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Language policy and planning of Amazigh languages in Morocco: a study of the language ideology of the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture (IRCAM)

Bao, K.

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Language Policy and Planning of Amazigh Languages in Morocco

A Study of the Language Ideology of the
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(IRCAM)

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Prof. dr. G.J. Rutten

Promotiecommissie: Prof. dr. K.M.J. Sanchez-Summerer

(Rijksuniversiteit Groningen)

Prof. dr. N.C. Kula

Prof. dr. H. Van de Velde (Fryske Akademy)

Dr. M. van Putten

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Cette situation est déterminée par la contradiction entre les forces du maintien et celles du changement, i.e., le conflit entre les facteurs qui tendent à préserver le berbère et ceux qui conduisent à sa perte.” In an article published in 1995, Professor Ahmed Boukous, one of the most influential Amazigh¹ linguists of our time, described the sociolinguistic situation of the Amazigh language in Morocco as being in a state between maintenance and change. While pointing to the situation of Amazigh, Boukous explained the vitality of the language, emphasizing that “elle représente la langue maternelle des Berbères, qui l’emploient comme moyen de communication privilégié dans leur vie quotidienne.”²

Years later, Boukous underwent a dramatic shift in his view of the Amazigh language. He began to discuss Amazigh, a language he had once regarded as endowed with vitality, within the context of language endangerment. In his 2012 book *Revitalisation de la langue amazighe: Défis, enjeux et stratégies*, he analyzed the situation of the Amazigh language in Morocco as “marquée autant par le danger d’extinction convoqué par un processus historique impérieux.”³ The imperative to maintain the language and prevent its shift thus transformed into the necessity for its revitalization to mitigate the threat of language death.

Amidst the opposite viewpoints regarding the state of the Amazigh language, whether it is in vitality or in danger of death, it is challenging to discern an equally dramatic shift in the practice of the Amazigh language in Morocco. Its status as a mother tongue and an important means of communication remains largely unchanged. Here, we can safely assume that the shift between the Amazigh language being considered either vital or at risk of death is not primarily associated with a change in language practice. Instead, it pertains more to a shift in language ideology or a

¹ While the term “Berber” is still employed in an objective manner within academic contexts, I consistently use the term “Amazigh” and its related forms, such as “Imazighen” for Berbers, when referring to the language, the people, and its derivatives, except in cases of quotations and specific references.

² Boukous, A. (1995a). La langue berbère: Maintien et changement. *International journal of the sociology of language*, 1995(112), 9-28.

³ Boukous, A. (2012). *Revitalisation de la langue amazighe: Défis, enjeux et stratégies*. IRCAM. p. 8.

transformation in ideologies about language. The new ideologies concerning Amazigh languages, which are the central focus of this thesis, are primarily associated with the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture (Institut royal de la culture amazighe, IRCAM), an institute established in 2001 and currently chaired by Boukous, serving as the facility for language policy and planning for Amazigh language(s) in Morocco.

Before delving into details, this introductory chapter will present the theoretical foundations, including language ideology and language policy and planning. It will then provide an overview of Morocco's languages and the situation of Amazigh, along with its related policies and planning. Following an explanation of the methodology, the chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis structure.

1.1. Language Ideology

A widely accepted definition of language ideology, articulated by Kathryn A. Woolard, describes it as “a mediating link between social forms and forms of talk.”⁴ This definition underscores the role of language ideology as a mediator, intervening in the established relationship between language practice and social structures, influencing both ends. As a type of ideology, it shares essential characteristics with other ideologies. While not entirely illusory or embodying “false consciousness,” as famously phrased by Friedrich Engels⁵, it is widely agreed that ideologies derive from social and experiential origins⁶, sometimes including misrecognitions or distorted notions that contradict scientific observations. Thus, in performing its mediating roles, language ideologies cannot be purely descriptive like “knowledge”; instead, they utilize their control over cognitions and evaluations to enhance logical coherence and persuasive power, effectively fulfilling certain mediating aims.⁷ This will be further explored in the analysis of IRCAM.

The interaction between language ideology and the two mediated ends, language

⁴ Woolard, K. A. (1998). Introduction: Language ideology as a field of inquiry. In Schieffelin, B. B., Woolard, K. A., & Kroskrity, P. V. (Eds.). (1998). *Language ideologies: Practice and theory*. Oxford University Press, 3-50.

⁵ Eagleton, T. (1991). *Ideology: An Introduction*. Verso. p. 89.

⁶ Woolard, K. A. (1998). p. 6.

⁷ For the four essential features of ideology, namely cognitive power; evaluative power; action orientation; and logical coherence, see Mullins, W. A. (1972). On the concept of ideology in political science. *American political science review*, 66(2), 498-510.

and social structure, is complex. Importantly, in the mutual influence between language ideology and language structure, the “misrecognitions” that may occur in ideology do not necessarily hinder its power of influence. As Alan Rumsey posits, partly as a result of these related misrecognitions, “might not the linguistic system gradually change so as to approximate that for which it was misrecognized?”⁸ As for the social aspect, language ideology links language with various facets including identity, aesthetics, morality, and epistemology, impacting essential social institutions such as religious rituals, child socialization, gender relations, the nation-state, education, and legal systems.⁹ Among these aspects, the focus of this thesis lies on identity and nation-state related issues. Two particular language ideologies will be elaborated upon in this chapter, namely the standard language ideology and the one nation–one language ideology.

1.2. Standard Language Ideology and One Nation–One Language Ideology

The standard language ideology is characterized by certain principles, notably the notion that languages are internally uniform and distinct entities. When languages are identified and distinguished from others, they often undergo a standardization process.¹⁰ Standardization is better understood as an ideology because a standard language is a conceptual construct rather than a concrete reality. It represents a set of abstract norms that actual usage may adhere to with varying degrees of conformity.¹¹ This ideology stands in stark contrast to the polynomic or pluricentric language ideology, which responds positively to linguistic variation and recognizes that no single linguistic norm is inherently correct.¹²

Language standardization matured hand in hand with the subsequent emergence of nation-states, where the ideology of one nation–one language, or simply national

⁸ Rumsey, A. (1990). Wording, meaning, and linguistic ideology. *American anthropologist*, 92(2), 346-361.

⁹ Woolard, K. A. (1998). p. 3.

¹⁰ Horner, K., & Weber, J. J. (2018). *Introducing multilingualism: A social approach*. Routledge. p. 21.

¹¹ Milroy, J., & Milroy, L. (1985). *Authority in language: Investigating language prescription and standardization*. Routledge & Kegan Paul. pp. 22-23.

¹² Horner, K., & Weber, J. J. (2018). p. 77.

language ideology, plays a crucial role.¹³ People who adhere to this ideology consider the contingent link between language and national identity significant and typically hold negative attitudes towards hybrid linguistic varieties, perceiving linguistic and cultural heterogeneity as a threat not only to the national language but also to national identity.¹⁴ This ideology shares a positive attitude towards language homogeneity similar to standard language ideology, as it believes that the optimal societal structure is one characterized by linguistic and cultural uniformity, thereby eliminating centrifugal and potentially dangerous differences.¹⁵ The standard and national language ideologies, while advocating for the existence of a homogeneous standard and/or national language, also leave room for discussion regarding how to address actual language variations, such as whether they should be tolerated or eliminated.

In the following section, I will introduce the historical development of these ideologies, focusing primarily on the Italian, French, German, and Arabic contexts—cases that have directly or indirectly influenced language ideologies concerning the Amazigh languages. The aim is to highlight their significance in modern nationalist discourse and examine the ideological groundwork that has shaped language ideologies regarding Amazigh.

1.2.1. The Social Functions of Language in Antiquity

The standard and national language ideologies are closely linked to the social functions of language. George C. Barker categorizes these social functions into two main aspects: Firstly, language delineates the collective identity of a group, termed the group-defining function. Secondly, language establishes and maintains social relations within the group, known as the group-relating function.¹⁶ Or in the words of Mikhail Bakhtin, this is described as the centrifugal and centripetal forces of

¹³ Costa, J., De Korne, H., & Lane, P. (2018). Standardising minority languages: Reinventing peripheral languages in the 21st century. In *Standardizing minority languages*. Routledge, 1-23.

¹⁴ May, S. (2005). Language rights: Moving the debate forward. *Journal of sociolinguistics*, 9(3), 319-347; Horner, K., & Weber, J. J. (2018). p. 23.

¹⁵ Blommaert, J., & Verschueren, J. (2005). The role of language in European nationalist ideologies. In *Language & peace*. Routledge, 163-188.

¹⁶ Barker, G. C. (1945). The social functions of language. *ETC: A review of general semantics*, 228-234.

language.¹⁷

The group-defining function of language has a long tradition in human history. In ancient Greece, non-Greek speakers were referred to as *Barbaros*, emphasizing the nascent Greek nation's attempt to construct otherness and define its own identity; a widely spread theory suggests that the Slavs were defined as “the people of the word,” emphasizing the role of language in their identity.¹⁸ Since at least the ninth century Abbasid Empire, Arabic has played a significant role in delineating Arab identity from non-Arabs, or *A'jam*, which means those “who do not speak Arabic correctly or clearly.”¹⁹ Similar attempts at self-definition can be considered as precedents for descriptive language ideologies that associate language with identity.

The group-relating function of language has also been utilized since early times, particularly in the process of state-building. In ancient Rome, Marcus Tullius Cicero mentioned language, along with rights and “many other things,” as important factors uniting the community.²⁰ Meanwhile, as the national language ideology typically correlates with the standard one, Cicero also displayed an early example of quasi-standard ideology by attempting to elevate the pleasant speech of Rome to the status of an educated standard, while suppressing the language characteristics of the rural periphery, which he deemed as harsh.²¹ Similar nascent standard language ideologies can be traced back even earlier to Ancient Greece.²²

¹⁷ Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (M. Holquist & C. Emerson, Trans., M. Holquist, Eds.). University of Texas Press. Austin. p. xix.

¹⁸ Mesiarkin, A. (2017). The name of the Slavs: Etymology and meaning. *Петербургские славянские и балканские исследования*, (1 (21)), 3-20.

¹⁹ Webb, P. (2016). *Imagining the Arabs: Arab identity and the rise of Islam*. Edinburgh University Press. pp. 178-179. See also Christys, A. (2003). The history of Ibn Habib and ethnogenesis in Al-Andalus. In Corradini, R., Diesenberger, M., & Reimitz, H. (Eds.). *The construction of communities in the early middle ages*. Brill, 323-348. p. 344.

²⁰ Cicero, M. T. (1852). *The orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero. Literally translated by C. D Yonge* (Vol. 1). London: Henry G. Bohn. p. 536.

²¹ Adams, J. N. (2003). “Romanitas” and the Latin language. *The classical quarterly*, 53(1), 184-205.

²² Colvin, S. (2016). The Greek Koine and the logic of a standard language. In *Standard languages and language standards—Greek, past and present*. Routledge, 33-46.

1.2.2. The Italian Case: An Early Expression of the Standard Language Ideology

Standard language ideology played a particularly important role in the modern era and language standardization is widely regarded as the linguistic aspect of modernity. This perspective, as expressed by Susan Gal, proposes that standardized systems are a component of an “axis of modernity,” representing a set of “modern” values—such as universality, rationality, and progress—which are opposed to values such as particularity, emotion, and tradition. Positioned on the “modern” side of this spectrum, standardized languages assert their superiority over other forms of language within the same community.²³ From this perspective, language standardization begins aligning with the origin of modernity in the late 16th century, a historical period characterized by a scientific, taxonomic project that posits the necessity of developing “a unique, decontextualized view of nature” to attain certain, definitive knowledge.²⁴ Consequently, there emerged a demand for language standardization to create a form of language that is “decontextualized, neutral, widely accessible, and learnable.”²⁵

This led to early language standardization efforts aimed at shaping these decontextualized languages, closely tied to the emergence and development of language academies in Europe. The first among them was the *Accademia della Crusca*, established in 1583 in Florence with the aim of “separating the flour (the good language) from the bran (the bad language),” or more specifically, formalizing the already dominant position of the Florentine dialect as the model for Italian.²⁶ The ideology at the inception of the academy was more aligned with those of classical times. One of its prominent founding members, Lionardo Salviati, believed that the superior softness of Florentine speech provided such an exquisite pleasure to all who spoke it that it would soon become universally accepted throughout the Italian Peninsula.²⁷ However, its modernity became evident shortly after its establishment

²³ Gal, S. (2018). Visions and revisions of minority languages. In *Standardizing minority languages*. Routledge, 222-242.

²⁴ Slaughter, M. M. (1982). *Universal languages and scientific taxonomy in the seventeenth century*. Cambridge University Press. p. 85.

²⁵ Costa, J., De Korne, H., & Lane, P. (2018). See also Gal, S., & Woolard, K. A. (2014). Constructing languages and publics authority and representation. In *Languages and publics*. Routledge, 1-12.

²⁶ <https://accademiadellacrusca.it/en/contenuti/origins-and-foundation/7525> (accessed May 3, 2024)

²⁷ Tosi, A. (2011). The Accademia della Crusca in Italy: Past and present. *Language*

with the introduction of scientific neologisms by Galileo Galilei, a member of the academy since 1605, who was committed to using Italian rather than Latin to reach a wider audience.²⁸

1.2.3. The French Case: A Strong Expression of the One Nation–One Language Ideology

A similar standard ideology with modern connotations was more clearly expressed later in 1635 within the French context with the establishment of the *Académie française*. Its mission was explicitly stated as follows: “La principale fonction de l’Académie sera de travailler, avec tout le soin et toute la diligence possibles, à donner des règles certaines à notre langue et à la rendre pure, éloquente et capable de traiter les arts et les sciences. (Article 24 des statuts)” However, unlike the *Accademia della Crusca*, the *Académie française*, as a project ordained by the monarchy, became as much political as academic from the beginning. Cardinal Richelieu, who initiated the academy, was the chief minister during the reign of King Louis XIII of France, a period that witnessed the formation of a more centralized French kingdom. The academy was part of the centralization effort and served as one of Richelieu’s instruments for internal unification of the kingdom, embodying the group-relating function of language.²⁹ The close relationship between standard language ideology and national language ideology was thus more clearly manifested.

Nevertheless, the establishment of the *Académie française* did not radically change language practices in the kingdom for the following one and a half centuries, as the usage of regional languages in France remained vibrant, until significant political and social changes were brought about by the Revolution. The nascent, more centralized republic had the imperative to further impose the French language across the country as a symbol of national identity. Furthermore, there was an urgent need to use the standardized national French language to disseminate the new laws and ideas of the revolution. Since linguistic issues were merely instrumental to this pressing need, regional languages were simultaneously promoted for this purpose at the beginning of the revolution. For instance, in 1790, the Constitution stipulated that all

policy, 10, 289-303.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ According to the introduction of the Academy on its official website, <https://www.academie-francaise.fr/institution/les-missions> (accessed May 3, 2024)

decrees would be translated into all regional languages, displayed, and read in public places. However, due to a lack of translators and the high costs of translations, the project did not last long.³⁰

In contrast, imposing a homogeneous language not only met the practical needs of the revolution but also embodied its spirit, as French, once exclusive to nobles and elites, now belonged to all citizens, signifying equality and freedom. This idea was eloquently articulated by Henri Grégoire, one of the most prominent leaders of the revolution, in 1794, as he inquired: “Si notre idiôme a reçu un tel accueil des tyrans et des cours, à qui la France monarchique donnoit des théâtres, des pompons, des modes & des manières, quel accueil ne doit-il pas se promettre de la part des peuples, à qui la France républicaine révèle leurs droits en leur ouvrant la route de la liberté?”³¹ Notably, Henri Grégoire not only championed imposing the standard national language, but also showed great hostility to regional languages, as reflected in the title of the same article “Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d’anéantir les patois et d’universaliser l’usage de la langue française”. According to him, the previous tolerance towards regional languages and translation efforts should be completely halted, making room for the dissemination of “une foule d’opuscules patriotiques, qui contiendront des notions simples & lumineuses” in a more standardized French language.

This heightened version of standard language ideology and one nation—one language ideology advocating not only for a standard national language but also for the elimination of language variations, was described by Marie-Clémence Perrot as arising from a defensive situation. In 1793, the Republic faced numerous external and internal threats, particularly from the federalist and royalist movements, where regional languages were seen as carriers of the counter-revolutionary spirit. Therefore, the decision to eliminate patois was aimed more at reaffirming the “one and indivisible” Republic and was “less a question of propagating than of defending the Revolution”.³²

³⁰ For this paragraph, see Perrot, M. C. (1997). La politique linguistique pendant la révolution française. *Mots. Les langages du politique*, 52(1), 158-167.

³¹ Grégoire, H. (1794). *Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d’anéantir les patois et d’universaliser l’usage de la langue française*. Paris: Convention Nationale.

³² Perrot, M. C. (1997).

1.2.4. The German Case: “One Language-One Nation” Ideology as a Precondition

Such ideologies were not exclusive to France and can also be observed, for example, in the German context. In 1617, the German *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* was founded, modeled after the *Accademia della Crusca*, by Prince Ludwig of Anhalt-Köthen, who was a member of the latter.³³ The merits of Modern High German were later promoted by Baroque literary and linguistic societies, facilitating its emergence as a written language. With the rise of German nationalism, by the late 18th century, Modern High German had essentially become established as a standard national language.³⁴ The ideological debate over whether to eliminate or tolerate regional languages also existed in the German context. For instance, Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700-1766) insisted in his German grammar that one ought to abstain from using provincialisms.³⁵ In contrast, Jacob Grimm (1785-1863), while acknowledging the importance of a standard, unified written German language as a reminder of shared German descent and as an indispensable medium for the German community, also cherished the value of German dialectal mother tongues.³⁶

Despite the similarities mentioned above, there is a significant difference between German and French language ideologies. Unlike France and England, which were unified states governed by monarchs, Germany in the early modern era remained a loose confederation of hundreds of semi-autonomous states. As a result, the Anglo-Franco style of political nationalism—where Ernest Renan famously used the metaphor of viewing the nation as a “daily plebiscite”—did not have the foundation to develop.³⁷ In contrast, a romantic nationalism, or cultural nationalism, emerged in the German intellectual tradition with language at the heart of it.

This ideology, embodying the group-defining function of language, can be traced

³³ Pfalzgraf, F. (2009). Linguistic purism in the history of the German language. *Landmarks in the history of the German language*, 137-168.

³⁴ Lobin, H. (2021). Alles muss raus! Der lange Kampf gegen die Fremdwörter. <https://www.goethe.de/prj/ger/de/kre/spk/22302864.html> (accessed May 3, 2024)

³⁵ Pfalzgraf, F. (2009).

³⁶ Norberg, J. (2022). *The brothers Grimm and the making of German nationalism*. Cambridge University Press. p. 142-151.

³⁷ Renan, E. (1882). Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?. Conférence faite en Sorbonne, le 11 mars 1882.

back to the theories of Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803). Herder suggested that a people (*Volk*) is defined by its possession of a distinctive language, which is essential for its national identity and spirit. His primary focus was on the connection between language and *Volk*, conveyed by the phrase, “Nur durch die Sprache wird ein Volk (only through the language a people becomes).”³⁸ As Frederick Barnard explains: “Language to Herder was the essential criterion of a human being, at once a cultural and a socio-political rallying force. It is also the key-concept in Herder’s notion of nationalism.”³⁹ Unlike political nationalism, this ideology offers a culture-oriented interpretation of the people and the nation. It emphasizes not the nation-state as a pre-condition, but rather the “national spirit” (*Volksgeist*) and its manifestations in literature and folklore, the native language, and history, which become the focal points of nationalism.⁴⁰

While language constitutes merely one facet of national identity alongside factors like history, culture, and religion, it has a unique status. People who adhere to this ideology generally believe, as described by Jan Blommaert and Jef Verschueren, that “just as feathers can predict features such as beaks, eggs, and the ability to fly in birds, a specific language can similarly be predictive of a distinct history and culture.”⁴¹ This ideological link establishes language as the foremost parameter of a nation and consequently implies that groups distinguished solely on the basis of a distinct language are described as real ethnic groups. Conversely, the absence of a distinct language tends to cast doubts on the legitimacy of ascription to nationhood.⁴²

1.2.5. The Arabic Case: An Integrated Development

All the aforementioned European language-ideological traditions, including the

³⁸ Bauman, R., & Briggs, C. L. (2003). *Voices of modernity: Language ideologies and the politics of inequality* (No. 21). Cambridge University Press. p. 169; Herder, J. G. (1877). *Sämtliche werke* (Vol. 18, B. L. Suphan, Ed.). Georg Olms. (Original work published 1877). p. 387.

³⁹ Barnard, F. M. (1959). The Hebrews and Herder’s political creed. *The modern language review*, 533-546. p. 540.

⁴⁰ Kohn, H. (2017). *The idea of nationalism: A study in its origins and background*. Routledge. p. 5.

⁴¹ Blommaert, J., & Verschueren, J. (2005). The role of language in European nationalist ideologies. In *Language & peace*. Routledge, 163-188.

⁴² *Ibid.*

standard language ideology, the one nation–one language ideology, the hostile ideology towards language variations generated by the former two, and the ideology of “one language-one nation” in cultural nationalism, were exported during the colonial era and left a significant impact on the colonized regions. An early example of this influence can be seen in the Arab world.

The emergence and development of Modern Standard Arabic were triggered by the colonial encounter of Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798. At that time, besides colloquial Arabic used by people in daily life, Classical Arabic, as the language of religion, was the formal literary language. It was, however, only written by a small elite on traditional Muslim science and had long lost its status to Turkish high culture in the Ottoman Empire.⁴³ The brief Napoleon invasion brought an intensive awareness of new science, technologies, and ideas to Arabic speakers and the ruling elites. During the subsequent Egyptian regime under Muhammad Ali (reign 1805–1848), who initiated the modernization process of the country in a bid to become an independent regional power, the development of the Arabic language gained new momentum with the help of government-sponsored education, translation, and publication projects, in which Arabic played a major role alongside Turkish and French.⁴⁴

One of the most notable developments in the Arabic language starting from this period was the influx of a large number of borrowings from European languages concerning new scientific terms and political and cultural concepts, especially from Italian, French, and later English. Previously, the borrowing pools of written Arabic were dominated by languages such as Persian, Turkish, and Greek for expressing “new” concepts.⁴⁵ This new expansion of borrowings significantly contributed to the vocabulary changes in the Arabic language, marking one of the most striking differences between Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic.⁴⁶

These new borrowings soon prompted responses, reflecting a significant ideology of purism incorporated into the Arabic standardization process. The ideology

⁴³ Newman, D. (2013). The Arabic literary language: The Nahda (and beyond). In J. Owens (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of Arabic linguistics*. Oxford University Press.

⁴⁴ Heyworth-Dunne, J. (1938). *An introduction to the history of education in modern Egypt*. Luzac & Co. pp. 196-199.

⁴⁵ Kossmann, M. (2013a). Borrowing. In J. Owens (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of Arabic linguistics*. Oxford University Press.

⁴⁶ Newman, D. (2013).

of purism is usually driven by a general fear of foreign (cultural) elements, often in response to *perceived* foreign invasion or cultural decline, regardless of whether these threats are actually taking place.⁴⁷ This ideology tends to emerge during periods of rapid social change, as was the case in the Arabic world in the 19th century, and is closely intertwined with the standard language ideology and the one nation–one language ideology.⁴⁸

Consequently, just as the *Académie française* initially aimed to make the French language “pure, eloquent, and capable of dealing with the arts and sciences,” the Arabic language academies and associations that began to emerge from the mid-19th century, modeled on the *Académie française*, prioritized coining Arabic words to ward off Western loanwords.⁴⁹ These efforts produced mixed results. On one hand, the academies, mostly based in Cairo and Damascus, were numerous and competitive, lacking a central authority for coining neologisms.⁵⁰ This fragmentation hindered the unification of Arabic technical and scientific terminology, resulting in the persistence of many loanwords in the technical sphere. On the other hand, despite a significant absolute number of loanwords in standard Arabic, their usage rate is relatively low beyond the technical sphere. Maarten Kossmann explains this as both ideological and sociolinguistic. Sociolinguistically, the diglossic situation of standard and colloquial Arabic made the use of the former more closely monitored, while ideologically, the standard and purism language ideologies exerted a significant influence.⁵¹

The aforementioned developments of the Arabic language constitute an indispensable part of what would later be termed the *Nahda*, or the cultural movement of the “Arab Renaissance,” which spanned roughly the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century. As standard language ideology and the one nation–one language ideology tend to mature hand in hand, the latter also found early expression in the Arabic context during the *Nahda*, with Lebanese Christians playing an important role. Simultaneous to the colonial encounter influencing Egypt, Lebanese Christians became familiar with modern European ideas through religious links. For

⁴⁷ Langer, N., & Davies, W. (2005). An Introduction to linguistic purism. in *Linguistic purism in the Germanic languages*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1-17.

⁴⁸ Horner, K., & Weber, J. J. (2018). p. 25.

⁴⁹ Newman, D. (2013).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Kossmann, M. (2013a).

example, the influential Arabic scholar, writer, and translator Ahmad Faris al-Shidyāq (1805-1887), a Lebanese Maronite Christian by birth, traveled to England in 1848 to help in the translation of the New Testament into Arabic and then went to Paris, where he stayed for several years.⁵² Starting in the 1860s, he suggested establishing a French-style language academy to regulate and preserve the “purity” of the Arabic language and began writing its grammar.⁵³

Another influential intellectual, Butrus al-Bustani (1819–1883), shared a similar background and experience to al-Shidyāq. Born into a Lebanese Christian family, he initially assisted American Protestant missionaries in translating the Bible into Arabic. Later in his career, he dedicated himself to creating an Arabic dictionary and encyclopedia, as well as editing periodicals. In the words of Albert Hourani, all of these endeavors made important contributions to the development of Modern Standard Arabic into “a language true to its past in grammar and idiom, but made capable of expressing simply, precisely, and directly the concepts of modern thought.”⁵⁴ Apart from these embodiments of standard language ideology, al-Bustani also possessed a national language ideology, as demonstrated by the name of the school he founded in 1863, *al-Madrasa al-Waṭaniyya*, or the National School, where the Arabic language and modern sciences were taught.

The National School was an important part of al-Bustani’s nationalist project in the wake of the sectarian violence at the time in Lebanon and Syria. It was the first secular school in the Arab world, maintaining a multi-confessional student body and faculty. For al-Bustani, the Arabic language was not religious but a secular and national language that united its speakers, who also shared a common culture and history. The cultural nationalism and the one nation–one language ideologies were clearly expressed in al-Bustani’s plea: “You all drink one water, breathe one air. Your language which you speak, your earth on which you walk, your welfare and your customs are all one.”⁵⁵ Through the efforts of al-Bustani and other Christian Arab intellectuals of the time, such as Nasif al-Yaziji and Ibrahim al-Yaziji, Arabic not only

⁵² Hourani, A. (2013). *Arabic thought in the liberal age, 1798–1939*. Cambridge University Press. p. 98.

⁵³ Newman, D. (2013).; Shidyāq, A. F. (1891). *A practical grammar of the Arabic language: With interlineal reading lessons, dialogues and vocabulary*. B. Quaritch.

⁵⁴ Hourani, A. (2013). p. 100.

⁵⁵ Sheehi, S. (2012). Butrus al-Bustani: Syria’s ideology of the age. In *The origins of Syrian nationhood: Histories, pioneers and identity*. Routledge, 57-78.

became a secular language of modern science and technology but also a secular language of Arabness.

The idea was not restricted to Christians, especially towards the start of the 20th century. At that time, awakened Arabness swiftly evolved into a movement with a broad network of associations, parties, secret societies, and clubs advocating for reforms and decentralization throughout the Arab provinces of the empire, and calling for Arabic to be recognized as an official language.⁵⁶ One of the most active participants in the movement, the Homs-born and Istanbul-educated activist ‘Abd al-Hamid al-Zahrawi, once emphatically expressed his national language ideology: “This Arab race has its characteristics in the unity of language, customs, interests, and tendencies that have emphasized Arab rights still ignored to this hour. For that reason, we, as Ottomans, demanded to have an effective share in the administration of the affairs of the empire, and to expose, as Arabs, special demands with reference to our nationalism and status.”⁵⁷

However, these advocations of Arab nationalism did not immediately become influential among the Arab majority in the late Ottoman Empire. On the one hand, Arab activists, initially inspired by the restoration of the Ottoman constitution, were soon brutally suppressed by the governing Committee of Union and Progress, with al-Zahrawi himself executed.⁵⁸ On the other hand, the majority of the Muslim Arab intellectual elite still embraced Ottomanism and generally cherished the Islamic *Umma*. Many even viewed Arab nationalism as a Christian project, critically rebuking that “Arabic shall not be Christianized.”⁵⁹ The situation only changed with the fall of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. This shift can be exemplified by the experience of Sati’ al-Husri (1880-1968), the influential director general of education of the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq.

Born to a Syrian family of the traditional Ottoman Arab elite, al-Husri was a renowned educational officer of the empire who was trained in Istanbul, worked in

⁵⁶ Tarabein, A. (1991). ‘Abd al-Hamid al-Zahrawi: The career and thought of an Arab nationalist. In Khalidi, R., Anderson, L., Muslih, M. Y., & Simon, R. S. (Eds.). (1991). *The origins of Arab nationalism*. Columbia University Press, 97-119. p. 99.

⁵⁷ Al-Khatib, M. (1913), *al-mu’tamar al-‘arabi al-awwal* (The first Arab congress), pp. 17-18. Quoted in Tarabein, A. (1991). p. 103.

⁵⁸ Tarabein, A. (1991). p. 109.

⁵⁹ Dawn, C. E. (1961). From Ottomanism to Arabism: The origin of an ideology. *The review of politics*, 23(3), 378-400.

the Balkans, and once held the position of head of the teacher training school (*darūlmua'llimin*), where he played an important role in the educational modernization process of the empire.⁶⁰ In the first half of his life, al-Husri adhered to the ideology of Ottomanism, which sought to unify Turks and Arabs, and hardly spoke about Arab nationalism. However, as Ernest Dawn stated, “Arabism won its first success, and a complete success, when the failure of the Ottoman Empire in World War I left the dominant faction of the Arab elite with no alternative to Arabism.”⁶¹ Al-Husri was a member of this elite, and significantly contributed to the success of this Arabism.

The aforementioned language ideologies from the French and German traditions can all be found in the Arab nationalism developed by al-Husri. In 1919, as the head of the education committee of the short-lived Arab Kingdom of Syria under King Faisal I, he became involved in setting up the Arab Science Academy in Damascus (*al-Majma'a al-'Ilmī al-'Arabī bi Dimashq*), patterned after the *Académie Française*.⁶² After following Faysal to Iraq in 1920 and resuming as the director general of education, al-Husri's ideology became more influential. Patterning to cultural nationalism, al-Husri presented the Arab *Umma* in a secular, nationalist mode as united by language and history, stating that “the language is the soul and the life of the nation, history is its memory and its consciousness.”⁶³ For him, a nation is not an Anglo-Franco style political “daily plebiscite,” but rather something truly existing, more aligned with the German conceptualization. The ideology is described by Albert Hourani as, “a man is, or is not, an Arab whether he wants to be or not,” which means that the Arab nation consists of all who speak Arabic as their mother tongue, “no more, no less.”⁶⁴

Sati' al-Husri recommended that the Iraqi curriculum be based in Arabic rather than Turkish. He stressed the importance of a concentration on classical Arabic

⁶⁰ Cleveland, W. L. (1971). *The making of an Arab nationalist: Ottomanism and Arabism in the life and thought of Sati' Al-Husri*. Princeton University Press. pp. 12-46.

⁶¹ Dawn, C. E. (1962). The rise of Arabism in Syria. *Middle east journal*, 16(2), 145-168.

⁶² Khoury, S. (2016). *Instituting renaissance: The early work of the Arab academy of science in Damascus, 1919-1930*. The George Washington University. pp. 204-207.

⁶³ Quoted in Tibi, B. (1981). *Arab nationalism: A critical enquiry*. (M. Farouk-Sluglett & P. Sluglett, Eds. and Trans.). Macmillan. p.122.

⁶⁴ Hourani, A. (2013). p. 313.

grammar and reading and aimed to achieve national regional unity through the use of standard Arabic to the exclusion of local dialects.⁶⁵ Similar language ideology showing hostility against dialects in the Arabic context can still be found in recent times. For example, in 2008, Mazin al-Mubarak, an Arabic scholar and a member of the Language Academy in Syria, called for a reinforcement of the status of Standard Arabic and advocated for a gradual eradication of the use of colloquial Arabic in Syria.⁶⁶ However, in general, similar ideologies cannot be considered as influential or applicable in the Arabic world, where the diglossic situation between Standard and Colloquial Arabic is firmly established, with the latter dominating most aspects of daily life. That said, the standard language ideology and the one nation–one language ideology have also been significantly successful. Standard Arabic has deeply integrated into all levels of society throughout the Arab world. It is used in both written and spoken forms, both nationally and internationally, representing a true revival of the Arabic language.⁶⁷

Furthermore, ideologically, despite diverse language practices across all Arabic countries, Arabic remains the sole and exclusive official language in the majority of cases.⁶⁸ This was also the case of independent Morocco until the changes to the constitution in 2011, which gave official recognition to Amazigh (see Chapter Two).

1.3. Language Policy and Planning

The fact that standardized Arabic achieved ideological success as the sole official language in practically multilingual countries, with similar cases in different contexts, is of interest to the coherent academic field known as Language Policy and Planning (LPP). The name Language Policy and Planning is problematic, as it is used inconsistently. Sometimes language policy is considered the overall framework with planning as an aspect of it, while at other times language planning is the main focus

⁶⁵ Simon, R. S. (1986). The teaching of history in Iraq before the Rashid Ali coup of 1941. *Middle eastern studies*, 22(1), 37-51.

⁶⁶ Bassiouney, R. (2009). *Arabic sociolinguistics*. Edinburgh University Press. p. 202.

⁶⁷ Newman, D. (2013).; Shraybom-Shivtiel, S. (1995). The role of the colloquial in the renaissance of standard Arabic Language as a mirror of social change. In Izre'el, S., & Drory, R. (Eds.). *Language and culture in the Near East*. Brill, 207-215.

⁶⁸ Bassiouney, R. (2009). p. 211.

with policies as different aspects of the planning practice. Moreover, a recent trend uses the term language management, as it is believed to more precisely capture the nature of the phenomenon.⁶⁹

I will continue using the term LPP but bear in mind its disputes and limitations. One reason for this choice is to avoid ambiguity. The term language management is used mainly to differentiate between simple and organized management, in which the simple one means “the speaker can manage individual features or aspects of his or her own or of his or her interlocutor’s discourse here and now.”⁷⁰ It is an important notion but generally not the focus of this thesis, especially considering that management is used in the name of the *Centre de l’aménagement linguistique (CAL)* of IRCAM, which is one of the focuses of this thesis, with the meaning of organized management which is directed and systematic.

Though there is no universal definition or approach to LPP, as the field highly depends on and varies according to context, scholars typically engage with the influential model by Bernard Spolsky, who posits that language policy comprises three interrelated but independently describable components: practice, beliefs, and management.⁷¹

Language practices refer to the observable behaviors and choices regarding language use – essentially, what people actually do. This includes the specific linguistic features they select and the variety of language they use regularly or typically. Language beliefs are largely equivalent to the term language ideologies. Language management, also known as language planning, operates on the assumption that language practices and beliefs can be influenced and altered. It typically involves deliberate efforts by language managers to change the language practices and/or ideologies of a targeted speech community.

Language management generally involves four types of planning: status, corpus, acquisition, and prestige planning. As proposed by Heinz Kloss, status planning aims to regulate the societal status and functional range of a language or variety, such as designating a language as official.⁷² Corpus planning, also known as “language

⁶⁹ Spolsky, B. (2009). *Language management*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 4-5.

⁷⁰ Nekvapil, J., & Nekula, M. (2006). On language management in multinational companies in the Czech Republic. *Current issues in language planning*, 7(2-3), 307-327.

⁷¹ Spolsky, B. (2004). *Language policy*. Cambridge university press.

⁷² Kloss, H. (1968). Notes concerning a language–nation typology. In J. A. Fishman,

cultivation,” involves creating new forms, modifying existing ones, or selecting from alternative forms in a spoken or written code. It is closely related to language standardization, including the development and reform of writing systems and spelling, various aspects of purism, and the modernization of the lexicon, particularly the selection and coinage of new words to address modern life and technology.⁷³

Among the other two discernible types of planning, acquisition planning aims to increase the number of users of a language or variety. More pertinent to educational plans, acquisition planning involves topics such as literacy, multilingual education, and creating integrated approaches to language teaching and learning in the school context.⁷⁴ Prestige planning, as suggested by Harald Haarmann, is based on the understanding that any language planning effort must be supported by a favorable psychological background among the people. This positive perception is essential for the effective implementation of planning goals and is ultimately the most crucial factor for the long-term success of the planning. Prestige planning, functioning on language beliefs or ideologies, operates at four levels, resulting in promoting the mental image of a certain language or variety by governments, by agencies, by groups, or by individuals.⁷⁵

This last point is particularly noteworthy as it aligns with the significant shift in the LPP field away from the classic language planning model of the 1960s and 70s, which operated on the premise that language planning occurred solely at the nation-state level and aimed to influence the development of the entire society.⁷⁶ Later

C. A. Ferguson, & J. Das Gupta (Eds.). *Language problems of developing nations*. New York: Wiley, 69-85.

⁷³ Spolsky, B. (2011). Language academies and other language management agencies. *Language policy*, 10(4), 285-287. For “language cultivation” named by the Prague linguistic school see Prague School. (1973). General principles for the cultivation of good language (P. L. Garvin, Trans.). In J. Rubin & R. Shuy (Eds.), *Language planning: Current issues and research*. Georgetown University Press, 102–111.

⁷⁴ Hogan-Brun, G., Robinson, C., & Thonhauser, I. (2013). Acquisition planning. *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics*, 1-9.; Cooper, R. L. (1989). *Language planning and social change*. Cambridge university press.

⁷⁵ Haarmann, H. (1990). Language planning in the light of a general theory of language: A methodological framework. *International journal of the sociology of language* 86, 103–26.; See also Ager, D. (2005). Image and prestige planning. *Current issues in language planning*, 6(1), 1-43.

⁷⁶ Jernudd, B. & Nekvapil, J. (2011). History of the field: A sketch. In *The*

scholars generally view this as an incomplete perspective, since language planners or managers are not limited to the nation-state level but also operate at the levels of organizations, schools, families, individuals, etc. This is also the advantage of the term “language cultivation” over planning, as it not only asks the question how languages are planned by higher authorities but also addresses personal concerns, such as “How well can I perform in the standard variety?”⁷⁷

Acknowledging the diversity of planners, it is necessary to pin down the focus of this thesis, which is on language activists and language academies. According to Bernard Spolsky, language activists, as significant participants in LPP, are “individuals and groups whose ideology is clearest in support of the maintenance, revival, or spread of a threatened target language.”⁷⁸ This is the case with IRCAM, the language academy where activists are faced with the practical need for the “maintenance” of Amazigh in Morocco and aim for the ideological “revitalization” of the language. Spolsky also reminds us that at a lower level, “activists attempt to influence existing, former, or potential speakers of the language to continue its use and to persuade government to support their plans.” This suggestion reveals two important aspects: activists target twofold, aiming at both speakers and the government, and language beliefs or ideologies play a crucial role in their influence, as the views of speakers and governments are what matter most.⁷⁹

Therefore, it is the more ideologically related status planning that matters most to activists and academics as they participate. As Spolsky states, “their (activists) linguisticism enables them to concentrate their mobilizing efforts on a single goal, the status of a language,”⁸⁰ and notes that “proclaiming status is usually the first goal of an academy.”⁸¹ It is especially so in the LPP model of Reversing Language Shift (RLS) when activists prioritize the need for language maintenance. In this context, status planning, which aims to “allocate societal resources in such ways as to foster the use of language in more (and more important) societal functions,” takes precedence, while corpus planning, which usually involves “constructing

Cambridge handbook of language policy. Cambridge University Press, 16-36.

⁷⁷ Spolsky, B. (2009). *Language management*. Cambridge University Press. p. 13.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* p. 204.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p. 205.

⁸¹ Spolsky, B. (2011). p. 286.

orthographies and written grammars for previously oral language traditions,” becomes instrumental in fulfilling the goals of status planning.⁸²

However, recognizing corpus planning more as a method rather than the ultimate aim in an activism-oriented LPP model does not mean it is less important. On the contrary, the corpus of language is typically the only aspect activists and academies have direct control over. And it is sometimes the ideologies embodied in corpus planning that they strive to get accepted by both the government and speakers. This is the case of IRCAM, as we will see, whose corpus planning is more akin to ideological planning than to practical planning, as the theoretical standard language it plans has a significant distance from speakers’ actual usage and has always faced difficulties in acceptance.

In addition to corpus planning, IRCAM has been involved in other aspects, including status planning (such as the constitutional recognition of the Amazigh language in Morocco, which the establishment of IRCAM itself was part of the process), acquisition planning (such as the inclusion of teaching Amazigh in the Moroccan educational system), and prestige planning (the increased usage of Amazigh varieties in urban areas and the significantly improved image of the language), where it strives to exert influence and has made important contributions.

Spolsky highlights the significance of studies about language academies by stating: “We need to know how successful government language agencies are in influencing language practices and what language management techniques have proved to be effective.”⁸³ However, this thesis will not be outcome-oriented, focusing on measuring the success of LPP implementation by a language academy. Instead, it will examine IRCAM’s planning efforts, with an emphasis on the ideologies behind them. It contributes to the field of LPP by presenting a case where politically driven planning efforts are not primarily shaped by the agency of speakers but by state considerations. This thesis explores how such political needs triggered a post-naturalist language ideology, which Kathryn A. Woolard refers to as “project authenticity,”⁸⁴ leading to a series of planning efforts that are significantly detached

⁸² Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages*. Multilingual matters. p. 338.

⁸³ Spolsky, B. (2011). p. 287.

⁸⁴ Woolard, K. A. (2016). *Singular and plural: Ideologies of linguistic authority in 21st century Catalonia*. Oxford University Press. pp. 38, 296.

from the actual language practices of speakers and are difficult to interpret through traditional language ideologies.

1.4. Languages of Morocco and the Situation of Amazigh

The Moroccan constitution of 2011 states that “L’arabe demeure la langue officielle de l’État. L’Etat oeuvre à la protection et au développement de la langue arabe, ainsi qu’à la promotion de son utilisation. De même, l’amazighe constitue une langue officielle de l’État, en tant que patrimoine commun à tous les Marocains sans exception” (Arabic remains the official language of the State. The State works to protect and develop the Arabic language, as well as to promote its use. Similarly, Amazigh is an official language of the State, as a common heritage for all Moroccans without exception).⁸⁵ Arabic and Amazigh are thus recognized by the state as two official languages.

In practice, people living in the realm of the Moroccan kingdom typically use either the vernacular Moroccan Arabic, known as Darija, a Maghrebi Arabic dialect, or one of the Amazigh varieties as their mother tongue. Moroccan Arabic, serving as the lingua franca of the country, is spoken by most native Amazigh speakers as a second, or second first language, while the acquisition of Amazigh by Arabic speakers is rare. Native speakers of both languages need to acquire Standard Arabic to achieve literacy (with the literacy rate for adults aged 15 and above relatively low at 77%, according to UNESCO statistics in 2022).⁸⁶ French (and Spanish in certain areas) has been another important literacy language in the country since the colonial era. Although it was meant to be phased out under the Arabization policy initiated shortly after Morocco’s independence in the early 1960s, French, as a prestigious foreign language, continues to hold a strong position in various domains such as economy, science, and technology.⁸⁷ The language situation in Morocco means that it is a prerequisite for any native Amazigh speakers to learn at least a second language,

⁸⁵ Secrétariat général du gouvernement, Direction de l’Imprimerie Officielle, Royaume du Maroc. (2011). *La Constitution*. Série “Documentation Juridique Marocaine”, Dahir n° 1-11-91, 30 juillet 2011.

⁸⁶ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?locations=MA> (accessed January 21, 2024)

⁸⁷ Ennaji, M. (2013). Language contact, Arabization policy and education in Morocco. In *Language contact and language conflict in Arabic*. Routledge, 88-106.

Moroccan Arabic, to achieve social integration on a supraregional level, and a third language, Standard Arabic, to become literate in their own country.

Though their exact number is not known, Amazigh speakers in Morocco probably comprise approximately one-third of the Moroccan population.⁸⁸ Towards the lower end of the statistical spectrum, the *Haut Commissariat au Plan* (HCP), the main producer of official statistics in Morocco, reported the percentage as 28% in 2004, 26.7% in 2014, and 25% in 2024.⁸⁹ However, both the results and, especially, the decreasing trend have been deemed highly doubtful and faced severe criticism.⁹⁰ As for the higher end, the linguist Moha Ennaji suggested that approximately half of the population of Morocco speaks Amazigh as a mother tongue.⁹¹ This high percentage is seldom echoed by other mainstream estimations. When translated into absolute numbers, even a low estimate by the HCP in 2014 shows that 9,037,481 people in Morocco are native Amazigh speakers, making it the country with the largest Amazigh-speaking population in the world.⁹²

Nonetheless, it is important to understand that the term Amazigh does not denote a homogeneous, mutually intelligible language. Instead, Amazigh is more accurately understood as a language family rather than a single language. Languages of the family are spoken across a vast yet discontinuous region stretching roughly from the Atlantic coast to western Egypt, and from the Mediterranean to the Niger River. The distances between certain Amazigh varieties are substantial and vary. To quote Maarten Kossmann, for example, “the differences between Zenaga and Tarifiyt are certainly not smaller than those between Romanian and French, and the differences between Tarifiyt and Figuig Berber may be comparable to those between Spanish and Portuguese.”⁹³ In this thesis, I will not go further into the complex issue of Amazigh

⁸⁸ For an analysis of the number of Amazigh speakers in Morocco, see Kossmann, M. (2013b). *The Arabic influence on northern Berber*. Brill. pp. 32-33.

⁸⁹ <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2024/12/167085/moroccos-language-dilemma-benmoussa-says-92-speak-darija-only-25-amazigh/> (accessed February 27, 2025)

⁹⁰ <https://medias24.com/2015/10/16/lircam-denonce-les-chiffres-du-hcp-sur-lutilisation-de-lamazigh/> (accessed January 23, 2024)

⁹¹ Ennaji, M. (2005). *Multilingualism, cultural identity, and education in Morocco*. Springer Science & Business Media. p. 74.

⁹² <http://rgphentableaux.hcp.ma/Home/> (accessed September 10, 2024) The Number comes from 26.7% of the legal population of Morocco, 33,848,242.

⁹³ Kossmann, M. (2013b). p. 17.

classification. Instead I will use the widely used names of Amazigh varieties without specifying whether they are languages or dialects.

Amazigh varieties in Morocco are generally categorized into three main groups: Tarifiyt, Central Moroccan Amazigh, and Tashelhiyt. Tarifiyt, spoken by around 4% of the Moroccan population, is found in the northeast of the country, in the Rif region.⁹⁴ It features considerable dialectal diversity internally and is linguistically closest to Amazigh varieties to the southeast and east, extending towards and across the Algerian border.⁹⁵

Central Moroccan Amazigh, or “Tamazight” in the narrow sense of the term (not referring to all Amazigh languages), is mainly found in the Middle Atlas region, hence it is also known as Middle Atlas Amazigh. However, due to its spread beyond the geographic Middle Atlas, Central Moroccan Amazigh is a less ambiguous name.⁹⁶ It is spoken by approximately 13% of the Moroccan population across a vast area spanning from the Taza corridor to Demnate and Ouarzazate, and from Tiflet to Tafilalt. Central Moroccan Amazigh is characterized by relatively high internal linguistic variation, with varieties that can be further classified into northern and southern groups.⁹⁷

Tashelhiyt is the most widely spoken Amazigh variety in Morocco. It is used in the southwestern region, by approximately 15% of the Moroccan population. It covers a large geographical area extending from the western part of the High Atlas to the Souss plain, and from the Anti-Atlas to the pre-Saharan zone south of the mountains. Though there is serious local variation within Tashelhiyt, speakers of various dialects understand each other well.⁹⁸ All three main Amazigh varieties in Morocco are vigorous languages, used locally in most aspects of life except in domains where writing is concerned.

During the half century after Morocco’s independence, with the implementation of the Arabization policy aiming to phase out the influence of the French language

⁹⁴ Mourigh, K., & Kossmann, M. (2019). *An introduction to Tarifiyt Berber (Nador, Morocco)*. Ugarit-Verlag. pp. 11-12.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Kossmann, M. (2013b). p. 20-21.

⁹⁷ Taïfi, M. (1991). *Dictionnaire tamazight-français: Parlers du Maroc central*. L’Harmattan-Awal. Introduction. I-II.

⁹⁸ El Mountassir, A. (1999). *Initiation au tachelhit: Langue berbère du sud du Maroc*. L’Asiathèque-maison des langues du monde. p. 14.

from the colonial era, the “one nation–one language” ideology of Arabic gained dominance, regardless of the multilingual situation long established in the country. As both the 1962 and 1996 constitutions stated: “Le Royaume du Maroc, Etat musulman souverain, dont la langue officielle est l’arabe, constitue une partie du Grand Maghreb (Arabe).”⁹⁹ The Amazigh language was thus officially ignored for decades in the country.

Moreover, the Arabization policy and the gap it created between language ideology and practice coincided with the rapid urbanization of the country, with the percentage of the urban population rising from 29% in 1960 to 65% in 2022.¹⁰⁰ Amazigh generally failed to integrate into this critical urbanization process¹⁰¹, greatly exacerbating a situation described by Amazigh activists as: “Des millions de berbérophones vivent en étrangers dans leur propre pays. Le ressentiment qu’ils en éprouvent est plus fort qu’il n’aurait été s’ils vivaient un véritable exil” (Millions of Berber speakers live as strangers in their own country. The resentment they feel is stronger than it would have been if they were living in true exile).¹⁰²

1.5. Language Policy and Planning for Amazigh

With general information regarding LPP and the Amazigh language in Morocco presented, I will introduce in this section the existing works focusing on LPP of Amazigh languages, particularly concerning language planning issues. Related research initially gained prominence in studies focusing on the Kabyle variety in Algeria, with Chaker (1983; 1985) providing systematic reflections.¹⁰³ Achab (2013)

⁹⁹ It is interesting to note that the 1996 version added the “*Arabe*” after “*Grand Maghreb*” which was previously seen as a default. See <https://mjp.univ-perp.fr/constit/ma1962.htm#pr> and <https://mjp.univ-perp.fr/constit/ma1996.htm#:~:text=Le%20Royaume%20du%20Maroc%2C%20%C3%89tat,r%C3%A9alisation%20de%20l'unit%C3%A9%20africaine> (accessed March 9, 2024)

¹⁰⁰ The World Bank’s data: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=MA> (accessed March 9, 2024)

¹⁰¹ Kossmann, M. (2013b). p. 38.

¹⁰² From the Berber (Amazigh) Manifesto. http://www.mondeberbere.com/chafik_berber-manifesto.html (accessed March 17, 2024)

¹⁰³ Chaker, S. (1983). De la linguistique descriptive à la linguistique appliquée: Un

provides a thorough review of the development of Amazigh neologism from the beginning of Amazigh activism in Algeria to recent times. Many of the neologisms documented are found in the dictionary compiled by IRCAM.¹⁰⁴ In Morocco, the initial focus was on orthography, as discussed by Elmedlaoui (1999), and on specialized vocabularies, such as educational terms compiled by Belaid (1993), and legal terms compiled by Afulay et al. (1996).¹⁰⁵

For the standardization issue of Moroccan Amazigh varieties, two trends exist. One proposes the standardization of regional varieties, as suggested, for example, by Lafkioui (2002), based on the case of Riffian, where it is stated that “il faudrait essayer de construire une koinè dialectale représentative pour chaque grande région.”¹⁰⁶ While the approach has been supported by many scholars, as demonstrated by Chaker (1998) and exemplified by the relatively successful case of Kabyle in Algeria, there is a lack of an implementing entity in Morocco, and related literature on this subject is scarce.¹⁰⁷ Sadiqi & Ennaji (2004) can be interpreted as an example of work in this direction as it aims at being a “descriptive simplified” grammar of Amazigh. According to its authors, it is based on, but not limited to, the varieties of Azilal and Beni Mellal region, and meant as a starting point for the standardization of the language.¹⁰⁸ It does not specify the direction and outcome of this standardization, but reflects the southern varieties of Central Moroccan Amazigh more than any other

tournant dans le domaine berbère. *Tafsut-Etudes et débats*, (01), 57-63.; Chaker, S. (1985). La planification linguistique dans le domaine berbère: Une normalisation pan-berbère est-elle possible?. *Tafsut-Etudes et débats*, (02), 81-91.

¹⁰⁴ Achab, R. (2013). *L'aménagement du lexique berbère de 1945 à nos jours*. Editions Achab.

¹⁰⁵ Elmedlaoui, M. (1999). *Principes d'orthographe berbère: en graphie arabe ou latine*. Université Mohamed I, Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines d'Oujda.; Belaid, B. (1993). *Tamawalt usegmi: Vocabulaire de l'éducation, français-tamazight*. Rabat: Imprimerie Najah El Jadida.; Afulay, A., Fouad, L., & Adghirmi, A. (1996). *Amawal azerfan: Lexique juridique français-amazighe*. Rabat: Imperial.

¹⁰⁶ Lafkioui, M. (2002). Le rifain et son orthographe: entre variation et uniformisation. In D. Caubet, S. Chaker, & J. Sibille (Eds.). *Codification des langues de France*. L'Harmattan, 355-366.

¹⁰⁷ Chaker, S. (1998). Orientations générales pour l'aménagement de la langue berbère: Urgence et réalisme. *Atelier aménagement linguistique de la langue berbère*. INALCO.

¹⁰⁸ Sadiqi, F., & Ennaji, M. (2004). *A grammar of Amazigh*. Pars Lettres 25. Publications of the Faculty of Letters Dhar El Mehraz, Fès.

varieties.

