L'IDENTITÉ ET LA FRANCOPHONIE:

EXAMINING THE INTERPLAY OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN MOROCCAN STUDENTS

BY

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Personally, I am interested in the language attitudes of French in Morocco for having spent two semesters in Ifrane, Morocco during my junior year. This city became my home during the 2014-15 school year, and in 2016 I returned there to visit my friends and colleagues on two separate occasions. Living, studying, and traveling to different parts of the country gave me intimate insight into Moroccan culture, and speaking French and

Darija[1] allowed me to see the country and its people through a completely different lens. However, as a white male, I held the physical image of *l'autrui* (the Other) in Morocco. On certain occasions I was addressed exclusively in French despite responding to my interlocutor in Darija, and this to me suggested that a tension exists between these languages in Morocco for different speakers. I wanted to explore this tension properly because through my formal study of linguistics I learned that these exchanges were a valuable resource by which we could study national and cultural identity. Therefore, this project has spanned two years in its entirety and brought me closer to the people and culture of Morocco as a result.

Introduction

The linguistic diversity of modern-day Morocco owes its existence to the complex history of occupation in the Maghreb, stemming first and foremost from France's cultural colonization of Morocco from 1912-1956. Today, the continuing presence of French as the language of higher education and economic opportunity illustrates the widespread influence that France still exercises over her former protectorate. Furthermore, French has also been shown to play a crucial role in extra-professional sites; Moroccans employ French outside of academic settings to isolate their individual speech communities, to transcend gender inequalities to assert linguistic prestige, or to indicate social status compared to others (Boumlik 1998; Ennaji 2005). This complexity of linguistic usage predicts a multifaceted understanding of French by its users in Morocco, raising the following questions; how might we best characterize younger speakers' attitudes towards

[1] Darija, also known as Moroccan Arabic, lies on one end of the dialectal continuum of Modern Standard Arabic. For more information on this language, consult https://www.ethnologue.com/language/ary

the French language, and by extension their perception of their own sense of self? Through sociolinguistic, qualitative analysis of conversational data collected in the spring of 2015, I show how the personal identities of Moroccan students intersect with their command of and nostalgia for French, yielding positive and negative alignments with the language. Three main categories of cultural identity emerged; Distant, where speakers separated their identity from the French language; Proximal, where speakers allowed for their cultural identity to coexist alongside French; and Congruent, where speakers' notions of their own identities were dependent on, inseparable from, and a result of the French language. By examining the different values assigned overtly to French by its speakers in the Maghreb, we can expand our understanding of how this interaction may influence linguistic and social hierarchies in this region now and in the future.

Historical Context

The most important historical event of the 20th century in Morocco is arguably the conquest of its lands by French forces. General Lyautey, the first Resident-General of Morocco in 1912, avoided a mass extermination of the Moroccan people by incorporating its present rulers into a frank reorganization of the government (Bidwell, 2012:1). Adding Morocco to the list of *départments* to the French Empire, France quickly assumed control of economic and political sectors, despite assurances from the French government that France was not there to colonize, but to civilize (Bidwell 2012:3). Educational reforms were established under the Treaty of Fes in 1912, doing away with Arabic curriculum and teachings in favor of the "modernity" of French. Especially in Northern Morocco, Spain (and therefore Spanish) played a role in the educational landscape, but its influence is negligible compared to that of France as Lyautey established primary and secondary

schools for the French elite. For the purpose of this paper, Spanish and its influence on the linguistic landscape of Morocco will not be discussed.

Today, while French holds no official position in Morocco according to the 1999 Moroccan National Charter on Education, it nevertheless acts as a language of social and linguistic prestige (Marley 2004). Formal French instruction is introduced into the public education at the third grade level, and begins even earlier in private institutions, Moroccan and French alike. Therefore, by the time students have reached the university level, they have been exposed to formal French education for more than half their lives. For students with pro-Francophone parents, French may have been a staple from an even earlier age; many speakers recount a more natural acquisition of French language learning at home and with their families, in addition to the formal requirements of the school systems in place in Morocco. Salhi (2013) notes that due to its place administration and education, the French language has become a *national heritage* (my emphasis) for Francophone Africa. This phrase implies a cultural memory that exceeds the role of a simple communicative code; it suggests the involvement of a national identity, specifically when examined under the definition of 'heritage' by Article 2.2 of UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (cited from Ahmad 2006). However, according to results of a language attitude survey in Marley (2004) most Moroccans deny that French makes up part of their patrimony. Benzakour (2010:36) offers this statement on the ability of French to persevere despite opposition on many official fronts; "Le secret de cette survie, il est d'abord dans sa faculté d'adaption. Au Maroc…le français ne se vit pas sous une mais sous

plusieurs variétés, même si le phénomène de variation reste quasiment occulté."[2] Effectively, its polymorphic and innovative behaviors allow for speakers to misunderstand it and therefore perpetuate its existence. Let us turn know to the mechanisms behind these different thought processes.

Theoretical Framework

Implicitly, language beliefs or judgements can impact social and political interactions. Evans (2013) argues that these linguistic assumptions by non-linguistics (affectionately called 'folk-linguistics') are important because they provide insight into cultural meaning of individuals. More specifically to the present study, Benzakour (2010) highlights the fact that some speakers of French in Morocco are unconscious of the consequences for their continued use of French in various locales. As Morocco has important economic and geographic ties to Europe and Africa, political ideologies of the many languages spoken in Morocco may have important ramifications. Folk beliefs concerning French language usage in Morocco provide us with a lens through which we may study the basis for these ideologies. Therefore, this study will contribute to our understanding of how Moroccans view the languages that exist in modern-day Morocco, and extend the work of Marley (2004) who examined these systems of linguistic belief through quantitative analysis of student and educator language judgements.

