

TYPES OF MULTI-LINGUALISM AND MULTI-DIALECTALISM ACROSS THE ARABIC SPEAKING COMMUNITIES

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Introduction

It ought to be pointed out, at the outset, that some of the elements of information about the **Arabic speaking communities (ASCs)** that will be referred to in this presentation are well substantiated to warrant further discussion than the facts mentioned here after. The defining characteristics that will be tackled (such as the phenomenon of the permanence of two or more varieties of the same language, or the case of **Arabization**¹ in the Maghreb, viewed from the angle of its impact on the nationalist feeling within the ASCs), all are aspects that have been dealt with relatively extensively by anthropologists, politologists, etc. My purpose here, therefore, is not so much to add another 'viewpoint' in relation to the domain as to attempt a re-evaluation of the nature and functions of these elements. More specifically, the aim is to bring out more clearly the relationships that may have been blurred through the unquestioning repetition of previous evaluations and/or a conformist perception and –why not say it– through their inappropriate analyses in general. As this is often the case, one may not be more wrong than when it comes to the genuine assessment of phenomena that one is certain to “know everything about”.

It is not a banal fact either to point out that human communities in general –out of some preservation instinct reactions– constantly display conservative tendencies vis-à-vis what they may consider to be ominous elements of change, maintaining thus the language in a state of inertia. In the long run compromises between these tendencies and the dynamic trends can eventually be achieved to establish a balance, yielding willy-nilly to the pressure of the exigencies of the evolutionary trends. In this respect, the balance consists mainly, not to say simply, in the permanent readjustments and adaptations to the environment and to the satisfaction of the community members' communicative needs. The ordinary, dialectic relationship

¹ A term used to introduce a distinction with **Arabization** as it refers to the attempts to plan the replacement of French with Standard Arabic in the administration, education, etc., in former French North West Africa (see below). Arabization, on the other hand, refers to the long, historical process of adopting spoken Arabic and culture natively. It entails the feeling of partaking of the legacy of the Arab tradition, not to say Arab origin. Reference is thus made, e.g. to “the Arabization of Egypt”, of “the Sudan”, of “North Africa”, etc. Arabization has been a long, quasi-spontaneous historical process.

between conservation and evolution is thus a complementary –as well as a concurrent– action.

More perhaps than with that of any other linguistic entity, however, the observation of the ASCs must be approached with careful, patient, serene and clairvoyant dispositions, due mainly to the over-charged, highly passionate nature of the ideological beliefs attached to the language question. As a result of well-established attitudes throughout the strata of the ASCs, therefore, the analysis of the users' relationship to the language reveals, first of all, the permanent action of the undercurrents of the two diametrically opposed and dialectically antagonist forces. As I shall discuss this below, all the ASCs are characterized, on the one hand, by total **inertia** when it comes to the formal aspects of the language; and, on the other hand, these communities are subjected to the occasional surges of **dynamic** activity in the language, in order to face up to the requirements of the successive dynamic outbursts of the communicative activity resulting from the socio-cultural dynamics. The inert, irremediably conservative nature is that of the **classical, literal, standard** or whatever appellation the formal properties of the language may come under. The dynamic, compromise-prone character is that of the vernaculars. The literal (i.e. mostly written) form of Arabic –this is a lengthy stability that perhaps no other known language has experienced– has essentially conserved its structural features for nearly fourteen centuries with occasional, bare stylistic and lexical addenda, particularly during the last hundred years or so. The vernaculars, by contrast, never ceased changing to adjust to socio-economic environments, including, lately, when changes to incorporate substantial chunks from the literal variety became an urgency, instating thus triglossic situations virtually everywhere among the ASCs. In what follows I discuss some of the social and historical factors underlying this dialectic relation between inertia and dynamic tendencies.

1. SOCIO-HISTORICAL FACTORS

A) The roots of the so-called Arabic diglossia

The sociolinguistic profiles of the ASCs (as sketched out even after W. Marçais (1930), and more particularly as refined after Ferguson (1959) to cite two of the earliest and most frequently quoted observers of the ASCs) have, in the best of cases, been envisaged exclusively from one of three viewpoints, in the sense that the situations have been approached either,

1. from the angle of predominantly **historical criteria**, or
2. on the basis of the formal, **linguistic features**, or
3. exclusively on the assumption of the **sociolinguistic functions**.

Furthermore, the parameters relied upon by analysts in each case lumped Arabic diglossia together with such different –not to say unlikely– communities as the Romance/Latin diglossia, that of the Katharevusa (Classical)/Dhimotiki (Modern) parallels in Greece, the Creole languages vis-à-vis standard European languages (French, English, Dutch, etc.), the Swiss dual use of German, or even the dissemination of English and French in the communicative functions in Canada,

etc.² The ASCs, however, have specific characteristics and are under the control of factors that, at the threshold of the modern era, have had a significant impact in conditioning their relationship to the language in ways that did not materialize anywhere else among the other so-called diglossic communities.

B) The three pillars of nascent pan-Arabism

The ASCs, undeniably and in more than one respect, constitute a unique entity in the world, as far as the sociolinguistic –and, for that matter, the socio-cultural and the social-psychological– features are concerned. As the nascent Arab Nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century grew aware of its mobilizing potential, it prompted the recognition –as symbolic values, at least among the élites– of the uniqueness of :

- a) the common historical past,
- b) the universalist character of the religion, and
- c) the common language.

These would constitute the pillars of pan-Arab national identity, relied upon more specifically in the consecutive attempts to cement the elements (b) and (c) above. For nearly two hundred years, therefore, the precept of one **common language** was going to be the prism through which most of the other constitutive elements in the identification of the self have been perceived. Even the facts of the contemporary, extreme dialectal fragmentation within the ASCs is viewed solely in terms of the homogeneity, i.e. as the stigmatic, but transitory, state towards a unified language.

The usual pattern in the lives and deaths of human languages in general –including the pattern followed by as prestigious classical or liturgical languages as Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, etc.– is that of a complementary role (or complementary distribution) between the oral and written media, with occasional readjustments when the variation becomes too substantial. The pattern may involve competition between the co-varieties or of the co-languages in contact, when the divergences become cumbersome, and complementary distribution and functional repartition are no longer possible. Not so Arabic.

