

French Use in Algeria between Arabisation Policy and English Globalisation

استعمال الفرنسية في الجزائر
بين سياسة التعريب وعالمية الإنجليزية

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Received. 14/04/2022

Accepted 08/11/2022

Abstract

This study is conducted to know what sustains the use of French in Algeria, despite hard attempts to generalise the policy of Arabisation and new intentions to institutionalise English. The basic aim is to point out the actual status of French in contemporary Algeria, in terms of its factual and functional use both socially and administratively. For that, an overview of the penetration of French in the Algerian context is given, followed by a clear description of the actual sociolinguistic landscape of the country. A reading of the authentic image of the status of French, in comparison to Arabic and English, is made, to locate the debate on the increase of the spread of French and the causes behind that.

Key words: Algeria, Arabic, French, English, language policy, arabisation.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى كشف العوامل التي تدعم استعمال اللغة الفرنسية في الجزائر رغم المحاولات الكثيرة لتعميم سياسة التعريب و تبني تأسيس اللغة الإنجليزية. الغرض الأساسي هو وصف الوضع الحقيقي الراهن للغة الفرنسية في الجزائر مع الإشارة خصوصا لاستعمالاتها الرسمية الإدارية في الواقع. لمحة تاريخية حول توغل اللغة الفرنسية في الجزائر، متبوعة بوصف الوضع اللغوي في الجزائر عامة. في قراءة للصورة الراهنة لمكانة اللغة الفرنسية و مقارنة باللغتين العربية و الإنجليزية ، نحاول الإجابة على الجدل القائم حول انتشار استعمال اللغة الفرنسية و تحديد الأسباب التي أدت إلى ذلك.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الجزائر، العربية، الفرنسية، الإنجليزية، السياسة اللغوية، سياسة التعريب

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1. Introduction

The existence of more than a language in the same country is a universal phenomenon that has often existed in the world to draw a portrait of human linguistic diversity, and to express man's need to communicate with other nations, to discover other cultures, or to exchange trade. However, this usually leads to the use of a language more than the others, or to language conflicts in some contexts. Algeria, our concern in this research, is generally seen as a multilingual country. Even though it is declared in its constitution that Arabic and Tamazight¹ are the official national languages, and no official status is given constitutionally to French, this latter is still widely used. It is a formal working language in many administrations, the medium of instruction in universities of sciences and technologies, and a language of wider communication in some regions, notably in the North of the country.

This research paper attempts to approach the issue of the continuing use of French in the Algerian from a sociolinguistic and language planning perspectives in comparison with the status of Arabic the official national language of the country and English as a global language being required in many sectors. It attempts to describe the factual and functional status of French in Algeria between the large implementation of the policy of arabisation and the government's undertaken process of institutionalising English. In this context, the place of the French language is a debatable subject, putting forward some questions to answer: what factors have elevated the functional status of French and make its use maintained until now? Is it authentically a highly required working language? Are current socio-political conditions enough to displace French and maybe replace it with English or Arabic? This research draws on theoretical readings of official and historical documents as well as on sociolinguistic authenticity in order to answer the preceding questions. To start with, a historical background of the existence of French in the Algerian language context is provided.

1. Historical Dimensions of French in Algeria

The history of a speech community is a key element in understanding the fundamental aspects that characterize its structure and identity. Hence, it is worth to know the historical dimensions that have constructed today's linguistic and cultural picture, namely the continuing use of the French language in spite of the policy of arabisation and the attempt of institutionalising English. In what follows, some of the most relevant events are selected to

describe, how the coloniser's language has been maintained as a medium of instruction and as a language of administration for six decades after independence, even without having officially any constitutional status.

