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Research Paper

Developing Language

and the Language of Development in the Arab World

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Contents

1- Introduction

The question of the state of the Arabic language, thus, necessitates debate on linguistic as well as multi-dimensional intellectual and socio-cultural issues by highlighting two intertwined aspects: development of language and the language of development. For, how else can sustainable and comprehensive development take place without developing language itself? And, how can we preserve our identity without preserving our language? The development of language, therefore, underpins sustainable and comprehensive development. Moreover, the critique of the state of the Arabic language and the management of linguistic pluralism as well as the management of bilingualism are components of a grandiose project aimed at solving the linguistic conundrum so as to transform language into an instrument in the generation of knowledge, the promulgation of ideas and development in its comprehensive sense.

2- A critique of the general state of the Arabic Language

The current state of affairs and the general condition of the Arabic language in contemporary Arab societies requires a thorough understanding and necessitates a critique aimed at directing dedicated efforts towards the enhancement of the Arabic language's ability to play its expected role in public life. Academic research on linguistics and on the social, cultural, psychological, political, economic and educational aspects of language must transcend the realm of academic ivory towers and bookshelves and translate into active policies aimed at enhancing languages, developing societies and capitalizing on language for developmental purposes.[1] This cannot be achieved without investigating the linguistic scene and criticizing the state of the Arabic language based on the current state of affairs, the changing dynamics and the requirements of modern society and power relations. Similarly, effective linguistic development cannot take place without investigating the Arabic language as a comprehensive intellectual and social system seeing as language underpins knowledge and science and constitutes a cognitive arrangement upon which society and worldviews are based. It is, therefore, important to reinforce awareness amongst Arabic speakers and highlight the interconnection between language and linguistics on the one hand and identity on the other hand. Moreover, it is

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[1] See Amal Youssef Al Azbi Al Sabbah (2006), <u>Dalīl al rasāʾel al jāmeʿiya lil mājesteir wal doctora lil bāhethīn al maʿniyīn bi minṭaqat al khalīj wal jazīra al ʿarabiya</u> (A guide to Masters and PhD theses for researchers concerned with the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula), Kuwait: The center of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula studies. Also, see <u>Dalīl al rasāʾel al jāmeʿiya wa mustakhlasātuha min al jāmeʿāt al ʿarabiyya</u> (A guide to university theses and their findings from various Arab universities), Jordanian University Library. Also, see Idris Wahi (1992), <u>Al izdiwājiyya wal thunāʾiyya fīl wadʿ al loghawi bil Maghreb</u> (Duality and double standards in language in the Maghreb), dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate diploma, Mohammed V University, Faculty of Literature, Rabat, Morocco.
Also, see Amena Ibrahimi (2003), <u>Al takhṭīṭ al loghawi w wadʿ al lugha al ʿarabiyya fil maghreb</u> (Linguistic planning and the state of the Arabic language in Morocco), dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Doctorate in Philosophy, Mohammed V University, Faculty of Literature, Rabat, Morocco. Mohamed Nafeh Al Ashiri (2008), <u>Al mashhad al loghawi al maghribi: dirassa fi ḍawʾ mafhūm al izdiwājiyya al mutarakiba</u> (The Linguistic scene in Morocco: A study in the concept of compound bilingualism), dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Doctorate of Linguistics, Fez University, Faculty of Literature (Al Mihzar). Also, Mohamed Al Ouraghi (2002), <u>Al taʿadud al loghawi w inʿikasātuh ʿala al nasīj al ijtimāʿī</u> (Linguistic pluralism and its impact on the social fabric), Rabat: Faculty of Literature Publications.

important to emphasize and shed light on the role of language in development and the culture associated with human development. Constructive criticism of the state of the Arabic language, therefore, must lead us to study language in a dynamic, organic and bidirectional fashion acknowledging that language is a mechanism of creating and managing culture and knowledge, and is, therefore, an intermediary factor in the process of human civilization and progress. Language is not merely an expression or manifestation of ideas and culture but is also an instrument of knowledge production, development and progress especially in light of modern advancements in information and communication technologies. Language has, therefore, been increasingly conceptualized as an indispensible economic asset seeing as the culture of knowledge has itself become an industry and an important gateway to a modern economy. As a result, language has acquired an economic as well as the cultural and civilisational dimensions which it has always enjoyed.[2]