C. Arab nationalism and the language question

As this is relatively well noted, in the geopolitics of the 19th century, the colonial powers (Ottoman, then European domination) finally provided the ASCs with fertile soil for what might be referred to as a totally new type of self and communal awareness. Perhaps for the first time in the histories of the entities, principles other than past mobilizing war cries (which consisted mainly of tribal and ethnic ones, and in the best of cases there were also religious motivations) provided new ideological

² Diglossia, this is to be stressed (see below), is a descriptive term that, after Psichari, Marçais then Ferguson, is strictly reserved by this author for the definition of those situations that are characterized (a) by the use of **markedly divergent varieties of the same language** (b) the variability, among the users, in the **degree of the inter-comprehension** depending on the level of familiarity with the H variety, (c) the dialectic complementarity in the performance of the communicative function.

bases. However, the modern mechanism of nationhood (economic and military power sustained by scientific and technological supremacy, mainly that of the West), were all the more apparent and were easily identified as they constituted the main strength of the conquering West. As a matter of fact, the shock from the initial contact with the imperial –mainly European– powers had not receded when the state of their own extreme retardation became obvious to the emerging Arab elites, an awareness that myth mingled with the genuine socio-political facts of the modern world prompted action of new societal ideals, project, and expectations.

1. The historical myths and the real world

The founding myths of Arab nationalism, in order to meet the challenges from the modern social modes, in general, are also relatively well known to warrant a detailed presentation here. Suffice it to point out that among the three principles of the projected “reconstruction” of **nationhood**, both the **Islamic faith**, and the **classicist forms of ancient culture** (the literature and the classicist modes of thinking) were idealized in relation to the third principle, i.e. the linguistic form of their expression : Literal Arabic. Each of the elements of the trilogy founded the other two while drawing its own legitimacy from its relation to them. Substantial efforts have thus been going to the revival of the ‘glorious past’.

The *Garden of Eden* pictures painted of the past of the Arab civilization and culture for successive generations have thus served, alternatively, the purpose either of a fence for the containment of the threatening, foreign influences from the modern, material modes of thinking and living³. Or it served the purpose of offering the tokens for the consciousness of the larger, national Arab community or pan-Arabism. The emphases may vary in the attempt to materialize either of the religious purposes (usually with undercurrents of conservative tendencies), or those with the patriotic and nationalistic bias (ordinarily underlain by progressist twists). In either case, however, the language question, in essence, i.e. in relation to the principle of one unified medium, never faltered, if one excepts the implicit concession, with the spoken Middle Arabic varieties of Arabic, made by the more “progressist” segments

³ From a linguistic (i.e. the purely scientific) point of view this attitude has been a utopia. But unlike most utopias it is a regressive one, being fundamentally turned towards the past., except when the pressure of the immediate, spontaneous –though usually non-intimate– communicative needs in relation to the real world, concessions are made with the use of the **Middle** varieties. These mixed forms of the language are resorted, to among other, to “integrate” larger, illiterate or semi-literate segments of the population in the media discourse or in public mass gatherings, etc. In those settings the communication process concerns important issues requiring, e.g. the cooperative reactions of the audience. President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, e.g. was certainly the first famous politician to have used and popularized the use of the middle varieties. The speeches of the late King of Morocco, Hassan II, were famous for a subtle spectral “varietal switching”, varying from the very archaic, classicizing style, when the address was purely “ceremonial” with no real contents, to the outright vernacular, when the message involved important political measures. Habib Beourguiba of Tunisia, in an interview with the French radio, in 1972 (reported in Granguillaume (1983:63)) commented on his choices of language form that “Je ne leur parle pas [to the Tunisians] l’arabe régulier, l’arabe des anciens, mais l’arabe qu’ils parlent eux-mêmes, un peu châtié, mais que tous comprennent, les femmes aussi bien que les hommes...”.

in the ASCs (see below).

It is against the backdrop of this ideological bi-partition that the concepts of **inertia** and **dynamic** forces take all their significance. And it is in the light of this bi-partition also that the traditional analysis of the Arabic linguistic situations in terms of diglossia alone is no longer adequate. Basically, it failed to recognize, and to account for, the dialectic relations between the Literal form, which is controlled by strict sociolinguistic constraints into inertia and the vernaculars, which are more freely and flexibly utilized in the spontaneous expression of the ever changing “real world”.

2. The formal linguistic features

The so-called standardization of languages aims primarily at codifying and thus at regulating the written usage. In the case of Arabic, the normalization and codification of the Quranic and literary koinè in the 9th and 10th century AD seem to have aimed beyond that. On the one hand, the codification enterprise did not concern an ordinary, oral practice but the formal, predominantly Nejdî variety (which happened also to be the main poetic koinè of the Peninsula). On the other hand, the codification was carried out at a time of great socio-cultural and political changes. It must have been implemented also, most probably, in an environment of substantial dialectal divergences and, to say the least, various degrees of competencies in the use of the newly Arabicized populations. As for the koinè, the idealization of its beauty and its “purity” were automatically matched with its sanctity : the belief in the miraculous nature of the Holy Book (the *i'jaaz*, and consequently non-imitable, properties of the Holy Qur'aan. These virtues were eventually extended to that form of the “language of the Arabs”. This was what I would call “the first **locking device**”, i.e. a principle by way of which a phenomenon is made immutable. In the social psychology of the users, the correlations thus made were established as a dogma.

3. The inertia forces

The term **inertia**, in relation to linguistic phenomena, refers basically to the state of conservative tendencies in the formal and notional –and of necessity in the sociolinguistic– communicative functions in all the constitutive elements of a language. Are inert the elements of a language that not only have resisted the ordinary effects of usage, the state of the normal “wear and tear” of the current exchange of linguistic forms in spacio-temporal practice, but also the exigencies of the sociocultural evolutions. The sacred properties conferred on LA, and the elitist character of the medium as a prestigious *lingua franca* for intellectual and scientific nature, constituted the second locking device.

⁴ The expression is borrowed –for the letter not so much the spirit– from the Moroccan domestic repertoire, where, by comparison with the auto-suggested (i.e. mainly psychological conditioning) process when, on the threshold of puberty, and in order to safeguard their virginity, girls used to be submitted, in some traditional families, to a “light” or “soft” witchcraft or magical spell to convince them of their “locking” *iqaf* to any intercourse with males. The locking is “undone” prior to their wedding through a “reversed” spell.

a) Division of labor

For many centuries, therefore, since the setting up of the institutions of the religious and administrative basis of the then vigorous Arab-Islamic order, a strict division of labor has been instituted. Indeed, this quasi-institutional division of labor has often governed many, basically agrarian or pre-modern societies, such as, e.g. the communities in Europe that, long after the emergence of the industrial revolution continued to function with important strata of illiterate populations. On the one hand, the division, so to speak, regulated –if not the bulk of the social stratification at least– the activities of the learned, scholarly élites in charge of the clerical tasks. On the other hand, the virtually illiterate majority constituted the strata in charge of the economic production of the material goods and/or all the manual tasks in general. For these, the acquisition of formal education was not a requirement. The corollary of this strict division of labor could be nothing other than the precise repartition of the communicative functions. And although, e.g. the Quranic school⁵, for many centuries, has been part of the basic communal institutions, it did almost nothing to increase literacy. It was attended mostly by the boys, mainly during the early years of childhood; and all the activity was devoted to the memorization of the Qur'aan, for which the learning of the basics of literacy were concomitant. The archaic and irrelevant –not to say esoteric– nature of this teaching, rarely left any imprint in the children. Only an infinitesimal proportion of the boys manage to join the clerical elite after a long and arduous training into the medium.

