

Spring 2018

# Binding Ideologies: An Investigation of Language Attitudes and Ideologies in the Moroccan Publishing and Book Sector

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## Recommended Citation

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Binding Ideologies:  
An Investigation of Language Attitudes and Ideologies in the  
Moroccan Publishing and Book Sector

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
MOR: Multiculturalism and Human Rights, SIT Study Abroad, Spring 2018

**Abstract**

The interaction between author and reader is not as simple nor as direct as may at times be assumed. There are “gatekeepers” and middle men who mediate the transmission of ideas from writer to reader; these institutions and their ideologies determine the final product that will (or will not) be presented to readers. In Morocco, this author-reader interaction is further complicated by the language ideologies which pervade the realm of Moroccan literature. As Moroccan publishers and booksellers are the “gatekeepers” who arguably engage the most in language politics, this study examines their role in facilitating or inhibiting the Moroccan author-reader interaction. Also explored is how Moroccan authors’ language(s) of writing impact their experiences in the publishing industry. This research thus constitutes an exploratory study aimed at mapping the dynamics of language ideologies in Morocco’s publishing and book industry.

**Keywords:** Anthropology (other), Modern Linguistics, African Literature

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the many individuals who have guided me and supported me throughout this study. Professor Belghazi, Professor Elalamy, and Wafae Drissi, thank you for the advice and support you have provided throughout the research process. The insights you shared on my topic and on conducting research more generally have been key to completing this study. Additionally, I would like to thank the individuals who contributed their time to participating in my research. I would also like to acknowledge the incredible support system I had throughout my research. To my SIT friends, the ISP has been a challenging and rewarding project, and I am so thankful that we could all support each other throughout or research. I am also grateful for my Moroccan family whose kindness I will not forget, as well as my friends and family back in the States for their support even when we are thousands of miles apart.

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## Introduction

The author-reader interaction may at first glance appear straight forward, with one actor transmitting his or her ideas to the other through writing. However, this phenomenon is neither as simple nor as direct as it may seem. There exist other actors who serve as “gatekeepers” and middle men to the author-reader interaction whose actions may facilitate, inhibit, ameliorate, or distort the reader’s encounter with the author’s text; they determine the final product that will (or will not) be presented to readers. Although there are a number of institutions which may interfere with the author-reader interaction (e.g. governments through censorship, etc.), this study will focus on two actors involved in the standard author-reader interaction: publishers and booksellers. The ideologies of these actors and their views of the texts which they encounter strongly influence the reader’s encounter with these texts in their final forms.

In Morocco, the language ideologies and attitudes which pervade the realm of contemporary Moroccan literature further complicate the transmission of authors’ ideas to readers. Key to the debate of languages in Moroccan literature are social and historical considerations as well as questions of practicality and marketability. The language(s) in which a Moroccan author writes affects how they and their works are received within the Moroccan publishing and book industry. This study thus constitutes an exploratory investigation of language ideology surrounding creative literary production in the private publishing and book sector in the Moroccan context. One goal of this study is to further investigate the findings of a series of reports produced on the state of Moroccan publishing in recent years. As these reports have presented much quantitative data on the sector, this study will endeavor to put this quantitative data into a direct dialogue with qualitative data gathered in interviews. The primary objective of this research, however, will be to document the experiences of contemporary

Moroccan authors and the factors influencing the Moroccan author-reader interaction by asking the following questions: How do(es) the language(s) in which Moroccan authors write affect their experiences in the private publishing industry in Morocco? How do Moroccan publishers and booksellers act as gatekeepers to the author-reader interaction, and how do their language ideologies factor into this phenomenon?

## **Literature Review**

### *Publishing Theory*

Book publishing constitutes a productive industry to examine in social research as its products are heavily dependent upon the social and ideological attributes of its participants. In his study of transnational publishing in low-income nations, Keith Smith (1977) highlights that despite the fact that “books are one of the oldest media-products, book publishing is the least researched media production industry” (Smith 1977, 169). This lack of research has thus created a veritable gap in the knowledge produced through social scientific study on media and our understanding of how ideas are presented (or not presented) to the public. Lewis Coser (1975) claims that publishers act as “gatekeepers of ideas,” arguing that they constitute the “social mechanisms that provide institutional channels for the flow of ideas” (Coser 1975, 15). Publishers thus determine the ideas and messages which are communicated from authors to readers via the printed page. Additionally, although very little research has been undertaken on the effects of booksellers’ ideologies in the transmission of ideas from author to reader, their role will also be addressed in this research. While the internet and other technologies now allow for greater mobility of ideas across time and space, publishing houses and booksellers remain institutions which validate and grant prestige to the content of the manuscripts they present (and the language(s) in which they present these works) to readers (Coser 1975).

### Language Ideology

Key to understanding the publishing industry in Morocco is to gain insight into the ideals and views which drive actors in this sector. One set of ideals which is highly influential and oftentimes polarizing in Moroccan society is language ideology. The definition put forth by Errington (1999) of language ideology as “the situated, partial, and interested character of conceptions and uses of language” constitutes a widely-accepted and -operationalized understanding of these ideals (Errington 1999, 115; Hoigilt & Mejdell 2017, 10). Hoigilt and Mejdell (2017) further elaborate upon the dimensions of language ideologies by examining how they vary across groups and individuals. They argue that “language ideologies may not only be approached as structured, cultural systems; they may also be seen in terms of speakers’ awareness and their agency” (Hoigilt and Mejdell 2017, 10). This conception of language ideologies allows one to situate those expressed by individuals within broader ideologies expressed throughout society. Additionally, Hoigilt and Mejdell highlight the importance of identifying differing language ideologies between social groups, particularly those of marginalized groups. They argue that it is necessary to consider “other ideologies corresponding to various social divisions (along class, ethnic, generational, etc. lines) that are not dominant but contribute to shaping the linguistic landscape” (Hoigilt and Mejdell 2017, 11). This consideration is particularly applicable to Morocco’s linguistic situation in relation to the language ideologies surrounding the usage of Amazigh language and *darija* in speech and writing which will be discussed in greater detail later.

### A Brief History of Morocco’s Linguistic Terrain

In order to understand the current language ideologies which are present in Moroccan society, one must first understand the interactions between languages which have taken place

throughout the nation's history. *Tamazight*, *tashelit*, and *rif* constitute the original Amazigh dialects of much of the Maghreb region (Wagner 1998, 172). As Arabic influence grew throughout the Maghreb region, the Arabic language began to displace Amazigh language primarily due to reasons of practicality in the political economy, with the three Amazigh dialects posing a hindrance to the standardization of a single Amazigh language (Zouhir 2014, 41-42; Wagner 1998, 172). (It is important to note that Arabic language in the Moroccan context may refer to both Classical Arabic and Moroccan Arabic (*darija*) whose relationship will be addressed in subsequent sections.) The use of both Arabic and Amazigh language in Morocco, however, was repressed upon the arrival of French and Spanish colonial powers to the region. Although both French and Spanish are still spoken in Morocco today, the effects of the French Protectorate in Morocco have shaped the nation's linguistic terrain much more significantly over time (Zouhir 2014, 43). A period of Arabization swept Morocco following its independence which lessened the pervasiveness of French throughout the nation (though not to the extent that was intended) yet also further subjugated Amazigh language (Luke 2003, 136). Despite these policies of Arabization, competition between French and Arabic has continued in many sectors of Moroccan society, notably in education and administration (Laachir 2018, 25-26). Although this overview presents an oversimplified representation of the evolution of Morocco's complex linguistic landscape, this information will provide the historical context necessary to develop an understanding of the current linguistic dynamics and language ideologies which pervade the Moroccan publishing sector.