Studying language from this perspective, therefore, is a study of the relationship between language and man; a study of the fundamentals of thought and the foundations of knowledge. It is a critique of the state of affairs as well as a critique of our characterization of this state of affairs because language is a reflection of the culture, ideas and concepts of those who speak it. As a result, the question of language is an epistemological question in its dynamics and its mechanisms of knowledge production. Mohammed Abed Al Jaberi, for instance, notes that "an Arab adores his/her language to the extent of sanctification and considers it an authority which reflects not only its own strength but also the strength of the Arab mind itself.[3] One of the most important aspects for those concerned with the Arabic language is the extent to which it is capable of absorbing and, thus, developing new mechanisms to cope with modern information and communication technologies and Arabic's ability to partake in the production of concepts and instruments of knowledge. Today, languages cannot be considered omnipresent unless they are widely used in global information networks which will effectively lead to the gradual demise of several languages which are incapable of adjusting to technological advancements and modern information technologies. This is the major challenge which the Arabic language faces today even in its Islamic context despite the fact that over one billion people adhere to Islam.[4] As a result, the dynamism and survival of the Arabic language will depend on its ability to adjust to internal and external linguistic challenges – that is to say, the search for a linguistic balance placing the Arabic language in 'the center' supported by calculated investments in bilingualism and pluralism and, hence, establishing a form of 'linguistic peace' founded upon an aware and balanced linguistic policy, linguistic planning and a commitment to making the Arabic language a language of technology, knowledge, science and development. This study, therefore, is founded upon a critique of the status quo in two respects: firstly, the complications of the

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[2] Hassan Al Sharif (2002), *Al 'awlama wal thaqāfa wal lugha: al qadāya al faniyya* (Globalization, cultura and language: technical issues), in ʾasʾelat al lugha (The question of Language), Rabat: Institute of Research and the Study of Arabization, pp. 43.
[3] Mohammed Abed Al Jaberi (2002), Takwīn al 'aql al 'arabi (The constitution of the Arab mind), Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, pp. 77.
[4] Hassan Al Sharif (2002), *op cit*, pp. 42

linguistic question; and, secondly, the characterization, analysis and ways in which the current state of the Arabic language is dealt with.

a. The complications of the linguistic question in the Arab World

The complications of the linguistic question in the Arab World can be summarized in the following points:

1. <u>Language in public and private life:</u> that is to say, the realities and situation of the Arabic language in its complicated context and surrounding in the Arab World in light of the plurality of languages including classical / standard Arabic, regional dialects and foreign languages. The first question that requires attention here is the dynamism and ability of the Arabic language to cope with and adjust to the fact that non-Arabic languages are more omnipresent than the Arabic language itself and, thus, their ability to challenge the Arabic language to achieve situational or futuristic objectives and change the nature and direction of development and progress to the detriment of the Arabic language and its native speakers. The second question which must be examined is the imbalance which characterizes the state of the Arabic language today in what may be called the 'linguistic crisis' or the 'linguistic conundrum' as well as the effort exerted to address this imbalance and the limited success which these efforts have yielded. These imbalances are a result of the inefficiencies, weak performance, discontinuities and instabilities in the balance between the desire to strengthen identity and the necessities of opening up to the other and, hence, limiting the Arabic language's ability to play a major role in the accumulation of knowledge and skills, expand the scope of intellect and thought as well as act as an instrument for communication.[5] As a result, comprehensive development aimed at bettering living standards and enhancing human dignity in Arab societies is unattainable.

Undoubtedly, the Arabic language has developed its use in public life, the media, the economy, politics and education, nor can we underestimate the role linguistics as a field of study has played in strengthening the language and standardizing and codifying its syntax. This, however, is only natural and must be supported both on the official level and strengthened on the popular level. Nonetheless, on the practical level, it is clear that there exists a situation of 'linguistic anarchy' or 'linguistic chaos' which is most visible in the disorganized state of linguistic duality which contributes to the weakening of the Arabic language in its classical / standard form through the promulgation and expansion of dialects to the detriment of formal Arabic on the educational, media and cultural fronts. It is also obvious that linguistic pluralism exists in the most negative form whereby pluralism does not lead to diversity and complementarity[6] nor does

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[5] Abdel Qader Al Fassi Al Fahri (2010), <u>'azmat al logha al 'arabiya fil Maghreb bayn ikhtilāf al ta'adudiya wa ta'thurāt al tarjama</u> (The crisis of the Arabic language between the inconsistencies of pluralism and the failures of translation), Beirut: Dār Al Kitāb Al Jadīd, pp. 15.

[6] See Mohammed Al Radi (2004), *Anmāṭ al siyāsa al loghawiya wal wad' al loghawi fil Maghreb* (Modes of linguistic policies and the situation of language in Morocco), in: Abdel Qadir Al Fassi Al Fahri (ed.) <u>loghat al haq wa loghat al qānūn</u> (vol. 3) (The language of truth and the language of the law), Rabat: Institute of Research and the Study of Arabization, pp. 407.

it contribute to coexistence between dominant and dominated languages or a situation whereby languages are indispensible, equal and complimentary.