b) Supra-national nature of the language

It is equally important to note that, in the linguistic geopolitics and the power relations, languages can achieve total supremacy. This supremacy⁶ can be reinforced in a coercive way by an imperial power or perpetuated by self-reproductive measures. The clerical casts and literate élites of the communities evolving in the spheres of the imperial institution were entrusted with the task of overseeing that supremacy. The power language then constitutes a supra national language, even a long time after it has ceased to be a spoken language. Literal Arabic is undoubtedly the language that has pushed this principle to an extreme.

c) The binding nature of the language

To the communities subjected to forms of multi-lingualism with a supra-national

⁵Called *msid*, *ḥḍar*, or *jameʿ*, depending on region, unavoidably, like the mosque to which it is usually attached, and where the school teacher *ṭaleb* serves also as religious guide to the population and performs the task of *Imam* even in the remotest and most humble hamlets, occasionally also engaging in curative talismans and some witchcraft for the women.

⁶Whether that of Aramaic, Phoenician, or to some extent Greek, during more or less long periods during Antiquity, or the supremacy of Latin then and for nearly four quarters of the Christian era.

language, in fact, the “alien language” rarely had a binding nature⁷. In the contemporary contexts, English, French or, to a lesser extent, Spanish, as supra-national languages in their respective dominions and/or former colonies –including such ASCs as those of North Africa– may be “evicted” provided the conditions for the political and sociocultural willingness are ensured. Because, apart from the practical aspects or benefits of their use or due, to the lack of the will to counter foreign language and culture alienation, these languages did not, and they still do not, have a compulsory or binding character. Not so Literal Arabic, and the concept of binding language has never been more appropriate than in the case of this norm⁸.

d) Strict, formal stability

To the knowledge of this analyst again, Arabic is the only language that, for fourteen centuries did not undergo any formal change as pointed out earlier. Modern Standard Arabic in no way diverges from Classical Arabic in morphosyntax or lexis. Stylistic trends and re-conceptualizations in the lexicon do not stray very far from the ‘original’. Hence,

e) The obligation for the adaptability of the users to the medium

In the debatable conception of the interaction between language and society –as indeed this is one of the most often debated conceptions, the so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis–, it has been realistically acknowledged that communities do elaborate their languages by constantly adapting the medium to the ever changing communicative needs. Concomitantly, the ensuing community’s perception of the universe is handed over to the following generation in the socialization processes, then in the educational systems. And as the saying goes, languages evolve to ensure functional adequacy, i.e. to overcome the deterioration resulting from the tear and wear processes; i.e. that it all comes to the fact that if language does serve to transmit the particular vision based on the experience of the universe from one generation to the next, each generation contributes to the making of the language; not so Arabic. For all one knows, it is the language that (ever since its standardization more than ten centuries ago) has shaped up the perception, the mentalities, and the vision of its literate portion of the population, one generation after another, without ever their having any bearing on its nature, its relation to the diverse domains of activity within the society, or its evolution or growth for that

⁷The Romance diglossia in some European communities, for example, was resolved between the 13th century and the end of the Renaissance culminating, in France, for example, with Francis I’s Edict of Villers Cotterêts of 1539.

⁸ There seems to be a contradiction, however, in the relationship between Literal Arabic and the European languages in contact. For example, the graphic environment (business signs and *grafitti* in general), in Roman script in the North African urban centers are extremely more “visible” than their Arabic counterparts, even in the populous districts where European residents or tourists would never venture to go. There is more to this than the sheer universal fashion factor, as research is revealing this (B.Zarry’s Ph.D in preparation). It seems that the users “decipher” signs in the Latin script more spontaneously and readily than they do the Arabic counterparts. The Arabization, by decree, of the business signs in Algeria, for example, resulted simply in replacing *grafitti* in French by other in English in the early 90’s due most probably to political vengeful skirmishes between French and Algerian authorities.

matter.

f) The perfect language principle

It is also a commonly held belief that Arabic (the literal variety that is), being the perfect language as the incarnation of this perfection is materialized in the Holy Qur'aan, it cannot in any way be altered without there being a risk of affecting the perfection, purity, etc., of the language build up⁹. This aspect of the ideological principle is not without consequence either as yet one other factor of inertia. It is not without consequence either for the circumstances of the learning and for the use of the medium in the domains assigned to it in the social interaction. The question of the relationship of education with the language question, in the light of most of the elements discussed above, takes on a particular significance.

This question is all the more important as it is rarely if ever asked, though it is against the backdrop of this relationship that most of the facts of education and sociocultural production can be elicited. How far, therefore, is (are) the language(s) of the community adequate for the preservation and circulation of the cognitive background information? It is also in the confrontation of the facts of education and the descriptive elements of the sociolinguistic situation that one can hope to reach a realistic assessment of those relata.

2. THE EDUCABILITY PRINCIPLE

Parallel to these points, therefore, and often underlying the discussion of some of the true implications for social democracy, and of the expectations for the affording of "equal opportunities" for all the children within the community, there is an urgent need for the assessment of the educability principle. This principle relates to the properly linguistic problems encountered in education –starting with the harrowing problem of illiteracy in the adult population– for that matter. As pointed out above, in this respect, the education problems within the ASCs are far more vexing than any of the usual types encountered in other communities¹⁰. The problems, therefore, concern not only the permanence of :

1) Illiteracy –one of the highest ratios in the world today (well beyond the 100th position in the world according to Unesco ranking and the World Bank Report of 1995¹¹, Morocco, e.g occupying 126th position) with still, in the best of cases around

⁹ According to the Islamic tradition (see, among others, the introduction to the *Lisaan Al 'Arab*), Hebrew was the original language, the one of the Garden of Eden; but it is Arabic that will be the ultimate language, for the hereafter and for eternity.

¹⁰ For example, one keeps reading or hearing alarmist reports, concerning education, even among the industrial nations concerning the drop of standards in math and science, the lack of motivation or curiosity for the acquisition of general culture, etc. Preoccupation is also with the failure to bridge the gap, via education, in these industrial countries, for the children from the so-called disadvantaged social strata of society. But the education problems in the ASCs far exceed the nature of the types above as will be discussed below.

¹¹In fact the Report was a response of the WB Director, to a epistle by the late king of Morocco related to the socio-economic expectations of the Kingdom for the coming

50% of the ASC members still illiterate (this is not to mention the failure of adult literacy campaigns—), but also,

- 2) The extremely poor achievements in education, and resulting from this,
- 3) The insignificance of the output of cultural and scientific production, etc.