According to Simpson (2008), there are two primary models for considering the relation between language and identity. The first, proposed by Appel and Muysken (1987)

[2] Translation: *The secret to this survival is firstly in its ability to adapt. In Morocco… French exists in not one but in many varieties, even if this phenomenon remains somewhat unknown.*

from their more recent version on language contact and bilingualism (2006), implies that there is no overt connection between one's national identity and the language used as its conduit. As they argue, other social factors (e.g. religion, social class, or geographic situation) could more potently impact a speaker's national identity by connecting them to the nation than could a national language. To apply this model to the language situation in Morocco, it is possible that speakers of Amazigh (Berber) feel strongly nationalistic by way of Islam rather than the Arabic that is spoken in Morocco. The second model contrasts this by stating that "language is a major vehicle of identity, along with cultural heritage, assumptions, values, and beliefs" (Simpson, 2008:44). Fishman (2010) discusses national identity and language more directly, remarking that when positive beliefs surround one's nation, the national language plays an important role in defining identity. In addition, one's ethnic identity is a contextualized, subjective notion that may or may not be displayed for various purposes. Fishman offers this succinct summation of the fluidity of personal identity; "identity, therefore, represents a field of forces that is constantly politically manipulated and exploited by all manifold parties invested in it" (2010: XXIX). By the same token, Japanese is associated with Japan's ideologies, in the same way that Arabic is linked to Arab states and policies. Fishman's theory implies thus a certain fluidity of identity based on a speakers' choice in language.

Morocco, as a multilingual nation, provides a natural locus for studying this interaction of language and identity. French also represents a language of prestige and economic mobility in modern-day Morocco (Benzakour 2010) and thus may play into a speaker's perception of their identity. It should be noted that this portrayal or display can be rather subconscious to the speaker. As Blommaert notes: "[…] the performance of

identity is not a matter of articulating one identity, but of the mobilization of a whole repertoire of identity features converted into complex and subtle moment-to-moment speaking positions" (2005: 232). The combination of these displays become points of interest to sociolinguists as they study this concept through the lens of language.

Research Question

Given the importance of studying the linguistic landscape of Morocco and the alleged connection between language and identity, I developed the following research question to structure my project: how do Moroccan university students perceive their cultural and identity (or identities) in relation to the French language? There were multiple predicted outcomes for this question, namely: that students will demonstrate reluctance, disproval, or other negative judgements about the French language and its use in modern-day Morocco, thus distancing their national identity from this language; that students will demonstrate nostalgia and propensity for speaking French compared to other languages in the linguistic landscape of Morocco, thus associating their cultural identity with the French language; or that students will demonstrate neither proclivity nor avoidance of the French language, thereby evidencing an identity separate from their spoken language(s).

Methodologies

I conducted a series of open-ended interviews in French that took place between February and May 2015 at the campus of Université d'Al Akhawayn (AUI) in Ifrane, Morocco. This interview technique allowed for participants to volunteer as much or as little information as they liked, while permitting me some way to structure the

conversational data (see e.g. Gall, Gall, and Borg 2013 for more information on open-ended interviews.). AUI is prestigious for being an American University, for having a heavy business emphasis, and for teaching most classes in English. Participants were all students of the university ranging from 19-22 years of age, 5 men and 4 women. Because I was not examining a fixed sociolinguistic variable based on demographic information, I did not collect these data about each participant formally. Conversations centered on family involvement in French education and language beliefs concerning French, though participants also offered judgements and assumptions of the role of Arabic on their education. These conversations were recorded digitally with the consent of the participants, and then transcribed by hand. An example of these transcriptions and the English translations of all data can be found in the Appendix. I performed content analysis following Stemler (2001) for these interviews, and grouped main categories of language attitudes together. Through their statements, students displayed various identities vis-à-vis the French language which are catalogued in the following section. Individuals' names were withheld to comply with requests for anonymity and data are referred to by initials only. The lone initial 'M' indicates the interviewer, in all cases myself.

Results

When analyzing these data, three common themes of identity portrayal began to emerge from attitudes given about French. I have chosen to describe these categories as Distant, Proximal, and Congruent (note that these names are of my own creation). For the Distant identity category, I first discuss how language competency and beliefs about the inherent separation of language and identity from students serve to distance student identities with attitudes associated with the French language. Next I examine the Proximal

identity category, analyzing remarks pertaining to bilingualism and family values assigned to French by students, which seem to reduce the distance between their individual identity portrayals and the French language. Last comes the Congruent category, where I conclude with statements indicating a lack of differentiation between French and their displayed identity, most often coming in the form of language mixing.

Category I: Distant

Kramsch and Whiteside (2008:664) define communicative competence as the ability to communicate "accurately, effectively, and appropriately" with others speakers. Indeed, communicative competence in a given language has a large impact on group membership to the identity associated with that spoken code. Benet-Martínez et al. (2002:9) state that bilinguals' capacity for two languages can have an effect on their own perceptions of "their mainstream and ethnic cultural identities as compatible and integrated vs. oppositional and difficult to integrate". To this end, Smith (2013) analyses French identity acceptance to the exclusion of black identity, specifically with immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa. Her speakers regularly offer comments connecting their individual (lack of) competence with the difficulty of fully integrating into French society; one participant in Smith's study states that "Je fais des fautes … je ne suis pas française…c'est pas ma langue. Je suis africaine"(2013:70). Here the speaker laments her inability to master the French language as it is noticed by her peers who attempt to correct her grammar. These corrections act as a linguistic barrier between the speaker and French culture. Accordingly, I saw similar statements offered by my participants. One speaker, IE, refused my assessment of his level in French in the following conversational turn;

1. **M** : On dirait que c'était ton destin d'apprendre… de maîtriser le français comme ça.

> **IE** : Ah, bon, moi je dirais pas que je maîtrise la langue mais plutôt je peux communiquer avec, c'est tout. (IE, March 18, 2015)

This statement can be analyzed in a number of ways. It must be noted that 'communicating' in an L2 language according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages falls under the A2 level of proficiency; the Basic User "Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters" (Verhelst et al, 2009:24). The amount of French education by a purely quantifiable basis supersedes this self-assessment of his language abilities. Firstly, the judgement from IE that his French language ability is only good for communication may reveal a profound sense of linguistic insecurity. He understands that he can speak in this code and though adeptly giving an interview almost entirely in French, he may still feel inadequate compared to other speakers of French. Indexed in Preston (2002) in his study of New York English, linguistic insecurity broadly refers to the belief that one's variety of language is inherently worse than the standard. In our example, IE may be juxtaposing his level of French with the "Standard" variety spoken in France and more specifically, Paris. Therefore, compared to native L1 speakers, he believes he can only "communicate". Here we can clearly see a division between IE's perceived identity and those whom he labels as competent speakers. He has distanced himself in this aspect from the Francophonie by indirectly assigning a positive judgement to those who can speak above and beyond his purported level.