The Arabic language is a strong and structured language with the potential to serve as a functional and global language if its potential is fully realized, its objective coherence is recognized on the formal domain and it is empowered, established and promulgated in Arab societies and, thus, its role in the generation of knowledge and education is enhanced. This can only be achieved by investing in the contextual and psychological factors which formalize and establish Arabic as a formal language whilst acquiring the necessary and beneficial knowledge of foreign languages. This requires cooperation and collaboration between Arabs on a transnational basis to establish and promulgate coherent projects and linguistic policies aimed at enhancing and expanding the use of the Arabic language and, thus, removing any doubts regarding its ability and potential as well as any attempts to undermine its role in society.[7]

2. Linguistic dynamism: that is to say, the interaction and competition between languages which characterizes the linguistic scene in the Arab World where languages compete overtly or covertly. Linguistic duality or bilingualism denotes the use of two languages by individuals and communities in a single context or the inconsistency between written, codified language and vernacular dialects.[8] Linguistic duality in the contemporary Arab World, therefore, creates a situation which weakens the development of classical / standard Arabic and, in fact, undermines formal Arabic.[9] This is due to the fact that bilingualism in this case is the result of imbalanced and chaotic linguistic duality which confuses between the "upper" or "higher variety" and the "lower variety" as well as between the standardized and non-standardized, the written, literary and rationalized (refined) forms of communication which dominate culture, politics, economics, law and the media and the common dialect used in everyday communications[10] to express the concerns and needs of the common layman.[11] This, in reality, is an incorrect understanding of duality which limits the uses of language, prevents it from performing its tasks and creates a situation of linguistic imbalance. Regional dialects play an important role in social tasks related to the daily and local concerns of their speakers as well as with the individual, personal and

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[7] Amina Al Yamlahi (2004), *Al logha al 'arabiya bayn al ta'adud wal rasmiya* (The Arabic language between plurality and formality), in: Abdel Qadir Al Fassi Al Fahri (ed.) loghat al ḥaq wa loghat al qānūn (vol. 1) (The language of truth and the language of the law), Rabat: Institute of Research and the Study of Arabization, pp. 193.

[8] Abdel Rahman bin Faraaj Al Qahtani (1997), *'athar al mujtama' wal 'usra fil izdiwāj al loghawi bayn al fuṣḥa wal 'āmiyya* (The impact of society and family on the linguistic duality between standard and vernacular), in: zāherat al ḍa'f al loghawi fil marḥala al jāmi'iya (Conference Proceedings) (The phenomenon of linguistic weakness in university [education]), at the Faculty of Arabic Language, Islamic University of Imam Muhammad bin Saud, Riyadh, (vol. 1), pp. 81.

[9] Some Westerners and Westernized Arabs compare this state with the state of Latin and languages rooted in Latin which is an incorrect comparison which weakens and undermines the Arabic language.

[10] See Thoraya Abou Saleh (2005), Fikr: mijalat al 'ulūm al 'insāniya wal ijtimā'iya (Thought: The magazine of humanities and social sciences), issue 7, pp. 96.

[11] Abdel Qodus Abou Saleh (1997), *izdiwāj al logha al 'arabiyya fil madāris wal jāmi'āt* (The dualism of the Arabic language in schools and universities), in: zāherat al da'f al loghawi fil marḥala al jāmi'iya (Conference Proceedings) (The phenomenon of linguistic weakness in university [education]), at the Faculty of Arabic Language, Islamic University of Imam Muhammad bin Saud, Riyadh, (vol. 1), pp. 81.

regional / communal integrity of local communities which are inferior tasks incapable of strengthening social cohesion, institutional interactions, national integration, international communications or culture and education. Such opinions which claim that the Arabic language is inherently incapable of expressing the essence of modernity[12] or articulating the concerns of contemporary life and that it is an 'unscientific' language unable to contribute to modern science, knowledge, economics and technology is, at the same time, an attempt to market languages with the intention of undermining and, thus, replacing the Arabic language.

