

A Brief Overview of National Languages in Mauritania¹

Amina Naciri-Azzouz*

pp. 93-102

1. Introduction

In Mauritania, as in most countries, the foundational texts do not necessarily reflect the sociolinguistic situation of the country. This is because the linguistic policy of a given nation-state does not mirror its linguistic practices, but rather hides the discursive practices of a given ideology², i.e. “the authoritative metadiscourses on the preferred language situation” (Blommaert, 1999: 30).

Consequently, Language Policy and Planning (LPP) is a discipline that focuses not so much on the communicative power of language, but on its symbolic power. Thus, when talking about power, we necessarily think of more than one language, namely in multilingual contexts where there is a situation of hierarchy and linguistic competitiveness among different linguistic communities that make up a territory. Therefore, LPP applies a multidisciplinary methodology that draws on theoretical tools from sociology, political science, education, among other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. In this way, the ideologies behind language policies are analysed and studied regarding their impact on educational planning, their role in social and linguistic change (dialectal levelling, emergence of new varieties and disappearance of others), their relationship with the construction of national, collective or individual identity (linguistic attitudes and representations), etc. (cf. Ricento, 2006).

The aim of this article is to present a brief overview of the national languages in Mauritania using the different studies that have been published to date. After a short introduction, the first section outlines the sociolinguistic situation of the country and the languages in use; the second section takes a historical look at the country’s language policy to analyse how languages have been a constant in the debate on nation-building. On the African continent, after independence and the formation of nation states, different formulas have been used to manage multilingualism. These have gradually evolved over time with different socio-political processes. On the one hand, there are countries such

 <https://doi.org/10.21747/0874-2375/afri40a7>

* **Department of Semitic Studies**, University of Granada.

1 This paper was supported by the project PID2019-107217GB-I00 funded by MICIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033 and PPJ1A2023-059 Grant funded by Plan Propio de Investigación, University of Granada. I wish to thank Aicha Janeiro-Anne for reviewing a draft of this text in English (all remaining errors are of course mine). I am also grateful to the research group “Language, Society, and Discourse” (Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, University of Nouakchott) for hosting me during my research stays in Nouakchott (2023 and 2024).

2 See, for example, Moustauoui, 2018 for Morocco and Diallo, 2010 for Senegal.

as Algeria and Morocco that have opted for a monolingual state, abandoning colonial languages, not recognising local languages³ and adhering to a supranational language such as Standard Arabic (cf. Benítez Fernández, 2012); on the other hand, in other countries, such as Senegal or Mali⁴, French has been established as an official language and different local languages were designated as national or official languages⁵.

In Mauritania, the Constitution declares Arabic (*fuṣṣḥa* or standard) – a transnational language – the official language, and the national languages are: Arabic, Pulaar, Soninké and Wolof. In addition, in the Constitutional Law 2012-015, it was deemed necessary to add, to the preamble of the 1991 Constitution, a more explicit and ideologized section on Mauritanian languages and national identity: “United throughout history by shared moral and spiritual values and aspiring to a common future, the Mauritanian people recognize and proclaim their cultural diversity, the foundation of national unity and social cohesion, and its corollary, the right to be different. The Arabic language, the country’s official language, and the other national languages, Poular, Soninké and Wolof, each constitute in themselves a national heritage common to all Mauritaniens, which the State has a duty, on behalf of all, to preserve and promote”⁶. Additionally, although French has no official status, it is used both as a working and administrative language (i.e., official documentation, the websites of national agencies are bilingual Arabic-French, in Parliament⁷, etc.)

Thus, an official language is an institutionalized language that enjoys the highest recognition of the state, while a national language –not an official one– is a language legitimized by the state, but which does not enjoy the same status. Nevertheless, there are also languages without official status, which may be legitimized and institutionalized for historical and socio-political reasons⁸.

In Mauritania, the language issue has persisted over the years within political conflicts and ethnic tensions. Following the independence from France in 1960 and the creation of the new Islamic Republic of Mauritania, its recent history has been marked by the construction of a national identity shaped by a narrative based on an historical cultural dichotomy of a multi-ethnic state: an Arab-Berber majority (Biḡān and Ḥarāfīn), who speaks Ḥassāniyya Arabic, and non-Ḥassānophone speakers or Black Mauritanian, formed mainly by the Haalpulaaren, the Soninké and the Wolof⁹. After independence, a young

3 In Morocco, Amazigh has been officialised in the Constitution of 2011 (Royaume du Maroc 2011, article 5. [Online]. Available at: http://www.sgg.gov.ma/Portals/o/constitution/constitution_2011_Fr.pdf and Algeria in the 2016 Constitution (République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire, 2016: article 4. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.joradp.dz/trv/fcons.pdf>.

