

**THE DISCOURSES OF HERITAGE LANGUAGES: DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE WITHIN TRANSNATIONAL MOROCCAN FAMILIES IN SPAIN. FROM LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES TO RESISTANCE**

**LOS DISCURSOS ENTORNO AL DESARROLLO Y EL MANTENIMIENTO DE LAS LENGUAS DE HERENCIA EN EL SENO DE FAMILIAS TRANSNACIONALES MARROQUÍES EN ESPAÑA: DE LAS IDEOLOGÍAS LINGÜÍSTICAS A LA RESISTENCIA**

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**Abstract**

In a context of mobility, transnationality, and the resulting multiplication of minority groups, the study of Heritage Languages (hereinafter HLs), multilingualism and Family Language Policy (hereinafter FLP) reveals the conflicting relations between the private family and the public spheres in the management of linguistic and multilingual resources. In this sense, greater attention should be given to families' diverse experiences, parental actions and practices as well as the language policies and discourses used to tackle the challenges of passing on and maintaining their HLs in a transnational and minority context. This paper examines the discourses of HLs, as well as their evolution and maintenance within transnational Moroccan families, by combining critical sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. The analysis focusses on Moroccan families' views on the discursive construction of Arabic

and Amazigh (Berber) as capitalized and accommodated resources and the parents' perceptions of the role their cultural heritage plays in their children's language socialization.

The results reveal that families deploy a range of strategies, actions, decisions and linguistic practices in order to promote the intergenerational transmission and use of Arabic and Amazigh, on the one hand, and to face and resist linguistic hegemony in the diaspora, on the other hand. The data analysed in this paper are the results of a qualitative research project conducted by means of semi-structured interviews, group discussions and linguistic biographies involving fathers and mothers of Moroccan origin.

The paper attempts to further the understanding of HL development and maintenance in transnational and multilingual Moroccan families in Spain.

*Keywords:* Heritage Languages, Moroccan families in Spain, Family Language Policy, language ideologies, discourses of resistance.

### **Resumen**

En un contexto de movilidad, transnacionalidad y presencia de minorías, el estudio de las lenguas de herencia, el multilingüismo y la política lingüística familiar revela el carácter conflictivo de las relaciones que existen entre la esfera familiar privada y la esfera pública estatal en la gestión de los recursos lingüísticos y multilingües. En este sentido, se debe prestar mayor atención a las diversas experiencias de las familias transnacionales, las acciones y prácticas de los padres, así como a las políticas lingüísticas y los discursos que utilizan e instrumentalizan para hacer frente a los desafíos de transmisión y mantenimiento de sus lenguas de herencia en un contexto transnacional. Este artículo examina pues los discursos sobre las lenguas de herencia, su evolución y mantenimiento en el seno de familias transnacionales marroquíes

en España a partir de un enfoque crítico sociolingüístico y discursivo. El análisis se centrará en las ideologías de las familias marroquíes en la construcción discursiva del árabe y el amazige (bereber) como lenguas capitalizadas y acomodados. Del mismo modo, se centrará en examinar las percepciones de las propias familias sobre el papel que desempeña la herencia cultural en la socialización lingüística de sus hijo-as.

Los resultados revelan que las familias despliegan una serie de estrategias, acciones, decisiones y prácticas lingüísticas para promover la transmisión y el uso intergeneracional del árabe y el amazige, por un lado, y para hacer frente y resistir el régimen sociolingüístico hegemónico en el contexto diaspórico, por otro lado. Los datos analizados en este artículo forman parte de una investigación cualitativa basada en un corpus de entrevistas semiestructuradas, grupos de discusión y biografías lingüísticas en el que habían participado padres y madres de origen marroquí.

El artículo ofrece una interpretación del proceso de desarrollo y mantenimiento de las lenguas de herencia en familias marroquíes transnacionales y multilingües en España.

*Palabras clave:* estudios en el extranjero, estancias cortas en el extranjero, sensibilidad intercultural, competencia intercultural, compromiso global, estudiantes de segundas lenguas.

## **1. Introduction**

Recent research in Spain (Moustououi Srhir, 2016; 2019; Moustououi, Prego and Zas (forthcoming) has shown how social, linguistic and labour stratification, which affects immigrant workers, in particular Moroccans over those of other communities, has led to the emergence of discourses of resistance in the family space against the hegemonic sociolinguistic order. These discourses

are produced in a context of minorities in which children and young people with Muslim parents of Moroccan origin experience processes of decapitalization and exclusion; namely a loss of social capital. Those processes are determined not only by the nature of the institutions in which the children transit, but also by the new context of anti-Muslim and anti-Moroccan racism and securitization policies. This resistance is supported by the maintenance of heritage languages (hereinafter HLs) and religious beliefs and practices within the Moroccan communities and families. As Blommaert (2018) argued, the use of languages and varieties without any status in a sociolinguistic regime and as components of a 'transparent normative sociolinguistic regime', such as Moroccan or Standard Arabic and Amazigh (Berber) - in the case of Moroccan families in Spain-, is considered a type of resistance to the pressures of different forms of assimilation and acculturation. In this sense, the study of HLs and Family Language Policy (hereinafter FLP) reveals the conflictive nature of the relations established between the private family sphere and the public sphere of the state in the management of linguistic and cultural capital as well as multilingual resources (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009, 2013; Curdt-Christiansen and La Morgia, 2018). In this sense, Moroccan transnational families provide situations and experiences of interest due to the major significance of the socio-discursive space in which discourses defending the transmission and maintenance of HLs take place. The Moroccan families also created a space for implementing language policy actions as a means of resistance. Taking this brief contextualisation as the starting point, this article aims to respond to the following questions:

- i) What impact do local and broader language ideologies have on the construction of HLs as capitalized and accommodated resources within the Moroccan families, considered to be a minority ethnolinguistic group?
- ii) What are the families' perceptions of the role their cultural heritage plays in language socialization?
- iii) To what extent Family Language Policy act as a form of resistance, specifically targeting and resolving concerns regarding the displacement of HLs and promoting their development? How do these actions guarantee the transmission, use and promotion of the HLs in a diasporic context?

