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(Moroccan) Mixed Arabic in digital media: A comparative analysis of oral and written practices in Moroccan digital platforms and newspapers

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the transition of (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic from oral to written productions in digital communication. The phenomenon of literacy in written Moroccan Arabic is an issue already observed by scholars, especially concerning the developments of standardization from below (Caubet 2017a-b, 2018; Miller 2017; Pennisi 2025, among others). Discussing the traditional perspective of the functionalist diglossic continuum of the Arabic language (Youssi 1992), this study aims to compare the morphosyntactic characteristics of (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic in oral and written productions through speakers/writers practices emerging from Moroccan digital media production. While several studies have already focused on the descriptions of dialectal elements occurring in different textual typologies, especially in Moroccan traditional media (Hoogland 2013, 2018; Brigui 2016, among others), the present study aims to analyze how a (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic style contributes to (informally) conventionalize a journalistic register, which is continuously employed in online newspapers and digital multimodal platforms. In order to achieve those goals, a corpus of written and oral data from 1) a digital Moroccan newspaper (*Goud*), 2) episodes of a talk-show, and 3) podcast, i.e. premeditated and unpremeditated communication in written and oral communication, has been contextually analyzed. The comparative analysis of oral and written practices shows that a mixed register of contemporary (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic is spreading in formal media Moroccan communication, serving variable discursive strategies.

Keywords: Mixed Written Media Arabic, Moroccan Arabic, digital Moroccan media, stylistic variation, Formal Non-Standard Arabic, Middle/Educated Moroccan Arabic

1. Introduction¹

Abdellah Tourabi, a Moroccan journalist and previously the editorial director of Moroccan magazines *TelQuel* and *Zamane*, describes the journalistic language used in the talk show he presents, broadcasted on the semi-public free-to-air channel 2M, *Ḥadīṭ^{mn} ma'a aṣ-ṣaḥāfa*² / *Confidence de presse* ('Talking to the Press / Press confidences'), as follows:

[...] c'est impossible de tenir toute une émission en *darija pure*, c'est impossible. C'est-à-dire que *darija* c'est une langue qui se traite pas parfois à la fonction, qui se traite pas à décrire des concepts... par exemple si je vais utiliser l'expression « ḥuqūq l-mar'a » ça n'existe pas en *darija*. En effet, *ça fait partie de la darija*, je pense *pas qu'il y a une frontière qui sépare*. Alors, dans la presse il y a ce qu'on appelle la troisième langue, «*al-luġa at-tālita*». La troisième langue, c'est-à-dire un mélange entre *darija* et *fuṣḥā*, l'arabe classique. On essaie de trouver *une phase intermédiaire* entre les deux.³

(Interview with Abdellah Tourabi, 2M journalist, February 22, 2018, Casablanca, in Pennisi 2025: 529).

From this brief excerpt, emerges the point that will be the central object of the present study. Tourabi, in fact, defines journalistic language as “*al-luġa al-tālita*” ‘the third language’, or a mixture of *Fuṣḥā* (Classical/Standard Arabic) and *Darija*, Moroccan Arabic (MA). Tourabi understands the journalistic language, which is also used in the TV program he presents, as an intermediary stage between *Fuṣḥā* and *Darija*, and points out that the two cannot be clearly separated: in other words, there would be no clear boundaries that in journalistic language would delimit *Darija* from *Fuṣḥā* and vice versa. The present study considers the expression (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic what Tourabi called the intermediary stage between *Fuṣḥā* and *Darija*, and in particular the mixed language of the formal journalistic register widespread in Morocco.

Specifically, this study aims to analyze the linguistic and stylistic characteristics⁴ of the Mixed Arabic used in the Moroccan media landscape, especially online, through

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² Transcriptions from oral data report the speeches as they are produced, including the superscript end inflection, when occurring. The program name *Ḥadīṭ^{mn} ma'a aṣ-ṣaḥāfa*, is transcribed here including the nunation because it is pronounced the same way by the journalist Abdellah Tourabi during his talk-show.

³ '[...] it's impossible to do a whole program in pure *Darija*, it's impossible. This means that *Darija* is a language that is not necessarily used to describe concepts... for example, if I use the expression “ḥuqūq l-mar'a”, it doesn't exist in *Darija*. Indeed, it's part of *Darija*, I don't think there's a border separating it. Then, in the press there's a so-called third language, “*al-luġa at-tālita*”. The third language, a mix between *Darija* and *Fuṣḥā*, Classical Arabic. We try to find an intermediate phase between the two.’ Emphasis added. See the entire interview in Pennisi (2025: 525-538).

⁴ In the present study we differentiate “linguistic characteristics” – which refer to morphosyntactic items – from “stylistic characteristics”, by which we mean, instead, the ways of being of discourse, borrowing Fairclough's analytical approach in analyzing social and ideological representations of discourse (Fairclough

a comparative analysis of oral and written, premeditated and unpremeditated practices⁵. A comparative analysis of linguistic practices in both oral and written communicative modes allows us to move beyond the functionalist view of diglossia, which traditionally sees Standard Arabic as a variety used only in written productions and separated from colloquial varieties used only in ordinary oral communications, as originally pointed out by Ferguson (1959). The functionalist perspective of diglossia marks most of the later studies, albeit in terms of a linguistic continuum (Blanc 1960; Badawī 1973; Meiseles 1980; Walters 1996; Hudson 1992, 1994, 2002; Haeri 2000, 2003; Kaye 2001; Boussofara-Omar 2006; Khalil 2018, 2022), and even ideologically in the linguistic representations of Arabic-speaking speakers (Brustad 2017).

The present study, therefore, aims to analyze the communicative strategies implemented by speakers of Mixed Arabic in the context of premeditated and unpremeditated journalistic communication in Morocco. The oral data were analyzed taking into consideration Youssi's (1992) description of the variety of "Arabe Marocain Moderne", i.e. Modern Moroccan Arabic (MMA henceforth), as a reference model of the formal oral language in Morocco. As for written Moroccan Arabic, the topic of transition from oral to written *Darija* has been well researched (Aguadé 2006, 2012; Benítez-Fernández 2008; Hoogland 2013, 2018; Brigui 2016; Kebede & Hinds 2016; Caubet 2017 a, 2017 b, 2018; Miller 2017; Pennisi 2025), especially in the context of the most famous *Darija* editorial productions. This study makes one step further, since it approaches the issue of non-Standard varieties of Arabic in Morocco through the perspective of "mixed styles" which Mejdell (2006) used to describe the linguistic situation in Egypt, comparing both written and oral productions. This comparative approach makes it possible to observe communicative strategies, as well as the morphosyntactic and lexical features that have become conventionalized in the formal oral journalistic register (Youssi 1992). These features, along with their associated communicative strategies, tend to be reproduced and/or represented in written texts as well, where they are now increasingly widespread, particularly in digital communication.

Prior to presenting the results of the comparative analysis, this study contextualizes the theoretical framework of linguistic variation in Arabic, with attention also to pragmatic and stylistic aspects in both oral and written production. The study then outlines the discourse analysis methodology and the description of selected corpus, before presenting the results of the analysis.

2003:26-28). Through this perspective, in fact, it is possible to analyze the different registers and styles of Arabic, taking into consideration both the strictly linguistic dimension (description and distribution of the morphosyntactic features being examined) and the stylistic dimension (registers of Arabic) as well as its social meaning (i.e. what and how a given linguistic and stylistic choice impacts and creates social meaning). Moving beyond the almost always dichotomous distinction between standard Arabic and colloquial varieties, Mixed Arabic is here considered not as a variety of Arabic, but a style that represents a way of being of speech.

⁵ While premeditated practices involve planned and structurally controlled language use, unpremeditated practices rely on spontaneous and more fluid speech patterns (Eagleson 1958: 153-154).

