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## Standard Arabic and Moroccan Arabic in the Royal Academy Of Morocco Latest Publications (2010-2013)

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

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## 1. Introduction: the sociolinguistic situation in Morocco and the role of the Royal Academy

- 1 Morocco, as a multilingual country, has adopted different measures and political decisions to handle multilingualism since its independence in 1956, running from monolingual policies to multilingual tolerance and, since the 2011 Constitutional reform, through official bilingualism, Arabic and Tamazight. The acceptance by the people of the 2011 Constitution initiates, officially, a new paradigm in the linguistic policy and, somehow, puts an end to a linguistic policy based exclusively on Arabicization. While the early stages of this policy were characterized by a neglect of the other linguistic varieties in the official discourse (Tamazight, Dāriġa, Ḥassāniyya),

the stance on French has continued to swing throughout the decades (Benítez 2010; Benítez, de Ruiter & Tamer 2010).

- 2 Before the acceptance of the 2011 Constitution, Morocco's sociolinguistic situation has seen a number of important changes in recent years (Ziamari & de Ruiter 2016; Miller 2014). Two of these major changes concern the steady introduction of Tamazight in public areas and the spread of Moroccan Arabic (MA), which has grown astonishingly since 2000.
- 3 The use of MA has spread into new settings, including formal and semi-formal domains (Benítez *et al.* 2013). This spread has been accompanied by a revalorization of this variety. This functional expansion of MA has been explained by social, political and economic changes, including Muḥammad VI's enthronement, the decline of pan-Arabism ideology and neoliberal measures (Miller 2014; Benítez *et al.* 2013; Ziamari & de Ruiter 2016). So far, a lot of recent attention has been dedicated to this development and to the debate around MA, with its supporters advocating for its standardization and, even, officialization. Indeed, the overwhelming use of Dāriġa in domains previously reserved exclusively for SA caused certain voices to raise against this *vulgarisation* (Miller 2012). While the claims and arguments of the 'Dāriġa advocates' have been thoroughly studied, less attention has been given to the opponents to this variety, who prefer and defend SA. In fact, 'Standard Arabic advocates' formulate many of the arguments against Dāriġa, considering it a mere dialect stigmatized for its 'impure' nature and linguistic 'incompleteness'.
- 4 SA advocates harbour a conservative vision, which pursues the pan-Arabic postcolonial discourse on SA perceived as representing the sense of authenticity and national identity, which were allegedly stolen by colonialism. Arguments are based on a monolingual ideology that, in its turn, is based on the enhancement of values associated with the standard variety: its religious nature, its historic, literary and scientific heritage, the supremacy of this variety, the national Arab-Islamic identity, and so on (see Høigilt and Mejdell 2017). At the same time, they criticize the promotion of Dāriġa as being intentionally anti-SA: for them, the movement represents a vulgarization of the public sphere designed to disrupt national identity and the very foundations of the State itself (الودغيري 2010; العربي المساري 2010).
- 5 For the Royal Academy of Morocco the spread of Dāriġa has not gone unnoticed. This institution, founded in 1977 by a *ḍahir* signed by King Ḥassan II, functions as an Academy of Sciences, meaning its work is not restricted to linguistic issues alone (unlike the Académie de la langue française). The Royal Academy is an intellectual forum which aims to encourage research in different intellectual areas and bring together some of the leading thinkers from inside and outside the Kingdom. In contrast with Institut d'Études et des Recherches pour l'Arabisation (IERA) is not attached to any other institution. Nevertheless, it does not mean it is an ideologically independent organization. As patron of the Royal Academy, the King appoints the institution's permanent secretary.
- 6 Even though its purpose is not restricted to linguistic issues, the Academy has shown a great concern for the latest sociolinguistic developments. Since 2000, it has organized several conferences and has published several reports devoted specifically to linguistic issues. In the period between 2005 and 2010, the Academy has published these proceedings:

(2005) قضايا استعمال اللغة العربية في المغرب

(2010) اللغة العربية في الخطاب التشريعي والإداري والإعلامي بالمغرب

(2013) الهوية المغربية في ضوء محدداتها الدستورية

- 7 Being an active partner in the sociolinguistic debate in Morocco, the viewpoint of the Academy needs to be taken into account. It is of great relevance to dissect the arguments that help build and support its stance. This paper analyzes the texts published by this institution before and after the acceptance of the 2011 Constitution (2010 and 2013 proceedings). This enables us to understand better the sociolinguistic debate in Morocco and to offer a general, comprehensive picture of the different discourses running on the public arena and the impact of the new constitutional frame.
- 8 Although the Academy does not take responsibility for any of the views or opinions expressed by individual members, there is indeed a common theme and shared perceptions running through the various ideas and points of view. It is important to note that all authors in these publications belong to a specific social stratum: they are highly educated, many of them work in the intellectual or academic milieu, they share a close relationship with the Palace and some of them have important roles in the political field<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, taking into account the relevance, functions and active role of the Academy, my paper tries to provide an answer to the following questions:
- 9 1. How does the Academy depict MA and SA through its publications during this important period?  
2. Has the stance of the Academy evolved during these years or because of the acceptance of the 2011 Constitution ?  
3. Does this portrayal imply a new or a different stance on the part of the Academics?
- 10 In order to appropriately answer these questions and as a first attempt to dissect the viewpoint of this institution, this paper adopts the following structure. Section (2) tackles the stance of the Academy's authors on multilingualism in the 2010 and 2013 Proceedings. This is followed by the depiction of SA (3) and MA (4) by authors in the 2010 and 2013 publications. The closing section (5) presents the conclusions.

## 2. Multilingualism: an overview

- 11 In both the 2010 and 2013 Proceedings, there is a recognition of multilingualism, but with important nuances. In 2010, multilingualism is depicted in two non-opposing ways:
- 12 First, it is portrayed as a reality of the Moroccan context. Researchers use to express their appreciation for the benefits of multilingualism, but as long as it does not hinder the role of the official language, i.e., SA. They describe the Moroccan multilingualism as being unbalanced in favour of French or MA. The limited space allocated to SA, especially in the Media, the Economy and the Administration leads to the 'linguistic subjugation' of the Moroccan citizen:

تزامن اللغة الرسمية والوطنية، إذا كان المواطنون الذين ترتبط مصالحهم الحيوية بمخلف المؤسسات والأجهزة الإدارية يعانون من القهر اللغوي (141-140: 2010 البوشيخي)

- 13 Thus, all proposals provided by authors in this publication aim at redressing the functions allocated to every linguistic variety (specially, French and SA). In particular, authors in these proceedings seek to give SA the place it deserves as the only official language by limiting the use of all other varieties:

فإن من مهام التخطيط اللغوي أن يدبر هذا التعدد راعياً للتوازنات اللغوية، وذلك بإعطاء اللغة العربية المكانة التي ينبغي أن تحظى بها باعتبارها اللغة الرسمية الضامنة للتوازن والوحدة الرمزية (89: 2010 الباهي ومبرور)

- 14 The second way in which multilingualism is described is in connection to ideology. More specifically, multilingualism is seen as a foreign ideology or an ideological tool whose aim is to replace SA and other 'minor' languages. Thus, multilingualism is seen as a facilitator of the crumbling of social cohesion and national unity (see for ex., وگاگ 2010: 260). In this sense, multilingualism is related to globalization and other 'international' policies, like francophonie and hispanophonie. All these foreign agenda are dangerous for the country, as they seek to impose their domination over other nations (ibid.). SA is then a victim in the struggle between French and English for the world's domination

دعوات لحرية إحياء الثقافات واللهجات الأصلية غافلين أن ذلك كله خدمة مجانية للاستعمار العولمي الذي يريحه إلا التفرقة والتمزق والخلاف والدفاع عن قضايا خاسرة أساساً! (261: 2010 وگاگ)

- 15 In any case, multilingualism is not a central point in 2010: the all perspective is drawn upon the continuation and the implementation of the Arabicization policy. The multilingual situation is seen as the result of a failed policy. A common trend is to call for a final, decisive policy that ends the overuse of French, because it is, in their viewpoint, a matter of coherence and compliance with the Constitution (for ex. الباهي 2010:112 ومبرور)
- 16 In contrast with this situation, multilingualism is, in 2013, an official fact and a reality. Therefore, it becomes a central issue. Thus, while in 2010, there was no need to justify the focus on SA; this stand is no longer valid in the 2013 official multilingual context. In fact, most of the ideas and arguments turn around the defense of the supremacy of SA in a multilingual setting<sup>2</sup>.
- 17 Therefore, while in 2010 the official status of SA was a very strong argument, in 2013 the defense of the supremacy of this variety in Moroccan society has to find different basis and arguments, as it will be shown below.

