

## **A Socio-Psychological Theoretical Analysis Of the French Parisian Accent Used among Tunisian Females and Males**

**Mahmoud Dhaouadi**

*Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology,  
University of Tunis I,  
Tunis, Tunisia*

**Abstract.** Field observations of the way Tunisian females and males pronounce the letter 'r' when they speak or read French show a significant difference between the two sexes. On the one hand Tunisian females tend to use the so-called Parisian accent when they pronounce the letter 'r' in their reading or speaking of the French language. On the other hand, an important majority of Tunisian males is inclined to roll their 'r' when they speak or read French. An attempt is made in this study : (1) to identify the psycho-social factors which are behind this peculiar linguistic phenomenon, and (2) to discuss those factors which have proven to be helpful in outlining a social science theoretical framework relevant both to the understanding as well as to the explanation of the phenomenon in question and to other similar phenomena affected by socio-psychological variables.

### **The Phenomenon Under Study**

The study to be dealt with in this paper is about a socio-linguistic behavior that prevails in modern Tunisian society at large . But, nonetheless, it is not usually noticed by the non-native population. On the one hand, we assume that this is because of linguistic factors (for instance, if this population knows neither Arabic nor French) and other reasons (not mixing with the Tunisian public, for example). On the other hand, the socio-linguistic phenomenon is widely recognized by the average Tunisian but she/he rarely thinks of an explanation. The phenomenon we would like to focus upon here is the greater tendency of Tunisian females, particularly of secondary school and higher levels of education, to pronounce the letter ® with the so-called 'Parisian accent' whether when they mix French with their Arabic (le Franco-Arabe) or when they speak or read French. In comparison to this, Tunisian males of similar educational background are rather inclined to roll their ® when speaking French or reading it or mixing it with Arabic. That is, they pronounce their French ® in a manner very similar to their

pronunciation of the Arabic letter (ر = ra). This does not mean, however, that there is a strict separate division of the /r/ accent pronunciation between today's Tunisian males and females. A study by the Tunisian linguist Hichem Skik shows that 90% of first year Tunisian female university students majoring in French used the Parisian accent while 7% roll their /r/ and 3% mix both accents. In this same study, Skik found the situation among his 37 male university students sample as follows: 19 of them use the Parisian accent, 15 roll their /r/ and 3 mix both accents.<sup>(1)</sup> Skik's statistical empirical data on the use of the Parisian accent by Tunisian female university students appears to be in conformity with the general tendency of the pronunciation of the French letter /r/ found among the larger Tunisian population. In sociological terms, the use of the Parisian accent by Tunisian females is the widespread existing norm. Of course, deviance occurs in any normative order. Our interest here focuses on the understanding and the explanation of the normative order and not on the deviance that may take place within it. Our principal aim is to offer an explanation to Skik's empirical data as well as to the public observation of the pronunciation difference in the letter /r/ among Tunisian females and males when they speak or read French.

### **The Aim and the Methodology of the Study**

This widely observable difference in the pronunciation of the French letter /r/ between Tunisian males and females needs social science understanding and explanation. In attempting to achieve that we use basically a socio-psychological approach in the analysis of the determining variables of this peculiar linguistic phenomenon. Our ultimate goal in this essay is, first, to establish a social science theoretical framework that could help us account for the emergence of the phenomenon in question as well as for its dynamic continuity in contemporary Tunisian society. Thus, the study's focus is theoretical and not empirical. Second, we would like to critically examine to what extent our theoretical perspective is compatible or not with the spirit of Skik's findings and explanation of the pronunciation difference of the French letter(r) between contemporary Tunisian females and males. Third, we hope that the socio-psychological insights derived from this study could be of genuine use to theory building in modern social sciences dealing with phenomena whose determining parameters are similar to those analyzed in the pages of this study.

