CHAPTER SEVEN: BILINGUALISM

Introduction

This chapter discusses the various types of biligualism attested in the Moroccan context. It deals with Berber-Moroccan Arabic bilingualism, Moroccan Arabic-French bilingualism, Standard Arabic-French bilingualism, as well as the linguistic interferences caused by bilingualism. The chapter focuses on the most productive type, Standard Arabic-French bilingualism, and shows that this kind of bilingualism is accompanied with a sociocultural dualism. Despite much ciriticism against this bilingualism which is widespread in education and administration, research has shown that most Moroccans find it useful and enriching.

An individual is bilingual if he or she speaks two different languages, and is multilingual if he or she speaks more than two different languages. Similarly, a country is bilingual if it makes use of two official languages, be they national, regional or foreign. For instance, Canada is a bilingual country, for it uses French and English as official languages. Morocco and Algeria are examples of multilingual countries because they use Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, Dialectal Arabic, Berber, French, and even Spanish on a small scale (Hassaine, 1984). India is also a multilingual country for it has several languages, namely Hindi, Punjabi, Dravidian languages, and English.

Most nations are actually bilingual or multilingual although it is not stated officially; however, one cannot claim that every individual speaker in those nations is necessarily bilingual or multilingual. *Perfect bilingualism* is generally rare because full mastery of two languages is hard to achieve. As Spolsky (1988) states:

> *[...] if we count as a bilingal only someone with equal and native command of two or more languages, we exclude the vast majority of cases and are left with the least interesting. In practice, then, scholars in the field treat bilingualism as a relative rather than an absolute phenomenon, and consider anyone able to produce (or even understand) sentences in more than one language as the proper object of their study; the explanation of different levels of control of the two or more languages (or varieties) then becomes an issue of central theoretical concern.* Spolsky (1988: 100-101)

A bilingual usually masters one language better than another, and not many bilinguals have native-speaker competence and fluency in two languages. This is due to the fact that it is extremely difficult for an individual to be fully competent in two different languages to the extent that he or she can accurately use either of them in various contexts and domains. Nonetheless, many people are quasi perfect bilinguals because they are able to use the two languages appropriately in a number of situations, and because they have almost native-speaker command of both languages.

In bilingual and multilingual countries, each language has its own functions usually referred to as 'configurational domains'. It was discussed in Chapters Three through Five, that, for example, Moroccan or Dialectal Arabic is the language of the street and home; Berber is the language of home and friends; Standard Arabic is the language used in education, administration, and the media; Classical Arabic is the language of the mosque, and French is the language of science and technology.

Fishman (1970) has outlined three kinds of relationships between diglossia and bilingualism (for a discussion of Arabic diglossia, see Chapter Three). First, there is bilingualism without diglossia which means basically that a country can be bilingual without being necessarily diglossic. In Canada, where both French and English are used side by side, each language has its own functions and domains where it is usually employed, and neither of these languages is High (H) or Low (L) because, both being official languages, they have an equal status. Second, there is diglossia without bilingualism which occurs when a country is diglossic but not bilingual. This is illustrated by Greece, where Katharevusa (H) is in diglossic relation with Dimotiki (L); but apart from Katharevusa and Dimotiki, there is no second or additional language that is widely used in the country. Another example comes from the Middle Ages in Europe, where Latin was the H variety used in diglossic relation with the rising Romance languages. Third, there is diglossia and bilingualism which is found when a country makes use of a H and a L variety together with another language system. The Arabic-speaking world is a good example: for instance, in the Maghreb countries, the H variety of Arabic (Classical Arabic or Standard Arabic) is used hand in hand with the L variety (dialectal Arabic); in addition, French and Berber are widespread, with each language and variety having its own domains where it is ordinarily used (cf. Section below). Thus, although diglossia and bilingualism are different, they "can occur separately or together in a speech community" (Bell, 1976: 135).

There are many definitions of bilingualism. Haugen (1956:9) defines bilingualism as "a cover term for people with a number of different language skills, having in common only that they are not monolinguals". Haugen's definition refers to both bilingualism and multilingualism. The contact of

different languages and cultures may bring about a bilingual or a multilingual situation.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the Arab conquest of North Africa in the eighth century brought Arabic into contact with Berber. The French occupation brought French, which became in contact with Berber and Arabic. As a result, multilingualism emerged. The most common pairs of languages that Moroccans know are Berber and Moroccan or Standard Arabic, Berber and French, French and Moroccan or Standard Arabic, Moroccan and Standard Arabic, Spanish and Moroccan Arabic, and Spanish and Berber. In the sections below, we will overview three types of bilingualism: Berber-Moroccan Arabic, Moroccan Arabic-French bilingualism, and Standard Arabic-French.

