

Language use in women's magazines as a reflection of hybrid linguistic identity in Morocco

Dawn Marley

Moroccan women, like women in many postcolonial societies, are under particular pressure to perform their traditional role as wife and mother, whilst aspiring towards a more 'modern' model of femininity. These conflicting desires are often expressed in terms of language use, where French is perceived as the language of modernity and globalisation, whilst Arabic, in its various forms, represents tradition and 'authenticity'. In this chapter I propose to examine the French language women's press to show how language use can reflect the hybrid linguistic identities of Moroccan women today. I will begin with a brief overview of the role and status of the French language, before focusing on the growth of the French language women's press over the last decade, and analysing a cross-section of magazines.

1. The role and status of French in Morocco today

Morocco has, since the Arab invasion of the seventh century, been a predominantly Arab-Islamic country, with Classical Arabic as the language of state and Dialectal Arabic the mother tongue of the majority of its citizens. (Tamazight, or Berber languages, generally recognised as the indigenous languages of North Africa, are also still widely spoken, particularly in rural areas, despite centuries of diglossia and shift towards Arabic.) However, the country was a French Protectorate from 1912 until 1956, during which time French became the language of administration and education, and generally the language of the elite. Despite this relatively short period of French domination, the French language became deeply entrenched in many areas of Moroccan society, and half a century on it is still a significant element in the sociolinguistic landscape of the country.

A policy of Arabization was introduced immediately after independence, with a view to eradicating French from public life and restoring Arabic to its role as national language. This was seen as an important way for the country to assert its cultural identity, and symbolised its cultural independence. However, the Arabic promoted as the national language is MSA (Modern Standard Arabic) and not the Moroccan vernacular. At independence the vast majority of the population was illiterate, and therefore had no access either to French or to MSA. Most members of the political and social elites were more proficient in French than in Arabic, due to their education and the fact that all the infrastructure of the modern state was in French.

For these reasons and others, Arabization proved far harder to achieve than the policy makers had hoped or expected, but by the end of the 1980s the public education system was officially Arabized. French was no longer the medium of instruction for any subject, and was reduced to being taught as a foreign language, purely as a means of communication, not as a language of culture. In 1990 the first fully Arabized cohort left school, with a minimal command of French, yet they found themselves facing a non-Arabized higher education sector, and a job market in which knowledge of French was still vital for success. In the ensuing fifteen years this situation has scarcely changed and in certain domains French seems to be even more important today than it was in the immediate aftermath of the Protectorate.

The reasons for the partial failure of the Arabization policy are many and varied (see Grandguillaume, 1983, Marley, 2003), but one major factor is the continued use of French by the elite, and the widespread perception that mastering French is the key to social and

professional success. Closely linked to this is the perception of French as a language more adapted to the modern world than Arabic, and its value as a means of access to the West. Whilst the generation who grew up during the struggle for independence may have resented French as the language of the colonising power, for the majority of the predominantly young population today, the Protectorate is ancient history. For many people in Morocco today, French does not represent the colonial past, but the global future, and access to French means access to the modern world.

Since the completion of Arabization in the state education system, the private education sector has grown rapidly, catering to the growing demand for bilingual education, and the number of French schools, run by the OSUI (*office scolaire et universitaire international*), has also grown over the last decade. The change of attitudes towards French in recent years is clearly reflected in the 2000 *Charte d'éducation et de formation*, which effectively (albeit implicitly) reinstates French as the language of instruction for science and technology, and recognises the value of teaching French from an earlier age in schools. Although no explicit reference is made either to the French language, or to Arabization, some commentators (Berdouzi, 2000, Moatassime, 2002) see the *Charte* as an acknowledgement that Arabization has not worked. Moreover, some consider that Morocco should capitalise on its 'French heritage' in order to guard against Islamic fundamentalism; Berdouzi (2000: 21) points out that other countries (meaning Algeria) which pursued a more rapid and total Arabization programme, have discovered that it has a number of undesirable consequences, such as a loss of skills, and the rise of xenophobia and obscurantism. Another important factor to take into account is the evolving relationship with France: as a result of massive emigration in the 1950s and 1960s there is now a large Moroccan community in France, and many disillusioned Moroccans today dream of joining their compatriots there (Sabry, 2005). French is very much the language of modernity and of upward social mobility.

