

Heritage Language Maintenance and Family Social Structure: The Role of Family Members in Cross-generational Transmission of Chaouia across Nuclear and Extended Families in Oum El Bouaghi City

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Abstract:

As research in heritage language maintenance intersects with the family from all outlooks, family structure should be an essential aspect to investigate. A context which can serve such an investigation is the Algerian one alongside its societal and linguistic background of Berbers. Accordingly, this study explores the dynamics of family language policy of Algerian Chaoui parents to inspect any potential role of nuclear and extended family structures on children's Chaouia (Tachawit) maintenance. We utilized a quantitative approach to collect data of 245 survey respondents analyzed statistically. Findings indicate that it's not primarily the family structure which affects Chaouia maintenance; rather, it's the agents within the extended family like paternal and maternal grandparents, paternal uncles, aunts and cousins who can positively support children's use of Chaouia irrespective of the family structure. Results support existing literature on the extended family members' agentive role in heritage language maintenance; nonetheless, our study elucidates that the same role is attainable in a nuclear family provided that the extended family members are agentive. These results encourage in-depth qualitative research on the role of extended family members in heritage language maintenance in all family structures.

Keywords:

Chaouia, heritage language, family language policy, family structure.

Introduction:

The linguistic situation in Algeria was altered by the successive colonization it confronted. Today, The Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, Spaniards, Ottomans and the French tongues' are present in words or sounds in Algerians' talks. Naturally, between mother tongues and languages of the colonizers, multilingualism was conceived; however, Algerians' tongues were lost in the middle. Furthermore, due to the socioeconomic and political ideologies of the country to retrieve its original identity and adopt with the post colonialist situation

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(1962), speakers of Tamazight, the original language of Berbers/Algerians, were obliged to abandon, arabize and frenchify their speaking throughout the years (Rouabah, 2022¹; Sahraoui, 2021²). Still, some regions managed to maintain their language in informal contexts (Mouhadjer, 2012)³. These latter are grouped into Kabyle, Chaouia, Touareg, Mزاب, Chenoua, Tashelhit, Tagargrent, Temacine, Tidikelt, Tarifit, and Taznatit (Rouabah 2022). On the grounds of this, Tamazight has been entitled as a heritage language amid multilingual Algeria. It wasn't until its nationalization in 2002, officialization in 2016 and standardization that it passed the gates of informality, and gained the value its people called for over years. The Different varieties of Tamazight have been standardized to be taught in schools whose regions still speak Tamazight in informal contexts. This was one face of the official recognition of Tamazight and Berber identity in a formal context which cannot be undermined in the maintenance of a heritage language; nevertheless, a heritage language owes its maintenance primarily to the family; family members are indispensable in the designated process. The focus of researchers has been centralized around the role family plays in the continuation of a heritage language (Romanowski, 2022⁴; Zhu et al⁵, 2020; Ong and Ting 2023⁶; Smith-Christmas, 2014⁷). Researchers have also shed light on the emotional aspect (Wang et al., 2023)⁸, and the role family relationships play in shaping the attitudes towards maintaining or shifting from the heritage language (Wang, 2023)⁹. Within all the aforementioned research about the role of different members of the family, the role of family structure on the maintenance of a heritage language on children is noticeably overlooked. Moreover, research in this field focus on heritage language in an immigrant context; in the Algerian context, Tamazight is struggling within its own territory. Smith-Christmas (2014) concluded that the extended family structure isn't necessarily successful if the family members themselves model language shift. Hence, the question that needs to be asked is why some children in extended families lose their heritage language whereas those in nuclear families maintain theirs and vice versa. A research that investigates the potential role of nuclear and extended family structures and their effect on heritage language maintenance is key to answer this question. Conducting this research would broaden the current knowledge about family structure's role in heritage language through measuring the extent to which it encourages or hinders its maintenance, and identify whether other factors crisscross the measured factor in any way.