Berber-Moroccan Arabic Bilingualism

This is the most common type of bilingualism in Morocco. Berbers are generally bilinguals whereas Arabophones almost never learn Berber; the reason for this one-way bilingualism may be geographical, religious, sociocultural, or educational.

Monolingual Berbers are usually children, old men and women living on the mountains or in the desert. The largest population of bilingual Berbers live in or around the big cities where contact with Moroccan Arabic is strong and necessary. Berbers learn Moroccan Arabic to do business and for transactions in cities; children acquire Moroccan Arabic at school and in the streets.

Today, more and more Berbers are bilingual because of the frequent contacts with Arabic at school, at work, in the media, in the administration, etc. Their number is expected to increase due to urbanisation and rural exodus (see Chapter Four). Many Berber families emigrate to cities like Casablanca, Marrakech, Béni Mellal, Agadir, Fès, Meknès, Tangiers and Tetouan in search for work and a better life (see Abbassi 1977, Boukous 1997, Ennaji 1997 among others).

Berber-Moroccan Arabic bilingualism, as used in cities, is 'compound bilingualism' (involved when two different languages form a "merged system") because both languages are used hand in hand for the same socio-economic purposes, while Berber-Moroccan Arabic bilingualism in rural areas is a case of 'coordinate bilingualism' (when two different languages are kept apart in the mind of the individual) because Arabic is predominant in the public sphere, in schools, courts, mosques, public offices, while

Berber prevails in the rural areas and at home. Notice that "bilingualism here is viewed as a scale running from the compound bilingual, in whom two languages form a merged system to the coordinate bilingual, in whom the two language systems are kept distinct"(Bell 1976: 120).

According to Abbassi (1977:101), 'co-ordinate bilingualism' in this context is more stable than 'compound bilingualism' because a great number of Berberophones speak Moroccan Arabic in rural areas. By contrast, Berber native speakers dwelling in the urban areas tend to be totally Arabised and may in the long run lose their competence in Berber. The general pattern is that in Berber rural speech communities, bilingual Berbers speak Moroccan Arabic as a second language in addition to maintaining their native language. In the cities, Berberophones tend to substitute Berber for Moroccan Arabic, or mix the two languages (see Saib 1990). This is due to the fact that many Berbers also speak Moroccan Arabic in the villages, thus forming a growing co-ordinate bilingual population, while the Berbers in the cities are likely to become completely Arabised and perhaps lose their bilingual ability. As Abbassi notes,

> *[...] it seems that in rural areas, bilingualism is characterised by the acquisition of Arabic as a second language along with maintenance (Fishman 1972) of Berber. In the urban areas, the general tendency is towards the displacement of Berber in favor of a shift (Fishman 1972) to Arabic.* » (Abbassi 1977 :101).

Berber and Moroccan Arabic share a number of characteristics. First, they are both uncodified and unstandardised. Second, they are used in informal situations. Third, they are not taught in schools. Fourth, they have an extremely rich oral literature, with no substantial written records to speak of. Fifth, neither of them enjoys social prestige, with Berber tending to be at the bottom of the prestige scale. Sixth, Berber and Moroccan Arabic have common domains of use; they are both used in the street, market place, family circles, etc. Thus, the shift from Berber to Moroccan Arabic does not necessarily require or entail a complete change in the domains of use (see Abbassi 1977:101 and Boukous 1995:50). The reverse is also true: the change of a domain may lead to a change of the variety or use of a different variety.

Moroccan Arabic-French Bilingualism

This is the most common type of bilingualism among Moroccans who have been educated in French or in Francophone schools since

independence. By and large, all Moroccans learn French at school, and as a result those who finish at least secondary education level achieve a certain command of the French language (see Table 1, Chapter 10). Most of these bilinguals live in urban areas where literacy is high and contact with French is strong. Moroccans learn French for sociocultural, educational and pragmatic reasons; they learn it to pursue their studies in Francophone schools, to do business with French tourists and to have access to information, science, and technology (see Chapters Five and Ten).