#### *The Arabic/French Dichotomy in Moroccan Literature*

Perhaps one of the most polarizing debates in contemporary Moroccan literature is the question of Moroccan authors' language(s) of writing, specifically their so-called "choice" to

write in Arabic or French (Laachir 2016, 26). Although a recent report on the state of Moroccan publishing indicates the dominance of Arabic-language publishing in Morocco, it does not address the ideological hierarchies surrounding French and Arabic in the contemporary Moroccan literary sphere (Janjar 2018). The renowned Moroccan writer and co-founder of the bi-lingual Arabic/French literature review *Souffles/Anfas* Abdellatif Laabi has lamented the lack of serious research on the politics of language in Morocco due to the overzealous language ideologies which often prevent productive debate; however, Karima Laachir (2016) bridges the gap between the worlds of Moroccan arabophone and Moroccan francophone literature by developing a balanced analysis of their relationship (Laabi 2018, 156). Laachir examines and addresses the separate study of literary works by Moroccan authors dependent upon whether they are written in Arabic or French as well as the ideologies and stereotypes which have led to this practice (Laachir 2016, 24).

One stereotype which has led to a divide between arabophone and francophone literary works in Morocco has been the conceptualization of French language as modern and “cosmopolitan” and the framing of the Arabic language as “archaic” (Laachir 2016, 23; Laabi 2018, 157). Laabi easily debunks this stereotype simply by citing the many works of modern literature which have been produced in Arabic, arguing that this belief has been built upon unfounded claims (Laabi 2018, 157). Conversely, others have debated whether Moroccan francophone literature may be considered truly “authentic,” claiming that works in French are not capable of expressing the Moroccan experience to the extent that the Arabic language is able (Laachir 2016, 30). In response to this debate, Laachir references the insights of Moroccan author Abdelfattah Kilito who claims that both French and Arabic are present in Moroccan literary works in some capacity or another (Laachir 2016, 27). He states that just as French style

and genres may influence works in Arabic, many Moroccan authors who write in French “have always maintained that Arabic language is strongly present in their writing and that ‘behind French letters, there are Arabic ones’” (Laachir 2018, 27). Thus, since both Moroccan arabophone and francophone writers draw from the similar Moroccan social, historical, and cultural context, all of their texts should be accorded the same level of “authenticity” (Laachir 2016, 22).

Another language ideology which has entered the realm of Moroccan literature claims that some languages are more apt in facilitating literary and emotional expression than others. Laachir highlights claims posited by the postcolonial critic Robert Young (2013) who has argued that authors may choose to write in French because Arabic is “distant ‘from certain areas of human experience, such as intimacy, which, writers argue, it finds impossible to express’” (Laachir 2016, 28). Laachir rebuts this statement by citing contemporary Arabic literature which has “engaged with various social and political issues, particularly women’s rights” (Laachir 2016, 28). As a Moroccan author who writes in multiple languages including Arabic and French, Laabi also rejects this claim, stating that it is not the aptness of a language in expressing “human emotion,” but rather the writer’s mastery of the language which will determine the level of emotional expression in a text (Laabi 2018, 157). Laabi further emphasizes the importance of moving past the focus on an author’s “choice” of language to investigate the thematic, technical, and aesthetic quality of a text (Laabi 2018, 155).

Driss Ksikes (2018), another Moroccan author who writes in French, Arabic, and English, seems to echo Laabi’s emphasis on the control and mastery of language to achieve literary expression (Ksikes 2018, 150). He states that the first step to obtaining “possession of a language is having the power to make it your own...by the creative act” of writing (translated

from French; Ksikes 2018, 150). The quality of self-expression demonstrated in a literary text is thus not dependent on the language in which it is expressed but rather on the author's skills and "possession" of the language. Ksikes, therefore, concludes, "my language is literature" (Ksikes 2018, 153). The writer's mastery of a language is that which renders the author capable of participating in literary production.

### *Diglossia in Morocco and Darija as a Written (Literary) Language*

As has been noted in preceding sections, discussion of Arabic language in the Moroccan context may refer to either Classical Arabic or Moroccan Arabic (*darija*). While Classical Arabic (also known as Modern Standard Arabic or *fusha*) constitutes the standardized form used across the Arab world, *darija* is an Arabic dialect which is highly specific and unique to Morocco (Hoigilt and Mejdell 2017). The functions of Classical Arabic and *darija* differ significantly in Moroccan society, and their relationship is a paramount example of the linguistic phenomenon of "diglossia" (Hoigilt and Mejdell 2017, 3). The most popular definition of diglossia was developed by Charles Ferguson (1959) who characterized this linguistic situation by identifying, outside the regional dialects of a language, the "very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety...which is...used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation" (Ferguson 1959, 336). The consequences of diglossia within the Moroccan context lead to the consideration of Classical Arabic as the language of literature while *darija* is frequently considered to be a solely oral language (Miller 2017, 90).

Classical Arabic is thus referred to as the (H)igh variety of Arabic, the one which is highly respected not only due to the legacy of its literary production, but also as a result of its

status as the holy language of the Qu'ran (Hoigilt and Mejdell 2017, 4). *Darija* and other regional dialects such as the Egyptian *ammiyya* are considered the (L)ow varieties of Arabic reserved for everyday interactions and conversations (Hoigilt and Mejdell 2017, 4). Despite Ferguson's claim that diglossia is a "relatively stable language situation," Hoigilt and Mejdell highlight the utility of regarding diglossia as "a construction of language ideology, rather than as a description of an actual language situation" (Ferguson 1959, 336; Hoigilt and Mejdell 2017, 6). While some view Arabic dialects such as *darija* as "vehicle[s] of linguistic and social fragmentation" and a "corruption of literary" of Classical Arabic, recent trends reveal that both the usage and status of *darija* in Morocco have been undergoing significant changes (Hoigilt and Mejdell 2017, 2; Elinson 2013, 715). These changes suggest the evolution of *darija* from an exclusively spoken language to its acceptance as a written language and even its emergence as a literary language (Elinson 2013, 717).

This shift of *darija* from the spoken to written sphere, however, has taken time. Although other Arabic dialects such as *ammiyya* have gained significant "cultural prestige" within their national contexts, *darija* has not reached this level of recognition in Moroccan society (Miller 2017, 92). The neglect of *darija*'s place particularly in Moroccan literature has been attributed to the domination of the French language in Moroccan literary production throughout the late 19th to late 20th centuries (Miller 2017, 92). As there were very few novels published in Morocco in Classical Arabic, let alone in *darija*, until the 1980s, "for most Moroccan intellectuals of the 1960–1970s, the issue of the literary national language was between Arabic (standard Arabic) and French" (Miller 2017, 93). The debate surrounding the use of French and Classical Arabic in Moroccan literature has thus overshadowed what may have been another productive debate between the use of Classical Arabic and *darija* in Moroccan literature.

Catherine Miller (2017) observes that it was not until the “late 1980s, early 1990s that the first public stands toward the valorization of *dārija* started to emerge” (Miller 2017, 93). Proponents of further national recognition of *darija* and its importance to Morocco’s national identity have highlighted its ability to express the many facets of Moroccan identity and “integrate” the various influences Morocco has encountered over time (Miller 2017, 105). This call for the increased recognition of *darija* has also been accompanied by an increase in the practice of writing in *darija* and greater acceptance of this practice (Caubet 2017, 121, 137).

Miller calls attention to the evolution of written *darija* since the 2000s as the language began to break out of the realm of traditional poetry (such as *zajal* and *mulhun*) to become more present in the media, novels, formal writings, and social networking platforms (Miller 2017, 91-95). The popularization of written *darija* has also been due to the shifting perception of *darija* not only as a “heritage” language but also as one of modernity (Miller 2017, 96-97; Caubet 2017, 118). *Darija*’s association with modernity has emerged alongside its revolutionary use on social networking platforms and the internet as “lay people, particularly the youth, [began] massively adopt[ing] *dārija* writings (both in Roman or Arabic scripts) in sms and social networks” (Miller 2017, 98). The process by which Moroccans have translated this previously spoken dialect into written form has been carried out in a truly “D.I.Y. (Do It Yourself)” spirit (Caubet 2017, 116). Moroccans who used chatting systems in the late 1990s and later SMS in the early 2000s pioneered written *darija* in Latin script as this was the only alphabet available on these platforms (Caubet 2017, 116). Dominique Caubet (2017) thus argues that over time, Moroccans have “taught themselves to write and to read (in that order),” achieving proficiency in *darija* in what she calls “a passage to writing” (Caubet 2017, 118). This process has mediated Moroccans’ “passage to literacy” as individuals have switched to writing *darija* in Arabic script allowing

them “to comprehend and express longer, elaborate, and even literary, texts” (Caubet 2017, 119). This process has allowed Moroccan writers to produce more complex texts written in *darja* and thus the opportunity to create literary texts in *darja*.