It is unsurprising then that French should have remained heavily influential within the Moroccan media. Although the national television channel (RTM) may have moved away from French broadcasts, the second channel, 2M, continues to broadcast a high percentage of its output in French. 2M, formerly a private channel, is generally perceived to be more innovative, forward-looking and open in outlook, its news programmes are regarded as objective and reliable. RTM is perceived as dull and predictable, its news output little more than a joke – in a recent study, Sabry (2004: 40) claimed that young people in the Atlas mountains “perceive Moroccan television to be a mere vehicle for advertising and the platform for a corrupt and irresponsible regime.” The most widely listened to radio station, Médi 1, broadcasts in both French and Arabic, and many national newspapers have a French and an Arabic version. In the mid-1990s, a number of new publications of various types were launched in French, including *Femmes du Maroc* and *Citadine*, the first of the 'new wave' of women's magazines.

2. Cultural and linguistic hybridity in Morocco

The concept of hybridity is a useful one in Morocco where, in common with many other postcolonial societies, new transcultural forms have come into being as a result of colonisation. Morocco is a developing country, rapidly joining the ranks of predominantly urban societies, yet with a large rural minority, which is poor and isolated. In postcolonial Morocco, official discourse stresses the Arab-Islamic nature of society, and the only official language is Arabic. A recent survey of young people in Morocco (*L'Économiste*, 2006) found that a majority (49%) consider themselves more Muslim than anything else, although

only 11% consider themselves primarily Arab. However, Moroccan identity is not simply Arab-Islamic; the country is African and Mediterranean, with indigenous Berber and Nomad cultures, as well as later European cultural influences. For many Moroccans daily life is a constant mixing of the different cultural forms and models available.

This may express itself in a wide variety of dress styles: many professional women will wear western style clothing to work, but might wear a more traditional style at home. Both 'modern' and 'traditional' Islamic styles are available, as well as Western and 'westernised' styles. This is clearly visible in the front covers and fashion pages of women's magazines, where *djellabas* and caftans alternate with the latest European styles. Interestingly, though, there are few headscarves: apart from the poor rural women in feature articles about various education and health initiatives in rural communities, the women in these magazines are almost always bare-headed.

In terms of language, code-switching is widespread, not only among the growing middle classes, who may consciously incorporate French and English into their speech, but also among other social groups. Many French words are totally incorporated into Moroccan Arabic, and no longer seem French (taubis, taumobile, chanté [chantier = chaussée], commissariat, congi). In other cases, particularly for words relating to new technologies and concepts, the French terms have become commonly available before an Arabic equivalent has become known (ordinateur, cyber). It is actually quite difficult for well-educated Moroccans to speak without using at least occasional French words, and it is common for people to intersperse their speech with French even when there are perfectly valid Arabic words.

Another factor contributing to the hybrid nature of modern Moroccan society is the changing role of women. The magazines under consideration portray themselves as feminine and feminist, taking pride in promoting and supporting women in Moroccan society, and celebrating the various successes of women's rights over the last two decades. Malika Malak, 2M journalist, said in *Citadine* (March 2003): « Être femme au Maroc, c'est vivre toutes les contradictions de la société marocaine. [...] Lorsqu'une société est en transition, les femmes ressentent plus que les hommes la pesanteur qui est inhérente à toute étape transitoire. »

As their place in society changes, women are creating a new hybrid identity: they are no longer the traditional Moroccan housewife, but neither do they wish to be copies of European and American women. As the Moroccan journalist and author Zakya Daoud (1993: 31) expressed it, Moroccan society is a "cohabitation schizophrénique entre le désir de changement et l'obéissance aux valeurs". Moroccan women are under pressure to perform their traditional role as the perfect wife and mother, and often genuinely wish to do this, whilst at the same time wanting to see changes which would bring them a greater degree of emancipation. Even among young people today, traditional gender roles are prevalent throughout society, as indicated in a recent survey by Moroccan newsweekly *L'économiste* (2006). Yet the same survey suggests that views on sexuality and other issues are often at odds with traditional Moroccan values. This changing, hybrid role is also reflected in the views and images in the magazines.

3. Development of the feminine press in Morocco

The feminine press does not have a very long history in Morocco. As in many developing countries, a high rate of illiteracy, particularly among women, prevented it from being a very viable enterprise until relatively recently. As throughout the world, this press tends to have a rather ambiguous role: whilst championing women's rights in various ways, and giving women a voice, they also represent women primarily as consumers, and focus on 'typically female' concerns such as fashion and home-making. In addition to this tension

between modernity and tradition, Moroccan magazines also try to keep a balance between emulating the successful style of Western magazines and trying to portray the reality of women's lives in Moroccan society. The result can sometimes appear somewhat schizophrenic – which may well be an accurate reflection of Moroccan society.

