
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Systematic Literature Review of Moroccan Arabic Darija and American English code-switching among University Students

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| ABSTRACT

The Moroccan sociolinguistic landscape represents a strategic intersection where Modern Standard Arabic and Moroccan Darija engage in complex linguistic hierarchies. Data highlights the dominance of Darija in daily interactions at 87.9% creating a Standard in the Shadows paradox. This environment serves as a critical backdrop for American university students who navigate these hierarchies during study abroad programs. Education of the linguistic tension reveals a dichotomy between the symbolic role of Modern Standard Arabic in identity and practical utility of Moroccan Darija. Such established complexity necessitates a systematic evaluation of literature concerning foreign learners. This systematic review addresses a significant research gap by evaluating synthesized evidence regarding American university students. While researching secondary education this review researches the unique sociolinguistic pressures on the American higher education cohort following the PRISMA 2020 framework and an initial bibliography of 81 documents. Synthesis indicates that code-switching facilitates clarity reflecting the 62% teacher usage rate yet potentially diminishes formal proficiency. The review researches the association between code-switching and 5 key variables including identity research outcomes and intercultural communication effectiveness plus language acquisition progress and sociocultural attitudes as well as formal language proficiency. Code-switching acts as a bridge for comprehension but simultaneously challenges formal proficiency levels which suffered a 65% negative impact in related contexts. Practical implications advocate for Arabic English bilingual classroom pedagogy and longitudinal research. Current evidence remains limited by reliance on convenience sampling and urban contexts. Policy reforms like the Strategic Vision 2015-2030 should foster balanced proficiency in multilingual contexts.

| KEYWORDS

Code-switching, Moroccan Darija, American university students, Study abroad, PRISMA 2020, Identity research

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 01 June 2026

PUBLISHED: 29 June 2026

DOI: 10.32996/ijllt.2026.9.7.10

1. Introduction

1.1. The sociolinguistic and sociocultural nature of code-switching

The strategic importance of deciphering code-switching within globalized educational matrices lies in its characterization as a sophisticated linguistic instrument rather than a symptomatic deficit in cognitive or grammatical proficiency that would hinder learning (Algharabali and al., 2015). In contemporary academic environments where diverse phonetic and syntactic systems intersect, the act of alternating between languages functions as a vital mechanism for navigating complex social realities and establishing affective proximity between students and teachers (De La Cruz, 2025). One posits in this systematic review that code-switching is a deliberate sociocultural practice reflecting the agency and symbolic capital of the speaker within their community (Bley, 2025). By synthesizing the foundational concepts of high and low language varieties established by Ferguson (1959) and

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further examined in the contemporary Moroccan context by Mazouze and al. (2026), it becomes evident that speakers utilize distinct diglossic registers to fulfill specific communicative demands. High varieties are traditionally reserved for formal or liturgical domains while low varieties dominate the vernacular and intimate spheres of daily interaction, demonstrating a strict functional separation (Driouch, 2023).

One notes that there exists a significant tension between the practical utility of a vehicular variety like Moroccan Arabic Darija and the symbolic value of formal languages documented in current scholarship (Mazouze and al., 2026). While formal languages often carry the weight of national identity and professional legitimacy, the low variety provides a level of social cohesion and communicative ease that formal registers cannot replicate spontaneously (Bley, 2025). Mazouze and al. (2026) highlight how this dynamic creates a paradox where the low variety maintains an everyday hegemony despite the official sovereignty and institutional prestige of the high variety. This sociocultural reality necessitates one to research deeper how these linguistic hierarchies manifest when global languages like English enter the local landscape, often acting as a bridge for intercultural communication (Margareta and al., 2025). Understanding these nuances is essential for grasping the strategic complexity of the Moroccan linguistic market and its unique pressures on transient populations, thereby justifying the use of code-switching to facilitate linguistic integration (Margareta and al., 2025).

1.2. Linguistic pluralism within the Moroccan study abroad context

The Moroccan linguistic market presents a strategic complexity that profoundly impacts visiting American university students, who must navigate a space defined by profound cultural pluralism. This pluralism is not merely a social observation but an ontological reality codified within the Moroccan Constitution of 2011, which explicitly recognizes the diverse Amazigh, Arab, and Saharan Hassani roots alongside Andalusian, Mediterranean, and African civilizational tributaries (Mazouze and al., 2026). Ennaji (2020) discusses how these tributaries create a dynamic environment of linguistic pluralism where multiple languages coexist and compete for dominance, acting as a lever for the composite identity of the country (as cited in Mazouze and al., 2026). For the visiting American student, this contact zone requires a psychological shift from monolingual expectations to a framework of linguistic multiplicity where Moroccan Arabic Darija serves as the primary vehicular variety for social integration and popular memory (Mazouze and al., 2026).

One notes that the dominance of Darija in daily life is empirically supported by the 87.9% usage rate identified in the recent field study by Mazouze and al. (2026), which confirms its status as the heartbeat of Moroccan social interaction and informal communication. For English speaking students, this environmental reality creates a unique challenge because the language of the street is often disconnected from the formal Modern Standard Arabic typically emphasized in traditional academic settings, creating a diglossic tension between practical utility and symbolic value (Mazouze and al., 2026). Tahiri and al. (2015) provide critical insight into the resulting imbalance between academic languages and the language of family or informal exchanges, noting that attitudes toward the low variety can often be complex or disparaging despite its absolute practical necessity for everyday interactions. American students find themselves in a linguistic landscape where they must balance the symbolic prestige of their own academic English with the overwhelming functional hegemony of Darija. These established Moroccan dynamics provide the essential backdrop for researching how local linguistic practices intersect with American English in the modern university demographic, especially regarding code-switching phenomena (Al Masaeed, 2020).

1.3. Identification of the scientific problem and the research gap

There is a strategic need for empirical synthesis in contemporary sociolinguistics to move beyond isolated field studies and develop a more holistic understanding of global language contact, especially since Morocco presents a highly diverse linguistic landscape where multiple codes compete (Kachoub, 2021). While existing scholarship has extensively documented the interactions between Modern Standard Arabic and French (Fathi and al., 2024; Tahiri and al., 2015), the specific interaction between Moroccan Arabic Darija and American English remains significantly insufficiently researched. Tahiri and al. (2015) establish that French remains the most valued language in academic contexts in Morocco while Modern Standard Arabic holds significant religious and symbolic capital, but this traditional focus neglects the burgeoning influence of English across various societal domains (Kachoub, 2021). This oversight represents a critical scientific problem because the increasing presence of American students in Moroccan higher education creates new linguistic outcomes that are not captured by historical models of the protectorate era, particularly regarding how these transient populations acquire local spoken varieties (Garcia & Al Masaeed, 2025).

The lack of a synthesized narrative regarding how American university students navigate the everyday hegemony of Darija described by Mazouze and al. (2026) leaves a notable gap in the literature concerning contemporary language acquisition and identity research. One observes that these learners increasingly rely on code-switching and translanguaging practices to build social networks and achieve intercultural understanding (Al Masaeed, 2020; Dewey and al., 2013). Current scholarship has focused heavily on secondary education diglossia or the historical tensions involving European languages, but it has largely neglected the specific sociolinguistic outcomes for the American study abroad demographic. This demographic is unique because these learners often arrive with preconceived ideologies about the prestige of formal Arabic compared to local dialects (Garcia & Al Masaeed,

2025). This group operates within a different set of power dynamics and linguistic motivations compared to local students, often using English as a bridge to initiate contact before integrating Darija into their linguistic repertoire (Dewey and al., 2013). Consequently, a systematic review is the only methodological approach capable of bridging this knowledge gap by aggregating disparate findings into a coherent framework to research further implications and policy development.

1.4. Rationale and methodological framework of the review

The systematic review methodology offers strategic value by providing a stand-alone resource for the academic community that synthesizes complex data into actionable insights for educators and policy makers. One observes that this approach is justified by the significant proficiency gaps and identity issues identified in recent field studies, which demonstrate how linguistic tension can hinder formal language mastery. Specifically, Mazouze and al. (2026) found that 65% of students reported a negative impact on their Modern Standard Arabic expression due to the pervasive use of Darija, while 62% of teachers utilized a linguistic mix in the classroom to ensure student comprehension and balance clarity with official curriculum adherence (Mazouze and al., 2026). These statistics indicate a deep rooted diglossic struggle where the practical utility of the colloquial language competes with the symbolic role of the standard language in identity and education (Mazouze and al., 2026). One posits that this tension likely extends to English speaking populations who must research effective ways to navigate this multilingual space (Garcia & Al Masaeed, 2025).

This review will transform raw data into a structured exploration of five key variables that define the code-switching experience for the study abroad demographic. These variables include code-switching patterns, identity research outcomes, intercultural communication effectiveness, language acquisition progress, and sociocultural attitudes. The review utilizes a demographic lens that considers the 56.6% female and 43.4% male distribution typical of recent urban educational studies in the region to ensure representativeness (Mazouze and al., 2026). By examining these variables, the review provides a scientific analysis that remains accessible to knowledge workers across fields such as education policy and international relations, aiming to inform policy interventions that can enhance language mastery while leveraging the practical utility of Darija. The ultimate goal is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how university students reconcile their academic linguistic goals with the practical realities of the Moroccan environment, often using language mixing to facilitate understanding and social integration. This framework serves as the foundation for a formal statement of the core research question.

1.5. Research question and aligned objectives

The scope of this inquiry is defined by the need to understand how linguistic contact between a global academic language and a local low variety influences student outcomes and program design, particularly in study abroad contexts (Al Masaeed, 2013). The central research question asks what the nature and outcomes of code-switching between Moroccan Arabic Darija and American English among university students in Morocco are. Answering this question is vital for developing language policies that reflect the true linguistic needs of international students and for designing study abroad programs that foster genuine intercultural competence without eroding formal language standards, especially since Morocco presents a highly diverse linguistic landscape (Kachoub, 2021). One posits that navigating this linguistic multiplicity is essential for social integration and academic success (Muthusamy and al., 2020).