However, what if IE were instead self-associating to other speakers of French who aren't able to augment their level due to economic or social constraints? Labov's work also indicated that linguistically insecure speakers may actually have within their repertoire a variety with increased prestige in specific circles, like the New York accent (Labov 1966).

Under this interpretation, IE may be in fact illustrating a type of social prestige associated with being a lesser speaker of the language. This *français mésolectal* as discussed in Benzakour (2010) could potentially serve to unite various Moroccan students who feel slighted by the educated elite of previous generations. Speaker OG offered an analysis of the phenomenon of refusing to speak French in the following:

2. **OG** : Il y a beaucoup de personnes que te disent non, **7na** on parle l'arabe, on va parler l'arabe puisque l'arabe c'est notre langue.
M : Ouais, et ça suffit.
OG : Mmm. Beaucoup de jeunes d'ailleurs. Beaucoup de jeunes.
(OG, April 3, 2015)

Her analysis of who exactly is against speaking French here are telling because of the way the Moroccan education system has changed since its independence. The previous system emphasized the social elite during French occupation and was almost entirely in French, connecting elite citizens and their families with social prestige and power. Without the European administration and with the spread of public institutions however, French has largely been subsumed by its linguistic predecessor, creating a minority of elite French speakers which Benzakour terms "*le français élitaire"* (2010:37). In this way, IE's statement that he only speaks French at a basic level reinforces his Moroccan identity by associating with this group that defines itself as Moroccan through the basis of their patrimony and Arabic language.

Communicative competence aside, earlier comments from IE suggest that he may be invoking his "symbolic (in)competence" of French as it relates to Francophone culture;

3. **IE** : […] implicitement on apprend la culture, les valeurs et l'histoire, donc je crois que c'est évidente d'apprendre quelques aspects de la culture française tout en apprenant la langue.
(IE, March 18, 2015)

Symbolic competence refers to the capacity for speakers to display temporal and spatial knowledge about a given code (Kransch and Whiteside 2008:664). A symbolic competence of French would therefore connect one to the historical meaning of French, a language of administration and colonial power. IE's statement is telling because it illustrates his personal belief system on learning French as a Moroccan student; he acknowledges that some cultural transfer must occur through the process of learning a language. This parallel's Fishman's model of language and identity as mentioned above. Indeed, by taking such a black and white approach to his competency in this language, IE seemingly displays a knowledge of French language elitism; according to Posner (1997:11), the standard French has been institutionalized and perfected across time to render it a national treasure. Nevertheless, by denying that he has symbolic competency in this code, he indicates an even greater separation between himself and those who do have this cultural competency. Whether this group refer to the *français de souche* or the elite Moroccans who have been educated in French from birth, IE seems to situate his own identity on the opposite side of a cultural and linguistic barrier.

Finally, IE's final phrase reinforces his evaluation of his language level in the same definitive way that other speakers have characterized French's monopoly as an official language in the Maghreb region. In Smith (2013:77), a participant claims that in Senegal, "le français, c'est la langue officielle. C'est tout". This finality resembles IE's statement to the letter, and the clarity of this linguistic boundary may shed light on how he views his personal identity to the French language.

Multiple participants in this study definitively separate the notions of "Moroccan identity" and "French Language". In their views, these two entities are mutually exclusive,

existing in divergence from each other without common contact points. The first example of this trope explores the hypothetical; what if French completely replaced Arabic in educational milieus? SO responds in the following remarks;

4. **SO** : Je pense que ça serait une bonne idée parce que, bon on parle l'arabe Darija dans notre quotidien, et du coup le peuple marocain ne pourra jamais perdre son identité. Mais si on intègre plus la langue française dans les cadres académique, ça sera un plus. Parce que ça va donner beaucoup plus de chances pour les jeunes pour aller travailler ailleurs et revenir dans leur pays pour l'améliorer. Pour ajouter d'autres choses, pour aider à limiter la pauvreté, tous ces trucs qui sont pas biens, tous ces trucs qui ne sont pas satisfaisants et auxquels on ne peut rien faire maintenant si on étudie en arabe et on reste au Maroc au chômage.
(SO, February 22, 2015)

The evaluation of Morocco's economic possibilities remains highly intertwined with its linguistic destiny; according to SO, studying in Arabic has the direct consequence of landing one in unemployment later on. However she further complicates this judgement by first equating Moroccan identity with the maternal language, Darija, linking the two logically according to her perception. Effectively, Moroccan's will continue to maintain their cultural identity by speaking their own language. By extension, this statement serves to create a black-and-white dichotomy between her identity and the French language; for this student, there can be no mutual intersection of these two notions because what it means to be Moroccan cannot be construed in terms of la Francophonie. This division is a prime example of what Le Page, Brock, and Tabouret-Keller would qualify "act of identity" (1985:2); SO is simultaneously, symbiotically associating herself with her country of origin as someone who speaks Darija (e.g. her personal identity), and how this group is constrained by their language (social roles).

The previous excerpt implicitly separates the French language and Moroccan identity. However, other students had much stronger reactions to the possibility that

spoken code could have an influence on personal identity. WM adamantly rejects this notion in the following;

5. **WM** : […] je crois que l'idée n'est pas très claire si on a dit que l'identité, l'identité cela n'a rien à voir avec une langue, cela n'a rien à voir avec- ce sont des éléments qui peuvent construire une culture et une identité mais l'identité elle-même - la langue c'est pas un objectif, c'est pas une finalité comme on dit, la langue c'est une manière c'est une, c'est un, It's a tool comme on dit en anglais.
M : Un outil
WM : Un outil exactement, c'est un outil. C'est une, c'est un objectif quand- Pourquoi communiquer avec les autres ? Pourquoi être - Pour transmettre notre culture, pour présenter notre identité. C'est pas une finalité- la langue française elle-même, elle ne présente pas grand-chose pour la culture de la France, c'est une petite partie que peut, les gens partout peuvent utiliser dans le monde pour présenter son identité. Donc si j'ai dit que je vais rejeter la langue ? Ce n'était qu'une langue. Ce n'est pas une finalité, ce n'est pas une identité enfin, mais au contraire je vais l'utiliser pour avoir cette-cette-cette finalité pour, moi je ne sais pas. (WM, 9 April 2015)

