arabic speaking countries¹¹⁵ and has diverged far from the Arabic of the Qur'an. Thus, the historical narrative of uniqueness and remoteness is mirrored in ideologies of the language.

The magazine's name "*Nichane*" is a word that is markedly Moroccan Arabic and indexes a more *sha'bi* 'everyman, common' orientation. It sounds, "as if the magazine were a friend or neighbor dropping in to tell you the latest news" as one friend put it to me. If you tell someone something *nichane* it means to say it 'direct or straight up.' The word *nichane* in Moroccan Arabic is also often used to describe a person of good moral character – someone who does not lie, cheat, or try to take advantage of others.¹¹⁶ It was one of the adjectives most often used amongst my unmarried friends in Tafza and Mohammedia to describe the type of husband they were looking for. For girls like Wafae,¹¹⁷ *nichane* also means someone who tries to live according to the five pillars of Islam and can often include someone who does not smoke or drink alcohol. In this sense its meaning can overlap with the word *ma'qul*, a word used to describe someone's character as being trustworthy. For example, when Wafae discovered that the man who had been secretly courting her and trying to steal kisses was already engaged to his maternal cousin, she poignantly exclaimed "*hnaya rrjal ma bqawch nichane*" 'here, the

¹¹⁵ Algerian Arabic (and to a lesser extent Tunisian Arabic) is viewed as being (somewhat) mutually intelligible with Moroccan Arabic. Moroccans explain that at some point in history this territory formed part of the same *Magharibi* empire, in addition to the fact that they were all influenced by a French presence.

¹¹⁶ Often when discussing a person or situation that is not considered *nichane*, a one handed gesture in which the hand slaloms back and forth away from the body of the speaker is used to visually represent the untrustworthiness of the subject discussed.

¹¹⁷ Wafae was a literacy teacher I worked with in the rural village of Tafza, Morocco. She was introduced in Chapter 2.

men aren't honest anymore.'¹¹⁸ In fact, I heard variations of this comment across all socioeconomic levels in Morocco as different people would relate to me how, unlike the situation a few decades ago, Moroccans in general are not *nichane* anymore and it is hard to find people who can be trusted. In these later senses of the word *nichane* there is an ironic contrast that will be discussed in more detail below between the pious meaning of the word when Wafae uses it and the sexually charged, sensationalistic topics – *hchuma* topics – that the magazine writes about on the other hand. It is part of this tension that, I argue, gave *Nichane* its popularity and also drew the attention of the government regulators that ultimately led to its collapse in 2010.

Given that *Nichane* was founded soon after the liberalization of the Moroccan press, *Nichane*'s “المغرب كما هو” “al maghrib kama huwa” ‘Morocco as it is’ motto should be viewed as a political commentary. During the reign of King Hassan II through the late 1990's, freedom of expression in the written press was sharply controlled and severely regulated by the Moroccan government.¹¹⁹ When the young Mohammed VI ascended the throne, however, the print media landscape underwent a massive change as a wave of “nouvelle presse,” new, liberal newspapers and magazines, emerged and quickly surpassed the existing party-controlled papers. Like other magazines of the “nouvelle presse,” many of *Nichane*'s early articles focused on the corruption of the former king's reign, a topic that had been unmentionable previously. When *Nichane* had exhausted topics dealing with Hassan II, it began publishing stories about the new government and king, at which point the editor Benchemsi and the newspaper fell under harsh criticism

¹¹⁸ Of course, the fact that he was courting her covertly and without the permission of her parents already indicated that his behavior did not fit into Wafae's definition of how an honest and straightforward man should behave.

¹¹⁹ Towards the end of his reign, in the 1990's, King Hassan II had already begun to give more leeway to the press.

and censure.¹²⁰ On more than one occasion, the editors of *Nichane* and staff writers were questioned by police and even put on trial because of the topic and language of *Nichane's* articles.

In addition to its meaning, the form of the motto itself also makes a political statement. Although it touts itself as the “Moroccan Arabic magazine,” the editorial board chose to write the motto “المغرب كما هو” in Standard Arabic instead of Moroccan Arabic. In Moroccan Arabic, it would likely read “*al maghrib ki dayr*” or “*al maghrib kif huwa*” instead. Given linguistic ideologies that associate Standard Arabic with formality and official things, it is possible that Standard Arabic was preferred because it was believed it would sound more formal, make a stronger statement and thus place *Nichane* at the same level as other magazines.

Finally, writing and publishing in Moroccan Arabic also challenged existing linguistic ideologies regarding the relative value and role of languages in Morocco (see Chapter 1). As discussed in earlier chapters, Moroccan Arabic is widely considered a strictly oral language and some consider the use of it in print as carrying religious implications in that writing in Moroccan Arabic is disrespectful of the sacred form and language of the Qur’an. The idea of writing a magazine in the same form as people actually communicate, i.e. Moroccan Arabic, challenges also the history and ideas that formal and public texts should be written in Standard Arabic. It challenges the idea that only Standard Arabic and French can represent important and official ideas and argues instead that texts in Moroccan Arabic can be worth paying for. Not all journalists, however, were open to the idea of writing and publishing in Moroccan Arabic. For

¹²⁰ <http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/article/102679/Morocco-and-Press-Freedom-A-Complicated-Relationship.aspx>

example, Taoufik Bouachrine, the director of another progressive magazine written in Arabic, had refused to collaborate on the *Nichane* project in part because he was hesitant about writing Moroccan Arabic (Miller 2012:420).

The following sections of this chapter will shift to analyzing the actual form and layout of text in *Nichane*. I will show that the “Moroccan Arabic magazine” was in reality mostly written in Standard Arabic with relatively limited Moroccan Arabic peppered throughout. The presence of Moroccan Arabic alone was enough to mark the entire magazine as being “Moroccan Arabic.” Key placement of Moroccan Arabic text in section headings, titles, bylines, highlighted quotes, and in certain weekly columns combined with a purist ideology served to mark the magazine as written in Moroccan Arabic.

History of Moroccan Arabic in the media

It is important to be clear, however, that the use of Moroccan Arabic in the Moroccan press has a history that begins before *Nichane*. On a visit to Tangiers, Morocco while conducting pre-dissertation research on adult women’s literacy courses in the summer of 2006, a literacy teacher gave me copies of a newspaper described to me as written in “simplified Arabic with some Moroccan Arabic mixed in.” The paper was called *Khbar Bladna* and was produced and edited by an American expatriate named Elena Prentice. It was distributed freely in Tangiers and was a staple text in a number of adult women’s literacy courses because of its “simple” language. *Khbar Bladna* was written in Arabic script, but, unlike mainstream Arabic press, the font was large and the diacritics for short vowels were included on all words in order to aid neo-literate adults to learn to read. Another example of the use of Moroccan Arabic was in the monthly

magazine *Al-Amal*, meaning ‘hope,’ that appeared in January 2005 (B. 2006). It was designed to promote basic literacy skills and social awareness among uneducated populations surrounding Casablanca and Rabat. Articles in *Al-Amal* were written by students at the journalism school L’Institut Supérieur de l’Information et de la Communication (ISIC) in Rabat and were designed to address topics of particular interest and importance to the poorer sections of the Moroccan urban population. Furthermore, it has been argued that there were likely much earlier examples of using a simplified or “dialect” driven form of Arabic in the press for the pedagogical goal of teaching literacy, beginning with the founding of the Arabic language press in the 19th century (Miller 2012). However, despite this history, the current use of Moroccan Arabic not as a pedagogical tool for literacy learners and neo-literate adults but rather as a new register for the written press as exemplified by *Nichane* is a trend dating to the last decade.

Miller (2012) analyzed four independent Arabic language magazines and newspapers that were published in the late 2000’s: *Nichane*, *Al-Masa’* (the daily Arabic newspaper with the most copies sold between 2008-2010 and that included a weekend satirical supplement with significant Moroccan Arabic usage), *Al-Jarida Al-Awla* (a daily Arabic newspaper that was published only from 2008-2010 and that included an interview on the final page with significant usage of Moroccan Arabic), and *Al-Ahdath Al-Maghribia* (a daily Arabic newspaper which contains a satirical page in Moroccan Arabic). Miller claims that *Nichane* became the most important symbol of the valorization of Moroccan Arabic in journalism as proven by its popularity and high readership. In her analysis, she considered the question of whether there is a tendency in these newspapers for the use of Moroccan Arabic to become more independent of

Standard Arabic or the opposite – to mix the two registers. She found that *Nichane* was the most open of the four examples of the written press to utilize Moroccan Arabic in all types of articles. The other three newspapers tended to restrict the usage of Moroccan Arabic to already acceptable registers such as irony, popular wisdom and transcription of oral language (420).

Layout of *Nichane*

Each issue of *Nichane* had a similar weekly format and general layout. *Nichane* was divided into several main sections including: current events, the week in review, Morocco, art and culture, sports, letters to the editor, and interviews. There were a number of regular columns including a weekly editorial, a gossip column, sports analysis and a column that discussed everyday issues. Issues were 50 pages in length. On the cover of the magazine was its title نيشان written horizontally in Arabic script, in large font, in a box in the upper right-hand corner. Below the title on the right was the motto “المغرب كما هو” ‘Morocco as it is’ and on the left was the issue number, date and magazine price, all of which was written in Arabic script. Written with vertically oriented text to the right of the same box was the title in Roman uppercase script NICHANE. This was the only Roman script visible on the cover. Below the magazine title was usually the cover story title and byline accompanied by a large color photograph or sketch. At the very top of the cover, above the magazine title, was advertised in smaller font one of the other feature stories for that issue with a small accompanying picture. On the inside of the magazine, in general, all titles, subtitles and articles in *Nichane* were written in Arabic script, with only isolated words (often proper names) and some paid advertisements using Roman script.

The first two pages of *Nichane* contained both an advertisement¹²¹ and the table of contents. The first column was always the weekly editorial entitled “ديريكت” /di:ri:kt/, a borrowing from the French word “direct” whose meanings include ‘*direct, forthright, frank, straight and live.*’ The editorial’s title highlighted the nature of the article – an editorial in which the editor has a chance to present his or her opinion to the reading public. Each week the editorial focused on a different topic, usually a current event of note. The title of the editorial stood in clear parallel to the magazine’s title *Nichane*, and thus, drew immediate attention to the use of Moroccan Arabic in the magazine, a language associated with French borrowings and code-switching. The contrast of the editorial title (a French borrowing written in Arabic script) with the magazine’s title (a Moroccan Arabic word written in both Arabic script and in Roman script following French spelling conventions) visually captures the complexity of the linguistic scene in Morocco.

The running head of the next section was called “أش واقع” ‘*What’s happening.*’ This section consisted of several articles, which focused on current national and international news events. Following this section was a weekly column called “نهار ليك نهار عليك” ‘*A day for you, a day on you*’¹²² and then a section called “المغرب” ‘*Morocco*,’ which contained a variety of articles related to national politics, economy and society. The following section was called “فن وثقافة” ‘*Art and culture*,’ and the weekly gossip columns “تبر كيگ” ‘*Gossip*’ and “الباتول الفضولية” ‘*Al-Batul: the curious.*’¹²³ The last few pages of the magazine consisted of a sports section, a page of letters to the editor,

¹²¹ This ad could be in either Arabic with Arabic script or in French with Latin script.

¹²² ‘A day for you, a day on you’ means a day in which is yours to do what you want and a day in which you will have to do what is called upon you.

¹²³ See Sadiqi (2006) for an insightful discussion on the important role of the female genre of “gossip,” which is used by women to negotiate reputations and redefine values.

and finally a weekly page entitled “تقرقيب الناب” ‘*The chattering canine*’¹²⁴ which consisted of an in-depth feature interview with a famous Moroccan. All of these section titles were either markedly Moroccan Arabic, as in “أش واقع” and “تبر گيگ”, or bivalent with Standard Arabic as in “فن وثقافة”. The back cover of the magazine was a paid advertisement.¹²⁵

Form of Moroccan Arabic

My analysis of *Nichane* supported Miller’s (2012) observation that the Moroccan Arabic traits most frequently used in the written Standard Arabic press in Morocco were morphosyntactic and lexical. I noted examples of the following: the possessive pronoun *dyal*, the present tense verbal prefix *ka-*,¹²⁶ the future tense morpheme *ghadi*, the negative particles *ma* and *chi* or *machi*, interrogative pronouns, and adverbs such as *daba*, *nichane*, and *bezzaf*. In addition, I observed a number of phonetic traits that were often marked through the use of diacritic marks that would normally be omitted in standard representations of Standard Arabic. Examples of these trends will be offered in different sections throughout this chapter.

Since *Nichane* was written with the Arabic script instead of Roman, it was able to draw upon established writing conventions for Standard Arabic for representing Moroccan Arabic. Thus unlike text messages which tended to draw upon spoken language as a referent, *Nichane* drew heavily upon writing conventions for Standard

¹²⁴ This name refers to the supposed clicking sound canine teeth can make when one is speaking animatedly.

¹²⁵ In most of the exemplars, I collected the back cover page of the magazine consisted of an advertisement written in a variety of Arabic and in Arabic script. This may have reflected an editorial choice to highlight the “Arabic” identity of the magazine and distinguish it from its French counterpart *Telquel*.

¹²⁶ The verbal prefix /ka-/ has two allomorphs [ka-] and [ta-] which occur in independent variation, though some general regional trends can be observed. The allomorph [ka-] is dominant in Casablanca and Rabat, whereas the allomorph [ta-] is common in Beni Mellal. *Nichane*, by using predominantly the [ka-] allomorph associates itself with the Moroccan Arabic dialects of Casablanca and Rabat.

Arabic. This is seen, for example, in cases where Arabic letters are written in a word which are not actually pronounced in speech. For instance, in the following Moroccan Arabic sentence from an article on illiteracy: “الناس باغيين يقرأو، خاص غير اللي يعاونهم” ‘People want to learn; all that’s needed is someone to help them,’¹²⁷ there is a definite subject relative pronoun “اللي.” In Moroccan Arabic, the definite article “ال” /al/ is not pronounced when the following consonant is coronal, as is found in the relative pronoun /li/. If this phrase had been produced in a Moroccan Arabic text message it would likely have been written in Roman script as it is pronounced .¹²⁸ However since it is written in Arabic script in a newspaper that follows Standard Arabic writing conventions, the relative pronoun is written with its definite article even though it is not actually pronounced in spoken language. This is also seen in words that exist in both languages but are pronounced differently in Moroccan Arabic. For example, the Standard Arabic phonemes /θ, d/ do not exist in Moroccan Arabic and are pronounced /t, d/ respectively. Although there are Arabic letters <ت, د> to represent the phonemes /t, d/, they were usually written according to standard conventions with the Arabic letters <ث, ذ>.

Occasionally, diacritics were used ostensibly to ensure the correct vocalization and understanding of the written word. For example, this can be observed in one of the cover stories in issue 226: «يا معانا يا مع آخرين» "الصحراء." *'The Sahara. Either with us, or with the others.'* In this example the diacritic mark sukun ◌ is written, which represents a consonant not followed by a short vowel. This is because although in spoken Standard Arabic, both consonants in the word “مع” /maʕa/ are followed by a short vowel /a/, in

¹²⁷ *Nichane*, Issue 198, April 24-30 2009, p26.

¹²⁸ In fact, it would arguably be more accurate to transliterate “اللي” in a text message as <lli> with a double initial consonant cluster as it is pronounced in speech. I have not observed this in practice, however, perhaps because text messengers are trying to economize on text message length.

Moroccan Arabic, this same word is pronounced /mʕa/ with an initial consonant cluster. Since in print media, the diacritic marks that indicate short vowels are usually not written, in order for the word to be correctly vocalized in Moroccan Arabic, the initial consonant cluster must be indicated with a sukun. Indicating consonant clusters that do not exist in Standard Arabic appears to be a common reason why diacritic marks were occasionally, but not systematically, used throughout the magazine. They were also used to mark words that are clearly of Moroccan Arabic origin or examples of spoken language that do not exist in Standard Arabic.

The “Moroccan Arabic” magazine

Most people I spoke with describe *Nichane* as unique because it is the only published magazine or newspaper they are aware of written in Moroccan Arabic. As most claimed it was either mostly or entirely in Moroccan Arabic, not in Standard Arabic, I was quite surprised the first time I opened a copy of *Nichane* to discover that the majority of the text of the magazine was written in Standard Arabic. So what was written in Moroccan Arabic? An analysis of the 7 issues of the magazine that I collected revealed that there were general patterns to Moroccan Arabic usage in the magazine. Four main areas will be discussed here: headlines, article type, quotations, and author’s voice/rhetorical function.

Headlines

It is commonly assumed that headlines function mainly to summarize a story in a clear and above all concise form. Beyond providing a general summary of the story, Bell (1991) shows that headlines also have an essentially pragmatic function of attracting the reader’s attention. More recently it has also been argued that another main function of

headlines in newspapers and magazines is to “optimize the relevance of their stories for their readers” who spend a significant majority of their reading time scanning the headlines rather than reading the article text (Dor 2003). According to Dor, a headline is “a textual negotiator between the story and its readers” (696). Visually, headlines purposefully stand out from the body of the article due to the space they occupy on the page, their large, often bold font, article initial positioning and a “frequent syntactic and semantic unorthodoxy” in their wording and spelling (696).

Given these characterizations of the function and general form of headlines, the choice of language variety, content and its written representation in the headlines of *Nichane* reveals a lot about the language ideologies embedded in the magazine. Moroccan Arabic was often used in article headlines and kickers¹²⁹ in *Nichane*.¹³⁰ This was usually accomplished using lexical items or grammatical structures markedly Moroccan Arabic or ones that were ambiguous and could be considered syncretic with Standard Arabic. For example, an article about illiteracy in Morocco was titled “محو الأمية. ماشي شي حرب” ‘The struggle against illiteracy. It is not that much of a war.’¹³¹ While the second word of the title is arguably syncretic and could be attributed to either Standard or Moroccan Arabic, the first word is in Standard Arabic. The second half of the title is Moroccan Arabic, as evidenced by the negative particle /maši/, which in Standard Arabic would have been expressed as /laysa/.