Caubet highlights that Moroccan writers who produce work in *darja* find it important to write in Arabic script, reasoning that it ensures they will be understood by a wider readership and constitutes an “authentic” and “powerful” medium which does not allow the writer to lead readers astray with complex “political” speak (Caubet 2017, 120). Along with these writers’ ideologies surrounding written *darja*, in recent years, there has been a “qualitative change” in works in *darja* (Caubet 2017, 122). Caubet states that between the years of 2014-2016, she has observed an increase in the “writing of long elaborate prose texts in *darja*, passing from basic communication to literacy proper,” citing works produced by a Moroccan rapper, blogger, and slam poet in her research (Caubet 2017, 122). In addition, there have been a number of novelists and journalists who have produced highly diversified works in *darja*, writing from a variety of perspectives (Elinson 2013). Producing written works in *darja* has thus become much more widely accepted in Moroccan society with one author even noting the exceptional popularity of his book in *darja* particularly among younger Moroccans, citing the relatability of the text as the reason for its success (Caubet 2017, 121; Elison 2013, 720). Although these individuals have all chosen to begin writing in *darja*, their activities do not constitute a unified movement to promote *darja* writing or mean that they necessarily support its institutionalization (Miller 2017, 102; Elison 2017, 720). The “disconnectedness” of these texts produced by these individuals, however, is exactly what seems to “reinforce [*darja*’s] association with Moroccanness, from the expressive individuality to the collective construct” (Elison 2013, 720; Miller 2017, 98). The

many different styles and context in which written *darija* is being employed thus reveal the spread of this practice throughout many domains in Morocco.

Although these individuals have revolutionized written *darija*, their activities have been largely “informal” in that they have not been producing writing in an officially codified language (Caubert 2017, 117). Despite the fact that the practices and perceptions surrounding *darija* in Moroccan society have shifted significantly, Caubert (2017) highlights that Moroccan “institutions [have] completely failed to follow suit” (Caubert 2017, 117). Although *darija* writing proliferates in Moroccan advertising as a “symbol of urban consumerism and youth culture,” there has been resistance in other domains to acknowledge the changing practices of *darija*’s usage primarily due to language ideologies (Miller 2017, 98). There has been particular resistance in official domains, perhaps most notably to its use in education which has been the topic of much debate in recent years (Caubert 2017, 118). Caubert argues, however, that even “the fact that the question [of *darija* in education] has been raised and discussed at length is a sign of change” (Caubert 2017, 118). Thus the changes which *darija* practices have undergone in recent years has led to its increased acknowledgement.

Despite *darija*’s growing recognition, “many people still doubt its value as a ‘true literary language’ which could become a formal institutional language” (Miller 2017, 102). The barrier to enter into the realm of Moroccan publishing with a work written in *darija* is particularly difficult to bypass as many publishers do not view it as a legitimate language of literary production (Caubert 2017, 138). Caubert poignantly states that “[s]ome authors dream of a printed version, a book, which would give a different social status to their [*darija*] writings; but is the world of publishing ready to cross the (language) barrier?” (Caubert 2017, 138). Although more publications in *darija* would certainly validate the language’s status in the literary sphere, Caubert

also points out that for those *darija* writers who publish online, the “Internet offers a much wider audience than could ever be given to a book in Morocco” (Caubet 2017, 138). Caubet here seems to reference the study conducted in 2016 which found that Moroccans on average read 10 minutes per day which is often compared to the French average of 48 minutes; however, it is also worth noting that the American average is only 21 minutes per day (Boushaba 2017; Humanities Indicators 2016). Caubet, therefore, asks “can [*darija*] literacy on keyboards and screens be exported to printed paper and books?” (Caubet 2017, 138). The answers to these questions remain unclear, yet it is evident that the status and perceptions of written *darija* in Moroccan society continue to evolve and transform.

#### *Amazigh Language and Other Linguistic Expression in Moroccan Literature*

Since the movement for the recognition of Amazigh language and culture which emerged in the 1960s and grew throughout Morocco during the 1980s, Amazigh has become the second official language of the nation (Pouessel 2012, 380). With this institutional recognition of Amazigh language have developed efforts to standardize a distinct script, grammar, and vocabulary for the language (Pouessel 2012, 377). The establishment of IRCAM (The Royal Institute for Amazigh Culture) in 2001 has been at the forefront of this endeavor seeking to standardize the Amazigh dialects and to stimulate cultural and literary production (Pouessel 2012, 377-378). These efforts have largely been centered around IRCAM’s promotion of the Tifinagh script as an alphabet which is distinct from Arabic and Latin script and unique to Amazigh identity (Pouessel 2012, 378). Opponents of IRCAM, which include a large number of Amazigh activists, however, argue that IRCAM represents an effort by the State to co-opt the Amazigh movement (Pouessel 2012, 378). They argue that the creation of a so-called standard Amazigh language may result in a similar diglossic relationship which exists between Classical

Arabic and *darija* in Morocco with the (H)igh or standard variety reserved for an “intellectual elite” marginalizing the regional dialects (Pouessel 2012, 388-389). Additionally, they highlight the obstacles posed by “the dispersal of energy involved in learning a ‘new’ alphabet and the way it is written when there is already a large corpus of Berber literary texts written in the Latin alphabet” (Pouessel 2012, 380). These considerations are thus key to operationalizing the language to allow for literary production in Amazigh.

One Moroccan writer Akunad laments the situation of Amazigh in the literary world, highlighting that “Amazigh literature is dependent upon the situation of the Amazigh language. The two are bound together...and unfortunately we don’t have a strategy here” (Pouessel 2012, 383). Most Amazigh literary works are published by IRCAM as Pouessel (2012) states that the Institute as has a notable “publishing arm” (Pouessel 2012, 378). These publications allow for greater access and availability of Amazigh texts published in both Tifinagh and Latin script; however, very few of these works are modern literary texts (Pouessel 2012, 379). Pouessel thus argues that “IRCAM’s publications stand more as a display of an alleged Berber publishing activity than a genuine operation of publication that would meet the ever-growing demand from authors” (Pouessel 2012, 379). Therefore, aside from IRCAM publications, Moroccans who produce literary texts in Amazigh often publish works at their own cost and very few publish with Moroccan publishing houses such as those which are the focus of this study (Pouessel 2012, 384-385).

Although other languages are represented in Moroccan literary production, texts written in these languages constitute a very small percentage of the publications produced by Moroccan publishing houses (Janajar 2018). Although Spanish, like French, constitutes one of the historically colonial languages of Morocco, its legacy in Moroccan literary production and

publishing is much less prevalent than that of French as is evident from the data presented in the following section (Janjar 2018, 13). It is also worth noting the increasing presence of English throughout Morocco which has emerged in recent years, with Elinson noting that in Moroccan society “increasingly, English is viewed as necessary for success in a wide range of fields including science, technology, and business” (Elinson 2013, 716). The increasing popularity of English is also reflected in the growing number of works produced by Moroccan publishing houses, which, while still very small, surpassed publications in Spanish last year (Janjar 2018, 9).

