

The role of social network sites in the revitalization of the Amazigh language as an endangered language in Tunisia

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Abstract:

Linguistic diversity is an important characteristic of this world but the main threat to this diversity is instability. Hundreds of languages are dying every day (Woodbury, 2006). Language revitalization refers to the process of reversing the decline of a language and reviving it. Those involved can include indigenous individuals and organizations, but the role of the government is paramount in the revitalization process. The genetic mapping project carried out by National Geographic revealed that most Tunisians share Amazigh origins as many other North African countries, but this remains very little claimed and leads to a dramatic decline of the Amazigh language in Tunisia. With the technological revolution and in the era of Web 2.0, the revitalization of the Amazigh language can benefit from the Tunisians' great interest in technology, particularly social network sites that can be seen as a way of preserving and documenting an endangered language. Based on a quantitative study, this research seeks to study the situation of the Amazigh language in Tunisia and to study the role played by social network sites especially Facebook in language maintenance. This research study also offers insights and suggests a digital language vitality process in favor of the Amazigh language.

Keywords: Language endangerment, revitalisation, the Amazigh language, Social network sites.

1. Introduction

Many parents today believe that it is essential that their children learn the national language and two or three international languages such as English, Dutch, and Chinese to be able to communicate and quickly integrate and meet the socio-economic development. Today, it is important to learn that engaging in the language learning process of outstanding languages does not mean the rejection and abundance of one's cultural and linguistic heritage. The rise of some languages automatically means the decline of others (Crystal, 2010). This cannot be denied but language endangerment or loss leads to socio-cultural marginalization (Olka & Sallabank, 2021, 4).

“An endangered language is likely to become extinct shortly. Many languages are falling out of use and being replaced by others that are more widely used in the region or nation[...] Dozens of languages today have only one native speaker still living. That person's death will mean the extinction of the language: It will no longer be spoken, or known, by anyone” (Woodbury, 2006). Regarding the increasing number of endangered languages (some estimates, 90% of the world's languages may vanish within the next century (ibid)), the notion of language revitalization has come to the surface.

The process of language revitalization is multidisciplinary (Pine & Turin, 2017) in which the creation of new speakers is a basic step and political willingness is crucial for the success of this long-term procedure (ibid, 1). There is an intersection between the social, cultural, and political domains and different stakeholders should intervene to revive any dying language (ibid, 2). Language diversification and multilingualism are beneficial at personal, socio-economic, and cultural levels. Language revitalization is not a single change and creating speakers who achieve communicative fluency level is not an easy short process but it is a long process that needs effort, engagement, and the participation of different interactants. It is a whole process that benefits the language, individuals, and society. “Overall language vitality is related to a nexus of factors; social, political, demographic, and practical” (Olka & Sallabank, 2021,7). Language revitalization is not just a process of creating new speakers of the target language or building new domains of language use and creating a future generation. Still, it is a whole process of investment not only at the individual level but at a larger socio-economic level by creating some job possibilities (ibid).

Tunisia has been the nexus of different civilizations, including the Phoenicians (as early as the 12 century B.C.), the Carthaginians, the Romans, the Vandals, the Byzantines, various Arab and Berber kingdoms, and the Ottomans. The Arabic language is considered the official language, French is considered the second language, and other languages such as English and Dutch are learned as third languages. However, not very different from other North African countries Tunisians are originally Amazighs, and the Amazigh language, or the Tamazight used to be widely used and spoken before the French colonization in 1818 (González, 2019). Today, the Amazigh language may be considered an endangered language because of the decreasing number of its speakers and the political rejection of the Amazigh culture (ibid).