This excerpt is striking for a multitude of reasons. To begin, WM employs a first person plural pronoun "notre" to refer to the collective Moroccan identity. In using this specific term, she differentiates fundamentally between what it means to be Moroccan and what it means to be French. Her judgement parallels findings in Marley (2004) that educators and students reject the notion that French is integral to the Moroccan patrimony. The French language therefore has no bearing on the in-group's identity for WM, regardless of the fact that it can be transmitted via French to members of the out-group. The second interesting piece of this exchange is the use of English to fill what appears to be a lexical gap in WM's speech. After searching for and failing to find an appropriate term in French to define what French means to her group's identity, she code switches to English as what appears to be a last resort. The exclusionary statements describing what language is *not* help her narrow down the concept she desires to express, but her apparent inability to retrieve the correct term in this moment implies a lack of linguistic competency that echoes her statements on the subject. By not being able to define her thoughts precisely in French, she effectively distances herself from a French identity, similar to IE's judgements on language

competence in the previous example. This argument could very well be construed as simple code switching to better connect with the researcher, an L1 speaker of English, however the number of statements that WM uses to define what a language is in her mind somewhat undermines this analysis. She qualifies language as not: “un objectif”, “une finalité, or “une identité”, and later as just “une langue”, “une manière de se présenter”. Thus, it appears that WM in fact chooses to switch into English to fill the temporary void in her French competency. Lastly, WM reifies the use of French to “communiquer” with others cultural information in lieu of *inherently* transferring other cultural information through speaking French. The emphasis on communicating ones’ thoughts and not ones’ identity has reemerged to ultimately deny an influence of French on their individual personas. These Moroccan students, as seen through their judgements, seem to tolerate French but do not care to associate with it more than is necessary given its place in society. These identity depictions, however fleeting they are, provide us with only one main category of cultural identity in relation to the French language.

Category II: Proximal

The second category of identity presented by Moroccan students is termed Proximal, suggesting that the French language and the cultural identity of the speaker can coexist in a mutually inclusive way. Supporting this train of thought and contrasting previous examples, many participants noted that since coming to the English institution of Al Akhawayn they have felt a sense of loss concerning the French language. At the end of one conversation, one participant confided positive associations that she felt with French in describing her favorite word and how she misses the language:

6. **WM** : …C'est 'magnifique'. Parce que je ne sais pas il est écrit avec 'g' mais se prononce avec 'n' et 'magnifique' comme ça… je ne sais pas les mots, les lettres, ça donne une joie pour moi.
[…]
WM: C'était un plaisir pour moi aussi surtout parce que ici on a le système américain donc on fait toutes les choses les cours etcetera on écrit en anglais donc ma langue française –
M : Ça te manque ?
WM : Oui ça me manque ! Et j'ai commencé à oublier les mots et comment prononce… comment de faire construire les phrases…
(WM, 9 April 2015)

These judgements seem at odds with WM's previous remarks about disassociating language and identity. To what can we attribute these feelings of nostalgia, if not to an internal connection with French? Having studied it since preschool, WM describes how this foreign language has impacted her life from an articulatory point of view; something that gives her joy. Such a profound emotion could not exist without playing some role in her identity as a French speaker, which effectively connects French with her personal identity as a Moroccan.

Turning now to a different speaker, language attitudes about other languages spoken in Morocco may betray a speaker's connection to the French language. MB attended a Spanish immersion high school and speaks Spanish, French, and Darija with conviction. However, when I asked him about his preference for Arabic, he laughs and responds with the following:

7. **MB**: l'arabe classique, j'aime pas !
(MB, 22 April 2015)

This overt judgement indicates that Standard Arabic has not made as large of an impression on him as the other languages in his repertoire. If the over-Arabization of Morocco education systems (see Marley 2004:30) in the post-colonial government has caused dislike of the main vehicle of culture and religion, what can be said of the main language of modernity and opportunity, French? Later on, MB also speaks of French as

being “une langue très très élégante” referring to it even as “la langue de Molière” (MB, 22 April 2015). This propensity towards multilingualism sheds light on what it means to be educated in French for this student; it enriches his life, it does not weigh him down. These judgements seem to be linked to his personal identity as he continues to pursue different languages through his education; having accepted French as a nurturing fact, he can use it to progress further in life than if he only were attached to Standard Arabic.

As French is a mandatory part of the Moroccan education system, the question of bilingualism plays a crucial role in educational and political ideologies. When examining different instances of Moroccan identity, we can use beliefs regarding this linguistic phenomenon to situate individuals’ associations with a given language. Marley (2004) generally discusses the various positive labels attached to bilingualism by Moroccan instructors and educators. Her survey shows that almost 2/3 of those within the academic sphere view bilingualism as advantageous for the people of Morocco (2003:37). This ideology has permeated Moroccan society, furthered by remarks from the late king Hassan II as remembered by speaker OG below:

8. **OG**: D’ailleurs Hassan II l’ex-roi du Maroc avait dit aujourd’hui que les personnes qui ne parlent que deux langues sont des personnes analphabètes... parce que c’est la base ici au Maroc. (OG, 4 April 2015)

Essentially, we can tell from this anecdote that Moroccan students regard their bilingualism more of an obligation rather than a privilege. This is important for understanding how bilingualism impacts speakers’ language judgements as they relate to the French language. OG continues her reflection later on as she characterizes the label that people give to those who do not speak French, relating it to educational opportunity;

9. **OG**: D'ailleurs au Maroc on cite quelque chose, c'est à dire, c'est malheureux de voir ça, quand quelqu'un ne parle pas le français, beaucoup de personnes le sous-estiment. Et c'est malheureux je trouve ça très malheureux d'accord ? Parce que, bon.
M : Pourquoi ils font ça?
OG : Moi je t'explique pourquoi. Parce que comme je t'ai dit toute à l'heure les gens qui ne parlent pas français ils ont l'habitude de, euhh, sont, n'ont pas suivi, donc, par- s'ils parlent l'anglais couramment ça, ça on peut le comprendre, ils mais s'ils ne parlent que l'arabe, dans ce cas ils sont vachement sous-estimés parce que ça veut dire qu'ils n'ont pas suivi un système performant tu vois ce que je veux dire ?
(OG, 13 April, 2015)

The crucial point lies in her judgement of those who do speak English and Arabic; this example of bilingualism is understood, even empathized, and seemingly appears less negative than someone who can only speak in Arabic. It indicates that learning French is not the most important consideration; it is the ability to converse in more than one code that renders someone lesser in the eyes of society. Thus, the perception of those who only speak Arabic are wholly negative. These judgements corroborate the findings of Marley (2004) where over 90% of survey participants agreed to some degree with the statement "it is always an advantage to speak two languages".

