

## **Heteroglossia in Choukri's *Al-Khubz al- Hafi*: A Reflection on Moroccan Plurilingualism**

**Mourad EL KHATIBI**

Languages, Arts and Human Sciences Laboratory, Faculty of Languages, Arts and Human Sciences, Hassan First University, Settat, Morocco  
Corresponding Author Email: [mourad.elkhatibi@uhp.ac.ma](mailto:mourad.elkhatibi@uhp.ac.ma)

**Yamina EL KIRAT EL ALLAME**

Mohammed V University, Rabat, Morocco

Received: 11/15/2022

Accepted: 02/14/2023

Published 02/24/2023

### **Abstract**

Language is not only a means of communication but also a symbol of identity. The languages people master and use determine not only their ethnic group, geographical region, and level of education but also their socioeconomic status and the identity that they claim. Like in the plurilingual<sup>i</sup> Society many languages are in contact in Morocco, and people have to code-switch and, or code-mix vernacular, official, and foreign languages. This article aims to investigate the use of languages, namely Darija, Amazigh<sup>ii</sup>, Spanish and Modern Standard Arabic in Mohamed Choukri's (1982) autobiography, *Al-Khubz al-Hāfi* within Bakhtin's (1981) model, known as Heteroglossia, which views language as a sociocultural phenomenon. The paper also uses Habermas' (1991) concept of "public space" to determine the domains of the use of languages. The significance of this study lies in its exploration of language use through the analysis of a literary text. Many sciences fields like linguistics, literature, sociolinguistics, and sociology are in contact in this study. The main question of this study is: How is plurilingualism represented in Choukri's *Al-Khubz al-Hāfi*? The linguistic analysis of the novel reveals the plurilingual profile of the author and Morocco and the ways all the existing languages interact.

**Keywords:** Amazigh, Choukri's *Al Khubz Al Hafi*, Cultural identity, Darija, Heteroglossia, Moroccan Plurilingualism, Vernacular languages

**Cite as:** EL KHATIBI, M. , & EL ALLAME , Y. E. (2023). Heteroglossia in Choukri's *Al-Khubz al- Hafi*: A Reflection on Moroccan Plurilingualism. *Arab World English Journal for Translation & Literary Studies* 7 (1): 243-260. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awejtls/vol7no1.19>

## Introduction

Morocco has a multilingual/plurilingual society where many of the languages in use come into contact with each other, and people have to code-switch and, or code-mix vernacular, official, and foreign languages. As Khatibi (1983) points out, the Maghrebi linguistic landscape is plurilingual because it involves a diglossic situation between Standard Arabic and Moroccan Arabic, i.e. Darija, Amazigh language, French and Spanish in the north and south of Morocco. There is an essential connection between mother tongues and foreign languages through translation.

In plurilingual societies like Morocco, language is not only a means of communication but it is also a reflection of the plural nature of Moroccan identity. In other words, languages people use represent their ethnic group, region, level of education, and even their socioeconomic status and identity. In diglossic societies where two languages co-exist, with a high-level language and a low variety - as is the case in Morocco, the standard type or language is out from all formal contexts; it is only for everyday communication, and is associated with illiteracy, ignorance, and low status.

This article investigates the use of different languages, namely Amazigh, Darija, Spanish, and Modern Standard Arabic, in Mohamed Choukri's (1982) autobiography, *Al-Khubz al-Hāfī*, translated into English by Paul Bowles as *For Bread Alone*.

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of language use through the analysis of a literary text. Many sciences fields like linguistics, literature, sociolinguistics, and sociology are in contact in this study. The study addressed the following research questions: (1) What are the particularities of *plurilingualism* in Morocco? (2) How is *plurilingualism* represented in Choukri's *Al-Khubz al-Hāfī*. (3) What are the different manifestations of language use in the public space in Mohamed Choukri's (1982 *Al-Khubz al-Hāfī*)?

The paper adopts Bakhtin's (1981) model, known as Heteroglossia, which considers language as a sociocultural phenomenon. Our adoption of that concept is motivated by the assumption that it is very beneficial in portraying the different voices that are used in the novel and in giving the reader the possibility to understand the various social and ideological backgrounds of the characters. The study also adopts a critical discourse analysis approach to the data used. It focuses on the other voices existing in *Al-Khubz Al- Hafī* and the roles that the characters play in the events. It also aims to shed light on the importance of voices in representing the social and cultural practices of Morocco at that time. Voice is not only an individual actor talking about his own experience but also a representative of a particular cultural and social group. The languages used in the book are an essential key to the work's analysis. The dialogues included in the novel illustrate the distinction between private space; where Amazigh language is in use, and public space; where Darija dominates. The use of the Spanish language is restricted to a specific context that requires communication with persons who speak only the Spanish language. Our study highlights the role played by vernacular languages in Choukri's cultural identity. The analysis of the novel indirectly illustrates the different statuses of languages in Morocco and examines Choukri's motivations for their use. The context in which these languages are used, the interlocutor with whom they are in use, and the narrator's state of mind provide deeper insight into the story itself.

This article is into five main sections. The first is the review of the literature. The second provides a brief overview of the Moroccan plurilingual context. The third explores the theoretical

framework adopted in the study, namely Bakhtin's (1981) model, known as heteroglossia. The fourth section introduces Choukri's (1982) autobiographical work, *Al-Khubz al-Hāfī*, and the fifth is on the analysis of the languages used in the novel, involving an examination of the contexts within which the languages are in use, the characters involved, and the emotional state; in which the author finds himself.

