

Duality in languages and identity

Morocco as an example

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عضو هيئة تدريس بكلية الفنون والاعلام

قسم الاعلام

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## ملخص البحث

مجال اللغة والهوية لهما أهمية بالغة في الثقافة الاجتماعية والواقع اللغوي، حيث تبحث هذه الورقة العلاقة بين ثنائية اللغة أو ازدواجية اللغة لدولة ما وعلاقتها بالهوية، وقد اقترحت البحوث السابقة عن ثنائية اللغة والهوية توصيات مهمة عن البيئات الهيكلية للغة، حيث وجدت بعض الدراسات الحالية بأن التحدث بلغة أو أكثر في بلد ما قد يؤثر على هوية وثقافة هذا البلد.

من خلال هذا الورقة سوف أبحث بالدليل عن تأثير التحدث بأكثر من لغة على الهوية الاجتماعية وسوف أدرس الشعب المغربي كمثال، لأن الشعب المغربي يتكلم الفرنسية (كلغة الشارع) أكثر من اللغة الرسمية للدولة وهي العربية وذلك حسب البحوث والدراسات السابقة، ثم سأقدم مبررات نظرية عن الهوية من خلال النظريات الرئيسية التي تتعلق بالنظام الاجتماعي والهوية مثل نظرية النظام الاجتماعي ونظرية الهوية الاجتماعية، وبالتالي توفير مبرر نظري لتأثير ثنائية اللغة على الهوية.

أخيراً، أنا أعتقد أن التأثير في الهوية متوافق فلسفياً مع النظريات الحالية للهوية واللغة، في الواقع أنا أعتقد أن الازدواجية في اللغة يمكن أن تساعد على إعطاء نظرية الهوية الاجتماعية معنى جديداً وتطوير قيمها الأساسية والغرض منها.

### Abstract

The field of language and identity has obtained importance within social culture and linguistic reality. This paper examines the relation between bilingualism or duality in languages and identity. Previous work on bilingualism has suggested a variety of significant in specific structural and language environments. However, the present study concludes that speaking to languages or more in a country may hurt and affect the identity and the culture of that country. Moreover, research investigating speech perception abilities of bilingual adults indicate that some bilinguals are capable of attaining equal or ultimate attainment abilities in their second language (Brice & Brice, 2008).. Finally, we realized that Moroccans people are more likely to speak French rather than Arabic.

Then I will provide the theoretical compatibility of identity with the main theory of social system: social identity theory, hence providing a theoretical justification for the effect of identity. I think the effect in an identity is philosophically compatible with the current theories of identities and languages which influence today's identities. In fact, I believe the duality in languages can help give the social identity theory new meaning and rehabilitate their basic values and purpose.

**Key words:** Identity, duality in languages (bilingualism), The linguistic-relativity, social identity, Cultural Identity.

## **Introduction**

Language is the biggest feature specific to the identity of the nation; some people said that the language is the nation. French language today is the language of the first use for more than half a century of independence to many Moroccans and their institutions. In fact, that does not allow this reality of linguistic (Moroccans saying that French is the only trophy of the Moroccans society is innocent of the negatives), because the coming of the language affected the development of Arabic language (national language), because of competition from the French language, that is not in the period of the French occupation only, but also in the period of independence.

This research examines how speaking two languages affect our identity and the relation between identity and language. Officially, Morocco is a bilingual country, but the linguistic reality is rather complicated. Although, Arabic is the national language, and French is taught in school, so the latter is more common in government and business and among upper class Moroccans. In addition, there are three main dialects of Berber spoken all over the country (although now I have no way of telling any of them from Arabic). In the north of Morocco, Spanish is widely spoken, while in the bigger cities like Casablanca, English is very common.

### **Research Questions:**

- 1- What is the relation between identity and language?
- 2- What is the cultural production on bilingualism in Morocco?
- 3- How important is identity and bilingualism in Morocco?
- 4- What are the particular features of bilingualism in this field?

### **Literature Review:**

There are lot of definitions about the identity, but the definition of Kuun (2008) has explained as a person's knowledge about who they are; who other people are; what it is that differentiates them and how one should behave in certain situations considering the social group where one belongs.

Bilingual or dual language acquisition is a process that differs from monolingual development (Brice & Brice, 2009). Schofel wrote another definition, (Bilingualism is the learning and use of two or more than one language and it is a linguistic, social, educational and psychological reality for many people and most countries (Schofel 2008).