2. Theoretical contextualization

The concept of “Third Language” (*al-luġa al-tālīṭa*) evoked earlier by the Moroccan journalist’s words, can be situated within the framework of linguistic variation. It was adopted by Arab writers in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly by the Egyptian playwright Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm (Avallone 2017). According to him, texts can be deliberately written in a Third Language appearing uniform to the norms of Classical Arabic, but performed as colloquial Arabic (Badawi 1985: 15-16). In other words, the written Third Language text is bivalent, because it can be read as Classical Arabic, but performed as non-Standard/colloquial Arabic as well. This sort of intermediary level, has long been described by scholars, not only as *al-‘arabiyya al-wuṣṭā*, but also as ESA, or Educated Spoken Arabic (Mitchell 1986), which, however, was applied to only oral communication. As Badawi states:

The very label itself, ESA, is variously applied to (a) spoken Arabic used by an educated Arab while conversing with an Arab from a different country, (b) spoken Arabic used by educated nationals of the same Arab country on subjects pertaining to their level of education and culture, and (c) the variety used by educated Arabic speakers coming from different Arab countries or from the same country to communicate with one another. (Badawi 1985:16)

Before digital communication, written (and journalistic) texts in non-Standard forms were linked only to sporadic ideologically and politically motivated editorial productions⁶ (Zack 2014). Nowadays, however, texts written in non-Standard Arabic are extremely popular online and thus enjoy greater visibility. These texts show “a new, variable, pluralistic, multilayered concept of (one) Arabic in which boundaries are erased” (Mejdell 2022: 119).

In the case of Morocco, Youssi (1992: 23-25) described this intermediate register as “Modern Moroccan Arabic”, which, according to him, represents the: “model of the Standard variety of orality [...] the variety of formal situations of oral exchange [...] the medium used on radio and television”. Building on this definition, it is possible to identify at least three registers of Arabic in Morocco: Classical Arabic and/or Modern Literal Arabic for the communicative modality of the written language, Moroccan Arabic for the informal oral modality, and MMA, the intermediate variety, for the formal oral modality. His approach reflects a traditional functionalist perspective, which does not conceive of MMA as a written language. Today, however, digital Moroccan space is also witnessing a growing use of non-Standard Arabic for writing not only informal, but also formal texts.

Regarding the distinction between oral and written communication, the concept of “permanence” (Sebba 2012) is relevant. Sebba states:

‘*Permanence*’, though the term is not completely satisfactory, is a factor which distinguishes many written texts from spoken ones. Texts in spoken genres by their nature tend not to be

⁶ See for example, among the most famous ones, the editorial production of *Abū Naḍḍāra*, lit. ‘the man with glasses’, a satirical newspaper founded by Ya‘qūb Ṣanū‘ (1839-1912), where Egyptian Arabic was used in writing (Zack 2014). For more details in other countries see also Langone (2016) and Miller (2017).

permanent, while texts in written genres, up to the age of the Internet, mainly had some degree of permanence. [...] to fully understand language mixing in written texts we need to know not only by whom and for whom they are produced, but how they are produced and how they will be read. (Sebba 2012: 7-8)

The concept of “Permanence” from Sebba is, therefore, relevant for observing whether or not elements of oral practices are maintained in written practices in (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic, and is therefore useful for interpreting pragmatic functions through a “contextual analysis” (van Dijk 2008), in which the communicative context of language mixing is taken into account.

3. Methodology and corpus description

The comparative analysis was conducted taking into account what Adam, in the context of journalistic texts, defines as the three levels of pragmatic organization:

Trois plans de l’organisation pragmatique peuvent être distingués : la visée illocutoire (valeur et force des actes de discours), la prise en charge énonciative des propositions et la représentation construite ou « monde » du texte.⁷ (Adam 1997: 16)

These levels provide insight into how a text constructs meaning according to its communicative intentionality and its enunciative configuration. In Adam’s model, the *visée illocutoire* refers to the overarching communicative purpose of the text, i.e. what guides the overall construction of the text, orienting the choice of discursive genres, linguistic registers and rhetorical strategies. The second level analyzes the position of the speaker with respect to the statements in the text (e.g., fully assuming an utterance, distancing oneself, delegating responsibility to someone else), influencing the credibility, apparent neutrality, or involvement of the text in relation to its content. The third level concerns the semantic-discursive construction of the content, i.e. the world represented by the text, presenting facts, actors, events, places, temporalities, causes, consequences, causal relations, implicit evaluations, and possible future scenarios.

These three aspects have been observed in the selected corpus of the present study to distinguish how linguistic variation impacts the illocutionary force of speech acts in (premeditated and unpremeditated) oral communication. This influence is mediated by different communicative strategies – such as ‘grounding’ (Khalil 2000), i.e. the process by which a text signals which information is central, new, or relevant and which information is incidental, taken for granted or background – and rhetorical tactics, including repetition, we/you polarization, and the use of religious or patriotic language (Mazraani 2008). Furthermore, the analysis shows how Mixed Arabic styles function as communicative tools to enhance the effectiveness of discourse in (written and oral) premeditated text.

⁷ ‘Three levels of pragmatic organization can be distinguished: the illocutionary aim (value and force of speech acts), the enunciative assumption of responsibility for propositions, and the constructed representation or “world” of the text.’

The corpus used in this study comprises three sub-corpora, each representing a different source of data. The first one includes the recording of the episode of the TV talk show broadcasted on the channel 2M, *Ḥadīṭ^{um} ma'a aṣ-ṣaḥāfa*, titled *Waḍ'iyyat ḥuqūq al-ʾinsān wa-l-ḥurriyyāt bi-l-Mağrib riḥqat Muṣṭafā al-Ramīd*, 'The situation of human rights and freedoms in Morocco, with Mustafa Ramid'.⁸ The program is presented by Abdellah Tourabi who interviews the main guest of the episode, with the support of two other journalists, always different in each episode. The episode transcript represents the oral corpus of the unpremeditated communication (one hour of recording).

The second one consists of the oral corpus of premeditated communication and covers 11 episodes of the podcast produced and disseminated on the multimodal information platform *Hawāmiš* (hawamich.info), selected from the column, featuring cultural life *ʾalā hāmiš al-ṭaqāfa* (lit. 'On the margins of culture'). The total length of the episodes is about one hour and thirty-five minutes. *Hawāmiš* podcasts are published alongside their corresponding written articles or reports. The data collected in this section of the corpus is considered premeditated because the narrative voice of the podcast episodes reads/interprets the corresponding written articles. The written texts of the articles from which the narrative voice records the podcasts were also analyzed and compared along with the premeditated oral data.

Finally, the third source was the corpus of written texts (premeditated communication). It includes 76,026 words, or 346 articles selected by the online journal *Goud* from all columns (three articles per month from January to December 2016).⁹

All data were previously analyzed quantitatively: the most frequent morphosyntactic features clearly belonging to the repertoire of non-Standard Arabic were subsequently analyzed in terms of their function and distribution across different textual and communicative contexts. The non-Standard Arabic features include: verbal morphology (the occurrences of suffixal and prefixal conjugation of *Darija*' repertoire), nominal negation (occurrences of *māšī* 'it is not') and verbal negation (occurrences of discontinuous negation *mā-* -š), possession and annexation through the use of the preposition *dyāl* 'of', and the use of the relative sentence introduced by the relative pronoun *llī* (invariable pronoun in *Darija*) in variation with *allaḍī* and its morphological variants (from Standard Arabic). The following comparative analysis presents the MMA traits in their textual and discursive context, in both oral and written modes of communication.

4. Analysis

4.1. Oral corpus: unpremeditated speech

The first part of the analysis concerns the unpremeditated oral texts from the talk show *Ḥadīṭ^{um} ma'a aṣ-ṣaḥāfa*. Journalist Abdellah Tourabi opens the broadcast as shown in (1) and (2), below:

⁸ The episode is available on the official YouTube page of the 2M television network, at the following link <https://youtu.be/IN1yCo2XKyq?si=DKyqzFDiXy-OEFUJ> (last accessed on 10/10/2023).

⁹ See Pennisi (2025: 151-154).