The remainder of the article is structured as follows: Part two describes the theoretical framework for HLs from a post-structuralist and critical approach that connects Bourdieu's notions of habitus and capital (1983) with the concept of family language management and policy (Spolsky, 2004). Part three provides an overview of the research methodology and the data collection process. Part four contains the analysis, focusing in particular on the impact of language ideologies in the process of linguistic socialization and their role in the development of HLs and multilingualism and how these language ideologies are likewise associated with parental agencies and FLP as resistance. The final part includes a discussion of the results obtained and a series of conclusions.

## **2. Heritage languages, habitus and family management**

Over the past two decades, literature has yielded numerous definitions for HL and HL speakers. It is worth mentioning that the notion of heritage languages arose in Canada in the late 1970s in the

context of the Heritage Language Programs in Ontario (Cummins & Danesi, 1990). In The United States, the term was not used until the mid-1990s, with the publication in 1996 of the Foreign Language Learning Standards. Cummins & Danesi (1990:13) noted that “The term ‘heritage language’ usually refers to all languages other than aboriginal languages of Native and Inuit peoples and the ‘official’ Canadian languages”. Rothman (2009:156) states that “A language qualifies as a heritage language if it is a language spoken at home or otherwise readily available to young children, and crucially this language is not a dominant language of the broader (national) society. Like the acquisition of a primary language in monolingual situations and the acquisition of two or more languages in situations of societal bilingualism/multilingualism, the heritage language is acquired on the basis of an interaction with naturalistic input and whatever in-born linguistic mechanisms are at play in any instance of child language acquisition.” Yet, HL’s can refer also to either immigrant languages or minority indigenous languages (Fishman, 2001; Polinsky & Kagan, 2007). The research in the American and Canadian contexts has been increasingly interested in examining issues related with the maintenance of HL’s and how their speakers (re) organize their linguistic repertoire and identities in diverse contexts; family, school, heritage language schools, and how they socialize in different communities of practice. Furthermore, there has been a growing research interest in examining issues related to the relation between the maintenance of HLs, bi/multilingualism and their political and ideological dimension (Fishman, 2001, García, 2005; Ricento 2005; Van Deusen-Sholl, 2003; Widely, 2005). Concerning the research on Arabic as a heritage language in North America, Visonà and Plonsky (2019) report that is “gaining ground relative to other work on heritage languages” and the majority of

them are related specifically to Arab and Muslim communities in the US and Canada (Al Batal, 2007; Bale, 2010; Visonà, & Plonsky, 2019). Some of these studies have been centred on Arabic speech communities; exploring HL education and how their speakers and learners construct, position, negotiate, and (re) shape their identities in diverse contexts (Albirini; 2014; Sahiri, 2007, Sehlaoui, 2008), such as family (Yazin and Ali, 2018; Hillman (2019), school (Ibrahim and Allam, 2006;), and HL schools (Engman, 2015), and how they socialize in different communities of practice.

In addition to the large number of studies conducted within the context of North America, consideration must also be given to HL research conducted in the European context, since the concept of 'heritage' and its nuances are open to multiple meanings and interpretations. The fact is that in the European context, sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists use the concept of 'heritage' far less, opting instead for alternative denominations such as languages of origin, diasporic languages or languages of immigration. From these notions, various studies on the Moroccan diaspora have analysed the relationship between the capitalisation, transmission and maintenance of the language or languages of origin with the spaces of worship in the different Moroccan communities in the Spanish context (García-Sánchez, 2014) or through Moroccan programmes for teaching the language and culture of origin (Mijares, 2006; Moscoso, 2013; Hadid Tounli, 2017). Similar results were found in the French context with the Amazigh speakers and the relationship between this HL and the construction of Amazigh identity within Moroccan and Algerian families (Biichlé 2012), as well as in the case of Maghrebi Arabic in the works of Barontini (2014) and Caubet and Barontini (2008). Related research

in the UK (Jamai, 2008) has explored the use and maintenance of the languages of origin among the Moroccan immigrant community in Britain and the role English plays in these processes. In another study, Extra and Yagmur (2010) centred their attention on language maintenance, patterns of language use and the socio-cultural orientation of Turkish and Moroccan youngsters in the Netherlands and the process of attachment to heritage, culture and languages in both communities. The work of Dekeyser and Stevens (2019) investigates the extent to which children of Moroccan heritage living in Belgium maintain their proficiency in their parents' heritage language and the extent to which they learn and speak Dutch. Recent research in Spain has focused on the role of HLs in the emergence of new translingual practices and their role in the reconstruction of identities among Maghrebi students in Galicia (Moustaoui, Prego and Zas, 2019). A further project carried out in the same context focused on the role of *Dariya* (Moroccan Arabic) in the multilingual repertoire of young students of Moroccan origin in Arteixo (Galicia), analysing how it becomes an HL for these young people (Moustaoui, Prego and Zas, forthcoming).

*Habitus* (Bourdieu, 1983) is a key concept in the analysis of HLs within the family linguistic environment. Essentially, Bourdieu argues that individuals acquire a *habitus*; namely a system of dispositions, practices and representations, acquired mainly at home, that allows them to move with varying degrees of ease among different fields of competence (Bourdieu, 1983; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Following this line, Carrington and Luke (1997) consider that *habitus* is not only built and acquired in the home, but also through a process of language socialisation throughout life. This Bourdieu's consideration of the *habitus* in the



home, allows us to interpret how family members interact within the different interactional social spaces in which they develop their relationships, practices and ideologies. At the same time, it provides the conceptual tools necessary to analyse the role of language at the heart of these interactions and spaces. Our research is framed within an approach that understands FLP regarding HLs as ideology, practice, and management (Spolsky, 2012: 4), in the sense that FLP responds particularly to “what families actually do with language in day-to-day interactions; their beliefs and ideologies about language and language use; and their goals and efforts to shape language use and learning outcomes” (King et al. 2008: 909). In this familiar scalar management, parental agency (Ahearn, 2001) acquires a significance that is realized through a number parental strategies deployed in order to maintain HLs in accordance with the family type, situation and aspirations (Hua & Wei, 2016), as well as their socialisation contexts. Seloni & Sarfati (2013: 9) view this type of parental agency as a mechanism that “can resist, shape or contest the values circulated through language ideologies.”