¹²⁹ A “kicker” is the name given to the introduction of the article which sets the tone for the article and briefly summarizes the story. Usually set off from the body text by a font larger than the body, but smaller than the headline, it acts as a bridge between the headline and the body text

¹³⁰ The first issue of *Nichane* from September 9, 2006 had mostly Standard Arabic titles and a few that could be considered “mixed.” However, beginning with the second issue the headlines became progressively more Moroccan Arabic dominant (Miller 2012: 22). All the issues I analyzed contained predominantly Moroccan Arabic titles.

¹³¹ *Nichane* issue 198, p. 26-27. The second half of this article’s title is meant to be read as sarcastic. What is implied is that not enough is being done to fight illiteracy.

This article's subtitle was also in Moroccan Arabic:

الاناس فالدول المتقدمة وصلات للسماء، وحننا مضاربين مع محاربة الأمية. آجيو نشوفو فين
وصلات بلادنا في حريها ضد العدو رقم 1: الجهل

People in developed countries have reached the sky, and we are still fighting against illiteracy. Come and see where our country has reached in the fight against enemy number one: ignorance.

Another example concerned an article about the sharp rise in the price of tomatoes. The article was entitled “مطيشة دارت الكرون” *‘Tomatoes have become something big.’*¹³² In this example the Moroccan Arabic elements are the expression ‘tomatoes grew horns,’ an expression that is used with people, not inanimate objects. To say a person ‘grew horns’ means that they ‘are acting arrogant as if they believe they are something special.’ In this case, it is used to emphasize that the price of tomatoes, which is usually around 2-3 dirhams a kilogram (approximately 25-35 U.S. cents a kilogram) has skyrocketed. At the time the article was written, the price of tomatoes had reached 20 dirhams a kilogram (around \$2.50).

Another example of the use of Moroccan Arabic is in the headline “قمع الصحافة. دابا ننگولوها لهيلاري” /qamaʕ aṣaħa:fa daba nguluha lhilari/ *‘Suppression of the press. [Be careful] we’re going to tell it to Hilary.’*¹³³ The second half of this title is marked as Moroccan Arabic by the adverb “دابا” ‘now’ and the first person plural verbal prefix <ن> /n/. It is also marked as Moroccan Arabic by the representation of the second vowel /u/ in the phrase /nguluha/ ‘we’re going to tell it’ with the letter <و>. In Standard Arabic, this vowel is not indicated with a letter, but rather with a diacritic mark that is usually omitted in most examples of written Arabic in the press. Finally, this phrase is

¹³² Nichane issue 249, p. 18-19

¹³³ This title names Hilary Clinton because at the time the article was written, she was the U.S. Secretary of State and also had personal connections to Morocco, through her sister who lives there.

marked Moroccan Arabic by the orthographic choice to write the sound /q/ in the verb “قال” ‘to say’ with a non-Standard Arabic letter <گ>, which represents how it is usually pronounced in the Casablancan variety of Moroccan Arabic, with the allophone [g] instead of [q].¹³⁴

This article headline is of particular interest because of how the representation of the word /qal/ ‘to say’ with the letter <گ> contrasted with how the same word was represented in a boxed text that was located directly below the article mentioning Hilary. The title of the box was “قال” /qal/ ‘he said’ and the sound /q/ was represented with the letter <ق> as pronounced in Standard Arabic. Thus, on the same page, the same phoneme in the same verb was represented with two different letters: one that indexed Moroccan Arabic and the other that indexed Standard Arabic.

Each week, the box “قال” contained a quote by a politician or other public figure. On the outer left of the box was a byline from *Telquel* written in Arabic, indicating that the quotes may be translations from the French magazine. The speaker’s name and title were written in Arabic script at the top of the box in white font on a black background and in the box itself, the quote was written. In the issue in question, the quote in the box was by a politician named Abdlaziz Rbah in which he said ‘we wish to move the socialist union to the opposition.’ It is not surprising that the occurrence of Standard Arabic /qal/ is used for highlighting the quotes of public persona, and in particular those that are decontextualized from their context. Also, if quotes in this weekly boxed text are indeed translations from French, as is suggested by the *Telquel* byline, it is interesting that they chose to do so into Standard Arabic instead of Moroccan Arabic. This supports

¹³⁴ Other varieties of Moroccan Arabic, such as Fes and some northern varieties, pronounce the word /qal/ either with [q] as in Standard Arabic, or alternatively with a glottal stop [ʔ].

ideologies that official and public uses of Arabic should be in the standard variety and that Moroccan Arabic in the print media does not have the status of a written language of translation.

I argue that the writing of titles and subtitles in Moroccan Arabic can thus be interpreted as an effort to attract readers to the story, to interpellate them through the language actually spoken on the street (in contrast to Standard Arabic), and to provide contextual information to readers by bridging them to the text. The use of Moroccan Arabic in the titles is designed to engage the reader and capture his/her attention and interest in the article. There are markedly “oral” elements in the headlines – the oral expression ‘*to grow horns*,’ and the written representation of spoken language (the choice to represent the allophone [g] in writing) that index the oral context for the text. The semiotic process of fractal recursivity serves to recast the oral/written opposition between Moroccan and Standard Arabic, in the written context of the magazine *Nichane*. This builds upon the argument made earlier in this dissertation that even when Moroccan Arabic is written in new contexts and in new forms it is clearly marked as the oral language in comparison to Standard Arabic. In *Nichane*, this feature is particularly evident when an article has a Moroccan Arabic title and then the opening of the article is in Standard Arabic. Indeed, most leads, that is the opening section of the article in which the main facts of the article are usually outlined, in *Nichane* were in Standard Arabic. This is often accompanied by a brusque shift in tone and register – from the titles and subtitles to the leads – implying to the reader that Moroccan Arabic is unsuitable for writing what is important in the article.

Article type

Based on the aforementioned examples of headlines in *Nichane*, it might be expected that most, if not all, of the body of all the articles were also written in Moroccan Arabic, but in fact, this was not the case. Articles in *Nichane* are perhaps best characterized by frequent code-switching between Standard and Moroccan Arabic, both intersententially and intrasententially. Of the many different types of articles published in *Nichane*, the weekly columns tended to have the most Moroccan Arabic. These included: an editorial column by Benchemsi, an opinion column called ‘*Al-Batul: the curious*,’ the week in review news column ‘*A day for you, a day on you*,’ the interview column and occasionally the letters to the editor by *Nichane* readers.¹³⁵ Of these weekly columns, the interview page contained the most Moroccan Arabic. Beyond the fact that they all contain notable examples of Moroccan Arabic, the weekly editorial, opinion and interview columns are also similar in that they can be viewed as more “oral” types of articles. That is, they are articles in which the writer is viewed as feeling freer in expressing his or her views more directly. This aligns with the dominant ideology that links Moroccan Arabic to the realm of oral language and Standard Arabic to writing. Thus, again through article type, fractal recursivity recasts Moroccan Arabic in terms of oral language. This ideology is explored in more detail in the next section, which discusses a very blatant example of oral language represented in writing: direct quotations.

The lead cover stories also tended to have a lot of Moroccan Arabic, though this may be linked to the fact that they were often written by staff writers who were

¹³⁵ It would be interesting to conduct a study on the letters to the editor published in *Nichane* to see if and how readers responded to the opportunity to write and be published in Moroccan Arabic as well as to see what editorial role the magazine assumed in the editing of these letters.

responsible for one of the other weekly columns. For example, Sanaa Elaji wrote the weekly opinion column ‘*Al-Batul: the curious*’ as well as the lead stories about sex before marriage in a November 2009 issue and jokes in a December 2006 issue, both of which will be discussed in more detail below. Given that she was a section editor for *Nichane* and her weekly column always contained text in Moroccan Arabic, it is not surprising that her other pieces would also contain a significant amount of Moroccan Arabic. Furthermore, unlike Benchemsi, who had his training in French, Elaji had her training in Arabic (Miller 2012).

Articles in *Nichane* with little or no Moroccan Arabic tended to be short articles that had no byline and were not attributed to any one author. These short articles often had a Moroccan Arabic title, but the body was written entirely in Standard Arabic. For example, an article about YouTube was titled in Moroccan Arabic “الرشوة بالترينجيل” ‘*Bribery with excuses*’,¹³⁶ whereas the entire text of the article was in Standard Arabic. It is possible these articles were from the associated press; their authors had sold to multiple newspapers; or that their writers were not heavily involved with *Nichane*. Indeed, a number of the contributors to *Nichane* did not work exclusively for the magazine and published articles in other online and paper venues, as well as in other languages. In some instances, the same article could be found in both *Nichane* in Arabic and in *Telquel* in French. The fact that *Nichane* writers published in Standard Arabic in these other venues likely influenced their writing style in *Nichane*, especially given the fact that no standardized method of writing in Moroccan Arabic existed in Morocco nor was developed by *Nichane*. Writing in Moroccan Arabic was thus an idiosyncratic activity – though a more in-depth analysis of the magazine would likely reveal if and how

¹³⁶ *Nichane*, Issue 249 April 23-29, 2010.

Moroccan Arabic was written and if patterns in language use appeared over the course of the magazine's publication.

Quotes

Another point of note about the use of Moroccan Arabic in *Nichane* was that it was frequently used in direct quotations. Journalistic practice across the Arabic speaking world is that direct quotations, which are originally recorded in an Arabic variety other than the standard, are translated by the writer or editor into Standard Arabic without any citation of this fact in the newspaper or magazine. This is done without comment and readers are assumed to be savvy that this is the practice. Moroccans I spoke to about the topic assumed that direct quotations in *Nichane*, while relatively faithful to the meaning of the original utterance, may in fact vary widely in form from the original spoken text. Many argued that the sought after effect is to make people who are directly quoted appear educated and well spoken. Since the hand of the translator is hidden in these interactions, readers must make their own judgments of the people being quoted as to whether they were likely to command Standard Arabic or not and to what importance. When direct quotes are written in Moroccan Arabic, however, the effect on many readers is to assume that the quote is truly representative of what was said. This falls in line with the ideology of Moroccan Arabic as being "direct" and able to reach to the heart of things.

Nichane thus stood out to its readers by presenting many, though not all, direct quotations in Moroccan Arabic. Even within the same article or within the same speaker's turn, code-switching between Moroccan and Standard Arabic was common. This practice invited the reader to question if the presence of the two languages in direct quotations is representative of the actual speech of the interviewees, or if the utterances

were translated by the article author during transcription or even modified later by the magazine editor before publication.

Regardless of the possible reasons why some direct speech is presented in Standard Arabic and some in Moroccan Arabic, the juxtaposition of the two languages in the same article has ideological implications for the reader. This is clear in the article ‘*People’s first experience with sex*,’¹³⁷ in which code-switching between Standard Arabic and Moroccan Arabic was represented both between speaker turns as well as within individual utterances. The article opens by recounting an exchange mostly in Moroccan Arabic between Ismail, a 30 year-old man who is engaged to be married, and his friend. Ismail confesses to his friend that the night of his wedding would be the first time, in his life, he would have sex. His friend asks him how he managed (sexually) in his relationships before, to which Ismail responds that ‘God blessed him with erotic dreams’ (27). In the interchange, Ismail is presented as beginning his utterance in Moroccan Arabic, switching to Standard Arabic briefly, and then switching back again to Moroccan Arabic. His friend is presented as speaking in Moroccan Arabic.

The next quote in the same article is written in Standard Arabic. It is a comment by Dr. Aboubakr Harakat, a famous Moroccan sexologist who has been a frequent guest speaker on the popular Moroccan television talk show “*Al-Khayt Al-Abyad*” ‘The White Thread’ on the television station 2M. It is arguably fruitless for the reader to speculate as to whether his original utterance was in Moroccan or Standard Arabic. As a highly educated man, who often gives interviews in Standard Arabic on radio and television, it is possible, and even likely that Dr. Harakat did in fact utter the reported speech in Standard Arabic. Indeed, he may have chosen to do so to make *Nichane* readers more comfortable

¹³⁷ *Nichane* Issue 246 November 13-19, 2010, p. 26-33.

when reading about sex and sexuality. In an interview with *Telquel* in 2010,¹³⁸ Dr. Harakat explained that during private therapy it can initially be uncomfortable for patients to express themselves with regard to sexuality topics in Moroccan Arabic. This comment is reminiscent of comments made by young adults regarding text messaging and dubbed foreign series about the choice to use Standard Arabic or French to talk about romance and love because they served as a buffer for otherwise shameful topics to be discussed. It is also possible, of course, that the article author or editor translated his quote into Standard Arabic to lend a sense of formality and authority to his commentary, as is the usual practice in magazine and newspaper quotations.

Following Dr. Harakat is a short vignette about a woman named Meryam, who refused to have sex with her husband when she contracted a vaginal illness. She explains to *Nichane* that when her husband complained to her father that “ما كتخليهش” ‘*she doesn’t let him [have sex with her]’* (28), her father beat her. The words her husband reportedly told her father were written in Moroccan Arabic. This choice likely reflected the actual language used in the original quotation because the mention of sex is only implied, as it likely would have been in natural conversation. This marks the utterance as personal and given that it indexes sex, it also adds a titillating sense to the written quote by breaking the taboo of referring to sex publicly in Moroccan Arabic.

At first glance, it appears the choice to represent some speech in the above quotes in Moroccan Arabic, rather than translate everything into Standard Arabic, as is standard practice, allows the writers and editors at *Nichane* to distinguish comments relating to personal experience (Ismail, Meryam) from comments associated with scientific authority (Dr. Harakat). However, this pattern of Moroccan Arabic indexing the personal and more

¹³⁸ *Telquel*, Issue 433, January 17-23, 2010.

intimate and Standard Arabic indexing authority and expertise, does not hold true for later quotes in the same article in which Standard Arabic is used to represent everyday people discussing their personal experience. For example, a woman named Bouchra is quoted discussing problems she and her husband have during sexual intercourse. When describing her sexual experiences before marriage and her husband's issue with early ejaculation, Bouchra's quote is transcribed in Standard Arabic. In contrast, the last part of her quote when she talks about how she initially felt embarrassed, but later was able to talk to her husband, is written in Moroccan Arabic. Thus, in this example, the more sexually explicit topics are presented to the reader in Standard Arabic and the topics considered more acceptable to express in public, though still intimate in nature, are presented in Moroccan Arabic.

When I showed this article to Omar, a young Moroccan university professor, he explained to me that the language of the quotes felt awkward to him and not the way people actually talk. The breaks in switching between Moroccan and Standard Arabic were unnatural. He suspected the code-switches may have been fabricated on purpose by either the writer or editor in order to avoid writing about sexually explicit topics in Moroccan Arabic, which may have made them *too* personal and intimate for the reader.

One weekly article in *Nichane*, which consistently included a significant amount of direct quotations written in Moroccan Arabic, was the interview column written by Mousa Metrouf, the general secretary to the editor. In his column entitled "تقرقيب الناب" 'The chattering canine,' he interviewed important and famous political, literary, artistic and media figures. His column was structured as alternating turns between the interviewer's questions and the interviewee's responses, with no editorial commentary.

The Arabic varieties used in the column by both the interviewer and interviewees were mixed, alternating intersententially and intrasententially between Standard and Moroccan Arabic. This was true regardless of the education level or job type of the person being interviewed. This made his column contrast greatly with other mainstream Arabic newspapers that translate all of their interviews into Standard Arabic (Miller 2012).

It was this alternation between Arabic varieties that some readers claimed gave them the impression that the column was a faithful transcription of the interview itself, by which they meant it was an accurate portrayal of real-life speech. In discussing this column with Moroccan friends of mine, there was a lot of speculation and debate over what variety of Arabic was actually used in the interviews and what types of people can be expected to control which varieties. Souad, a young teacher at a Moroccan elementary school in Casablanca, argued that when people are giving interviews that are being recorded in Morocco, they will often make efforts to switch to or incorporate Standard Arabic into their speech. She advised me to ‘watch interviews on TV and [I would] see how people try to talk all in Standard Arabic to sound more important and professional, but they really can’t. Their talk is full of connecting words in Moroccan Arabic.’ By connecting words, she was referring mainly to adverbs. On the other hand, she also pointed out, ‘Some things you just don’t say in Moroccan Arabic or there is no word for it, like ‘firstly.’ That is something we use in writing and when we want to give a formal talk we will say that in Standard Arabic.’ She was describing the adverb “أولاً” /awwalan/ ‘firstly’ in Standard Arabic.

Using Moroccan Arabic to transcribe interviews has the effect of strengthening the association with speech. This is also supported visually in the article. At the top of

each weekly article, is a photograph of the interviewee sitting a table and pouring a traditional glass of Moroccan mint tea while looking directly into the camera. Drinking tea in Morocco is a social ritual that is very important and iconic of hospitality. The image combined with the Moroccan Arabic in the article literally invites the reader to engage with the interview. I argue that it is not surprising that the article with the most Moroccan Arabic is the one representing most directly spoken language. This familiar theme of Moroccan Arabic being sanctioned in writing when it is strongly associated with orality is a theme that has already been discussed in Chapter 3, regarding text messaging, and in Chapter 4, with regards to INWI's billboard campaign. Thus here again, the semiotic process of fractal recursivity can be observed, defining within a written text, a part that is more "oral" than other more traditionally formal written sections.

Author's voice

Miller (2012) argues that switches to Moroccan Arabic in the press have historically been used in what she terms "traditional" registers such as the expression of irony, popular wisdom, and the transcription of oral language. In many articles I analyzed in *Nichane*, Moroccan Arabic was employed by authors when injecting their opinion or stance into their article. It was also frequently used in *Nichane* in rhetorical interjections and to express irony and sarcasm.

