

The Language and Cultural Policy of the Middle East and Northern Africa Countries Within the Framework of Educational Development and Multiculturalism:

The Case of Jordan and Morocco

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Abstract—The study analyzes the language and cultural policy of the Middle East and Northern Africa countries within the framework of educational development and multiculturalism (the case of Jordan and Morocco), as well as the resulting priority directions of their language policy aimed at preserving Standard Arabic as a symbol of national identity. The object of the study is the language policy of the leading Arab countries exemplified by Jordan and Morocco. The main purpose of the study is to analyze the unique experience of the Arab states in this area. The research methods include the complex ethno-linguistic method, discourse analysis, the comparative method, the quantitative analysis method, case-study, the historical method and the linguo-didactic method. The research is based on the theoretical analysis and generalization of scientific literature, the study of information and analytical materials of periodicals and Internet websites, their scientific systematization, scientific description of the resulting data etc. The conclusions of the study are of great practical importance, as they show that the ongoing globalization process has become a catalyst for exacerbating the problem of preserving national identity, one of the core aspects of which is the issue of preserving and developing national languages.

Keywords—*Standard Arabic; arabization; official language; linguistic situation; multilingualism; spheres of functioning; globalization; dialects; Morocco; Jordan; educational development; Middle East; Northern Africa; Islamic civilization; language and cultural policy*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Middle East and Northern Africa was always a geopolitical strategic region for all the big countries; that is why the colonization spread to the Middle East, Northern Africa and Africa. The metropolises had claims on the natural resources of these countries, on expanding their sphere of influence, as well as on cheap labor.

The Arabic language is the language of a huge Islamic civilization. Nowadays the language is not only a way of communication with others, it is one of the main factors when we speak about modern policy, because the language is a part of the state's political vector.

It is also known that the Arabic language is the language of the Holy Quran and the Arab nation and the language of Arab Islamic culture as well as the language of the Great Arab civilization. It should be mentioned that Arabic is one of the official languages of various international and regional organizations, such as the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the League of Arab States and others. Arab governments practice a special language policy that varies from state to state.

But what happened to these countries during the colonization period? The population was divided into higher and lower societies. Accordingly, the children of representatives of high society had great privileges in learning, which cannot be said about the children of lower societies. Most metropolises were not opposed to the spread of their native language – the Arabic language – but

education was created according to Western traditions with the languages of the metropolis.

II. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

It should be said that the Arab countries were under European occupation for many years, when they witnessed the attack of foreign languages (eg English in Jordan, French in Morocco). Those are the languages of the colonizers, who introduced English or French as teaching languages in the Arab countries. To develop and practice the policy of Arabization of the language to restore the Arabic language and its rise.

The education in Arab countries is a difficult synthesis system of the Arab and Western academic traditions. The Middle East had a great system of philosophical sciences, religious education and literature in the Middle Ages, but the Region was always under pressure. Firstly, it suffered from an influence of the Ottoman Empire. Then there was the era of the Crusades and the conquests. In the 18th and 20th centuries, a colonial campaign began to unfold. And today the world is facing the consequences of globalization.

All of these factors had a considerable impact on the educational system of Arab countries. Of course the whole education is mostly in Arabic, especially the sciences, medicine, traditional Arabic language and religious subjects. But nowadays a lot of universities in the Middle East and North Africa have established by the Western model. Despite the fact that all universities, not only in the Middle East, but throughout the world, use the Western education system, each Arab country has its own universities, based on attracting foreign investment. The education in such university is mostly in English or French, it depends on country's relations with Western states.

For example, Morocco was a French protectorate, so the system of education there is mostly French.

There are a lot of different global ranking systems that make up the ranking of the best universities of the country and the world. Here is the list of the top 5 universities in Morocco according to the Ranking Web of Universities:

- Université Mohammed V de Rabat (University of Mohammed V in Rabat)
- Université Cadi Ayyad Marrakech
- Université Mohammed Premier Oujda
- Université Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah Fes
- Université Hassan II de Casablanca [1]

Here is the list of the top 5 universities in Jordan according to the Ranking Web of Universities:

- University of Jordan
- Jordan University of Science & Technology
- Hashemite University
- Yarmouk University

- Al Balqa Applied University [2]

According to this Ranking, we see that the University of Jordan is in 10th position, Jordan University of Science & Technology is in 16th, University of Mohammed V in Rabat is 18th, Université Cadi Ayyad Marrakech is 20th the Hashemite University – 40th, Yarmouk University – 48th, Al Balqa Applied University – 60th, Université Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah Fes – 70th position, the University of Hassan II in Casablanca – 75th, etc [3].

