# The Politics of Language and Identity in Lebanon and Morocco: Similarities and Differences*

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**Abstract:** *Taking a comparative approach, this study seeks the historical trajectories which shaped the language situations and identity in Lebanon and Morocco in so far as these language situations involve conflict between Arabic and other languages (French and Berber/Amazigh) or Arabic and its dialectal variants. There are endogenous and exogenous forces that set the stage for the appearance of new identities in both countries. The major conflict in Lebanon is fundamentally two notions of self-definition, the one based on religion and the other based on language. The battle of religiously and linguistically constructed identities is fought on many fronts. In Morocco, however, the main conflict is mainly about language. The Arabization policy stimulates oppositional identity that rejected pan-Arabism as a focal point for national pride. The new dynamics of political and cultural transformations that Morocco has recently experienced have also led to the revitalization of new definitions of national identity.*

## 1. Introduction

Lebanon and Morocco are fertile grounds for the study of multilingualism, language policy and identity, which hitherto have not received a comparative study from sociolinguists. Such a study in a comparative frame is warranted and illuminating in this case given the fact that Lebanon and Morocco are much more heterogeneous in linguistic terms than other Arab countries.

Lebanon and Morocco have had a long tradition of multilingualism. In a cultural and linguistic sense, they represent extremes in the spectrum of Arab states. They are socially and linguistically diverse and their cultural make-up is one of the richest in the Arab world due to their geographical locations. Their strategic locations have made the two countries open to a variety of linguistic influences. The complex interplay among languages in Lebanon and Morocco is driven by religion, ethnicity and issues of identity, education, and economic development. Both countries with independence have inherited a deeply rooted French linguistic and cultural legacy after rule by the French. It is believed that countries with Western colonial heritage are viewed as more susceptible to the acceptance of foreign languages. This explains the linguistic complexity of these countries compared to other Arab countries. The two countries also served as a safe haven for an array of exiled religious communities. However, though the cultural and linguistic complexity of Lebanon is similar to Morocco, there are internal and external forces that set the stage for the appearance of national identities in both countries. To understand Lebanon and Morocco of today and

the place of language in constructing their national identities, it is vital to delve into the history of the two countries.

## 2.  Lebanon

Lebanon is a country with a complex cultural, linguistic, religious and geographical identity. Four languages share the linguistic space that makes the Lebanese cultural scene. Arabic, French, English and Armenian are the languages used in Lebanon. This diversity in languages goes hand in hand with diversity in ethnic groups and religious sects which consist of Muslims (Shia, Sunni, Druze, Ismailite and Alawite), Christians (Maronite Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Chaldean, Assyrian, Copt, Protestant, etc.) and Jews.

The presence of many ethnic groups, religions, and sects makes Lebanon a model of place for coexistence. However, it has triggered "an identity crisis" (Kraidy 1998). It has also made the country vulnerable to internal conflicts and has given justification for foreign powers to interfere in the domestic affairs of Lebanon. Although the language is never the source of conflict, it is nevertheless implicated as a proxy by competing political groups. A discussion of historical and political events is therefore crucial to show how language, identity, and political conflict interact in Lebanon.

Many great civilizations have had a great impact on Lebanon and changed the religious, political, social, linguistic, and economic profile of the region. The Phoenicians were the first people thought to have lived in Lebanon (Salameh 2010). Other civilizations include the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Seleucids, Romans, Arabs, the Crusaders, the Mamluks, the Ottomans, and the French (Esseili 2011). During the Ottoman reign, Lebanon was exposed to more European influences and had been giving up control over its territories in the form of concessions to France and England by the time of World War I started. France and England obtained greater capitulations that allowed them direct control over the Christian and Jewish populations in the Ottoman territories (Gatton 2010). These agreements allowed France and England to establish protectorates over the sects in Lebanon. Conflicts among different Lebanese sects emerged in 1845 between the Christians and the Druze. European intervention became a frequent occurrence with a weak Ottoman Empire unable to resolve the conflicts (Gatton 2010). The Christians were supported by France and the Druze by the British. Foreign powers supporting religious factions created an air of ill among the relatively harmonious groups and created a major divide in how the Lebanese see their future. An agreement of how Mount Lebanon would be was signed in 1861. The agreement gave the colonial powers greater control over the area.