In this research, the role of social network sites in Amazigh language revitalization is studied by adopting a quantitative research method of data collection, and some suggestions related to the use of technological development in favor of Amazigh language revitalization are recommended and a digital language vitality process is suggested.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Endangered Language: Definition

There are around 6000 to 7000 languages spoken in the world (Woodbury, 2006; Lewis et al. 2013) half of them are in danger of extinction in the next century (Woodbury, 2006). Language diversity is a characteristic of some areas that are known as language hotspots such as New Guinea (830 languages), Indonesia (722 languages), and Nigeria (more than 500 languages) (Harrison, 2010a). But it is in these same areas that there are the highest levels of language endangerment and the least studied languages (ibid). An endangered language can be defined as a language that will die out shortly because it is limited in usage and is threatened by a major or dominant language (Woodbury, 2006). Woodbury (2006) suggested four reasons why a language might disappear:

- *Bottom-up*: parents who are the speakers of a language “X” decided not to pass/ teach the language to their children and with the expense of time the language will disappear because there are no speakers anymore.
- *Top-down*: when the government and with the power of law decides to adopt one national standard language and rejects/ prohibits using another language.
- *Linguicide*: a colonized force reduces the number of speakers of a language “X” through genocide such as the case of the Mayan, Aztec, and Inca civilizations that disappeared after the disappearance of the Aboriginal Spanish people in Central and South America.
- *Language Attrition*: it happens when speakers of a language “X” start to borrow linguistic patterns from a language “Y” (syntax, phonology, morphology...) leading to the decay and disappearance of “X”.

The top-down reason for language endangerment is overwhelming today (ibid). Most societies tend to adopt one national standard language for education, legislation, and media and this automatically establishes the superiority of one language against the other existing languages that are considered minority languages (ibid) such as the case of Bahasa Indonesia which is the standard national language in Indonesia while there are about more than 700 languages, hence the process of language shift. Sallabank (2010, 185-186) determined two attitudes toward language shift/ endangerment. There is a negative attitude that the local language is useless and “stigmatized” in comparison with the standard language. So, the speakers are seen as minorities who feel ashamed to use it which is why they decide not to pass it to their children. This phenomenon is mainly noticed when they move from a rural to an urban context where the local language is seen as useless and it often takes a back seat. On the other hand, there is a positive attitude that the local language is part of one’s identity and it is important to preserve it by passing it to children. The knowledge of other languages does not contradict the preservation of the mother tongue.

2.2 The state of the Amazigh language in Tunisia

The genetic mapping project carried out by National Geographic is believed to be the first of its kind, based on the analysis of vast numbers of DNA samples over many years, and found that Tunisia has the lowest proportion of Arabs in its population with only 4 percent. The

highest percentage was found to be 88 percent from North Africa, 5 percent from Western European countries, and 2 percent from West and Central Africa (Lucas-Sanchez et al. 2021). Tunisians like many inhabitants in North Africa are mainly Amazighs in origins (CMA, 2012; González, 2019; Trabelssi, 2019; IWGIA, 2023). The word Amazigh means “free person”. The Amazighs established states more than 30 centuries ago and left traces in the Tunisian language, architecture, dress, traditional industries, rituals, customs, forms of social organization, arts, and literature (González, 2019). All of these elements established the cultural structure of Tunisia that shares similar aspects with other North African countries like Morocco, Algeria, Libya, and Mauritania (Belhiah et al. 2020; Idhssaine & El Kirat, 2021; Mezhoud (2023)).

The number of Tunisians who currently speak the Amazigh language or the Tamazight remains unknown as no official statistics are available. Some activists estimate the number of speakers at more than 500,000 which is 2% of the Tunisian population (ibid). The vast majority of Amazighs today inhabit villages in the south of Tunisia like Matmata and Tataouine, as well as from the island of Djerba (González, 2019). Some others are located in the North like the tribes of Jallas, Ayar, Salat, Farashish, and Orba, and in the center, like Hammam and Namamesh tribes (ibid). The Amazigh language was the state language until the borders of the Almowhed era, where the ruling families were Amazigh families until Tunisia was annexed to the Ottoman Empire (ibid). Adopting Woodbury's (2006) reasons for language disappearance, it can be said that the first reason for the decline of the Amazigh language was top-down. The Amazigh language underwent a gradual process of minimization in favor of the Arabic language explains Mongi Bouras, head of the Berber Museum in Tamezret, a village in Matmata, Gabes in the south of Tunisia (González, 2019). He claimed that “It is through the link between Arabic and religion that this language penetrated the Amazigh communities. It is the language of the Koran, and children have been taught it in mosques since the Arab invasion,” (ibid).

