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**The Role of Language in Shaping National
Identity in Post-Revolutionary Tunisia**

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Abstract

The role of language in identity construction in Tunisia has been frequently discussed, with arguments often centering on the language issue. As language barriers in Tunisia highlight the connection between social hierarchies, linguistic customs, and nation-states, it is crucial to understand how language contributes to identity construction and how it influences the daily lives of Tunisians. Language plays a significant role in shaping the cultural identity of Tunisians as it reflects their historical and social background. Moreover, the use of language in different contexts and situations can reinforce or challenge existing power structures within Tunisian society.

To explore the linguistic identities of Tunisians, a mixed-methods study was conducted using a customized Language Identity Questionnaire developed by Khatib and Rezaei (2013). The study identified six factors as essential elements of the linguistic identity model, which were presented in the study after an inductive qualitative analysis of the questionnaire results. Additionally, Facebook stories and excerpts from statuses created by Tunisian Facebook users were analyzed deeply to examine the various languages Tunisians use online.

The study looked at language use from three perspectives: the commenter's choice of register, the context in which the message was used, and young people's use of code-switching and code-mixing. The results show that while the participants' identities and viewpoints have remained unchanged, their comprehension of intercultural and interlingual issues concerning Arabic, French, and English languages and cultures has improved. The findings suggest that young people can navigate multiple linguistic and cultural contexts and that language use is a complex and dynamic process influenced by various factors. These insights could inform language education policies and practices that better reflect the multilingual realities of contemporary societies.

Furthermore, the study has found that language patterns in mediated communication platforms serve both as a model for and as a projector of emerging identities. In other words, linguistic practices offer a more accurate and current picture of how language diversity encountered in social media challenges hegemonic and dominant national discourses that support monolingualism.

The study proposes a novel approach to evaluate data by employing partial order theory and unveils a Tunisia-specific language identity model. This method reveals that Tunisians' attitudes towards Arabic are not homogeneous but rather differ at various levels. The study identifies three distinct groups of attitudes towards the Arabic language among the surveyed population. Furthermore, the results indicate that language identity is constantly in flux. Individuals continually construct and reconstruct it through their experiences in bilingual, trilingual, and multilingual settings. This highlights the importance of acknowledging and valuing linguistic diversity, as it can significantly impact an individual's sense of self and cultural identity. It also emphasizes the need for language policies that support multilingualism and promote language learning opportunities.

Keywords: *Multilingualism, revolution, language identity model, linguistic identity, profiles*

1. Introduction

Identity is a complex concept encompassing various dimensions, including gender, sexual orientation, religion, class, and caste. Language is a powerful symbol of identity, representing cultural heritage and fostering a sense of belonging. It can also act as a unifying force, enabling individuals to embody multiple identities that transcend traditional social divisions. The relationship between language and identity often manifests strongly in the context of national or group belonging. Language is not always the sole defining criterion for identity formation, as societal contexts and ideologies also significantly influence this process. In various social

groups, the language spoken reflects not only individual identities but also societal structures, social classes, and cultural backgrounds.

Tunisia presents a compelling case study due to its longstanding history of linguistic and political tensions since gaining independence on March 20, 1956. This research aims to contribute to the field of sociolinguistics in Tunisia, investigating the sensitive topic of multilingualism and identity at a pivotal moment in the country's history (the 2011 revolutionary movements). By delving into this uncharted territory, the research seeks to shed light on the intricate relationship between language and identity, providing valuable insights into the complexities of identity formation and expression within a multilingual context. In the specific case of Tunisia, the Arabic language is considered one of the foundational pillars of the nation's identity. The literature on language and national identity, as explored by Wright (1994), Joseph (2004), and Simpson (2007), has proven to be particularly relevant and valuable in understanding the relationship between language and the construction of national identity in Tunisia.