The first women's magazines were launched in the 1980s, two in Arabic and one in French, but all were short-lived. *Thamania Mars* (8 March), launched in November 1983, and *Nissa' al-Maghrib* (Moroccan women) in 1986, were unlike typical Western women's magazines in that they were independent and not reliant on income from advertising. *Thamania Mars* was run entirely by volunteers, led by a lawyer, Aïcha Loukhmass. She claimed that she launched the magazine in order to help “créer les conditions nécessaires pour l'éclosion dans notre pays d'un mouvement féminin de masse” (Akherbach et Rerhaye, 1992: 143). In order to be useful to society, said Loukhmass, a women's magazine should have three ‘missions’: to inform, mobilize and organize Moroccan women. Both these magazines were serious publications, critical in raising awareness of women's rights and the need for changes in legislation and in society to bring about justice for women.

The French-language publication *Kalima* aimed to “traiter de la société à travers le prisme féminin”, according to its founder, Hind Taarji (Akharbach & Rerhaye, 1992: 60). Unlike the Arabic language publications it did accept revenue from advertising, so in this respect had more in common with the feminine press elsewhere in the world. It existed for just two and a half years (1986-1989), but remains an important point of reference for the Moroccan feminine press today.

These short-lived publications seem to suggest that there was no market for the women's press in Morocco, yet two decades later this sector of the press is thriving, with a growing number of competitors. The competition opened in 1995, when two new magazines were launched, *Femmes du Maroc* and *Citadine*, were launched within a month of each other. Their launch at this time was both an expression and a confirmation of the changes – political, economic, social and cultural - that had taken place in society over the previous two decades. The increase in education and in the number of working women meant that the potential readership for such magazines was higher than ever before, and economic and political liberalization meant the possibility of greater editorial freedom and greater possibilities for increasing revenue through advertising. The 1990s witnessed the launching of a large number of new publications, including a variety of ‘independent’ weekly newspapers and monthly ‘leisure’ magazines, primarily in French. This proliferation of new titles, including *Citadine* and *Femmes du Maroc*, represents an important moment in the development of the Moroccan press when, for the first time, there was a sufficiently large market for these types of publication.

It is also significant that these new magazines emphasised the fact that they are *magazines de proximité* and *magazines identitaires*, in other words, they differ from other – foreign - magazines on the market in their closeness to the cultural environment and identity concerns of their readers (Skalli, 2000: 140). As a way of emphasising this, each magazine from an early stage associated itself with an annual national event: *Caftan* for *Femmes du Maroc* and *Khmissa* for *Citadine*, enabling them to identify closely with Moroccan women at different levels. Nevertheless, by choosing to publish in French they appear to immediately distance themselves from a vast proportion of the potential public. However, the fact that a considerable number of other women's magazines have been launched over the last decade, also in French, suggests that the language is not perceived as alienating. The popularity of this sector can be seen rather as indicative of the paradoxical desire for an ‘authentic’ local product, but the equally strong desire for a more ‘global’ identity.

Over the last decade, a number of other magazines have joined *Femmes du Maroc* and *Citadine*, although these two appear to remain the most popular and prestigious. *Ousra*

(launched in 2001) is more family oriented, and does not claim to be feminist; *Famille Actuelle*, also launched in 2001 claims to be the “premier magazine de la famille marocaine” and tends to focus more on family issues; *Parade*, “magazine pour elle” aimed at young women between 20 and 30; in 2006 *Tendances & Shopping*, “le magazine de la femme moderne”, entirely focused on fashion and beauty, was launched and in 2007, *Modernes Women*, which appears to be a slightly less upmarket version of *Ousra* or *Famille actuelle*. In a widely disseminated article, Hassan Hamdani (2007), former journalist with *FdM*, comments that young readers are not really interested in the same things as their mothers, that they “font du féminisme au quotidien, comme Monsieur Jourdain faisait de la prose: de manière inconsciente”. They feel that the feminist cause has been won, and they no longer wish to read about it, or see themselves presented as victims. In fact, according to Hamdani, they are primarily interested in shopping.