Undeniably, this state of affairs is not only a result of economic or financial hardships as is the case in other “developing” nations. Nor is it fundamentally due to the sociocultural retardation, the ASCs being among the communities with one of the oldest traditions and familiarity with writing civilisation. Paradoxically, and basically perhaps, this state of affairs is due to this very “rich” linguistic complexity, where the variety of the written medium is substantially dissociated from the spoken one(s) as the discussion below will sum up the implications underlain in this situation. And as this has often been pointed out by successive observers of the linguistic scene, the variety of the written medium is not the mother tongue of any portion of the population, nor is it spoken spontaneously anywhere in the ordinary transmission of information. The pedagogical and psychological implications of this fact are tremendous for the acquisition of knowledge and, by way of consequence, for the development of the cognitive faculties. The history of the implantation of written Arabic in the ASCs remains to be researched and written out (neither of which tasks is the aim of this paper, need one stress this). However, one may venture in what follows, very sketchily, some of the broad features and facts about the dissemination of the written medium and the relationships that the ASCs have woven between the language and the society.

1. An extremely selective training

To begin with, and as alluded to above, it ought to be pointed out that, one generation after another during all those centuries that the Arabization processes took to shape up the present linguistic panorama (and throughout the large domain that the language covers), only a minority among the best gifted school children have been wont to achieve successful initiation into the subtleties of the language. This initiation was performed through long and arduous training. Due to the tremendous effort and time necessary to internalize the subtleties of an archaic morphology¹² and to master the usage of an infinite number of lexical forms and rhetorical figures, few learners achieve proficient skills in the use of the language and the contents it purported to transmit¹³. Being thus turned mostly towards the past and its vehemently glorified legacy, the teaching in/and of Arabic eventually has little or no significance for the facts of the concrete environment of the learners. Furthermore, as there results a quasi-total homogeneity in the language syllabi and in the cultural and literary studies all throughout the ASCs in the teaching of the

millennium. In the Report, J. D. Wolfensohn points out the extremely serious malfunctions in the Moroccan educational and administrative systems.

¹² The Literal variety has been characterized by substantial, formal archaism because diachronically it has been “stopped” in its evolution when it was codified. The codification occurred at a time when the language was evolving from the inflectional to the syntactico-semantic structuring, word order, and the heavier reliance on prepositions as functional items.

¹³ School children’s grammar books and most reading materials in general, to this day, are ridden with grammar rules and stylistic idiosyncratic forms that no one uses in speech or writing.

intricacies of the medium, there are, of necessity, the same shortcomings, the least serious of which perhaps is the learners' own feeling of inadequacy and, therefore, the developing of a defeatist attitude vis-à-vis education.

2. A basically conservative process

Literal Arabic is basically conservationist in character in the sense that the structures and the lexical stock that were identified, codified and elaborated more than a millenium ago are still current today, and they are standardized throughout the domain of the language. The "unicity" of the language (if one may commit a Gallicism) has been safeguarded at that price : the **locking device** defined above. The maintenance of this "one-language" principle, being intangible in character, controls and channels all else related to it, but more specifically the functions of the written language.

The somehow skewed view of the communication functions is obvious, e.g. in the distortions observed in the utilization of the four linguistic skills and their inter-related functions as well as in the erroneous relationships between the media used. One has only to consider the impact, on the school children, of the inter-relations in the speaking, hearing/understanding, reading, and writing skills as exercised in Arabic: the users speak a form of language they cannot write; write a form they don't speak; hear a form they cannot understand¹⁴; and the form that makes up their conceptual universe (i.e. the one that they understand) neither offers anything to read nor is it customarily written. One consequence of this is that, for most adolescents, reading is basically a school activity¹⁵, and when they do read it is rather late. Only exceptionally (due to family or to some stimulation from the educational environment) is reading a recreational activity or the sustaining mechanism for the cognitive and/or enculturation processes. The writing skill, albeit the functions associated with it, is often associated with (not to say usually reduced to) the sheer regurgitation of the in-class processed texts and materials. The very rich living culture of the home, and of the environment in general, is scarcely associated with the cognition elaboration of the curricula. While the sociocultural, and technical and scientific contents of the curricula refer to ancient Arab culture and are expressed in a linguistic form that simply offers few or no vantages points in relation to which the learners evolve. So much so that one may say that everything in the education machinery has often resulted in making the learners experience frustrating estrangement from the environment and thus to feel unsafe.

One of the causes of this type of relationship to the languages is undoubtedly due

¹⁴ Add to this also –as this is largely agreed upon today even among the fiercest defenders of the *status quo*, the fact that if in many languages one reads to understand, with Arabic one needs to understand in order to be able to read, which is actually a triangular operation.

¹⁵ In her well documented sociolinguistic research, Bnoussina (1999) investigated, among other features of diglossia in and around the Marrakesh multilingual context, the reading habits of the literate population. Astounding findings about the negligible part this recreational skill enjoys in the activity of the literate subjects investigated could be matched only with their poor performance in the reading test of a one page narrative and descriptive passage extracted from the popular, Noble Prize winner Nagib Mahfuz, the most popular of Arab novelists.

to the extremely purist tradition to which L.A. Literate subjects are made to be constantly sensitive. One is constantly on one's guard not to display any deficiencies in the command of the grammatical intricacies, to show ignorance of an impressive number of lexical items, or be caught unawares with "faulty turns" in the style, etc. The accomplished scholar, by the same token, is the one who picks up errors in others' usage and opposes silencing proofs. This exacerbated awareness of the formal side of the language is so pervasive that arguments about the "errors" often divert attention from a debate or discussion initially devoted to topics and contents questions that may be of an important nature¹⁶. This paralyzing phobia of the "language error" and the self and environment censorship are not without consequence on the creative faculties of the users. It is not uninteresting either to point out that these attitudes seem to be far more acute in the Western Arabic (see below) than among Eastern Arabic users.

3. The status of the vernacular cultures and literatures

Reference to a schizophrenic state in relation to these dualities within the self and vis-à-vis the environment has sometimes been made to describe the estrangement from the cultural bases of the subjects. That the native vernaculars and the cultural wealth they sustain everywhere vividly and vigorously are evident save for the subjects themselves, who have been conditioned into self denial and into derogatory conceptions of the popular environment. The common beliefs are that only the classical forms of the language and culture deserved consideration. Researchers are wont to hear self deluding statements to the effect that the vernacular are corrupt forms of the classical, that the native cultures—even while deeply immersed into one or the other forms of their manifestations—are defiled as vulgar, decadent or backward, etc. Their very existence is considered as a stepping stone in the way of "civilizational" progress and prestigious knowledge. The affirmed hostility to the native sociocultural environment is fostered by the school and by the élites' righteous conception of their worth and by the safeguarding of their privileges. Like the language the cultural production (whether literary in popular songs and vernacular poetry, theater, TV programs, cinema, etc., some of which are of a good quality) funnel part of the creative output and enjoy a more than welcoming reception and/or consumption. The schizophrenic attitude in fact consists also in evolving within the native culture while denying its worth, let alone granting it even the status or dignity of a social constitutive element, not to mention fostering its transmission in the school curricula¹⁷ or their circulation in the channels of cultural diffusion. Rarely has there been human communities who have delved so deeply into self-defilement and negation of the being.