From this standpoint, Morocco then is a site where students are *required* to engage in bilingualism to be taken seriously by their community. Does this mean that French culture intrinsically enters self-perceptions of Moroccan identity, as Fishman (1999) proposes that language and culture are so deeply intertwined? As Ramírez-Esparza and García-Sierra (2014) point out in their article concerning biculturalism, L2 learners, despite understanding cultural aspects connected to the target language, need not identify with their target language's culture to speak that language; they classify different groups of people as monocultural and bicultural bilinguals. This distinction nuances the earlier interpretation of the relation between culture and language identities, but the examples of English and Spanish bilinguals in the U.S. presented in Ramírez-Esparza and García-Sierra

(2014) largely do not capture the complexity of the linguistic situation in Morocco. As Benzakour (2010) discusses however, the national Charter (promulgated in 1999) lays out a requirement of 6-8 hours of French language instruction in public Primary schools and 5 hours in state-run Secondary schools. This formal obligation may thus play a different role in how Moroccan students view their bilingual education compared to other sites. Various student remarks help shed light on the impact of this philosophy on how they identify with their nation. MB, a student who attended a Spanish *lycée*, reveals how he views his ability to speak multiple languages in the following:

10. **MB**: Puisque par exemple, moi personnellement j'étais un produit du français, de l'arabe et de l'espagnole dès mon plus jeune âge, et donc j'ai eu cette facilité à apprendre [les langues], et aussi j'ai eu l'envie d'apprendre l'anglais […] Donc voila c'est surtout une affection disons déjà préétablisse, puisque je n'ai pas choisi d'apprendre le français, on m'a fait apprendre le français, mais, je suis content de cela.
(MB, 22 April, 2015)

MB is poignantly aware that his bilingualism comes from external influences rather than his own *volonté.* He characterizes himself as a product of the institutions put in place by his government's language policy, seemingly lowering his status as an individual and raising his importance to his peers. This linguistic immersion and his ease at negotiating different codes thus form the basis of his identity, despite his lack of individual agency in learning a foreign language. Furthermore, the affinity for learning different languages seems to him an innate quality in his identity, previous established by decades of outside factors. The most striking statement is his conclusion; he positively assesses the fact that he has a bilingual aptitude. This could be interpreted as a contentment to having fulfilled his obligation to avoid the "illiteracy" of only speaking two languages, or rather as an individual desire for success as French serves as the conduit for social prestige among certain groups. The most likely explanation is the former, as MB displays an aversion to

the extreme Arabization (Marley 2004) and monolingual mindset of some nationalists after I questioned him regarding this phenomenon:

11. **MB** : Je vois donc juste pour répondre à cet argument je dirais plutôt il n'est pas très stable, très fort celui de « le français c'est la, c'est- c'est l'ancienne langue de la colonisation donc il ne faut pas le parler ». Ça c'est totalement faux. Puisque déjà apprendre une langue c'est surtout être introduit à une nouvelle culture, ce qui veut dire que c'est une richesse, ce n'est pas un fardeau, et enfin personnellement je vois pas le français comme un fardeau. (MB, 22 April, 2015)

This statement clearly allows us to situate his perception of his country's bilingualism in general as well as his identity as a bilingual speaker Describing second language learning as "une richesse" signals an entirely positive evaluation of his French education and the institutions representing it. MB goes even further to dismiss possible negative effects of continuing French language education by first categorically denying the colonialist argument and then reiterating that he does not regard French as a burden of any kind. This optimistic view of French and bilingualism as it relates to his own experiences serves to situate this particular identity closer to the French language than others who oppose it.

How exactly can we characterize this luxury of learning about a different culture through its language? A different speaker, SO, offers her opinions on how being bilingual influences her activities:

12. **M** : Ça vous plait ces courses en français? Ou pas vraiment ?
SO : Pas vraiment, parce que ça fait longtemps que j'ai pas étudié le français, euh, dans un contexte académique. J'aime le français, j'aime lire les romans [en français] etcetera, mais pas être notée, et être évalué dans mon français parce que je l'aime pas.
M : Ouais, exactement.
SO : J'aime le français comme une activité parascolaire, comme quelque chose je fais parce que je l'aime, mais pas parce que je suis obligée de le faire devant un professeur. (SO, 19 février, 2015)

As an extracurricular activity, reading in French appears akin to what Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) termed "communities of practice" in their groundbreaking work

adapting social cognitive theory to linguistic experimentation. The authors used conceptions of community that disregarded previous variationalist assumptions concerning gender, sex, and ethnicity. Under this framework, SO self-identifies as someone who enjoys the language of French outside of the academic sphere. As a native speaker of Arabic, her bilingualism is thus portrayed through this hobby. Although not explicitly tying her French usage to identity, she nevertheless makes use of French to widen her biculturalism through the activity of reading.

There may still be other factors influencing the positive associations towards bilingualism in Moroccan students. One's identity is formed through an emotional connection with one's country as Fishman and Garcia (2010) have illustrated, but perhaps a stronger indicator of ethnic identity can be found by examining one's parents. Dennis et. al (2005) demonstrate the degree to which parental support for or denigration of cultural maintenance influences adolescent ethnic identity in Armenian, Vietnamese, and Mexican families. This study examined immigrant families that immigrated to the United States; in all categories, parental contribution and adolescent identity were positively associated. However this example does not observe families who have remained in a nation undergoing drastic political and colonial reform; do these parental effects still hold, and could they play a role in promoting bilingualism? Speaker SA provides the following justification, describing her family's linguistic habits:

13. **SA** : Alors. Mon père parle beaucoup français. Beaucoup beaucoup. Parce que lui il a étudié pendant que, quand on était colonisé par les Français, et tous ses profs étaient Français. Et il s'en souvient toujours. Et des fois il me les cite, il dit « M. Four-et-court » **Mouhim** des noms comme ça. Et donc mon père il parle beaucoup français, et ses études il les affecte en français et du coup il y a, donc avec mon père [on parle] surtout en français.
(SA, 22 April, 2015)

Although she does not explicitly state her father's involvement in her identity formation, we can reasonably postulate a correlative influence because she later expresses her affinity for the language separately from the cultural impacts that this language has.