The first objective is to characterize the specific code-switching patterns that emerge when students move between English and Darija in both academic and social contexts. This involves analyzing whether the mix is used as a clarity strategy, similar to the 62% teacher mix observed in local classrooms, or as a means of social signaling (Mazouze and al., 2026). Characterizing these patterns allows researchers to identify the specific linguistic triggers that prompt a shift from the high variety to the low variety during intensive study programs, often acting as an instrument to ensure student comprehension (Almagableh & Yunus, 2022).

The second objective involves analyzing identity research outcomes to determine how students use code-switching to balance their home identity with their host culture, often reflecting the agency and symbolic capital of the speaker (Bley, 2025). This includes evaluating whether the use of Darija facilitates a sense of belonging or creates a sense of linguistic confusion among students. Understanding this balance is critical for addressing the identity issues that often arise when students are caught between the sovereignty of their native English and the everyday hegemony of the Moroccan vernacular, which maintains its dominance in informal communication (Mazouze and al., 2026). One observes that learners increasingly rely on translanguaging practices to build social networks (Dewey and al., 2013).

The third objective evaluates intercultural communication effectiveness by examining how switching between registers facilitates or hinders mutual understanding in the contact zone. This includes looking at how the absence of standard exposure outside the classroom, which affects 57% of students in related studies, impacts the ability of Americans to communicate effectively (Mazouze and al., 2026). This objective seeks to determine if code-switching serves as a bridge for clarity or a barrier to deeper cultural immersion, given that it is often utilized to negotiate meaning and enhance intercultural understanding (Al Masaeed, 2020).

The fourth objective focuses on language acquisition progress and seeks to identify whether the use of Darija serves as a facilitator or an impediment to mastering formal linguistic structures. Given that 65% of students in existing studies report a negative impact

on their formal writing and expression, one must research if a similar decline occurs in the English proficiency of visiting students (Mazouze and al., 2026). This objective aims to provide data for the design of hybrid curricula that leverage the practical utility of Darija without sacrificing academic rigor, encouraging a judicious use of the mother tongue to support learning outcomes (Al Masaeed, 2016).

Finally, the fifth objective researches the sociocultural attitudes held by students toward both Darija and English and how these perceptions influence their willingness to engage in code-switching. One observes that English is increasingly prized as a global medium of science and upward mobility (Kachoub, 2021), while local colloquial varieties frequently encounter stigmatization in formal domains despite their absolute communicative necessity (Skouri, 2016). This involves examining the tension between the symbolic value of English as a language of science and the affective proximity provided by Darija, which intrinsically functions as the language of intimacy and in group solidarity (Palmer, 2013). Students must constantly navigate this dichotomy to negotiate their cultural identities while simultaneously adapting to rigorous globalized academic standards (Alshehri, 2025). By addressing these paragraphs of inquiry, the review provides a comprehensive synthesis that informs both theory and practice in the field of applied linguistics, ultimately establishing that code-switching constitutes a sophisticated strategic asset for meaning making and intercultural empathy rather than a mere linguistic deficit (Margareta and al., 2025).

2. Theoretical Framework for the Sociolinguistic Study of Moroccan Diglossia

2.1. Patterns of Linguistic Alternation and Functional Fluidity

Within the Moroccan educational landscape, linguistic alternation represents a strategic pedagogical maneuver rather than a mere byproduct of bilingualism that scholars research to understand classroom interactions (Almagableh & Yunus, 2022). Variety selection serves to dictate the pedagogical climate, as the shifting borders between Modern Standard Arabic and the vernacular variety known as Darija define the instructional environment. This alternation is particularly visible in the contrast between digital communication and the formal classroom. While digital discourse in environments such as WhatsApp groups often prioritizes emotional immediacy and communal solidarity through the unmediated use of the vernacular to express multifaceted cultural identities (El Baroudi, 2021), the classroom utilizes alternation as a cognitive bridge to navigate complex theoretical frameworks. In this setting, the pedagogical landscape is characterized by a functional pragmatism where the high variety is often relegated to the background to ensure student comprehension, thereby lowering the affective filter and empowering learners to process new input effectively (Nurillayevich & Ozodova, 2025).

Intra sentential switching. This pattern involves the alternation of linguistic varieties within the boundaries of a single sentence or clause. It requires a sophisticated level of grammatical integration where the speaker maintains the syntactic integrity of both the standard and colloquial systems (Mazouze and al., 2026). One posits that this specific mechanism remains exceptionally prevalent among skilled bilinguals who seamlessly combine structural elements to articulate complex thoughts without causing communicative breakdowns (Alaiyed, 2022).

Inter sentential switching. This occurs at sentence boundaries, where an entire thought is articulated in one variety before the speaker transitions to another. This is frequently observed when teachers provide an initial definition in Modern Standard Arabic and subsequently provide an elaboration in Darija to anchor the concept in the students' lived experience (Mazouze and al., 2026). By adopting this approach, educators can research comprehension levels directly while establishing a supportive atmosphere that bridges the gap between formal academia and everyday reality (De La Cruz, 2025).

Tag switching. This involves the insertion of short phrases, fillers, or discourse markers from one variety into another. These tags often signal shifts in tone or serve to maintain social rapport without disrupting the primary linguistic stream. Furthermore, deploying these brief conversational markers acts as a contextualization cue that assists speakers in negotiating interpersonal relationships and projecting empathy effortlessly (Al Masaeed, 2013).

Lexical gap filling. This is a communicative strategy where speakers utilize terms from a specific variety because it contains the precise technical or social terminology required to convey a specific meaning that may be absent or less accessible in the other variety. One observes that learners heavily rely on this resource to overcome temporary vocabulary limitations and maintain conversational fluency without compromising their intended message (Khoumssi, 2020).

These functions act as essential classroom tools while simultaneously challenging the sovereignty of Modern Standard Arabic, which is traditionally expected to remain the exclusive medium of formal instruction (Al Masaeed, 2020). Quantitative data indicates that 62% of teachers utilize a mix of varieties to facilitate understanding, an act of pedagogical pragmatism that inadvertently compromises formal linguistic standards (Mazouze and al., 2026), often resorting to the mother tongue to lower anxiety and serve as a cognitive scaffold for learners (Nurillayevich & Ozodova, 2025). One observes that this shift from formal to informal varieties acts as a mechanism for clarity that creates a Standard in the Shadows paradox, where the official language is structurally present but functionally marginalized in everyday educational interactions (Mazouze and al., 2026). Ultimately, these switching patterns inform how speakers negotiate their social and personal identities, signaling their alignment with either official authority or local

solidarity, thereby demonstrating that language choice is a deliberate act that scholars research to understand social positioning rather than a mere sign of linguistic deficiency (Khoumssi, 2020).

2.2. Socio Identity Outcomes and Positional Research

Language functions as a vital vessel for identity and a primary mechanism for defining social hierarchy within a diglossic society. In Morocco, the interplay between Modern Standard Arabic and Darija creates specific identity outcomes including belonging and social positioning. Students utilize linguistic cues to signal cultural affiliation or group solidarity, often navigating a hybrid identity that synthesizes the prestige of the high variety with the authenticity of the vernacular, which reflects their agency in constructing multiple identities to fit different social situations (Bley, 2025). This research is a constant process where individuals assess the social weight of their variety selection to achieve specific positional advantages within the communal hierarchy, as language constitutes a form of symbolic capital that reinforces social power and cultural expectations (Bley, 2025).

The following comparison illustrates the dichotomy between the identity constructs associated with variety selection as observed in recent sociolinguistic field studies (Mazouze and al., 2026; Tahiri and al., 2015).

High Variety Identity, namely Modern Standard Arabic, is a construct intrinsically linked to modernity, professional status, and official administration. It represents the standardized form of the language and carries significant cultural and religious prestige. As the language of the state and education, it serves as a symbol of intellectual achievement and national unity. Indeed, scholars emphasize that this formal variety acts as a unifying bond across the Arab world while strictly remaining the language of instruction and written literacy rather than spontaneous daily interactions (Tahiri and al., 2015).

Low Variety Identity, represented by Moroccan Darija, is a construct rooted in local cultural heritage and popular memory. It is the primary vehicle for daily communication, humor, and domestic life. Darija symbolizes authenticity and direct social interaction, acting as a marker of local belonging and popular solidarity despite its lack of official status in formal domains. One notes that this variety maintains an overwhelming 87.9% usage rate in daily life, demonstrating its absolute necessity for informal social integration and expressing emotional warmth (Mazouze and al., 2026). The tension between the symbolic role of the official language and the practical hegemony of the vernacular creates a fragmented sense of social belonging. An inability to master the high variety often leads to an ontological insecurity and identity conflict, as the individual feels disconnected from the professional and intellectual spheres that Modern Standard Arabic represents. This linguistic barrier can lead to marginalized social positioning where the speaker remains confined to informal domains. These identity constructs heavily influence the success of communicative exchanges, as participants must manage the diverse cultural weight of their linguistic choices to ensure social integration. Consequently, one must research how speakers adapt their linguistic repertoires to navigate this diglossic tension and bridge the gap between formal academic requirements and colloquial social realities without experiencing linguistic alienation (Mazouze and al., 2026).