Linguistic pluralism, on the other hand, is informal, non-institutional and unnatural; in other words, plural in form and unitary in its objectives, whereby foreign languages no longer play their initial role in providing the means for cross-cultural and international communication aimed at expanding understanding and increasing tolerance and interaction between countries, nations and civilizations. If pluralism is aimed at and utilized to enrich society, enhance cultural diversity and contribute to equality and complementarity between cultures, societies and communities by preserving their traditions and values and transforming their differences into a participatory process whereby ethnic and linguistic communities can partake and integrate, then it will not pose a challenge to national cohesion nor will it cause tensions between diverse communities and the official state language or lead to its deterioration and, thus, provide foreign languages and forces with the chance to infiltrate society and undermine its identity.[13]

Foreign languages have benefited from this situation and gained the upper hand strengthening their domination and monopolization of language as a result of the bad management of linguistic pluralism in the Arab World which lost track of its initial and intended goal – that is to say, serving Arab societies.[14] This imbalance manifests itself in all domains of public life and its institutions from the media to economics and politics. Questioning the Arabic language's ability and its relegation to an inferior position has been the channel through which Arab identity itself has been questioned.[15] Moreover, the acceptance of a foreign language as the dominant language and the substitution of the Arabic language by foreign languages in fulfilling crucial social tasks, is a compromise in identity and its essential prerequisites. Any state or nation retains the right to defend its language whereas no one has the right to impose their language – voluntarily or forcefully – upon other nations and societies in spite of their linguistic particularities.[16]

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[12] This issue is a long-standing concern rooted in medieval as well as Orientalist discussions which were carried forth into the modern era by such intellectuals as Louis Awad (who is himself one of the most famous authors whose works are in vernacular dialects) as well as Mohammed Hassanein Heikal, Amin Al Khouli, Tawfik Al Hakim, Lotfi Al Sayyid, Abdel Aziz Fahmi and Said Akl.

[13] Abdel Qadir Al Fassi Al Fahri (1999), Iktisāb al logha al ʻarabiyya wal taʻlīm al loghawi al motaʻaded (Acquiring the Arabic language and multilingual education), <u>Abhāth lissāniyya</u> (Linguistic Studies), vol. 4, issue 1-2, Rabat: Institute of Research and the Study of Arabization, pp. 24-25.

[14] See Amina Al Yamlahi (2004), *op cit*, pp. 185.

[15] Abdel Aali Alouadghiri (2000), <u>Al logha wal dīn wal hawiyya</u> (Language, religión and identity), Casablanca: Matbaʻat Al Najah Al Jadida, pp.7.

[16] See Abdel Salam Al Massadi (2011), <u>Al ʻarab wal intiḥar al loghawi</u> (Arabs and linguistic suicide), Beirut: Dar Al Kitab Al Jadid Al Motahida, pp. 102.

3. The instruments through which this linguistic imbalance is manifested: include the media, education, publications as well as cultural and social events. The linguistic scene in the Arab World demonstrates the modality of the irregular and uncoordinated development of these mediums which is itself a reflection of the 'linguistic crisis' discussed above. For instance, why are newspapers being published in vernacular dialects, given that readers are capable of reading them in classical / standard Arabic? In fact, the observer cannot claim to have a scientific answer to this question nor can they justify the usage of vernacular Arabic in the study of literature, jurisprudence or Islamic history. Similarly, one cannot justify foreign aid and investment in TV channels and radio stations which broadcast in the vernacular dialect or promulgates foreign languages on a mass scale whether this is in relation to advertisements, documentary films or sports. It must be noted that, although the discourse used to address such issues as religion, politics and the media, targets the general public and is based on oral communication, it is presented in classical / standard Arabic (the higher variety) when presented or published in writing. In reality, the Arabic language – in its classical / standard sense – is a written language which is seldom used in oral communication. Despite this, written Arabic has remained within the constraints of the higher variety and in accordance with its grammar, syntax and lexicon while oral communication represents the interplay between the oral and the written insofar as spoken Arabic is in accordance with classical / standard Arabic for those engaged in writing and 'refined' professions (for instance, intellectuals when speaking on TV channels and radio stations)[17] – in other words, functions which language is expected to serve but cannot be performed by vernacular dialects.

As for the global scene, there exists an unrelenting competition between languages[18] as is manifest in the 'race' to learn English, for instance, throughout the Arab World.[19] In this context, Algeria and Morocco present two distinct examples which can be generalized throughout the Arab World and are demonstrative of the competition between foreign languages. Until recently, it was inconceivable that the English language may indeed make a breakthrough in the Francophone Maghreb where France exerted influence on all aspects of life for many years. Nonetheless, there is an undeniable rush amongst students of the Maghreb to learn English in an

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[17] Abdel Wahab Al Rami (1998), *'Arabiyat al saḥāfa al maktūba: min wahm al tawḥīd ila sharṭ al ta'adud* (Arabic in the press: from the illusions of unity and the precondition of pluralism), 'Arabiyat al sahāfa, Rabat: Institute of Research and the Study of Arabization, pp. 140.

[18] Competition is no longer confined to the duality between Arabic and foreign languages, but is also manifest in the strong competition between various foreign languages within the Arab World whereby French refuses to give way to the English language in the administrative, economic and political domains in many Arab countries whereas English prevents French from infiltrating other societies and sectors.