This issue is important because the duality in language may or may not change the identity of any group of people, so if someone uses another language more than the official language may change the interaction and the identity of people. In addition, does speaking or learning a second language in the native country affect their culture in the official language, and does the ideology of the foreign culture affect the way that people think or act?. This investigation will allow me to find out if the duality in language works or not in order to provide some facts about it.

### **Social Identity Theory:**

“A social identity is a person's knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category or a group” (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). “A social group is a set of individuals who hold a common social identification or view themselves as members of the same social category” (Stets & Burke, 2000, P.225).

Gumperz. (1982) says that Ideology frames language, and language frames social reality. Language is so important because it shapes our identity, so if we speak another language rather than our native language how we can shape our identities.

### **Background and History**

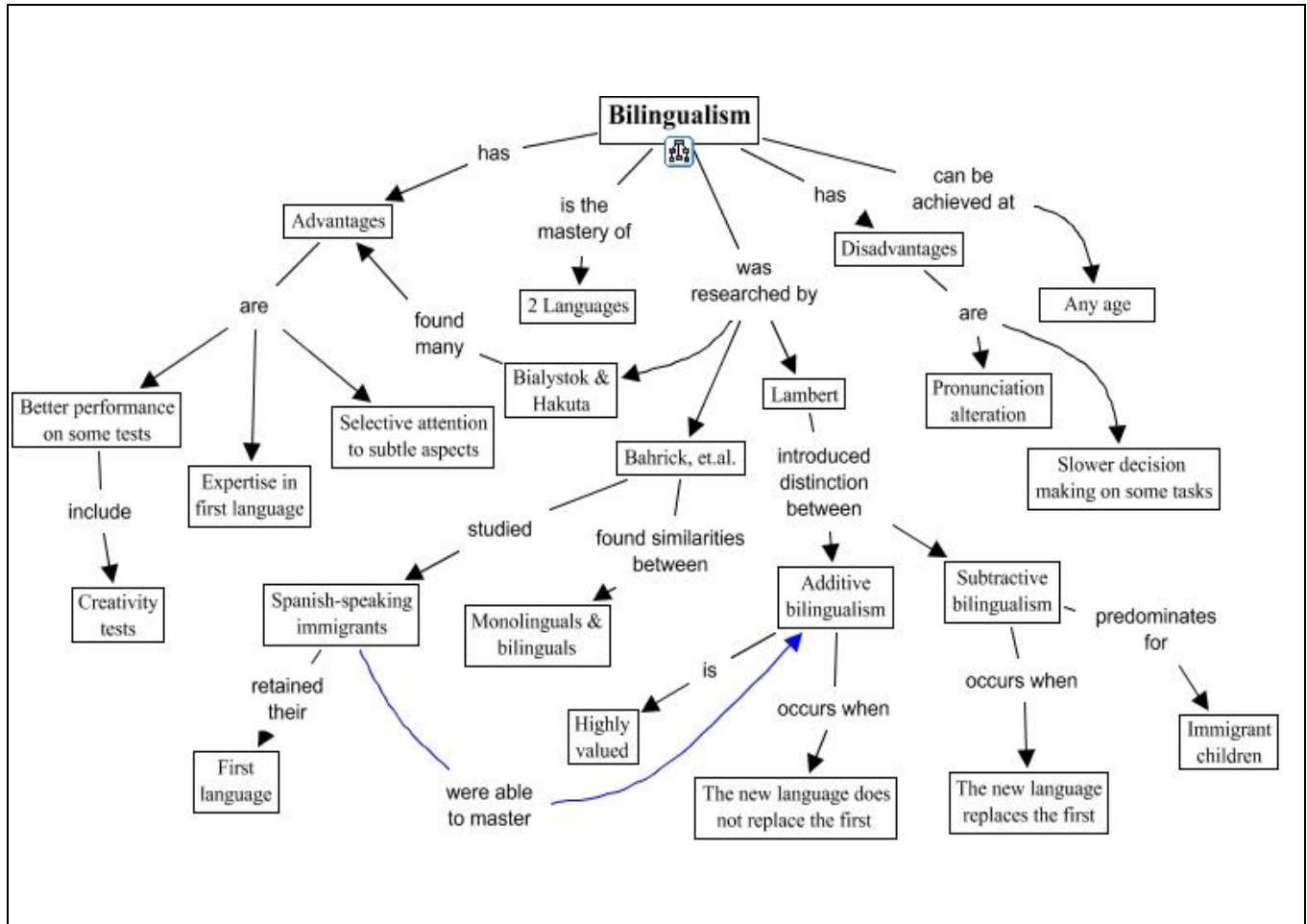
Morocco became independent of France in 1956; it was only in the 1980s that French was replaced by Arabic as the main language of instruction in Moroccan secondary schools (Angrist & Lavy, 1997).