The deterioration of the Amazigh language was aggravated by the French colonization at the end of the 19th century. The Amazigh suffered the most painful decay during the years of anti-colonial struggles in North Africa and the Middle East (González, 2019; Belhiah et al. 2020; Idhssaine & El Kirat, 2021; Mezhoud, 2023). “Once independence was achieved, President Bourguiba imposed a policy of Arabization through the school, the administration, and the media” (González, 2019). In theory, it was a matter of regaining ground lost to the French, but there was also a clear will to exclude the Amazighs and to suppress any kind of activism linked to this identity » Bouras recalls (ibid). President Ben Ali adopted the same linguistic homogenizing policy from 1987 to 2011. During this long period, the number of Amazigh speakers declined dramatically, particularly with the migration of many indigenous people from rural to urban areas and families no longer pass the language to their children; hence the bottom-up reason for language endangerment (ibid). Although Tunisia has voted in and adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the government of Tunisia does not recognize the Amazighs and prohibits many activists from speaking about the Amazigh cause (IWGIA, 2023).

After the Arab Spring and the Jasmine revolution in Tunisia, the Amazigh cause came back to the surface, and many Amazigh associations were launched. Today, there are about fifteen local and national associations such as the Azru Association of Amazigh Culture, Arbata

Association of Amazigh Culture, Tamazight Association of Culture and Arts, Amazigh Association of Djerba, and the Tunisian Association of Amazigh Culture (ATCA). Although the Tunisian government does not recognize the Amazighs till present there are many actions in favour of the Amazigh culture. The associations are organizing conferences, parties, and clubs to promote the Amazigh heritage and trying to attract young generations (IWGIA, 2023). According to Ben Maamar, a researcher in Amazigh culture and a member of the ATCA, "the presence of the Amazigh language in the Tunisian arena is legitimate, and even desirable, within the framework of valuing the national culture and highlighting its diversity and richness." He believes that "it is necessary not to exclude or refuse to discuss this matter, but rather to value it and work to highlight it in a way that befits it and takes it out of the circle of folklore and tourism, to the circle of research, archiving, revival and resettlement." (Trabelssi, 2019).

With the meteoric rise of the internet and particularly social network sites, the Amazigh activists have created several social groups on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter which have become virtual social communities that unite those interested in the Amazigh culture (Chbichib, 2023). Facebook for example has become a means of communication between Tunisian Amazighs all over the world, a place to exchange information about coming events and planned meetings, and a place to share cultural heritage and to enlarge knowledge about the Amazigh culture (ibid). Social network sites are ideal for reviving endangered languages (Crystal, 2010). This study will focus on the role of social network sites (Facebook in this case) in preserving and revitalizing the Amazigh language.

3. Research Methodology

This is quantitative research based on using a standardized questionnaire as a basic data collection method. The questionnaire is based on closed and fixed-response questions. The closed-ended questions limit the respondents' answers to a fixed set of responses through dichotomous questions requiring Yes or No answers as well as several multiple-choice options. The fixed-response questions provide opportunities to mark the most appropriate responses and register strong opinions on fixed-point Likert scales depicting frequency, influence, and satisfaction. The set of questions and responses were prepared regarding previous studies related to language revitalization and based on a pre-test version. The first three questions are demographic. They specify the characteristics of the participants in terms of age, sex, and occupation. Questions four through fifteen focus on the Amazigh language in Tunisia, the participants' evaluation (feelings and opinions) of the Amazigh language, and the language revitalization process.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, a pre-test was conducted so that the validity of the questions, how easy they are to understand, and the pertinence of the proposed response modalities can be verified. Accordingly, the structure of the questionnaire was progressively improved thanks to the reactions and the remarks of the test group. The construction of the final version of the questionnaire ultimately led to Appendix A. To ensure better comprehension and a wide administration of the questionnaire, an Arabic parallel version was prepared and checked for translation accuracy. Once the final version of the questionnaire was ready, two methods of administering were chosen.