### *Morocco's Publishing and Book Sector*

In Morocco's publishing and book industry, the language ideologies which are discussed above dominate the Moroccan literary world. Language ideologies and sociolinguistics are widely researched in the Moroccan context; however, sociolinguistic research often focuses largely on spoken language (Hoigilt & Mejdell 2017, 2). The sociolinguistics of the written word, like the subject of book publishing, constitutes an under-researched subfield (Hoigilt & Mejdell 2017, 2). Despite this general lack of research, a series of reports has been undertaken over the past three years by the King Abdul-Aziz Al Saoud Foundation (La Fondation du Roi Abdul-Aziz Al Saoud) on the state of Moroccan publishing in literature and the social sciences which has provided valuable insights into the trends of this often-neglected sector. The goal of the Foundation's studies as expressed in the most recent 2016/2017 report is to begin producing more bibliometric data on Moroccan publishing so as to create a repository of information on which to build in future years (Janjar 2018, 5). The researchers further explain that their goal has been to produce more quantitative data in order to paint a more accurate picture of Moroccan publishing instead of relying on the mere estimations provided by those in the industry.

One of the primary findings of the report is the continuing increase in Moroccan editorial activity over the past three years. It found that there has been a 16% increase since last year's report and a 57% increase compared to the 2014/2015 report (Janjar 2018, 7). The report cited arabophone publications (including both print and electronic texts) as contributing most to this growth (Janjar 2018, 7). In line with this finding, these reports have found that Moroccan publishing continues to undergo a process of Arabization which began in the mid-1980s with the implementation of the nation's post-independence Arabization policies (Janjar 2018, 9). Whereas publications in Arabic and French were closer in number in 1960 with Arabic publications at 58.08% and French publications at 41.92%, the Foundation found that for the 2016/2017 year 81.88% of Moroccan publications were in Arabic, 14.54% in French, 2.25% in Amazigh, 0.75% in English, and 0.58% in Spanish (Janjar 2016, 6; Janjar 2018, 8).

As the Foundation's report provides data on both literary and social science publications, it is worth noting that literary texts constitute 24.17% of the printed works accounted for by the 2016/2017 report (Janjar 2018, 13). In reference to these literary texts, the report notes that "the diverse linguistic expressions of the works seem to reflect the profound cultural evolutions which Moroccan society has experienced since the 1980s" (Janjar 2018, 13). The linguistic demographics of these literary works do indeed reflect such trends with 80% written in Arabic, 13% in French, 8.56% in Amazigh, and 1.14% in other languages (Janjar 2018, 13). Particularly worth noting is the increase in literary production in Amazigh which has nearly doubled from 4.5% in the 2014/2015 report to 8.56% in the 2016/2017 report (Janjar 2016, 14; Janjar 2018, 13). Publications in Amazigh are almost entirely literary texts with 95.5% falling into the literature category (Janjar 2018, 10). It is important to note, however, that the large majority of these works in Amazigh were published by national institutions and associations rather than by

private professional publishers (Janjar 2018, 22-23). The language of literary texts also varies significantly depending upon the genre of each work. For example, of those novels published in Morocco, 69.2% were in Arabic, 28.3% in French, and 2.4% in Amazigh (Janjar 2018, 13-14). For works of poetry, 82.1% were in Arabic, 9.8% in Amazigh, and 6.3% in French (Janjar 2018, 13-14). Furthermore, novels and novellas have risen to become the most common form of Moroccan literary expression constituting 50.3% of the literary texts catalogued by the report; however, poetry closely follows, accounting for 40% of Moroccan literary production (Janjar 2018, 13).

The report also provides an overview of the evolution of Moroccan publishing throughout the nation's history. It found, in particular, that the number of private publishers has increased significantly from approximately 10 during the 1980s to 178 active private publishers for the 2016/2017 year (Janjar 2018, 21). The analysis of the report again referencing the effects of Arabization in Morocco, the report cited only that only three of these 178 publishers specialized in French-language publishing (Janjar 2018, 21). Private professional publishers edited 43% of the works accounted for by the 2016/2017 report, while 33% were edited by national institutions and nearly 25% were published at the cost of the author (Janjar 2018, 21-23). The report attributes this high number of works published by authors independently to infrastructural insufficiencies in the sector of Moroccan publishing, also noting that the works of authors who publish at their own cost often receive much less exposure than those produced with a private or institutional publisher (Janjar 2018, 21).

## **Methodology**

Throughout my collection of primary data, I employed two ethnographic research methods: the semi-structured interview and participant observation (Bernard 2011). In utilizing

qualitative methods, I assume the value and validity of knowledge production in the quotidian experiences of individuals and their role in constructing social reality through cultural participation (Hathaway 1995, 544-545). I conducted a total of 10 interviews with a subject population consisting of two Moroccan authors, an editor at a Moroccan publishing house, a sociolinguist at a Moroccan university, two employees at bookstores in Rabat, and four university-age readers of Moroccan literature. Six of these interviews were recorded electronically and transcribed to collect verbatim quotes, while I simply took notes throughout the other four interviews. The four interviews which I chose not to record were shorter in length, and the questions I asked solicited more concise responses which were easily documented. Verbal informed consent was obtained from the participants before each interview to communicate the topic of my research as well as its anonymous and confidential nature. The participants will thus be referred to by titles (e.g. professor, etc.) or by pseudonyms.

My positionality as an American undergraduate student did not seem to provide any clear incentive for the publisher, authors, and students I interviewed as I was either a student gleaning information from an experienced professional or a peer of the university students. There may have been some incentive for booksellers to answer my questions if they considered me a potential customer. I, however, worked to diminish the possibility of this perception by communicating that I was a student conducting research without expressing interest in particular products. It is also important to acknowledge my position as a student of French which allowed me to communicate with French-speaking participants and read articles in French on my topic. Conversely, it is equally, if not more, important to acknowledge my inability to communicate complex ideas in Arabic or read academic articles in Arabic. This barrier to accessing work

produced in Arabic and Arabic-speakers who do not speak French or English presents the possibility of bias and gaps in the knowledge presented and produced by this study.

Four of my interviews were conducted in English and another four were conducted in French, while one primarily utilized English but employed French to clarify complex questions and responses. It is important to note the potential for miscommunication when employing a language which is not the first language of the interviewer or the participant, or, as it was in some cases, neither the first language of the interviewer *nor* the participant. My participants and I worked to mitigate the possibility for misunderstanding by repeating questions and asking for clarification and further explanation of ideas. Additionally, I listened back to the recordings of my interviews in French multiple times to ensure I gained as clear and complete a comprehension of our conversations as possible. I also noticed, however, that the number and quality of my follow-up questions did not match those of the English interviews I conducted as I was not as at ease formulating impromptu questions in French. Although conducting interviews in French complicated the process of interviewing at times, the opportunity it provided me to speak with these individuals far outweighed the drawbacks of these complications. As one of my participants noted, even though French was not his first language nor my own, it acted as a vehicle through which we were able to exchange ideas, an activity which otherwise would not have been possible.

Other limitations to the data I collected pertain to sampling biases related to snowball and convenience sampling, gender bias, and sample size (Mack and Woodsong 2005; Dörnyei 2007). Due to the time constraints which characterized this research, I was often limited to interviewing individuals within my existing social circle and acquaintances of these individuals. Although employing snowball and convenience sampling decreases the representativeness of my results, I

believe that analyzing the positionality of each participant will allow me to minimize bias. The process of mapping each individual's positionality will help me situate their personal language ideologies within larger trends and/or how they diverge from these trends.

Furthermore, only three out of my ten participants were female, while the remaining seven were male. Although I would have liked to interview more female participants, the dominance of male presence in my sample is reflective of a larger trend in the domain of Moroccan literature itself. This male dominance is most pronounced in the population of Moroccan writers. A recent report on Moroccan publishing found that only 25% of Moroccan writers who published literary works during the 2016/2017 year were female and only 17.5% of those who published novels were female (Janjar 2018, 14). Moreover, this field research was certainly limited by my sample size. In particular, I would have liked to have interviewed more publishers, including those which publish primarily in Classical Arabic, as the editor I interviewed specialized in French language publishing. As it is difficult to gain *entrée* into the publishing industry, however, I was fortunate that one of the authors I interviewed facilitated the process in contacting the editor I would interview. Although I also would have liked to interview more authors, I was fortunate to interview both a francophone author and an arabophone author in order to account for their differing experiences within the Moroccan publishing industry.