### Literature Review

Marshall and Moore (2018) state that *plurilingualism* is a concept that portrays the sociolinguistic reality in contact situations. According to Piccardo (2013), it is a kind of interaction of languages, mainly between individuals. It describes everyday language use, which is an authentic representative of different social interactions. *Plurilingualism*, as a term, is also tackled in many works of fiction. Many writers use the code-switching concept to describe, and present their characters. Hoffman (1996) defines code-switching as “the alternate use of two languages or linguistic varieties within the same utterance or during the same conversation” (p.110).

### *Plurilingualism in Morocco*

Language is a means of communication with others and expressing ideas, emotions, knowledge, memories, and values. Language is also a symbol through which people may claim their identity. In many societies, the mastery of multiple languages is highly valued and considered an asset. In diglossic societies such as Morocco and all Arab and African societies, languages acquire a status that depends on their disciplines of use and people's attitudes towards them. While mother tongues, also referred to as vernacular languages, are oral, excluded from all traditional fields, and reserved only for everyday communication and private space, official languages are valued, and used in all the conventional areas.

Haidar (2022) stresses that Morocco is known for its linguistic plurality, which reflects mainly its multicultural particularities. Wide linguistic varieties mingle with their specific functions. Because of this diglossia, it was necessary for the migrants to learn many languages to work and live together with Moroccans and other migrants. Therefore, learning foreign languages has become a solution for them to get rid of their social problems, and gain their life. Kachoub and Hilgendorf (2019) emphasize that many foreign languages have existed over the centuries due to the social and economic developments in Morocco. Ennaji (2005) states that Morocco nowadays contains a diversity of ultraracial groups, which are represented by Imazighen, Arabs, Jews, and Christians. According to Boukous (1985), Morocco has a heterogeneous sociolinguistic situation because there is a kind of rivalry between existing languages for the objective of exercising a symbolic power. One of the main challenges of this competition is becoming the identity of the dominant groups.

In Moroccan society, there is the co-existence of vernacular, official and foreign languages. This situation is the result of the country's colonial and historical heritage. Morocco was under colonialism by many countries, and the Moroccan linguistic sphere added many foreign languages. Therefore, Moroccan citizens range from monolingual speakers who can speak only one of the vernacular languages, namely Amazigh or Darija, to multilingual individuals who, in addition to the Moroccan vernaculars, can speak the official language(s) of the country and several foreign languages, and French, Spanish, and English in particular.

The term *vernacular* refers to the language spoken by ordinary people and used to communicate with each other in informal settings such as home and public space, as opposed to standard languages generally used in traditional domains such as education and administration. Vernacular languages, also known as ethnic languages, are usually non-official. They are used in verbal conversations more than in written communication and are endemic to specific societies and communities within a country or region. In the MENA region in general and Morocco in particular, vernacular languages are the mother tongues of people; they are generally referred to as dialects, as is the case of Darija; they can also be entirely distinct languages, as is the case with the language of the Amazigh. They are often devalued and are generally not in use in literary works.

The term *official language* referred to the standard form of languages, which is, most of the time associated with the State. It is the language of official and traditional fields that the governments establish such as education, administration, and media; also of literary works in general, as is the case with Modern Standard Arabic in all Arab countries and Morocco in particular.

Besides these languages, there exist many foreign languages, which are, for the most part, colonial languages, as is the case in Morocco with French and Spanish, or global languages such as English. The co-existence of all these languages has made Morocco a multilingual or plurilingual society in which all these languages are in contact. This phenomenon has influenced not only the everyday speech of its citizens but also the literary works of novelists and writers.

### ***Mohamed Choukri's Al-Khubz Al- Hafî as an Autobiographical Narrative***

Following the independence of their countries, many writers in the Maghreb or North Africa started to write their personal experiences during the period of colonialism in the form of autobiographies. Writing became a kind of psychological emancipation from the negative impact of colonialism on them and their countries. Erickson (1998) has argued that most of the autobiographies written by postcolonial writers are focused on story-telling. Cases in point are Khatibi's (1971) *Tattooed Memory*, Tahar Ben Jelloun's (1985) *The Sand Child*, and Assia Djebbar's (1985) *Fantasia: An Algerian Calvacade*. These autobiographies aim at maintaining a dialogic conjunction between writer and reader outside the text and also a dialogic conjunction inside the text between the narrator, i.e. and narratee, i.e. implied reader, the narrator, and characters, and between the characters themselves. Some postcolonial autobiographies focus on a metalinguistic dynamic (writing about writing) and thus further complicate reference to the identity of the author, narrator, and characters. In other words, the main concern of these autobiographies is the artistic quality of writing. By making recourse to story-telling and dialogic exchange, postcolonial autobiographers engage in 'language games' whose objective is to disempower the master narratives.

Some autobiographies like Khatibi's (1971) *Tattooed Memory* discuss postcolonial issues. These kinds of novels are most often by writers who are natives of colonized countries like Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt. Therefore, the autobiographer will discuss the particular experiences of childhood while at the same time shedding light on the negative image of colonialism. Such autobiographies address many postcolonial issues and concepts, including identity, ambivalence, language, and alterity. Hamil (2002) argued that the act of writing an autobiography requires the existence of other alternatives to constitute a new identity, one that does not advocate "the idea of the unified subjectivity" or even "the notion of a foundational origin"

(p. 14). On the other hand, Erickson (1998) notes that postcolonial autobiographies do not advocate resistance and revolution but only reject the ideology of the master discourses. By using Amazigh and Darija in his novel, Choukri leaves or questions the unique language imposed by the State, Modern Standard Arabic, as a unifying language by excluding of the other languages.