The first method consists of administrating a print version of the questionnaire in a face-to-face setting. This procedure permits a direct response to the respondents' queries and requests for clarifications about the nature of the questions and it also enables better control of the samples' representativeness. The data collection started in 2022 in Matmata, Gabes in the South of Tunisia as a geographical concentration of Tunisian Amazighs. Starting on January 12th, Amazigh people in Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, and parts of Africa celebrate Yennayer, the Amazigh new year. The year 2022 in the Gregorian calendar marks the year 2972 for the Amazighs but because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the distancing guidelines, the celebrations of the Amazigh New Year were all cancelled for two years. The responses to the questionnaire in a face-to-face context were limited to forty-two (42) respondents.

To maximize response rates, another method of monitoring questionnaires was used. It consists of a web-based questionnaire available at: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1xuDqqkP-9ABmi9k9wpsLYNB1lw5oiwZh208ax-47jVY>. This link was circulated and published with the help of some friends and Tunisian associations (The Tunisian Association For Amazigh Culture (ATCT), Association de Développement et de Souvgarde Taoujout, Association Amazigh du Djerba, Association Azrou de Culture Amazigh, ...) interested and engaged in Amazigh groups and pages on Facebook. They were asked to voluntarily and anonymously fill in the questionnaire and forward the link to their friends. One hundred and thirty-seven (136) entered the online survey and provided a full response to the questionnaire. So, one hundred and seventy-nine (178) participated in this study. 77,4% of the participants are males and 22,6% are females. The participants are a mixture of people with different socio-professional categories, educational levels, and incomes. The following graph presents a population sample categorization according to the factor of age.

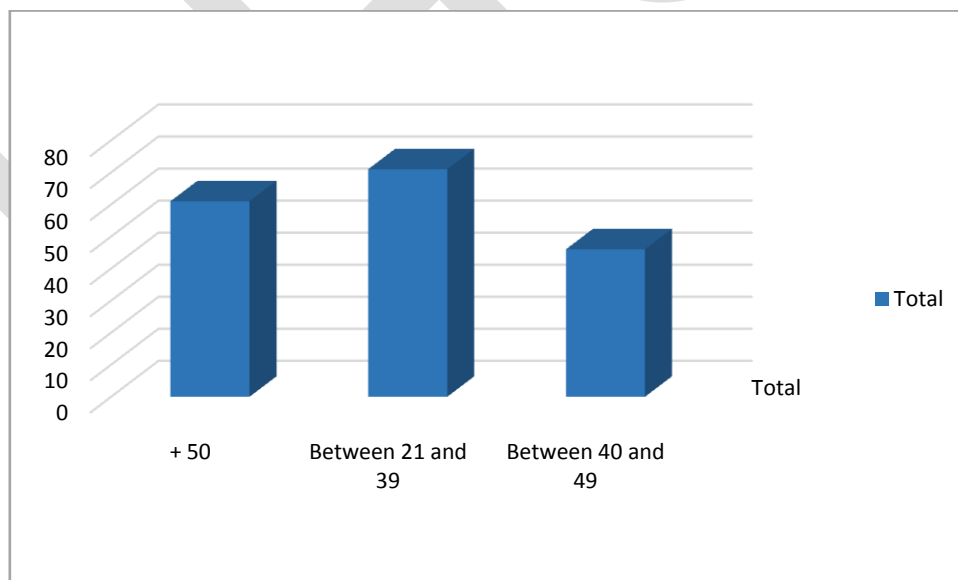


Fig. 1 Age of participants

The software of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 22.0) is used as software for statistical data analysis. Different types of data analyses will be used: descriptive statistics and multivariate data analysis.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 The frequency of language use

The Amazigh language is not an official language, and its use is limited to some indigenous people known as the Amazigh in Tunisia. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was approved and recognized by Tunisia, although the majority of people and legal experts are unaware of it (IWGIA, 2023). Additionally, there is no legislation and the Tunisian government does not acknowledge the presence of the Amazigh population in the nation (ibid). The Amazigh culture marginalization heavily impacts the Amazigh language situation as a major cultural component. In this research study, it was found that only 23,7% of the participants speak or read the Amazigh language but this linguistic knowledge is limited to some words or expressions that are frequently used. The decreasing number of speakers put in question the future of this language and the urgency to act because the native speakers are decreasing every day due to the age factor and this was noticed by the researcher in the process of data collection in a face-to-face context. The majority of participants who are speakers of the Amazigh language are aged more than fifty and most of them speak the language but they are unable to write it. The data analysis shows that the participants (92%) believe that the Amazigh language is in danger of extinction. The participants are anxious and dissatisfied with the situation of the culture and the language. The participants were presented with a five-point Likert scale of satisfaction to express their qualifications regarding the situation of the Amazigh language in Tunisia.