French classes are available everywhere in Casablanca. In addition, l'Institut français ( an institute of learning France language) offers all levels of French and a number of specialized classes such as business and medical French, and there are language schools all over the city that offer French classes. Arabic classes and institutions are much harder to find (Aboutcom, para 5)

### **The Linguistic Situation in Morocco**

Language has always been affected by history and culture. It is a strong component of one's historical and cultural identity (Sadiqi, 2006). A particularly important phase in Morocco's modern history is the era of French colonization (1912-1956). Language played a role in this era, as well as in postcolonial Morocco. Consequently, French was introduced to Morocco as a "civilized" and "superior" language. It was used in most spheres of political power such as the government, the administration and education. The French elevated their own language and marginalized the Moroccan languages (Khatibi, 1983).

Figure 1: The advantages and disadvantages of bilingualism. IHMC CampTools (2010).



The bilingualism has advantages and disadvantages as we see in (figure 3). That model of bilingualism suggests two kind of bilingualism, which is addictive and subjective, so the subjective occurs when the new language replaces the first language.

## Estimates of Moroccan Migrant Stocks Worldwide

Figure 2: Estimates of Moroccan Migrant Stocks Worldwide. Hass (2005)

Country	Population registered in Moroccan consulates (2002)	Destination country statistics	Year	source
France	1,024,766	506,000	1999	IOM 2003:217 (French census)
Netherlands	276,655	315,821	2005	Statistics Netherlands
Belgium	214,859	204,000	2000	IOM 2003:101

The best example for that is Morocco; in Morocco, the French language mostly replaced the Arabic language in streets, schools and official departments. As a result, that will help to predominate for immigrant Moroccan children, and that is why Moroccan has a huge population in France which is about 1,024,766 (figure 4).

From (figure4) we see that most Moroccan people speak French, so they prefer to go to France because they claim that France will offer a good opportunity for better life. That is one reason why young people in Morocco focus in French language more than Arabic language.

### **The relation between language and identity:**

“The relationship between language and identity is not only abstract and theoretical but also has important consequences for positive and productive language learning and teaching, so we can say that language enacts identity” (Bonny, 1997, P.413). Moreover, the nation is always connecting with language that represents its identity (Wagner, 2007). As a result, language is so important



because it helps to show or associate our identity because language is the most important instrument of socialization, of making humankind human as Wagner mentions in his book.

Wagner (2007) points out this principle by emphasizing three aspects of the relation between language and identity:

- 1- Nation is not identical with a community speaking the same language.
- 2- Common language does not seem to be necessary to a nation.
- 3- Some language groups do not think of themselves as a separate nation. (p.30).

Young (2010) claims that “every linguistic act is at the same time an act of identity” (p.104), So, in each conversation and act of writing language will be a choice contributes to the ongoing negotiation of identity in relation to audience, interlocutors, setting, subject, and message.

Li Wei argues that “we must not assume that, in any given conversation, speakers switch languages in order to ‘index’ speaker identity, attitudes, power relations, formality, etc.; rather, we must be able to demonstrate how such things as identity, attitude and relationship are presented, understood, accepted or rejected, and changed in the process of interaction”(p.106).

Bucholtz & Hall (2003) says that the studies of language and identity found difference between cultural ideologies and social practices: cultural beliefs about how people of different social backgrounds speak and act, while the actual linguistic and social practices in which people perform in specific social contexts and it is complex and strategic.

“Language, as a fundamental resource for cultural production, is hence also a fundamental resource for identity production. Identity: an outcome of cultural semiotics that is accomplished through the production of contextually relevant sociopolitical relations of similarity and difference, authenticity and inauthenticity, and legitimacy and illegitimacy” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2003, P.382)

### **Duality in Languages and Identity in Morocco:**

Wagner (2007) claim that “for scholars in the German Romantic tradition, language mirrors the soul of the nation and, as such, is the most effective way of apprehending the spirit of the community”(p.28). What the spirit of the Moroccan community when the speak French instead of Arabic language. There are many negative aspects caused by the French language in Morocco and the French language is not just booty of Moroccan society without any negatives. Alzawade (2009) pointed some negative aspects from the field observation of linguistic behavior in Moroccan society such as:

- 1- The absence of spontaneous feeling strong and excited today in favor of the use of Arabic.
- 2- Most of the absence of objection on the Moroccans Arabic writing worthless checks, on the one hand, and like the cynicism of those who write them and in Arabic, on the other.
- 3- The absence of the Arabic language in the writing of signs in streets and other public spaces.
- 4- The observed behaviors to Moroccans language at the level of writing and speaking will discover that Arabic language is not their national language, as advocated by the Constitution of their country.
- 5- Arabic language does not have to attend in seminars held by the Moroccans in Moroccan society.
- 6- The studies of Social Sciences gathered that there is a close relationship between language and the collective identity of the people so Imbalance in the following

relationship between the Moroccans and Arabic language - as described in these indicators - is the primary source to create a Moroccan identity troubled and confused.

7- In addition, Even the word "mother" "أمي" in Arabic language, for example, in a speech of children and young females and males to use their mothers disappears almost completely in several points and areas in the country of Morocco. And is replaced by the word "mama" is very close in pronunciation of the French word "maman". However, there was a belief among the majority of Moroccans through the occupation and the independence that duality in language gains all good for the one who knows two languages and two cultures.

Wanger (2007) mentions that people like to change their languages voluntarily, so when people accept another language that will help to play an important role in national identity formation.

Salomo, Lieven, & Tomasello (2010) made a study about Young children's sensitivity to new and given information when answering predicate-focus questions and he found these points.

Figure 3: How young Moroccan children answering predicate-focus questions

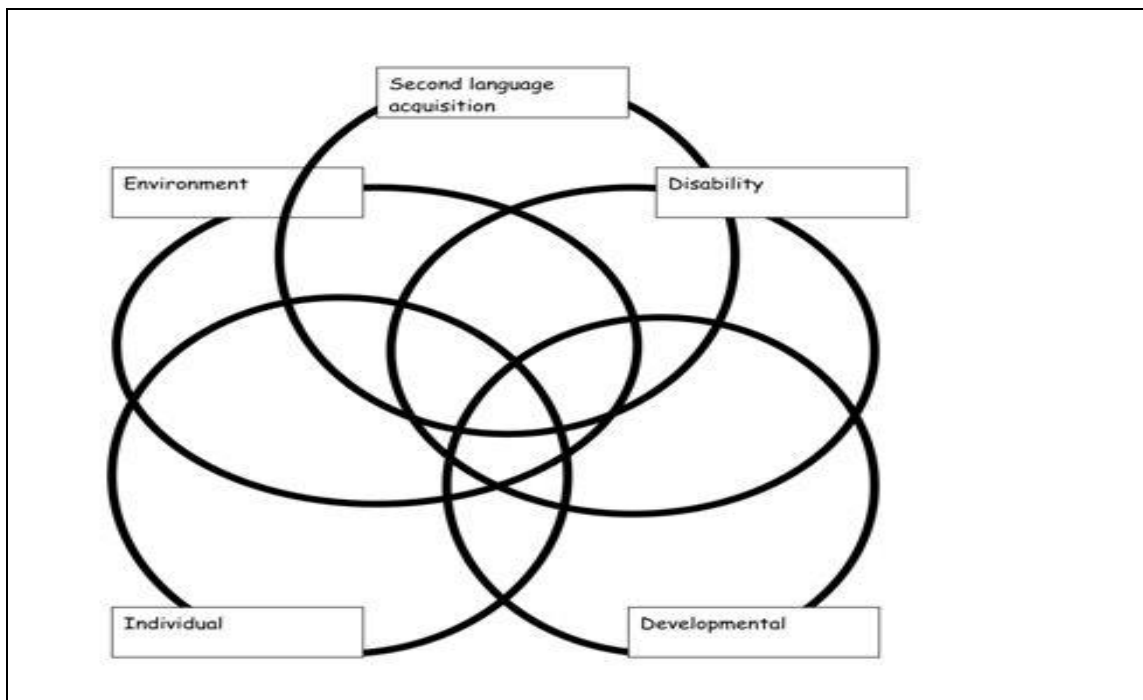
Morocco	Reading	Storytelling	Conversation	Singing	TV
Arabic	0.04	1.60	2.16	0.43	0.00
French	1.52	0.54	0.32	0.67	3.16

As we see in the chart, the Moroccan kid is more likely to speak and sing by French language, and he watch the French programmers more than the Arabic one. As a result, what identity that kid is going to achieve, the Arabic one or the French.

