Moroccan Language Policy and Its Effect on Sociolinguistics: Attitudes of Students and Professors Toward Sociolinguistic Research

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Abstract

Given its location, Morocco is influenced by multiple linguistic factors. As a result, Sociolinguistics became a crucial linguistic field in the country. It witnessed significant development since the 1970s since a considerable amount of research was conducted to cope with the constant changes in language policy. While research grew in quantity, there were no significant attempts to closely analyze its contributions and determine its efficiency. To this end, the study at hand provided a general background of the status of sociolinguistic in Morocco. It also reflected on the attitudes of students and professors involved in the field on the status of the latter. Similarly, it investigated the extent to which the Moroccan language policy has impacted research produced in sociolinguistics. Therefore, the results presented the attitudes toward the development and the involvement of sociolinguistic research. It mainly reflected the region of Rabat-Sale and to a lesser extent Casablanca, Fes, and Marrakech. The study concluded that sociolinguistic research in Morocco focuses on some languages/varieties more than others. As a consequence, despite the immense growth of the field in recent years, it still does not meet the expectations of the population of the study.

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1 Introduction

Being a complex multilingual nation, Morocco pursued a simple language policy for years under the umbrella of ‘Arabization’. This was followed by the fundamental goal of creating a monolingual society. This adopted linguistic policy assured the restoration of the role and the status of Standard Arabic after the period of the French Protectorate. The purpose of the decision was to eliminate the dominance of French in official settings. However, while the presence of French was increasing, Moroccan Arabic and Amazigh (Berber), on the other hand, were dispossessed of their linguistic presence. Nonetheless, the 2000 Charter for Educational Reform identified the importance of other languages and varieties that preexist herein. In other words, Amazigh, and its varieties, received recognition and the importance of the latter was highlighted at last. Similarly, the charter presented regulations meant for the improvement of how these languages/varieties are taught and learned in schools. Additionally, 2011 was a changing point in language policy. This year witnessed the reformation of the constitution in addition to the emergence of equality between Amazigh and Arabic. Naturally, this constant change has had an impact on the produced research in sociolinguistics in Morocco. To this end, this article aims to examine the influence of these policy changes on the nature of the produced research in the field through the eyes of students and professors involved with sociolinguistics. The paper at hand trifurcates into three major parts: Part 1 provides a general description of the Moroccan sociolinguistic situation, part 2 sheds light on the language policy applied post-independence until today and reviews the previous literature on attitudes in Morocco, and lastly, section 3 presents and discusses the findings of the study.

Unfolding the Moroccan sociolinguistic landscape

With its strategic location at the crossroads of Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, Morocco became a multilingual nation and the norm became a situation of diglossia (c.f. Youssi, 1995). The influence of this location had its impact on the linguistic situation in the country, resulting in major linguistic changes. This developed a power dynamic among three crucial languages, namely, Amazigh, Arabic, and French (c.f. Shin, 2017). Similar to French, Spanish also played a strong role in this multilingual situation. This is due to the geographical proximity on one hand, and the Spanish occupation of Morocco on the other. It is worth mentioning that there remain two Spanish enclaves namely, Ceuta and Melilla on Moroccan soil, and the Spanish language is still the predominant language in the northern areas of Morocco. Nonetheless, the use of Spanish has been in continuous decrease since independence in 1956. This was predictable since Spanish is not represented in the educational system. Therefore, today, Spanish merely holds the status of a foreign language in Morocco (c.f. Benzakour et al., 2000). On the contrary, the case for French is quite the opposite. The popularity and the spread of the latter are growing until today. To this end, this study focuses on French and giving less focus on Spanish since it has a very limited presence. This is reflected in the regions targeted in the present study. The languages at play herein are described as follows:

a) Amazigh

Amazigh or ‘Berber’ is the term used by Europeans to refer to the indigenous languages of the Maghreb countries. The term covers the mother tongue of the indigenous people of Morocco, Algeria, and partly Tunisia, in addition to the adjoining sub-Saharan countries. This region is rich with some affiliated, but not entirely mutually intelligible, languages belonging to the Hamito-Semitic family. The speakers of Amazigh in Morocco trifurcate into three distinctive groups namely, Tashelhit, Tamazight, and Tarifit. Despite being present for approximately 5000 years, no attempt to codify these varieties and/or provide a proper script has ever taken place in the country until the recent years (Boukous, 1995b). In fact, for the last fourteen centuries, these varieties have always been identified as ‘Low varieties’ in a diglossia situation when compared to Arabic varieties. The reason why Arabic has been the ‘high’ language in Morocco resides in the fact that the latter was embraced by the Amazigh community as the language of religion and, therefore, comes above local varieties.