4 Mali’s 2023 Constitution no longer recognizes French as an official language, but as a working language (Journal Officiel de la République de Mali, 22 July 2023, article 31. [Online]. Available at: <https://sgg-mali.ml/JO/2023/mali-jo-2023-13-sp-3.pdf>.

5 In Senegal there are six national languages contained in the constitution and “any other national language that will be codified” (Official Journal of the Republic of Senegal, 2001, article 1). [Online]. Available at: <https://www.sec.gov.sn/publications/lois-et-reglements/loi-ndeg-2001-03-du-22-janvier-2001-portant-constitution-modifiee>.

6 Translation taken from Constitute [Online]. Available at: [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Mauritania_2012; Constitution de la République Islamique de Mauritanie, 1991: 2. French version \[Online\]. Available at: https://www.primature.gov.mr/sites/default/files/2023-06/Constitution_consolid%C3%A9e_fr.pdf](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Mauritania_2012; Constitution de la République Islamique de Mauritanie, 1991: 2. French version [Online]. Available at: https://www.primature.gov.mr/sites/default/files/2023-06/Constitution_consolid%C3%A9e_fr.pdf).

7 In this case, the French translation service was abolished in 2020.

8 For the relationship between language and national identity in some African countries, see Simpson, 2008, and for the presence of Romance and colonial languages in Africa, see Reutner, 2024.

9 For an alternative analysis of the different dichotomous narratives around identity in Mauritania, see Ciavolella, 2014. For an approach to Mauritania from different disciplines to understand recent socio-political and historical transformations, see Ould Cheikh, 2014 and Ould Ahmed Salem, 2004.

Mauritania began a progressive process of Arabization, both of the education and the administration, a process that fuelled the discontent of the Black Mauritanian (cf. Taine-Cheikh, 2014).

2. The sociolinguistic situation in Mauritania

The Constitution envisages Mauritania as a multilingual and multiethnic country. What is somewhat less clear is the complexity of its sociolinguistic situation: a mosaic of multilingual linguistic practices, both oral and written, that often vary and are modulated by region, neighborhood, social class, age, etc.

Ḥassāniyya Arabic, a Maghrebi-type variety of Arabic, is the most widely spoken in the country¹⁰, and is the mother tongue of the Biḍān and the Ḥarāṭīn. In addition, it goes beyond the borders of Mauritania, spreading throughout the western Sahara¹¹. In Mauritania, although Ḥassāniyya does not enjoy any explicit state recognition, it is a prestigious variety and is considered a national language¹².

Pulaar, Soninké and Wolof belong to the Niger-Congo family, which are also transnational languages, each of them extending to certain regions of West Africa. Pulaar is the second most spoken national language in Mauritania, followed by Soninké and Wolof. In the main cities of the south of the country these are the majority languages, which are also very dynamic in the capital, especially Pulaar and Wolof¹³.

In the southwest of the country, Zenaga, a critically endangered Amazigh variety¹⁴ that has remained an interethnic language, languishes. In addition, there is a small Bambara community in the east of the country (cf. Taine-Cheikh, 2023).

Thus, the sociolinguistic situation in Mauritania is very diverse and complex. On the one hand, there are regions with a tendency towards monolingualism (e.g. there is a Ḥassānophone majority in the north), while multilingualism is the norm in the south and in the Senegal River Valley. Furthermore, depending on the city and its communities, one language or another could be the majority and vehicular (e.g. Kaédi, Pulaar; Rosso, Wolof).

The situation in large cities is more heterogeneous. Nouakchott, a capital with a population of almost one million (a third of the Mauritanian population), brings together all of the ethnic and linguistic elements of the country (cf. Choplin, 2009), which makes

10 Although we do not have official statistics, around 75 % of the population is considered Arabic-speaking, i.e. around three million speakers (Taine-Cheikh, 2020: 246).