### Interaction of Bilingual Factors

Brice (2009) creates a model that explain the interaction in bilingual factors, he claims that bilingual or duality language is a process that differs from monolingual development and it involves more layers that affect ultimate acquisition include four factors which is second language acquisition factors, environmental, individual, developmental, and disabilities factors.







Figure 4: The interaction of Bilingual Factors model of Brice



### The linguistic-relativity

The linguistic-relativity hypothesis predicts that language can shape people's thoughts.

Figure 5: Explaining the simple of linguistic-relativity

Original figures	Labels	Simple drawings
	Curtains in a window	
	Diamond in a rectangle	
	Crescent moon	
	Letter "C"	

Each one explains any simple by his way, so the simple of moon may consider as crescent moon but someone may consider it as letter C. as a result, speaking two languages do the same, it may shapes different thoughts by different ways.

In many ways, the study of linguistic anthropology is the study of language and identity. “The study of identity has been most closely associated with other fields, especially psychology and sociology; anthropologists have also found the concept to be a valuable tool for understanding local cultural workings of and responses to sexism, racism, (neo) colonialism, and other kinds of power relations” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2003, p.369). Identity: an outcome of cultural semiotics that is accomplished through the production of contextually relevant sociopolitical relations of similarity and difference, authenticity and inauthenticity, and legitimacy and illegitimacy (Bucholtz & Hall, p.382).

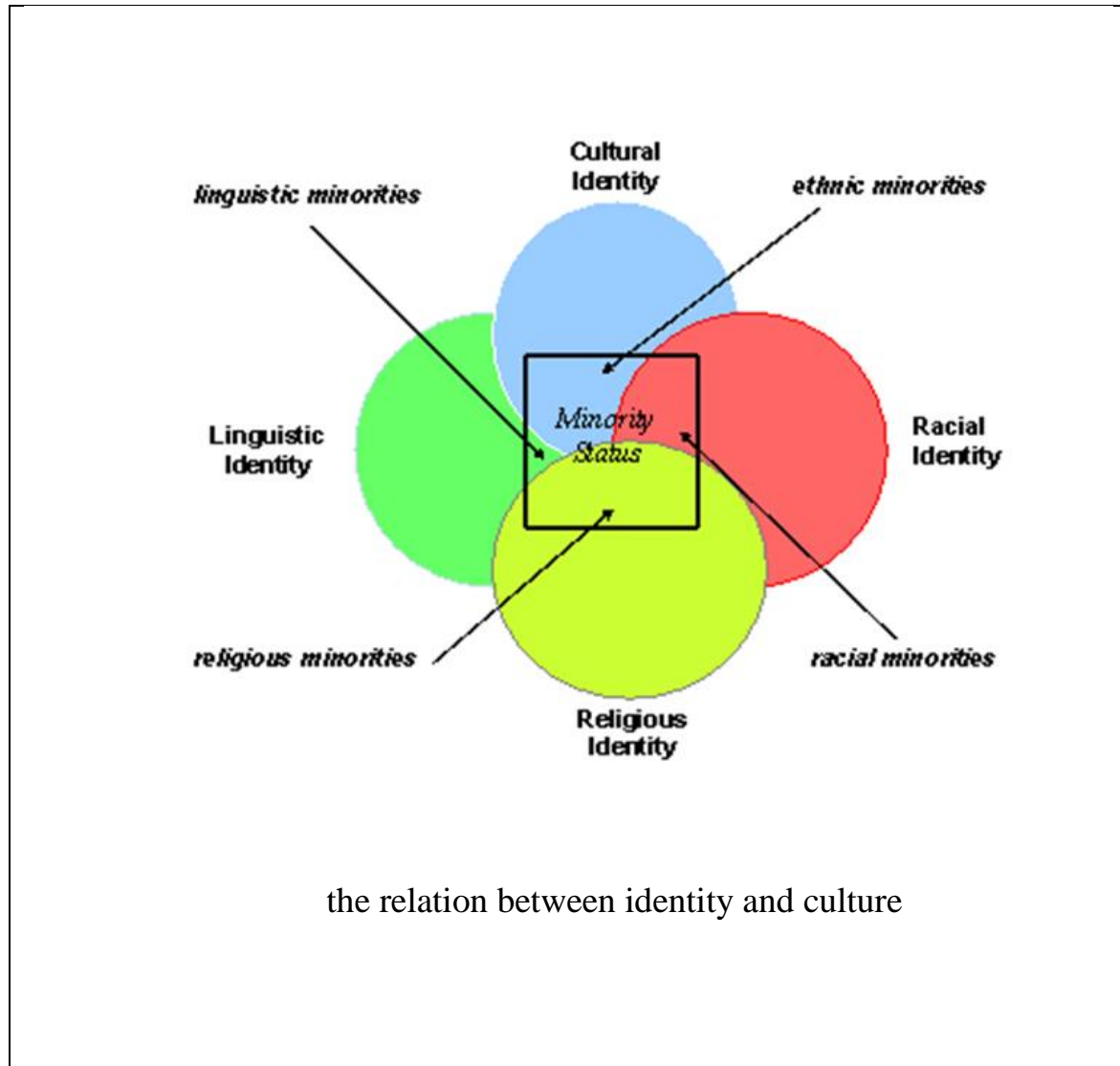
### **The relation between identity and culture**