The other trend, codifying a standard Moroccan Amazigh based on all three main Moroccan varieties, has been implemented at the official level in Morocco by IRCAM. Several theoretical works on the issue have been published. Ameer et al. (2004) is the first didactic manual by CAL, addressing the urgent need to incorporate the teaching of the Amazigh language into the Moroccan educational system. This applied-oriented work adopts a highly interventionist approach, sometimes prescribing the replacement of specific features of Amazigh varieties so that “la forme de base qui est d’ailleurs ‘pan-amazighe’” can be restored.¹⁰⁹

Boukhris et al. (2008) explains the grammar of standard Moroccan Amazigh in more detail. As the strategy aiming to ensure the unity of the language, it stated that “on retient comme outils ou morphèmes fondamentaux ce qui est commun aux différentes variétés ou ce qui est le plus fréquent.” Meanwhile, it commits itself to safeguarding the grammatical richness of the language and to leaving room for variation.¹¹⁰ This combination of the principles of unity and pluralism sometimes leads to ambiguity regarding its criteria and implementation, and further examination is needed to understand how it works.

As an example, in prescribing the system of conditional subordination, Boukhris et al. (2008) generally follows the common feature of Amazigh varieties to differentiate between hypothetical and counterfactual conditions. To accommodate variations, it provides multiple conjunctions, including *mala (mla)*, *mri (mr)*, *ig (igh)*, *mk (km)*, *mud*, *mta* all translated as “if.” Among these, *ig (igh)* and *mk (km)* indicate hypothetical conditions (“une condition dans le futur”), while *mud* and *mta* denote counterfactual conditions (“une hypothèse dans le passé”). However, when it comes to *mala (mla)*, the conjunction does not serve to indicate different conditions. Instead, the sentence relies solely on verb conjugations to convey the meaning, as demonstrated in the two examples provided: “*Mala (mla) ad iddu ghr babas ad kis mungh* (“If he goes to his father, I will accompany him”); *Mala (mla) idda ghr babas ad kis mungh* (“If he had gone to his father, I would have accompanied him”).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Ameer. M., Bouhjar. A., Boukhris. F., Boukous. A., Boumalk. A., Elmedlaoui M., Iazzi. E. & Souifi. H. (2004). *Initiation à la langue amazighe*. IRCAM. p. 21.

¹¹⁰ Boukhris, F., Boumalk, A., El Houssain. M, & Souifi, H. (2008). *La nouvelle grammaire de l’amazighe*. IRCAM. pp. 12-13.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 181.

This loss of function in *mala (mla)* to differentiate between hypothetical and counterfactual conditions contrasts with actual language practices. In Tarifiyt, it is exclusively used as a hypothetical conjugation.¹¹² Conversely, in Tashelhiyt, where *mala* is also found, its usage is similar to *mta* in exclusively introducing the counterfactual subordinate clause.¹¹³ Thus, the grammar accords with the description that in Amazigh varieties in Morocco, *mala (mla)* can either be a hypothetical or counterfactual conjunction, while at the same time, it suggests that the appearance of this conjunction cannot immediately indicate the nature of the following subordinate clause, which is generally not the case in Amazigh varieties. So it leaves questions regarding the criteria for applying the principle of unity and that of leaving room for variations in the standard Amazigh, which need further exploration.

Another question partly shown in the same example is that, if the natural correspondence between the aforementioned conjunctions in individual Amazigh varieties is not specified, along with other linguistic aspects where pluralism is applied, it will be deemed legitimate to mix different features of different varieties in one sentence or context in standard Amazigh, as long as they are not specifically ruled out. This leads to the consideration that the usage of the homogeneous standard Moroccan Amazigh might be unpredictable and even more heterogeneous than Amazigh varieties. Paradoxically, any approach to reduce these random combinations would entail a focus on the grammars of specific varieties, which IRCAM considers undesirable.

The principle of pluralism is more readily understandable when applied to vocabulary planning. Aneur et al. (2017) is a comprehensive Amazigh-French-Arabic dictionary that aims to collect vocabularies from all Amazigh varieties in Morocco. It views all collected vocabularies as belonging to a common resource of “Moroccan Amazigh,” which were previously scattered across different dialect descriptions. When collected together, the dialectal or geographical origins of the vocabularies are deliberately omitted in the dictionary to align with the overall language planning strategy of IRCAM.¹¹⁴ Notably, although it embraces the richness of Amazigh

¹¹² Mourigh, K., & Kossmann, M. (2019). p. 115.

¹¹³ Aspinion, R. (1953). *Apprenons le berbère: Initiation aux dialectes chleuhs*. Eds Felix Moncho. p. 303.

¹¹⁴ Aneur, M., Ansar, K., Boumalk, A., El Azrak, N., Laabdelaoui, R., & Souifi, H. (2017). *Dictionnaire général de la langue amazighe*. IRCAM. p. 5.

varieties, the dictionary excludes the vast majority of Arabic loanwords, which are ubiquitous and important in the language practice of all Amazigh varieties. This phenomenon is also of interest in the ideological examinations of this thesis.

Additionally, IRCAM published Taïfi (2016), a substantial dictionary that expands the work of the same author's 1991 dictionary for central Moroccan Amazigh to encompass the "parlers du Maroc."¹¹⁵ In comparison to IRCAM's dictionary, it agrees that the system of Amazigh needs to be reconstituted. However, it differs in that it does not avoid showcasing the contact between Arabic and Amazigh.¹¹⁶ In spite of this presence of Arabic-related words in the dictionary, IRCAM described it in its communications as "embracing the vision of the institute in terms of standardization of Amazigh."¹¹⁷

Among other important works regarding standard Moroccan Amazigh, Laabdelouai et al. (2012) presents a conjugation manual for the language. Initially, the work compiled 10,000 verbs from various Moroccan varieties. Subsequently, the authors pruned this collection by excluding repetitions and "non-integrated loans," resulting in a condensed list of 3584 words. These verbs are categorized into 31 types of conjugation, each accompanied by illustrative examples.¹¹⁸ Aneur et al. (2010) focuses on IRCAM's planning of the Neo-Tifinagh script, intended for official use in writing standard Moroccan Amazigh. It includes a discussion of the history and historical significance of the alphabet from IRCAM's perspective.¹¹⁹

Additionally, there is a wealth of literature on sociolinguistics, focusing on Amazigh issues as part of the overall research landscape in Morocco. Ennaji (2005) examines the sociolinguistic history and situation in Morocco, emphasizing the impact of multilingualism, with Amazigh playing an indispensable role, on the cultural

¹¹⁵ Taïfi, M. (2016). *Dictionnaire raisonné berbère-français: Parlers du Maroc*. IRCAM.

¹¹⁶ Taïfi, M., & Pognan, P. (2011). Un dictionnaire en tant que corpus: Traitements informatiques du dictionnaire raisonné berbère-français de Miloud Taïfi. *Les ressources langagières: Construction et exploitation*, 33-51.

¹¹⁷ <https://www.ircam.ma/index.php/fr/actualites/nouvelle-publication-dictionnaire-raisonne-berbere-fran%C3%A7ais-parlers-du-maroc> (accessed June 1, 2024)

¹¹⁸ Laabdelouai, R., Boumalk, A., Iazzi, E. M., Souifi, H., & Ansar, K. (2012). *Manuel de conjugaison de l'amazighe*. IRCAM.

¹¹⁹ Aneur, M., Bouhajar, A., Boukhris, F., Boukous, A., Boumalk, A., Elmedlaoui, M., & Iazzi, E. M. (2010). *Amazigh script and orthography* (Arabic version). IRCAM.

identity of the country.¹²⁰ Abbassi (1977) provides a comprehensive study on a similar topic of multilingualism in Morocco, based on the situation before some significant changes occurred in the status of Amazigh. Despite this, his detailed research on diglossia and code-switching, where Amazigh has a presence, still provides valuable insights.¹²¹ Sadiqi (2003) examines languages in Morocco within the framework of gender studies. The study investigates the functioning of concepts such as monolingualism, code-switching, and illiteracy within the social life and language practices of the country, particularly focusing on gender issues.¹²²

Boukous (1995) conducts sociolinguistic and sociocultural studies of Morocco, examining its language market within the framework of Bourdieu's propositions on symbolic production. The analysis focuses on the competitive relationships between Amazigh, Arabic (both dialectal and standard), French, and Spanish in the Moroccan language market. The work reveals the mechanisms by which certain languages constitute symbolic capital, enabling their speakers to benefit from both material and symbolic profits and privileges in Morocco. According to this study, Amazigh represents the least well-off language in this competition, as it not only competes at a disadvantage as "une langue faible" alongside dialectal Arabic against "les langues fortes" (standard Arabic and French) but also faces internal competition. In this competition, the Amazigh-speaking communities established in urban areas are subject to a process of "linguistic assimilation," particularly among the younger generations, in favor of dialectal Arabic.¹²³

This analysis of the Moroccan language market, especially the predicament of Amazigh, is largely inherited in Boukous (2012), which discusses measures to counter the "attrition-death" of the Amazigh language and guide its "revitalization" in Morocco. Considering the author's tenure as the rector of IRCAM for more than twenty years, this work can be regarded as an important guiding influence on the LPP efforts led by the institute, showcasing the ideology of IRCAM in a concentrated

¹²⁰ Ennaji, M. (2005). *Multilingualism, cultural identity, and education in Morocco*. Springer Science & Business Media.

¹²¹ Abbassi, A. (1977). *A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Multilingualism in Morocco*. (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin).

¹²² Sadiqi, F. (2003). *Women, gender and language in Morocco*. Brill.

¹²³ Boukous, A. (1995b). *Société, langues et cultures au Maroc: Enjeux symboliques*. Faculté des lettres et des sciences humaines-Rabat.

manner.¹²⁴ Boukous (2018) continues these discussions, addressing more recent developments in the Moroccan language market.¹²⁵

In addition, several studies focusing on the LPP of the Amazigh language in Morocco itself can also be found. Nachef (2016) primarily focuses on the acquisition planning of the Amazigh language in Morocco. After providing information regarding status planning and corpus planning of standard Moroccan Amazigh, the work thoroughly examines its implementation and promotion in the educational field. This is done through analysis of interviews, questionnaires, documents, and publications, presenting achievements and predicaments in both standardization and teaching aspects of the Amazigh language in Morocco.¹²⁶

Abouzaid (2011) is a study on a similar topic that examines the progress of the Amazigh teaching project in Morocco during the period of 2007-2011. The work provides insights into a landscape where the acquisition planning of the Amazigh language still encounters uncertainties, even after gaining new status, thereby negatively impacting the complex corpus planning of the standard Moroccan Amazigh by IRCAM. Among the obstacles identified, it highlights the challenge of acceptance of standard Amazigh in the Rif region and the emergence of a diglossic situation between the standard Amazigh taught at schools and the spoken Amazigh varieties.¹²⁷ Additionally, Abrous (2017) offers a comprehensive comparison of acquisition planning for Amazigh between Morocco and Algeria.¹²⁸

In addition to acquisition planning, Iazzi (2018) addresses the corpus planning of standard Moroccan Amazigh, with a focus on phonological and morphological aspects. As a long-time member of IRCAM, the author extensively reconstructs the

¹²⁴ Boukous, A. (2012). *Revitalisation de la langue amazighe: Défis, enjeux et stratégies*. IRCAM.

¹²⁵ Boukous, A. (2018). *Essais de politique et d'aménagement linguistiques*. IRCAM.

¹²⁶ Nachef, L. (2016). *Normativisation et enseignement de la langue amazighe au Maroc: État des lieux, méthodes et réalisations* (Doctoral dissertation, Université de Lyon).

¹²⁷ Abouzaid, M. (2011). *Politique linguistique éducative à l'égard de l'amazighe (berbère) au Maroc: Des choix sociolinguistiques et didactiques à leur mise en pratique* (Doctoral dissertation, Université Stendhal-Grenoble III).

¹²⁸ Abrous, N. (2017). *L'enseignement du berbère: Analyse comparée Algérie/Maroc* (Doctoral dissertation, Aix-Marseille Université).

planning process of standard Moroccan Amazigh, providing important insights into how the “polynomic” strategy is actually implemented in the corpus planning endeavor.¹²⁹

1.6. Methodology

In order to study an ideology comprehensively, discourse holds a privileged position, as the sole medium through which one can directly probe patterns of meaning.¹³⁰ Ideologies are often not explicitly presented in socially constitutive and conditioned discourse. Instead, discourse may manifest perceptions, evaluations, and aims influenced by ideologies. In other words, discourse may not straightforwardly convey ideologies, but it subtly reflects them and serves as a medium through which (and in which) ideologies are reproduced.¹³¹ Hence, there is a crucial need for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a method to render these ideologies more visible and transparent.

The term “critical” in this thesis implies a meticulous examination of the concepts contained within the discourse of IRCAM. These conceptions will be scrutinized within their contexts and will not be left unquestioned based solely on their literal, general, or intuitive interpretations. Through these studies, the thesis aims to provide a critical or analytical description of the language ideologies of IRCAM, rather than adopting a prescriptive stance. While some scholars argue that CDA should propose changes and suggest corrections to specific discourses, this thesis deliberately avoids that approach.¹³²

As for the sources of discourse, I will mainly rely on the official publications of IRCAM, as well as articles, addresses, and published interviews by its members on various topics. For general activities of IRCAM and how related information is

¹²⁹ Iazzi, E. M. (2018). *Norme et variations en amazighe marocain (aspects morpho-phonologiques)-Pour une approche polynomique de l'aménagement linguistique* (Doctoral dissertation, Ibn Zohr University, Agadir).

¹³⁰ Verschueren, J. (2012). *Ideology in language use: Pragmatic guidelines for empirical research*. Cambridge University Press. p. 18.

¹³¹ Blommaert, J., & Bulcaen, C. (2000). Critical discourse analysis. *Annual review of anthropology*, 29(1), 447-466.

¹³² For a prescriptive stance of CDA, see Toolan, M. (1997). What is critical discourse analysis and why are people saying such terrible things about it? *Language and literature*, 6(2), 83-103.

presented, I will consult the official *Bulletin d'information* of IRCAM (*Inghmisen n usinag*) and its *Rapport d'activité* each year. For discourse presenting the ideologies of IRCAM in a relatively direct way, I will mainly rely on the works of Professor Ahmed Boukous, especially *Revitalisation de la langue amazighe : Défis, enjeux et stratégies* (2012), as well as those by other previous and current members of IRCAM. I will pay special attention to the introduction and conclusion parts of relevant works where ideological discourse is usually concentrated. The publications of IRCAM's *Centre de l'aménagement linguistique* (CAL), through which the language ideologies of IRCAM are translated into language planning practices, are a central focus in the thesis. These informative sources include, for example *Initiation à la langue amazighe* (2004), *La nouvelle grammaire de l'amazighe* (2008), and *Dictionnaire Général de la Langue Amazighe* (2017), as well its online version *DGLAi*.

The practical usage of standard Moroccan Amazigh will serve as another important discourse containing the ideologies of the institute. This discourse reveals planning methods, linguistic preferences, and ideologies that might not have been explicitly addressed in detail through systematic linguistic prescriptions. Among other resources, the series of IRCAM's textbooks for standard Moroccan Amazigh, *Tifawin a tamazight*, will be of vital importance. A more detailed introduction to IRCAM and CAL publications, which will serve as sources for this discourse, was provided earlier in this section.

During the analysis of relevant discourse, I will specifically focus on any discrepancies that may arise among the aforementioned sources when discussing similar topics. This approach will enable me to identify personal perspectives and the consistent ideologies of the institute, while also monitoring shifts and developments in its ideologies over time.

1.7. Chapter Outlines

The thesis is organized into seven chapters. Chapter Two provides a brief history of the development of Amazigh nationalism and the Amazigh cultural movement, focusing on two of their most important linguistic expressions: the Tifinagh script and neologisms. This aims to show the historical and intellectual path that led to the establishment of IRCAM. Chapter Three will examine IRCAM itself, particularly its first year when the structure was formulated, and the initial ideology of IRCAM during the rectorate of Professor Mohamed Chafik, focusing on his historical and

linguistic ideologies. It will then investigate the development and new features introduced under the rectorate of Professor Ahmed Boukous.

Next, in Chapter Four, I will explore how IRCAM began its LPP practice by influencing the acquisition planning of Amazigh in Morocco, with standard Moroccan Amazigh at the same time becoming the central notion of its corpus planning. In response to both Moroccan nationalism and Amazigh nationalism, IRCAM's standard Moroccan Amazigh holds the inevitable trait of homogeneity, which entails an effort to merge the three main Moroccan Amazigh dialects. The emphasis will be on how this notion was implemented through the adoption of the Neo-Tifinagh script and how this innovative planning method is justified within the mainstream framework of Amazigh language planning, which focuses on regional dialects.

The fact that the innovatively coined standard Moroccan Amazigh of IRCAM is not specifically based on any Amazigh variety that people actually use gives it an inherent problem of acceptance. Even if accepted, the potential spread of the language will inevitably lead to a new diglossic situation, which is widely deemed undesirable. These issues necessitate the justification of the planning method with sound arguments. From this point, I will examine how the language ideologies of IRCAM were designed to address these questions, considering the very nature of ideology, which has power over cognition and evaluation and needs to be logically coherent to maintain persuasiveness.

In Chapter Five, I will discuss Ahmed Boukous's conception of the "death" of the Amazigh language and its subsequent "revitalization." I will explore how the language practices of Amazigh speakers in Morocco were characterized as the "dialectalization" of a language that should have been homogeneous and perceived as "dying," thus necessitating change rather than maintenance of the situation. The planning of a new Moroccan Amazigh is consequently viewed as a sign of language revitalization, a justified concept associated with language rights, commonly encouraged by supranational organizations and frequently referenced by language activists in language management.¹³³ The problem persists in that, while some Amazigh varieties are indeed endangered, the overall situation of Amazigh varieties, especially in Morocco, hardly aligns with the traditional notion of language death and revitalization discussions.¹³⁴ This brings us to the discussion of IRCAM's ideology

¹³³ Spolsky, B. (2009). p. 204.

¹³⁴ Kossmann, M. (2013b). pp. 34-35.

of “language attrition” in the latter half of the chapter, where I will study how the theories on language attrition as an individual phenomenon are connected with the “language attrition” of IRCAM as an inclusive concept in explaining broader undesirable situations within Amazigh languages, which illustrate the “dying process” of the language as a whole. I will then show how the ideology of purism is deepened as part of Ahmed Boukous’s comprehensive discourse on “attrition-death” ideologies, leading to IRCAM’s decision to exclude nearly all Arabic loanwords from standard Moroccan Amazigh.

In Chapter Six, I will explore IRCAM’s “polynomic” approach to language planning. By analyzing its meaning and implementation in lexical planning, language teaching and morphological planning, I aim to understand the essence of this polynomic ideology and its connection with IRCAM’s fundamental aim of achieving language homogeneity. I will argue that IRCAM’s “polynomic” ideology is fundamentally different from its original meaning as a concept. Instead, it serves as an ideological tool mediating between IRCAM’s vision of a homogeneous standard Amazigh and the diverse linguistic practices in Morocco, ultimately supporting the standard language ideology by integrating variations.

2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AMAZIGH CULTURAL-POLITICAL MOVEMENT

2.1. Amazigh Nationalism

Salem Chaker, former professor of Berber in Paris and an important player in the Kabyle cultural movement, has characterized Amazigh nationalism as “un produit exogène — bien acclimaté, mais exogène —, directement issu des idées et valeurs mises en circulation dans nos sociétés par les contacts avec l’Occident et la colonisation directe” (An exogenous product—well-acclimated, yet exogenous—directly stemming from the ideas and values introduced into our societies through contact with the West and direct colonization).¹³⁵ The aspect of acclimated, or the deeply embedded awareness of Imazighen as a people in the Maghreb long before French colonization is early on famously and clearly shown by Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) as: “they belong to a powerful, formidable, brave and numerous people (*sha ‘b*, pl. *shu ‘ūb*); a true people like so many others the world has seen—like the Arabs, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. The men who belong to this family of peoples have inhabited the Maghreb since the beginning.”¹³⁶

Though similar sources defining Imazighen as a people during the Middle Ages are meager, an identity-building process for Imazighen can still be traced under the broader identity of Muslim. This can be exemplified, for example, by the case of the Barghawata, an Amazigh confederation established in the Tamasna region, extending along the Atlantic coast of Morocco from the 8th to the 12th century, whose Amazigh version of Islam was equipped with a Quran written in Amazigh and a local prophet independent from the East.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Chaker, S. (1987). L’affirmation identitaire berbère à partir de 1900. Constantes et mutations (Kabylie). *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 44(1), 13-34. p. 14.

¹³⁶ Quoted in Brett, M., & Fentress, E. (1997). *The Berbers: The peoples of Africa*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing. p.1.

¹³⁷ Tourneau, R. I. (2012). Barghawāṭa. In P. Bearman (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*. Brill.; Talbi, M. (1973). Hérésie, acculturation et nationalisme des berbères Bargawata. In Galley, M., & Marshall, D. R. (Eds.). (1973). *Actes du premier Congrès d’études des cultures méditerranéennes d’influence arabo-berbère*. Société nationale d’édition et de diffusion, 217-233.; Chtatou, M. (2021). The Barghwata dynasty (744-1058): A Berber stark defiance of

This emerging identity entered the modern era as modern Amazigh nationalism in an exogenous manner, similarly to the aforementioned case of Arab nationalism, as an outcome of the colonial encounter. This encounter started with the French invasion of Algeria in 1830, which immediately triggered fierce resistance from the local people, including those living in the mountainous coastal area extending eastward from Algiers called Kabylia. People in this region speak Kabyle, the two largest Amazigh varieties in Algeria. The Kabyle people have a long tradition of seeking to retain political autonomy and hostility toward non-local powers, which is only partly due to their ethnolinguistic awareness. This awareness is itself a result of the larger factor of their mountainous isolation, where preserving meager resources is crucial.¹³⁸ For the same reason, while the Kabyle people vehemently resisted the French colonization by themselves, they were less enthusiastic about directly joining the resistance movement of Emir Abdelkader with its broader Islamic cause in the late 1830s.¹³⁹

The French colonizers were informed early on about the existence of “two people” in Algeria, historically through William de Slane’s translation of Ibn Khaldun’s work, presented as *Histoire des Berbères* (4 volumes, 1852-1856), where the conflict between the conquering race of Arabs from the east and the conquered race of Amazigh in their native land is presented as a main line of North African history.¹⁴⁰ Linguistically, they were informed by Adolphe Hanoteau’s influential *Essai de grammaire kabyle* (1858), where he presents the usefulness of the study as: “L’étude de la langue berbère, outre l’intérêt qu’elle présente au point de vue scientifique, a pour nous, en Algérie, un but plus pratique et une utilité plus immédiate sous le rapport de l’administration et de la domination du pays.”¹⁴¹

Related knowledge was utilized by the French in two interconnected trends within colonial administration and the lengthy process of so-called Pacification. Firstly, a “divide and rule” policy emerged in Kabylia, exemplified in the juridical

Islamic orthodoxy. Eurasia Review.

¹³⁸ Temlali, Y. (2020). *La genèse de la Kabylie: Aux origines de l’affirmation berbère en Algérie (1830-1962)*. La Découverte. “La Kabylie et les Aurès: Une autonomie réelle mais relative”

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Hannoum, A. (2003). Translation and the colonial imaginary: Ibn Khaldun orientalist. *History and theory*, 42(1), 61-81.

¹⁴¹ Hanoteau, A. (1858). *Essai de grammaire kabyle*. Bastide. p. XVII.

aspect where the status of customary law was elevated alongside, or as a complement to French law, aimed primarily at undermining Islamic law.¹⁴² In a more general way, the “divide and rule” policy was explicitly expressed in 1891 by the politician Camille Sabatier, Député of Oran (1885-1889)¹⁴³: “Divide ut imperes! et pourquoi pas? Pourquoi ne pas prévenir une union (entre Kabyles et Arabes) qui ne pourrait se faire que contre la France.”¹⁴⁴

Secondly, based on a similar “divide and rule” mindset, French colonizers began to formulate a *Kabylophile* ideology, which was essentially an expression of anti-Arab racism. This sentiment was circulated by Auguste Warnier, one of the architects of this ideology, who stated: “While progress is difficult under the Arab regime, if not impossible, it is easy by grafting French civilization onto Berber tradition.” This Kabylophile ideology was supported by two principles: “The Arabs are invaders, and the Kabyle Berbers are the only true natives; the latter must be the foundation of our policy, as their origin, past, and civilization undeniably bring them closer to us.”¹⁴⁵ Accordingly, the Berber tradition was portrayed by the French as fundamentally opposed to the Arab tradition in all respects: “la sédentarité contre le nomadisme, l’esprit laborieux contre l’indolence, une religiosité peu fervente contre le fanatisme et des institutions ‘issues du droit romain’ contre des institutions irrémédiablement ‘aristocratiques’.”¹⁴⁶

This Kabylophile ideology aimed to substitute the Arabo-Islamic tradition with the French one rather than genuinely promoting Amazigh traditions and was mainly reflected in the educational field. Instead of promoting an Amazigh education, the main colonial policy largely reflected the vision of Émile Masqueray, the director of the École supérieure des lettres in Algiers, who proposed in 1874: “En dix ans, si l’on voulait, tous les jeunes Kabyles parleraient français. Dans l’espace de deux

¹⁴² Scheele, J. (2008). A taste for law: Rule-making in Kabylia (Algeria). *Comparative studies in society and history*, 50(4), 895-919.

¹⁴³ Jolly, J. (Ed.). (1960). *Dictionnaire des parlementaires français: Notices biographiques sur les ministres, députés et sénateurs français de 1889 à 1940* (Vol. 1). Presses Universitaires de France. p. 324.

¹⁴⁴ Ageron, C. R. (1960). La France at-elle eu une politique kabyle?. *Revue historique*, 223(Fasc. 2), 311-352. p. 350.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 316-317.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* Quoted in Temlali, Y. (2020).

génération, la Kabylie tout entière sera transformée et française.”¹⁴⁷

Though the limited politics reflecting this “divide and rule” mindset were largely unsuccessful in furthering colonial rule, the French Kabylophile ideology left an influence on later Amazigh nationalism, as its main principles are frequently echoed by later Amazigh activists — emphasizing the distinction of Imazighen from Arabs and emphasizing Arabs as invaders and irremediably alien, and Imazighen as the only true indigenous people in North Africa with greater cultural and political rights. However, this remains a lesser aspect of Amazigh nationalism’s exogeneity. The primary significance, as noted by Salem Chaker, lies in its origins from the resistance to French colonization and the poetry that reflected this resistance, laying the foundation of Kabylo-Amazigh nationalism, a nationalism primarily defined by a territory but with the Amazigh language being an essential element. And it was among the Kabyle elites educated in French schools by the end of the 19th century that the first explicit manifestations of self-awareness of Amazigh identity in Kabylia emerged.¹⁴⁸

This self-affirmation of Amazigh cultural identity by the first French-educated Kabyle elites was manifested in their pursuit of research into the Amazigh language, literature, history, etc. This “culturalist” strand of Amazigh nationalism continued into the 20th century with Kabylian Franco-Amazigh scholars and writers, flourishing through works such as *Chants berbères de Kabylie* (1939) and *L’éternel Jugurtha* (1946) by Jean Amrouche, *Les poèmes de Si Mohand* (1960) by Mouloud Féraoun, and *Poèmes kabyles anciens* (1980) by Mouloud Mammeri.¹⁴⁹ It was based on these continuous cultural expressions and affirmation of Amazigh identity that Imazighen, as a modern people or nation, began to engage in political issues, responding to both prevalent trends in the Maghreb — French colonialism, and Arab nationalism.

Kabyles were active in the ranks of the Algerian revolutionary nationalists from the beginning. Since the 1930s, a young generation of Kabyle nationalists joining the *Parti du peuple algérien* (PPA) began to openly express their interest in the study and rehabilitation of the Amazigh language and culture. Among them was Mohand Idir Aït Amrane, a student who, at only twenty years old in 1945, composed the first famous nationalist song in the Amazigh language, *Kker a mmis umazigh* (“Arise, son

¹⁴⁷ Ageron, C. R. (1960). p. 342.

¹⁴⁸ Chaker, S. (1987).

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 16.

of Amazigh”).¹⁵⁰ In this song, he references the ancient Numidian kings Massinissa and Jugurtha, aligning with a common memory for Amazighism, and clearly expresses that it is for the “Beloved Algeria” that “we will shed our blood.”¹⁵¹

As shown by Melha Benbrahim, texts by Amazigh nationalists during this time centered on two topics: advocating for independent and radical nationalism, reviving the tradition of resistance to foreigners and explicitly announcing armed struggle; and emphasizing the Amazigh historical and cultural identity of the Maghreb.¹⁵² Amazigh nationalists did not necessarily view Arabs as foreign to the Maghreb. For example, Mohand Idir Aït Amrane considered Islam as the cement of Arab-Amazigh unity and the brotherhood between the two peoples as the eternal fruit of the Islamization of North Africa. Accordingly, in politics, the majority of Amazigh nationalists thought that cultural issues were secondary to the struggle for independence.¹⁵³

However, the atmosphere within the nationalist movement led by the PPA and later the MTLD (Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques) was dominantly Arab-Islamic, showing intolerance towards any Amazigh elements. Following the so-called *crise berbériste* from 1949 to 1954, the newly founded Front de libération nationale (FLN) declared that while it respected “all fundamental freedoms without distinction of race or creed,” it aimed at the “realization of North African unity within the natural Arab-Islamic framework.”¹⁵⁴

Shortly after Algeria’s independence in 1962, the FLN confirmed the Arabization policy aimed at eliminating French influence. At the same time, Amazigh language and culture also became direct victims of the “one nation–one language” ideology of Arab nationalism. For example, only three months after Algeria declared its independence, the government conducted a highly symbolic act by abolishing the

¹⁵⁰ Ouerdane, A. (1987). La «crise berbériste» de 1949, un conflit à plusieurs faces. *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 44(1), 35-47.

¹⁵¹ The Kabyle lyrics can be found at https://m.wikisource.org/wiki/Kker_a_mmi-s_umazi%C9%A3. For the French version of the lyrics, see https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Debout_fil_d%27Amazigh_! (accessed May 15, 2024)

¹⁵² Benbrahim, M. (1982). *La poésie populaire kabyle et la résistance à la colonisation de 1830 à 1962* (Doctoral dissertation, Paris, EHESS).

¹⁵³ Temlali, Y. (2020). “Le berbéro-nationalisme, un courant non monolithique”.

¹⁵⁴ For full text of the Declaration of FLN, see <https://mjp.univ-perp.fr/constit/dz1954.htm> (accessed June 26, 2024)

chair of Amazigh studies at the University of Algiers.¹⁵⁵ As a reaction, Kabylia became the birthplace of the foremost rival political party after independence, the Front des forces socialistes (FFS), which, although without a clear Amazigh agenda, called for both cultural and political pluralism. As a result, the Amazigh issue in Algeria became strongly politicized.

In the face of aggressive Arab nationalism and the repression of political opposition in Kabylia, a “one nation–one language” ideology gained prominence among Amazigh activists, aiming to counter the denial of the Amazigh language and culture. This ideology is based on the idea that all Amazigh varieties are fundamentally one language with merely dialectal and superficial differences, an idea with long-attested scientific roots. As early as in the *Grammaire et dictionnaire abrégés de la langue Berbère*, published in 1844 based on a manuscript written in the late 18th century, the French orientalist Jean-Michel de Venture de Paradis viewed Amazigh as one language, using expressions such as “the peoples who speak this language have various names” to refer to speakers of varieties as distant as Tashelhiyt and Kabyle.¹⁵⁶ René Basset shared a similar idea, as evident in his *Manuel de langue kabyle (dialecte zouaoua)* (1887), where he described the language as “merely a dialect (of Berber)”¹⁵⁷

By 1900, activists of Kabylia identity were well informed about the unity of Amazigh, and the idea that their language was only a local variant of Amazigh was widely accepted.¹⁵⁸ This idea forms the foundation of Amazigh nationalism, a cultural nationalism that believes “one language means one people.” With the development of this ideology, especially under the oppression by Arab nationalism, the standard language ideology and one nation–one language ideology involving language planning efforts gained prominence in Amazigh nationalism.

These language planning efforts were important for the development of Amazigh nationalism because, from the nationalists’ perspective, as an oral language lacking major written traditions and modern vocabularies, the Amazigh language naturally needs a standardization process involving choosing a writing system and coining

¹⁵⁵ Chaker, S. (1987).

¹⁵⁶ De Venture de Paradis, J. M. (1884). *Grammaire et dictionnaire abrégés de la langue berbère*. Paris: Imprimerie Royale. p. xix.

¹⁵⁷ Basset, R. (1887). *Manuel de langue kabyle (dialecte zouaoua) grammaire, bibliographie, chrestomathie et lexique*. Maissonneuve & C. Leclerc. pp. 1-2.

¹⁵⁸ Chaker, S. (1987). p. 26.

neologisms. Addressing these two issues involves important ideological considerations, because, as Salem Chaker points out: “Only the linguistic parameter is immediately relevant for distinguishing ‘Arabs’ and ‘Berbers’ in the Maghreb.”¹⁵⁹ Thus, language planning likely represents one of the few efficient ways for Amazigh activists to assert and promote their ideology that the Imazighen constitute a homogeneous nation distinct from the Arabs. This is, at times, also expressed in a more radical form similar to the French colonial *Kabylophile* perspective positing that Amazigh culture is the only authentic culture in the Maghreb, while the Arabic one, despite centuries of population and language mixing, remains fundamentally exogenous.¹⁶⁰

These ideologies and related language planning efforts are best exemplified by the influential *Académie Berbère* in Paris, established by Mohand Arav Bessaoud during his exile in 1966. Born in the village of Taguemount Ledjdid in Kabylie in 1924, Mohand Arav Bessaoud was both an ardent Amazigh activist and an active Algerian nationalist. He joined the PPA and later the FLN in the fight for Algeria’s independence.¹⁶¹ After independence, faced with the authorities’ pan-Arabist ideology, their dictatorial nature, and the brutal suppression of Amazigh activists, he joined the FFS rebellion in 1963 but became disillusioned by its dismissal of the Amazigh cause.¹⁶² Following the rebellion’s defeat two years later, Mohand Arav Bessaoud left for France, where he engaged more openly and dedicatedly in Amazigh activism. During this time, his most influential activity was co-founding the *Académie Berbère d’Échange et de Recherches Culturels* with other activists, including the famous Kabyle singer Taos Amrouche, army officer Abdelkader Rahmani, and pharmacist Mohand-Saïd Hanouz.¹⁶³

As reminded by Lionel Galand, the *Académie Berbère* was “more concerned

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 25.

¹⁶⁰ Temlali, Y. (2020). “Le berbéro-nationalisme et le berbérisme: Deux courants distincts”.

¹⁶¹ For Bessaoud’s experience during the the war of independence, see Bessaoud, M. A. (1991). *Heureux les martyrs qui n’ont rien vu: La vérité sur la mort du colonel Amirouche et de Abbane Ramdane*. FeniXX.

¹⁶² Bessaoud, M. A. (1966). *Le FFS, espoir et trahison*. FeniXX.

¹⁶³ Aïtel, F. (2014). *We are Imazighen: The development of Algerian Berber identity in twentieth-century literature and culture*. University Press of Florida. p. 115.

with action than with science.”¹⁶⁴ The nature of the organization was hotly debated from its establishment, with discussions on whether it should be a less populist, more intellectual association or include grassroots activism. The latter approach, championed by Mohand Arav Bessaoud, prevailed.¹⁶⁵ During its operation for a decade, the *Académie Berbère* strengthened awareness of Amazigh identity and greatly raised the prestige of the Amazigh language and culture. These achievements, through multiple efforts, were summarized in the preface of a history of the academy as follows:

“... he (Mohand Arav Bessaoud) needed to unearth the portraits of Numidian kings to show that the Berbers have a history, that they had kingdoms, kings, and warriors ..., and to prove that the Berbers are intelligent people, he had to invoke Plotinus, Saint Augustine, Apuleius, Ibn Khaldoun ..., and explain that they contributed greatly to humanity through their contributions to the civilizations of the peoples who colonized them. Then, he had to revive Tifinagh, recover lost words (*Azul*, *Thanemirth*), name the days of the week ..., and invent words that never existed ..., move heaven and earth ... if necessary, to restore the Berber’s pride in belonging to this noble Numidian race, which successive colonizers tried in vain to portray as barbarians.”¹⁶⁶

The works of the academy were thus twofold: historical and linguistic. Historically, it aimed to create a subversive memory of Maghribian history, centering mainly on the Numidian kings (202 BCE-25 BCE) who were viewed as true native and anti-invasion Amazigh heroes. Linguistically, it embodied a combination of standard language ideology and Amazigh nationalism, believing that the Amazigh language, though comprising multiple varieties, is internally uniform and can be managed and standardized accordingly with elements mixed from different dialects. This is mainly reflected in two ways: the adoption and adaptation of the ancient

¹⁶⁴ Galand, L. (1989). *Les langues berbères*. In *La réforme des langues: Histoire et avenir* (Vol. IV). Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag. p. 342.

¹⁶⁵ Aïtel, F. (2014). pp. 115-116.

¹⁶⁶ Bessaoud, M. A. (2000). *De petites gens pour une grande cause, ou l’histoire de l’Académie Berbère: 1966-1978*. p. 8.

Libyco-Berber alphabetical writing known as Tifinagh for writing Kabyle; and drawing from other Amazigh varieties to enrich and modernize Kabyle vocabulary. The neologisms of the *Académie Berbère* borrowed from a wide range of Amazigh varieties. For example, *tanfust* (“history”) came from Mozabite, *ifed* (“a million”) from a Tuareg term designating a very large number, and *anbaḍ/anabaḍ* (“government”) from central Moroccan *baḍ* (“power, authority”).¹⁶⁷

The efforts of the *Académie Berbère* were influential due to intensive meetings of activists in Parisian cafés and the publication of its bilingual (French and Amazigh) monthly bulletin, *Imazighen*, which included a wide range of content such as political and historical texts, grammar lessons, lexical pages, proverbs, riddles, tales, and poems, and which was widely circulated not only in France but also in Algeria and Morocco.¹⁶⁸ Thus, using the Tifinagh script and creating Amazigh neologisms were prominent as the two most important expressions of Amazigh nationalism in the crucial language aspect. These two trends will be introduced in detail.

2.2. Tifinagh

The new writing system developed by the *Académie Berbère* for writing Kabyle, known as Neo-Tifinagh, is inspired by the Libyco-Berber script that dates from ancient times in North African, Saharan, and Canarian inscriptions.¹⁶⁹ The origin of the Libyco-Berber script is debated, as stated by Karl-Gottfried Prasse: “L’origine de l’alphabet libyque est inconnue. ... Toutes les tentatives de le dériver des hiéroglyphes égyptiens, des alphabets sudarabique, grec, ibérique, voire phénicien-punique, n’ont pas réussi jusqu’ici à fournir la preuve décisive.”¹⁷⁰ This script gradually developed into Tifinagh, a script used among the Tuareg people, who inhabit the central and southern Sahara regions of Algeria, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso.¹⁷¹ Although the historical connection between Libyco-Berber and Tifinagh is undeniable, there are

¹⁶⁷ Achab, R. (2013). pp. 78-88.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 78-79.; Aïtel, F. (2014). pp. 115-116.

¹⁶⁹ Pichler, W. (2007). *Origin and development of the Libyco-Berber script*. Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. p. 6.

¹⁷⁰ Prasse, K. G. (1972). *Manuel de grammaire touarègue (tahaggart)*. Akademisk Forlag. p. 146.

¹⁷¹ Elghamis, R. (2011). *Le tifinagh au Niger contemporain: Étude sur l’écriture indigène des Touaregs* (Doctoral dissertation, Leiden University). pp. 61-62.

reasons to consider it a new type of graphic system, with most signs being either new or having changed their form and phonetic value.¹⁷²

Tifinagh has flexible writing direction, as described by Werner Pichler:

In Tifinagh there is no restriction to one direction of writing. People say “*ässhurud*” = “there is no rule”. Vertical writing from bottom to top is still classified as the original, authentic form of writing and is used predominantly by old people and women. Normally the direction from top to bottom is not used. Younger people who have learned Arabic and/or French at school write mainly in horizontal lines from left to right (which is supposed to be influenced by Latin writing) or from right to left (influenced by Arabic writing). Writing in circles or spirals is possible but rare.¹⁷³

As detailed by Ramada Elghamis, Tifinagh is used nowadays by Tuaregs alongside Latin and Arabic letters in various contexts, including traditional applications such as private correspondence, private administration, marking goods, judicial and administrative functions, managing village cooperatives, memory aids for language learning, decorative and emblematic purposes, signage, and divination practices. With the aid of printing and media, its usage has expanded into fields such as journalism, political propaganda, and religion.¹⁷⁴

Tuareg Tifinagh became known to western scholarship through various works, including those by Adolphe Hanoteau (1860), Said Cid Kaoui (1900), and Charles de Foucauld (1920).¹⁷⁵ It was primarily through the *Dictionnaire touareg-français, dialecte de l’Ahaggar* by Charles de Foucauld, published in 1951-1952, that the Ahaggar Tifinagh script became known to Kabyle enthusiasts, and inspired the Neo-Tifinagh of the *Académie Berbère*.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Pichler, W. (2007). p. 92.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Elghamis, R. (2011). pp. 167-295.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p.117.; Hanoteau, A. (1860). *Essai de grammaire de la langue Tamachek.*; Cid Kaoui, S. (1900). *Dictionnaire pratique tamâheq-français (langue des touaregs)*. A. Jourdan.; de Foucauld, C. (1920). *Notes pour servir à un essai de grammaire touarègue (dialecte de l’ahaggar)*. J. Carbonel.

¹⁷⁶ de Foucauld, C. (1951–1952). *Dictionnaire touareg-français, dialecte de*

*Ahaggar Tifinagh*¹⁷⁷

a	·	y	∴	n	l	t	†
b	⊕	h	∴	ŋ	l	‡	€
d	Λ	j	⋈	q	…	w	:
ḍ	E	k	∴	r	○	x	::
f	⊚	l	∥	s	⊙	y	ξ
g	⋈	l	(=l)	ş	(=s)	z	⋈
ğ	†	m	⊔	ş	⊚	z	#

Writing Kabyle with Tifinagh letters was an innovation. By the time the *Académie Berbère*, led by Mohand Arav Bessaoud, came up with the idea of using Tifinagh, writing the language with Latin letters was already popular among activists, especially thanks to the advocacy of Mouloud Mammeri.¹⁷⁸ Mohand Arav Bessaoud himself was initially reluctant to adopt Tifinagh, facing criticism that viewed the alphabet as “an archaic script” and its revival as “the rekindling of extinguished embers” He was eventually convinced by the Moroccan activist Mahjoubi Aherdane.¹⁷⁹ Mahjoubi Aherdane was an influential Moroccan politician with close ties to the monarchy, serving as the defense minister at the time.¹⁸⁰ He participated in 1957 in the foundation of the *Mouvement populaire*, a royalist party dominated by rural Amazigh speakers, though without a specific Amazigh agenda.¹⁸¹ An ardent Amazigh nationalist, he himself advocated early with Hassan II (reign 1961-1999) for recognizing Amazigh as a national language and for it to be taught across the country in the same manner as Arabic.¹⁸²

Mohand Arav Bessaoud recounts in detail how the *Académie Berbère* was

l’Ahaggar (Vols. I–IV). Imprimerie Nationale de France.; Elghamis, R. (2011). p. 317.

¹⁷⁷ Elghamis, R. (2011). pp. 64-65.

¹⁷⁸ Bessaoud, M. A. (2000). p. 90.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 89-91.

¹⁸⁰ López García, B. (2017). Compte rendu de Mahjoubi Aherdan, “Mémoires”. *Hespéris-Tamuda*, 52(2), 465-473.

¹⁸¹ Willis, M. (2008). The politics of Berber (Amazigh) identity: Algeria and Morocco compared. *North Africa: Politics, region, and the limits of transformation*, Routledge, 227-242.

¹⁸² López García, B. (2017).

decisively convinced by Mahjoubi Aherdane, “our Moroccan brother,” to adopt Tifinagh. The persuasive words of Aherdane are as follows:

“You say in your leaflets,” Aherdane pointed out to me, “that our language was written long before Jesus Christ, but you do not show this writing or think to teach it. I imagine, therefore, that you are a prisoner of Latin characters. Tifinagh, my dear, is not just another script for us but a witness to a significant part of our history. They attest, in any case, to the existence of a civilization; they express the identity you seek to defend. I will go even further in case you are not convinced. You are not unaware that the Jews have reclaimed their ancient script, which some considered a model of difficulty for writing their language. And yet, they lack neither linguist-scholars nor financial means if they had wanted to adapt the Latin alphabet. Instead, they reclaimed their ancient script, and I imagine you can guess why.”¹⁸³

Thus, it can be observed that Tifinagh was chosen by Amazigh activists as a symbol to manifest the existence of Amazigh history and civilization. Following the decision, activists began adapting Tifinagh to suit Kabyle phonology. In comparison to the Ahaggar script, around half of the signs are new, either added or replaced, in the plan of the *Académie Berbère*.¹⁸⁴ Therefore, it should be considered a new system, called Neo-Tifinagh. Among the most important changes, the dot-signs featured in Tifinagh were considered “impractical” and “a source of confusion” and were largely replaced.¹⁸⁵ For instance, ⵉ, ⵏ, ⵓ, ⵙ, ⵔ, which represent the values γ, h, k, x, and q, respectively, become ⵏ, ⵏ, ⵏ, ⵏ, and ⵏ in Neo-Tifinagh. Notably, while there are no dot-signs for consonants in Neo-Tifinagh, those for the vowels “a” (ⵏ) and “u” (ⵓ) are preserved. The complete alphabet is shown as follows:

¹⁸³ Bessaoud, M. A. (2000). p. 91.

¹⁸⁴ Aghali-Zakara, M. (1994). Graphies berbères et dilemme de diffusion: Interaction des alphabets latin, ajami et tifinagh. *Études et documents berbères*, (1), 107-121.

¹⁸⁵ Bessaoud, M. A. (2000). p. 90.

*Neo-Tifinagh of the Académie Berbère*¹⁸⁶

b	⊖	ḡ	ⵝ	n	l	č	ⵝ/ⵞ	y	Π / Σ
β	Δ	h	∅	q	Z	t	†	z	ⵝ
d	Λ	ḥ	∠	y	Ψ	θ	X	z	ⵝ
ð	V	x	X	ε (Ω)	ⵏ	ṭ	ⵉ / ⵊ		
ḍ	∅	k	ⵏ	r	∅	j	I	a	•
ḍ/ð	E	ḵ	ⵏ	s	∅	ḡ	X	i	Σ
f	Π	l		š	∅	ṭ	ⵉ	u	:
g	X	m	ⵏ	š	ⵏ	w	ⵉ	ə	÷

Besides the replacement of dot-signs, Neo-Tifinagh writes all vowels, whereas the traditional Tuareg script only writes vowels at the end of the word.¹⁸⁷ Additionally, while Tifinagh is flexible as to writing direction, Neo-Tifinagh is written from left to right. Thus, in comparison to Tuareg Tifinagh, which can be influenced by both Latin and Arabic features, Neo-Tifinagh of the *Académie Berbère* might be considered a “Latinized” Tifinagh.

2.3. Neology

Ramdane Achab traces the first Amazigh neologisms back to 1945, when they appeared in Amazigh nationalist songs composed by Kabyle activists of the Algerian national movement. The majority of these new creations do not derive from words previously existing in Kabyle but rely on borrowings from other Amazigh varieties.¹⁸⁸ Mohand Idir Aït Amrane played a leading role in this round of coining neologisms, which lasted around a decade. For example, in his famous *Kker a mmis umazigh*, he uses the very word “Amazigh,” which originates in Moroccan varieties and was unknown in traditional Kabyle culture, which lacked a word for the Amazigh language and its speakers as a whole.¹⁸⁹

Relying mainly on the memoirs of Aït Amrane and Malha Benbrahim’s work on Kabyle poetry during the colonial period, Ramdane Achab identifies around twenty-

¹⁸⁶ Elghamis, R. (2011). pp. 318-319.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 297-303.

¹⁸⁸ Achab, R. (2013). pp. 57-77.

¹⁸⁹ Chaker, S. (1987). p. 27.

four pertinent texts containing more than twenty neologisms, listed here:¹⁹⁰

- 7 terms from Tuareg: *agaraw* (“sea”); *amaḍal* (“earth, world”); *mraw* (“ten”); *tera* (“love, will”); *tiggureg* (“independence, freedom”); *tilelli* (“freedom”); *timidwa* (“friendship”);
- 6 terms from Central Moroccan Amazigh and Tashelhiyt: *amaziɣ* (“Berber”); *anegmu* (“oppressor”); *ayzu* (“dungeon, prison”); *ayzuz* (“standard, flag”); *mraw* (“ten”); *usman* (“lightning”);
- 2 terms from Mozabite: *aylan* (“country, nation”); *mraw* (“ten”);
- 6 new terms coined on the basis of existing Kabyle terms: *adyan* (“history”); *amenhar* (“lead, direct”); *ayaw* (“ally”); *azegzaw-zeggʷaɣ* (“green-and-red”); *tiddukelt* (“union”); *amadan* (“people”).¹⁹¹

Through the sole intermediary of around twenty terms, as observed by Ramdane Achab, “almost the entire arsenal of Berber neology has been revealed, experienced and put into context”.¹⁹² This neological arsenal includes, for example:

- Derivation of form, such as *adyan*, meaning “history,” derived from the feminine form *tadyant*, meaning “event, adventure, or story,” whose masculine form was previously unusual;
- Semantic extension, such as *ayaw*, which ordinarily means “nephew” or “uterine relative,” neologically used to mean “ally”;
- Internal borrowings, from a wide range of Amazigh varieties, such as the very word *amaziɣ*;¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ Achab, R. (2013). pp. 66-70.; Benbrahim, M. (1982).; Aït-Amrane, M. I. (1992). *Ekkar a mmis oumazigh. Mémoire. Au lycée de Ben-Aknoun 1945*. Alger.

¹⁹¹ Achab, R. (2013). p. 70.

¹⁹² *Ibid.* pp. 77.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.* pp. 66-72.

Though versatile in neological tools, it should be noted that the number of neologisms during this period remained relatively low, and many terms were not echoed in later usage. This is partly because these first experiments in neology, along with the poets and songs containing them, and Amazigh cultural expressions in general, were severely suppressed starting from the second half of the 1950s.¹⁹⁴ It wasn't until the late 1960s and 1970s, roughly simultaneous with the activities of the *Académie Berbère*, that the second and more systematic round of Amazigh neology started. This was mainly thanks to the work by Mouloud Mammeri at the University of Algiers, where he gave courses in Amazigh grammar, literature, and civilization.¹⁹⁵

Mammeri started to reveal his neologisms, mainly technical terminologies for introducing the Amazigh language, in the early 1970s. These efforts resulted in the manual *Tajeṛṛumt n tmaziyt* (Grammar of Amazigh), completed in 1972. Another project directed by Mammeri began shortly afterward, leading to a comprehensive and systematic dictionary of new Amazigh terms, titled *Amawal*, compiled between 1972 and 1974 in Algiers.¹⁹⁶ Unlike *Tajeṛṛumt n tmaziyt*, which focuses solely on grammatical terms, *Amawal* is the first work to explicitly identify a certain number of general lexical needs of the Amazigh language and attempt to address them on a massive scale.¹⁹⁷ Many of these new terms had already been adopted and spread by the *Académie Berbère* through activists who attended Mammeri's courses before the publication of the dictionary.¹⁹⁸

The two works are of particular relevance to this thesis. *Tajeṛṛumt n tmaziyt* serves as the primary reference for the grammatical vocabulary of IRCAM, *Amawal n tjerrumt*, where a significant number of neologisms from *Tajeṛṛumt n tmaziyt* are found.¹⁹⁹ It is interesting to note that the only two Arabic loans found in the latter—namely *ajemmal* (“collective”) and *tunṭiqṭ* (“syllable”)—are both replaced in IRCAM's work with *amegru* and *tafirt*, respectively.²⁰⁰ This is also the case for

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 75-77.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 92.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 117.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 88.

¹⁹⁹ Boumalk, A., & Nait-Zerrad, K. (Eds.) (2009). *Vocabulaire grammatical amazighe (Amawal n tjerrumt)*. IRCAM. p. 12.

²⁰⁰ Achab, R. (2013). pp. 109, 115.; Boumalk, A., & Nait-Zerrad, K. (Eds.) (2009).

Amawal, which provides a substantial number of terms for the general vocabulary of IRCAM. However, the Arabic loans in *Amawal*, which already constitute an extremely low percentage, are selectively replaced in IRCAM's vocabulary. For example, *aterras* (infantryman) in *Amawal* becomes *amakal* in IRCAM's vocabulary; *afsax* ("eclipse") becomes *anubz*; and *amecwar* ("stage") becomes *tikli* or *tijlt*.²⁰¹ This cannot be seen as a general rejection of external borrowings. For instance, French loans in *Amawal*, such as *ajenyur* ("engineer"), are well adopted as *ajnyur* by IRCAM.²⁰² I will return to this issue in a later chapter to analyze the ideology behind IRCAM's hostility towards Arabic loans.

2.4. The Amazigh Cultural Movement in Morocco

The efforts of the *Académie Berbère* successfully raised Amazigh consciousness and inspired the further development of the Amazigh cultural-political movement in both Algeria and Morocco. In Algeria, this laid the foundation for the "Printemps berbère." In March 1980, when the regime launched another wave of Arabization efforts targeting cultural and educational institutions in Kabylia, tensions escalated following the cancellation of a lecture by Mouloud Mammeri on ancient Amazigh poetry at the University of Tizi Ouzou. This sparked widespread demonstrations and strikes across the region.²⁰³ The movement was eventually suppressed, however, sporadic protests continued to occur. It was from this definitive moment, coupled with further developments, that a popular Amazigh movement was established in Kabylia with "explicit cultural, ideological, and political translations".²⁰⁴

In Morocco, shortly after the establishment of the Paris-based *Académie Berbère (d'Échange et de Recherches Culturels)*, a similar organization called the *Association Marocaine de Recherches et d'Échanges Culturels* (AMREC) was founded in Rabat in late 1967. Its goals included collecting Amazigh cultural heritage, promoting the

pp. 141, 159.

²⁰¹ Achab, R. (2013). p. 139.; IRCAM's terms from <https://tal.ircam.ma/dglai/search/index?e=0&&l=2> (accessed July 29, 2024)

²⁰² Achab, R. (2013). p. 139.; Aneur et al. (2017). p. 99.

²⁰³ Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). *The Berber identity movement and the challenge to North African states*. University of Texas Press. pp.79-80.

²⁰⁴ Chaker, S. (2001). Berber challenge in Algeria: The state of the question. *Race, gender & class*, 135-156.