For example, in a feature article written in 2009, which analyzes advances made in adult literacy education, the author makes occasional code-switches to Moroccan Arabic to interject her opinion on the topic. The opening of the article, written in Standard Arabic, describes the official start of the campaign against illiteracy in 2000 and

presents a number of statistics on the number of illiterate men and women, in urban and rural Morocco. After the fifth sentence, which states the fact that there are over 10 million illiterate people in Morocco, the author code-switches intrasententially to Moroccan Arabic to exclaim “هاد الشي بزالف” /had ši bzza:f/ ‘*this is a lot!*’ In this instance, not only is the code-switch made to Moroccan Arabic, but it is also written in a manner akin to text messages. The word “بزالف” is written with a repeated vowel letter to emphasize iconically that “maaany” people are illiterate.¹³⁹ Thus, Standard Arabic is employed in the article to state facts, whereas Moroccan Arabic serves as the commentary language.

Later in the next paragraph was another sentence in Moroccan Arabic embedded in a section discussing the high percentage of women who participate in literacy courses: “الناس باغيين يقرأو، جاص غير اللي يعاونهم” ‘*People want to learn; they just need someone to help them.*’¹⁴⁰ This sentence is marked Moroccan Arabic by the lexical choice to use the markedly Moroccan Arabic verb /bya:/ ‘*want*’ instead of the equivalent Standard Arabic verb /ara:da/. The author uses Moroccan Arabic to highlight her opinion that the cause of illiteracy is not to be found in a lack of interest on the part of the adult women learners, but rather on unnamed others, assumedly the government and associations, for not providing the needed assistance.

One of the weekly columns that consistently incorporated Moroccan Arabic was Ahmed Benchemsi’s editorial. While the majority of his text was in Standard Arabic, he frequently used Moroccan Arabic phrases and short sentences to add rhetorical, sarcastic

¹³⁹ The purposeful extension of vowels to emphasize a point is a common linguistic practice in Morocco, whether Moroccans are speaking in Moroccan Arabic or in French. A Moroccan I spoke with, who was a native French speaker, recounted that when he employed this feature when speaking French in France, his French friends commented that his speech sounded Moroccan influenced.

¹⁴⁰ *Nichane*, Issue 198, April 24-30 2009, p26.

or humorous effect to his text. For example, in a September 2009 editorial entitled “From politics to psychology,” Benchemsi utilizes frequent Moroccan Arabic interjections found in casual conversations such as “أواه” ‘no way?!’ and “يالصاح!” ‘really?!’, the latter an expression to indicate incredulity. The use of these interjections in the article can have the effect of making the reader feel more involved and connected to the article. The use of Moroccan Arabic like this is representative of the magazine’s title *Nichane*; it is as if Benchemsi is talking directly to the reader, sharing a story. The expression “أواه” meaning ‘no way?!’ or ‘wow!’ is used often in everyday conversations to express one’s incredulity at what’s being narrated. In these examples, Moroccan Arabic can be seen either as representing the rhetorical voice of Benchemsi the author, or alternatively, it can be seen as inviting the reader to identify with it as his or her own voice, providing feedback to Benchemsi and encouraging him to continue. It also invites the reader to identify with the point of view being put forth by Benchemsi. The fact that these expressions are in Moroccan Arabic versus Standard Arabic, makes them feel natural and familiar to the reader.

Nichane, Moroccan Arabic and taboos

As mentioned above, not only did *Nichane* stand out by utilizing Moroccan Arabic in various sections of the magazine, it also shocked readers by the types of stories they covered. Indeed, *Nichane* played off of the tension created in writing topics considered taboo or *hchuma* in Moroccan Arabic. The magazine editors often chose intimate, shameful and socially or politically risqué topics normally discussed in one’s mother tongue language in private settings, and printed them in a publicly distributed magazine with bold titles written in Moroccan Arabic. Thus, *Nichane* presented a double

shock to readers: first, for printing in Moroccan Arabic in the first place, and second, by printing the unspeakable in the very language that often makes it more shocking due to Moroccan Arabic's ideological associations with intimacy, privacy and *hchuma*. This possibly caused a significant sense of ideological disjuncture to be experienced by the readers on multiple levels.

From its first issue in September 2006, *Nichane* chose cover stories whose themes were described to me by former readers as being 'audacious,' 'sensationalistic,' 'polemic,' 'overly intimate,' and 'provocative.' The covers were illustrated by photographs or cartoons that Moroccans described as sometimes titillating or even shocking. Themes included politics, sex and sexuality, culture, religion, and human rights. For example, some cover stories I encountered included '*Hospitals: pay or die*,' '*Corruption at the hands of the police*,' '*Why (and how) Moroccans have complexes*,' '*Trying sex for the first time*,' '*Moroccan women and the curse of the Gulf*,'¹⁴¹ '*Red Nights in Casablanca*,' '*The King's aunt*,'¹⁴² and '*Hot Marrakesh nights*.' Many of these are topics that have historically been considered taboo, and in some cases illegal, both in conversation and in print.

The subtitles for these articles, usually written in Moroccan Arabic, were also provocative. For example, the subtitle for the cover story '*Trying Sex for the First Time*'¹⁴³ was written in Moroccan Arabic as follows:

كابين اللّي كُيُصِبر حتى الزواج وكابين اللّي "كُيُعيّش حياتو". "نیشان" سوّلات ولاد وبنات باش
يحكيو على "أول مرة": الحب, المغامرة... وما بعد.

¹⁴¹ This title refers to the rise in prostitution rates of Moroccan women who either offer their services to men from the Gulf states or go to the Gulf to work as prostitutes.

¹⁴² This title highlights the royal family's indiscretions.

¹⁴³ *Nichane*, Issue 226, November 13-19, 2009.

There are those who wait until marriage and those who “live their lives” [as they wish]. “Nichane” asked boys and girls to tell about “the first time” [they had sex]: the love, the adventure... and so forth. (my translation)

In this quote, the euphemisms ‘live their lives’ and ‘first time’ to describe sex before marriage is placed in quotation marks to highlight its sexual connotation. In addition, the subtitle contains the Moroccan Arabic words “ولاد وبنات” ‘boys and girls,’ categories that not only refer to gender but also to marital state. An unmarried adult woman may still be referred to as “بنت” ‘girl’ to highlight that she is available for marriage. The term can also be used to insinuate that a woman is immature or naïve.¹⁴⁴ By choosing these words instead of using a broader term such as ‘people,’ the author brings to the reader’s immediate attention that the article is about sex before marriage.

It was not only the article topics themselves, but also the fact that they were written in Moroccan Arabic that make them particularly shocking for some readers. As in dubbed TV series, Moroccans I spoke with regarding *Nichane* argued that normally by translating things into Standard Arabic, there is a distance created between the topic and the reader or viewer. Standard Arabic functioned as a buffer. This ideology was articulated to me one afternoon in Rabat while reading magazines in a café with a friend named Dounia. I had a selection of magazines I was collecting for analysis and she immediately picked up the copy of *Nichane* with the couple in bed and after reading the headline and subtitle exclaimed, “What would my mother think of this?!” There were equally revealing photos and text in French and English language magazines on the table,

¹⁴⁴ At a conference in Fes, Morocco during a discussion in Arabic about a paper I had presented, a middle aged man who took offense at what he saw as my “championing of Moroccan Arabic” and insisted on calling me ‘بنت’ ‘girl’ in public even though he knew I was married.

but she didn't make the same comments with those. She later told me it was the fact the article subtitle was in Moroccan Arabic that brought the topic home for her and made her imagine how uncomfortable it would be to talk about such an intimate theme with her mother.

The cover photo for the issue she picked up was that of the article about sex before marriage from September 2009. In the photo, a young man and woman are lying together in a bed of white pillows and sheets. The couple is looking directly into the camera and smiling. The woman is dressed in a white camisole and the young man is clasping her hand to his naked chest. The bed sheets are pulled up around their waists. By itself, the photograph is edgy. Dounia shrugged her shoulders when she saw it and said it was racy, but in her opinion okay. However, when she read the subtitle text she exclaimed, "They aren't married?! Wow that makes it very different." The direct gaze of the couple to the observer was now interpreted by Dounia as defiant. Their smile indicated to her that they are clearly unashamed of what they are doing and perhaps even defiant of tradition and Moroccan law which clearly states that sexual intercourse should be reserved for wedlock. Dounia interpreted the writing of the subtitle in Moroccan Arabic and its juxtaposition with the photo as publicly condoning premarital sex, something she is strongly against. Moroccan Arabic in this example takes on the role of the "deviant," the language used to rebel against moral tradition and law, domains associated with Standard Arabic. The use of Moroccan Arabic to discuss deviant moral behavior aligns with ideologies of language that position Moroccan Arabic as the variety of Arabic most deviant or different, in regards to linguistic features, to Standard Arabic.

The following month, while on a visit to Tafza, I showed this issue to my friends to observe their reactions to it. When Sanaa saw the cover of the magazine, she said ‘wow! that isn’t something you usually see in an Arabic magazine let alone any magazine in Morocco.’ Wafae and Ghita were even more shocked to see it, telling me “*hadchi kha:yeb bzza:f*” ‘this is very bad.’ Wafae asked me to hide the magazine in the bottom of my suitcase so her brothers and parents wouldn’t see it when I spent the night at their house. The language of the magazine, referring to Moroccan Arabic, was ‘dirty’ they said and Wafae was afraid her older brothers would believe it would ‘encourage bad behavior.’ They emphasized that since it was written in Moroccan Arabic, rather than in Standard Arabic or French, the text would reach right to the heart of the readers and had the power to influence their behavior. This was the same reasoning articulated by Miriam and her brother Abdelaziz when the first foreign soap operas dubbed in Moroccan Arabic emerged (Chapter 5). While both Wafae and Ghita admitted to me that the stories were true and that there are Moroccan women, including women we knew in Tafza, who engage in *hchuma* behaviors such as sex before marriage, they solemnly informed me that it was against Islam. ‘They don’t publish these stories in the good newspapers and magazines,’ I was told. By “good newspapers and magazines,” they were referring to ones in Standard Arabic. Wafae and Ghita’s comments about the ‘bad’ and ‘dirty’ language in *Nichane*, and its implied relation to the shameful behaviors described in the article, were not the first time I had heard women in Tafza assume an indexical relationship between language and behavior. The other instance, though occurring in a completely different context, also focused on the power of written language.

During my last week conducting field research in Tafza, a middle aged woman named Khalti Fatima, a neighbor of my host family, passed away suddenly one hot summer morning. The cause of her death was attributed to a possible insulin shot overdose. Khalti Fatima was a beloved community member, always offering a smile and a hot cup of tea for friends and family members who were passing by. Her death shocked everyone in Tafza and the dirt path outside her house was swarming with veiled women mourners coming to pay their respects for over a week. I spent the days immediately following her passing helping her family receive the many thirsty and hungry guests by washing never ending piles of tea glasses and small plates to be set out immediately again.

On the second afternoon, the women sitting vigil outside the house began to wail loudly in grief and some beat the ground with their hands and pulled at their hair. Wafae and I were in Khalti Fatima's house visiting with out-of-town guests when we heard the sounds. Wafae turned to me, disapproval on her face, and explained that those women outside didn't know any better than to act this way. As she spoke, similar wail was heard in the room in which we were sitting, joining the chorus outside. I looked towards the sounds and saw Khalti Fatima's niece Nour, a teenage girl in Wafae's literacy class, begin to echo the cries of the women outside and then frantically bury her head in her hands. What Wafae did next shocked me. She brusquely stood up, marched over to Nour and slapped her soundly on the face twice, yelling at her loudly to stop. Nour's cry stopped mid-wail and she stared back at Wafae as if in disbelief. Wafae then began more calmly to state to her that she was now *qaria* 'educated' and knew better. Nour sat back

down with the other women, spent and exhausted looking, and Wafae led me out of the house.

Later that evening Wafae was still upset by the incident. She told me that because she had taught the women to read directly and independently from the Qur'an, they should now behave 'properly' at difficult times like these and set a good moral example for the community. She said she and the students had studied Qur'anic verses that discussed the importance of letting go of those who die and managing one's grief with poise. For Wafae, learning to read Standard Arabic and being able to access the Qur'anic teachings more directly should have a direct influence on the women's behavior, not just when it comes to more obviously "literacy" based activities, but in all aspects of their daily comportment.

Consequences of publishing the taboo in Moroccan Arabic

In December 2006, Sanna Elaji and Driss Ksikes¹⁴⁵ were both charged with "denigrating the Islamic religion" and "the publication and distribution of writings that were against morals and tradition" for having written an article that analyzed popular Moroccan humor. Twelve days after the controversial issue, then Prime Minister Driss Jettou forbade the distribution of *Nichane* and ordered all copies of the magazine to be withdrawn from newspaper stands. Elaji and Ksikes were subject to a publicly televised court trial and a Casablanca judge gave them both three year suspended sentences. The event attracted widespread public attention and copies of *Nichane* were even burned during a demonstration at the Université Ibn Tofail of Kénitra.

¹⁴⁵ At that time, Elaji was a writer and Ksikes was the editor of *Nichane*.

The offending article was marked in Moroccan Arabic by the opening question word “كيفاش” ‘how’ and the verb “كضحكو” ‘laugh’ as seen below:

النُّكْت: كيفاش المغاربة كضحكو على الدين والجنش والسياسة

‘*Jokes: How Moroccans laugh at religion, sex and politics.*’¹⁴⁶

Its subtitle, also written in Moroccan Arabic, was ‘*Jokes are the salt of life... society. Moroccans, like others, laugh at everything, religiously forbidden sexual relationships, the king, the official bible, Islamic ideology and ... “Nichane” breaks down the characteristics of Moroccan jokes and shares the funniest ones.*’ The majority of the article analyzes Moroccan humor, discussing such topics as the themes and structures of popular Moroccan jokes, the history of humor, and the social function of popular jokes. Aside from the title, subtitle and the transcription of various popular jokes, the majority of the article was written in Standard Arabic, with interjections in Moroccan Arabic. Some of the jokes, in particular, a few related to the monarchy and religion, were in Standard Arabic.

Topics of jokes included the monarchy, sex, religion, politics, ethnicity, education and regionalism. The following joke about the king of Morocco was written in Moroccan Arabic (30):

فرانسا حلات الحدود مع المغرب. بحيث يمكن لأي واحد بمشي بلا فيزا. المغاربة كلهم تمو غاديين كيجريو. الملك طلع فالباطو وگال للشعب: "اللخر فيكم يطفي الضو".

France opened the borders with Morocco, where anyone could go [to France] without a visa. All Moroccans headed there running. The king got in the boat and said to people “The last one of you turn off the light!”(my translation)

¹⁴⁶ *Nichane*, Issue 91, December 9-15, 2006.

This joke pokes fun at the King Mohammed VI who is often applauded by Western heads of state for his openness to the United States and Western Europe and his modern and moderate politics. As is the situation for many poor Moroccans who seek entry into Western Europe in order to improve their and their family's economic standing, the joke alleges that the economic situation in Morocco is in such disarray that the King himself wouldn't hesitate to leave as well if given the chance. This is a joke considered 'light' and not offensive to most Moroccans with whom I shared the article. Both the narrative of the joke, as well as the King's comment, is presented in Moroccan Arabic.

In contrast to some of the lighthearted jokes, the following joke is among the religious jokes that were considered defamatory to Islam and that caused a public outcry and government punitive measures against *Nichane* when they were published (28).

مات أبو هريرة ووقف أمام الملاك المسؤول عن نتائج أعماله في الدنيا. نظر الملاك الى الكومبيوتر. وقال له: جهنم. احتج أبو هريرة وطالب بمجيء النبي. جاء النبي ونظر الى الكومبيوتر وقال له: ما عندي ما ندير ليك جهنم. أخذ أبو هريرة يصرخ ويلوم النبي فنزل الله, فأخذ يشتكى إليه ويبيكي, عندها ربتوا على كتفيه وقالوا له: شوف لهيه. راك شاركتي معنا فالكاميرا الخفية.

Abu Hurairah¹⁴⁷ died. When he stood before the angel who judges your life. He [the angel] looked at the computer and told him "hell." Abu Hurairah started protesting and asked the prophet to come. The prophet came, looked at the computer and told him, "I can't do anything for you, it's hell." Abu Hurairah started screaming and blaming the prophet. So God came down and he [Abu Hurairah] started complaining to him and crying. They [God and the prophet] patted him [Abu Hurairah] on his shoulders and said "Look there. You are on candid camera." (my translation)

This joke arguably derives its humor from the implication that the prophet Mohammed and God would engage in everyday human silliness, such as candid camera.

¹⁴⁷ Abu Hurairah was a companion of the prophet Mohammed and has narrated a large number of hadith, reports on the teachings, words and deeds of the prophet.

I argue, however, that this sense is amplified by the use of language variation in the text. As indicated in the quote above, the narration of the text is presented in Standard Arabic, whereas the majority of quotes are presented in Moroccan Arabic.¹⁴⁸ In the telling of this joke the narrator, a mere human, uses Standard Arabic, the language variety associated with the divine and formal occasions, whereas the prophet and God are represented speaking Moroccan Arabic, the variety associated with things mundane and even vulgar. It is this surprising juxtaposition of language varieties with social categories that adds to the joke's comic effect. Indeed, one man I shared this joke with interrupted me as I had just started telling it to comment that jokes told in Standard Arabic are never going to be that funny. "It is a serious language" he said, "not one open to humor." He did crack a smile, however when I reached the Moroccan Arabic punch lines. While neither this man, nor most others with whom I shared this joke found it inflammatory, most said jokes that talk about the prophet or God were inappropriate to be shared in many social situations and should not be printed and distributed to a public audience.