Finally, given that LP is a discursive construct (Blommaert, 1996), I have included an explicit empirical analysis of family discourses. Specifically, the article takes the ideologies related to the capitalisation and accommodation of HLs in diaspora and the consequences of their maintenance and the fact that these discursive positions contain elements of resistance toward the linguistic hegemony of Spanish and also toward cultural and linguistic assimilation. In this sense, the article regards discourse as social practice that contains ideas, opinions and ideologies. In other words, the research deals with how families not just talked about the

transmission and development of HL's and how they think and speak about their heritage.

### **3. Participants and Data Collection**

According to data from the Spanish Statistical Office (INE in its Spanish initials/ 1st January 2021), there are 869,661 people of Moroccan origin in Spain and 297,097 with Spanish citizenship who were born in Morocco. Moreover, Moroccans make up the largest community of foreign origin in Spain.

A large part of the Moroccan population residing in Spain comes from the Rif region in northern Morocco and is an Amazigh speaking community (Bernabé López and Berriane, 2004). The Rif region was an area of the Spanish protectorate, and therefore large numbers of people from this region are socialised with Spanish to some degree. Worthy of mention in this sense is that most of the transnational families I interviewed had a linguistic life trajectory in their country of origin marked by state LPs that, at least until recently, failed to recognise the vernacular mother tongues of the country, specifically the so-called Dariya (Moroccan Arabic), despite the fact that Amazigh (Berber) was recognized in 2011 as an official language. We are thus dealing with families who display complexity in their multilingual linguistic repertoire, which includes the local languages Dariya, Amazigh and Standard Arabic, as well as the colonial and transnational languages, namely French and Spanish. Furthermore, these families attach different degrees of value to these languages, and a particular understanding of the relationship between languages and power, in terms of their social, practical and functional status, both in their country of origin and in the host country. Moroccan families also pass on their religious practices and attend the local

heritage schools or mosques, which act not only as places of worship but also as spaces in which to learn and reproduce the language and cultural practices of their country of origin.

The data analysed was collected over five years in three qualitative studies begun in 2012. I conducted 10 interviews and 6 discussion groups (DGs) involving 40 mothers and fathers of Moroccan origin in Madrid and peripheral locations in the Castilla la Mancha autonomous community, specifically the northern belt of the province of Toledo on the boundary with the region of Madrid. The interviews and DGs focused directly on the topic of FLP and their experiences and strategies regarding the transmission of their HLs. Some of the interviews and discussion groups was conducted during an ethnographic work in an HL Islamic School managed by the Moroccan community in Fuenlabrada, a peripheral location situated in the south of the Madrid region. During this ethnographic work in this HL School, I interviewed mothers and fathers whose children attended Modern Standard Arabic and religion lessons. Some of the mothers interviewed are also involved in the teaching of these programmes. These qualitative interviews, which included both first and second generation migrants, HL's and its transmission emerged as a primary concern for the community in general, leading to social, political, educational and even economic challenges.

All the participants have given their consent not just to participate in this research but to process, use and transfer the data collected. The article is using only pseudo-anonymised data with the aim to provide individual data subjects with a high degree of protection and anonymity.

Table 1: *Participants' profile.*

Number of Discussion Groups realized	Number of Interviews realized	Age and marital status of the participants	Job profiles of the participants	Sociolinguistic profile of the participants
3 groups of males (in each group there was between 6 and 8 participants). 3 groups of females (in each group there was between 6 and 8 participants).	10 semi-structured interviews with fathers and mothers.	Over 35. Married to a Moroccan man or women. With children.	Low-skilled workers. Some of the participants are unemployed.	Mother tongue: Moroccan Arabic (MA) or Riffian (Rif). Bilingual Rif/MA. Multilingual Rif/MA/Modern Standard Arabic and Spanish. Speakers of other languages (usually French)

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Language ideologies: HLs between capitalization and accommodation

Ideologies and the discursive construction and naming of languages and varieties are two issues that play a key role in the development and maintenance of HLs. This section examines the impact of local and broader language ideologies in the HL discourse of Moroccan families as a minority ethnolinguistic group and how these ideologies navigate between capitalization and accommodation.

Example (1) is a Discussion Group with six fathers from the first generation group of male migrants. (The numbers correspond to the identification code of each informant).

2: ولكن بلاتي، بلاتي، الإنسان كابتزوج ويعمل أولادو علاش زعما؟ حيت هو كاي. فهمتي. كايبقى ديك الجيل ديالو ديال العرق ديال إِيَّاه.

5: إيه ضروري.

2: ولكن الإطلع ما عرفش العربية أشني خليتي فيه؟ خليتي فيه غير السمية إه.

5: ولا شيء.

2: خليتي فيه.

5: ولا شيء.

2: غير السمية، خليتي فيه غير فلان ولد فلان...

1: حنا غا نشوفو الأخ دابا حنا ما نمشيوش بعيد...

2: اللغة الأم كايخصها تكون كايخص يتحافظ عليها.

1: يعني هاد الشيء ديال العلم دابا ولا ضروري.

5: نفرضو.

1: ماشي غير العربية.

5: نفرضو كاع العلم بصفة عامة، اللغات.

[....]

2: المَرَّا اسبانيولا مع الرّاجل، ولا فرانسوية ولا هادي... العاويل كايطلعو ممكنين أصاحبي،

ما كايعرفش حتى الحمد لله. وهداي مصيبة باش الكحلة، ما كايعرفش حتى... تهدر معاه

بالعربية... كايمنشي حتى إل المغرب كايصدق مهوكل. ما يعرف حتى يتصرف، كايضحكو

عليه غير ف الشّارح ويسرقوه وما يعرفش...

5: كايين اللّي تلقاه جاهل... كايين اللّي تلقاه إياه جاهل.

6: كايبقا فيّا الحال أنا فيّا واحد الحاجة...

