ARABICIZATION IN MOROCCO: A CASE STUDY IN
LANGUAGE PLANNING AND LANGUAGE
POLICY ATTITUDES

APPROVED BY SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Study

This dissertation is a case study of the problems of language conflict, language planning, and language user attitudes toward Arabicization as the essential component of language policy in the North African country of Morocco. More importantly, however, my aim is a systematic assessment of the extent of effectiveness of language status and corpus planning on Moroccan public education. The implementation phase of Arabicization is examined through a close look at over two decades of language conflict in a complex multilingual setting. The achievements and problems encountered by Moroccan and other Arab language planning agencies in their tasks of language modernization and lexical elaboration are also dealt with.

In light of these issues, as well as of a comprehensive review of language planning literature, I also attempt to synthesize the theoretical and pragmatic implications for a situation like Morocco's on the study of language policy planning, language conflict, and the sociology of language in developing nations in general, and those of North Africa and the Middle East in particular. In order to reach the overall purpose of my investigation, I pursued the following intermediate objectives:

(a) Analyzing the various developments of language policy in independent Morocco by way of a chronological reconstruction of facts relevant to Arabicization, especially in terms of its applications to public education.

(b) Reporting on the language planning activities carried out by specialized Moroccan and other Arab agencies in their
efforts to promote Arabic as a medium of instruction for science and technology at all levels.

(c) Surveying language and language policy attitudes among groups of vital language users. Senior secondary school and university students and teachers were chosen for this purpose.

(d) Determining the possible theoretical and pragmatic implications that this investigation might have on the study of language problems and language planning.

1.2 The Problem and Problem Statement

1.2.1 Scope

In order to delineate the problem investigated here, at least two essential questions may be asked, thus making the problem twofold at this point:

(1) Assuming that language is a vital element and a valuable resource in national development, and assuming that Arabic has been, in principle at least, an official symbol of national and cultural identity for independent Morocco, why has it not been promoted to the role and function of a medium of instruction for science education, a role that has remained the privilege of French? In other words, what other factors have stood in the way of implementing Arabicization in Morocco besides the acknowledged shortage in competent manpower and deficiencies of Arabic which generate a lack of educational and reference materials?

(2) Assuming that language and language policy are closely linked with education and education quality, in what ways is Arabicization linked with the quality of education in Morocco? And how have concerned Moroccans felt about Arabicization?
1.2.2 Rationale

Of the geographical areas experiencing sociocultural change, modernization, and a need for universal literacy, the North African region has been explored less than others in terms of the role of language in nation building. More specifically, the ramifications (sociolinguistic and otherwise) of Arabicization in Morocco have not by and large been investigated through well-designed field research. However, several conclusions have been reached on the nature of multilingualism in Morocco (e.g., Moatassime 1974, 1978; Abbassi 1977; Boukous 1979; among others) from the vantage point of sociolinguistics and education, or political science (e.g., Zartman 1964; Gallagher 1966), or socio-political history (e.g., Laroui 1973).

My focus on Arabicization is achieved in light of the principles of language planning as suggested by Haugen (1966) and subsequently adopted and discussed by others. I also chose to undertake this investigation hoping it may help fill a general gap in case studies of language policy planning and the reactions to such policy by set target populations. The Moroccan example offers a timely chance to look into some questions, such as those formulated in 1.2.1 above, which remain unanswered.

Indeed, since Morocco regained her political independence in 1956, the task of national reconstruction and the reestablishing of a national identity has entailed some attempts to restore Arabic to the role and status of official/national language. Since then, three different Moroccan constitutions have proclaimed Arabic as the official state language. In reality, however, French has been maintained in such a role in some of the most vital sectors of Moroccan public life. With the exception of ministries like Religious Endowment and Islamic Affairs, Justice, and to some extent Public Works and National Revival, all government departments operate in French, or in French and Arabic. Above all,
within the educational system which provides these administrative sectors with trained manpower, each of the two languages is used at nearly the same rate, according to some estimates. This means that up to the last few years, a Moroccan child with Tamazight (Berber) or Arabic mother tongue had to receive instruction in arithmetic and other fundamental sciences in French. Such a policy of unbalanced bilingual education, as well as the subsequent attempts to give Arabic the upper hand as the medium of instruction for all subjects, have had more negative than positive consequences. Such a state of affairs is by no means unique to Morocco. In fact, identical situations are present in the other Maghrib countries of Algeria and Tunisia, as described in Souriau (1976, 1977), Mignot-Lefèbvre (1971, 1974), Sraieb (1970), and more recently by Benabdi (1980) and others. The three countries display similarities in their national sociolinguistic profiles in addition to having had France as a colonial power, whose chauvinistic policies have contributed to the long-term language conflict. Arabicization has therefore provided both a political and a sociocultural way out of the conflict. However, it has not done so without further complicating the situation. In fact, many of the ills of the educational system which have generated a great deal of dissatisfaction and unrest in education circles in Morocco have been blamed, at least partly, on language policy (Al-Jabri, n.d. [1973]; Moatassine 1974; Boukous 1978; among others).

By assessing the situation in a systematic way, this research may be of relevance not only to those interested in the Moroccan situation, but also to students of language planning and the sociology of language in other developing nations. It is also hoped that more empirical investigations on Arabicization in Morocco and the rest of the Arab world will be encouraged.
1.3 Theoretical Framework

Since there is no general consensus on a single theory of language planning or the sociology of language, several sources are drawn upon for theoretical support in my investigation. Although it is inspired largely by the work of Haugen (1966), it is also influenced by ideas of other contemporary sociolinguists and language planning scholars and practitioners, whose contributions were scrutinized for their applicability to the Moroccan example. Particular attention was given to the views of native as well as non-native writers, on the different interpretations of the concept and the policy of Arabicization. In addition to their observations on the multifaceted language conflict in Morocco and its educational implications, their proposed solutions were also taken into consideration.

Language user reactions, which represent Haugen's (1966) acceptability criterion, lie at the core of this research. These reactions cannot be overemphasized, as they often determine the need and the extent of effectiveness of any language planning.

1.3.1 Theoretical Assumptions and Hypotheses

Several assumptions and hypotheses about the problems under scrutiny provide us with a theoretical base without being necessarily confirmed or rejected by our findings. Of these, a few have become established theoretical premises now proven as universally valid by other studies in the field. Some of them are merely listed below, but surveyed in more detail in Chapter III, along with other claims and hypotheses more exclusively relevant to the Moroccan situation.

(1) Language is a dynamic resource in national development and sociocultural change (e.g., Haugen 1966, 1969a, 1969b; Jernudd and Das Gupta 1971; Fishman 1973a, 1973b, 1974). It can