### **Historico-Socio-Psychological Factors of the Parisian Accent**

Faced with the phenomenon of the Parisian accent, linguists, sociologists and psychologists are bound to raise questions as to the cause(s) that lie(s) behind the socio-linguistic phenomenon in question. Two kinds of causes are more likely to be proposed. They are historical and socio-psychological. The historical hypothesis suggests that the nature of the contact Tunisian males and females had with the French language was historically different for each one of them. On the one hand, Tunisian males had contact

---

(1) H. Skik, "La Prononciation de /R Français en Tunisie." La Manouba: Faculté des Lettres, 1992.

with the French people and their language many generations before the Tunisian females did. The rolling of the ® was then widely spread among the French speaking people they encountered like the fishermen. On the other hand, Tunisian females had begun to learn French especially after France's occupation of Tunisia (1881). The Parisian accent is assumed to have been increasingly widely used in that period. In addition to this, Tunisian girls had learned French almost exclusively in schools where apparently a special care was given to the teaching of French.<sup>(2)</sup>

So the end result of this historical hypothesis stipulates that this dual pronunciation of the ® among the Tunisian females and males has become a linguistic norm that been transmitted from one generation to the next to this day.<sup>(3)</sup> At its face value, this historical hypothesis is a plausible one with regard to the explanation of the initial origin of the ® pronunciation difference between contemporary Tunisian males and females. But what this historical hypothesis does not provide is an explanation of the reason behind the general maintenance of the status quo of that dual linguistic pronunciation of the French ® among Tunisian males and females. That is, what are the forces which have worked against a substantial change<sup>(4)</sup> in that dual pronunciation norm? Such a question is more than a legitimate one. Because both language studies and field observations prove that people's pronunciation of letters and words changes through time and varies from one region to the other. As such, a plain historical point of view of the matter at hand is hardly satisfactory for a credible commending scientific explanation. Help from the disciplines of psychology and sociology of language becomes, therefore, very pressing indeed.<sup>(5)</sup> From a sociological perspective, language constitutes a social norm by which people communicate with each other. It is one of the fundamental bases on which depend strongly the making of a human collectivity as well as the solidarity of its members. From a symbolic point of view the use of a given language may enhance the social status of its user as well as her/his psychological well-being. So, any credible understanding and explanation of people's preferential use of this or that language/accnt as well as their desire to maintain it or replace it by another language/accnt has to take seriously into consideration the socio-psychological rewards which could be associated with language/accnt's symbolic use by the social actor involved.

---

(2) Skik, "La Prononciation," 1-3.

(3) Ibid., 4.

(4) In general, Skik's study confirms the main observation which is the focus of this study. 90% of the girls students continues to stick to the Parisian accent while only a little bit over 50 of the male students use the Parisian accent. This sample is hardly representative for the Tunisian male population. This is because the sample of the 37 males is (a) university students and (b) majoring in French. So, it is more likely that (a)+(b) will predispose this male sample to opt for more use of the Parisian accent than the rest of the population when they speak or read French. In doing so, the Parisian accent male students :1) live up more to the best standard of pronunciation (the Parisian accent) of the French language and 2) at the same time they can always claim to be more modern than those who continue to roll their (r). We will see in the remaining pages of this study that Western modernity is a sort Catch 22 for Tunisian females. The over use of the Parisian accent by Tunisian females is strongly correlated with their desire to acquire a modern identity that makes them resemble, especially the Parisian French female.

(5) Ph. Smith, *Language, the Sexes and Society* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1985).

### **The Roots of the French Language in Tunisia**

Historically, it was under the French colonization that Tunisians were initially exposed to the French language and they have come to master it and widely retain it in their own society well after their independence from France in 1956. There are two processes which have motivated both Tunisian females and males to learn and speak French. On the one hand, the French language was perceived by the colonized Tunisians as the high status language of their dominant colonizer. The latter was seen as more advanced particularly in science and technology. In short, the French occupier symbolized modernity for them. Thus, the acquisition and the use of French had become a symbolic key tool that could be manipulated and exploited by Tunisian females and males in order to enhance their self-esteem and social status both under colonization and after independence. On the other hand, the French colonizing authorities had made great efforts to undermine the status of the Arabic language in the colonized Tunisian society. French had become the dominant language for Tunisian pupils and students of mainly primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, many Tunisian families sent their children to the so called Mission System: schools of pure French educational system where the Arabic language and culture were hardly taught. The grip of acculturation of Tunisian into the French language and culture had been strengthened by the spread of the use of French in the administration sector throughout colonized Tunisia. Thus, the semi-full use of French in Tunisia had become more than obvious by the middle of the twentieth century. The impact of that colonial cultural fact is still strongly felt in many sectors of today's Tunisian society.