Amazigh language, and raising identity consciousness. Some of the most active members of this first Amazigh cultural association in Morocco were Brahim Akhiat, a high school teacher and poet; Ali Sidqi Azaykou, who would become a prolific poet, historian, and one of the most influential Amazigh activists in the country; and Ahmed Boukous, who had just completed higher education in literature, history, and pedagogy at Mohammed V University and would soon be heading to France to be trained as a social scientist and linguist.²⁰⁵ All three activists joined the board of IRCAM (Conseil d'Administration) in 2002, with Ahmed Boukous shortly after becoming the Rector.²⁰⁶

There is a close connection in the development of the Amazigh cultural movement in Morocco with developments in France and Algeria. French colonialism in Morocco started in 1912, with the Sultan and his administration under the protectorate retaining significant influence over administrative, economic, political, and legal matters. As in Algeria, French colonizers in Morocco similarly believed that the Berbers were vital for France's stable presence in the country, creating and maintaining a balance between them and the Arabs. This led to the implementation of "a sound Berber policy" that called for the utmost respect for Amazigh customs.²⁰⁷ The policy was implemented at the very beginning of the protectorate. As stated in the Dahir (royal decree) of 1914, the Amazigh tribes should be administered "according to their own laws and customs," and French authorities would be responsible for creating the appropriate legal texts or regulations.²⁰⁸ The policy was further specified in the so-called Berber Dahir of 1930, in which the customary tribunals were formally established to rule civil, commercial and other cases, while most criminal cases were reallocated to the French courts.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). p. 95.; Ilahiane, H. (2006). *Historical dictionary of the Berbers (Imazighen)*. The Scarecrow Press. p. 22-23.; <https://www.ircam.ma/fr/activites/ev-nements/hommage-a-m-ahmed-boukouss> (accessed July 1, 2024)

²⁰⁶ IRCAM. (2003). *Bulletin d'information (Inghmisen n usinag)*, 1. p. 4.

²⁰⁷ Hoisington Jr, W. A. (1978). Cities in revolt: The Berber Dahir (1930) and France's urban strategy in Morocco. *Journal of contemporary history*, 13(3), 433-448.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ For the text of the Berber dahir, see Halstead, J. P. (1967). *Rebirth of a nation: The origins and rise of Moroccan nationalism, 1912-1944*. Cambridge, Mass. pp. 276-277.

In contrast to the Kabyle mode in which the French legal system was established above customary law and Islamic law, in Morocco, the French legal system was in essence in competition with the rule of traditional courts.²¹⁰ Thus, when French law took further hold in 1930, not only educated city dwellers displayed vehement resistance to it, but rural Amazigh speakers, as stated by John P. Halstead, “were even more repelled by the dahir as a joint attack on their religion and their traditional autonomy”.²¹¹ Consequently, as Katherine Hoffman observed, the French “Berber Policy” taking root in Morocco and reaching its apex with the Berber Dahir, led to a reverse trend whereby Islamic law was more widely embraced in rural areas and many Amazigh speakers opted to be ruled by a *qadi* (judge of Islamic law) rather than a judiciary council.²¹² Additionally, alongside their Muslim identity and traditional tribal loyalties, Moroccan Amazigh speakers expressed awareness of a distinct “Morocco-sized” identity.²¹³ These factors collectively laid a solid foundation for a form of Amazigh nationalism, which, contrary to French expectations of opposition to Arab conquest and Islamization, prioritized the country’s independence from colonization.

Similar to Algeria, the first generation of Amazigh nationalists began to emerge from Franco-Amazigh schools in Morocco. The most notable example was the school in Azrou, which opened in 1927 and became a collège three years later. Initially designed by the French as a “school for the Berbers and by the Berbers” to counter Arab-Islamic nationalism, it became a “hotbed of Moroccan nationalists.”²¹⁴ It was at the Collège d’Azrou where Mohamed Chafik, later the first rector of IRCAM,

²¹⁰ Scham, A. (1970). *Lyautey in Morocco: Protectorate administration, 1912-1925*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p. 200.

²¹¹ Halstead, J. P. (1967). p. 180.

²¹² Hoffman, K. E. (2010). Berber law by French means: customary courts in the Moroccan hinterlands, 1930–1956. *Comparative studies in society and history*, 52(4), 851-880.

²¹³ Wyrzten, J. (2011). Colonial state-building and the negotiation of Arab and Berber identity in protectorate Morocco. *International journal of middle east studies*, 43(2), 227-249.

²¹⁴ Ageron, C. R. (1971). La politique berbère du protectorat marocain de 1913 à 1934. *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine (1954-)*, 18(1), 50-90.; See also Bennhlal, M. (2005). *Le collège d’Azrou: Une élite berbère civile et militaire au Maroc, 1927-1959*. Paris: Karthala.

became a Moroccan nationalist before developing into an Amazigh activist.²¹⁵

As a result, in the immediate years after Morocco's independence, it would be difficult to identify an "Amazigh bloc" in the political context. The *Mouvement Populaire* (MP), founded in 1957, could be labelled as "a predominantly Amazigh political party" in certain contexts.²¹⁶ However, it took great care to avoid appearing as a purely Amazigh-speaking or identity-based movement in order to gain wider support from rural masses in order to counter the dominance of urban, bourgeois *Istiqlal*.

Meanwhile, the Arabization policy of the authorities after independence showed similar hostility towards Amazigh cultural expressions as seen in Algeria. Among the numerous academic units and institutions that vanished after 1956 in Morocco, any institution recognizing Tamazight as an administrative language was shut down.²¹⁷ Under the Arabic one nation–one language ideology, the Amazigh language faced trivialization and ignorance, to the extent that it was presented as "just a dialect of Arabic"²¹⁸ and its speakers were perceived as "simply someone who hasn't gone to school."²¹⁹ This was the predicament from which the Moroccan Amazigh Cultural Movement began. Given the situation it faced, the movement had a fundamental objective to raise the prestige and status of the Amazigh language and culture in order to counter the established Arabic "high culture," aiming to establish Amazigh as an equally standardized, literacy- and education-based system of communication.²²⁰

Therefore, it is not hard to understand why the efforts of the *Académie Berbère* in awakening awareness of Amazigh identity and raising the prestige of the Amazigh language and culture gained popularity in Morocco and in 1970 Mohand Arav Bessaoud received thousands of letters of support from the country.²²¹ In this period of what could be called an "Amazigh awakening" of the 1960s and 1970s, several

²¹⁵ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). *Mohamed Chafik: L'homme de l'unanimité: parcours d'une figure emblématique de la revendication amazighe au Maroc*. Tamaynut-Anfa. pp. 25-43.

²¹⁶ Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). p. 88.

²¹⁷ El Guabli, B. (2023a). The idea of Tamazgha: Current articulations and scholarly potential. *Tamazgha studies journal*, 1(1), 7-22.

²¹⁸ Kossmann, M. (2013b). p. 30.

²¹⁹ Quoted in Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). p. 90.

²²⁰ For the definition of "high culture," see Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and nationalism*. Cornell University Press. p. 54.

²²¹ Aïtel, F. (2014). p. 116.

Amazigh cultural associations thrived in Morocco following the establishment of AMREC. Among the most influential were the *Association Nouvelle pour la Culture et les Arts Populaires* (ANCAP) or *Tamaynut*, and the *Association de l'Université d'Été d'Agadir* (AUEA). Although political agendas, particularly leftist ones, occasionally emerged in the activities of these associations, they were neither consistent nor widely accepted. Regional and political differences largely drove the increase in the number of associations, as evidenced by the departure of Ali Sidqi Azaykou from AMREC in 1975 to start a new association.²²²

The “Printemps berbère” in 1980 in neighboring Algeria brought a change in the situation in Morocco, where the politicization of the Amazigh issue seemed imminent. Azaykou once evoked the option of political autonomy for Moroccan Amazigh, a demand he said paralleled those of the Basques in Spain and the IRA in Northern Ireland.²²³ This modern ethno-political type of politicization urged King Hassan II to intervene. On the one hand, he established the *Commission Nationale pour la Sauvegarde des Arts Populaires*, headed by Mahjoubi Aherdane from his inner circle, and allowed the publication of a bimonthly journal, *Amazigh*, to serve as a public platform to discuss issues surrounding the Amazigh language and culture.²²⁴ On the other hand, Amazigh associations and activists were persecuted. For example, it was because of an article published in the first Arabic-language issue of *Amazigh* attacking the Arabization policy that Azaykou was sentenced to one year in prison.²²⁵ Additionally, Ahmed Boukous was not allowed to hold a passport for many years, while Hassan Idbelkassem, the founder of *Tamaynut*, was imprisoned for one week in 1982 for displaying a sign in Tifinagh script at his office.²²⁶

This situation, where the Amazigh cultural movement was deprived of any public activity, only began to change in the 1990s, a period that marked the beginning of a new era for human rights globally.²²⁷ The Moroccan Amazigh cultural movement

²²² Feliu, L. (2006). Le Mouvement culturel amazigh (MCA) au Maroc. *L'année du Maghreb*, (I), 274-285.

²²³ Chahir, A. (2006). Leadership politique amazigh. In H. Rachik (Ed.), *Usages de l'identité Amazighe au Maroc*. Imprimerie Najah El Jadida, 196-226. Quoted in Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). p. 99.

²²⁴ Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). pp. 97-98.

²²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 98.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Rollinde, M. (1999). Le mouvement amazighe au Maroc: Défense d'une identité

referenced human rights in two interconnected aspects. Historically, the strategy, as summarized by Brahim El Guabli, involved “the (re)invention of tradition and the creation of a subversive memory” to affirm that the Amazigh language and culture are the oldest in Morocco, corresponding to the idea of Indigeneity.²²⁸

This idea of Indigeneity was reflected in the *Charte d’Agadir* issued in 1991 by the main Moroccan Amazigh cultural associations. In this charter, they asserted that “L’historicité de la langue et de la culture amazighes et leur enracinement dans la terre marocaine sont attestés depuis plus de 5 millénaires selon les documents archéologiques disponibles.”²²⁹ On this basis, the associations outlined their fundamental demands regarding the linguistic aspect: (1) constitutional recognition of Amazigh language as a national language; (2) establishment of a national institute for Amazigh studies and research; (3) inclusion of Amazigh language and culture in various cultural and educational activities; (4) presence of Amazigh language and culture in scientific research programmes; (5) presence of the language in written and audiovisual media; (6) promotion of production and creation in the Amazigh language in the field of knowledge and culture; and (7) implementation and utilisation of means of expression and learning in the Amazigh language.²³⁰

The first requirement of constitutional recognition of the Amazigh language as a national language was consistent with the Amazigh cultural movement as a whole. As Salem Chaker commented on the Algerian case: “la langue est posée comme trait définitoire fondamental de l’identité berbère” and “la revendication (du mouvement culturel berbère) est avant tout linguistique (= ‘berbère langue nationale’).”²³¹ This caused the second requirement to play a particularly important role at the practical level since it was Amazigh as a language standardized by the institute that would be recognized as the national language and preferably used in fulfilling other demands.

culturelle, revendication du droit des minorités ou alternative politique?. *Revue algérienne d’anthropologie et de sciences sociales* (8), 63-70.; El Guabli, B. (2023a).

²²⁸ El Guabli, B. (2020). (Re) Invention of tradition, subversive memory, and Morocco’s re-Amazighization: From erasure of Imazighen to the performance of Tifinagh in public Life. *Expressions maghrébines*, 19(1), 143-168.

²²⁹ For the original text of The Charte d’Agadir relative aux droits linguistiques et culturels in French, see https://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/afrique/maroc-charte_agadir-1991.htm (accessed March 17, 2024).

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ Chaker, S. (1987). p. 25.

The tasks of this potential institute, as further listed in the Charter, included the elaboration of a unified graphic system allowing for the adequate transcription of the Amazigh language; the standardization of the grammar of the language; and the production of pedagogical tools suitable for teaching the language. These contents would become the primary functions of IRCAM a decade later.

Two years after the issuance of the *Charte d'Agadir*, Hassan II delivered a speech on August 20, 1994, in which he deemed it “imperative” to introduce primary education of the three “national dialects”—namely, Tarifiyt, Central Moroccan Amazigh, and Tashelhiyt. Furthermore, he asserted that the country should be based on “multiple geniuses and diverse authenticities and customs, each as rich as the others”.²³² However, to the frustration of the activists, the King’s lip service brought no real change at the legislative level. This frustration was only exacerbated by the establishment of the *Haut Commissariat à l’Amazighité* (HCA) in neighboring Algeria in 1995, which was attached to the president’s office and tasked with “la réhabilitation et la promotion de l’Amazighité en tant que l’un des fondements de l’identité nationale” and “l’introduction de la langue Amazighe dans les systèmes de l’enseignement et de la communication.”²³³

In Morocco, the activists’ repeated demands and urging of the authorities to fulfill their promises culminated in the Amazigh Manifesto in March 2000. The Manifesto, directed to the newly-crowned King Mohammed VI was written with the lead of the esteemed Amazigh scholar Mohamed Chafik from the inner circle of the royal family (as will be introduced in the following chapter) and signed by 229 individuals comprising of academics, authors, artists, entrepreneurs, and civil servants.²³⁴ The manifesto contained a series of explicit demands related to Amazigh issues echoing the *Charte d’Agadir*. These demands included the constitutional recognition of the Amazigh language, the promotion of economic development in Amazigh-speaking regions, the inclusion of Amazigh language teaching in the educational system, the establishment of scientific organizations for the standardization of the language, the creation of educational tools for its instruction, and the requirement that Tamazight be used in public environments catering to those

²³² Bennhlal, M. (1994). Maroc: Chronique intérieure. *Annuaire de l’Afrique du nord*, 33, 569-596.

²³³ https://www.hcamazighite.dz/fr/page/le-hca-p7?tag=bloc_28 (accessed July 29, 2024)

²³⁴ Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). p.159.

who are not fluent in Arabic, among others. For the urgency of the demands, the king was warned: “The question, now, is on the verge of moving from being an economic and cultural one to being a political question. This will, undoubtedly, be the case if the necessary steps are not taken—and within appropriate time limits—to redress what needs redressing. This is so because the Amazighs will not forego their ‘Amazighity’.”²³⁵

In response to the manifesto, nearly 200 Amazigh associations declared their support, and 150 activists convened in Bouznika two months later to deliberate on potential tactics to realize the demands.²³⁶ Following the Conference at Bouznika, the creation of a Moroccan Amazigh party became imminent, as argued by militants such as Rachid Raha who asked “Pourquoi les Imazighen du Maroc devront s’organiser politiquement?”²³⁷ One year later, in June 2001, activists planned to gather again in Bouznika for the Second National Conference on the Amazigh Manifesto when access to the town was cut off by police, preventing delegates from assembling.²³⁸ However, just when an escalation seemed inevitable, a favorable response came from the authorities on July 30, 2001. In his Throne Day speech, King Mohammed VI directly addressed the Amazigh issue and promised the establishment of a royal institute of Amazigh culture.²³⁹ Following this, on October 17 of the same year, Royal Decree No. 1-01-299 was issued, formally ordering the establishment of the Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe (IRCAM) in Rabat. The main purpose of the institution was to collect and transcribe expressions of Amazigh culture, conduct related research and studies, and facilitate the teaching of Amazigh by producing educational tools such as general lexicons and specialized dictionaries.²⁴⁰

²³⁵ From the Berber (Amazigh) Manifesto. The text of the Manifesto in English and French can be found at http://www.mondeberbere.com/chafik_berber-manifesto.html (accessed March 17, 2024)

²³⁶ Sater, J. N. (2003). *Civil society and political change in Morocco* (Doctoral dissertation, Durham University). p. 223.

²³⁷ “Pourquoi les Imazighen du Maroc devront s’organiser politiquement?” in *La gazette du Maroc*. No. 190, 22 November 2000.

²³⁸ Communiqué du comité du Manifeste Amazigh. Rabat le 24 juin 2001. http://amazighworld.org/human_rights/morocco/morocco_communique_comite_du_manifeste_amazigh.php (accessed March 16, 2023)

²³⁹ <https://mjcc.gov.ma/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/30-07-2001-.pdf> (accessed March 30, 2024)

²⁴⁰ Dahir n 1-01-299 du 29 rajab al khair 1422 (17 octobre 2001) portant création de

This new development signified that one of the most consistent and urgent demands of the Moroccan Amazigh cultural movement, second only to the constitutional recognition of the Amazigh language but also essential for it, was realized. However, it is essential to note that IRCAM was established as an instrument by the authorities to prevent an ethno-identity-based politicization of the Amazigh issue. The Royal Decree stressed that IRCAM is “chargée de sauvegarder, de promouvoir et de renforcer la place de notre culture amazighe... en tant que richesse nationale et source de fierté de tous les Marocains.”²⁴¹ This expression echoes a strategy by the Algerian HCA, which frames the language of “Tamazight” as “language of all Algerians” to deterritorialize and de-ethnicize the linguistic and cultural claims from a specific group of people, which might hinder the national unity of the country.²⁴²

The Moroccan IRCAM was established six years after the Algerian HCA, and the adoption of a similar strategy in response to the Amazigh movement suggests that Moroccan authorities, to some extent, took into account the experience of their hostile neighbor in handling the Amazigh issue. Shortly after the establishment of IRCAM, in 2002, Algeria took the lead again in responding to the Amazigh movement by amending Article 3 of its Constitution, adding to the statement “Arabic is the national and official language” the clause: “Tamazight is also a national language. The State works for its promotion and its development in all its linguistic varieties in use throughout the national territory.”²⁴³ Though Amazigh did not attain the same official and national status as Arabic but was only recognized as a national language, its inclusion in the Constitution was still significant—a development that Morocco lacked at the time.

A similar constitutional recognition of the Amazigh language in Morocco, long pursued by the Moroccan Amazigh cultural movement, was finally realized in 2011 in the context of the “Arab Spring.” Amid the popular uprisings that swept across

l’Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe. *Bulletin officiel*, 4948, pp. 1074-1076.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² Abrous, D. (1995). Le Haut commissariat à l’amazighité, ou les méandres d’une phagocytose. *Annuaire de l’Afrique du nord*, tome XXXIV, CNRS Éditions, 583-590.

²⁴³ Constitution of Algeria, as amended in 2002. available at:

<https://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/africa/DZ/algeria-constitution-with-the-amendments-of-10/view> (accessed March 5, 2025)

North Africa and the Middle East, beginning in Tunisia in December 2010, the situation faced by Moroccan authorities was relatively moderate. Compared to other countries where the slogan “the people want to topple (*isqat*) the regime” dominated protests, Moroccan demonstrations were characterized by the slogan “the people want to reform (*islah*) the regime.”²⁴⁴ That said, the situation was far from something that could be ignored by the authorities. By mid-February 2011, the Moroccan “Arab Spring” quickly developed into the February 20 movement, with 37,000-60,000 demonstrators protesting in over 50 cities and towns, and weekly protests continuing for months afterward.²⁴⁵

The movement, serving as an umbrella “for all those left outside the public space who wished to reclaim that space, democratize it, and transform it into a genuine avenue for debate,”²⁴⁶ inspired wide participation, including activists from the Amazigh movement, with Amazigh flags prominently displayed in the demonstrations.²⁴⁷ One of the most tragic incidents during these protests occurred in the Tarifiyt-speaking Rifian city of Al Hoceima, where on February 20, a protest gathering of 37,000 people ended in the death of five individuals due to a fire inside a bank.²⁴⁸ With these developments once again forecasting the politicization of the Amazigh issue, the authorities incorporated a response specific to the Amazigh movement within their broader reaction to the February 20 movement. On March 9, King Mohammed VI announced plans for fundamental constitutional reform in a nationwide television address, in which he emphasized that the new constitution would “enshrine... the Amazigh component as a core element and common asset belonging to all Moroccans.”²⁴⁹

²⁴⁴ Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2022). *Amazigh politics in the wake of the Arab Spring*. University of Texas Press. p. 125.

²⁴⁵ Badran, S. Z. (2018). *Demobilization in Morocco: The case of the February 20 Movement*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas). p. 3.

²⁴⁶ Mekouar, M. (2016). *Protest and mass mobilization: Authoritarian collapse and political change in North Africa*. Routledge. p. 95.

²⁴⁷ Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2022). p. 131.

²⁴⁸ Naudé, P. F. (2011). “The death toll from the protests in Morocco stands at five dead and 128 injured”. Jeuneafrique.

<https://www.jeuneafrique.com/182305/politique/le-bilan-des-manifestations-au-maroc-s-l-ve-cinq-morts-et-128-bless-s/> (accessed March 5, 2025)

²⁴⁹ “King Mohammed VI’s Speech to the Nation,” March 9, 2011, Quoted in Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2022). p. 132.

Accordingly, the new Constitution of Morocco, issued later that same year, explicitly states in Article 5 that while “Arabic remains (*demeure*) the official language of the State,” “likewise, Amazigh constitutes an official language of the State, being a common heritage of all Moroccans without exception.”²⁵⁰ Though the two languages are not listed in parallel within a single sentence but rather in two separate sentences, with Arabic prioritized in sequence, the elevation of Amazigh’s status—not only as a national language, as in Algeria, but as an official language—was still significant. This is especially evident when considering that the 1996 Moroccan Constitution made no mention of Amazigh and began with the statement: “The Kingdom of Morocco, a sovereign Muslim state whose official language is Arabic, constitutes a part of the Greater Arab Maghreb.”²⁵¹

IRCAM, along with its functions, is closely tied to this status planning process as a precondition for the officialization of Amazigh. As the new Constitution states: “An organic law defines the process of implementation of the official character of this language, as well as the modalities of its integration into teaching and into the priority domains of public life, so that it may be permitted in time to fulfill its function as an official language.” Moreover, certain expressions in the new Constitution, such as viewing Amazigh as “a common heritage of all Moroccans without exception” and describing the unity of the country as “forged by the convergence of its Arab-Islamist, Amazigh, and Saharan-Hassanic components, nourished and enriched by its African, Andalusian, Hebraic, and Mediterranean influences,” closely resemble those found in IRCAM’s founding documents. Therefore, to fully understand the officialization of Amazigh in Morocco, it is essential to closely examine these documents, where IRCAM’s ideological framework is also embedded.

²⁵⁰ Secrétariat général du gouvernement, Direction de l’Imprimerie Officielle, Royaume du Maroc. (2011). La Constitution. Série “Documentation Juridique Marocaine”, Dahir n° 1-11-91, 30 juillet 2011.

²⁵¹ Constitution du 13 septembre 1996. <https://mjp.univ-perp.fr/constit/ma1996.htm> (accessed March 3, 2024)

3. FOUNDING IDEOLOGIES OF IRCAM AND ITS ACTIVITIES IN THE FORMATIVE YEARS

This chapter will address the following issues: First, I will analyze the founding documents of IRCAM to understand the institute's foundational ideology. Second, I will provide a biography of IRCAM's first rector, Mohamed Chafik, and examine his ideology, focusing on both historical and linguistic aspects. Next, I will discuss IRCAM's activities during its formative years, including the formation of the *Conseil d'Administration* and the research centers, along with an introduction to its core members. Finally, I will introduce the transition from the rectorate of Mohamed Chafik to that of Ahmed Boukous, along with IRCAM's internal controversies.

3.1. The Guiding Ideology of IRCAM

The establishment of IRCAM is based on three key documents: the Royal Speech of July 30, 2001 (Throne Day Speech); Royal Decree No. 1-01-299 (IRCAM Dahir); and the Royal Speech of October 17, 2001 (Ajdir Speech) delivered at the ceremony of affixing the Cherifian Seal to the IRCAM Dahir.²⁵² Many of the contents within these documents are ideologically driven and can be regarded as guiding principles for the establishment and future activities of IRCAM.

The Throne Day Speech marks the first occasion when the establishment of “un institut royal de la culture Amazigh” was explicitly promised by the authorities. This promise was made within a context where the authorities express support for “un édifice démocratique,” “une administration déconcentrée,” and “l'éclosion des particularismes culturels.” However, these expressions of democracy and diversity do not contradict the “unité de notre Peuple”. On the contrary, this diversity is carefully framed within a national identity characterized by “homogeneity, unity, and originality,” with diverse tributaries, namely “Amazigh, Arab, Sub-Saharan African, and Andalusian”, all contributing to the whole. The homogeneity is anchored in the Islamic faith, under which the united Moroccan nation, with its enduring monarchical regime, “ne connaissant ni majorité, ni minorité.” Thus, while the Amazigh language and culture are emphatically recognized in the speech by the authorities, they should

²⁵² The text of the three documents can be found in the annex of Nacheff, L. (2016). pp. 334-338.

be seen only as a contribution to the diversity of the homogeneous Moroccan people. There is no place for a concept of Imazighen as a people.

Thus, in terms of language, the speech reaffirms that “Arabic, as the mother language and the one that conveyed the word of God—Glorified be His Name—in the Holy Quran,” holds a special status in the country. It is only on this basis that the speech references the late Hassan II’s promise to “envision the introduction of teaching dialects in the curriculum,” and specifies the “process of integration of Amazigh in the educational system.” However, the question of what exactly is meant by “Amazigh” and its relationship to the “dialects” is left unanswered. This is a question that IRCAM cannot avoid addressing, as it is responsible for preparing and monitoring the process of integrating Amazigh into the education system.

It is less ambiguous when “Amazigh” is understood as a culture rather than as a language, as the speech clearly states that IRCAM should aim to “strengthen the pillars on which our ancestral identity rests, while keeping in mind the need to give new impetus to our Amazigh culture, which constitutes a national wealth, in order to provide it with the means to preserve, develop, and flourish.” However, these expressions only add to the ambiguity on the linguistic side. Since the Amazigh language is undoubtedly the most important part of Amazigh culture, what does it mean for the language to be “preserved, developed, and to flourish”? Therefore, it can be concluded that the speech does not address concrete language planning issues and leaves considerable room for interpretation. However, it emphatically underscores that this planning, along with IRCAM’s broader activities, must ultimately contribute to a single, unequivocal, supreme aim: consolidating national unity.

Similar ideologies are reaffirmed in the Ajdir Speech, where IRCAM’s aim is reiterated as “en œuvrant à la sauvegarde de notre culture amazighe, en consolidant son statut dans les domaines culturel, médiatique et éducationnel, en tant que richesse nationale et motif de fierté pour l’ensemble des Marocains.” On this basis, the Ajdir Speech makes a clearer statement of the authorities’ concerns and the fundamental aim for establishing IRCAM: “l’Amazighité, qui plonge ses racines au plus profond de l’Histoire du peuple marocain, appartient à tous les Marocains sans exclusive et qu’elle ne peut être mise au service de desseins politiques de quelque nature que ce soit.” Thus, according to the authorities’ design, IRCAM, along with its language planning function, should work toward the unity of the nation by dissolving, rather than consolidating, the very idea of Imazighen as a people, in order to prevent an

ethno-identity-based politicization.

Based on these ideologies, the IRCAM Dahir was issued, reiterating that Amazigh is merely a tributary to “our national identity” and that Amazigh culture is a “a national treasure and a source of pride for all Moroccans.” A new point made in the Dahir is the more concrete demands for language planning, as reflected in Article 7: “Convaincu que la codification de la graphie de l’amazigh facilitera son enseignement, son apprentissage et sa diffusion, garantira l’égalité des chances de tous les enfants de notre pays dans l’accès au savoir et consolidera l’unité nationale ...” This indicates that the language planning for the Amazigh language, particularly the acquisition planning in which IRCAM is involved, should aim to influence all Moroccan children equally, desirably without any further ethnic or regional differentiation, in order to fulfill the objective of consolidating national unity.

The Dahir then specified the functions of IRCAM, with the content related to language planning remaining flexible, as shown in Article 3.4:

“Étudier la graphie de nature à faciliter l’enseignement de l’amazigh par: La production des outils didactiques nécessaires à cette fin et l’élaboration de lexiques généraux et de dictionnaires spécialisés; L’élaboration des plans d’actions pédagogiques dans l’enseignement général et dans la partie des programmes relative aux affaires locales et à la vie régionale, le tout en cohérence avec la politique générale de l’État en matière d’éducation nationale.” (Studying the orthography in a way that facilitates the teaching of Amazigh by: Producing the necessary teaching tools for this purpose and developing general lexicons and specialized dictionaries; Developing educational action plans in general education and in the section of the curriculum related to local affairs and regional life, all in alignment with the state’s general policy on national education.)

This ideology prioritizes the national unity of Morocco, centered around the monarchy, as supreme and inviolable. Although Amazigh culture is emphatically recognized, it is regarded only as a cultural contribution to the diversity within the framework of national unity. Both Arabic and Amazigh speakers are united by their Islamic faith and loyalty to the regime that acknowledges “neither majority nor minority” in an ethno-political sense. The language, consistently termed *l’amazigh*, is

treated with an ambiguity that conceals and downplays its regional variations. Clear traces of these ideologies can be found in the works of Mohamed Chafik, the most important founder of IRCAM and its first rector.

3.2. The Life and Ideologies of Mohamed Chafik

3.2.1. A Biography

Mohamed Chafik was born on September 17, 1926, in Aït Sadden, east of Fès, a region where Central Moroccan Amazigh is spoken. He belonged to an influential local family, though not particularly economically privileged. His grandfather was one of the tribal leaders, and his uncle was a renowned warrior who fought both other tribes and the French authorities.²⁵³ Mohamed Chafik was the only child among seven boys and eight girls in his family to complete secondary education. His schooling began at a local Quranic school, where his teacher did not speak Amazigh. In 1934, at the age of 8, Mohamed Chafik enrolled in a local school where French was the sole language of instruction. Three years later, due to his outstanding performance, he was awarded a scholarship to attend the *Collège d'Azrou*.²⁵⁴

As previously mentioned, *Collège d'Azrou*, located in a rural Amazigh-speaking region and meant to be far away from nationalist influence, was originally intended to cultivate Franco-Amazigh civil and military elites who would “penser français, réagir français.”²⁵⁵ However, it ultimately became a “hotbed of Moroccan nationalists.” Chafik was one of these nationalists who detested the colonialists and their discrimination against Moroccans.²⁵⁶ As a result, although he excelled as a student in Azrou, he refused to enroll in the french-speaking *Lycée Poeymirau* in Meknes as arranged by the French administration, choosing instead to go to Rabat and attend the Arabic-Islamic-oriented *Lycée Moulay Youssef*.²⁵⁷

Chafik became involved in nationalist activities in Rabat immediately upon his arrival, recalling: “I handed over a national flag that I had carefully hidden when I

²⁵³ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). pp. 21-25.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 24-27.

²⁵⁵ Bennhlal, M. (2005). p. 28.

²⁵⁶ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). p. 31.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 30-31.

arrived from Azrou to the nationalist demonstrators who needed it!”²⁵⁸ His active participation in nationalist demonstrations even led to his temporary exclusion from school.²⁵⁹ In 1946, Chafik was appointed as a teacher in Midelt, and by 1953, he was teaching at the *Lycée de Jeunes Filles* in Fès where he continued his nationalist activities. He joined the nationalist party Istiqlal, formally founded in 1943 and dominated by urban elites. He also joined efforts by former students of the *Collège d’Azrou*, advocating for the return of Sultan Mohamed V after his deposition and exile in 1953, an act described by the press as “the Berbers take a stand.”²⁶⁰

After the return of the Sultan and the independence of Morocco in 1956, Chafik withdrew his support from the *Istiqlal* Party. He explained this decision by noting that the party’s primary objective, as indicated by its name, was to achieve Morocco’s independence. Once this goal was accomplished, Chafik believed that the party had failed to develop a program for Morocco’s future, leaving it with no reason to continue.²⁶¹ This might not be entirely accurate, as the Proclamation of Independence of Morocco in January 1944 shows that the nationalist leaders of the Istiqlal Party had already proposed a rough outline for the country’s future: “a consultative political system, similar to the governments in Arab Islamic countries in the East.”²⁶²

Its strong Arab nationalist tendency was not in line with Mohamed Chafik’s belief, as he always saw a place for the Amazigh language and culture in Morocco and consistently emphasized the importance of diversity as a language teacher.²⁶³ However, unlike Mahjoubi Aherdane, Chafik did not immediately become politically active in the first decade of Morocco’s independence, a period when the Amazigh issue was largely absent from the political scene. Instead, Chafik became prominent as an educator, and by 1963, he had been promoted to the position of chief inspector at the Ministry of National Education.²⁶⁴

For most of the 1960s and 1970s, when the Amazigh issue gained prominence through activist efforts in Algeria and France, leading to the establishment of the

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 34.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 34-35.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 35.

²⁶² <https://mjp.univ-perp.fr/constit/ma1944.htm> (accessed May 24, 2024)

²⁶³ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). pp. 39-42.

²⁶⁴ <https://alacademia.org.ma/membre/%d9%85%d8%ad%d9%85%d8%af-%d8%b4%d9%81%d9%8a%d9%82-2/> (accessed May 30, 2024)

Académie Berbère and Amazigh cultural associations in Morocco, Mohamed Chafik was largely absent from these movements. He himself recalled that he began to “defend Amazigh identity” only as late as 1978.²⁶⁵ In the meantime, he continued to become prominent as an intellectual and educator and entered the inner circle of King Hassan II.

This started in 1968 when Chafik was summoned to join the Royal Cabinet as an inspector of national education, tasked with advising the King, who was deeply concerned about the May 1968 events in France. Chafik described the situation, noting “(que) la France était alors embrasée et que ces jeunes qui se rebellaient contre De Gaulle étaient une source d’inquiétude, même à Rabat.”²⁶⁶ Against this background, Chafik was tasked with preparing “a more technical report on the pedagogical value of Quranic education that was dispensed in the mosques”²⁶⁷ He recalled that his report, submitted to the King, concluded emphatically: “l’enseignement dans les m’sids (mosquées) est l’une des causes principales de notre retard civilisationnel.”²⁶⁸ However, contrary to Chafik’s advice, the King instructed the Minister of National Education to generalize this type of education, leading to the creation of Quranic schools that year “in every corner of the neighborhood.”²⁶⁹

This did not hinder Mohamed Chafik’s promotion; on the contrary, he continued to rise within the government. In 1970, he was promoted to Deputy Secretary of State of the Ministry of National Education, and two years later, he became Secretary of State to the Prime Minister.²⁷⁰ This could be interpreted, at least in part, as an effort by the regime to maintain a liberal and modernist voice. Additionally, Lahoucine Bouyaakoubi offered another interpretation, suggesting that the regime systematically placed key positions in the hands of Amazigh elites, particularly former students of the *Collège d’Azrou*, to distance them from the potential politicization of the Amazigh

²⁶⁵ Interview, M. Chafik: les dégâts de l’élite sont énormes. July 15, 2015.

<https://www.economia.ma/content/m-chafik-les-d%C3%A9g%C3%A2ts-de-l%C3%A9lite-sont-enormes> (accessed May 30, 2024)

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ El Guabli, B. (2019). Moroccan society’s educational and cultural losses during the years of lead (1956-1999). *Journal of global initiatives: Policy, pedagogy, perspective*, 14(2), 10, 143-161.

²⁶⁸ Interview, M. Chafik: les dégâts de l’élite sont énormes.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ <https://alacademia.org.ma/membre/%d9%85%d8%ad%d9%85%d8%af-%d8%b4%d9%81%d9%8a%d9%82-2/> (accessed May 30, 2024)

issue. The gradual inclusion of Mohamed Chafik into the inner circle can be seen in this context, especially since he had just published his first articles on Morocco's forgotten heritage before being invited to join the Royal Cabinet.²⁷¹

In 1977, Mohamed Chafik was commissioned with a more important position as the Director of the *Collège Royal*, where the princes and princesses of Morocco received their education. This role meant that the then-Crown Prince, later King Mohammed VI, who completed his baccalaureate in June 1981, spent his entire high school education under the direction of Mohamed Chafik.²⁷² This appointment can be seen as a sign of the significant trust Hassan II placed in Chafik and the close relationship that developed between Chafik and Mohammed VI. It was as an intellectual and high-ranking educational official within the inner circle of the monarchy that Mohamed Chafik began to play his role in the Amazigh cultural movement.

This involvement began with an incident after the 1977 elections during a session of the Government Council. When Mahjoubi Aherdane, then the Minister of Posts, Telegraph, and Telecommunications, spoke in French, Istiqlalian Minister Mouhamed Diouri interrupted him, insisting that he speak in the national language (meaning Arabic). In response, Aherdane chose to speak in Amazigh. Following a heated exchange between the two, the session was adjourned.²⁷³ Considering the significant development of the Amazigh cultural movement over the past decade and the risk of its politicization, the King, informed of the incident, requested a report on the Amazigh question from Mohamed Chafik. The report presented the Amazigh question in its cultural dimension and suggested the creation of an institute for Amazigh studies and a chair at the *Faculté des Lettres*, with objectives that included establishing a dictionary and planning the Amazigh language for educational purposes.²⁷⁴ Following this report, the Moroccan parliament voted in 1979 to create an institute for Amazigh studies, but this initiative never came to fruition.²⁷⁵

²⁷¹ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). p. 49.

²⁷² <https://www.maroc.ma/en/content/biography-hm-king-mohammed-vi> (accessed August 29, 2024)

²⁷³ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). pp. 54-55.

²⁷⁴ Lehtinen, T. (2003). *Nation à la marge de l'Etat: La construction identitaire du Mouvement Culturel Amazigh dans l'espace national marocain et au-delà des frontières étatiques* (Doctoral dissertation, Paris, EHESS). pp. 178, 308.

²⁷⁵ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). p. 55.

This can be seen as a clear indication that an IRCAM-like institute had long been considered an option by the monarchy as a response to the undesirable development of the Amazigh cultural movement. However, as previously mentioned, the actual response by Hassan II in the 1980s was one of repression. Mohamed Chafik likely miscalculated the authorities' attitude and the unfolding of events. In 1980, following the *Printemps berbère* in Algeria, he directly engaged in the Amazigh cultural movement for the first time by participating in the session of *l'Université d'Été d'Agadir*, encouraging the publication of the journal *Amazigh*, and even co-founding a new Amazigh cultural association with Ali Sidqi Azaykou.²⁷⁶ However, just two years later, when repression began—with Azaykou imprisoned and the new association banned—Chafik, though not personally persecuted due to his position within the monarchy's inner circle, chose to resign as the director of the *Collège Royal*.²⁷⁷

The rest of the 1980s saw Mohamed Chafik largely absent from the political scene as he dedicated himself to his writings, which will be discussed in the following section. It wasn't until the 1990s, with a shift towards a more liberal political atmosphere, that Chafik reemerged as a public figure for the Amazigh cause. Still a member of the *Collège Royal* and part of the monarchy's inner circle, he maintained a close relationship with the Amazigh cultural movement. In 1990, the association AMREC held a meeting in homage to Mohamed Chafik, and a year later, Chafik publicly expressed his support, as a member of the *Collège Royal*, for the *Charte d'Agadir*.²⁷⁸ This way, from the 1990s onward, Mohamed Chafik became an important liaison between the authorities and the Amazigh cultural movement.

From the authorities' viewpoint, the "Plan A" in response to the potential politicization of the Amazigh issue during the 1980s had been repression. However, when this approach became untenable a decade later, "Plan B," represented by Mohamed Chafik and long kept in reserve, began to play a more significant role. It was in this capacity that Chafik drafted the Amazigh Manifesto in March 2000, warning the authorities that "the question, now, is on the verge of moving from being an economic and cultural one to being a political question." To prevent this politicization, Chafik's method, proposed in the late 1970s to create an institute for

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.* p. 182.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 56-59.; Interview, M. Chafik: Les dégâts de l'élite sont énormes.

²⁷⁸ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). pp. 189-192.

Amazigh studies, was finally realized in the form of IRCAM. With this context in mind, it is important to closely examine the ideologies of Mohamed Chafik through his writings to understand how the guiding ideology of IRCAM evolved.

3.2.2. Historical Ideology

The historical ideology of Mohamed Chafik is explained in his work, *Thirty-Three Centuries of Amazigh History* (1989), written in Arabic.²⁷⁹ This work generally aligns with the historical ideology of the Amazigh cultural movement by narrating a history aimed at creating a subversive memory through the process of re-Amazighization, while also retaining Chafik's own distinct and significant insights. Re-Amazighization, as Brahim El Guabli explains, emphasizes that the Imazighen were never extinct and are not merely being revived now. Instead, it asserts that the confluence of colonization, Arabization, and Islamization has led to the gradual erasure of Tamazight and its culture over time, not only in Morocco but also across Tamazgha—the broader Amazigh homeland, which activists argue stretches from Northwest Egypt to the Canary Islands.²⁸⁰

Ali Sidqi Azaykou, the influential activist who co-founded the short-lived Amazigh cultural association with Mohamed Chafik in 1980, was a pioneer in theorizing this historical ideology. According to Azaykou's historiographical project, historians should be aware of the present de-Amazighized situation and strive to rewrite the current historical narrative. He argued that “the history that we read, teach, and are influenced by was written by foreign hands and with a mentality that is different from ours, and for goals that are different from or even in total opposition to the aspirations and goals that we entertain.”²⁸¹

In terms of methodology, Azaykou suggested that history need not be based solely on written evidence. Instead, he valued the use of sources and methodologies

²⁷⁹ Chafik, M. (1989). *al-thalāth wa al-thalāthīn qarnan min tārīkh al-Amāzīghīyīn*. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/Taoufiqtahistory/mode/2up>. (accessed August 29, 2024)

²⁸⁰ El Guabli, B. (2023b). *Moroccan other-archives: History and citizenship after state violence*. Fordham University Press. p. 34.

²⁸¹ Azaykou, A. S. (2001). *tārīkh al-maghrīb aw al-ta'wīlāt al-mumkina*. Rabat: Markaz Tāriq Ibn Zīyyād. pp. 16-17. Quoted in El Guabli, B. (2023b). p. 45.

that would require the “intersection and collaboration of the scholar of religion, the litterateur, the historian, the geographer, and the specialist in popular culture, among others.”²⁸² On this basis, he advocated for historians to consult what Brahim El Guabli terms the “other-archive,” namely “the land itself,” to demonstrate how North African and Moroccan history have been deeply shaped by Amazigh toponymies and onomastics. Through this approach, Azaykou sought to construct a continuity of Amazigh histories that predate the arrival of Arabs and Islam and extend to the present day.²⁸³

Mohamed Chafik’s *Thirty-Three Centuries of Amazigh History* was written to a large extent within the framework of Azaykou’s historiographical project. At the very beginning of the book, Chafik emphasizes that historians and those who recorded the events of ancient times, even if well-acquainted with the concept of “objectivity,” can never be entirely free from national, ethnic, or religious feelings.²⁸⁴ Chafik agrees with Azaykou that the only histories currently available are de-Amazighized. He suggests that this is because in the Imazighen’s stance towards their past, “there is a kind of nobility and chivalry, as if their state of mind is saying: Let that past be what it was, it does not concern us.”²⁸⁵ Consequently, echoing Azaykou’s argument, Chafik points out that “from the era of the first pharaohs and ending with the era of the French ‘pacification,’ the accounts of the history of Imazighen have always been written by their opponents (*khuṣūm*).”²⁸⁶

Faced with this situation, Chafik decided to write this re-Amazighized history from an Amazigh nationalist perspective. This approach is evident in his definition of Amazigh, where he states: “‘Amazigh’ is a name imbued with the meaning of nobility, chivalry, and honor... This may be the result of self-pride on the part of the Imazighen, because people usually take their lineages as a symbol of pride and invincibility, which is what we believe.”²⁸⁷ The expression “what we believe” clearly shows that in this history, the “feelings” of the Imazighen, rather than those of their opponents in the past, finally count.

²⁸² El Guabli, B. (2023b). p. 46.

²⁸³ *Ibid.* pp. 46-47.

²⁸⁴ Chafik, M. (1989). p. 5.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p. 6.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 8-9.

Also aligning with the concept of re-Amazighization, Chafik attempts to demonstrate that the Imazighen have a continuous history that predates Islamization, Arabization, and colonization across Tamazgha. This is why he claims thirty-three centuries of Amazigh history. To make this narrative possible, or to reason through such an extensive history with limited written evidence, Chafik resorts to the other-archive, or “the land itself.” In doing so, he moves away from genealogical explanations of the Amazigh people’s origins, such as the theories of descent from tribes in Yemen or from Noah.²⁸⁸ Instead, Chafik agrees with Azaykou’s argument that the land of Tamazgha itself, and the language spoken on this land, is “one of the best documents” preserving history.²⁸⁹ Given the scientific fact that, as pointed out by Maarten Kossmann, by the time of the Romans, almost everyone in North Africa spoke Amazigh or a related language,²⁹⁰ this “land and language-documented” history becomes Amazigh history by default.

It is in this vein that Chafik traces Amazigh history back 3,300 years to ancient Egypt, referencing Herodotus to state that “it appears that the first major Berber tribe came into contact with the ancient Egyptians during a war (1227 BCE). It was called *libū* and it was a settlement in the territory of present-day Libya.”²⁹¹ He also refers to a drawing found in the tomb of Pharaoh Seti I, describing it as depicting “Berber tribal leaders as drawn by an Egyptian artist around 1300 BCE”.²⁹²

The narrative of Chafik then transitions 1,000 years later to the Numidian kingdom, highlighting figures such as the kings Massinissa, Bocchus I, Jugurtha, and Juba I, who are all revered as symbols of identity by Azaykou and other Amazigh activists.²⁹³ Jugurtha, in particular, is an important case for claiming an Amazigh history through onomastics. The name *Jugurtha* is analyzed as *y-uger-ten*, meaning “he surpasses them,” with the verb still well-attested in multiple Amazigh varieties

²⁸⁸ El Guabli, B. (2023b). p. 46.; Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam, & Torrey, C. C. (1968). *The history of the conquest of Egypt, North Africa and Spain, known as the futuh Misr of ibn 'Abd al-Hakam*. Yale University Press. p. 8.

²⁸⁹ El Guabli, B. (2023b). pp. 46-47.

²⁹⁰ <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/news/2017/11/the-unstoppable-advance-of-berber> (accessed August 29, 2024)

²⁹¹ Chafik, M. (1989). p. 9.

²⁹² *Ibid.* p. 13.

²⁹³ Chafik, M. (1989). pp. 32-44.; For Numidian kings as symbols of identity, see Andam, L. (2017). Quelques motifs de l’identité amazighe dans la poésie de Sidqi Azaykou. *Revue des études amazighes*, (1), 115-135. p. 122.

today.²⁹⁴ A similar case is *Massinissa*, which Chafik suggests in another article derives from the typical Amazigh onomastics *Mmis-n-Izza*, meaning “Son-of-Izza.”²⁹⁵ In this same article, *Le substrat berbère de la culture maghrébine*, Chafik also shows multiple cases of Amazigh toponyms, such as “Azrou, Ifrane, Imouzzar, Agadir, Tawnat, Tawrirt, signifient respectivement rocher, cavernes, cascades, falaises, montée, et colline” demonstrating the existence of an Amazigh history embedded in the land.²⁹⁶

While the history presented by Chafik, along with the historiographical project of Azaykou, is designed to counter the traditional narrative written by foreigners or opponents, once historical writing as a whole has been safely placed within the framework of re-Amazighization, he does not hesitate to quote from sources authored by these very opponents. This is exemplified by, for example, his quoting of Saint Augustine, who stated that “the Berbers were constantly allying themselves with every colonizer due to a desire to get rid of the resident colonizer,” and Titus Livius’ narration, “It is the sword of the Numidians that made Cannae a victory”²⁹⁷ Chafik’s references also include *Les Berbers: Étude sur la Conquête de l’Afrique par les Arabes, d’après les Textes Arabes Imprimés* (1881) by Henri Fournel, a French engineer rather than a trained historian, who argued that the Arabs had victimized the Berbers, whom he considered the true “autochthonous race,” and attempted to illustrate in his work the “historical hostility” between the two peoples.²⁹⁸

This by no means indicates that Chafik’s work shares Fournel’s ideology. On the contrary, Chafik’s most important historical initiative, which also differs from that of Azaykou, lies in his effort to reconcile the argument of indigeneity, or the historical hostility between the Imazighen and Arabs. It would be safe to assume that Chafik understood why Azaykou crossed the authorities’ red line and was eventually jailed. What the authorities could not tolerate was an article by Azaykou in the short-lived journal *Amazigh*, titled *Fī sabīl mafhūm ḥaqīqī li-thaqāfati-nā al-waṭaniyya*”

²⁹⁴ Camps, G., & Chaker, S. (2004). Jugurtha. *Encyclopédie berbère*, (26), 3975-3979.

²⁹⁵ Chafik, M. (1984). Le substrat berbère de la culture maghrébine. *Französische heute*, (15), 184-196.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ Chafik, M. (1989). pp. 25, 48.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 129.; Rouighi, R. (2019). *Inventing the Berbers: History and ideology in the Maghrib*. University of Pennsylvania Press. pp. 156-157.

(“Toward a Real Conceptualization of Our National Culture”). In this article, Azaykou launched a frontal attack against Arabization by challenging the argument that Arabic, as the language of the Quran, takes precedence over the Amazigh language.²⁹⁹ Azaykou refuted the overlap between Arabic language, Islam, and national culture in Morocco by driving a wedge between the prevalent association of Arabness with Islam and arguing that discussions about Arabization were only meant to sideline Amazigh language while the Moroccan elites appropriated French for themselves.³⁰⁰

Contrary to Azaykou, Chafik’s writings do not focus on refuting the overlap between Arabic, Islam, and national culture in Morocco. His strategy is to challenge the exclusiveness of the relationship between Arabic and Islam claimed by Arabization, while avoiding the dismantling of this overlap. Instead, he seeks to incorporate Amazighness into it. This might be the reason why Chafik deemed it important in the Amazigh Manifesto, which he drafted, to include multiple Islamic quotations to demonstrate the religious legitimacy for advocating for Amazigh causes. For example, he cites the Quran: “And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors: verily in that are Signs for those who know,” the Prophet: “An Arab has no merit over a non-Arab, save as concerns piety,” and Imam Ali: “Learn languages! Each language represents a human being!”³⁰¹ This suggests that Chafik’s strategy might involve extending the overlap of Arabic-Islam-Morocco by integrating Amazigh alongside Arabic, a strategy also visible in his historical writings.

In *Thirty-Three Centuries of Amazigh History*, Chafik establishes two explicit principles for evaluating North African history:

“The first principle: Anyone who ruled North Africa, in whole or in part, for a period of time during the Islamic era, and was not a Muslim, can only be considered an intruding colonizer... The second principle: Any Islamic state can only be an Islamic state (*kullu dawlatin islāmiyya, lā yumkinu an takūna illā dawlatan islāmiyya*). It should not seek its legitimacy in a racial or ethnic affiliation, but rather it must seek it in piety

²⁹⁹ El Guabli, B. (2023b). p. 42.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.* See also Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). p. 99.

³⁰¹ From “The Fourth Request” of the Berber (Amazigh) Manifesto.

and sincerity of belief...”³⁰²

By referencing Islam, Chafik sidesteps the claim that the Imazighen are indigenous to the region while the Arabs are invaders. More importantly, according to the second principle, Morocco should be considered an Islamic kingdom rather than an Arab country—nor an Amazigh country. This approach seems to differ from Azaykou’s re-Amazighization plan, which views Islamization alongside colonization and Arabization as forces that have gradually erased Tamazight and its culture over time.

To further support his argument, Chafik attempts to blur the boundaries between Arabs and Imazighen, who he says are both shaped by the same land, or the “social soil” (*al-turba al-ijtimā‘iyya*). He states, “As for language, it cannot be the only measure, because the Arabized Amazigh, unless he is transferred from his first social soil, retains, without realizing it, the characteristics that were inherent in his personality; and because the Arab of origin who has been immersed for generations in the depths of Amazigh society is inevitably assimilated without realizing it, in the material and moral components of his being. Add to all this that the gap between the Arab and Amazigh natures is not vast.”³⁰³ Hence, by this logic, the people in the land of Morocco are either Arabized Imazighen or Amazighized Arabs, Thus they can be seen as a homogeneous people, shaped—sometimes unconsciously—by the same social soil.

This presents an interesting nationalist ideology that differs from both Herderian cultural/romantic nationalism and the Anglo-Franco style of political nationalism. Chafik does not prioritize language as the primary marker of a nation, in contrast to cultural nationalism, which emphasizes that only through language can a people exist. However, he retains a core aspect of it by viewing national identity as predetermined, even unconsciously. The key difference lies in the suggestion that this identity is not determined by one’s first language, but rather by one’s first social soil. In this context, language and culture alone are unreliable indicators of identity, as Imazighen can be Arabized, and Arabs can be Amazighized. The only stable criterion becomes the enduring social soil itself and whether or not people remain rooted in it.

This stable social soil can be understood as the Maghreb, or more specifically, Morocco, which, over a long historical period, has been organized as a continuous

³⁰² Chafik, M. (1989). pp. 48-49.

³⁰³ *Ibid.* p. 49-50.

Islamic monarchical regime on a relatively stable territory. Chafik clearly states that what the Amazigh language contributes is “the infrastructure of the Moroccan Islamic personality.”³⁰⁴ In this sense, Chafik’s ideology may align with the political nationalism of Morocco, reflected in its national motto “*Allāh, Al-Waṭan, Al-Malik*”³⁰⁵ (Allah, the Country, the King), as seen in France and England, where stable, unified states are prerequisites for national identity. However, the key difference is that Chafik’s political nationalism is not a “daily plebiscite,” but rather a predetermined identity, even without people being conscious of it. Thus, it may be fitting to define Chafik’s ideology as a form of romanticized political nationalism, in which a political entity plays a decisive role in providing a stable social soil, allowing different languages and cultures to contribute to its meaning. In this framework, Amazigh and Arabic speakers are not defined by their respective irreconcilable cultural nationalisms, but rather by their shared homogeneity, rooted in the common social soil they share.

The historical ideology of Mohamed Chafik, along with the nationalist thinking within it, can be seen as an important theoretical preparation for King Mohamed VI’s recognition of the Amazigh language and culture in his Throne Day Speech in 2001. This recognition led to the creation of IRCAM, where the King also stressed that his kingdom does have “ni majorité, ni minorité.” What is hoped to change, in view of Mohamed Chafik, is not a Maghreb “re-Amazighisé,” but rather “un Maghreb d’abord maghrébin,”³⁰⁶ into which Amazighness must be incorporated as one of the tributaries to an Islamic state safeguarded by the monarchy, which cannot be anything otherwise—especially as clearly stated in *Thirty-Three Centuries of Amazigh History*, it “should not seek its legitimacy in a racial or ethnic affiliation.” It was under this series of ideologies that IRCAM was founded.

3.2.3. Language Ideology

The Amazigh language is of the utmost importance in Mohamed Chafik’s ideology, as summarized in his own words: “the Amazigh language is one of the most important

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p. 61.

³⁰⁵ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Morocco_2011?lang=ar (accessed August 30, 2024), The 2011 Moroccan constitution Article 4.