11 It is the only vernacular variety of Arabic that enjoys national language status in some states, such as Senegal and Mali. In Morocco, in the Constitution of 2011, it is stated in Article 5 that “The State shall work for the preservation of Hassani, as an integral part of the united Moroccan cultural identity, as well as for the protection of cultural expressions and languages practiced in Morocco”.

12 Between 2023 and 2024, I have organized different focus groups in the framework of my postdoctoral project on Ḥassāniyya (vehicular) Arabic variation with young *Noikchottois.es* from different sociolinguistic backgrounds, most of them university students, and many gave Ḥassāniyya the status of a national language, i.e. interpreted Standard Arabic as the official language and Ḥassāniyya as the one language. On the other hand, there are those who considered that it was the same language, Arabic and Ḥassāniyya.

13 Soninké is an interethnic language, which is not usually used as a vehicular language. On the other hand, Pulaar and Wolof are.

14 One of the reasons given for the lack of Amazigh movement in Mauritania is that it is an almost invisible community that has merged with the Ḥassānophone one, having no political demands of its own (cf. Taine-Cheikh, 2012). In social media, we can find groups such as **ⵣⵉⵎⵉⵔ ⵉⵎⵓⵔⵉⵏⵉⵢⵓⵏ ⵉⵎⵓⵔⵉⵏⵉⵢⵓⵏ** “We are Amazigh from Mauritania and we are proud” that value Zenaga and advocate for its recognition by the state, although it seems to be a very small movement.

the Nouakchott language market very diverse, dynamic, and fluid. There are different Vehicular languages –Hassāniyya Arabic, Pulaar, French or Wolof– depending on the context and different social variables. Moreover, linguistic practices do not always coincide with the representations of the speakers and, despite discourses around language tensions, Hassāniyya Arabic is increasingly becoming the vehicular language, at least in big cities (cf. Dia, 2007, Taine-Cheikh, 2007, among others).

Among foreign languages, French retains its position and remains the language of business, education, being as well a language of social prestige in certain public and private spheres (cf. Ould Zein & Queffélec, 1997, Ould Cheikh, 2007).

Despite the previous paragraphs, it should not be forgotten that the boundaries between languages are not always so well-defined by the speakers, and even less so in contexts of multilingualism where languages mobilize dynamics of power and social prestige. Therefore, there are endless phenomena of linguistic contact in the oral and written practices of Mauritaniens (code-switching, translanguaging, linguistic change, mixed languages, etc.), especially among young people¹⁵.

3. Language and education policy

Changes in educational and language policy have been a consistent feature throughout Mauritania's history, which has been marked by ethnic tensions, and protests by Black Mauritaniens or non-Hassānophones. The civil movement for the defense and promotion of national languages has been a constant in Mauritania that has pushed through the different laws and educational reforms. In the case of Pulaar, social, cultural, and intellectual actors have played an important role in building a movement of protest and transnational activism within the Pulaar community in Senegal and in the diaspora, each maintaining their struggle at the national level (cf. Heming, 2020, Hames, 2017).

Mauritania's first Constitution of 1959 recognizes Arabic as the national language¹⁶, and French as the official language. After independence, the Constitution of 1961 declared Arabic the national language, as well as an official language alongside French. On the other hand, in 1976, different associations for the promotion of national languages were institutionalized. Finally, Arabic, Pulaar, Soninké and Wolof were established as national languages in 1979 following the creation of the Institut des Langues Nationales (ILN), whose main goal was to introduce them in the educational system.

There have been numerous educational reforms, and while the focus of the debate has always revolved around Arabic and/or French, there was only a single attempt to incorporate national languages that happened in the eighties. During the colonial period, France attempted to implement a “modern” educational system following a colonial ideology in which traditional Islamic education was considered not to be in line with colonial interests. For this reason, two educational systems were established in the present-day territory of Mauritania: a French-speaking school for non-Hassānophones (Haalpulaaren, Soninké and Wolof) of the *vallée*, and some Arabic-French bilingual

¹⁵ For example, see Taine-Cheikh, 2022, 2007 for the evolution of Hassāniyya Arabic and contact with Standard Arabic; Dia, 2007 for Hassāniyya as a lingua franca in Nouakchott; Tauzin, 2007 and Mourre, 2011, for new linguistic and aesthetic uses in rap, and Ely Yannick Ahounou is currently writing a thesis on *clavarder* and Hassāniyya variation in Mauritanian rap, at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar.