During the colonial era, North African countries colonized by the French army were referred to as 'Afrique du nord française' (the French North Africa). Algeria, in comparison to Arab countries subject to European rule, spent the longest period under colonialism, from 1830 to 1962, and hence absorbed the heaviest colonial impact, as described by H. Chapan Metz (1994). The coloniser followed the policy of Frenchification that aimed at assimilating Algeria culturally and linguistically and making it an extension of Metropolitan France on the Southern side of the Mediterranean. 'The French historian Peyrouton was to write that by the turn of the twentieth century France saw Algeria as "sa fille d'élection, le reflet de son propre génie" ('her chosen daughter, reflecting her own genius).' (F. Aitsiselmi and D. Marley, 2008: 189).

The coloniser applied the policy of assimilating the Algerian natives to the French character and building a French Algeria, by spreading and elaborating its language through education and by means of social contacts too. 'Épousez le pays' (espouse the country) was its major motto, highly backed by 'Jules Ferry² who was a fervent believer in that approach...[and] imposed a harsh programme of acculturation which positioned French as the dominant language on its colonies, ousting local languages, Arabic and Berber,' (M. Rebai Maamri, 2009: 78). Thus, one of the heaviest impacts of the French coloniser on Algeria was 'the dislocation of language', (ibid; 77).

French has been used in North Africa as a de-facto language and learnt because of its compound relationship for its 'long and fraught shared history, particularly in the case of Algeria,' (F. Aitsiselmi & D. Marley, 2008: 186). Thus, the French language was so spread and used even for daily contacts in many contexts. Rabah Sebaa (in F. Aitsiselmi and D. Marley, 2008: 189), an Algerian linguist, claims that 'the French language occupies in Algeria an unquestionably unique situation within the world' (la langue française occupe en Algérie une situation sans conteste unique au monde).

Hence, supremacy was given to the French language and culture by the coloniser via the process of 'mission civilisatrice' employing 'a methodical policy of deracination and deculturation,' aiming at 'the eradication of indigenous idioms and traditions,' (M.

Benrabah, 2014: 44). In fact, the real objective was realised after years of colonialism and French became the official language of Algeria, mainly when ‘Literary Arabic was decreed a foreign language - by the Decree of 8 March 1938,’ (Grandguillaume, in Benrabah, 2007: 400). M. Benrabah views that the impact of the French occupation was ‘profound’ on both the native culture and language confirming in his monograph about Algeria that ‘the influence was so deep [and] Algerian society was never the same again.’ (2005: 395). The French succeeded to a certain extent their ‘assimilationist policy of total Frenchification on millions of recalcitrant Algerians,’ (Gallagher, M. Benrabah, 2014: 44).

Furthermore, French was widely learnt and used after 1962 despite the government’s attempts to arabise the whole population. Its use became a prerequisite in many fields, and that the number of French users increased gradually in the decades after independence. Development and modernisation have also played a significant part in its spread in all French post-colonies. Granguillaume views that Algeria in 1962 was totally frenchified (K. T. Ibrahimi, 1997) and that the French model was deeply engraved in the Algerian’s life styles, architecture, and language. After independence, the government continued using French as the dominant working language in many sectors, even though Arabic was proclaimed the official national language of the country, and the policy of arabisation was put into action. Since 1962, French is still the language used in many sectors, namely health, business, and higher education.

2. French in Algeria from a Language Planning Perspective

It is worth to note that the purpose of language planning and policy is generally to determine linguistic norms, to preserve national identity, and to highlight the nature of any language issue in order to solve it. Therefore, issues of linguistic and educational policies are usually directed up to the government’s objectives and orientations in any language planning, but sometimes marked by ideological considerations or influenced by geopolitical conflicts. However, solving language conflicts and regularizing their status in a speech community is not an easy task for language planners and decision makers and takes a long time to introduce a change. Sociolinguistic authenticity, technological or educational requirements, official legislations, modernisation, and global political or economic needs are some of the dimensions to consider in any country’s language policy.