2: وأنا اللّي كايبقى فيّا الحال أنا هو العايل هاداك منين غادي... إلافاتت ديك الفرصة ديال عام

ديال عام حتى إل سبع سنين وما يعرفش يتناقش معاك ولو بالذّارجة وما قلناش حتى باللغة

الفصحى. بإمكان ديالك تعلموا الحروف واللّغة الفصحى إلا كنت عندك الإجتهدام متلا والصّبر

وكدا فهمتي ولا لا؟ ولكن إلافاتك ما بين عام سبع سنين وغير كب على راسك الما...

6: أنا كانشوف... دابا.

2: ما عندك ما تعلمو العربية ما عندك ما تعلمو هاديك السّاعة.

*2: But wait, wait. Why do human beings marry and later have children? Because that's how human beings, you see, maintain this continuity between generations and preserve a sense of belonging for themselves and their parents.*

5: *That is essential.*

2: *But if they grow up without knowing Arabic, then you have failed. You'll have no more than an Arabic name.*

5: *Nothing more.*

2: *It's a failure.*

2: *He would just be So-and-so, son of Whatshisname.*

1: *Let's see what this guy has to say, we're not too far off track.*

2: *The mother tongue must be preserved.*

1: *I am talking about what science demands, it is essential now.*

5: *Let's assume that.*

1: *Not only Arabic.*

5: *Let's assume all languages in general.*

[...]

2: *A Spanish woman married to a (Moroccan) man or a French woman or some such ... her children, my friend, they don't have a clue and don't even know how to say الحمد لله (al hamdu li allah) (thanks to God), it's a shame. He won't even know ... and if you speak to him in Arabic ... When he goes to Morocco he doesn't know what's going on, he doesn't know how to act and they laugh at him in the street; he could be robbed and he wouldn't even realise it.*

5: *There are people who do not realise how important it is, their father is not aware of it.*

6: *What gets to me is that...*

2: *I also feel sorry for the child who; this child if he loses this opportunity from ages one to seven and he won't know how to speak with you in Dariya [Moroccan Arabic] and let's not even talk about Fusha [Modern Standard Arabic] eh? You can teach him the letters and Fusha if you make the effort and have the patience for example and so on, no! If he reaches 7 and you haven't done it with him, you'll never get it back.*

6: *It's what I see now.*

2: *You can no longer teach him Arabic and you can't teach him anything.*

This example shows that the discursive construction of the significance of the language is related to the reproduction of a maternal and paternal model from the country of origin, wherein the

affective and family bond is a primary argument “Why do human beings marry and later have children? Because that’s how human beings, you see, maintain this continuity between generations and preserve a sense of belonging for themselves and their parents”. The parental family nucleus is also the guardian of the ethno-linguistic and cultural integrity of their Arab origins. The model this group defends is based on the extent to which acquiring the language will pass on their heritage and all the related knowledge. According to this example, identities - both linguistic and ethnic -, are a set of fixed and authentic hereditary markers that are passed on. They cannot be dynamic or changeable, guaranteeing the creation and cultivation of sociolinguistic and cultural familiar cohesion. In addition, the group’s leaning towards an ‘authentic’ interpretation of their heritage creates an accommodation of certain common identification markers that navigate between the ethno-linguistic and the cultural, in particular between what is Arabic and what is Moroccan. This accommodation emerges from an association of the community with an ethnolinguistic and cultural identity, which is neither local nor national, but belongs to the country of origin. This would therefore indirectly legitimise the differentiation of the group from the host society in general and therefore the need to pass on the group’s heritage. The parents also assigned a role to HL related to the transmission of values by highlighting the moral, social and cultural benefit required for the construction of their children as members, not just of a macro Moroccan linguistic community but also as members of a community of practice in different settings. In fact, the association between language ideologies and the domestic environment makes the family a particularly important setting for valuing and constructing the HLs of Moroccan families, converting it into an accommodated resource that guarantees resistance against

external competitiveness and the processes of substitution and linguistic assimilation.

Example (2) is from the same discussion Group in which the same informants participated. (The numbers correspond to the identification code of each informant).

3: ولكن ولكن سمح لي على أي أساس؟ واش على أساس أنها لغة القرآن... ولا على أساس أنها لغة

كل شي لغة القرآن ولغة... ولا اللغة الأم وعلى أساس أنها اللغة الأم.  
{كايتكلموا ف نفس الوقت}

3: يعني فيه كايسهال التواصل مع المحيط اللي عايش فيه لأنه هو مغربي وُجا مقيم ف الخارج يعني كايكون... إلا كان على هاد القناعات أنا صراحة يمكن... أما إلا كان على أساس واحد أنها لغة ديال الدين يمشي يتعلمها من أجل الدين فقط... لأنها لغة ديال القرآن هادا منطلق شي شوية ما تاي... ماشي كافي... بالنسبة لي أنا ماشي كافي... لأن يمكن تكون هي لغة ديال القرآن... مزيانة أنها ديال لغة القرآن ولكن هي لغة كباقي اللغات يعني خصنا نشوفو فيها هاد...

5: خاصك ت...

3: حنا فعلا القرآن نزل وهادي ولكن ربما كانشوفو لها... هاد ربما هاد التفضيل ولكن ماشي هي لغة مميزة عن باقي اللغات.

6: إيه لأنها لسان كباقي اللسانيات.

5: الألسنة.

3: كباقي الألسنة بطبيعة الحال بحال اللي كاتقول أنت لأنه... لذلك خصنا يتسمى ما شي تسمى بحال... تم نعطيها شي حاجة.

5: إمتيازات.

6: نديرو متلا... نديرو متلا... بحال الشينو وكايهضر بالشنوية مع أولادو ف دارو وف كل شي وف الزنقة كاتلقاه كايهضر معاه، كايديه إل المدرسة كايقرا الشينوية السبت و الأحد حتى هما نفس المشكل بحالنا.

2: تاني عاود على حساب الدين.

6: كايقرا... ماشي على حساب الدين باش يتعلم اللغة دبالو هو باش كايهضر.

2: وهو أولا وقيل كل شيء اللغة ديال الأهل.

6: وكايهضرو يعني عادي ف الزنقة حنا كانشمو وكانهضرو ف الزنقة وكانحشمو نهضرو بالعربية كايخصنا نهضرو بشوية كانحشمو قدام الناس علاش لغتنا هادي نهضرو بها حزين يعني أنت و أولادك يمكن تهضر بها عادي.

