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Center for Scientific and Technical Research for the Development of the Arabic Language(CSTRDAL)
Linguistic Research Unit and Arabic Language Issues in Algeria(LRUALIA)



تعريب التعليم بعد الاستقلال في 1962

The Arabization Process in Education after the Independence 1962

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ملخص

كان الوضع اللغوي في الجزائر بعد الاستقلال معقدا للغاية. وجود وهيمنة اللغة الفرنسية كمنافس للغة العربية خلال الاستعمار قلل من قيمة وأهمية اللغة العربية كلغة وطنية للدين والهوية والولاء. وبعد الاستقلال مباشرة، أصر المسؤولون الوطنيين في الجزائر على استعادة هيبة الوطن وهويته وهيئته. وكان القرار الأول والأهم هو إعادة اللغة العربية إلى مكانتها السابقة قبل مجيء الفرنسيين. ورغم أنهم فرضوا استخدام اللغة العربية في العديد من المجالات، إلا أنهم كانوا مؤمنين أن التعليم هو من يضمن مكانة اللغة العربية. ولذلك تعرض هذه الورقة البحثية خطوات وتاريخ عملية التعريب في الجزائر بعد 1962 من خلال التعليم. كما يشير إلى أهدافه والعراقيل التي واجهت هذه العملية في البلاد في ذلك الوقت.

الكلمات المفاتيح: التعريب؛ استقلال الجزائر؛ التعليم؛ الأهداف؛ معوقات التعريب.

Abstract

The linguistic situation in Algeria after the independence was so complicated. With the presences and the dominance of the French language as an antagonist of the Arabic language during the colonization reduces the value and importance of Arabic as the national language of religion, identity and loyalty. Just after the independence, the Algerian national and loyal officials insisted to recovering and regaining the status, identity, and the prestige of the country. The first and the most important decision was returning the Arabic language in its previous position before the coming of the French. Although they imposed the use of Arabic in many domains, by they believed that education guarantees the position and the prestige of the Arabic language. Therefore, this paper presents the steps and the history of Arabization process in Algeria after 1962 through education. It also refers to its goals and the handicaps of such process in the country at that time.

Keywords: Arabization; Algerian independence; education; goals; handicaps of arabization.

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1. Introduction

After the independence, the linguistic policy in Algeria insisted on recovering the national language and gradually reducing the importance of French. Thus, laws and programs of Arabization were spread; and all the Algerian constitutions announced that Arabic is the official language of the country. It was supported in the Tripoli program devised by the Front de Liberation National (FLN) in 1962, and later it became a necessary element of the newly independent Algeria in the constitution of 1963. It was officially supported by Ahmed Ben Bella, the head of the new state until 1965, and Houari Boumediem who ruled Algeria until his death in 1978. The new leaders of independent Algeria sought to 'Arabize' Algeria and to make the Arabic language as the only national language because they considered Algeria as no longer an Arabic speaking country, but as an Arab country. President Ben Bella declared in October 1962 that Arabic should be introduced in the educational system; thus Standard Arabic was implemented as the official language of all formal settings mainly in education. It is taught since the primary level of schools and continues until secondary and university levels. Of the most important goals of the Arabization policy is the integration of the Arabic language in schools aiming at replacing the spoken languages by MSA; but above all policy makers of independent Algeria had strongly sought to regain the status of Arabic and reduce that of French. The main task of schools is therefore directed to correct the child's language and expressions he has acquired prior attending school. The role of Arabic in education is extremely important; it reinforces the status of the language and the nation as well.

The main objective of teaching and learning Standard Arabic is to equip the student with the ability to master language skills, and to recognize and realize the meaning of many chapters in Quran. Although the government pursued a policy of linguistic Arabization of education, but the strong position of the French language in Algeria was not deeply affected by this policy. Its value as an important international language has continued to be recognized, it is now kept as a second language after SA. Besides, it is part of the standard school curriculum in all the Algerian schools, as it is largely understood by most of the Algerians. Even after the political debate in Algeria in the late 1990s regarding the substitution of French by English in the educational system, the government decided to retain

French. In fact; one can't summarize such huge process on one page; therefore; this paper seeks to explain the process of Arabization after 1962 in details from the primary level until the university. Therefore, this paper presents the steps of the Arabization process held in Algeria from 1962, in addition to its objectives, goals, and challenges.