The Ottoman Empire lost the World War I and Lebanon became a French mandate. With the announcement of Greater Lebanon in 1920, Lebanon borders were established (Esseili 2011). Because of the Protectorate, France had stronger ties with the Maronites in Lebanon. Christians insisted on being independent and maintained their alliance with the West. This increased the area under the

control of Mount Lebanon, where the Maronite resided (Gatton 2010). The political demands of the Maronites to establish an independent entity rested increasingly on the belief that a culturally and ethically distinct people resided in Lebanon (Kaufman 2004). The Maronite church was cultivating a distinct Maronite religious identity for centuries and an exclusive Christian identity began to materialize in Mount Lebanon. The Maronite church played a decisive role in the shaping of the political history of Lebanon. It should be noted, however, that the first proponents of a Phoenician identity were not Maronite clergyman, but non-clerical Christians who had their education in the West (Kaufman 2001). When General Gouraud declared the establishment of Greater Lebanon, the wishes of the Maronites in Lebanon were finally realized.

## 2.1 The French colonial discourse on language and identity

France, as the mandate power, created the so called Greater Lebanon in 1920, adding Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, Jabal Amil, the Biqa, and the Akkar to the later Ottoman little Lebanon (Harris 2012). Therefore, it comprised additional coastal regions and other districts in addition to the already formed Mount Lebanon in 1861. In this way, the Shiite areas in the South and the Bekaa and the Sunni coastal towns were grouped with Mount Lebanon to form the new country of Greater Lebanon under the French Mandate. Extending the territory of Lebanon by bringing areas dominated by Sunni and Shiite sects and placing them under a Maronite government controlled by the French eventually changed the balance of power. This attempt was made with massive resistance. It was the Jesuits, alongside their numerous Christian Lebanese graduates, who fought against the tendency. In spite of this resistance, Greater Lebanon was officially recognized in the Lausanne Conference in 1923.

On assuming power in Lebanon, France declared Arabic as the official language. It also amended the constitution in 1926 to make French an official language and the language of instruction for science subjects. The amendment also required all private schools to follow the official curricula (Suleiman 2006). French, therefore, was fundamental to the Christians of Lebanon spiritually, culturally and politically. Lebanon gained independence in 1944 and "official recognition was given to sixteen religious communities, each of which had the right to parliamentary seats according to a proportional system. The chief of state is always a Maronite, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, the president of parliament a Shiite" (Gahwyler 1986:15). Competing missionaries groups came to Lebanon in large numbers. The most active of the missionary groups were the French and the Americans. The competition between the French Jesuits and the American Evangelical Protestants resulted in the establishment of many schools all over the country. On the eve of World War I, Lebanon had 100 Christian schools, 29 French, 12 English, 22 Russian, 3 Islamic, and 5 public (Shaaban and Ghaith 1999). Unlike the American Protestant and the Russian Orthodox missions which delivered their message through the medium of Arabic, the French Jesuits pursued a policy of French self-interest by promoting the French language chiefly among the Maronites (Suleiman 1994). The French also

mandated knowledge of French as a requirement for entry into the civil service. This situation helped make French the language of the elite and educated (Shaaban and Ghaith 1999).  During the French mandate (1925-1943) French was the major language of government and education dwarfing Arabic, which resulted in resentment among Muslim community. It is at this time that the Arab nationalist movements used the Arabic language as a rallying point in their struggle against the colonial power (Suleiman 1994). This resentment was also prevalent among non-Muslims on account of the weakening of the educational institutions that used to serve their communities (Shaaban and Ghaith 1999). The English language-medium schools "dwindled in number and were forced to adapt to the situation by starting the French in Grade 1 and delaying English till grade IV" (Shaaban and Ghaith 1999:4). These legislative measures led to the spread of French as an instructional language at the expense of other languages. The French introduced the concept of nationalism in their curricula. They made a clear connection between religion and nationalism in their programs of study. They also introduced in the curricula classes about Ancient Egypt, Babylon, Assyrian, Canaan and Phoenicia. There is no doubt that the French assisted in all possible means to the distribution of Phoenicianism in Lebanon (Kaufman 2000). They even advocated that "the ancient Phoenicians were not of Semitic race, as the Arabs were, but rather that they were descendants of Ham, from which the Indo-European races emerged" (Kaufman 2001:176). This strategy increased the complexity of the Lebanese identity and further ingrained the division between the Muslims and Christians. There was a natural identification of the part of Muslims with the rest of the Arab Muslim World while the Christians wanted to remain culturally and spiritually attached to the Western world (Gatton 2010). This not to say, however, that all Lebanese Christians were in favor of the French language. The Arab renaissance known as "Nahda" was mainly led by Christian scholars and writers who advocated nationalism through the use of Arabic as "the bond of identity over religion" (Suleiman 2006:126).