As a result, many Moroccans master both Moroccan Arabic and French. They use the latter as a second language in addition to their mother tongue. In big cities, Francophone Moroccans tend to mix both languages or to replace Moroccan Arabic words by French ones in their informal conversations because French has a prestigious status and is present in the public space. The degree of mastery of French depends on the bilingual's level of education and socio-economic background, for the higher the level of education and the wealthier the family background, the bigger the frequency of speaking French and the more frequent the alternative use of French and Moroccan Arabic by a bilingual. These factors determine the bilingual's ability to choose one or the other language in a particular speech situation.

The domains where these bilinguals choose one code rather than the other are determined by the criteria of setting, formality, interlocutor, topic, and mode. Thus, at home, a bilingual uses Moroccan Arabic, while at school or at work, s/he may use French. Formality is associated with French, while informality is linked to Moroccan Arabic. When the interlocutor is French-educated, the tendency is to use French or a mixture of Moroccan Arabic and French. When the topic is science and technology, the bilingual often uses exclusively French. Likewise, for writing purposes, the tendency is to use French only, not Moroccan Arabic, which is limited to casual conversations and spoken discourse.

This act of using one language rather than another is different from the act of switching codes. Moroccan Arabic-French bilinguals commonly code switch between the two languages. The outcome is a production of sentences with some parts in one language and other parts in the second language. We shall deal with this phenomenon in detail in Chapter Eight. A bilingual may switch from one code to another even though s/he is able to express herself/himself in the first language. At times the bilingual is unable to find the right words in one language and feels obliged to switch to the other language.

In the case of Moroccan Arabic-French bilinguals, their language choice is determined also by their attitudes toward their languages. Thus, the more favourable they are toward the two codes, the more they use them interchangeably or alternately in different domains and for various functions. Moroccan Arabic-French bilinguals hold, by and large, positive attitudes to French, which motivates them to switch between the languages according to situations.

In this connection, it is interesting to look at the attitudes of university students, who associate Moroccan Arabic with family, casual conversations, market, street, and orality, on the one hand, and tradition, identity, and authenticity, on the other hand. By contrast, they associate French with work, school, and technology, thinking that it is practically the language of modernity, freedom, and prestige (see Chapter Nine). Thus, attitudes help not only to determine language choice and use, but also to determine the degree of influence of one language over the other (see Bentahila 1983a).

Standard Arabic-French Bilingualism

Almost all previous studies of bilingualism in Morocco were focused on Standard Arabic-French bilingualism, because this type of bilingualism is closely related to education and academia as both languages are taught in schools. Ennaji (1988) stated that Standard Arabic-French bilingualism was the result of the bilingual system of education. Gallagher (1964) also discussed this problem and argued that bilingualism was a case of "institutionalised bilingualism". Mazouni (1969 :29) stated that Standard Arabic-French bilingualism had its psychological and pedagogical consequences on the learner (cf. Chapter Two). Micaud (1974) stressed the role of Standard Arabic-French bilingualism in North Africa as an identification symbol which distinguishes it linguistically and culturally from the Middle East.

Standard Arabic-French bilingualism is intimately linked to education; the two languages are not the mother tongues of Moroccans, as they are learnt only at school. A limited number of Moroccan people are actually Standard Arabic-French bilinguals (25%), basically those who hold a high school certificate or a higher degree, and who speak both languages fluently (see Santucci 1986, Poindexter 1991 and Elbiad 1995). However, the degree of competence in both languages depends on the level of education of every bilingual; in general, the higher the level of schooling, the more proficient the bilingual.

In Moroccan public schools, the number of hours allocated to Standard Arabic, at the primary and secondary levels, are by far more important than those allocated to French. This is why conservative forces complain that this kind of bilingualism is unfair because the two languages involved are not given the same status, since French is predominant:

French

-primary school : 4 years of French, with an average of 10 hours per week

-junior high school (collège): 3 years of French, with an average of 6 hours a week

-senior high school (lycée): 3 years of French, with an average of 5 hours per week (for students of sciences and "letters")

Standard Arabic

-primary school : 6 years of Standard Arabic, with an average of 15 hours per week (and 30 hours per week for the first two grades).

-junior high school (collège): 3 years of Standard Arabic, with an average of 6 hours a week

-senior high school (lycée): 3 years of French, with an average of 6 hours for letters pupils and 2 hours per week for science students.