I also employed the practice of participant observation throughout my research. The primary activity in which I engaged was visiting bookstores to gain an understanding of the works they carry and their clientele base. I observed the languages of works, the publishers of works (whether Moroccan or foreign), how they were displayed, the nationality of authors (whether Moroccan or foreign), and the best-selling books in addition to other factors. I also mapped the layout of each store to gain a better understanding of how works in certain languages

are more visible than those in others, a factor which varied significantly from store to store. These observations were also supplemented by interviewees who discussed their observations in Moroccan bookstores (specifically in Rabat) during our interviews.

Additionally, I utilized participant observation at two other events related to Moroccan literature: a lecture at the Kalila wa Dimna bookstore in Rabat and the Salon International de l'Édition et du Livre in Casablanca. The lecture which I attended was centered around a book entitled "*Maroc: La guerre des langues?*" which I had purchased serendipitously a couple weeks before without knowledge of the forthcoming lecture. The discussion panel constituted three of the sixteen authors of the book who each discussed the article they contributed to the work. I took notes throughout the lecture and met two of the authors following its conclusion. My participant observation experience at the book fair in Casablanca was primarily a reflection on my visit during February before the start of our research period.

## **Data Analysis and Findings**

### *Moroccan Authors and Their Language "Choice"*

As highlighted by Karima Laachir (2016) in previous sections, Moroccan authors are often questioned about their "choice" to write in either Classical Arabic or French. After one undertakes even minimal research on the matter, however, it becomes clear that it is often simply a practical choice dependent upon the writer's level of "control" and mastery of the language in which they write. The arabophone author who I interviewed stated simply that Arabic "is the language that I like to write in best. And I mean I don't know other languages well enough for fiction to write in any of these languages. So it is mostly the language I feel that I know best and that suits my style in fiction more than others." He explained that particularly for the act of creative writing, it is important to be comfortable and at ease in one's language in order to

facilitate self-expression and the creative process. It is important to note that this author may be proficient at reading and writing in other languages such as English and French; however, since he was educated in Classical Arabic, he feels it is the language in which he has the most control.

Following this response, he discussed how Classical Arabic is the language most conducive to his writing process, yet that others may criticize the language because it is not “spontaneous and, therefore, cannot be natural.” These individuals seem to employ the rhetoric that Classical Arabic is not “apt” at emotional expression as has been mentioned in previous sections. This author disagrees with this view, stating “I don’t buy the argument that says speak spontaneously...writing is not a spontaneous exercise anyway.” He argues that writing is a “form of expression that requires some form of reflection and selection of vocabulary... You have to be selective, you have to choose between the various possibilities that you have before you find the right formula.” This author thus writes in Classical Arabic due to the mastery of the language that he has achieved which allows him to engage in the process of creative production.

The francophone author with whom I spoke was similarly instructed in his language of writing until he obtained his high school degree. Although he went on to study English at university, he stated, “I had the feeling that I had a good control of the French language...I think I was not wrong because I didn’t study French since and I’m a writer! [*chuckling*].” When I asked if he would ever consider writing a creative piece in Classical Arabic, he responded “No, no. No, I would not for a very simple reason which is that I don’t think I’m...really in control of Classical [Arabic.]” This author echoes the argument made by Driss Ksikes (2018) that to truly make a language one’s own as a creative writer, there must exist a level of control and mastery of said language. He added, “And when I say in control, it means not only being able to read in Arabic. You can read, but [to] write is different. And not only write, you know, I could write a

paragraph or maybe a letter, but write creatively...I don't think I can do that." He argues thus that it is this difference between proficiency and mastery which prevents him from writing in Classical Arabic.

His attitude toward writing in *darija*, however, is quite the opposite. In fact, this author was one of the first Moroccan writers to employ *darija* as a literary language outside the realm of traditional poetry. In reference to his control over the language, he remarked, "*darija*, of course I could write in *darija*! Cause you know, it's my mother tongue, that's for sure." Thus, because *darija* is his first language he described the writing process as fluid, stating "I didn't erase much, honestly. It came so naturally. It's incredible." As all of the other novels this author has published have been written in French, the question remains of why he chose to write this particular novel in *darija*. The arabophone writer provided insight into this motivation to write in *darija*: "Why do you choose to write in a specific language? If the primary objective has to do with creativity, then you can see it. Then if you have other concerns such as activism or solidarity or something like that," they will be evident as well. This was indeed the case for the francophone author, as he revealed that writing in *darija* "was actually more of a, let's put it this way, a militant act for me...it was really something, okay like I said, kind of daring. I knew it would also be kind of risky." Thus, in this case, it is clear that other factors were considered in this author's choice to write in *darija* besides his control of the language. He explained further that "some of the motivations I had behind writing it...was to sort of to trigger some kind of debate. And it did as a matter of fact!" As has been demonstrated by Stéphanie Pouessel (2012), texts produced in Amazigh written in the *tifinagh* script constitute another example of an author's language of writing making a political statement which, in the case of Amazigh, would be one of solidarity with Amazigh identity. Aside from writings in *darija* and Amazigh,

however, an author's choice of language is normally a practical one based on their language of education.

*Language Variation and Differential Experiences in Moroccan Publishing*

It is necessary to take into consideration Moroccan authors' choice of language (or lack thereof) as the language of their texts often leads to differential experiences within the Moroccan publishing industry. An author who writes in Arabic has a different experience than one who writes in French who has a different experience than one who writes in *darija* and so on and so forth. This difference becomes even more evident when a writer, like the francophone author in the aforementioned section, writes and publishes in more than one language. Although texts may be translated, it is still the original language which decides how it will be received by Moroccan publishers and thus determines if the works will be published into another language. I thus will argue that, as Lewis Coser (1975) asserts, publishers do indeed act as "gatekeepers of ideas"; however, in multilingual nations such as Morocco in which languages are valued differently in the publishing world and in society in general, this situation becomes more complex. While there is normally only one metaphorical "gate" through which to pass in monolingual societies which is dependent on the ideas expressed in a text, I suggest that in multilingual societies there exists a precursory "gate" dependent upon the language ideologies of society. This preliminary "gate" thus results in an additional interference to the Moroccan author-reader interaction.

*French*

The language of writing which seems to produce the greatest number of opportunities for Moroccan authors in the realm of publishing is French. This is in large part due to the visibility and amount of exposure their texts receive as well as funding with which Moroccan francophone publishing houses are often provided. The arabophone author articulated what he viewed as some

of the benefits of publishing as a francophone author in Morocco. He asserted that “[i]f you publish in French, then you have a better chance, because there is some support coming from France in what is called the ‘Francophonie.’” This support of French-speaking populations outside of France (although France is technically part of this population) may be observed in President Macron’s recent announcement of his initiative to increase the number of French-speakers throughout the African continent as well as in his appointment of Moroccan author Leïla Slimani as “Madame Francohonie” and leader of this initiative (Talabot 2018). The arabophone author continued by stating that “there are a number of publishing houses that are subsidized by the French government. So if you publish in French, then the French will pay you some money for it, or...it might buy a number of texts from you, or you will be invited [for] various activities...provided your text is good enough.” Francophone publishers in Morocco do indeed receive support from both French and Moroccan organizations and associations in their endeavors, as one editor who I interviewed from such a publishing house noted was a particularly common practice in producing translations of texts. Concluding his comments, this author added that “there is also the possibility...that you [may] publish in France. Then, if it is a known publishing house in France, this is the solution...the visibility [of the text] is larger.” The francophone editor mentioned that practice is popular amongst some of the most well-known

The Moroccan francophone author stated that in Moroccan publishing his “experiences are probably tied to each individual book” and the publishing houses with which he has worked. He did bring up, however, that for his books he has been able to work directly with translators to develop translations of his texts rather than relying on his publishers to do so. He explained that he was able to do this because of the nature of his contract with each publisher: “I only gave...the original language, which is French. Which means I keep the rights for all the other

languages.” This is not that average situation of most Moroccan authors, he stated, as “normally, it’s the publishers who get offers from other foreign publishers who are interested in the book.” Although this is the general process, this author noted that “no publisher...has brought to me any translation. And I’m translated into nine languages. That’s very strange. Is it that they’re not doing their job?...I don’t know, there is something wrong, think about it!” This observation seems to reflect a broader phenomenon which was remarked upon in the report on publishing in Morocco cited earlier which discussed infrastructural insufficiencies that exist in this sector regardless of a text’s language (Janjar 2018, 21). These organizational considerations in Moroccan publishing will be addressed in subsequent sections.