## 2.2 The postcolonial discourse on language and identity
Although Lebanon received independence, the term nationalism meant an entirely different thing to each ethnic group. These differences can be categorized into two ideological camps: the Christian nationalists and Arab nationalists (Gatton 2010). The Christian nationalists, largely consisted of Maronites, wanted a country with a Christian leadership, and they relied heavily upon a Western European approach in their policies. The Arab nationalists consisted generally of Muslims. They drew from the concept of Umma, or Islamic community. In their attempts to disassociate themselves from Arab national movement, some Christian nationalists claimed that language is not a required component of any national consciousness. This was a response to the Arab nationalists who claimed that Arabic is one of the prime pillars of the Arab identity, the second being Islam (Kaufman 2004). For instance, Charles Corm, a Maronite Christian nationalist who gave up Arabic entirely in favor of French, made French his only medium of communication and France his cultural world

of reference. He was one of the most conspicuous voices in the establishment of a Christian, non-Arab entity in Lebanon. He also insisted on the idea that the Lebanese were Phoenicians. Although the ideal of Corm regarding the Lebanese national identity failed politically due to the historic agreement between the Maronites and the Sunnis which defined Lebanon as a country with an "Arab face", it did not die (Kaufman 2004). Rather, it is manifested in the festivals. The Baalbeck International Festival was the most celebrated. The cultural orientation which the organizers of the festival were trying to convey is not to negate Lebanon Arab identity, but to depict Lebanon similarly to the way Charles Corm had envisioned (Kaufman 2004).

In terms of languages, French continued to compete with Arabic in education and the arena of national definition in spite of the fact that the Lebanese government attempted to disengage from the French hegemony in politics and education. Declarations were made and decrees issued to promote Arabic and build a strong national identity. The teaching of Arabic was made obligatory in all private institutions. Despite these declarations to make Arabic as a symbol of national identity, French continued to play a pivotal role and the French educated ruling elite keep using it under the guise of keeping up with the technological advances. Abou (1962) asserts that French is fundamental to the Christians of Lebanon spiritually, culturally and politically. Arabic-French bilingualism was indexical of the confessional structure of Lebanon. The civil war intensified these divisions and hostilities in the country. These hostilities were often expressed in linguistic and cultural terms (Shaaban and Ghaith 1999).

Several parties within Lebanon were involved in the civil war, which lasted from 1975 to 1990. However, the most important one was the fight between the Lebanese Front and the Lebanese National Movement. The civil war ended in 1990, but the language and national identity conflict were not completely solved in spite of the provisions of the "National Accord Document for Lebanon," which is also called the Ta'if agreement because it took place in the city of Ta'if in Saudi Arabia. The civil war that started for political and sectarian reasons in Lebanon did not resolve the issue of Lebanon's identity and the issues that caused the war. There were no winners in this war and the tension that fueled the war can still be seen. The latest violence that erupted after 2005 showed the issue is far from being solved (Esseili 2011).

The Ta'if agreement postulates that Lebanon was Arab in identity and belonging, thus replacing the formulation of 1943 constitution in which Lebanon was described as having "an Arab face", a description resented by the Muslims (Shaaban and Ghaith 1999; Suleiman 2006). Thus, the issue of identity was settled in favor of the Arabic identity of the country. There is a clear emphasis in the new educational plan on proficiency in Arabic as the only official language in the country (Shaaban and Ghaith 1999). However, successive Lebanese governments sought to circumvent this through ad-hoc measures that maintained the status quo ante (Suleiman 2006).

Although linguistic diversity in Lebanon is not directly responsible for the conflict, it reflects underlying affiliations and allegiances of Lebanese religious