¹⁶ After listening to the report of a colleague at an important Moroccan governmental meeting, a functionary signals with his fingers, to another functionary seated across the table from him, as an aside, that he had counted some 29 errors in the presentation of the person who had just read the report. It came also as a shocking, "offensive" realization to the educated North Africans when, for the first time, they hear Middle Eastern users of Literal Arabic to see the extent to which the practice of this language is defective.

¹⁷ Never has there been any attempt to integrate aspects of the *zajal* "dialectal poetry" or *malhun* "sung traditional dialectal poetry" as aspects of the oral patrimony, in the school programs or advocated the inclusion of parts of the ballads, legends, fables, etc., in the school programs, at any of the levels of education.

4. Literacy statistics and the real facts

In the light of these relata it becomes obvious, for example, that the interpretation of the literacy statistics (whether of adults or of school leaving adolescents) reveals a different reality beyond the superficial statement of the facts of knowing the shapes of the letters. In fact, the uses to which the acquired literacy is put –and the reality revealed in the test of their confrontation with the basic, daily tasks to be performed, in the reading and writing functions–, are far from proficient¹⁸. Even the claim in this case, e.g. that about half the population in the ASCs (official statistics) are literate, is the statement of a skewed fact, literacy being generally understood as the simple fact of having been to school and some capacity to identify the letters. And, indeed, for many children who have gone through junior education, or for adults having attended literacy programs, putting to practical use the acquired literacy skills stands little chance of success and as it often ends up being a delusion. What junior literature, for example, there exists in the ASCs has very reduced circulation. As for adults, they are known to read very little. For both categories of users this is due mostly to the linguistic distance between the native vernaculars and the standard variety, not to mention, in both cases, the inhibiting factor of the “unnaturalness” or inappropriateness of the form of the standard to the environment.

The relations to the language thus established within the ASCs have set up tightly closed borders between the practical world –that of everyday life– and the world of scriptural symbolism, with all that it involves in terms of intellection and abstractedness. Initiating adults into literacy skills as this has been carried out in quite many communities the world over, for example¹⁹ has, in general, consisted in simply extending the reference to the familiar, symbolic orders, from the vocal to the visual patterning. The acquisition of the literacy skills for the ASC members has involved, on the contrary, the learning of substantial amounts of quite divergent patterning and vocabulary. The dialectal, formal and notional proximity of the vernaculars to the Literal variety may not be negligible in the attempts to penetrate the conceptual universe of the latter. The affiliation ties between the two varieties, however, is far from affording easy access to it or constituting an “open store” to help oneself. As a matter of fact, the phenomenon of literacy procedures within the ASCs may be likened to teaching a Frenchman the literacy skills of Spanish, or to teaching a speaker of English to read and write In German. Hence, in my opinion, the failure of literacy campaigns in general.

The descriptive elements in the discussion above, from a sociolinguistic point of view, and in relation to the point of view of the sociocultural progress, definitely display a rather bleak view of the situation. A no less dark picture of the perspective for the future (in terms of sociocultural progress and in terms of the socio-economic

¹⁸Whether exposed to adult literacy programs or having undergone a formal education, the users –even after a few years of schooling and the acquisition of some fair knowledge of the spelling and basic grammar rules may still display a poor performance in as basic functions such as the reading of the press or the writing out of straightforward messages.

¹⁹The Cuban case in the 60’s or the campaigns into some of the major languages in India, offer examples of some of the most successful literacy campaigns in the world conducted on the basis of the mother tongues.

well-being expected from the fair repartition of educational and scientific benefits) indelibly imposes itself.

5. The dynamic force

The linguistic relata, like everything social, are never static. As substantiated in other works, and as this will be discussed below, the linguistic dynamics have resulted in the setting up of new, formal innovations and structural (re-)adjustments to meet the sociolinguistic requirements. Beside the factors of inertia described above, extraordinary sociocultural upheavals were initiated by those very dynamics, were themselves consequences of the contact. The ASCs have been affected by all sorts of man-provoked interventions during the twentieth century. The emulation of the twentieth century "civilization" and in some cases linguistic contacts with Western modes of sociocultural behavior and economic production have had, as consequences, the integration of new modes of communicating and of organizing the sociolinguistic functions in general. In what follows an assessment of these relations, from a strictly sociolinguistic point of view, is offered. It provides a finer description of the situations than, I believe, hitherto available.

3. THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC VIEWPOINT

Contact situations, unavoidably, usually involve some type of division of labor and, of necessity, entail some kind of repartition of the communicative functions, with virtually, inherently unequal statuses of the systems in contact. However, the determination of the specific nature and degree of the power relations among the systems in presence (which normally should be the starting point for the relevant analyses) have eventually constituted the main aims of the investigations. All contact situations –this goes without saying– result from historical factors. Of necessity, these factors entail sociocultural consequences. The main issue here (while one may still be legitimately on the lookout for classificatory principles that are relevant to the situations), is that of being alert to the specific characteristics in relation to each case. As this author has argued elsewhere in connection with the Arabic di-/triglossia (Youssi 1983, 1986, and 1995), the so-called **High (H)** and **Low (L)** varieties of Arabic are underlain by a rather unique type of :

- a) **historical affiliation** of the diglossic varieties
- b) **strict repartition of the functions** in the communicative tasks of the varieties.
- c) various degrees in the **lack of continua** between the diglossic varieties, and
- d) Rigid **fixedness of the grammatical structure of H**, contrasting with the unimpeded, natural changes in L.

1. The traditional typologies

A diglossia situation (in addition to the current sociolinguistic features put forward to characterize it above), has as primary function that of warding off formal change in the classical, high variety : thus a spoken variety is entrusted with the task of carrying out the spontaneous and so to speak natural, daily "chores" in community life. In this capacity, this variety abides by the natural laws of change. The high variety, on the contrary, resisting change in the ways described above, is eventually

out-distanced by the vernacular(s) in the communicative functions within the society, to the extent that, as in the extreme case of the ASCs, the classical form is restricted to (only some of) the written functions.