### 3. Standard Arabic before and after the 2011 Constitution

- 18 In the 2010 Proceedings, SA is the main axis around which all the content turns around. This variety is described as being under attack, abandoned, mistreated, threatened and suffering belittlement:

لذلك سينالها الكثير من الإهمال والإفساد والإساءة والتهميش (239-240: 2010 المودغيري)

This is due to the aforementioned unbalanced multilingualism.

- 19 Moreover, SA is, according to Academics, falsely accused of petrification, cultural decline, backwardness (جمود، تخلف، تراجع حضاري); it is said to be a freezed language with a very poor lexicon closed to modernization (224, 217-212: 2010 الودغيري).
- 20 But, according to the Proceedings' authors, all these false statements are far from the true nature of Arabic, because

ظلت العربية الفصحى لغة الفكر والعلم والأدب، أي لغة متميزة بمعجمها ضوابطها ومقومات استمرارها، محتاجة إلى التعلم والتعليم، وإتقان الضوابط التي تحفظها بين الأجيال، ناقلة للتراث الفكري والعلمي والحضاري بأمانة عبر العصور (150: 2010 الكتاني)

- 21 Besides its linguistic values and the cultural, scientific and historical legacy it encapsulates, SA is strongly linked to national identity and national cohesion, because it is considered the foremost bond: SA embodies the culture, the history, the civilization, the past and the future of all Moroccans. Therefore, it is an unifying factor of all the citizen

نرى فيها هويتنا وتاريخنا ونبض قلوبنا (51: 2010 العبدلالي)

Consequently, Arabicization is still presented as a means to restore the lost identity as against French, because it is a matter of sovereignty:

وقد كان القرار بتعريب البلاد قرار سياديا (314: 2010 التازي)

- 22 The amalgam and the symbiosis between language and nation is so strong that any attack against the language (SA) is understood as an attack against the identity and sovereignty (150: 2010 الكتاني), any perversion of this variety is felt as against the linguistic identity (159: 2010 الكتاني), because, according to, (52: 2010 العبدلوي)

اللغة العربية جزء لا يتجزأ من الوجدان الاجتماعي والثقافي للشعوب والأمم

- 23 SA is the essential bond that links Moroccans, not only among themselves, but also with the rest of the Arabs and the Islamic world (228: 2010 الودغيري; 45: 2010 العبدلوي). Therefore, it is easy to understand the relevance of the protection of SA, because it is not a mere linguistic issue: it is the nation and the sovereignty that are at stake. Thus, all the suggestions and proposals advanced by authors are framed under the Arabicization policy.
- 24 The promotion and preference for SA not only rests on the belief in the Arabicization policy and the portrayal of the variety itself. Neither it is only justified in its description as an essential part of the national identity and the national cohesion. The foremost argument exposed in these Proceedings is based upon the contradiction between the official role and the actual use. Then, the official status is in itself a strong reason for the defense of SA:

ويرتب على إضفاء طابع الرسمية على لغة من اللغات وجوب استعمالها في إدارات الدولة ومرافقها ومصالحها وجوبا قانونيا، ومنع مخالفة ذلك تحت طائلة المساءلة القانونية والمتابعة القضائية (133: 2010 البوشيخي).

- 25 The implications of the official status go far beyond. As a matter of fact, القاسمي (2010: 208) states that the current situation of SA infringes upon human rights, especially, children's human rights. According to this author, the language, the religion and the values are part of the right for children's own identity. Thus, by using a different language other than the official one, the children's right to their identity is marginalized:

ويتساءل المرء: كيف تحافظ وسائل الإعلام لدينا على هوية الطفل، الشخصية أو الوطنية، إذا كانت تهتمش لغته الوطنية وتشوه قيمه الدينية بما تبثه من برامج أجنبية؟ (2010: 208 القاسمي).