### **Tunisian Females' Condition and the Parisian Accent**

In addition to the historical hypothesis referred to earlier with regard to the wider use of the Parisian accent by Tunisian females, there are two other strong reasons which have prepared and continue to predispose the Tunisian females to be psychologically and socially more in need than Tunisian males for their persistent adoption of the Parisian accent when they speak or read French. These two reasons explain as well the tendency among Tunisian females to mix their Tunisian dialect with more French words and expressions (*le Franco-Arabe*) than their male counterparts do. In other words, both the Parisian accent and the greater use of French in the Tunisian dialect by Tunisian females could be interpreted as symbols of the degraded social status and the strained psychological state of the contemporary Tunisian females. The socio-psychological situation of the latter makes them : (1) keener than the Tunisian males for the imitation of the former French colonizer and (2) more pressed than the Tunisian males to reach out for the symbols of modernity. Both behaviors could be seen as the syndrome of what is called "status frustration" in modern psychology.

### **The Pecking Order among the Three Social Actors**

In order to use as well the sociological perspective in our analysis, let's look now

at the phenomenon in question from the perspective of the social theory of imitation.

The act of imitation implies at least the presence and the interaction of two parties: the imitator and the imitated. In the situation at hand during the French colonization of Tunisia, there were three parties involved: the Tunisian females, the Tunisian males and the French colonizers. The interaction of these three social actors constituted what social psychologists call a triad. In this case, the three parties interact through the law of the so-called pecking order. That is, a hierarchy prevails in the relationship among the three social actors. On the one hand, during Tunisia's colonization by France (1881-1956), the French occupiers were the dominant party and the Tunisian males and females were the dominated ones. On the other hand, Tunisian society was a strongly male dominated one. Inequality between the sexes was an overwhelming feature. In this triad situation, Tunisian females were subjugated to two types of domination. In short, they were the most powerless of the three parties.

### **The Continuing Pecking Order**

With Tunisia's independence in 1956, things have greatly changed between the parties in question. The French physical occupation of Tunisia was terminated. Consequently, the majority of the French population left Tunisian territory soon after. But the shades of French domination did not fade away from the imagination of the independent Tunisian population. France is still strongly present among Tunisians through its cultural symbols especially its language, culture and thought. France, as a well developed society, is still intensely felt by developing Tunisia through tourism, the written media and the lively images which Tunisians regularly receive from various French/European television stations on their television screens. After independence, the dominant/dominated relations between the French and the Tunisians, have taken the form of developed/developing relations. That is, Tunisians continue to suffer from the inequality syndrome in their relation with the French, their former colonizer.

### **Persistent Inequality between the Sexes**

The Tunisian social scene has, in turn, witnessed considerable positive change in favor of the promotion of the social status of Tunisian females. Females have massively gone to school and to the job market. Many pro-female progressive laws have been adopted as well. The Tunisian woman stands today as the avantgarde in the entire Arab world as far as woman's rights are concerned. Yet, genuine equality between males and females has hardly been completely achieved in independent modern Tunisia. This is far from being peculiar to Tunisia. Inequality between the sexes still exists even in the most advanced Western societies of this century. In other words, the Tunisian female still lags behind her male counterpart on many fronts on the equality scale. In spite of her considerable gains that have increasingly enhanced her social status in the last three decades or so, she remains more disadvantaged than the Tunisian male with regard to

what we would like to call 'modernity's benefits'.<sup>(6)</sup> The net result of all this is the continuing presence of some hierarchical order among the former French colonizers, the Tunisian males and the Tunisian females. The pecking order still holds through. There has been some change favoring more equality in the relationship between independent Tunisians and the former French colonizers, on the one hand, and the relationship between the sexes since Tunisia's independence, on the other. In this hierarchical triad, the position of the Tunisian female tends to remain in the third place.

