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

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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

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[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.

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[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

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[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 convoyé 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]

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[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

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[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

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[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

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[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

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[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

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[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

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[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'étiolement 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

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[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

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[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

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[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

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[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

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[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 indigenousness of Amazigh people, and legitimacy grounded in human

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[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 Tarifiyt, 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

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[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, Mzab, 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

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[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'étiolement 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

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[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'étiolement 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

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[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*

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[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

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[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

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[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

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[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,

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[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, lattitude 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]

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[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

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[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

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[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 restructuration. For example, the conservation of native phonemes, suppletion and wordorder all indicate that Tunisian Berber retains all its typical characteristics."[571]

Gabsi also adresses 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]

Noteworthily, 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

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[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

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[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

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[579] Kossmann, M. (2013b). pp. 101-102.
[580] *Ibid.* p. 417.
[581] *Ibid.* p. 418.
[582] Ameur 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 Morocco[583] 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 "concurrencer un lexème natif." This criterion largely depends on IRCAM's decision. For example, when *lɛafit* ("fire") is preserved, it is listed as a synonym alongside four other words—*afa*, *timssi*, *aẓiẓn*, 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 *lɛaḏəs* and *lḥimẓ*,

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[583] Kossmann, M. (2013b). p. 117.

[584] *Ibid*. p. 89.

[585] Ameur et al. (2017). pp. 628, 352. For chickpea there is also *afẓẓin. 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 *tatffaḥt*, 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 *tatffaḥt* 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, *tatffaḥt*, although it features the Arabic trait /aḥ/, it more closely resembles the unity noun *taḍəffaḥt* found in Tarifiyt and Kabyle, rather than the

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[587] *Ibid*.

[588] Ameur et al. (2017). pp. 46, 526, 602.; Kossmann, M. (2013b). pp. 145-146.

[589] Ameur 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)ffaḥ*, 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,

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[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 Ameur, a later director of CAL. Ameur 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, Ameur 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 transfered 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"

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[596] *Ibid*. p. 9.
[597] Ameur, M. (1990). pp. 25-26.

and plays a critical role in preventing Moroccan Amazigh varieties from being classified as separate dialects according to Ameur'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

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[598] Kossmann, M. (2013b). p. 421.
[599] Boukous, A. (2009b). p. 423.