³⁰⁶ Chafik, M. (2000). *Pour un Maghreb d’abord maghrébin*. Centre Tarik Ibn Zyad.

civilizational and cultural factors that has shaped the Moroccan spirit, the natural environment in which it grew, and Moroccan thought in many of its aspects.”³⁰⁷ Therefore, if the Amazigh language is to be incorporated into national education, it should not be seen as a right or duty for any majority or minority, but for all Moroccans who share this cultural heritage to learn. In fact, Chafik’s vision is even broader, as he envisions “every Moroccan, every Arab, and every Muslim who wishes to learn about an aspect of knowledge that represents an important part of the heritage of Islamic peoples will enter the field of learning Amazigh.”³⁰⁸

But the question remains: what is this Amazigh? Though “the Amazigh language” has sufficient scientific evidence demonstrating its internal unity, it exists only in the form of its multiple, often mutually unintelligible varieties scattered across North Africa. Chafik’s suggestion is clear: people should research and learn Amazigh, as he did in his Arabic-Amazigh Dictionary, focusing on “what the Danish researcher Karl-G. Prasse called ‘the original Berber (*le protoberbère*),’ which André Basset noted, based on the information available to him, has not changed much over the last eight centuries.”³⁰⁹ In Chafik’s view, “the reality is that the Amazigh language (in its unity) is still alive.”³¹⁰ The language is “preserving its own entity,” but the problem lies in the fact that this entity “is not fully revealed with all its elements” because too much attention has been given to the dialects. Instead, people should be “heading towards seeking unifying factors, not seeking dividing factors between them as a number of French ‘researchers’ were doing.”³¹¹

Chafik believes that if Amazigh is studied without an exclusive focus on its dialects, then “the Amazigh language in its current state, that is, as a living language that people communicate with, spontaneously and naturally, is capable of recovery (*qābila li-l-inti’āsh*), growth, and prosperity,” especially through the process of “lexical creation,” which the “flexible derivation system” of Amazigh is particularly well-suited for.³¹² This shows that for Chafik, though Amazigh is vividly alive in the form of its dialects, on its path to prosperity, it is still necessary for the language to

³⁰⁷ Chafik, M. (1989). p. 61.

³⁰⁸ Chafik, M. (1990). *al-mu’jam al-‘arabī al-amazīghī* (The Arabic-Amazigh Dictionary). (Vol. 1). The Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco. p. 11.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.* p. 8.

³¹⁰ Chafik, M. (1989). p. 63.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² *Ibid.*

first “recover” from its current “dialectal” situation.

Chafik is particularly hostile to the term dialect when referring to Amazigh. This stems, in part, from the Arabization process, during which Amazigh was dismissed as “just a dialect of Arabic.” Additionally, Hassan II’s reference to Amazigh as three “national dialects” was viewed by activists as diminishing the language’s status. Consequently, Chafik felt it was crucial, especially in his works written in Arabic, to emphasize that Amazigh is “a language in its own right, not a ‘dialect’ branching off from another language. It has its own dialects branching off from it.”³¹³ He also cautions readers at the very outset of his Amazigh textbook, *Forty-four lessons in the Amazigh language* (1991), stating, “If you believe that Amazigh is ‘just a dialect’ and that mastering its grammatical, morphological, and lexical information will only take you a few hours, then I advise you to leave this book and learn a language that you revere and value, such as English or German.”³¹⁴

For Chafik, Amazigh is a real independent language by its own rights. This means that emphasizing and researching Amazigh varieties as though they were independent languages is contrary to his ideology. This explains why he discourages, sometimes to the extent of strongly criticizing it, research that focuses on specific Amazigh varieties. He criticizes that “French lexicographers were limiting their fields of research to local or tribal dialects, exploring the characteristics of each dialect, and were eager to highlight the differences at the expense of the groups in order to establish proof that the tribes are culturally distinct, and that some of them are enemies to others as long as they differ in pronunciation, timbre, or tone.”³¹⁵

Importantly, this criticism demonstrates that Chafik is aware and cautious of the group-defining function of language, as he believes that the linguistic variety within Amazigh carries the potential for social division. This can be seen as the fundamental reason why, in the three founding documents of IRCAM, which aim to consolidate Moroccan national unity, Amazigh is consistently represented as a single language, *l’Amazigh*, without reference to its varieties.

Meanwhile, Chafik seems to be aware of the group-relating function of language and appears to have a one nation–one language ideology in mind, as his Amazigh

³¹³ Chafik, M. (1989). p. 61.

³¹⁴ Chafik, M. (1991). *arba ‘a wa-arba ‘ūn darsan fī al-lughā al-Amazīghiyya*. Rabat: Toub Press. p. 5.

³¹⁵ Chafik, M. (1990). p. 7.

textbook reveals aspects of his vision of *l'Amazigh*. The language taught in *Forty-four Lessons in the Amazigh Language* is more familiar to speakers of Central Moroccan Amazigh, as is Chafik himself. For instance, the preverbal marker for negative imperatives is introduced as *ad-ur*, rather than, for example, the Tarifiyt *wer/wir*, and the imperfective form is introduced with the particle *ar*, which may be unfamiliar to speakers of other varieties that use *da*, *la*, or no particle, as in Tarifiyt.³¹⁶ However, in multiple occasions in the book, Chafik also shows features from other varieties but avoids naming them. For example, for the numeral “one,” Chafik introduces *yan*, *yun*, *idj*, *idjen* for masculine and *yat*, *yut*, *isht*, *ishten* for feminine, explaining that the four pairs of usages are “all synonymous,” without specifying that *yan-yat* is from Tashelhiyt, *yun-yut* from Central Moroccan Amazigh, and *idjen-isht* from Tarifiyt.³¹⁷ Another example is the question word “how,” where Chafik gives three synonyms *mamk*, *mamsh*, *mimsh*, each from Tashelhiyt, Tarifiyt, and Central Moroccan Amazigh but also does not name them.³¹⁸

Thus, Chafik attempts to present a single homogeneous Amazigh language incorporating features from the three main Moroccan Amazigh varieties. These features are not presented as coming from different varieties, but rather as “synonyms” belonging to one unified language. This means that the case, for example, of using the Tarifiyt *idjen* instead of *yan* before a Tashelhiyt noun is considered legitimate in Chafik’s book, even though it would seem strange to all Amazigh speakers. Therefore, it can be concluded that the primary aim of Chafik’s book might not be to describe Amazigh as used in practice, but rather to serve an ideological purpose. His goal is to convey the perception that Amazigh is a homogeneous language, with the various features of the three Moroccan Amazigh varieties presented as mere synonyms within this language. These differences are downplayed as not significant enough to define three distinct languages or, consequently, three distinct peoples. Instead, those who speak the mutually unintelligible Amazigh varieties are portrayed as one people, unified by speaking “one single language.”

These ideologies reflected in Chafik’s works can be seen as simultaneously addressing two problems in Hassan II’s characterization of Amazigh as “three national

³¹⁶ Chafik, M. (1991). pp. 301, 228.; For the usage of Tarifiyt, see Mourigh, K., & Kossmann, M. (2019). pp. 123, 113.

³¹⁷ Chafik, M. (1991). p. 37.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 177.

dialects” of Morocco. Chafik aims to demonstrate that, first, Amazigh has the status of language, not dialect, and second, it is a single language, not three distinct ones. Another aspect of Chafik’s ideology is his focus solely on the main Amazigh varieties in Morocco, so his description of Amazigh does not encompass, for example, Kabyle and Tuareg.

Based on these fundamental ideologies, Chafik tries to diagnose why the single Amazigh language in Morocco is presented in the form of dialects. He attributes this partly to its contact with Arabic, stating that “Amazigh dialects vary in experience and contact with the Arabic language, and this has resulted in their disparity in adopting Arabic words and in their killing of the original Amazigh words.”³¹⁹ Chafik’s suggestion reflects his view of language contact not as a natural linguistic phenomenon but as an undesirable one that leads to the killing of Amazigh words and further widens the gaps between its dialects. Consequently, Chafik believes that finding and showcasing the real roots preserved in different Amazigh dialects is an important way to bring about the “recovery” of the Amazigh language.

This ideology is reflected in Chafik’s Amazigh textbook, where, for example, the “synonyms” for the concept of “some” and “a few” are listed as *kra*, *shra*, *sha*, *its*, whereas the Arabic loan attested in Tarifiyt as *rebeaḍ* is not included.³²⁰ It is also explicit in Chafik’s Arabic-Amazigh dictionary, which he views as “a process of ridding the eloquent Amazigh tongue—that is, what is technically called ‘*la koine*’ Amazigh—from the ‘barbaric’ dialects, a process in which reliance on the original was preferred over embracing the derivative, and in which the intrusive was replaced by the original, deduced from the interior.”³²¹ Thus, strong standardization and purism ideologies can be observed at play in Chafik’s language ideology.

However, it is worth noting that Chafik did not actively translate these ideologies into a systematic language planning process. He views his dictionary as a preparatory step toward language planning and standardization but avoids concretely describing what exactly this “Amazigh koine” entails, other than suggesting that researching Proto-Berber (in his conception) is helpful for bringing it forth. The most concrete suggestion he offers is to use Amazigh neologisms to replace the “intrusive” loans.

³¹⁹ Chafik, M. (1990). p. 9.

³²⁰ Chafik, M. (1991). p. 37.; For Tarifiyt, see Mourigh, K., & Kossmann, M. (2019). pp. 100.

³²¹ Chafik, M. (1990). p. 10.

Even here, Chafik emphasizes that his dictionary is not aimed at purifying Amazigh from Arabic loans. Their absence is not because he considers them “illegitimate,” but rather because “there is no benefit for the learner to teach him what he already knew,” much like “saying to a French speaker, for example, that a car is called a *tomobile*, a driver is called a *chauffeur*, and an engine is called a *motor*.”³²² As for the dialectal problem, although Mohamed Chafik removed labels indicating the different origins of varieties of these “authentic” Amazigh words, he cannot be considered to be technically planning an Amazigh vocabulary with his dictionary.

Therefore, although Chafik’s ideology and the founding ideologies of IRCAM derived from it are clear, crucial principles such as “Amazigh is one language, not dialects” which “belongs to all Moroccans” are distant from the language practice. What is observed are only Amazigh varieties that are not mutually intelligible and do not function as language tools for all Moroccans, a situation that can only be changed through corpus planning and acquisition planning. While language practices may be overlooked in ideological discussions, they could not be ignored once IRCAM started to undertake the concrete task of planning and preparing the teaching of *l’Amazigh*.

3.3. The Formative Years of IRCAM

The declaration establishing IRCAM was generally well-received by the Amazigh movement. Essafi Moumen Ali, a lawyer, writer, and member of AMREC, expressed a representative view, stating that the creation of IRCAM was the result of a long struggle by the Amazigh movement and a favorable response from a just king.³²³ There were also favorable voices not directly focused on the creation of IRCAM itself, but on its founding documents, which were seen as an important step toward achieving the ultimate goal of constitutional recognition of Amazighness—a status that had never been legally protected before. This was the perspective of Ahmed Adghirni, a lawyer and early advocate for an Amazigh political party in Morocco, remembered as one of the most uncompromising activists for Amazigh identity, which he believed had been “colonized by Arab-Islamic culture and society.”³²⁴ Similarly, Hassan

³²² *Ibid.* pp. 10-11.

³²³ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). pp. 144-145.

³²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 145.; <https://www.congres-mondial-amazigh.org/2020/10/20/d%C3%A9c%C3%A8s-de-ahmed-adghirni/> (accessed August 30, 2024)

Idbelkassem, the aforementioned founder of *Tamaynut* who was once imprisoned for displaying a Tifinagh sign, shared this view.³²⁵

However, the ideologies reflected in the founding documents of IRCAM, which aimed at absorbing Amazighness into a homogenous Moroccan identity, did not go unnoticed. For instance, Mohamed Ziani, vice-president of the Confederation of Amazigh Cultural Associations of the Rif, believed that the authorities were merely trying to co-opt social movements. He argued that the true objective behind the creation of IRCAM was to assimilate the Amazigh movement and neutralize its activism to avoid a politicized scenario like that of Algeria.³²⁶ Lahoucine Bouyaakoubi describes similar voices belonging to “some radical tendencies of the movement, vigilant towards everything that comes from the Moroccan authorities.”³²⁷ However, after reviewing IRCAM’s founding documents, it appears that, at least on this issue, Mohamed Ziani was reasonable in making his judgment.

While activists might not all view IRCAM positively, most believed that Mohamed Chafik, despite being from the inner circle of the authorities, was capable and trustworthy in leading the Amazigh movement forward. People like Ahmed Adghirni recognized his scientific expertise, and Mohamed Ziani viewed him as sincere in his commitment to Amazigh causes.³²⁸ Chafik thus became an acceptable candidate for both the authorities and the activists to serve as the first rector of IRCAM. On January 14, 2002, King Mohamed VI formally appointed Mohamed Chafik as the rector of IRCAM, with Chafik accepting the position on two conditions: that his tenure would be provisional for one year, and that he would not receive payment.³²⁹ Chafik did not expect to solve all the problems facing Amazigh during his tenure, as he viewed them as highly complex.³³⁰ His primary concern was to make IRCAM function effectively, which required him to participate in selecting the members of the *Conseil d’Administration* and organizing the institute’s structure. And he needed to act swiftly to realize his core aim: making the teaching of Amazigh a *fait accompli* in Morocco. As he later expressed his concern, “N’importe quel directeur, secrétaire ou

³²⁵ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). p. 145.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

³²⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 146-147.

³²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 146.

³³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 147.

inspecteur, ayant un vague sentiment panarabiste, peut retarder l'arrivée des manuels, la programmation d'un cours voire sa mise en chantier."³³¹

3.3.1. Conseil d'Administration

The selection of the *Conseil d'Administration* (CA) of IRCAM was under close scrutiny by the authorities. The process was overseen by a royal commission working alongside Mohamed Chafik, composed of some of the king's most trusted figures.³³² These included Hassan Aourid, spokesman of the Royal Palace and a classmate of King Mohammed VI at the *Collège Royal*, born to an Amazigh family in Errachidia;³³³ Mohammed Mezian Belfkih, a close advisor to both Hassan II and Mohammed VI, who held various key government positions such as Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Public Works, Vocational Training, and Executive Training since the 1970s;³³⁴ Abdelwahab Benmansour, the royal historian who became *Chef du Cabinet Royal* as early as 1961, the first year of Hassan II's reign;³³⁵ and Mohamed Rochdi Chraïbi, *Chef du Cabinet Royal*, who had served as Mohammed VI's private secretary when he was crown prince.³³⁶

According to the IRCAM Dahir, the CA is composed of the rector and a maximum of 40 members. These must include five representatives from the Ministries of the Interior, Higher Education, National Education, Culture, and Communication; one university president representing the universities and one director of an academy representing the regional education and training academies, appointed by the King on the recommendation of the respective ministers.³³⁷ Mohamed Chafik was under

³³¹ Interview, M. Chafik: les dégâts de l'élite sont énormes.

³³² The information regarding the royal commission is quoted from Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). p. 146. However, it is worth noting that the name of the director of the *Cabinet Royal* at the time, Mohamed Rochdi Chraïbi, appears to have been mistakenly listed as "Mounir Chraïbi" in the book. See also IRCAM. (2003). *Bulletin d'information (Inghmisen n usinag)*, 1. p. 5.

³³³ <https://www.mjtnews.com/2019/12/22/hassan-aourid-a-senior-civil-servant-and-man-of-letters/> (accessed September 18, 2024)

³³⁴ <https://web.archive.org/web/20101015062232/http://www.lematin.ma/Actualite/Express/Article.asp?id=132923> (accessed September 18, 2024)

³³⁵ [Abdelwahab BENMANSOUR – alacademia](#) (accessed September 18, 2024)

³³⁶ <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/195702/politique/ombre-et-lumi-re-sur-les-minences-grises/> (accessed September 18, 2024)

³³⁷ IRCAM Dahir, Article 5, <https://www.ircam.ma/fr/textes-fondateurs/texte-du->

considerable pressure since there was an expectation that the CA members would come from prominent activists of the Amazigh movement. Meanwhile, even political parties that remained hostile to the Amazigh cause were lobbying to be represented at the Institute.³³⁸ Ultimately, Chafik succeeded in living up to the movement's expectations by securing a majority of CA members who were well-known activists of the Amazigh cause, including most members of the committee that had worked with him on preparing the Amazigh Manifesto two years earlier.³³⁹ The list is as follows:³⁴⁰

Government Background:

- Mohamed Abderrahim - *Ministère de la Communication, Rabat*
- Ali Amahan - *Ministère de la Culture*
- Said Belcadi - *Directeur au Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur, de la Formation des Cadres et de la Recherche Scientifique, Rabat*
- Salah Ben Yamna - *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, Rabat*
- Mohieddine Amzazi - *Ministère de l'Intérieur, Rabat*
- M'hamed Sallou - *Chef de Service au Ministère de la Culture*

Academic Background:

- Mohamed Chafik - *Membre de l'Académie du Royaume*
- Mohamed Ajajaa - *Professeur de l'enseignement secondaire, Meknes*
- Abdellatif Bencherifa - *Président de l'Université Moulay Ismail, Meknes*
- El Houssayn El Moujahid - *Professeur de l'enseignement supérieur, Rabat*
- Ahmed Boukous - *Professeur de l'enseignement supérieur, Rabat*
- Mohamed Chami - *Professeur de l'enseignement supérieur, Oujda*
- Hassan Benhakeia - *Professeur de l'enseignement supérieur, Oujda*
- Hlima Ghazi - *Professeur de l'enseignement supérieur, Rabat*
- Abdeslam Khalafi - *Professeur à l'Université Alakhawyne, Ifrane*
- Abdelkader Mahmoudi - *Professeur de l'enseignement supérieur, Meknes*
- Ali Sidqi Azaykou - *Professeur de l'enseignement supérieur, Rabat*

[dahir](#) (accessed September 18, 2024)

³³⁸ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). pp. 147-148.

³³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 148.

³⁴⁰ IRCAM. (2003). *Bulletin d'information (Inghmisen n usinag)*, 1. p. 4.

- Meryam Demnati - *Professeur de l'enseignement secondaire, Marrakech*
- Ahmed Aassid - *Professeur de l'enseignement secondaire, Temara*
- Lahcen Oulhaj - *Professeur de l'enseignement supérieur, Rabat*
- Mohamed Boudhan - *Inspecteur de l'enseignement secondaire, Nador*
- Ali Khadaoui - *Inspecteur de l'enseignement secondaire, Kénitra*
- Mimoun Ighraz - *Inspecteur de l'enseignement technique, retraité, Meknes*
- Jilali Saib - *Professeur de l'enseignement supérieur, Rabat*
- Slimane Chegdali - *Académie de Settat*

Professional Background:

- Brahim Akhiat - *Commerçant, Rabat*
- Ali Bougrine - *Ingénieur des mines, Rabat-Casablanca*
- Mohamed Behri - *Journaliste, Rabat*
- Amina Ibnou-Cheikh - *Journaliste, Rabat*
- Ilias El Omani - *Homme d'affaires, Rabat*
- Moumen Ali Essafi - *Avocat, Casablanca*
- Hassan Idbelkassam - *Avocat, Rabat*
- Leila Meziane - *Médecin, Casablanca*
- Abdelmalek Houssayn Oussaden- *Chirurgien, Fes*

The royal commission's decision to reduce the list from the allowed 40 personalities to the final 34 further reflected the nature of IRCAM as an enterprise closely controlled by the authorities. Among the activists proposed by Mohamed Chafik but ultimately excluded was Ahmed Adghirni, likely due to his vision of creating an Amazigh political party in Morocco, a vision he later realized with the founding of the *Parti Démocrate Amazigh Marocain* (PDAM) in 2005, which was dissolved by the government three years later.³⁴¹ The exclusion from the CA led Adghirni to declare, "le but de l'IRCAM est d'assimiler le mouvement amazighe et le danger c'est de makhzéniser l'action culturelle amazighe, chose encore jamais faite auparavant."³⁴² This sentiment was echoed within the *Tamaynut* association,

³⁴¹ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). pp. 149-150.; <https://www.afrik.com/dissolution-du-parti-democrate-amazigh-marocain-la-communaute-berbere-condamne> (accessed September 18, 2024)

³⁴² Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). p. 150.

particularly after its founder and president, Hassan Idbelkassem, was included in the final CA list. In July 2002, following the announcement of the CA members, a faction broke away from a Tamaynut congress and went on to create a new organization, the *Réseau Amazigh pour la Citoyenneté* (Azetta). This dissident group criticized *Tamaynut* for neglecting broader human rights issues in Morocco, a country they argued still needed to be “democratized,” as well as for its cooperation with IRCAM.³⁴³

These developments demonstrate that, although the first CA of IRCAM included prominent Amazigh activists—a move that may have appeased the movement—the outcome was a division within the Amazigh movement. This was particularly striking given that, just two years prior, the movement had been remarkably united and on the brink of politicization. The movement was now split into a moderate camp represented by IRCAM, cooperating with the authorities, and a radical camp whose influence became limited. This filtering process became continuous, leading activists to choose between cooperation or departure. For instance, on October 16, 2005, seven members of the first CA signed a resignation letter, criticizing the “absence de volonté politique du gouvernement de promouvoir tamazight” and stating that “les pouvoirs politiques n’avaient pas changé d’attitude sur le fond de la question amazighe en tant que langue, culture, identité et mémoire.”³⁴⁴ This criticism highlights the ideological divergence between a Moroccan nationalism that absorbs Amazigh identity, as represented by IRCAM, and the Amazigh nationalism, which strongly asserts a distinct identity.

On June 27, 2002, Mohammed VI formally appointed the first CA of IRCAM. In a brief speech, the King reiterated in a more concise and explicit manner the fundamental ideologies of IRCAM, emphasizing that the Amazigh language and culture are a “richesse nationale et motif de fierté pour l’ensemble des Marocains” and that “l’Amazighité, qui plonge ses racines au plus profond de l’Histoire du peuple marocain, appartient à tous les Marocains sans exclusive et qu’elle ne peut être mise au service de desseins politiques de quelque nature que ce soit.” The king also clearly

³⁴³ Pouessel, S. (2006). Du village au «village-global»: Émergence et construction d’une revendication autochtone berbère au Maroc. *Autrepart*, (2), 119-134. p. 129.

³⁴⁴ <https://tawiza.eu5.org/Tawiza103/communiquFR.htm> (accessed September 18, 2024). The letter was signed by Mohamed Ajajaa, Abdelmalek Houssayn Oussaden, Hassan Benhakeia, Mohamed Boudhan, Ali Bougrine, Mimoun Ighraz, and Ali Khadaoui.

asked the CA members, distinguished by their “sincere patriotism,” to ensure that IRCAM is based on “a sustained interest in our entire cultural heritage” and that the promotion of Amazigh culture would remain “in perfect harmony with the foundations of our ancestral Moroccan identity, united around its sacred and enduring values.”³⁴⁵ These ideologies thus became a clear directive for the CA of IRCAM, guiding its concrete works.

3.3.2. Administrative and Academic Structures

Simultaneously to the selection of the CA, work on organizing the administrative and academic structures of IRCAM was underway. From November 2001 to the end of March 2002, Mohamed Chafik, as Rector, along with a commission composed of Fatima Boukhris, Ahmed Boukous, El Houssayn El Moujahid, and Jilali Saib, collaborated to define IRCAM’s departments and determine their leadership.³⁴⁶ Except for Boukhris from the *Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Rabat*, who was not a member of the CA, all others were from *l’enseignement supérieur* in Rabat and members of the CA. It is worth noting that among the four, Ahmed Boukous and El Houssayn El Moujahid were specialists in Tashelhiyt, while Fatima Boukhris and Jilali Saib specialized in Central Moroccan Amazigh, with no Tarifiyt specialist involved in this phase. Following this, from April to July 2002, future center directors and department heads joined the preparatory commission to finalize the structure and membership of IRCAM, which began operations shortly afterward.³⁴⁷

IRCAM initially had two administrative departments: the *Département des Ressources Humaines, des Affaires Générales et Juridiques* and the *Département du Budget et du Matériel*.³⁴⁸ Later, two additional departments were added: the *Département de la Communication*, aimed at strengthening the Institute’s presence in media and public spaces, broadening its influence, and enhancing its image and impact; and the *Département d’Audit Interne et Contrôle de Gestion*.³⁴⁹ For study and

³⁴⁵ IRCAM. (2003). *Bulletin d’information (Inghmish n usinag)*, 1. p. 3.

³⁴⁶ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). p. 150.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ IRCAM. (2003). *Bulletin d’information (Inghmish n usinag)*, 1. p. 15.

³⁴⁹ <https://www.ircam.ma/fr/departement-de-la-communication> (accessed September 18, 2024); <https://www.ircam.ma/fr/organigramme-ircam> (accessed September 18, 2024)

research units, IRCAM was designed with seven centers: the *Centre de l'Aménagement Linguistique* (CAL), the *Centre de la Recherche Didactique et des Programmes Pédagogiques* (CRDPP), the *Centre des Etudes Artistiques, des Expressions Littéraires et de la Production Audiovisuelle* (CEALPA), the *Centre des Etudes Anthropologiques et Sociologiques* (CEAS), the *Centre des Etudes Historiques et Environnementales* (CEHE), the *Centre de la Traduction, de la Documentation et de l'Édition* (initially including “*et de la Communication*”), and the *Centre des Etudes Informatiques, des Systèmes d'Information et de Communication* (CEISIC).³⁵⁰

3.3.2.1. CAL

The *Centre de l'Aménagement Linguistique* (CAL), the language planning agency of IRCAM, is tasked with the ultimate goal of standardizing “*la langue amazighe*” for its integration into the education system, the media, and public life in general. CAL’s main focus is on grammar and lexicon. It is composed of two study and research units: the Grammar unit and the Lexicon unit. Its concrete objectives include the codification of spelling, the creation of an Amazigh dictionary, the development of terminology for modern specialized vocabulary, and the collection of traditional vocabulary from the field. These efforts result in dictionaries, sectoral lexicons, grammars, and conjugation manuals, all aimed at contributing to “*la diffusion et [...] l’implantation de la langue standard.*”³⁵¹ The last expression from IRCAM’s official introduction, placing the diffusion of the standard language before its implantation, is interesting, as it suggests that the ideology and certain traits of the standard language might be disseminated prior to the full establishment of the language in practice.

Ahmed Boukous was appointed as the first director of CAL, with its initial team of researchers including Meftaha Ameer, Aïcha Bouhjar, Fatima Boukhris, Abdellah Boumalk, Mohamed Elmedlaoui and El Mehdi Iazzi.³⁵² Ahmed Boukous was born on October 15, 1946, in Lakhsas, Tiznit province, a Tashelhiyt-speaking area. He

³⁵⁰ IRCAM. (2003). *Bulletin d'information (Inghmisen n usinag)*, 1. pp. 11-15.

³⁵¹ <https://www.ircam.ma/fr/centre-de-amenagement-linguistique> (accessed September 18, 2024)

³⁵² IRCAM. (2003). *Bulletin d'information (Inghmisen n usinag)*, 1. p. 11.

pursued higher studies in literature, history, and pedagogy in Rabat (1964-1967) before teaching French in secondary education in Rabat for three years. He then continued his studies in Paris, obtaining the *Doctorat de 3^e Cycle* in social sciences (1974) at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études*. Boukous subsequently worked as a professor at the *Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Rabat* until joining IRCAM in 2002. During this time, he earned a *Doctorat d'État* in linguistics at the *Université de Paris-VIII* in 1987, focusing on the phonotactics and prosodic domains of Tashelhiyt from Agadir, and taught Amazigh at the *Institut Supérieur d'Archéologie et du Patrimoine* in Rabat from 1986 to 1994.³⁵³

For the other researchers, Meftaha Ameer, who would later become the director of CAL, was a professor at *l'Université Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah de Fès*, where she taught French language and literature before joining IRCAM.³⁵⁴ A native Tashelhiyt speaker, she studied Middle Atlas (Ayt Mguild) phonology to obtain her doctorate in Aix-en-Provence under supervision of Salem Chaker in 1985. Her involvement in Amazigh studies continued, notably with an article published in 1990, where she discussed the classification of Amazigh dialects. In this article, Ameer argues that neither ethnic, historical, nor racial considerations, nor grammatical and phonetic variations, should be the primary criteria for classifying Amazigh dialects. Instead, she proposes that: “Une classification satisfaisante devrait, alors, recourir à un canevas de paramètres hiérarchisés où l’intercompréhension (dans laquelle le lexique joue un rôle prépondérant) viendrait en premier.”³⁵⁵ This conclusion suggests that if different Amazigh varieties share a significant enough vocabulary to ensure mutual understanding, despite grammatical and phonetic variations, these varieties might be classified as a linguistic entity, a theory that would become central to CAL’s language planning.

Aïcha Bouhjar, a Tarifiyt speaker from Belgium, taught at the Department of French Language and Literature at the *Faculté des lettres et des sciences humaines de*

³⁵³ Boukous, A. (1987). *Phonotactique et domaines prosodiques en berbère (parler tachelhit d'Agadir, Maroc)* (Doctoral dissertation, Paris 8).; The CV summary of Ahmed Boukous can be found in IRCAM. (2004). *Bulletin d'information (Inghmisen usinag)*, 2. p. 17.

³⁵⁴ <https://fesfestival.com/2019/en/conferencier/meftaha-ameur/> (accessed September 20, 2024)

³⁵⁵ Ameer, M. (1990). A propos de la classification des dialectes berbères. *Etudes et documents berbères (2)*, 15-27. pp. 25-26.

Kénitra since 1994 before joining IRCAM in 2002. That same year, she defended a *Thèse d'Etat* in French sociolinguistics at *l'Université Mohammed V-Agdal* on bilingualism among Moroccan migrants in Brussels. Bouhjar served as the director of CAL from 2007 to 2015 and later became head of the *Département de la Communication*.³⁵⁶ Fatima Boukhris taught in the Department of French Language at the *Faculté des Lettres de Rabat*, specializing in generative syntax of Central Moroccan Amazigh. Also interested in sociolinguistics and pedagogy, she raised questions in a 2004 article, where she conducted a survey on the low efficiency of French language education and explored the reasons why the major in modern literature and the French department, in general, no longer attract students. Boukhris advocated for more investigation into language teaching issues before any educational reform, particularly regarding “l’enseignement d’une langue telle que le français dont le statut est ambigu.”³⁵⁷

Abdellah Boumalk was a linguist educated at INALCO in Paris, specializing in Tashelhiyt.³⁵⁸ He served as a lecturer-researcher in French linguistics at the *Faculté des Lettres d'Oujda*.³⁵⁹ His works, *Vocabulaire usuel du tachelhit* (co-authored) and *Manuel de conjugaison du tachelhit*, are used for teaching Tashelhiyt at INALCO.³⁶⁰ Mohamed Elmedlaoui was a linguist educated at *l'Université de Paris-VIII (Doctorat de 3^e Cycle)* and *l'Université Mohammed V-Agdal (Doctorat d'État)*, specializing in Amazigh, Arabic, and Hebrew. He served as Vice-Dean of the *Faculté des Lettres d'Oujda* (1995-1999) before joining IRCAM, where he directed the study and research unit of Lexicon in CAL.³⁶¹ In Amazigh studies, he is familiar with all three

³⁵⁶ <https://www.ircam.ma/sites/default/files/2022-01/bouhjar.pdf> (accessed September 20, 2024)

³⁵⁷ Boukhris, F. (2004). Pour une implication de l'étudiant dans la conception des programmes. *Revue langues et littératures*, 18, 37-51.

³⁵⁸ Boumalk, A. (1996). *Morphogénèse et dynamique lexicale en berbère: Tachelhit du Sud-Ouest marocain* (Doctoral dissertation, Paris, INALCO).

³⁵⁹ Boumalk, A. (2004). *Manuel de conjugaison du tachelhit: Langue berbère du Maroc*. L'Harmattan. About the Author.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*; Bounfour, A., & Boumalk, A. (2001). *Vocabulaire usuel du tachelhit: Tachelhit-français*. Centre Tarik ibn Ziyad.; Brochure Licence 2024-2025 Berbère, Département Afrique et Océan Indien, INALCO. Available at: https://www.inalco.fr/sites/default/files/2024-06/Brochure%20licence%202024-2025_BERBERE.pdf (accessed September 20, 2024)

³⁶¹ Mohamed Elmedlaoui, CV summary. Available at: <https://static.blog4ever.com/2006/04/162080/Elmedlaoui-CV-Publications--2-.pdf>

main varieties in Morocco with a specialization in Tashelhiyt phonology.³⁶² He left IRCAM in 2006—details of which will be discussed later—and joined *l'Institut Universitaire de la Recherche Scientifique, Rabat*, directing research on *Géopolitique, Identité et Migration* until his retirement in 2017.³⁶³ El Mehdi Iazzi was an assistant professor of linguistics at *l'Université Ibn Zohr à Agadir* from 1988, granted tenure in 1991 after defending his Doctorate thesis (*doctorat de 3^e cycle*) on the Amazigh variety of Aït Attab, situated at the junction of the areas of Tashelhiyt and Central Moroccan Amazigh, under the supervision of Ahmed Boukous.³⁶⁴

It can thus be observed that most of the founding members of CAL had experience teaching French in Morocco. In terms of Amazigh studies, their expertise was primarily focused on Tashelhiyt: three members (Boukous, Elmedlaoui, and Boumalk) come from a pure Tashelhiyt background, while two (Ameur and Iazzi) have backgrounds in both Tashelhiyt and Central Moroccan Amazigh. Boukhris has a Central Moroccan Amazigh background, while Bouhjar is the only native Tarifiyt speaker.

3.3.2.2. Other Research Centers

Besides CAL, the *Centre de la Recherche Didactique et des Programmes Pédagogiques* (CRDPP) was established to conduct research in didactics and develop educational programs for the integration of Amazigh into the educational system. This involved creating specific curricula for Amazigh, providing training programs and activities, and supervising and evaluating trainers in Amazigh language and culture. Its most urgent mission following the establishment of IRCAM was to produce school textbooks and other teaching materials for Amazigh education, in cooperation with other centers, particularly CAL, which was responsible for standardizing the language

(accessed September 20, 2024)

³⁶² Elmedlaoui, M. (1985). *Le parler berbère chleuh d'Imdlawn (Maroc): Segments et syllabation* (Doctoral dissertation, Paris 8).

³⁶³ Mohamed Elmedlaoui, CV summary.

³⁶⁴ Iazzi, E. M. (1991). *Morphologie du verbe en Tamazight (Parler des Aït Attab, Haut-Atlas Central): Approche prosodique* (Doctoral dissertation, Université Mohammed V.); An introduction to El Mehdi Iazzi is available at: <https://www.fmsch.fr/en/researchers/el-mehdi-iazzi> (accessed September 20, 2024)

for integration into the educational system.³⁶⁵

Boudris Belaïd was appointed as the director of CRDPP. He was the author of the first lexicon of didactics and pedagogy of Amazigh, *Tamawalt usegmi*. Published in 1993, the lexicon was prefaced by Mohamed Chafik and referenced the dictionary and textbook by Chafik published shortly before.³⁶⁶ Belaïd's work relied heavily on neologisms from Kabylia. The preface and introduction of the book were written in Central Moroccan Amazigh using Latin letters, where Belaïd employed many neologisms from *Amawal* (the dictionary of new Amazigh terms by Mouloud Mammeri) that are not familiar to the book's audience, such as *tamezla* for difference, *agnu* for problem, and *agbur* for content.³⁶⁷ Notably, although written in Latin letters, the lexicon incorporated a table of Neo-Tifinagh based on the version of *Académie Berbère*, but omitted consonants that are only relevant to Kabyle, such as those for /č/ and /tʰ/.³⁶⁸

The *Centre des Etudes Artistiques, des Expressions Littéraires et de la Production Audiovisuelle* (CEALPA) aimed to contribute to the development and influence of the Amazigh language and culture through the publication of literary and artistic works, as well as the collection and preservation of Amazigh cultural, literary, and artistic heritage via audiovisual documents. It was directed by M'hamed Sallou, a member of the CA and head of department at the *Ministère de la Culture* before joining IRCAM.³⁶⁹ Besides, the *Centre des Études Anthropologiques et Sociologiques* (CEAS), directed by Ouazzi Elhoussine, was tasked with carrying out anthropological and sociological analyses of social phenomena and conducting studies on intercultural issues.³⁷⁰ The *Centre des Études Historiques et Environnementales* (CEHE), headed by Mohammed Hammam, was established to direct studies and investigations, particularly focusing on “*des périodes peu connues de l'histoire du Maroc, notamment les époques protohistorique et préislamique.*”³⁷¹

³⁶⁵ IRCAM. (2003). *Bulletin d'information (Inghmisen n usinag)*, 1. p. 12.

³⁶⁶ Belaïd, B. (1993). *Tamawalt usegmi: Vocabulaire de l'éducation, français-tamazight*. Najah El Jadida.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 11-12.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 4.

³⁶⁹ IRCAM. (2003). *Bulletin d'information (Inghmisen n usinag)*, 1. p. 13.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

As for the *Centre de la Traduction, de la Documentation et de l'Édition* and the *Centre des Études Informatiques, des Systèmes d'Information et de Communication* (CEISIC), headed by Jilali Saib and Lahbib Zenkour, respectively, their functions were reflected in their names.³⁷²

The centers were designed to conduct activities in line with the fundamental ideologies of IRCAM. Thus, for example, CEHE was established to conduct research on “Moroccan history,” rather than Amazigh history. Accordingly, the center’s first publication was a book on Amazigh terms “in the history and civilization of Morocco.”³⁷³ Similarly, for CEAELPA, when the director M’hamed Sallou was asked by a journalist, “Can we speak of an ‘Amazigh cinema’ in Morocco?” he answered that he preferred the term *cinéma amazighophone* because “there is only one Moroccan cinema, whether in Amazigh, Arabic, or Darija.”³⁷⁴ These examples show that the fundamental ideology of IRCAM, which holds that Amazighness belongs to all Moroccans without exception was effectively guiding the activities of its research centers. The language planning of CAL, as will be discussed, was expected to follow the same approach.

3.3.3. Ahmed Boukous as the New Rector and the Challenges he Faced

With the formation of the CA and the structure of IRCAM completed, Mohamed Chafik’s tenure as rector was nearing its end. His last and critically important task was to secure the immediate implementation of Amazigh teaching in Moroccan schools, a process he estimated could easily be delayed or even canceled by “n’importe quel directeur, secrétaire ou inspecteur, ayant un vague sentiment panarabiste,” as quoted earlier. There were indeed different strands within the *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale* (MEN) regarding support for Amazigh education.³⁷⁵ One group favored this education, citing the *livre blanc* published by the ministry in 2002, which aimed

³⁷² *Ibid.* pp. 14-15.

³⁷³ Hammam, M. (2004). *Amazigh terms in the history and civilization of Morocco: Part one* (in Arabic). IRCAM.

³⁷⁴ Interview, “C’est très rare que des films amazighophones bénéficient de subventions.” Al Bayane, March 1, 2020. <https://albayane.press.ma/%ef%bb%bfcest-tres-rare-que-des-films-amazighophones-beneficient-de-subventions.html> (accessed September 25, 2024)

³⁷⁵ Abouzaid, M. (2011). p. 156.

to explain all ministerial notes, including the curriculum for the Amazigh language (*manhaj al-lugha al-amazighiya*) intended for the first cycle of education.³⁷⁶ Conversely, another group of people at the Ministry referenced the *Charte nationale d'éducation et de formation* from 1999, which, while expressing “openness to Amazigh,” viewed “the use of the Amazigh language or any local dialect” merely as a means to “facilitate the learning of the official language.”³⁷⁷

Against this background, IRCAM swiftly secured a convention with the Ministry on June 26, 2003, which was favorable to IRCAM’s vision. The two partners announced the broad strategic lines centered around three principles: 1. The teaching of Amazigh is integrated into the basic cycle, beginning in the first year of primary education; 2. A generalization envisaged for all levels of education (vertical generalization), progressively extending from one level to total coverage of the three school levels; 3. A definitive generalization across the entire territory (horizontal generalization) by 2010.³⁷⁸ IRCAM would be responsible for the production and expertise of teaching tools, but not be involved in operations within the schools. Other tasks, such as teacher training and the monitoring and evaluation of Amazigh teaching, would be conducted jointly by IRCAM and the Ministry.³⁷⁹ Immediately after the convention, the pilot program introducing Amazigh as a compulsory subject for first-year students started, covering 345 primary schools selected by the ministry in predominantly Amazigh-speaking areas.³⁸⁰

The dominant role of MEN in Amazigh education, or in the acquisition planning of the Amazigh language, instead of IRCAM, can be understood as a strategy by the authorities to ensure that the founding ideologies of IRCAM are safely implemented throughout Amazigh education. With the fundamental ideologies of IRCAM articulated and secured, the institute’s structure established and functioning, and the teaching of Amazigh in Morocco having become a *fait accompli*, Mohamed Chafik concluded his tenure as the first rector of IRCAM. It can be considered that, Chafik had little interest in participating in the concrete language planning efforts of IRCAM.

³⁷⁶ Abrous, N. (2017). pp. 156-157.

³⁷⁷ Charte nationale d'éducation et de formation (1999). available at: <https://www.mcinet.gov.ma/sites/default/files/documentation%20iscae%20rabat%202018.pdf> (accessed September 25, 2024)

³⁷⁸ Abrous, N. (2017). pp. 152-153.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p. 157.

³⁸⁰ Abouzaid, M. (2011). pp. 154-155.

He recalled in an interview that “sincèrement, pour ce qui est de l’enseignement de la langue amazighe, l’IRCAM a les coudées suffisamment franches. En revanche, il bute sur des blocages de toutes sortes.”³⁸¹ He left these opportunities and challenges to his successor, Ahmed Boukous, the director of CAL, and even attempted to avoid appearing to impose personal preferences on the corpus planning of the Amazigh language in Morocco. This was particularly evident during a CA meeting on January 30-31, 2003, where the issue of the script was discussed, which was the same meeting where Mohamed Chafik formally announced his departure.³⁸²

The transition of the rectorate from Mohamed Chafik to Ahmed Boukous was not smooth, and the challenges for the latter were immense. The “regional issue” arose first. Although the founding documents of IRCAM avoided any mention of regional differences in Amazigh varieties in Morocco, this issue was considered from the very start when forming IRCAM’s structure. When listing the members of the CA, Mohamed Chafik and the royal commission attempted to ensure “fair representation” of the three regions: the Rif in the north, the Middle Atlas in the center, and the Souss in the south.³⁸³ Furthermore, CA member Mohamed Boudhan, *Inspecteur de l’enseignement secondaire* from the Riffian city of Nador, suggested the principle of “*représentativité régionale*,” arguing that the three key positions of IRCAM—the rector, the secretary general, and the director of CAL—should reflect regional balance.³⁸⁴ However, with Ahmed Boukous becoming the new rector, not only was the lack of Riffian representation in these key positions left unaddressed, but the team became further “Souss-centric”, as both Ahmed Boukous and Secretary General El Houssayn El Moujahid were from the Souss region.³⁸⁵

Feeling a lack of representation at various levels within IRCAM, seven Riffian members of the CA signed a petition protesting the marginalization of the Rif region.³⁸⁶ The issue received a response during the second ordinary session of the CA

³⁸¹ Interview, M. Chafik: Les dégâts de l’élite sont énormes.

³⁸² Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). p. 163.

³⁸³ *Ibid.* p. 149.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p. 164.; See also Elmedlaoui, M. (2004a). *Ma part de vérité sur l’IRCAM (En hommage à M. Chafik), 2ième Partie*. OrBinah. Available at: <https://orbinah.blog4ever.com/ma-part-de-verite-sur-l-ircam-en-hommage-a-m-chafik-2ieme-partie> (accessed September 29, 2024)

³⁸⁵ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). p. 164.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p. 165. The signatories were Hassan Benhakeia, Mohamed Boudhan,

for the 2004 financial year. According to M'hamed Sallou, a CA member, director of CEAELPA, and one of the petition's signatories, the session promised that IRCAM "va lancer un vaste chantier, pendant les deux ans à venir, pour la réalisation de la monographie du Rif, une région qui a longtemps souffert d'un manque d'intérêt d'où l'importance de cette monographie qui concernera tous les secteurs du Rif."³⁸⁷

As the new rector, Ahmed Boukous promptly addressed the regional representation issue early in his tenure by publishing a statistical table that claimed to show the percentage of staff affiliations by region, categorized as North, Center, and South. According to CAL member Mohamed Elmedlaoui, this table was distributed to representatives of the national press on December 31, 2003. The table's conclusion stated, "Les données du tableau ci-dessus montrent que la région du Nord est sous-représentée, en dépit des efforts déployés par le Rectorat pour réaliser l'équilibre." The imbalance was explained as being due to the fact that "la plupart des chercheurs de la région du Nord, qui avaient été fortement sollicités par le Rectorat en 2002 mais qui ont décliné son offre." The proposed solution was that "un effort doit être fait pour recruter d'autres chercheurs de la région."³⁸⁸

Notably, although IRCAM did not shy away from addressing the regional representation issue, it approached the matter according to its own ideology and principles, as reflected in how it presented the three main Amazigh varieties in Morocco. These varieties were not referred to by their common linguistic names—Tarifiyt, Tamazight, and Tashelhiyt—names that parallel other varieties like Kabyle and Tuareg. Instead, IRCAM labeled them by their geographical regions as North, Center, and South, which only make sense within the borders of Morocco. As seen in expressions like "des chercheurs de la région du Nord," IRCAM may have recognized the need to acknowledge regional differences, which were not mentioned in the founding documents, but it downplayed the linguistic distinctions. Ideologically, IRCAM preferred to view researchers as coming from the northern, central, or southern parts of Morocco, rather than acknowledging that they were speaking or

Mohamed Chami, Ilias El Omani, Abdeslam Khalafi, Leila Meziane, and M'hamed Sallou.

³⁸⁷ L'IRCAM amorce un nouveau virage. 26 juillet 2004, *Aujourd'hui Le Maroc*. <https://aujourd'hui.ma/actualite/lircam-amorce-un-nouveau-virage-16408> (accessed September 29, 2024)

³⁸⁸ Elmedlaoui, M. (2004a).

working on different Amazigh varieties.

The regional issue can be seen as part of a broader politicization tendency at IRCAM during the early rectorate of Ahmed Boukous. As recalled by Elmedlaoui, in Boukous's first press meeting on March 31, 2004, he described IRCAM as “an institution where the scientific and the non-scientific intersect” (*mu'assasa yataqāta' fihā mā huwa 'ilmī wa mā huwa ghayr 'ilmī*).³⁸⁹ According to Elmedlaoui, this non-scientific aspect was “embodied through the conclusion of several dozen cooperation agreements with a dense network of hundreds of associations, and through the allocation of a significant budget for this, in order to repel the accusation of so-called ‘academicism.’”³⁹⁰

While Elmedlaoui might have expected IRCAM to be a “purely scientific” institution, the institute, as discussed earlier, was inherently political, designed to prevent the politicization of the Amazigh cultural movement. Therefore, it might not be surprising that IRCAM saw it necessary to collaborate with and exert influence over Amazigh associations, in the same way as its CA incorporated many influential activists. It is understandable why Elmedlaoui viewed IRCAM as becoming, in his words, an institution for “political appeasement (*mu'assasa li-l-istirḍā' as-siyāsī*).”³⁹¹ However, at the same time, this “political appeasement” appears to have never been satisfying enough for the Moroccan Amazigh movement as a whole. In this complex and confusing political landscape, both Elmedlaoui, who accused IRCAM of political involvement, and the seven CA members, as mentioned, who criticized its lack of political progress, resigned from IRCAM during the early rectorate of Ahmed Boukous in 2004-2005.

According to the communiqué issued by the resigned CA members, both of IRCAM's major efforts in its founding years—the adoption of Neo-Tifinagh for writing standard Amazigh (see Chapter Four) and the implementation of Amazigh language education—were criticized. Regarding the writing system, the communiqué

³⁸⁹ Interview with Mohamed Elmedlaoui by Abdul Aziz Jahbali, Al-Alam newspaper, June 7, 2010. *mas'ala al-Amazighiya ba'da thamaniyya sanawat min 'umur ma'ahid al-IRCAM, wa fi ufuq tajdeed majlisihi al-idari* (“The Amazigh issue after eight years of the life of the IRCAM Institute: On the horizon of renewing its Board of Directors”), available at: <https://orbinah.blog4ever.com/en-arabe-1-l-institut-ircam-maroc-apres-huit-ans> (accessed September 30, 2024)

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

states: “The obstacle to the expansion of Tifinagh outside of IRCAM accentuates the isolation of the first written productions in Amazigh, thus putting a brake on scientific research on the standardization of the language, a basic condition for a successful transition to writing.”³⁹² Though it is incorrect to associate IRCAM with “the first written productions” in Amazigh, which has a long writing tradition as will be discussed, and it is doubtful whether the adoption and promotion of Neo-Tifinagh truly pose such a threat to the standardization project, this statement remains notable. It reflects that, for the resigned CA members, IRCAM’s ability to fulfill its fundamental duty of standardizing Amazigh was severely questioned.

A similar lack of confidence is also found in the educational aspect, where the communiqué critics: “Regarding teacher training, the enforcement of the mandatory status of Amazigh in schools, and other logistical matters, these are now left to the discretion of regional academies and delegations, which feel bound only by the spirit of the charter. For instance, Amazigh is not taught anywhere in the third year, despite being officially announced by the Ministry of National Education (MEN). Worse, the introduction of Tamazight in middle and high schools, which was planned under a MEN-IRCAM agreement in 2003 for the 2005-2006 school year, has been postponed indefinitely. As for universities, Amazigh remains absent.”³⁹³

The issues related to teacher training were particularly acute, as separately attested by Elmedlaoui: “Since 2003, in a highly urgent plan referred to as ‘training sessions’ in cities and rural areas, reliance has been placed on no more than 14 staff members from the linguistic and pedagogical preparation centers at the institute. These individuals are repeatedly and unexpectedly forced to suspend their scheduled research programs, for which the centers are held accountable, in order to travel to remote areas and conduct training sessions lasting an average of three days here and there. They work with a group of teachers who are not consistently listed, nor homogeneous in their mastery of any variant of Amazigh or in their educational experience. For instance, as I personally witnessed, a trainer from IRCAM might find themselves facing individuals who are about to retire the following year, or others who question why they were selected for training since they do not speak any form of

³⁹² Communiqué des sept démissionnaires du C.A. de l’IRCAM. Available at: <https://tawiza.eu5.org/Tawiza103/communiqueFR.htm> (accessed March 1, 2025).

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

Amazigh.”³⁹⁴

Besides the technical issues related to the writing system and education, the more fundamental discrepancy between the resigned CA members and IRCAM lies in the ideological aspect. While IRCAM’s guiding ideology seeks to depoliticize the Amazigh issue and de-ethnicize Amazigh speakers by incorporating them into a homogeneous Moroccan national identity, the communiqué from the resigned CA members expresses a different perspective: “The reign of Amazighophobia is taking revenge on the hope sparked by the gathering in Ajdir, which momentarily nurtured the dream of the Imazighen (men and women) to finally reclaim their identity rights and dignity on their own land.”³⁹⁵ The thesis will not examine further the internal politics of IRCAM. However, based on the above discussions, one consequence of the early events during Ahmed Boukous’s tenure might be understood: with the departure of dissidents for various reasons, IRCAM’s founding ideologies, along with those of the new rector, were able to take firm hold within the institute.

³⁹⁴ Interview with Mohamed Elmedlaoui by Abdul Aziz Jahbali, *Al-Alam* newspaper, June 7, 2010.

³⁹⁵ Communiqué des sept démissionnaires du C.A. de l’IRCAM.

4. "MOROCCAN AMAZIGH": A CENTRAL CONCEPT IN IRCAM'S LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY

4.1. The Origin of the Idea

In previous discussions, it has been established how the Moroccan authorities defined *l'Amazighité* as belonging to "tous les Marocains sans exclusive," aiming to prevent an ethnic-based politicization of the Amazigh issue. Consequently, if Amazigh is to be taught across the country, it would become a compulsory subject for all Moroccan students, without exception, as demonstrated by the convention between IRCAM and MEN: "L'enseignement doit être généralisé à tous les établissements scolaires du pays, et à tous les élèves, qu'ils soient amazighophones ou non."³⁹⁶ Thus, both the ideological orientation and the practical need for teaching the language necessitate the development of a "national Amazigh" for Morocco, which must be homogeneous to align with IRCAM's fundamental ideology of promoting a national identity characterized by "homogeneity, unity, and originality."

Ahmed Boukous once weighed in on the question of what form of Amazigh should be taught—whether it should be "le berbère commun" or "les dialectes régionaux (les parlers locaux)"—in a 1995 article written before the establishment of IRCAM, in which he pondered:

"Faudrait-il enseigner le berbère commun, les dialectes régionaux ou les parlers locaux? Opter pour l'enseignement du berbère commun répond à l'objectif de l'unification de la langue berbère mais pose le problème des modalités de la codification d'une koinè dont l'existence est plus idéale que réelle. Enseigner les dialectes ou les parlers, c'est faire acquérir un objet familier au locuteur mais cette décision a l'inconvénient d'entériner la dialectalisation du berbère et, partant, risque d'aggraver la non-intercompréhension entre les locuteurs natifs de dialectes distincts."³⁹⁷ ("Should we teach common Berber, regional dialects, or local varieties? Opting to teach common Berber aligns with the goal of unifying the Berber language but raises the issue of how to codify a koine whose existence is

³⁹⁶ Nachef, L. (2016). p. 217.

³⁹⁷ Boukous, A. (1995a). p. 16.

more ideal than real. Teaching dialects or local varieties means providing learners with a familiar object, but this decision has the drawback of entrenching the dialectalization of Berber and, consequently, risks exacerbating the lack of mutual understanding among native speakers of distinct dialects.”)

This discussion shows that Boukous once viewed the “dialectalization” of Amazigh as undesirable and expressing a desire for “unification of the Berber language.” However, despite this desire for a unified language, he acknowledged that an “Amazigh koine” was “more ideal than real.” He understood that the practical reality was to teach “regional dialects,” but this choice was ideologically undesirable, as it would risk “exacerbating the lack of mutual comprehension” between Amazigh speakers. The establishment of IRCAM and the inclusion of Amazigh in the national education system resolved this dilemma by categorically negating the second option, as Moroccan students, who were being shaped with a homogeneous national identity, could not be left to study different languages. The concern was no longer limited to “exacerbating the lack of mutual comprehension” between Amazigh speakers alone, but also the potential creation of a linguistic barrier between Moroccan people as a whole.