groups (Esseili 2011). French is more strongly associated with the Christians than with the Muslims and the Druzes, who tend to favor English as a foreign language. Shaaban and Ghaith (2000) present some striking numbers about language affiliations: 95 percent of the Maronites, 85 percent of the Catholics and 71 percent of the Orthodox associate themselves with the French while 82 percent of the Muslim and 70 percent of the Shiites and the Druzes tend to favor English. The current language situation in Lebanon, however, reflects new trends. English has been taught in traditional French medium private schools due to globalization. Parallel to these advances English has made, it has been noted that "the French language has been making inroads into the Shiite community schools of those who have recently come back to Lebanon in large numbers in order to escape the troubles in the African continent" (Shaaban and Ghaith 1999:10). Since French has lost its vitality as a potent symbol of identity it once was in Lebanon, Arabic is no longer called on as in the past to act as an active marker of identity (Suleiman 2006). Multilingualism became the norm. Lebanon introduced a trilingual policy in 1990s and "language was no longer considered an identity marker, at least in terms of religious affiliation" (Esseili 2011:63). However, Suleiman (2006) notices that the struggle between French and Arabic as markers of identity has recently been replaced by a struggle between Standard Arabic and Lebanese Colloquial Arabic as identity constructions in media. In this context, the linguistic tension between Standard Arabic and Lebanese Arabic reflects a broader tension between "Arabism" and "Lebanonism". Al Batal (2002:112) argues that "Arabism perceives Lebanon as an integral part of the Arab world while "Lebanonism" perceives Lebanon as unique culturally and linguistically vis-à-vis the rest of the Arab world. Suleiman (2003) asserts that the promotion of colloquial Arabic as a marker of national identity tends to be associated with inward looking Lebanese nationalism which sees Standard Arabic as an instrument of pan Arab cultural and political hegemony. Therefore, Lebanese Arabic is favored instead. The supporters of this variety are Christians, particularly the Maronites.

El-khury (2005) speaks about the collapse of the political, social, cultural and religious order that in the past protected Standard Arabic against its enemies. In modern Arab thought, the Arabic dialects are constructed as the great opponent, even the enemy to Standard Arabic. Under this context, Lebanese colloquial Arabic "will eventually do to Fusha what French has failed to do to it: create an amphibian identity for Lebanon that will gradually drift away from the Arab shores" (Suleiman 2006:133). It is interesting to note that Standard Arabic is being elbowed out of domains that were dominated before. Lebanese Arabic has begun to penetrate Lebanese social life and media. What makes media interesting at this juncture is its close association with the centers of political power in the country. According to Suleiman (2006), Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBCI), for example, is strongly connected to the Maronite-dominated Phalange Party, which is committed to maintaining a Lebanese identity for Lebanon, in which the Maronites play a crucial role. The same is true of Al-Manar TV which reflects the Islamist ideology of its sponsor

Hezbollah and champions of Standard Arabic in its news broadcasts. Following Kraidy (2003) and Chocahne (2007), Nasr (2010) sees that private television stations in Lebanon did not contribute to the creation of a national discourse on reconciliation in Lebanon that barely survived a 15 year civil war. Rather, they fueled the sectarian conflict by taking the conflict from the street to the airwaves.

It is clear from the discussion above that Arabic, nation building, and political conflict interact in Lebanon. This interaction cluster among Arabic as an indigenous language and French as a colonial language. Although the language is not the primary source of conflict, it is used as a proxy that expresses a host of political interests among the competing groups (Suleiman 2006).

## 3. Morocco
Morocco is located at a point where the African and European crossroads meet. It is linguistically and culturally diverse and its cultural make up is one of the richest in the Maghreb (North African countries). The cultural and linguistic context of Morocco is characterized by the significant use of Arabic as well as the presence of Berber, French, Spanish and English.

Berbers are unquestionably the first inhabitants of Morocco and the Berber language and culture is the foundation of Moroccan culture and identity. Several civilizations had a great impact on Berber civilizations. Among these civilizations are the Phoenicians, the Carthargians, the Greek, the Roman, the Vandal, the Byzantine, and the Arabs. However, it is the Arab civilization that has impacted the history of Morocco linguistically, religiously and culturally. It should be noted, however, that the Berber kingdoms and dynasties did not disappear with the arrival of Arabs in Morocco (Sadiqi 1997). The historical interactions between Arabs and Berbers included accommodation, acculturation, rejection and resistance. The Berbers continued to rebel and apostatize at times, and often adopted dissident religious opinions (Maddy-Witzman 2011). The initial incorporation of the Berber tribes into the Islamic domains was not easy. However, over time Islam became a very significant part of their individual and collective identity.

Berbers are not a homogeneous group. They constitute a "bewildering number of cultures, economics, and physical characteristics and can at best be defined as Mediterranean" (Maddy-Weitzman 2001:26). The lack of linguistic homogeneity among Berbers in Morocco has led to a dilution of political and socioeconomic strength (Sirles 1985). The cocoon of widespread competency in Morocco transfers the burden of communication from Berber to Moroccan Arabic. The close relationship between Arabic and Islam is very significant too. As Berbers became Islamized, there was a language shift from Berber to Arabic.

## 3.1 The French colonial discourse on language and identity
At the beginning of the twentieth century, Morocco was subject to the French and Spanish colonization. The French colonization had a great impact on the

Moroccan linguistic landscape, culture and education. It also deeply influenced the life of Berbers. French colonialism attempted to divide and rule Morocco by emphasizing Berber distinctiveness vis-à-vis the Arabic speaking populations.