### Who Imitates Whom Most and in What ?

Modern social science theory of imitation suggests that the weaker party is more inclined to imitate the stronger one. This is in line with the law of imitation of Ibn Khaldun, the Arab historian and sociologist of the Middle Ages (1332-1406). It states that the vanquished party tends always to imitate his conqueror: "the vanquished always want to imitate the victor in his distinctive characteristics, his dress, his occupation, and all his other conditions and customs."<sup>(7)</sup> As seen before, the Tunisian female suffers from a double domination. Her traditional male dominated society continues to block her social mobility, restrict her access to the wider range of modernity's benefits and limit her free development and actualization. In face of this situation, the educated Tunisian female in particular is pushed hard to look for an outlet that liberates her somewhat from the burden of her double domination. Her inclination to imitate the French dominant party appears to be legitimate for at least three reasons: (1) the French were physically and now are symbolically the top dominant party in the triad setting referred to earlier. Thus, they were and are more eligible to be imitated by the most dominated party (the Tunisian female). (2) The Tunisian female's imitation of the French liberates her somehow psychologically and, to a certain extent socially, from the strict tradition of the Tunisian male dominated society, and (3) it is through the imitation of the French (Western) dominant party that the Tunisian female attempts to minimize the stress caused by her desire for modernity in a society which continues to exercise a widespread double standard between the sexes.<sup>(8)</sup> In other words, being more deprived of modernity's wider benefits than her Tunisian male counterpart, the Tunisian female tends to seek peaceful symbolic means to express her frustration. She opts for some sort of non-violent protest against the male dominated society. Her imitation of the French (the Western) party is hardly limited to her adoption of the Parisian accent when she speaks or reads French. As pointed out earlier, she is also known to be more keen than the Tunisian male in mixing her Arabic with French words or/and expressions (Franco-

---

(6) Modernity's benefits refers basically to three things: 1) more equality between the sexes in their society's social order; 2) more freedom of mobility for females in society; 3) more freedom of expression in public for females.

(7) Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: Introduction to History*, ed. by N.J. Dawood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 116.

(8) P. Hays. "Modernization, Stress and Psychopathology in Tunisian Women," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1987.

Arabe) in her daily speech.<sup>(9)</sup> Furthermore, Tunisian females appear to be more involved in birthday celebrations than Tunisian men. This is more visible in the organization of birthdays of the children which has become, since independence, a relatively widespread custom among a significant majority of Tunisian mothers. The adoption of the Parisian accent, the tendency of using more French words or/and expressions with Arabic and the widespread birthday celebrations among Tunisian females all converge to signal one thing: Tunisian females are more in need to imitate French (Western) modernizing symbols. To speak French with a Parisian accent means to be as modern as the Parisian themselves; the most modern of all modern French people. Behind the Parisian accent and the French language use in general, there is more than what the ear can hear. The persistent use of the Parisian accent by today's Tunisian females stands for the symbols of becoming modern like Parisians. In sociological terms, feeling thwarted by the traditional structure of a male dominated society, the modernizing Tunisian females reach out for certain symbols of modernity which hardly raise the anger of the males of the Tunisian society. The Parisian accent, the greater use of French words and expressions (Franco-Arabe) and birthday celebrations appear to satisfy both sides. On the one hand, the Tunisian females' self-esteem and their desire for becoming modern seem to get adequate fulfillment from the easy practice of those symbols. On the other hand, the Tunisian male population does not apparently mind to see that Tunisian females have access to modernity through the use of some of its symbols which are tolerated by the rules of a male dominated society.<sup>(10)</sup>

The Tunisian female's social status before and after independence makes her, as described above, more prone to be involved in a wider range of imitative behavior of the French (Western) party in more than just a limited single act. It covers rather a number of symbolic acts (the Parisian accent, more use of French words and expressions with Arabic (the Franco-Arabe and birthday celebrations) which ultimately make up an entire unit or a coherent system. All these different acts signal unequivocally the Tunisian female's pressing desire for Western modernity of which her male dominated society deprives her of many of its aspects. Her bargain here is to bigger access to the system of modernity she reaches out for and concentrates her imitation upon what we have called male tolerated cultural French (Western) symbols as a compensation for modernity's missing benefits. Her greater deprivation (compared with her Tunisian male counterpart) from modernity's gains predisposes her to be the most eligible candidate for a fuller swing, so to speak, of imitation of some symbols of modern French /Western people in general.