Many of the jokes published about sex were described as *hchuma*. Take the following joke for example (27):

واحد الراجل فيق مراتو فالليل باش ينعس معاها. كالت ليه: "سمح ليا راه عندي موعد مع الطبيب ديال العيالات غدا وبغيت نبقا فريش." نعس الراجل ورجع فيق مراتو من بعد ربيع ساعة وگال ليها: "ياك ما عندكش موعد مع الدونتيسيت؟"

A man woke his wife during the night to have sex. She said to him "Sorry I have an appointment with the women's doctor¹⁴⁹ tomorrow and I want to be fresh."¹⁵⁰ The man went to sleep then woke up his wife again a quarter of an hour later and said to her, "But now hold on, you don't have an appointment with the dentist?"

¹⁴⁸ One repeated word in the joke 'computer' is presented as an English borrowing into Moroccan Arabic. The use of the English borrowing in the middle of the Standard Arabic narration may index the prophet's and God's modern relationship to technology.

¹⁴⁹ Meaning 'gynecologist.'

¹⁵⁰ This is a borrowing from the French word 'fraîche'.

This joke describes a woman who refuses to have sex with her husband when he wakes her up one night because she claims to have an appointment with the gynecologist the next day and wants to show up clean for it. The punch line occurs when her husband wakes her up a second time to point out that she doesn't have an appointment with the dentist, by which he implies that she could instead provide him with oral sex. Due to its topic, this joke is such that it usually would only be told between intimate, and most likely same-sex friends. Oral sex is considered a highly taboo subject in Morocco.

The joke is told in Moroccan Arabic, a point emphasized by the decision to represent certain words like the [gal] 'said' in “وگال ليها” [uga:l li:ha] ‘and he said to her’ according to its pronunciation in Moroccan Arabic, with initial [g] instead of [q]. Indeed, this is a joke that can perhaps only be imagined being told in Moroccan Arabic, as to tell such a joke in Standard Arabic would kill its edge and delivery by creating that buffer between the listener and a taboo subject. In fact, while discussing this issue of *Nichane* with college-aged students and Moroccan young professionals in Casablanca, they emphasized that most jokes are told in Moroccan Arabic. More specifically, jokes that deal with taboo subjects such as sex, could be made more titillating by recounting them in Moroccan Arabic, which serves to highlight their inappropriateness. Even in mainstream newspapers and magazines that almost exclusively published in Standard Arabic, exceptional examples of written Moroccan Arabic could often be found in political and humorous cartoons.

In addition to the joke about the prophet above, other jokes published in this issue also made use of linguistic variation, this time with the additional element of using

borrowed words from French to set up the punch line. In the following joke, French labels borrowed into Moroccan Arabic are used to refer to an unmarried woman

“mademoiselle” and a married woman “madame.” The joke was printed as follows (27):

سألت المرأة الخضار: "بشال الخيار أسيدي؟" فأجابها الخضار: "3 ديال الدراهم أمدام". سألت امرأة ثانية الخضار: "بشال الخيار أسيدي؟" أجابها الخضار: "3 ديال الدراهم مادموزيل". استغربت المرأة الأولى الأمر وسألته: "باش عرفتيني أنا مدام وهي مادموزيل؟" أجابها الخضار: "من شدة."

A woman asked the vegetable seller: “How much are cucumbers?” He answered her: “3 dirhams madame.” A second woman asked the vegetable seller: “How much are cucumbers?” He answered her: “3 dirhams mademoiselle.” The first woman was taken aback and asked the vegetable seller: “How did you know that I am a madame and she is a mademoiselle?” He answered her: “From the [firm] grip.”

The humor in this joke initially depends first on the background knowledge that when people buy vegetables from the market in Morocco they usually pick up and handle the produce themselves often before even asking about the price. The punch line centers on the insinuation that a *mademoiselle*, an unmarried woman, would not have had any previous sexual experience and would thus pick up and hold a cucumber in her hand delicately as a virgin might touch her husband on their wedding night. A *madame*, a married woman,¹⁵¹ on the other hand, would have had sexual experience touching her husband and it would show in how she handled the similarly shaped cucumber. The use of terms borrowed into Moroccan Arabic from French serves to highlight the contrast in married state of the two women.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ The double meaning of the word *madame* as it exists in English as both a married woman and as the manager of a prostitute house, is not widely shared by Arabic speaking Moroccans.

¹⁵² One afternoon in Tafza, while I shelling peas and gossiping with a group of elderly women outside, my neighbor shoed her teenage daughter away from the group and asked me to stop my tape recorder. She then proceeded to share with the group a joke that made one woman laugh so hard she cried. When the women realized I hadn't followed, one woman grabbed bunch of peapods in her hand and held them under her apron, moving them back in forth in a phallic gesture. Though I never did understand the nuance of the

Closing Nichane

Eight months following the controversial issue on jokes, another article was published, which captured the Moroccan government's attention. On August 4, 2007, all issues of *Nichane* in kiosks and over 50,000 issues of *Telquel* still in press were seized, and many destroyed, by a battalion of police officers at the request of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Communication. Ahmed Benchemsi, then the editor of the two magazines, was picked up by the police and held for 20 hours of intense questioning regarding an editorial he had written and published in both magazines. The editorial in question analyzed the latest speech by the King Mohammed VI¹⁵³ and resulted in charges of "insulting the King" being brought against him. In a subsequent editorial he published in *Telquel*, Benchemsi revealed that he was questioned repeatedly about his views on politics in Morocco, the role of political parties, and the separation of powers. He was also interrogated about the choice of writing the *Nichane* copy of his editorial in Moroccan Arabic, which the police argued was a 'disrespectful' language and thus inappropriate for analyzing a royal speech. It was made clear that Standard Arabic was the expected language to be used. The same concern was not mentioned for the French version of the same article that was printed in *Telquel*. In the end, Benchemsi was released and charges dropped.

The Moroccan government's swift and punitive reaction to Benchemsi's use of Moroccan Arabic to question the role of the king, who is believed by Moroccans to be a descendant of the prophet, shows clearly that using Moroccan Arabic in written form is not appropriate when the subject has to do with religion. It also suggests that the use of

joke, the general topic was clear, and I learned that while such jokes may be told among close friends, all married women and mothers, it was inappropriate language for young, unmarried, ears.

¹⁵³ The King's speeches are almost always delivered in Standard Arabic.

the written lower language, Moroccan Arabic, to criticize an oral speech in the high language, Standard Arabic, is also viewed as inappropriate. In the week following *Nichane's* closing, its sister publication *Telquel* published a memorial article about *Nichane*. In it, Benchemsi claimed that it was political pressure by the government that caused massive advertising boycotts against the magazine between September 2008 and September 2010 that resulted in an insurmountable loss in revenues (Benchemsi 2010). The Moroccan government's reactions to *Nichane's* choices of language, topics and images, as well as the reaction by most Moroccans, as discussed earlier in this chapter, suggest a general agreement in Morocco that there are certain contexts and topics for which Moroccan and Standard Arabic should remain separate. The following chapter of this dissertation will explore this theme in more detail and reflect on the possible future of Moroccan Arabic literacy practices.

CHAPTER SEVEN

#DarijaVSfous7a: Languages of Instruction in Public Schools

This dissertation has looked at recent changes in language use and literacy practices in a variety of contexts in Morocco. I have shown that in some places the emergence of new Moroccan Arabic literacy practices is occurring without much resistance, such as in the world of SMS text messages and advertising, whereas in other places its presence has proven controversial. I have questioned if these new literacy practices can be viewed as evidence for shifting ideologies of language in Morocco, or if, semiotic processes such as fractal recursivity serve to reframe written representations of Moroccan Arabic in ways that reproduce rather than destabilize ideologies of Moroccan diglossia.

This chapter offers a final context for addressing these issues, and in doing so, brings my dissertation full circle and back to the question of a possible role for Moroccan Arabic in the domain of education. It takes as its focus a discussion of the diverse reactions to a late 2013 news event: a set of educational recommendations made to King Mohammed VI which promoted the use of a codified form of Moroccan Arabic in public schools, starting in preschool and continuing through the first few years of primary school. Similar to the Passerelle literacy approach discussed in Chapter 2, the main goal of teaching young students to read and write in Moroccan Arabic would be the easier and more rapid acquisition of Standard Arabic. This would begin with a gradual transition from Moroccan to Standard Arabic beginning in third grade after which the use of

Moroccan Arabic would be phased out. However, unlike in the case of Passerelle, which was generally accepted with little overt criticism, the proposal to institutionalize a role for Moroccan Arabic in public schooling was largely met with open hostility and skepticism. As demonstrated in this chapter, the passionate commentary in the 10 months following the public release of this proposal suggest that Moroccans are committed to Standard Arabic and believe strongly in its value as the language of public education.

These reactions also vividly illustrate how debates about language in school are not simply about pedagogy, but rather point to broader social and political concerns. At stake in the debate about the language of instruction in Moroccan public schools are issues such as national identity, religion, political economy and modernity. There is a broad characterization that places French and English as modern global languages; Moroccan Arabic as a backward, provincial and restrictedly local language; and Standard Arabic somewhere in between the two. This chapter argues demonstrates how those lines of thinking fall apart as the ways by which language is talked about cut across these simple dichotomies. That many of these online reactions incorporate, entextualize and respond to written representations of Moroccan Arabic in a dynamic debate over the *present* role and function of language in education and its *future* consequences, shows moments in which individuals use Moroccan Arabic in creative ways that challenge the modern/backward ideologized contrast.

This chapter takes a detailed look at both metalinguistic commentary made in online social media comments about the debate as well as the linguistic form of the comments. It demonstrates that though the majority of online comments strongly criticized the notion of institutionalizing Moroccan Arabic in education, the use of

written Moroccan Arabic online and its juxtaposition to other language varieties is viewed as acceptable in online space. Here Moroccan Arabic becomes constitutive of a perceived intimacy in online social media and a basis by which to negotiate who has the authority to participate in such a debate in the first place.

Questioning the paths to education

In the summer and fall of 2013, the topic of formalizing a role for mother tongue languages in the domain of education resurfaced. On August 20th, King Mohammed VI gave a speech in which he drew attention to the educational crisis in Morocco and the urgent need for educational reform. As in the majority of his speeches, the king spoke in Standard Arabic to the Moroccan public. He noted that the road to education remained “ما يزال شاقا وطويلا” ‘still hard and long’ in part due to

الاختلالات الناجمة عن تغيير لغة التدريس في المواد العلمية، من العربية في المستوى الابتدائي والثانوي، إلى بعض اللغات الأجنبية، في التخصصات التقنية والتعليم العالي¹⁵⁴

imbalances caused by changing the language of instruction in science subjects, from Arabic in elementary and secondary education to some foreign languages in technical schools and Higher Education

The King pointed to the shifting of languages of instruction between Arabic (by which he refers to Standard Arabic), and “some foreign languages,” (by which I assume he mainly refers to French and English) as a central reason for the educational crisis. He suggested the need for

تأهيل التلميذ أو الطالب، على المستوى اللغوي... لتسهيل متابعته للتكوين الذي يتلقاه

rehabilitation of high school and university students at the linguistic level...to ease their transition into their post-high school education

¹⁵⁴ Quoted from the article “خطاب الملك محمد السادس بمناسبة الذكرى الستون لثورة الملك والشعب” at <http://www.assdae.com/23943>. (accessed 15 September 2014).

On October 4th and 5th 2013, less than two months following the King's speech, Nourredine Ayouch, well-known Moroccan business man¹⁵⁵, philanthropist and founder of the non-governmental organizations Zakoura Microcredit and Zakoura Education,¹⁵⁶ organized an international colloquium in Casablanca on the future of Moroccan education entitled "Le chemin de la réussite" 'The Pathway to Success.' The goal of the workshop was to brainstorm different areas of educational reform that ranged from teacher training, language, work skills, and innovative school models. Those present included local and international scholars, current and former members of the Moroccan Ministry of Education, as well as two current royal advisors, Omar Azziman and Fouad Ali El Himma. The attendance of Azziman and El Himma, combined with the timing of the conference shortly after the King's speech, sparked a significant amount of media speculation that the royal palace was backing the recommendations of the panel, a hypothesis Ayouch later denied.¹⁵⁷

One of the five panels included in the conference was entitled 'National Languages, Languages of the Future.' Its objective was to debate issues such as which languages should be taught, according to what method and what role mother tongue languages and foreign languages should play in education. The panel took as a starting point a statistic that has been frequently quoted since the King's speech: only 6% of 6th grade primary public school students have a command of Standard Arabic and only 1% of French (Fondation Zakoura Education 2013:7). The panel published numerous

¹⁵⁵ Ayouch runs one of the largest advertising agencies in Morocco.

¹⁵⁶ Zakoura Education aims to address the high drop-out rates among children in Moroccan public schools and to help reintegrate previously unschooled children into the public education system. It has founded more than 450 schools and provided adult literacy classes to adults since 2007.

¹⁵⁷ <http://www.yabiladi.com/articles/details/21268/darija-contre-langue-arabe-grand.html> (accessed 13 September 2014)

recommendations to address this shocking statistic including the position that children's mother tongue languages should be the language of instruction from preschool through the first years of primary school, after which Standard Arabic would be the language of instruction. This recommendation was made in order to assist the child in acquiring fundamental building blocks of knowledge because "l'enfant ne doit pas souffrir de barrière linguistique à l'apprentissage de la vie" 'the child shouldn't suffer from a linguistic barrier in learning throughout life' (7). To do so, the panel recommended that Moroccan Arabic be codified and steps for transitioning between Moroccan Arabic and Standard Arabic in the later years of primary school be established. They noted that pilot schools would be needed to test the transition between "spoken Arabic" (Moroccan Arabic) and "written Arabic" (Standard Arabic) before the program could be generalized.

In addition, the panel argued that the divisive policy of teaching scientific disciplines in Arabic at the high school level and in French at the university level needed to be eradicated, and that a linguistic continuity must be put in place during the entirety of schooling years. Interestingly, the panel concluded that English should become the principal language of instruction in scientific and technical fields in order for students to access a globalized world where English is preponderant. Despite the fact that changing the language of instructions in the sciences to English would pose its own challenges and obstacles to an education system plagued by lack of resources and support, few online commentaries raised the point or indeed, even referred to the English part of the proposal.

The panel's recommendations presented above revealed several, sometimes conflicting, assumptions regarding mother tongue languages and their role in education. For example, the suggestion to adopt Moroccan Arabic as the language of early

instruction implies that currently children are missing some critical building blocks for learning in the preschool and early primary school years due to the fact instruction is in Standard Arabic. Schulthies (2014) argued that an assumption inherent in calls to make Moroccan Arabic the language of instruction is that Moroccan “children struggled and dropped out of school because they were taught in a language they didn’t speak at home [Standard Arabic] and that the cognitive disconnect between the language of instruction and student’s ‘mother tongue’ impeded their development of critical reasoning and other skills central to future employment.”¹⁵⁸ It is posited that Moroccan Arabic would be best for early education and literacy because it would allow for easier and more direct transfer of information to a student. This reasoning recalls language ideologies discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 that associate Moroccan Arabic with immediate and unmediated access to information and Standard Arabic with a filtered and distanced access. In the panel’s proposal, Moroccan Arabic is associated with intimacy and, recognized as a mother tongue language, it is viewed as a more personal medium for interacting with young children. In contrast, Standard Arabic is presented as an obstacle to intrapersonal connection and learning. Embedded both in this reasoning and the position that Moroccan Arabic would need to be codified to become a language of instruction is the assumption that Moroccan and Standard Arabic are two different and separate languages, rather than varieties on a continuum. However, the supposition that a gradual shift from Moroccan Arabic to Standard Arabic in the later years of primary school would be unproblematic, reveals a contradictory ideology that posits Moroccan Arabic and

¹⁵⁸ Schulthies, Becky (2014). The Language of Instruction or the Instruction of Language? Reviving Official Language Debates in Morocco. *Section News. Anthropology News*, 55: e95–e132. doi: 10.1111/j.1556-3502.2014.55306.x (accessed 1 September 2014).

Standard Arabic as inherently similar, two varieties on a continuum, so that the transition from one to the other would be self-evident.

The role of Moroccan Arabic in formal education

Following the October colloquium, the TV show *Moubacharatan Maâkoum*¹⁵⁹ on 2M invited Nouredine Ayouch and the revered historian Abdallah Laroui to discuss the introduction of Moroccan Arabic in children's preschool education.¹⁶⁰ The debate took place on November 27, 2013 and was moderated by the show's host Jamaâ Goulahsen. It was estimated that 1.2 million Moroccans (14.2% of the viewing audience) followed the live debate on TV (Mathiau 2013).

Laroui was the first of the two men to speak. He opened the discussion by noting how the question of the possibility and usefulness of Moroccan Arabic in education and in political life had already been researched and debated during the time of the French Protectorate. He recounted that language experts and scholars had been brought together around the year 1934 to determine if it was possible to make Moroccan Arabic the official language of Morocco. They had decided it was inapplicable to the Moroccan situation for numerous reasons, one of which was the obstacle of choosing which the temporal placement of the current debate into the past by linking it to a French colonial agenda served to frame the live debate as superfluous from the start. He insinuated that not only did the idea of institutionalizing Moroccan Arabic smack of being a vehicle for foreign (French) neo-colonial agendas, it also was a subject that the French themselves had rejected decades earlier. Referring to vernacular varieties of Arabic as "al-'a:mia" in

¹⁵⁹ The title of the show is in Standard Arabic.

¹⁶⁰ Though I watched the debate live when it took place in November, my analysis is based on a recorded copy of the debate downloaded online from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ad6bq5BbDs (accessed 3 December 2013).

general, Laroui argued that it would be pointless to use Arabic letters to represent spoken Arabic officially in writing. It would make more practical sense, he implied, to just write Standard Arabic instead. If Roman letters were used to write vernaculars, and said vernaculars became the languages of instruction, Laroui warned it would

“ابتعدنا من الموروث الثقافي العربي” ‘take us away from the Arabic cultural heritage.’

Moroccan Arabic was thus presented by Laroui as incapable of linking past knowledge to the present, unlike Standard Arabic. During the debate, Laroui directly quoted scholars in Arabic and French to support his position.