But the Global system of QS World Ranking of universities will give the next results. The University of Jordan took the 9th place, Jordan University of Science & Technology – the 14th, Yarmouk University – the 33rd, the Hashemite University is 38th, the Moroccan University of Mohammed V in Rabat is only in the 50-60th place, the University of Hassan II in Casablanca only between the 71th and 80th places [4].

Thus, out of 10 universities of Morocco and Jordan, only 6 of them are included in the QS rating of the region. Only the University of Jordan is in the top 10 Universities.

According to the QS World Ranking only 3 universities of Jordan are included in this list:

- University of Jordan – rank 601-650;
- Jordan University of Science & Technology – rank 651-700;
- German Jordanian University – rank 751-800 [5].

As for Morocco, only one university is in QS World Ranking list:

- Al Akhawayn University Ifrane – rank 801-1000 [5].

As for the World Universities Rankings (THE), there are only 4 universities of Jordan:

- Jordan University of Sciences and Technology – rank 351-400;
- University of Jordan – rank 801-1000;
- Hashemite University – rank 1001+;
- Yarmouk University – rank 1001+ [6].

As for universities of Morocco, there are also 4 universities:

- University of Marrakech Cadi Ayyad – rank 801-1000;
- Mohammed V University of Rabat – rank 801-1000;
- Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University – rank 801-1000;
- Université Hassan II de Casablanca – rank 1000+ [7].

The conclusion of the analysis is that education in Morocco and Jordan is not lobbied in the widespread western rating systems. The fact is that the educational system in Arab countries still has some problems even if the government pays lot of attention to such problem.

In Jordan there is a huge amount of the young population who needs a good education and the Jordanian policy is aimed at improving conditions for young people to get a decent education.

As we already mentioned the colonization period drew a large line between the higher strata of society and the lower ones in all the countries, which was colonized in the past. Moreover, the problem is that the educational program is also separated. In Morocco there is also a problem with the educational system because of different schools: there are some private schools, where not everyone study, and other, public schools. The education is different in these institutions. As the AlJazeera published: "it has become very difficult for students at public schools to pursue a decent career" [8]. During the King's speech, His Majesty the King Mohammed VI mentioned: "The education sector is facing many difficulties and problems. They are mostly due to the adoption of some syllabi and curricula that do not tally with the requirements of the job market. Another reason has to do with the disruptions caused by changing the language of instruction from Arabic, at the primary and secondary levels, to some foreign languages, for the teaching of scientific and technical subjects in higher education. Accordingly, students must be provided with the necessary linguistic skills so that they may fully benefit from training courses" [9].

As for the Arabic language, all the Arab countries are aiming to preserve the sacred status of the Arabic language because of several reasons. First of all, there is a desire to preserve self-identity and to concentrate forces around the unity of the people in the state. The second is the preservation of the religion of Islam, its laws and regulations, since the Arabic language is one of the important components of Islam. Third, there is a belief that a country without its own language is not a full normal state, especially when the country had a colonized past.

That is why most of the Arab countries made Arabization the main goal of a country's policy. After its independence, Morocco also has opted for Arabization as a language policy in education. "Following their independence, each of the three states planned their Arabization. Their ultimate goal was to advance the Arabic language as the official and national language. They conceived of this enterprise as a restoration of the national personality in opposition to the cultural alienation associated with colonizing during which Arabic has been pushed aside by French in important domains" [10].

There is a huge problem in most of Arab countries, including Morocco and Jordan, with the two variations of the Arabic language. The first is the classical Arabic – the language of Qur'an, religion, mass-medias and education, and the second is modern native Arabic – the language of the streets. The last one is more commonly used by the young people because of several reasons: it is much simpler, the grammar is not so important, the words are shorter etc. Of course the young population will give preference to the "street's language" than to the classical one. Even in English it is easier to say "how u doin?" than "how are you doing?". The same in Arabic, such as for example the phrase "what do

you want to eat". If we speak the classical Arabic, we use the phrase "ma:tha: turi:du an taa'kula'", and if it is a dialect it turns to "shu biddik akl?". In fact, the problem is very big because today there is a large segment of the population that does not speak classical Arabic, and some of them do not even understand it. That is why the Arab world is on the verge of big shift, when classical Arabic language will be forgotten by the population. Even now, there is a communication problem between Jordanian and Moroccan, Egyptian and Yemeni, etc.