Identity is a complex concept that encompasses cultural, linguistic, historical, and social dimensions. Post-2011 revolution in Tunisia has brought diverse perspectives on linguistic identity to the forefront, including the institutionalization of Arabic, recognition of the Tunisian Language (TA), and promotion of the Tamazight language spoken by the Amazigh population. The complexities of identity in Tunisia, particularly concerning language, assure the multidimensional nature of identity, encompassing cultural, linguistic, historical, and social dimensions. Interdisciplinary engagement and a comprehensive review of existing literature on identity are essential for understanding the intricate motivations and dynamics surrounding language campaigns and their impact on Tunisian society. The study aims to examine the phenomenon of multilingualism in Tunisia, focusing on the post-revolutionary period. It recognizes the connection between language practices, social hierarchization, and the nation-state, as highlighted by Heller (2008). The investigation centers on how these linguistic issues play a role in constructing the image of "Tunisianness" or Tunisianity. Language practices are integral to constructing cultural codes and the perception of Tunisian identity. The research questions include:

1. What language must a Tunisian speak to be considered a Tunisian?
2. How can we define Tunisianity linguistically?
3. How do sociolinguistic practices contribute to constructing Tunisianity?
4. What implications did the revolution have in raising the question of Tunisianity?
5. To what extent are language and identity connected in Tunisia?

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to our understanding of the complex relationship between language and identity in Tunisia. As a North African country with a diverse linguistic profile, Tunisia provides a unique context to explore how language influences individual and collective identities. By investigating the historical, social, and political aspects of language use and policy, this investigation sheds light on the dynamics of language identity in a multilingual society.

The findings can have several practical implications, such as informing policymakers and educators about the role of language in shaping identities, leading to more inclusive and effective language policies in education and other spheres of public life, preserving linguistic heritage, and promoting linguistic diversity, particularly in the case of endangered languages like Tamazight. Additionally, this study presents a pioneering language identity model specifically tailored for Tunisia, setting a precedent for future research in this domain.

2. Literature Review

Language use is intricately tied to identity because it serves as a medium through which we communicate with others, convey our thoughts and feelings, and experience the world around us. It is an integral part of how we represent ourselves to the world. Moreover, language is a fundamental component of any social group or community. In this sense, attitudes towards language are associated with individuals' perception of their belonging to such social groups (Jenkins, 2008). The notion that language and identity are tightly interconnected persists and permeates various aspects of human existence. This belief finds support in empirical studies conducted in the field, which consistently demonstrate the strong association between language and personal or group identity (Karoulla-Vrikki, 2004; Golan-Cook & Olshtain, 2011; Spencer *et al.*, 2013; Stevenson, 2015;). Ulibarri (1972) delved into the complicated connection between language, people, and culture, emphasizing their inseparable bond. According to Block (2009), language identity involves the relationship between an individual's self-perception and the various modes of communication, whether through language, dialects, or sociolects. Khatib and Rezaei (2013) underscored six components of language identity (Table 1), illustrating how users perceive language in connection with the context in which it is practiced. In multicultural societies, these language identities may either embrace or resist specific languages, varieties, or linguistic forms imposed on them, often subject to negotiation (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004: 3).

Table 1. Language Identity and its components

Component	Definition
Attachment toward native language or L1	People's thinking and feeling about L1 in comparison to L2
Pronunciation attitude	Attitudes towards pronunciation patterns in L1 and L2 and desirable perceived pronunciation
Language and social status	Associating social status to the language which people speak
L1 use or exposure in the society	Use of L1 in comparison to L2 in the daily lives of people
Language knowledge	Knowledge about the history and literature of one's language
Script or alphabet	Feelings about the alphabet and writing system of one's language

Considering the multifaceted nature of language and its impact on identity, it becomes essential to analyze language dynamics from different perspectives. Scholars have approached this topic through two main theoretical frameworks: essentialist and constructivist perspectives. Essentialist perspectives perceive language as an innate aspect of identity, positing that individuals possess a predetermined "linguistic essence" (Brown, 2015). This viewpoint emphasizes the intrinsic link between language and identity, treating language as a core component of one's being. On the other hand, constructivist perspectives view language as a socially constructed entity that evolves and transforms over time. According to Hall (1997), language is shaped by social and cultural contexts, reflecting the power dynamics and social structures within a society. This perspective highlights the malleability and contextual nature of language and its connection to identity. By considering both essentialist and constructivist perspectives, we can deepen our understanding of the complex relationship between language and identity, recognizing the interplay between individual experiences, societal norms, and historical contexts (Garcia, 2010).