- 26 So far, the main ideas around SA in the 2010 have been exposed. The 2013 Proceedings offer a different perspective in some aspects, but the positive portrayal of SA is kept and treasured. In other words, many of the ideas, values and features associated to SA in 2010 are also found in the 2013 Proceedings, but differently stressed and enhanced.
- 27 As in the 2010 Proceedings, the official status of SA is frequently mentioned in connection to its struggles to fulfill this role, which is always at stake due to the threats posed against it. Again, one such threat comes from the policies of the francophonie policies and the presence of the French in Morocco, but also the spread of Dāriġa. This is perceived and presented in warlike terms: Arabic suffers from

(2010: 217) الودغيري هجمات وحملات ومسح وتشويه وتهميش وتهجين

- 28 Once more, this variety receives the highest consideration: its high linguistic qualities and the heritage it carries are praised. Nevertheless, in contrast with 2010 Proceedings, the religious dimension of SA is enhanced more frequently:

اللغة العربية التي ظلت (إلى جانب الإسلام) لقرون عديدة الأمانة التي يجتمع حولها المجتمع المسلم، ليس بصفتها لغة قوم وإنما بصفتها لغة القرآن (375: 2013 المكاوي).

- 29 Both the portrayal of its linguistic qualities and its religious aspect are key to understand the underlying rationale in a context of official multilingualism:
- 30 First, in a context in which political decisions concerning the languages are yet to be taken, the description of the varieties becomes very relevant, since it is the basis upon which the type of multilingualism is to be build. In 2013 the organical laws on the implementation of the official role of Tamazight were not yet drafted, meaning the specific measures of the linguistic policy are yet to be decided. In other words, because Tamazight is an official language alongside Arabic, it is no longer a matter of implementing a policy already initiated (Arabicization); it is no longer a matter of compliance with the Constitution: it is a matter of building a new policy. Thus, in contrast with 2010, the portrayal of SA adopts a comparative perspective as against all the other varieties of the country (Gago, forthcoming).
- 31 As of the religious dimension, the link of SA with Islam becomes highly relevant, since its unifying role is derived from its relation to the holy revelation, as the previous quote from (375: 2013) المكاوي clearly shows (see also, among others, 2013 الودغيري: 169). SA becomes a shared good among all Muslims and all Moroccans. And this consideration as a shared language lends it a degree of neutrality, because it belongs to all citizens and it is not attached to a specific ethnic nor political group. Therefore, it is a neutral language as far as politics is concerned:

كونها لغة محايدة غير ذات انتماء عرقي أو قومي أو طائفي، فهي –كما سبق القول– لغة أمة وليست لغة أم.

- 32 This perspective contrasts with the 2010 Proceedings. In both publications (2010 and 2013), SA is the unifying bond, but the arguments and the rationale that support this claim are different. In the 2010 Proceedings, the official status, the cultural legacy, the history and, above all, the nationalist ideology back this consideration of SA as the ‘unifying bond’. Nevertheless, in 2013 this role of SA derives, above all, from its relation with Islam, which is, in turn, a shared religion by almost all Moroccans. Moreover, the political arguments and associations related to SA are almost thoroughly erased in 2013 Proceedings, in contrast with the 2010 publication.

#### 4. MA before and after the 2011 Constitution

- 33 MA is portrayed, in both 2010 and 2013 proceedings, as *lahǧa*. Many of the characteristics typically associated to *lahǧāt* are found here: first, it is local, diversified, fragmented; second, it is a simplified variety, poor in lexicon, with no rules and limited to ‘basic’ functions because it is unable to convey complex ideas and thoughts; and third, it has undesirable features. The following excerpts illustrate these statements:

- 34 MA as a local and fragmented variety:

كما سنجد العاميات التي تعاشها في تعدد لغوي غني حلقات فرعية، تبقى في إطارها المحلي أداة للتواصل والإبداع، مع اعتبارها ملكاً للجميع (34: 2010 الجراي)