This means that, globally, one third of the weekly classes are devoted to French. By the end of high school, students are expected to achieve a good mastery of both Standard Arabic and French. But in reality, many teachers, professionals, and decision-makers complain about the low standards of French in public schools. This low level is often ascribed to the impact of Arabisation, which began in the early 1960s, and which emphasised Standard Arabic over French. Arabisation is one among many reasons why many people prefer to send their children to private schools, where French instruction occupies an important place in the curriculum, beginning in kindergarten, as developed in Chapters Nine and Ten.

It is noticeable that, overall, schooled Moroccans with a Baccalaureate level seem to be multilingual, but in practice many of them do not really master Standard Arabic and French very well. Thus, good Standard Arabic-French bilinguals are hard to come by. The main reason for this deficiency has to do with the present-day system of education which suffers from many flaws and shortcomings. It creates inequality and heterogeneity among Moroccans. For instance, those who have attended the French "missions" are generally unable to function in Standard Arabic, and graduates of the Moroccan system usually lack a good command of French. These problems have

negative repercussions on the job market which often seeks graduates who master Standard Arabic, French and at times English (see Ennaji 2003b).

In the following section, we look at the various forms of language interference that are related to the different types of bilingualism. It is noticeable that bilingualism exhibits cases of transfer, borrowing, code switching, and interference. We will focus on the phonology and on word borrowings. These linguistic phenomena appear in 'subordinate bilingualism' where a language is heavily influenced by a dominant language.

Linguistic Interference Caused by Bilingualism

Phonological Influence

Phonological interference is due to the contact between Berber and Moroccan Arabic, on the one hand, and the contact between Arabic and French, on the other hand. The first interference is more common among old people in urban areas than among the young because few children speak Berber.

In Berber-Moroccan Arabic bilingualism, the most salient cases of phonological interference are those of phonological substitution. For instance, the Tashelhit speakers in the Souss substitute Arabic /d/ for the affricate /dz/, as in /dzaba/ (now), /sidzi/ (sir), /sserdzin/ (sardines).

Berber speakers of Moroccan Arabic also palatalise the Moroccan Arabic voiceless velar stop /k/, which becomes a voiceless palatal fricative[ç] in some Berber dialects in the area of Azilal, or a voiceless palato-alveolar [ʃ] in Tamazight variety. For example:

1)

/k/ ----> /ʃ/ in Tamazight

Moroccan Arabic		*Tamazight*	*Tashelhit*	*Gloss*
makla	---->	/maʃla /	makla	food
mknas	---->	/meʃnas/ ,	mknas	Meknès city
ktab	---->	/ʃtab/ ,	ktab	book

In turn, Berber has greatly influenced the suprasegmetal level of Moroccan Arabic, especially intonation and stress (see Chtatou 1997). This accounts for the presence of a Berber accent in the Moroccan Arabic sound pattern.

French-Moroccan Arabic bilingualism is full of phonological interferences. For instance, Moroccan speakers of French tend to replace the French uvular /R/ by the alveolar trill /r/ (see Ennaji 1988, Chtatou 1997). This language contact results also in word borrowing. There are extensive borrowings from French into Moroccan Arabic and from the latter into Berber. Most of these borrowings have been integrated in the recipient language system as loan words. Berber has borrowed a great deal of Moroccan Arabic words, especially those that belong to the domain of religion, agriculture, and politics. To illustrate this, consider these examples:

2)

Berber	*Moroccan Arabic*	*Gloss*
rbbij	rbbi	my God
lustad	l ʔustad	the teacher
lkulija	lkullija	the faculty
ʃhatt	ʃhada	testimony
lfd̲or	lfṭr	breakfast
taz̲allit	s̲la	prayer
lxraif	lxrif	autumn
taħrrat	l-ħart	ploughing

Berber also uses Moroccan Arabic loans for items already existing in Berber. These Moroccan Arabic loans are used interchangeably with Berber terms.

3)

Berber	*Moroccan Arabic loans*	*Gloss*
ajffas	limn	right
azlmad	lisr	left
tawwuri	lxdəmt /lxədma	work
jaggug	ibaʕd /bʕid	far
ʕaħanu	lbit (the room)	the room

Notice that the Moroccan Arabic loans have been adapted to the phonological and morphological patterns of Berber.