1. Sociocultural Context: Geographical Distribution, Use, and Language Shift

1.1. Sociolinguistic Profile of Oum El Bouaghi Speech Community

The sociolinguistic fabric of Oum El Bouaghi city, as it is often the case with other adjacent Tachawit speaking regions, tends to be unequivocally complex and diversified, both culturally and linguistically. The sociocultural composition of the city is relatively diverse, comprised of speakers and communities of speakers, which belong to two major distinct ethnic groups, namely: Berbers and Arabs. In stark contrast with the foregoing ethnic groups, families of Kabyle descent tend to be represented with extremely low proportions in the city. Albeit socioculturally heterogeneous, ethnic divide in Oum El Bouaghi city is maintained by sharp and, also, fine-tuned linguistic demarcations across different urban and rural blocks, as illustrated in figure 1.

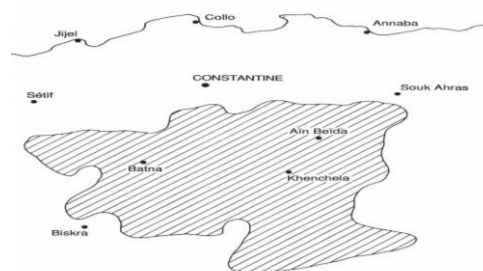


Figure (1): Geographical Distribution of Tachawit in the Aurès Territory

It is readily apparent that Tachawit, also labeled ‘*Chaouia*’, admits of varying degrees of regional distribution across Oum El Bouaghi city. The use of Tachawit seems to be highly prevalent in major localities like Ain Kercha and Ain Fakroun, two mutually intelligible and stereotypical Chaoui varieties in the northeastern parts (Segnia territory). In these rural blocks, it must be noted, Tachawit gains a strong currency as the dominant community variety, and tends to be extensively used in various formal and informal domains, such as home, economic transactions, entertainment, and daily social encounters. However, the use of Tachawit tends to gradually shade off, both socially and geographically, to non-Berber varieties as one travels eastward in Oum El Bouaghi Ville and Ain El Beida, two of the most populated areas whereby speakers prefer to use Dariġa in almost all possible social domains. Overall, Tachawit tends to be regionally preserved in isolated localities and used in in-group conversations by smaller insular groups like elderly speakers, who strongly identify as Berber speakers and ascribe Tachawit to positive social meanings, e.g., ethnic cohesion, cousinhood, and sense of togetherness.

1.2. Generational Language Shift, Language Policy, and Family Language

Families that form the locus of this study reside in different urban and rural villages in Oum El Bouaghi, which was once a stronghold of Tachawit, but which has witnessed patterns of generational language shift towards Dariġa and dialect obsolescence in the last three decades. By way of example, the number of Tachawit users has drastically decreased in western parts (Ain Mlila), central urbanized areas (Oum El Bouaghi ville) and most eastern areas of the city, such as Ain El Beida and Fkirina. Due to the increasing negative connotations and linguistic ideologies ascribed to Tachawit and, by and large, Berber varieties in Oum El Bouaghi regions, parents of Berber descent tend to discourage their children from using Tachawit in public spheres and schools, encouraging them to communicate in Dariġa, a dominant community language variety that is acquired, used, and shared by all speakers in the city (Melgani, 2017)¹⁰. Furthermore, intergenerational communication in Tachawit has gradually decreased in informal contexts (home), and Dariġa progressively replaced Tachawit as the peer group language code among children and adolescents in the neighborhood and school yards. The use of Tachawit became an ‘*adult privilege*’, so to speak, as parents and grandparents prefer to use it only with their spouses at home, peers and other adult speakers in the neighborhood. The gravity of the situation was robustly corroborated by patterns of dialect obsolescence language shift towards Dariġa, which were illustrated by Chaira (2020)¹¹ and Melgani (2020)¹², who reported that a sizeable number of lexical features and expressions has been sidelined and substituted by Arabic and French linguistic alternatives, a strong indication of ongoing lexical erosion and, by extension, patterns of gradual language death in Oum El Bouaghi City. It is worth noting that the progressive eclipse of Tachawit among younger generations and in parent-child discussions was also attributed to attitudinal and affective motives. While there is a deep-seated belief in Oum El Bouaghi local ideologies that associates Dariġa with stances of modernity, urban life style, and being a sedentary

urbanite, Tachawit is connoted low status, negatively ascribed to stances like ‘toughness’ and ‘backwardness’. The sociocultural embeddedness of Tachawit and negative connotations ascribed to it are highly prevailing in Oum El Bouaghi community such that many youngsters would die of embarrassment if someone told them that they look like, think like, or talk like speakers of Chaoui roots.