Goffman (1949) and Gee (2014, 2015) have significantly contributed to our understanding of the relationship between language, social interactions, and identity formation. In his book *"An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method"*, Gee delves into how language is utilized to construct social identities, negotiate power dynamics, and establish social norms within specific communities. He emphasizes that language is a crucial tool for identity formation and socialization. Furthermore, in *"Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses"*, Gee explores how language practices and literacy skills contribute to social inequalities and the construction of identities. He highlights the interplay of language with power, ideology, and social context, which influences individuals' self-perception and identity within particular social groups. Similarly, Goffman's work, particularly *"The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life"*, focuses on impression management and how individuals actively shape their identities through language use, nonverbal cues, and performative acts during social interactions. Although Goffman primarily examines face-to-face interactions, the principles and insights he presents are highly relevant to comprehending the complex relationship between language, social interactions, and the formation of identities.

3. Research methodology

The current study attempts to understand the language identity in Tunisia from a sociolinguistic perspective. Drawing on relevant literature, it tries to understand the complexity of language identity while drawing an image of the role languages play in forming the linguistic identity of Tunisia, referred to in this context as Tunisianity. Another main objective of the current study is to create a comprehensive model that effectively captures the relationship between Tunisians' evolving social and cultural identity orientations and their reported bilingual and multilingual orientations in the context of acculturation.

The study employed diverse qualitative methods to investigate language practices in Tunisia, particularly focusing on the use of language by political leaders and public reactions to it. Slogans from protests were collected from various online sources, concentrating on frequently used ones to analyze protester sentiment comprehensively. The language choices of former President Ben Ali and current President Kais Saied during official speeches were examined, noting a predominance of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Facebook interactions among Tunisians were analyzed to understand responses to political leaders' language use. Comments on presidential speeches provided qualitative insights into public perception. The study also explored language practices within a Facebook group, observing unique orthographic choices reflecting regional Arabic variants. Data analysis in the qualitative part of the research is approached based on Creswell & Creswell (2017).

In addition to the qualitative methods, the quantitative part of the study involved data collection through a questionnaire available in Arabic, English, and French to ensure inclusivity and data quality. The analysis of this data was conducted using a novel statistical methodology proposed in the study, namely the partial order theory. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of the relationships between variables, providing deeper insights into the dynamics observed in the study.

4. Results

4.1 Qualitative analysis

4.1.1 Language ideology and evolution of Tunisian revolutionary slogans

The significance of slogans in revolutions, particularly evident in the Tunisian Revolution, cannot be overstated. These slogans serve as the rallying cry, encapsulating the aspirations and demands of the people while uniting them around a shared ideal. The linguistic elements

embedded within these slogans hold immense power, resonating deeply with the Tunisian population and inspiring similar movements across the Arab world.

Drawing parallels between the Tunisian Revolution and historical events like the French Revolution highlights the universal appeal of revolutionary ideals and slogans. The spread of slogans and principles from one revolution to another underscores the interconnectedness of global movements for political change and social justice.

As Tunisia now navigates the challenges of establishing a democratic system and consolidating political institutions, it is essential to remember the revolutionary ideals and aspirations that brought about the changes in the first place. The language of parties and elections should be clear of the fundamental values of freedom, justice, and dignity that inspired the revolution. Looking at the map of the Arab world today, one can quickly realize that the Tunisian revolution succeeded in formulating the rallying cry for all Arab uprisings. The poetry of the venerable Abu al-Qasim Chebbi, particularly the opening line of his poem “The Will of Life”, has inspired Tunisian youth. The first verse of the poem stating, “If, one day, a people desires to live, then fate will answer their call”,¹, served as the slogan for the revolution and captured its central demand: the right to dignity (Youssfi, 2011).