¹⁶ The first Mauritanian constitution was translated into Hassāniyya Arabic, which is already indicative of the prestige of this variety and its symbolic value (cf. Ould Mohamed Baba, 2021).

medrasāt 'schools' for the Biḍān¹⁷. However, from the 1950s onwards, there was a tendency towards the unification of the educational system with an Arab-French cursus preparing the process of decolonization, which resulted in the first protests of the non-Ḥassānophone or Black Mauritanian elites as they became aware of the turn towards Arabization (Pettigrew, 2007).

After independence, different educational laws followed. In the first phases of 1961 and 1967, the path of gradual Arabization continued with the introduction of traditional teaching in public schools (Taine-Cheikh, 2004: 5), while maintaining a bilingual system.

However, the 1973 reform shook the balance of power as it was carried out in a specific socio-political context: the shift towards the Maghreb and the Middle East with a democratic pan-Arabist movement, an economic system of its own and a strong sedentarization of nomadic populations due to droughts. In this context, the aim was to establish a modern public education system in which Arabic would have a greater weight.

The reform of 1973 did not prosper and a new education law was established in 1979, incorporating Arabic, the national languages, as well as French as a foreign language. To this end, the Institut National des Langues was created, and the national languages (Pulaar, Soninké and Wolof) were either standardized or unified. Thus began a period of experimentation that lasted 20 years, during which two parallel public systems were established: (mostly) French for non-Arabic speakers¹⁸ and Arabic for Arabic speakers¹⁹.

After several extremely negative reports and evaluations of the Mauritanian education system by different international organizations and the World Bank, the Mauritanian government responded with a new educational reform in 1999, to put an end to a segregationist education system and to improve the results of Mauritanian learners. The response then was to abolish the bilingual *filière*²⁰ and to establish a system composed of two fields: Arabic for the humanities subjects and French for the science subjects, in addition to other foreign languages²¹.

After another negative diagnosis highlighting the structural problems of the Mauritanian education system²², a new reform has been approved in 2022 based on the principles of equity, inclusion, national unity, and a multilingualism that reinforce cultural awareness. To this end, this law includes national languages in the *curriculum*²³: national languages will be taught in schools and Ḥassānophones children must learn at least one national language (apart than standard Arabic). Additionally, Arabic will be the language of communication and the language of instruction for all children and scientific subjects in secondary school will be taught in French²⁴.

17 Prior to the colonial period, traditional Qur'anic education was followed throughout the territory, to which the elites had access with educational institutions such as the *maḥaḍra* (Ould Mohamed Baba, 2012). In the south or the *vallée*, religious education was followed in Arabic and in *Ajami* (the use of Arabic alphabet to write Pulaar or Soninké) (Diallo, 2016).

18 The system of teaching the national languages is not sufficiently developed to replace French.

19 In addition to a greater offer of private education in French.

20 With the *de facto* abolition of the teaching of national languages, the Institut des Langues Nationales closed.

21 For a detailed overview of the different Mauritanian laws and a reflection on this issue, see Taine-Cheikh, 2004, Ould Zein, 2010, and Gadio, 2018.

22 The new Programme national de développement du secteur éducatif can be found on the website of the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Réforme du Système Éducatif. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.education.gov.mr/fr>.

23 The Institut pour la promotion et l'enseignement des langues nationales is created.

24 République Islamique de Mauritanie, Lettre de politique du secteur de l'éducation et de la Formation, 2022-2032: 13. Planipolis, UNESCO. [Online]. Available at: https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/Mauritania_%20lettre_de_politique_2022-2032.pdf.

However, not all social actors for the defense of national languages agree with this reform. The issue of languages of instruction and communication is perhaps the one that has provoked the most debate, along with the one that regulates private education and obliges the enrollment of primary school children in public education. Critics have first pointed out the risk of giving an “experimental” character to the teaching of national languages when these experimental classes had already been done in 1973. The second criticism is that there is not a move towards the officialization²⁵ of these languages since, according to Mamadou Kalidou Ba²⁶, “l’égalité passe par l’officialisation des toutes les langues mauritaniennes”.

In any case, the law is in place and the first classes are scheduled for the 2024-2025 academic year. During my last stay in Nouakchott in February 2024, Mohamed Ibrahima Sarr, the Organizational Officer of the Association pour la Promotion de la Langue Wolof, kindly explained to me what stage has been reached in the introduction of the reform and what has been the role played by the cultural associations. Below, I present an excerpt from the interview in which Sarr alludes to the challenges and fears, to the social dimension of education, as well as the issue of language in Mauritania.