The sociocultural context of Tachawit in Oum El Bouaghi and, by and large, many Berber speaking cities has gradually changed in the last two decades. Tamazight was established as a national language in 2002, and then as the second official language in 2016, two crucial landmark periods in the history of language policy and planning in Algeria. The official recognition of Tamazight was co-opted by the establishment of the HCA, and followed by a series of political decisions that boosted the linguistic and cultural pride of Berber speakers in many Berber speaking blocks, such as Oum El Bouaghi, Batna, Tizi Ouzou, ..etc. The use of Tamazight in TV radio stations, social media platforms and theater played a major role in the artistic representation of Berber culture and language in Algeria. Tamazight, by the same token, was also established as an optional language of instruction in primary schools, secondary schools and higher education (Benrabah, 2007)¹³. Notwithstanding these major political decisions, and even though the new advances have broadened the domains of language use (Fishman, 1967¹⁴; 1972¹⁵) of Tamazight into several sociopolitical and social domains, the status quo of Tachawit at the family level and other privatized domains remains unchanged in Oum El Bouaghi and other localities in the Aurés province (Melgani, 2021)¹⁶.

2. Algerian Family Structure

According to Boutafnouchat (1984)¹⁷, The Algerian family was extended in structure consisting of small families of 3 to 4 generations with 20 to 60 people residing under one roof. They were found in Berber areas and other regions of the country .These families eventually divided to several families creating their own extended families. Residence after marriage can be said to be patrilocal, sons lived in or near their father's residence, or that of kinsmen with the grandparents participating in their grandchildren rearing (Achoui, 2006)¹⁸. Within and after independence, ‘the process of introducing new technologies into the macro and micro or domestic economy has contributed to speeding up and expediting the process of developing facilities and behaviors within society, as well as within the Algerian family.’ (Boutafnouchat 1984). The latter moved towards the nuclear family structure to adapt with the social and economic changes in urban cities .One of the changes that were generated by the nuclear family is the family’s separation from its kinship (Hrayriyah & Tebal , 2018)¹⁹ as residence couldn’t necessarily be patrilocal. Furthermore, responsibility was unique to each house and so was family language policy depending on the linguistic needs. This evidently affected heritage language maintenance.

3. The Role of Family Structure in Heritage Language Maintenance

Between heritage language maintenance and shift stands the family, the driving force in both (Romanwski 2021)²⁰. In point of fact, research on the effect of family structure on heritage language maintenance hasn’t been sufficiently investigated. At odds with the logical norm of the extended family being a better environment compared to a nuclear one to nurture heritage language, Smith-Christmas (2014) conducted an ethnography of an extended Gaelic English family, highlighting that despite the extended family encouraging state of the minority language, if family members occasionally use it with the youngsters, the vantage is lost. Consequently, intersect factors that alter the family structure’s effect are to be explored. According to research, the most vital agents in home language maintenance constitute the nuclear family. Many studies have confirmed the role of parents

in directing and maintaining a heritage language in multiple contexts (Li, 2006²¹; Lee & Gupta, 2020²²; Zamri & Azman, 2020²³; Park & Sarkar, 2008²⁴). And more focused research attracted each parent's role. On the one hand, mothers proved to be crucial in heritage language maintenance (Kwon, 2017²⁵; Ong, 2021²⁶). On the other hand, fathers' hidden role in the process was stressed (Romanowski, 2022; Al Sahafi, 2015²⁷). Furthermore, Kheirkah and Cekaite (2017)²⁸ highlighted siblings' role as language socialization agents in bilingual families, and how they can provide extra heritage language input. Notwithstanding, other research stressed extended family's effect on heritage language maintenance opening the door towards other pivotal agents beyond the nuclear family. Research has shown that intergenerational transmission is a key to language maintenance and development (Fishman, 1991²⁹; Gafaranga, 2010³⁰; Smith-Christmas, 2014). Grandparents play a vital role in home language maintenance (Zhang, 2009³¹; Ruby, 2012³²). Braun (2012)³³ focused on the impact of the extended family, particularly grandparents, who expand the context of heritage language use. Guardado and Becker (2014)³⁴ highlighted the role of familism in heritage language development strategies and the ways these strategies were supported by affective ties to extended family members. Moreover, the importance of maintaining and continuing to develop the home language for continued communication with extended family members was studied by Connaughton-Crean and Duibhir (2017)³⁵. On the grounds of this, the extended family structure seems to be as vital as a nuclear one in heritage language maintenance which raises the question of which is more effective in heritage language maintenance.