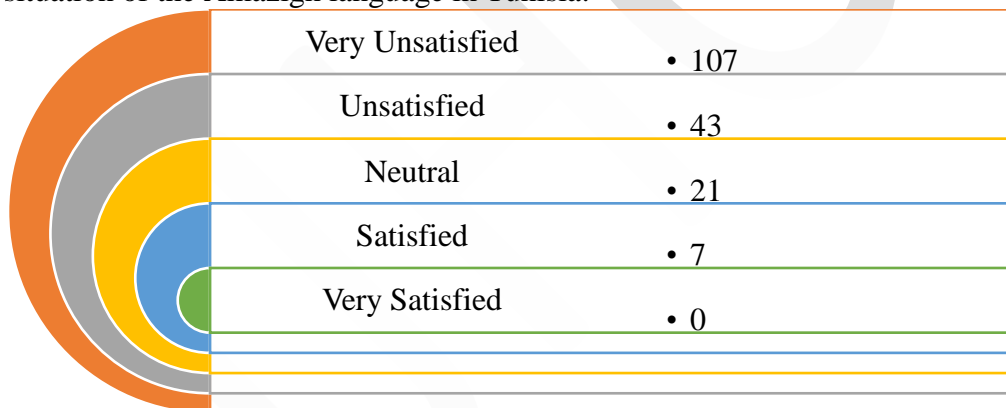


Fig. 2: The users' satisfaction with the situation of the Amazigh language in Tunisia

There is a certain consensus that Tunisians are dissatisfied regarding the situation of the Tamazight at a micro level and of the Amazigh culture at a macro level. The differences in language endangerment qualifications can be explained by the fact that some feel neutral and see it as a natural process and the cause of the development of other languages. Some others are in denial of danger because they feel partly responsible for rejecting or not passing the language to their children. The majority, however, are dissatisfied and they feel nostalgic for the past which is linked to their cultural heritage. Among these, a few feel motivated to do something to rescue their language because they feel the importance of cultural diversity and maintenance.

4.2 The Role of Social network sites in language revitalization

After the Arab Spring, many Tunisian cultural associations have been developing and calling for acknowledgment of the Amazigh culture and language in 2014 and 2019 constitutions such as the Tunisian Association of Amazigh Culture, The Development and Maintenance Association Taoujout, the Amazigh Association of Djerba, and Tamazight Association for Culture and Arts... Previously, before 2011, the existence of such associations and active movements was strictly banned (CMA, 2012; González,2019; Trabelssi, 2019; IWGIA,2023).The Tunisian government does not recognize the language as an official language and its use is very limited in some indigenous inhabitants and some cultural and folkloric events. All of these things work against the Amazigh population's efforts to advance their cultural, economic, and social rights. These organizations advocate the Amazigh heritage and work to maintain it as cultural plurality has always been a trait of the Tunisian civilization (ibid).

In this research study, participants were asked about their engagement in any organization or social network site to promote the Amazigh culture. It was found that only 21,9% of the samples show interest in joining organizations or associations interested in the promotion of the Amazigh culture. However, 62,8% revealed that they are members of social network sites and are engaged in supporting and maintaining the Amazigh language. The following graph summarises the participants' points of view on a five-level Likert scale of influence.