Linguistic diversity is a common natural phenomenon. However, the contact between languages in the same sociolinguistic atmosphere causes a number of linguistic phenomena, such as multilingualism or bilingualism, codeswitching, vocabulary borrowing, and automatically the use of one variety more than others. Colonialism, immigration, wars and globalisation have contributed deeply to the emergence and spread of multilingualism, and so, many nations cannot be defined as purely monolingual, and so Algeria is. If the native language of a nation is the only functional one, it is quite natural that once another language is incorporated to the linguistic context, there is need for specifying the status of each one. Hence, the contact between indigenous languages and the coloniser's, for instance, will make the notion of status a necessity, as they may challenge each other in many ways. This is also the case of Algeria where French has been promoted for many conditions. This signifies that specifying officially the status of each language is supposed to be a key to stability and to solve language conflicts if there come to happen.

For that reason, language planning is required in a way or another, to grant each language its suitable status and solve linguistic issues, since languages are not equal in terms of scale, use, spread, dominance and prestige. However, this makes the process of LP challenging to a certain extent, mostly if languages are competing one another, in terms of indigenesness, function or spread. As Gadelli (Almahmoud, 2013) says, 'the larger the number of domains in which a language is recognised, the higher its status: government; assembly/parliament; courts; administration; education; business; media' (p.11). Hence, the status given officially to a language depends on its dominance and on the government's policy and intentions, though historical and ethnical backgrounds are other dimensions that support it with a kind of strength, but not in all cases. If the native language is a marker of national identity, the language of wider communication and the international language are also significant. In many post-colonial countries, the language of the coloniser has remained very widely functional, or even taken the official status in some situations.

Algeria, post-colonial country, acted out after independence to regain its national identity, and so implemented the policy of arabisation. It is not that simple eradicating a language that has been functional very widely for a considerable period. This has been the case in Algeria, 'where the language of the political process and state bureaucracy has remained that of the colonial power, either in place of or alongside the national language,' (Benrabah, 2014: 46). Language is not an object to be displaced in a short time: it is a way of

being. The power of the coloniser usually ensures the spread and prominence of his language in the colonised area, even after giving independence. Not only French, but English or Spanish are also still used as official or co-official languages in many post-colonial countries, while they have a significant status and function as a de facto working language in other cases. Thus, many people have kept using them or at least borrowing what cannot be translated. Moreover, most of the elites have been educated in colonial languages.

Banda (2009) argues that 'it is not surprising that in the majority of cases, colonial languages have retained their official status and are the main languages of education, state functions and business in general' (p.1), for the policy of many newly independent states. He added that in spite of re-officialising native languages, colonial languages have dominated educational and official government domains. Bröring & Mijts (2017) see that LP is still controlled by the coloniser, since 'the colonial period left its marks, or more precise, its scars...[and] the concordance principle and the (colonial or idealistic?) ideas connected with this principle are the greatest obstacles for changes in LPP' (pp. 32-34). History of post-colonial countries shows that colonial languages dominate the linguistic landscape, if not shape LPP decisions.

Algeria is described in some sociolinguistic studies as a complex language situation, in which official and national languages, Arabic and Tamazight, are components of the Algerian nationality and symbols of national identity, and French is the major remnant of the French coloniser, still used both in the spoken and the written contexts, without forgetting English which is being institutionalised in different fields, in these last few years. French represents a linguistic reality in Algeria. It is still present sociolinguistically in many regions, such as large cities, and used by intellectuals. It is widespread in the different strata of the population in many sectors, and used by the majority of executives, especially technical ones. French is the the first foreign language studied in all levels of pre-university education, and the medium of instruction in universities of medical studies, sciences and technology.

The French language has its global position because of different factors, among which stands its wide use as a lingua franca, though after English, in Europe and in many other countries worldwide, mainly in its post-colonies. France has been a strong military and economic power for a long period, governing different parts of Africa. It has kept control on

many countries, for its policy of deculturalisation. Living in France or immigrating for job or studies is still the dream of many Algerians. For all these reasons, French is theoretically a remnant of the coloniser, but a language of wider communication in Algeria, and even used in official documents and in the administrations of many sectors without any constitutional status. However, no one can deny that it is functioning as the first foreign language deeply required in some sectors, and highly spread in some regions. Coming back to reality, French is poorly used in many regions in Algeria, namely the South and rural areas; it is even rejected sociolinguistically.