4. Rationale for use of French in the feminine press

Clearly by opting to use French rather than Arabic the publishers are targeting a certain readership: primarily well educated – and therefore bilingual, professional or otherwise socially active and financially independent young women. In this they are perhaps little different to magazines such as *Elle*, *Marie-Claire* and *Cosmopolitan*, which appear to target professional working women. Moreover, historically, women’s magazines inevitably tended to target middle and upper-class women, since they were the only ones with the education and income to enable them to buy and read magazines. In modern Morocco both purchasing power and literacy rates are still depressingly low (2003 literacy rate for the total population was 51.7%, 64.1% for males and only 39.4% for females), so that any publication, French or Arabic, will have a limited readership compared to Western countries. In fact these two magazines have a relatively high circulation by Moroccan standards, and seem to have remained stable over the last few years. Sales figures for 2002 showed *Femmes du Maroc* with a circulation of 19,234, behind its Arabic language sister magazine (*Nissae Mina al Maghrib*), with 36,400 (Korzeniowska, 2005: 3). In April 2006, *Citadine* produces 25,000 copies a month, whilst *Femmes du Maroc* produces 20,097? It can also be assumed that each magazine may be read by up to eight or ten readers (Skalli, 2000: 139), and back copies of the magazines are sold cheaply in book shops and even out on the pavement in big cities, which means that the readership is greater than sales figures might initially suggest.

Hassan Hamdani (2007), suggests that the primary reason for using French is that advertisers prefer French language magazines: there is a preconceived idea that women who prefer to read in Arabic probably cannot afford the luxury items, or even the household appliances, advertised. He quotes the example of a soap powder company which refused to advertise in an Arabic language magazine, as studies suggested that its readers did not own washing machines. Despite this, he quotes Aïcha Sakhri, editor in chief of *FdM*, as saying “le lectorat francophone se réduira comme peau de chagrin dans les années à venir”.

Despite using a language which would appear to restrict these magazines to an elite audience, both *FdM* and *Citadine* claim that they are close to the social reality of Moroccan women’s lives. Although they follow a Western model, it is against the background of Moroccan culture and society, which means the end products are different from their Western counterparts in various ways. According to Skalli (2000: 192), “for most readers, the choice of French as a medium for communicating with Moroccan women is already a glaring contradiction”, since it excludes the mass of the population. However, she goes on to say that the ‘ambiguous compromise’ (Kaye and Zoubir, 1990) on the language reflects the contradictions within Moroccan society. As shown by many studies over the last quarter of a century, beginning with Bentahila (1983), Moroccans tend to support Arabization, but at the

same time do not wish to lose the benefits of being bilingual. The 'schizophrénie' commented on by Zakya Daoud is not limited to the issue of the role of Moroccan women, but exists in many domains, including the language issue. Recent surveys (*L'économiste*, March 2006) may suggest that young people are increasingly conservative, particularly in their religious views, yet at the same time, there has never been a greater demand for French and French style education.

5. Analysis of language use

I will now turn to an analysis of the magazines, a selection covering the period from November 2003 to October 2007, for a brief analysis of the language used and its impact. I will consider two aspects of this: the relationship between language and content, reflecting the idea that French is more 'suitable' to this type of magazine, and secondly, the linguistic style and code-switching, which reflect the linguistic environment of modern Morocco.

Language and content

Since these magazines are aimed primarily at 'modern' working women, and French is widely perceived as the language of modernity, it seems appropriate, at a basic level, for them to be published in French. Moreover, an analysis of the types of subjects dealt with underlines the idea that French is a more suitable language. This is strikingly illustrated in the November 2003 issue of the magazines, which followed a major event for Moroccan women, the long awaited reform of the *Moudawana*, the repressive 'family code' which had, until then, kept women permanently under male guardianship. On October 10 the king had announced the reform which, whilst appearing conservative to some Western eyes, went further than most Moroccan campaigners had dared to hope in improving women's rights. The *Moudawana*, which appeared in 1957-1958, was "little more than a codification of Islamic law of the Maliki school that prevailed in Morocco [and] should be read as the continuation of the legal subordination of women to men" (Charrad, 2001: 167). This reform was unanimously accepted by the Moroccan parliament on 16 January 2004. The text of the law was of course originally in Classical Arabic, the language of the divinely inspired *Shari'a* law. Although the reform passed in October 2003 was also in Arabic, French might seem a more suitable language for discussing the improvement in women's rights brought about by it.