- (1) *muṣāhidī-nā l-kirām* 'ahl^{an} wa-marḥab^{an} bi-kum ka-kull yawm 'aḥad ma'a barnāmiḡ-kum l-ḥi-wārī Ḥadīt^{un} ma'a ṣ-ṣaḥāfa. ḍayfu-nā li-**hādā** l-yawm huwa s-sayyid Muṣṭafā r-Ramīd, wazīr ad-dawla al-mukallaf bi-ḥuqūq l-'insān, li-l-ḥadīt 'an waḍ'īyyat ḥuqūq l-'insān wa-l-ḥurriyyāt bi-l-Maḡrib wa-kayfa tanwī ḥuṭṭat al-'amal l-waṭanī fī maḡāl ad-dīmūqrāṭiyya wa-ḥuqūq l-'insān tarsīlha-hā wa-taqwiyata-hā wa-madā ʿansīḡām al-'aḡlabiyya l-ḥukūmiyya wa-hal **tu'attir** al-iḥtilāfāt bayna mukawwināti-hā 'alā 'adā' al-ḥukūma? 'idāfat^{an} bi-ṭabī'atī l-ḥāl 'ilā mawāḍī' 'uḥrā. **s-sī** r-Ramīd **marḥbā bī-k...**

(min: 00:26-00:54)¹⁰

Dear viewers, welcome, like every Sunday, to your talk-show *Ḥadīt^{un} ma'a aṣ-ṣaḥāfa*. Our guest today is Mr. Mustafa Ramid, Minister of State for Human Rights, to talk about the situation of human rights and freedoms in Morocco and how human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected in Morocco. How does the national action plan for democracy and human rights intend to strengthen and reinforce them, and to what extent is the governmental majority harmonious, and do the differences between its components affect the government? Mr. Ramid, welcome...

- (2) *bidāyyat^{an} qbāl mā ndəhlū* fə-t-tafāṣīl, 'a **s-sī** r-Ramīd **nta kəntī** muḥāmī li-sanawāt ṭawīla, **kəntī** 'ayd^{an} wazīr l-'adl wa-l-'ān **nta** wazīr d-dawla f-maḡāl ḥuqūq l-'insān wakabtī **t-taṭawwur dyāl l-ḥurriyyāt** w-ḥuqūq l-'insān f-l-Maḡrib, **qbāl mā ndəhlū fə-t-tafāṣīl dyāl hād l-qaḍāyā dyāl ḥuqūq l-'insān** w-l-ḥurriyyāt f-l-Maḡrib su'āl **s-sī** r-Ramīd **lī-k ṣaḥṣiyy^{an}** min ḥilāl hād **l-masār dyāl-k** f-maḡāl l-ḥurriyyat w-ḥuqūq l-'insān, **wāš nta** rādī ṣaḥṣiyy^{an} 'alā waḍ' ḥuqūq l-'insān ḥāliyy^{an} fī-l-Maḡrib? **kifāš ka-ybān lī-k l-waḍ'?**

(min: 01:13-01 :37)¹¹

Before going into detail, Mr. Ramid, you were a lawyer for many years, you were also Minister of Justice, and you are now Minister of State for Human Rights, responsible for the development of freedoms and human rights in Morocco. Before going into the details of this issue of human rights and freedoms in Morocco, a personal question, Mr. Ramid: based on your career in the field of freedoms and human rights, are you personally satisfied with the human rights situation in Morocco today? How do you see this situation?

These first two excerpts represent a type of unpremeditated speech, insofar as they would not be explicitly read. Although Tourabi uses more or less the same introductory formulas to begin his program and introduce guests with premeditated questions, his speech act shows typical characteristics of unpremeditated communication, such as the use of repetition¹² (Eagleson 1958: 149-150). See especially the repetition of *qbāl mā ndəhlū fə-t-tafāṣīl* 'Before going into the details' in (2). The sentence is used by Tourabi to introduce the first question for the guest. The question, however, is preceded by a digression contextualizing the guest; therefore, the repetition of the above sentence echoes the introduction of the question and serves, at the communicative level, to make the (oral)

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IN1yCo2XKyG&list=PL6tDa8neN6tHKH0Ny7Ta7l2SCO-ApNz6N&index=53> (Accessed 23-10-10). This study includes both longer excerpts and (glossed) shorter examples drawn from them. Long excerpts are presented in regular font. Within these, terms and expressions in bold indicate elements that are explicitly in Moroccan Arabic, while italics are used to mark interjections and bi-valent words. By contrast, (glossed) shorter examples are consistently presented in italics.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² Repetition, on the other hand, is regularly used as a means of persuasion, see in particular Johnstone (1991).

message clear and straightforward for the audience (the direct addressee, Mr. Ramid, and the larger audience, in the studio and at home), alternating between different foreground and background content (Khalil 2000: 121-126).

Linguistically, Tourabi uses a mixed style of Arabic. In excerpts (1) and (2), words in bold represent occurrences of words and expressions pronounced by the journalist in non-Standard Arabic. Phonetically, several words follow the typical Moroccan Arabic pronunciation, such as, for example, the merger of interdental fricatives with dental occlusives (Heath 1997: 206). Note in (1) the variation $\text{t} \sim \text{t}$ (*tu'attir*, and not *tu'attir* 'to affect' in Standard Arabic), or the variation of $\text{d} \sim \text{d}$ (*hādā* and not *hādā* 'this' in Standard Arabic). Note, too, the tendency to elide short vowels in open syllables (Versteegh 1997: 164-169), one of the typical features of Maghrebi Arabic (Aguadé 2018: 33). Indeed, observe in (1) *marḥbā* (and not *marḥab^m*, 'welcome', in Standard Arabic), and in (2) *qbāl* (and not *qabla*, 'before', in Standard Arabic).

On the morphosyntactic level Tourabi's speech act is characterized by the alternation of Standard and non-Standard elements. See, for example, the systematic use of the prefix conjugation, with or without the preverb *ka-*, as in (2) the verb 'to enter' *ndāḥlū*, 1st p.m. (*nadhulu* '[we] enter' in Standard Arabic), and the verb *ka-ybān*, 'to appear', 3rd s.m., in the sentence entirely constructed in Moroccan Arabic, given in (2-a), below:

(2)

- a) *kifāš ka-ybān* *lī-k* *l-waḍ*?¹³
 how NPST-appear.PRS.3SG.M to-2SG.M DEF-situation
 'How do you see this situation?' (Lit. 'How does the situation appear to you?')

Another morphosyntactic construction in Moroccan Arabic repertoire is the analytic annexation via the preposition *dyāl*, as in (2b-c) given below:

(2)

- b) *t-taṭawwur dyāl l-ḥurriyyāt*
 DEF-development of DEF-freedoms
 'The development of freedoms'
- c) *f-t-tafāṣīl dyāl hād l-qaḍāyā dyāl ḥuqūq l-'insān*
 into-DEF-details of DEM DEF-issues of rights DEF-human.being
 'Into the details of this issue of human rights'

In (2-b) the analytic annexation is single, i.e. only the first term placed before the preposition *dyāl* 'of' (*t-taṭawwur* 'the development', which is a noun defined by the definite article), and the second term postposed after the preposition *dyāl l-ḥurriyyāt* ('of the freedoms'), are part of the annexation. In contrast, in (2-c), the analytic annexation

¹³ All examples listed in alphabetical order refer to the previously numbered excerpts and the sources listed therein previously. Glossing rules follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules for interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses.

consists of more elements, and in particular the last part of the chain, *l-qaḍāyā dyāl ḥuqūq l-ʿinsān*, ‘the issue of human rights’, is constructed with a noun determined by the definite article *l-qaḍāyā* (‘the issues’) before the preposition *dyāl*, and by an *iḍāfa* (synthetic annexation, used in both Standard Arabic and *Darija*), *ḥuqūq l-ʿinsān* (‘human rights’, lit. ‘rights of the human’), after the preposition *dyāl*.

It should also be noted that the preposition *dyāl* in *Darija*, also serves the function of a possessive adjective when suffixed by personal pronouns as in (2-d) below:

(2)

- d) *l-masār dyālə-k*
 DEF route of-2SG.M
 ‘Your route.’ (Lit. ‘the route of you’).

Other elements of the lexical and morphosyntactic repertoire of *Darija* also appear in extracts (1) and (2), such as the suffix conjugation to express the past tense (see the conjugation of *kəntī*, ‘[you] were’), the use of interrogative pronouns, such as *kifāš*, ‘how’, already mentioned, and *wāš*, ‘do you/are you’, in (2-e), below:

(2)

- e) *wāš nta rādī šaḥṣiyy^{an}?*
 Q 2SG.M satisfied.SG.M personally
 ‘Are you personally satisfied?’

Finally, on the lexical level, the Moroccan appellation *s-sī*, lit. ‘Sir, or Mr.’, a shortened form of *al-sayyid*, ‘Sir/Mister’ (in Standard Arabic), is used in this case by the journalist as a formula of respect to address Mr. Ramid.