Unlike the British, who adhered to a policy of indirect rule in their colonies and generally did not concern themselves with the idea of transforming the colonized natives into Englishmen/women, French colonialism was guided by the notion of assimilation. Seen from this perspective, the French assimilationist policy entails the "cultural elevation of a foreign people by its incorporation into greater metropolitan France" (Sirles 1985:88).  The theory of assimilation had therefore been implemented in French colonies and had become the leitmotif of all colonial bodies in France. It was ideologically best practiced by Louis-Hubert Lyautey who became the first French Resident-General of Morocco in 1912.  Kaufman (2000) noted that a significant fact of Lyautey's theory was the "politique de races" which emphasized the cultural, ethnic, and cultural differences between the various communities in the colonized area.  In Morocco, Lyautey exploited the existence of a larger Berber population by highlighting ethnic and cultural differences between the Berbers and the Arab population and working ardently to separate the Arab and Berber populations. To achieve this purpose, the French administration issued the Berber Decree in May 1930. The French administration founded schools in Berber regions with the primary purpose of teaching French and local Berber history instead of Arab Islamic history (Kaufman 2000). The French also constructed a complete myth of origin and ancestry for the Berbers. It follows then, according to this view, that the Berbers racial origins go back to the Indo-European race and as such they have distinct identity from Arabs and any attempt to assimilate them into the Arab-Muslim society would fail. The Berber decree had been discredited and rendered unsuccessful since it was a direct attack on the Muslim unity and identity. The politicization of Berber identity was compatible with a powerful Islamic consciousness. In the long term, religious ideology united Moroccans during the French Protectorate. Islam and Classical Arabic were the instruments of Moroccan identity in the revolutionary times against colonialism which was represented as Christian and French. Thus, it was widely expected that upon achieving independence in 1956, the new state of Morocco would successfully incorporate the heterogeneous tribal oriented speakers of Berber under the rubric of a homogeneous 'national' identity based on a common Islamic faith and the Arabic language (Maddy-Weitzman 2001).

## 3.2 The postcolonial discourse on language and identity
The number of Berber speakers declined in the decades after independence. Rapid urbanization, expansion of free education, and rural exodus and the dialect status officially assigned to Berber have led to its regression (Ennaji 1997). Ironically, the regression of Berber has generated a gradual increase in the self-consciousness and an ongoing Berber search for self-identity. Still, there is evidence that forms of Berber consciousness had long existed and are not purely the result of the recent regression of Berber. Shatzmiller (2000) notes that

the drive to bring the Berber populace into the mainstream of Islamic statehood deepened the awareness of Berber particularism while at the same time resisting uniformity and conformity to cultural norms through which acculturation was enforced.

Despite the claims and counter claims about this, it seems undeniable that the Arab conquest of North Africa was at Berber expense and Berbers have been fighting an uphill battle to preserve their identity. The Berber revival has focused primarily on linguistic and cultural matters after independence. Independence brought a new set of challenges between the Berbers activists and the Moroccan state. The Monarchy's heavy reliance on military officers of Berber background reinforced the existing process of Berbers' integration into the larger Moroccan population and standing with the state. Explicit articulation of Berber identity was not welcomed though. Until the early 21st century, Berber matters were a cause for governmental censure, and for self-censorship for they singled potential disloyalty to the Arab-Islamic nation and thus to the monarch (Hoffman 2006). To acknowledge or refer to any distinction between Arabs and Berbers was to risk associating oneself with the French colonial attempt to divide the nation into ethnic enclaves. There are historical reasons rooted in the protectorate era that explain this perception. One of these reasons was the famous 1930 Berber Decree, which put the Berber regions under tribal laws while the rest of Morocco was under Islamic law (Alalou 2006).

Since independence, the identity debate in Morocco has centered on the issue of language. The conservative paradigm of language policy in Morocco is oriented around theoretical understanding that multilingualism is a major obstacle to political and economic development of Morocco. It views Berber as an obstacle to individual and national development. Therefore, Berber speakers need to be fully assimilated to the Arabic Moroccan identity. This theoretical orientation justifies the implementation of Arabization seen as an integral part of Moroccan unity. Arabization is mainly associated with issues of national identity and a regain of Arabo-Islamic authenticity. It is a concept deeply rooted in the colonial experience that Morocco had painfully undergone. The colonization had stripped Morocco of the Arabic identity and imposed an alien culture, identity, and language.

