The Egyptian oasis of Siwa is an Amazigh language enclave in an Arabic-speaking country, where geographical isolation, scarce immigration and scant locals' mobility have resulted in the preservation of a close-knit population and strengthened Siwans' sense of groupness and distinctiveness. Globalization, the introduction of modernity products and practices and the increased contact with the previously unknown national language represent nowadays a challenge to the traditional way-of-life and the vernacular language maintenance.

As part of a doctoral research project aimed at provide a portray of Siwa's sociolinguistic trends starting from the analysis of speakers' attitudes and ideologies, two attitudinal surveys were carried out in Siwa, combining written questionnaires and sociolinguistic semi-structured interviews with an extensive ethnographic observation. For the purpose of this paper I will focus on Siwan community's awareness of and attitudes towards languages and linguistic usages, its relationship with lifestyle change, and its effect on linguistic practices.

According to the results of my study, the diffusion of the Arabic language among diverse brackets of population, though the increasing recourse to code-switching and loanwords, does not hinder siwī's function as community's in-group code nor it affects Siwans' positive attitude towards it. On the other hand, higher education, social mobility, daily exposure to Arabic and less dense and multiplex network ties, correlate with a shift from straightforward appreciation of forefathers' language towards the emphasis on its symbolic value.

Since the process of social change is at a very early stage, it is difficult to make predictions. Nevertheless, although the majority of the population still makes an unquestioned use of the ancestral language, people who came in closer contact with modern habits and with Arabic start to articulate their attitudes and negotiate their practices in a new way.

Keywords: language attitudes, language and identity, Arabic language.