Choukri's autobiographical trilogy includes *Al-Khubz Al-Hafi* (1982), *Zaman Al-Akhta'* or *Al-Shuttar* (1992) (Time of Mistakes or *Streetwise* [1996]), and finally, *Wujuh* (Faces, 2000). In *Al-Khubz al-Hafi* (translated by Paul Bowles as *For Bread Alone* [1982]), he describes his miserable life from childhood to adulthood. Choukri (1935-2003) grew up in a low-income family with a tyrannical father. He suffered from his father's abuse and violence. He even saw his father killing his baby brother, a tragic incident that made Choukri live in everlasting fear of his father. To escape such violence, he fled his home and became a homeless child in the poor neighborhoods of Tangier. In that situation, he was to suffer a great deal from hunger; he mentions how, one afternoon, he could not stop crying because he was so hungry (Choukri, 1982).

Early in his childhood, his father forced him to work in a café. During this period, he developed some bad habits, stealing, smoking kif, and drinking alcohol. However, at the age of twenty, he tried to get rid of his bad habits and became interested in reading and writing. Therefore, he decided to go to school. Reading became his passion. Writing became an excellent way to recall his miserable childhood, characterized by poverty, terror, and prostitution. Although *Al-Khubz al-Hafi* focuses more on his individual experiences, how he records them, using dialogue and giving voice to his characters, provides insight into the issues addressed.

In *Al-Khubz al-Hafi*, Choukri explores many taboo issues, including sexuality, prostitution, masturbation, and alcohol. The autobiography also describes his early life experiences, among which are poverty, violence, hunger, illiteracy, homosexuality, and crime. He argued that, in so doing, he distinguished his writing from the "telling" of Moroccan storytellers. In his book Paul Bowles 'wa uzla Tanja' (1997), Choukri declares that "I don't tell my stories; I write them for those who can read, but Mrabet does not write, he only narrates, and Paul writes his stories" (p. 118).

Choukri revolutionized the modern Arabic narrative in terms of the topics he addressed and the languages he used. He combined Modern Standard Arabic with Darija, Amazigh (the language of the Moroccan Amazighs), and Spanish since his autobiographical writing is on his personal life experiences. Though he was born in an impoverished context, he managed to overcome his miserable situation, educate himself and become a teacher and writer. *For Bread Alone*, in its English version, translated by Paul Bowles, was his first published book. The Arabic version is one of the most widely read books in Arabic. It has been translated into 30 languages and was banned in Morocco from 1983 to 2000 because of the taboo issues it addressed and its use of vernacular languages.

### Method

The main objective of this study is to analyze the use of languages in Choukri's *Al-Khubz al-Hafi* (a novelistic autobiography as he describes it) to identify the motivations for their use. Given the co-existence of different languages in Morocco, *plurilingualism* is adopted here rather than multilingualism. As a technical term, *plurilingualism* was introduced to language education in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, i.e. CEFR and describes a process of the dynamic, creative language across the borders of language varieties (Council of Europe, 1996, 2001). While 'multilingualism' refers to the separate coexistence of

different languages, whether within the individual or societies, to achieve the ideal proficiency of a native speaker in each of these languages, *plurilingualism* insists on the interactive development of the individuals' fundamental communicative skills through their linguistic and cultural experience with all the languages.

*Plurilingualism* a life-long activity involving the learning of the languages that are in use in society , i.e. vernacular languages, official languages, and foreign languages. It does not necessarily mean reaching native-like proficiency but instead believing in the partial command and knowledge that individuals can develop in any language, be it their mother tongue or a foreign language. The primary motivation for adopting the term *plurilingualism* in this study is that native-speaker-like proficiency is no longer the ultimate goal and that what matters most is not mastery and excellence but rather the way that languages become part of the individual's life and enrich it. Indeed, Choukri illustrates Moroccan *plurilingualism*; he used to speak in addition to his mother tongue, Tarifit, Darija, Modern Standard Arabic, Spanish, and French.

Within that general framework, this study adopts Bakhtin's principle (1981), 'heteroglossia' (literally: 'different voices'), which considers language to be a socio-cultural phenomenon and "a concrete heteroclitic conception of the world" (p. 293). Bakhtin defines Heteroglossia as "another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions, but in a refracted way" (p. 324). His focus on the novel is important because it considers language inherently social, contextual, and evolving. Language does exist in the mess of ordinary life, which makes it open to various interpretations. Heteroglossia, according to him, involves all the different ways in which people speak to one another and how each one adopts the other's speech/ideas and tries to appropriate them. It examines how they differ based on gender, culture, age, language, socioeconomic status, and ethnic group and reflects people's cultural, social, economic , and educational backgrounds. Indeed, the other ways of speaking and the languages used reflect those different voices. Bakhtin (1981) stresses that there is a co-existence of varieties within a single *linguistic code* and that heteroglossia provides the framework for arguing that the novel can be a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) , and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized. The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargon, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, [...] present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre.

## Analysis

### *Heteroglossia in Al-Khubz Al- Hafi*

Literature is a domain that requires the use of formal languages. In such a context, mother-tongue languages, also known as vernacular languages, are considered low varieties or corrupt forms of official languages that should not be used in traditional fields. In the Arabic-speaking world, the use of vernacular languages, i.e., local "dialects" as referred to, is highly criticized and often regarded as a threat to the Standard Arabic form. Choukri's use in some dialogues of Amazigh and Darija initially was initially criticised; many people, including novelists, academics, and literary critics, condemned it. The present study aims to demonstrate that one of the strengths of Choukri's novel lies in the use of the different languages in use in Moroccan society and the voice that the writer gives to his characters.