Despite the secondary status given to Amazigh, it is still the language that “shapes the mental world of Amazigh speakers and defines their collective cultural identity” (Boukous, 1995a). It is undeniable that the language has been marginalized for several years, to make space for the Arabization process followed post-independence from the French Protectorate (1912-1956). This was a measure taken to reunite Moroccans after the attempt by the French system to separate the ‘Berbers’ and the Arabs. Albeit, the Amazigh cultural movement received strong support in the Moroccan political pool in the last decades. Support from the “Congres Mondial Amazigh” (World Amazigh...
Congress) and several research centers in many universities, both in North America and Europe, raised the status of the language (c.f. Marley, 2004). Nowadays, the echo of this uprising made its way to several respected universities across the globe.

Despite the importance of Amazigh, being an indigenous language in Morocco, it is worth mentioning that it is still greatly confined. The language is merely present in a few parts of the country (i.e. The Rif, the Atlas, and the high parts of the Sahara south) and barely used in the major cities in official settings. Even though there are instances where the language is spoken or used in the major cities, the aforementioned areas remain dominant and presence in the urban setting is very low (Boukous, 1995a).

b) Arabic

The Arabic language is related to Hebrew, Aramaic, and several other Semitic languages. The widespread of the language over several countries gave birth to new varieties and Morocco was no exception. Similarly, the Islamic Conquest influenced the importance of Arabic in Morocco. For the present paper, two forms of Arabic are reviewed, namely, ‘MSA’ (Modern Standard Arabic), which refers to the standardized form used in official settings, and ‘Dialectal Arabic’, the verbal version and non-standardized variety. This entails the emergence of a diglossia situation where MSA is the high and Dialectal Arabic is the low variety (c.f. Al-Sobh et al., 2015). Therefore, MSA has always taken the role of the ‘High’ variety, serving as a means of communication informal settings such as religion, education, and politics on the one hand. On the other hand, Moroccan vernacular Arabic plays the role of the ‘Low’ variety, used in informal situations by the layman.

The dissimilarities that surface when comparing the two codes are highly noticeable lexically, prosodically, as well as structure and grammar wise. The melting pot of languages and varieties existing in the country function as a hurdle in front of young learners of MSA. The similarities between MSA and Dialectal Arabic create pedagogical problems and linguistic insecurity for the students (c.f. Maamouri, 1998). In their eyes, MSA is a ‘foreign’ language since it is not the language they acquire at home. This results in an increasing number of illiterates in Morocco, especially in the Amazigh speaking areas (Agnaoou, 2004). As a consequence, Darija was introduced as a potential language of instruction. This idea was supported by activists such as Noureddine Ayouch who used the UNESCO declaration (1996) on language rights to bolster his claim. Ayouch, a member of Morocco’s Supreme Council for Education, Training, and Scientific Research, strongly defended the use of Vernacular Arabic (i.e. Darija) in the Moroccan educational system (c.f. Caubet, 2003). Nonetheless, this caused a prolonged and controversial debate across the nation. As a result, Ayouch, and his supporters, suffered a backlash from officials, such as the former Head of Government Abdelilah Benkirane, who issued a statement firmly declining the idea of using Darija as a medium of instruction in Moroccan preschools in February 2015.