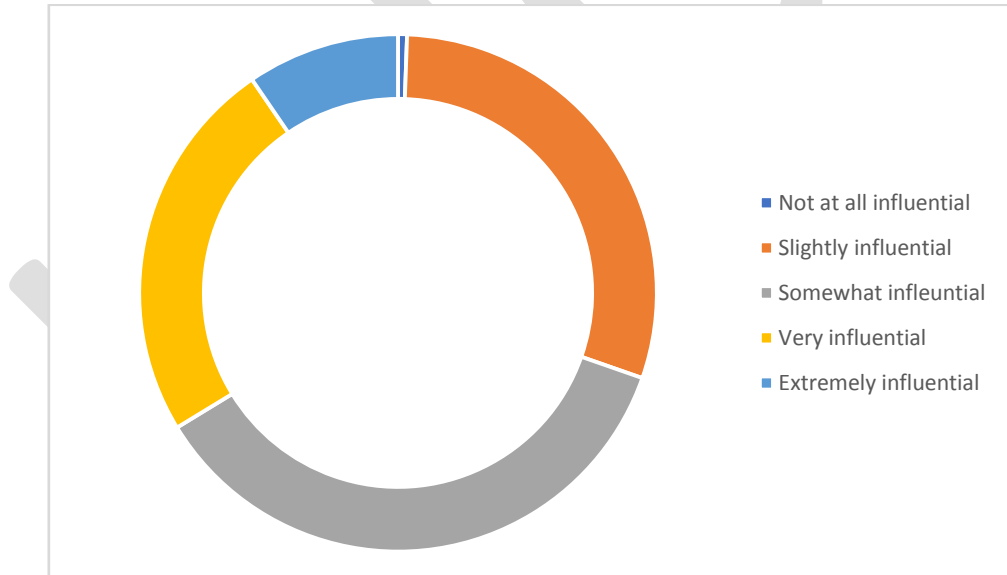


Fig. 3 The influence of social network sites in Amazigh language preservation

Almost all participants believe that social network sites can play a crucial role in language revitalization. Today, people prefer to join social network sites to meet people around the world with whom relations would have been impossible in the near past. These sites are built to be user-friendly and cost and effort-effective. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and many other sites enable their members to create groups where like-minded people can share their common interests and hobbies. In this study, the participants selected different reasons for joining a virtual group supporting the Amazigh cause.

Table 1: Reasons for joining social network sites

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Number of participants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>To connect with ancestors (family members, relatives, and friends) who speak the Amazigh language</i>	48	26.9%
<i>To preserve the cultural and historical heritage</i>	126	70.8%
<i>To build/join a community of Amazigh language speakers</i>	78	43.8%
<i>To enlarge your knowledge about the Amazigh culture and language</i>	147	82.6%
<i>To feel part of the Amazigh Community</i>	118	66.3%

The internet users in Tunisia who are interested in the Amazigh culture have found an easy way to get in touch with their culture through social networking. The great majority are interested in enlarging their knowledge about the Amazigh culture and language or in preserving what is seen as an in-risk priceless heritage. These platforms have become a way to get in touch with people outside their social circle sharing the same interest in the Amazigh culture and instruments to enlarge social relations through membership in virtual communities. These findings corroborate many researchers' findings that social network sites are very effective in reviving endangered languages (De Falco&Cesarano, 2016; Sallabank, 2010; Lhawa, 2019; Soria, 2016), especially the Amazigh language (Belhiah et al. 2020; Idhssaine&El Kirat, 2021; Mezhoud, 2023).

4.3 Recommendations for Amazigh Language Revitalisation

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to all endangered languages. By reviewing the literature, different and good practices and different approaches previously applied in specific cases were compiled and new possibilities are currently being explored and put into practice. First of all, a clear evaluation of the case is needed to plan future aims and objectives and take accurate procedures. Objectives can be divided into short-, mid-, and long-term objectives.

Short-term objectives may include an evaluation of the situation of the Amazigh language in Tunisia. Local and national organizations with the help of statistics institutes and enterprises should determine the number of indigenous speakers. Counting may help determine the degree of language menace. Then, some sensibilization campaigns should take place to encourage the speakers of the language to teach their children to guarantee language continuity. In addition, the economic value of Amazigh as a local culture should be promoted through the acknowledgment of local heritage and the organization of touristic events with national and international targets.