4. Method:

This study addresses the potential role of family structure, nuclear and extended, on children's Chaouia use and maintenance. It explores and investigates how parents' language practices, attitudes and management efforts within different family structures pertain to children's Chaouia maintenance.

- What is the status of Chaouia in parents' and children's language choices?
- How can living in an extended or a nuclear family affect children's Chaouia use?
- What are parents' beliefs, opinions and attitudes towards family structure's role in Chaouia maintenance?
- Who are the pivotal members in Chaouia maintenance within nuclear and extended families?
- What are parents' strategies to maintain their children's Chaouia ?

4.1. Research Instrument

To answer the above questions, we addressed a questionnaire to parents in Ain Fakroun and Hanchir Toumghani, two towns in the state of Oum El Bouaghi. The reason behind choosing such target population is because these towns are predominately Chaouia speaking rural communities, as opposed to Oum El Bouaghi urban center and other rural towns in which local speaking Arabic (or Dariġa) seems to be the dominant language variety.

The designated questionnaire encloses four sections. The first one seeks to solicit data about participants' social information as their age, ethnic identity, educational level, place of residence and family structure. These social variables, it is assumed, may crisscross with patterns of language practices, attitudes and management across the Berber families under study. The second section addresses parents' and children's language practices. The latter were asked to identify the language(s) used in the family in different contexts and with different members. The third section aims to highlight parents' beliefs and attitudes

towards Chaouia learning and the family structure's role in its maintenance. The fourth section targets parents' decisions on their family structure and Chaouia maintenance highlighting the different agents involved in children's linguistic planning and parents' strategies to maintain Chaouia .

4.2. Participants:

Using convenient sampling, this research targets parents. Questionnaires are passed on through children in primary schools to their parents at home, so the school is a vital medium to ensure that the participants are parents who have at least one child. Furthermore, choosing Ain Fakroun and Hanchir Toumghani as places of residence makes it easily accessible to families of Chaoui origins who , if don't speak Chaouia, are at least residing in an environment which does. For the family structure, all nuclear and extended families are considered including those with a single parent to provide a thorough analysis on children's Chaouia maintenance within different structures, and identify the actual members who direct it. An online version was designed and submitted on the social media platform Facebook prior to the paper version; however, it received no responses .The paper questionnaire's submission started on October 2023, and ended on November 2023 .A total of 300 questionnaires were printed, and 280 responses were collected. However, 245 were coded and 35 were excluded as they had no answers or didn't correspond to the answering criterion. The ethnic identity of parents answering the questionnaire is 76.7 % Chaoui and 8.2% Chaoui Arab, and that of their spouses is 75.1% Chaoui and 9% Chaoui Arab. In addition, the mean age of the participants is 41.42 (SD=7.27) ranging from 24 to 68. Among the participants, 57.1% were fathers and 37.6% were mothers. Moreover, the data indicates that there are four family structures as displayed in table 1, and since the research is interested in the structure and members of each family structure, one parent family structure is categorized under nuclear family to indicate a small number of members and no additional ones outside the traditional definition of a nuclear family ; however it is analyzed independently to detect any significant data. In the same respect, extended family structure has been also divided into two structures. As a result, the family structure of the children's families was 65.4 % nuclear and 30.2 % extended as shown in table 1.

Family Structure	N	%
One Parent + Children	19	7,8%
Both Parents + Children	141	57,6%
Both Parents + Children + Grandparent(s)	32	13,1%
Both Parents + Children + Grandparent(s) + Uncles' Family	42	17,1%

Table (1): Distribution of Family Structures in the Sample

For participants' housing, 46.5% live in independent houses with 11.8% of them living far from family; while 20.8% live with their families and 29.4% live connected to their families' houses.

