In the 1960s labour migration from Morocco and Turkey to Western Europe started to take place. This labour migration was in the aftermath of many years of underdevelopment and of massive unemployment in the European market. Initially these labourers had a short-term goal in mind, to earn money and return to their country of origin. This option of return soon changed into a term goal in mind, to earn money and return to their country of origin. This is why many of these migrants hard of work, linguistically speaking, quite distant from each other. But in general is not understood by arabophone Moroccans. The Moroccan Arabic dialect serves as the general language of communication in daily life in Morocco. Finally French, and to a small extent Spanish, are also spoken in Morocco. The rate of literacy in Morocco is quite high with percentages of 41.7% for males and 67.5% for females.

The majority of the Moroccans that came to Europe in the sixties were illiterate or semi-literate; they were the berber language Tarifit (in the Berberophone form, in general, the majority of the Moroccan community as opposed to the situation in Morocco. The Turks that came to Europe were generally better educated than the Moroccans. A minority of them is kurdophone. Members of the Moroccan communities took with them their specific linguistic characteristics but were confronted with societies that were different and spoke a language, which was different and thus different from their mother tongues. For the first generation, there seemed to be no urgent need to adopt the new languages as they were already living in Europe only on a “temporary” basis. It is why, this many of these migrants hardly acquired German, French or Dutch. But when children came and new children were born the situation changed drastically. These children were and are much more open-minded to the new societies. They had to enter into the new system and thus were exposed to the new languages. In general this intergenerational language shift follows the following model (cf. Jaspaert & Kroon, 1993):

- G1 minority language dominates majority language;
- G2 minority language and majority language are in balance;
- G3 majority language dominates minority language;
- G4 majority language replaces minority language.

This implies that in due time the minority languages will disappear. Of course this is a model and as such cannot be considered as the standard path that is followed. Research on ‘second generation’ migrants as it was new groups of ‘first generation’ migrants.

The Linguistic Heritage

The Moroccans that came to Europe with them the linguistic heritage of their homeland. Morocco is not, as is the general rule in nearly all states, a monolingual society. Its official language is Arabic. Arabic in its dialectal forms is spoken by nearly all Moroccans but in the mother tongue of only about 45% to 50% of the population. For the rest, the mother tongue is one of the three Berber languages spoken in Morocco. Berber and Arabic are linguistically speaking, quite distant from each other. Berber is generally not understood by arabophone Moroccans. The Moroccan Arabic dialect serves as the general language of communication in daily life in Morocco. Finally French, and to a small extent Spanish, are also spoken in Morocco. The rate of literacy in Morocco is quite high with percentages of 41.7% for males and 67.5% for females.

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