At times, Moroccan Arabic loans are preferred to the existing Berber terms because the former are more commonly used and have acquired some prestige. The most significant example is the case of numerals (see Ennaji 1995). While Tashelhit Berber has preserved its numeral system, Tamazight and Tarifit have adopted Arabic numerals starting from number four:

	Morccan Arabic	*Tamazight Berber*	*Tarifit*	*Tashelhit*
1	waħd	jun	waħid	jan
2	ʒuʒ	sin	θnajn	sin
3	tlata	ʃrad	θrata	krad
4	rbʕa	rbʕa	rbʕa	koz
5	xmsa	xmsa	xmsa	smmus
6	stta	stta	stta	sdis
7	sbʕa	sbʕa	sbʕa	sa
8	tmnja	tmnja	tmnja	tam
9	tsʕud	tsʕa	tsʕa	tza
10	ʕaʃra	ʕaʃra	ʕaʃra	mrawt

Table 1 : Numerals in Moroccan Arabic and Berber

Likewise, French has brought into Moroccan Arabic a huge amount of vocabulary relevant to science, technology, and modern culture. It has led to

the introduction of a parallel lexicon for Moroccan Arabic items already in use by virtue of the prestige of French. Consider the following examples:

4)

French loans	*French*	*Gloss*
srt'afika	'certificat	certificate
risṭ'ora	'restaurant	restaurant
ṭ'obis	'autobus'	bus
fakt'ura	'facture	bill
dokṭ'or	'docteur	doctor

For instance, in /risṭora/ the vowel /e/ of *restaurant* has changed to /i/, and the nasalised final vowel has been replaced by the oral vowel /a/. Similarly, the stress has shifted from the first syllable in the French term to the penultimate syllable in *risṭora*. In the French loan word /*ṭobis*/, we notice that the initial vowel /o/ in *autobus* has been deleted, and the vowel /u/ has been substituted for /i/ in *ṭobis*; also the stress has shifted from the initial position to the penultimate syllable.

Notice that this borrowing is accompanied by phonological and morphological changes from one system to another. For instance, stress shift, vowel change, intonation change, deletion are involved in such borrowings, as will be noticed in the examples below.

On the morphological level, some Arabic loans follow Berber verb conjugations and other grammatical paradigms; others obey the original Moroccan Arabic inflectional rules like plural, etc. For example:

5)

Moroccan Arabic /Berber	*Gloss*
lkisan	glasses
lbrard	tea-pots
lktuba	books

Some Moroccan Arabic verbs are adapted to Berber morphological markers for tense, as in:

6)

i-xdm (he worked)

ma-i-xdm (he will work)

t-sllem (greeted)

da-i-t-sellam (he greets)

and to morphological markers for mode, as in:

7)

ur-da-i-t-xdam (he does not work)

ur-da-t-sellam (she does not greet)

In (6) and (7), the Moroccan Arabic verb stems *xdm* and *sllam* undergo the Berber system of affixation: *i*- for first person pronoun, *m*- for future tense, *t*- for second person pronoun, the habitual marker *da*-, and the negative marker *ur*-.

As for nouns in Berber, they usually take the Arabic definite article; all Berber nouns take the definite article *al*-. They take the plural form of Moroccan Arabic as well:

ʃraʒm (windows) - ʈbali (tables)- ʈbasl (plates)

lkrasa (chairs) - lkisan (glasses) -lfuʈat (towels)

Phonological interference is very common due to the contact between French, Moroccan Arabic, and Berber (see Ennaji 1988). The concern here is with the kind of pronunciation of French words that is used by people who hardly know any French. The pronunciation of some French loans is perfectly adapted to the Moroccan Arabic and Berber sound systems to the degree that few people would recognise these words as actually French (see Chapter Five).

Both Moroccan Arabic and Berber lack the voiceless bilabial stop /p/, and the labio-dental voiced fricative /v/. Thus, in the labial series, French includes four oral consonants whereas Berber and Moroccan Arabic include only two, as illustrated below:

8)

French	*Moroccan Arabic/Berber*
p	-
b	b
f	f
v	-

As a result of this discrepancy, /p/ and /v/ are often replaced by /b/ and /f/, respectively in the French loans, as in:

9)

French	*Moroccan Arabic/Berber*	*Gloss*
par-brise	/barbriz/	windshield
pièce	/bjasa/	piece
parabole	/barabul/	satellite-dish
vacances	/fakans/	holidays
veste	/fista/	jacket
télévision	/tilifizjun/	television

Non-educated speakers may use /p/ and /v/ instead of /b/ and /f/ while uttering French loans. At times, /v/ is replaced by /b/, as in:

10)

French	*Moroccan Arabic/Berber*	*Gloss*
la vanille	labani	vanilla
lavabo	lababu	wash basin
valise	baliza	suitcase

Given the above data, we notice that the integration of French words into the Moroccan Arabic and Berber systems is carried out with a slight change in pronunciation.