As a mid-term objective, it is suggested to incorporate the Amazigh language in national school curricula. As a start, the courses can start in areas where there are some concentrations

of indigenous speakers to strengthen families' efforts to maintain their mother tongue. The courses may take the form of linguistic clubs based on communicative approaches to language learning to motivate youngsters to learn through stimulating activities such as songs, plays, games, story-telling, quizzes, and the like. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education can also intervene in the maintenance process by encouraging new graduates to proceed with their higher education in Amazigh language literature and civilization to create specialists and future instructors and by organizing academic events at national and international levels to benefit from comparative and cross-cultural studies.

Long-term goals are mainly based on the political willingness of the Tunisian government to write legislation and constitutional laws. The government should collaborate with local and national organizations and associations to revitalize the Amazigh culture and language. The legislative reconnaissance of the Amazigh culture is the most important bridge for cultural maintenance. After the Arab Spring, these associations succeeded in bringing the Amazigh cause to the surface but governmental procedures are paramount to preserve it.

The achievement of these goals is highly tied to the stakeholders' belief in the importance of cultural diversity and their commitment to promoting the Amazigh culture. The government and national associations could collaborate with countries with whom they share some social and cultural traits and that succeeded in maintaining their endangered languages, particularly in the big Maghreb like Libya and Morocco. Morocco came to realize the Amazigh language as a national language that can be used in schools, courts, and national administrations (González, 2019; Belhiah et al. 2020; Idhssaine & El Kirat, 2021; Mezhoud, 2023). The Tunisian government could also benefit from many international programs and projects of language diversity and revitalization such as the NPLD European Roadmap for Linguistic Diversity, The META-NET Strategic Agenda, FLaReNet Blueprint for Actions and Infrastructures, and The Digital Language Diversity Project (started in September 2015 funded by the European Commission under Erasmus+ program) to name a few.

The use of technology is highly recommended. The quick and fast information exchange in era 2.0 enables the widespread of many causes and events with limited effects in offline contexts. Social network sites are important platforms for maintaining dead languages through chat groups, posts, messaging, etc. It is also important to think about the creation of some learning applications that enable young-technologically literate users to have access to this heritage from their devices such as smartphones and PCs hence the notion of digital language vitality scale.

The Digital Language Vitality Scale is a tool "for measuring the degree of digital vitality of languages, which in turn is defined as the extent to which a language is present, used and usable over the internet through digital devices (PCs as well as mobile phones, smartphones, tablets, satellite navigators, internet TV, etc) (Soria, 2016). The scale was created under the Digital Language Diversity Project (DLDP) started in 2015 and funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ program (detailed information about the funding program and the DLDP Consortium is available from the project website: <http://www.dldp.eu>). The main objective of the program is breaking the rule of "low digital representation- low digital readiness" by encouraging and empowering indigenous speakers with the intellectual and practical skills to create and share digital content to protect and sustain endangered languages.

The digital language vitality scale is graded from 1 to 7, with 1 representing the ‘pre-digital’ level and 7 characterizing a ‘digitally thriving’ level. The scale was developed based on linguistic vitality assessment (Fishman, 2001; Brenzinger et al, 2003; Lewis and Simons, 2010; Gibson, 2015).

In this research, the stakeholders and the supporters of the Amazigh cause may adopt the digital language diversity project as Tunisia is one among many countries in North Africa engaging in the Erasmus+ program. According to the linguistic vitality assessment scale, the Amazigh language will be considered vital if three main indicators are fulfilled. These are the digital usability of a language, the quality and amount of use of a language, and the digital prestige of a language. The first indicator refers to the digital usability of a language related mainly to the existence of an internet connection and the availability of standardized fonts for the language. In this case, it can be said that the Amazigh language fulfills the condition because of the high internet integrity in Tunisian society and the availability of a standardized code of written Amazigh language namely Tifinagh. These two main bases can be used as a scaffold to support the Amazigh language.