As such, the continuing overwhelming use of the Parisian accent by the majority of today's Tunisian females when speaking or reading French has to be understood in light of what has been already underlined. That is, the historical argument accounting for the

---

(9) M. Dhaouadi, "Borrowing as a Linguistic Behaviour of the Dominated Maghrebians" (in Arabic), *Arab Journal for Humanities*, 6, 22 (1986), 41-66.

(10) Smoking in public, as a sign of modernity and liberation for some Tunisian females, is still seen as unacceptable behavior by Tunisian society.

contemporary Tunisian female's Parisian accent is far from adequate. Without the analysis of the social situation and the psychological state of the contemporary Tunisian female and her use of cultural symbols in response to those conditions, no lucid understanding and explanation of the origin as well as the maintained use of the Parisian accent by the Tunisian females today could be expected to be genuinely secured. The question of the Parisian accent is hardly a matter of plain history, as Professor Skiks claims. Such a view excludes the impact of society's ever ongoing dynamics on language use through time and space. A given accent of a given language is always potentially subject to change by the people who use it. When it persists, as is the case with the Parisian accent among contemporary Tunisian females, we have to seek a structuro-functional perspective that offers a credible explanation. In other words, the continuing use of the Parisian accent by the majority of Tunisian females will continue to fulfil socio-psychological needs as long as the Tunisian female remains, in certain areas, the more handicapped party of the modern Tunisian society pecking order structure.

### **The Tunisian Male's More Limited Imitation of Western Cultural Symbols**

The application of the structuro-functional perspective on today's French language speaking or the reading accent of the Tunisian males can not be done as adequately as we have shown with Tunisian females. First, as stated before, Tunisian males continue to use the Parisian accent much less when they speak or read French. They are less concerned with birthday celebrations. In short, they imitate these cultural symbols of Western modernity less than their Tunisian female counterparts. Second, the triad structure described earlier puts the Tunisian male in an ambiguous position. On the one hand, he feels and acts as the stronger partner in his relation with his Tunisian female partner. Moreover, he still sees the French (Western) people as more developed and more modern than his own. Nonetheless, his overall social situation still accords him a middle range status between the Tunisian female's lower status and the French (Western) person's perceived higher status. Based on Ibn Khaldun's imitation paradigm, the Tunisian male would imitate the dominant West less than the Tunisian female. That is, his social position in the hierarchical structure pushes him less harder than the Tunisian female to the act of imitating the West.

On the other hand, Western modernity has a strong general appeal to the Tunisian male including its cultural symbols. However, his propensity for imitating those symbols is bound to be quantitatively less than what is practiced by the Tunisian female. As pointed out, this is because the Tunisian male has a wider spectrum (more chance) than his Tunisian female counterpart in experiencing Western modernity's benefits. That is, he is not pushed hard either by society's social structure or by its cultural value system to concentrate on the imitation and the use of selected Western cultural symbols as in the case of the Tunisian female. Thus, there are two factors which predispose the Tunisian male not to be eager to use the Parisian accent when he speaks and reads French : (1) as just explained, the cultural value system as well as the social structure of Tunisian



society allow the Tunisian male to experience a wider range of Western modernity's benefits. His social position in his own society does not narrow the scope of his maneuvering with Western modernity as does the social position of contemporary Tunisian females.