As depicted in Table 2, the revolutionary slogans exhibited a fascinating multilingual characteristic, being presented in various languages and sometimes even combining different linguistic elements. What makes this observation noteworthy is that the languages employed by the protesters are, in fact, part of their linguistic repertoire. The presence of multiple languages in the slogans reflects the linguistic diversity within the Tunisian population. The protesters drew upon the languages they were familiar with, utilizing Arabic (in its two forms MSA and TA), French, English and sometimes a combination of those languages.

Table 2. Table of Tunisiaian revolution slogans and their english translations

Slogan in original form	Slogan translation to English	Slogan original language
Tunis hurra hurra wa Ben Ali 'ala barra!	Tunis is free, free and Ben Ali out!	Tunisian Arabic
الشعب يريد إسقاط النظام	The people want to downfall the regime	MSA
Ben Ali dehors!	Ben Ali out!	French
Ben Ali assassin!	Ben Ali murderer!	French
RCD Degage	RCD out!	French
RCD Degage Out!	RCD out out!	Bilingual French
RCD No way!	-	English
Mafia out!	-	English
Tunisie libre! Trabelsi: voleurs dehors!	Tunis free! Trabelsi: thieves, out!	French
Game over	-	English
حرية، عدالة اجتماعية، كرامة وطنية	Employment, Freedom, Social justice, National dignity.	MSA
حريات، حريات، لا رئاسة مدى الحياة	Freedoms, freedoms, no lifelong presidency.	MSA
التشغيل استحقاق يا عصابة السراق	Employment is a merit; you gang of thieves.	MSA
يا بوليس فيق فيق، الحجابة تحكم فيك	O police wake up, coppers control you Oh police, be careful, the barbers have control over you.	TA
خبز وماء وبن علي لا	Bread, water, and no Ben Ali.	TA
بن علي يا جبان الشعب التونسي لا يهان	Ben Ali, you coward, the Tunisian people will not be humiliated.	MSA

¹ Original verse in Arabic “إذا الشعب يوماً أراد الحياة = فلا بُد أن يستجيب القدر”، meaning “when people choose a noble and worthy existence, the Fates will accordingly respond”. Translated by Elliott Colla. Translation retrieved from <https://arablit.org/2011/01/16/two-translations-of-abu-al-qasim-al-shabis-if-the-people-wanted-life-one>

اعتصام اعتصام حتى يسقط النظام	Sit-in, sit-in, until the regime falls.	MSA
يا خماج دégage	Dégage you septic	Bilingual French-TA
Obama: yes we can, Tunisia: yes we do	-	English
Enough, no more games	-	English
I have a dream, Une Tunisie libre	"I have a dream, A free Tunisia"	Bilingual English-French

The Tunisian Revolution exemplifies the transformative power of language in mobilizing populations, challenging oppressive regimes, and fostering a sense of collective identity and agency. From the iconic chant of "*shoghl, horryya, Karama Wataniya*" to the universally resonant call of "dégage," these slogans reflect the diversity and resilience of Tunisian society.

The multilingual nature of the slogans reflects the linguistic diversity within Tunisia and serves as a testament to the protesters' inclusive approach in reaching out to diverse audiences. By embracing their linguistic heritage, Tunisians reclaimed their cultural identities and asserted their right to self-expression.

In conclusion, the Tunisian revolutionary slogans not only galvanized the population during a time of political upheaval but also symbolized the triumph of language over oppression and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity. Through their words and actions, the Tunisian people reshaped the course of history and inspired movements for change around the world.

4.1.2 Presidential speeches

The analysis of language use during political speeches, particularly those of former President Ben Ali and current President Kais Saied, provides valuable insights into the intersection of language, politics, and identity in Tunisia. Both leaders' choices regarding language reflect broader debates within Tunisian society regarding linguistic identity and its implications for governance and communication.

Former President Ben Ali's use of both Modern Standard Arabic and Tunisian Arabic (TA) in his speeches highlights the tension between formal and colloquial language in political communication. While his adoption of TA in his final speech was seen as an attempt to connect with the people, the subsequent rejection of his message through the use of MSA by protesters underscored the complex power dynamics inherent in language choice. This linguistic exchange symbolized a shift in authority, with the people reclaiming their voice in a language traditionally associated with power and governance.