2.3. Communicative Mediation and Intercultural Effectiveness

Linguistic accommodation constitutes a strategic necessity within a pluralistic civilization like Morocco, where the coexistence of diverse civilizational tributaries necessitates a high degree of communicative flexibility. The effectiveness of intercultural communication is largely determined by the ability of speakers to manage cultural differences through mediation and proximal variety selection, actively employing accommodation strategies to negotiate meaning and ensure mutual comprehension (Abu-Melhim, 2014). This process is reinforced by the Moroccan Constitution of 2011, which explicitly recognizes linguistic plurality as a fundamental lever for the composite identity of the nation, legally affirming its diverse Amazigh, Arab, Saharan Hassani, Andalusian, African, and Mediterranean roots (Mazouze and al., 2026). Article 5 of the Constitution stipulates that while Arabic remains the official language, the state is committed to promoting all cultural constituents of the Moroccan people, thereby institutionalizing a dynamic linguistic pluralism (Ennaji, 2020, as cited in Mazouze and al., 2026). Within this framework, linguistic accommodation functions as a cognitive bridge, allowing participants to navigate the distal boundaries of formal discourse through the use of shared vernacular resources, ultimately demonstrating how speakers manipulate their linguistic repertoires for strategic interactional gains (Al Masaeed, 2020).

Darija serves as a critical communicative bridge and a living heritage that facilitates direct social interaction where formal varieties may fail to establish a human connection, proving essential for establishing trust and promoting a deeper understanding of local cultural values (Schmitt, 2016). As a vital tributary of everyday communication, the vernacular embodies the popular memory of the nation and allows for a level of social comfort and spontaneity that the high variety, in its standardized rigidity, often precludes (Mazouze and al., 2026). This linguistic flexibility is a prerequisite for social cohesion in a society characterized by its Amazigh, Arab, and Mediterranean influences. One observes that the success of Darija as a tool for mediation highlights its role in nourishing the national identity without necessarily detracting from the status of Modern Standard Arabic as the language of education and administration (Ennaji, 2020, as cited in Mazouze and al., 2026). However, the effectiveness of these communicative strategies is inextricably linked to the long term progress of language acquisition within the formal school system, as those who can successfully

navigate both varieties are better equipped for comprehensive social and professional integration. Consequently, one must research how bilingual speakers adapt to these diverse diglossic demands to foster genuine intercultural competence while simultaneously maintaining formal academic standards (Parsons, 2023).

2.4. Cognitive and Practical Competence in Language Acquisition

Achieving balanced proficiency within a diglossic educational framework presents significant strategic challenges that often lead to proficiency gaps. The progress of Arabic proficiency and communicative competence among secondary students is hindered by a stark contrast between classroom exposure and social reality, since Modern Standard Arabic remains nobody's mother tongue and is rarely used in informal domains (Schmitt, 2016). One observes that source data reveals that 57% of students lack any exposure to Modern Standard Arabic outside the school environment, which limits their ability to internalize the linguistic rules required for formal expression (Mazouze and al., 2026). This lack of environmental support exacerbates the difficulty of transitioning from the informal mother tongue to the formal second language of instruction, prompting one to research how learners can effectively acquire the high variety when their primary social interactions rely entirely on the vernacular (Palmer, 2013).

The pervasive reliance on code-switching within the classroom presents an alarming risk to the acquisition of formal skills, as overreliance may hinder full immersion and slow language development (Muradov & Ozodova, 2025). One notes that research indicates that 65% of students report a negative impact on their writing and expression skills due to the frequent intrusion of Darija into formal academic settings (Mazouze and al., 2026). The current pedagogical environment marginalizes the use of the high variety, which ossifies the students' ability to produce complex formal discourse. Furthermore, the reliance on the vernacular erodes the expressive capacity required for the language of science, while the lack of out of school exposure stagnates the development of a robust linguistic repertoire, often leading to poor proficiency in the target language (Alkhudair, 2019). This situation undermines the state's goals of achieving balanced proficiency, as students struggle to master the standardized variety required for professional advancement. These acquisition patterns are reinforced by broader ideological frameworks that dictate the status of each variety, perpetuating a cycle where the official language is structurally present but functionally marginalized (Mazouze and al., 2026).

2.5. Ideological Frameworks and Sociocultural Attitudes

Language ideologies play a strategic role in maintaining the linguistic status quo or facilitating shifts in prestige and stigma within Moroccan society. Modern Standard Arabic is widely viewed as the legitimate language of the state and religion, carrying immense historical weight and symbolic value (Tahiri and al., 2015), to the extent that it serves as a unifying bond across the Arabophone world (Parsons, 2023). Conversely, Darija is often associated with a low status in formal domains, despite its hegemony in everyday life. This creates a sociocultural paradox where the most frequently used variety lacks official prestige, while the official language remains socially distant for many because it is nobody's mother tongue and is rarely used for spontaneous daily interactions (Parsons, 2023). Generational attitudes further complicate this landscape, as younger speakers navigate the tension between global influences and the preservation of local linguistic heritage. One observes that these younger generations often resort to language mixing and code-switching to project a modern identity while retaining their authentic Moroccan roots (Khoumssi, 2020).

These ideologies are reflected in national policies such as the 1999 National Charter for Education and Training and the Strategic Vision 2015 2030, both of which emphasize the importance of the high variety for national identity (Mazouze and al., 2026). However, the everyday dominance of Darija creates what Ibn Khaldun described in the *Muqaddimah* as a corruption of the habit, where the mixing of varieties leads to a decline in the innate mastery of the official tongue (Abd al Rahman bin Muhammad al Hadrami, 1978). One notes that this deterioration is historically attributed to mixing with other populations, which creates a deficient linguistic habit (Mazouze and al., 2026). This history of linguistic mixing has resulted in significant language anxiety, particularly during the 2018 debates regarding the inclusion of Darija in textbooks (Suleiman & Abdelhay, 2020). During this period, standard language advocates argued that integrating the colloquial variety into education would destroy cultural purity and destabilize national unity (Zakhir & O'Brien, 2019). Such ideologies complicate efforts at sustainable linguistic balance, as the practical ease of the vernacular often overrides the symbolic desire for the high variety, necessitating one to research empirically these conflicting pressures to understand how speakers truly negotiate this diglossic tension (Mazouze and al., 2026).

2.6. Final Synthesis and Theoretical Integration

Researching Moroccan diglossia requires a holistic integration of the 5 axes discussed in this framework to provide a comprehensive diagnostic of the linguistic landscape, especially given the complex sociolinguistic reality where multiple codes compete (Kachoub, 2021). The conceptualization of switching patterns, identity research, communication effectiveness, acquisition progress, and sociocultural attitudes collectively explains the persistence of the Standard in the Shadows phenomenon (Mazouze and al., 2026). The functional fluidity of classroom language, characterized by frequent code-switching, is not an isolated event but is deeply connected to how individuals negotiate their sense of belonging and social status. One observes that speakers utilize this linguistic flexibility to navigate between the prestige of formal education and the intimacy of daily life (Tahiri and al., 2015).

This research is mediated by a constitutional context that recognizes plurality while striving for standard sovereignty, officially affirming diverse cultural roots yet maintaining the primacy of Arabic (Mazouze and al., 2026).

The empirical data gathered from the 99 students surveyed provides a critical test for these theoretical constructs, highlighting how the 87.9% dominance of Darija in daily life creates a structural barrier to the mastery of the high variety (Mazouze and al., 2026). These findings confirm that the theoretical background is not merely descriptive but provides the essential diagnostic tools required to interpret why students who value Modern Standard Arabic for its religious and cultural status still struggle to use it for formal expression, primarily because it remains nobody's mother tongue and is rarely practiced spontaneously (Schmitt, 2016). By understanding the ideological and cognitive barriers to acquisition, stakeholders can better address the proficiency gaps that currently characterize the Moroccan educational system, often exacerbated by a lack of environmental support outside the classroom (Mazouze and al., 2026). Ultimately, this framework prepares the reader for the detailed analysis of the field study results, demonstrating that a sustainable linguistic balance requires a multifaceted approach that values both the symbolic role of the high variety and the practical utility of the vernacular within the North African diglossic continuum, thereby fostering a learning environment where local languages act as a pedagogical bridge rather than a hindrance (Muradov & Ozodova, 2025).

3. Methods

3.1. Review Design and Strategic Framework

The methodological architecture of this research is grounded in a rigorous systematic framework designed to research the intricacies of linguistic behavior and sociocultural positioning, recognizing that language constitutes a vital tool for navigating multiple identities and responding to societal pressures (Bley, 2025). To substantiate the analytical rigor and ensure that the evidence synthesis is entirely reproducible, this study strictly adheres to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses 2020 guidelines. This strategic choice is paramount for maintaining methodological transparency while synthesizing diverse literature regarding code-switching and the multifaceted processes of identity research, which scholars increasingly view as a dynamic practice reflecting both speaker agency and institutional constraints (Bley, 2025). While the review prioritizes the experiences of American students in Moroccan educational settings, it utilizes foundational empirical data from local contexts to provide a necessary sociolinguistic baseline, given that Morocco possesses a rich history leading to profound linguistic and cultural plurality (Garcia & Al Masaeed, 2025).

By employing this standardized protocol, the research functions as a comprehensive synthesis of qualitative and quantitative evidence, ensuring triangulation where the strengths of one approach compensate for the limitations of the other (Alshehri, 2025). One observes that this mixed methodology allows for a sophisticated understanding of how language varieties intersect within asymmetrically powered educational environments. This structured approach demarcates the selection logic and provides the clarity required to bridge existing scholarly gaps, particularly the lack of synthesized narratives regarding multidialectal learners preparing to study abroad (Garcia & Al Masaeed, 2025). The implementation of this framework directly dictates the subsequent search design and the logic of the literature selection process, ensuring that one can systematically evaluate how these translanguaging practices affect language acquisition and mutual understanding (Al Masaeed, 2020).