This was evident at the first CAL seminar on the standardization of Amazigh held on December 8-9, 2003, where Boukous revisited the question of planning Amazigh as either “a common standard language transcending regional particularities” or “a set of standard geolects.”³⁹⁸ As the new rector of IRCAM, Boukous warned that the second option would imply managing Amazigh within the framework of regionalization, retaining “the principle of territoriality.” This would mean that “the practice of learning and using Amazigh would be confined to specific regions.” Boukous further emphasized that “the objective that seems to demand attention for political reasons, as it responds to a strong social expectation, is the standardization of a common Amazigh language for the entire national community.”³⁹⁹ Along with highlighting the problem of planning “standard geolects,” Boukous simultaneously

³⁹⁸ Boukous, A. (2004). La standardisation de l’amazighe: Quelques prémisses. In *Standardisation de l’amazighe. Actes du séminaire organisé par le Centre de l’Aménagement Linguistique à Rabat, 8-9 décembre 2003*, 11-22.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 17-18.

outlined the merits of planning for “a national Amazigh language.” This approach would be suitable for use in national education, media, and administration, ultimately serving as an institutionalized official language of Morocco—the ultimate goal for the Amazigh movement.⁴⁰⁰

The idea of planning “a national Amazigh language,” as discussed by Ahmed Boukous, thus aligned with the political expectations of the Amazigh movement and was consistent with the ideology of IRCAM, which mentioned no terms other than *l'amazigh* in its founding documents. This soon became a principle within IRCAM, as members testified in an interview with Lahcen Nachef that “il était ‘politiquement incorrect’ de parler de dialectes ou de parler différents. On était quasiment dans ‘l'idéologie de la langue amazighe.’”⁴⁰¹ It is important to note that “la langue amazighe” of IRCAM did not reflect the one nation–one language ideology of Amazigh nationalism, which envisions a “pan-Amazigh” for intercomprehension among all Amazigh speakers, called “le berbère commun” by Boukous (1995: 16). Rather, it aligned more closely with the ideology of Moroccan nationalism, aiming to establish a Moroccan Amazigh for the Moroccan people.

This idea was reflected more explicitly in the mission for CAL: “met en œuvre rapidement un processus de sélection permettant de capitaliser les convergences et dépasser les divergences pour parler de ‘l'amazigh marocain.’”⁴⁰² In a more concrete way, Boukous established that the standardization of Moroccan Amazigh involves a comprehensive approach addressing its pronunciation, morphology, grammar, and lexicon. This effort aims to ultimately reduce divergences and eliminate “non-functional dialectal features,” which are perceived as hindrances to mutual comprehension.⁴⁰³ Guided by this ideology, CAL began its work, with outcomes such as the 2008 publication *La Nouvelle Grammaire de l'amazighe*, which particularly emphasized that “elle n'est pas une grammaire particulière d'une variété (parler ou dialecte), mais plutôt une grammaire de l'amazighe marocain.”⁴⁰⁴

The project of standardizing a Moroccan Amazigh was extraordinary, as the concept had not been seriously discussed in print before. It was only vaguely

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p. 17.

⁴⁰¹ Nachef, L. (2016). pp. 164-165.

⁴⁰² Abrous, N. (2017). p. 220.

⁴⁰³ Boukous, A. (2004).

⁴⁰⁴ Boukhris, F., Boumalk, A., El Houssain, M., & Souifi, H. (2008). p. 5.

embodied in the works of Mohamed Chafik, as discussed previously, who presented an Amazigh dictionary of terms from all three main Amazigh varieties in Morocco without specifying their origins. Additionally, in his Amazigh textbook, he occasionally treated the features of these three main varieties as synonyms within a single Amazigh language. Despite this, Chafik refrained from using the term Moroccan Amazigh.

Now, with the innovative idea of planning towards a standard Moroccan Amazigh set as a principle of IRCAM, immediate challenges arose. The concept of Moroccan Amazigh could be understood as essentially a *berbère commun* on a national level. This idea introduced a new classification of Amazigh varieties based on national borders. According to this classification, the “national dialects” within a national border were meant to be converged and standardized into a national *berbère commun*. Or, in the words of Boukous: “la construction du standard national à partir de la capitalisation des convergences interdialectales.”⁴⁰⁵

This approach of standardizing a *berbère commun* contradicted the conclusions reached by many Amazigh linguists, who, during the 1998 workshop at INALCO on *Aménagement linguistique de la langue berbère*, emphasized that “The development of a common Berber standard cannot be considered an immediate objective. It is necessary to avoid creating a new diglossic situation in the Berber context, similar to that of Classical Arabic/dialectal Arabic, which would be entirely counterproductive to the goal of promoting the Berber language, particularly its widespread adoption.” Instead, they proposed that, “Dans l’immédiat, et sans doute pour plusieurs décennies, on visera à établir une forme standard (écrite) de chaque variété régionale du berbère (kabyle standard, tachelhit standard, etc.).”⁴⁰⁶

It is interesting to note that the example given by the workshop to advise against the creation of a *berbère commun* and the diglossic problem following was the situation between Classical Arabic and Arabic dialects. Whereas in Ahmed Boukous’s later theory, formulated within a different political context, it was exactly the lack of a high Amazigh, akin to Classical Arabic, and the only existence of “dialects,” or being “une langue dialectalisée” in his words, that was hindering mutual intelligibility and

⁴⁰⁵ Boukous, A. (2012). p. 245.

⁴⁰⁶ Chaker, S. (1998). Orientations générales pour l’aménagement de la langue berbère: Urgence et réalisme. *Atelier aménagement linguistique de la langue berbère*. INALCO.

detriment to the weight of the language.⁴⁰⁷ In the English version of Boukous's *Revitalisation de la langue amazighe: Défis, enjeux et stratégies*, the national languages of North Africa are introduced as "Amazigh ('Berber' in the Western tradition) and Arabic, with its variety and its standard dialects (called 'Moroccan', 'Algerian', 'Tunisian', 'Libyan' Arabic, etc.)."⁴⁰⁸ This framing reflects Boukous's intent to present Amazigh as a language with a unified high version, whereas Arabic is portrayed as suffering from a dialectal situation. This seems to be an ideological attempt to invert the perceived situation or status of the two languages.

How, then, can the discrepancy be explained between IRCAM, which pursued the planning of a *berbère commun*, and the linguists at the INALCO workshop, who warned against it, even going so far as to call it "un monstre normatif supplémentaire"?⁴⁰⁹ The explanation may lie in the fact that the two arguments stem from different perspectives. The INALCO workshop focused on corpus planning and cautioned that a *berbère commun* would inevitably create a language "très éloigné de tous les usages réels."⁴¹⁰ In contrast, Boukous was primarily concerned with the status and prestige planning of the Amazigh language, viewing the elimination of its "dialectalization" as essential to enhancing its weight. Additionally, both positions addressed acquisition planning for Amazigh. The workshop considered a *berbère commun* counterproductive for the "promotion de la langue berbère et notamment à sa généralisation."⁴¹¹ Meanwhile, IRCAM saw a national *berbère commun* as fundamental for acquisition planning, as explicitly stated in CAL's *Initiation à la langue amazighe* (2004): "L'introduction de l'enseignement de la langue amazighe dans le système éducatif marocain implique le choix d'une langue standard commune à enseigner."⁴¹²

Therefore, it can be concluded that IRCAM's push toward standardizing a

⁴⁰⁷ Boukous, A. (2009a). Poids des langues: De la métaphore au paramétrage. Le cas de l'amazighe. M. Gasquet-Cyrus et al. (Eds.), *Le poids des langues: Dynamiques, représentations, contacts, conflits*, Coll. *Espaces discursifs*, 123-140.

⁴⁰⁸ Boukous, A. (2011). *Revitalizing the Amazigh language: Stakes, challenges, and strategies*. IRCAM. p. 18.

⁴⁰⁹ Chaker, S. (1998).

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹² Aneur. M., Bouhjar. A., Boukhris. F., Boukous. A., Boumalk. A., Elmedlaoui M., Iazzi. E. & Souifi. H. (2004). p. 13.

Moroccan Amazigh originated from the urgent need for acquisition planning of the Amazigh language in Morocco, which would ultimately contribute to its status and prestige planning. In comparison, the corpus planning of this “Moroccan Amazigh,” along with its potential drawbacks, was considered secondary and subordinate. This understanding is concisely reflected in the following discourse by Ahmed Boukous on the LPP of the Amazigh language, which may initially seem confusing and paradoxical, but can now be better understood:

“Ma conviction est que la standardisation est assurément une condition *sine qua non* du développement de l’amazighe dans le cadre de sa constitutionnalisation, de son institutionnalisation et de son opérationnalisation. Elle devrait avoir des conséquences bénéfiques sur sa situation aussi bien en termes de changement relatif à son statut qu’en termes de codification de ses structures grammaticales et lexicales, et d’extension du répertoire de ses fonctions sociolinguistiques. Or, il s’agit d’une opération dont la réussite dépend de la volonté politique et d’une adhésion réelle de la société en vue d’une implantation sociale effective. [...] Par le fait d’une demande sociale organisée et d’une volonté politique résolue, l’amazighe devrait connaître une situation inédite dans son histoire. Les défis à relever par la langue et la culture amazighes sont importants et les enjeux qu’implique l’aspiration à un nouveau statut sont considérables.”⁴¹³

This discourse shows that for Boukous, the primary motivation behind the standardization of (Moroccan) Amazigh stemmed from its envisioned officialization, or standardization as a *sine qua non* for status planning—a task he believed to be as crucial as corpus planning. The key issue in this standardizing process, which would lead to “*un nouveau statut*” for Amazigh, was its reliance on “*la volonté politique et [...] une adhésion réelle de la société.*” Due to concerns over securing this political will, the planning of a standardized “Moroccan Amazigh” became a strategic move. It was within this framework of status planning that Boukous began to address the corpus planning of the language, as he continued:

⁴¹³ Boukous, A. (2009b). *Phonologie de l’amazighe*. IRCAM. pp. 422-423.

L'aménagement de l'amazighe s'inscrit dans ce contexte. C'est une tâche urgente mais l'urgence ne devrait pas mener à l'improvisation et à la précipitation qui conduiraient soit à l'émiettement de l'amazighe par excès de régionalisme et de communautarisme soit à l'appauvrissement de l'amazighe par excès de volontarisme irrédentiste et par standardisation irréaliste. Il s'agit d'un processus équilibré qui devrait, idéalement, s'étaler dans la durée, sans pour autant souffrir de blocage; son enclenchement devrait encore moins être remis aux calendes grecques. La réalisation de cette tâche gagnerait, en tout cas, à adopter une approche rationnelle, progressive et flexible intégrant la démarche de la chaîne vertueuse alliant vision, implémentation et régulation dans la recherche constante de l'équilibre entre la tendance localiste privilégiant les données lectales et géolectales et la tentation globaliste imposant une norme standard arbitraire.⁴¹⁴

In this complex discourse, what can be understood is that the corpus planning of the standard Moroccan Amazigh is less concerned with what it is as a real language, which, as Boukous states, can only be revealed "over time." Instead, it is more about what it is not: it is neither a process of standardizing regional varieties that leads to "localist tendencies," nor an arbitrary and unrealistic attempt to impose a berbère commun. It was in continuously supporting the ultimate aim of a successful status planning, which could not be achieved without "political will and genuine societal acceptance," that the corpus planning of the standard Moroccan Amazigh was designed to adopt "a rational, progressive, and flexible approach." However, the progressive planning method "over time" presented a problem, as pointed out by Boukous, it could neither be left to the calendes grecques, meaning it couldn't be postponed indefinitely. This implies that while "flexibly" avoiding the two "extreme tendencies" in standardizing Moroccan Amazigh in the long run, it was still crucial to make standard Amazigh tangible, ideally as a homogeneous national language, without obviously disrupting language practices—and this is where the advantage of adopting a Neo-Tifinagh by IRCAM becomes evident.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 423.

4.2. The Neo-Tifinagh IRCAM

4.2.1. The Three Script Choices for Writing Amazigh for IRCAM

The Amazigh language has a writing tradition that appears in three different alphabets: Arabic, Latin, and Neo-Tifinagh. Arabic is an important language in Islam, and thus its script was known to many people. Introduced to the Maghreb during the Arab-Muslim conquest, Arabic served as the basis for the earliest traces of writing in Amazigh during the Islamic period. The use of Arabic scripts to write Amazigh varieties is evident in the Maghreb, with numerous manuscripts produced throughout the region, likely beginning in the 15th century.⁴¹⁵ These texts, covering a wide range of topics and representing various Amazigh varieties, are highlighted by Mohamed Meouak: “Il suffit par exemple de se pencher sur les écrits ibadites du ġabal Nafūsa, les kanouns et les actes notariés de Kabylie, les œuvres littéraires, juridiques, religieuses et botaniques de l’Atlas et du Souss, voire même des textes médiévaux en berbère du nord du Mali localisés dans les régions de Tombouctou et de Gao, à l’est du pays.”⁴¹⁶

Existing manuscripts show that use of the Arabic alphabet for writing Amazigh became a real tradition in the Djebel Nefousa in Libya and in the Souss region in southern Morocco.⁴¹⁷ For the latter, research by Nico van den Boogert demonstrates the continuity of an established written tradition in Tashelhiyt through the study of manuscript texts dating from the late 16th century to the mid-18th century.⁴¹⁸ More recently, in the early 1970s, new generations of Tashelhiyt authors continued to rely on the Arabic script in their literary and scholarly writings, with Mohamed Chafik’s Arabic-Amazigh Dictionary standing out as a notable example.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁵ Meouak, M. (2015). *La langue berbère au Maghreb médiéval: Textes, contextes, analyses*. Brill. pp. 7-8.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 8.

⁴¹⁷ For the tradition of writing Amazigh in Arabic letters in Djebel Nefousa, see, for example, Calassanti-Motylinski, A. D. (1898). *Le Djebel Nefousa. transcription, traduction Française et notes avec une étude grammaticale*. Paris, Ernest Leroux. pp. 1-2.; See also Meouak, M. (2015). pp. 314-316.

⁴¹⁸ Van den Boogert, N. (1997). *Berber literary tradition of the Sous — with an edition and translation of “The Ocean of Tears” by Muḥammad Awzal (d. 1749)*. De Goeje Fund, Vol. XXVII. Leiden: NINO.

⁴¹⁹ Pouessel, S. (2008). *Écrire la langue berbère au royaume de Mohamed VI: Les*

However, despite its practical tradition and relatively good phonetic correspondence, the Arabic script was not favored by all scholars and activists. This opposition stemmed mainly from the symbolic meaning attached to the script: Arabic was perceived as an imposed and exogenous language, representing cultural, political, and religious dominance, which Amazigh activists sought to resist. In this context, as seen in the case of Kabylia, the Latin script emerged as the preferred choice. On the one hand, it symbolized a break from Arabization and a connection to broader modernist and secular ideals, while on the other, it was considered the most appropriate scientific choice, allowing for the maintenance of links with international languages written in the Latin alphabet.⁴²⁰

The Latin alphabet was introduced to the Maghreb through the French conquest, via Amazigh texts collected by Western missionaries, soldiers, and researchers, which laid the foundation for Amazigh studies and the linguistic description of its variations.⁴²¹ It later became widespread in Kabylia and was also present in Morocco, becoming dominant in most university research, both abroad and within the Maghreb.⁴²² The use of Latin letters for writing Amazigh was perceived by Arabists and Islamists as a tradition imposed by the West, symbolizing a lingering influence of Western colonialism. They instead favored the Arabic script, both as an anti-colonial, local solution and as a way to shape and reinforce the subordinate status of Amazigh to Arabic, an effort driven by the ideology of Arab nationalism, as well as by the religious belief in the sacred nature of the Arabic script.⁴²³

Besides these two ideologically opposing choices for writing Amazigh was the option of Neo-Tifinagh. This innovation began to be promoted as late as in the late 1960s by the *Académie Berbère* as a symbol to assert the existence of Amazigh history and civilization, which long predated the spread of Arabic and Islam. Though not much used in practical writings, the symbolically significant Neo-Tifinagh was cherished by activists in both Algeria and Morocco. It was considered a choice for writing and standardizing the Amazigh language by scholars, including those who would later join IRCAM, as evidenced by the inclusion of a Neo-Tifinagh table in

enjeux politiques et identitaires du tfinagh au Maroc. *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la méditerranée*, (124), 219-239.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*

⁴²² Abrous, D. (1996). Le passage à l'écrit. *Encyclopédie berbère*, (17), 2583-2585.

⁴²³ Pouessel, S. (2008).

Tamawalt Usegmi (1993) by Boudris Belaïd, and as discussed in a 1994 article by Meftaha Ameer on writing and standardizing Amazigh, where Tifinagh was presented alongside Arabic and Latin as one of the three options.⁴²⁴

With the establishment of IRCAM and the immediate incorporation of Amazigh into national education in Morocco, it became urgent to decide which script among the three choices would be officially used for teaching and standardizing the Amazigh language.

4.2.2. The Voting and Adoption of Tifinagh

The issue of choosing the official writing system for Amazigh in Morocco sparked heated debate as IRCAM approached its decision. The Islamist bloc lobbied for the adoption of the Arabic script; for instance, Ahmed Raïssouni, President of the Islamist party *Mouvement de l'Unité et de la Réforme* (MUR), sent a letter directly to the Rector of IRCAM, advocating for the Arabic script.⁴²⁵ Meanwhile, the Amazigh movement strongly opposed the Arabic option. Seventeen members of IRCAM's *Conseil d'Administration* (CA) even threatened to resign if the Arabic script was adopted.⁴²⁶ Regarding the Latin and Tifinagh options, both had support among activists, though the general trend among Latin-script supporters was also to appreciate the symbolic value of Tifinagh. AMREC, one of the most influential Amazigh associations, publicly backed the Tifinagh plan in an article titled *Enseignement de la langue amazighe: pour une officialisation de l'alphabet Tifinagh*.⁴²⁷

The alphabet issue was formally discussed at a session of the CA held in Rabat on January 30 and 31, 2003. After speeches and presentations on each of the alphabets, the floor was opened for CA members to express their opinions. The subsequent voting process involved two rounds, with a script requiring a two-thirds majority for the decision to be valid. In the first round, Tifinagh received 14 votes, the Latin script 13, and the Arabic script only 5. After further debate, the second round resulted in a clear victory for Tifinagh, with 24 votes in its favor and only 8 remaining for the Latin

⁴²⁴ Ameer, M. (1994). Diversité des transcriptions: Pour une notation usuelle et normalisée de la langue berbère. *Etudes et documents berbères*, (1), 25-28.

⁴²⁵ Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). p. 158.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 159

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*

script, giving Tifinagh a comfortable majority. The decision was later endorsed by King Mohammed VI, who sent a letter of congratulations to the CA members and convened representatives of political parties to inform them of the decision.⁴²⁸

When faced with the choice between Arabic and other scripts, CA members first tended to choose either Latin or Tifinagh in opposition to Arabic. In the second round, after the Arabic option was ruled out, the votes for Tifinagh surged, absorbing both Arabic and Latin supporters, allowing it to win comfortably. From this perspective, it could be argued that Tifinagh served as a compromise between the Latin and Arabic scripts. However, this interpretation should not overshadow the reality that Tifinagh had long been a preferred choice among Moroccan activists. This is evident from as early as the decisive advice given by Mahjoubi Aherdane to the *Académie Berbère*, to the endorsement by AMREC, and the results of both rounds of voting at IRCAM. More significantly, the adoption of Tifinagh should be regarded as the first, and one of the most crucial steps in IRCAM's corpus planning towards a standardized national Amazigh language for Morocco.

4.2.3. Tifinagh-IRCAM and Its Significance for Standard Moroccan Amazigh

The adoption of Tifinagh initiated the task of corpus planning within IRCAM, which did not simply implement a decision of the CA but was actively involved in creating a reformed Neo-Tifinagh system, referred to as Tifinagh-IRCAM, and through it, the planning of the phonology of standard Moroccan Amazigh. By the time of Tifinagh-IRCAM's development, several other Neo-Tifinagh plans had emerged from the alphabet introduced by the *Académie Berbère*. These included the plan by *l'Association Afus Deg Wfus*, or the European Berber Cultural Space, based in Roubaix, France, and established in 1985 by former *Académie Berbère* activist Mouhand Ouramdane Khacer⁴²⁹, along with the plan of Arabia Ware Benelux.⁴³⁰ CAL's goal in designing its own Neo-Tifinagh had two key objectives: "1. Le maintien

⁴²⁸ The information in this paragraph regarding the voting and decision-making process comes from Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). pp. 159-162.

⁴²⁹ <https://www.afusdegwvus.org/services/HistoriqueLireLaSuite.html> (accessed October 5, 2024)

⁴³⁰ The Neo-Tifinagh of Arabia Ware Benelux available at: <https://aeb.win.tue.nl/natlang/berber/tifinagh/tifinagh-mondeberbere.html> (accessed October 5, 2024)

d'un lien solidaire avec les différentes variantes de l'alphabet tifinaghe actuel, d'où la nécessité de puiser dans le fonds des graphèmes disponibles dans les différentes variantes et de considérer la création de nouveaux symboles comme un dernier recours; 2. L'adaptation du nouvel alphabet aux structures de l'amazighe standard, requérant parfois l'introduction de quelques modifications." This design was guided by four principles: "l'historicité, la simplicité, l'univocité du signe et l'économie."⁴³¹

The effort result in the Tifinagh-IRCAM as follow

*Tifinagh-IRCAM*⁴³²

	TIFINAGHE	Correspondance latine	Correspondance arabe	Exemples
ya	o	a	ا	oΛOoO
yab	Θ	b	ب	o ΘOεΛ
yag	X	g	ك	oXCooO
yag [~]	X [~]	g [~]	ك [~]	oX [~] X [~] o [~] o [~]
yad	Λ	d	د	oXδΛ
yaɖ	E	ɖ	ض	oEoQ
yey	§	e		+§++O
yaf	⊘	f	ف	oXδ⊘
yak	⊘	k	ك	oKQ⊘δQ
yak [~]	⊘ [~]	k [~]	ك [~]	oCΛΛoK [~] ⊘
yah	⊘	h	ه	o⊘ΛΛδ
yaḥ	λ	ḥ	ح	oλεΛδ⊘
yaε	ϣ	ε	ع	oϣ⊘oλ
yax	X	x	خ	+εX⊘ε
yaq	⊘	q	ق	o⊘Qo⊘
yi	ε	i	ي	εCε
yaj	I	j	ج	oCIIδE
yal	⊘	l	ل	oC⊘o⊘
yam	C	m	م	oCλ
yan	l	n	ن	εOΛl
yu	§	u	و	§ΛC
yar	O	r	ر	§OoO
yaɾ	Q	ɾ	ر	ΘQ Qo
yaγ	ϣ	γ	غ	oϣQδC
yas	⊘	s	س	ε⊘⊘
yaş	⊘	ş	ص	⊘⊘o⊘+
yac	C	c	ش	oClll⊘
yat	+	t	ت	+δ⊘⊘o
yaɖ	E	ɖ	ط	+εEE
yaw	l	w	و	oll⊘
yay	ϣ	y	ي	oϣϣε⊘
yaz	⊘	z	ز	oC⊘⊘ϣ
yaž	⊘	ž	ز	ε⊘ε

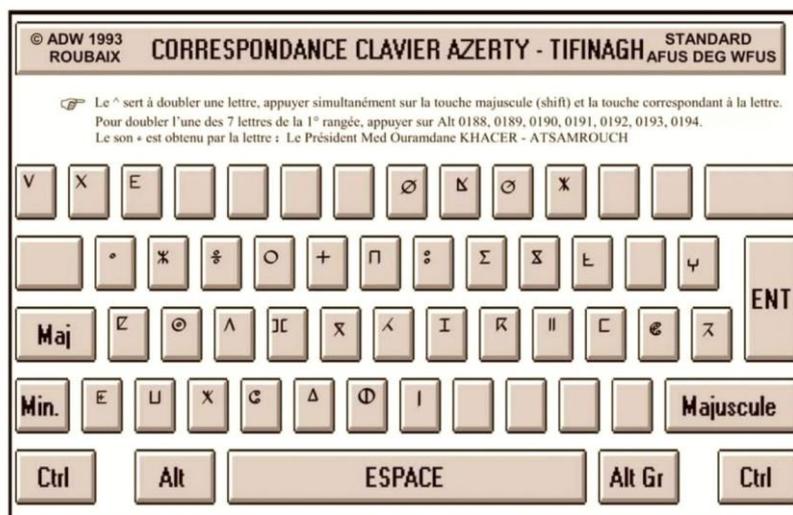
In line with the aim of "maintaining a strong connection with the various existing variants of the Tifinagh alphabet," Tifinagh-IRCAM introduced only three innovative

⁴³¹ Aneur. M., Bouhjar. A., Boukhris. F., Boukous. A., Boumalk. A., Elmedlaoui M., Iazzi. E. & Souifi. H. (2004). pp. 31-32.

⁴³² *Ibid.* p. 14.

graphemes (ⵍ, ⵎ, ⵏ). The remaining symbols were drawn from existing Tifinagh scripts, sometimes with slight graphemic modifications (e.g., ⵏ, ⵐ, ⵑ), primarily from those of *Académie Berbère*, *Afus Deg Wfus*, and Arabia Ware Benelux.⁴³³ Though Tifinagh-IRCAM primarily borrowed graphemes from other Neo-Tifinagh systems, it maintained a high degree of discernibility, particularly from the *Académie Berbère* version, which is the most well-known. Most notably, its distinction was marked by the use of circle symbols instead of point dot symbols for writing vowels (ⵏ, ⵐ, ⵑ). This innovation was borrowed from one of the two typing plans proposed by *Afus Deg Wfus* in 1993, known as *Afus Deg Wfus 2 Regular*, while the *1 Regular* version continued to use point signs for vowels.⁴³⁴ Additionally, the connection of the typically two separate parts in the characters ⵍ and ⵎ, a feature borrowed from the Arabia Ware Benelux plan, also contributed to Tifinagh-IRCAM's distinctiveness.

*Neo-Tifinagh Afus Deg Wfus 2 Regular*⁴³⁵



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These grapheme features borrowed from lesser-known Neo-Tifinagh systems secured Tifinagh-IRCAM a high level of recognizability, ensuring the visual and

⁴³³ For the origin of graphemes, see *Ibid.* pp. 34-35.

⁴³⁴ <https://www.afusdegwvus.org/#typo> (accessed October 5, 2024)

⁴³⁵ <https://www.afusdegwvus.org/#archive> (accessed October 5, 2024)

ideological existence of a standard Moroccan Amazigh, as it is officially regulated that Tifinagh-IRCAM was designed to write nothing but *l'amazighe standard*.

Besides graphemes, when considering the phonemes of Tifinagh-IRCAM, its significance for planning a homogeneous standard Moroccan Amazigh becomes more pronounced, as it was not designed to accommodate the phonology of any specific dialects. The official release of Tifinagh-IRCAM in 2003 was accompanied by a note stating: “Cet alphabet ne représente pas totalement les données phoniques d’aucun parler particulier; fondamentalement conçu pour écrire l’amazighe standard. Il permet ainsi d’aménager la structure-phonique de la langue amazighe dans la perspective de son unification progressive. La particularité essentielle de cet alphabet est de contribuer à neutraliser, au niveau de l’écrit, les faits à caractère local.”⁴³⁶ It was understood that the note intended to emphasize that localized characteristics would only be obliterated at the written level by Tifinagh-IRCAM, meaning that the oral practice of Amazigh varieties would remain unaffected. However, given that the script was designed for national education and not limited to writing, the phonetics of standard Amazigh reflected in Tifinagh-IRCAM were likely to result in a more complex situation.

The phonemes of the standard Amazigh of Morocco are reflected by the 33 letters of Tifinagh-IRCAM, with 27 consonants, 2 labialized consonants, and 4 vowels (including 3 full vowels, or plain vowels, and 1 central vowel, schwa ə), which falls short in fully reflecting the phonetic realization of Amazigh varieties in Morocco. This was mainly due to the exclusion of certain phonetic units, “qui sont soit des variantes régionales, soit des unités non distinctives, soit des unités phonématiques peu productives.”⁴³⁷ CAL did not specify the criteria for judging what should be taken as “non distinctives” and “peu productives,” but examples were listed across six aspects:

1. The lenited consonants mainly found in Tarifiyt and some varieties of Central Moroccan Amazigh, such as the phonetic units \underline{b} and \underline{t} , were written the same as non-lenited consonant, thus Θ stands both for \underline{b} and b and \dagger stands both for \underline{t} and t ; 2. The retention of the emphatics (that is, pharyngealized consonants), includes the sounds E

⁴³⁶ Elmedlaoui, M. (2004b). De “une notation usuelle du Berbère” à “l’ortographe de l’Amazighe” (project de standardisation d’une langue). In *Standardisation de l’amazighe. Actes du séminaire organisé par le centre de l’aménagement linguistique à Rabat*, 63-84.

⁴³⁷ Ameer. M., Bouhjar. A., Boukhris. F., Boukous. A., Boumalk. A., Elmedlaoui M., Iazzi. E. & Souifi. H. (2004). p. 18.

(t), E (d), Q (r), Ø (s), and ʒ (z) in certain words such as “ⵏⵉⵣⵓⵔ” (*anzar*, “rain”) and “ⵉⵛⵉⵢⵔ” (*išid*, “rage”); 3. For the labiovelars, only two phonemes attested in most Moroccan varieties, namely kʷ and gʷ, were retained; 4. The affricates resulting from phonetic mutations, as seen in Tarifiyt (e.g., *ll* to *dj* and *lt* to *tc*), were not retained; 5. The sibilants transformed from *t* into *s* and from *d* into *z*, a feature in some Tashelhiyt dialects, were considered as “surface variation” and not retained; 6. The lateral *l*, which transforms into *r* in Tarifiyt and some varieties of Central Moroccan Amazigh, as well as into *j* in the region of Azrou, was restored as *l*, which was seen as more *pan-amazighe*.⁴³⁸

It can be concluded that Tarifiyt is the variety whose phonetic system is least reflected by the phonemes of Tifinagh-IRCAM in writing standard Amazigh of Morocco. However, this should not be simply understood as a form of discrimination by CAL against Tarifiyt. Rather, it reflects a persistent issue in writing Tarifiyt that already existed with Latin letters. Tifinagh-IRCAM essentially follows the same orthographic conventions as the agreed orthography of Latin letters, which was proposed and accepted by members of the Riffian scientific community in the Netherlands in 1996–1997 and summarized by Mena B. Lafkioui in 2000.⁴³⁹ Khalid Mourigh and Maarten Kossmann point out the issues with this agreed Latin orthography for writing Tarifiyt, which are inherited in Tifinagh-IRCAM as follows:

“The orthography is strongly phonological and sometimes historical, and aims at convergence with other Berber languages, at least in writing conventions. Thus, some typical Tarifiyt sound changes are not represented. The result is a system that many native speakers find difficult to apply, because some contrasts are made, which do not exist in Tarifiyt (e.g. one should write *kal* or even *akal* ‘earth’ instead of the general Tarifiyt form *šar*), while other contrasts that exist in Tarifiyt are obliterated (e.g. the difference between *řmar* ‘cattle’ and *lmal* ‘capital’, which are both written *lmal*). In spite of its ‘agreed’ status, this orthography has hardly ever been

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 18-21.

⁴³⁹ Mourigh, K., & Kossmann, M. (2019). pp. 21-22.; Lafkioui, M. (2000). Propositions pour la notation usuelle à base latine du rifain. *Comptes rendus du groupe linguistique d'études chamito sémitiques (GLECS)*, (XXXIII), 189-200.

implemented in practice, and the few attempts are often riddled with errors, or have added some additional marking in order to make the phonological structure of the words retrievable.”⁴⁴⁰

CAL does not always ignore similar issues caused by Tifinagh-IRCAM. For instance, it addresses the problem arising from the absence of the spirant *ṭ* in contrast to the occlusive *t* as the direct object personal pronoun of the third person singular in Tarifiyt and Central Moroccan Amazigh, where the morphemes for the feminine *t* and the masculine *ṭ* are opposed. This issue was resolved by writing *tt* in place of the absent *ṭ*.⁴⁴¹ However, in general, it can still be understood that, both in terms of graphemes and phonemes, the design of Tifinagh-IRCAM was instrumental in planning towards a homogeneous Moroccan standard Amazigh. For graphemes, the Tifinagh-IRCAM script distinguishes itself through the adoption of less common circular symbols for vowels, in contrast to the more widely used point signs well-attested in both Tuareg and neo-Tifinagh alphabets. This choice provides a visual individuality to the standard Amazigh of Morocco, differentiating it from other Amazigh written in Tifinagh. While, in terms of the inventory of phonemes reflected in the orthography, Tifinagh-IRCAM cannot be considered descriptive of any particular varieties, it is specifically designed for standard Moroccan Amazigh.

4.3. “Moroccan Amazigh” in Education

The official textbook developed by IRCAM for teaching Amazigh in Morocco is titled *Tifawin a Tamazight* (“Hello Tamazight”). It consists of six books, with the first being introduced in 2003. Since September 2008, the complete series has been used across all six levels of the primary cycle.⁴⁴² The design of the *Tifawin a Tamazight* textbooks reflects IRCAM’s progressive approach to developing a standard Moroccan Amazigh. The textbook begins by teaching three main varieties in Morocco, with the first-year book offering the same content in three versions, each corresponding to one of these varieties. Ideologically, it positions itself as teaching a homogeneous standard

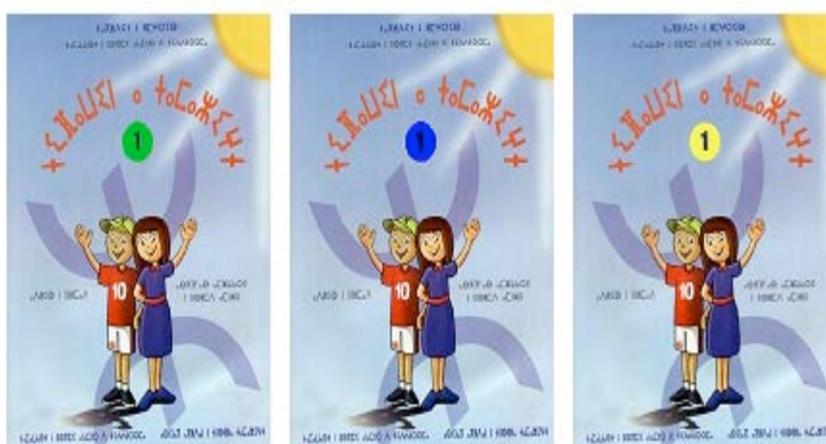
⁴⁴⁰ Mourigh, K., & Kossmann, M. (2019). pp. 21-22.

⁴⁴¹ Aneur. M., Bouhjar. A., Boukhris. F., Boukous. A., Boumalk. A., Elmedlaoui M., Iazzi. E. & Souifi. H. (2004). pp. 18-19.

⁴⁴² Abouzaid, M. (2011). p. 162.

Amazigh, achieved both through the consistent use of Tifnagh-IRCAM and by avoiding explicitly naming the specific Amazigh varieties. These varieties are visually distinguishable only by the color differences on the branding of the cover: blue for Tarifiyt, green for Central Moroccan Amazigh, and yellow for Tashelhiyt.⁴⁴³ When it becomes necessary to refer to the varieties, they are identified as Amazigh of the north, center, and south, as reflected in the names of the audio files accompanying the teaching guide.⁴⁴⁴

Covers of Tifawin a Tamazight 1 with color differences⁴⁴⁵



The second-year textbook, by contrast, is presented in a single version, but it maintains the color-coding system with colored bands (blue, green, and yellow) on each page to indicate the different varieties. Additionally, some pages are marked by brown to introduce content common to all three.⁴⁴⁶ This system appears designed to gradually familiarize learners with the other two varieties and their common features. However, upon closer examination, the second-year textbook is not essentially different from the first-year one, as it sometimes seems merely to gather the content from three separate books into one. This arrangement still allows teachers and students

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁴ https://www.ircam.ma/index.php/fr/edition/Guide_de_l%E2%80%99enseignant_et_de_l%E2%80%99enseignante_de_l%E2%80%99amazighe (accessed October 20, 2024)

⁴⁴⁵ Abouzaid, M. (2011). p. 162.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 163.

to focus primarily on their own variety.

This is evident, for example, in Unit 3 of the second-year book, between pages 34-39, where three texts discuss “g *ugadaz*” (“In the market”), titled: “g *ugadaz n tmsaman*” (p. 34, page in blue for Tarifiyt), “g *ugadaz*” (p. 36, page in green for Central Moroccan Amazigh), and “g *ugadaz*” (p. 38, page in yellow for Tashelhiyt), respectively.⁴⁴⁷ It can be inferred that these sections have not been written for teaching in sequence and are rather intended to be used separately by teachers of each variety. For instance, each text is followed by a list of new words, where “*agadaz*” (“market”) is introduced three times, each in a distinct way targeting speakers of different varieties. For example, “*agadaz*” is first introduced on page 34 in blue as “*agadaz: ansa, mani ssayn d znuzan iwdan timsuyin (ssuq)*” and reintroduced on page 38 in yellow as “*agadaz: ssuq*,” a repetition that seems illogical if the book is intended to be used in page order.

Three texts of “g *ugadaz*” with colored bands in Tifawin a Tamazight 2⁴⁴⁸



Additionally, each text is followed by similar content introducing the usage of “like, or as much” (*am, anct, zun*), which means that if the book is meant to be used in page order, students would be introduced to the same concepts three times, each in a different variety. A similar example is found in Unit 7, discussing traffic, which

⁴⁴⁷ IRCAM. (2004). *Tifawin a tamazight 2, adlis n unlmad (manuel pédagogique de l'élève)*. Rabat :

Publication OKAD. pp. 34-39.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 34, 36, 38.

features three different texts followed by similar grammar and exercises.⁴⁴⁹ In this instance, the word “*abrid*” (road) first appears on page 82 in the blue Tarifiyt section, where it is not introduced as a new word. However, it is later listed as a new term on page 86 in the yellow section and is explained using the Tashelhiyt equivalent “*abrid: ayaras*.” These examples suggest that the book is designed for teachers and students to focus directly on their own sections when studying similar topics and grammar within the same unit, with the other varieties being mentioned to varying degrees or not at all.

This arrangement changes significantly in the third-year textbook. Although the units in Book Three still feature three texts in different colored bands, each representing a similar theme, their contents are now independent. Each text is followed by new vocabulary and reading comprehension exercises, without the repetition seen in Book Two. In each unit, only after completing all three texts are the grammar modules introduced, marked by a brown color band, signifying that the grammar is common to all three varieties or represents the grammar of standard Moroccan Amazigh. Each grammar module is then followed by another text, also marked in brown, indicating its use of standard Amazigh.⁴⁵⁰ This significant and sudden change in Book Three, which mandates the teaching of other varieties that were not compulsory in the previous books, combined with the added difficulty of new words and grammar, presents a substantial challenge for both educators and students.

The difficulties were reflected in an interview conducted by Myriam Abouzaid in 2007 with a teacher whose native language was Tashelhiyt and who had been teaching Amazigh for three years in Rabat. The teacher testified: “La 3ème année, le problème qu’on trouve, par exemple, moi et ma copine, le dialecte qu’on connaît c’est celui du Souss. Par contre pour les livres de la 3ème année, ils essaient de... de confuser ou bien de fondre les 3 dialectes. Donc lorsqu’on trouve par exemple un mot du nord ou bien... du Moyen Atlas, oui, donc on ne comprend pas ce mot. On n’a pas un dictionnaire qui donne des explications ou bien des... des synonymes des 3 dialectes. Donc nous, les enseignants, je crois qu’il faut qu’on connaisse les autres

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 79-90.

⁴⁵⁰ IRCAM. (2005). *Tifawin a tamazight 3, adlis n unlmad (manuel pédagogique de l’élève)*. Rabat : Publication OKAD.

dialectes.”⁴⁵¹ This issue arose suddenly in the third year, as the teacher noted that during the second year, “we teachers always look for the dialect we know. We teach it to our students. That’s the difference between the second-year textbook and the third-year textbook.” In the third year, “on the other hand, there is only one text. So the only... we have to study it.”⁴⁵² The teacher then explained the reason for this arrangement: “We are trying to arrive at a single language, but we haven’t achieved it yet... One text. In which they use vocabulary from the South, the Rif, and the Middle Atlas...”⁴⁵³

The texts representing standard Amazigh, are included in Book Three at the end of each unit, marked by brown bands. However, it is difficult for these texts to entirely escape identification with specific varieties. For instance, the standard Amazigh text in the brown band on page 21 begins with the following sentence: *ijj n ujdīd, tuya izddy g yict n turtit. tuya ittffy ku ass sg taddart nns zikk, ittyima xf yict n tṣṭta n usklu, ittīrir; iccat g tmja.*⁴⁵⁴ Here, the past indicator *tuya* and the absence of a particle before the imperfective verb, along with the usage of *ijj* for “one,” *turtit* for “fig tree,” and other features, clearly reflect Tarifiyt usage. Except for *ku ass, sg,* and *asklu*, the whole sentence is in Tarifiyt, which may not be familiar to speakers of the other two varieties. In contrast, on page 117, another standard Amazigh text employs terms like *ad ur* for negative imperatives and *uhu* for “no,” which are more familiar to speakers of Central Moroccan Amazigh or Tashelhiyt.⁴⁵⁵ Thus, the concept of “standard Amazigh” presented in the book may not reflect a homogeneous language but rather resembles “three standards” of the main Amazigh varieties in Morocco. (This feature in language teaching is presented as part of the polynomic approach by IRCAM in planning Amazigh, which I will come back to explain in Chapter Six.) While these standards share a writing system and certain phonetic and grammatical rules, they are ideologically framed as “*une langue*,” rather than practically so.

This is evidenced by the description of the textbook by Bouchra El Barkani, a member of the CRDPP, who explained that rather than focusing on a homogeneous language, the third and fourth-year textbooks aim to further encourage students to

⁴⁵¹ Abouzaid, M. (2011). pp. 351-352.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 352.

⁴⁵⁴ IRCAM. (2005). p. 21.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 117.

practice with all three varieties. The goal is to foster a situation where students can “comprendre l’autre qui parle un dialecte autre que le mien et parler un dialecte autre que le mien.”⁴⁵⁶ Continuing along this path, in the 5th and 6th years, students begin acquiring knowledge that enables them to speak “un ‘amazighe standard’ compréhensible par tous les amazighophones du Maroc.”⁴⁵⁷ While the focus in the fifth year shifts to standard Amazigh rather than the previous goal of “understand and speak another dialect,” the color-coding system of the fifth-year textbook remains in place, with the main change being an increase in the percentage of brown pages.⁴⁵⁸ For example, in the text on page 80, the use of *tuya*, along with the absence of a preceding particle for the imperfective verb, and sentences like *aqqa imttawn n ugujil sskmaḍn ul inu*, which include the presentative particle *aqqa*, make this passage more familiar to Tarifiyt speakers than to others and than other texts.⁴⁵⁹

The official introduction of IRCAM to Book 5 sheds light on what this standard Amazigh entails. The official website of IRCAM states that “Tifawin a Tamazight 5 vient couronner les efforts de cette standardisation progressive entamée dans les niveaux précédents en adoptant une langue amazighe riche et unifiée pour l’enseignement-apprentissage des activités de base (communication, lecture et écriture).” In explaining how this standard Amazigh is unified, it highlights three aspects: “l’adoption d’une graphie tfinaghe-ircam à tendance phonologique, l’adoption des mêmes règles d’orthographe, le primat d’un vocabulaire commun et des structures équivalentes et l’emploi des mêmes néologismes.” It also emphasizes an important feature: “Le parti pris de cette standardisation n’a cependant pas conduit à l’appauvrissement de la langue. En effet, les variantes lexicales et morphologiques ne sont pas présentées comme des formes concurrentes mais comme des synonymes et des équivalents qui expriment la richesse des ressources linguistiques de l’amazighe.”⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁶ El Barkani, B. (2010). *Le choix de la graphie tfinaghe pour enseigner, apprendre l’amazighe au Maroc: Conditions, représentation et pratiques* (Doctoral dissertation, Université Jean Monnet-Saint-Etienne). p. 159.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁸ IRCAM. (2007). *Tifawin a tamazight 3, adlis n unlmad (manuel pédagogique de l’élève)*. Rabat : Publication OKAD.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 80.

⁴⁶⁰ <https://www.ircam.ma/fr/edition/tifawin-a-tamazight-5> (accessed October 25,

With this presentation, Bouchra El Barkani's discussion of the ultimate goal of Amazigh education in Morocco—enabling students to speak “a standard Amazigh comprehensible to all Amazigh speakers in Morocco”—becomes clearer. The inter-comprehension among Moroccan Amazigh speakers is not to be achieved through the education of a single standard language, as the *Tifawin a Tamazight* series begins by teaching the varieties and retains features from all three throughout. Instead, it relies primarily on students learning about the other varieties, expanding their vocabulary across all three, including neologisms, and broadening their grammatical knowledge to encompass each variety. In contrast, the standard Amazigh is primarily an ideological concept, with its limited realization relying mainly on “the adoption of a Tifinagh-IRCAM script with a phonological orientation” and “the adoption of the same spelling rules.” Regarding “a common vocabulary and equivalent structures,” the term used is “primacy” rather than adoption, indicating an emphasis on highlighting these aspects of “a unified language” in education, rather than imposing a single language.

The importance of presenting an ideologically unified Amazigh, as introduced at the beginning of the chapter with a quotation from Ahmed Boukous emphasizing political reasons, aims at “responding to a strong social expectation: the standardization of a common Amazigh language for the entire national community.” This idea is echoed in IRCAM's official presentation of *Tifawin a Tamazight*, which states that it aims to enable students to communicate “à travers l'oral et l'écrit dans un amazighe national riche et unifié tout en consolidant le sentiment d'appartenance à une communauté linguistique plus large et en renforçant la cohésion nationale.”⁴⁶¹ In practice, as described by Bouchra El Barkani, this means enabling students to “understand others who speak a dialect different from mine and to speak a dialect different from mine.” Consequently, the openness of IRCAM's standardization, designed to introduce teachers and students to a language they are familiar with, is complicated by requiring them to learn new varieties.

In conclusion, the Amazigh education in Morocco requires teachers and students to confront a complex situation, particularly from the third year onward, as they engage with other Amazigh varieties and later with Amazigh standards that could reflect features of any of the three varieties. These standards are presented as unified

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⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*

mainly ideologically, with Tifinagh-IRCAM playing a crucial role through its graphemes and phonemes. Mutual comprehension of the ideologically unified Amazigh is expected to be achieved primarily through the expansion of knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical traits from other varieties, rather than through the mastery of a single language. The difficulties in education for both teachers and students caused by this form of acquisition planning can only be exacerbated by the inclusion of non-Amazigh speakers, who need to start learning Amazigh through one variety and, while still at a rudimentary level, will be introduced to the other two varieties.

While the political reasons behind the idea of planning toward a unified Moroccan Amazigh have been explained earlier in the chapter, it was essential for IRCAM to clarify and justify why it would risk potentially creating such a complex diglossic situation solely to prevent, as Boukous stated and quoted earlier, “la tendance localiste privilégiant les données lectales et géolectales”—especially given that standardizing regional varieties was precisely what linguists recommended at the 1998 INALCO workshop. In an effort to reconcile the contradiction between the “scientific need” to standardize Amazigh varieties and the “political need” to avoid standardizing varieties while planning toward a common Amazigh, Ahmed Boukous, as the rector of IRCAM, developed a comprehensive theory addressing the “death” of the Amazigh language and the/a strategy for its “revitalization.”

5. THE “DEATH” AND “REVITALIZATION” OF THE AMAZIGH LANGUAGE IN AHMED BOUKOUS’S LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY

Ahmed Boukous is aware of the suggestions made by linguists regarding the standardization of regional Amazigh varieties and their rejection of planning for a common Amazigh language. In *Revitalisation de la langue amazighe* (2012), while discussing the strategies for standardizing Amazigh, he fully quotes Salem Chaker’s objection: “L’élaboration d’un standard berbère commun ne peut être considérée comme un objectif immédiat. Il faut éviter de constituer dans le champ berbère une nouvelle situation diglossique du type de celle de l’arabe classique/arabe dialectal qui serait tout à fait contre-productive par rapport à l’objectif de promotion de la langue

berbère et notamment à sa généralisation.”⁴⁶² However, while Chaker’s argument clearly states that a common Amazigh risks creating a diglossic situation and hindering the promotion of the language, Boukous’s discourse focuses not on why a common Amazigh is undesirable, but rather on why it is unrealistic, referring to it as “une utopie.”⁴⁶³

Boukous addresses what Chaker refers to as “un standard berbère commun” using instead the term “standard supranational,” emphasizing that the main issue lies in the lack of political will for such planning. He states, “il n’est à l’ordre du jour ni dans l’agenda des gouvernements ni dans celui de la classe politique maghrébine ni même dans celui de la société civile.”⁴⁶⁴ Consequently, the absence of “a supranational entity authorized to implement this standard” condemns it “to lack real consistency across different countries.”⁴⁶⁵ Thus, for Boukous, the issue is not so much that the idea is undesirable, as he acknowledges that a common Amazigh “will undoubtedly have symbolic value in terms of the ideology of Tamazgha,” but rather that it is unfeasible and “risks having no sociolinguistic consistency.”⁴⁶⁶ The English version of *Revitalisation* is particularly revealing in this regard. Before quoting the same paragraph from Chaker, it echoes the metaphor used in the INALCO workshop, referring to the proposed common Amazigh as a “monster.” While the workshop describes it as “un monstre normatif supplémentaire,” emphasizing the unnecessary diglossia it may cause, Boukous calls it a “stateless monster language without anchoring in the sociolinguistic and cultural reality.”⁴⁶⁷

Based on these discussions, Boukous proposed the innovative concept of a national standard, which, in contrast to the stateless common Amazigh across *Tamazgha*, benefits from “une aire donnée qui soit à la fois un espace d’intercompréhension langagière et un espace culturel communautaire offrant les meilleures conditions pour la réussite de l’implantation sociale de l’amazighe

⁴⁶² Chaker, S. (2000). Orientations générales pour l’aménagement de la langue berbère: Urgence et réalisme. *Imazighen ass-a*, 5-6. Quoted in Boukous, A. (2012). p. 232.

⁴⁶³ Boukous, A. (2012). p. 244.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 243.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 244.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁷ Boukous, A. (2011). p. 232.

commun et unitaire."⁴⁶⁸ Starting from this planning method rooted in "a solid sociolinguistic and sociocultural reality," Boukous suggests that the standard national Amazigh would "contribute to homogenizing Amazigh" in the long run.⁴⁶⁹ Boukous's discussion on planning a "national Amazigh" primarily focuses on its feasibility in contrast to the concept of a "common Amazigh." However, it lacks an exploration of its necessity, particularly in light of the widespread support among linguists for the standardization of regional varieties. Addressing this need to highlight the undesirability of planning for regional varieties, Boukous continues his discussion on the concepts of "regional standard" and "local standard."

Boukous does not clarify the distinction between the two terms in the book and avoids using terms like *Tarifiyt* and *Tashelhiyt*. In fact, in an article addressing the same issue in 2009, Boukous mentions only the regional standard, with no reference to a local standard under the supranational and national standards.⁴⁷⁰ In *Revitalisation*, the discussion of regional standard focuses exclusively on political considerations, as Boukous suggests that the "undeniable forces" of the choice are foremost "political acceptability in terms of negotiating power within the group and the emergence of regional leadership," along with factors such as "social congruence in terms of representations" and "governance through proximity in terms of territorial management."⁴⁷¹

While addressing its defects, the points made are also primarily political, suggesting that it risks "exacerbating regional divisions and reinforcing particularisms," which further hinders "the chances of Amazigh identity forming a unified community bloc with an autonomous national leadership capable of negotiating with central authorities." Additionally, it limits "the chances of an endogenous development of the Amazigh language through the confluence of linguistic resources" and "hinders exchanges between regional cultural expressions and limits their mutual enrichment."⁴⁷² It can be observed that, according to the book, these political defects of the regional standard are the merits of the national standard.

⁴⁶⁸ Boukous, A. (2012). p. 245.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁰ Boukous, A. (2009c). Aménagement de l'amazighe: Pour une planification stratégique. *Asinag*, 3, 13-40.

⁴⁷¹ Boukous, A. (2012). p. 247.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*

Only after the above discussion does Boukous address language practice in the section on local standard, acknowledging that “l’avantage de cette option est qu’elle respecte les données de la réalité linguistique et culturelle locale.” However, he also notes its defects: “Elle a cependant l’inconvénient majeur de renforcer à l’extrême l’état d’émiettement dialectal déjà avancé de l’amazighe, ce qui aggraverait la précarisation de l’amazighe.” In this regard, Boukous believes that “la nécessité de «coller à la réalité» ne devrait cependant pas conduire à cristalliser les divergences au sein de l’amazighe par la description dans le menu détail des structures des parlers locaux et leur normalisation.”⁴⁷³

The use of the terms *standard régional* and *standard local* helps avoid a direct divergence from the linguists’ suggestion advocating for the standardization of, as previously quoted, “chaque variété régionale du berbère (kabyle standard, tachelhit standard, etc.)” Boukous refrains from blaming the problem of “coller à la réalité” on the regional choice, instead placing it on the term of local. A similar careful use of terms is evident in the English version of the book, where Boukous lists only three choices—“pan-Amazigh,” “regional Amazigh,” and “the lect as a standard”—rather than four. In this version, he explicitly suggests that the choice of “regional Amazigh” is “the most appropriate.”⁴⁷⁴ However, while it appears that Boukous aligns with the INALCO workshop on standardizing a “regional variety,” his interpretation differs, as he states: “this (regional) option consists in considering dialectal facts in a given area which is both a space for linguistic mutual intelligibility and a community cultural framework which offers the best conditions for the successful establishment of common Amazigh.”⁴⁷⁵ This indicates that “regional Amazigh” in Boukous’s context is not what the INALCO workshop defines as “kabyle standard, tachelhit standard, etc.,” but rather a synonym for “national Amazigh.”

In the English version, Boukous categorizes choices like Tarifiyt and Tashelhiyt, though still without specifying them, under the term “the lect as a standard.” This brings us back to a central concern of this thesis: How can it be justified that the more practical approach of standardizing the Amazigh language—based on regional varieties—should not be the chosen approach? In other words, how can the choice of a national Amazigh be presented as not only feasible but also necessary, beyond the

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.* pp. 247-248.