“With [the former president] Aziz, there were discussion processes in relation to this. With [the current president] Ghazouani, a reform was put in place. An exchange to really discuss and review the republican school as they say.

And in this exchange of discussion that took place, [...] all the actors were invited, the actors of education were invited to discuss what the new education system that Mauritania must adopt, and which must be in line with the republican formula, but also must include the system of intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. As a result, the three cultural associations –the Soninké Association, the Pulaar Association and the Wolof Association– have collaborated [...] And they defended tooth and nail the introduction of national languages. Just as others have defended the need to maintain French, just as others have said that Arabic should be maintained in order to unify everyone.

In any case, whatever the case, we have succeeded in insisting that it is essential for the smooth running and cohesion of this country to introduce the national languages. Because that is a form of respect for others, but it is also a way of accepting that in this country, we are a country with several languages.

As part of this reform, it has been proposed to set up an institute that will be responsible for reintroducing the national languages into the Mauritanian education system. And this has sparked a debate, and the State has decided to set up the Institute for the Promotion and Teaching of National Languages, which will have the chance to reintroduce national languages in principle in 2025. Because currently in 2024, the Institute has started its work since 2023 [...]. Because that is the primary system we have at the moment. There is a primary [...] Because that is what the reform was intended. The idea may be to stick to something else, to continue teaching Wolof and the Pulaar language. That is the perspective.

25 The Organisation pour l’officialisation des langues nationales (OLNS) has organized several demonstrations against this reform and has promoted social media campaigns with the support of social, cultural, political and intellectual actors. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/Olan222>.

26 Professor at the University of Nouakchott and writer, see the interview in *le 360 Afrique*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6s7UmYNtHRg&ab_channel=Le360Afrigue.

We will see what the policy will do after that. But in any case, the Institute has been set up since 2023. With budget issues, something else.

In any case, in 2024, it has already started recruiting staff. For department heads, it is something else. But for the past 4 or 5 months, they have already started the process of training the trainers. In other words, we have taken teachers who are already teaching in French or Arabic, whom we are going to retrain so that they can learn Wolof. But according to their language. That is to say, you are a teacher, but you speak Wolof. But you teach Arabic, or you teach French. You are being taken back because you are already in the system.

Since you already know how to teach, all we have to do here is learn the Wolof alphabet. The rest is easy to... At least, that is what has been done. With a lot of difficulty, it must be said. Because behind the scenes, we are in a country where everything is politicized. People deliberately wanted to create problems for us in that sense. At one point, the Minister of Education decided to take novices, that is, volunteers to train them and after them, they will go to the experimental school. To which the three associations categorically refused, saying no. For an experimental phase, it can only be done by men who are experienced. Because otherwise, it makes no sense.

And in the year 2025, experimental schools will be opened. And there will be students who will start. And after that, an evaluation will take place. If it ushers in something good. And I hope that will usher in something good. In 2026 or something else, it is going to be widespread. Across the country, people are going to be forced to learn at least two languages. If you are an Arab, you are obliged to choose a language, either Wolof or Pulaar, but according to the sociographic context in which you find yourself [...].

No, they are going to teach outright. The scientific subject will be taught in the national language. For example, mathematics, geographical history, all of this will be taught in the national language. In fact, the initial objective for politicians was to use it as a language of communication. We said no. Wolof, Pulaar is a language that can be taught like any other language. [...] Now, there are procedures. Depending on how the pupil progresses through the second year, the other languages are introduced. Arabic is introduced, French is introduced, and so on. This means that when the student reaches the sixth grade, he will find himself with at least three languages that he masters. His own language, because if he learns mathematics and numbers in his own language, if he sees it tomorrow in another language, it is not going to surprise him. He is not going to try too hard to figure out that one in his own language is going to say one or two [...]. Basically, that is it. Now, there are always worries because behind the scenes, people are wondering if we won't end up [...] when we realize that it works, another president or people are going to get up in the morning to say that we have to stop everything. There are always these suspicions. Sarr reviewed the interview and would like to add this: "It is important that the Mauritanian government promulgates the decree, because there is a decree. The promulgation decree has not yet been signed and published by the President of the Republic. This could cause harm in the future, because the first time national languages were introduced in the country, as there was no decree, people woke up one day and found that they had stopped them. So we really need a decree, publishing

the introduction of national languages, and we are still waiting for one. So there you have it.

