

Diffusion du berbère standardisé dans les écoles marocaines : Obstacles didactiques et paradoxes sociolinguistiques

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Abstract:

In Morocco, the Berber (Amazigh) language had always had a minored status, despite the fact that it is spoken by an estimated 40% of the Moroccan population. It coexisted with standard Arabic (the only official language), Moroccan Arabic, and French. The Berber language consists of many different varieties of which three major vernaculars can be identified: Tarifit (Northern Morocco), Tamazight (Central) and Tachelhit (Southern). In 2001, the IRCAM (Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe) was created in order to concretize the requested language planning (standardization and teaching). In this institute, the linguists in charge of the corpus planning have worked (and still are) on a standardized Amazigh language. They claim that the methodology employed for this project is democratic. In other words, standard Amazigh should be a koïné (or a unified language) which should be common to the “main” vernaculars.

Berber is now a national language and since 2003, it has been entering the educational system as a compulsory subject in primary schools, no matter the pupils’ mother tongue.

My presentation will explore the setting of this new linguistic policy in the education system. After six years, the pedagogical choices do face many practical obstacles. Sometimes, from a sociolinguistic perspective, the situations in class can reveal to be very paradoxical.

I would like to show the results of my study through three main points:

- the relative legitimacy of the newly standardized language, compared to the local vernaculars.*
- the impact of pre-existing Arabic diglossia on my informants’ opinions.*
- the ambitious challenge of an original teaching project said to carry an “function of identity”*

I would also like to draw a parallel with the teaching of the Rom language in Romania, in order to shed a light on the similar complexity of these projects.

Keywords: *Standardisation; Minority language; Education; Language planning; Morocco.*