3. Sociolinguistic Dimensions of French in Algeria

The Algerian linguistic situation is characterized by its complexity for the coexistence of several languages. Classical Arabic, also known as literary, modern standard Arabic³, Algerian Arabic (dialectal), Berber dialects, Tamazight, and French characterise the linguistic landscape of Algeria. Each of these languages is used in its specific context. Authentically, Arabic is the Algerian official national language par excellence, considered legitimately as the language of the State. It is the language of education and administration. Tamazight, after being recognised as a second official national language, has not reached such a wide spread and use as Arabic. Dialects are used for daily social contacts. French is the first foreign language used in the country.

However, reality proves the continuing use of French in many Algerian administrations, in education and even in communication. French is still present in signs, the press, the media, advertising and literature, either independently or with Arabic. Algerian Arabic and Tamazight are the languages used for social contacts, mostly spoken, but lately widely present in advertising and in the media. Standard Arabic, as the language of State, is mostly used at the written level, but to some extent at the oral scale. It is the language of oral communication in the media, formal political contexts, in education, and in seminars in letters and humanities.

However, French is still the main foreign language spoken in the country, for two major reasons. First, the elites, who have been ruling the government since independence, have graduated either from the French or the bilingual schools. Second, it is the first foreign language taught from primary to secondary education, the medium of instruction at universities of sciences and technologies, and a language of scientific and economic

communication. Besides, it is used in diplomacy as a language of intra/inter-relations. In fact, French is the language of prestige for some Algerians, while for others, it is a vital means of daily communication, and for another category, it is, then, a tool of knowledge, but for all of them, it is a foreign language.

Hence, French is sociolinguistically a language of wider communication and a de facto working language, the fact that marks Algerian contacts with bilingualism, codeswitching and borrowing. It is worth noting that some administrations and some scientific fields at university require the use of French as the most vehicular language, for both written and oral communication. An instance of this may be the case of Doctors, engineers, technicians or students of sciences who may well use French officially for formal discussions or when dealing with written tasks. A doctor addressing his/her staff uses French in most of the cases, similarly as a teacher of Chemistry or Physics explaining a formal lecture to his students, or a bank officer at work, etc.

Accordingly – and to be objective – there is natural influence of French on spoken Arabic, for its long existence in the life of Algerians. Since French is still used as the de-facto functional language in administrations in many sectors, there are terms that can be spread in workplaces according to their nature. Terms that are found in the language practices of the staff of a healthcare institution are different from those used in a police station, or an educational administration. This is quite natural. However, the use of foreign words in daily language practices characterises more Algerian Arabic than Standard Arabic. AA is more infected in urban areas than in rural regions. Some families in large cities use French as a first or a second language in their daily lives. However, at the macro scale, the Algerians have a certain extent of mastery of French, as they use it frequently, whether at home, in workplaces or in the society.

Some of the words and expressions widely used are selected here to illustrate how their pronunciation changes. ‘L’école’ (school)⁴, ‘grippé’ (have flu), ‘l’opération’ (surgery), ‘français/e’ (French) are examples used in Algerian Arabic but usually pronounced “à l’algérienne”, respectively as ‘licoune/licoule’, ‘megrippi’/‘megrippiya’, ‘l’parassioune’/l’barassioune), ‘l’fransice’. Another instance is the large exploitation of social networks, especially Facebook, which is so popular in Algeria. This has given birth to new

terms, like ‘nconekti’ (‘connecter’ = to connect), ‘partagih/-a/-hom)’(‘le/la/les partager’ = share it), ‘pibliyiteh / pibliyit’ha’ (‘je l’ai publié’ = I’ve published it) and ‘lizami’(‘les amis’ = friends).