Even though MSA, being the written variety, remains intact by influence from Moroccan Arabic, a few linguists oppose such claim. Boukous (1995b), for instance, posits that there is a newborn in the Moroccan context. He refers to this form as ‘intermediary’ and claims it is used mainly by the educated elite merely informal settings as it is the case on national television and radio broadcasting. Ennaji (1995), also highlighted this phenomenon using the nomenclature ‘Educated Spoken Arabic’, a variety used by educated people working in media. Ennaji also argues that there is often code-mixing between Moroccan Arabic and MSA due to either lack of a full grasp of the formal language or to oversimplify for the layman.

c) French

While the two aforementioned languages and varieties made the sociolinguistic situation very complex, the presence of French-made the situation even more complicated. The multilingual situation became more delicate due to the influence of French during the French protectorate since 1912. France imposed French as the language of civilization in Morocco. As a consequence, it downgraded the importance of Arabic. To that end, most of the resistance attempts focused on restoring Arabic, being the sacred language of the Islamic population, not only in Morocco but also in the region of North Africa (c.f. Saib, 2001). Despite the heavy presence of French, the latter failed to compete with Arabic in religious contexts. Instead, it overtook the role of the language used in education and administrative settings. During the colonial period (1912–1956), knowledge of French was highly demanded in power positions and, henceforth, was learned by the elite. Accordingly, it’s widespread served against the Arabization policy. Since Independence, a great number of people learned French given its importance in the job market. Thus, despite the lack of any form of officialization of French, the latter remains of paramount importance in several crucial domains.
namely, economics, science, technology, and to a great extent media. Furthermore, it possesses an important position in education and a greater position in the private sector. Due to the long-standing existence of all the languages in Morocco, bilingualism expanded for centuries and had its impact on the population. In terms of linguistic choice, the language policy focus post to independence ignored the linguistic reality of the country and focused on unifying the country’s linguistic situation through Arabization but French was still widely used in several settings.

**Language policy changes in Morocco and attitudes towards the change**

Similar to the history of its neighboring countries, Morocco suffered from the French colonization for a lingering period. This had negative consequences, not only on the history of the country but also on the number of languages spoken herein. Following the end of the colonization period, the question of ‘a national language’ grew stronger than before. While the protectorate period made of French the prevailing language of decision making, the decision post-independence concluded to Arabization being the replacement. This raised the need for a new linguistic reform, different from that of the colonizer, which asserts independence. Consequently, the choice fell on Arabic, since it represents religion and legitimacy (c.f. Sadiqi, 2006).

While Arabic was widely used and taught in schools in Morocco, implementing the Arabization process was an easy task. This was possible since the norm was to assert an Islamic and independent Moroccan identity. The common belief was that adopting Arabic, rather than Amazigh or Moroccan Standard Arabic (MSA), is a step towards a symbolic linguistic change for equality (c.f. Ech-Charfi, 2004). However, it soon became a symbol of asserting and maintaining power for the elite. While Arabic was the symbol of solidarity on paper, the reality was that it was merely used as the power holder. On the other hand, maintaining the use of French was viewed as the key to modernity, economic and social development (c.f. El Kirat & Laaraj, 2016; Errihani, 2008). This became obvious from how the elite prepared their children before independence by sending them to French schools abroad (c.f. Boukous, 1999). This issue holds until today in the Moroccan community. Merely a few people define themselves as Muslims as a social identity rather than ethnically defining themselves as Arabs or Amazigh. Furthermore, Moroccans, regardless of their ethnicity, are required to learn Arabic in school, being the national language of the country. Nonetheless, the educational system still follows the French style of teaching. This also explains the reason most Arab countries see Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia as Muslims more than they are “Arabs”. This means that the Amazigh are viewed as inferior and in a lower status which Muslims as a social identity holds until today in the Moroccan community. Merely a few people define themselves as Muslims as a social identity rather than ethnically defining themselves as Arabs or Amazigh.

The initial goals set for Arabization were achieved by moving from the use of French and the French system to a unified national language and identity. Nonetheless, the local identity was not represented, and Arabization worked as a way to contain and retain power for the elite rather than a symbol of solidarity. This, however, started to change with the 2000 educational reform. This represented the turning point where Moroccan linguistic policy took a new stand. The recent language policy stands for the linguistic identity of the people (c.f. Ennaji 2005). In fact, in addition to reinforcing the role of Arabic as the language used in official settings, and French as the language of science, Amazigh was finally gaining ground. Consequently, this resulted in the creation of the “Royal Institute of Amazigh culture” (IRCAM) in 2001. Similarly, the creation of the “Tifinagh” script shortly followed based on the 2000 BC to the 3rd century AD version of the latter. Following several attempts to reinforce the presence of Amazigh in education and academia, the year 2011 witnessed the recognition of the language by the Moroccan Constitution as an official language of the country by Arabic. This gave a concrete presence and integration of Amazigh in real-life situations.