Choukri's novelistic autobiography portrays the Moroccan plurilingual situation as it was during the period of the writing of the novel. The author uses different languages in different contexts, with other characters, for various issues and reflecting the narrator's states of mind. Analysis of the settings, interlocutors, topics, and speakers will show that a clear distinction can be between the languages adopted and the spaces in which they are in use.

Choukri uses Modern Standard Arabic as the primary language for his novelistic autobiography. However, he also uses vernacular words and expressions in Amazigh, Darija, and even Spanish, especially in dialogues, as a way of giving voice to different characters and revealing their status and identity. He creates a different style of his own, one that helps portray the characters' state of mind and the context within which they find themselves. The context in which the three languages are used and the novel characters are all different.

Bakhtin's (1981) model, known as Heteroglossia, offers a valuable framework for the study of Choukri's novelistic autobiography, mainly in the use of various languages to describe the different social, linguistic, and cultural groups and the co-existence of distinct varieties and languages. The classification of the extracts from the book to be analyzed has taken into consideration many elements like the context, speaker, interlocutor, and emotional state of the speaker. This procedure will illustrate the motivating factors that prompt the character's use of either Amazigh or Darija. The use of language seems to be a spontaneous attitude and a reflection because the story's principal source is the author's personal life experiences. The book includes ten extracts in Amazigh, 45 in Darija, and four in Spanish. Data analysis focuses on the dichotomy between private and public space and the idea of the formal domain.

#### *Language Use in the Private Space*

The use of the Amazigh language in general, and its Tarifit variety in particular, appears ten times in specific contexts, eight of which involve his mother. These interactions with the mother appear mostly on pages six, nine, 10, 13, and 15 of the Arabic version of the novel:

#### **Example One (p.6): Author's mother's statements**

*Look at your brother! he doesn't cry, and you, you call;  
Come here, don't be afraid  
Come here  
Enough for you! May you eat yourself*

خم أو ماش. نتا وبتروشا ، إشك تترود  
أراحد. لا تخف. أراحد  
أراحد  
أشفاش، أنتشد إخنش

#### **Example Two (p.9): Author's answers to his mother**

*I am here  
He will kill me as he killed my brother*

أقايي ذانينا  
لا. أداي ينغ امش ينغا أوما إينو

The above extracts illustrate Bakhtin's concept of Heteroglossia (other-languagedness), i.e., the use of another's voice "serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way" (Bakhtin 1981, p. 324). It reports interactions among the author-narrator, the work, and the reader. Heteroglossia refers to the ideologies related to the various languages people use as members of

society. Language is not only a means of communication, but it carries the features of people's age group, social class, geographical region, family, friends' circle, profession, etc. All the extracts are of an intimate private space, between mother and son. Most of the settings in which Amazigh is in use are associated with the author's emotional state; most of the time, he is suffering from either hunger or physical pain or else fearing violence and torture. The use of the mother tongue provides readers with the possibility to know the settings and characters, allows them to feel a sense of proximity, and also helps them determine the relationships between the characters. The use of Amazigh adds the mother's voice. It portrays the situation of the Riffian family, where the mother is confined to the home and acts as a source of love and protection for her children against the harshness of life and, or violence of the father. Indeed, compared to the father, the mother is a refuge for Mohamed. The mother is the symbol of the family and adds the family dimension to the story to reveal the life conditions of The Riffi family. The author's use of his mother tongue and his giving the voice to his mother is a way of claiming his Amazigh-Riffian identity and honoring both his mother and his native language in an environment where Amazigh identity, language, and culture were stigmatized, marginalized, and excluded, and where women were themselves considered second rate citizens and had a meager status. The author could have used Modern Standard Arabic or even Darija instead of Amazigh. Still, his intention was not only a narration of events and scenes but also an attempt to show the diversity of voices and the issues of language, ethnicity, and identity in Morocco.

By including these dialogues where the child cries out of hunger in Amazigh, the author tries to illustrate the complex living conditions in the Rif at that time. Crying for bread directs the reader to the title of the novel "For Bread Alone"--in Arabic, "Bare Bread", which is the extreme form of poverty, where people actually could not afford anything other than bread, and where bread was the prominent ingredient people used to live. By giving voice to the child to express hunger, the author-narrator illustrates heteroglossia and polyphony within a single utterance.

Choukri's reference to these specific moments, hunger, and crime, recorded in dialogues in the mouth of a child, shows that the narrator is unable to forget his miserable childhood. The images are still in his memory, and the pain and sufferings were still with him even at the moment of writing. The voice of the child expressing hunger and fear in Amazigh portrays a reality he has lived and the childhood sufferings that the author wants the readers to feel.

The mother's statement in the Tarifit variety, "اشفاش، أتشد إخفنش؟"، where she asks Mohamed to stop eating, is very significant as well and is a way for the author to refer to the years of hunger the Rif region has gone through. The statement in Tarifit variety, "لا. أذاي ينغ امش ينغا أوما إينو"، where Mohamed refuses to appear for fear his father may kill him, illustrates the trauma the child has experienced when he saw his father killing his brother. For him, his father was a killer. He was scared to death of him and was expecting him to kill him at any moment. It is a horrible and traumatic feeling that a child could never overcome.