III. LANGUAGE POLICY IN JORDAN

In the context of the policy of the Arabic language, we depend on the language policy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Arabic is known as the official language of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan [11]. When talking about the Jordanian language policy, it is necessary to say about teaching the Arabic language in the majority of Jordanian schools and universities. In the Kingdom (like other Arab States) we observe three levels of Arabic.

- Standard Arabic, which is used in official events such as statements, official talks, media, etc.,
- Common Jordanian dialect, which is understood by all the inhabitants of the country where the language is spoken, which is used in everyday life and in some media,
- Local Jordanian dialects used in everyday life that vary from region to region.

The inhabitants of the Kingdom speak in everyday life in the Jordanian dialects which differ from the traditional language in the absence or simplification of the correct grammatical forms and in the presence of multiple English quotations. For example, the word "ha:tif" (means phone) is used in the standard language and the word "mobile" in the dialect. There exists many similar expressions.

It should be mentioned that classical Arabic is the language of religion. The Jordanian government is exerting its arduous efforts to preserve the classical as the language of Islam and the Holy Qur'an. In this context, it should be noted that the King of Jordan is originally from the people of the Prophet Muhammad - and therefore an important objective of the Kingdom is to preserve the Islamic religion and the classical Arabic language as the language of the Prophet and the language of the Qur'an. Muslims around the world respect the Jordanian king because he is one of the relatives of the Prophet - peace be upon him [12].

In April 2015, a conference was organized by the Jordanian Arabic Language Academy and the World Institute of Islamic Thought. The importance of this conference lies in the development of the treatment document, which aims to help the Arabic language in facing the challenges of the age and to develop the programs of the revival of the classical Arabic language. During this conference, there were discussed various problems and challenges, such as the necessity of spreading the Arabic

language and teaching the Arabic language based on the effective methods of education and the promotion of the classical Arabic language as the language of the Islamic religion.

There has also been talk of various linguistic errors in the media.

In these circumstances it is necessary to take quick measures to preserve the classical Arabic language because the language of speech is spread more and more in different fields, which previously were dominated by the classical Arabic language. People, especially children, cannot speak the national language properly, so they do not understand television and radio programs [13].

IV. MULTILINGUALISM IN MOROCCO

As for the Northern Africa we are going to analyze the language policy in Morocco.

Morocco was under the protectorate of France, that is why still nowadays more than half of the Moroccans speaks French language and even use it much more often than the Arabic language. It is important to note that France had a strong influence on the language structure of Morocco, which contributed to the preservation of French interests even after gaining independence by the Kingdom in 1956. Despite the fact that French is the widespread language of the country, the Kingdom retained its Arab-Islamic identity, while maintaining the status of the native language. The Classical Arabic is a compulsory subject in Moroccan schools.

In Morocco, there are more than three language groups in comparison with Jordan:

- Standard Arabic, which is used in official events such as statements, official talks, media, etc. like it is in Jordan;
- Common Moroccan dialect, which consists of the synthesis of Arabic and French languages, using words from other national languages of ethnic minorities;
- Also the Local Moroccan dialect, which is less common in large cities;
- Berber language;
- Other Moroccan languages.

It should be noted that all the Muslim Arab countries use the Classical Arabic as one of the main aspects of the Islam.

In fact, Morocco has several problems because of the use of specific Moroccan dialect more often than a traditional Arabic. That is why multiple Moroccan experts think that the language panorama in Morocco is witnessing a real crisis in all aspects. It is time to establish a clear and well-oriented policy which takes into consideration the promotion of Morocco's cultural heritage and identity, as well as the need to adapt to global changes using suitable communication techniques to achieve growth and prosperity for the country [14].

The situation is quite alarming for the population.