As shown in (1) and (2), therefore, morphosyntactic features of Moroccan Arabic alternate and merge with constructions and expressions in Standard Arabic. All the morphosyntactic and lexical features shown above are part of what Youssi (1992) called MMA, and which in this study corresponds to (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic, i.e., a formal oral register of non-Standard Arabic in Morocco. This register also represents what Tourabi termed *al-luġa al-tāliṭa*, i.e. a mixed style in which the contours of what is traditionally called Standard Arabic are more fluid, and where morphosyntactic features of the repertoires of non-Standard varieties, in this case Moroccan Arabic, are merged with the Standard structures of the Arabic language. This is not simply the use of dialectal elements in Standard Arabic speech (such as *dyālək*, ‘your’ in the excerpt *d*, or *wāš*, ‘are you?’, in the excerpt *e*), but Standard Arabic also becomes part of this third language through the use of now bivalent terms and expressions (Mejdell 2006), such as *l-masār*, ‘route’, (excerpt *d*) and *šaḥṣiyy^{an}*, ‘personally’, (excerpt *e*). Although the practice observed in (1) and (2) reflects the uncodified norm prevalent even in the oral practices of contemporary journalistic communication, it is interesting to note that there is stylistic variation within this mixed style, where the alternation between the use of expressions closer to the style of Standard Arabic and expressions closer to Moroccan Arabic reflect a pragmatic strategy. In fact, returning to examples (1) and (2), Tourabi’s

introductory speech is initially constructed, both phonetically and morpho-syntactically, on an almost total adherence to the style of Standard Arabic. Instead, elements in Moroccan Arabic mark passages to the focal points of the communicative functions of his speech. In particular, note in (1) that at the end of his introduction to the topic of the episode and the announcement of the guest, both in Standard Arabic, Abdellah Tourabi welcomes his guest by switching to Moroccan Arabic, stating: *s-sī r-Ramīd marḥbā bī-k*, ‘Mr. Ramid, welcome.’ This abrupt switch to the Moroccan Arabic repertoire marks on the pragmatic level the performative act of “welcoming”, using the colloquial register, *Darija*, which symbolically represents closeness and unity with Moroccans and at the same time a direct, clear, and concise means of communication.¹⁴ This first shift in style allows the journalist’s speech as a whole to shift and focus attention on the guest, Mr. Ramid. A second stylistic shift also occurs in (2), where Tourabi directly addresses his guest by using Mixed Arabic. Note, in particular, the final part of his speech, i.e. how the journalist structures the question for his guest. Initially, Tourabi asks:

(2)

f) *wāš nta* *rādī* *šaḥṣiyy^{an}* *‘alā waḍ’* *ḥuqūq* *l-’insān*
 Q 2SG.M satisfied.SG.M personally on situation rights DEF-human.being

ḥāliyy^{an} *fī- l-Maḡrib?*

currently in DEF-Morocco

‘Are you personally satisfied with the human rights situation in Morocco today?’

In this first question, the journalist alternates morphosyntactic elements of Moroccan Arabic with lexical choices in Standard Arabic, see in fact in (2-f) the interrogatives and the personal pronoun in Moroccan Arabic and the rest of the sentence in Standard Arabic.¹⁵ Later, the journalist switches to Moroccan Arabic, more abruptly, as indicated in example (2-a) above. Thus, on the pragmatic level, the reiteration of the question, first in Mixed and more detailed Arabic, then in Moroccan Arabic, reflects a conscious discursive strategy of the journalist aimed at making his communicative intention explicit, i.e. inviting his guest to answer explicitly, clearly and directly. Moreover, Tourabi stated:

Dans mon émission, j’essaie même de tirer l’invité vers *darija*, parce que vers *darija* il peut être plus clair, plus direct et loin de la langue de bois. L’arabe classique tel qu’il est pratiqué au Ma-

¹⁴ Caubet (2017a, 2017b, 2018), likewise, shows that the *Darija* used by Moroccan artists in their written productions is considered a more effective linguistic tool allowing them to represent their communicative intentions and artistic creations.

¹⁵ The lexical choices in Standard Arabic are bivalent in (2-f), insofar the lexical repertoire of *Darija* has now acquired these kinds of expressions, which are common to the journalistic lexicon. Moreover, with the exception of the first two elements of the sentence, the pronunciation of Tourabi in (2-f) reflects the phonetics of standard Arabic, but as it is usual in Media Arabic, the case ending of each individual element of the sentence is dropped. The exceptions in this case are *šaḥṣiyy^{an}*, ‘personally’ and *ḥāliyy^{an}*, ‘currently’, where the case ending of adverbs in *-an* (indefinite accusative) is in common use.

roc, c'est beaucoup plus propice à la langue de bois, c'est-à-dire qu'on dit tout et on dit rien.¹⁶
(Interview with Abdellah Tourabi, 2M journalist, February 22, 2018, Casablanca)¹⁷

The minister's reply is also characterized by stylistic variation, as shown in the following long extracts:

- (3) bi-smī llāh ar-rahman ar-rahīm, al-ḥaqīqa 'anna l-masār l-ḥuqūqī li-l-bilād 'idā 'anta 'aḥadta-hu f-waḥḥad l-madā zamanī wāsi' **matal^{an} nqūlū** mən 'alf-wu-tsā'-miya-wu-ts'in **matal^{an} l-'al-fayn-wu-tsa' fās**, sa-tarā bi-'anna hunāk **waḥḥad l-masīra**¹⁸ taṣā'udiyya wa-'anna-hu hunāk muktasabāt mutawāliyya, 'idā **dhəlti f-t-tafāṣīl wu-bditi ka-ddaqqaq f-l-waqā'i** wa-l-mu'tayāt sa-taḡid *ya nī* l-'adīd mən l-mašākil wa-l-hilālāt wa-li-dālik huwwa bi-šaklⁱⁿ mulḥaṣ 'aql la-k 'anā *ya nī* rādī nisbiyy^{an} 'alā l-masār l-ḥuqūqī fī l-bilād wa-lakinna-nī 'ayd^{an} *ya nī* ḡayr rādī 'alā kaṭīr mən at-tafāṣīl....

[Tourabi: **matal^{an} ?**]

matal^{an} dākši kulši, māši kulši, wa-lakin l-'adīd mimmā yuṭraḥ mimmā huwwa ma'rūf, 'andī **matal^{an} l-mawḏū dyāl**... ta'sīs l-ḡam'iyyāt lli fī **katīr** min l-'ahyān **kāyn ḡam'iyyāt mā ka-ttwəṣṣəl-š bi-t-tawāṣīl dyāl-hā**, 'andī **matal^{an} ši marrāt ka-ykūn ba'ḏ** t-tadaḥḥulāt *ya nī* l-'am-niyya allatī tuṭīr niqāš^{an}, 'andī **matalan** ba'ḏ l-muwāṭinīn alladīn **yaštakūn** mən madā tawaffur ḡamānāt l-muḥākama l-'ādila...

(min : 02:34-03:13)¹⁹

In the name of God, the merciful and the omnipotent... the truth is that the route of rights in the country, if you take it in a broad time dimension, let's say from the 1990s to 2019, you will see that there are progressive steps and that there is increasing progress. If you get into the details and start looking at the facts and figures, you'll find plenty of problems and irregularities. To sum up, I can say that I'm relatively satisfied with the country's human rights progress, but I'm also dissatisfied with several details...

[Tourabi: For instance?]

Like all this, not everything, but a large part of what is known and considered... I have, for example, the question of associations which, in many neighborhoods, are not connected. I have, for example, some security interventions that provoke debate. I sometimes have citizens complaining about the lack of guarantees of fair trial...

- (4) [...] 'id^{an} **ḥnāyā... ka-nqūlū** dā'im^{an}, taḥt ḥād l-'unwān, ḥuqūq l-'insān f-l-Maḡrīb tataqaddam^u taqaddum^{an} mustamirr^{an} wa-muḍṭarid^{an} [sic], lakinna-h^u taqaddum^{un} baṭi'^{un} wa-muḍṭarib. 'id^{an}, 'and-nā *ya nī* l-ḡānib, kamā **ka-nqūlū** dā'im^{an}, l-mamlū' min l-ka's, w-'and-nā l-ḡānib *ya nī* l-fāriḡ min l-ka's, fa-alladī yurakkiz 'alā l-ḡānib l-mamlū', **ka-ybān li-h mzyān dakši**, alladī yurīd^u 'an yaṇḍur 'ilā l-'umūr f-ḡānib-hā l-fāriḡ, **rāḥ ḡādī yšūf ya nī fi-hā kāyn l-mašākil**.

