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The language context in Morocco

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The population of Morocco consists of Arabs, Arabized Berbers, Berbers, French and Spanish. The language context here plays an essential role in determining the general state of domestic policy.

A language context is a set of forms of existence of one language or a set of languages in their territorial and social relationship and functional interaction within the boundaries of certain geographic regions or administrative political formations [4; P. 266].

Morocco is home to 33.8 million people, about 60% of the population are Arabs, about 40% are Berbers. Also, Europeans (about 60 thousand people) and a small number of Jews (7 thousand people) live on the territory of Morocco. The process of merging various tribes and peoples into a single Moroccan nation is not fully completed. Therefore, one of the main characteristics of the language context in Morocco, as in the whole of modern Africa, is the presence of languages that are used simultaneously by several ethnic groups, or the use of several languages by one ethnic group.

Describing the language context of Morocco, one should single out, on the one hand, local languages (Berber or Amazigh and dialects, Arabic in classical and modern versions and dialectal Arabic with dialects) and, on the other hand, foreign languages borrowed and introduced into Morocco in the colonial era (French and Spanish together with English, which is international and therefore also gaining ground) [1; P. 63].

The Amazigh language, also called Berber in the Western European dialectological tradition, or Tamazigh, is the language of the most ancient part of the

population of North Africa, living in the territory from the Mediterranean Sea in the south to Niger and Mali in the north, from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Egyptian-Libyan border in the east. ... These lands were Arabized, but despite this, numerous Berber-speaking settlements have survived there.

In July 2011, in the new Constitution of Morocco, the Berber language acquired the status of an official state language along with Arabic. It began to be taught in primary school, used on television and in print. Nevertheless, the Amazigh language remains to a greater extent a factor in the identification of the Berber culture, an intergroup phenomenon on the scale of an urban settlement and a language of informal communication [2; P. 18]

Arabic language in Morocco preserves the norms of the Quran language, thereby strongly associating with Islam. It is predominantly a written language, despite its oral use in education and preaching. Classical Arabic cannot be attributed to the native language of any part of the population: it is not used in spontaneous oral communication and in everyday communication, but remains exclusively formal in religious and political issues [5; P. 7].

The language of everyday oral communication in the country is Moroccan Arabic. It is a dialect that has no standards, it has undergone a number of influences and changes, thus reflecting the evolution of the language in the country. Existing only orally, it distinguishes in itself several forms, the origin of which depends on the speaker's place of residence: urban areas, mountainous areas and nomadism. They also distinguish the Hassania language – a dialect that is more widespread in Mauritania, but captures the territory of southern Morocco. Without official status, Moroccan Arabic is the native language of most Moroccans, with the exception of Berber families. It facilitates communication between representatives of the Maghreb countries.

The Arabic and Berber languages, as well as the culture of the Arabs and Berbers, played an important role in the formation of the national community of Moroccans. They were brought together and united by such factors as a single Arabic

literary language, a single religion - Islam, the interpenetration of folk customs and traditions, joint management, a common struggle against the colonialists for gaining national independence. For fourteen centuries, since the arrival of the first Arab tribes in the Maghreb and the beginning of the Arabization of the region, in the Maghreb countries, especially in Morocco, active interaction and mutual influence of the Arabic and Berber languages have taken place and now continues.

The position of the Spanish language in modern Morocco is limited to small areas. After the declaration of independence, the Spanish language retained its influence in several northern border towns. In the rest of the country, it is a foreign language, often the next most popular after English.

Spanish is found in the educational programs of secondary schools and in higher educational institutions in the departments of philology, but in the areas of Spanish influence, it penetrates into both everyday and cultural life. Here you can find both Spanish publications and programs on radio and central television.

One cannot fail to note the confident steps of English in the language context of modern Morocco. Having no direct and specific ties with language policy either before or during the colonial period, English is considered a purely foreign language. It, like French, opens up access to technology and modern civilization, which makes it a serious competitor to the main foreign language. Today it is studied in schools and universities. It has a significant status in both public and private educational institutions, and in the latter it often functions as the main language of instruction.

French occupies an exceptional position in the language context of Morocco. Appearing in 1912 with the advent of the protectorate of France, it became the official language of many institutions of power "in the course of the purposeful introduction of the colonial administration into various spheres of life in African society" [3; P. 89]. Fifty years after the declaration of independence, the French language is present in the life of Morocco as a link between the African state and Europe.

Without the status of an official language, French has a special position, and it cannot be classified as a foreign language in the conventional sense. It is considered the language of the progressive part of the population, as it reveals the culture of the outside world and serves as the basis for scientific development and research in various fields. French remains the language of literary creation and a tool for the transfer of scientific knowledge. The colonial past of the French language lies at the root of all the difficulties and contradictions inherent in the modern policy of language change in Morocco. It is used in official cases and less often in informal situations (mainly for communication in a narrow circle of the urban elite stratum), it is an instrument of school, social and professional separation.

In Morocco, the French language is not the basis for national-ethnic identification, but performs important functions of interethnic and interstate communication, as well as the language of education, science, modern production, and the media. Having the status of the first foreign language and not being native to the local population, French in Morocco is represented by its territorial variant.

An important characteristic of the language context in Morocco is bilingualism, or rather multilingualism, which generates complex relationships that arise between groups using different languages. Multilingualism in modern Morocco is a reflection of historical events, a logical continuation of the country's cultural and scientific progress and a condition for the successful development of a multinational state, taken into account in the implementation of language policy.

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