5. Results:

5.1. Language Practices

This part analyses parents' and children's linguistic choices with different family members and others. These choices serve as a basic foundation to children's Chaouia scope of use and maintenance within different family structures.

5.1.1. Code Choice: Parents Vs Children

5.1.1.1. Parents

The data indicates that the mean of participants' Chaouia mastery is 3.098 (SD=1,092); with only 11.8% who identify their level in Chaouia as weak. It points out that the mode of parents language use mainly changes between 1 (Chaouia) and 2 (Dariġa). Table 2 below displays the agents with whom parents mostly use Chaouia across different family structures. Within all the latter, parents mostly use Chaouia with their own parents followed by siblings in structure 2 and 4 and by neighbors in structure 1 and 3. It is worth noting that within all structures, Chaouia use with the spouse decreases when the child is present whereas in the case of the rest of the family it remains the same or increases except in structure 3.

	Nuclear Family		Extended Family	
	One Parent+ Children	Both Parents+ Children	Both Parents+ Children+ Grandparents	Both Parents+ Children+Grandparents + Uncles' Family
Spouse	42.1%	36.2%	34.4%	31%
Spouse with Child Present	26.3%	26.2%	12.5%	19%
Most of the family with Child Present	42.1%	39.0%	28.1%	35.7%
Parents	52.6%	59.6%	59.4%	52.4%
Siblings	31.6%	49.6%	53.1%	42.9%
Neighbors	47.4%	45.4%	46.9%	38.1%

Table (2): Parents' Chaouia Use

Table 3 below displays parents' language use with their children. Within all structures, Chaouia use is distinctly lower compared to Dariġa; however, it should be noted that the degree of home language use seems to be increasing within all structures when Chaouia is mixed with other codes like Dariġa and Arabic.

	Nuclear Family		Extended Family	
	One Parent+ Children	Both Parents + Children	Both Parents+ Children+ Grandparents	Both Parents+ Children+ Grandparents+ Uncles' Family
Dariġa	26.3%	38.3%	50%	38.1%
Chaouia	10.5%	7.8%	3.1%	9.5%
Chaouia and	31.6%	16.3%	9.4%	21.4%

Other Codes				
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Table (3): Parent's Chaouia Use with their CHild**5.1.1.2. Children**

The data pinpoints that within all structures, Dariġa is present as the most frequent mode; however, children's Chaouia use differ. Within the first structure, the agents with whom children mostly communicate Chaouia are paternal uncles and aunts (52.6%) and cousins (47.4%). Within the second structure, it's with maternal grandparents (21.3%) and paternal grandparents (20.6%). Within the extended family structure, Chaouia use is lower than in nuclear structure. Within the third structure, children's Chaouia use is mainly with maternal grandparents (15.6%) and within the fourth structure, it's with paternal grandparents (31.0%) and maternal grandparents (23.8%). This sheds the light upon parents and siblings who are not linguistically main agents in terms of children's Chaouia use.

Table 4 below shows children's Chaouia use with parents and siblings. In structure 1 and 4, the percentage is higher compared to structure 2 and 3 when it comes to fathers and mothers. However, with siblings, Chaouia use is higher within structure 2 and 4.

	Nuclear Family				Extended Family			
	One Parent+ Children		Both Parents+ Children		Both Parents+Children+ Grandparents		Both Parents +Children+ Grandparents+ Uncles' Family	
	Chaouia	Chaouia and other codes	Chaouia	Chaouia and other codes	Chaouia	Chaouia and other codes	Chaouia	Chaouia and other codes
Father	21.1%	15.8%	9.2%	11.3%	9.4%	6.2%	11.9%	9.6%
Mother	15.8%	15.8%	8.5%	9.9%	3.1%	6.2%	11.9%	9.6%
Siblings	5.3%	15.8%	8.5%	9.2%	6.3%	6.2%	14.3%	9.6%

Table (4): Children's Chaouia Use**5.1.2. Parents and Children: Language and Context**

In table 5 below, a summary of parents and their spouses' language choices with their children in different situations is provided.