The whole issue of women's rights and emancipation is central to both magazines, and is an issue that is more likely to be expressed in French than in MSA. Women's emancipation, like gender equality, sex education, sexuality and liberty generally, are not subjects freely discussed in MSA, as they are highly sensitive, if not actually taboo in a conservative Muslim society. Enabling women to speak about these issues is also an important aim, particularly for *Femmes du Maroc*, which gives women several opportunities to contribute to the magazine, and this too may be easier in French than in MSA. I will look briefly at the regular rubrics of the magazines, and at the feature articles in order to assess the extent to which the content focuses on subjects which might be difficult, if not impossible, to discuss traditionally in Arabic.

In *Femmes du Maroc* the readers' pages include not only a regular letters page, but also a page devoted to answering questions on 'psychological' issues, and one on 'legal' issues, both of which frequently contain highly sensitive questions, concerning relationships, including sexual aspects, in one case, and controversial aspects of women's rights, in the other. The regular '*C'est mon histoire*' is a reader's true story, almost inevitably involving a

certain degree of discrimination, if not abuse, at the hands of husband(s) and fathers, true stories not normally shouted about in Morocco, and perhaps more acceptable if told in French. Among the regular articles are the 'pages noires' entitled 'et si on en parlait?' which deal with very explicit sexual issues; 'couple' which covers slightly less taboo, but nonetheless sensitive issues, such as maintaining interest in a marriage, infidelity, in-laws and domestic staff. 'Moi et moi-même' tackles problems such as lack of confidence, nail-biting, punctuality and other personal and social problems, whilst *parents* looks at family problems, for example, 'familles recomposées', educating mothers, looking after older relatives and how to prepare children for puberty. This last item suggests that the magazine is targeting a rather older audience than is usual in Western magazines, where mothers of teenagers might not normally constitute the target audience. Finally, 'psycho-boulot' looks at work-related issues, such as 'moi et mon bureau', jealousy in the workplace, female competence and promotion, telling lies at work, disability at work. For many readers, the world of work will be associated with French, and even if there is no longer a taboo attached to women working outside the home, most professional women are likely to find French the most normal language in which to refer to work issues.

In terms of feature articles, *Femmes du Maroc* regularly tackles sensitive issues in its *dossier*. The *Moudawana* features heavily in the time period covered – the November, December 2003 and April 2004 issues all devote their *dossier* to it. Other subjects covered include the highly sensitive issue of domestic violence, and the impossible task faced by women in the teaching profession.

Citadine also devoted a special dossier to the reform of the *Moudawana* in November 2003, and in later issues had articles on a range of sensitive issues, including abortion, female celibacy, infertility and sterility, and male sexuality. *Citadine* has fewer readers' contributions – there is no traditional letters page, although there is a health page with readers' questions to a doctor. There is also the readers' true story, 'Moi, ma vie', which is similar to the true stories in *FdM*. Sensitive issues are also addressed in an 'interactive' way in 'Micro-trottoir', which features the views of random members of the public on a given topic. This is not necessarily on a sensitive, or even serious subject, however: whilst one issue asked for views on press freedom, others asked about ways to celebrate New Year's Eve and St Valentine's day. In general, *Citadine* is less controversial, and raises sensitive issues less frequently. Both magazines, however, do devote a lot of space to information about events and products which would only really be of any interest to a well educated and relatively wealthy, French-speaking audience. In a sense, then, the language simply accentuates the overall message of the magazine, that it is destined for a limited audience.

In addition to sensitive and taboo subjects, it is interesting to note that the magazines do address issues that are profoundly Moroccan, and use French to do so in a new way. Most obviously they often carry articles reporting on projects to improve women's lives in rural parts of Morocco, in healthcare and education. There are also frequent features on the problems of living with in-laws, and particularly managing the mother-in-law. Family problems generally are far more wide-ranging than is the norm in European magazines. Another factor is the way in which religion remains central to all areas of life, a Moroccan reality which often impacts significantly on the way in which subjects are treated, and is in some cases the subject of feature articles.

A good example of this is in *Citadine*, April 2006: *Les végétariens et leurs motivations*. This article begins by listing famous names from (largely Western) world history who were vegetarians, but moves on to Moroccan vegetarians, almost all of whom cite religious reasons for their choice. One woman claims she was traumatised by the 'sacrifice du mouton' so central to Moroccan Islam, and further justifies her vegetarianism by

claiming that modern production techniques make most meat *haram* anyway. One man appears to have gone to great lengths to justify vegetarianism on Islamic grounds, citing the Qur'an, the Islamic research institute in Cairo and the grand mufti of Marseille! Another woman claims her primary concern is political, but concludes that her humanitarian concerns are totally in harmony with Islam. The article concludes piously that the Prophet had a largely vegetarian diet and the benefits of vegetarianism were expounded by Al-Ghazali in the eleventh century.