A graphic representation of the current pattern of strict diglossia relations (i.e. a pattern where, for example, no attention is paid to other languages in contact) would be as follows:

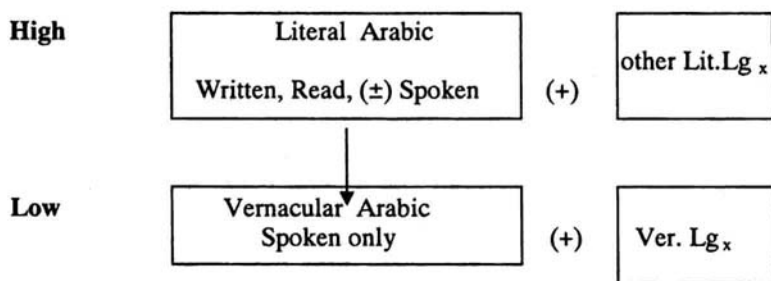


Fig. 1 Current pattern of diglossia²⁰

The diglossia features in the four defining communities isolated by Ferguson (1959), for example, actually sum up the common, underlying features of this type of contact. However, they stopped short of displaying or reporting on other, more subtle, more specific characteristics that, not only would account for the contemporary relations that exist in the linguistic entities, but also would determine whatever underlying dynamic trends may be synchronically at work.

The dynamic synchrony manifestations in the ASCs, for one thing, do not correspond to any of the known typologies prevalent in the other diglossic situations documented in as diverse as the defining communities mentioned above. It should be stressed once again that, firstly, unlike, e.g. standard German in Switzerland or French in Haiti, Standard Arabic is nowhere –nor by any one stratum of the population– spoken natively. Secondly, unlike Greek Dhimitiki, Schwyzertütsch (or, for that matter, Maltese, the only dialect of Arabic to have been codified, standardized and developed or elaborated), no vernacular of Arabic has been promoted to serve the formal, official functions of written communication. And thirdly, it must be borne in mind that, unlike any of the other communities (whose political and sociocultural autonomy can permit action within the bounds of national

²⁰Due to the strict codification of LA, it constantly happened that the sense of the “interference” has been a one-way process, i.e. from the standard on to the vernaculars. Even when there emerged forms of *Medium Arabic* (the so-called “arabe moyen” of the French philologists that sprouted at various places, from the Levant to Moorish Spain, from the 10th century onwards, and was occasionally written –see, e.g. Lentin 1997– in the form of educated or semi-educated Arabic), it was clear that the model was LA. It was to the classical forms that the users turned for the implementation of the linguistic materials required for the classicization of the vernaculars (poetry, popular narratives, personal correspondence, clerical records of all sorts, etc.) In other words, it seems as if in the minds of the users the process involved a classicization of the Vernacular rather than a dialectalization of the Literal, which would be unthinkable.

sovereignty), no ASC has, up until now, determined singly or regionally, as a result of some form of concerted decision, to undertake any action –or initiate any prerogative– that would alter in any way the status of Arabic. Nor has any consequent measure in the way of language planning taken place. It has been as if any consequent action involving the status of Arabic (and, by the same token, any significant language planning of any sort involving the use of the language) would have been difficult to even imagine outside some consensual decision involving all twenty-two states represented in the Arab League of Nations. What regional characteristics there are –in terms of a broad **Eastern Arabic** (*Mashreqi*), **Western Arabic** (*Maghrebi*), see below– are due to socio-historical and political separate evolutions, down to the present century; i.e. that in relation to the language question –as with everything else perhaps–, the ASCs have been the patient, unquestioning objects of history rather than its true makers.

2. Large geographical extension and substantial ethnic diversity

The tremendous, functional diversity displayed by the ASCs, therefore, can be matched only by the great complexity of the communicative behaviors of their members. Undoubtedly, this diversity is due, first of all, to the vast extension of their domains, and indeed to the impressive variety of the ethnic components of the entity. It may also be due –and perhaps more importantly so– to the socio-historical bases of the ideology underlying the make-up of the ASCs as hinted above (see also Moatassime 1992). Generally, in the works tackling this question, the broad outline of this diversity and complexity is made allowance to, or at least it was taken for granted, in research about this or that aspect in the investigation relative to one particular ASC community or another. To the knowledge of this analyst, however, there has been no attempt at globally approaching the relata of the situations within the ASCs as one global entity. It is true, as a matter of fact, that whether the question of the feasibility (and perhaps the question of the relevancy) of such a large scale study would be possible, is another matter.

One can state, however, that as far as the use of the language and its dissemination in the ASCs is concerned, there is a clear distinction to be made into two linguistic areas in an east/west direction. If, for the obvious reasons, one excepts Maltese again²¹, therefore, two major dialectal blocks may be distinguished. For the lack of better defining terms, these may be referred to as **Eastern** and **Western Arabic**. A somewhat gross, imaginary dividing, approximate, isogloss strip would cross Libya longitudinally (in a north-south direction), between the Cyrenaica-Tripolitania quasi-natural or geographical repartition. In a sense, the physical configuration of space, as well as the historical factors (which would be too numerous to mention here), have underlain this repartition. But one can point out, very rapidly, the ethnic and linguistic features, on the one hand, and the contemporary sociolinguistic factors, on

²¹ Along with the relatively numerous, albeit in many cases rather isolated “Oases” of micro-Arabic speaking communities, particularly on either shores of the Great Sahara (in Mauritania, Northern Nigeria, Tchad, Southern Sudan, Ethiopia, etc. – in which cases one can talk of a somewhat Black African Arabic–), then in Asia well into Iran and beyond in Ouzbekistan, apart from these “specks” of dialectal varieties of Arabic, the two poles constitute a non-debatable reality of which the users themselves have a clear awareness.

the other hand. This large subdivision does not in the least preclude sociocultural, socio-economic, or socio-political factors.

a) Eastern Arabic

Two important sociolinguistic factors, obviously, are at the heart of the above mentioned, broad, linguistic subdivision of the ASCs. Firstly, there is the relatively early Arabization²² of those Eastern communities, which resulted in the quasi-total eradication of many of the original –in some cases major–languages of the Middle East (Coptic, Aramaic, etc.; see *Encyclopedia of Islam*). Unlike Western Arabic, in relation to which Berber has displayed a maintenance will and is still performing its functions as a substratum in relation to the vernaculars, Eastern Arabic has eventually established itself as the sole medium. For, except in the areas in the Middle East where geographical and/or religious barriers sometimes preserved “islands” of these original languages²³ most of the linguistic communities have become mono-lingual.