All of the linguistic reform and policy changes in the last decades did not go unnoticed by people and researchers alike. The latter group contributed greatly to this issue. This has been apparent from the booming growth in the field of sociolinguistics witnessed in Morocco since the 1970s. To this end, the next part of this paper sheds light on the attitudes of researchers towards the effect language policy have had on the field of sociolinguistics.

**Significance of the study**

The study at hand should be of interest to some students and researchers interested in the status of sociolinguistic research in Morocco. Also, this paper comes useful to those interested in Moroccan Language policy and the fast growth of sociolinguistics in Morocco. By providing insights into the attitudes of Moroccan students and professors toward the current status of sociolinguistics, this study contributes to the understanding of the viewpoints of those interested in the field. Similarly, since the paper focuses on the extent to which the field has developed since its
emergence in the 1970s, it provides a viewpoint on how languages/varieties spoken in Morocco are analyzed approached. Furthermore, this paper provides insights serving language attitude research as well as ethnological studies. This paper provides an opportunity to investigate how the field of sociolinguistics, is viewed through the eyes of those interested in the field. Furthermore, curriculum developers could make use of this study to reconsider the content and the design of the curriculums used in Morocco to better represent the local languages/varieties. The thing that will meet the interest of the students and, therefore, efficiently increase the pace of the learning process (Sibomana, 2018).

While several studies investigate the attitudes in sociolinguistics in a myriad of ways, the present study presents an original investigation intended towards the research itself. The paper at hand sheds light on the importance of the field and investigates its development from the perspective of those involved in it namely, professors and researchers. Therefore, the originality and novelty of the present article are in the fact that it reflects on the field as a whole and not only on the specific subtopics it encompasses, as it is usually the case in studies on attitudes in sociolinguistics in Morocco.

**Purpose of the study**

The present paper seeks to identify the viewpoints of students and professors toward the field of sociolinguistics in Morocco. Similarly, it provides concrete knowledge concerning the nature of sociolinguistic research concerned with three languages, namely, Arabic, Amazigh, and French. Moreover, this paper investigates the different attitudes of students and professors toward sociolinguistic research in Morocco. It should be noted that the term ‘linguist’ is used in the present paper as an umbrella term to represent both linguistics’ professors and students. The paper at hand also seeks to provide a leading analysis of the attitudes of ‘linguists’ on the field as a whole as opposed to the classical way of repeatedly investigating attitudes in sociolinguistics on the micro-level.

## 2 Materials and Methods

### Research Design

The study follows a mixed-method design. That is, both the quantitative and qualitative research approaches were put to use herein to elicit the data from the participants. Accordingly, this paper provides descriptive as well as inferential results. To this end, the instrument used herein was determined as a questionnaire. Following the personal information section, the questionnaire was designed to assess four main points namely, the development, the involvement, the importance, and the objectivity of sociolinguistics. The latter was addressed to professors and students working on sociolinguistics in several cities in Morocco namely, Rabat-Sale, and to a lesser extent Casablanca, Fes, and Marrakech. The participants were assured complete privacy and that the information they provide will be strictly used for this study only. The participants were requested to provide honest answers and provide their viewpoints concerning their attitudes toward the field of sociolinguistic research in Morocco.

### Participants

The participants in the present study were 33 (n=14 females and n=18 males) from a total of 42 approached participants. While this numerical number is somewhat small for quantitative analysis, the high diversity in the sample collected for this study makes this number very representative of the issue under question. Furthermore, as far as the present study is concerned, the qualitative findings are the most revealing in the case of attitudes. The age range of the participants ranged from 21 to 35 years old. They all have different backgrounds and they speak different mother tongues (Moroccan Arabic and Amazigh). Most of the participants were master’s students and professors, but there were also participants from the Ph.D. level. 14 of them had teaching experience in teaching English as a foreign language and worked closely within sociolinguistics on their dissertations. The population of the study was gathered from Mohammed V University in Rabat, both from the Faculty of Letters and Humanities (FLSHR) and Faculty of Human Science (FSE) and from several other universities, namely, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University in Fes, Kadi Ayyad in Marrakech, and Hassan II University in Casablanca.
3 Results and Discussions