Identity is a central task that begins in infancy and ends with the culmination of one's life. Its role in adolescent development has been particularly important as youth come to know and define

themselves in ways that were not possible during their childhood (Huffaker & Calvert, 2005, Para 2).

### **Cultural Identity:**

Figure 6: the relation between identity and culture



In their model (figure 8) they claim that cultural identity is a matter of becoming as well as of being...it belongs to the future as well as the past. It's really about a search for belonging (Para,

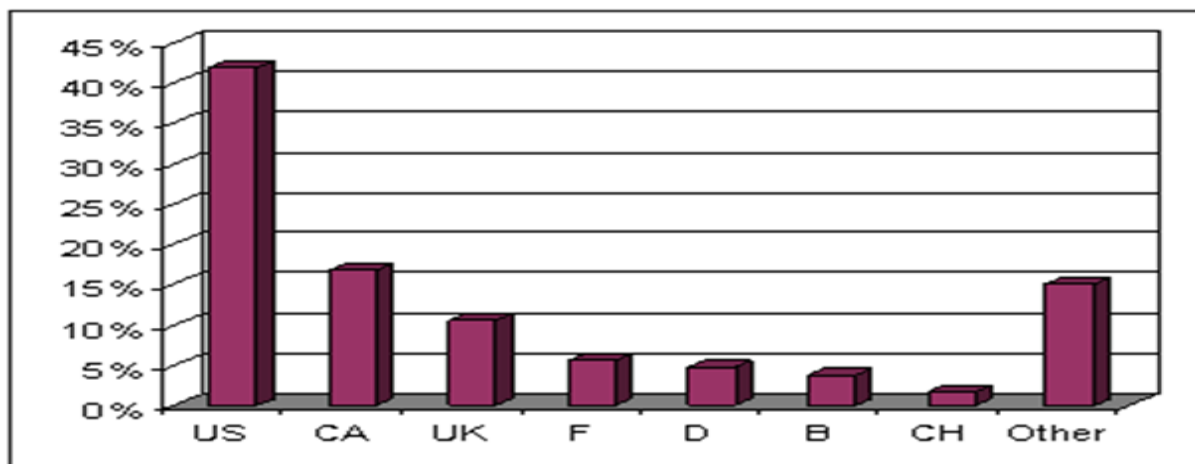
5), so identity, language and culture work together to create the minority status of any group of people.

### Findings:

- 1- Language is so important and it plays the role of enacting and shaping our identity
- 2- Bilingual people who replaced their native language by another language may affect their identity.
- 3- Duality in languages has advantages and disadvantages.
- 4- Moroccan people tend to speak French more than Arabic especially in school.
- 5- The relation between language, identity and culture is like a circle, each one completes the other.
- 6- The researches about bilingualism are a few.
- 7- People tend to speak another language in order to obtain different culture.

### Suggestions for Future Research

Figure 7: Publications on bilingualism in the world



Publications on bilingualism in the world are not important for many countries, if we look to figure 9, we will see that only a few countries such as the U.S, Canada and the U.K made publications such as researches, articles and books about the subject of bilingualism.

Future research needs to examine the interrelationship among the three bases of identities: person, language, and social (group) identities. Hence, Morocco as a bilingual country, and it should focuses in this subject for future research. One of the greatest expectations that establish our identities is the language that we speak (Hall, 2005), so I suggest doing a research in the area of How Moroccans reflect their language expectations when they speak another language such as French? Moreover, are they reflect their Moroccan identity or not.



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