(min : 04:04-04:37)²⁰

¹⁶ 'In my broadcast, I even try to draw the guest into *Darija*, because in *Darija* he can be clearer, more direct and far from the "langue de bois. Classical Arabic, as it is spoken in Morocco, is much more conducive to "langue de bois", namely you say everything and you say nothing.'

¹⁷ See the entire interview in Pennisi (2025: 520-538).

¹⁸ The usual phonetic realization of the indefinite article in Moroccan Arabic is *waḥd əl-*. All transcriptions from oral texts reproduce dialogues as they were performed.

¹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IN1yCo2XKyg&list=PL6tDa8neN6tHKH0Ny7Ta7l2SCO-Ap-Nz6N&index=53> (Accessed 23-10-10).

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

[...] So we always say, under this formula, that human rights in Morocco are progressing steadily and continuously, but this progress is slow and disturbed.

So we have, as I always say, the full half of the glass... and the empty half of the glass. To those who focus on the (glass-half) full side, everything looks good; those who want to see the facts on the (glass-half) empty side will see everything as a problem.

Unlike the journalist, the minister's speech is characterized by a more extensive use of colloquial style, or rather, a more pronounced stylistic variation. Note, for example, not only the verbal morphology of the *Darija* repertoire (as in (3) *ka-nqūlū*, '[we] say', prefix conjugation, or *dħəltī*, lit. '[you] entered', suffix conjugation), or possession through the preposition *dyāl* (in (3) *t-tawāšīl dyāl-hā* lit. 'their connection'), but also nominal and verbal negation, through the use, respectively, of *māšī kulšī*, lit. 'it is not everything', and *mā ka-ttwəṣṣəl-š*, lit. '[it]doesn't get to'.

Moreover, the minister's speech is built on a stylistic alternation which is most evident insofar as, in addition to using the bivalent terms of the semantic field related to human rights and politics (such as *muktasabāt*, 'progress', *tafāšīl*, 'details', *l-masār l-ḥuqūqī*, '[human] rights progress', *ḥuqūq l-'insān*, 'human rights', among others), he alternates lexical and morphosyntactic choices that are part of Standard Arabic and *Darija*, respectively. Note, for example, at the beginning of his speech in (3), *sa-tarā* '[you] will see', a verb conjugated in the future tense in line with the verbal morphology of Standard Arabic, i.e., the morpheme of the future *sa-* prefixed to the prefixal conjugation *tarā*, 2nd s.m., and the verbal root which is part of the lexical repertoire of Standard Arabic. In contrast, in (4) he uses *gādī yšūf*, '[he] will see', which is a verbal root from the repertoire of *Darija* (*šāf* / *yšūf* 'to see'). Again, stylistic variation represents a precise communicative strategy, corroborated by the expressions used within his speech. Indeed, looking at his performative act, it is evident that in both (3) and (4) the minister's speech tends to be extremely polarized: on the one hand, the lexical choices and morphosyntactic constructions are rigidly tied to the norms of Standard Arabic. Note, for example, the use of the *basmala* (*bi-smī llāh ar-raḥman ar-raḥīm*, 'In the name of God, the merciful and the omnipotent') to emphasize his performative act, i.e. to formalize his speech in compliance with Muslim precepts²¹; moreover, unlike the journalist, he emphasizes certain passages of his speech by systematically marking the case and mood endings, such as:

(4)

a) *ḥuqūq l-'insān ḥāliyy^{an} f-l-Mağrīb tataqaddam^u taqaddum^{-an} mustamirr^{-an}*
rights DEF-human.being in-DEF-Morocco progress.PL.NPST progress-ACC continuous-ACC
wa-muḍṭarid^{-an}, lakinna-h^u taqaddum^{-un} baḥī^{-un} wa-muḍṭarib
and-steady-ACC but-SG.M progress-NOM slow-NOM and-disturbed
'Human rights in Morocco are progressing steadily and continuously, but this progress is slow and disturbed.'

In (4-a) the key terms of his speech are uttered with the case endings (in superscript characters). On the other hand, this sentence, entirely in Standard Arabic - and with the

²¹ See for instance, the use of verses and extracts from the Coran in Geddafi's political discourses (Mazraani 2008: 665).

case ending -, precedes the last part of his speech in which the minister alternates idiomatic expressions, lexical and morphosyntactic choices that are typically part of the *Darija* repertoire. Note, in particular, his metaphorical discourse: the metaphor of the full or empty glass is expressed in Standard Arabic (as illustrated in 4-b and 4-d below), while the minister's interpretation of the metaphor is expressed in *Darija* (as illustrated in 4-c and 4-e below):-

(4)

b) *fa- alladī yurakkiz 'alā l-ḡānib l-mamlū'*
and who focus.PRS.3SG.M on DEF-side DEF.full
'those who focus on the (glass-half) full side' (in Standard Arabic entirely)

c) *ka-ybān lī-h mzyān dakšī*
appear.PRS.3SG.M to-3SG.M good all.that
lit.'everything appears to him good'.

d) *alladī yurīd^a 'an yaṇḍur 'ilā l-'umūr f-ḡānib-hā l-fāriḡ*
who want.PRS.3SG.M COMP see.PRS.3SG.M to DEF-facts DEF-side-3PL DEF-empty
'those who want to see the facts on the (glass-half) empty side'

e) *ḡādī yšūf ya'nī fi-hā kāyn l-mašākil*
FUT see.PRS.3SG.M that.is in.3PL there.is DEF-problems
'he will see everything as a problem'.

On a pragmatic level, this mechanism serves a double purpose: the first concerns communicating the purely semantic meaning of the message, i.e., the slow advancement of human rights in Morocco can be interpreted positively and negatively; the second purpose, on the other hand, concerns the communicative intention, (the illocutionary force of his speech), i.e. what his speech intends to communicate. Alternating in his discourse Standard Arabic and *Darija* allows the minister to symbolically reinforce the feeling of closeness and empathy with his audience. Therefore, his communicative intention is linguistically constructed through stylistic alternation, i.e. in (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic.

4.2. Oral corpus: premeditated speech

For practical reasons, the present analysis focuses on one episode of the *Hawāmiš* podcast, entitled *Maḡallat 'Anfās tatanaffasu muḡaddadan fī 'Amrīkā... bāḡiṭūna maḡāriba yuḡayyūna taḡribat Al-La'abī wa-rifāqi-hi* ('Anfas magazine breathes again in America... Moroccan researchers breathe new life to the experience of Laabi and his companions').²² As indicated earlier, the text of the podcast is published on hawamich.info in two versions, namely version one through a written journalistic article (whose author is Imad Stitou), and

²² See <https://hawamich.info/6468/> - ~:text = سنة 50 عرفه مغرب سبعينات القرن الماضي . See also Pennisi (2025: 350-361).

version two through the reading of the same text (which is interpreted by Issam Belgana). The incipit of the article/podcast is shown in Table 1,²³ presenting both versions:

Table 1. Incipit Podcast/Article Hawamich.info

Translation	Podcast	Article
After more than 50 years, Anfas is back with a new breath, a group of researchers who decided to revive the experience of a magazine that characterized Morocco's cultural and political history before it was halted due to the political climate of the 1970s.	mən ba'd ktar mən ħamsīn sana ka-tarġa' <i>mğallat 'Anfās b-nafas ġādīd, maġmū'a mən</i> <i>l-bāḥiṭīn qarrarū y'āwdū</i> <i>'ihyā' taġribat l-maġella</i> <i>lli tab'āt t-tārīḥ at-taqāfi</i> <i>w-s-siyāsī f-l-Maġrib</i> qbal mā twaqqaf b-sbab <i>l-munāḥ s-siyāsī lli 'arfū</i> <i>Maġrib sabb'imīyāt l-qarn</i> <i>l-mādī.</i>	بعد أزيد من 50 سنة، تعود مجلة "أنفاس" بنفس جديد، مجموعة من الباحثين قرروا إعادة إحياء تجربة مجلة طبعت التاريخ الثقافي والسياسي في المغرب قبل أن تتوقف، بسبب المناخ السياسي الذي عرفه مغرب سبعينات القرن الماضي. ba'da azyad min ħamsīn sana, ta'ūdu <i>maġallat "Anfās" bi-nafas ġādīd, maġmū'a</i> <i>min al-bāḥiṭīn qarrarū i'ādat ihyā' taġribat</i> <i>maġalla ṭaba'at at-tārīḥ at-taqāfi wa-s-siyāsī</i> <i>fī al-Maġrib qabla an tatawaqqaf, bi-sabab</i> <i>al-munāḥ as-siyāsī alladi 'arafa-hu Maġrib</i> sab'ināt al-qarn al-mādī.
This article is published on hawamich.info, written by Imad Stitou and played in the audio version by Issam Belgana. You can listen to all episodes of the Hamawich podcast on all podcast platforms.	hād l-maqāl ka-yġi-kūm <i>'alā Hawāmiš point info,</i> mən 'i'dād 'Imād Stittū <i>f-n-nuṣṣa l-masmū'a,</i> ka-yrafq-kum 'Iṣām <i>Belgana w-yōmkōn</i> li-kum tsəm'ū ġamī' <i>ḥalaqāt podcast Hawāmiš</i> <i>'alā kull minṣṣāt</i> <i>l-podcast.</i>	2023 5.18 HAWAMICH عماد استيتو [date of publication, platform, and the author's name]
In 1966, in the Moroccan capital Rabat, a group of Moroccan poets who called themselves "linguistic fedayeen" decided to launch a unique experiment through which they intended to bring about a cultural revolution in a country just emerging from colonialism. This was the French-language literary magazine Anfas, which soon took on a political dimension, becoming indignant against existing conditions, the dominant system, and colonial and capitalist powers.	sanat 'alf w-ts'āmi'a w-stā w-stīn f-l-'āšima <i>l-maġribiyya ar-Ribāt,</i> ġādī yqrarū ṭulla mən <i>š-šu'arā' l-maġāriba lli</i> ṭalqū 'lā nfas-hum smīyya dyāl "al-fidā'i- <i>yyīn 'al-luġawīyyīn</i> ", <i>qarrarū ta'sīs taġriba</i> <i>farīda mən naw'-hā,</i> bġaw mən ḥilāl-hā 'ihdāt <i>ṭawra taqāfiya f-balad lli</i> <i>yā allāh hrəġ mən</i> <i>l-sti'mār fa-kānt</i> <i>maġellat 'Anfās</i> <i>l-'adabiyya 'an-nāṭiqa</i> <i>b-l-faransiyya lli</i> <i>sur'āna-mā ḥdāt bu'd</i> <i>siyāsī sāḥiṭ 'al 'awdā'</i> <i>l-qā'ima wa-l-nidām</i> <i>s-sā'id w-didd l-qiwā</i> <i>l-isti'māriyya</i> <i>w-ra'smāliyya.</i>	سنة 1966، في العاصمة المغربية الرباط، سيقّر ثلّة من الشعراء المغاربة ممن اطلقوا على أنفسهم تسمية "الفدائيين اللغويين" تأسيس تجربة فريدة من نوعها، أرادوا من خلالها إحداث ثورة ثقافية في بلد خارج للتو من الاستعمار، فكانت مجلة "أنفاس" الأدبية الناطقة بالفرنسية، التي سرعان ما أخذت بعدا سياسيا ساخطا على الأوضاع القائمة، والنظام السائد، وضد القوى الاستعمارية والرأسمالية. sanat alf wa-tis'u mi'a wa-sitta wa-sittūn, fi <i>al-'āšima al-Maġribiyya ar-Ribāt, sa-yuqar-</i> <i>riru ṭulla min aš-šu'arā' al-Maġāriba</i> mimman 'aṭlaqū 'alā nafsī-him tasmiyat <i>"al-fadā'iyyīn al-luġawīyyīn"</i> ta'sīs taġriba <i>farīda min naw'-i-hā, arādū min ḥilālī-hā</i> <i>iḥdāt ṭawra taqāfiyya fī balad ḥarīġ li-t-</i> tawwi min al-isti'mār, fa-kānat maġallat <i>"'Anfās" al-'adabiyya an-nāṭiqa bi-l-faran-</i> <i>siyya, allatī sur'ān mā 'aḥdāt bu'dan</i> <i>siyāsiyyan sāḥiṭan 'alā al-awdā' al-qā'ima,</i> <i>wa-n-nizām as-sā'id, wa-ḍidda l-quwā</i> al-isti'māriyya wa-r-ra'smāliyya.

²³ Ibidem.

Unlike unpremeditated communication, *Hawāmiš*'s podcast does not contain spontaneous speech (there are no repetitions and interjections, for example); rather, the podcast follows the written text. However, the reading differs from the written text in some lexical choices and morphosyntactic structures. In Table 1, the elements that differentiate these choices in the podcast and the article are highlighted in bold, while the elements highlighted in italics represent the loan words and/or non-Arabic terms pronounced in foreign languages, but also the bivalent terms and expressions (Standard Arabic/ *Darija*) that in the podcast are pronounced according to Moroccan Arabic practices or inserted in non-Standard constructions. The most striking divergences between the two texts mainly concern morphosyntactic constructions, as for instance the realization of relative sentences shown in Table 1, as indicated in the examples 5(a-b)-9(a-b) below.

Whereas in the written article the relative pronoun *allaḍī* (and its morphological variants) is used consistently with the norms of Standard Arabic, in the podcast the only relative used is *llī*, i.e., the invariable relative of the *Darija* repertoire, established in MMA (Youssi 1992: 265-273). The following examples show the variation between the relative pronoun *allaḍī* (and its morphological variants) and the use of *llī* in the written and oral text:

5a)

<i>qarrarū</i>	<i>i'ādat</i>	<i>iḥyā'</i>	<i>tağribat</i>	<i>mağalla</i>	<i>ṭaba'at</i>
decide.PRF.3PL.M	repetition	giving.life	experience	magazine	mark.PRF.3SG.F
<i>al-tārīḥ</i>	<i>al-taqāfi</i>	<i>wa-l-siyāsī</i>	<i>fī-l-Mağrib</i>		
DEF-history	DEF-cultural	and-DEF-political	in-DEF-Morocco		

'[They]decided to revitalize the experience of a magazine [that] marked the cultural and political history in Morocco'

5b)

<i>qarrarū</i>	<i>y'āwdū</i>	<i>iḥyā'</i>	<i>təğribat</i>	<i>l-mağella</i>	<i>llī</i>	<i>ṭab'āt</i>
decide.PRF.3PL.M	repeat.NPST.3PL.M	giving.life	experience	DEF-magazine	REL	mark.PRF.3SG.F
<i>t-tārīḥ</i>	<i>at-taqāfi</i>	<i>w-s-siyāsī</i>	<i>f-l-Mağrib</i>			
DEF-history	DEF-cultural	and-DEF-political	in-DEF-Morocco			

'[They]decided to revitalize the experience of a magazine that marked the cultural and political history in Morocco'

6a)

<i>al-munāḥ</i>	<i>al-siyāsī</i>	<i>allaḍī</i>	<i>'arafa-hu</i>	<i>al-Mağrib</i>
DEF-atmosphere	DEF-political	REL	know.PRF.3SG.M-3SG.M	Morocco

'The political atmosphere that Morocco has known'

6b)

<i>l-munāḥ</i>	<i>s-siyāsī</i>	<i>llī</i>	<i>'arf-ū</i>	<i>l-Mağrib</i>
DEF-atmosphere	DEF-political	REL	know.PRF.3SG.M-3SG.M	Morocco

'The political atmosphere that Morocco has known'

7a)

tulla min al-šu‘arā’ al-maġāriba mim-man aṭlaqū ‘alā nafs-i-him
 group of DEF-poets DEF-Moroccan.PL.M among-REL attach.PRF.3PL.M on self-GEN-3PL.M
tasmiyat “al-fadā’iyyīn al-luġawiyyīn”
 name DEF-Fedayeen.PL.M DEF-linguistic.PL.M
 ‘A group of Moroccan poets who called themselves *linguistic Fedayeen*’