Arabization is thus an attempt at solving the identity crisis by promoting the Standard Arabic language. For the ideologists of the fundamentalist movement, Standard Arabic is viewed as a sacred language and central to the national Arab identity. At the opposite, other languages are considered a threat to Standard Arabic. Arabization, therefore, is not merely a matter of language promotion in Morocco; rather, it entails the promotion of a particular state-centered vision of language and culture while ignoring the undisputed fact that Morocco has a multilingual population. The goal of Arabization was, therefore, one of linguistic and cultural homogenization.

The most ardent supporters of Arabization were the purists or traditionalists who were motivated by nationalistic considerations. Arabization has always been presented by the nationalists as a search for authenticity. In his

study on language policy, Gafaiti (2002) explains that the revitalization of Arabic meant the revitalization of the national culture. He asserts that Arabic language is the one which provides cultural and instrumental backbone of the Arabs' identity.

By focusing on the unification of the populations around one language, the ideologies of the post governments created a climate of fear of acculturation among Berber communities (Alalou 2006). Attitudes to the Arabization policy have always been contradictory and ambiguous and its implementation clash with realities where opinions diverge between tradition and modernity (Sadiqi 2014). It was not welcomed by the Berbers, who viewed it as a harsh suppression of all forms of Berber. Some Berber rights activists even view this policy as cultural and linguistic genocide. Planning this type of language policy was hardly more than an application of the protectorate's French language policy, only Arabic assumed the dominant role for a change (Marley 2004). This does not imply, however, that they opposed Arabic in its religious role. Rather, they wanted to see Arabic as part of the religious identity while other languages fulfill other functions. They drew parallels with the language policy in other Muslim countries such as Iran and Pakistan where the national languages are Persian and Urdu languages, respectively, while Arabic is the language of religion (Benmamoun 2001).

The Movement Populaire (MP) emerged as a vehicle for rural Berber interests and against the encroachment of the predominantly urban and Arab Istiqlal party. The MP was given significant support by the Monarchy which sees the movement as an important ally in its own power struggle with the Istiqlal party (Willis 2002). Some Berber activists, however, accused MP of not being a strictly Berber in terms of identity and not defending Berber rights (Zouhir 2014).

The last decade of King Hassan II's rule was marked by an important political, economic and social change. Late Moroccan King Hassan's 1994 speech marked a turning point in the Moroccan public discourse regarding Berber identity. He declared that Moroccan dialects including the dialects of Berber form one of the components of the authenticity of Moroccan history. He even stated that the use of Arabic and Berber dialects were more preferable than the use of foreign languages such as French and Spanish in everyday speech. For this reason, he recommended teaching the Berber dialects as they contributed to building the Moroccan history and glory. This move was in contrast to the Arabization policy that emphasized Arabic linguistic and cultural heritage in the educational realms. He recognized the multicultural roots of Morocco and took a stand in defining Moroccan national identity as more than exclusively Arab Islamic (Buckner 2006). By doing so, he provided legitimacy for the Berber culture movement.

The officials' attitude to Berber has considerably changed from indifferent to favorable. The Moroccan political parties were in favor of teaching Berber and using it in media. Berber activists have managed to slough off much of colonialist stigma associated with Berber in the past. On October 17, 2001, King

Mohamed VI announced the creation of the Royal Institute of the Amazigh culture (l'Institue Royal de la Culture Amazigh, IRCAM). IRCAM has been empowered to promote not only the Berber art and culture, but to implement the use of Berber in the classroom. The promotion of Berber and teaching it in schools seems laudable to anyone who believes that cultural and linguistic expression is a fundamental human right (Crawford 2005). The Monarchy's recognition of Berber language and culture as being integral to Moroccan history in 2003 was a dramatic shift from previous governmental policies to assimilate and suppress Berber identity in Morocco (Todd 2011; Zouhir 2014). The new Moroccan constitution also represents a historical turn in that it has acknowledged Berber as an official language. It was the first time a North African country officially granted official status to the region's indigenous language. The new constitution, introduced by King Mohammed VI in 2011 in response to Arab Spring protests, an overwhelmingly approved in a referendum, recognized Berber as an official language of the state alongside Arabic. Under this political climate, Moroccan political parties have to come to acknowledge the importance of Berber as a major component of the Moroccan national identity.