The second sociolinguistic factor –actually one resulting from more recent historical causes– concerns the relative, non-consequential (or altogether absence of) contact with European languages. The colonial “adventures” of the 19th and 20th centuries have had no (or only an insignificant) sociocultural impact on the Middle Eastern communities compared with those in the Maghreb. As a consequence, the use of Arabic as the major linguistic medium in the Middle East has not posed the same kind of problems for education or for the use in the media as in the Maghreb, for example. And although the acuteness of the illiteracy question, for example, is virtually similar in all the ASCs (for reasons other than the sheer socio-economic ones), the absence of communicative competition from a European language has instituted a different relationship with Arabic than in the Maghreb. The Middle Eastern varieties of Arabic have been partaking of a greater number of the communicative functions, being unchallenged by external interference, as the case has been by French in the Maghreb. Thus the use of “intermediate” forms of speaking (the middle varieties or what I called **triglossia**) must have been resorted to in Middle Eastern communities much earlier and much more systematically than in the Maghreb²⁴. This current pattern of **triglossia** without bi-/multi-lingualism, i.e. without the alternating use of a vernacular variety of Arabic, a Middle (mixed variety of Vernacular and Literal Arabic), and the Standard, Literal variety with a rather strict repartition of the communicative functions, may be schematized as follows :

²² Arabization here refers to the adoption of an Arabic vernacular as a mother tongue.

²³ Neo-Aramaic (also called Neo-Syriac) at the Christian village Maʿlula, and the Muslim villages of Jubʿadin and Baqʿa in Syria and Lebanon; South Arabian in Yemen, Chaldean in Iraq, etc.; see Cohen 1988, pp. 95-99.

²⁴ This fact accounts, to some extent, for a more “relaxed” attitude to the use of the language in the Middle East, with little attention being paid to the complexities of the grammar of the Standard. It accounts also for the no-existence of Arabicization tensions and of the more or less hostile attitudes to bi-/ multi-lingualism as in the Maghreb. For example, metaphorical codeswitching to French among the bourgeoisie in the Middle East prior to the Nasserian Revolution, or to English among the new elites since the *infatih* the “opening up” to Western influences, in the Middle Eastern societies, as a result of the peace settlement initiatives are limited to be of any impact socially or of significance sociolinguistically.

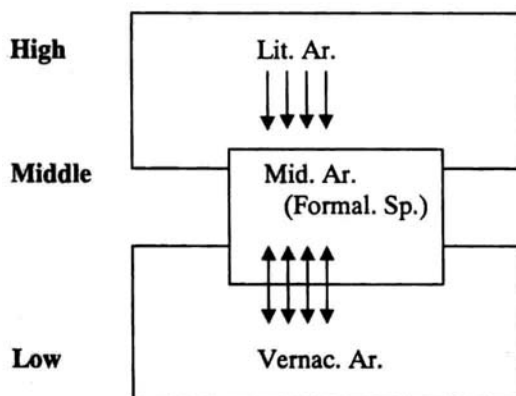


Fig. 2 Current pattern of triglossia in Eastern Arabic

Consequently, being in other words underlain by all the above features of the situation and by the specific relata among the constitutive sociocultural elements, the linguistic situations of the ASCs, obviously, cannot be typologically categorized and/or classified accurately among any of the known groups of languages. When this was attempted, the typologies reached were either reduced in their scope, not to say they were fragmentary (for being restricted to small communities or to reduced facts), or they displayed mere over-generalizations (for having somewhat too lightly extended the characteristics collated in one single region to the whole).

In other words, the all-embracing treatments (e.g. à la Ferguson, who failed to isolate the facts about the roles of Berber –and who under-estimated the impact of French– in North Africa), tended to by-pass the specific nature and the sectorial feature. For example, many an analyst failed to perceive the implications of the superstructure for the domain(s) covered, blinded as they had been by the hypotheses of whether it is the classical variety or the vernaculars that will eventually prevail as medium for the current communicative purposes.

b) Western Arabic

The impact of the historical and sociocultural factors that have shaped the communities of North West Africa, including Mauritania²⁵, has not been yet fully evaluated either. This region constitutes an entity –with more unifying elements perhaps than the ones underlain in the constitutive groups in Eastern Arabic– not only due to the Berber sub-stratum in the Maghreb, and the way Arabic has been grafted onto it, but also in relation to the impact of the contact with French. Although in the case of Morocco, for example, this contact was barely 44 years old when political independence was granted by France, the imprint of the French language and culture seem to have an everlasting effect on all Maghrebi communities. The ensuing situation of multi-lingualism with triglossia can be represented diagrammatically as follows :

²⁵ See the work of C. Taine-Cheikh, particularly (1978, 1989 and 1991).

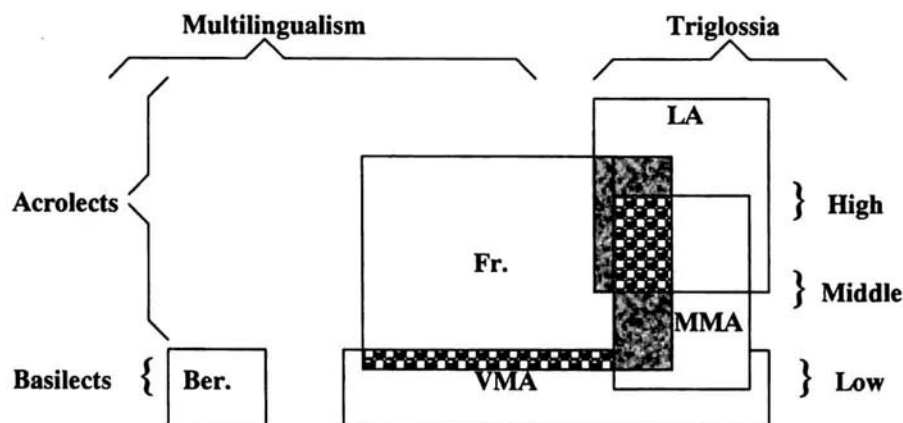




Fig 3. Current Pattern of Triglossia and Multi-lingualism in Western Arabic²⁶

 Code-Switching and Borrowing

 Calque and Semantic interference

The limits of this paper do not permit developments about this complex aspect of the Maghrebi situation. One will simply point out that the role(s) that French has been called upon to play go far beyond those of residual elements from a former colonial language. The function it is actually made to play also exceeds that of a foreign language required as a “window on the world”, or that of an auxiliary language for scientific and technological development. While probably associated with all the factors and expectations above, French is a second (when it is not the 1st or the sole) mother tongue of the Maghrebi bourgeoisie, the true medium of socioeconomic –and therefore, political– power. The French language and culture thus have permitted the elites in power –while posing as a crucial issue the problem of Arabization– to avoid bringing in any solutions that would not only put to jeopardy their privileged positions but also that might alter the secular communicative mechanisms in ways that may get out of control. For the elites do not have any civilizational projects or sociocultural programs that could concern the whole community. In the present structure of the social equational system involving the stratification of the population in terms of the repartition of the roles and the privileges, French certainly occupies the central position²⁷.