### *Arabic*

The arabophone author explained the steps through which most Moroccan authors who write in Classical Arabic pass in order to publish their texts. He stated that the first step is “to look for a publishing house that...can either be in Morocco or...Lebanon, or in the Gulf” to submit the manuscript.” He continued to describe this process, relating that “[i]f you have the privilege of having your text published...in Morocco your book also might be submitted for an award... If you publish outside of Morocco...then you might submit your text for the equivalent of the Booker Award. There is the Arab Book Award.” Although this process may seem simple and direct, this author then recounted a number of negative experiences which he had publishing his first novel with a Moroccan arabophone publishing house. He first stated that “it took a long time for the publishing house to accept it, to buy, to publish it. And then they have all the rights...and they don’t give you anything back. So I didn’t really get anything. I got zero for that.” He then described the lack of communication between he and his publisher, observing that “there was a complete lack of transparency as to how [many] texts they sold.” His experience

with this publisher thus reflected a lack of reciprocity in their dealings following the initial sale of the rights of his novel.

His experiences with this publisher were only exacerbated when he was contacted by two friends to translate his novel into English. When he discussed the prospects of such an enterprise with the publishing house, “they said, ‘No, no, no. We will find our own way of doing it.’ So, I lost that opportunity, because they never did it.” Although the Moroccan francophone author was also not aided by his publishers in the process of having his novels translated, his contract permitted him to work with translators directly, whereas, the contract which the arabophone author held with his publisher did not permit him to do so. Furthermore, he recounted that he was also contacted by his friend who is a very well-regarded artist who had offered to create the cover of the novel for him. When he asked his publisher about this possibility, they responded, “No, we have our own artist who does this.” Moreover, he was later contacted by a filmmaker to create a movie based on his book, however, by that point, the publisher had gone out of business. He then contacted one of the individuals from the publishing company and inquired as to how he could get the rights to his book back. They replied, “We have 200 copies left in the basement. If you buy them from us, that means that you can get your rights back.” This arabophone author, therefore, justifiably argued that selling the rights of his book to the publisher gave him virtually no control over his work. When I asked whether he knew of any authors who have had similar experiences in the past, he replied “Oh many, many,” confirming that his experience in Moroccan publishing is not an isolated occurrence.

Following his series of negative interactions with this publishing house, the author resolved to publish his next novel at his own expense independently of a publishing house. He concisely explained this process: “You can contact a printing house, and you can ask them to

publish 5,000 copies [or] 1,000 copies, and then you pay for it and it is yours... So this is... \$5,000 and you can publish your own novel.” He noted that this alternative option served him and his novel better than working with a publishing house, noting that he had complete control over his work as well as the fact that his second novel won the Moroccan Book Award. He stated that paying to publish his work was well worth it as “the award... covered the cost, and then I had \$2,000 left! *[laughing]* Lots of money!” The francophone editor who I interviewed noted the prevalence of this practice of publishing independently in Morocco, as the publishing report for the 2016/2017 year found that 25% of the publications were published at the author’s cost (Janjar 2018, 21). She stated that she had observed that most of the authors who participated in this practice were arabophone writers, and that they often do so to release works and sell them to their friends. The report similarly notes that publishing at the author’s expense may limit the exposure of the works to the city in which the writer lives and his or her social circle (Janjar 2018, 21). Thus the case of the arabophone author who I interviewed may be an outlier as he had published his first novel with a publishing house and thus likely had more exposure and visibility before releasing his second novel independently.

### *Darija*

The francophone author who I interviewed had a radically different publishing experience (not to mention reception) when he released his novel in *darija* than when he had published works in French. The first comment he made about publishing in *darija* was that “the irony is that the person who published that book is American... It’s an American woman, not a Moroccan publisher... at that time, I couldn’t think of any Moroccan publisher.” He explained that the woman who had published his book started a publishing house which was meant to stimulate the practice of writing in *darija* by solely publishing works in *darija*. He stated that this

was one of his primary motivations in writing the novel, to address the “absence of *darija* in creative writing.” He made it clear that he was not concerned with the official recognition of *darija* by the State, but that he was instead concerned with “whether people appropriate [the] language to create, and think, and elaborate ideas, and concepts, and stories, and narratives. That’s even more important.” Thus, as discussed previously, he did indeed make a cognizant choice and effort to write in *darija*. Despite the fact that the only condition which had changed was the language in which he wrote, this author’s access to the Moroccan publishing sector significantly diminished in comparison to when he had published books in French.

He said at that point in time, there were no Moroccan publishers who he thought would consider publishing a book in *darija*, and upon further reflection he ventured “I don’t know if anyone would do it now...maybe? I have no idea.” A shift in publishers’ willingness to publish in *darija* would certainly be dependent on whether they believe they would have a strong readership for such works. As writing in *darija* has become more and more common on social media and in messaging platforms, particularly among young Moroccans, so too has creative writing in *darija* continued to grow. When I asked about the possibility of books in *darija* appealing to younger readers as texts to which they may relate, the author agreed and mentioned that the reception of his book in *darija* was very strong among young readers. He stated, “I’ve seen people who don’t read...they’re literate, young people, but they just don’t read. They go for something else, but they read that [book]...they read it for fun...it’s good when you read for fun, it’s good!” Thus it is worth investigating more seriously how young readers would receive more literary texts written in *darija*.

When I asked Moroccan university students what their views on how more creative texts written in *darija* would be received, however, they gave contrasting answers. Mei, a student of

English and Cultural Studies, stated that she had recently heard about the particular text written by the francophone author from her professor and shared that “it would be very, very interesting to me. But if it was for other people, I’m not sure...” Another student who studies Linguistics, Hamza, on the other hand, does believe that these texts would have a readership, arguing that they would be more accessible and relatable to Moroccans. He believes that the true obstacle to creative works written in *darija* would be publishers and the lack of recognition of *darija*’s potential as a literary language. When I did ask the francophone editor if she would consider publishing a work written in *darija* by the francophone author who I interviewed, she replied, “Frankly I cannot tell you if I would definitely do it...*if* he proposed a novel in *darija*, I would have to read it...therefore I cannot respond before this...one cannot say never, never, never. You must study each work case by case.” Although she seems open-minded, the hesitance and ambiguity of this editor’s answer indicate that *darija* remains marginalized in Moroccan publishing today.

### *Amazigh*

Like *darija*, Amazigh is considerably under-represented in the publications of private Moroccan publishing houses. When discussing the number of publications in this language, the arabophone author stated, “for...Amazigh, the number is very, very small. And I think that IRCAM is the only institution that would finance the publication in Amazigh.” The francophone author had a similar outlook on Amazigh’s current place in Moroccan publishing. When I asked whether he thinks Moroccan publishing houses will become more open to publishing in Amazigh, his reaction strong, stating, “Oh my God. Not yet. There are publications, but they are all from IRCAM. So they are all subsidized and sponsored by...you know, it’s national. It’s just the idea that okay we have more and more people publishing in [Amazigh].” This author’s ideas

are also evident when Pouessel (2012) problematizes the publishing practices of IRCAM, arguing that the Institute's activities are primarily for show rather than constituting "a genuine operation of publication that would meet the ever-growing demand from authors" (Pouessel 2012, 379). The francophone author continued by sharing his belief that Amazigh's increased presence in the realm of private publishing in Morocco would legitimize it as a literary language. He states that "publishing is a business. So, they won't publish a book if they won't sell it. So, if they start publishing books in Amazigh, that day...yeah. We would think...that Amazigh has become really a language of creation and literature and writing." He adds that this process will require a large amount of time "and probably I don't think I will live to see that, personally." Thus, it is widely acknowledged that Amazigh will need to break out of the realm of publishing within the state-supported IRCAM in order to assert itself as a literary language.