7b)

tulla mən š-šu‘arā’ l-maġāriba llī ṭalqū ‘lā nfas-hum
 group of DEF-poets DEF-Moroccan.PL.M REL attach.PRF.3PL.M on self-3PL.M
smiyya dyāl “‘al-fidā’iyyīn’ al-luġawiyyīn”
 name of DEF-Fedayeen.PL.M DEF-linguistic.PL.M
 ‘A group of Moroccan poets who called themselves *linguistic Fedayeen*’

8a)

fī balad ḥāriġ li-t-tawwi min al-isti‘mār
 in country coming.out just out.of DEF-colonization
 ‘In a country just coming out of colonization’

8b)

f-balad llī yā-allāh ḥrəġ mən l-sti‘mār
 in-country REL just come.out.PRF.3SG.M from DEF-colonization
 ‘In a country that has just come out of colonization’

9a)

fa-kānat maġallat “Anfās”[...] allatī sur‘āna-mā aḥadāt bu‘d^{an}
siyāsīyy^{an}
 and-be.PRF.3SG.F magazine Anfās REL quickly take.PRF.3SG.F dimension-ACC
political-ACC
 ‘So, *Anfās* was the magazine that quickly took on a political dimension’

9b)

fa-kānt maġellat ‘Anfās [...] llī sur‘āna-mā ḥdāt bu‘d siyāsī
 and-be.PRF.3SG.F magazine Anfās REL quickly take.PRF.3SG.F dimension political
 ‘So, *Anfās* was the magazine that quickly took on a political dimension’

Examples 5(a-b)-9(a-b) demonstrate the occurrences of the relative pronoun in Table 1 and highlight the divergences between the text of the written article and the podcast. Specifically, the relative pronoun appears in both the written article and the podcast in 6a and 6b, and in 9a and 9b; on the other hand, the syntactic structure of the podcast text in 5b and in 8b diverges from the text of the written article in 5a and 8a. Moreover, in the written article in 7a, the indefinite relative *man* ‘whom’ occurs affixed to the preposition *min*, lit. ‘from’, i.e. *mimman* ‘among whom’; whereas in the podcast the corresponding syntactic structure is built with the specific (and invariable) relative *llī*

in 7b. Such variation between written and oral texts (article/podcast), both premeditated, shows and corroborates that in formal oral production the relative pronoun *llī* is the conventionally accepted and widespread form (Youssi 1992: 265-273). In particular, as Youssi (1992) asserted, while the forms of the relative in MMA have been simplified through the use of the invariable relative pronoun *llī*, the relative syntax has, on the other hand, undergone a phenomenon of syntactic complexification, i.e. “dans bon nombre d’occurrences de la relativation en MMA, il s’agit plutôt d’emplois descriptifs ou appositifs dont la suppression n’affectera en rien les éléments préexistants, constitutifs de la proposition dite principale”²⁴ (Youssi 1992:270). He also adds : “Il semble même que, plus la situation est empreinte de formalisme, plus le locuteur recourt à la relativation d’élément d’énoncés qui seraient autrement dans une relation prédicative par rapport au syntagme nominal employé comme antécédent”²⁵ (Youssi 1992 : 271). So, the example 8b²⁶ corroborates Youssi’s (1992) assertions regarding the prevalence of the pronoun *llī* in MMA.

Finally, it must be pointed out that the style represented by the podcast’s premeditated text thus tends to reproduce and conventionalize the formal and journalistic (oral) register, namely (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic. Indeed, if one looks globally at the podcast’s premeditated oral text, the morpho-syntactic traits described by Youssi (1992) and typical of MMA for oral communication (including the relative sentences just observed) are blended with lexical choices more in keeping with the lexicon of Standard Arabic. Examples 5(a-b)-9(a-b) clearly illustrate this phenomenon. The lexical choices in the podcast, in fact, slavishly follow the lexicon used in the written article; extremely evident, for example, is the use of expressions and collocations attested in Standard Arabic and not usual in *Darija*, such as *tulla mən* ‘a group of’ in 7b, or *sur’āna-mā* ‘quickly’ in 9b that would certainly have correspondents in more current uses in Moroccan Arabic, but not necessarily less formal ones.

The uniqueness of the oral and premeditated text of the podcast lies precisely in its mixed and bivalent nature: mixed because Standard and non-Standard syntactic and morphological elements are mixed in the same text; bivalent because the lexicon (which also includes the verbal roots of almost all the verbs used in the podcast that are conjugated according to the Moroccan Arabic system) is derived from the shared repertoire (Standard and non-Standard) of Arabic.

²⁴ ‘In many occurrences of relative sentences in AMM, these are rather descriptive or appositive uses whose deletion will in no way affect the pre-existing elements making up the so-called main proposition’.

²⁵ ‘It even seems that, the more formal the situation, the more the speaker relies on the relativization of elements of statements that would otherwise be in a predicative relation to the nominal phrase used as an antecedent’.

²⁶ Note that, in contrast, in example (5-b) the relative is used because unlike the text of the written article, in the podcast the antecedent, *l-mağella* ‘the magazine’ is determined by the definite article, and therefore the use of the relative *llī*, would be grammatically required. Note, however, that in (5-h), on the other hand, the antecedent *f-balad* ‘in a country’ is indefinite, and therefore the use of *llī* would not have been grammatically required, but more importantly, as already mentioned, it represents a syntactic complexification, otherwise replaceable by the active participle *hāriġ*, ‘coming out’, as used in parallel in the written article in (5-g).

Moving beyond the dichotomous view of diglossia and its functionalist approach, the textual types analyzed and compared in the present study show that it is not completely possible to divide two distinct varieties of Arabic, but that the linguistic and stylistic variations found in the (premeditated and unpremeditated) practices highlight the tendency to systematically use Mixed Arabic. The difficulty of classifying Arabic into different varieties emerges more clearly when observing the practices of non-Standard written and premeditated production, will be looked at in detail at in the next section.

4.3. Analysis of written production: premeditated written discourse

This section focuses on the use of (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic in premeditated journalistic writing on the online newspaper *Goud*. Many *Goud* journalists claim to express themselves in Moroccan Arabic²⁷. However, when carefully analyzing their texts, what emerges is actually (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic. Despite the fact that they claim to write in *Darija* (a non-codified language for formal written purposes), their non-Standard texts (written in Arabic characters) bring out more of the bivalent and mixed nature of *Goud*'s articles, especially in terms of lexical choices. As already demonstrated on the oral data in the previous section, the *Goud*'s texts written in (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic are also characterized by an overt syntactic structuring borrowed from the repertoire of Moroccan Arabic, and a lexical choice more closely adherent to Standard Arabic. In Opinions articles, however, stylistic variation is further emphasized by linguistic choices in order to mark the illocutionary force of such argumentative texts.

See, in particular, the Opinions article by Mohamed Socrates²⁸ in which the former militant of the Feb. 20 movement criticizes the repression of Rif protesters by police forces in 2016. Table 2 below shows part of the incipit (on the right)²⁹ and its translation on the left:

Table 2. Opinions article from *Goud*

Translation	Arabic source
Of course, we're known, but even we, we know you, one by one. We know you from generation to generation, dating back many centuries. [...]	طبعاً نحن معروفون ، ولكن حتى حنا كنعر فوكم واحد واحد ، كنعر فوكم أبا عن جد وطيلة قرون [...] [حنا عارفين أنكم كنعر فوونا وأي تحرك ديالنا راه كيتم وفق هاد المعرفة المسبقة لي بيناتنا ، لذا فكما رأييت ورأي العالم تحركاتنا كانت سلمية ، مايمكنش تدبير العنف مع المعارف ، ونحن نحترم هذه المعرفة التي بيننا ، ولكن للأسف نتومة لي مكتحارموهاش [...]
[...] We know that you know us, and that all our movements are carried out according to this mutual knowledge that we have built up. So, as you've seen, and as the world has seen, our movements were peaceful, and you can't use violence with your acquainted people. we respect the knowledge that [there is] between us, but, unfortunately, it is you who have not respected it.	tab'an nahnū ma'rūfūn, wa-lakin ḥaṭṭā ḥnā ka-n'arfū-kum wāḥd wāḥd, ka-n'arfū-kum abā 'an ḡadd wa-ṭīla qurūn [...] ḥnā 'arfūn 'anna-kum ka-ta'rfūnā wa-'ayyi taḥarruk diyāl-nā rāḥ ka-yatimm wifqa ḥād l-ma'rifa l-musbiqa lli bayanāt-nā, liḡā fa-kamā ra'ayt wa-ra'ā al-'ālam taḥarrukāt-nā kānat silmiyya, mā yimkinš tādīr al-'unf ma' al-ma'ārif, wa-nahnū nahtarim ḥadihi al-ma'rifa allatī bayna-nā, wa-lakin li-l-asaf, ntūma lli ma-ka-taḥtārmū-hā-š [...]