(2) The second factor which does not favor the Tunisian male's wide use of the Parisian accent when he speaks or reads French is what we may call the masculinity cultural value system. In today's Tunisia the boundaries between the sexes are still fairly drawn. Tunisia is still a male dominated society. So, the behavior of males which makes them resemble female's behavior is hardly well received by the general public. In many cases, it is perceived as a flagrant scandal to the honor and the dignity of being a real male (macho). As underlined, the Parisian accent has been used much more by Tunisian females than by Tunisian males. Consequently, the adoption of the Parisian accent by the Tunisian males is still considered a femininity trait by a larger majority of the Tunisian male population. This situation often leads to potential conflict within the Tunisian male's cultural value system. Should he stick to the rather strict dichotomy of masculinity/femininity as a traditional value system of this own society and, thus, avoid the use of the Parisian accent when he speaks or reads French? Or should he use the Parisian accent as a symbolic sign of modernity as it is felt and perceived by the majority of Tunisian females? So, to use or not to use the Parisian accent becomes somewhat a disturbing question for the average Tunisian male. This situation puts him in a dilemma whose solution can hardly be a straightforward one. His dilemma tends to be worked out through some of what may be called a social context strategy. That is, the use of the Parisian accent or the rolling of the ® or the mixing of the two by the Tunisian male would depend on the social context. He uses the Parisian accent when he is abroad or at home with native French speaking people (French, Swiss, Quebecois). The use of the Parisian accent here is quite appealing for the Tunisian male since it makes him look more modern in this context. In contrast, he is expected to avoid using the Parisian accent in Tunisian popular male milieu where the use of the Parisian accent by the Tunisian male is widely condemned. Finally, in a higher educated milieu like the university where both sexes are present, the Tunisian male finds himself in a rather ambiguous situation. On the one hand, he is in a modern space. The university, as an institution, symbolizes modernity per se. The use of the Parisian accent goes along very well with the modern atmosphere of academia. Consequently, the Tunisian male is strongly tempted at times, at least, to resort to the Parisian accent. On the other hand, the femininity trait linked with the Parisian accent can't be discarded altogether from the unconscious perception of the Tunisian male. The non-resolution of the cultural value of masculinity/femininity dichotomy can only motivate a considerable number of Tunisian males to continue to roll their ® when they speak or read French.

### **Scenario of Plausible Evolution in the Use of Western Cultural Symbols among Tunisians**

It remains relevant to conclude this study by attempting to forecast how the

Parisian accent , Franco-Arabe and birthday celebration rituals may evolve in Tunisian society in the coming twenty years or so. There are four influential variables which have to be looked at here. They are modernity, equality between the sexes, the femininity/masculinity dichotomy and change in the political leadership.

First, in Tunisia today, as in the rest of the Third World, modernity continues to mean Western modernity. The West is dominant on the international scene. Its worldwide domination and its modernity impose somewhat the appeal of Western civilization on the dominated and the less developed countries of the world. So, the imitation of the West including its cultural symbols, becomes highly expected among developing societies particularly in this period of globalization. The collapse of the socialist regimes can only help promote the cultural symbols and the products of Western modernity. So, modernity in those societies is still today largely a feature imported from the West and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future. Modernity is not and will hardly be in the coming two decades a Third World self-made phenomenon. This state of affairs could only generate attitudes and willingness among the Third World males and females alike to be more prone to imitate the West on many fronts. Cultural imitation appears to be the easiest thing to do. In our opinion, this is why the imitation of certain Western cultural symbols constitutes the preferred target of the more disadvantaged groups (like the Tunisian females in this study ) of the population of developing societies.

Western modernity will, therefore, continue to appeal to Tunisians, females and males, as long they have not become the makers of their own credible self-made model of modernity. Independent Tunisia's attempts to modernize have been strongly inspired and dependent on Western models of modernity. For instance , the use of the Arabic language continues to be excluded from modern sectors of Tunisian society. The teaching of scientific subjects both in secondary schools and higher educational institutions is still largely carried out in French to this day. French is overwhelmingly used in many sectors of Tunisian administrations (banks, postoffices, water and electricity companies...). Use of the French language in the environment is still dominant everywhere in the Tunisian landscape: in the capital (Tunis) as well as in small cities and tiny villages. Unlike the province of Quebec in Canada which has fully integrated the use of the French language in all sectors of society, Tunisia is far behind as far as the full use of Arabic in its vital modern sectors is concerned. And this is after 42 years of independence. In other words, today's Tunisian society is not strongly committed to modernize itself through the use of its own cultural symbols. It is still rather considerably dependent on the French (Western) cultural symbols. As such, Tunisia could hardly claim the achievement of indigenous modernity on the cultural symbols front at this stage of its development/modernization. This lack of indigenous modernity could only promote the continuing desire of Tunisians to imitate the West in the foreseeable future. With the unlikelihood of the immediate crystallization of indigenous modernity in today's Tunisia, Tunisian males and females alike will continue to be affected and fascinated by Western modernity. The imitation of the West will continue to

be appealing to both sexes. This situation will reinforce the continuing imitation by Tunisians of the Western linguistic-cultural symbols described in the preceding pages.