[19] Mohammed Raji Al Zaghloul (2004) notes that "the choice between English and French depended on the nature and nationality of the colonising power in the past whereas today, new factors determine the result of the linguistic choice including the language adopted by the authorities as well as the relative authority of these contending languages. In the Maghreb, for instance, there is a slow transition from French to English for the aforementioned reasons whereas the use of the English language in other countries is a result of these same factors." Al Zaghloul (2004), *Loghat al qowa wa qowat al logha fil ta'līm al 'āli fil 'ālam al 'arabi* (The language of power and the power of language in higher education in the Arab World), Al lissan al 'Arabi (The Arab tongue), issue 58, pp. 72.

attempt to posses the key to the language which dominates modern technology and science. Today, the number of English teachers in Morocco is equivalent to the number of Arabic teachers – both of which exceed the number of Spanish, German or Italian teachers whereas the number of French teachers only marginally exceeds the number of English teachers. Moreover, institutions teaching foreign languages are witnessing exceeding demand by Moroccans from various age brackets and from across the gender divide. In addition to this, private English classes have been offered in Moroccan high schools since the previous academic year under the supervision of the US Fulbright Program which fosters cultural exchange and involves a number of American teachers.[20] In Algeria, English has been introduced as an alternative to French which dominated education as the primary foreign language in Algeria until the 1980s. Since the enforcement of mandatory primary education, French became the second foreign language following English.[21] Similarly, higher education was not Arabized in a number of other Arab countries especially in the scientific and technical professions and fields. How can this transformation be understood? How can the speed with which English is replacing French be justified? And, how has the linguistic map changed?

One of the most important manifestations of this imbalance is the organized and systematic support which foreign languages are received in the Arab World – in education, economic, the media and other important sectors. This is no longer confined to the teaching of English or French as 'the foreign language' or 'the second language', but considering it more than just that. Moreover, in recent years, interest in German, Chinese and Spanish has increased; thus, increasing the intensity of competition between foreign languages. Generous support and material and non-material incentives in the form of scholarships, and the flooding of the Arab market with publications and digital products as well as audiovisual material have also contributed to the promulgation of foreign languages in the Arab World.

4. The impact this has had on the Arabic language and on the linguistic map: in other words, the impact competition between languages has had on the state of the Arabic language in contemporary society as well as in the short-term and long-term. Notions of 'linguistic failure', 'linguistic discrepancies', 'linguistic poverty', 'linguistic insecurity' and 'the linguistic schism' have become increasingly dominant in recent years.[22] These notions are associated with the condition to which the linguistic situation has arrived in light of this linguistic crisis. As a result, there has been a call to address this 'linguistic weakness' and the 'regression of the Arabic language' throughout the Arab World. Moreover, several academic and scientific conferences have been held throughout the region and on various levels indicating awareness of the linguistic problem and the increased perplexities between classical / standard Arabic and vernacular

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[20] Abdel Salam Al Massadi (2011), *op cit*, pp. 64.

[21] Saleh Bel Eid (1998), *qarār taʿmīm al logha al ʿarabiyya w istiʿmaliha: raʾi fil tajruba al jazāʾiriyya* (The decisión to promúlgate the Arabic language and the expansión of its usage: an analysis of the Algerian experience), Al lissan al ʿArabi (The Arab tongue), issue 46, pp. 241.

[22] See Abdel Majid Jahfa (2009), *Al masʾala al loghawiya fi taqrīr al khamsīniya* (The linguistic question in the Fiftieth Report), Basamāt, Rabat: Faculty of Literature, issue 4, pp. 105.

dialects as well as the disparities between Arabic and English[23] / French and the emergence of a hybrid language. The issue, however, transcends the mere question of linguistic diversity and dynamics of language. In fact, foreign languages have become a means to social mobility, a precondition of political and economic mobility and *the* language of development and progress.

b. Characterization of the linguistic scene: from description to explanation

Descriptions and characterizations of the state of the Arabic language and the questions associated with language must be examined and analyzed with the intention not only to describe, but, more importantly, to build the foundations necessary to find solutions by investing in the rich cultural and linguistic heritage as well as by investing in the cumulative and inherent potentials of the Arabic language by rationalizing and promulgating language.

Scientifically speaking, the question of language in the public sense can be characterized by its dynamism – on the institutional as well as the individual and social levels; and on the formal and informal levels. As a result, the linguistic scene and the vigorous debates over the linguistic question, the so-called 'linguistic struggle', the choice of languages, linguistic policies and the practice and promulgation of language necessitates analysis on two fronts.