3.2. Information Sources and Search Strategy

Capturing the nuanced intersection of applied linguistics and international education necessitates a strategic multiple database approach to ensure the capture of varied scholarly perspectives. This comprehensive search ensures that the synthesis reflects the complex interaction between language acquisition and sociocultural attitudes, particularly since language choices are intricately linked to identity and intercultural competence (Dewey and al., 2013). The primary bibliographic search was executed through Scopus and Google Scholar to identify high quality academic contributions. To augment the initial results and ensure no significant studies were overlooked, one employed complementary citation chaining to review the reference lists of all retrieved papers for additional relevant documentation. The search strategy utilized a narrative word based format that integrated core terms including code-switching and Moroccan Arabic and Darija and American English. The search narrative specifically targeted study abroad experiences and the linguistic behaviors of American university students. Furthermore, the strategy incorporated critical thematic concepts such as intercultural communication and identity research and language acquisition along with the broader sociocultural attitudes that influence linguistic choices, recognizing that these elements are fundamental for successful social integration (Palmer, 2013). This exhaustive search design produced an initial document pool that establishes a robust foundation for researching the linguistic reality of students in the region.

3.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Regarding inclusion and exclusion criteria, the application of rigorous eligibility criteria is a vital procedure to preserve the analytical scope and ensure the scientific authority of a systematic review within applied linguistics. One establishes in this research a temporal boundary ranging from the year 2000 to the year 2026 to capture over 2 decades of linguistic evolution and significant shifts in educational policy. The review considers documents published in English and Arabic to acknowledge the bilingual nature

of the academic discourse in North Africa, where multiple codes constantly interact and compete (Tahiri and al., 2015). Accepted document types are limited to scientific articles and academic theses to ensure that the synthesis is built upon peer reviewed or formally examined evidence. The thematic inclusion criteria prioritize research situated within bilingual and intercultural contexts where code-switching represents a primary mechanism of communication, often serving to maintain social rapport and negotiate meaning (Al Masa'eed, 2013). Conversely, the exclusion criteria serve to obviate the influence of non-scientific texts and opinion pieces or editorials that lack empirical depth. Studies were also excluded if full text access was unavailable or if the language pairs under research were irrelevant to the specific interaction between Moroccan and American linguistic systems. These strategic filters lead directly into the operational phases of the PRISMA selection process, ensuring a comprehensive synthesis of qualitative and quantitative evidence (Alshehri, 2025).

3.4. Identification and Screening Stages

The identification and screening stages constitute the initial filtering phases of the systematic review and are essential for managing a high volume of potential data while ensuring that only the most methodologically sound studies proceed to the final analysis, thereby allowing one to research complex sociocultural phenomena with precision (Alshamsi & Alsheikh, 2020). During the Identification stage, the execution of the multiple database search strategy resulted in the compilation of an initial bibliography comprising 81 documents. Following this, the Screening stage involved the systematic identification and removal of duplicate records across the selected databases to ensure a clean dataset. Once duplicates were eliminated, one conducted a secondary screening focused on titles and abstracts to remove papers that clearly failed to meet the study objectives or the predefined eligibility criteria. This systematic reduction allows one to concentrate analytical efforts on a refined and highly relevant selection of scholarly work, ensuring that the remaining literature accurately reflects the specific linguistic behaviors of the target population (Garcia & Al Masa'eed, 2025). These preliminary filters provide the necessary bridge to the more intensive qualitative assessment required during the full text review.

3.5. Eligibility and Inclusion Stages

The eligibility and inclusion stages mark the transition from superficial screening to a significant methodological shift toward a deep qualitative assessment of document validity and sociolinguistic relevance. During this phase, the full texts of the remaining documents were retrieved and meticulously scrutinized against the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. This stage is critical for verifying that the methodology and findings of each study contribute substantively to the synthesis of identity research and linguistic practice, which are fundamental for understanding how speakers construct their social realities (Bley, 2025). Following this rigorous appraisal, the Included stage marks the final phase where the most robust studies are retained for both qualitative and quantitative synthesis, ensuring triangulation where the strengths of one approach compensate for the limitations of the other (Alshamsi & Alsheikh, 2020). It is important to clarify that the final number of included studies is finalized only after the completion of this screening process and the resolution of any eligibility uncertainties through expert consensus, a practice that significantly enhances the reliability of the interpretations (Awawdeh and al., 2025). These procedural steps ensure that the evidence base is credible and aligns perfectly with the research objectives. The progression of these stages and the specific criteria applied are summarized in the visual representation provided below.

3.6. PRISMA Flow Diagram and Selection Criteria

The PRISMA flow diagram and selection criteria illustrate how the selection process follows a linear progression through 4 distinct methodological phases based on the following text representation. One observes that adhering to these systematic guidelines guarantees methodological transparency and reproducibility across the entire synthesis (Awawdeh and al., 2025). The identification stage records identified through database searching of Scopus and Google Scholar resulted in 81 documents. Subsequently, the screening stage ensured that records were screened by title and abstract after duplicate removal. Papers were excluded if they did not meet specific study objectives. During the eligibility stage, full text documents were assessed for eligibility based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Finally, in the included stage, studies were retained for the final synthesis. The final number of included studies will be completed after final screening is finished. One notes that this systematic reduction allows one to concentrate analytical efforts on a refined and highly relevant selection of scholarly work (Alshamsi & Alsheikh, 2020).

A summary of selection criteria establishes that inclusion criteria require studies published from 2000 to 2026. Furthermore, documents must be written in English or Arabic, taking the form of scientific articles and academic theses that focus on bilingual and intercultural contexts. Conversely, exclusion criteria obviate non-scientific texts or opinion pieces and editorials. Documents where the full text is unavailable or studies involving irrelevant language pairs are also systematically removed. These strategic filters ensure that the synthesis is built upon peer reviewed or formally examined evidence, thereby preserving the analytical scope and scientific authority of the research (Alkhalwaleh, 2019).

3.7. Data Extraction and Management

Regarding data extraction and management, to ensure that findings are comparable across diverse studies and linguistic contexts, the review utilizes a standardized extraction grid. This organized approach to data management is fundamental for maintaining consistency and accuracy during the transformation of complex sociolinguistic data into a synthesized narrative. One posits that categorizing this information systematically is essential for triangulating data where the strengths of 1 methodological approach compensate for the limitations of another (Alshehri, 2025). The extraction grid was specifically designed to capture essential information from each included study to create a uniform database for final analysis. The specific categories of data collected include participant demographics and the precise linguistic context of the research along with the core findings regarding the practice of code-switching. Additionally, one observes that the grid extracts the theoretical framework and the methodological limitations of each study to ensure a comprehensive overview (Muthusamy and al., 2020). By categorizing information in this standardized manner, the review can identify recurring patterns and significant discrepancies that might remain hidden in a less structured synthesis. This systematic collection process provides a stable platform for the subsequent evaluation of data reliability and methodological quality, allowing one to research how potential biases in self-reported data might affect the overall interpretation of bilingual behaviors (Khoumssi, 2020).

3.8. Quality Assessment and Bias Considerations

The strategic implementation of quality assessment serves to mitigate risk and enhance the authoritative weight of the evidence synthesis, ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the complexities of language contact rather than methodological artifacts (Alkhudair, 2019). By critically evaluating the methodological rigor of each included study, the review ensures that the final conclusions are substantiated by high quality research. One posits that assessing validity and reliability is paramount for allowing the survey results to be generalized to other contexts (Alkhudair, 2019). This process involves the application of the Joanna Briggs Institute critical appraisal tools to determine the strength of the evidence. The assessment considers the reliability of measurement instruments such as the Cronbach alpha coefficient, which reached 0.82 in the foundational study by Mazouze and al. (2026), a level considered highly acceptable in sociolinguistic research (Mazouze and al., 2026).

Furthermore, the review process includes a dedicated effort to identify and address potential biases within the primary research such as the limitations of convenience sampling or the prevalence of urban centric data collection, which inherently restrict generalizability and external validity across diverse educational settings (Mazouze and al., 2026). Addressing these factors during the synthesis phase allows one to form a more nuanced interpretation of the results and prepares the data for the final analytical framework, ultimately leading one to research how potential limitations in self-reported data might affect the overall interpretation of bilingual behaviors (Reema, 2023).

3.9. Synthesis Methodology and Analytical Framework

The final phase of the methodology involves a high level evidence transformation where raw data is converted into a sophisticated narrative synthesis, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of complex sociolinguistic behaviors (Alshamsi & Alsheikh, 2020). The primary approach is a thematic synthesis that identifies recurring patterns regarding identity research and language acquisition across different educational settings, allowing researchers to code and categorize data directly to identify themes that emerge from the sources without relying exclusively on preconceived theories (Awawdeh and al., 2025). This is complemented by a comparative synthesis used to contrast various sociolinguistic attitudes and their impact on educational outcomes within the Moroccan diglossic landscape, demonstrating how speakers actively interpret and assign social meaning to linguistic variations (Falchetta, 2019). A critical analysis phase follows where the overall strength of the available evidence is weighed using the GRADE approach to determine the validity of the synthesis against the research objectives, ultimately guaranteeing methodological transparency and analytical rigor (Awawdeh and al., 2025). Throughout this process, the analysis maintains a high level of linguistic sophistication and ensures that code-switching is examined as a dynamic mechanism of identity construction, moving beyond viewing it as a mere linguistic deficit to recognizing it as a strategic identity affirming practice (Bley, 2025). These procedures provide a robust foundation for the subsequent presentation of findings and the formulation of evidence-based recommendations for language policy, aiming to foster genuine intercultural competence without eroding formal academic standards (Parsons, 2023). These final steps conclude the methods by providing a transparent and rigorous path from data identification to high level thematic synthesis, thereby allowing one to research language contact phenomena effectively across diverse cultural domains (Driouch, 2023).