⁴⁷⁴ Boukous, A. (2011). pp. 231-234.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 233.

political needs of IRCAM as discussed, and as appearing to be a linguistic choice as well? The English version of *Revitalisation* provides a clear answer, echoing the French version’s critique of *standard local* as reinforcing Amazigh’s “state of dialectal fragmentation” and aggravating its “precariousness”. It suggests that choosing the “lect” (intended, Tarifiyt, Central Moroccan Amazigh, and Tashelhiyt) as a standard “would have the major drawback of reinforcing the state of dialectalization of Amazigh and, hence, contribute to strengthening the processes of heterogenization that have been at work for centuries in the field of Amazigh.”⁴⁷⁶

In the following part of this chapter, I will try to analyze Boukous’s discourse on the “heterogenization” process of Amazigh, examining his comprehensive theory that situates the Amazigh language within discussions of “language death” and “language revitalization.” I aim to clarify how terms like dialectalization and language attrition serve as indicators of this so-called heterogenizing and dying process of Amazigh. Then, I will analyze how IRCAM’s exclusion of Arabic loanwords in the lexical planning of its standard Amazigh addresses both the dialectalization and attrition issues and ideologically supports the “revitalization” of the Amazigh language.

5.1. The “Revitalization” Reversing the “Death” of Amazigh Language

Ahmed Boukous begins the book *Revitalisation* with a section discussing “de la mise en danger à la mise à mort des langues,” describing the situation of the Amazigh language in Morocco as “marquée autant par le danger d’extinction convoqué par un processus historique impérieux.”⁴⁷⁷ This prompts an introduction to the concepts of death and revitalization in relation to languages. Language death is not regarded as a precisely defined term in scientific discourse, as it is often seen as an emotional expression tied to language shift and maintenance, with languages anthropomorphically described as dying or being killed by other languages.⁴⁷⁸ These metaphors presuppose the existence of distinct languages and treat language as fixed, static systems rather than as open systems that are constantly shifting and changing. In this context, an imagined version of a language might be considered endangered.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.* p. 234.

⁴⁷⁷ Boukous, A. (2012). pp. 3-6, 8.

⁴⁷⁸ Horner, K., & Weber, J. J. (2018). p. 44.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 44-45; See also Pennycook, A. (2004). Language policy and the ecological turn. *Language policy*, 3, 213-239. p. 231.

This discussion does not deny the fact that a language might be endangered and could become extinct, as David Crystal provides a simple definition: “a language dies when nobody speaks it anymore... If you are the last speaker of a language, your language—viewed as a tool of communication—is already dead.”⁴⁸⁰ Wolfgang Dressler suggests that language “dies” in various ways, notably stating that it “usually occurs in unstable bilingual or multilingual speech communities as a result of language shift from a regressive minority language to a dominant majority language,” highlighting the loss or death of a language within a multilingual or bilingual environment.⁴⁸¹ Additionally, two other circumstances that may be discussed as forms of language death include cases where a language transforms into distinct daughter languages, as seen in the death of Latin, and instances where an entire speech community ceases to exist, as occurred with Tasmanian.⁴⁸²

However, regardless of the criteria used, the Amazigh languages cannot be considered as facing the danger of extinction. In Morocco, the three main Amazigh varieties are spoken across their respective regions by nearly the entire population. Additionally, in his evaluation of the six Amazigh varieties listed in the UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, Maarten Kossmann considers Judeo-Berber and Ait Rouadi Tamazight, though experiencing decline, not distinct enough to be classified as dialects on their own. As for Figuig Berber, Senhadja de Sraïr, Beni Iznasen, and Ghomara Berber, the assessment of their endangerment is highly questionable according to this author.⁴⁸³ Ahmed Boukous's earlier perspective on this issue, before IRCAM's establishment, was not significantly different. In 1995, he stated, “Amazigh c'est une langue douée de vitalité car elle représente la langue maternelle des Berbères, qui l'emploient comme moyen de communication privilégié dans leur vie quotidienne, dans la pratique sociale et dans la production culturelle.”⁴⁸⁴ However, while he previously recognized the vitality of Amazigh, his attitude shifts to discussing its imminent danger of “language death” in *Revitalisation*.

To understand this shift in attitude, it is essential to note that Boukous's discourse

⁴⁸⁰ Crystal, D. (2000). What is language death? In *Language death*. Cambridge University Press, 1–26.

⁴⁸¹ Dressler, W. U. (1988). Language death. In F. J. Newmeyer (Ed.), *Linguistics: The Cambridge survey*. Cambridge University Press, 184–192.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*

⁴⁸³ Kossmann, M. (2013b). pp. 34–35.

⁴⁸⁴ Boukous, A. (1995a). p. 11.

on the language death of Amazigh is chronologically late to, and ideologically subordinate to, the discussion of its revitalization. In his 2009 article titled *Aménagement de l’amazighe: pour une planification stratégique*, which aims at “l’analyse systémique de l’aménagement de l’amazighe dans le cadre du processus de revitalisation de l’amazighe et dans la perspective d’une planification stratégique de la politique de promotion de l’amazighité,” Boukous does not discuss any imminent danger of extinction for the Amazigh language. Instead, he diagnoses its weaknesses as “oralité, vernacularité, dialectalité, non-standard” and identifies threats in aspects such as “législation, idéologie, économie, technologie, et étiolement (dans les conditions sociales et économiques imposées par l’urbanisation).”⁴⁸⁵ Meanwhile, he still views “vitalité” as one of the language’s most significant assets, aligning with his earlier stance on the importance of maintaining the language.⁴⁸⁶

Thus, what can be observed between Boukous’s 1995 article and his 2009 article might reflect a shift from the theory of language maintenance to that of language revitalization. This theoretical shift reflects the development of the theory of language revitalization itself. As noted by Leanne Hinton, literature on language revitalization has grown significantly since the 1990s. In the 1970s and 1980s, the focus was on language maintenance—efforts to preserve the status quo for minority languages.⁴⁸⁷ In the 1990s, as the issue of language “death” or disappearance due to various factors became more pressing, communities and linguists turned to urgent efforts to “save” these languages by documenting them before their last speakers passed away. For many community activists, however, documentation alone was insufficient, as it merely pickled the language, whereas true language revitalization required acquiring new speakers by finding ways to help people learn the language where intergenerational transmission had ceased.⁴⁸⁸ Thus, the term language revitalization became widely adopted, emphasizing measures to counter language endangerment, particularly the loss of family-based language transmission.⁴⁸⁹

As for Amazigh in Morocco, although bilingualism with Moroccan Arabic is

⁴⁸⁵ Boukous, A. (2009c). pp. 21, 25.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p. 21.

⁴⁸⁷ Hinton, L. (2003). Language revitalization. In *Annual review of applied linguistics*, 23, 44-57.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p. 45.

⁴⁸⁹ Horner, K., & Weber, J. J. (2018). p. 67.

prevalent, Amazigh maintains a privileged status within the inside domain of the village and the family, with little indication of large-scale decline in family-based transmission. Moroccan Arabic, meanwhile, dominates the outside domain.⁴⁹⁰ Concerns about the endangerment of Amazigh among scholars and activists may reflect what Kossmann describes as the impact of urbanization, mass education, and improved infrastructure, which have expanded the “outside” domain and created new contexts of language use—contexts in which Amazigh has not so much contracted but rather failed to expand into new domains.⁴⁹¹

That said, cases of the loss of family-based transmission of Amazigh does occur as a result of urbanization. While the phenomena associated with urbanization may not necessarily endanger the Amazigh language as a whole, they raise concerns for Boukous, who, in his 1995 paper on the maintenance and shift of Amazigh, notes that Arabic is “employed increasingly in urban areas, as a result of migration.” He concludes that “les facteurs du changement du berbère sont assurément plus puissants que ceux de son maintien; ils conduisent à la déperdition lente mais progressive du berbère en situation de contact, c’est-à-dire en milieu urbain,” where the “lack of loyalty among speakers toward their first language,” described by quoting “people know very well on which side their linguistic bread is buttered,” is mostly to blame.⁴⁹² Boukous’s 2009 article presents a view similar to his earlier perspective on the endangerment of the Amazigh language. He diagnoses that the “migratory context contributes to reducing its social base,” emphasizing that one of the most pressing issues lies in “certain segments of the community not considering the Amazigh language and culture as central identity values, and thus only weakly ensuring the intergenerational transmission of the language and culture.”⁴⁹³

What differs in Boukous’s 2009 article compared to his 1995 one is that he shifts the issue from the framework of language maintenance to that of language revitalization. In this context, he cites, for example, the famous model of Reversing Language Shift (RLS) by Joshua A. Fishman, who is one of the first researchers in the field of language revitalization, studying it from the perspective of sociological

⁴⁹⁰ Kossmann, M. (2013b). p. 38.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹² Boukous, A. (1995a). p. 25.

⁴⁹³ Boukous, A. (2009c). p. 37.

theory.⁴⁹⁴ What is particularly notable is that, although, as Hinton points out, “works on language death preceded works on revitalization,”⁴⁹⁵ when Boukous attempts to place Amazigh within the framework of language revitalization, he still believes that Amazigh retains vitality but is only perceived as endangered. In evaluating the situation of Amazigh, Boukous is explicit with a comparison in the very beginning of the 2009 article to that of French in Canada, stating that: “Dans cette optique générale, j’envisagerai le cas de l’amazighe dans le cadre de la sociolinguistique en mettant à contribution, notamment, le modèle de reversing language shift proposé par Fishman (1991, 2001) pour décrire et expliquer le phénomène de la résistance des langues à la dévitalisation, à l’étiolement et à la mort, modèle amélioré par Landry, Deveau et Allard (2005) et appelé revitalisation ethnolangagière, à partir du cas du français au Canada.”⁴⁹⁶

The evaluation of the situation of Amazigh by Boukous is very similar to the one presented in the article he quotes, “Au-delà de la résistance: principes de la revitalisation ethnolangagière,” which diagnoses the situation of French in Canada. The article explains: “L’urbanisation grandissante et l’exode des régions rurales, principalement par les jeunes, constituent ensemble un autre phénomène qui menace la vitalité de la francophonie canadienne en situation minoritaire; l’urbanisation accrue contribue à un affaiblissement des communautés francophones et les jeunes migrants francophones qui intègrent les milieux urbains deviennent plus vulnérables à l’assimilation linguistique.”⁴⁹⁷ Based on these observations, the article describes the situation of French in Canada as “une vitalité décroissante” and proposes a “processus de revitalisation langagière,” which is quoted with emphasis in Boukous’s article.⁴⁹⁸ However, it is highly questionable whether the model for French in Canada truly fits within the framework of language revitalization based on RLS, or, as Boukous suggests, an improved version of the latter.

The endangerment of French in Canada, as an ideologically driven discourse, is primarily a sentiment shared within the context of Quebec Francophone

⁴⁹⁴ Hinton, L. (2003). p. 49.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 48.

⁴⁹⁶ Boukous, A. (2009c). p. 15.

⁴⁹⁷ Landry, R., Deveau, K., & Allard, R. (2006). Au-delà de la résistance: Principes de la revitalisation ethnolangagière. *Francophonies d’amérique*, 22, 37-56. p. 39.

⁴⁹⁸ Boukous, A. (2009c). pp. 24, 30.

nationalism.⁴⁹⁹ As introduced by Kristine Horner and Jean-Jacques Weber, while French is the majority language in Quebec, it is a minority language in Canada as a whole. Consequently, many Québécois feel that French is endangered and must be protected against English, particularly in what some perceive as a hostile anglophone environment.⁵⁰⁰ This feeling led to the implementation of *Bill 101* (the Charter of the French Language, 1977), which aims at giving French “a chance of survival” in the country. This included several restrictive clauses, such as requiring new immigrants to enroll their children in French-medium schools and mandating that all commercial signage be in French only, with these measures not being relaxed until the 1990s.⁵⁰¹

The quoting by Boukous of the revitalization model of French in Canada and its application to the case of Amazigh in Morocco shows that his view on the endangerment of Amazigh is primarily ideological and discussed mainly within the nationalist context. Just as Quebec Francophone nationalists perceive French as “endangered” only within the bilingual environment of Canada, but do not necessarily believe that the French language is on the verge of extinction, Boukous, when discussing the revitalization of Amazigh, does not necessarily believe that the language is on the brink of losing its last speakers. However, this approach of discussing language revitalization without addressing language death changed in his 2012 book *Revitalisation*. This book opens with a section titled “De la mise en danger à la mise à mort des langues,” in which he references UNESCO’s interpretation of language death, suggesting that: “le patrimoine langagier de l’humanité est menacé dans sa diversité par l’extinction des langues précarisées. Ce constat se fonde sur les données suivantes: 6,809 langues sont répertoriées à travers le monde... 50 % des langues du monde sont en danger... 450 langues sont en voie d’extinction... et 1 langue disparaît en moyenne toutes les deux semaines.”⁵⁰²

Though it does not explicitly show how the Amazigh language fits among those at risk of disappearance or extinction, this approach has the advantage of broadening the source of IRCAM’s legitimacy beyond the national level, as discussed in Chapter

⁴⁹⁹ For “endangerment” as an ideologically driven discourse in the defense of languages, see Duchêne, A., & Heller, M. (Eds.). (2008). *Discourses of endangerment: Ideology and interest in the defence of languages*. Continuum.

⁵⁰⁰ Horner, K., & Weber, J. J. (2018). p. 126.

⁵⁰¹ May, S. (2001). *Language and minority rights: Ethnicity, nationalism, and the politics of language*. Harlow: Pearson Longman. pp. 229-231.

⁵⁰² Boukous, A. (2012). p. 3.

Three, to an international level. Boukous states in the same paragraph that “Le danger encouru par la diversité linguistique interpelle les communautés concernées, les institutions nationales, les organisations internationales et les organisations nongouvernementales dédiées aux droits humains.”⁵⁰³ He then specifically mentions the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2003), emphasizing the priorities he aims to apply to legitimize IRCAM’s activities beyond national documents: “la sensibilisation à la problématique de la disparition des langues et à la nécessité de sauvegarder la diversité linguistique; le renforcement des capacités locales et la promotion de politiques linguistiques appropriées; et la mobilisation de la coopération internationale.”⁵⁰⁴

According to Horner and Weber, support from international minority rights organizations, alongside efforts by grassroots movements and the state, is essential for the success of a language revitalization effort.⁵⁰⁵ Though it is highly questionable whether a Canadian French-like language revitalization aligns with this theoretical framework of language revitalization, the strategy of internationalizing the Amazigh revitalization cause became important to IRCAM’s approach. This is more explicitly presented in the “Fondement juridique” section of *Revitalisation*, where Boukous references ten documents, primarily from UNESCO, topped with the Charter of the United Nations and the the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in an effort to position IRCAM’s work within the broader scope of international initiatives aimed at protecting minority rights.⁵⁰⁶ This effort is not confined to theoretical discourse but is translated into practice, most notably through IRCAM’s annual celebration of International Mother Language Day in collaboration with the UNESCO office in Rabat.⁵⁰⁷

However, the question remains: while it is understandable why IRCAM sought to reference UNESCO, the discourse on language death presented at the beginning of *Revitalisation* seems difficult to align with the actual situation of the Amazigh language. What, then, is the particular way Boukous frames the concept of death in

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁵ Horner, K., & Weber, J. J. (2018). p. 68.

⁵⁰⁶ Boukous, A. (2012). pp. 269-270.

⁵⁰⁷ See, for example, the event held in 2015.

<https://www.ircam.ma/fr/actualites/celebration-de-la-journee-internationale-de-la-langue-maternelle-2015> (accessed November 8, 2024)

relation to Amazigh, and what is the benefit of doing so? In other words, how does invoking the discourse of language death contribute to reinforcing IRCAM's ideological narrative? Boukous's portrayal of the death of Amazigh in Revitalisation is varied and often ambiguous, yet one instance offers particularly revealing insights. This concerns which "dead" languages he chooses to compare with Amazigh. He writes: "Le processus d'étiollement et d'obsolescence des langues est largement attesté dans la vie des langues du monde. Des exemples nous sont donnés à travers l'histoire de l'humanité par la quasi-disparition de langues prestigieuses comme l'égyptien ancien, l'araméen, le grec ancien et le latin, et la mort d'autres langues moins puissantes."⁵⁰⁸ The English version of the same section is also informative, as it uses the same languages as examples but shifts terminology to illustrate "the process of attrition-disappearance of languages is widely attested in the life of the languages of the world."⁵⁰⁹ From this example, I will analyze two particular terms central to Boukous's description of the ideological death of the Amazigh language, namely its so-called dialectalization and attrition.

5.2. The "Dialectalization" of Amazigh

By using the cases of Ancient Egyptian, Aramaic, Ancient Greek, and Latin to exemplify the death of prestigious languages, Boukous shows a negative attitude toward language change, particularly regarding the historical transformation of Amazigh. This view stands in contrast to Wolfgang Dressler's perspective, previously quoted, which considers Latin not as having died but rather as having evolved. Boukous's attitude aligns with Mohamed Chafik's approach, as discussed earlier, which advocates for scientific research on the commonality of Amazigh varieties with the aim of "recovering" Amazigh from its current "dialectal" state. Boukous develops this ideology with discussions of the dialectalization of Amazigh as a sign of its death, indicating that Amazigh varieties practically in use as dialects should not be standardized in language planning. Instead, IRCAM's approach in planning towards a national Amazigh is ideologically directed towards the recovery or revitalization of the Amazigh language.

This ideology is not significantly different from the dwarfing of Amazigh

⁵⁰⁸ Boukous, A. (2012). p. 76.

⁵⁰⁹ Boukous, A. (2011). p. 81.

language into national dialects by Hassan II, which activists might interpret as an Arabist perspective—one in which Arabic is recognized as a language, while Amazigh is reduced to dialects. The difference lies in that the latter classification of Amazigh as dialects ideologically boosts the status of Arabic, while Boukous's approach boosts the status of a national Amazigh. Both approaches exhibit a bias against the Amazigh regional varieties used in practice, and in Boukous's case, serve the aim of suggesting these varieties should not be the focus of standardization. In the following section, I will demonstrate how the supposed dialectalization of Amazigh is portrayed in Boukous's discourses and how Amazigh dialectology is framed as a form of colonial research, reinforcing the notion that standardizing regional dialects is undesirable.

Dialectalization is the explanation Boukous offers for the presumed death or disappearance of the Amazigh language. This is evident in his statement:

“Or l’amazighe est une langue fortement dialectalisée au point que certains chercheurs mettent en doute l’existence même d’une langue amazighe et parlent d’une pluralité de langues amazighes. Les principaux dialectes sont le tarifite parlé dans la région du nord-est, le zenati dans la région de l’oriental, le tamazighte dans la région du Maroc central et du sud-est, et le tachelhite dans la région du sud-ouest. La dialectisation de l’amazighe est un handicap pour l’intercompréhension entre les Amazighes des régions éloignées. Cependant, l’amazighe acquiert progressivement le statut de langue normalisée avec les actions d'aménagement menées dans le cadre des activités de l'Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe (IRCAM).”⁵¹⁰

Dialectalization is a central concept in Boukous's discourse for linking the language ideology of a single Amazigh language, which is dying or disappearing, with the actual language practices of the Amazigh varieties. The core idea is that Amazigh varieties are not independent languages but rather fragmented remnants of a dying Amazigh language that currently only exists in these dialectal forms. Thus, IRCAM's primary goal is to address the dialectalization of this dying language by transforming it into a normalized language, ultimately leading to its revitalization. Boukous

⁵¹⁰ Boukous, A. (2012). p. 45.

suggests that the dialectalization of Amazigh is a phenomenon arising from language contact and change. But knowing that this concept is fundamentally ideological—focused primarily on defining Tarifiyt, Central Moroccan Amazigh, and Tashelhiyt as dialects with a lower status than languages—he dedicates a section of his book to argue that the dialectalization of Amazigh, as a result of language contact and change, cannot be fully understood through traditional linguistic theories but rather through the lens of sociolinguistics.

Boukous begins a section titled *Approche théorique du contact de langues* by referencing Ferdinand de Saussure's distinction between *linguistique interne* and *linguistique externe*.⁵¹¹ Saussure posits that everything altering the system of a language is internal, while what is external belongs to the realm of *parole*. He views the study of external linguistic phenomena as fruitful but not essential for the understanding of the internal linguistic organism.⁵¹² Saussure's theory will not be evaluated in this thesis, rather, what is relevant here is how Boukous employs Saussure's framework to trivialize the study of language contact by categorizing it within the domain of "la linguistique externe, notamment la linguistique diachronique et la linguistique géographique," or, as rendered in the English version of the book, "diachronic linguistics and dialectology."⁵¹³

Boukous states: "On le voit, pour Saussure, l'emprunt et la variation introduits par le contact linguistique sont des faits de parole, ils perturbent la langue comme système stable en y introduisant le changement et, du coup, son étude se situe hors du champ de la vraie linguistique, la linguistique interne."⁵¹⁴ In this way, Boukous attempts to trivialize the study of language contact and change, which, in his view, leads to the study of dialects or dialectology, as merely a study of *parole*, and therefore not part of true linguistics. Meanwhile, Boukous argues that Saussure, who views language as a stable system that can only be superficially influenced by language

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 63.

⁵¹² De Saussure, F. (1995). *Cours de linguistique générale*. Éditions Payot & Rivages. pp. 40-43. He states: "Nous pensons que l'étude des phénomènes linguistiques externes est très fructueuse; mais il est faux de dire que sans eux on ne puisse connaître l'organisme linguistique interne. Prenons comme exemple l'emprunt des mots étrangers; on peut constater d'abord que ce n'est nullement un élément constant dans la vie d'une langue" (*ibid.*, p. 42).

⁵¹³ Boukous, A. (2012). p. 63.; Boukous, A. (2011). p. 74.

⁵¹⁴ Boukous, A. (2012). p. 63.

contact, contributes nothing other than “quelques éclaircissements intéressants” in areas including what Boukous terms as “la dialectalisation et le changement linguistique.”⁵¹⁵

After referencing Saussure, Boukous continues by discussing Transformational Generative Grammar, which he describes as being “centrée sur l'étude de la compétence du locuteur-auditeur idéalisé appartenant à une communauté supposée totalement homogène” and “n'accorde pas d'intérêt au comportement verbal des locuteurs réels.”⁵¹⁶ He then reaches a similar conclusion as with Saussure's approach, arguing that generativists are similarly unable to adequately address the language contact-induced dialectalization, stating that “on ne devrait pas s'attendre à une contribution significative des générativistes en matière d'étude des phénomènes liés au contact des langues.”⁵¹⁷ Boukous then briefly acknowledges the research on language contact and change at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century positively, yet he characterizes these studies as being conducted from the perspective of “comparative dialectology.”⁵¹⁸

These paragraphs by Boukous can by no means be taken as an academic review of the development of linguistic studies on language contact and change; rather, they should be understood from an ideological perspective. In this light, beyond using dialectalization to explain the non-existence of the Amazigh language and to diminish the status of its varieties, Boukous also leverages the term dialectology to trivialize research on what he considers dialects and their dialectalization as outcomes of language contact and change. On one hand, this paves the way for his own ideological interpretation of language contact through a sociolinguistic lens with a focus on language attrition, which will be discussed later; on the other hand, it downplays research on Amazigh varieties, which in IRCAM's project are not to be regarded as fixed, stable, or internal languages that deserve thorough description and, more importantly, standardization.

Driven by a similar motivation to critique the studies and descriptions of Amazigh dialects, Boukous further associates these endeavors with what he terms

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 63-64.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 64.

“colonial research in the field of Berber dialectology.”⁵¹⁹ Boukous explicitly states in one of his articles that “the case of Moroccan Berber is in all respects similar to that of other languages that have experienced the practice of colonial dialectology.”⁵²⁰ In this way, he presents the singular concept of Moroccan Berber as an ideological language entity that suffers from what he terms “colonial dialectology.” Here, the term *colonial* does not merely signify a historical timeframe but carries a negative connotation, suggesting that such research is as illegitimate as colonialism itself and, therefore, of diminished value. It is within this negative colonial context that Moroccan Berber was examined through its dialects, thus giving rise to Boukous’s concept of colonial dialectology.

In this article, *Colonization and Berber dialectology: An overview*, which aims “to provide a succinct review of the studies done in the field of Berber dialects during the colonial period in the Maghreb,”⁵²¹ Boukous does not present the shortcomings of Amazigh studies during that era because they are “early studies”, but rather because they are “colonial studies”. This is evident from Boukous’s emphasis on the colonial agenda, as he finds it necessary to highlight the motives of colonizers in acquiring knowledge of the language of the colonized people, as he describes it: “according to the well-known principle: know the men to exert action on them.”⁵²² Though acknowledging the contributions of colonial dialectology, Boukous emphasizes that its value mainly lies in “providing the Berber language and culture with conditions for their preservation and promotion under the new impetus given to the linguistic and cultural policy of the independent Maghreb states.”⁵²³ By this statement, Boukous delineates a clear boundary between colonial and post-colonial Berber studies, suggesting that their qualities and values differ not due to the accumulation of knowledge over time, but rather because of the distinct purposes behind conducting these studies.

To illustrate the colonial intentions of researchers, Boukous critiques, for instance, the work of Venture de Paradis, remarking that “it is significant in itself that

⁵¹⁹ Boukous, A. (2016). *Colonization and Berber dialectology: An overview*. In *La lingua nella vita e la vita della lingua: Itinerari e percorsi degli studi berberi*, 153-171. p. 166. See also Boukous, A. (2012). pp. 159-179.

⁵²⁰ Boukous, A. (2016). p. 154.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*

⁵²² *Ibid.* p. 155.

⁵²³ *Ibid.* p. 154.

this book was published with the assistance of the Ministries of War and Trade."⁵²⁴ He also references what he terms "the confession of É. Laoust," emphasizing that "even academic studies can be used for political purposes."⁵²⁵ Regarding the main shortcomings of colonial dialectology and how they were shaped by colonial purposes, Boukous argues: "The zeal of the describers was mainly shown in the monograph genre, particularly in the design of textbooks for teaching-learning the language. One can easily understand the motivations behind this choice. In contrast, detailed studies on specific points of the grammar are scarce. The completed studies are synchronic descriptions which usually focus on a single dialect."⁵²⁶ This focus on a single dialect appears to be a central source of Boukous's dissatisfaction with these studies and likely explains why he labels them as dialectology.

Boukous's article uses the term dialectology to emphasize that colonial researchers were not studying languages but rather dialects. He notes that "one can easily understand the motivations behind this choice," suggesting that the colonizers' communicative needs with the colonized populations drove them to study and attempt to teach these dialects for practical usage. However, Boukous's reasoning here appears somewhat confusing. As noted earlier, it was precisely some of these so-called colonial dialectologists, such as Venture de Paradis, who were among the first to view Amazigh as a unified language. Moreover, the scholarly interest in documenting smaller Amazigh varieties was by no means limited to the colonial period; such research has continued to flourish and make significant contributions to post-colonial Amazigh studies.

Thus, what can be understood from Boukous's discourse on colonial dialectology is that the concept serves the ideological aim of rendering the descriptive studies of Amazigh varieties (dialects), which might lead to the standardization of regional varieties instead of a national Amazigh, as part of a colonial agenda, and thus outdated, undesirable, and illegitimate. This is in contrast to post-colonial studies that focus not on Amazigh dialects but Amazigh language, which, in Boukous's words, contribute to "the process of the revitalization of Berber since the early 21st century," based on "the indigenoussness of Amazigh people, and legitimacy grounded in human

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 155.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 156.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 160.

rights, namely linguistic and cultural rights.”⁵²⁷

Within this context, Boukous mentions in the same article “the existence of three groups of Berber dialects” in Morocco, specifically recognized by what he refers to as “linguistic geography studies.” Immediately following this acknowledgment, he emphasizes that “the real differences are only evident at the extreme points of the area that the dialects cover, so much so that there never is an abrupt break between the dialects.”⁵²⁸ While Boukous emphasizes the continuum of Amazigh varieties, he does not mention that Tarifyt, for instance, is also similar to varieties in Algeria. Instead, he discusses Amazigh varieties according to the boundaries of modern states, thereby assuming the concept of national Amazigh dialects, and uses terms like “Libyan dialects” and “Egyptian dialects” as subtitles in the article.⁵²⁹

In conclusion, Boukous’s use of dialect-related terms serves IRCAM’s ideological aims in LPP, specifically to argue that Amazigh varieties should not be the focus of standardization. Among these terms, dialects serves to diminish the status of the Amazigh varieties used in practice, while the concept of the dialectalization of Amazigh is used to explain the death or disappearance of a supposedly real Amazigh language. Together with the term *dialectology*, Boukous argues that the dialectalization and dialects of Amazigh, on the one hand, cannot be understood through traditional linguistic theories, and on the other hand, should not be examined descriptively as a continuation of colonial dialectology. This colonial dialectology, he suggests, while it could be used as “war booty,”⁵³⁰ fundamentally contradicts the goals of revitalizing the Amazigh language through the planning towards a national Amazigh by IRCAM.

With the above understandings, a question remains: merely defining Amazigh varieties as dialects and framing their existence as a situation called *dialectalization* does not seem convincing enough to prove the death of the Amazigh language. To build a more systematic ideology, Boukous suggests that this dialectalization is a result of language contact and change. As discussed earlier, he considers this phenomenon not adequately explainable through traditional linguistic theoretical frameworks. In this theoretical void, Boukous proposes that the phenomenon should

⁵²⁷ Boukous, A. (2016). pp. 166-167.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 162.

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 163.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 165.

instead be analyzed through the lens of sociolinguistics and the theory of language attrition, whereby language contact can lead to the death or attrition-disappearance of a language. This will be the focus of the next section.

5.3. “Language Attrition” and the “Death” of the Amazigh Language

Boukous is aware of, and concerned about, the potential contradictions in his discourse on the death of Amazigh, which he refers to as the “paradoxe de l’amazighe.” He articulates this paradox with the question: “Si des langues de grande civilisation ont cessé de vivre, comment alors expliquer que des langues peu fortunées comme l’amazighe aient pu se maintenir jusqu’à nos jours?”⁵³¹ This cessation of life of languages might be explained by the fact that languages change over time. Boukous acknowledges the phenomenon of language change, but since his discourse revolves around an idealized Amazigh language that is perceived as better than the existing Amazigh varieties in practice, language change is cast in a negative light. Thus, factors contributing to language change may be framed ideologically as harmful, while those preventing it are viewed positively. In this context, Boukous argues that the geographical isolation of Amazigh varieties has been a crucial factor in preserving the Amazigh language, which, though “peu fortunée,” dying, and suffering from a dialectal situation, has at least remained alive. Or, in his own words: “l’amazighe doit essentiellement sa préservation à l’isolement dans des régions montagneuses comme les montagnes de l’Atlas, du Rif, de la Kabylie, des Aurès, de Nefoussa ou dans des régions désertiques ou pré-désertiques comme à Siwa, Ghadamès, Gourara, Mزاب, Dadès, Dra et Ahaggar.”⁵³²

In contrast, it is language contact that, in Boukous’s theory, particularly the contact between Amazigh and Arabic “in such an aggressive environment,” with Amazigh in a weak position, that leads to the negative “language change” responsible for the dying of Amazigh. As he states:

“Les communautés amazighophones n’ont cependant pas toutes échappé au contact avec les langues instituées par les divers pouvoirs. C’est le cas notamment des groupes amazighophones installés dans les

⁵³¹ Boukous, A. (2012). p.76.

⁵³² *Ibid.*

agglomérations urbaines et des communautés enclavées dans les plaines et les plateaux où il existe une forte présence de communautés arabophones ou arabisées. Dans cette situation de contact linguistique, l'amazighe occupe le plus souvent une position faible du fait de son statut de langue minorée sur le marché linguistique, ce qui contribue au changement de ses structures phonologiques, morphologiques et lexicales et de ses fonctions sociolinguistiques. Le facteur déterminant du changement linguistique qui conduit à l'étiollement est sans conteste le contact des langues favorisé par l'urbanisation. Il s'ensuit que la capacité de résilience de l'amazighe est mise à rude épreuve dans un environnement aussi agressif.”⁵³³

Before elaborating on the issue of language contact and change, Boukous emphasizes the inadequacy of traditional linguistic theories in understanding this phenomenon. He explicitly states: “En conclusion, l'approche structurale n'a pas le souci de l'étude de la langue dans le contexte social; de ce fait, elle n'est pas appropriée au propos qui est le nôtre dans cet ouvrage.”⁵³⁴ Instead, he suggests: “L'approche que nous adoptons dans notre analyse est de type sociolinguistique.”⁵³⁵ Boukous does not detail what this sociolinguistic approach might entail, beyond briefly mentioning William Labov to argue that “pour fonder un modèle alternatif, il est nécessaire de travailler sur les données de la parole quotidienne.”⁵³⁶ Boukous suggests that his studies provide “new materials and additional arguments in favor of a social linguistics,” and aims to demonstrate that “the study of language in a sociocultural context is not only a possible task but also a necessity for the study of linguistic change in dynamic synchrony.”⁵³⁷ As for the central concern of this study of linguistic change, he elaborates on a situation by stating: “We will show how the performance of a native speaker can exhibit a number of gaps and deficiencies in a situation of language contact.”⁵³⁸

This last expression is synonymous with what Boukous refers to as language

⁵³³ *Ibid.* p. 77.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 78.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 79.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*

attrition, a concept central to his sociolinguistic approach in explaining the death of the Amazigh language. In the following section, I will demonstrate the two types of language attrition in Boukous's discourse and how the language attrition in the narrower sense—referring to the change or attrition of everyday speech—is generalized and equated in his study of linguistic change with language attrition in the broader sense to explain the death of the Amazigh language as a whole, an ideological stance that justifies the revitalization efforts undertaken by IRCAM.

5.3.1. Language Attrition in the Broader Sense

Within his ideological framework, Boukous uses *language attrition* as evidence of the dangerous or dying situation of Amazigh, potentially leading to its eventual disappearance. This is evident in the English version of *Revitalisation*, where he references "the process of attrition-disappearance of languages."⁵³⁹ Additionally, in the French version, under the chapter "Prologue: Langues en danger, résilience et processus de revitalisation," there is a section titled "Attrition, résilience et revitalisation,"⁵⁴⁰ where language attrition emerges as the central notion for Amazigh's ideological endangerment. It is the diagnosis and understanding of this process of language attrition in the Amazigh language that lays the fundament to its revitalization.⁵⁴¹

Boukous explains that language attrition may occur when a language is in contact and conflict with stronger languages. In his words: "Sur le plan terminologique, l'étiollement et l'attrition représentent un processus à la faveur duquel les langues qui se trouvent en situation de conflit avec d'autres langues plus fortes sont affaiblies et dévitalisées."⁵⁴² The English version provides more detail about this process of attrition-death, where he states: "Attrition is a process whereby languages in conflict with stronger ones are weakened and devitalized. This situation is generally characterized by the reduction of the functions and uses of the language, the diminution in the number of speakers, semilingualism, the break in intergenerational transmission and, in fine, death."⁵⁴³ According to Boukous, the more languages are

⁵³⁹ Boukous, A. (2011). p. 81.

⁵⁴⁰ Boukous, A. (2012). Sommaire. p. V.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 9.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.* pp. 8-9.

⁵⁴³ Boukous, A. (2011). pp. 19-20.

in conflicting contact, the more language attrition intensifies. This process is exacerbated by globalization in the modern era, or as he states: “la globalisation a quasiment imprégné de sa forte empreinte les différentes étapes de l’histoire de l’humanité et que cela a contribué à générer un processus d’attrition plus ou moins lent des langues minorées. Ce phénomène s’est évidemment aggravé dans le cadre de la globalisation systématique des temps modernes.”⁵⁴⁴

Amazigh is viewed as a constant victim of language attrition in the broader sense throughout history. Boukous occasionally lists the “conquering languages” that have weakened Amazigh, including Latin, Arabic, Spanish, and French.⁵⁴⁵ In a rare instance of other IRCAM members echoing Boukous’s concept of broader language attrition, Khalid Ansar from CAL identifies “its contact with dominant languages such as Arabic, French, and Spanish” as one of the three factors underlying “the progressive attrition of Amazigh.”⁵⁴⁶ However, compared to French, Spanish, or other languages, it is the contact with Arabic that is perceived as the most significant factor contributing to this attrition. This focus is reflected in Ansar’s other two factors: “the institutionalization of administrative life and the schooling of Moroccans” and “the massive migration of Amazigh people from the countryside to cities and their linguistic assimilation into the largely Arabic-speaking urban population.”⁵⁴⁷ Similarly, the language attrition of Amazigh, particularly in its conflicting contact with Arabic in urban areas, is central to Boukous’s discourse on language attrition. However, this attrition should be understood in a narrower sense, which Boukous attempts to bridge with—or use as evidence for—language attrition in the broader sense.

5.3.2. Language Attrition in the Narrower Sense

Unlike language attrition in the broader sense, a term that does not appear to have been used by Ahmed Boukous before chairing IRCAM, attrition in the narrower sense was previously discussed by him. In a 1997 article titled *Situation sociolinguistique*

⁵⁴⁴ Boukous, A. (2012). p. 14.

⁵⁴⁵ Boukous, A. (2009c). p. 37.

⁵⁴⁶ Ansar, K. (2013). The standardisation and dissemination of Amazigh terminology in Morocco. Conference paper. *Hellenic language and terminology*. Athens, Greece, 7-9 November 2013.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

de l'Amazighe, Boukous states in the abstract that the article addresses questions including "the progressive attrition of Berber in urban areas to the benefit of colloquial Arabic."⁵⁴⁸ Although the main body of the article does not revisit the term attrition, it sheds light on aspects of its development within Boukous's language ideology.

In this article, Boukous introduces Morocco's linguistic market, which includes four main languages: the dominant languages of Standard Arabic and French, and the weakened mother tongues of Amazigh and dialectal Arabic, within which conflicts also exist between the two weakened languages, leading to what he terms the attrition of Amazigh by dialectal Arabic.⁵⁴⁹ Boukous discusses this phenomenon of "mother tongues in conflict" to the detriment of Amazigh as one occurring exclusively in urban areas, in contrast to rural areas where Amazigh is described as "living and dynamic."⁵⁵⁰ Boukous explains this new conflict in urban areas in detail, stating:

"Par l'effet de la destructuration des bases de l'économie rurale, de l'émigration qui lui est subséquente et par l'action des forces centrifuges, les locuteurs amazighophones ont tendance à marginaliser sinon à abandonner leur idiome maternel en s'intégrant dans les structures de la ville. Le processus de perte de la langue maternelle s'illustre dans les différentes étapes du bilinguisme amazighe-arabe dialectal, qui est en fait un bilinguisme de substitution; cette situation relève d'ailleurs moins du bilinguisme que de la diglossie, une diglossie qui est elle-même instable, transitionnelle. Dans la première étape de ce processus, l'essentiel du répertoire communicatif des locuteurs se déroule en amazighe, ensuite vient une étape marquée par la diglossie amazighe-arabe dialectal, où le degré d'usage de l'amazighe est aussi important que celui de l'arabe dialectal, le choix de l'une ou l'autre langue se fait en fonction des situations de communication dans lesquelles sont impliqués les locuteurs. Puis suit une étape où les usages de l'amazighe deviennent marginaux par rapport à ceux de l'arabe dialectal, l'amazighe se retranchant quasiment dans le réduit familial. Il arrive, enfin, que chez les sujets de la troisième

⁵⁴⁸ Boukous, A. (1997). Situation sociolinguistique de l'Amazighe. *International journal of the sociology of language*, 1997(123), 41-60. p. 41.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 43.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 55.

génération la maîtrise de la langue maternelle soit purement passive. Ce schéma général trouve sa parfaite illustration dans les situations où l'amazighe est en position de dépendance suite au contact avec des langues plus fortes, c'est-à-dire pour le moment essentiellement en ville."⁵⁵¹

What can be understood from this paragraph is that, before IRCAM, Boukous's notion of language attrition, as reflected in his expression "the progressive attrition of Berber in urban areas to the benefit of colloquial Arabic," focused primarily on the attrition of the domain of usage of Amazigh, rather than on the attrition of its linguistic corpus. In other words, Boukous's primary concern in discussing the attrition of Amazigh revolved around his observation that Amazigh speakers in urban areas are gradually ceasing to use the language, or that Amazigh is being abandoned while Arabic is increasingly adopted. This contrasts with an interpretation of attrition as, for example, the erosion of the linguistic abilities of Amazigh speakers in urban areas (e.g., they no longer speak good Amazigh).

As to the corpus changes that might occur during language contact between Amazigh and Arabic, particularly through loanwords, Boukous does not view these as a source of attrition of the Amazigh language. Instead, as reflected in the same article, he terms this phenomenon "the dependence of Amazigh." Boukous explains that "borrowing constitutes a relatively significant phenomenon in Amazigh," while emphasizing that "it is important to note here that almost all borrowed lexemes undergo a process of 'nativization,' during which they adapt to the phonological structures and morphological patterns inherent to the grammar of Amazigh."⁵⁵² In the meantime, in a section titled "L'amazighe langue-source," Boukous highlights Amazigh loans in Arabic, suggesting that this dependence is mutual.⁵⁵³ This demonstrates that, before chairing IRCAM, Boukous did not present borrowings in language contact as necessarily indicative of undesirable language attrition in Amazigh, as he viewed the language as capable of nativizing borrowings.

This attitude—that the attrition Amazigh suffers from dialectal Arabic is mainly an attrition of domain of usage rather than of the corpus of the language—is more interestingly reflected in the following passage from the same article, where Boukous

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 49.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.* p. 52.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.* pp. 53-54.

states: "De ces exemples d'emprunt linguistique, il apparaît que l'amazighe se trouve en situation de dépendance puisqu'il emprunte l'essentiel du lexique technique aux autres langues; paradoxalement, c'est l'arabe dialectal, la seule langue qui lui emprunte, qui l'accule dans ses derniers retranchements, à savoir les régions périphériques à la campagne et le cercle familial en ville."⁵⁵⁴ This illustrates that, for Boukous, Amazigh and Arabic depend on or are mutually beneficial to each other in terms of borrowings. What he finds problematic—or paradoxical—is not the linguistic exchange itself but that the domain of usage of Amazigh is being attrited by colloquial Arabic, which he implies should rather have been sharing the domain.

In the English version of *Revitalisation*, which reflects the ideology of IRCAM, Boukous's attitude toward the attrition of Amazigh by Arabic in urban areas underwent a notable shift. In this work, he redirects the focus of attrition from the space of usage to the corpus of the language itself—shifting from the concern expressed in his 1997 article, where he focuses on the cessation of Amazigh use in urban areas, to a view where the language spoken in urban areas is attrited, leading to the danger of death of the Amazigh language. This is attested in the section titled "Linguistic Aspects of Attrition" under the chapter "The Vagaries of Intergenerational Transmission," where Boukous presents a case study using a microsociolinguistic approach to assess the grammatical competence of 50 Amazigh-speaking children. The study concludes that "the average score achieved by rural children is 96.3%, while that achieved by urban children is 28.4%, which means that less than half of the population of urban children masters the grammatical competence of the mother tongue."⁵⁵⁵

The test included one focusing on lexical borrowing, where a rural child in an urban area "resorted to borrowing from languages with which he is in contact," primarily Arabic, "to overcome his ignorance of the vocabulary of his mother tongue."⁵⁵⁶ Combined with tests addressing grammatical aspects such as pronunciation and conjugation, in which urban children scored significantly lower than rural children, Boukous concludes: "The deficiencies we observe in the realizations of urban children affect all aspects of the lexicon and morphology. It further appears that the compensation strategies used by urban children are part of a

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 54.

⁵⁵⁵ Boukous, A. (2011). p. 86.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 88.

process of creating an interlanguage whose structural basis is borrowed predominantly from Colloquial Arabic.”⁵⁵⁷ The above example shows the meaning of language attrition used by Boukous, in a narrower sense, or the attrition happening to Amazigh in urban areas with contact with Arabic, underwent a change after he began chairing IRCAM: the earlier focus on the attrition of the domain of usage of Amazigh by Arabic has now been expanded to include a further meaning, where not only is the domain affected, but the corpus of Amazigh is also being attrited by Arabic.

The meaning of the two types of language attrition in Boukous’s discourse is thus clear. The broader sense, as quoted earlier, refers to “a process whereby languages in conflict with stronger ones are weakened and devitalized,” while the narrower sense is exemplified by borrowings from Arabic made by native Amazigh-speaking children in urban areas. In IRCAM’s ideology, these two distinct meanings of attrition are merged into one general view of attrition that threatens the Amazigh language and necessitates its revitalization. This is evident not only in Boukous’s works but also, as previously quoted, in Khalid Ansar’s statements describing “the progressive attrition of Amazigh” as both the result of “its contact with dominant languages such as Arabic, French, and Spanish” (the broader sense) and “the massive migration of Amazigh people from the countryside to cities and their linguistic assimilation into the largely Arabic-speaking urban population” (the narrower sense).⁵⁵⁸ The logic of this ideology is to generalize the “narrower attrition” to illustrate the “broader attrition” and then employ the “broader attrition,” or the “attrition-disappearance” of languages, to support the narrative of the “death” of Amazigh, thereby justifying its revitalization by IRCAM. The major weakness of this logic lies in the insufficient definition of the “broader attrition,” which is designed to be connected to and illustrated by the “narrower attrition” through generalizing or broadening the “narrower” sense of “attrition” beyond individual phenomena. This weakness will be examined in detail in the following section.

5.3.3. Problems in Connecting the Two Types of Attrition

Boukous understands the need to connect the two types of attrition, or to broaden the meaning of the narrower attrition in his discourse. He argues that the case studies,

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 96.

⁵⁵⁸ Ansar, K. (2013).

including "the description of the linguistic properties of deficiencies observed in the performance of urban children," are "rudimentary but significant," as they "allow for measuring the impact of sociocultural variables on linguistic change."⁵⁵⁹ The rudimentary nature stems from the fact that "such a detailed analysis seems difficult to achieve within the framework of a broad-spectrum study," while its significant aspect lies in the fact that "examining the language attrition process in even a small sample allows for identifying trends that can outline the general configuration of the change Amazigh is undergoing in urban contexts."⁵⁶⁰

On another occasion, Boukous suggests that it is important for a sociolinguist to focus on "the linguistic analysis of interferences," as it provides insight into "the external factors that induce language contact."⁵⁶¹ These factors, including "le contexte social du contact des langues, leurs fonctions, leur statut, latitude et la motivation des locuteurs à leur égard," are described as "importants pour saisir l'ampleur du contact linguistique et prédire le sens du changement."⁵⁶² These discourses indicate that for Boukous and within the ideology of IRCAM, the case studies of individual language attrition serve the function of predicting the tendency of language change in contact situations as a whole. Specifically, the narrower attrition of the Amazigh language, observed in children in urban areas, is used to predict the tendency of the broader "attrition-disappearance" of the Amazigh language.

A similar example is found in Boukous's definition of language attrition in the broader sense, as quoted earlier: "Attrition is a process whereby languages in conflict with stronger ones are weakened and devitalized. This situation is generally characterized by the reduction of the functions and uses of the language, the diminution in the number of speakers, semilingualism, the break in intergenerational transmission and, in fine, death." It is worth noting that for Boukous, *semilingualism* is among the signs indicating the process of the attrition-death of languages. The term semilingualism is typically used to describe cognitive deficiencies in children who have not adequately acquired language before being exposed to a second language.⁵⁶³

⁵⁵⁹ Boukous, A. (2012). p. 104.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.* pp. 64-65.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.* p. 65.

⁵⁶³ O'Neill, B. (2004). Semilingualism and cognitive deficiency. *言語文化研究*, 15(3), 199-205.

As a situation similar to Boukous's attrition of Amazigh in the narrower sense, semilingualism is employed here to suggest that narrower, individual language attrition has the function of predicting the broader tendency of the attrition-death of Amazigh. This connection between the two types of attrition is where the problem might lie.

Language attrition, as a field of linguistic study, typically examines the phenomenon of a speaker no longer being proficient in a language, often due to non-pathological reasons such as a lack of contact with the language-speaking community.⁵⁶⁴ It refers to an individual or community-centered phenomenon of losing linguistic abilities or experiencing regression in specific grammatical properties and overall fluency in linguistic skills.⁵⁶⁵ Boukous suggests that the study of language contact in individual cases is particularly important "pour un sociolinguiste... pour saisir l'ampleur du contact linguistique et prédire le sens du changement."⁵⁶⁶ It is worth noting that the foundation of this sociolinguistic work for "prédire le sens du changement" lies in studies like those of Uriel Weinreich. As Boukous states in the same paragraph:

"Dans la veine structuraliste, Weinreich a produit un travail remarquable sur le contact des langues. Il a montré que ce phénomène se manifeste par le bilinguisme et l'interférence qu'il induit dans la structure des langues en contact et notamment dans la performance des individus qui pratiquent l'alternance des langues. Selon lui, l'interférence traduit les déviations de la norme de la langue parlée en raison d'une maîtrise approximative de cette langue. Elle se manifeste à différents niveaux de la grammaire de la langue, notamment sur les plans phonique, morphologique et lexical."⁵⁶⁷

However, whereas Boukous suggests that "deviations... at different levels of the grammar of the language in individuals' performance" can predict the overall change

⁵⁶⁴ Schmid, M. S. (2008). Defining language attrition. *Babylonia*, 2(08), 9-12.

⁵⁶⁵ Montrul, S., & Yoon, J. (2019). Morphology and language attrition. *Oxford research encyclopedia of linguistics*, 1-22.

⁵⁶⁶ Boukous, A. (2012). p. 65.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 64.

of a language, it is noteworthy that Weinreich specifically addresses the limitations of such predictions. He highlights how partial shifts in language caused by contact do not necessarily indicate or lead to a total language shift. As Weinreich states in *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*:

“Language shifts should be analyzed in terms of the functions of the languages in the contact situation, since a mother-tongue group may switch to a new language in certain functions but not in others. For example, under a foreign occupation, or in migrating to a new country, the adult members of a mother-tongue group may come to use a new language in its dealings with governmental authorities, while the children use it in school; at the same time, the old language may live on in the homes and at informal gatherings of the group. In such a case we might speak of a PARTIAL rather than a TOTAL shift [capitalization in original]. While language shifts among urban immigrants in America are usually rapid and total, the language shifts among rural immigrant communities are often rather of a partial type for two or three generations, at least.”⁵⁶⁸

As to the case of Amazigh, the issue that a partial shift can hardly predict the tendency of a total shift is also evidenced in a study on language attrition and maintenance by Zouhir Gabsi, which focuses on the Amazigh variety in Tunisia. Gabsi's study finds that even though lexical attrition is evident in the form of borrowing en masse from Arabic, grammatical evidence shows little structural change.⁵⁶⁹ In detail, Gabsi finds that “Tunisian Berber shows varying degrees of attrition as the result of the intensive contact with Arabic. The most significant influences are the high number of loanwords; frequent hybridisms which can affect the morphological makeup of Berber lexis; and the relatively cumbersome rules for marking the plural in Berber.”⁵⁷⁰ While these findings might be interpreted as evidence of the attrition of Amazigh as a whole within Boukous's ideological

⁵⁶⁸ Weinreich, U. (1968). *Languages in contact: Findings and problems*. Mouton Publishers. p. 107.

⁵⁶⁹ Gabsi, Z. (2011). Attrition and maintenance of the Berber language in Tunisia. *International journal of the sociology of language*, 2011(211), 135-164.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 150-151.

framework, Gabsi offers a contrasting perspective. He concludes that “Tunisian Berber has not undergone a widespread restructuring. For example, the conservation of native phonemes, suppletion and wordorder all indicate that Tunisian Berber retains all its typical characteristics.”⁵⁷¹

Gabsi also addresses the signs of attrition he finds in Amazigh, especially the massive borrowing from Tunisian Arabic. However, different from Boukous’s ideology, which focuses on an ultimate attrition-death of Amazigh, Gabsi’s direct concern is highlighted by quoting Jean Aitchison’s warning that “a language heavily affected by a dominant language in the areas of lexis and structure... may not be recognized as a separate language.”⁵⁷² Specifically, Gabsi warns: “At present, Tunisian Berber is erroneously perceived as a sub-dialect of Tunisian Arabic and may be lost if revival efforts are not initiated or fail.”⁵⁷³ He then diagnoses that the core problem hindering the revival of Amazigh, not only in Tunisia but also in the rest of the Maghreb, lies in the lack of government support. For example, teaching Berber in local schools is hindered by political powers.⁵⁷⁴ Furthermore, Gabsi points out that “[o]ne of the key factors in reversing language shift in Tunisia is the attitude of the speakers themselves towards their language.”⁵⁷⁵

Noteworthy, faced with phenomena similar to Boukous’s language attrition in the narrower sense, Gabsi emphasizes countermeasures through language planning, focusing on status planning, prestige planning, and acquisition planning. In contrast, aligned with the ideology that the partial shift of Amazigh leads to its total shift, or attrition-death, Boukous extends these language planning measures to include corpus planning. This is evident in his 1997 pre-IRCAM article, where, as quoted previously, Boukous discusses the attrition of Amazigh primarily in terms of its space of usage. However, in his 2009 article as rector of IRCAM, he begins addressing the two types of attrition together, as reflected in his diagnosis of the situation of Amazigh: “Tout au long de l’Histoire, l’amazighe a subi le contact de langues conquérantes, notamment le latin, l’arabe, l’espagnol et le français. Ainsi a-t-il vu son espace se

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 151.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*; Aitchison, J. (1991). *Language change: Progress or decay*. Cambridge University Press.

⁵⁷³ Gabsi, Z. (2011). p. 151.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 152.

rétrécir, sa masse parlante se réduire, son homogénéité s’altérer, ses structures se détériorer et ses fonctions socioculturelles décroître.”⁵⁷⁶

Facing this ideologically framed “deterioration of structures” of the Amazigh language as a whole, or the attrition in the broader sense—a total shift attributed to its contact with Arabic—the revitalization of Amazigh, according to IRCAM’s ideology, is regarded as necessary not only through status, prestige, and acquisition planning but also through corpus planning, specifically targeting Arabic loanwords.