Firstly: the academic, scientific and institutional front which has the upper hand in making and shaping the linguistic question given that it possesses the scientific as well as the practical means to shape and implement policies pertaining to the linguistic conundrum. Moreover, this front is capable of bringing 'linguistic anarchy' to an end. Language must be understood as an institution much like other institutions which require respect, attention and organization as well as material support and authority especially that 'linguistic security' is no less important than national and public security.

Secondly: the public domain which is dominated by literates and politicians and may be monopolized by particular cultural, intellectual, social and economic elites depriving others of their linguistic autonomy and rights as well as appoint themselves in positions allowing them to determine the nature and fate of language through institutions and boards with an authority over language.[24] In doing so, these elites do not serve language nor do they invest in its development or the development of society.

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[23] See Walid Ahmad Al Anati, *al 'awlama al loghawiya: al tadāwul bil ingliziya fil 'ālam al 'arabī – mathal al 'urdun* (The globalisation of language: the promulgation of English in the Arab World, the Jordanian example), in: al logha al 'arabiya wa tahadiyāt al 'asr (The Arabic language and contemporary challenges), Amman: Petra University Press, pp. 121.

[24] Newspaper columns, for instance, are a good example of this characterization. See, for example, *al 'izdiwājiya al loghawiya fil Maghreb: mulāḥaẓāt 'ala mu'tamar jam'iyat zakzara lil tarbiya* (Linguistic dualism in Morocco: An insight from the conference of the Zakzara Association for Education), Al Massā' (Morocco), issue 1373, Monday 21 February 2011. Also see Mohammed Barada, *Al ṭāher bin Jaloun yashtaki min waṭ'at taqdīs al logha* (Al Taher bin Jaloun complains about the threats of 'sanctifying' language), Jaridat Al 'Itihād Al Ishtirāki (Socialist Union Newspaper, Morocco), issue 8189/2006, 13 March 2006. Also, Said Yaqtin, *Bi ṣadad al logha al 'arabiya wal dostūr* (The Arabic language and the Constitution), Al-sabāh (Morocco), issue 3440, 4 May 2011.

Confusing the two levels of analysis undermines our understanding of the real issues pertaining to the linguistic scene as well as to the nature and functions of language and draws attention away from the issue of linguistic development and the role of language in development. In any case, the issue of linguistic structures must not be left to the layman and those who are unqualified or to those who are better versed in foreign languages and those who question the potentials of the Arabic language and believe that it is inherently weak and incapable.

3- Investing in the cumulative and inherent potentials of the language

By the inherent potentials of the Arabic language, we refer to two aspects.

(a) Firstly: to a number of objective realities pertaining to the Arabic language as well as to its various credentials and characteristics. These include the fact that it is the formal language for several countries as well as international and inter-governmental organizations; the language of a rich historical and civilisational heritage; an incubator and pillar of human civilization; a transmitter of others' civilisational achievements with a particularly successful and widely acknowledged role in human history; the language of several nations, ethnic groups and communities around the globe and the language of over three hundred million native speakers and many more who use it as a *lingua franca* for religious, academic, cultural, political and economic purposes. Moreover, Arabic is the language of media of communication in its varying forms, education, instruction, law and justice, the economy as well as the language of scientific, intellectual, literary and civilisational achievements.

In addition , Arabic is the language of the Holy Koran which underpinned its vast and rapid development and spread throughout the globe and guaranteed its preservation and survival. It is also the language in which Prophetic tradition and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad were documented and transmitted throughout time. As a result, the study and understanding of the Koran and the Sunna are contingent on knowledge of the Arabic language – a reality which practicing Muslims and scholars are aware of and actively seek to reinforce.

Combined, these factors and many more beyond the scope of this study are, in actual fact, major strengths of the Arabic language and a determining factor in development alongside the religious, demographic, economic, military, cultural and political factors. Undoubtedly, the Arabic language is the most defining aspect of Arab culture and society and is, perhaps, the language most associated with identity. It is also the language which survived seventeen centuries acting as a preserver and disseminator of the nation's history, prosperity, achievements as well as its failures and malfunctions. Given this historical role in reflecting and documenting the past achievements of the Arabs' civilisation, the Arabic language is capable of playing a similar role in the issue of development today.[25]

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[25] Nabil Ali (2001), <u>Al thaqāfa al 'arabiyya wa 'asr al ma'lumāt: ro'ya li mustaqbal al khitāb al thaqāfi al 'arabi</u> (Arab cultural and the information age: a perspective on the future of Arab cultural discourse), Kuwait: 'Ālam al Kitāb, pp. 265.