The best example of religion as the subject is Ramadan. The holy month of fasting may seem out of place in a glossy women's magazine, but it is an unavoidable cultural reality in Morocco – to be unaware of it would be like not noticing Christmas in Western countries, and thus it is covered every year. In the November 2003 issue of both magazines, the fashion pages feature updated versions of traditional Moroccan garments. *FdM* has the title: *Ramadan 2003: caftans, djellabas, accessoires...Tout est là, réformé!* *Citadine* meanwhile has a section on *Mode et Ramadan: jellabas en balade*. Both reflect the fact that many Moroccan women who normally dress in European style may adopt a more traditional style for the holy month, but do not wish to appear any less stylish. The main fashion pages in *FdM* are followed by *Accessoires essentiels. Une djellaba et un caftan pour le Ramadan, OK, mais avec quoi? Bottes, sacs, babouches....* It would perhaps be more difficult in MSA, with the obvious link to the language of the Qur'an, to treat Ramadan as a fashion opportunity. Both magazines also feature a Ramadan cookery special, with variations on traditional dishes for breaking the fast. This leads to the fact that using French in these magazines does not prevent them from being profoundly Moroccan, a fact underlined by the frequent code-switching.

Similar tendencies can be noted in the newer magazines: *Modernes Women* for October 2007 has articles on Ramadan: one on the implications for diabetics, one on the digestion of different types of sugar – neither of them has anything very profound to say, but Ramadan seems to be a useful hook on which to hang information about health and nutrition. The second article is introduced by a sentence reminding readers that Ramadan is actually about religion, but going on to say that it tends to be all about eating – the month of temptation!

It is also worth noting, in the context of the 'global' versus 'local' issue that all the magazines are fairly consistent in their use of 'local' specialists. Thus in *Famille Actuelle* the dentist, paediatrician, gynaecologist and psychotherapist are all practitioners in Casablanca.

Code-switching and linguistic hybridity

Although the use of French limits the audience to a relatively small part of the Moroccan population, it is important to note that the target audience is clearly Moroccan, not French. Whilst any French speaker would be able to read and understand most of the text, there is also a degree of code-switching, primarily into Moroccan Arabic, which makes the language peculiar to Morocco. Code-switching occurs in various ways, and for various reasons, but the most obvious use here is to create a sense of belonging for Moroccan readers. "In other words, context-specific terms are used for the purposes of reinforcing the shared beliefs and practices within a community and rekindling the spiritual bond of its members" (Skalli, 2000: 221). The type of readers targeted will certainly code-switch on a regular basis in their daily lives, even if they do not recognise this, and thus the language of the magazines reflects the language of certain Moroccans, even if it is true that the majority of Moroccan women do not have access to this mixed code.

I will concentrate on a few specific examples from the two most established magazines, beginning with the earlier references to Ramadan. On the cover of the November issue of *Citadine*, the fashion pages are referred to as *le meilleur du beldi* (country, here meaning traditional), whilst the Ramadan cookery feature in *FdM* is entitled *Mon ftour à moi* (the special name for the meal to break the fast). No explanation is given for either of these switches, since none would be needed for Moroccan readers, and there is no French word that expresses these concepts better.

Similarly, a large number of Moroccan Arabic words feature in an article referring to another important festival in the Islamic year, *Aid el Kebir*. This festival celebrates the sacrifice of Abraham, and in Morocco it is traditional for each family to sacrifice a lamb, even if the cost is prohibitive for many. The humorous article in *FdM* of February 2004, *Moi, mon mari, le mouton et la bonne "mchat congi"!!* (who has gone on leave) will immediately be understood by all Moroccan readers, who will recognise the panic of the middle class housewife whose maid has gone to celebrate this festival in her village, leaving *Lalla Fatéma* (madame) to cope with the arrangements concerning the *haouli innocent* (lamb). This humorous article includes around 15¹ other Moroccan Arabic words, half of them culinary terms, and many of them incomprehensible to a non-Moroccan French speaker.