14. **SA**: C'est une question assez dure parce que je n'aime pas le système français et je suis pas trop fan de la France en général mais je dois avouer que avoir le français m'aide beaucoup au Maroc. Et donc, j'aime bien la langue.
(SA, 22 April, 2015)

We see again the repeating theme from students that language can be wholly separated from culture, nationality, and educational systems therein. By excluding the French language from its own culture and associating it with her father instead, SA's statements illustrate how knowing a second language could have impacted her personal feelings towards French through the lens of her family. Her identity as a bilingual French speaker, influenced in large part because of the positive associations she makes with it and with her family, remains closer to the language than others who choose not to associate with the French language in Morocco. We may posit a correlation between a negative perception of French by Moroccan parents and their children's association with it, but more data is needed to ascertain this claim.

In addition to forming these identities from school, students exhibited a preference for bilingualism not from an administrative compulsion but because of a more implicit, familial effort. This familial effect has been studied extensively, but first appears in the literature in Fishman (1991:441). He argues for: "the centrality of the family and of the small-scale processes which constitute and build informal, face-to-face intimacy and affection, insofar as intergenerational transmission of mother tongue and cultural identity are concerned". In other words, families play a crucial role in the formation of L1 learning and cultural identity in second generation youth. Even though Morocco as a whole does

not constitute a locus of L1 French, the parallels of family contact are plausible. The so-called familial effect is replicated in the following anecdote by speaker SO:

15. **SO**: Mes parents sont des ingénieurs donc ils ont reçu toute leur éducation en français, toutes les matières étaient éduquées en français à leur époque, et quand j'ai ouvert mes yeux à la maison je trouvais toujours des chaînes françaises à la télévision, je trouvais les romans, les revus, ma mère lisait beaucoup les revus en français et ça m'a poussé à être comme elle. Par exemple mes sœurs étaient éduquées, et on faisait des jeux, on jouait à des jeux de mots, c'était un peu compétitif puisque, aller, viens faire des devoirs, bien. Est-ce que vous comprenez ce que je veux dire ? C'était à la fois- C'était, c'était plus, euuuh-
M : Ça fait partie de votre famille.
SO : Oui, etcetera, exactement. Oui. C'était pas obligatoire, mais c'était pas euuu obligatoire, c'était une chose que je m'amusais en faisant.
(SO, 19 February, 2015)

The effects of SO's family on her French language education parallel those findings in Dennis et. al (2000) that parents can have a positive influence on the cultural maintenance of their kids relating to their cultural identity. Here, the speaker signals a holistic familial presence in her French abilities. SO indicates friendly competition between herself and her siblings that accentuated her language learning; positive sibling rivalry essentially facilitated the acquisition of French. Additionally, as a young girl SO strove to emulate her mother, a key figure in childhood development and in the creation of identity. Her reading in French would condone this language in the eyes of SO. Therefore, the participation of the family is undoubtedly an important feature in both the identity of SO and the acquisition of her French language. Despite arguing for a cultural and linguistic independence from the former colonial regime, SO's personal identity remains moldable by her family's positive support in her Francophone education.

Category III: Congruent

The final category of identity portrayal relating to cultural identity and the French language offered by students in these data concerns a total lack of differentiation between these two ideas. This appears to signal a congruency or immediate proximity of these two

notions thus far differentiated by various speakers. The first example from speaker MB demonstrates his code switching ability between the two codes of Arabic and French when I asked about the amount of language he speaks:

16. **M**: Et les langues, elles s'utilisent une moitié arabe ou une moitié français, ou un pourcentage comme ça ?
MB: Ouais, ben en fait, quoique tu dises, Je ne ferais pas une grosse différence là-dessus puisque des fois mêmes un par un je peux utiliser dans une même phrase l'arabe et le français au même temps.
M : En se mélangent ?
MB : Oui exactement.
(MB, 22 April, 2015)

Effectively, MB claims that he doesn't differentiate between Moroccan Arabic and French because of his ability to use them both simultaneously in the same sentence. This seems to parallel Meisel's characterization of bilingual children's "language mixing" (1989:323). However on closer examination, this definition only seems to apply during early childhood development. He argues in the same chapter that after age four, bilingual children learn to differentiate between codes and this knowledge forms the basis of a speaker's pragmatic competence in the form of code switching. Bilingual speakers are prone to code switching, which has been long studied in Morocco (see Bentahila 1983 for a discussion on the nine principle reasons why Darija-French code switching takes place in Moroccan speech patterns; Boumans 1998 for syntactic constraints on Arabic-Dutch code switching in Morocco; Redouane 2005 for an analysis of the four main types of code switching in relation to Moroccan Arabic and French.) Fundamentally, this phenomenon as defined by Gumperz (1977:1) refers to the "juxtaposition of Assuming this definition holds true, MB's statement is problematic to fit into this model because he perceives his languages to be combined homogenously. If instead we follow Gumperz's model, then we can effectively posit that these two languages (and by extension the ethnic and cultural identities attached to them) as distinct from one another. By perceiving these multiple codes as a singular one,

MB is rendering unclear the boundary between his identities as a French speaker and a Moroccan. This goes beyond his previous examples in except 11 in which he identified with the bilingual community of Morocco; he no longer views these languages, or identities, as completely separate.

The previous analysis is admittedly extreme in its assumptions of code switching and what the speaker truly wanted to convey in his statement. A lighter interpretation of MB's statement could be that although he does not make such a hard-lined distinction, he still is able to differentiate between them as pragmatic situations arise. The fact that his interview was conducted in French and that he did not "accidentally" slip in Moroccan Arabic supports this analysis. However, the fact remains that this folk linguistic belief that Moroccan Arabic is nothing more than a mixture of Arabic, French, and Spanish betrays the potential for French and Moroccan identities to occupy the same space.