There are even people who think that this is just appetizers to deceive us again. There are always those suspicions. Which means that we are still on edge about national languages.

And God knows that this is a good opportunity to definitively solve this problem of social dialogue, this problem of individual exchange. God knows it is the language to regulate it. [...] Even if there are others in our community because we have to be honest too. There are others who give it to us because they believe that learning Wolof makes no sense, does not even have a future in today's world. You must learn French and English. That is the future. That, too, is understandable. We are aware of this [...]. But nevertheless, it is important to preserve my culture, the culture of others, to preserve my personal identity, that my language is spoken and written at least in my own country".

4. Conclusion

When we look at the linguistic situation in Mauritania, the first question that arises is precisely that of the national languages –Arabic, Pulaar, Soninké and Wolof–, as it is a political and politicized issue that has marked the agenda of Mauritanian language policy and educational planning. In addition, the movement for the promotion of national languages has been one of the most visible protest movements²⁷.

On the other hand, when we try to trace the origins of this conflict, we find that it arises between two hegemonic languages –Arabic and French– with an unbalanced shift to Arabic. Furthermore, not all Mauritanian elites felt represented, which led to a lack of consensus on how to manage plurilingualism. This is why there is a pluralistic debate in which different positions seek a balance in the country's language policy, assuring that all Mauritians are represented in the language and education policy of the state. Thus, there are those who advocate for an Arabic-French bilingual system, and others who advocate for a system that represents the Mauritanian cultural reality, i.e. national languages²⁸.

As for the vitality and use of languages in Mauritania, according to UNESCO, Zenaga is the only critically endangered language. In the case of national languages –Pulaar, Soninké, and Wolof–, it is noted that current language policies are accelerating their decline (Moseley, 2010: 28). This is probably due to the lack of visibility of these languages in the spheres of power: the media, politics, and mainstream culture. However, socio-cultural transformations, globalization and the irruption of new forms of dissemination and communication are giving rise to different linguistic, social and cultural phenomena not controlled (so far) by "traditional" systems. In this context of political reforms and social transformations, in-depth studies focusing on Mauritanian languages, from formal and social perspectives, would be useful to assess language practices and their social meaning, which in turn might have a positive impact on language policy and planning.

²⁷ Culture can be a good vector of protest against power without making it feel particularly threatened.

²⁸ See the testimonies collected by Gadio, 2018: 150-168, where several intellectuals and social actors debate this situation.

Bibliographic references

- Ahmed, E. H. M. (2020), *Language Policy and Identity in Mauritania: Multilingual and Multicultural Tensions*. Lanham, United Kingdom: Lexington Books.
- Benítez Fernández, M. (2012), Un repaso a la política lingüística del Norte de África desde la descolonización. *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes*, 23, pp. 69-80.
- Blommaert, J. (2006), Language Policy and National Identity. T. Ricento (Ed.), *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- ____ (1999), The debate is open. Blommaert, J. (Ed.), *Language Ideological Debates*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Choplin, A. (2009), *Nouakchott: Au carrefour de la Mauritanie et du monde*. Paris: Karthala.
- Ciavolella, R. (2014), Representing the Nation Horizontally and Vertically: Identity Differences and Asymmetries of Power in Mauritania. *Middle East Law and Governance*, 6(3), pp. 327-346.
- Dia, A. (2007), Uses and attitudes towards Hassaniyya among Nouakchott's Negro-Mauritanian population. Miller, C., Al-Wer, E., Caubet, D. & Watson, J. C. E. (Eds.), *Arabic in the city: Issues in dialect contact and language variation*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Diallo, I. (2016), Literacy and education in West Africa: from Ajami to Francophonie. *Africa Review*, 8(1), pp. 60-70.
- Gadio, A. (2018), Colinguisme en Mauritanie et esquisse d'une politique linguistique durable: quelle politique linguistique mauritanienne pour quel enseignement des langues? (Thèse de doctorat, Université Paul Valéry-Montpellier 3).
- Hames, J. (2017), "A river is not a boundary": interplays of national and linguistic citizenship in Pulaar language activism. *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue canadienne des études africaines*, 51(1), pp. 103-122.
- Hemmig, C. (2020), "Jokko Sa faami" ("get onboard if you understand"): language, online media, and political consciousness within Mauritania's Halpulaar community. *Journal of the African Literature Association*, 14(3), pp. 391-406.
- Moseley, C. (2010), *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*. Paris: Unesco.
- Mourre, M. (2011), Rap à Nouakchott, entre langage et esthétisme: vers un remodelage du politique par la jeunesse. *Diversité urbaine*, 10(2), pp. 129-140.
- Moustaoui, A. (2018), Language Policy and Planning in Morocco: a Critical Approach. Bassiouney, R. & Benmamoun, E. (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Arabic Linguistics*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Ould Ahmed Salem, Z. (2004), "Les marges d'un Etat-frontière. Histoire régionale, culture nationale et enjeux locaux." In *Les Trajectoires d'un Etat-frontière. Espace, évolutions politiques et transformations sociales en Mauritanie*, edited by Ould Ahmed Salem, Z., pp. 9-45. Dakar: Codesria.
- Ould Cheikh, A. W. (2014), *État et société en Mauritanie: Cinquante ans après l'Indépendance*. Paris: Karthala.
- Ould Cheikh, M. (2007), Le français en Mauritanie, langue d'enseignement dans un espace plurilingue – Réalités sociolinguistiques et choix didactiques. *Communication and Argumentation in the Public Sphere*, 1(2), pp. 329-345.