Like many indigenous groups that have endured centuries of subordination and isolation, the Berber activists have been demanding more linguistic and cultural recognition. Today Berbers are pressing for what they argue as basic human rights, the freedom to speak Berber in courtrooms and the parliament. During a routine session in Morocco's lower house in 2013, Health Minister Hussein El Ouardi was questioned in Berber by an opposition Member of Parliament (MP) about inadequate health infrastructure in the city of Al-Hoceima and the Health Minister responded in Berber (Middle East Online, 2013). Similar incidents happened in 2012 when Rayssa Fatima Tabaamrant, a Moroccan Berber singer and MP, addressed the Moroccan Minister of National Education, Mohamed Wafa, in Berber that he does not speak during a parliamentary session. Berber activists hailed such decisions to speak their indigenous language in parliament. However, the recent constitutionalization of Berber is a very clever containment strategy. Berber is no longer a subordinated language; it is an official language now, and there is no way to make the old complaint against 'linguistic genocide'. Most importantly, the same move by the state has re-established the existing hierarchy: Arabic and then Berber in actual reality. So, it achieved a double ideological functions.

## 4. Comparison of language and identity discourses in Lebanon and Morocco: similarities and differences

As stated above, Lebanon and Morocco are fertile grounds for the study of language policy and identity. There are complex relations between language, identity and national feeling and between all of these and political movements for autonomy during the colonial period in both Lebanon and Morocco. Unlike Morocco, however, Lebanon is a conglomerate of many ethnic groups with distinctive identities and political representation. Religion and politics in

Lebanon are also closely connected and they have a big role in shaping the Lebanese identity (Nasr 2010).

Soon after they liberated themselves from the French colonialism, Lebanon and Morocco were faced with two ideologies concerning the medium of instruction in public schools: the ideology of decolonization of education on the one hand, and the ideology of development on the other. However, decisions about language policy implementation in both countries are likely to be based upon ideological rather than upon purely linguistic and pedagogic considerations. More specifically, the language policy implemented in both countries acts fundamentally as strategy aiming at planning language inequality.

The Arabization policy which has been adopted since independence is a re-affirmation of a national identity which has been obscured for years by the French colonization in both countries. Although the Arabization policy has succeeded in expanding the use of literary Arabic in Lebanese and Moroccan governments' bureaus and schools, it stimulates oppositional identities that rejected pan Arabism as a focal for national pride. The Arabization process in Morocco highlights a strong conflict between the values and belief of the traditionalists who are in favor of the Arabization policy and modernists who oppose it. It also highlights a tension between Arabs and Berbers who see Arabization as a threat to their identity. The tension that exists in Lebanon is remarkably different. We have seen that the conflict with regard to Arabization is between the traditionalists and the nationalists who see that the promotion of colloquial Lebanese Arabic as marker of nationalism is better than Standard Arabic and the process of Arabization as this latter is an instrument of pan-Arab cultural and political hegemony. The promotion of Standard Arabic in both countries as an official language and subsequently as a medium of instruction in the era of independence was dissociated from planning and as a result was inadequate. It is not an accident that the Arabization project has clearly failed and has now been taken by what come to be known as "Lebanonism" and "Darijation," which refer to the promotion of the Lebanese Arabic and Moroccan Arabic/Darija, respectively.

The tension between Standard Arabic and Lebanese Arabic or what is called "Arabism" and "Lebanonism" in Lebanon remains within the orbit of the old conflict between Arabic and French in spite of its different linguistic emphasis on "Lebanonism" (Suleiman 2006). The debate which reflected the dichotomy over language was the proposition advocated by the renowned poet Said 'Aql and other Lebanese nationalist ideologues that the Arabic to be used in literature and education should be the Lebanese Arabic and not Classical Arabic, which they considered as a dead language (Gordon 1985; Kaufman 2004). They believed that in today's national movements language is considered to be a prime component of the identity of any community. They, therefore, attempted to turn colloquial Lebanese into the national language of Lebanon. Parallel to this debate is the linguistic rivalry between Moroccan Arabic and Standard Arabic. Moroccan Arabic is slowly developing a more erudite form that is beginning to penetrate Moroccan academic and social life. Several

Moroccan organizations communicate to their members across different platforms using Moroccan Arabic. It is common to find Moroccan Arabic used in Moroccan newspapers and media. Also, some Mexican and Turkish TV shows on Moroccan public TV channels are dubbed into the Moroccan Arabic dialect. Those who are calling for Moroccan Arabic teaching are empowered by the francophone ideology. For instance, Noureddine Ayouch, the prominent francophone activist and founder of the Zakoura Education Foundation, called in various political and media meetings for Moroccan Arabic to be introduced early in public schools. The tension between Moroccan Arabic and Standard Arabic remains within the orbit of the old conflict between Standard Arabic and French in spite of its linguistic emphasis on Moroccan Arabic. Any kind of appeal of using Moroccan Arabic instead of Standard Arabic is nothing but strengthening the status of the French language in Morocco in spite of its different linguistic emphasis.