Ayouch’s participation in the debate began when he was asked to speak about his qualifications to participate in a discussion of language policy, considering that he is viewed as a man of business rather than a respected scholar like Laroui. Ayouch described his experience of over 20 years working with the nongovernmental organization he founded, Fondation Zakoura Education, and the trips overseas he participated in to learn about other mother tongue language programs. He described field experiences he had had visiting Zakoura schools throughout Morocco and stressed the importance of providing education that is locally specific. For example, he emphasized the need of training local teachers to provide instruction in the mother tongue language variety spoken by students, rather than continuing the current policy of assigning teachers to public schools irrespective of linguistic or cultural difference. Ayouch’s comments strongly linked Moroccan Arabic to local spaces. Throughout the debate, Ayouch frequently cited both UNESCO’s 1953 call to use mother tongue languages in primary education and research conducted on the topic as support for his argument to make official the use of Moroccan Arabic in primary education. Laroui responded to Ayouch’s

frequent references to UNESCO and other international actors with overt criticism, commenting that the Moroccan situation is unlike other cases where mother tongue education has been implemented.

While the debate had been announced in the press as a probable duel, in the end the two interlocutors agreed on the main premise that Moroccan Arabic does have a place in the education system but differed in how they imagined it. Both recognized the education crisis facing Morocco, and agreed that mother tongue language varieties are necessary to be used *orally* in the preschool years and the first two years of primary school to introduce children to schooling and teaching them the fundamental building blocks of learning. However, Laroui denied the need to officialize an oral role for Moroccan Arabic in education, because he claimed “hal hadihi al-muba:dhara na:fila aw superflu” ‘isn’t this initiative needless, in excess... or superfluous,’ in part because it is already occurring in practice. He pushed instead for teacher training to use a simplified form of Arabic as the language of instruction that would be easy for children to learn and understand. Thus, the debate became a nuanced negotiation of what the language of instruction in the primary schooling years would look like. Ayouch supported an “elevated” Moroccan Arabic that would be codified and could be used in writing whereas Laroui rejected the idea of writing Moroccan Arabic and instead argued for the creation of a “simplified” Standard Arabic for oral use.

Laroui argued against the codification of Moroccan Arabic in primary education because of his strong conviction that the primary role for oral communication in school is to access the written word. For him, education and learning are inherently connected with written texts, and thus with Standard Arabic. He argued that Moroccan Arabic

cannot be a vehicle for higher learning because it is not a language ‘of culture’ that can be classed at the same level as other foreign languages.¹⁶¹ He referred to Moroccan Arabic frequently as “folklorique” ‘folkloric’ and contrasted it with ‘knowledge.’ During the debate, Laroui cautioned that it would take over a century for Moroccan Arabic to become a true language of writing and that in the interim Moroccans would be cut off from the Qur’an, their Arabic language textual history, as well as a larger community of Standard Arabic users.

Framing the debate in the press

Both immediately preceding and following the televised debates, a flurry of articles were published debating the role, form and use of languages in Moroccan education. Interestingly, the live debate itself was framed as being in conversation with newspaper articles that had been published the week preceding the debate. At intervals during the debate, seven different Arabic language newspaper articles were displayed on a large screen located behind the show’s moderator. All of the headlines were in Standard Arabic.

¹⁶¹ <http://www.monoeil.ma/12-millions-de-marocains-ont-regarde-le-duel-ayouchlaroui-hier-soir-sur-2m/> (accessed 11 September 2014).



Figure 16: Screen clipping from the debate between Ayouch and Laroui in which an article from the Arabic newspaper *Assabah* with the headline “Teaching in Darija... chaos” can be seen in the background.

The headlines were foregrounded in a text box and included the following (the approximate time the headlines appeared during the 1hr 32 min recording of the show are indicated in parentheses):

(min 9:04) ¹⁶² الدارجة لغة للتدريس في المغرب؟
 Darija, could it be a language of instruction in Morocco?

(min 10:31) ¹⁶³ التدريس بالدارجة... الزوبعة
 Teaching in Darija... chaos¹⁶⁴

(min 14:34) عيوش: الدارجة حل جذري للهدر المدرسي
 Ayouch: Darija is a radical answer to school dropout

¹⁶² <http://www.aawsat.com/home/article/9637> (article published 15 November, 2013; accessed 18 September 2014).

¹⁶³ http://www.assabah.press.ma/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49238:2013-11-25-15-09-06&catid=1:cat-courrier&Itemid=580 (article published 25 November 2013; accessed 18 September 2014).

¹⁶⁴ The Standard Arabic noun الزوبعة can translate to ‘whirlwind’ or ‘storm’ in English. Moroccans I queried associated the word with the notion of ‘chaos’ or ‘tumultuousness.’

حمودي: التدريس بالدارجة مستحيل منهجياً¹⁶⁵ (min 26:02)
Hamoudi: Teaching in Darija is methodologically impossible

أعتماد الدارجة حظ وتبخيس من قيمة المغرب والمغاربة عليك أن تعثر على سيويوه جديد قادر على دراسة الدارجة
(min 42:10)

The integration of Darija [in education] greatly cheapens the value of Morocco and Moroccans, you have to find a new Sibawayh¹⁶⁶ for the study of Darija

These headlines, chosen only from Arabic language newspapers, clearly show the sense of speculation and critique provoked by the idea to incorporate Moroccan Arabic in public education through the use of words like ‘radical,’ ‘chaos,’ and ‘methodological impossibility.’ Such descriptions aligned with the views presented by Laroui and cast doubt on the claims for a positive role for Moroccan Arabic as made by Ayouch.

Also included in the headlines displayed on the screen was one from the newspaper *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia* that published a series of five articles from November 20-25, 2013 based on an interview with Abdallah Laroui about the future role of Moroccan Arabic in public education. For years, Laroui had maintained silence on the topic of Moroccan Arabic in education, until his acceptance to partake in the debate with Ayouch. Thus, the release of such an extensive interview provided the public with background on Laroui’s point of view to balance the amount of information that had circulated in French and Arabic regarding the colloquium recommendations by Zakoura Education. Included in the series of articles were numerous animated photographs of Laroui looking as if he were caught in the middle of a passionate debate and heatedly fighting for the cause of Standard Arabic.

¹⁶⁵ http://www.assabah.press.ma/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49232:2013-11-25-14-21-48&catid=1:cat-courrier&Itemid=580 (article published 25 November 2013; accessed 20 September 2014).

¹⁶⁶ Sibawayh was a famous linguist and grammarian of the Arabic language in the 8th century.

By not presenting any headlines countering this viewpoint, the TV show framed the debate, as well as the position of the moderator and the TV station 2M, to be aligning with Laroui. While the vast majority of the articles published before the debate critiqued Ayouch's position, a select few supported Moroccan Arabic as a language of instruction. For example, the writer Driss Ksikes argued that "enseigner d'abord en darija reviendrait à démocratiser la langue" 'teaching first in Darija will serve to democratize the language',¹⁶⁷ but he cautioned that significant work by linguists will need to be done first to standardize the language. Ksikes' position on the topic is not surprising, given that he was a co-founder of the "Moroccan Arabic" magazine *Nichane* discussed in Chapter 6. Another article claimed that if Moroccan Arabic were given the status of an official language in the constitution, "la darija peut au moins servir d'idiome de base pour former une génération de Marocains à l'aise dans leur identité" 'Moroccan Arabic could at least serve as the base language to create a generation of Moroccans who were comfortable with their identity'.¹⁶⁸ In fact, it is not uncommon to hear Moroccans employ the metaphor of schizophrenia to illustrate the frustration and loss of identity experienced by children who, when they enter public schools, are forced to abandon their mother tongue language and interact in a language foreign to them in the classroom.¹⁶⁹ Some articles supported the pedagogical reasoning behind the proposal to introduce Moroccan Arabic as a language of instruction. One article discussed the commonly heard critique that Ayouch's goal was to marginalize the role and importance of Standard Arabic in Moroccan life and clarified Ayouch's position that Moroccan Arabic is the best way to

¹⁶⁷ http://telquel.ma/2013/11/26/enseignement-la-darija-fait-debat_9703 (accessed 8 September 2014).

¹⁶⁸ http://telquel.ma/2013/11/22/darija-coran-et-politique_9558 (accessed 11 September 2014).

¹⁶⁹ http://telquel.ma/2013/11/22/darija-coran-et-politique_9558 (accessed 11 September 2014).

transition to Classical Arabic, not as a replacement for it.¹⁷⁰ Notably, all of the articles I located discussing a positive role for Moroccan Arabic in education were published in French.¹⁷¹

Following the live debate between Ayouch and Laroui, most news sources concluded that Laroui had a stronger and better articulated argument. An article reporting an interview with Moussa Chami, a linguist who has worked in the training of Moroccan public school teachers and who in 2007 created l'Association Marocaine pour la Défense et l'Illustration de la Langue Arabe (The Moroccan Association for the Defense and Illustration of the [Classical] Arabic Language), underscored a number of the arguments presented by Laroui in the debate. Chami, adopting the same language as Laroui, agreed that the question of using Moroccan Arabic in primary education represented "un faux débat" 'a false debate,' and supported Laroui's characterization that the most common language used in the classroom is "un arabe un peu vulgarisé, simplifié" 'an Arabic that has been made a little cruder and more simplified.'¹⁷² This wording attempts to negate any current role, oral or written, for Moroccan Arabic in the classroom and to minimize perceptions of difference between the oral and written varieties of language in school. It can also be perceived as an attempt to erase the current presence of Moroccan Arabic in schools, because failure to do so would evoke a sense of disjuncture. One article claimed for example that it was "un débat qui a confirmé le statu quo, celui qui consiste à nier les problèmes, et à prendre acte d'une forme de convergence

¹⁷⁰ http://telquel.ma/2013/11/26/enseignement-la-darija-fait-debat_9703 (accessed 8 September 2014).

¹⁷¹ This may in part be due to the fact that the French language news websites often have more comprehensive search engines than their Arabic counterparts. I do not believe this accounts for the entire discrepancy; however, as attention to which articles were included in embedded links in posts, both in Arabic and French, revealed the same pattern.

¹⁷² http://telquel.ma/2014/01/16/debat-quelles-langues-pour-le-maroc_10487 (accessed 14 September 2014).

des deux langues, darija orale et arabe écrit” ‘a debate that confirms the status quo, which consists of denying the problems, and chooses a path of convergence between the two languages, oral Moroccan Arabic and written [Standard] Arabic.’¹⁷³ Speaking with regard to standardizing Moroccan Arabic, Chami echoed Laroui in his reservations: “Quant à adopter ou constitutionnaliser le marocain, ce serait revenir sur toute une culture. Ce serait aller à contre-courant de la religion pratiquée par l’énorme majorité du peuple marocain” ‘In reference to adopting or constitutionalizing Moroccan Arabic, it would be the denial of an entire culture. It would be to go against the religious current as practiced by the grand majority of the Moroccan people.’¹⁷⁴ Again, Moroccan Arabic is associated with a sense of backwardness and an impediment to progress as well as a threat to religious identity.

In addition to critiques of the institutionalization of Moroccan Arabic in public education, a number of news articles framed the debate through polarized characterizations of Laroui and Ayouch that included references to their linguistic capabilities. Laroui was praised as being “l’émminent intellectuel” ‘the eminent intellectual,’ “l’un des derniers grands intellectuels que compte ce pays” ‘one of the last great intellectuals that this country has’, “bilingue, brillant”¹⁷⁵ ‘bilingual and brilliant,’ “un érudit solitaire, farouche”¹⁷⁶ ‘a shy, solitary erudite’ “un penseur connu au delà des frontières” ‘a thinker known outside [Morocco’s] borders’ and “un homme posé, qui

¹⁷³ <http://www.yabiladi.com/articles/details/21268/darija-contre-langue-arabe-grand.html> (accessed 14 September 2014).

¹⁷⁴ http://telquel.ma/2014/01/16/debat-quelles-langues-pour-le-maroc_10487 (accessed 14 September 2014).

¹⁷⁵ <http://Int.ma/blog/fahd-yata/polemique-linguistique-exit-la-darija/> (accessed 10 September 2014).

¹⁷⁶ <http://economia.ma/fr/bg/driss-ksikes/le-savant-et-l-entrepreneur> (accessed 12 September 2014).

respire la science par tous ses pores¹⁷⁷ ‘a poised man, who breathes science through all his pores.’ In this example, the characterization of Laroui’s linguistic ability (brilliant and bilingual) maps onto existing ideologies of the language the man is seen to support. Laroui is associated with science, education, culture and global space – characterizations which align with ideologies of Standard Arabic as the language of high culture, a scientific past and a bearer of knowledge across time (both religious and scientific). In contrast, Ayouch was presented as “un businessman libéral”¹⁷⁸ ‘a liberal businessman’, “l’homme d’action et de la société civile”¹⁷⁹ ‘the man of action and of civil society’ and a “darijophile”¹⁸⁰ ‘Darijaphile.’¹⁸¹ Such characterizations ground him and Moroccan Arabic in the present time and local space.

Multimedia reactions

Not only was the debate entextualized through the use of headlines from the Arabic news press in the background, but as it was aired live on television, immediate viewer reactions submitted by SMS text messaging periodically ran in a banner at the bottom of the television screen. All of the SMS messages displayed presented views against the institutionalization of Moroccan Arabic in public schools.¹⁸² For example, *Abdelallah* from Rabat wrote:

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.medias24.com/IDEES/Debats/pdf6697-Darija-Le-debat-Laroui-Ayouch-conforte-le-statu-quo-actuel.html> (accessed 13 September 2014).

¹⁷⁸ <http://economia.ma/fr/bg/driss-ksikes/le-savant-et-l-entrepreneur> (accessed 12 September 2014).

¹⁷⁹ <http://www.medias24.com/IDEES/Debats/pdf6697-Darija-Le-debat-Laroui-Ayouch-conforte-le-statu-quo-actuel.html> (accessed 13 September 2014).

¹⁸⁰ http://telquel.ma/2014/01/14/les-hommes-de-2013-ils-ont-lance-le-debat_10463 (accessed 10 September 2014).

¹⁸¹ This word with its Greek origin suffix “phil” was used to emphasize Ayouch’s love for and championing of Moroccan Arabic.

¹⁸² Given the overwhelming negative reactions to Ayouch’s proposal in the press and online commentaries before the debate, it is not necessarily surprising that all the SMS messages displayed were also against or cautious about the proposal. It is open to speculation if any viewers (given the demographics of the

من يتحدثون عن التعليم بالدارجة يريدون قتل التعليم بصفة عامة
*Those who talk about teaching in Moroccan Arabic, they want to kill
education in general.*

Abdelrazaq from Marrakech claimed,

إدخال الدارجة إلى المدارس ستكون أكبر جريمة ترتكب في حق اللغة العربية للأجيال القادمة
*The introduction of Moroccan Arabic in school will be the biggest crime
committed against the Arabic language for future generations.*

While anxieties revealed in the two SMS messages quoted above were focused on the effect such a policy might have on the future of education and Arabic language, anxieties regarding how such a plan would be implemented were also expressed. For example, one viewer texted, ‘what variety of Moroccan Arabic will we adopt, [one from] Marrakech, the north, the Rifi [mountains], Oujda?’ Astutely, this viewer highlighted the challenge variation within what was being referred to as “Darija,” “Moroccan Arabic” and/or “al-‘a:mia” posed to plans to institutionalize Moroccan Arabic. Indeed, neither Ayouch nor the panel’s recommendation discussed how regional, socioeconomic, urban/rural, etc. variation¹⁸³ would be dealt with in the processes of standardizing of “a” variety of Moroccan Arabic to be used in education nationwide.

All of the texts were written in Standard Arabic with Arabic script. For the audience viewing the show from their TV and computer screens, the fact that all the SMS messages were in Standard Arabic supported a view of Standard Arabic as able to address current issues and of Moroccans’ ability to effectively communicate in it. It also localized the debate as belonging to (educated) Arabic speakers and not to those who have low Arabic literacy skills nor to those who use French as their language of

viewers for this TV show) would have texted messages in support of institutionalizing Moroccan Arabic in education.

¹⁸³ See Chapter 1 for a discussion of variation in Moroccan Arabic.

communication. As discussed in Chapter 3, the dominant SMS conventions in personal communication between friends included the use of Moroccan Arabic (or Tamazight) in text messages, with frequent code-switching between languages, and a clear preference for the Roman script. The SMS text messages displayed during the debate thus stand in contrast with everyday texting practice, and the use of the Roman script to represent Arabic, in public space. It is possible that viewers who submitted SMS messages in hopes they would be included on the show specifically chose Standard Arabic due to a desire to appear well educated; because it indexed their position on the debate against the use of Moroccan Arabic in school; and/or because they identified the context in which their SMS text would be published (in an Arabic medium debate on public TV) one in which according to ideologies of Moroccan diglossia Standard Arabic was the only appropriate language. Given that staff of *Moubacharatan Maâkoum* served as intermediaries in the reception, selection and projection of the SMS messages during the debate it is unclear if the show's editors chose those particular SMS submissions to display in part because of their language form and content or if the messages were edited by the station according to a purist Standard Arabic ideology before being displayed in the ticker at the bottom of the screen. It is possible that some viewers texted their comments in Moroccan Arabic (either in Arabic or Roman script), but they were not chosen for display.

In addition to the SMS commentary shown during the live debate, reactions in the online media were swift and came in numerous forms including tweets, Facebook posts, video and written blogs, and letters to the editor of online magazines. Unlike the broadcast SMS commentary, these responses were written in a wide variety of language varieties

and scripts, with some comments incorporating multiple varieties and scripts in the same post. As in the news press and the SMS messages displayed during the debate, although some supported Ayouch, most comments I read favored Laroui. In one online blog, for example, Ayouch was criticized for disturbing a hornet's nest and opening "Pandora's box."¹⁸⁴ Other blogs and Facebook comments revealed concerns regarding how the standardization of Moroccan Arabic would be put into effect, and anxieties as to the social consequences. Many people questioned how Moroccan Arabic should be written, right to left or left to right, and if Arabic or Roman characters should be used. Some feared Standard Arabic would now become firmly placed as a "foreign language" if Moroccan Arabic became a medium of instruction and that eventually it would die out. It was claimed the loss of Standard Arabic in Morocco would isolate Moroccans from other Arabic speakers worldwide. There were critiques that this idea was a mere distraction from more pressing and critical issues in the education system such as teacher training, funding and the universal availability of proper and suitable educational facilities for all.