- Ould Mohamed Baba, Ahmed-Salem (2021), Edición y traducción del texto ḥassānī manuscrito de la primera constitución mauritana. *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes Y Hebraicos. Sección Árabe-Islam*, vol. 70, pp. 239-265.
- ____ (2012), La maḥaḍra de Mauritania: Una universidad nómada. *Al-Andalus Magreb*, n.º 19, pp. 345-360.
- Ould Zein, B. (2010), Eléments sociolinguistiques pour une réflexion didactique à propos de la situation en Mauritanie. *Le Français en Afrique - revue du réseau des observatoires du français contemporain en Afrique*, n.º 25, pp. 43-58.
- Ould Zein, B., & Queffélec, A. (1997), *Le français en Mauritanie. Actualités linguistiques francophones*. Paris: EDICEF, AUPELF.
- Pettigrew, E. (2007), Colonizing the Mahadra: Language, Identity, and Power in Mauritania Under French Control. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 33(2-3), pp. 62-89.
- Reutner, U. (Ed.), (2024), *Manual of Romance Languages in Africa*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.
- Ricento, T. (Ed.), (2006), *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Simpson, A. (Ed.), (2008), *Language and national identity in Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Taine-Cheikh, C. (2023), Mauritania: French in Mauritania. In Ursula Reutner. *Romance Languages in Africa*, de Gruyter. Serie Manual of Romance Linguistics, pp. 289-317. [Online]. Available at: 978-3-11-062610-0.hal-03502167.
- ____ (2022), Le ḥassāniyya et la variation diglossique à travers WhatsApp: la Mauritanie à l'heure du Covid-19. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, vol. 278, pp. 81-106.
- ____ (2020), Ḥassāniyya Arabic. Lucas, C. & Manfredi, S. (Eds.), *Arabic and contact-induced change*. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- ____ (2014), Idéal linguistique, pratiques langagières et construction des savoirs. Ould Cheikh, A. W. (Ed.), *État et société en Mauritanie. Cinquante ans après l'Indépendance*. Paris: Karthala.
- ____ (2012), Arabe(s) et berbère en Mauritanie. Bilinguisme, diglossie et mixité linguistique. Mejdell, G. & Edzard, L. (Eds.), *High vs. Low and Mixed Varieties. Status, Norms and Functions across Time and Languages*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- ____ (2007), The (r)urbanisation of Mauritania. Historical context and contemporary developments. In Miller, C., Al-Wer, E., Caubet, D. & Watson, J. C. E. (Eds.), *Arabic in the city: Issues in dialect contact and language variation*. London/New York: Routledge.
- ____ (2004), "La Mauritanie: vers une nouvelle politique linguistique?", *Aménagement linguistique au Maghreb*. Revue d'aménagement linguistique, 107, pp. 205-226.
- Tauzin, A. (2007), Rap and Rappers in Nouakchott (Mauritania). Miller, C., Al-Wer, E., Caubet, D. & Watson, J. C. E. (Eds.), *Arabic in the city: Issues in dialect contact and language variation*. London/New York: Routledge.