²⁶The central position suggested by Fig. 3 is due not only to the fact that it is the source of interference, or its ideational force as the language of socio-economic power, but to the true functional tasks it performs: it is the only medium that has the maximum number of communicative functions as it is the only medium spoken, read and written.

²⁷Ironically, this extremely complex structure in the Maghreb, to a great extent, has been elaborated and overseen for over four decades by some of the most outspoken proponents of the radical Arabization of the educational system and of all the social environment. But as has often observed, none of these “militants” of Arabization ever entrusted their own children to schools where Arabic was a major means of instruction, preferring instead to confide them to the French Mission schools, or in more recent years to the American schools that

It is, therefore, more than opportune, among others (in addition to offering a relatively new typology) to point out some of the salient misconceptions currently circulating about the Arabic situation. It is also necessary perhaps to point out directions in view at least of a more realistic understanding of the levers of communication. The question relative to the global, sociolinguistic study of the ASCs, as one can see, is not just another facetious manner of pointing out styles of speech but it is essential if one is to understand the relation of the whole to the parts, i.e. if one is to have an objective and rational explanation for the national situations. It ought to be borne in mind that :

Firstly, the language, ideologically at least, is the exclusive, uniting and/or unifying element of the ASCs.

Secondly, the thus self-imposed “linguistic unity” has ideological bases and sociocultural principles rather than straightforwardly and clearly identified communicative values. Related to these two points –and to a significant extent controlling them– are the two issues that, for quite some time now, have been problematic for both of the Maghreb and the Middle East. It is, to a large extent, the symbolically and emotionally over-charged issue of Arabization, that of the fulfillment of Arab Nationalism, respectively, and that of sociocultural retardation for all. To these issues no solutions have been envisaged.

More important yet is the fact that the right questions concerning the linguistic situation and concerning the communicative needs of the ASCs –which never were asked– are not only that of Arabization or that of bi-/ multi-lingualism but rather that of the extreme fragmentation resulting from multi-dialectalism, on the one hand, and the official recognition that there exists a very serious linguistic problem that calls for very urgent and perhaps very profound solutions.

Concluding, additional remarks

The elements of this presentation may seem somewhat removed from the preoccupations underlain in the discussions current in sociolinguistic research. This may be so much so that one wonders about what involvement could there be regarding sociocultural problems in the ASCs that are perhaps better left for politicians and social reformers to tackle. But then if sociolinguistic research should content itself solely with the observation of the mechanical interaction between the language and more or less clearly defined social parameters, it would run the risk of heading towards a situation of irrelevance. The relationships holding between language and social organization –this is oftentimes overlooked– go far beyond the straightforward communicative functions. For example, the nationalist movements, which took hold of the language question, the world over, were well aware of the benefits in monopolizing reference to it, instituting it as a dogma. The native linguists know how delicate it may be to discuss the language question beyond the conventional opinions. As for the non-ASC observers (it would not be digressing too much from the object of this presentation either to point out that lately, and not always convincingly, particularly when these observers are declared “friends of the Arabs”), they have been made to feel that they would be better off keeping their opinions about ASCs for themselves. In other words to them they are to mind their own

business²⁸. One of the outcomes of this relatively intimidating stand is an over-cautious attitude in the Westerners' approach to the sociocultural facts of Arabic and more so in the formulation of their observations. In the *Conclusion générale* to his very insightful and richly documented research on "Arabization" in the Maghreb, G. Granguillaume (1983:157), with what he probably considers a tactful sense of opportunity but somewhat embarrassed reservations, pleads that "n'étant ni arabe, ni musulman, ni citoyen de l'un des trois pays du Maghreb, ne se reconnaî[t] pas le droit de donner des conseils et encore moins des leçons sur un problème aussi délicat que celui [Arabization] qui est traité ici." However, should the legitimacy of such precautionary or reserved stand at all have some validity, it denotes simply, among other things, the extent to which the language question is an extremely sensitive one. The sense of insecurity in dealing with it may have been instilled in persons who may not have any reasons to feel threatened by it. This type of stand points out also and more particularly—though in an indirect way—to the risks and/or consequences that the native speaker of Arabic faces if views not in conformity with the current trends are expressed. For the weight of the factors of inertia simply is too overwhelming to make allowance for the spontaneous compliance with the phenomena of the social dynamics, with different degrees and capacities along the East - West differentiation.

One other unsettled issue is that of the resolution of the linguistic tensions. All in all, it is also obvious that when the demand in the Maghreb is for the "restoration of Arabic" —i.e. in its own right and vis-à-vis French that is—, the claim in the Middle East is for the eradication of the dialects altogether. But clearly both issues are barely real(-istic) ones, even if French does constitute a problem in the manner in which it is disseminated in the community as explained earlier. This is the case even if some allowance is made for the likelihood of the two unrealistic regional aspirations above, for can the high motivation and strong power of will alone lead to the efficient "restoration of Arabic"? Another no less important question, related to the above, is that of "What cultural heritage would the users of Arabic of the next millennium be going back to?" A no less crucial issue is the significantly wide, formal and notional distance between the standard and the vernaculars. Even the more or less spontaneous attempt to bridge the gap underlain in the emergence of the Middle varieties does not indicate that the speakers are likely to take the decisive to speak the High variety. In the most optimistic of prognoses, one can expect the homogenization of the Middle and the Low varieties, which will eventually resolve itself into a **new diglossia**. In the concluding remarks to his article, Ferguson (1959) ventures the prognosis for the future of Arabic to the effect that by the year 2159, diglossia will resolve itself into the standardization of the vernaculars around Rabat or Tunis for North Africa [no reference was made to Algeria (!?), then still "Département français"], Cairo or Damascus for the Middle East, etc. The discussion of the **inertia** and **dynamic** undercurrents in the language presented so

²⁸ It is not infrequent though that the advice or the hint would come from these nationalists who would not hesitate to freely express some of the most unfavorable opinions and critical views about their Western interlocutors' communities. But what may look as an "effrontery" is often what may be termed a "victim's retaliation syndrome"; it permits the nationalistic feeling to "save face" vis-à-vis the domineering system, while giving the illusion that the constitutive elements are under control.

far in this presentation does not in the least point in those directions²⁹. Rather these two trends seem to converge into yet another dead end, where the educated élites, preoccupied as they are with the exclusive preservation of their privileges, have no regard for the ordeals of the masses.

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²⁹ In the wake of the above prognosis, in concluding an otherwise well documented and very fine analysis of the Tunisian situation, Grandguillaume (1983:68), a little too inadvertently perhaps, heralds that the evolution of Arabic was heading "en un premier temps vers la fin de la diglossie : c'est-à-dire vers une langue nationale tunisienne qui, dans sa version écrite, sa "correction", serait calquée sur l'arabe moderne, mais qui aurait intégré dans son vocabulaire l'essentiel des apports du dialecte tunisien, et aussi de nombreux termes français."

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