The second example of this level of congruency reveals a more fundamental combination or confusion of these two identities, French and Moroccan. Speaker AE noted that sometimes Moroccan youth experienced an identity crisis when entering the education system due to the shift in language policy. The following demonstrates that, according to the speaker, simultaneously one can have a Moroccan identity and a French identity:

17. **AE** : Il y a une espèce de crises d'identité chez les jeunes ici au Maroc. Parfois on oublie nos racines, et nous nous sentons plus français que marocain. Moi aussi je l'oublie, de temps en temps je me considère comme étant français autant que marocain.
(AE, 8 April 2015)

This statement is remarkable for a number of different reasons. Firstly, after questioning AE further, I discovered that he had never lived in France and had been educated in the private Moroccan education system (not in a French immersion school or *lycée*). This means that compared to some other students in the French Elite system, he received less

French instruction, and therefore interacted less with French culture from an academic standpoint. Secondly, he uses the expression of "roots" (*raciness*) to firmly anchor his cultural identity in Morocco. He speaks about this in a collective way, extending his analysis to more than just his person experience by using the first person plural "we". He clearly portrays his Moroccan identity with this expression. However, his statements unequivocally connect him to the French language and by extension French culture in a more overt fashion than we have seen before. In forgetting his own heritage, he has effectively replaced his culture with that of the former colonizers, a phenomenon that is neither positive nor agreeable according to him. To what can we compare this identity crisis specified by AE? Many North African Francophone writers have discussed this concept in their literature (see e.g. Mortimer 1988; Mudimbe-Boyi 1993), however perhaps the clearest example comes from the author Abdelkbir Khatibi as he tries to understand his own use of French while writing:

> When I write in French, my entire effort consists of separating myself from myself, of relegating it to my deepest self. I am thus divided from myself within myself, which is the condition for all writing inured to the destiny of languages. Henceforth, little by little, my native tongue becomes foreign to me (from Ennaji 2005: 108)

This quote speaks to the trauma of disassociating oneself with one's native language, and the clear ramifications it has for one's identities. Khatibi recounts the paradox of losing one's nativity through the process of writing about his culture in French, and this seems to parallel the identity crisis that AE discusses in example 17. In AE's words, the process of becoming French through speaking the French language constitutes a traumatic experience for these young Moroccans, who must learn how to reconcile their cultural identities with those of the previous colonizers. In AE and MB's statements, we see how one's cultural

identity can be indistinguishable from the French language because of the influence that France still exerts over her former colony.

Discussion

As demonstrated by the previous analyses, there are a wide range of language attitudes about French which serve to form or contrast the cultural and national identities of Moroccan students. Speakers had the opportunity to present these attitudes overtly, however I can, in the model of qualitative research, only speculate on the true underlying causes of these beliefs. Undeniable proof would require a drastically more invasive procedure which would inhibit the natural responses sought by doing this research in an interview format. Regardless, the hypotheses of this project were that speakers would demonstrate proclivity, nostalgia, aversions, ambivalence, distaste, and/or lack of enthusiasm for the French language and its use in modern-day Morocco, stemming from the difficulties associated with transitioning out of the colonial hegemony and into a new era. With the three main categories of cultural identity portrayal, it is safe to say that these hypotheses have been supported to some extent, though the population for my study was not representative of the youth who were opposed to learning French as discussed in example 2 by speaker OG.

It must be noted that many of these data could have been influenced by the procedural techniques of interviewing in the colonial language of French. If we take language and identity to go hand in hand following Fishman (2010), then it is possible that many identity presentations were not independent from the code used to convey them. Examples 12 and 13 center on the influence of family and the French language; how would these discussions have changed if our interview had taken place in Darija? Would it even

be possible to tease apart these variables, or speak about these formal topics in a language other than French? The situation is so complex that further research may well be warranted for this topic, as balanced bilingual research has long represented a crucial area of sociolinguistic knowledge (e.g. Cummins 1977).

Furthermore, participant beliefs on some occasions were self-contradictory. Examples 5 and 6 exemplify this type of interaction as the speaker WM first denied the connection between language and identity, then overtly expressed nostalgia for French as part of her familial identity. This confusion is to be expected; Preston (1996) gives a systematic framework for language attitudes by folk linguistics, categorizing four main modes of awareness. Of interest to us is the third mode, accuracy, because he states that folk can represent more formal linguistic beliefs on a spectrum ranging from clearly logical to completely wrong. I argue that by contradicting oneself about conventional definitions of identity and language, speaker WM inaccurately represented her beliefs on the conscious level. This gives weight to the sociolinguistic, qualitative research of language attitudes as a whole because it demonstrates that formal training is required to understand something as banal and widespread as language, an idea that is sometimes lost to those who speak many different languages.

Conclusion

Through these speakers' statements about themselves and judgements towards the French language, we have seen the presentation of a multitude of different identities. Given Morocco's complex history of occupation, the region's intricate linguistic landscape, and the different theoretical models for associating cultural language and national identity, it

only makes sense that there is no single way to analyze these identity portrayals. After conducting a series of sociolinguistic, open-ended interviews with Moroccan colleagues and associates, I was able to classify three main types of identity presentation concerning Moroccan culture and the French language. These categories I have called Distant, where speakers wholly separate their cultural identity with the French language and any influence thereof; Proximal, where speakers introduce the French language into their cultural identity space by way of bilingualism and family construction, thereby allowing for a mutualistic relationship to the language; and Congruent, where speakers showed a lack of differentiation between the French language and their presented identities through language mixing and identity crises. These three categories represent the different distances, loosely defined, that can be portrayed in relation to speakers' knowledge of and propensity for using the French language.

One goal of this project was to contribute to the growing body of sociolinguistic, qualitative studies who portray communities from the in-group rather than the out-group perspective. Building on work from Marley (2004); Chakrani and Huang (2014); Chakrani (2015) who quantitatively catalogued language attitudes through surveys, I was able to ask speakers more directly about their feelings towards the French language. This technique produced a more individualized account of the various cultural identities present in the population of Moroccan students, supporting the quantitative techniques as well as providing opportunities for new directions.