2: أولا اللغة شوف هاديك خاصو يتعلمها لأنه اللغة د إباه و د يماه ماشي ديال إباه و يماه و صافي و د جدو و جداتو و جدو و جداتو.



3: *But forgive me, what is the basis here? Because Arabic is the language of the Qur'an or because it is the language of everything, of the Qur'an and the mother tongue, or because it is the mother tongue?*

*[They all talk at once]*

3: *Or learning it facilitates communication in the environment where they live because they are Moroccan and come to live abroad. If it is based on these convictions it might be so... but if it is because it's the language of religion and they learn it simply because of the question of religion and because it is the language of the Qur'an, that's not really a good enough reason; for me it's not enough. It may be the language of the Qur'an, that's fine. But it is also a language like any other and it has to be seen that way.*

5: *You must.*

3: *It is true that the Qur'an was revealed and so on, and we see it as something special, but it shouldn't be considered superior to other languages.*

6: *Yes.*

3: *It is just another language like the other linguistics [a lapse on the part of the informant].*

5: *Languages.*

3: *Like the other languages indeed, as you say, because we should. I don't think you should give it...*

5: *Privileged status.*

6: *Imagine that a Chinese person who speaks Chinese with his children at home and everywhere, on the street. He talks to them, he takes them to a school to learn Chinese on Saturday and Sunday, they also have the same problem.*

2: *But it also depends on religion.*

6: *They don't learn it through religion, by learning their language and in order to speak.*

2: *First of all it is the language of his family.*

6: *You see them in the street talking normally. We are ashamed to speak Arabic, we speak quietly and we are embarrassed to do so in front of people, why? It's our language, and we can speak it freely; that is, you and your sons can speak it normally.*

*2: First and foremost they should learn it because it is the language of their parents and not only that. It is the language of their grandparents and great-grandparents, and so on:*

*4: It's their roots.*

Example (2) shows that linguistic identity takes on an aspect of self-ascription and that its construction through the negotiation of such ascription is apparent in the linguistic practices of individuals. Social activities and the interactions that construct them on a micro level are produced and reproduced through language, as we see in this example. In addition, the role of Arabic as HL is related to the fact of being Arab, and with ethnic and religious identity:

*2: But it also depends on religion.*

*6: They don't learn it through religion, by learning their language and in order to speak.*

*2: First of all it is the language of his family.*

This claim indirectly suggests that those who cease to speak the language would be denying their social and cultural capital and consequently their identity; they would be assimilated and would therefore lose touch with their heritage. If we follow the notion of HL (Fought, 2006; Garcia, 2005) and the linguistic ideology of differentiation (Irvine & Gal, 2000), in examples (1) and (2) we can observe how the group negotiates and legitimises its identity in relation to its own daily linguistic practices within the family, and outside, in the space beyond its control. My interpretation therefore necessarily involves considering heritage and language as cultural, linguistic and symbolic capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) and as a mechanism through which subjects can position themselves (Val & Vinogradova, 2010). In addition, the discourse the group constructs around the preservation and transmission of cultural and linguistic

heritage, as well as the discourse surrounding diaspora, clearly shows how forms of the capitalization of heritage are perceived as transcending national boundaries (Guarnizo, 1997). Heritage is used to construct and reconstruct cultural and social values and meanings for the language. The parents stated that their ability to successfully maintain the HL in their environment gave them a sense of identity and of self; the HL is constructed as an accommodated resource for maintaining cultural and social tradition and ethnolinguistic identity for future generations. Another significant aspect in the discursive construction of HL as an accommodated resource within families is Arabic's crucial role in promoting a strong attachment to their original cultures and country. This discursive construction also points to a strong interdependence between languages, country and cultures of origin, including religion.

#### **4.2. Strategies for the transmission and maintenance of HLs and FLP as a form of resistance**

This section addresses discourses of resistance produced by the family and parents that considered themselves a subordinated linguistic minority in a context in which Spanish is seen as the dominant language and HLs do not rank highly in the linguistic market. It also considers how parents exert their agency by defending and promoting the family HLs.

Example (3) is part of an interview with Fouad, a bilingual speaker from the Rif region in northeastern Morocco (Riffian/Moroccan Arabic), and the father of two girls and a boy.

المستجوب: ؤ الدراري باش كايهدرو ف الدّار معكم؟ شحال عندك دبال الدراري؟ ثلاثة قلتي؟  
زوج بنات ؤ ولد؟

فؤاد: ثلاثة. نهار اللي تزدت الدرية الصغيرة حاولنا حنايا ف الدار نهضرو غير بالريفية على حقااش الوالدين ديالنا كايعرفو غير الريفية.

المستجوب: غير الريفية؟ الريفية.

فؤاد : باش حتى يديرو معهم التواصل ف الباكاسيونيس. باش يعرفو يتواصلو مع الوالدين ديالنا مع الدرية الأولى بدينا فهاد المجال مزيان. بدينا عاود ثاني كانقريو شوية العربية هنايا. تزدت الدرية رغم هاد المشاكل تعلمو يكتبو. لحسن الحظ اللي عندهم الوالدين اللي قراو ف المغرب بحال أنا ؤ المرا حتى هي عندها واحد المستوى.

المستجوب: كنت أنتم كاتعلمهم ف الدار مرة مرة كاتعنوهم؟

فؤاد: ف الدار ؤ كانخصو لهم واحد الساعة ؤلا زوج ديال السوايع ف السيمنا كانقريوهم ف الدار.

المستجوب: ولكن الهدرة ف الدار غير بالريفية.

فؤاد: بالريفية ف الدار.

المستجوب: الماكلة بالريفية؟

فؤاد : ف الدار. ف الأول بدينا هكداك

المستجوب: منين كاتخرجو ف البارك معهم منين كاتكونو معهم كلشي بالريفية ؤ لا كايبدلو؟ فؤاد: حنا بدينا هكداك ولكن ولات مع الوقت ولينا نقصو من الريفية من نهار هم اللي دخلو الدراري إل المدرسة نيشان. دخلو الدراري ديالنا دخلو المدرسة ولاو كايستغلو الوقت كتر ف المدرسة كتر مايستغلو ف الدار ؤ زيد كايستغو لهم الديبيريس بالسبليونية ؤ خاصك تفهمو بالسبليونية بحال اللي ولات يعني.