On the other hand, President Kais Saied's steadfast adherence to literary Arabic in his speeches reflects a commitment to preserving linguistic tradition and upholding the official language designated by the Tunisian constitution. However, this choice has faced criticism from some sectors of society, who argue that it creates a barrier to understanding and communication, particularly during times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The debate surrounding President Saied's language choice underscores broader tensions between linguistic purity and accessibility, highlighting the complexities of language in shaping political discourse and identity formation.

The diverse perspectives of Tunisians on social media platforms illustrate the depth of the linguistic identity cleavage within Tunisian society. While some advocate for recognizing the Tunisian dialect as an official language, others emphasize the cultural and historical significance of literary Arabic. This debate reflects a broader struggle for acknowledgment and self-determination among Tunisians, with language serving as a fundamental component of personal and collective identity.

Ultimately, the ongoing deliberation over language choice in political communication highlights the evolving nature of Tunisian identity in the post-revolutionary context. The outcome of this debate will undoubtedly have far-reaching implications for the cultural heritage

and linguistic identity of the Tunisian people, underscoring the importance of a nuanced understanding of language in shaping political discourse and national identity.

4.1.3 Social media users' interactions

Analyzing the linguistic practices of Tunisian Facebook users offers valuable insights into how language is used to express identity and communicate in online spaces. By examining excerpts from Facebook statuses posted between 2019 and 2020, we can observe the diverse linguistic scene and the ways in which individuals navigate between different languages and writing systems. As we will see, several types of spellings are used by Tunisian Facebook users to express themselves in different languages: notably MSA, French and Tunisian. According to my observations, it seems possible to characterize the writing of the selected Statutes according to two aspects: one relating to the language used, and the other to the graph used.

(1) Examples of the use of the Latin script²

a. expression in Tunisian	
<i>nhebik barcha. (B.K)</i>	'I love you so much'
b. expression in Tunisian and French	
<i>merci beaucoup, win lkitha, hhhhhh, super, super sympa (M.B.)</i>	'Many thanks, where did you find it, great, super lovely'
c. expression in French	
<i>J'adore à Monastir aussi on avait les mêmes troupes. (L.N.)</i>	'I love it, we had the same troops in Monastir too.'
d. expression in Standard Arabic	
<i>Orsileha ila rouh Abi [...] 27 octobre thikra wafatihi. (A. B)</i>	'I dedicate it to my father's soul [...] 27 October anniversary of his death'

(2) Examples of the use of numbers with Latin spelling

a. expression in Tunisian and French	
<i>Je l'adore kol chay ya3rfou [...]. (S.M.)</i>	'I love him, he knows everything [...]
b. expression in Tunisian	
<i>hedhy lm3alma. (S.J.)</i>	'This is the boss'

(3) Examples of the use of the Arabic writing

a. expression in Tunisian	
<i>ايه توا قديم حق حق (R.J)</i>	'Yes! now this is the real outdated'
b. expression in French	
<i>ج دور (T.D.)</i>	'j'adore' 'I like'
<i>بروبليم (I.N.)</i>	'problème' 'problem'
c. expression in Standard Arabic and French	
<i>بنجوووور. على أحلى قدم (B.M.)</i>	'Bonjour (good morning) to the best outdated'
d. expression in Tunisian and French	
<i>هههههه حتى هو مات سببسيال هذا (F.H.)</i>	'Hhhhhh This is a special mathematics'
e. expression in Standard Arabic	
<i>من احلى الذكريات 🍷🍷 (F.C.)</i>	'One of the best memories'
f. expression in Tunisian and Standard Arabic	

² (Smari & Hortobágyi, 2020: pp. 224–225)