Situations	Mean	Std. Deviation	Linguistic Code
Meal time	3.26	2.08	Dariġa
Play time	3.30	2.04	Dariġa
Instructing the child to do chorus	3.25	1.91	Dariġa

When watching cartoons	3.46	1.92	Arabic
When telling stories	3.47	1.94	Arabic
When disciplining your child	3.31	2.07	Dariġa
Expressing love to your child	3.53	2.24	Dariġa
Explaining new information to your child	3.83	2.16	Arabic

Table (5): Parents' Language Choice with their Child in Different Situations

It's worth mentioning that within all structures, Chaouia use is slightly higher within structure 1 and 4 compared to structure 2 and 3.

5.1.3. Family Structure and Children's Chaouia Use:

To identify the relationship between children's Chaouia use frequency and family structure, linear regression analysis is conducted.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Regression	.06	1	.06	.04	.851
Residual	386.16	216			
total	386.22	217	1.79		

Table (6): Child's Chaouia Communication inside the House

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.91	1	.91	.55	.458
Residual	355.10	216			
total	356.00	217	1.64		

Table (7): Child's Chaouia Communication outside the House

Table 6 and 7 above show that both significant values are beyond significance level of 0.05; therefore, the differences between family structures in children's Chaouia use are not statistically significant. To further investigate this, table 8 below shows the mean of children's Chaouia frequency is 2.35 (SD=1.35) inside the house and 2.18 (SD=1.30) outside the house; the mean is relatively low. Nonetheless, the mean is average with 2.68 and 2.56 within the first and fourth structures respectively. Furthermore, children's Chaouia communication is the lowest in structure 3.

	Nuclear Family		Extended Family	
	One Parent+ Children	Both Parents+ Children	Both Parents+Children+ Grandparents	Both Parents+Children +Grandparents+ Uncles' Family

	Mean	St.Dev	Mean	St.Dev	Mean	St.Dev	Mean	St.Dev
Chaouia Use inside the House	2.68	1.38	2.31	1.34	2.06	0.99	2.56	1.55
Chaouia Use outside the House	2.32	1.49	2.12	1.25	1.87	1.14	2.46	1.43

Table (8): Children's Chaouia Communication Frequency

It's noteworthy that children's Chaouia communication inside the house increases along with the percentage of their parents' Chaouia communication with them. In table 9 below, valid percent is used as 47.8% of the data is missing; thus, between the assumption of not using Chaouia at all and question neglecting, no accurate interpretations can be made.

	Nuclear Family		Extended Family	
	One Parent+ Children	Both Parents +Children	Both Parents+ Children+ Grandparents	Both Parents +Children+Grandparents+ Uncles' Family
Parents' Chaouia use with Child	68.4%	47.5%	53.2%	54.8%

Table (9): Parents' Chaouia Communication

Although parents declare that the choice of living with their parents increases their children's Chaouia maintenance (mean=0.63), their response is negative to the fact that living separate from parents decreases it especially within structure 3 and 4 (Mean = 0.20 and 0.36 respectively)

5.1.4. The Most Important Agents in Chaouia Maintenance

The table 10 below shows parents' ordering of the important agents in Chaouia maintenance for their children .The agents are ordered from the most to the least important. The data shows that grandparents are the most important with a mean of 2.21 (SD=1.71) followed by fathers M=2.91. It noticeable that siblings don't seem to have much influence when it comes to Chaouia use, this can be due to the fact that they have different levels in Chaouia according to parents' reports. In addition, paternal and maternal uncles' and aunts seem to have an agentive role within all structures.

Family Members	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Grandparents	180	2,21	1,713
Father	174	2,91	2,065
Mother	166	3,61	2,206
Paternal Uncles and Aunts	170	4,11	1,617
Maternal Uncles and Aunts	164	4,95	1,445
Siblings	141	5,66	2,014
Paternal Cousins	163	5,66	1,641

Maternal Cousins	156	6,30	1,690
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Table (10): Family Members' Importance in Children's Chaouia Maintenance