4. Results of the Systematic Review on Moroccan Diglossia and Educational Outcomes

The strategic importance of a transparent selection process remains paramount when validating the empirical ground of a sociolinguistic research, ensuring that findings accurately reflect the complexities of language contact rather than methodological artifacts (Alkhudair, 2019). By adhering to a rigorous methodology for literature inclusion, one ensures that the resulting synthesis functions not merely as an anecdotal collection of observations but as a robust evidentiary map reflecting the profound

complexities of the Moroccan linguistic landscape, where multiple codes constantly interact and compete (Tahiri and al., 2015). This methodological transparency facilitates the verification of data sources and the replication of findings, which are the cornerstones of high impact academic research within the C2 scientific tradition, thereby significantly enhancing the reliability of the interpretations (Awawdeh and al., 2025). One utilized a systematic selection process to maintain scientific integrity and provide a clear pathway from initial inquiry to final data extraction, allowing one to research complex sociocultural phenomena with precision (Alshamsi & Alsheikh, 2020).

The selection process followed 4 distinct stages aligned with established systematic review protocols, guaranteeing methodological transparency and reproducibility across the entire synthesis (Awawdeh and al., 2025). The first stage, Identification, involved an exhaustive bibliographic search across specialized databases focusing on sociolinguistics and education. This initial phase yielded 81 documents, including peer reviewed journals and academic dissertations. The second stage, Screening, involved an assessment of titles and abstracts to ensure relevance to the specific variables of diglossia and educational equity, systematically removing records that clearly failed to meet predefined eligibility criteria (Garcia & Al Masaeed, 2025). Following this, the Eligibility stage required a comprehensive analysis of full text documents to confirm they met strict inclusion criteria regarding participant demographics and study design. The final Included stage established the specific corpus of literature utilized for this synthesis. Readers should refer to Figure 1 for the visual representation of this flow. The finalized numerical values across these stages represent the filtered selection of high quality evidence required for a sophisticated analysis, preserving the analytical scope and scientific authority of the research (Alkhawaldeh, 2019). This refined selection of literature provides the necessary data for the following descriptive mapping and the subsequent thematic research into the systemic educational impacts of diglossia, aiming to foster genuine intercultural competence without eroding formal academic standards (Parsons, 2023).

The demographic and geographic distribution of the included research plays a vital role in shaping one's current understanding of the Moroccan linguistic landscape. By mapping where and how these studies were conducted, one can better appreciate the nuances of language use between urban and private settings and across different educational trajectories, recognizing that language constitutes a vital tool for navigating multiple identities and responding to societal pressures (Bley, 2025). The synthesized research designs and publication periods found in the sources offer a comparative window into the evolution of Moroccan sociolinguistic thought over the last decade. A primary distinction exists between the research design of Mazouze and al. (2026) and that of Tahiri and al. (2015). The study conducted by Mazouze and al. (2026) utilized a quantitative sociolinguistic field study approach focused on secondary education within the public sector. This study was administered to 99 secondary students in urban contexts, comprising 56 female students and 43 male students (Mazouze and al., 2026). This sample allowed for a detailed descriptive analysis of language preferences and proficiency challenges within the state educational apparatus, highlighting how the everyday dominance of Darija creates a structural barrier to the mastery of the high variety (Mazouze and al., 2026).

In contrast, the study by Tahiri and al. (2015) represents a descriptive transversal research of primary students. This research focused on a smaller population of 27 students aged 8 and 9 years who were enrolled in the 3rd grade of a private primary school (Tahiri and al., 2015). The disparity in sample sizes and educational levels allows for a comparative analysis of how the diglossic schism manifests at different stages of cognitive development. The evaluation of language pairs in these studies centers predominantly on the dyad of Modern Standard Arabic and Moroccan Darija. However, the literature also acknowledges the significant roles of French and Amazigh where data supports their presence, especially since Morocco presents a highly diverse linguistic landscape where multiple codes compete (Kachoub, 2021). For instance, Tahiri and al. (2015) explored the sociolinguistic profile across 3 languages, identifying French as a language of immense academic prestige, which remains the most valued language in educational settings (Tahiri and al., 2015). Meanwhile, Mazouze and al. (2026) noted the constitutional officiality of Amazigh while focusing on the overwhelming dominance of Darija in the daily lives of students. These descriptive profiles set the stage for a deeper thematic research into how specific linguistic variables interact within the Moroccan classroom and influence broader patterns of educational equity, aiming to foster genuine intercultural competence without eroding formal academic standards (Parsons, 2023).

The five variables identified in this review represent the critical pillars for assessing the impact of diglossia on educational equity. These variables allow one to move beyond superficial observations and delve into the structural tensions defining the Moroccan educational experience, ultimately demonstrating that language choice is a deliberate act that scholars research to understand social positioning rather than a mere sign of linguistic deficiency (Khoumssi, 2020).

4.1. Code-switching patterns.

Code-switching is a frequent and strategic mechanism in Moroccan classrooms, serving as a communicative bridge between the formal curriculum and student understanding. Analysis shows that 62% of teachers and 56% of pupils engage in language mixing (Mazouze and al., 2026). This practice represents what Gumperz (1982) identified as situational switching, where the speaker alternates between codes to meet different contextual needs. In the Moroccan context, teachers use Darija to clarify complex concepts while attempting to maintain adherence to the official curriculum delivered in Modern Standard Arabic. While this

facilitates immediate clarity, it may simultaneously reduce the total time students spend practicing the formal variety, thereby reinforcing the diglossic gap and potentially hindering full language immersion (Nurillayevich & Ozodova, 2025). One observes that educators frequently utilize this strategic alternation to lower the affective filter of learners and create a more supportive educational environment (Alkhudair, 2019).

4.2. Identity research outcomes.

The research of identity is a central feature of the Moroccan linguistic reality where the high variety and low variety carry distinct symbolic weights. Modern Standard Arabic functions as a powerful symbol of modernity, religious identity, and cultural status (Mazouze and al., 2026; Tahiri and al., 2015). It is viewed by students as the language of the Quran and refined literature, representing an acrolectal ideal. Conversely, Darija represents local social belonging and popular memory. While it is the language of family and spontaneity, it often occupies a lower perceived status in formal academic contexts. This creates a psychological tension for students who must navigate between a language of the heart and a language of the state. Indeed, speakers constantly maneuver through these linguistic choices to construct their social realities and project either formal authority or in group solidarity (Bley, 2025).

4.3. Intercultural communication effectiveness.

The effectiveness of communication in Morocco is intricately tied to the prestige of different linguistic codes and their perceived utility in a globalized world. French remains the most valued and widely used language in private educational settings, functioning as a gatekeeper to academic prestige and professional advancement (Tahiri and al., 2015). Simultaneously, Modern Standard Arabic serves as a tool for connecting Morocco to the wider Arab world and remains the official language for national state administration. This multi layered communication structure requires students to manage global, regional, and local identities, with those in private sectors often possessing greater access to the linguistic capital of French compared to their public-school counterparts. Consequently, one must research how these hierarchical linguistic distributions impact educational equity and intercultural mediation within diverse socio-economic groups (Kachoub, 2021).

4.4. Language acquisition progress.

This paradox describes the clash between the de jure sovereignty of Modern Standard Arabic in the Constitution and the de facto sovereignty of Darija in the cognitive reality of the student (Mazouze and al., 2026). Data indicates that while Darija facilitates immediate understanding for 43% of students, its dominance results in a 65% negative impact on Modern Standard Arabic writing and expression (Mazouze and al., 2026). Students find it difficult to transition to the formal variety because they lack exposure to it outside the classroom, as Modern Standard Arabic is nobody's mother tongue and is rarely used in informal domains (Schmitt, 2016). One observes that the language that helps students learn concepts can simultaneously hinder their mastery of the official written language required for academic success, thereby reinforcing the diglossic gap and stalling full language immersion (Nurillayevich & Ozodova, 2025).

4.5. Sociocultural attitudes.

These attitudes reveal a sharp divide between language use and language value. French and Modern Standard Arabic enjoy high prestige due to their associations with global progress and religious tradition respectively (Tahiri and al., 2015). However, Darija maintains a traditionally low status despite its overwhelming dominance in daily life, where it accounts for 87.9% of all interactions (Mazouze and al., 2026; Tahiri and al., 2015). This disconnect creates a systemic tension where the most useful language for daily survival is the least valued in the educational hierarchy. These thematic threads reveal that the Moroccan educational framework is caught in a state of dual diglossia where globalization and local tradition pull students in competing directions, compelling them to constantly negotiate between a language of the heart and a language of the state to construct their social realities (Bley, 2025).

The necessity of critical analysis is paramount in moving from simple data extraction to a sophisticated sociolinguistic synthesis. By comparing the convergences and divergences between available studies, one can identify patterns that transcend individual classroom settings. A major point of convergence is the conclusion that Darija remains the primary communicative bridge in Morocco despite decades of official Arabization policies. All sources agree that the informal variety is the mother tongue and the 1st point of contact for children long before they enter the formal school system, acting as the primary vehicle for daily communication and social solidarity (Mazouze and al., 2026). However, several methodological weaknesses must be noted. The literature relies heavily on small sample sizes, with Mazouze and al. (2026) studying 99 students and Tahiri and al. (2015) studying only 27 pupils. There is also a notable reliance on convenience sampling in urban or private school contexts. This creates a geographic bias toward the Casablanca and Mohammedia axis, where the researchers are based, at the expense of rural populations where linguistic habits might differ significantly, which inherently restricts generalizability and external validity across diverse educational settings (Mazouze and al., 2026).