الزمن الجميل و الخير و البركة و الماخاخ النظيفة و التربية (F.J.)	'The beautiful and benevolent time, the blessings, the clean minds, and the education'
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(4) Examples of the use of two spellings in Arabic and Latin for expressions in Tunisian and French

a. expression in Tunisian and French

inoubliable ♥ (N.S.) عبد الحلیم حافظ	'Abd Alhalim Hafidh is unforgettable'
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b. expression in French and Tunisian

cette publicité (H.D.) قداش كنت نحبها	'How much I used to love this advertisement'
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These examples are not exhaustive. Other languages also circulate, such as Egyptian Arabic, English, Spanish, or Italian, and many other possibilities have also been noted. It is also pertinent to point out several features that characterize these writings. These features include the use of colloquial language, the incorporation of slang and dialects, and the presence of code-switching between languages. Additionally, these writings often reflect the cultural and social contexts in which they are produced. Facebook users show high ability in mixing languages and scripts (see examples in Figure 1): French, standard Arabic, Tunisian, two by two, sometimes all three. This ability to mix languages and scripts on Facebook can reflect the multilingual and multicultural nature of the Tunisian society. It also highlights the importance of social media in shaping and reflecting cultural and linguistic diversity.



Figure 1. Screenshots taken from Facebook, retrieved on 5th of September 2020 (Smari & Hortobágyi, 2020: 226)

According to Gervasio and Karuri (2019), when people occupy online platforms, they reconstruct language in ways that match the constraints and affordances of different digital spaces. Social media users take photos and upload them or share status updates in real-time and space, rendering the process a naturalized practice. This being the case, observing Facebook Stories, similar features were found. Take the example of G.R., who posted seven stories in two hours (see Figure 2). Of the seven stories, three were in English, one in Tunisian Arabic, one in MSA, one in Egyptian Arabic, and one in French and Tunisian Arabic. These mixtures of more languages are usually found in Tunisians' Facebook or Instagram Stories. The variation in language usage and graphics is also strongly present. When browsing through many stories, I noted that, apart from other languages, variants of the Arabic language are also

present. People tend to self-express in social media while spontaneously displaying their linguistic identities in real time and space.



Figure 2. Screenshots of Facebook stories taken from G.R.'s profile (Smari & Hortobágyi, 2020:227).

In conclusion, Tunisia's linguistic landscape reflects a complex interplay between the official recognition of Standard Arabic and the enduring influence of French, both of which hold significant cultural and historical significance. While Standard Arabic is ideologically linked to national identity, French maintains a pervasive presence in various domains despite not being officially recognized. This linguistic tension underscores the need for the state to acknowledge and embrace the country's linguistic diversity to promote unity and inclusivity. By recognizing the importance of both Arabic and French in Tunisia's cultural fabric, the nation can bridge divides and create a more inclusive society where all linguistic communities feel valued and respected.

4.2 Quantitative analysis

The Tunisian language identity model encompasses six factors (F1 to F6) influencing individuals' language identities, resulting in 94 distinct profiles. Among these profiles, the most frequent ones account for varying percentages, with the (2,2,2,2,2,2) profile being notable for its profound attachment to Arabic over foreign languages like French and English. This individual exhibits a strong commitment to preserving Arabic heritage and customs, reflecting a deep pride in their linguistic identity.

The most prevalent profile, constituting 10% of the population, demonstrates a preference for the Arabic language while engaging with foreign languages, indicating bilingual or multilingual capabilities. Despite this, a strong affinity for the native language persists, emphasizing its enduring significance.

Further analysis reveals profiles such as (2,2,0,0,2,0) and (2,2,0,1,2,2), which represent 4% of the population and reflect internal conflicts between cultural identity and societal norms. These profiles highlight the struggle between valuing Arabic language and associating societal standing with proficiency in foreign languages.

Additionally, profiles like (2,2,1,1,2,2) and (2,2,0,2,2,2) demonstrate varying degrees of attachment to Arabic language, reflecting nuances in upbringing and environmental influences. Partial order theory is proposed to rank these profiles based on their degree of attachment to Arabic, offering a nuanced perspective on Tunisian language identity.

The Hasse diagram representation, displayed in Figure 3, categorizes individuals into three distinct groups: Groupe A (Attached), Groupe F (Fuzzy), and Groupe D (Detached). Groupe A exhibits the strongest attachment, Groupe F displays a nuanced attachment, and Groupe D represents minimal attachment to Tunisian language identity. This visual representation aids in

understanding how Tunisians perceive and identify with their language identity across different profiles.