Some critics also argued that the push to institutionalize Moroccan Arabic in the classroom was tailored to advantage particular social classes or political interests. One man claimed in his blog that Ayouch, being a business man, was taking advantage of a "golden opportunity for business fat cats to make money out of new textbooks, dictionaries, and other materials needed for the new language."¹⁸⁵ A number of people commented that it would be a waste of public funds to research, standardize and implement Moroccan Arabic in the school system. When I mentioned this point of view

¹⁸⁴ <http://boutaharnouredine.blogspot.com/2013/12/modern-standard-arabic-or-slang-in.html> (accessed 05 September 2014).

¹⁸⁵ <http://boutaharnouredine.blogspot.com/2013/12/modern-standard-arabic-or-slang-in.html> (accessed 10 September 2014).

to a Moroccan friend of mine who is a father of two primary school students at a Moroccan public school, he explained to me that he feared such a policy would keep those who couldn't afford private schooling for their children locked in a cycle of low education and unemployment. 'Our children already graduate without French or English, what will happen if they don't have Standard Arabic either? What future do they have?'

The following excerpted chain of comments was made in response to a post on a Facebook page for Abdellah Laroui that provided the link of an online video of the previous evening's debate with Ayouch. The comments displayed below demonstrate the passionate and highly critical response the debate received in online media.

 **Aziz Boussadra** ✕
 ليونيسكو، ليونيسكو ليونيسكو سير تموت انت وليونيسكو..... مناظرة لا علاقة مفكر كبير مع
 قلوبش..... لفلوس اش كتدير هده 100% توصيات يهودية غريبة هدفها ارجاع المغرب الى الورا
 والكل يعرف عائلة علوش وافكارهم والسلام..... كون جات هاد الفكرة من المختصين بحال
 العروي نرحب بهاالمغرب هو لي بقا لهم باعين يديرو لينا حرب اهلية

See Translation
 November 28, 2013 at 8:32pm · Like · 3

 **Zine El Abidine Elhaddad** darija mazyan tkon fel madariss o tkon hiya la langue
 dyalna , machi amazighiya ola français ola chi haja khera ,brite chi nhar na3tiw
 kima li darija dyalna , b7al nass fe europa 3atyin 9ima lora dyalhom , b7al holandiya
 ola almaniya ola danmarkiya

November 28, 2013 at 8:36pm · Like

 **Abdelaadim Poéte Horaira**
 معذرة أرجو ألا تحكم على المناظرة كونها دون المستوى والأحرى أن نقول مناظرة غير
 متكافئة، فشتان بين العالم المبرز والوصولي الانتهازي، العربية لغة القرآن وهي ستبقى
 محفوظة مثلما حفظ الله تعالى القرآن، رغم كيد الكائدين وتامر الأندال.

See Translation
 November 28, 2013 at 8:40pm · Edited · Like · 8

 **Mohammed El Hajjaji** lah i3ti lmkom zizal ntoma o l7okoma o l9raya d l7abs
 dyalkom ana bghit lmaghrib ikhtafi mn lwojod matkhafoch ta ana baghi nkhtafi galk
 l9raya z**** machi l9raya

November 28, 2013 at 8:44pm · Like

 **Ghandi El Habib**
 تبين بالواضح تهافت نبيل علوش الذي لا يحمل سوى أفكار طوباوية ليست لها علاقة
 بالواقع.على العموم المناظرة ليست في المستوى فقط لأن هرما مثل المبرز عبد الله العروي
 كان يستحق ندا حقيقيا له، وفي حالة العكس كان من الواجب لضمان نجاح البرنامج على
 الأقل أن يستدعى لوحده،وهذا ما أدركه مقدم البرنامج نفسه.

See Translation
 November 28, 2013 at 8:47pm · Like · 2

Figure 17: Facebook comments in Moroccan and Standard Arabic¹⁸⁶

Aziz Boussadra UNESCO, UNESCO, UNESCO..... go die you and UNESCO.....A debate with no comparison between a big thinker and “Quellouch.”¹⁸⁷ What money does! This is 100% Jewish-Western¹⁸⁸ with the goal of taking Morocco back. And everybody knows “Allouch’s”¹⁸⁹ family and their ideas, and that’s it..... If this idea had come from specialists like Laroui, I would welcome it.... Morocco is what’s left for them [the Western foreign powers] they want to provoke a civil war.

¹⁸⁶ https://www.facebook.com/Abdellah.Laroui/posts/10152049625589441?stream_ref=5 (accessed 8 April 2014).

¹⁸⁷ “Quellouch” is a word meaning ‘exhibitionist’ in Moroccan Arabic. In this post it is being used as a play on words for its phonetic resemblance to Ayouch’s name and its implication that he enjoys putting himself in the public spotlight.

¹⁸⁸ This mention of Jewish-Western influence refers to the fact that Ayouch’s ex-wife is Jewish.

¹⁸⁹ “Allouch” is a word meaning “sheep” in a variety of Arabic. This is another play on words with Ayouch’s name that insinuates that Ayouch’s family tends to blindly follow the West.

Zine El Abidine Elhaddad *It's good to have Darija in schools, and it's good to have it as our language [our official language], not Amazighiya or French or anything else, I want the day to come where we give value to our Darija, like people in Europe that value their own language, like Dutch, German, or Danish...*

Abdelaadim Poéte Horaira I beg your pardon, I wish you wouldn't judge this debate as being of sub-par, but rather as being of non-equals. What a difference between a world of excellence/pre-eminence [Laroui] and one of opportunism, Arabic is the language of the Qur'an, and it will remain protected as God has protected the Qur'an, despite the machination of the sly and the conspiracy of the scoundrel.

Mohammed El Hajjaji *May God descend an earthquake upon you and on your government and the prison-type education of yours.¹⁹⁰ I want Morocco to disappear from this earth [from being] don't worry I too want to disappear they say it's education it's z****¹⁹¹ not education*

Chandi El Habib [the debate] clearly showed Nabil Allouch's¹⁹² incoherence who only holds utopian ideas that have no relation with reality. In general, the debate is of bad quality only because a pyramid like the outstanding Abdellah Laroui deserved to be paired with someone of the same caliber. And if not, then to ensure the success of the program they could have at least invited him [Laroui] by himself. And that's what the show's host realized himself.

The comments above clearly reveal the vehemence with which many people reacted to and engaged with the debate. With the apparent exception of *Zine El Abidine Elhaddad*, one of the few who posted a comment supporting Moroccan Arabic as an official language of Morocco¹⁹³, the comments above are strongly against Ayouch's proposal and highly critical of his competency and motives for participating in the debate.

¹⁹⁰ By this Mohammed is saying that the quality of present day public education is very bad.

¹⁹¹ "z****" refers to a pejorative Moroccan word for penis that is strongly considered *hchuma*. Since *Aziz Boussadra* represented most of the word with stars, I can not speculate on the exact form of the word he was indicating. Discussions with a number of different Moroccans has assured me, however, that the word has the meaning "my dick" in this context is clearly pejorative.

¹⁹² This comment entextualizes the joke made in the earlier comment by *Aziz Boussadra* that Ayouch is a sheep. Nabil is the name of Ayouch's son, the famous filmmaker, who is also culturally half Jewish. It is unclear if the use of the name Nabil was a mistake, or if *Chandi El Habib* was purposefully highlighting the Jewish family connection.

¹⁹³ Unlike the other facebook users quoted, *Zine Al Abidine Elhaddad* focused the terms of his comment on Moroccan Arabic (Darija) vs. Tamazight/French, not on Moroccan Arabic vs. Standard Arabic. Thus, it is unclear from this comment what his position on Ayouch's proposal is.

Ayouch is characterized as incompetent, sly, and unrealistic, as well as a neo-colonial linked with UNESCO, an exhibitionist and an opportunist. The comments made by *Aziz Boussadra*, *Abdelaadim Poéte Horaira*, and *Mohammed El Hajjaji* show that many Moroccans are aware that development and education projects originating from outside Morocco are loaded with outside political interests and underlined by language ideologies that may run counter to the those held by Moroccans. Indeed as discussed in Chapter 2, literacy and language policies have often become narratives used to justify other colonial projects (Collins and Blot 2003).

Also of interest in this comment chain is the alternation of posts written in Moroccan Arabic (both in Roman and Arabic scripts) with posts in Standard Arabic (all written in Arabic script). Two of the Moroccan Arabic posts, the one by *Aziz Boussadra* written in Arabic script and the one by *Mohammed El Hajjaji* written in Roman script, are perceived as particularly intimate and passionate comments as compared to the ones in Standard Arabic. As Adil, a Moroccan friend of mine¹⁹⁴ who read these posts with me, explained, “we can’t get emotional in [Standard] Arabic because it doesn’t sound natural, it doesn’t reflect your emotions even if you speak fluently in Standard Arabic. Your audience does not, and you will come off ridiculous, as someone unable to genuinely express his emotions.” *Aziz’s* use of the word “*quellouch*” ‘exhibitionist,’ because of both its meaning and its moderately *hchuma* and inappropriate connotations, functions metapragmatically to tell the reader, in Adil’s words, “Let’s drop the P.C. [political correctness] crap and start speaking straight!” Indicating *Mohammed El Hajjaji’s* comment with his finger, Adil argued that if this had been written in Standard Arabic it would have been as if *Mohammed* was cursing in Shakespearean English; he would have come off as a “pussy.” In fact, *Aziz* included a strongly

¹⁹⁴ Adil is fluent in Moroccan Arabic, Standard Arabic, French and English. His comments to me were made in English.

hchuma word in Moroccan Arabic for ‘my dick’ in his comment and indicated his awareness of the inappropriateness of the term by representing four out of five letters with “*.” I argue that Aziz uses *hchuma* language, which normally would only appropriately be heard in intimate conversation among close friends, purposefully in a public, online space to make his comment have a great effect on the reader. Adil’s remarks aligned with the commonly heard claim by both Moroccans and foreigners alike, that Moroccans are particularly emotional and tend to talk loudly and with a lot of hand gestures to emphasize what they are talking about. Moroccan Arabic is strongly associated with notions of intimacy, which as demonstrated can be further accentuated through the use of *hchuma* language, even in online communication. People who post in Moroccan Arabic, regardless of script in this particular case, may be viewed by Moroccan readers as exposing themselves more to their interlocutor and expressing themselves without restraint than if they had posted in Standard Arabic.

Tweeting #inDarija, #aboutDarija

As seen in the characterizations of Ayouch and Laroui presented in newspaper articles and Facebook comments above, the way each expressed himself linguistically during the debate was also the focus of numerous critiques. In the days leading up to and following the debate, the issue was responded to vigorously on Twitter in the form of tweets. Tweeting is an asynchronous online form of communication that, like SMS messages, is limited to 140 characters. Tweets are often user-coded by topics or main subject, which are marked by a hashtag “#.” Both hashtags and tweets originally could only be made in left-to-right Roman script, but later became available in right-to-left Arabic script in March 2012.¹⁹⁵ The tweets I surveyed about the debate were mostly

¹⁹⁵ <https://blog.twitter.com/2012/twitter-now-available-in-arabic-farsi-hebrew-and-urdu> (accessed 10 September 2014).

marked with the hashtags #AYLA (which stands for Ayouch and Laroui), #ayouch, #laroui, #darija and #2M in Roman script and #الدارجة العروية # عيوش in Arabic script.

In a number of tweets the language variety used by Ayouch and Laroui became a point of comparison and critique itself. Such comments were not simply evaluations of language use, but rather indexed other social and political issues embedded in the debate. In her work on television viewing commentaries in Morocco and Lebanon, Schulthies showed that critiques of language use by politicians and news announcers were not just about the linguistic specificities of a particular utterance, but rather reflected concerns about national identity, neo-imperialism and morality (Schulthies 2009). Similarly, comments posted about the debate revealed anxieties about Moroccan national and religious identity as well as modernity.

In general, Laroui was praised for his choice to speak in a relatively high register of Moroccan Arabic that drew from Standard Arabic but did not betray a reliance on French syntax or idioms to convey meaning.¹⁹⁶ For example, in the first tweet displayed in Figure 18 below, *Seddik KHALFI* claims that ‘without giving my opinion on the debate, at this moment, on set there is one whose language I understand the language, the other not.’ Note that he marked his tweet with the hashtag “#DarijaVSfous7a”, i.e. ‘Darija vs. Fusha’ a tag which locates the central opposition of the debate between two varieties of Arabic (vs. between Arabic and French or Arabic and Tamazight).¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Interestingly, although Laroui’s choice to quote directly from sources written in French during the debate did raise some negative comments, his credibility was not thus undermined. The act was described in online media “as a shame”, but was tolerated as evidence of his “bilingualism” and excellence as an internationally renowned scholar.

¹⁹⁷ In addition to marking the main topic of a tweet, hashtags can also be used to express side commentaries on the main message, disclaimers or what a New Yorker magazine article described as an “extension of the muttered-into-a-handkerchief” verbal play (Orlean 2010) in which a hashtagged word is made to seem as if it accidentally slipped out.



Figure 18: Tweets about the language use of Ayouch and Laroui during the debate.

Seddik KHALFI's tweet was almost immediately responded to by a follower *Najlae B.B.* who claimed 'personally, I don't understand at all what Ayouch says :) for me it is French translated into Darija on Google Translate.' By joking that Ayouch would need Google Translate to express himself in Moroccan Arabic, *Najlae B.B.*'s comment above suggests that Ayouch is a francophone, (elite) outsider who is complicit in a French neo-colonial agenda. She uses language as a way to delegitimize Ayouch as someone who should not have a voice in the debate. In doing so, *Najlae B.B.*'s tweet recasts the debate as centrally involving the opposition between French and Arabic, an opposition that was erased in many of the responses that took the Moroccan Arabic vs. Standard Arabic as the main opposition. Her joke that Ayouch speaks French better than Arabic recalls other critiques made in the press and online that as a father who enrolled

his children in the French Mission schools in Casablanca, Ayouch is disconnected with Moroccans whose children attend public schools and any language policies made would not affect him or his family personally.¹⁹⁸ For example, YouTube user *Cpe S Bennour* posted a comment below the full length video of the debate on YouTube questioning "Est-ce que vos petits enfants vont aussi subir cette torture Mr AYOUCH? ou Ils seront [sic] privilégier [sic] dans leurs écoles privés [sic] comme vos enfants"¹⁹⁹ 'Are your grandchildren also going to be subject to this torture Mr. AYOUCH? or will they be privileged in their private schools like your children [were].'

It is important to note that tweets criticizing the language of Ayouch were not limited to those posted in French. Tweets were also written in Moroccan Arabic, often using Roman characters, and sometimes with code-switching into French. For example, *B_M* comments in a mixture of Moroccan Arabic and French that: 'The Moroccan Arabic of Ayouch, it is Daddy who sent the car keys [to] the chauffeur so that the boss [Ayouch] can come and check in with his secretary.'



Figure 19: Tweet written in Moroccan Arabic with Roman script criticizing Ayouch.

¹⁹⁸ See for example the video blog posted online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJGH6pLqqXg> (accessed 2 September 2014).

¹⁹⁹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ad6bq5BbDs (accessed 12 October 2014).

In this tweet, the French origin words were marked as code-switches vs. borrowings due to their transcription following normative French orthography. A Moroccan elementary school teacher I spoke with interpreted *B_M*'s frequent use of code-switching to French in this tweet as showing an elitist and snobbish way of speaking by which one inserts words of French into their Arabic. In other words, the code-switching between French and Arabic may be understood by some readers as iconic of how Ayouch himself speaks Moroccan Arabic. This interpretation is supported by the imagery in the tweet of a rich businessman who has a secretary and whose father provides him with a car and chauffeur.

One tweeter's criticism of Ayouch's speech pointed towards the uneasy relationship between oral and written language that was highlighted in the debate itself.



Figure 20: Tweet criticizing the language used by Ayouch during the debate.

Here *Assil*'s English tweet critiques Ayouch for misspeaking by leaving off the definite article in front of the word 'language,' and saying "لغة الأم" 'the mother's language' instead of "اللغة الأم" 'the mother tongue language.' *Assil* jokes that Ayouch "misspells" the spoken word, a joke that reflects anxieties of many Moroccans regarding the proposition to standardize Moroccan Arabic and teach Moroccan Arabic writing skills to young children. *Assil*'s joke also highlights the oral/written dichotomy, which framed

a lot of the debate. In the debate, Laroui emphasized repeatedly that the purpose of oral language is to provide access to the written world, which is where scholarly knowledge is found. He viewed school as a domain of the written word and warned that instruction in Moroccan Arabic may break the students' link with a history of written knowledge in Standard Arabic.

Assil's comment is additionally interesting, however, not just for the point it made about Ayouch's speech, but also because it included an embedded link that when clicked upon, took the reader to the original post on his Facebook page for which there was a short chain of comments between *Assil* and three interlocutors. Of note on his Facebook page is that *Assil's* original post had been cutoff in the 140 character limit tweet. Missing from the tweet was the main clause "a kitten dies in awful agony" in reference to how it feels to listen to Ayouch speak. It is noteworthy that while his tweet was made in English, the comments posted in response were written in Moroccan Arabic, French and Standard Arabic.