In fact, wherever languages meet in the same social context, and coexist together, each for a specific need, there is room for effects of language contact, such as codeswitching or words’ borrowing. Besides, the longest they exist together, the more one affects the other. However, change occurs evidently through time. These last few years, many Algerians have changed their idea towards French. Some have become more attached to this language for prestige, immigration or job reasons. Some still consider it a language of modernisation. In contrast, there is a wide-spread ideology that French is the language of the enemy, mainly after the Hirak, and the last socio-political events between France and Algeria. Furthermore, the spread of English and the need to use it as a global language have started affecting the use of French.

4. French between Arabisation Fans and Political Plans

The policy of arabisation undertaken by Algeria after independence was a reaction to the coloniser’s policy of prohibiting the use of Arabic for years. Therefore, the government implemented the ‘policy of Arabisation’, aiming at restoring the qualities of the Algerian society. Although, the process of arabisation has been systematically undertaken, its implementation has been very sluggish; the fact that has encouraged the continuity of the use of French as a working language in education, administrations, and economy. It is worth noting that the process of Arabisation was delayed in the late 1980s and in the 1990s, for the political instability lived by the country; another chance for French to keep its position.

During the era of the ex-President Bouteflika, multilingualism has been promoted encouraging a more spread of French and a support to the use of English. The generalisation of Arabisation was delayed, for the socio-political instability that marked the period. However, the constitution revision done in 2016 proclaimed a more elaboration of the Arabic language and encouraged the translation of scientific and technical matters into Arabic, and the same text was maintained in the revision of 2020. The Higher Council of the Arabic Language (HCAL) was designed responsible for following the accomplishment of the process. However, the last few years have been marked by a kind of tensions, an economic crisis, political obscurity and social instability, the famous people’s reaction against the

preceding president and his government, after twenty years of governance, and by the transition to the new government.

Such factors have not only obstructed the elaboration arabisation, but have also been a stone in front of French and the prestige it has gained during years. While some ideologies consider French as the most suitable language of development and science for Algeria, others give it the status of prestige and another category see that the number of its speakers is being more limited by time. After the Hirak, many things have changed in the Algerians society, and by the coming of President Tebboune and the last tensions between France and Algeria, The status of French has never become as before. Moreover, arabisation fans have always been fighting the use of French, finding a ready floor for a more expansion of the idea of Arabic the most dominant language.

The new political agenda is a good witness of a well-structured plan to displace French to some extent, mainly after the last proclamations of the French President Macron about Algerian martyrs. Some strict measures are being taken to maintain the continuity of the policy of arabisation. Many ministries have officially removed the use of French in written communication, and used only Arabic and sometimes English for contacts with foreign countries. The Higher Council of the Arabic Language is encouraging the elaboration of Arabic. In fact, it is time showing the emergence of a change, and the most convenient shift that could be made is the execution of the third article of the constitution, in addition to a more institutionalisation of English as a foreign language for its global status and international significance as a language of science and business.

5. English or French: the Challenge

Rapid global technological shifts have led new stances towards economy, language planning, politics, social relations and life styles, while social networking have revealed several facets of the world and of global policy. Hence, the effect of inter/intra-connectedness and the need to cope with worldwide aspects have imposed a set of changes at the level of local and global language planning. English has been offered a privileged and hegemonic status in the world. Spolsky (2004) views that ‘English as a global language is now a factor

that needs to be taken into account in its language policy by any nation state,' (p.91). Accordingly, the notion of English as the global lingua franca par excellence has become culturally present across time and space, and highly adapted by people for its worldwide value. The position it has gained has endowed it with such a magnitude that many states have supported its teaching as a first, second or a foreign language.