Tracing the chronological development of these debates reveals a long history of concern regarding linguistic purity, which scholars research extensively to understand contemporary language policies (Alkhudair, 2019). Earlier concerns about Arabic corruption were documented by Ibn Khaldun, who observed grammatical and semantic deviations in the Arabic tongue resulting from contact with non-Arabs (Mazouze and al., 2026), specifically noting that this linguistic habit corrupted due to mixing with other populations and created a deficient linguistic state (Mazouze and al., 2026). These historical concerns have evolved into modern debates regarding the Strategic Vision 2015 through 2030 and the inclusion of Darija in textbooks, igniting profound language anxiety among standard language advocates who fear the destruction of cultural unity (Zakhir & O'Brien, 2019). While the 1999 National Charter for Education and Training emphasized strict Arabization, modern policies are beginning to grapple with the reality of plurilingualism. One observes that the shared conclusion across the literature is that a sustainable linguistic balance requires a hybrid approach that leverages the practical utility of the colloquial while reinforcing the sovereignty of the formal variety in science and formal education, thereby facilitating comprehension without sacrificing academic rigor (Nurillayevich & Ozodova, 2025). The following matrix provides a final evidentiary summary of the core studies.

The first study by Mazouze and al. (2026) establishes a research context centered on secondary education in urban Moroccan public-school settings. One notes that its methodological approach utilizes a quantitative field study relying on a questionnaire administered to 99 students, ensuring a strong analytical foundation with a reliability of 0.82 (Mazouze and al., 2026). The summary of the 5 variables indicates that code-switching is used by 62% of teachers, often acting as an essential pedagogical bridge to ensure student comprehension and lower the affective filter (Nurillayevich & Ozodova, 2025). Modern Standard Arabic represents a symbol of modernity, and the formal variety connects students to the Arab world (Mazouze and al., 2026). There is a 65% negative impact on writing, and Darija usage stands at 87.9%, clearly demonstrating its absolute hegemony in informal domains and daily life (Mazouze and al., 2026).

The second study by Tahiri and al. (2015) defines a research context focusing on primary education within a private school setting in Morocco. The methodological approach consists of a descriptive transversal study involving 27 students aged 8 and 9 years (Tahiri and al., 2015). The summary of the 5 variables reveals that French is identified as the most valued language in academic settings, frequently functioning as a gatekeeper to professional advancement and socioeconomic prestige (Kachoub, 2021). Modern Standard Arabic possesses high religious and cultural status, maintaining its role as the unifying bond of the Islamic community (Turjoman, 2017). Darija is used primarily for family interactions, and negative attitudes toward Darija exist in school (Tahiri and al., 2015). Consequently, one concludes that a profound status imbalance is observed based on the context of usage, where the practical utility of the mother tongue clashes with institutional expectations (Tahiri and al., 2015).

This systematic review highlights the complex interplay between traditional diglossia and the needs of a modern educational system, compelling one to research how these dual pressures affect learners in multilingual spaces (Parsons, 2023). The evidence suggests that while Modern Standard Arabic holds symbolic sovereignty, the everyday hegemony of Darija creates proficiency gaps that must be addressed through modern pedagogical methods and increased exposure to the formal language. The findings underscore the need for policy reforms that reconcile the practical communicative needs of students with the cultural and official status of the standard variety, potentially through hybrid curricula that utilize local languages as a cognitive scaffold (Nurillayevich & Ozodova, 2025). Future research must expand beyond urban convenience samples to include a more representative cross section of the Moroccan population, ensuring that external validity and generalizability accurately reflect the diverse sociolinguistic realities of both rural and urban educational landscapes (Mazouze and al., 2026).

5. Analytical Discussion on Linguistic Diglossia and Code-switching in Moroccan Educational Environments

5.1. Interpretation of Core Findings regarding Linguistic Realities

Morocco stands as a preeminent and sophisticated model of cultural pluralism within the Mediterranean basin, a status that forms the foundational architecture of its national identity. This identity is not a monolithic construct but rather a complex tapestry woven from diverse civilizational tributaries, including Amazigh, Arab, Saharan Hassani, Andalusian, African, and Mediterranean influences that all constitute the main ingredients of the country's linguistic and cultural plurality (Garcia & Al Masaeed, 2025). The strategic imperative of comprehending the linguistic landscape within this pluralistic framework is institutionalized by the Moroccan Constitution. Article 5 of the 2011 Constitution explicitly designates Arabic as the official language of the state while simultaneously elevating Amazigh to the status of a 2nd official language. This constitutional framework seeks to maintain a delicate equilibrium between the preservation of Modern Standard Arabic as the primary reference for education and state administration and the recognition of a dynamic linguistic pluralism where Moroccan Darija functions as a vital conduit for daily communication and the preservation of popular memory (Ennaji, 2009). One observes that navigating this multiplicity is essential since language functions as a primary mechanism for defining social hierarchy within a diglossic society (Mazouze and al., 2026).

The empirical evidence reveals a profound bifurcation between the languages utilized across various societal spheres, often leaving learners confused before 2 linguistic systems (Mazouze and al., 2026). Statistical findings from recent scholarly research indicate that Moroccan Darija maintains an absolute hegemony in the daily lived experiences of the population, with a usage rate of 87.9% in informal settings (Mazouze and al., 2026). In stark contrast, the data records a 0% usage rate for Modern Standard Arabic in

these same informal, spontaneous interactions (Mazouze and al., 2026). This total absence of the standard variety from the vernacular life of the citizenry highlights a rigid sociolinguistic division where the official language is perceived as a distant entity, emerging only when institutional or formal requirements necessitate its deployment, largely because Modern Standard Arabic is nobody's mother tongue and is rarely used for spontaneous daily interactions (Schmitt, 2016). Consequently, one must research how individuals manage this rigid sociolinguistic division to negotiate their identities across both formal and informal domains (Bley, 2025).

This pervasive disparity creates what may be termed a paradox of sovereignty for Modern Standard Arabic, especially in a diglossic society where the high variety struggles to maintain its exclusive formal status (Mazouze and al., 2026). While it occupies a high status as the official medium of instruction and the prestigious language of the state and religion, it exists as a standard in the shadows when compared to the ubiquitous dominance of the colloquial variety, which inherently functions as the mother tongue and primary vehicle for daily communication (Schmitt, 2016). The standard language is universally respected and standardized, yet as Martinet (1990b) (as cited in Mazouze and al., 2026) posits, it remains a tongue imposed in specific circumstances by those holding institutional power rather than a naturally acquired form utilized in the rhythms of daily existence. One observes that this functional split relegates the official language to a state of formal confinement, rendering its actual sovereignty questionable once one steps outside the school environment, where it completely disappears from spontaneous interactions with a 0% usage rate (Mazouze and al., 2026). Such a linguistic reality inevitably permeates the academic space, as the daily dominance of Darija finds its way into formal pedagogy through the complex linguistic researches occurring between teachers and students. Consequently, one must research how educators actively utilize colloquial interference and code-switching as an essential communicative bridge to ensure learner comprehension despite official monolingual expectations (Mazouze and al., 2026).

5.2. Functional Dynamics of Code-switching as a Multidimensional Resource

Within the Moroccan educational context, code-switching emerges as a critical and strategic bridge that facilitates the navigation between rigid formal curriculum requirements and the fundamental necessity for communicative clarity, reducing cognitive load and lowering the affective filter of learners (Nurillayevich & Ozodova, 2025). Given that students frequently encounter significant challenges in mastering the high variety of the language, both educators and learners adopt a hybrid approach to ensure that complex academic concepts are successfully transmitted and internalized. This linguistic practice is far from a mere indication of deficiency; it is instead a functional adaptation to a diglossic environment where the high variety is reserved for the written text while the low variety is utilized to unlock the meaning of that text. One must research how this pedagogical translanguaging empowers individuals to negotiate meaning and enhance foreign language learning by utilizing their entire linguistic repertoire rather than perceiving it as a lack of competence (Al Masaeed, 2020; Khoumssi, 2020).

Quantitative analysis of classroom interactions reveals that a significant majority of participants rely on these hybrid linguistic forms. Research indicates that 62% of teachers and 56% of students report the frequent use of a mixture of standard and colloquial forms during the course of their lessons (Mazouze and al., 2026). This data reflects a deliberate pedagogical strategy intended to balance the authoritative demands of the official state curriculum with the practical, immediate needs of the learners, demonstrating that educators actively utilize the mother tongue as an essential scaffold to ensure content acquisition (Nurillayevich & Ozodova, 2025). Teachers often demonstrate a necessary leniency by permitting colloquial usage, with data suggesting that 68% of the time such flexibility is essential to respond effectively to student comprehension gaps. Consequently, scholars research how this deliberate accommodation prevents communication breakdowns and establishes a relaxing learning environment that encourages active student participation (Alkhudair, 2019).

Code-switching thus functions as a multidimensional resource that is simultaneously linguistic and social, allowing one to research how individuals navigate their multiple identities and cultural affiliations (Bley, 2025). As a linguistic instrument, it serves as an auxiliary tool that supports the comprehension of intellectually demanding subjects, particularly when the formal and sometimes archaic vocabulary of Modern Standard Arabic presents a barrier to learning. Socially, the introduction of Darija into the classroom environment fosters a sense of social comfort and cultural belonging, acting as an in-group marker that signals solidarity and emotional closeness (Khoumssi, 2020). It permits a more spontaneous and authentic articulation of thought that the strict syntactic requirements of the standard language might otherwise inhibit. This dual functionality ensures that the classroom remains a space of both formal academic growth and meaningful interpersonal connection, ultimately validating the learners' cultural heritage while guiding them toward formal proficiency (Alshamsi & Alsheikh, 2020).