The image shows a Facebook post by Assil Smaili El Alaoui from November 27, 2013. The post text is: "#Ayouch Vs #Laroui sur #2M : Ayouch please quit saying لغة الأم instead of اللغة الأم . Each time you misspell it, a kitten dies in awful agony." Below the text are options for "See Translation", "Like", "Comment", and "Share". A "Follow" button is visible in the top right. Below the post, it says "10 people like this." and lists several comments:

- Oussama Gaou** (7re9ni rassi) - November 27, 2013 at 10:12pm - Like - 1
- Meriem Hnida Hder bdarija nfhmouk hhhh** - November 27, 2013 at 10:12pm - Like
- Assil Smaili El Alaoui** (See Translation) - November 27, 2013 at 10:15pm - Like - 2. Comment: "أنا أشرت في الرأي مع الدكتور العروي" (I shared the opinion with Dr. Alaroui).
- Assil Smaili El Alaoui** (Oussama tana mredni 😊) (See Translation) - November 27, 2013 at 10:16pm - Like - 1
- Meriem Hnida Kanhdrou bdarija f l Facebook 3lach la flmdrassa bach tkml lbahiya hhhh** - November 27, 2013 at 10:18pm - Like
- Mouhib Wahid** (tt à fait d'acc avec laaroui 😊) - November 27, 2013 at 10:19pm - Like

Figure 21: Facebook page that was embedded in a tweet.²⁰⁰

The three Facebook users who commented on *Assil's* post all agreed that it had been unpleasant to listen to the way Ayouch spoke. *Oussama Gaou*, the first to comment, wrote in Moroccan Arabic “7re9ni rassi” /ħreqni ra:si/ ‘My head is burning’, which in this context has the figurative meaning: “I got a headache while listening to Ayouch speak.” *Meriem Hnida*, who posted at the same time and also in Moroccan

²⁰⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/Asseil/posts/10202412870781147> (accessed 13 October 2014).

Arabic, demanded of *Assil*, ‘speak in Moroccan Arabic [so] I [can] understand you hahaha.’ *Assil*’s response three minutes later to *Meriem* code-switched to Standard Arabic when he replied, ‘I share the opinion of Dr. Alaoui, Meriem.’ He switched back to Moroccan Arabic in his response to *Oussama* a minute later in which he said, ‘Oussama, I too got sick’ [listening to Ayouch]. *Meriem*, still writing in Moroccan Arabic, jokes that, ‘we speak in Moroccan Arabic on Facebook why not in school so we go all the way hahaha?’ By ‘going all the way’, *Meriem* was suggesting that since we are using Moroccan Arabic on the internet, why not use it everywhere. Finally, *Mouhib* commented in French, ‘[I am] totally in agreement with Laroui.’

This chain of Facebook comments is notable for the multiple language varieties at play, the form in which they are represented, and the creative juxtaposition of the script and languages, which in of itself served as a resource for indexing the writer’s opinions on the debate. Moroccan Arabic was represented by *Oussama*, *Meriem* and *Assil* in Roman script in a similar form as described in text messages in Chapter 3. French was also represented in Roman characters following abbreviation conventions associated with social media and texts such as the shortening of “tout” to “tt.” In contrast, Standard Arabic was represented in Arabic script according to normative conventions and English was represented in Roman characters following standard orthography.

Meriem’s request that *Assil* “speak” in Moroccan Arabic so she could understand him, playfully recalled the language used by Ayouch during the debate to justify his proposal of institutionalizing Moroccan Arabic in preschool and the early primary years. By ending her comment with “hhhh,” she indicated the joking frame in which she wanted *Assil* to interpret her words. His choice to deny her request by writing in Standard Arabic

in Arabic script shows not only that he has taken up the joke, but also visually represents his position in the debate as in support of Laroui's arguments for the maintenance of Standard Arabic in early primary education and against the institutionalization of Moroccan Arabic. In contrast, his response to *Oussama*, immediately following his response to *Meriem*, was in Moroccan Arabic written in Roman script. The abrupt change in script and languages suggests that while *Assil* may not support the institutionalization of Moroccan Arabic in education, he finds it a suitable medium for informal communication on social media sites such as Facebook. He did not respond to *Meriem's* joke that followed, however, in which she suggests since Moroccan Arabic is already used on Facebook it might as well be used in school. Throughout this chain of comments, Moroccan Arabic indexes a sense of intimacy and friendliness between the three participants as it is the language used to set up the jokes about Ayouch and his proposal. Even *Assil's* response in Standard Arabic, in which he states to *Meriem* that he agrees with Laroui, was only funny because the comment contrasted in both form (Arabic vs. Roman script) and language variety with the immediately preceding comment in Moroccan Arabic.

Another tweet criticized the way Ayouch had attempted to frame his proposal, portraying Ayouch's call for "mother tongue languages" to be used in school as a marketing strategy.



Figure 22: A tweet criticizing Ayouch’s framing of the debate.²⁰¹

Ahmed tweets in a mixture of Standard and Moroccan Arabic that ‘Ayouch is a marketing man, the essence of his product is [Standard] Arabic, he wants to wrap it with “tamaghribit,” and sell it to the market [the masses] under the name of “the Moroccan language.”’ The word “maghribi” is a transliteration of the Arabic adjective ‘Moroccan.’ In this tweet *Ahmed* has added the Tamazight discontinuous morpheme /t...t/, in addition to the vowel /a/ in order to “Tamazight-ize” the Arabic word. When added to a masculine noun, such as /isli/ ‘husband,’ the Tamazight morpheme /t...t/ creates a feminine form of the noun, in this case /tisli/ ‘wife’ (Boukhris, et al. 2008:35). *Ahmed*’s additional inclusion of the vowel /a/ in the first syllable reflects his awareness that the masculine nouns commonly begin with /a/. In addition to marking female gender, feminine nouns may also carry a diminutive or pejorative association as well. This is seen in *Ahmed*’s use of “tamaghribit” which implies that a superficial and inauthentic linguistic “dressing” can be added to Standard Arabic to make it seem more appealing. In his tweet, *Ahmed* thus challenges the assumption embedded in Ayouch’s argument that

²⁰¹ <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23marketing%20AND%20%23ayouch&src=typd> (accessed 4 April 2014).

Moroccan and Standard Arabic should be understood as separate linguistic codes, rather than closely related varieties.

Embedding Moroccan Arabic online

An interesting characteristic of social media sites that was present in many of the above examples, is that users can embed #hashtags, hyperlinks, quoted texts and screen clippings into their comments that thereby point readers to other newspaper articles, blogs, tweets, Facebook pages, etc. This “textuality” feature of language has been argued to be a central process in language by which social meanings, as well as relationships of power and authority, are reflected and constituted (Silverstein and Urban 1996). In online social media, hashtags, for example, link and allow for comprehensive searches of similarly tagged, asymmetric texts across social media sites including Twitter, Facebook, Google +, Instagram, and YouTube. Hyperlinks, while not searchable in the same way as hashtags, can also link users recursively through an unlimited number of websites. The embedding of one written text inside another is an additional avenue through which the juxtaposition of multiple language varieties, forms and scripts can occur, often without the intention of the original author. Since many who write in Arabic script create #hashtags in Roman script, their comments become searchable by a wider audience and appear in search engines juxtaposed to comments in other languages written in Roman script such as English and French. In these spaces, written representations of Moroccan Arabic can be seen to challenge hegemonic ideologies associating it with backwardness as seen in the example taken from *Assil*'s tweet and Facebook posts above in Figures 21 and 22 above.

Not only can links to other written online texts be embedded in online social media sites, but links to video and audio recordings can be included as well. For example, a Facebook status update by a friend of mine included a link to a video blog posted on December 3, 2013 by *Muslim1966* to YouTube about the debate. In this video blog entitled, “Mr. Ayouch l’ami du Roi” ‘Mr. Ayouch the King’s friend,’ *Muslim1966* launched an ideological and personal attack on Ayouch.²⁰² Speaking mainly in Moroccan Arabic with some switching to French, he accused Ayouch of ‘taking himself for someone’ and insinuated that it is people like him who have driven Morocco to ruin. *Muslim1966* described Ayouch as a microphone for the French, because like them, he wants to vilify Standard Arabic and use Moroccan Arabic as a way to keep the public ignorant. This is a type of divide and conquer strategy that works by isolating Morocco from the rest of the Arabic speaking world.²⁰³ Although *Muslim1966*’s YouTube homepage had only 418 subscribers, his video blog about Ayouch attracted 14,538 views and more than 30 written comments in Moroccan Arabic, Standard Arabic, French and English.

YouTube user *Fahdofsky* also posted a widely circulating video blog that criticized Ayouch and was reposted in a number of comments on Facebook.²⁰⁴ His video entitled “AYOUCHGATE ؟ من أنت يا عيوش ؟” ‘AYOUCHGATE - Who are you Ayouch?’²⁰⁵ has attracted over 113,465 views, has been shared 810 times and has received 450 comments in French, English, Moroccan Arabic (in both Roman and Arabic

²⁰² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LITBXQNDosw> (accessed 9 September 2014).

²⁰³ This comment indexes French protectorate policies in Morocco by which Arabic speaking and Berber speaking children were educated in different schools. See Boutieri (2011) for a discussion of how protectorate and post-independent education policies have created an ambiguous bilingualism in Arabized public schools between French and Standard Arabic.

²⁰⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJGH6pLqQXg> (accessed 2 September 2014).

²⁰⁵ *Fahdofsky*’s choice of title for his video includes a clear reference to the Nixon Watergate scandal.

scripts) and Standard Arabic. Speaking primarily in Moroccan Arabic, with occasional code-switching to French, *Fahdofsky* argues that Ayouch should not be involved in such an important discussion as he has had no training in linguistics or education. *Fahdofsky* quotes a verse in the Qur'an linking its revelation to the Arabic language. He expands on the importance that Arabic represents for all Muslims regardless of mother tongue language. He argues that Ayouch's education plan aims to break the bonds between Arabs and Berbers, which he says, are mainly held together by Islam and thus the common language of worship: Arabic. Like *Muslim1966*, *Fahdofsky* accuses Ayouch of using a divide and conquer approach, however in this case, it is the separation of Arabic speakers from Tamazight speakers that is focused on, rather than Moroccans from other Arabic speakers. In his reference to the language of the Qur'an, *Fahdofsky* links (Standard) Arabic to both a religiously significant moment in the past and an Islamic national community, as well as implicitly to all Muslims worldwide who read the Qur'an.

YouTube user *Albert einstein* agreed with this later critique, commenting below *Fahdofsky's* video blog in French that,

j'espere [sic] que les racistes de tout bord manipulés par l'extérieur et les politiciens irresponsables ... comprendront la gravité [sic] d'une telle décision sur l'avenir du maroc et sa place qu'il a dans le monde arabe et islamique! Cette décisions absurde et facile et efface d'un trait l'histoire multidentenaire du maroc et ceci est très grave, la darija arabe marocain est un langage non soutenue et doit rester a sa place

I hope that the racists of all kinds that are manipulated by the outside and the irresponsible politicians...will understand the gravity of such a decision on the future of Morocco and its place in the Arab and Islamic world! This decision is absurd and easy and erases in one stroke hundreds of years of Moroccan history and this is very serious, Moroccan Arabic is an unsupported language that should stay in its place

Similarly, Goulou bazz expressed a similar concern in Standard Arabic that,

هي مؤامرة واضحة للغرب على المغرب لان اللغة العربية هي لغة القران، بمعنى اخر فصل الاجيال القادمة عن الدين والاسلام ...

The plot is clearly from the West in terms of Morocco because the Arabic language is the language of the Qur'an. In other words, separate the future generations from religion and Islam...

The perceived threat that potential changes in Arabic literacy practices are understood to pose to Moroccan's relationship to the Qur'an (and by extension Morocco's relationship to other nations and the legitimacy of the Moroccan nation and monarchy) is clearly expressed in the online comments made above. Other research has shown how Standard Arabic literacy practices understood to link directly to notions of political and social power. For example, Messick (1993), in his ethnography about cultural practices of inscription surrounding the Qur'an and other sacred texts in Yemen, recounts how changes in schooling were viewed as threatening to the existing Yemeni sociopolitical order.

Placing Moroccan Arabic in time and space

Many of the online comments above have demonstrated how critiques of language often speak to broader social issues such as national identity, religion and political economies of languages and speakers in Morocco. Tellingly, a number of these comments evoke particular temporal and spatial grounds by which different language varieties are understood to point in specific ways to these and other social issues. Drawing both from the discussion above and from additional examples from online social media presented below, I argue that dominant ideologies linking Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight to a provincial, non-modern past and present; Standard Arabic to a glorified religious past and geographically dispersed communities of Arabic speakers and Muslims (two categories that overlap but are not equivalent); and French (and English) to a

modern, globalized world of future economic possibility; are both reinforced and challenged by linguistic practices in online and other forms of media.

To begin, the proposal put forth to institutionalize Moroccan Arabic and Ayouch's comments during the debate associated the *early* use of Moroccan Arabic in the classroom with the *future* success of students in primary school. Moroccan Arabic in this sense was assumed to be a lingua-franca geographically *reaching out to all Moroccans* in order to provide an equal jump-start to school. The notion to standardize Moroccan Arabic positioned it as a suitable vehicle for the *modern* nation state. This characterization of Moroccan Arabic clearly challenges hegemonic ideologies associating it with provincialism and backwardness as seen in user comments.

In contrast, tweet user *Coeur et sport* commented that 'Since Arabization, we read less newspapers in French, with Moroccan Arabic we will not even read ones in [Standard] Arabic after 10 years, [becoming] without culture.'



Figure 23: Tweet commenting on the future effects of Moroccan Arabic institutionalization.

Coeur et sport evokes multiple continua of time and space. For one, French literacy is located in the protectorate *past*, Arabic literacy in the recent past and present,

and Moroccan Arabic literacy in a possible *future 10 years* down the road. It may appear that French is being cast as backward, non-modern, and linked to a Protectorate past, but I argue it is exactly the opposite that is being suggested. Indeed, I have frequently heard comments from older Moroccans in Casablanca that education was much better under the French protectorate and decades immediately following, than it is now. In this tweet, *Coeur et sport* implies that Arabic literacy is less valuable than French literacy for accessing print news media. *Coeur et sport* values French literacy as a means of access to *current* events reported in newspapers from a different perspective, thus associating it with a modern *present* and *international, French language public*. Standard Arabic is seen as narrowing the access of the Moroccan reading public to current affairs due to Arabization policies, which reduced French literacy. Finally, Moroccan Arabic is linked in this tweet with a *future* state of illiteracy, a term that is associated strongly with notions of *provincialism* and *backwardness*. Literacy in Moroccan Arabic is viewed as the most restrictive of the three languages. *Coeur et sport* warns that when reduced to only Moroccan Arabic literacy, Moroccans will effectively be “without culture” and isolated from their Arabic and French historical past and future.

Another tweet user *Foulani Hanaa* similarly argued that ‘now that Morocco needs to open its educational system to English in order to connect itself with the world, we want to turn to Moroccan Arabic to put ourselves further in a hole.’ *Foulani Hanaa* claims that whereas English would allow Moroccans to *connect to the world*, the use of Moroccan Arabic would further *constrict* Moroccans, echoing the view that Moroccan Arabic is backwards, non-modern and limiting.



Figure 24: Tweet about English connecting to the world.

Foulani Hanaa's tweet brings English back to the forefront of the conversation. Indeed, a central component of Ayouch's proposal was to have English replace French as the language of science and technology in schools. With the intense public scrutiny of the Moroccan/Standard Arabic opposition, and, as will be discussed below, the Arabic/French language opposition, English (and in many ways French as well) became the white elephant in the room and was largely erased in commentary surrounding the debate.

In contrast to chronotopes that linked French with modernity and brighter economic and social *futures* in Morocco, other tempolitical portrayals of the language associated it with moving backward to a negative past. The video blog by *Muslim1966* described above, evokes chronotopes that posited French as a vehicle of a neo-colonial *present* agenda for actors whose goal it is to set up *future* educational language policies in which social and linguistic inequalities established during *past* French protectorate strategies of "divide and conquer" will be reinforced. This point of view is supported by Boutieri who argues that "Arabophone education has been in fierce antagonism with the

recycling of French Protectorate pedagogical visions in the school, the job market, and processes of national development and that the widely acknowledged crisis of public education relates intimately to this competition” (2012: 444). Boutieri suggests that a focus on the roles of Moroccan vs. Standard Arabic in public education may be silencing the more pertinent rivalry between French and Arabic educational visions. However, as seen in written commentary to the video by *Fahdofsky*, as well as other Twitter and Facebook posts discussed in this chapter, this anxiety over a future global isolation through Moroccan Arabic literacy is challenged by the very role given to written and spoken Moroccan Arabic by users on the internet in responding to the debate. Indeed, as I will suggest in the following and concluding chapter of this dissertation, emergent Moroccan Arabic literacy practices on the internet form a promising future site for exploring themes raised in this dissertation and for questioning if Moroccan’s commitment to Arabic diglossia may shift or not as consequence of these changing practices.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

Furthering the conversations

Chapter 7 has brought into focus a number of themes, explored in earlier sections of this dissertation, surrounding language ideologies related to the emergence of new literacy practices in Moroccan Arabic in various forms and different contexts.²⁰⁶ These themes include the role of fractal recursivity in mediating ideological disjuncture and responding to changing literacy practices; the association of Moroccan Arabic with orality, intimacy and *hchuma*; and the opposition of Moroccan Arabic literacy practices to those of other languages, particularly to Standard Arabic. The present chapter will outline some of the contributions this dissertation as a whole makes to conversations with which it has been engaged, including approaches in linguistic anthropology to ideologies about language and discussions of changing language use in Morocco.

This dissertation has engaged with conversations in linguistic anthropology that look at the semiotic process involved in constructing ideologies of difference. I have demonstrated the concept of fractal recursivity to be particularly productive in thinking about how people respond to moments of ideological disjuncture when they encounter new and changing forms of literacy and language use in different contexts. Fractal recursivity serves as a strategy by which emergent literacy practices that appear to

²⁰⁶ Messing makes a case for schools being a hot place for “the emergence and reformulation of ideologies” of language (2003:95).

contradict dominant language ideologies can be recast in such a way that instead of challenging such ideologies, they realign with them and participate in their reproduction.