The sociolinguist who I interviewed also mentioned that Amazigh writers who use *tifinagh* script struggle because they state, "When I write in Tifinagh no one can read me." He argues that this "means that *tifinagh* is not implemented in reality" and there exists a "gap in practices and perceptions." This issue of implementation means that although Amazigh is recognized as the second official language of Morocco, there has been little follow-through to ensure Amazigh is included in a number of important sectors such as education. The francophone editor identified education as the primary means by which to Amazigh may enter into the world of private publishing. In order to begin publishing in Amazigh, she argues, "[w]e must wait for this generation of students who have obligatory Amazigh in primary school for the power to achieve a true readership in Amazigh." Her opinion was also shared by another university student, Amine, who speaks Amazigh and studies Linguistics. Amine explained that he is currently working to write a novel in *tifinagh* script which he has studied independently. He

argues that Amzaigh and the *tifinagh* script “must be integrated into education” in order to teach the “generation of the future,” the generation which will build a readership for Amazigh.

Therefore, as the Amazigh writer Akunad has observed, Amazigh literature and its place in Moroccan publishing is largely dependent on its Amazigh’s current language situation.

#### *Booksellers and the Moroccan Book Market*

It is important to note at this time that although the publishing report released by the King Abdul-Aziz Al Saoud Foundation found that 82% of the publications of Moroccan publishers were in Arabic last year and only 15% were in French, these statistics should not be confused with the sales of the books in Morocco. The report does not mention the number of copies produced of each book nor how many of each were sold last year. Although there are not many statistics available on the sale of books in Morocco, particularly according to language, my participants did provide their observations of the book market throughout our interviews. When I told the francophone author these statistics he expressed his surprise: “Wooow. 82%!? That’s a lot...But you know that the French books sell more? That’s interesting...They sell more!” He added that Arabic books “don’t sell. With a few exceptions, of course.” Amine also corroborated this statement during our interview after a man approached us to sell books, noting “you see the man selling books...most of the books are in French.” He then stated that there has been a marginalization of books written in Arabic. The observations of the francophone author led him to conclude that French books “are more *visible* in the media. So that’s interesting, you know? This is probably why when you were giving that figure, I was kind of surprised. Because we always hear about those titles in French and sometimes in Arabic, but like I would have thought like 50/50 at least?” He thus brings up the again the necessity of visibility and exposure to the sale of texts.

The editor, on the other hand, mentioned that she was not surprised by the statistics released by the King Abdul-Aziz Al Saoud Foundation, explaining her perceptions of the publishing world and book market. She explained that some of the “elevated numbers” of works published in Arabic may be attributed to the high rate of publishing at the authors cost. She stated that she did not believe that there are “so, so many well-known” Moroccan authors who write in Arabic and that more arabophone authors tend to publish independently and sell a small number to their friends and acquaintances. The arabophone author stated that he was also not surprised by this statistic, but that does believe that the Francophonie would like to increase the number of publications in French: “I have the impression now that we are pushing for a change in the situation...[the] francophonie is definitely aiming at changing that.” He then mentioned that I may want to visit some bookstores and speak to booksellers in the area to gain a better understanding of how language dynamics play out in the sale of books.

While publishers act as the primary “gatekeepers” of the author-reader interaction, the role of booksellers is also important to consider in this process. Although booksellers must take into account what will sell and what their clients will buy, their personal ideologies are also not absent as they select which books to sell. Furthermore, the location and manner in which they choose to display books is also an indicator how they influence the interaction between reader and author. If a book is displayed in the front window, perhaps with a note from an employee recommending it to readers, the likelihood of it being picked up by a reader is much higher if it is on the back shelf of the second floor. Thus, not only the books they carry but the way these books are displayed reveal how the bookseller values certain literature (and certain languages) over others. Booksellers in the Moroccan context thus constitute a secondary group of “gatekeepers” who may facilitate or limit the contact between the author and the reader.

The participant observation which I carried out in bookstores revealed insights into this realm of the book industry. The first bookstore which I visited was Kalila wa Dimna. Upon entering, it is clear that the store primarily sells books written in French which take up approximately 70 percent of the store's space. An employee later confirmed this, stating that they are a "francophone bookstore." As I was entering I heard one young woman who seemed to be Moroccan tell her friend in English, "French books...even Moroccans write in French." There were many books written in French by Moroccan authors displayed on the front tables, and when I discussed this with the employee she stated that between 50 and 60 percent of the books carried by the store are by Moroccan authors, adding that they have works by all Moroccan francophone authors in stock. Most books written by French authors appeared to be displayed on the shelves behind these tables or farther in the back. The store also featured small sections of Arabic, English, and Spanish books. Many of the Arabic books seemed to be for kids and the one shelf and table which did display Arabic novels were each very sparse and located in a dark corner at the back of the store. The number of novels in English seemed even to outnumber books in Arabic, while Spanish books took up only a very small shelf.

The arabophone author commented on this bookstore stating that, "the owner of Kalila wa Dimna is a woman who believes in la Francophonie. It is as if that is her mission. Even if she wouldn't receive any funding from the French Institute. She would do it because she believes in La Francophonie." From my observations at Kalila wa Dimna, this author's assertion does not seem unlikely. The owner's support of francophone literature is apparent not only in the books carried at this store but also where and how these books are displayed. The language ideologies of this bookseller and how they affect the store's stock and displays thus impact the potential readers who enter the bookstore and the authors of the books sold (or not sold) there.

The layout of the store and type of books carried at another bookstore 3ème Millénaire differ significantly from Kalila wa Dimna. The first floor of 3ème Millénaire constitutes books only written in Arabic, while the second floor, which is approximately half the size of the first, carries French books and a small section of English books. When I spoke with an employee, he estimated that 80 percent of the Arabic books they carry are written by arabophone Moroccan authors, while only 25 percent of the books written in French which they carry are written by francophone Moroccans authors. He also added that the demand for books written in Amazigh and *darija* has started to increase and that they carry some books in these languages including a translation of the French book *Le Petit Prince* into *darija*. When I asked if they sell books written in Arabic or French more often, he said that normally they sell more in Arabic, but at certain times during the year such as before exams he stated that they sell more in French. He explained that this is also dependent on the buying power of readers as he stated that books in French are often more expensive than those in Arabic.

This question of buying power was a remarked upon by several participants who I interviewed including Mei, Amine, and the francophone author. French books are most expensive, as the average price of books in France is much higher than in Morocco with the added price of importing these titles (Janjar 2018, 25). However, the francophone author noted that even books written in French and sold by Moroccan francophone publishers are higher in price than those in Arabic: “books in Arabic are cheaper than books in French. Though they are published sometimes...with the same publisher.” He explained that the book which he is currently publishing in French will also be translated into Arabic and sold by the same publisher, yet that the Arabic version will likely only be 50 dh whereas the French version will be 80 dh. He stated that the primary reason for this is that one “would expect Francophone people in this

country to have more money. Which is not wrong.” Thus, the French-speaking elite in Morocco are able to afford these higher-priced books.