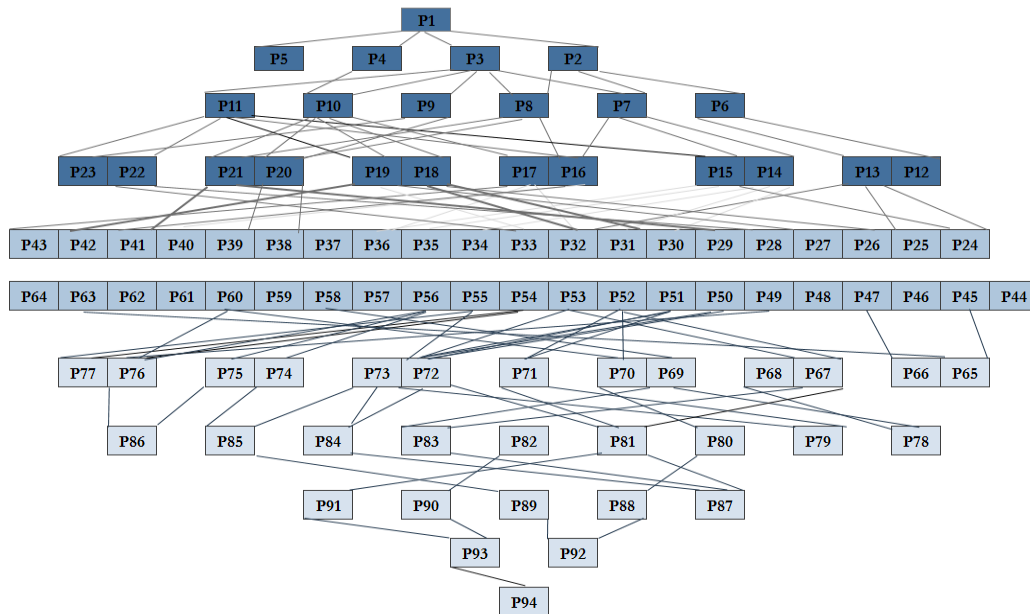


Figure 3 The HassDiagram

5. Discussions

The Tunisian revolution played a significant role in nurturing the language identity of Tunisians by challenging linguistic hierarchies and promoting linguistic diversity. The revolution upended the linguistic hierarchy, allowing Tunisians to assert their linguistic identities and celebrate the rich tapestry of languages present in the nation. The use of Tunisian Arabic in revolutionary slogans, alongside languages like French and English, underscored the importance of embracing linguistic variety and championing the diverse languages and dialects present within the nation. This act of multilingualism was revolutionary in breaking free from oppressive language and emphasizing the power of unity in diversity. Multilingualism also led to inclusivity, allowing different linguistic groups within Tunisia to unite under a common cause. The revolution also inspired other nations struggling for freedom and democracy, highlighting the importance of using language as a tool for liberation and social change. The revolution contributed to the emergence of a more inclusive language policy that recognized the importance of linguistic diversity in the cultural and social fabric of the country.

Tunisian policy makers implicitly defend French as a universal language while resisting the influence of English, which currently serves as the primary conduit for accessing global knowledge. This tension between cultural and linguistic identity preservation and the need to access global knowledge and opportunities is highlighted by the fact that French is the first foreign language studied by Tunisian students. Since 1994, English has been taught in primary schools, becoming a compulsory subject for all students and taught across all levels. This has led to a rise in awareness of its importance in all domains of life.

Conscientious multicultural education is crucial in the realm of education and social awareness, as it fosters empathy and inclusivity by breaking down complex situations into discrete elements. Tunisia, like its neighboring northern African countries, stands as a compelling example of multiculturalism due to its historical ties with the French language. The linguistic scene in Tunisia reveals a fascinating complexity, with both Arabic and French

emphasized by state laws as official languages. Tunisian Arabic stands as the primary language used in daily communication, with French being intertwined with Arabic in various contexts.