المستجوب: السبليونية ولات غالبية؟

فؤاد: غالبية ؤ حنايا ما لقيناش داك الفراغ متلا زوج د السوايع ديال العربية متلا ف السيمانة ماكافياش، قليلة.

قليلية. المهم حنايا ولات السبليونية كاتغلب علينا كاتغلب علينا. ولاو دابا ف الأول كانو كايهدرو بالريفية.

المستجوب: حتى لاياش حتى أش من سنة؟

فؤاد: نقولك ست سنين سبع سنين.

المستجوب: ست سنين منين دخلو لابريرايا.

فؤاد: ولاو كايهمو لك ما يردوش عليك.

*Interviewer: And the children, what language do they speak with you? How many children do you have? You said three. Two girls and a boy.*

*Fouad: The day the first daughter was born, we tried to speak only Riffian at home because our parents [his and his wife's] only speak Riffian.*

*Interviewer: Only Riffian? Riffian.*

*Fouad: So that there is communication with them when we go on holiday... so they can communicate with their grandparents. We started that way and to be honest the strategy has worked well. Then we started teaching them*

*some Arabic here. When our second daughter was born, despite her health problems, they learned to write in Arabic. Children like ours are lucky: those whose parents studied in Morocco, like my wife and I, to a good educational level.*

*Interviewer: Did you teach them from time to time at home and help them?*

*Fouad: At home, yes. We spent an hour or two a week teaching them at home.*

*Interviewer: But do you only speak Riffian at home?*

*Fouad: At home just Riffian.*

*Interviewer: And at lunchtime too?*

*Fouad: Yes at home. We started to work like this.*

*Interviewer: And when you go out to the park or when you are out with the girls, is all the interaction in Riffian, or do they swap language?*

*Fouad: Initially, it was only Riffian, but over time, we began to notice that they were speaking less in Riffian, right from the day they started at school. When the girls started school and began to spend more time outside than at home, as well as doing their homework in Spanish and having some things explained to them in Spanish, it seems that Spanish began to emerge as the dominant language.*

*Interviewer: Spanish is the one that dominates?*

*Fouad: It does dominate. What's more, we haven't had enough time to teach them more Arabic; two hours a week, for example, is not enough... it's very little.*

*Interviewer: At what age did you notice that Spanish began to dominate?*

*Fouad: I would say from about from six or seven.*

*Interviewer: So when they started school.*

*Fouad: What started to happen was that they understand you but they don't answer [in Riffian].*

In example (3), it can be seen that from the beginning, Fouad and his wife, followed an LP of “only in Riffian” at home, albeit combined with the teaching of Arabic both at home and in other spaces outside the home. Thus, the family implemented a policy of maintaining bilingualism, in accordance with the sociolinguistic profile of the parents and, in general, the sociolinguistic regime of the

Rif region of Morocco, as well as a high degree of engagement with the HLs. However, the successful maintenance of family bilingualism began to decline when the children reached six or seven years of age and started school. This marked the arrival of Spanish on the scene, in conjunction with the home languages, and began to dominate the interactions of Fouad's daughters as they began their language socialisation at school. *"Initially, it was only Riffian, but over time, we began to notice that they were speaking less in Riffian, right from the day they started at school. When the girls started school and began to spend more time outside than at home, as well as doing their homework in Spanish and having some things explained to them in Spanish, it seems that Spanish began to emerge as the dominant language."* This was despite the fact that the parents continued to speak to them in Riffian and took them to a civic centre for lessons in Standard Arabic. In Fouad's case, the entire process of transmitting their HLs during their children's first six years was affected by socialisation in Spanish at school. In Fouad's family, the mother tongue is seen as the language of family interaction and part of their cultural heritage. The process of teaching Arabic, although it is not their mother tongue, is also affected indirectly since the family's priority, from a socio-ethnic point of view, is the transmission of Riffian. The multilingual situation of the family described here is unbalanced as a result of the dominance of Spanish, at least in the daily interactions between the two daughters and their parents and in the context of their socialisation at school, outside the actual classroom, thereby limiting the use of the HLs, clearly generating conflict and tension between school and home aspirations and LPs.

Example (4) Interview with Mohamed (father of two girls and a boy).

المستجوب: أشنو همّ العوامل اللي كاخليو أن دري من بعد شهر من بعد العطلة تايبدا يهضر غير بالسبنيولية؟

محمد: لأنه المحيط فاش كاين كل شي كايهضر بالسبنيولية. كايجي إل الدار متلا أنت كاتحاول تهضر، تعطيه جوج كلمات ولا ثلاثة بالعربية. ولكن كايمشي ف المدرسة كايغلس ستة ولا سبع سوايع مع الدراري. الأستاذة كا تهضر معه بالسبنيولية، صحابو اللي ف المدرسة كايهضرو معه بالسبنيولية. يعني هنا فين كاين، يعني الجو و المحيط هو اللي كايأثر على اللغة ديال الإنسان. أما منين كايمشي إل المغرب كايلقا كايلقا راسو **أبليجي** باش يهضر، خاصو إلا ماهضرش بالعربية ماكاينش اللي يفهمو. فهمتيني؟

*Interviewer: In your opinion, what factors cause the child, after a month's holiday [referring to the summer break], to return to speaking only in Spanish?*

*Mohamed: Because of the environment he is in: everyone speaks Spanish. When you get home, for example, you try to speak two or three words with him in Arabic. But he goes to school and spends six or seven hours with the children there. The teacher speaks to him in Spanish, his friends speak to him in Spanish, I mean, that's where ... That is, it's the surroundings and the environment that influence the language of a human being. But when he goes to Morocco, he sees that he is forced to speak, if he doesn't speak in Arabic nobody is going to understand him. Do you see what I mean?*

Mohamed says that one of the challenges the family faces in terms of maintaining HLs is the socialisation in Spanish in spaces outside the home. The issue of HL transmission and maintenance seems to be of great concern to the community in general, since it is affected by how the children's sociolinguistic environment outside the home is regimented. According to this example, a possible assimilation and loss of the HL is partly due to the overwhelming dominance of Spanish in school and, to a lesser extent, its dominance in other sociolinguistic environments outside the home that are not under the control of the family. Within the context of the family, assimilation appears to be defined as the set of mechanisms through which parents and their children adopt the dominant language of the host society in their daily linguistic practices and abandon their home

languages, thus precipitating the loss of the mother tongue; in this case, a bi/multilingualism of loss rather than of gain. This process of assimilation takes place in different spaces and institutions, where school is one of the most important. Parents' worries regarding assimilation and the dominance of Spanish in certain spaces of interaction, concern the interactions in which they do not intervene themselves; in other words, when the children are alone.