The use of Moroccan Arabic can contribute to a sense of community, a community of educated Moroccans who are all capable of speaking fluent French, but often find that the *mot juste* is in *Darija* (dialect). Examples of this can occur in interviews. Nassima Al Hor, journalist and television presenter, begins an interview (*Citadine*, February 2004) by saying she comes from a modest background but, *hamdoullah* (thank God), she and her siblings all went into higher education. Later on, talking about her job title, she laughs about the way it is translated into Arabic: *mounachita! ma ken natchete ana!* (entertainer! I don't entertain!). The word for entertainer could also be interpreted as one who stimulates, with wine or drugs, so is comical or insulting for a Moroccan. In fact she has a particular interest in Dialectal Arabic, having been the first presenter to use it on national television. She comments that she sometimes uses Classical Arabic words when the dialectal word is too *h'rache* (rough). Examples also occur in the regular columns on personal and family life, such as *La souab attitude*, an article on being polite to the in-laws, where *souab* conveys a meaning not found in *poli*.

Both magazines feature humorous columns about the type of thirty something, dynamic, independent women targeted by the magazines. These columns present an image of modern working women, single or married, who are trying to reconcile their modern working lives with Moroccan (Muslim) traditions. They incorporate Arabic words to accentuate the Moroccan reality in which they live. In April 2006, for example, Chama, the heroine in *Citadine*, recounting how she allowed herself to be talked into meeting a man with a view to an arranged marriage, uses the term *Lmouhim*, literally the important thing, but used here in a sense similar to the French *enfin*. She addresses the would-be husband, who thinks too much of himself, as *ould nass*, literally son of people, but meaning from a respectable family, and then says *lghaleb Allah*: Allah is the victor, in other words, it's out of your (or our) hands.

In November 2004, it is again Ramadan that provides the backdrop for a modern couple who combine their busy Western lifestyle with a show of tradition. Abbas and Habiba (*dite* Olivette) are coping with the first day of Ramadan: the special cakes and dishes are all named in Arabic (*kaâb ghzal, chebbakiya, briouates, rghifates, mlaoui*), while she refers to his mother as *al oualida* (slightly archaic term for mother). Olivette forgets to set the alarm

¹ *Kercha, m'rouisia, rass mechoui, choua, douara, boulfaf, mhamer* are all culinary terms, related to the *haouli*; other words were *sunna* (religious customs), *ajer* (blessing), *hbiba* (darling), *kanoun* (traditional brasier), *saharates* (music variety shows), *souab* (politeness) and *bled* (country, village).

for *shour*, the pre-fast meal, and is reminded by her husband of her ‘Cartesian’ education: “mais où avais-tu donc la tête? A moins qu’à la Mission française, on trouve ça *beldi* de se lever pour le *shour*?” When Olivette’s mother arrives in the evening, she feels ignored by her son-in-law (obsessively watching the clock), and says: “A *ouldi*, tu manqueras pas un peu de *souab* par hasard?” She then refers to him as a *bouhali* – an ascetic, or holy man. As they wait for others to arrive to break the fast, Olivette worries that “Il reste une minute pour la *zouaga* (the siren that lets people in towns know it is time to end the fast) et quand ça va sonner, j’ai bien peur que Abbas ne fasse table rase les trois quarts du *ftour*.”

Sometimes Classical Arabic is also used, particularly in a legal context, for example when talking about the reform of the *Moudawana*: terms such as *wilaya* (guardianship), *sadaq* (dowry), *khol’* and *tamlik* (wife’s right to divorce) all refer to aspects of Islamic law, and do not necessarily have adequate translations in French. The ‘connaissez vos droits’ page in *FdM* regularly features such terms, as do feature articles on the *Moudawana* and various aspects of women’s rights.

Borrowings from English

Briefly worthy of mention is the fact that there are numerous borrowings from English. This is in large part simply because English is perceived, as in many places, as the ultimate language of modernity, and incorporating English words into the text make it appear even more modern. It also assumes that the target audience will recognise and understand these words. In the April 2006 issue of *FdM*, the words “*morrocan touch*” featured on the front cover and numerous times in a dossier about Moroccan fashion week – unfortunately with the wrong spelling every single time. The front cover of *FdM* for November 2004 bore the legend *Mode in Londres. Do you speak Caftan?* and the fashion pages featured a model in caftans posing around London, followed by an article about the fashion industry in London, beginning with the sentence: “*Underdressed jusqu’au bout des ongles, la rue londonienne surprend aux entournures côté fashion.*”

This use of English in fashion articles is extremely noticeable in the October 2007 issue of *Modernes Women: le skinny, working girl, le jean slim, le look vintage, fait son come-back, ‘oversize’, flashy, baggy, “very sophisticated”*.