(b) Secondly: much has been said about the objective syntax-related aspects of the Arabic language as well as its literary richness for purposes of reasoning and philosophy as is evident in many works on Arabic[26] both in relation to deterministic natural sciences as well as relativistic humanities and social sciences. This is a testimony of the Arabic language's ability to serve important functions as is outlined in a corpus of literature on linguistic syntax, lexicon as well as in works on the privileges and advantages of the language. What requires a lot of attention and examination today, however, is the Arabic language systemic property, its automation flexibility as well as its ability to absorb and adjust to information technologies and linguistic engineering. In fact, the Arabic language shares with other languages a number of vocal, structural and comprehensible features and is punctuated by several regulatory guidelines in common with many other languages; though not all.[27] The study of Arabic grammar in terms of its syntax, the study of its formation in terms of penmanship and the study of its lexicon in terms of vocabulary and comprehension and, thus, the utilization of the rich lexicon in the Arabic language as manifest in the Arabic dictionary can contribute to Arabic language's ability to adjust to the technological leap. Computerized linguistics has added a new dimension to the Arabic language [28] both in terms of linguistic theory as well as the practical aspect relating to information databases, databanks, and language instruction. Moreover, advanced studies of language and linguistics have had an important impact on the development of the internet and its uses: it is undeniable that information technologies today are a cultural and technological turning point which most modern societies are witnessing. In fact, information technologies pose a challenge to all written languages and, thus, cultures, practices and communities by which, adjustments to these challenges has become the only option for any contemporary language, culture or community seeking to survive and prosper today.[29]

4- Developing language as a prerequisite for comprehensive development

With such accumulated knowledge and research in the subject of language especially in relation to the question of the so-called 'linguistic crisis', it is our belief that the time has come to translate this knowledge and analysis into an explanation of the crisis with the intention of finding solutions aimed at preserving the Arabic language and securing its role in modern society; hence, allowing it to survive and contribute to civilisational development and human and scientific progress. This can capitalize on a wealth of academic, educational and socio-cultural

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[26] See: Ibn Al Azraq Al Gharnati, <u>Rawdat al ’i‘lām bi manzilat al logha al ‘arabiya min ‘ulūm al islām</u> (The best announcement of the privileges of the Arabic languages in the sciences of Islam) and Al Shatbi, <u>Al muwāfaqāt</u>.

[27] Abdel Qader Al Fassi Al Fahri (2002), *Al francofoniyya fil Maghreb: man yukhāṣem man?* (Francophonie in Morocco: who avoids who?), <u>Al Ta‘rīb</u>, Rabat: Institute of Research and the Study of Arabization, issue 13, pp. 31.

[28] See: *al sijil al ‘ilmi li nadwat ’istikhdām al logha al ‘arabiyya fi tiqaniyāt al ma‘lumāt* (The proceedings of the conference on the use of the Arabic language in information technologies), <u>Al ’a’māl al muhkama</u>, number 4, 1992, Riyadh: King Abdul Aziz Library. Also, see <u>Al mu‘ālaja al ’āliya lil logha al ‘arabiyya: waqā’i‘ al nadwa al duwaliyya</u> (The mechanization of the Arabic language: proceedings of the international conference), CITAL, June 2007, Rabat: Institute of Research and the Study of Arabization. Also, see CITAL 2009.

[29] *Al logha al ‘arabiyya wal tiqaniyāt al ma‘lumātiyya al mutaqadima: ’a‘māl al munāẓara* (The Arabic language and modern information technologies: proceedings of the debate), <u>Al mu’tammar al dawli li mu’assassat al malik Abdul Aziz Al Saud lil dirāssāt al islāmiyya wal ‘ulūm al ’insāniyya</u> (International Conference of the King Abdul Aziz Al Saud Association for Islamic Studies and Humanities), Casablanca, 1993, introduction.

literature in order to link the study of language and the realms of thought, intellectual dynamism and the production of knowledge. It is important to connect the core issue with its repercussions and deduce results and conclusions which inform researchers of the realities pertaining to the state of the Arabic language and its interaction with its Arab and international contexts. In fact, as Mohammed Al Qabali notes, "amongst the issues which are of interest to the observer and scholars examining the production of knowledge and science is the fact that the linguistic scene amongst us today has led many Moroccan as well as non-Moroccan linguists to engage in the topic in various ways and with various intentions. They, however, converge in their desire to decipher the different threads of the linguistic conundrum and highlight the dynamic mechanisms of this linguistic interaction without ignoring or overlooking the different intentions and objectives associated with this endeavor.[30]