5.2. Language Attitudes

This part sheds light on parents' attitudes and ideologies on Chaouia use, the relationship between family structure and Chaouia maintenance and the role of different agents within the designated structures.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
1. Living with an extended family increases the chances of using Chaouia for children	230	4,01	1,07	1,144
2. Living with grandparents is an essential aspect in teaching children Chaouia	231	4,11	,98	,970
3. The father, mother and siblings are the only agents who control the child's shift or maintenance of Chaouia	226	3,72	1,02	1,046
4. Living in a separate and far house decreases the chances of Chaouia use	225	3,77	1,06	1,134
5. Living in a nuclear family directly affects children's shift from Chaouia	226	3,70	1,11	1,223
6. Children speaking Chaouia strengthens their relationship with members of the extended family	223	3,61	1,22	1,500
7. Chaouia use should only be in family gatherings	223	3,40	1,13	1,278
8. Children's Chaouia use controls their parents' Chaouia use	227	3,82	1,07	1,149
9. The correct linguistic upbringing is communicating in Chaouia while learning other languages depending on the context	225	3,51	1,14	1,296
10. Teaching Tamazight in school can maintain children's Chaouia	228	3,37	1,23	1,511
11. Eliminating Chaouia use with your children means eliminating Tamazight identity	230	3,13	1,31	1,709

Table (11): Parents' Attitudes towards Chaouia

5.2.1. The Influence of Family Structure on Chaouia Use

According to items 1, 4 and 5, parents believe that living within an extended family increases the probability for Chaouia use in contrast to a nuclear one especially those which are across long distances.

5.2.2. Chaouia Use: Who Controls Whom?

According to item 3, the only agents who control Chaouia maintenance are those within a nuclear family, that is, parents and siblings. Still, parents recognize the essentiality of grandparents in the designated process as shown in item 2. Participants also believe that children themselves control their parents' Chaouia use (item 8). This can be tracked in the insignificant use of Chaouia in the home environment from parents' side with their children (table 3). Such child agency in family language policy has gained high interests in

the last two decades. In her book (2023)³⁶, Zhan attempts to illustrate the significant influence of children on parents' family language practices and policies through insights from child agency studies within family language policy like Smith-Christmas (2021)³⁷, Revis (2016)³⁸, Fogle and King (2013)³⁹, Gafaranga (2010), and Luyx (2005)⁴⁰.

5.2.3. Chaouia Context, Tamazight Identity and Family Relationships

Data shows that participants link Chaouia use with Tamazight identity as shown in item 11. They are in favor of teaching Tamazight in school along with other languages each to be used in its appropriate context. Furthermore, they believe that Chaouia has a positive effect on children's relationship with members of the extended family. This may be due to parents' willingness to provide a rich Chaouia environment at home and school in order to boost their children's attachment to Berber culture on the one hand, and to teach the new cultural knowledge on the other hand. Despite all of the above, they are in favor of the limitation of Chaouia use to the family context only.

5.3. Language Planning

This last part gives insight to parents' management efforts to maintain their children's Chaouia. The data shows that parents take their linguistic upbringing into consideration when deciding to live in a nuclear or extended family with a mean of 0.50 (SD=0.5). According to parents, children do not affect their Chaouia use (M= 0.26) especially within extended families (Structure 3 /M= 0.16 / Structure 4 /M=0.23) which contradicts with their belief in (item 8/ table 10) . Parents within extended families are more likely to follow their parents' strategy in teaching Chaouia especially those within structure 4.

5.3.1. Children's Language Planners

Nuclear Family				Extended Family			
One Parent+ Children		Both Parents+ Children		Both Parents+ Children+ Grandparents		Both Parents+ Children +Grandparents +Uncles' Family	
Mean	St. Deviation	Mean	St. Deviation	Mean	St. Deviation	Mean	St. Deviation
3.25	1.77	3.50	1.48	3.50	1.50	3.92	1.92

Table (12): Language Planners

According to the table above, within all structures, both parents are present as the main agents who are in control of their children's linguistic planning.

In the first and second structures, the father and mother are present as the sole planners whereas within the third and fourth structures, grandparents are present along with parents.