Finally, a clever *jeu de mots* combining Moroccan Arabic and English. A little feature in *FdM* November 2004 about British babouches reads: *Anglo-mania quand tu nous prends, même nos babouches s’inclinent! Elles sont So Fashion façon Burburrys et elles ne quitteront pas nos pieds, briti oula ma british!* When pronounced with a French uvular r, this sounds like ‘do you want (them) or not?’ in Moroccan Arabic

Conclusion

At one level it has to be concluded that the use of the former colonial language in women’s magazines restricts their readership and prevents them from being truly representative of Moroccan women. At the same time, however, it must be recognised that use of Arabic would be almost as restricting at present, given that most women who fit the profile usually targeted by women’s magazines – reasonably well educated, working – are likely to be bilingual. Illiteracy remains an enormous problem for Moroccan women, and means that the majority of older women have no access to any kind of reading material. Moreover, even when they can read, many working class and peasant women have little time or opportunity for reading, and it is not an activity they would be encouraged to engage in. Aïcha Loukhmass comments that many Moroccan women who can read never go beyond celebrity gossip magazines (Akhbach & Rerhaye, 1992: 147).

Despite the progress of Arabization, which has had an enormous impact on the state education system, French remains essential for social and career success in Morocco, and it does not therefore seem strange that French should be the language of a successful publication addressing Moroccan women. It is clear, though, that the French used in these magazines is manipulated in such a way as to contribute to their profoundly Moroccan nature. It is of course appealing to a relatively small elite, but this elite is growing, and with the democratisation of education, young people in cities at least are increasingly aspiring to the lifestyle promoted by these magazines. More and more young women can identify with the use of French and English, and are developing a hybrid identity, where they are at once “profondément marocaines et fières de l’être” (FdM, 100, April 2004) but also enjoy all the benefits of being modern Westernised women. The few examples I have referred to demonstrate how the writers of women’s magazines use code-switching and cultural allusions to create a text which is peculiar to Morocco, reflecting the linguistic and cultural hybridity of the country.

Issues of *Femmes du Maroc*, *Citadine*, *Modernes Women* and *Famille Actuelle* from November 2003 to October 2007

Akharbach, Latifa and Rerhaye, Narjis (1992) *Femmes et Média*. Casablanca: Éditions Le Fennec.

Bentahila, A. (1983) *Language Attitudes in Morocco*. Clevedon : Multilingual Matters.

Berdouzi, Mohamed (2000) *Rénover l’enseignement: de la charte aux actes*. Rabat: Renouveau.

Charrad, Mounira M. (2001) *States and Women’s Rights. The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco*, Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Daoud, Zakya (1993) *Féminisme et Politique au Maghreb*. Casablanca: Éditions EDDIF.

L’Économiste, *Les jeunes d’aujourd’hui*, mars 2006.

Grandguillaume, G. (1983) *Arabisation et politique linguistique au Maghreb*. Paris : Maisonneuve et Larose.

Hamdani, H. (2007) Presse. Dentelles et papier glace, *Telquel* online no. 263.

Kaye, J. and Zoubir, A. (1990) *The Ambiguous Compromise. Language, literature and national identity in Algeria and Morocco*, London: Routledge.

Korzeniowska, Victoria (2005) ‘Gender, Space and Identification in Femmes du Maroc and Citadine’, *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, 8 (1), 3-22.

Marley, Dawn (2003) ‘Uniformity and Diversity: fact and fiction in Moroccan Language Policy’, in Kamal Salhi (ed.), *French in and out of France. Language Policies, Intercultural Antagonisms and Dialogue*, Bern: Peter Lang, 335-376

Moatassime, Ahmed (2002) La charte marocain d’éducation à l’épreuve des langages maghrébins, in Fassi Fihri, Abdelkader (ed.), *Assalat al-lugha*.

Sabry, Tarik (2004) Young *Amazighs*, the Land of *Eromen* and Pamela Anderson as the embodiment of modernity, *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, Vol. 1 (1), 38-52.

Sabry, Tarik (2005) Emigration as popular culture. The case of Morocco, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 8 (1), 5-22.

Skalli, Loubna (2000) Articulating the Local and the Global: a Case Study in Moroccan Women’s Magazines, unpublished PhD thesis, Pennsylvania State University.

UNSD Millennium Indicator Database, online documents at URL
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_resultsd.asp?crID=504&fID=r5&action=print [accessed 19 September 2005]

CIA World Factbook: Morocco, online documents at URL
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mo.html#People>