Quantitative Results

The analysis of the study bifurcates into two main subsections. The first subsection reports the results of the current study as obtained by the implemented instruments. The second subsection, however, addresses the results of the study in light of the research question.

a) Descriptive Statistics

The table below provides the descriptive statistics of the study. The response rate of the questionnaire reaches approximately 78%. Of the (n=42) participants approached to participate in this study, (n=33) responses were valid and were used in the following analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heading</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of Sociolinguistics</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in Research</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Sociolinguistics</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivity to Languages/varieties</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The means summarized in the table above describe the variables used to measure the attitude among the population. The descriptive statistics above provide a side-by-side comparison of the four variables. The number of valid entries is N= 33.

A look at the table (1) above shows that there is a difference between the variables. It can be noticed that the mean representing the involvement of Sociolinguistics in current linguistic research in Morocco is the highest, reporting (μ = 3.27). This entails that most researchers see that Sociolinguistics is tackling very important issues in the current linguistic situation. As far as the mean of the variable on the development of the field, the latter reports (μ = 2.96). Concerning the objectivity variable, the mean shows a score of μ = 2.72 which is to some extent high. This shows that the confidence of the population in the quality of the research produced in the field is somewhat average. The mean decreases gradually, however, when the population is asked about the importance of research produced in Sociolinguistics, reporting (μ = 1.54).

The aforementioned results show a difference between the variables used to measure the attitudes towards sociolinguistics research. Despite the involvement of Sociolinguistics in research in Morocco, the participants see...
that it is still not developed. It can be concluded that the distribution of answers is not symmetrical, rather it’s positively skewed. This remains to be seen in the coming subsection in the t-test conducted herein.

b) Descriptive statistics

To assess the statistical significance level of the degree of difference between the variables representing the attitudes, this study conducts a one-sample t-test. The aforementioned instrument compares the mean score of distribution in contrast to a continuous variable. The scale ranged from 1 to 5 with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 5 meanings strongly agree.

Since the population is defined as one group representative of the attitude of students and professors on Sociolinguistic research in Morocco, the answers to the questions from the questionnaire were combined using ‘compute variable’ in SPSS. This resulted in the variable ‘mean Attitude’ which represents all the questions in the questionnaire. Table (2) below shows the results of the descriptive statistics performed for this purpose.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics for researchers’ attitudes score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean. Attitudes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The attitude means the score of the population exhibits $M= 2.77$, which is smaller than 3.00. This entails that the participants’ attitude towards Sociolinguistic research in Morocco is negative, which confirms the findings showed earlier by the descriptive statistics comparing the variables of the attitude. To find out whether this negative attitude is statistically significant or not, we ought to look into the results of the P-value of the one-sample t-test (Table 3):

Table 3
One-sample test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Value</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean. Attitudes</td>
<td>-3.55</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-.22078</td>
<td>-.3475 to -.0941</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is seen from table 3 above, there was a statistically significant difference between the researchers’ mean attitude score ($M= 2.77$) and the average test value of the Likert scale (3.00). This is explained by the fact that the p-value was smaller than the specified level of significance (i.e. .001 < .05). To this end, it could be concluded that the degree of the negative attitudes of researchers toward Sociolinguistic research in Morocco is statistically significant. In other words, despite the heavy presence of sociolinguistics in research in Morocco, it is still not sufficiently represented. This is due to questions on the degree of objectivity reached in certain studies produced in the field. To this end, the mean of the importance of the field decreases.

Qualitative Results

While the quantitative results showed a negative attitude towards the quality of sociolinguistic research in Morocco, the qualitative findings provide more discussion. The analysis herein provides a more in-depth view of what the participants think. The results herein are divided into 4 main themes.

Theme 1: The field of Sociolinguistics in Morocco is the most developed among all fields of linguistics?

An average of 59.19% said that they disagree or strongly disagree with this question while 19.60% were neutral and 21.21% agree or strongly agree with this question. This entails that a scanty number of respondents agree that sociolinguistics is the most developed field of linguistics in Morocco. On the other hand, almost 60% of the population were highly unsatisfied with sociolinguistics in comparison with the rest of the linguistic fields in Morocco.
Theme 2: compared to other fields of linguistics, how evolved is research in sociolinguistics in Morocco? Concerning the development of the field, 65.4% were for the evolvement of sociolinguistics in Morocco in general. Conversely, only 34.6% believed that sociolinguistics is not as evolved as the rest of the linguistic fields.