Choukri's use of Amazigh tells the reader about the author's mother tongue and his Amazigh identity. It reveals that, at the time of writing, Amazigh was the mother tongue of Amazigh children in the region. Women who did never leave their homes were mostly Amazigh monolinguals. Indeed, until the late 60s, Amazigh was the primary language of communication in the whole Tarifit area, transmitted to children and spoken at home and within the Riffi ethnic community. The three other contexts in the novel in which Amazigh is used further illustrate that linguistic situation. The older man who carries his brother's dead body to the graveyard also



addresses the author in Amazigh. Being a member of the Tarifit ethnic community, he uses the child's mother tongue to communicate with him because it was, at the time, the primary means of communication within the community:

**Example Three (p.10): The old man**

*What is this blood?*

ما نا الدم ما؟

**Example Four (p.10): Author (Child)**

*I stepped on some glass* -

عفسغ خ الزجاج

**Example Five (p.10): Father reacting to the older man's question**

*He is an idiot*

ذابو هاري

As stated earlier, Amazigh is mainly associated with either intimate space, home, or internal location related to Amazigh ethnic community members. These few dialogues in the Amazigh language have a substantial impact. They reveal the author's ethnic identity and thus add an Amazigh cultural, linguistic, and ethnic component to the autobiography. Indeed, these few statements, together with some of the extracts in Darija, reveal a lot about the status of the Amazigh language in general and the Amazigh Riffi community in particular.

Substantial and very significant use of Amazigh occurs in the author's reaction when he is hit with a stick by a policeman after being sent to town by his mother, along with some other neighborhood boys to buy beans for her. He screams in Riffain, "Oh, my mother! Oh, my mother!" (! أيمانوا! أيمانوا) to express pain. This intuitive reaction to pain, yelling his mother's name in Amazigh, reveals how deeply rooted the language is in his subconscious mind. The language of instinctive and emotional reactions is always the mother tongue. We can tackle Heteroglossia in all the previous examples from an ideological perspective. The author-narrator seems to have a kind of attachment and glorification of Amazigh identity through the use of Amazigh language in the author's home and with the closest person to him, his mother.

*Language Use in the Public Space*

According to Habermas (1991), public space is a domain of social life where we can form the public. It is open to all citizens and involves every conversation in which individuals come together to form people. Choukri's autobiography includes 42 statements, either as dialogues or insults in Darija, the Lingua Franca of Morocco, and the primary language of everyday communication among all the other groups. A close analysis of the different settings and, or contexts in which the various characters use Darija serves to illustrate real life in public space, as well as some of the taboo places and practices in the narrator's neighborhood—from cafes, streets, and hotels, to brothels, prostitution, and pedophilia. The presence of all these characters and locations in the story provides the reader with details about the social and cultural life of Moroccan society at that time. Each character and context addresses a real issue, has a voice in the autobiography, and adds to its cultural, linguistic, social, and economic dimensions.

The scenes in which the boys insult the narrator depict common stereotypes about Amazigh people in general and Riffi people in particular. They also reveal the extent of poverty in rural Amazigh areas and the Rif region and show the sufferings of Amazigh populations. The

neighborhood boys' statements on pages 16-17 of the Arabic version are very significant and revealing:

### Example Six (p.16): Statements of the boys of neighborhood

*He doesn't know how to speak Arabic*

ما كيعرفش يتكلم العربية

*He is a Riffi coming from the land of famine and killers.*

هو ريفي. جا من بلاد الجوع والقتالة (القتلة)

*When one of their cows or sheep or goat die, they eat it. They eat carrion*

إذا ماتت لهم بقرة أو غنمة أو عنزة كياكلوها. كياكلو حتى الجيفة

*The Riffi is deceitful, and the Jebli is naive.*

"الريفى" خداع والجبلى نية.

In the first statement, the neighborhood boys make fun of the author because he cannot speak Arabic, i.e. Darija. That is, indeed, an actual social fact under which most Amazighs have suffered in post-independence Morocco and even later. For a long time, Amazigh, who could not speak Darija, was stigmatized and ridiculed in public for not mastering Darija and saying only Amazigh. It was – and still is – the situation in several Moroccan regions, even after the officialization of the Tamazight language- a genuine problem, if not a crime. By recording this attitude, the author undoubtedly intends to portray the attitudes that Arabic-speaking people have towards the Amazighs. Generations of Amazigh children have developed an inferiority complex because of such attitudes and behaviors. Reading such statements, readers of Amazigh origin can indeed recall their own experiences with such conduct and sympathize with the young boy, i.e. pp.16-17.

The second, third, and fourth statements represent stereotypes about the Riffi people, namely that they are “killers” and “deceitful”. The fact that young neighborhood boys express these statements shows that the stereotypes are deeply rooted in the community and succeeding generations will receive them, which helps explain the prevalence of such beliefs in Moroccan society even today. In addition, this portrayal of the Rif as a region of killers and the hungry has become a historical document. Many people have regarded it as a haven for dissent; the Hirak Rif Movement, a popular mass protest in the region from October 2016 to June 2017, comes to mind as evidence.

The young boys' presence in the streets also reveals how boys learn from an early age how to occupy the public space and how they are also held responsible by going to the market and doing some errands for the family, as is the case with Mohamed who has to go to buy things for his mother, as opposed to girls who are strictly forbidden to leave the house. The use of Darija in the streets illustrates the diglossic situation in Morocco and gives voice to the vernacular language, the language of life and everyday communication, as opposed to Modern Standard Arabic, the language in which the book, the novel, is written.

The boys' reaction towards Mohamed, the Riffi boy, and how they make fun of him illustrates the exclusion, rejection, and psychological trauma that generations of Amazigh children have experienced in the public space and still do, especially in Amazigh contact areas. It also reveals the exclusion of the indigenous identity of North Africa in general and Morocco in particular. As a Riffian who has indeed lived the colonial era and was undoubtedly aware of the

“Berber Dahir” and the impact this has had on the status of the Amazigh language, culture, and identity, the author’s giving voice to young boys to express stereotypes and humiliate a young Amazigh Riffi boy is a way for him to somehow predict the future of the Amazigh language, culture, and identity in the future since those boys symbolize the future of the country.