The arabophone author also stated that he believed 3ème Millénaire is influenced by ideologies in the stock of books they carry as well as where these books are displayed. He stated, “I think the owner of Al-Alfiya talita [3ème Millénaire] might have his own agenda,” even venturing that this agenda “may be Islamist, *maybe* Islamist. Because there is also a huge display of Islamist books on the first floor in addition to fiction.” Although he stipulates that the religious ideologies of the owner may determine what titles are carried and how they are displayed, it is also clear that language ideology is a determinate. Simply the fact that Arabic books are located more visibly on the first floor as well as in greater quantities, while books written in French and some English books are located on the smaller second floor reveal a favoring of Arabic texts. 3ème Millénaire thus constitutes another example of how booksellers may influence the author-reader interaction.

The arabophone author and Mei both also brought up the local bookstore Livre Service and its characteristics. The arabophone author observed that this bookstore contrasted sharply from 3ème Millénaire: “The first floor [is] mostly French – not mostly, only, exclusively – the texts in French. Very nicely displayed, so much room. *So* many texts. And then if you are looking for texts in Arabic, you go upstairs. They are not really as nicely displayed... it is as if you are speaking about a secondary language.” The language ideologies represented by Livre Service thus seem to express the antithesis of those suggested by 3ème Millénaire. The layout of the two stores is essentially swapped with French on the first floor and Arabic on the second at 3ème Millénaire. The author added “Now, my guess is that they are getting subsidies from the French government, because in addition to all that, the schedule of the Institut Francais was right

there at the counter.” Mei seemed to agree with the author’s assertion, stating that she knew that many students from (most likely French) private schools are told to buy books from this specific store, and suggested there must be a kind of “partnership” between these schools and the Livre Service. The affiliations of this bookstore and its language ideologies, particularly the schedule of the French Institute, likely influence the readers who visit the store.

It is also worth noting that there is an English bookstore in the vicinity of these bookstores as well. Abdellah, a university student studying English, mentioned this bookstore and stated that with the growing popularity of English in recent years, the store has started bringing in more customers. Due to the fact that there have been few publications in English by Moroccan authors, this bookstore likely doesn’t greatly impact the Moroccan author-reader interaction; however, the impact and activities of this store may be interesting to trace in the future as English continues to gain popularity. The other bookstores Kalila wa Dimna, 3ème Millénaire, and Livre Service which sell books in Arabic and French certainly do impact the transmission of ideas from author to reader. The manner in which they choose to display books and where they are located in the store, as well as recommendations of books from staff and institutions and other practices work to mediate the Moroccan author-reader interaction.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As this research constituted an exploratory study, there are a number of limitations to the findings which must be considered. Perhaps the most important consideration is that of sample size. Although I was able to interview ten individuals, the populations to which my participants belonged varied considerably (i.e. they were not all authors, etc). Although interviewing individuals such as the university students and the sociolinguist offered a variety of perspectives which were important to gaining a holistic and contextual understanding of the topic at hand, it

would have been productive to be able to speak with a greater number of authors, editors, and booksellers. Unfortunately, due to the time and resource constraints of the study, this was not possible. The francophone and arabophone authors who I interviewed provided valuable information on their experiences in publishing both with publishing houses and independently as well as on the rather rare experience of publishing a novel in *darija*; however, in order to generalize further about the experiences of Moroccan authors in publishing, it would be necessary to interview more writers.

Additionally, while the information the Moroccan francophone editor shared provided insight into publishing in the Moroccan context, it would be preferable to interview a greater number of editors with different backgrounds. As there are not many francophone publishers in the Moroccan publishing sector, her perspective may not represent the so-called average experiences and practices of Moroccan publishers (Janjar 2018, 22). I also would like to have interviewed readers with more varied identities instead of all university students; more variation in age, socioeconomic status, education level, and gender would paint a more balanced picture of the experiences of the Moroccan reader and what they look for in a book. In addition, it would have been helpful to visit more bookstores and interview their owners directly instead of employees to understand how much bookstores vary in the language ideologies which they reflect and to understand the motivations of the owner more clearly.

## **Conclusion**

This study has demonstrated that language ideologies in the realm of contemporary Moroccan literature significantly affect the experiences of Moroccan authors' experiences with Moroccan publishing houses. Moroccan authors who write in French generally seem to have the greatest number of opportunities navigating the world of publishing. They often receive more

exposure, and their works are more visible as francophone publishing houses may receive institutional support from French and Moroccan institutions. Arabic authors seem to encounter more obstacles while navigating the publishing industry in Morocco; they may be given little control over their work in their contracts with publishers which is perhaps one of the reasons for the high percentage of authors who publish at their own cost in Morocco. Authors who write in Amazigh and *darija* are considerably marginalized in the Moroccan private publishing sector. While the reasons that Amazigh literature is underrepresented in the industry are largely due to its small readership and for reasons of practicality, those for *darija*'s exclusion are not as clear. It seems that to a large extent that it is due to the ideology which claims that *darija* cannot be a literary language. Another another reason seemed to be the doubt that there would be a large enough readership, despite the popularity of previous works written in *darija*.

This research has also revealed how the language ideologies and “agendas” of booksellers may facilitate or hinder the Moroccan author-reader interaction. Not only which books these bookstores carry, but also where and how they are displayed throughout the physical space may indicate the particular language attitudes of the owners of these stores. These features are further supplemented by book recommendations or lists from staff or other institutions which support a certain bookstore. All of these factors which are present when a reader enters a bookstore influence their encounters (or not) with texts. Additionally, book kiosks were not observed extensively in this study, however, these stands and their similarities and differences to bookstores may be interesting to explore in future research.

Although this research constitutes a case study on the presence of language ideologies in the Moroccan publishing and book sector, it may be productive to carry out similar research in other multilingual nations, particularly in those which value some languages more than others.

This research may continue to test Coser's theory that publishers act as "gatekeepers to ideas" as well as whether authors in multilingual nations must pass through two "gates" – one dependent on language ideology and the second on the content and message of their texts – in order to reach their readers. Such studies may continue to examine the less-researched role of booksellers and how their ideologies mediate the author-reader interaction. This research would contribute to the considerably under-researched fields of book publishing and the sociolinguistics of the written word.

In the specifically Moroccan context, there are a plethora of other research topics to investigate within these fields. As the scope of this project was admittedly large, in future research, it will be helpful to narrow the focus of the study further. Perhaps one of the most interesting subjects for further research involves examining the evolving use of and attitudes towards *darija* in writing. As Dominique Caubet (2017) found that more individuals are increasingly writing "elaborate texts" in *darija* and posting them online, it will be interesting to monitor these writers and if they do begin to publish in print with Moroccan publishing houses. It may also be productive to interview editors about these growing writing practices in *darija* and if they believe *darija* could become a "language of literature" and if they would be willing to publish these works in *darija*, provided they are of high quality. Concerning the readership of literary texts written in *darija*, it would be interesting to investigate what demographics of the population would be interested in reading such works. When I asked Amine if he thought young readers would be more interested in reading a book in *darija* than in other languages, he said that he was unsure and believed a survey study would need to be conducted. As publishers need to know if there will be a readership for the works they publish, this research would likely have greater implications in the Moroccan publishing world.

More quantitative research is also certainly needed in order to assess the current state of the Moroccan publishing and book sector. Although the publishing report produced by the King Abdul-Aziz Al Saoud Foundation has certainly contributed to this goal, there still exist many gaps in the research. Some of the most important data to gather will be on the number of copies produced and sold of published works. Of particular interest would be how many texts in each language are sold in Morocco. As was brought up in a few of my interviews, the number of publications and even copies produced in a certain language may differ greatly from the number of copies of that work which are actually sold. This gap between production and sales may cause confusion and incorrect conclusions if information from both processes is not considered. The report by the Foundation also seemed to be selective in its analysis of the data, suggesting that the report may be biased in some ways. There was one mention of a book written in *darjia* which was published last year, but no further analysis of the significance of this work. Additionally, there was other data such as the languages of the works which were published at the cost of the author (i.e. what percent in Arabic, French, etc.). Although some of these considerations may be outside the scope of the Foundation's annual publishing report, this is all the more reason to pursue research on this subject in other capacities.

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