I hope to continue and expand on this research by narrowing the focus of my questions about language influences. For example, I only scratched the surface of how speakers' families influence their attitude towards French. By focusing on only one area of

impact, whether familial, school institution, or bilingualism, I would be possibly able to isolate the causes behind the various attitudes. Collecting more information about each participant would also benefit this future direction because it would allow researchers to attribute a rough index to the populations who perpetuate these attitudes. These changes could lead to better language policy and curriculum recommendations for those in power in Morocco because they would understand with more precision the needs of the people of Morocco.

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Appendix

English translations of conversational data in order of appearance:

Language key for conversational data: French, **Darija** English

1 **M:** One would say that it was your destiny to learn…to master French as such.

IE: Ah well, personally I wouldn't say that I have mastered it, but rather that I can communicate using it, that's all.

(IE, March 18, 2015)

2 **OG**: There are a lot of people who will tell you no, that here we speak Arabic and we will continue to speak Arabic because it is our language.
M: Ok, end of story.
OG: Mmm, lots of young people, as a matter of fact. Lots of young people.
(OG, April 3, 2015)

3 **IE**: Implicitly you learn the culture, the values, and the history, so I think that it's obvious that you learn some aspects of French culture even while learning the language.

(IE, March 18, 2015)

4 **SO**: I think that would be a good idea because well we speak Darija in our everyday life, and so the Moroccan people will never lose their identity. But if French was more integrated into the academic curriculum, that would be a positive. Because it would give youths more opportunities to go work abroad and then come back to their country to make it better. To adding new things, to help limit poverty, all these things that are bad, all these things that are not satisfying and about which we can do nothing if we continue to study in Arabic and stay in Morocco in poverty.

(SO, February 22, 2015)

5 **WM** : I think that idea isn't very clear if you say 'identity', well identity has nothing to do with language, that has nothing to do with – these are elements that can form a culture and an identity but identity itself – language is not an objective, it's not a finality, as you say, language is a manner, it's a, it's an, "it's a tool" as you say in English.

M: A tool

WM: A tool, exactly, it's a tool. It's a, it's an objective when, why communicate with others? Why be – to transmit our culture, to present our identity. It's not a finality, the French language itself, it doesn't present very much for French culture, it's a small part that can, people everyone on earth can use it to present their own identity. So if I said that I would reject the language? It's nothing but a language! It's not a finality, it's not an identity therefore, but au contraire I would use it to have this-this-this finality for, well, I don't really know.

(WM, 9 April 2015)

6 **WM**: … it's 'magnificent'. Because I don't know it's written with a 'g' but pronounced with an 'n' and 'magnificent' like that… I'm not sure, words, letters, that gives me a real joy.

[…]

WM: It was a pleasure to speak with you as well, above all because here in the American system we have to do all our courses and whatever in English, we write in English and so my French –

M: You miss it?

WM: YES I miss it! And I have started to forget words and how to pronounce …. How to make sentences.

(WM, 9 April 2015)

7 **MB**: I don't like classical Arabic!

(MB, 22 April, 2015)

8 **OG**: Furthermore Hassan II the ex-king of Morocco once said that nowadays people who only speak two languages are illiterate. Because here in Morocco, that's the base.

(OG, 4 April, 2015)

9 **OG**: Furthermore in Morocco, we say something, really it's awful to see this but, when someone doesn't speak French, a lot of people judge him. And it's awful, I find that really awful ok? Because, yeah.

M: Why do they do that?

OG: I'll tell you why. Because as I just told you people who don't speak French have the habit of…well, being, because – if they speak English fluently well, that we can understand, but if they only speak Arabic, in this case they are really judged because that means that didn't get a good education, you see what I mean?

(OG, 4 April 2015)

10 **MB**: Because for example, me personally I was a product of French, of Arabic, and of Spanish from the beginning, and so I had this faculty to learn [languages], and I also wanted to learn English. … So there you go, it's very much an affinitiy, let's say pre-established, because I didn't choose to learn French, they made me learn it, but I'm happy for it all the same.

(MB, 22 April 2015)

11 **MB**: I see, well just to respond to this argument, I would say that it's not very logical, that of "French is the, is the former language of colonialism so you shouldn't speak it". That is completely false. Because firstly, learning a language introduces you to a new culture, which means that it's a positive, not a burden, and I mean personally I don't see French as a burden.

(MB, 22 April 2015)

12 **M**: Do you like taking classes in French?

SO: Not really, because it's been a long time since I've studied French, uh, in an academic context. I like French, I enjoy reading books in French, etcetera, but I don't like being graded on it, getting evaluated on my French because I don't like that.

M: Yes, exactly.

SO: I like French as an extracurricular activity, as something that I do because I like it, but not because I am forced to use it in front of a professor.

13 **SA**: So. My dad speaks a lot of French. So so much. Because he studied during, while we were colonized by the French, and all his teachers were French. And he always remembers these moments. And sometimes he'll quote them for me, he says "Mr. Whats-his-name" no matter names like that. And so my dad he speaks a lot of French, and his studies were all in French then of course, with my dad I speak above all in French.

(SA, 22 April, 2015)

14 **SA**: That's a really hard question because I don't like the French system and I'm not the biggest fan of France in general, but I admit that French helps me a lot in Morocco. And so I like French a lot,

(SA, 22 April, 2015)

15 **SO**: My parents are engineers, so they were educated wholly in French, everything academic was in French in their time, and when I first opened my eyes at home I always saw French TV, I saw French books, journals, my mom would always read journal articles in French, and that made me want to be like her. For example, my sisters were educated in French, and we would play games, we would play word games, it was a little competitive at times, like, come on, go, do your homework, great. Do you quite understand what I'm saying? It was, at the same time, it was, umm uh

M: It was part of your family

SO: Yes, like that, exactly. Yes. It wasn't an obligation, but it wasn't ummm obligatory, it was something that I had fun doing.

(SO, 19 February, 2015)

16 **M** : And these languages, do you use them half-half Arabic and French, or roughly like that?

MB: Yes, well in fact, I wouldn't make such a distinction there, because sometimes one at a time, I can use them both in the same sentence, French and Arabic.

M: Mixing them together?

MB: Yes, precisely.

(MB, 22 April, 2015)

17 **AE**: There's a type of identity crisis here in Morocco. Sometimes we forget our roots, and we feel more French than Moroccan. Me too, I also forget, once in a while I consider myself as being more French than Moroccan.

(AE, 8 April, 2015)