The ongoing globalization process has become a catalyst for exacerbating the problem of preserving national identity, one of the core aspects of which is the issue of preserving and developing national languages. It should be noted that the rapid development of new information and communication technologies is a challenge to multiculturalism, despite the fact that at the same time it opens up new hypothetical opportunities for a dialogue of civilizations. UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity demonstrates the world community's awareness of the importance of multiculturalism as a major factor of development. In particular, Article 6 of the Declaration states: "The key to cultural diversity is freedom of expression, pluralism of mass media, multilingualism" [15]. It is obvious that multiculturalism is based on linguistic diversity, and it is education which plays a key role in its preservation.

In this respect, particularly illustrative is the example of the practical implementation of the principle of multilingualism in the educational system of the Kingdom of Morocco, where the linguistic situation is characterized by the coexistence of three languages, two of which, namely Standard Arabic (hereinafter SA) and the Berber language "Amazigh", are official, and the third (French), though it has no official status, is widely used in various spheres. Such a language situation in the country is due to the heterogeneous ethnic composition of its population, where a significant place is occupied by non-Arab ethnic group – Amazigh Berbers (about 45% of the population). In addition, it is home to a significant number of Europeans, the number of which is about 60 thousand people with a total population of 35 million people. At the same time, the French-speaking population is about 20% [16].

It should be noted that the historically indigenous population of the country (Amazigh Berbers) demonstrates amazing cultural and civilizational stability: despite the invasions of numerous conquerors, it managed to preserve its national identity. In particular, during the Arab conquest, with full Islamization, there was no total Arabization of the population: millions of people continue to speak Berber.

During the French colonial expansion, the French language was imposed on the local population through political, economic, administrative pressure, which was accompanied by the marginalization of SA and its displacement from the most important spheres of life, such as science, education, medicine, etc., including by inciting separatist sentiments among the Berbers through the imposition of confrontation between Arabic and Berber. The response to this policy was the Arabization policy proclaimed in Morocco following independence in 1956, which was most consistently pursued in the field of education and aimed at making SA the language of instruction instead of French.

Starting from 1967, in the country there was consistent Arabization of the five-year primary education; however, after three years French was re-introduced as the language of instruction in the three senior grades of primary schools, as it was necessary to prepare students for studying in secondary

school of science, which could not be taught in SA due to the lack of unified terminology [17].

In 1972, there began the Arabization of secondary school: they started to teach in SA such subjects as geography, history, philosophy; and from 1977 – a number of sciences. In order to train Moroccan teachers capable of conducting training in SA, there were opened 5 specialized colleges in the country, where 269 students were enrolled [18].

The preservation and development of SA is largely facilitated by the activities of the Inter-Arab Bureau for Arabization coordination (Rabat, Morocco), which was created as a pan-Arab body engaged in coordinating the efforts of Arab states in the field of Arabization of modern terminology and conducting systematic work aimed at expanding the scope of SA, primarily through its dissemination as the main language in the official sphere, social and political life, at all levels of education, in the fields of science, culture and mass media.

The main objectives of the Bureau are to make SA the language of education, communication, scientific research, corresponding to the requirements of modern life, as well as to develop and disseminate it by elaborating scientific methodology for compiling the necessary dictionaries and forming the necessary terminology, systematization, classification and unification of terminology in coordination with the academies of Arabic and other specialized language institutes.

With the same purpose, in Morocco in 1960 at the national University of Mohammed V (Rabat) there was established the Institute of Arabization working in the same basic directions.

At the same time, the Moroccan leadership has always been characterized by a balanced and objective approach to language policy and Arabization: given the existing realities that did not allow implementing full Arabization of the educational system, it preserved bilingual education: the humanities are taught in SA, the sciences – in French. The principle of multilingualism as the basis of the country's language policy was enshrined in the speech of monarch Hassan II, delivered on February 23, 1961 after the death of his father: "Foreign languages acquisition will enrich our Arab-Muslim heritage... Arabic and French are destined for cooperation" [19].