Second, any futuristic scenario regarding greater use of the Parisian accent by the Tunisian males or the less concentrated imitation of Western cultural symbols on the part of Tunisian females will greatly depend on the internal change in the relationship between the sexes within modern Tunisian society. In sociological terms, what is required here is a cultural-structural change. On the one hand, for the Tunisian males to be more attracted to the use of the Parisian accent, a substantial cultural change is needed.<sup>(11)</sup> The cultural value of the masculinity/femininity dichotomy has to be tackled. The lines drawn between the Tunisian sexes have to be considerably modified, if not eliminated altogether. In other words, modern Tunisian society has to cease to be a visibly male dominated society. Once something of this sort has been accomplished, the Tunisian males will be less likely to be ashamed of using the Parisian accent (due to its femininity connotations) at all times and all places when speaking or reading French. But due to the slow pace of change of a people's cultural value system, even when favorable conditions are put in place, the syndrome of the masculinity/femininity dichotomy will more likely survive for a long time to come especially among the Tunisian male population.

Third, as to the promotion of equality between the sexes in modern Tunisian society, this will very likely lead Tunisian females to adopt a less focused imitation of Western cultural symbols as described before. In other words, Tunisian females will spread thin, so to speak, their imitation of Western modernity. They will be less likely to manifest the sort of obsessive behavior they have shown with regard to their overuse of certain Western cultural symbols (the Parisian accent) in their attempt to reach out for Western modernity's benefits.

Fourth, the appeal of Western modernity's cultural symbols (language, customs...) could effectively be reduced in coming years and decades in Tunisian society if a significant political change that strongly advocates the promotion of Arabic and Islamic cultures takes place in it. The occurrence of this type of change can't be completely ruled out from the scene in the future of Tunisia. Islamic revivalism threatens many political regimes in the region. The coming to power of an Islamic leadership in Tunisia will certainly emphasize the importance of the Arabic - Islamic components of the Tunisian identity. Full Arabization will become a top priority under the new Tunisian political leadership. Tunisians will be resocialized to have a sense of pride in their Arabic language. This new situation is bound to reduce Tunisians' use of the French language and its appeal. As for the appeal of Western modernity to Tunisians under the Islamic regime, it is expected to be minimized. On the one hand, the would-be Tunisian Islamic authority will undertake a serious criticism of the model of Western modernity. This will be propagated to the different groups of society through the media and will be

---

(11) W.F. Ogburn, *On Culture and Social Change*, ed. by D. Duncan (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1964), 86-95.

implemented in various social policies. On the other hand, the new Tunisian Islamic leadership will frame its own model of development and modernity.

The impact of this development on reducing the appeal of Western modernity to Tunisians will depend strongly on the success of the indigenous model of modernity in face of the Western model of modernity. An efficient and competitive indigenous model of modernity will likely impose itself as a legitimate alternative to the Western one. With that, the blind and global imitation of Western modernity by Tunisians will be greatly reduced.

تحليل نظري اجتماعي-نفسى للنبرة الفرنسية الباريسية  
المستخدمة بين التونسيين من الذكور والإناث  
بمحمود الذواوي

أستاذ، قسم الاجتماع والأنثروبولوجيا، جامعة تونس 1، تونس

ملخص البحث . تشير الملاحظات الميدانية إلى أن هناك فرقا مهماً في نطق التونسيات والتونسيين لحرف R عندما يتحدثون أو يقرأون اللغة الفرنسية. فمن جهة، تميل معظم التونسيات إلى استعمال ما يسمى بالنبرة الباريسية عند نطقهن لحرف R في اللغة الفرنسية. ومن جهة ثانية، تميل أغلبية مهمة من الرجال التونسيين إلى نطق حروف ( R ) نطقاً يشبه نطقهم لحرف (ر) في اللغة العربية. تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على العوامل النفسية والاجتماعية التي أدت إلى تبلور هذه الظاهرة اللغوية اللافتة للنظر، ومنها تحديد معالم إطار فكري اجتماعي-نفسى مناسب لفهم الظاهرة قيد الدرس وتفسيرها.