Moving to the second indicator, the users should increase the use of the language for texting, emailing, websites, blogs, wikis, books, and content shared on social media. Today the number of Amazigh groups and pages in Tunisia is increasing day after day and lately this year the intellectual website Wikipedia recognised the use of Tifinagh and provided Amazigh translations for users and researchers. This is a clear worldwide belief and a recognition in the Amazigh language but much work is needed to be done in the Tunisian context. The activists should encourage, motivate, and empower the speakers and influencers with the intellectual and practical skills to put them in the position of creating and sharing more and more digital content. These procedures will help and support the regional and associative in-field actions for improving the language vitality of the Amazigh language and of the Amazigh culture as a whole.

As for the third indicator, it cannot be fulfilled only if the second indicator is highly achieved. There is a strong correlation between these two indicators since the digital prestige of a language is a sign of a language that is not only highly used in digital devices but “is so in a full-fledged way, enjoying the widest possible ranges of uses and applications (localized digital services, machine translation, edutainment products, and services” (Soria, 2016, 21). The following chart summarizes the major steps needed to promote the technological vitality of the Amazigh language in Tunisia.

Table 2: The digital language vitality scale

Low-level vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To ensure connectivity - To develop and adopt a standardized encoding - To develop a standardized orthography - To develop some basic language resources (at least a corpus/ a spell checker/ and a lexicon)
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High-level vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating or enriching a Wikipedia in the language - Having localized versions of important sites - Main operating systems and social media interfaces - Developing advanced language resources and tools (wordnet/ multilingual corpora/ multi-taches applications)
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The process of language revitalization is paramount today and according to Kipp (2000 as cited in Pine & Turin (2017)) “(1) never ask permission, never beg to save the language. Never; (2) never debate the issues. Never; (3) be very action-oriented- just act; (4) show, don’t tell; (5) use your language as your curriculum- botany, geography, political science, philosophy, and history are all embedded in the language”.

5. Conclusion

Language revitalization is not a single change and creating speakers who achieve a level of communicative fluency is not a short and easy process, but it is a long process that requires effort, commitment, and the participation of different stakeholders. It is a whole process that benefits not only the language but also individuals and society. In this research work, it was found that the use of technology is highly recommended for the revitalization of dead and endangered languages like the Amazigh language. Rapid information exchange in the 2.0 era enables the rapid and vast generalization of many causes and events with limited effects in offline contexts. Social networking sites are important platforms for maintaining dead languages due to their accessibility and widespread use. The digital language vitality scale could be applicable in the case of the Amazigh language, particularly because of the high integrity of the Internet in Tunisian society.

The digital language guidelines “can be conceived as actionable guidelines for regional and minority language speakers and communities to identify current gaps and areas where action can and needs to be taken (Soria, 2016, 25); but using the words of John Hobson “The internet and digital world cannot save us. They cannot save indigenous languages. Of course, these things have benefits but they are not the Messiah. [...] What we need is sustainable initiatives, to create opportunities for indigenous language users to communicate with each other in their native tongue. To get people speaking again.” (Scannell, 2013). The stakeholders and the Amazigh associations should target younger generations to promote the Amazigh language as a main component of the Amazigh identity and culture and guarantee the continuity of this struggle to obtain recognition and to restore the legitimate place of the Amazighs (history, language, and culture). The language should be introduced into teaching, research, and public media. Legally, it is important today to create laws and legislation to protect the Tunisian Amazigh history, language, and culture like what happened in other North African countries such as Morocco because variety is the spice of life.

This study has just scratched the surface. There is a need for more research in order relation to the Amazigh language revitalization process. To ensure the effectiveness of future research, one obvious extension of this study is to increase the sample size to allow additional manipulations such as investigating more people's views. The need for exact statistics of Amazigh speakers is crucial in language revitalization. It is important to conduct longitudinal studies that will permit the exploration of the effectiveness of adopted procedures across time

to see whether this will have remarkable influences on language revitalization. Moreover, it is recommended to encourage researchers to direct future research to study the Amazigh language and target new fields of study such as psycho-linguistic, pragmatics, and semiotics to participate in the revitalization process. Another important research direction will be the use of cross-cultural studies. It is important to obtain culture-specific findings that can later be linked to findings from other cultures. Comparative studies will allow the identification of cross-cultural differences and similarities. In the case of the Amazigh language, Tunisians can benefit from the experiences of other countries like Morocco.

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