²⁷ See for instance the interview to Ahmed Najim (Editorial Director of *Goud*) and to Mohamed Socrate (*Goud*'s collaborator), in Pennisi (2025: 294-335).

²⁸ <https://www.goud.ma/250402-مكتعرفوناش-حيث-سحققونا-طحننو-ي/>. See Pennisi 2020 concerning the linguistic and stylistic expression of resistance in *Goud*'s media discourse.

²⁹ <https://www.goud.ma/250402-مكتعرفوناش-حيث-سحققونا-طحننو-ي/>.

Socrates builds his speech by mixing expressions closer to Standard Arabic (معروفون *ṭabʿan naḥnū ma rūfūn* ‘of course, we’re known’), with expressions closer to Moroccan Arabic (ولكن حتى حنا كنعرفوكم *wa-lakin ḥaṭṭā ḥnā ka-n ʿarfū-kum* ‘but even we, we know you’), alternating between Standard and non-Standard linguistic features and morphosyntactic structures. For instance, he alternates between prefix conjugation according to the norms of Standard Arabic with conjugation norms typical of Moroccan Arabic, as showed in example 10 below:

(10)

wa-naḥnu naḥtarim haḍiḥi al-maʿrifa allatī bayna-nā, wa-lakin li-l-asaf,
 and-1.PLrespect.PRS.1PL this DEF-knowledge REL between-1.PL and-but for-DEF-sorrow
ntūma llī ma ka-təḥtārmū-hā-š
 2.PL REL NEG NPST-respect-PRS.2PL-3SG.F-NEG

In example 10, Socrate uses *naḥtarim* (‘we respect’), affirmative prefixal conjugation, in Standard Arabic, *versus* negative prefixal conjugation, in *Darija*, such as *ma-ka-təḥtārmū-hā-š* (‘you don’t respect’), or again, the variable use of the relative pronoun, such as *allatī* (‘that’), in Standard, *versus llī* (‘who’), in *Darija*, in the same sentence.

His entire article, as well as the underlying discourse it conveys, is structured on an antithetical construction, which reflects morphosyntactic and stylistic variation, emphasizing, as shown in (10), the illocutionary force of his message. Indeed, in (10), Socrates uses the personal pronoun *ntūma* (‘you’)³⁰ in *Darija* topicalizing it, where in fact, *ntūma* is the antecedent of the relative. This syntactically marked construction through topicalization, as occurs in other language systems as well, is also stylistically marked: the first part of the sentence (*naḥnu naḥtarim*) is in Standard Arabic, while the second part of the sentence, which is syntactically marked, is in Moroccan Arabic (*ntūma llī ma-ka-təḥtārmū-hā-š*). The shift to *Darija* reflects a concern to forcefully express a message that the author considers important and central to his discourse, namely, in his view, it is the Power that has no respect for the Moroccan people. Expressing it in *Darija* allows him to construct (allegorically) his closeness to and identification with the people, i.e. with all those repressed demonstrators that the former militant of the February 20 movement defends in his article. The illocutionary force of his message is based, therefore, not only on a syntactically marked construction, but also linguistically marked on the level of stylistic choices.

The stylistic mixing and alternation within his discourse makes his written text linguistically and stylistically identifiable with (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic. Indeed, even the constructions and expressions that in writing might visually appear to be in Standard are, in fact, bivalent depending on how the reader reads them in their overall syntactic and stylistic context.

Socrates’ premeditated text is functionally constructed as an argumentative text with its communicative strategies designed to criticize repression, but also as a message of

³⁰ Note also the alternation of personal pronouns and deictics used as a political discourse strategy. For more details, see La Rosa (2018), Maalej (2013), Pennycook (1994), Manetti (2015) and Holes (1993).

solidarity and identification with the repressed Moroccan people. The Mixed Arabic of his text thus allows him to express his message more incisively.

5. Conclusion

The analysis conducted in this study has demonstrated that (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic is emerging as an increasingly stabilized register within Morocco's formal and digital media communication, both in oral and written forms. By comparing unpremeditated oral texts (talk shows), premeditated oral texts (podcasts), and written texts (digital journalism), the study reveals the stability of morphosyntactic and lexical features characteristic of formal oral *Darija* – defined as MMA by Youssi (1992) – blended with structures drawn from Standard Arabic, even in written productions. Notably, the variety of Mixed Arabic employed in the online newspaper *Goud* mirrors, in written form, the mixed linguistic practices observed in oral communication. One illustrative example is the use of the relative pronoun *llī*: while variation between *llī* (*Darija*) and *alladī* (Standard Arabic) was observed in the spontaneous oral speech of Minister Ramid and participating journalists, all instances of relative clauses in the podcast (a premeditated oral text) were constructed using *llī*. This systematic preference in the podcast may suggest an emerging process of informal standardization of a journalistic-style formal register within (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic. The same stylistic features are observable in the written corpus, with the exception of the *Goud*'s opinion articles, where texts, such as the one authored by Socrate, exhibit similar stylistic variation and discursive strategies to those found in unpremeditated oral speech. Rather than being isolated or informal phenomena, these discursive practices indicate that (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic is functioning as a *de facto* vehicular language within the Moroccan journalistic sphere. This mixed style enables the expression of authority, emotional engagement, and conceptual clarity. As demonstrated, the stylization of such mixed forms serves specific pragmatic purposes: it facilitates modulation of register, marks thematic transitions, and fosters a sense of proximity and accessibility in communication with audiences.

These findings contribute to ongoing sociolinguistic and ideological discussions regarding the nature of linguistic variation in Arabic. While early models, such as Ferguson's (1959) foundational diglossia framework, proposed a binary distinction between "high" and "low" varieties, subsequent scholarship – particularly Badawi's (1973) stratified model of Arabic levels, Meiseles' (1980) continuum-based approaches, and Mejdell's (2006) work on mixed styles – has increasingly emphasized a more dynamic, graded understanding of variation, especially within spoken registers. Expanding on this line of research, the present study proposes an extension of the diglossic continuum model through the inclusion of written communicative practices – an area that has often received limited attention in studies on diglossia. By adopting a comparative methodology that spans unpremeditated and premeditated oral data as well as written digital media, this study demonstrates how morphosyntactic features associated with formal spoken varieties – such as those described by Youssi (1992) in his definition of MMA – are increasingly being stylized and conventionalized in written journalistic discourse. Importantly, the

systematic use of (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic in established and professional media outlets – such as the digital newspaper *Goud*, the multimodal platform *Hawāmiš*, and the television broadcaster 2M – suggests a form of informal or implicit legitimacy attributed to these mixed practices. Although not formally codified, the consistent uses of such mixed styles in high-visibility, formal communicative domains indicate their growing normative status. In this regard, the study not only reinforces but also expands current understandings of Arabic's sociolinguistic landscape, by highlighting how mixed language practices are contributing to a broader reconfiguration of the boundaries between Standard and non-Standard varieties – not only in speech, but also in writing.

Nevertheless, the study was conducted using limited data. For instance, the corpus analyzed is temporally limited (with only one year of written data) and geographically/ sociologically bounded (focused on a limited number of platforms and programs). Future research could expand the dataset to encompass a broader range of sources, including additional discourse genres such as social media interactions, sports commentary, and institutional communication, in order to further assess the scope and variability of the phenomenon. Furthermore, ethnographic research of the reception of such linguistic practices among Moroccan audiences would yield valuable insights into perceptions of legitimacy, acceptability, and the social indexicality of mixed forms.

Lastly, (Moroccan) Mixed Arabic emerges from this study not only as a descriptive linguistic object, but also as an index of broader sociocultural transformations reshaping the relationship between language, identity, and media in contemporary Maghreb societies. If the practices documented here reflect a wider trend, it may be argued that the boundaries between Standard and colloquial Arabic are not merely being blurred, but are actively being reconfigured through deliberate, contextually anchored communicative practices – practices that merit full recognition in the study of modern and contemporary Arabic.

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