Although Standard Arabic has survived the linguistic rivalry and dominance of foreign languages in Morocco for several years, it is very hard to predict whether Moroccan Arabic will be viewed as a better alternative to Standard Arabic and whether the days of its last vestiges numbered. Since language is a crucial feature of national and personal identity, Moroccan Arabic will eventually do to Standard Arabic what French has failed to do to it.

Usually, in colonial schools, the French taught their history but not of the colonized. The French colonial schools in Morocco were a prime example of such a policy. The curricula imposed by the French considered only their civilization, history, and values. However, this was not the case in Lebanon, at least not for the Christian communities. The fact that France regarded Lebanon as part of its own heritage, combined with the Christian bonding with the Maronites, led Jesuits teachers to teach and conduct research into the history of the region (Kaufman 2004).

For the Maronite Christians, French is a tool or medium of cultural and spiritual expression and its presence in Lebanon is necessary, which contradicts the mission and the ideology behind Arabization. Père Sélim Abou, for example, maintains that French is as much a part of the Lebanese soul as is Arabic. He warns against adopting Arabic as Lebanon's exclusive language (Gordon 1985). Most Maronites and Catholic Lebanese communities today "still have strong affinities for France, a country that they think as their protector" (Suleiman 2003:204). The presence of French in Lebanon, therefore, is endowed with political, religious and cultural connotations (Zouhir 2008). French underpins a concept of Lebanese national identity (Diab 2000). This type of identity is separate from Arab nationalism. Religiously, French gives prominence to Maronite confessional identity within the Lebanese body of politics. Culturally, it signifies Lebanese linguistic hybridity as a way of supplanting any monolinguistic articulations of the national self (Suleiman 2003). In Morocco, however, French does not bear such religious and cultural connotations for the modernists and traditionalists. It is seen by the modernists as the language of technology and its presence is necessary for Moroccan socio-economic

development (Ennaji 2005). In traditionalist and Islamic circles, French is perceived as a legacy of colonization (Bokous 2008).

Unlike French, English is not promoted as a language of culture, but as a pragmatic option for use in the world of technology, science and business (Suleiman 2006). English is progressively gaining more ground in the language market in Lebanon and Morocco. Diab (2000) notices that English is gaining more ground in Lebanon due to political and practical considerations and start to become more influential than French (for trends and challenges in teaching English in Lebanon, see (Esseili 2014)). Sadiqi (1991) and Zouhir (2007; 2011) also point out that English is having considerable impact on Moroccan language situation and policy and creeping into Moroccan academic life. A fuller discussion of the place of English in Lebanon and Morocco would reveal a host of other debates which are beyond the scope of this paper. However, what is interesting is that Arabization enhanced the role of English in Morocco. Moreover, some ruling leaders of the Justice and Development Party, which advocates Islamism and Islamic democracy, calls for strengthening the presence of English and adopting it as a first foreign language in Morocco. Parallel to these claims, the Muslims tend to favor English as a foreign language in Lebanon too (Suleiman 2006). French is associated with the Christians, and English is associated with the Muslims.

## 5. Conclusion
This article engages the reader in a systematically structured panorama about the historical trajectories which shaped the sociolinguistic situations, politics of language, and identity in Lebanon and Morocco. It also shows that language, viewed in the broad cultural sense, in both countries is a site of power struggle and inequality between different political forces. Most importantly, it shows how the French colonial conditions of language use employed institutional mechanisms and resources such as state-policies and educational language policies to create artificial ethnic boundaries (indigenous Maronite/Berber vs. Arab). Postcolonial elites tried to fight this version of policy by implementing the Arabization policy. The view of Arabic as a unified and sacred language is itself a product of historical struggle. Although introduced to bring the French colonial cultural legacies to an end in Lebanon and Morocco, the Arabization policy led to the emergence of a new type of alienation, created another system of linguistic hierarchy, and created a deep crisis within the Lebanese and Moroccan societies. Arabization has failed as a process of national integration designed to reduce conflicts in Morocco and Lebanon because it was a "top-down" policy dictated by political and ideological factors. In both Lebanese and Moroccan situations, language is invested with connotations of authority (e.g., French with religion in Lebanon and French with modernity in the Morocco; Arabic with state power in both countries).

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