Example (5) Interview with Mouna, mother of one girl and one boy.

المستجوب: وأنتم مازالين كاتحضرو أنيت معهم بالعربية ف الدار؟  
منى: دابا بحال إلى ف الدار.

المستجوب: إم

منى: أنا عندي دابا الدردي ولدي الكبير انا كانهضرك على بلال.

المستجوب: إم

منى: بلال لاحظت بأنه كايهضر هو بالإسبانية معي.

المستجوب: إم.. معك ومع أباه.

عمنى: معي فهمتي منين كايجي من المدرسة وكايلاحظ هو منين كاترد عليه بالعربية أنت المرة الأولى الثانية بحال إلا كايقلب هاديك الطارخطة مموريا ( كايبغي يمشي معك حتى أنت ف السياق.

المستجوب: إم

منى: إلا رديتي عليه بالإسبانية ماغاديش يخرج لك من هاديك الخانة ديال الإسبانية.

المستجوب: إه

منى: أنا كانلاحظ بأن منين كايجي من المدرسة خصوصا هاديك الساعة من الزوج الثلاثة الرابعة.

المستجوب: إم

منى: بحال إلا كايجي مشراحي "mama quiero eso". (كايضحك) أنا كانحاول مانمشيش معه فهاديك الموجة.

المستجوب: إه

منى: كانرد عليه بالعربية عاود ثاني هو مرة كايبرد علي بالإسبانية مانقولش نو (no) له هدر ماكانفرضش عليه.

المستجوب: ماكانفرضش عليه؟

منى: إلا فرضتي عليه ديك... غادي تسمى بحال ديك الحاجة محضورة هي اللي مرغوب فيها.

المستجوب: يعني ماكانتمنعو ما والو ماكانفرضش عليه.

منى: أنا هادي هي الطريقة ديالي كانبقي نرد عليه متلا بالعربية المرة الأولى الثانية وطوماتيكمو.

المستجوب: تاييدل.



منى: كايمشني معي الحمد لله.  
المستجوب: منين تاكون هو مع الدراري المغاربة وداك الشي؟ باش كايهضرو؟  
منى: مع المغاربة بالإسبانية.  
المستجوب: مع أولاد المغاربة؟  
منى: مع أولاد المغاربة بالإسبانية. هذا مشكل هذا إشكال ف الحقيقة  
المستجوب: سواء كانوا ف الدار ولا ف البارك ولا ف الباتيو ديال المدرسة.  
منى: بالإسبانية.

*Interviewer: Do you still speak to them in Arabic at home?*

*Mouna: Now, at home?*

*Interviewer: Yes.*

*Mouna: I have a son; I'm talking about Bilal, the oldest.*

*Interviewer: Umm.*

*Mouna: I noticed that Bilal speaks to me in Spanish*

*Interviewer: With you and with his father?*

*Mouna: With me, do you see? When he comes back from school and he realises that you answer him, the first time and the second time in Arabic, it is as if you change his mind-set, and he wants to continue the interaction with you in the same language.*

*Interviewer: Hmm.*

*Mouna: If you answer in Spanish, it carries on in Spanish.*

*Interviewer: Hmm.*

*Mouna: What I noticed is that when he comes back from school, he usually comes back between three and four,*

*Interviewer: Hmm...*

*Mouna: as if it were programmed "Mama, I want that" (she laughs). I try not to conduct the conversation in Spanish and I answer only in Arabic but he's weighed down with Spanish.*

*Interviewer: And do you not insist that he speaks one language or another?*

*Mouna: No, if you impose anything at this stage, whatever's forbidden becomes the desired thing.*

*Interviewer: You don't forbid or impose anything.*

*Mouna: That's my approach. I try to answer him the first and second times in Arabic and he automatically...*

*Interviewer: He changes his language*

*Mouna: And the conversation continues (in Arabic). Thank God!*

*Interviewer: And when he's with other children of Moroccan origin? What language do they speak in?*

*Mouna: He speaks Spanish with children of Moroccan origin.*

*Interviewer: And with the children of Moroccans?*

*Mouna: With the children of Moroccans in Spanish. Actually, this is a problem.*

*Interviewer: Wherever they are, at home, in the park or in the playground?*

*Mouna: In Spanish.*

The example (5) is another case of how families try to resist the dominant sociolinguistic order as described by Mouna. She confesses that, prior to the birth of her children; she and her husband decided that they would speak only in Moroccan Arabic during the first three years before the children went to school. However, she recognises that it was precisely when her first son began school that Spanish became another language used at home. This last example provides the most ideological and discursive thread of resistance. Mouna constructs everyday linguistic practices as the most common oppositional practices and discourses.

*Mouna: as if it were programmed "Mama, I want that" (she laughs). I try not to conduct the conversation in Spanish and I answer only in Arabic but he's weighed down with Spanish.*

*Interviewer: And do you not insist that he speaks one language or another?*

*Mouna: No, if you impose anything at this stage, whatever's forbidden becomes the desired thing.*

At the same time, this resistance indexes their condition as subordinated linguistic minorities. The use of the Moroccan Arabic as the HL and its promotion in daily linguistic practices in the home can be seen as a strategy that challenges the prevalent assimilative

forces underpinned by the continuous engagement in conversations in which the HLs are used more or less at home and in other settings under the control of the parents. The process of linguistic socialization in HLs as an act of resistance encompasses more than just the transmission of language; indeed, it extends to the cultural influences that affect all aspects of human development, differentiating two main dimensions: how children are socialized through the use of language and how they are also socialized for the use of the language. This example clearly reflects how new and different spaces of communication are created within transnational families (Soler and Zabrodskaia, 2014). Within these spaces, various linguistic resources are used, depending on the symbolic function of the language, its practical status and the degree of control that parents have over the choice or imposition of the language variety used in their interactions with their children or in those that occur among the children. What is clear in this example is that Spanish occupies the children's own interactive space, not only at school but also at home or in other socialisation spaces such as the mosque or the neighbourhood. The ability of parents to control the interactions that occur exclusively among their children is sometimes limited. This situation causes some concern and frustration in the parents, who consider it to be a problem, since the children are not using their home languages with other children of the same origin, as Mohammed and Mouna point out in examples (4) and (5) respectively.