The other settings in which Darija is used involve insults expressed by different characters in the story, including the narrator, his friends , and acquaintances, or some conversational exchanges related to sexual matters. Most expressions used involve swearing words, thus revealing the state of mind and emotional and psychological state of the characters involved. Most of the characters who use the words are either disappointed, frightened, or angry:

**Example Seven (p.47):**

*Let her go shit with her youth*

تمشي تخرا هي وشبابها

*Eat your mother, daughter of a bitch*

امش لتأكل أمك بنت القحبة

*Prostitution is everywhere*

التقبيين في كل مكان

*Son of shit! Son of a bitch*

ولد الزبل. ولد القحبة

*Damn this, buy and sell*

!تقو على هذا البيع والشراء

*Damn that penis service!*

!تقو على خدمة الزب هذه

*Go to procure westerners in a whorehouse*

امش تقود النصارى في البورديل

The above statements all involve insults and swear words, reflecting the vulgar language used in public spaces. Choukri’s use of these statements is spontaneous because he is writing about real-life experiences. Any translation into Standard Arabic would be difficult and would certainly not have the same impact on the reader. It may not describe clearly the state of mind of the speaker so effectively. Choukri declared that he intended to write his stories as they lived them for those who could read them. He wanted to break taboos and portray society as it was, with all its evils and stifling behaviors, and not merely write about it.

Other contexts where Darija is in use involve sexual encounters and pedophile adult men trying to abuse the narrator as a young boy. Pedophilia is, indeed, one of the most critical issues covered in Choukri's Al-Khubz al-Hafi. The work reflects the particularities of Tangier in the fifties. Pedophilic acts and stories revolve around the city of Tangier. Reference can be made here to the level of Felix Ramos, the Spanish presenter and the singer who raped a 14 years old homeless Moroccan boy. His abuse of the boy continued for three years, and to keep him silent, he used to pay him. The story of Adnane Bouchouf, an eleven-year-old Moroccan boy violently kidnapped, raped, killed, and buried in Tangier in 2020 by a twenty-four-year-old Moroccan young man, reveals that the issue persists. Moreover, Tangier has always attracted famous homosexual writers such as Jean Genet, Roland Barthes, and Paul Bowles, who used to have sex with boys. The statements in Choukri’s autobiography illustrate situations in which adult men approach the young boy Mohamed in the hotel where he had taken refuge.

**Example Eight (p.118): Drunk man talking to Mohamed**

- (i) *Aha, gazelle! Where are you off to, beautiful?* آ، الغزال! فاين ماشي أهاد الغزال
- (ii) *Hey, beautiful!* إيه! أديك الغزال.
- (iii) *Your visit is a benediction.* زارتنا بركة.
- (iv) *Come here and have a drink with us* أجي تشرب شي كاس معنا،
- (v) *Come here what's the matter with you? We will not eat you.* أجي آش عاندك؟ ماغاديش ناكلوك.
- (vi) *God brought you here tonight!* جابك الله هاد الليلة.
- (vii) *What a handsome boy! I will be right up.* يا لطيف على هاد العايل! أنا راجع دابا.
- (ix) *Not now. Leave the boy alone.* ماشي دابا. خلي العايل عليك
- (x) *Later, later. Do with him whatever you want.* من بعد، من بعد اعمل معاه اللي بغيتي
- (xi) *This is unacceptable. You behave as if you have never seen boys!* هادي هي البسالة. اتقول عمرك ماشفت العواول

All the above statements revolve around pedophilia and the attempts of drunk adult men to abuse the author. The narrator takes refuge in a Fondaq<sup>iii</sup>. After spending a whole day walking, on the stairway, he runs into a drunk man who touches his face and utters statements as a way of hitting on him or trying to insult him.

As mentioned in Choukri's *Al-Khubz al- Hafī*, pedophilia was widespread in Tangier at that time and still is. What is worth noting is that pedophilia touched most homeless persons and still does. Statements (ix), (x), and (xi) show that pedophilia was like normal, usual activities as it appears in the words of the men, ex. "Not now. Leave the boy alone! Later, later. Do with him whatever you want. It is unacceptable. You behave as if you *have never seen boys!*"

The author had to fight against different pedophile men, and not only one. As he was afraid of being raped, he decided to hide and spend the night in the animals' quarters, preferring animals to humans. The following day, the narrator chooses not to return to that place. The use of Darija in all these situations in which pedophilia is present is significant. It reveals the identity of the pedophile men, as their accent in Darija shows that they are initially from Tangier. The use of the words «العواول، اعمل» is part of the vocabulary of the typical variety of Darija spoken in the north.

The use of Darija also represents the identity of the men, their level of education, and their social class. Indeed, Choukri's *Al-Khubz al- Hafi* presents two pictures of sexual intercourse: one associated with the whores who get money for sex, the other, sex with boys, which is free. Based on the language used here and in the Spanish brothels, with Spanish whores (pp. 47-49) and homosexuals (p.13), we can claim that the poor and illiterate men who could not afford money for sex, found in pedophilia an excellent solution to satisfy their sexual desires. Sex is not only an act of pleasure but also a representation of power abuse. In other words, homeless boys in Choukri's *Al-Khubz al- Hafi* are just victims of pedophilia acts.

Bakhtin's Heteroglossia, in all the above contexts, is a set of utterances and words that link the speakers together in a particular social context. In this regard, the phrase or utterance is a basic unit of meaning that functions within its context (Bakhtin, 1986). Other people, words, expressions, time, and place represent the context. The term is the product of many relations, which are cultural and political.