Educational reforms in Tunisia provide insight into the linguistic policies and practices of the country, showcasing a nuanced multilingual reality. Social media platforms serve as a rich ground for examining this complicated linguistic milieu, where languages become vehicles for projecting one's identity and revealing a complex web of cultural influences and affiliations.

The text explores the linguistic practices of Tunisia, revealing a paradox between the official language policy promoting MSA as the exclusive language of the state and the diverse linguistic practices observed. The lived experiences shared on social media contrast with the official discourse advocating linguistic monolingualism, challenging the idea of a singular national identity. The concept of conscious multicultural education resonates deeply in the discussion of Tunisia's linguistic scene, highlighting the complex interplay between official policies and the diverse identities and affiliations of Tunisians.

The dual perspective of Arabic, French, and English languages within the cultural scene offers valuable insights into Tunisian individuals' roles as both proponents and objective evaluators of their linguistic identities. Passionate advocates embrace their cultural heritage in Arabic, while others engage in impartial assessment of the complex relationship between language use and identity. This ambivalence captures the complex socio-cultural milieu in Tunisia, manifested through the ambivalent language identity.

Being Tunisian is not restricted to a single linguistic identity but rather a dynamic blend encompassing Arabic, French, and English, reflecting the intricate tapestry of Tunisia's historical, cultural, and contemporary influences. Using Arabic, French, and English in different contexts allows Tunisians to navigate their multicultural identity and connect with various local and international communities.

6. Conclusions

The linguistic situation in Tunisia is complex and multilingual, with the country experiencing various influences from Phoenician, Roman, Arab, and Ottoman civilizations. This has led to debates on Tunisianity, as individuals and communities navigate their identity in a rapidly changing socio-political landscape. The Tunisian revolutionary slogans, characterized by their multilingualism, symbolize the political weight of each language and the struggle for national pride and self-assertion.

The concept of Tunisianity emerged after the 2011 revolution, representing a renewed sense of national pride and self-assertion. The ongoing discussion over the official recognition of the Tunisian dialect highlights the heavy linguistic identity cleavage experienced by many Tunisians. The absence of a formalized status for Tunisian Arabic in official documents and legislation raises questions about the extent to which the dialect should be acknowledged and integrated into formal institutions and educational systems.

The uncertain status of Tunisian Arabic encapsulates a broader struggle for cultural and linguistic recognition in Tunisia, symbolizing the tension between preserving cultural heritage and conforming to established linguistic norms. The eventual resolution of this uncertainty will significantly impact the cultural mosaic of Tunisia and its evolving linguistic identity.

The language identity model introduced in this study reveals the varying language competencies and affinities that Tunisians possess regarding their national language and other linguistic systems. These dynamics reveal how multilingualism can complement and reinforce a connection to one's mother tongue and national language or signify openness to linguistic and cultural diversity.

The study aims to overcome the limitations of previous Tunisian research studies by using partial order theory, a new methodology that can provide a fresh perspective on the subject matter. However, the study has several limitations, including the small and representative

sample size, response bias, and the focus on language proficiency in TA, MSA, French, and English.

The study also leaves out the Berber language, which is not recognized as an indigenous language in Tunisia. This raises questions about its impact on language identity in Tunisia. Future research could explore the role of Tamazight in the Tunisian context and its potential influence on language attitudes and identity.

The findings of this study offer valuable insights that can significantly impact language policies, educational strategies, cultural initiatives, and societal cohesion in Tunisia and beyond. The development of a language identity model based on partial order theory holds promise as a versatile analytical tool for understanding how Tunisians construct their identities through language use across various contexts. This model can be applied to other regions and countries, shedding light on language identity formation and linguistic diversity elsewhere.

The study's insights directly impact language curriculum development and policy formulation, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and valuing linguistic diversity, including languages like Berber, in shaping language identity. Promoting multilingual skills in educational institutions enhances connections to linguistic heritage and cultural identity. Media professionals should represent linguistic diversity accurately and sensitively, and policymakers can leverage these findings to formulate informed policies that support language learning and cultural preservation.

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