The essential aspect pertaining to the development of language requires connecting rational analysis with theorization, practice and action. In other words, the connection between language, culture, modern technology, civilisational progress and development must become the unassailable norm whereby expression and communication through modern technologies must be associated with the standardized and qualified use of language in a digitalized form[31] capable of absorbing information, storing data and preserving meaning. It must be noted that digital mechanisms have been developed to perform crucial data storage, analysis and processing functions in the Arabic language.[32] Indeed, postindustrial societies, postmodern societies, information societies or knowledge societies necessitate the reinterpretation of the nature of knowledge itself as well as the mechanisms through which it is created, disseminated and preserved in societies where computers and information systems are now dominant[33]. No language or culture or community today can find its place in the contemporary world or survive in modern societies if it chooses to stay on the fringes of the modern information society or fail to adjust to modern information technologies. The explosion of knowledge and the rapid flow of information and spread of technology – all of this has led to a powerful realization of the importance of promulgating the Arabic language and empowering it in its Arab and international context by developing it and reinforcing its position. This is particularly important given that development cannot take place without producing knowledge; and knowledge cannot be produced without language as an instrument.

Consequently, it is important to capitalize on and invest in the cumulative and inherent potentials of language whether that refers to the sheer number of native Arabic speakers – given that languages derive strength from their practical and actual presence amongst native speakers and

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[30] Mohammed Al Qabali (2009), *ḥawl juzur al wadʿ al loghawi fil Maghreb* (On the roots of the linguistic situation in Morocco), Baṣamāt, Rabat: Faculty of Literature, issue 4, pp. 73.
[31] Hassan Al Sharif (2002), *op cit*, pp. 53.
[32] Proceedings of the Third Conference on the mechanization of the Arabic language: proceedings of the third international conference), 24 May 2009.
[33] Nabil Ali, *Al ʿArab wa ʿaṣr al maʿrifa* (Arabs and the information age), ʿalam al maʿrifa, issue 184, 1414 AH (2000), Kuwait.

its usage in expressing their thoughts, opinions and beliefs[34] – or the sheer economic influence Arabic can exert as well as its flexibility and attractiveness in relation to the production of knowledge as well as its cultural, scientific, historical and religious influence.

The discussion of the Arabic language outlined in this study and the examination of the questions discussed above is not a mere case of scientific inquisition or intellectual luxury, but an attempt to characterize the state of the Arabic language in light of contemporary issues and modern technologies as well as cultural globalization and, thus, is an examination of the leap in science and media of communications and a contribution to the study of language in an information age. It must be noted that the rapid developments which the contemporary world is witnessing with regards to media, science and knowledge could not have happened without developing language. In fact, man's ability to codify is most obvious in language which is a key instrument in expression and the codification of thought. Indeed, all other means of communication from oral communication to body language and audiovisual communication presuppose the presence and coherence of language.[35] Undoubtedly, the global mission of human civilization today cannot be achieved without a complementary investment in language – for it is the carrier and disseminator of the cultural and scientific product of this dynamic process as well as the prime expression of these achievements. Moreover, language is the key component in the promulgation of ideas and thoughts and is the safety valve against infiltration by the civilisational other.[36] Accordingly, language is in a perpetual state of dynamism within the context of constructive debate and criticism. But is it really capable of interacting with and shaping this dynamic process? This question, in reality, is associated with the long-standing question of the nature of language itself as well as the identity of its speakers although it has been reinvigorated as it relates to the contemporary situation and future of language.[37] Indeed, the best way to solve this conundrum and enhance the Arabic language's ability to produce and transmit knowledge is to develop it; whereas the best way to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development is to develop the Arabic language.

5- Conclusions
Linguistic development is the primary guarantor of society and social peace and is the correct way to enhance development. It is only when the Arab citizen, that his / her language is safe and, thus, his / her identity is unchallenged and rights and dignity preserved that he / she will enjoy a feeling of belongingness and develop an awareness of rights and duties. Only then will he / she partake voluntarily in the developmental endeavor and participate in the production of the means of development and progress.

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[34] Louis Jean Calvier (2009), Ideologies of World Languages, translated to Arabic by Patsy Jamal Al Din. Algiers: Al Ikhtilaf Publishers, 1430 AH (2009), pp. 21.

[35] E. Benveniste (1966), Problèmes de linguistique générale vol. 1, Ed, Gallimard, pp. 28.

[36] Abdel Salam Al Massadi (2011), *op cit*, pp. 29-30.

[37] Abdel Rahman Yajioui (2003), *dirasa taqwimiyya lil logha al 'arabiyya wa lil lissāniyāt fil jami'a al maghrebiyya* (A corrective study of the Arabic language and linguistics in the Moroccan University), hawliyāt kuliyat al logha al 'arabiyya bi Marrakech, issue 17, pp. 100.

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