Theme 3: To what extent is research in Sociolinguistics important? An approximate of 79.2% of the respondents believed that sociolinguistics is extremely important while only 20.8% remained neutral or believed that sociolinguistics is not as important as other linguistic fields in Morocco.

Theme 4: How Objective is sociolinguistics to each language/variety used in Morocco? Concerning the objectivity of sociolinguistics, 54.4% agreed that the field faces challenges of subjectivity. A percentage of 46% believed that studies on French are very dominant, controlling sociolinguistic research. Conversely, only 27% believed that the amount of research conducted on Amazigh is sufficient, 15% believed that Standard Arabic was sufficiently studied, and only 12% believed that Moroccan Arabic is researched enough.

Discussion

The population of the present study tends to agree that sociolinguistic research in Morocco is not tackling all languages/varieties used in Morocco equally. They tend to believe that it focuses on certain languages and varieties at the expense of others. Despite the booming growth of sociolinguistics since the 1970s, research in the area, according to the population, it is still not the most developed field of linguistics. This entailed that the population believes that more work needs to be done to raise the value of research in the field.

As expected, French scored higher than most local languages with a percentage of 54.4% when the respondents were asked about the trends of research in sociolinguistics about the languages spoken in Morocco. Concerning which languages are most researched, the result was in favor of Amazigh since a myriad of participants chose the latter as the most researched with a percentage of 27% while Standard Arabic scored only 15% and Darija scored 12%. This is explained by the fact that interest in the Amazigh culture and language grew rapidly in recent years. Nonetheless, in daily life, this does not mean that Amazigh remains superior to Standard Arabic or Darija. The increase in research on Amazigh is merely recent. This is explained by the fact that the language received recognition as an official language only recently, in 2011.

Secondary to French, Darija and Standard Arabic still hold a higher frequency of occurrence in research in sociolinguistics in Morocco. Concerning the development of research in the field, the result exhibited that research in sociolinguistics is involved. Nevertheless, this only covers certain languages and not all languages/varieties equally. This is apparent from the results of the qualitative findings. Concerning the importance of Sociolinguistic research in Morocco in general, the results were very significant as 79.2% of the respondents agreed that sociolinguistics is crucial. This entails that the population believes that despite the growth of sociolinguistics, French is still dominant. For the local languages, this meant that they did not benefit as much from the booming growth of the field.

While Amazigh flourished, to some extent, in recent years in sociolinguistic research, standard Arabic and Darija recorded a smaller frequency. This means that professors and students alike are still not satisfied with the work done so far in the field. This is reasonable since sociolinguistics is relatively a new field in Morocco, compared to other fields like morphology, phonology, and syntax. The population also believes that the French colonization and the preservation of French post-independence have influenced Moroccan research. The majority agrees that it remains the most dominant language researched even though it is neither an indigenous language nor an official one in the country.

4 Conclusion

The study at hand shows that sociolinguistic research in Morocco deals with several languages and varieties and how language policy shapes sociolinguistics. Most participants’ responses were different from one language/variety to another. This shows that despite the fast growth of sociolinguistic research in Morocco, it is still not as elaborated as expected since those interested in the field believe that there is a wide range of unresearched aspects of different languages and varieties. This high number of issues waiting to be investigated, however, could allow sociolinguistics to grow bigger than the other fields of linguistics in Morocco. The language policy adopted is in constant change.
Nonetheless, the presence of French and its dominance is still the norm. This has a negative impact on the linguistic situation in Morocco and the status of the local language/ varieties. Since the recognition of Amazigh as an official language did not happen until recently, researchers are not certain about how equal research on both Arabic and Amazigh would be, especially in comparison to French. The results found herein are of paramount importance for further research and future researchers. It also provides a pathway for those interested in Sociolinguistics in Morocco. It should be noted, however, that data collection was challenging given the nature of the addressed population and the time constraints.

Conflict of interest statement
The authors declared that they have no competing interests.

Statement of authorship
The authors have a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The authors have approved the final article.

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References


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