As a result, the use of English has become significant in many sectors in Algeria in the last decade. In fact, legislative texts dictate the generalisation of the Arabic language as the official national language of Algeria, and the preservation of national symbols of identity. There is an urgent need to use foreign languages, namely international ones, even though no status is officially given to foreign languages in the constitution of the country. It is evident that English has become to a great degree the language of business, finance, politics and science. However, Redkin and Bernikova (2016) see that 'other modern languages besides English are acquiring the growing importance, and Arabic is among them,' (p.196).

English has become a *de facto* new competitor of French after this latter's long competition with Arabic. In education, both French and English are considered as foreign languages, the former (foreign language 1) taught from the 3rd grade of primary school, while the latter (foreign language 2) is taught from the 1st year of the middle cycle. In many countries, English is the language of technology, development, scientific research, trade and economy. It is in this perspective, the Algerian State is has started, on an experimental basis, positioning English in its political agenda. One of the clearest government's actions is the teaching of English instead of French in some pilot schools in the country, at the level of the primary cycle and this, from the 4th year of primary school. If the the Algerian experiment of 1993/1994 to implement English in primary education failed, for some specific reasons, it does not mean that the new institutionalisation of English will fail; it is neither the same people, nor the same atmosphere, not even the same conditions and political regime.

In higher education, English is today the language mostly required for scientific research. The ex Algerian Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Tayeb Bouzid⁵, through an online survey⁶, tested students' and teachers' attitudes about the introduction and reinforcement of English language at university for the teaching of technical subjects. As a sign of erasing French in favour of English, this initiative was accompanied by an instruction dated July 21, 2019 and addressed to all the directors of Algerian universities requiring them to use the Arabic language and the English for the headers of official

administrative letters, and simply exclude the French language from all official correspondence. Another instruction was to offer the possibility to doctoral and master students to write and defend their dissertations in English if they wish.

The strong argument of such orientation aims to strengthen the use of English in higher education and tends towards better visibility of the scientific and educational activities of the sector in order to raise the Algerian university to international standards, and make it more competitive and more open to the outside world. In fact, signs of the competition started to appear in the linguistic and the political domains, but if the current government continues to rule the State and execute its plan. It is not that simple to shift from the wide use of French to the attempt of implementing English; such a plan cannot be limited to changing mail headers, or to the results of a pilot experiment in some primary schools. It is a long-term process that requires specific conditions and a large acceptance among decision makers and the population, and a well-studied policy of how to integrate the use of English in all the sectors. English is evidently competing French in many sectors. However, more room is logically to Arabic, the national official language.

6. Discussion

It is well known in the literature of language planning and policy that the language of the coloniser has been the major remnant in post-colonial countries, and so French has done in Algeria. As Fishman confirmed, native languages were generally used in multilingual countries as their symbol of national identity and indigenisation, whereas the coloniser's language was usually kept as a means of wider communication and modernisation, mainly by elites and newly educated people. In fact, On the one hand, Algeria after independence was not ready to stop functionally the use of French as an official language. It was strongly hit by the the long colonisation and by the war of liberation. Hence, the most convenient choice was to implement the policy of Arabisation to confirm the aspect of an independent state. On the other hand, it was not easy for Algeria to displace French immediately after independence, because a language is not an object to remove at any time. Language, as a means of communication, cannot be displaced immediately. Whether imposed under any factors, or chosen deliberately, once spread to a certain extent, it becomes a means of communication,

and hence, used for different purposes. It requires a long time to make a change, yet rarely possible without taking strict measures.

In view of that, it is noticed that French is a reality in the Algerian sociolinguistic atmosphere after approaching its continuing existence from different perspectives. Face to arabisation and to the spread of English, the status of French as a language of wider communication and modernisation for decades is a strong support for its continuity. It is evident that the Algerian government has followed the footsteps of the new independent countries that have tried to preserve their national languages and displace the colonisers' to some extent, and hence it focussed on the major components of national identity and unity. It could be noticed that the Algerian government has attempted to give a new shape defining the Algerian cultural aspect, but focussing on the Arab-Muslim character. However, it could neither generalise Arabic for the shortage of teachers, nor stop the use of French because of its wide expansion in different domains and in daily language practices, mostly by the elites. Therefore, it was stated in its first constitution, that French would be used provisionally with Arabic along with the carrying out of the policy of Arabisation.