As Bakhtin (1986) affirms, 'addressivity' characterizes utterances or words, i.e., a word is a means of communication between a speaker and a receiver or a listener. The used utterances or terms denote the cultural and social backgrounds of the listener or receiver. The choice of a statement takes into consideration all these external factors. Discourse is, therefore, a set of statements that are in Bakhtin's argument, 'dialogic'; that is in the form of dialogues and 'historically contingent.'

Choukri also uses Spanish, a language widely in use in the city of Tangiers. In Choukri's work, it is used in Spanish brothels, as with the Spanish whore and the Spanish homosexuals. It is used to communicate with the "others," non-Moroccans. The narrator uses it to help his mother sell fruit and vegetables. It describes not only Tangier's cosmopolitan identity but also its plurilingual dimension as a direct consequence of colonialism. Indeed, as noted above, *Al-Khubz al-Hafi* aspires to reflect linguistic diversity by using Standard Arabic as the autobiography's primary language, but with the addition of Spanish, Darija, and Amazigh to portray the plurilingual dimension of the city and the country as a whole.

The use of Spanish mostly in depicting brothels is itself very significant in that it reveals all the social ills that colonization has brought to Moroccan society. The author's use of a foreign language in such contexts and with his acquaintances also implies their openness to the other culture and adherence to some aspects. Indeed, when compared with other Arab and Muslim societies, Moroccans are more open to different cultures and languages.

#### *Formal Domain*

The primary language of the traditional fields in Morocco is officially Modern Standard Arabic. It is the primary language for literary work, as with Choukri's work. He uses it to write his autobiography, in that it is the norm. MSA is the language of state identity. It has functioned as a symbol of cultural independence of the country through the Arabization process. Choukri uses it at points where dialogue could have been in use since the situations involve interactions between the characters. While that involves the most significant part of the work, the focus here is on its use in the pedophilic context.

**Example Nine (p.112): Pedophilia Experiences**

(i) *From a car, an older man was signaling to me. I went near the car. He opened the door and said to me in Spanish: Get in. I got in and sat beside him. What does he want of me? [...]*

عجوز يشير لي أن أقرب منه. اقتربت من السيارة. فتح الباب، قال بالإسبانية: اركب! ركبت إلى جانبه. ماذا يريد مني؟ [...]

(ii) *I asked him in Spanish: Where are we going?*

*He made a circular motion (movement) with his hand: a tour,*

*a short tour. [...] He is a pedophile. That much is certain, I thought.*

قلت له بالإسبانية: إلى أين نحن ذاهبان؟ قال راسما بيده حركة دائرية: جولة، جولة قصيرة. [...] إنه "حساس". هذا لا شك فيه.

(iii) *I asked him in Spanish: Where are we going?*

*He made a circular motion (movement) with his hand: a tour,*

*a short tour. [...]*

(iv) *[...] He is a pedophile. That much is certain, I thought.*

قلت له بالإسبانية: إلى أين نحن ذاهبان؟ قال راسما بيده حركة دائرية: جولة، جولة قصيرة.

[...] إنه "حساس". هذا لا شك فيه.

The above example describes the author's first sex experience with a Spanish pedophile, even if this is not explicitly stated (see statement (iv)). Given the use of dialogue in other contexts of the story, as noted above, one may wonder why the author does not use the natural conversational language he has previously used, recording directly the words used. One reason might be the nature of the topic itself and the fact that it is taboo. Recording something one lived is different from trying to re-enact it. Dialogue gives life to the event and forces the author to experience it anew, something the author surely did not want to recall.

All this contributes to the diversity of voices that reflects the social class, origins, and cultural backgrounds of the speakers. Most of the users of vernacular languages are presented in the novel as being illiterate, a status that the author himself had suffered before he took the initiative to learn how to read and write. In his introduction to *For Bread Alone*, Bowles (2006) himself envisions Choukri as being somehow more-or-less illiterate since he did not learn to read till he was an adult. Bowles considered Choukri's narration the work of an "illiterate" who has not yet known "to classify what goes into his memory" (p. 4).

The above extracts show a dialogic relationship between the speaker and the listener, who becomes the speaker through understanding and response (Bakhtin, 1986). But response may require time. Utterance can also be a silent responsive understanding depending on the topic of

conversation or discourse. As Bakhtin argues, an utterance cannot exist without the presence of other statements. The speaker's presuppositions depend, in fact, on the language system used, the speaker's statements, and the others' words, as it appears from the above extracts.

The use of multiple languages in Choukry's work shows how people and languages interact and influence each other. The contact between people leads to intersections between languages. Just as people can influence each other, with the most vigorous gaining control over the weakest, so do languages. In Morocco, Darija has imposed itself everywhere as the language of communication in public spaces. It is even the language of communication among Amazigh communities themselves, resulting from the marginalization, stigmatization, and exclusion of the Amazigh language from all public domains and its reversion to private space, which Darija has ended up invading as well. The situation of Amazigh, as Choukri discusses in the novel, provides a historical overview of the gradual shift from Amazigh to Darija experienced by most Amazigh communities. It also reveals that the process started more than half a century ago. The use of Darija by the young boys who, as a group, insulted the lone Mohamed Choukri illustrates the power relationship between that group and the individual.

Choukri's autobiography is a genuine portrait of the Moroccan plurilingual situation. It describes his childhood experiences of poverty, marginalization, and emotional frustration in Morocco. For his characters, he adopts the language in which they can best express themselves. His 'novelistic autobiography' (as he terms it) has gained widespread recognition because he manages to portray the real-life experiences of the narrator and all his characters. The work also serves as a document that accurately depicts social, cultural, and historical phenomena and defines the dynamics of Moroccan cultural identity.