## **5. Discussion**

My analysis reveals that HLs in Moroccan transnational families are constructed as a relational accommodated resource and therefore as a way of structuring and facilitating relationships, which might be

related to communicative purposes and access to social and cultural knowledge, managing assets, and providing access to religious capital. These actions should position the children in a translocal-diasporic space other than their country of residence, along with a sense of identification and cohesion. The value that parents place on their transnational HLs is legitimised and reproduced through the logic of the country of origin, where clearly both Arabic and Amazigh occupy highly significant positions in the Moroccan linguistic regime and also by asserting the discourse of the development of HL's in their ethnic, cultural and religious identities in a minority context.

The examples presented in this article reveal that families negotiate their FLPs, taking into account realities shaped by the desire to guarantee ethnic loyalty and linguistic and identitarian continuity by maintaining and transmitting the HLs. At the same time, the initiatives arising from FLP are also related to social pressures, the demands of education and the imposition of Language Policies by the state and the linguistic hegemony of Spanish in spaces of communication that are not controlled by the families. In the case of bilingual or multilingual families such as Fouad's, who are Amazigh and Moroccan Arabic speakers, the family sets up resistance through forms of management and intervention on two fronts: firstly, by the transmission of Amazigh as the mother tongue and home language; and secondly, by the teaching/learning of other local and heritage languages, in this case Arabic in its two varieties, Moroccan and standard modern Arabic. As seen in examples 4 and 5, Moroccan family discourse assumes that linguistic interaction in the family's HL is a practice that facilitates greater internal cohesion and therefore the integration of the children within the language communities of origin, both in the diaspora and in the country of origin.

Another potential issue in my analysis is related to HLs as a relative discursive and social construction in the sense that FLP is a particular organization of social action. All the examples analysed have shown how the discourses are oriented toward the promotion of HLs and the socio-communicative, cultural and religious interests of the Moroccan community rather than economic or political considerations. In some cases, this stems from a functional bi/multilingualism motivated predominantly, although not exclusively, by questions of ethnic heritage, the family and the community, as well as the desire to offset the power of socialisation in Spanish at school and in the sociolinguistic environment beyond the home. In this sense, one of the central challenges families face is to negotiate a model of language policy comprising varying levels of commitment to maintaining the heritage linguistic varieties on the one hand, and to acquitting the dominant language on the other, in the sense that parental LPs address the link between family aspirations and the requirements of the state and the labour market in which Spanish is indispensable for both. Part of the active agency of the parents in their LPs is manifested in speaking *only* in the language of origin in the home or *one parent one language*, which might be seen as an imposition of patterns of interaction and use of the language. This type of decision was highlighted by other informants, who argued that in Spanish there are many swearwords, whose use would detract from an environment of respect within the family. In contrast, speaking the HL guarantees and maintains respect, understood here as the use of a register without swearwords. In many of the cases analysed here, active parental agency is also manifested in the parental mechanisms deployed as part of the desire to make their children multilingual and able to use the same linguistic repertoire as their parents.

## 6. Conclusion

The analysis reveals that the transmission and maintenance of “languages” and “heritage” by Moroccan families is considered not just a rationalized organization of sociolinguistic regime at the scale-level of the family but also as a means of reproducing Moroccanness as a habitus with its Arabic, Amazigh and Muslim and cultural components in the next generation and in a diasporic context. I believe that this reasoned FLP within Moroccan transnational families is related to a complex model for the management of communicative and identity repertoires. Arabic has many linguistic varieties and develops many functions. These functions pose challenges for FLPs, due to the complex hetero/multi/transglossic and heterogeneous nature of the repertoires in Arabic. Families of Arab-Moroccan origin often have to pass on Moroccan Arabic to their children as an oral mother tongue. They need to teach them the Standard variety in order for them to develop other communicative skills used in formal contexts, primarily reading and writing. Even standard Arabic is often considered to be also a HL that must be passed on and preserved. This complexity in the design, negotiation and establishment of the FLP is greater in Amazigh families, as in the case of Fouad’s family. The Arabic language as capital also fulfils functions related to the ability to carry out socio-religious practices framed in a Muslimness - often associated with Moroccanness and the Arabic language- which is assumed to exist and will be inherited by their children.

Consequently, one of the issues worthy of further examination is the manner and degree to which young people of Moroccan origin contest their parental FLP, the agency they develop in terms of ideologies, new linguistic practices and decisions related to language use patterns in which notions such as age, education,

linguistic citizenship, nationality and cosmopolitanism are relevant. When does the agency of young people begin to influence the family sociolinguistic regime imposed by parents? and how does its emergence affect not only the transformation of the parental sociolinguistic regime but also the social, cultural and ideological family cohesion in a diasporic context, and therefore the socialization model of the family? A final point for consideration is how these young people negotiate and renegotiate paths and identities of themselves, which are more complex than the heritage positions ascribed to them by their parents?

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### **Notes**

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Research Project Santander-UCM. “Socialización familiar y educativa de la juventud musulmana: el tránsito del capital social, político y religioso.” 2019-2021. Ref. PR87/19-22644.

Research Project: “Espacios de transformación sociolingüística en el contexto educativo gallego: agencia de los hablantes, repertorios multilingües y prácticas (meta) comunicativas EquiLingGalicía (Plan nacional I+D+I Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación y Universidades – Agencia Estatal de Investigación PID2019-105676RB-C44).

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