Moreover, Moroccan Arabic and Berber, unlike French, lack the vowels /e/, /y/, /ø/, /œ/, as well as nasalised vowels like /ɛ̃/, /õ/, and /ã/. As a result, Moroccan speakers of French tend to replace front rounded vowels /y/, /ø/, /œ/ by the back rounded vowels /u/ and /o/ and /e/ by /i/, and nasalised vowels by oral ones, as in:

11)

French	*Moroccan Arabic/Berber*	*Gloss*
l'écurie	lkuri	stable
vidéo	vidju	video
camion	kamju	lorry
pnø	pnu	tire
frein	fran	brakes

The above data reveal that Moroccans with a low standard of French adapt the foreign vowels to the sound patterns of their vernaculars.

Grammatical Interference

These are basically morphological elements that cut across Moroccan Arabic, Berber, and French yielding morphological interferences. For instance, there are words consisting of Moroccan Arabic nouns and Berber affixes which are used to create verbal nouns in Moroccan Arabic, especially names of professions or functions:

12)

Moroccan Arabic

tanʒʒart (being a carpenter)

taxddart (being a greengrocer)

taxjjat (being a tailor)

tarjjast (being a president)

Notice the affixation of the Berber feminine singular markers *ta-* and *-t* to the Moroccan Arabic noun stems *nʒʒar* (carpenter), *xddar* (greengrocer), *xjjat* (tailor), and *rajs* (president), respectively.

Other cases of morphological interference are, for instance, the affixation of the above feminine singular markers to Moroccan Arabic adjectivals yielding new Moroccan Arabic verbal nouns, as in:

13)

ʃffar (thief) ---> taʃffart (theft)

ħmar (donkey) ----> taħimarit (be like a donkey)

drri (kid) ----> tadrrit (be childish)

Similarly, French loans may be incorporated into Moroccan Arabic morphological markers yielding new words carrying new meanings:

14)

Moroccan Arabic	*French*	*Gloss*
t-kwansa	se coincer	to be stuck
t-nirva	s'énerver	to be angry
t-ruda	se roder	to be experienced
t-ranʒa	s'arranger	to made a deal
t-grippa	se gripper	to catch a cold
t-prezonta	se présenter	to attend
t-klassa	se classer	to classify

Here the French loans express either a passive mode (*se coincer:*"to be stuck"), a reflexive value (*s'enerver:* "to be angry"), or reciprocity (*s'arranger:* "to make a deal"); the Moroccan Arabic prefix *t-* marks these semantic values.

The phenomenon of bilingualism seems acute because of the multilingual and multicultural context of the country (see Fitouri 1983:124). It generates code switching, the focus of the following chapter, in which the social facets and linguistic intricacies of code switching among Moroccan Arabic-French bilinguals will be discussed.

Note

(1) Kamal Al Hajj (1976) distinguishes between two types of bilingualism: "integral" and "practical" bilingualism. Integral bilingualism means giving as much weight to the second language as to the mother tongue or perhaps even allowing the second language to be predominant. Practical bilingualism implies keeping the mother tongue as the language of creativity; which expresses aspects of social life, and resorting to the second language to open up to the world and to embrace science and technology. Practical bilingualism entails using the second or foreign language as an auxiliary language without allowing the second language to dominate the mother tongue. For the author, integral bilingualism is contrary to human nature, for human spontaneity can be expressed only by the mother tongue.

According to Al Hajj (ibid), when a Lebanese excels as a creative writer, he generally uses Arabic, and when he writes in French, he uses Lebanese French. However, this idea is perhaps too strong and exaggerated because we know at least one famous Lebanese writer, Amin Maalouf, who won the "Prix Goncourt" in France for his excellent French writings. The Moroccan writer Tahar Ben Jelloun also won the same prize in 1990 for his excellent French novels. Joseph Conrad was Polish and excelled as an English novelist. The world attests such many cases.