Choukri tells the sad story of Mohamed and his family in the poor and forgotten Rif as a way of addressing the issue of a marginalized Rif. Though he does not intend solely to address the marginalization and stigmatization of the Riffi identity, culturally and politically, any reader aware of the Amazigh issue in Morocco gets the message. Choukri's work recounts the story of many Riffi families who moved from the Rif mountains, either to the city of Tangier or abroad, in the hope of escaping poverty. Yet, while Choukri was fortunate enough to meet the person who taught him how to read and write, many other Riffi children have persisted in their ignorance.

Through the use of vernacular languages, Choukri can strike a chord with the majority of his readers and establish a strong connection because those levels of language are closer to everyday conversation. The dialogues and phrases used succeed in reinforcing the narrative's setting and adding depth by creating a sense of realism that allows readers to relate their own lives to those of the story's characters.

By using different languages--Amazigh, Darija, Spanish, and Modern Standard Arabic, the author seeks to illustrate their coexistence in Morocco, particularly in his personal life. He reveals his plurilingual profile and shows how, beginning as an illiterate teenager, he became a plurilingual adult who can use many languages.

The significant effect that the use of vernacular languages has on people is that they are not only used for communication but also as a means of identifying their area, territory, and ethnic group. Each vernacular language represents a group, a culture, and an identity. Vernacular languages often evoke emotion and celebrate the local over the universal or transnational. As noted earlier, Choukri's story reflects many cultural and social issues: domestic abuse, child labor, homelessness, crime, violence, imprisonment, addiction to drugs and alcohol, sexual revelry, and

male prostitution. It offers its readers poignant criticism of all these problems. The story-telling device allows Choukri to provide a wide range of perspectives and a realistic image of Moroccan society. His use of vernacular languages is everywhere – in schools, university courses, at home, and offices, in law, medicine, and the media. If literature is to be used to criticize the evils and ills of society, then it needs to utilise the communicative means that are regularly used in people's everyday lives.

All the statements from Choukri's novel can be qualified as others' speeches in another language, even if the narrator produced them. It is, thus, an indirect speech of the narrator, who is, at the same time, the author. Heteroglossia allows the author to criticize in a very indirect way what Arabs thought of Riffians and Amazigh citizens in general. Heteroglossia is not only a means to produce a literary work through a diversity of languages and dialects but a means for the author to transmit thoughts, ideas, and ideological beliefs.

In sum, the analysis of Choukri's *Al-Khubz al- Hafi* within Bakhtin's model, Heteroglossia, revealed that the use of different languages represents different interpretations of life experiences governed by the existence of the author-narrator, a specific social context and of course of a particular theme and topic. As Bakhtin (1981) stresses, languages, whatever their particularities and differences, represent distinct points of view of the world and forms of developing the world in words. Therefore, these languages mutually supplement one another, contradict one another, and are interrelated dialogically. They also represent a diversity of voices, styles of discourse, or points of view in Choukri's literary autobiographic novel.

## Conclusion

The study concluded that Choukri's autobiography pictured the diversity of Moroccan culture through characters and language. Many factors denoted Bakhtin's heteroglossia in Choukri's *Al-Khubz al-Hafi*, such as the social context, the level of education of speakers, and their social class. Language is a good representative of its users. A well-educated person can never use vulgar words and expressions. Language can help establish a bridge between the Self and the Other and reveal the degree of acculturation.

## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> The term 'plurilingualism' is used in this study since it insists on the interactive aspect between existing languages for effective communication and draws on the individual's linguistic and cultural experiences.

<sup>ii</sup> The term Amazigh is a term that refers to all the "Berber" varieties in use in Morocco and the standard variety, which has become the second official language of Morocco. Tamazight in Morocco refers only to the variety spoken in the central of Morocco as opposed to Tarifit, said in the north, and Tashelhit spoken in the south. The term was developed and adopted by Moroccan Amazigh linguists to avoid the negative connotations of Berber, which people used to connect it with the word barbarism.

<sup>iii</sup> A Fondaq is a small hotel with two floors, where animals occupy the ground floor, and people the floor above.

## About the Authors

**Mourad EL KHATIBI** got his Ph.D. in political discourse and translation. He is currently an assistant professor at the Faculty of Languages, Arts and Human Sciences, Hassan First University in Settat, Morocco. He teaches English Studies and translation. Member of the Moroccan Writers' Union. Member of the Languages, Arts, and Human Sciences laboratory. Participated in many international conferences in Morocco, Qatar, England and Tunisia. His areas of interest are



translation, literary criticism ,and cultural studies.He has published more than eight books on literary translation and literary criticism and many articles in International journals.Translated two collections of Haiku poetry from Arabic into English. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7667-1172>

**Yamina EL KIRAT EL ALLAME** got her Doctorat d'Etat in minority identities, languages and cultures. She is the Director of the Moroccan Institute for Advanced Studies (IMEA).She is also the coordinator of the UNIMED Sub-Network on Migration. She was a member of the UNESCO Ad Hoc Committee of Experts for Endangered Languages. She is an international adviser and consultant in the field of higher education. She was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Greenville Tech in 2010 with the program entitled "Direct Access to the Muslim World" , where she helped in developing a program entitled "Middle Eastern Studies".Professor EL KIRAT is a member of the Standing Committee of the World Congress of African Linguistics (WOCAL) and the President of the Organizing Committee of WOCAL 9. Her interest in all these issues stems from her personal experience and interest in the linguistic, cultural, social, educational , and political issues in North Africa in general and the Moroccan context in particular. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2511-2741>

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