5.4. The Exclusion of Arabic Loanwords

With an understanding of the concept of language attrition in the discourse of Boukous and the ideology of IRCAM, it becomes clear how Boukous diagnoses the endangerment of the Amazigh language as a result of its contact with “stronger” languages. This diagnosis is twofold, as more explicitly explained in his 2018 book *Essais de politique et d’aménagement linguistiques*. First, he states: “Au niveau sociolinguistique, l’amazigh a des fonctions généralement dépourvues d’utilité socio-économique et de prestige social, ce qui le positionne de manière défavorable sur le marché linguistique et conduit souvent ses propres locuteurs à ne pas lui accorder une valeur centrale dans leur comportement langagier, dans leurs représentations et dans leur discours épilinguistique.”⁵⁷⁷ Second, he argues: “Enfin, Au niveau linguistique, l’amazighe est fortement soumis à la compétition avec des langues plus puissantes que lui et avec lesquelles il entretient des rapports d’échange inégal sur le marché linguistique. Cette situation contribue à l’invasion massive des emprunts lexicaux et phraséologiques, notamment à l’arabe et au français; ce qui affaiblit davantage l’amazighe et en fait un idiome à la limite de l’obsolescence.”⁵⁷⁸

That is to say, according to Boukous’s ideology, the attrition-death of Amazigh is not a problem to be merely solved by status planning, but must be addressed enfin at the level of corpus planning—reversing the lethal effects of the sociolinguistic unequal exchange that lead to the obsolescence of Amazigh, which manifests itself in the massive invasion of loanwords. Though Boukous notes that the invasion of

⁵⁷⁶ Boukous, A. (2009c). p. 37.

⁵⁷⁷ Boukous, A. (2018). *Essais de politique et d’aménagement linguistiques*.

IRCAM. p. 167.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

loanwords comes from both Arabic and French, a quantitative study of 1,526 meanings in Tarifiyt shows that while 51.7% of the vocabulary consists of loans, only 6.3% are from French and Spanish combined, in contrast to 41.7% from dialectal Arabic (plus 3.2% from Classical/Standard Arabic).⁵⁷⁹ This shows that Arabic is, indeed, the dominant source of this invasion, while French remains largely irrelevant.

The massive borrowings by Amazigh are significant, as Maarten Kossmann describes: “With the exception of Ghadames, all northern Berber languages have higher percentages of borrowings in basic lexicon than a well-known borrower as English took from Romance.”⁵⁸⁰ Meanwhile, Kossmann reminds that this phenomenon cannot be sufficiently explained by vague notions such as prestige, as most borrowings come from dialectal Arabic rather than from the prestige language, Standard/Classical Arabic. More importantly, prestige-related explanations fail to account for why some basic elements are borrowed while others are not, as borrowings are by no means evenly distributed across the core lexicon.⁵⁸¹

This reminder, combined with the previous discussion on the two types of attrition, shows that, in the contact between Amazigh and Arabic, considerations regarding the prestige and status of languages cannot soundly explain the borrowings in the past, nor predict a total shift with more borrowings in the future. In other words, it remains insufficiently proven that the prestige and status of the Amazigh language are relevant to its corpus of massive borrowings from Arabic. However, this relevance is established in the ideology of IRCAM, which, in its “revitalization” of the Amazigh language, includes as one of the most important measures in corpus planning the exclusion of nearly all Arabic loanwords from standard Moroccan Amazigh.

The near absence of Arabic loanwords in IRCAM’s *Dictionnaire général de la langue amazighe* is officially explained as follows: “Les emprunts dotés d’une productivité dérivationnelle, d’une légitimité sociale et d’une extension géographique ont, également, leur place dans le dictionnaire quand ils ne concurrencent pas un lexème natif.”⁵⁸² While this suggests that loanwords are permitted under certain conditions, these criteria are stringent, making their inclusion rare. Moreover, although the discourse implies an equal approach to loanwords from different

⁵⁷⁹ Kossmann, M. (2013b). pp. 101-102.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p. 417.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.* p. 418.

⁵⁸² Ameer et al. (2017). p. 5.

languages, Arabic loanwords appear to be of particular concern. This is not only because Arabic is the single largest source of loans in Amazigh, but also because IRCAM seems to specifically target Arabic in its exclusion policies.

Among the criteria for preserving loanwords, the expressions of derivational productivity and social legitimacy are rather ambiguous and less decisive in comparison to geographical extension. As shown in IRCAM’s *Dictionnaire général de la langue amazighe*, the handful of preserved loanwords, such as *ujdid* (“new”), and *zzitun/tazitunt* (“olive”), can hardly be explained as preserved because they are more productive or legitimate but because they are well attested in all three main Amazigh varieties in Morocco. In comparison, for example, the excluded *layla* (Moroccan Arabic *lila*)-related words, loaned from Arabic for “night,” are only used in Northern Morocco⁵⁸³ and thus excluded by IRCAM.

It should be noted that, even if a loanword is well attested in all Amazigh varieties in Morocco, it is still subject to the final condition for inclusion in the vocabulary: whether IRCAM determines it “concurrer un lexème natif.” This criterion largely depends on IRCAM’s decision. For example, when *leafit* (“fire”) is preserved, it is listed as a synonym alongside four other words—*afa*, *timssi*, *azizn*, and *takat*—and is not considered to compete with native words. In contrast, for “car,” widely attested loanwords are excluded. An example of this is *tumubil* in Tashelhiyt and similar forms elsewhere, originally from the French *automobile* and directly loaned via dialectal Arabic *t-tumubil*,⁵⁸⁴ which IRCAM considers to be in competition with the native neologism *tihirit*. Nonetheless, in this assessment of what is considered native versus what is regarded as competing, a process that seems both subjective and inconsistent, there are indications that Arabic loanwords are more specifically targeted compared to those from other languages. The following examples are particularly informative for understanding IRCAM’s ideology.

For the meaning of “lentil,” IRCAM’s dictionary opts for the word *tilintit*, and for “chickpea,” it selects the word *ikikr*.⁵⁸⁵ Both terms were borrowed into Amazigh early on from the Latin *lens* and *cicer*.⁵⁸⁶ With later contact with Arabic, these Latin-origin terms were largely replaced by Arabic equivalents, such as *leaḡas* and *lhimz*,

⁵⁸³ Kossmann, M. (2013b). p. 117.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p. 89.

⁵⁸⁵ Aneur et al. (2017). pp. 628, 352. For chickpea there is also *afzzin*. *Ibid.* p. 66.

⁵⁸⁶ Kossmann, M. (2013b). p. 141.

respectively, in almost all Amazigh varieties in Morocco. Only in Tashelhiyt, *tilintit* (or *tiniltit*) still exists, while the word *ikikr* is preserved in a different meaning, “red pea” rather than “chickpea”.⁵⁸⁷

In these cases, IRCAM’s preference for *tilintit* and *ikikr* demonstrates that Latin-origin loanwords are perceived as more native to Amazigh compared to Arabic loanwords, regardless of the latter’s widespread usage across varieties. This reflects IRCAM’s ideological framework, suggesting that its lexical planning is not solely based on the aforementioned strict synchronic criteria for including loanwords present in Amazigh varieties today, as described in its dictionary. Instead, it reveals a chronological approach to planning, aiming to ideologically restore the Amazigh language to a pre-Arabic-contact state. This restored version of Amazigh would then be supplemented with either neologisms or modern borrowings, such as *tihirit* (“car”), *lbank* (“bank”), and *atanbr* (“postage stamp”), to form the vocabulary of standard Moroccan Amazigh.

This planning, aimed at ideologically restoring some kind of pre-Arabic contact Amazigh, is also evident in the meaning of “apple.” IRCAM’s dictionary provides three terms for “apple”: *adffu*, *tadffuyt*, and *tatffaht*, while the well-attested and widely spread Arabic loanword *tt(ə)ffaḥ*, found in all three main Amazigh varieties in Morocco, is excluded.⁵⁸⁸ Among the three terms, *adffu* and its feminine form *tadffuyt* appear more aligned with IRCAM’s preferences, as the derived meaning of “apple tree” (pommier) is assigned to *adffu* in the dictionary and to the feminine *tadffuyt* according to the online version of the *DGLAi*, whereas *tatffaht* lacks this meaning.⁵⁸⁹

Notably, though all three forms and the Arabic-loaned *tt(ə)ffaḥ* ultimately derive from the same Semitic root, the terms preferred by IRCAM, *adffu/tadffuyt*, belong to the Punic form of the word. This is identified by the usage of the Punic-featured /d/ and /u/, instead of the Arabic-featured /t/ and /aḥ/.⁵⁹⁰ As for the other term included by IRCAM, *tatffaht*, although it features the Arabic trait /aḥ/, it more closely resembles the unity noun *tadəffaḥt* found in Tarifiyt and Kabyle, rather than the

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁸ Aneur et al. (2017). pp. 46, 526, 602.; Kossmann, M. (2013b). pp. 145-146.

⁵⁸⁹ Aneur et al. (2017). p. 46.;

<https://tal.ircam.ma/dglai/search/indexs?session=140440&&val=pommier&&e=0&&l=2> ((accessed November 3, 2024)

⁵⁹⁰ Kossmann, M. (2013b). pp. 145-146.

collective form referring to a collection of apples presented as a whole.⁵⁹¹ As for this collective form, *tt(ə)ffah*, grammatically singular and loaned from Arabic, which is used in all three main varieties in Morocco, it seems to be carefully excluded from IRCAM's vocabulary and replaced by the Punic-origin term *adffu*. This IRCAM-favored, Punic-origin *adffu* is not found in Morocco but is instead attested in Chaouia (Algeria) and Djerba (Tunisia).⁵⁹²

This example demonstrates that being identified as native serves as the most decisive criterion for including loanwords in IRCAM's vocabulary, taking precedence over the criterion of geographical extension. In other words, even if a word is not attested in Moroccan Amazigh varieties, it can still be included if it is considered native. In this judgment of nativeness, Arabic loanwords are particularly targeted as non-native compared to earlier Latin/Punic loanwords or later French loanwords and neologisms. This approach reflects an ideology, as seen in IRCAM's lexical planning, that appears to negate or erase part of Amazigh's linguistic history—namely, its contact with Arabic.

To understand this ideology, it is important to revisit the ideas of Mohamed Chafik. Chafik diagnosed that "Amazigh dialects vary in experience and contact with the Arabic language, and this has resulted in their disparity in adopting Arabic words and in their deadening of the original Amazigh words."⁵⁹³ Despite this, he suggested that Amazigh remains "capable of recovery,"⁵⁹⁴ a process that could be aided through language planning. As noted earlier, Chafik excluded Arabic loanwords from his dictionary but explicitly clarified that this decision was not based on the belief that Arabic loans do not belong to the Amazigh language. Rather, he explained that it was unnecessary to introduce his audience to words they already knew.⁵⁹⁵

However, in a similar approach to excluding Arabic loans, IRCAM's *Dictionnaire général* operates on the ideology developed by Ahmed Boukous, wherein Chafik's notion of recovery is recontextualized within the discourse of Amazigh revitalization. This revitalization aims to reverse the death of Amazigh,

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*; For the discussion of collective nouns and unity nouns, see Mourigh, K., & Kossmann, M. (2019), pp. 37-38.

⁵⁹² Kossmann, M. (2013b). pp. 145-146.

⁵⁹³ Chafik, M. (1990). p. 9.

⁵⁹⁴ Chafik, M. (1989). p. 63.

⁵⁹⁵ Chafik, M. (1990). pp. 10-11.

evidenced by its dialectalization and attrition, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Boukous's concept of attrition of Amazigh aligns with Chafik's concern about the killing of the original Amazigh words. For the recovery and revitalization of the Amazigh language, language planning needs to address this issue. As Boukous warns of a total shift or the broader attrition of Amazigh in the future due to contact with Arabic, and given his assertion that Amazigh has historically endured "the massive invasion of loanwords," this "Arabic invasion" is seen as something to be fought back against in IRCAM's language planning—not only must Amazigh's attrited area in the social domain be reclaimed, but the attrited area within the corpus of the language must also be reconquered.

Additionally, it must be noted that the exclusion of loans not only serves an ideological purpose in countering attrition but also fulfills a practical role in addressing dialectalization. Chafik not only diagnosed that contact with Arabic led to the "deadening of the original Amazigh words,"⁵⁹⁶ but also observed that "their disparity in adopting Arabic words" contributed to the dialectalization of the language. Thus, the exclusion of Arabic loans simultaneously addresses both of these symptoms of Amazigh's attrition-death.

For dialectalization, it is also worth noting the 1990 article *À propos de la classification des dialectes berbères* by Meftaha Aneur, a later director of CAL. Aneur proposes: "Une classification satisfaisante devrait, alors, recourir à un canevas de paramètres hiérarchisés où l'intercompréhension (dans laquelle le lexique joue un rôle prépondérant) viendrait en premier." By prioritizing mutual intelligibility, with a focus on vocabulary, as the foremost criterion for distinguishing dialects, Aneur underscores its significance over grammatical and phonetic variations, as well as ethnic, historical, or racial considerations.⁵⁹⁷ This argument is not necessarily ideologically driven, but when transferred to the context of IRCAM's ideology, it can be inferred that if Moroccan Amazigh varieties are not to be classified as distinct dialects, as part of reversing the "dialectalization" of Amazigh, their vocabulary must be unified as the primary means of enhancing mutual intelligibility.

Adding to this, Mohamed Chafik had earlier identified the "disparity in adopting Arabic words" as a key factor in the classification of Moroccan Amazigh varieties into dialects. The exclusion of Arabic loans, therefore, works to address this "disparity"

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 9.

⁵⁹⁷ Aneur, M. (1990). pp. 25-26.

and plays a critical role in preventing Moroccan Amazigh varieties from being classified as separate dialects according to Ameer's criteria. The consistency between Chafik's and IRCAM's dictionaries, where Arabic loanwords are removed in both cases, can thus be better understood. This exclusion addresses both *attrition* and *dialectalization*, ultimately contributing to the *revitalization* of Amazigh.

The exclusion of Arabic loanwords from the vocabulary of standard Moroccan Amazigh has two potential consequences. First, it should be noted that, as shown by Kossmann, except for the Amazigh variety of Ghadames (Libya), "all other languages are relatively high borrowers."⁵⁹⁸ Thus, the foremost effect of IRCAM's exclusion of Arabic loans in the standardization process might not be to make Amazigh varieties in Morocco "more similar," but rather to create a vocabulary that is different from the language practices of all Amazigh speakers in the country. Second, considering that Tashelhiyt is a lower borrower of Arabic in Morocco compared to Tarifiyt and Central Moroccan Amazigh, a general exclusion of Arabic loans from standard Moroccan Amazigh makes the language relatively more familiar to Tashelhiyt speakers than to Tarifiyt speakers.

The significant gap between standard Moroccan Amazigh and the varieties used in practice, which runs contrary to Boukous's principle of avoiding "the imposition of an arbitrary standard norm,"⁵⁹⁹ is not overlooked by IRCAM. This issue is addressed through another key concept in IRCAM's language planning—the "polynomic approach," which will be examined in the next chapter.

6. UNDERSTANDING THE POLYNOMIC APPROACH IN IRCAM'S LANGUAGE PLANNING

The idea of a polynomic approach plays a significant role in IRCAM's discourse about language planning. Originating from the Corsican experience, this approach is applied to address the complexities of planning Amazigh, which encompasses multiple varieties. As CAL member El Mehdi Iazzi explains, "L'approche polynomique appréhende la langue dans le respect de sa diversité. Toutes les variétés sont reconnues légitimes et aucune ne peut prétendre représenter à elle seule la langue" (The

⁵⁹⁸ Kossmann, M. (2013b). p. 421.

⁵⁹⁹ Boukous, A. (2009b). p. 423.

polynomic approach views the language with respect to its diversity. All varieties are recognized as legitimate, and none can claim to represent the language on its own).⁶⁰⁰ The polynomic principle is implemented in planning Amazigh by “recognizing and integrating variations within the norm at all levels of the linguistic system (phonetic/phonological, lexical, morphosyntactic), both written and oral, and avoiding a rigid, uniform national linguistic standard.⁶⁰¹ As Meftaha Ameer concludes, a polynomic approach allows for “donner plein droit aux usages pluriels” (fully legitimizing plural usages).⁶⁰²

Through the literal interpretation of this polynomic approach, one might think that the aforementioned tendency of standard Moroccan Amazigh being particularly distant from Tarifiyt—both phonetically, through Tifinagh-IRCAM, and lexically, through the exclusion of Arabic loanwords—might not constitute a rigid norm. Instead, Tarifiyt would be granted “plein droit” according to the polynomic principle. However, in practice, these two aspects are explicitly highlighted as exceptions to IRCAM’s polynomic approach and are not addressed in a *laissez-faire* manner. As Iazzi explains: “Les deux aspects qui nécessitent une intervention ou un ajustement sont la ‘norme graphique’ et le traitement des ‘lacunes lexicales’ et de la masse des ‘emprunts non intégrés.’”⁶⁰³ It is only beyond these two aspects that the polynomic approach applies, ensuring that “la totalité des structures, communes et variées, font partie de la norme nationale.”⁶⁰⁴

This selective application of the polynomic principle necessitates an investigation into the true meaning and function of IRCAM’s polynomic ideology. This chapter begins by examining the original meaning of the polynomic ideology in the Corsican context. It then explores how IRCAM has adopted a polynomic approach in the planning of Amazigh, analyzing its differences and how it aligns with and supports the planning of standard Moroccan Amazigh. The chapter will argue that IRCAM’s polynomic ideology is fundamentally different from that in the Corsican context and functions only subordinate to the standard language ideology, rather than

⁶⁰⁰ Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 30

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰² Ameer, M. (2009). Aménagement linguistique de l’amazighe: Pour une approche polynomique. *Asinag*, 3, 75-88. p. 81.

⁶⁰³ Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 30.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

as a guiding principle shaping planning decisions. This argument will be assessed through an examination of how the polynomic approach is applied in the morphological domain.

6.1. The Corsican Language and the Concept of Polynomy

IRCAM attributes the origin of the polynomic approach in language planning to the experience of the Corsican language.⁶⁰⁵ Corsican originated from Latin, which became established on the island during antiquity following the conquest of Corsica and Sardinia in the 3rd century BCE. Throughout the Middle Ages, Tuscan functioned as the prestige language of the Corsican islanders, eventually yielding to Italian in the 16th century for all vernacular uses.⁶⁰⁶ After the French conquest in 1769, Corsica experienced a process of linguistic francization, during which French gradually replaced Italian and infiltrated vernacular usage. Today, French is the most widely used language on the island.⁶⁰⁷ Under the strong one nation–one language ideology of French nationalism, Corsican, like other regional languages in France, holds no official status. It is usually considered endangered, with UNESCO identifying it in 2012 as being in a phase preceding extinction based on the criterion of intergenerational transmission.⁶⁰⁸

Linguistically, Corsican is divided into five dialectal areas: Corso-Gallurian, Taravian, Central-Southern, North-Eastern, and Corsican Cape.⁶⁰⁹ However, it is commonly referred to in terms of two main varieties, Northern and Southern Corsican, with a continuum of overlapping features in the central region.⁶¹⁰ The difference between the Tuscan-like Northern Corsican and the Calabrian-like Southern Corsican is described by Jacques Fusina and Fernand Etori as follows: “Un Corse du Sud parlant corse en Toscane sera identifié comme calabrais; un Corse du Nord parlant

⁶⁰⁵ Aneur, M. (2009). p. 80.; Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 30.

⁶⁰⁶ Retali-Medori, S. (2024). Corsican dialect classifications. *Dialectologia*, (12), 99-145. p. 101.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p. 102.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁰ For example, as shown in Jaffe, A. (2019). Standardization(s) and regimentation: Polynomic orthodoxies and potentials. *Language & communication*, 66, 6-19.

corse en Sardaigne centrale sera identifié comme italien.”⁶¹¹

The 1970s saw the first wave of Corsican language activism, which focused on navigating within the dominant French language ideological framework to gain legitimacy and resources, particularly for minority language education.⁶¹² This movement immediately raised a question: Which Corsican should be taught? While this question is often addressed by adopting a standard language or a monoglot standard in the French tradition, Corsican activists opted instead to preserve and legitimize dialectal diversity. It was in this context that the sociolinguist Jean-Baptiste Marcellesi developed the concept of polynomy in the 1980s.⁶¹³

The concept of polynomy is rooted in an ideology that views language as an abstraction shaped by the affirmation of socio-political identities. As Marcellesi explains, “l’existence est fondée sur l’affirmation massive de ceux qui la parlent de lui donner un nom particulier et de la déclarer autonome des autres langues reconnues.”⁶¹⁴ A polynomic language is thus defined by Marcellesi as “une langue à l’unité abstraite, à laquelle les utilisateurs reconnaissent plusieurs modalités d’existence, toutes également tolérées sans qu’il y ait entre elles hiérarchisation ou spécialisation de fonction. Elle s’accompagne de l’intolérance entre utilisateurs de variétés différentes sur les plans phonologiques et morphologiques, de même que la multiplicité lexicale est conçue ailleurs comme un élément de richesse” (a language with an abstract unity, to which users recognize multiple modalities of existence, all equally tolerated without hierarchical ranking or functional specialization among them. It is accompanied by mutual tolerance among users of different varieties at the phonological and morphological levels, just as lexical multiplicity is conceived elsewhere as an element of richness).⁶¹⁵

It is worth noting that in the Corsican context, the concept of polynomy originated as a way to view and describe language, rather than as a method for standardizing it. Polynomy represents a counter-standard concept, in direct opposition

⁶¹¹ Etti, F., & Fusina, J. (1981). *Langue corse: Incertitudes et paris*. Scola Corsa.

⁶¹² Jaffe, A. (2019). p. 8.

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁴ Marcellesi, J. B. (1984). La définition des langues en domaine roman: Les enseignements à tirer de la situation corse. *Actes du congrès de linguistique et de philologie romanes*, 5, 307-314. p. 314.

⁶¹⁵ Marcellesi, J. B. (1989). Corse et théorie sociolinguistique: Reflets croisés. *L’île miroir. Ajaccio: La Marge*, 165-174. p. 170.

to the standard language ideology. While the standard language ideology is characterized by the belief that languages, once identified and distinguished from others, should be internally uniform, distinct entities materialized as concrete standards,⁶¹⁶ a polynomic language ideology views named languages as abstract constructs. It posits that languages exist concretely only through practical usage. Building on this perspective, Marcellesi asserts, “S’agissant du corse, en étranglant la polynomie on étranglera la langue”⁶¹⁷ For Marcellesi, the polynomic ideology is a direct response to the enduring presence of “la vieille idéologie unifiante, unicisante, normative.”⁶¹⁸

To counter the standard language ideology, the polynomic ideology proposes an alternative principle for language standardization. Alexandra Jaffe describes this principle, stating, “standardization never takes place in a vacuum.”⁶¹⁹ In other words, the Corsican language must be rooted in somewhere, tied to specific dialects and local contexts, rather than existing as a generic Corsican anywhere.⁶²⁰ This aligns with the ideology of authenticity, which attributes the value of a language to its relationship with a particular community. Within this ideological framework, a speech variety must be deeply connected to a specific place in the consciousness of its speakers in order to be considered authentic. If such social and territorial roots are not discernible, a linguistic variety lacks value in this system.⁶²¹

The ideology of authenticity stands in opposition to the conception of neutrality or anonymity in a standardized language. As the foundation of political authority in the public sphere of rational communicative exchange, the ideology of anonymity assumes that public discourse transcends individual and social particularities, presenting itself as neutral, universal, and objective.⁶²² By erasing the social and historical roots of dominant voices, this ideology perpetuates the notion that hegemonic languages and perspectives emerge from nowhere and belong to no one in

⁶¹⁶ Horner, K., & Weber, J. J. (2018). p. 21.

⁶¹⁷ Bulot, T., Marcellesi, J. B., & Blanchet, P. (2003). *Sociolinguistique: Epistémologie, langues régionales, polynomie*. L’Harmattan. p. 291.

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 24.

⁶¹⁹ Jaffe, A. (2019). p. 6.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 8.

⁶²¹ Woolard, K. A. (2016). *Singular and plural: Ideologies of linguistic authority in 21st century Catalonia*. Oxford University Press. p. 22.

⁶²² *Ibid.* p. 25.

particular—positioning them as if they could exist anywhere—thereby reinforcing their authority in the modern public sphere. Ideally, the citizen participating in public discourse speaks in what can be described as a “voice from nowhere.”⁶²³

Complexities arise when the polynomic ideology is applied in practice, particularly in domains where standardization becomes a concern, such as language education. While the polynomic ideology is inherently a counter-standard concept, standardization is not always avoidable. In the Corsican context, although there is no official language academy or centralized standardization authority, language planning structures and official agents have emerged and expanded.⁶²⁴ In these planning efforts, Corsican is often represented as having a duality of northern and southern dialects, as seen in materials like the poster and brochure from the Corsican Territorial Collectivity’s language office.⁶²⁵ This representation contrasts with the linguistic reality that Corsican comprises five dialectal areas, each of which comprises many local varieties.

Furthermore, as Jaffe recounts, the mayor of the village of Riventosa had to consult a local Corsican language expert for the spelling on panoramic maps, but the authenticity of some spellings was contested.⁶²⁶ Such contests over authenticity, which the polynomic ideology seeks to avoid by legitimizing all real uses of the Corsican language, are also evident in educational settings. In schools, the imbalance in social dynamics between teachers and students often results in a perception that the language used by teachers holds greater authenticity compared to that of the students. Jaffe illustrates this in an example from another study: a child, though encouraged to retain his own spelling of a word, opted instead to write it using the teacher’s pronunciation.⁶²⁷ All these examples show that, Corsican may be ideologically defined as a polynomic language with no single authority, still authenticity and standardization can naturally emerge in practice. The contests over authenticity in the Corsican language cannot be viewed as outcomes of a polynomic standardization but rather as the result of a lack of standardization in practice. As Jaffe concludes: “To

⁶²³ *Ibid.*; Gal, S., & Woolard, K. A. (2014). pp. 1-12.

⁶²⁴ Jaffe, A. (2019). p. 7.

⁶²⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 9-10.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 14-18.

⁶²⁷ Jaffe, A. (2005). La polynomie dans une école bilingue corse: Bilan et défis. *Marges linguistiques*, 10, 282-299. p. 296.

summarize, the stakes of this particular regime of standardization of Corsican have remained, over the last 30 years, more symbolic/ideological than practical/economic.”⁶²⁸ This lack of practical standardization allows for two interpretations of the polynomic principle in the Corsican context, each influenced by different perspectives on sociolinguistic change.

The first interpretation, embodied by certain institutions, models the polynomic individual who freely uses any variety of Corsican they choose. Jaffe critiques this interpretation for disregarding sociolinguistic changes, as it assumes a sociolinguistic field akin to the past—where a community of speakers and writers collectively engaged in linguistic exchanges that gradually established parity among different varieties. The second interpretation, partially acknowledging sociolinguistic change, is reflected in institutions like the Corsican Territorial Collectivity. These institutions acknowledge that Corsican users of their bi-dialectal publications do not necessarily belong to or form a sufficiently robust community of practice to sustain a plural linguistic system. As a result, the polynomic system is interpreted as requiring the obligatory presentation of both northern and southern dialects, rather than allowing free choice between them, effectively mandating strict and overt equivalence in language use.⁶²⁹ As Jaffe concludes, the outcome is that “a polynomic standard makes knowledge of variation and proficiency in a specific variety a condition of full membership and authenticity.”⁶³⁰

Understanding the complexity and critiques of polynomic ideology in its original Corsican context, it is worth noting that its application to Amazigh by IRCAM may prove complex. When Meftaha Aneur of CAL suggests that “the concept of polynomy, born from a reflection on the Corsican situation, can easily be applied to multilingual or multilectal situations in other countries,”⁶³¹ this claim calls for a detailed comparison and examination.

6.2. Is IRCAM's Language Ideology Polynomic?

From the above studies, it can be concluded that the concept of polynomy, originating

⁶²⁸ Jaffe, A. (2019). p. 7.

⁶²⁹ Jaffe, A. (2019). p. 18.

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶³¹ Aneur, M. (2009). p. 80.

in the Corsican context, is rooted in an ideology that views language as *l'unité abstraite*, existing only through its diverse and actual usage. It directly opposes the standard language ideology, legitimizing and granting authenticity not to a standardized form or a language academy that regulates it, but instead to dialect-specific speech, embracing its full range of usages. In practice, the polynomic ideology exhibits a delayed reaction to sociolinguistic change, not entirely different from that of the standard language ideology. It either assumes an unchanging sociolinguistic situation, identical to the context in which parity among varieties was historically established, or it acknowledges change and responds by insisting that the parity established in the past must consistently be displayed and performed.

Moving to the case of Moroccan Amazigh language planning and the ideology of IRCAM, which claims to be based on a polynomic approach akin to that of Corsican, a fundamental difference emerges. As discussed in the earlier chapter, IRCAM does not perceive Amazigh as an abstract construct, but rather as a concrete language suffering from dialectalization. It subscribes to a strong standard language ideology, in contrast to a counter-standard approach that fully embraces the authenticity of Amazigh's diverse linguistic practices. Instead, IRCAM interprets these diverse practices as symptoms of dialectalization, reflecting "the processes of heterogenization that have been at work for centuries in the field of Amazigh."⁶³²

As introduced earlier, a similar ideology that views Amazigh not as an abstract construct but as a concrete language had already begun taking shape in the thinking of Mohamed Chafik before the establishment of IRCAM. Chafik asserts that "the reality is that the Amazigh language (in its unity) is still alive."⁶³³ He sees Amazigh dialects, or language tied to somewhere, as an abnormal situation, envisioning instead a generic Amazigh anywhere waiting to be recovered from its dialectal state. With Chafik's view shaping the later ideology of IRCAM, it can be argued that IRCAM's language ideology fundamentally contrasts with the Corsican-style polynomic concept from its very inception.

So, how does the polynomic concept fit into IRCAM's ideology? A simple answer might be that IRCAM fundamentally adheres to a standard language ideology rather than a polynomic one. However, because the standard ideology is significantly distant from actual language practices, IRCAM employs the polynomic concept as an

⁶³² Boukous, A. (2011). p. 234.

⁶³³ Chafik, M. (1989). p. 63.

approach rather than a principle, subordinately operating under the overarching ideology of a standard Moroccan Amazigh in its language planning efforts. This subordination is reflected in Meftaha Ameer's discussion of IRCAM's polynomic approach to lexical planning.

6.2.1. On a Polynomic Lexicon

In the 2009 article *Aménagement linguistique de l'amazighe: Pour une approche polynomique*, Ameer clarifies what in an Amazigh dictionary should be considered as polynomic and what might not. She argues that most existing Amazigh dictionaries cannot be considered to be polynomic since they are "often confined to a single dialect," citing examples such as: "C'est le cas du Vocabulaire français-berbère de E. Destaing (1938) qui concerne le tachelhite du Sous, du Dictionnaire rifain-espagnol (E. Ibañez, 1949), du dictionnaire de M. Taïfi (1991) qui étudie les parlers du Maroc central (neuf parlers comme le précise l'auteur dans son introduction). Le vocabulaire usuel du tachelhite de A. Bounfour et A. Boumalk s'inscrit dans une visée standardisante, mais reste circonscrit à «une koinè usuelle commune à l'aire dialectale du chleuh» (2001 : VIII), le Dictionnaire tarifit-français de M. Serhoual (2002)."⁶³⁴

In contrast to the Corsican polynomic approach, which grants full legitimacy and authenticity to language tied to somewhere, Ameer's perspective demonstrates that the more a dictionary is tied to specific dialects and local contexts, the less it aligns with a polynomic framework. She states: "Parfois même le travail lexicographique peut porter sur un seul parler comme c'est le cas du Dallet (1982) qui étudie un parler kabyle particulier: celui des Aït-Menguellat, ou encore la recherche de D. Azdoud (1997) sur le lexique des Aït-Hdiddou (Maroc central)."⁶³⁵ Besides these works, the only dictionary viewed as polynomic in Ameer's article is the three-volume dictionary

⁶³⁴ Ameer, M. (2009). p. 84.; Destaing, E. (1938). *Etude sur la tachelhit du Sous: Vocabulaire français-berbère*, Paris, Leroux.; Ibañez, E. (1949). *Diccionario rifaño-español (etimológico)*, Madrid, Instituto de Estudios Africanos.; Taïfi, M. (1991).; Bounfour, A. & Boumalk, A. (2001). *Vocabulaire usuel de tachelhit (tachelhit - français)*, Rabat, Centre Tarik bnou Zayad.; Serhoual, M. (2002). *Dictionnaire tarifit-français* (Doctoral dissertation, Université Abdelmalek Essaâdi, Tétouan).

⁶³⁵ Ameer, M. (2009). p. 84.; Dallet, J. M. (1982). *Dictionnaire kabyle-Français, parler des Aït Menguellat*. éditions SELAF.; Azdoud, D. (1997), *Lexique commun des Aït-Hadiddou ou du Haut Atlas (Maroc central)* (Doctoral dissertation, Université El Jadida).

by Mohamed Chafik, “qui s’inscrit dans une visée polynomique dans le sens où il considère la langue comme une et multiple ne donne pas aux différentes variétés leur propre individualité, elles se retrouvent toutes englobées sous l’étiquette amazighe.”⁶³⁶ As discussed earlier, the *al-mu‘jam al-‘arabī al-amazīghī* (The Arabic-Amazigh Dictionary) by Chafik includes lexicon from all three main varieties in Morocco without indicating their origins. Aneur describes this feature as “not giving the different varieties their own individuality.” While this approach might be considered counter-polynomic in the Corsican context, Aneur interprets it as reflecting the “one and multiple” nature of Amazigh, thereby aligning with a polynomic vision.⁶³⁷

What can be observed is that in viewing Chafik’s dictionary as polynomic, while other variety-specific works are not, Aneur’s view seems to rest on an ideology that takes a standard Moroccan Amazigh as the default. Only under the overarching counter-polynomic yet standard language ideology, which views Amazigh as a concrete rather than abstract language, can Chafik’s dictionary be interpreted as following a polynomic approach by incorporating more dialects rather than focusing on a single one.

With the understanding that polynomy operates as an approach subordinate to the standard ideology of Amazigh, it is worth noting that disagreements within IRCAM do exist regarding how polynomic this approach can be. For instance, Aneur criticizes Chafik’s work, stating: “Nous regrettons, pour notre part, l’absence d’informations sur les parlers étudiés, le manque d’indication des sources documentaires,”⁶³⁸ to which Chafik himself responds that “toutes ces indications sont consignées sur ses fiches qui ont servi à l’élaboration du dictionnaire.”⁶³⁹ For Aneur, a polynomic approach can tolerate varieties being identified, as long as they are safely placed “sous l’étiquette amazighe.” Thus, she does not support Chafik’s method, which involved documenting origins while intentionally refraining from displaying them.

However, as evidenced by the *Dictionnaire général de la langue amazighe* (2017) by IRCAM, Chafik’s approach of anonymizing the varieties persists, presenting

⁶³⁶ Aneur, M. (2009). p. 84.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*

different lexical options for the same meaning not as words from multiple varieties but as synonymous terms within a single unified language. This suggests that, in IRCAM's language planning, even as an approach subordinate to the standard language ideology, the concept of polynomy plays a significantly diminished role. For IRCAM, the label of the language can only be "Amazigh," reflecting "la vieille idéologie unifiante, unicisante, normative"⁶⁴⁰—the very ideology, as quoted earlier, that Marcellesi opposed by developing the polynomic ideology for Corsican.

6.2.2. On Plurinormalist Language Teaching

Besides the lexical aspect, Ameer discusses education and media as two additional domains demonstrating the application of the polynomic approach in Moroccan Amazigh. For media, she provides the example: "A la radio nationale, chacun des trois grands groupes dialectaux occupe une plage horaire mais la radio s'adresse à tous les amazighophones. Nous notons, par exemple, la participation des auteurs par téléphone à des émissions interactives réalisées dans une variété qui n'est pas la leur."⁶⁴¹ This example, where the three main varieties of Morocco are ideologically treated as equals and speakers are encouraged to engage with varieties other than their own to facilitate communication, aligns with the polynomic approach in education. The ultimate objective of this approach in education, as Ameer explains, is "On insistera sur la bonne maîtrise d'une variété avec l'obligation de l'ouverture sur les autres."⁶⁴²

This ultimate goal is envisioned to be realized progressively, as Ameer explains: "Après l'accompagnement de l'élève dans sa langue maternelle au niveau des premières classes, on pourra entamer une certaine ouverture sur les autres variétés afin de le sensibiliser à la pluralité de la langue en insistant sur le dénominateur commun qui sous-tend les différentes variétés, mais en présentant aussi les aspects de divergence... Au niveau du secondaire (collégial et qualifiant), on veillera à la progression dans cette visée de «l'un et du multiple» à dessein d'amener l'étudiant au niveau de l'université à la pleine possession de la multiplicité du système de la langue."⁶⁴³ Discussions on IRCAM's textbooks in an earlier chapter demonstrate that

⁶⁴⁰ Bulot, T., Marcellesi, J. B., & Blanchet, P. (2003). p. 24.

⁶⁴¹ Ameer, M. (2009). p. 83.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.* p. 82.

⁶⁴³ Ameer, M. (2009). pp. 81-82.

this educational approach has been effectively implemented. For example, it aligns with the earlier quotation from Bouchra El Barkani of CRDPP, who explains that IRCAM's textbooks aim to foster a scenario where students can "understand others who speak a dialect different from mine and speak a dialect different from mine."⁶⁴⁴

However, there are two important expressions in Ameer's discourse that require closer examination. First, she suggests that this educational approach aims at "le rapprochement des différentes variétés et de la convergence."⁶⁴⁵ Second, and crucially, this approach cannot be considered to be polynomic. Instead, as Ameer herself defines it: "C'est ce que des sociolinguistes comme Ch. Marcellesi et J. Treignier appellent une didactique plurinormaliste."⁶⁴⁶ On this issue, Christiane Marcellesi and Jacques Treignier specifically remind us that "La proximité de l'expression didactique plurinormaliste avec celle de langue polynomique n'indique pas qu'elles se recourent. Pour nous plurinormaliste s'oppose à normaliste et anormaliste."⁶⁴⁷ This necessitates a closer examination of the concept of plurinormalist language teaching and its relationship with polynomic language ideology.

It is worth noting that plurinormalist language teaching is a concept developed independently of polynomic language ideology. It was elaborated during the late 1970s and the 1980s by language education specialists from the sociolinguistic research unit at the University of Rouen, in collaboration with other experts in the field at the French *Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique*.⁶⁴⁸ The concept was initially formulated concerning the teaching of French—a highly standardized language—aiming to transform this teaching and its broader educational framework by incorporating sociolinguistic variation.⁶⁴⁹ Thus, it can be understood that plurinormalism opposes both *normaliste* and *anormaliste* approaches. It focuses on

⁶⁴⁴ El Barkani, B. (2010). p. 159.

⁶⁴⁵ Ameer, M. (2009). p. 81.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 82.; Marcellesi, C., & Treignier, J. (1990). *Éléments pour une didactique des langues polynomiques: L'expérience de l'enseignement plurinormaliste du français. PULA (Publications Universitaires de Linguistique et d'Anthropologie)*, 3, 4, 268-281.

⁶⁴⁷ Marcellesi, C., & Treignier, J. (1990). p. 275.

⁶⁴⁸ Blanchet, P. (2020). "Corsican sociolinguistics": Key words and concepts of a cross-linguistic theory. *International journal of the sociology of language*, 2020(261), 9-26. p. 20.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

language education in general, encompassing the teaching of any language, even highly standardized ones.⁶⁵⁰

In the Corsican context, plurinormalist language teaching is favored among three sociolinguistic orientations in teaching, as outlined by Christiane Marcellesi and Jacques Treignier:

“La première normative consisterait à dire au candidat qu’il n’existe qu’une Norme du corse (celle du centre de décision politique, administratif) et que toute autre variété est à la fois inesthétique et fautive. La seconde anormative reviendrait à laisser le candidat parler comme il le souhaite sans prendre en compte que les variétés entretiennent entre elles des rapports de proximité ou de distance qui peuvent avoir des effets lors d’un concours. La troisième plurinormaliste s’appuie sur la reconnaissance de la pluralité des normes, sur la présence majoritaire au sein du jury de telle ou telle variété. Il convient alors d’alerter le candidat sur les effets de connivence ou de distance que ses choix de mises en mots peuvent créer.”⁶⁵¹

It can thus be understood that plurinormalism represents a form of eclecticism between *normaliste* and *anormaliste* approaches. It functions to address both the rigidity of a *normaliste* system, as seen in the case of French, and the lack of standardization in an *anormaliste* system, as exemplified by Corsican. When applied to a polynomic counter-standard language like Corsican, a plurinormalist approach to language teaching, which inherently incorporates norms, might be regarded as a compromise. This compromise acknowledges a critical reality, as pointed out by Philippe Blanchet: “School is indeed in many societies one of the institutions, if not the institution, in charge of the indoctrination that changes domination into hegemony through the obligation of selective norms made ‘obvious’ in all aspects of social life, especially linguistic norms.”⁶⁵² Due to the fact that “Teaching varieties of any distinct language is at the same time impossible (there are too many varieties) and contradictory (it cuts the language into several supposedly homogeneous pieces),” a plurinormalist language teaching adopted in Corsican compromises to not insist on

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵¹ Marcellesi, C., & Treignier, J. (1990). p. 275.

⁶⁵² Blanchet, P. (2020). p. 19.

varieties, as done by polynomic ideology, but instead stepped back to insist on variation.⁶⁵³

With these understandings, returning to the case of Moroccan Amazigh, it can be observed that IRCAM's language teaching approach aligns well with a plurinormalist framework, as it incorporates the teaching of three main Amazigh varieties under the label of a homogeneous Amazigh, as demonstrated in IRCAM's schoolbooks. However, it is important to note that this plurinormalism is not contrary to the standard language ideology upheld by IRCAM and cannot be seen as an approach developed from a polynomic ideology. The critical difference between IRCAM's plurinormalism and the Corsican case lies in its foundation: it is not a compromise to the fact that teaching all varieties of a polynomic language is impossible, but rather a response to the reality that teaching one unified variety of a standard language, namely Moroccan Amazigh, is currently unfeasible, as such a singular variety does not yet exist in practice. In other words, unlike the Corsican approach, which insists on variation, IRCAM's plurinormalism does not reflect a similar insistence, as Amazigh variations are viewed as the result of an undesirable dialectalization process. On the contrary, as stated by Aneur, it aims at "le rapprochement des différentes variétés et de la convergence,"⁶⁵⁴ aligning with the revitalization process of Amazigh as defined by Boukous.

6.2.3. Shaping Sociolinguistic Dynamics

Besides the above aspects of lexicon and language teaching, another notable difference between IRCAM's polynomic approach and the polynomic ideology of Corsican lies in its active role in shaping sociolinguistic change. As Jaffe criticizes, the two approaches adopted under the polynomic ideology in Corsican contexts either completely ignore sociolinguistic changes or only partially acknowledge them.⁶⁵⁵ Jaffe provides an example of how the binary opposition between the northern and southern dialects of Corsican—particularly its polynomic spelling (such as the northern *simu* and the southern *semi* for "we are")—was quickly adopted as a semiotic

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 22.

⁶⁵⁴ Aneur, M. (2009). p. 81.

⁶⁵⁵ Jaffe, A. (2019). p. 18.

resource in the toolkit of football fan rivalry.⁶⁵⁶ This exemplifies new sociolinguistic dynamics that a polynomic approach is not designed to address.

In contrast, IRCAM's ideology, serving the homogeneous Moroccan nationalism outlined in its founding documents, is not only responsive to emerging sub-identities but also actively intervenes to mold them within the ideological unity of the Moroccan Amazigh language. This is evident in the previously quoted words of Mohamed Chafik: "French lexicographers limited their fields of research to local or tribal dialects, exploring the characteristics of each dialect, and were eager to highlight the differences at the expense of the groups in order to establish proof that the tribes are culturally distinct, and that some of them are enemies to others as long as they differ in pronunciation, timbre, or tone."⁶⁵⁷ By promoting "le rapprochement des différentes variétés et de la convergence," IRCAM does not merely accommodate sociolinguistic shifts but strategically directs them toward a predetermined linguistic—and consequently, identity—unity.

In conclusion, IRCAM's supposedly polynomic approach cannot be considered to be aligned with the Corsican polynomic ideology; rather, it stands in contrast to it. Its allowance for variations is subordinate to and works in conjunction with a strong standard language ideology that perceives the Amazigh language as a concrete entity rather than an abstract construct. In terms of the lexicon, IRCAM adopts a unified Amazigh as the default, insisting not on variation but on anonymizing variations. In language teaching, IRCAM's plurinormalist approach is not a compromise to the unavoidable standardization required in education but rather a response to the significant linguistic distance between Morocco's three main Amazigh varieties.

Compromising with this reality, IRCAM adopts a plurinormalist teaching method while remaining firmly committed to "le rapprochement des différentes variétés et de la convergence," aligning with its ideological framework for "revitalization." Notably, because of the aim of rapprochement and convergence, the three main Amazigh varieties face different degrees of intervention in standardization with Tarifiyt being the most affected. This approach of diminishing the particularity of varieties contributes to the understanding that, unlike the Corsican polynomic case, criticized for its delayed response to sociolinguistic changes, IRCAM's approach actively fosters potential sociolinguistic shifts, aligning with the homogeneous

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 16.

⁶⁵⁷ Chafik, M. (1990). p. 7.

Moroccan national identity.

IRCAM's polynomic tolerance for variation operates strictly within the limited space left by essential standardizations—what El Mehdi Iazzi describes as “the two aspects that require intervention or adjustment,” namely, “la ‘norme graphique’ et le traitement des ‘lacunes lexicales’ et de la masse des ‘emprunts non intégrés.’”⁶⁵⁸ As the essential standardizations were introduced earlier in this thesis, the remainder of this chapter will focus on how the polynomic approach operates within this left space, primarily concerning the morphological planning of Moroccan Amazigh by IRCAM.

6.3. The Polynomic Approach in IRCAM's Morphological Planning: Focusing on the Imperfective Forms

As stated by El Mehdi Iazzi, besides the orthographical and phonetic aspects of graphic norms and the lexical aspect for treating lexical gaps and non-integrated loanwords, in the morphological aspect, IRCAM's polynomic approach guarantees that the entirety of structures, both common and varied, are part of the national norm. However, a closer examination suggests otherwise. Iazzi explicitly states that IRCAM's polynomic approach is a method to reconcile the contradiction between language practice and language ideology—“the situation of Moroccan Amazigh (multiple dialects grouped into three major regional varieties)” and “the idea of a unique and unified Moroccan Amazigh.”⁶⁵⁹

However, IRCAM's polynomic approach is not without its emphasis. As Iazzi goes on to explain: “Nous considérons que seule une approche polynomique, plurielle et polycentrique de la norme permet de mieux intégrer les variations régionales.”⁶⁶⁰ This emphasis on “better integrating regional variations,” aligning with Ameer's “bringing the different varieties closer together and achieving convergence,” suggests that even beyond the graphical and lexical planning, or the two essential standardizations, IRCAM's polynomic approach to morphological planning may still not fully guarantee “the entirety of varied structures.”⁶⁶¹

Iazzi's explanation of the polynomic approach also aligns with Boukous's

⁶⁵⁸ Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 30.

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 225.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 30.

guiding principles on IRCAM's corpus planning of Moroccan Amazigh, which advocate for "a rational, progressive, and flexible approach," avoiding both "localist tendencies" and the imposition of a common Berber.⁶⁶² In Iazzi's discourse, "a polynomic, plural, and polycentric approach to the norm" serves to prevent the imposition of a single common Berber, while Boukous's objection to "localist tendencies" is echoed in the more crucial planning goal of "better integrating regional variations." This process of integrating regional variations is to be achieved progressively and flexibly.

The progressiveness and flexibility of IRCAM's corpus planning process toward the idea of a unique and unified Moroccan Amazigh by integrating variations is reflected in the following example. In *Initiation à la langue amazighe* (2004), which reflects some initial ideas by CAL in planning Moroccan Amazigh, the formation of imperfective aspect involves, among others, morphological change through prefixation with *tt-*, accompanied by vowel alternation. This alternation accommodates any of the three Amazigh vowels: *a*, *i*, or *u*. To exemplify this flexibility, the book specifically provides the example of the verb *drdr* ("to sprinkle"), whose imperfective form is given as *ttdrdir*, demonstrating the validity of using the vowel *i*.⁶⁶³ However, in the *Dictionnaire général de la langue amazighe* (2017), the imperfective form of *drdr* is presented exclusively as *ttdrdar*, instead of *ttdrdir*, which had previously exemplified IRCAM's polynomic approach to addressing variation.⁶⁶⁴

The once-tolerated but eventually excluded *ttdrdir* serves as an example that, even beyond the two essential standardizations, in the morphological aspect, "the entirety of varied structures" can hardly be continually guaranteed within IRCAM's polynomic approach. To further illustrate this point, it is worth continuing to focus on IRCAM's planning of the imperfective aspect, which represents one of the most irregular morphological categories of the Amazigh language. The examination will address IRCAM's treatment of three aspects of Amazigh imperfective forms: preverbal particles, stem formation, and the negative imperfective form.

⁶⁶² Boukous, A. (2009b). p. 423.

⁶⁶³ Ameur, M., Bouhjar, A., Boukhris, F., Boukous, A., Boumalk, A., Elmedlaoui M., Iazzi, E. & Souifi, H. (2004). pp. 59-60.

⁶⁶⁴ Ameur et al. (2017). p. 297.

6.3.1. Preverbal Particles

In Amazigh varieties, the imperfective aspect is primarily used in three contexts: to express that an event happens habitually or repeatedly; to express an event of longer duration; and to express an ongoing action (progressive).⁶⁶⁵ In usage, the derived forms of words are usually prefixed with preverbal particles, which can include *da* or *la*, primarily found in Central Moroccan Amazigh, and *ar*, mainly found in Tashelhiyt. Tarifiyt is the exception, where particle-less imperfectives are common. The only context in Tarifiyt where a particle is almost obligatory is in the progressive use, where the present-time relevance particle *qa* is prefixed, corresponding to the immediate timeframe implied by progressive use.⁶⁶⁶

IRCAM's approach to planning preverbal particles of imperfectives is reflected in the following discussion by Iazzi: "En outre, les parlers disposent d'un ensemble de particules adverbiales préverbales, obtenues par grammaticalisation de mots autonomes, qui soutiennent l'aoriste et l'inaccompli, e. g. *ad yazzl* (il courra), *ad icc / ad itc* (il mangera), *ar ittazzal / da ittazzal / la ittazzal / aqqa ittazzal* (il court), etc. Certaines variations de particules sont régionales (e.g. *aqqa* au nord, *la* au centre, *ar* au sud), d'autres expriment dans le même parler des nuances qui restreignent leur distribution."⁶⁶⁷ Additionally, Iazzi notes: "Certains adverbes préverbaux sont communs, e.g. *ad* exprimant le « non-réel / non-effectif », d'autres sont régionaux, e.g. *ar / la / da / aqqa* (rendant l'inaccompli, l'inachevé, le continu, l'itératif, etc.)."⁶⁶⁸

This demonstrates that IRCAM's planning strategy involves introducing the particle *aqqa* for the Northern dialect, meaning Tarifiyt, as a prefix for imperfectives. This approach reduces the distinctiveness of Tarifiyt's particle-less feature for imperfectives, aligning it more closely with the other two Moroccan varieties, where particles are obligatory. Here, the polynomic approach is constrained to the selection of a particle but does not go far enough to prioritize or emphasize Tarifiyt's unique particle-less usage.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that, although the *aqqa* plan was part of IRCAM's corpus planning from its inception, as demonstrated in *Initiation à la langue*

⁶⁶⁵ Mourigh, K., & Kossmann, M. (2019). pp. 113-114.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 114.

⁶⁶⁷ Iazzi, E. M. (2018). pp. 525-526.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 508.

amazighe (2004), particle-less imperfectives were not explicitly ruled out. The same book states: “L’inaccompli s’emploie souvent accompagné des particules aspectuelles *ar / la / da / aqqa*,”⁶⁶⁹ implying that the use of particles is common, but not mandatory. This implication persists in IRCAM’s *Guide de l’enseignant et de l’enseignante de l’amazighe* (2023), where a particle-less imperfective appears in the example: *ixddm ziri gi tnjjart* (“Ziri works in carpentry”), with the imperfective *ixddm* unaccompanied by a particle.⁶⁷⁰ This might arguably demonstrate that “the entirety of varied structures” is still preserved in standard Moroccan Amazigh. However, the *Guide* does not mention particle-less forms, nor does it use language similar to that in *Initiation*, where particles are described as “souvent” rather than mandatory in the grammar explanation section. Instead, the particles *da*, *ar*, *la*, and *aqqa* are explicitly listed.⁶⁷¹

This suggests that IRCAM shows a clear preference for certain varieties, with its planning increasingly enforcing the obligatory use of particles for imperfectives. This approach progressively narrows the scope of variation by minimizing the prominence of Tarifiyt’s particle-less usage. Tarifiyt is thus designed to align with IRCAM’s planning of the imperfectives of standard Moroccan Amazigh, which are preferred to always include a particle. Only secondary to this interventionist regulation—aimed at “le rapprochement des différentes variétés et de la convergence”—is a subordinate polynomic approach applied, offering the polynomic option of *aqqa* and allowing varieties to select their own particles. However, in practice, Tarifiyt speakers do not genuinely enjoy polynomy but are instead expected to adapt to a new usage, while speakers of the other two varieties are not similarly required to adjust.

6.3.2. The formation of the imperfective stem

The derivation of a verb’s imperfective form is one of the most irregular aspects of Amazigh morphology. Some scholars suggest that the formation of imperfectives cannot be predicted at all. Paul Bisson states: “il faut ... connaître (le thème inaccompli de chaque verbe), car il est impossible de (le) construire soi-même de

⁶⁶⁹ Aneur. M., Bouhjar. A., Boukhris. F., Boukous. A., Boumalk. A., Elmedlaoui M., Iazzi. E. & Souifi. H. (2004). pp. 60-61.

⁶⁷⁰ Agnaou, F., Bouzandag, A., El Barkani, B., El Gholb, L., Ouqua, K., & Sghir, M. (2023). *Guide de l’enseignant et de l’enseignante de l’amazighe*. IRCAM. p. 301.