King Mohammed VI continues the policy, the vector of which was set by his father Hassan II, based on the principles of multiculturalism and multilingualism, in which SA is considered to be the language of culture, whereas French is the language of science and to a great extent of office work. At the same time, the problem of the insufficient functioning of SA as a national language as well as any attempts to narrow this sphere through the dissemination of the French language are perceived by Moroccan society as manifestations of "Westernization" and neocolonialism in the form of cultural dependence, as a direct threat to national identity. This point can be illustrated by the recent discussion by the Moroccan Parliament of the draft law on the teaching of sciences (2019) in French instead of Arabic, and the

public reaction to it. Supporters of SA made statements that the law in the proposed wording would inflict irreparable damage to the national identity of the country due to the weakening of the national language position. It should be noted that the draft law included 60 articles, but the stumbling block was two of them: the transition to the teaching of sciences in French and the gradual introduction of paid education in public schools for people from poor families, which will certainly cause a huge blow to the system of free education in the country. It should be noted that in the 1970s, progressive representatives of the Moroccan intelligentsia and political elite fought with the Francophone lobby for the Arabization of the teaching of all academic disciplines, which in the colonial era were taught exclusively in French. In the early 1980s, there was made another step in this direction: not only humanities, but also sciences, e.g. mathematics, engineering, etc. were taught in SA. The process of Arabization was gradually gaining momentum, but in the end it involved only the undergraduate level.

In addition, the new law prescribes the compulsory study of French from pre-school age, contrary to all the recommendations of teachers and experts in the field of education, who urge to start learning French later, and at the level of pre-school education to teach and strengthen SA. Indeed, the introduction of compulsory learning of French from pre-school age can be seen as an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of the country, which did not take place even in the colonial era. The study of French and other national languages in the country traditionally began in the 2-3 grades of primary school, which in 1999 was enshrined in the National Charter of education. Analyzing the above mentioned draft law, famous Moroccan scholar Abdul Ali al-Madhiri said in an interview with "al Jazeera net": "All this will lead to further "Frenchification" of Moroccan society and the degradation of the national (Arabic) language, as a language cannot exist and develop without being actively used in such important areas of society as science, technology, economics, etc. Article 5 of the Constitution states the need to develop, strengthen and preserve Arabic. It is obvious that the expansion of the sphere of functioning of French in Morocco is on the recommendation of French experts, though it is clear that English is more functional. Thus, it is an imposed decision, which exacerbates the linguistic and cultural dependence, reinforces the expansion of Francophonie that captures all the spheres of life. It is noteworthy that there is no nation which has experienced a revival in a foreign language, abandoning the national one" [20].

SA advocates call for the implementation of the Law on the establishment of the Academy of Arabic of Mohammed VI, published in the Official Gazette in 2003, since the freezing of the law raises questions about whether there is a desire at the state level to develop the national language.

The phenomenon of the "Arab spring" was a powerful impetus for the awakening of national consciousness, which led to a change in the language policy of Morocco, where during the protest movement in 2011 there were active protests against the wording "Arab Morocco" in the

Constitution of 1996. It was advocates of Berber identity that formed the social base of the protesters. Their main requirement was the recognition of the Amazigh language in the new Constitution as an official language [21].

In this situation, Mohammed VI made a wise decision to meet the demands of the protesters, thus confirming his commitment to the course of ensuring the balance of forces and interests of the main ethnic groups living in the country. As a result, in the new Constitution of 2011, Berber acquired the status of the official language de jure, despite the fact that de facto it is Arabic and French which are the main means of communication. It should be noted that the policy of preserving and actively popularizing Berber largely allowed putting down the protest movements and maintaining stability in the country.

In order to promote and develop the Berber language and culture in Morocco, in 2001 on the initiative of King Mohammed VI there was established the Royal Institute of Berber culture. Royal decree No. 1-01-299 defined the scope of its activities, its tasks and powers. Working with government agencies and all interested institutions, it pursues the policy of the king, aimed at the gradual introduction of Berber in education, public and cultural life of the country, national media [22]. In the 2003-2004 school year, Berber was introduced as a subject in 350 schools [23].

V. CONCLUSION

Thus, it can be said that Moroccan national identity is based on multiculturalism and multilingualism. Its main constituent elements are Berber, Arabic, French, which are in a harmonious combination and are complemented by African, Andalusian and other components. The Kingdom's educational system, which is based on multilingualism, is a mirror of this diversity.

In conclusion, it can be said that the language policy in the Arab countries, including Jordan and Morocco, relates to the dissemination and preservation of the Islamic religion and is based on the need to preserve native languages (Arabic and Berber) as a symbol of national identity. At the same time the leaders of Arabic countries recognize the necessity of using foreign languages (English and French) in parallel with the official languages due to keeping up with the times.

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