However, change is inevitable throughout time. The generation born on the onset of independence is today around sixty years old. This means that most of them have graduated from the Algerian school, i.e. arabised education, even though some have been through the bilingual system. Accordingly, the French language has never been considered as a language of alienation and a language of colonialism as today. It is losing its prestige and no longer fascinating young Algerians, who are generally described to have more positive feelings towards Arabic and English. Authenticity is a good witness that English is being spread gradually among the young generations. Today's children pronounce more English expressions than French, and achieve better standards in English than in French. Globalisation and the wide exploitation of means social media are among the fundamental factors for that.

The government's initiative to elaborate the use of Arabic and replace French with English must be the subject of a long-term plan to adapt such a new situation. Such reflection requires the participation of experts and academics who can examine all the necessary factors and aspects in order to obtain significant results. It is worth to note that latest political events between France and Algeria as well as the Hirak are major causes of the change of the factual and functional status of French. This proves deeply the ideological struggles which reflect the intention of the government to initiate a new linguistic policy. It is fair to note that ideologies

have always manipulated the linguistic aspect of the country, but it is also significant to confirm that it is transitional era that will bring about new changes.

Today, Arabic has achieved an international position among the top five world languages. It is often in the fourth or the fifth position worldwide, for the number of its speakers as a mother tongue, not counting Muslims all over the world. From another angle, postgraduates in many fields are required to master English, to be able to conduct a study or to present a communication sometimes. So, it is time for the regime to bother about involving Algerians into a modernised world in terms of all dimensions, among which multilingual qualifications are required. In this context, the Algerian government is undertaking some active measures to enhance the use of the English language in education, at university and in many other domains. However, French is still functioning, to a certain extent, as the language of official management, administration and research structures. This implies that change requires both time and a strong will far from any ideology, but for the benefit of the country and to response to internal and external needs.

7. Conclusion

Languages are part of identity; they are the witness of history and the product of social practices. Every community seeks to affirm its identity and to defend its specific and fundamental characteristics. However, the coexistence of several languages on the same territory can, in the absence of a well-considered language policy and the presence of conflicting ideologies can lead to language competition. Algeria has got the advantage of an interesting linguistic diversity, which should act in favour of the construction of the Algerian personality. It should be objectively stated first that Arabic is the most convenient language of the Algerian character as the official language, and that the execution of this policy has achieved a degree of success. Second, French has taken on the status of a living foreign language. In addition, its particular characteristic of being a fundamental language of administrations, banks, universities, hospitals, industries, etc. confirms that the Algerian current context is not yet ready to replace French with English. Third, the plan to expand English today should start by stretching awareness among people for the value and the need of global languages, notably English, and preserve national languages. Finally, multilingualism is advantageous, if well controlled.

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Notes :

¹ Tamazight was recognised as “also an official and national language” in February 2016.

² Jules Ferry was a staunch defender of colonialism during the second colonial empire and Minister of Public Instruction in the 1880s. (M. Rebai Maamri, 2009: 78)

³ Terminology differences concerning Arabic are not taken into consideration in this research paper, in which simply Standard Arabic and Algerian Arabic are used.

⁴ What is written in Italics is French and if pronounced in Arabic/Algeria Arabic is in Bold type.

⁵ Tayeb Bouzid was appointed head of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (to handle current affairs) on April 1, 2019 following popular demands led by the "HIRAK" of the Arab movement demanding the ousting of the government in place related to the corrupt system of the former president of the republic Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

⁶ <https://www.mesrs.dz /poll>