The impact of these patterns on intercultural communication effectiveness is significant, as one observes that they facilitate mutual understanding and actively bridge linguistic gaps within diverse environments (Palmer, 2013). The capacity to alternate between 2 distinct linguistic systems represents a sophisticated sociolinguistic tool, a concept famously explored by Gumperz (1982) (as cited in Khoumssi, 2020), who defined it as the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages belonging to different grammatical systems (Khoumssi, 2020). One notes that this ability allows speakers to satisfy diverse contextual demands and manage the intricate complexities of a multilingual society, proving that this practice is a highly skilled performance rather than a

linguistic deficiency (Alkhudair, 2019). In Morocco, code-switching acts as a mechanism for research, enabling individuals to fulfill the formal expectations of the state while simultaneously asserting their local cultural identity, thereby maintaining in group solidarity alongside institutional compliance (Bley, 2025). However, these functional advantages eventually lead to a complex research of individual student identity and the shifting status of the languages involved. Consequently, one must research how learners navigate the psychological tension between the prestigious official language and the authentic mother tongue to establish their social positioning (Mazouze and al., 2026).

5.3. Research of Identity and Sociocultural Attitudes

Language in the Moroccan state serves as a powerful and emotive symbol of identity, often generating a strategic tension between various linguistic varieties. Modern Standard Arabic is fundamentally associated with the overarching themes of modernity, official statehood, and religious sanctity, specifically as the language of the Quran and the broader Arab Islamic heritage (Tahiri and al., 2015). Conversely, Moroccan Darija is viewed as the custodian of popular memory and a primary symbol of local belonging and direct social interaction. This creates a psychological landscape where students must continuously negotiate their position between a prestigious, formal identity and an intimate, local one, recognizing that language constitutes a vital tool for navigating multiple identities and responding to societal pressures (Bley, 2025). One must research how learners manage this dual reality since the official language remains socially distant while the colloquial variety serves as the primary vehicle for daily communication (Mazouze and al., 2026).

The empirical findings regarding student preferences illustrate this inherent tension with clarity. While 14 respondents in a recent study expressed a preference for the standard variety due to its immense cultural and religious value, other students favored Darija or a hybrid mix based on its practical utility and ease of expression (Mazouze and al., 2026). The standard language is honored for its eloquence and structural precision, yet it is frequently perceived as an external tool rather than a personal one, primarily because it remains nobody's mother tongue and is rarely practiced spontaneously (Schmitt, 2016). Darija, despite its lack of formal institutional status, provides the familiar and efficient means required to navigate daily life, leading to a situation where the symbolic prestige of 1 variety competes directly with the practical necessity of another. One observes that speakers actively utilize this linguistic flexibility to bridge the gap between rigid formal curriculum requirements and the fundamental necessity for communicative clarity (Nurillayevich & Ozodova, 2025).

This research of identity is further complicated by the pervasive influence of French, particularly within private educational institutions. According to findings from Tahiri and al. (2015), French is often perceived as a language of high prestige and significant academic value, frequently utilized in elite contexts and private schooling. In these environments, French and Modern Standard Arabic are both categorized as strong languages associated with progress and high culture, while Darija is often characterized as the weak language, relegated strictly to family exchanges and informal oral communication (Tahiri and al., 2015). This hierarchy further entrenches a sociocultural divide, where different languages are assigned varying degrees of worth based on their perceived utility in both global and local markets. Consequently, one must research how this unequal distribution of linguistic capital impacts educational equity, as French functions as a gatekeeper to academic prestige and professional advancement (Kachoub, 2021). Furthermore, this linguistic setting demonstrates a profound status imbalance where the practical utility of the mother tongue clashes with institutional expectations (Tahiri and al., 2015).

This situation is a manifestation of a broader dual diglossia where the forces of globalization and the historical legacy of the colonial era continue to shape the status of national versus foreign languages (Fathi and al., 2024). One observes that this postcolonial reality frequently places imported languages in direct competition with indigenous codes, thereby complicating language planning and educational reforms (Ennaji, 2009). The history of the protectorate has positioned French as the language of the economic and intellectual elite, functioning as an indispensable gatekeeper to upward mobility and prestigious private sector employment (Chakrani, 2013). Conversely, the official state policy of Arabization seeks to reclaim the sovereignty of the standard variety, primarily aiming to reestablish a unified Arab Islamic identity despite the practical challenges of implementing it across all educational levels (Tahiri and al., 2015). Within this struggle, the colloquial variety remains the primary mother tongue for the vast majority of the population, yet it still lacks the institutional support or standardization granted to its competitors, often facing stigmatization as a corrupted or impure code despite its absolute hegemony in daily informal interactions (Garcia & Al Masaeed, 2025; Miller and al., 2019). These complex sociocultural attitudes do not merely influence identity but also have tangible and measurable effects on actual language acquisition and proficiency levels, compelling one to research how learners navigate these conflicting ideological pressures to achieve balanced communicative competence (Palmer, 2013).

5.4. Evaluation of Supportive Roles versus Proficiency Risks

The pedagogical debate regarding the integration of code-switching in Moroccan schools involves exceptionally high stakes, as educators are forced to balance the immediate need for comprehension with the long-term objective of formal language mastery. There is a persistent and justified concern that while the allowance of colloquial language may assist students in grasping difficult concepts, it may simultaneously prevent them from achieving the high level of fluency in the official language required for

professional and academic advancement, as learning the target language through the first language often deters learners from becoming self-sufficient in the formal variety (Cruz-Cárdenas and al., 2022). This creates a precarious situation where the supportive role of the mother tongue may directly conflict with the strategic objectives of the national educational system, compelling one to research how to manage these dual pressures effectively (Parsons, 2023).

A detailed analysis of the data reveals a significant divergence in student perceptions regarding the impact of Darija on their academic development. While 43% of students find that the use of the colloquial variety assists their understanding of the lessons, a much larger majority of 65% report that its use negatively impacts their ability to write and express themselves fluently in Modern Standard Arabic (Mazouze and al., 2026). This suggests that while Darija provides an effective oral bridge, it may eventually become a cognitive crutch that hinders the development of formal literacy. One observes that this reliance on code-switching often stems from linguistic interference that germinates from the mother tongue (Saou & Hoadjli, 2022). The severe lack of exposure to the standard variety outside the school environment, reported by 57% of students, further exacerbates this proficiency deficit, since Modern Standard Arabic is nobody's mother tongue and is rarely used for spontaneous daily interactions (Schmitt, 2016).

Excessive reliance on code-switching also carries the risk of entrenching proficiency gaps that are increasingly difficult to bridge as the student matures. Without a linguistically supportive environment in the home or via the media, students only encounter the standard language within the restricted confines of the classroom, which already challenges one to research how to create an authentic linguistic setting (Alkhudair, 2019). When teachers themselves switch to the colloquial for the sake of clarity, the total volume of high variety input is drastically reduced. This lack of immersion makes it challenging for learners to acquire the syntactic and morphological structures essential for advanced academic writing, leading to a detrimental cycle of low proficiency and continued dependence on the colloquial form, as overreliance may hinder full immersion and slow language development (Nurillayevich & Ozodova, 2025). Consequently, one posits that while code-switching reduces cognitive load initially, it must be managed carefully to avoid undermining long term educational goals (Alkhudair, 2019).

This contemporary challenge resonates with the historical observations made by Ibn Khaldun in the *Muqaddima* regarding the corruption of linguistic habits. One observes that this phenomenon mirrors historical concerns about linguistic purity, where scholars researched how contact with foreign populations altered innate linguistic faculties ('Abd al Rahman bin Muhammad al Hadrami, 1978 as cited in Mazouze and al., 2026). He argued that the mixing of Arabs with non-Arabs led to a significant deviation from the pure Arabic tongue, as the younger generations were exposed to expressions that confused the established linguistic rules, ultimately creating a deficient habit ('Abd al Rahman bin Muhammad al Hadrami, 1978 as cited in Mazouze and al., 2026). In the modern Moroccan context, the constant mixing of standard and colloquial forms creates a similar confusion, where students struggle to maintain the grammatical and syntactic standards of the official variety, frequently experiencing an inability to use the language easily due to prior reliance on colloquial expressions before 2 distinct linguistic systems (Mazouze and al., 2026). This historical perspective emphasizes that hearing is the origin of linguistic habits, and without consistent exposure to a pure standard, the habit becomes corrupted, particularly since 57% of students report a severe lack of exposure to the formal language outside the classroom environment (Mazouze and al., 2026). These proficiency gaps necessitate a robust theoretical and pedagogical framework to address the needs of modern Moroccan learners, prompting one to research and implement modern teaching methods that foster balanced proficiency without eroding the central status of the formal variety (Mazouze and al., 2026).

5.5. Theoretical and Practical Framework Implications

It is strategically necessary to align educational theory with empirical sociolinguistic data to create effective and sustainable language policies in Morocco, ensuring that decisions reflect the bilingual speakers' actual practices rather than idealized monolingual norms (Alkhudair, 2019). The current situation is best understood through the diglossia models proposed by Ferguson (1959) and Fishman (1967). Ferguson (1959) described the coexistence of high and low varieties with clearly defined functional roles, while Fishman (1967) observed how such a division can lead to significant proficiency challenges if the transition between these varieties is not managed with care. The findings in the Moroccan context support a reality where these 2 varieties are in constant contact, suggesting that a rigid pedagogical separation of the 2 is no longer a viable or effective model, as the strict intercontextual compartmentalization of standard and colloquial forms fails to capture the fluid translanguaging instinctive to native speakers (Afkir, 2019).