5.3.2. Parents' Planned Efforts to maintain their children's Acquisition and Use of Chaouia

The results indicate that parents tend to encourage Chaouia use with all family members and in different contexts. Spending weekends or attending religious and cultural occasions

at grandparents', uncles' or aunts' houses seem to be encouraged. This can be attributed to parents' desire to create a more culturally and linguistically rich environment for their children to easily acquire new Chaouia forms, and practice their skills in the heritage language variety. However, when it comes to moving to the grandparents' house and adopting an extended family structure, there was a negative response with a mean of 0.20 (SD=0.40) within all family structures except for the fourth structure with a mean of 0.50 (SD= 0.50). Furthermore, parents plan to engage their children in Tamazight cultural activities in an attempt to maintain their children's Chaouia ;however, this stands in question to their avoidance of Chaouia use after their child entered school (M=0.50).

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Taking children constantly to relatives	227	,52	,50	,251
Spending weekends at their grandparents' house	227	,61	,489	,238
Spending spring, summer or winter holidays at grandparents' house	222	,48	,50	,251
Moving to grandparents' house	212	,20	,40	,162
Encouraging Chaouia use with all family members	222	,52	,50	,251
Talking in Chaouia in family matters and interests	220	,53	,50	,250
Engaging them in Tamazight cultural activities	218	,55	,50	,249
Taking them to attend religious and cultural occasions at grandparents, uncles or aunts' houses	227	,78	,41	,170

Table (13): Parents' Plans to maintain their Children's Chaouia

6. Discussion:

The purpose of this research study has been to gain a better understanding of the relationship between family structure and children's Chaouia use/maintenance through exploring the latter's uses. Taken together, our findings indicate that although parents are communicating using Chaouia with many agents, on familial and societal levels, it cannot be said that their children preside that list; the same situation can be applied to children's Chaouia use. The explanation for this can be attributed to concerns pertaining to the benefits that Tamazight can bring to children's educational and future professional demands in addition to the economic and political language policies. Such external factors behind parents' beliefs, attitudes and management efforts within family language policy have been the interest of many studies (Shwartz, 2020⁴¹; Curdt-Christiansen, 2018⁴²; King, Fogle & Logan- Terry, 2008⁴³). This does not deny the fact that parents are implementing strategies to sustain their Children's Chaouia use. This can be attributed to cultural identity loyalty or their desire of linguistic continuity, still the official recognition of Tamazight at governmental, institutional, and school levels has undoubtedly been a key factor in the process. Within nuclear and extended family structures, the first and fourth family structures show higher degrees than the second and third structures when it comes to children Chaouia use and maintenance. Thereupon, it can be concluded that both nuclear and extended family structures can improve or hinder maintenance. The results provide supporting evidence of the importance of the agents of the extended family like paternal and maternal grandparents, paternal uncles, aunts and cousins in the child's Chaouia use regardless of the family structure. This opens the door towards the fact that family structure is only essential when the agents in it are active speakers of Chaouia especially in the case of children. While the study's aim was to compare both structures, the results direct us toward the agentive role different family members play within family structures. The present results are consistent with Smith-Christmas's (2014) ethnography that found

that the extended family structure isn't very effective when members within it themselves model language shift. The limitation of the study is the sample generated which had more nuclear families that fall under structure two. This might be due to the fact that extended families are fewer compared to the past, so quantitative tools choice wouldn't generate insightful results. In terms of future research, it would be useful to adopt a qualitative study with members of all family structures which would offer more insightful details on the question: when can family structure make the difference in Children's Chaouia maintenance? The present study has opened our understanding towards exploring new angles of the relationship between family structure and heritage language maintenance which would in the future stimulate further investigation of this important area.

Conclusion

Although this article's main aim was to inspect the potential effect of family structures on children's Chaouia maintenance, the results redirected the path of research. They showed that nuclear and extended family structures do not definitely affect Chaouia maintenance. It is the agents with whom children communicate Chaouia who make the difference. The latter are members of the extended family whether they fall under nuclear or extended family umbrella. These results direct us towards a new angle of research of who are the members that possess the agentive role in heritage language maintenance? More qualitative studies would be the key to further investigate this area. Can parents, who are the primary planners of children's linguistic upbringing, be relatively insignificant in heritage language maintenance, or do they plan to assign other agents to take the job for them? This research has certainly raised many questions concerning who really directs children's heritage language maintenance.

Footnotes:

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