ولكن الدارجة المغربية، كأكثر اللهجات المحلية في العالم، لها خاصية معروفة هي أنها شفوية وليست مكتوبة، ومجالاتها الوظيفية محصورة في تأمين التواصل اليومي بين مختلف الطبقات الاجتماعية في السوق والشارع والمعمل والمدرسة وبين أفراد الأسرة (268: 2013 الودغيري)

- 35 MA as a simplified variety:

فاللهجة العامية، صيغة مبسطة في بنيتها وقواعدها، قاصرة في تراكيبها ومصطلحاتها التقنية، محدودة في نطاق استعمالها، لأن غايتها التواصل اليومي السريع. فهي بطبيعتها لا تصلح للتعبير عن الفكر المعقد، ولا التحليل المنطقي المعقّد (205: 2010 القاسمي)

- 36 MA and its undesirable features:

ولهذا السبب أصبحت التمازج في وسائل إعلاننا متبدلة وعمامية رديئة مختلطة بشكل هجين بالفرنسية، بدعوى التواصل مع الكافة (358: 2013 المكاوي)

- 37 But above all, the portrayal of this variety is frequently accompanied by words of ‘warning’, because *Dāriǧa* represents a danger in many ways:

- 38 First, it contributes to the social worsening and decline of the education:

وإذا كان الإشهار يستخدم اللهجة الدارجة، فإنّ له تأثيرات سلبية شديدة على لغة الأطفال (199: 2010 القاسمي)

- 39 Second, and most important, it is a dividing factor. It is a colonial tool whose aim is to break the national cohesion:



الدعوة الجهرية إلى تطوير العاميات لإضعاف الفصحى (...) هي دعوة استعمارية روج لها حديثاً الاتجاه العلماني في المجتمعات العربية والإسلامية (2010: 261 وگگ)

ليس حُباً في هذه العامية بالتأكيد، ولكن لضرب عصفورين معا: إضعاف الفصحى وتقوية الفرنكونية (2013: 176 الودغيري)

- 40 In this sense, the promotion of MA is put into relation with the ‘multilingualism ideology’ explained above. In any case, the portrayal of MA remains essentially unchanged. The main difference between 2010 and 2013 Proceedings does not concern the depiction in itself, but the degree of attention payed to this variety. In 2010, in the course of the heated debate around MA, its astonishing spread was the main concern. In 2013, the Academy shifts its attention to Tamazight, the new official language who might threat the privileged status of SA.

## 5. Conclusions

- 41 Coming back to the three research questions exposed in the introduction of this paper, the above analysis enables the following statements.
- 42 Concerning eventual changes affecting the depiction of MA and SA, the analysis has shown that, despite the important changes at the levels of the legal frame and the social context, the portrayal of these varieties has not evolved regarding on the essential. Thus, in relation to the second and third questions (on the impact of the 2011 Constitution), we confirm that the stance of the Academy stays the same, but the arguments to build its position have evolved towards a more religious-like approach and, at the same time, Academics downgrade or even erase any political association of SA.

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## NOTES

1. Some examples, among others, may illustrate this point: Rajaa Naji Mekkaoui, the first Moroccan female Doctor of Law, was also the first woman to lecture in front of the King in the 'Hassanian Lessons'; El-Oudghiri worked as a Professor at the Universities of Fes and Mohammed V; Abbès Jirari completed his PhD in Literature (El-Cairo University) and worked in the Ministry of International Relations.

2. This applies to the articles dealing with linguistic issues. As it can be deduced from the titles, the 2013 Proceedings tackle a more general, multidimensional topic (the Moroccan identity), in contrast to the 2010 Proceedings where the theme is the Arabic language itself.

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## ABSTRACTS

The stance of the Royal Academy of Morocco, an active partner in the sociolinguistic debate in Morocco, is analyzed through the texts published in 2010 and 2013 (before and after the acceptance of the 2011 Constitution). The purpose of this paper is to portray Academy's stance regarding Moroccan Arabic (MA) and Standard Arabic (SA) along this period in order to elucidate possible changes in the Academy's discourse.

## INDEX

**Keywords:** Standard Arabic, Moroccan Arabic-Dāriġa, official language, multilingualism, linguistic policy

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