The current empirical findings do not support a complete abandonment of the standard variety but instead point toward a shift toward hybrid modules that utilize Darija as a strategic and transitional bridge. Key strategic documents, such as the Strategic Vision 2015 2030 and Framework Law 51.17, should be amended to incorporate evidence based strategies that recognize the practical utility of the colloquial variety (Mazouze and al., 2026). By utilizing Darija strategically in the early grades to explain complex ideas, educators can enhance student comprehension without eroding the ultimate status of Modern Standard Arabic as the language of science, literature, and officialdom, thereby allowing learners to reduce cognitive load and access prior knowledge effectively (Alshehri, 2025). One posits that this requires a balanced approach where the standard is simultaneously reinforced

through increased exposure and modernized teaching methods, recognizing that avoiding the mother tongue entirely often deprives students of an essential pedagogical resource (Al Masaeed, 2016).

Teacher training requirements are paramount in managing this complex diglossic reality, prompting one to research and implement professional learning frameworks tailored to multilingual educational settings (Zhang & Lütge, 2024). There is an urgent need for professional development programs and workshops that train educators on how to judiciously use the colloquial as a bridge while maintaining high standards for student expression, since educators often switch codes to manage classroom behavior and provide emotional support without formal guidance (Alshehri, 2025). Implementing such strategies would directly address the 65% negative impact on expression identified in recent scholarly work (Mazouze and al., 2026). For instance, teachers could be trained to provide initial explanations in Darija and then immediately require students to summarize those points using the standard variety, thereby reinforcing the linguistic boundary while ensuring that the core concepts have been understood, ultimately guaranteeing that the mother tongue functions as a temporary scaffold rather than a permanent cognitive crutch (De La Cruz, 2025).

The proposed pedagogical reforms should also include a modernization of the curriculum to make the standard variety more accessible and relevant to the daily reality of the learners, ensuring that the educational system trains students effectively in the official languages of the state (Kachoub, 2021). This could involve the simplification of complex grammatical rules through a gradual and accessible presentation and the linking of the language to contemporary topics of interest to students, such as technology, global economy, and modern culture, incorporating language games and multimedia resources to enhance engagement (Mazouze and al., 2026). By creating a more supportive linguistic environment both inside and outside the school, particularly by promoting the use of Modern Standard Arabic in cultural activities and media to increase out of school exposure, policymakers can foster a more balanced proficiency in both the standard and colloquial varieties (Mazouze and al., 2026). One posits that this approach allows educators to leverage the colloquial variety as a transitional bridge without eroding the central status of the formal language in education (Mazouze and al., 2026).

These implications, however, are shaped by certain methodological constraints that one must address in future research, such as the reliance on non-random convenience sampling and the confinement to urban contexts, which restrict the generalizability of the findings (Mazouze and al., 2026). Consequently, one must research these phenomena using broader scopes and mixed methods approaches, including longitudinal studies and direct classroom observations, to enhance external validity across diverse educational settings (Mazouze and al., 2026).

5.6. Critical Assessment of Literature and Research Limitations

A critical evaluation of research constraints is vital for maintaining the integrity of sociolinguistic conclusions and for informing future national policy decisions. While the current body of literature provides valuable insights into the Moroccan linguistic situation, many studies are limited by methodological factors that restrict the generalizability of their results, ultimately challenging one to research how to create an authentic linguistic setting (Alkhudair, 2019). It is essential to recognize these limitations to avoid overextending the results of small-scale research to the entirety of the diverse Moroccan educational system, where multiple codes constantly interact and compete (Tahiri and al., 2015).

One major critique involves the limited sample sizes utilized in the primary literature. For instance, key studies often rely on relatively small groups, such as the sample of 99 secondary students in the work of Mazouze and al. (2026) and only 27 primary students in the study by Tahiri and al. (2015). These small numbers make it difficult to assert that the results are truly representative of the entire Moroccan population, which encompasses various regional dialects and vastly different socioeconomic backgrounds. Furthermore, the frequent reliance on non-random convenience sampling further limits the external validity of this research, demonstrating that one must research these phenomena using broader scopes and mixed methods approaches to enhance external validity across diverse educational settings (Mazouze and al., 2026).

Geographic bias represents another significant limitation in the current research. Much of the existing literature focuses almost exclusively on urban contexts, particularly in major cities such as Casablanca or Mohammedia, or on specific private school environments. This focus often neglects the linguistic realities of rural populations and those in the southern regions of Morocco, where the influence of Amazigh or Saharan Hassani may create significantly different diglossic dynamics, as language constitutes a vital tool for navigating multiple identities and responding to societal pressures (Bley, 2025). The experiences of students in public schools may also differ substantially from those in the private sector, where French often holds a far more dominant and prestigious position, functioning as an indispensable gatekeeper to upward mobility and prestigious private sector employment (Chakrani, 2013).

The heavy dependence on self-reported data from questionnaires also presents a challenge to the accuracy of the current findings. Participants may provide answers that reflect social desirability or their own idealized perceptions of language status rather than their actual, daily linguistic behavior. Future research must incorporate direct classroom observations and longitudinal data to track actual proficiency changes over a longer period of time and to observe the nuances of code-switching in real time, as longitudinal

data are essential to understand the dynamic and fluid nature of identity and language use which cross sectional studies fail to capture (de Villers, 2005). This would provide a more objective basis for understanding how language mixing affects the acquisition of formal writing and speaking skills, ensuring that decisions reflect the bilingual speakers' actual practices rather than idealized monolingual norms (Alkhudair, 2019).

Additionally, there is a noted and limited focus on the linguistic contact between Moroccan Arabic and American English compared to the extensive literature available on the contact between Arabic and French, which predominantly explores how postcolonial historical ties have shaped bilingual practices (Zakhir & O'Brien, 2019). As English becomes increasingly important in the global market and among the Moroccan youth, understanding this specific linguistic contact will be crucial for future education policy, primarily because the younger generations view this code as a neutral language devoid of colonial overtones and essential for international mobility (Kachoub, 2021). A broader and more diverse approach to sampling, encompassing different regions, school types, and language pairs, is necessary to provide a truly comprehensive understanding of the sociolinguistic landscape of Morocco, as current data often reflect an urban geographic bias that neglects the distinct realities of rural populations (Mazouze and al., 2026). Consequently, one must research these phenomena across diverse demographic settings to ensure that the findings are robust and accurately represent the entire nation (Falchetta, 2019). Future research should prioritize stratified random sampling and longitudinal data to enhance the external validity of these vital sociolinguistic conclusions, since scholars posit that longitudinal tracking is essential to capture the dynamic and fluid nature of identity research over time (de Villers, 2005).

6. Conclusion

The primary objective of this systematic literature review involves researching the complex dynamics of code-switching between Moroccan Arabic Darija and American English within the Moroccan study abroad context. For American university students, understanding this linguistic interplay is strategically significant as they navigate the sociolinguistic tension between classroom sovereignty and everyday hegemony. Research on the Moroccan linguistic reality reveals a profound paradox where formal Modern Standard Arabic remains a standard in the shadows while the vernacular exerts a persistent hegemony over daily social interactions. This review evaluates how these environmental factors shape the communicative strategies of learners who must research complex cultural landscapes to achieve functional proficiency. By analyzing the contact zone between these diverse varieties, the study provides a foundation for assessing the trajectory of bilingual development and social identity formation in the Maghreb.

Synthesis of the five core variables indicates that code-switching patterns are deeply influenced by the 87.9% dominance of Darija in daily Moroccan life (Mazouze and al., 2026). The reported 62% teacher usage rate of the vernacular in formal spaces directly alters the input environment for American students, forcing them to research meaning through the vernacular sooner than pedagogical frameworks traditionally anticipate. This reality creates a competence paradox where Darija, despite having negative sociocultural attitudes and low status, becomes the only viable path for social integration and intercultural communication effectiveness (Tahiri and al., 2015). Students must balance the symbolic value of formal language with the practical utility of the vernacular as a communicative bridge. However, the 65% reported negative impact of Darija on formal expression suggests that reliance on code-switching complicates language acquisition progress by eroding the development of academic registers. Consequently, identity negotiation becomes a process of navigating the conflict between academic proficiency and the necessity of vernacular fluency for social survival.

This review makes a substantial contribution to sociolinguistics by applying the diglossia model of Ferguson (1959) and the code-switching theories of Gumperz (1982) to the specific American English and Darija contact zone. Theoretically, it frames the Moroccan environment as a space where traditional linguistic boundaries are blurred by pragmatic needs. Practically, it proposes an authoritative shift in educational frameworks to address the 57% lack of exposure to formal language outside the classroom. The implementation of modern teaching methods and hybrid modules is recommended to leverage Darija as a transitional tool rather than a barrier to mastery. This approach aligns with the Strategic Vision 2015 2030 and promotes a sustainable linguistic balance that prioritizes both pragmatic utility and formal standards. Such contributions are essential for reshaping the current understanding of bilingual classrooms and the pedagogical interventions required for international students.

Limitations within the current literature include the reliance on small sample sizes and the concentration of data within urban centers as evidenced in the source material. These constraints restrict the generalizability of findings across more diverse geographic contexts beyond the major cities. Future research trajectories must prioritize longitudinal studies that track identity negotiation over extended periods to provide a more nuanced view of the study abroad experience. There is also a pressing necessity for empirical research into the pedagogical implications of code-switching within specific Arabic English bilingual settings across varied demographic groups. These limitations serve as essential catalysts for the next generation of sociolinguistic inquiry to expand beyond current methodological boundaries. Framing these gaps as opportunities will allow for a more robust understanding of how linguistic contact influences learner outcomes in diglossic environments.

This systematic review reinforces the thesis that successful intercultural competence depends upon balancing linguistic equity with the preservation of formal standards. Ensuring that students can effectively navigate both the formal variety and the everyday

hegemony of the vernacular is vital for long term academic success and sustainable intercultural engagement. The necessity of adopting modern pedagogical strategies remains paramount to bridge the gap between the standard in the shadows and the pragmatic reality of the host society. Ultimately, the integration of these findings into study abroad programming will facilitate a more comprehensive approach to language acquisition and cultural immersion in Morocco.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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