For example, in my analysis I show that new Moroccan Arabic literacy practices that are tolerated and even successful are so, in part, because of the role of fractal recursivity in redefining such practices as “oral” within the written contexts. This recasting of the oral/written opposition *within* Moroccan Arabic literacy contexts, reinforces dominant ideologies that associate Moroccan Arabic varieties with orality and a low status, and Standard Arabic with writing and a high status. Indeed, I argue that fractal recursivity plays a powerful role in how people justify the use of certain written forms of Moroccan Arabic, even when they may generally support the point of view that Moroccan Arabic should not be written. Whereas some studies, such as Messing’s (2003) work on Mexicano use in Tlaxcala, Mexico, have provided ethnographic examples on how the construction of ideologies of difference through fractal recursivity can contribute to changes in language shift, my dissertation provides ethnographic examples of how fractal recursivity can also play a role in maintaining ideologies of difference in ways that attempt to erase changes in language practices. That is, by viewing written Moroccan Arabic as belonging to “oral” language use, one can ignore changing linguistic practices in which Moroccan Arabic is represented in written form alongside languages traditionally associated with writing, such as Standard Arabic and French.

Thus, this dissertation has demonstrated fractal recursivity to be analytically useful in drawing attention to how oppositions, such as oral/written in Morocco, can be reproduced across different social contexts. My dissertation pushes this observation

further; however, by questioning why this process has been effective in certain contexts, such as texting practices and advertising, and ineffective in others, such as magazine news media and education. I have shown that Moroccans react differently to the written representation of Moroccan Arabic according to such factors as the subject matter being portrayed, the context and form in which it is represented, and the intended audience and purpose for which it is being written. I have built upon Philips' (2004b) notion of an "ecology of ideas," by using it to think more productively about fractal recursivity and ideological disjuncture. I have argued, that the focus on only one ideological opposition, and in one context, risks erasing the complexity of ideological diversity and the co-presence of other ideological disjunctures or alternatively, ideological overlap, that play a role in how people interpret particular, situated literacy practices. Moroccan Arabic SMS text messaging has "taken root," I show in Chapter 3, in part because media ideologies defining texting as more speech like than writing align with hegemonic ideologies of Moroccan Arabic as an oral language and Standard Arabic as a written language. Additionally, ideological oppositions of Moroccan vs. Standard Arabic that cluster around this oral/written binary, such as that Moroccan Arabic is seen as informal and private, overlap with media ideologies that engender similar associations for SMS text messaging.

In contrast, literacy practices such as writing about *hchuma* and culturally taboo topics in Moroccan Arabic in printed magazines (as was frequently the case in *Nichane*), or the proposal to institutionalize Moroccan Arabic for use in public education, do not take root. This is in part due to other types of co-occurring disjunctures that become highlighted by the act of writing in Moroccan Arabic, a language closely associated with

intimacy and a direct connection with readers. As shown in Chapter 6, writers at *Nichane* not only produced written texts in Moroccan Arabic, but they also chose to write about themes considered *hchuma*. Thus, while instances of Moroccan Arabic text in *Nichane* may be viewed as examples of “orality” in contrast to written Standard Arabic, the recasting of the opposition fails to legitimize the new literacy practice. This is in part due to the fact that it highlights other associations with oral Moroccan Arabic literacy practices that are tied closely to notions of intimacy and *hchuma*. This dissertation’s discussions of fractal recursivity and the usefulness of interrogating ideological binaries across varied contexts, while attending to other possible ideological disjuncture and convergence, will be of interest to scholars of linguistics and anthropology who work on ideologies of difference.

The anxieties about the possible effects of Moroccan Arabic literacy practices in the different contexts examined in this dissertation underscore how the debates about the form and variety of language to be represented in writing are linked to issues of power and forms of subjectivity (Woolard 1998, Collins and Blot 2003). For example, Chapter 2 discussed how ideologies of literacy linking it with notions of economic development and modernity were embedded in USAID’s Passerelle literacy program. Indeed, these ideologies of language and literacy were shown to serve particular economic and political objectives that denied simple claims that mother tongue literacy education is a power neutral endeavor for the sole good of the women learners. Furthermore, Chapter 7, shows that Moroccans clearly view the institutionalization of literacy practices in children’s public education as a political move influenced by actors with a Western agenda to subjugate Morocco. Many expressed to me that the marginalization of

Morocco within the Arabic speaking world by reducing competency in Standard Arabic literacy, would serve to maintain a post-colonial dependence on foreign languages such as French and English for the economic and social gain of Western powers. These discussions have responded to Collins and Blot's (2003) call for more situated accounts of literacy that take into account historical power structures and how they link to current and shifting literacy practices. As such, this dissertation would be of interest to scholars concerned with issues of literacy, particularly of mother tongue literacy practices, and their relationships to language ideology and power.

The reactions presented throughout this dissertation to emergent Moroccan Arabic literacy practices, and most clearly demonstrated in the passionate commentary in Chapter 7 to the proposal to institutionalize Moroccan Arabic in public education, emphasize that many Moroccans are in support of keeping the roles and domains of Moroccan Arabic and Standard Arabic clearly separate. This is particularly the case for domains in which attempts to recast Moroccan Arabic literacy practices as oral through fractal recursivity and erasure are unsuccessful. My dissertation as a whole, thus suggests that the future of Moroccan diglossia is ambiguous. On the one hand, Moroccans of different sociocultural backgrounds are very attached to diglossia as an ideology of language.²⁰⁷ Some of this attachment is in seen in the "in-your-face" posts and video blogs surrounding the education debate in Chapter 7. At other times, alignment with ideologies of diglossia is more subtle, as seen in Chapter 2 when Passerelle literacy teachers utilize strategies of bivalency to only write lexical items that

²⁰⁷ Many Moroccans I spoke with justified their defense of Arabic diglossia in part because they view it as an ideology shared across the Arabic speaking world. Since most consider Moroccan Arabic as the most deviant and bastardized mother tongue variety of Arabic (the one which most diverges from Classical Arabic), they view it as more critical in Morocco than in other countries such as Syria to maintain a stricter separation between the forms and uses of Moroccan and Standard Arabic.

can be understood as belonging equally to Moroccan and Standard Arabic. This is also apparent in Chapter 4 through the choice made to only represent clearly marked spoken language in Moroccan Arabic in Inwi billboard advertisements. Thus, despite the fact that the recent emergence (and uneven success) of Moroccan Arabic literacy practices in areas traditionally associated with Standard Arabic appears to support an interpretation that diglossia as an ideology may be shifting in Morocco, the semiotic process of fractal recursivity reframes such practices as oral, thus reinforcing Arabic diglossic regimes.

As Chapter 7 has illustrated, the ways in which diglossia is defended in online commentary on social media sites are seemingly inconsistent with a language ideology that insists on the separation of spoken and written language. Many of the online comments creatively utilized, embedded or were juxtaposed to Moroccan Arabic literacy practices online. Indeed the rhetorical punch of some comments, such as the *Aziz's* “*quellouch*” joke above (see Figure 18), is dependent on the written representation of Moroccan Arabic in his post and his choice to use it instead of an alternative language variety. While such creative uses of Moroccan Arabic online may challenge or undermine linguistic ideologies associating Moroccan Arabic with orality and Standard Arabic with writing, they also raise the oral/written opposition and its regulation in education, and other domains, to the level of metawareness in online media. This in turn, draws attention to the form and use of language in ways that simultaneously reinforce ideologies of difference that support Arabic diglossia.

Pointing to the future

A number of questions that have emerged over the course of my dissertation involve issues of the standardization of Moroccan Arabic. For example, comments made

by translators, actors and production managers at Plug-in in Chapter 5 reveal some of the negotiations at play surrounding the possible emergence of a “standard” variety of Moroccan Arabic for television dubbing purposes. More explicitly, Chapter 7 discusses in detail the public debates following the recommendation that Moroccan Arabic be standardized and a writing system developed so that it may be effectively used as a language of instruction in schools. Both of these examples open up the question of which variety is to be standardized in each instance, or if a new variety is to be created by blending different varieties, and, importantly, by whom. The complex variation present in Moroccan Arabic suggests that it will not be a simple matter of how to standardize Moroccan Arabic for either purpose. Additionally, it is clear in a number of the comments presented in Chapter 7 that many Moroccans view the unequal access to linguistic resources as having a direct impact on a person’s future economic and social opportunities. Fears have been expressed that, as in the case of Tamazight standardization, a central, urban variety of Moroccan Arabic would undergo processes of standardization which would result in further stigmatization of ‘*robi*’ rural’ speakers and those of varieties in the geographic margins of Morocco, such as the far northern varieties and the Hassaniya variety of the south.

The question of by whom and within which institutions Moroccan Arabic would be standardized is also worthy of research attention. Moroccans have specific ideologies concerning who is authorized to determine such national language policy and who isn’t. In the case of education, there is noticeable resistance towards Ayouch, due to his popular characterization as an opportunist and liberal business man who has neither the training nor “proper” expertise to partake in the debate. One commenter even wrote that had

Laroui proposed the same plan he would have accepted it. Of importance to many Moroccans is that those who determine language policy be not overly influenced by outside interests, be they French neo-colonial or other imperialist or development oriented discourses. Recall both Laroui's submissive dismissal of UNESCO and *Aziz Boussadra's* Facebook wish that both Ayouch and his UNESCO would die.

Many of the above are issues that will likely become the focus of the public eye and Moroccan media in the near future. Plans have been underway the past few years at l'Université Mohamed V in Rabat to organize an international conference focused on the standardization of Moroccan Arabic²⁰⁸. Furthermore, On July 17, 2014 King Mohammed VI appointed 92 new members to "le Conseil Supérieur de l'Education" 'The High Council of Education' with the mission of saving the national education system.²⁰⁹ Ayouch is on the commission and plans to continue promoting the teaching of Moroccan Arabic. It has been quoted in the media that Ayouch even thinks that Moroccan Arabic deserves to become a "langue officielle au même titre que l'arabe, l'amazigh" 'official language of the same status as Arabic, Tamazight.' The commission planned to submit their first report to the King in December 2014.²¹⁰

Future "sightings" of Moroccan Arabic

In Chapter 7, I suggested online social media as an additional site to explore forms and uses of written representation of Moroccan Arabic as a promising direction for future research on topics of oral/written oppositions, ideological change, fractal recursivity, and disjuncture. Beyond the written use of Moroccan Arabic on Facebook,

²⁰⁸ El Medlaoui, Mohamed. Personal communication, July 2, 2012.

²⁰⁹ http://telquel.ma/2014/07/26/education-on-attendre-du-cse_1411371 (accessed 29 August 2014).

²¹⁰ http://telquel.ma/2014/07/21/installation-cse-relevance-polemique-darija_1410276 (accessed 29 August 2014).

Twitter, and YouTube posts on the one hand, and oral use in practices such as video blogs on the other, there are numerous other newly emergent roles for Moroccan Arabic online that have begun attracting the public's attention. Given that many scholars identify mass media as central players in processes of language standardization and in the creation and reproduction of standard language ideologies (Lippi-Green 1997; Milroy and Milroy 1999; Silverstein 1996), it would be interesting to consider how the form and use of Moroccan Arabic may change given its increasing presence online and recent discussions of its institutionalization for education. Such research would be of interest to scholars both inside and outside linguistic anthropology working on issues of computer mediated communication.

For example, in December 2013, following the 2M debate with Ayouch and Laroui, *Telquel* published an article describing two Moroccan engineers who have begun posting short tutoring videos in Moroccan Arabic for students.²¹¹ Tutoring topics include algebra, algorithms, computer science, programming languages, thermodynamics, and electrokinetics. The videos are targeted towards Moroccan Arabic speaking high school and university students and are free to access on wandida.com and on YouTube. Rachid Geurraoui and Mahdi El Mhamdi, both staff members of l'Ecole Fédérale Polytechnique de Lausanne in Switzerland, chose to embark on this project in 2011 as a response to a problem they had identified in Moroccan classrooms. They had noted that because teachers explain concepts in Moroccan Arabic orally in class, when the students find themselves alone to study from their Standard Arabic textbooks they feel lost. In addition to recording their tutoring lessons in Moroccan Arabic, the two men also record

²¹¹ http://telquel.ma/2013/12/18/education-les-sciences-en-version-darija_10147 (accessed 29 August 2014).

alternative versions of each of the same videos in French, Classical Arabic and English. Thus, students are able to access and compare the same lesson in the language(s) of their choice. In the Moroccan Arabic version, scientific or technical words that do not exist are borrowed from one of the other three languages. The visual element of the videos usually consists mainly of a white marker board on which hand written graphs, diagrams and outlines are written. The titles and abstracts of the Moroccan Arabic videos are written in Moroccan Arabic in Arabic script, with code-switching into Standard Arabic and French (still written in Arabic script) as needed. The main body text in the Moroccan Arabic videos, however, is all in Standard Arabic. In fact, the videos images are identical in the Moroccan and Standard Arabic versions.

Given the intense reactions to the notion of introducing Moroccan Arabic in public schools, it would be interesting to observe how Moroccan students, their parents and teachers respond to these Moroccan Arabic educational videos. By positioning Moroccan Arabic as a language capable of transmitting scientific and technical knowledge alongside French, Standard Arabic and English, these videos clearly present a challenge to hegemonic ideologies that view Moroccan Arabic as backward and associated with illiteracy. It is unclear if the choice to only display written Standard Arabic in the tutoring videos themselves may reflect an ideology held by Geurraoui and El Mhamdi that Moroccan Arabic should not be written in this context; if it was a practical decision based on the extra work it would take to translate, film and edit footage of Moroccan Arabic written text; or if the authors purposefully drew on the juxtaposition of the Standard Arabic text and Moroccan Arabic voiceover to mimic the learning situation students face in the classroom.

Another type of new Moroccan Arabic literacy practice that has emerged recently on the internet is serial fiction novellas and diaries written in Moroccan Arabic and circulated through social media sites. One example is the Facebook page “كريمة-بوجمعة” ‘Karima wa Boujemâa’ created by Abderrahim Belahmed and Imane Belabbas.²¹² Over the course of 29 episodes, Belahmed and Belabbas told the fictional story of couple named Karima and Boujemâa who lived in a poor neighborhood in the Moroccan capital of Rabat. Among the challenges faced by the couple included experiences with corruption, poverty, prostitution, and drugs. A magazine article in *Telquel* described the language used in “Karima wa Boujemâa” as “franc et cru qui peut heurter les yeux chastes d’un lecteur” ‘frank and crude that can offend the chaste eyes of a reader.’²¹³ In the article, Belahmed is quoted remembering that while he was not the first to publish in Moroccan Arabic on Facebook, it was very rare to find someone writing stories in the language online. He recounted that he had tried publishing in Standard Arabic, but had garnered very few followers. In contrast, the Facebook page “Karima wa Boujemâa” had over 12,000 followers.

Similarly, human rights activist and blogger Mohamed Sokrate published in Moroccan Arabic, using social media as a platform, about his experience being incarcerated for two years in the central prison of Marrakech following a conviction for drug trafficking. In a blog published on Goud.ma, Sokrate told stories of human rights violations that he both experienced and witnessed. He explained that he chose to tell his story in Moroccan Arabic instead of Standard Arabic because “pour parler de prison, il

²¹² <https://www.facebook.com/pages/1403248203282186/كريمة-بوجمعة> (accessed 29 August 2014).

²¹³ http://telquel.ma/2014/06/17/tendance-darija-langue-litteraire_139303 (accessed 15 July 2014).

faut le faire dans la langue de la prison”²¹⁴ ‘to talk about prison, one must use the language of the prison.’ In response to critiques in the Moroccan press that his blog entries were too sordid and vivid for his audience, Sokrate is quoted responding “la littérature est libérée de toute contrainte morale. Et si j’écrivais en arabe ce que j’écris en darija, on n’aurait pas critiqué cela. C’est juste que notre darija est plus directe, plus imagée” ‘literature is free of all moral constraints. And if I wrote in [Standard] Arabic what I write in Moroccan Arabic, there wouldn’t be any critiques. It is just that our Moroccan Arabic is more direct, more vivid.’

The ideologies apparent in how these authors discuss their online texts and the public reactions reported in *Telquel*, recall similar ideologies that were discussed in Chapter 6 about the magazine *Nichane*. Specifically, there is a dominant ideology that has been noted throughout this dissertation that associates Moroccan Arabic with a sense of directness and intimacy in that Moroccan Arabic is imagined to reach right to the core of the person hearing or reading it. In this sense, Moroccan Arabic is viewed both as a uniquely effective medium for expressing particular experiences and interpellating certain interlocutors, and as a potentially dangerous and influential medium of expression. The idea that Moroccan Arabic is closely related to affect and thought is not a new point of view. In 2004, for example, Anouar Mahid published an article online in the Moroccan Arabic – American magazine *Tingis* arguing that it would be “a good idea for Moroccans to have a written language that reflects their thoughts and emotions... to develop a genuine Moroccan literature and give Morocco and Moroccans a voice that, like their history, is uniquely theirs.”²¹⁵ A strong supporter of the constitutionalization of

²¹⁴ http://telquel.ma/2014/06/17/tendance-darija-langue-litteraire_139303 (accessed 15 July 2014).

²¹⁵ http://www.tingismagazine.com/opinion/a_national_language.html (accessed 1 September 2014).

Moroccan Arabic, he has argued that “When thinking and writing merge into a continuous stream, Morocco may well experience a cultural renaissance of historic proportions.” Whether the official commission charged with addressing such questions as they pertain to the Moroccan education system will agree with Mahid has yet to be determined. It is clear, however, that online forms of communication, as well as evolving smart phone text messaging services, advertising and Moroccan Arabic dubbing, will continue to be fertile ground for future investigations into Moroccan Arabic literacy practices and their relations to notions of language ideologies, fractal recursivity and disjuncture.

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