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 39.

façon certaine.”⁶⁷² Similarly, Victorien Loubignac observes: “il n’y a aucune règle permettant de manière certaine de construire (le thème inaccompli) d’un verbe donné, primitif ou dérivé. Il existe en effet pour (ce thème) différents modes de formation entre lesquels sont répartis assez arbitrairement les différents verbes.”⁶⁷³

That said, the formation of imperfectives generally involves three key derivational devices, as Mourigh and Kossmann specify in the case of Tarifiyt: “Gemination of a stem consonant; Prefixation of *t(t)-*; and Insertion of a plain vowel (*i, u, a*) before the last consonant of the root.”⁶⁷⁴ These three devices also apply to the other varieties in Morocco. In the case of Tashelhiyt, they correspond to Abdellah Boumalk’s description as: “l’adjonction du préfixe (*tt-*) au verbe primaire (thème d’aoriste); la tension d’une radicale (à l’initiale ou en deuxième position); une alternance vocalique.”⁶⁷⁵ Based on these three devices, certain regulations apply; notably, gemination and prefixation rarely co-occur, while the insertion of a plain vowel is commonly combined with the prefixation of *t(t)-*.⁶⁷⁶ On this basis, several other rules apply and may vary between varieties, for example, in Tarifiyt verbs with three consonants (*CCC*) and no plain vowel (*i, u, a*) have mostly gemination of the second consonant of the stem (*CC:C*). In contrast, this is not the case in Central Moroccan Amazigh and Tashelhiyt, where the form *ttCCaC* is also widely attested.

IRCAM featured a way to regulate this irregularity, as reflected in Iazzi’s work. After a general description of the formatives of the imperfective in Moroccan varieties, Iazzi states: “En somme, la composante morphologique qui régit la formation du thème inaccompli des verbes simples comporte deux types de règles: -règles primaires et obligatoires: gémination d’une radicale ou préfixation de *tt-*; -règles secondaires: affixation d’une mélodie vocalique /a/.”⁶⁷⁷ The interventionist aspect of this planning lies in its regulation of the formation of the imperfective stem to involve only the vowel *a*, rather than allowing for the full range of plain vowels (*i, u, a*), thereby

⁶⁷² Bisson, P. (1940). *Leçons de berbère tamazight: Dialecte des Aït Ndhir (Aït Nâaman)*. F. Moncho. p. 32. Quoted in Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 632.

⁶⁷³ Loubignac, V. (1924). *Étude sur le dialecte berbère des Zaïan et Aït*

Sgougou (Vol. 14). E. Leroux. p. 302. Quoted in Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 632.

⁶⁷⁴ Mourigh, K., & Kossmann, M. (2019). p. 60.

⁶⁷⁵ Boumalk, A. (2003). *Manuel de conjugaison du tachelhit (langue berbère du Maroc)*. l’Harmattan. pp. 18-19.

⁶⁷⁶ Mourigh, K., & Kossmann, M. (2019). p. 60.

⁶⁷⁷ Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 641.

enhancing overall morphological simplicity and consistency.

This regulation on vowel insertion, which prioritizes the vowel *a*, contradicts grammatical rules observed in actual language practice. For example, as Mourigh and Kossmann introduce the relevant rule in Tarifiyt: “Verbs without an internal plain vowel (*i, u, a*) that have more than three stem consonants, or three consonants one of which is geminated, take the prefix *t-*. With some verbs a vowel is inserted between the last two consonants of the stem.”⁶⁷⁸ In this case, as well as in similar cases in other varieties, the vowel inserted between the last two consonants is variable. This variation is observed by Iazzi as: “La voyelle affixée avec la préfixation de *tt-* est aussi le plus souvent /a/ (dans les parlers du sud) ou parfois /i/ (dans les parlers du centre et du nord, avec une tendance plus prononcée au nord en faveur de /i/).”⁶⁷⁹

Though acknowledging this variation, as shown by the two-phase derivational rule of IRCAM, the usage of *a* is prioritized in an imposing manner, while the usage of *i* is not consistently tolerated. This results in the aforementioned case of *drdr* being presented exclusively as *ttdrdar*. Similarly, *srsr* (“to ring”), which is derived into the imperfective form as *tsersir* in Central Moroccan Amazigh,⁶⁸⁰ is listed in IRCAM’s dictionary solely as *tsrsar*.⁶⁸¹ Thus, it might be safe to say that, in this morphological aspect regarding the vowel inserted in verbs’ imperfective forms, the polynomic approach guaranteeing the entirety of varied structures is not observed.

Besides the secondary vowel rule, there is another issue regarding the primary rule: “gémination d’une radicale ou préfixation de *tt-*.” While the rule is largely descriptive of practical usage, the remaining issue is how to choose between the two. A major contradiction arises in cases like Tarifiyt, where verbs with three consonants and no plain vowel (*CCC*) mostly undergo gemination of the second consonant of the stem (*CC:C*). However, in Central Moroccan Amazigh and Tashelhiyt, the derivational pattern *ttCCaC* is also attested. For example, *lmd* (“to learn”) is derived into *tlmad* in Tashelhiyt, whereas in Tarifiyt, *tlmad* is impossible, and the attested form is *lmmd* (pronounced *řəmməḍ*).⁶⁸² To address this issue, IRCAM adopts a polynomic approach, as Iazzi states: “Pour assurer à la norme nationale son caractère

⁶⁷⁸ Mourigh, K., & Kossmann, M. (2019). p. 63.

⁶⁷⁹ Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 633.

⁶⁸⁰ Taïfi, M. (2016). p. 652.

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.* p. 631.; Ameur et al. (2017). p. 478.

⁶⁸² Boumalk, A. (2003). p. 20.; Mourigh, K., & Kossmann, M. (2019). p. 61.

polynomique, toutes ces variations méritent d'être prises en considération."⁶⁸³ This means that the imperfective form of *CCC* verbs can either be *CC:C* or *ttCCaC*. This polynomic approach is reflected in IRCAM's dictionary, where the imperfective of *lmd* is listed as *lmmd/tlmd*.⁶⁸⁴

However, although a polynomic approach is adopted in this aspect, its decision process and implications require further examination. It is worth noting that in IRCAM's earlier grammar, *La nouvelle grammaire de l'amazighe* (2008), the examples provided for the imperfective form of *CCC* verbs are exclusively *CC:C*, with the Tashelhiyt and some Central Moroccan Amazigh varieties' pattern of *ttCCaC* absent.⁶⁸⁵ This suggests that, on this issue, IRCAM initially preferred the feature common to all three main varieties in Morocco. However, as reflected in IRCAM's dictionary and Iazzi's work, with the inclusion of the *ttCCaC* form, IRCAM later adopted a more polynomic approach to accommodate this specific feature of Tashelhiyt and Central Moroccan Amazigh.

Another issue worth noting is that, in Tashelhiyt, alongside *ttCCaC* and *CC:C*, there is a further way of forming the imperfective of *CCC* verbs. Depending on the sonority of the second consonant, this method involves geminating the first consonant instead of the second, resulting in the form *C:CC*. For example, *krz* ("to plough") becomes *kkrz* instead of *krrz*.⁶⁸⁶ This feature of Tashelhiyt is not specifically addressed in IRCAM's planning. However, as reflected in its dictionary, the imperfective of *krz* is listed as "*krrz/kkrz*," indicating that this special Tashelhiyt usage (*C:CC*) is acknowledged and polynomically included.⁶⁸⁷ In contrast, a special Tarifiyt long imperfective form, *ttCaC:aC*, rather than *ttCCaC*, is not recognized by a similar polynomic approach.⁶⁸⁸

Considering these examples of the polynomic inclusion of Tashelhiyt features and the non-polynomic treatment of Tarifiyt ones, it might not be mistaken to suggest that, under IRCAM's polynomic approach to planning the formation of the

⁶⁸³ Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 642.

⁶⁸⁴ Aneur et al. (2017). p. 387.

⁶⁸⁵ Boukhris et al. (2008). pp. 93-94.

⁶⁸⁶ Dell, F., & Elmedlaoui, M. (2002). Syllables in Tashlhiyt Berber and in Moroccan Arabic. Dordrecht: Kluwer. pp. 122-123.

⁶⁸⁷ Aneur et al. (2017). p. 315.

⁶⁸⁸ Mourigh, K., & Kossmann, M. (2019). p. 61.

imperfective stem, Tashelhiyt emerges as the variety *more polynomic* than Tarifiyt. This trend is also reflected in the planning of another aspect of the imperfectives: its negative form.

6.3.3. The Negative Imperfective

Among the three main varieties in Morocco, Tarifiyt is the only one that has a negative form for imperfectives distinct from the positive one. The derivation rule is very regular, as described by Mourigh and Kossmann: “any *a* in the positive Imperfective is changed to *i*. When there is no *a* present, the two forms are homonymous.”⁶⁸⁹ This issue is observed by Iazzi as follows: “Dans la plupart des parlers, la valeur positive et négative de ce thème ne connaît aucun changement morphologique. Seuls quelques parlers du nord-est modifient toute voyelle *a* dans le radical en *i* en passant de la valeur positive à la valeur négative de ce thème.”⁶⁹⁰

Iazzi's formulation presents this particular feature of Tarifiyt in a hyper-dialectal way as “seuls quelques parlers du nord-est”(only a few dialects of the northeast), which trivializes the Tarifiyt differentiation between a negative imperfective from a positive one. This leads to the imposition of “the positive and negative value of this theme undergoes no morphological change” as the grammar of IRCAM's standard Amazigh, which means that the polynomic approach guaranteeing the entirety of varied structures is not applied in this case. This is reflected, for example, in IRCAM's *Guide de l'enseignant et de l'enseignante de l'amazighe* (2023), in the section introducing “des éléments de la conjugaison de la langue amazighe.” The aspects listed include: “l'aoriste; l'aoriste de narration; l'accompli; l'accompli négatif; l'inaccompli; l'impératif; le participe,” where the negative imperfective (l'inaccompli négatif) is omitted.⁶⁹¹

Thus, even though the Tarifiyt rule on the negative imperfective is simple and regular, it is not included as a polynomic choice in favor of maintaining the uniformity of Moroccan Amazigh. This represents yet another case where Tarifiyt is positioned as the least polynomic among the three varieties under IRCAM's polynomic approach

⁶⁸⁹ Mourigh, K., & Kossmann, M. (2019). p. 63.

⁶⁹⁰ Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 650.

⁶⁹¹ Agnaou, F., Bouzandag, A., El Barkani, B., El Gholb, L., Ouqua, K., & Sghir, M. (2023). *Guide de l'enseignant et de l'enseignante de l'amazighe*. IRCAM. p. 292.

for planning the imperfective-related morphology of standard Moroccan Amazigh. With this understanding added, it can be concluded that, in terms of morphology—specifically regarding aspects of the imperfective—IRCAM’s stated polynomic approach, which aims to ensure the entirety of varied structures, is not fully reflected in practice.

Based on the above discussions on IRCAM’s morphological planning of imperfective forms, the application of a polynomic approach can be categorized into three situations:

1. Polynomic approach not applied: This includes the preference for the inserted vowel *a* in derivations and the omission of the negative imperfective form.
2. Polynomic approach applied nominally: Here, the approach is secondary to the uniformity of standard Amazigh, as seen with the obligatory prefixed particle *aqqa*, which is assigned to Tarifiyt to allow for a polynomic choice but is, in practice, not used as such.
3. Polynomic approach applied: This applies to the polynomic choice between *CC:C* and *tCCaC* for deriving *CCC* verbs.

However, it is important to note that the inclusion of the *tCCaC* form, and especially the *C:CC* form, as seen in IRCAM’s dictionary, indicates a more polynomic attitude toward Tashelhiyt’s usage. This stands in contrast to Tarifiyt, which does not receive the same recognition for its characteristic features, including the inserted vowel *i*, particle-less imperfectives, and its distinct negative imperfective form.

6.4. IRCAM’s Polynomic Approach as Mediation Between Language Ideology and Language Practice

From the above discussions, the polynomic approach in IRCAM’s language planning can be better understood: it is fundamentally different from the polynomic ideology in the original Corsican case, as it views Moroccan Amazigh as a concrete rather than an abstract language. This understanding sets the foundation for IRCAM’s lexical planning, which features a polynomic inclusion of words from all dialects of

Moroccan Amazigh. In terms of language teaching, it is crucial to distinguish between the polynomic ideology and plurinormalism, as the two do not necessarily overlap. This is exemplified by IRCAM's approach, where plurinormalism is adapted to support the goals of the standard language ideology, rather than embodying a truly polynomic framework. Regarding morphological planning, IRCAM's polynomic approach set to ensure the entirety of varied structures is not fully applied.

IRCAM's polynomic approach can be seen as an attempt to mediate the significant discrepancy between language ideology and language practice. Ideologically, in the face of the potential politicization of the Amazigh issue, Moroccan authorities have embraced a politically inviolable language ideology that promotes a homogeneous Moroccan Amazigh, with IRCAM established and tasked with its standardization. This stance is notably distant from Morocco's diverse Amazigh linguistic landscape, which includes three main varieties.

In the process of gradually planning language practice to align with the ideology, the polynomic approach is adopted by IRCAM to address the diverse language usage within the framework of the standard ideology. In this process, the polynomic approach operates only within a limited space left by the realization of the standard Moroccan Amazigh, where standardization dominates and mediation with diverse language practices is not required. This is explicitly reflected in Iazzi's words: "The two aspects that require intervention or adjustment are the graphic norm and the treatment of lexical gaps and the mass of non-integrated loanwords."⁶⁹² It is only "outside of these two aspects" that the polynomic approach applies, ensuring that "the entirety of structures are part of the national norm."⁶⁹³

Accordingly, as reflected in IRCAM's planning on these two essential aspects for a homogeneous Moroccan Amazigh, it is found that IRCAM's neo-Tifinagh represents not any particular variety but standard Moroccan Amazigh. For instance, features from Tarifiyt, like the rhotacism *r*, are restored as the lateral *l*, and several labiovelar sounds, which are common in Tashelhiyt and most of Central Moroccan Amazigh, are not represented, with only the two also attested in Tarifiyt (*kʷ* and *gʷ*) being made official phonemes in IRCAM's plan.⁶⁹⁴ Similarly, in lexical planning, IRCAM excludes the vast majority of Arabic loanwords in its standardization of

⁶⁹² Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 30.

⁶⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 31.

⁶⁹⁴ Boukhris et al. (2008). p. 20.

Moroccan Amazigh, making its standard Amazigh, in terms of lexicon, significantly distant from all the spoken varieties in Morocco. In these two aspects, where language ideology dominates, the “polynomic approach” for mediating language practice is absent.

It is only in the remaining space for morphological planning, facing a situation described by Iazzi: “On ne peut pas créer une nouvelle morphologie ou une nouvelle syntaxe. Mais, les règles morphologiques ou syntaxiques disponibles peuvent être exploitées de manière originale,”⁶⁹⁵ that the polynomic approach plays its mediating role in selecting practical usages. Even in this selection, it is important to note that IRCAM’s primary consideration aligns with Moroccan Amazigh rather than privileging any specific variety. For instance, IRCAM presents *rad* alongside *ad* as a polynomic choice for the future particle.⁶⁹⁶ While *rad* is specific to Tashelhiyt and closely adjacent Central Moroccan Amazigh varieties, this should not be interpreted as simply a Tashelhiyt-centric planning. Instead, IRCAM promotes *rad* as a polynomic choice primarily because it reflects a grammatical feature of Amazigh, representing the grammaticalization of the verb *iri* (“want”), analogous to the use of “will” in English.⁶⁹⁷

That said, as analyzed previously, a situation where Tashelhiyt is more polynomic and Tarifiyt less polynomic is reflected in the planning regarding the imperfectives. Tarifiyt features, including the inserted vowel *i*, particle-less imperfectives, and its distinct negative imperfective form, are all excluded, while a specific Tashelhiyt usage of the *C:CC* form for imperfective stems is polynomically included. However, rather than viewing it as a consistent Tashelhiyt-privileged planning approach disguised as a polynomic discourse, it is important to recognize that IRCAM’s ultimate aim of establishing a homogeneous Moroccan Amazigh through bringing the different varieties closer together and achieving convergence or better integrating regional variations remains a dominant force, while the polynomic approach serves as a means to mediate this objective with diverse language practices.

To be specific, the inclusion of the Tashelhiyt *C:CC* form is better understood as one of many cases demonstrating IRCAM’s openness to various practical usages as polynomic choices for mediating language practice within a strong standard language

⁶⁹⁵ Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 270.

⁶⁹⁶ Boukhris et al. (2008). p. 105.

⁶⁹⁷ Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 269.

ideology. This approach aligns with what is reflected throughout IRCAM's *La nouvelle grammaire de l'amazighe*, where even highly specific usages—such as the future particle *sad*, a feature of Figuig, and *ra* as an allomorphic variant of *ad*, specific to the Zemmour dialect of Central Moroccan Amazigh—are both included as examples.⁶⁹⁸ While the less polynomic feature of IRCAM's planning regarding Tarifiyt might be better interpreted as resulting from the contradiction between IRCAM's dominant ideology of a standard Moroccan Amazigh—realized through the convergence of varieties—and the uncomfortable reality that Tarifiyt is the most divergent of the three main varieties in Morocco.

This contradiction is reflected in Salem Chaker's remarks on IRCAM's polynomic approach to planning a standard Moroccan Amazigh. Chaker states: "En fait, je pense que cette notion de polynomie, dans le cas berbère, ne peut guère être mise en œuvre qu'entre des variétés régionales relativement proches, par exemple, pour le Maroc, entre le tachelhit et l'essentiel du tamazight; mais il me paraît très difficile d'y intégrer le rifain."⁶⁹⁹ IRCAM's morphological planning regarding imperfectives might be seen as an example of how integrating Tarifiyt is perceived as "very difficult," as noted by Chaker, or even as a situation in which the mediation of the polynomic approach between language ideology and practice failed.

That is to say, rather than being interpreted as an ideologically driven favoring of Tashelhiyt and bias against Tarifiyt, the situation of Tarifiyt being less polynomic in IRCAM's planning is more suitably interpreted as a result of the unavoidable politically driven language ideology for standardizing a homogeneous Moroccan Amazigh. For this point, it is worth reexamining how Iazzi interprets the planning decision not to include the specific usage of Tarifiyt for differentiating the form of negative imperfectives in standard Moroccan Amazigh—an unfortunate failure of the polynomic approach to mediate between language ideology and practice—as he suggests: "Seuls quelques parlers du nord-est modifient toute voyelle *a* dans le radical en *i* en passant de la valeur positive à la valeur négative de ce thème."⁷⁰⁰

By referring to "only a few dialects of the northeast," which is in fact inaccurate,

⁶⁹⁸ Boukhris et al. (2008). p. 105.

⁶⁹⁹ Chaker, S. (2009). Aménagement linguistique de l'amazighe: motivations, méthodologie et retombées. Entretien réalisé par Meftaha Ameer. *Asinag*, 3, 161-165. p. 164.

⁷⁰⁰ Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 650.

Iazzi seems to carefully avoid allowing this uncomfortable decision—made for the sake of the homogeneity of Moroccan Amazigh—to be misinterpreted as an ideological bias of IRCAM against Tarifiyt. The approach involves trivializing this specific usage of Tarifiyt in discourse, aiming to downplay the mediation failure of the polynomic approach when confronted with the dominant ideology of a homogeneous Moroccan Amazigh, which seeks to “better integrating regional variations.”⁷⁰¹

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 225.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of the thesis are presented in the following sections. First, it reexamines IRCAM's role in the Moroccan Amazigh cultural movement and concludes how this role shapes its guiding ideologies. These ideologies are reflected in Mohamed Chafik's writings and confirmed in the institute's foundational documents. Next, it summarizes IRCAM's planning efforts, categorizing them into two aspects: ideological planning, as embodied in Ahmed Boukous's works, and practical planning, which serves the ideological objectives. The latter is reflected in acquisition planning and corpus planning, addressing graphical-phonological, lexical, and morphological aspects. Following this summary, the thesis concludes by situating IRCAM's planning of the Amazigh language within the broader discussion of linguistic authority and its related ideologies, contributing to the understanding of how a language ideology of post-naturalist authenticity, shaped by political agendas rather than speakers' agency, can manifest in practice.

7.1. The Role of IRCAM in the Moroccan Amazigh Cultural Movement

The Moroccan Amazigh cultural movement is inspired by Amazigh nationalism, akin to German and Arabic cultural nationalism, where ideologies on language and history play a central role. Developing into social movements, it has two core expressions mainly against Arabization, namely reevaluating and rewriting, specifically re-Amazighizing the Maghrebian history, and standardizing the Amazigh language, envisioning it as a constitutionally recognized language by the state. From this "culturalist" trend, the Amazigh issue developed potential for transforming into ethnic-based politicization as shown in Algeria, interwoven with Kabyle nationalism. A similar politicization of the Amazigh issue is the red line for Moroccan authorities who govern the largest Amazigh-speaking population in the world.

In what could be described as an Amazigh awakening from the late 1960s to the 1970s, several Amazigh cultural associations thrived in Morocco, in parallel to developments in France and Algeria. During this period, Moroccan authorities faced the risk of the politicization of the Amazigh issue. Two responses were devised: the accommodating approach, proposed by Mohamed Chafik, an Amazigh scholar and educator within the inner circle of King Hassan II, which called for the creation of an official institute for Amazigh studies; and the opposing approach, aimed at

suppressing the Amazigh movement through repressive measures. The latter prevailed throughout the 1980s, until the 1990s, when the atmosphere began to shift.

By the advent of the new millennium, as the Amazigh issue once again approached the brink of politicization, the long-reserved proposal to create a royal institute for Amazigh studies was adopted by the new king, Mohammed VI, under the influence of Mohamed Chafik and the Amazigh Manifesto he drafted. This decision led to the establishment of IRCAM, paving the way for efforts to standardize, teach, and constitutionally recognize the Amazigh language in Morocco. While the institute can be seen as a significant achievement of the Moroccan Amazigh movement, IRCAM's role should also be understood as an instrument of Moroccan authorities to prevent an ethnically based politicization of the Amazigh issue—a role reflected in its founding ideologies.

7.2. The Founding Ideologies of IRCAM

Mohamed Chafik's historical and linguistic ideologies, developed mainly in the 1990s through his works, serve as the basis of IRCAM's ideology. They show an important discrepancy from Amazigh nationalism in not viewing Imazighen as a distinct people, but instead reshaping Amazighness as one of several tributaries contributing to a broader Moroccan national identity based on the Islamic faith and allegiance to the King. This is represented by his historical ideology, which claims: "Any Islamic state can only be an Islamic state. It should not seek its legitimacy in a racial or ethnic affiliation, but rather it must seek it in piety and sincerity of belief..."⁷⁰² In this framework, the people in the land of Morocco are described as either Arabized Imazighen or Amazighized Arabs, between whom "the gap is not vast."⁷⁰³ Thus, they can be seen as a homogeneous people, shaped—sometimes unconsciously—by the same social soil.

Accordingly, in Chafik's language ideology, the Amazigh language is not seen as the defining factor of Amazighness, but rather as one of the important civilizational and cultural elements that have shaped Moroccan identity for all, rather than for any majorities or minorities. Chafik's works involve efforts toward planning a standard Moroccan Amazigh, primarily by compiling a Amazigh dictionary and writing a

⁷⁰² Chafik, M. (1989). pp. 48-49.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.* pp. 49-50.

schoolbook that includes vocabulary and grammatical features from all three main Moroccan Amazigh varieties, without naming them, but presenting the works under the unified label of the Amazigh language. Furthermore, Arabic loanwords are largely excluded from Chafik's works, tacitly reflecting standard and purist language ideologies. This exclusion suggests that language contact between Amazigh and Arabic is an undesirable phenomenon, one that leads to the killing of Amazigh words and further widens the gaps between its dialects.

Chafik's ideologies are clearly reflected in the three founding documents of IRCAM: the Royal Speech of July 30, 2001 (Throne Day Speech); Royal Decree No. 1-01-299 (IRCAM Dahir); and the Royal Speech of October 17, 2001 (Ajdir Speech). These documents stipulate that IRCAM must secure Morocco's national identity, characterized by "homogeneity, unity, and originality," with diverse tributaries, namely "Amazigh, Arab, Sub-Saharan African, and Andalusian," all contributing to the whole. The homogeneity is anchored in the Islamic faith under the united Moroccan nation, with its enduring monarchical regime, "recognizing neither majority nor minority." Amazigh language and culture are consistently presented as a "national wealth and a source of pride for all Moroccans," ultimately aiming to ensure that "Amazigh identity... cannot be used for political purposes of any kind." For the aim of a homogeneous Moroccan identity, the language is always referred to as *l'amazigh*, with no reference to its varieties.

Mediating the discrepancy between the language practices of the three main varieties existing in Morocco and the language ideology of a homogeneous Moroccan Amazigh—especially adapting the former to the latter for the standardization and teaching of the language—becomes the central issue of IRCAM's language planning efforts. These efforts can be categorized into the dominant ideological planning and the subordinate practical planning that cooperate with it.

7.3. Ideological Planning

IRCAM's ideological planning for the Amazigh language is primarily reflected in the works of Ahmed Boukous. The central concept of this ideology is the revitalization of the Amazigh language. However, the language revitalization in Boukous's ideology differs from the concept in the model of Reversing Language Shift, which is based on, and preceded by, studies on language death. Before IRCAM, Boukous consistently described Amazigh as a language with vitality, emphasizing the need for maintenance

rather than revitalization. Within the IRCAM context, his new discourse on the death of the Amazigh language serves as a major ideological explanation for why the standardization and teaching of Amazigh varieties in practice are not seen as desirable. Instead, IRCAM advocates for a homogeneous standard Amazigh in Morocco, aimed at its revitalization. This death and non-existence of a unified, homogeneous Amazigh language—thus necessitating revitalization efforts by IRCAM—are primarily explained through two terms: dialectalization and attrition of the Amazigh language.

Dialectalization, as a way to explain the death or non-existence of the Amazigh language, is reflected in Boukous's words: "Amazigh is a highly dialectalized language to the point that some researchers doubt the very existence of a single Amazigh language and speak of a plurality of Amazigh languages."⁷⁰⁴ This concept functions to define Tarifiyt, Central Moroccan Amazigh, and Tashelhiyt as dialects with a lower status than languages, viewing them as pre-revitalized, dying forms, unworthy of standardization and teaching. Furthermore, even works that describe these supposedly dialectalized Amazigh varieties, without a vision for their revitalization, are seen by Boukous as undesirable, aligning with the tradition of colonial dialectology.

Language attrition is another concept used to explain the attrition-death of the Amazigh language. It is featured in Boukous's discourses as a combination of two types of attrition: one in broader sense described as: "Attrition is a process whereby languages in conflict with stronger ones are weakened and devitalized. This situation is generally characterized by the reduction of the functions and uses of the language, the diminution in the number of speakers, semilingualism, the break in intergenerational transmission and, in fine, death."⁷⁰⁵ The other is in the narrower sense, referring to "the progressive attrition of Amazigh in urban areas to the benefit of colloquial Arabic."⁷⁰⁶ This concept focuses not only on the attrition of the space of usage of Amazigh, as Boukous discussed pre-IRCAM, but also stresses the so-called attrition of the language's corpus. Boukous supports this with examples of urban children's diminishing Amazigh abilities, highlighting the borrowing from Arabic as evidence of this attrition. The narrower view of attrition as an individual phenomenon

⁷⁰⁴ Boukous, A. (2012). p. 45.

⁷⁰⁵ Boukous, A. (2011). pp. 19-20.

⁷⁰⁶ Boukous, A. (1997). p. 41.

is then used by Boukous to support, or predict,⁷⁰⁷ the broader attrition and the attrition-death of the Amazigh language as a whole.

Based on the ideology of attrition of the Amazigh language, the language as a whole is described as facing a “deterioration of structures”⁷⁰⁸ similar to what occurs as individual phenomena and hence needs to be addressed as an essential part of corpus planning within the framework of the revitalization of the Amazigh language.

7.4. Practical Planning

IRCAM’s practical planning for the Amazigh language is primarily reflected in two aspects: acquisition planning and corpus planning, both of which are designed in alignment with IRCAM’s ideological planning. In terms of acquisition, IRCAM adopts a plurinormalist approach to language teaching aimed at familiarizing Amazigh speakers with other varieties besides their own to achieve successful communication. However, this approach does not serve a polynomic language ideology akin to that in the Corsican context; instead, it aligns with the standard language ideology emphasizing the ideological unity of standard Moroccan Amazigh. The adoption of plurinormalism can be understood as a compromise with the linguistic reality of the three main varieties existing in the country, which contradicts the ideological vision of unity.

To support this ideological purpose, IRCAM’s schoolbooks are designed to teach the three varieties under a homogeneous label of Moroccan Amazigh. The differences between the varieties are not represented by their names but are instead indicated through a color-coding system: blue, green, and yellow bands correspond to the varieties of Tarifiyt, Central Moroccan Amazigh, and Tashelhiyt, respectively. Additionally, brown is used to introduce content that represents standard Moroccan Amazigh, common to all three varieties, though the content under the brown color can still carry strong traits of each variety. This does not mean that standard Moroccan Amazigh is merely a collection of three varieties ideologically combined; rather, this acquisition planning is supported by corpus planning efforts on the Amazigh varieties being taught, which also serve IRCAM’s overarching ideology of revitalizing the Amazigh language.

⁷⁰⁷ Boukous, A. (2012). p. 65.

⁷⁰⁸ Boukous, A. (2009c). p. 37.

IRCAM's corpus planning for the Amazigh language concerns mainly three aspects: graphical-phonological planning with the Neo-Tifinagh script, lexical planning reflected in IRCAM's dictionary, and morphological planning concerning IRCAM's discussions on the grammar of standard Moroccan Amazigh. The Neo-Tifinagh IRCAM script is distinguished by grapheme features borrowed from lesser-known Neo-Tifinagh systems, notably using circle signs instead of point signs for writing vowels, derived from the Neo-Tifinagh *Afus Deg Wfus 2 Regular*. This design secures Tifinagh-IRCAM a high level of distinction, ensuring the visual and ideological existence of a standard Moroccan Amazigh, as it is officially regulated that Tifinagh-IRCAM was designed to write nothing but *l'amazighe standard*.⁷⁰⁹ Similarly, in the phonological aspect, Tifinagh-IRCAM also does not represent any variety specifically, but rather standard Moroccan Amazigh.

Lexically, IRCAM's dictionary is characterized by a strong standard and purist language ideology that anonymizes the three main varieties of Morocco it incorporates, grouping words under a single, unified label of Amazigh, while excluding the vast majority of Arabic loanwords. These features are inherited from Mohamed Chafik's method in compiling his Arabic-Amazigh Dictionary, but it should be noted how the ideology behind it was developed by Ahmed Boukous, with his discourses on the deterioration of structures of the Amazigh language, suffering attrition due to contact with Arabic.

Besides, both in Chafik and Boukous's ideology, Arabic loanwords are seen as a factor that widens the gaps between Amazigh varieties. Thus, removing loanwords is viewed as a way to address not only the attrition but also the dialectalization of Amazigh, leading the way to its revitalization. The results are twofold. Firstly, considering that the Amazigh languages, including the three main varieties in Morocco, all borrow heavily from Arabic, the standard Amazigh as envisioned by IRCAM might significantly diverge from actual language practice. Secondly, since Central Moroccan Amazigh and Tashelhiyt borrow fewer Arabic words than Tarifiyt, the exclusion of almost all Arabic loanwords in the planning process makes Tarifiyt more affected in the process of converging the three varieties.

Morphologically, it is suggested that the planning is based on a polynomic approach ensuring the entirety of varied structures in the national standard, as shown

⁷⁰⁹ Elmedlaoui, M. (2004b).

in the planning regarding the imperfective tense—one of the most varied and irregular aspects in Amazigh morphology—the polynomic approach only applies partially. The prioritization of the vowel *a* in stem derivation, the omission of the negative imperfective form, and the obligatory prefixed particle, all in contradiction with the language practice of Tarifiyt, are applied in an imposing manner. And where the polynomic approach is applied, allowing speakers to choose between *CC:C* and *tCCaC* for deriving *CCC* verbs, it is notable that, since Tarifiyt speakers exclusively use the *CC:C* form, this polynomic choice in practice accommodates Central Moroccan Amazigh and Tashelhiyt. Moreover, Tashelhiyt retains an additional “polynomic” option to preserve its specific *C:CC* form, as reflected in IRCAM’s dictionary.

Therefore, in all aspects examined in IRCAM’s practical planning for the Amazigh language, serving the ideology of its “revitalization,” the suggested aims such as “bringing the different varieties closer together and achieving convergence”⁷¹⁰ and “better integrating regional variations”⁷¹¹ reflect a consistent process of compromising, adapting, and converging Tarifiyt with the other two main varieties in Morocco. However, it would be misleading to interpret this simply as an ideological bias against Tarifiyt. To fully understand the broader ideological framework of IRCAM, it is useful to consider Kathryn A. Woolard’s concept of *sociolinguistic naturalism* as a reference.

7.5. IRCAM’s Ideology: A Politically Driven “Project Authenticity”

The concept of sociolinguistic naturalism, developed by Woolard and building on John Joseph’s concept of linguistic naturalism, describes the belief that a linguistic form is rightfully authoritative because it is perceived as the natural, unmediated expression of social reality rather than the result of human will, effort, intervention, or artifice.⁷¹² It reflects the similarity between the two seemingly contradictory ideologies of authenticity and anonymity, both of which place a high value on the relationship between linguistic form and a vision of truth. However, paraphrasing

⁷¹⁰ Ameur, M. (2009). p. 81.

⁷¹¹ Iazzi, E. M. (2018). p. 225.

⁷¹² Woolard, K. A. (2016). p. 30.; Joseph, J. (2000). *Limiting the Arbitrary: Linguistic Naturalism and Its Opposites in Plato’s Cratylus and Modern Theories of Language*. John Benjamins.

Woolard, while the ideology of anonymity locates truth in the “referential fit” of language to the world, the ideology of authenticity sees truth in the “pragmatic fit” of linguistic form to the speaker who authors it or the community that authorizes it.⁷¹³

In sociolinguistic naturalism, both the language from somewhere and the language from anywhere may be regarded as the most direct and unmediated expressions of the true self. The language from somewhere refers to the form of language acquired first and produced apparently artlessly.⁷¹⁴ In contrast, the language from anywhere is an anonymous, dislocated language described by John Joseph as “the language common to all the people but specific to none of the towns: what all of them do, yet what none of them does.”⁷¹⁵ Both might be perceived as natural and therefore inherently good.

Sociolinguistic naturalism has been challenged by developments in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics. In these fields, scholars have proposed models that emphasize speakers’ agency in shaping language, rather than portraying them merely as inheritors of language and identity.⁷¹⁶ In this understanding, speakers themselves can still value a sense of authenticity even when it is not one that comes naturally to them. Rather than being based on origins and “where you’re coming from,” authenticity can also be framed as “where you’re going.”⁷¹⁷ It can be a goal, described by Woolard as post-natural, “project authenticity.”⁷¹⁸

This framework of project authenticity might be a fitting description of IRCAM’s language ideology, as it situates the authenticity of the Amazigh language within its project, termed revitalization. As a post-naturalist ideology, it challenges key aspects of sociolinguistic naturalism. On the one hand, IRCAM contests the authenticity of Amazigh language varieties used in practice, or the language from somewhere. On the other hand, it shows little interest in the concept of the Amazigh anywhere, distancing itself from pan-Amazigh perspectives that represent “where you’re coming from.” In IRCAM’s language ideology, authenticity is consistently tied to its own project, which is oriented toward “where you’re going,” namely a

⁷¹³ Woolard, K. A. (2016). p. 30.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 32.

⁷¹⁵ Joseph, J. (2000). p. 147.

⁷¹⁶ Woolard, K. A. (2016). p. 32.

⁷¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 33.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 38, 296.

developing Moroccan Amazigh.

While being described as a project authenticity, it is crucial to note that IRCAM's post-naturalist ideology is politically driven from external forces rather than an internally driven project primarily shaped by speakers' agency. Specifically, IRCAM's ideological distance from both Amazigh from *somewhere* and from *anywhere* is not rooted in speakers' reflections on their language but is instead shaped by the Moroccan state's political agenda. This agenda seeks to distance Moroccan Amazigh speakers both from a pan-Amazigh movement associated with *anywhere* and from a localist attachment to *somewhere*. The political dominance shaping IRCAM's ideology is explicitly articulated in the Ajdir speech:

“Nous voulons aussi affirmer que l'amazighité qui plonge ses racines au plus profond de l'histoire du peuple marocain appartient à tous les Marocains, sans exclusive, et qu'elle ne peut être mise au service de desseins politiques de quelque nature que ce soit. Le Maroc s'est distingué, à travers les âges, par la cohésion de ses habitants, quels qu'en soient les origines et les dialectes. Ils ont toujours fait preuve d'un ferme attachement à leurs valeurs sacrées et résisté à toute invasion étrangère ou tentative de division.”⁷¹⁹

It is this political agenda—resisting both “any foreign invasion” and “attempts at division”—that defines IRCAM's post-naturalist stance and shapes its language ideology. This politically driven ideological prescription primarily dictates what IRCAM's ideology should not be rather than what it should be. Consequently, on one hand, it initiated the formation of a new project authenticity, which would later be called *revitalization*. On the other hand, it initially left a significant ideological void, allowing aspects of traditional sociolinguistic naturalism to persist.

These aspects, in filling the void, include both the ideologies of authenticity and anonymity, along with standard language ideology, national language ideology, purist language ideology, and polynomic language ideology—all of which have left traces in IRCAM's ideological framework. This complexity is reflected, for example, in Chafik's approach to compiling an Amazigh dictionary without indicating word

⁷¹⁹ Available at IRCAM's official website: <https://www.ircam.ma/fr/textes-fondateurs/discours-dajdir> (accessed January 21, 2025)

origins, aligning with the ideology of anonymity, while Ameer initially disagreed with this approach and suggested presenting word origins under the unified label of Amazigh, demonstrating that the ideologies of authenticity and anonymity are not inherently contradictory.

Similarly, IRCAM's commitment to teaching the three main varieties in Morocco through a plurinormalist approach reflects an ideology of authenticity while simultaneously labeling all varieties under the homogenizing framework of Moroccan Amazigh, reflecting the ideology of anonymity at work. Furthermore, IRCAM's shifting application of the polynomic approach in grammatical planning exemplifies this complexity. On one hand, as shown by examples in *La nouvelle grammaire de l'amazighe* (2008), IRCAM initially prescribed the strict formation of CCC verbs in the imperfective exclusively as CC:C.⁷²⁰ This was later expanded to include not only tCCaC but also the specific C:CC pattern. However, on the other hand, an initial openness to the vowel *i* in imperfective formation was later restricted. And more generally, some very specific usages that were previously presented in *La nouvelle grammaire de l'amazighe* later lost their inclusion in subsequent works.

Nevertheless, this ideological complexity and dynamism must give way to the development of the new revitalization project, which claims supreme authenticity while filling the ideological void that was initially shaped by political intentions to be post-naturalist. In rationalizing this project, or justifying why the concept of a standard Moroccan Amazigh—neither from somewhere nor existing anywhere—should be the destination of “where you're going,” Boukous introduced the concept of the death of Amazigh, supporting it with discourse on *dialectalization* and *attrition*. This then became the dominant ideology of IRCAM, guiding its planning efforts. A deepened purist ideology toward Arabic loanwords serves as a clear illustration of how this project authenticity dictates IRCAM's planning decisions.

At the foundation of IRCAM's revitalization project lies the belief that Amazigh varieties are essentially the same and that this underlying similarity must be made visible through planning efforts rather than being left *dialectalized* indefinitely. As a politically oriented Moroccan national institute, IRCAM is dedicated to realizing this process among the three main varieties in Morocco, rather than considering Amazigh without a sense of national borders, or prioritizing the convergence of more obviously

⁷²⁰ Boukhris et al. (2008). pp. 93-94.

similar” varieties in its planning. More broadly, the case of Amazigh language policy and planning in Morocco, shaped by IRCAM’s ideological framework, contributes to the understanding of how political factors might influence language planning decisions, and to what extent a politically driven project, grounded in a post-naturalist stance on linguistic authenticity, can challenge speakers’ language practices in the planning process, particularly in a multilingual environment.

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SUMMARY

This thesis examines how Amazigh (Berber) languages are being planned in Morocco, the largest Amazigh speaking country by population in the world, and seeks to understand the considerations behind these planning measures by studying the ideologies of the agency for planning Amazigh languages in Moroccan, the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture (IRCAM).

The study begins with a review of the history of the Amazigh cultural movement, describing its Kabylean origins against the backdrop of colonization, and the context in which it developed in response to postcolonial Arabization policies in Algeria, with key promotion by the Paris-based Académie Berbère. It highlights the importance of language planning efforts, including the creation of the Neo-Tifinagh script and neologisms, to Amazigh nationalism. It then moves on to introduce how the Moroccan Amazigh cultural movement was consequently inspired, with major developments in the 1970s, followed by suppression from Moroccan authorities, which only began to ease in the 1990s. It examines how the creation of IRCAM in 2001 resulted from negotiations between the Amazigh cultural movement, whose central demand was the constitutional recognition of the Amazigh language in Morocco, and the Moroccan authorities, who were concerned about the politicization of the movement.

The thesis focuses on the importance of Mohamed Chafik, the founding rector of IRCAM—a scholar and educator from the inner circle of King Hassan II, who was revered by the movement as an Amazigh activist. It closely examines the historical and linguistic ideologies of Chafik, analyzing how Amazigh nationalism was, in his thought, absorbed into broader Moroccan nationalism. It shows how his ideology—redefining Amazighness as a component of a unified Moroccan national identity rooted in Islamic faith and monarchical allegiance, rather than as a distinct ethnic identity—was reflected in the founding documents of IRCAM, namely the Royal Speech of July 30, 2001 (Throne Day Speech); Royal Decree No. 1-01-299 (IRCAM Dahir); and the Royal Speech of October 17, 2001 (Ajdir Speech).

For safeguarding the homogeneous Moroccan nationalism—prescribed by the 2001 Throne Day Speech as “recognizing neither majority nor minority”—IRCAM pursued an inviolable aim in its language planning efforts: working toward a homogeneous standard Moroccan Amazigh. This approach, however, stood in contradiction to the language practices of the three main Amazigh varieties existing

in Morocco: Tarifiyt, Central Moroccan Amazigh, and Tashelhiyt. After reviewing the events of IRCAM's formative years—including the establishment of its Conseil d'Administration, administrative and academic structures, and its transition to the rectorship of Ahmed Boukous—the thesis focuses on how the institute attempts to mediate the discrepancy between the language ideology of a homogeneous Moroccan Amazigh and the linguistic practices of the three main Amazigh varieties through its language planning efforts.

These efforts began with two main initiatives: first, the adoption and adaptation of Neo-Tifinagh IRCAM—a script that is graphically distinctive and phonemically unified—for writing exclusively the standard Moroccan Amazigh; and second, the development of the *Tifawin a Tamazight* (“Hello Tamazight”) schoolbook series for teaching Amazigh in Morocco. The textbooks teach the three main Amazigh varieties but avoid explicitly naming them, instead ideologically framing them into a unified Moroccan Amazigh.

After describing the two initial planning efforts, the thesis focuses on the ideology and discourse of Ahmed Boukous centering the concept of the “revitalization” of Amazigh, and examines how the creation of a standardized Moroccan Amazigh is justified within the ideological framework of IRCAM. By setting a homogeneous standardized Moroccan Amazigh as the goal of the “revitalization” process—mandated by the institute's political nature but not grounded in any language practice—Boukous seeks to articulate the “death” of the Amazigh language in a particular way, specifically, a “death” supported by two diagnoses: the “dialectalization” and “attrition” of the Amazigh language.

The concept of dialectalization functions to define the three main Amazigh varieties in Morocco as dialects with a lower status than languages, viewing them as pre-revitalized, dying forms, unworthy of standardization in comparison to the homogeneous Moroccan Amazigh. Language attrition is another concept used to explain the death of the Amazigh language. It is featured in Boukous's discourses as a combination of two types of attrition: one in broader sense described as a process whereby languages in conflict with stronger ones are “weakened” and “devitalized”, which is supported and predicted by the attrition in the narrower sense, referring to the attrition of the language's corpus as a mainly individual phenomenon. Based on the ideology of attrition of the Amazigh language, the language as a whole is described as facing a deterioration of structures similar to what occurs on the individual level,

and hence needs to be addressed as an essential part of corpus planning within the framework of the revitalization of the Amazigh language. This leads to one of the most significant phenomena of language planning by IRCAM—the exclusion of the vast majority of Arabic loanwords from standard Moroccan Amazigh.

With a standard Moroccan Amazigh significantly distant from language practice, the thesis moves on to examine how language ideology and practice are mediated in the ideology and discourse of IRCAM, through the key concept of the polynomic approach. After examining the original meaning of the polynomic ideology in the Corsican context, the thesis explores how IRCAM has adopted a polynomic approach in the planning of Amazigh, analyzing its function as subordinate to the standard language ideology—fundamentally different from its role in the Corsican context. The selective application of the polynomic principle is investigated mainly through the morphological planning of the imperfective aspect, which represents one of the most irregular morphological categories in Amazigh.

The thesis finds that, while a polynomic approach is occasionally applied, the prioritization of the vowel *a* in stem derivation, the omission of the negative imperfective form, and the obligatory prefixed particle—all in contradiction with the language practice of Tarifiyt—are implemented in an imposing manner. The phenomenon is interpreted by the thesis as a failed mediation of the polynomic approach between language ideology and practice, resulting from the unavoidable politically driven language ideology for standardizing a homogeneous Moroccan Amazigh.

As the conclusion, the thesis situates IRCAM's language planning efforts within Kathryn A. Woolard's concept of sociolinguistic naturalism, proposing that IRCAM's ideology represents a politically driven "project of authenticity." This post-naturalist approach prioritizes a standardized Amazigh language as a planning aim shaped by the Moroccan state's agenda, over both the actually spoken varieties and a pan-Amazigh language. Through this conclusion, the thesis contributes to understanding how politically motivated language planning can shape notions of linguistic authenticity in multilingual contexts.

SAMENVATTING

Deze dissertatie onderzoekt taalplanning voor de Amazigh (Berber)-talen in Marokko, het land met de grootste Amazigh-sprekende bevolking ter wereld, en probeert de overwegingen achter de planningsmaatregelen te begrijpen door de ideologieën van het agentschap voor de planning van Amazigh-talen in Marokko, het Koninklijk Instituut voor Amazigh Cultuur (IRCAM), te bestuderen.

De studie begint met een overzicht van de geschiedenis van het Amazigh-nationalisme, waarbij de oorsprong in Kabylië tegen de achtergrond van kolonisatie wordt beschreven, en de context waarin het zich ontwikkelde als reactie op het postkoloniale arabiseringsbeleid in Algerije, en met belangrijke steun door de in Parijs gevestigde Académie Berbère. De studie benadrukt het belang voor het Amazigh-nationalisme van taalplanningsinspanningen, zoals het ontwikkelen van het Neo-Tifinagh-schrift en neologismen. Vervolgens wordt beschreven hoe de Marokkaanse Amazighculturele beweging hierdoor werd geïnspireerd, met belangrijke ontwikkelingen in de jaren 1970, gevolgd door onderdrukking door de Marokkaanse autoriteiten, die pas in de jaren 1990 begon te versoepelen. De dissertatie onderzoekt hoe de oprichting van IRCAM in 2001 voortkwam uit onderhandelingen tussen de Amazigh culturele beweging, die constitutionele erkenning van de Amazigh-taal in Marokko als centrale eis stelde, en de Marokkaanse autoriteiten, die bezorgd waren over de politisering van de beweging.

In deze context richt het proefschrift zich op de betekenis van Mohamed Chafik, de mede-oprichter en eerste rector van IRCAM – een geleerde en docent uit de *inner circle* van koning Hassan II, die door de beweging werd vereerd als Amazigh-activist. De historische en linguïstische ideologieën van Chafik worden nauwkeurig onderzocht, waarbij wordt geanalyseerd hoe het Amazigh-nationalisme in zijn denken werd opgenomen in een breder Marokkaans nationalisme. Het laat zien hoe zijn ideologie – die Amazigh-identiteit herdefinieert als een onderdeel van een verenigde Marokkaanse nationale identiteit geworteld in het islamitische geloof en trouw aan de monarchie, in plaats van als een afzonderlijke etnische identiteit – werd weerspiegeld in de oprichtingsdocumenten van IRCAM, namelijk de Koninklijke Toespraak van 30 juli 2001 (Troondagtoespraak); Koninklijk Decreet Nr. 1-01-299 (IRCAM Dahir); en de Koninklijke Toespraak van 17 oktober 2001 (Ajdir-toespraak).

Om het homogene Marokkaanse nationalisme te waarborgen –beschreven in de

Troondagtoespraak van 2001 als “het erkennen van noch meerderheid, noch minderheid” – streefde IRCAM een onschendbaar doel na in zijn taalplanningsinspanningen: het werken aan een homogeen standaard-Marokkaans Amazigh. Deze benadering stond echter in tegenspraak met de taalpraktijk van de drie belangrijkste Amazigh-variëteiten in Marokko: Tarifiyt, Centraal-Marokkaans Amazigh en Tashelhiyt. Na een overzicht over de vormende jaren van IRCAM – inclusief de oprichting van het Conseil d’Administration, administratieve en academische structuren, en de overgang naar het rectoraat van Ahmed Boukous – richt de dissertatie zich op de vraag hoe het instituut probeert het verschil te overbruggen tussen de taalideologie van een homogeen Marokkaans Amazigh en de linguïstische praktijk binnen de drie belangrijkste Amazigh-variëteiten door middel van zijn taalplanningsinspanningen.

Deze inspanningen begonnen met twee belangrijke initiatieven: ten eerste, de overname en aanpassing van Neo-Tifinagh IRCAM – een schrift dat grafisch onderscheidend en fonemisch uniform is – als enige schrift voor het standaard Marokkaans Amazigh; en ten tweede, de ontwikkeling van de schoolboekenreeks *Tifawin a Tamazight* (“Hallo Tamazight”) voor het onderwijs van Amazigh in Marokko. De leerboeken onderwijzen de drie belangrijkste Amazigh-variëteiten, maar vermijden ze expliciet te benoemen, en kaderen ze ideologisch in in een verenigd Marokkaans Amazigh.

Na het beschrijven van de twee initiële planningsinspanningen, richt de dissertatie zich op de ideologie en het discours van Ahmed Boukous, met als centraal concept de “revitalisering” van Amazigh, en onderzoekt hoe een gestandaardiseerd Marokkaans Amazigh wordt gerechtvaardigd binnen het ideologische kader van het IRCAM. Door een homogeen gestandaardiseerd Marokkaans Amazigh als doel van het “revitaliseringsproces” te stellen – gemandateerd door de politieke aard van het instituut, maar niet gebaseerd op enige taalpraktijk – probeert Boukous de “dood” van de Amazigh-taal op een specifieke manier te verwoorden, namelijk een “dood” ondersteund door twee diagnoses: de “dialectalisering” en “verzwakking” van de Amazigh-taal.

Het concept van dialectalisering dient om de drie belangrijkste Amazigh-variëteiten in Marokko te definiëren als dialecten met een lagere status dan talen, ze te beschouwen als pre-gerevitaliseerde, stervende vormen, die niet waardig zijn voor standaardisatie in vergelijking met het homogeen Marokkaanse Amazigh. Attritie is

een ander concept dat wordt gebruikt om de dood van de Amazigh-taal te verklaren. Het wordt in Boukous' discours voorgesteld als een combinatie van twee soorten verzwakking: een in bredere zin beschreven als een proces waarbij talen in conflict met sterkere talen “verzwakken” en “ontzield” raken, wat wordt ondersteund en voorspeld door attritie in engere zin, verwijzend naar attritie van het taalcorpus op het niveau van het individu. Op basis van de ideologie van attritie van de Amazigh-taal wordt de taal als geheel beschreven als onderhevig aan een achteruitgang van structuren, vergelijkbaar met wat zich voordoet op het niveau van het individu, en moet daarom worden aangepakt als een essentieel onderdeel van corpusplanning binnen het kader van de revitalisering van de Amazigh-taal. Dit leidt tot een van de meest significante fenomenen binnen de taalplanning door het IRCAM – de uitsluiting van de overgrote meerderheid van Arabische leenwoorden uit het standaard Marokkaans Amazigh.

Dezede dissertatie onderzoekt verder hoe taalideologie en taalpraktijk worden gemedieerd in de ideologie en het discours van IRCAM, via het sleutelconcept van de polynomische benadering. Na de oorspronkelijke betekenis van het concept polynomie in de Corsicaanse context te hebben voorgesteld, onderzoekt de dissertatie hoe het IRCAM een polynomische benadering heeft aangenomen in de planning van Amazigh, waarbij de functie ondergeschikt is aan de standaardtaalideologie – fundamenteel verschillend van zijn rol in de Corsicaanse context. De selectieve toepassing van het polynomische principe wordt onderzocht via de morfologische planning van het imperfectieve aspect, dat een van de meest onregelmatige morfologische categorieën van de Amazigh-taal vertegenwoordigt.

Het proefschrift concludeert dat, hoewel een polynomische benadering soms wordt toegepast, de prioritering van de klinker *a* in stamafleiding, het weglaten van de negatieve imperfectieve vorm en het verplichte voorgevoegde partikel – allemaal in tegenspraak met de taalpraktijk van Tarifiyt – op een dwingende manier worden geïmplementeerd. Dit fenomeen wordt geïnterpreteerd als een mislukte mediatie van de polynomische benadering tussen taalideologie en -praktijk, als gevolg van de onvermijdelijke politiek gedreven taalideologie voor het standaardiseren van een homogeen Marokkaans Amazigh.

Als conclusie situeert de dissertatie de taalplanningsinspanningen van IRCAM binnen Kathryn A. Woolard's concept van sociolinguïstisch naturalisme, waarbij wordt voorgesteld dat IRCAM's ideologie een politiek gedreven “project van

authenticiteit” vertegenwoordigt. Deze post-naturalistische benadering geeft prioriteit aan een gestandaardiseerde Amazigh-taal als een planningsdoel gevormd door de agenda van de Marokkaanse staat, boven zowel praktische variëteiten als een de landsgrenzen overschrijdende pan-Amazigh-taal. Met deze conclusie draagt het proefschrift bij aan het begrip van hoe politiek gemotiveerde taalplanning noties van linguïstische authenticiteit in meertalige contexten kan vormgeven.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Kefan Bao was born on 22 March 1992 in Shenyang, China, where he was raised and educated prior to university. In 2010, he enrolled at Beijing International Studies University and received a BA in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language in 2014. Between 2014 and 2016, he obtained two master's degrees—first in Translation Studies from Cardiff University, UK, and subsequently in Middle Eastern and North African History from the Moshe Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University, Israel.

He spent the following two years studying Modern Standard Arabic in Tetouan, Morocco, before enrolling in the Graduate School of Humanities at Leiden University on 16 January 2019, as a PhD researcher at the Centre for Linguistics. Since July 2020, his research has been funded by the China Scholarship Council (CSC)–Leiden University Scholarship.

Kefan Bao also works as a freelance journalist and translator in China, focusing on Middle Eastern issues.