2. Standard Arabic and Pedagogical Implementation

The Arabization process is the gradual transformation of an area into a one that speaks Arabic and is part of the Arab culture. It can also mean the replacement or displacement of a native population with Arabs, although this rarely happened in ancient times. The question of language has been one of the most intricate and conflicting aspects of Algeria's postcolonial politics. The process of Arabization was then a matter of cultural decolonization and social equity since those educated in French had access to positions barred to the majority of the population which remained illiterate (Emmanuelle B 2002:02). Since independence, the issue of language created a confrontation between the Arabophones and the Francophones, and therefore an opposition between Arabic and French in Algeria. According to the Arabophones, French is the language of the enemy, the language of colonialism, the expression of Western culture, and the negation of the Algerian national identity. On the contrary, Arabic is the language of the Algerian nation, the recuperation of the Algerian identity, the expression of the Algerian soul, the language of Quran , and the evidence of the Arab Muslim community to which Algeria belongs (Emmanuelle B2002:22).

After the independence and in favour of the national language in education, President Ben Bella declared in October 1962 that Arabic should be introduced in the educational system; thus Standard Arabic was implemented as the official language of all formal settings mainly in education. Standard Arabic is taught since the primary level of schools and continues until secondary and university levels. Since 1962 the Algerian leaders sought to correct the 'faults', as they considered, of the educational system during the colonization. The two major faults were mainly: the ignorance of the Algerian culture and identity, and second the exception of many Algerians from educational opportunities. Thus, their goals were directed towards providing a universal schooling, and increasing the use of the Arabic language and teaching the Arabao-Islamic culture (Benrabah 2005).

In the early years of the independence, the Arabisation policy suffered from a lack of planning and organization. Bouamrane (1986: 52-53) sees that introducing the Arabic language in school programs had only a quantitative character. During the first year of independence (1962-1963), seven out of 30 hours per week were taught in Arabic; while in the 1963-1964 school year, teaching Arabic became obligatory in all programs and at all levels, and the value of the French language teaching decreased. Then in 1964-1965, the authorities arabized the first year of the primary level and increased the rate of Arabic language teaching to 10 hours in all other levels in addition to a number of religious instruction (Grandguillaume, 2004:97). In a report made in 1966, the Ministry of Education set up the following details on the state of Arabisation:

1) ***in primary education:*** pupils of :

- 1st year: are totally Arabised, i. e. they have 15 hours of Arabic per week
- 2nd, 3rd and 4th years: have 10 hours of Arabic and 15 hours of French
- 5th and 6th years: have 10 hours of Arabic, 20 hours of French

2) ***in secondary education:***

- From 8 hours of Arabic in the first form to 5 hours in the 7th form (final year)
- 5 secondary schools are totally Arabised
- 17 Islamic Institutes are totally Arabised giving an essentially confessional teaching
- ***in higher education:*** The year of 1964 witnessed the creation of Institutes of Arabic Language and Literature in the Faculties of Arts at the Universities of Algiers and Oran. These Institutes train students for the "Licence» (Bachelor of Arts) in Arabic Language and Literature (Cited in Bouamrane 1986 :52-53).

In order to enhance the process of Arabisation, the Ministry of National Education created an "Arabisation Commission" in 1967 which adopted and used four distinct methods ; these are :

1) *horizontal progression* which focuses on Arabising all the educational spheres starting by the first year of primary education until the last year of higher education;

- 2) *vertical progression* which seeks to arabize the various subject matters according to availability in human and technical means;
- 3) *punctual progression* which demands a definite Arabaization from the first year in primary education to the last year in secondary education, in a number of schools throughout the country, then extend this process progressively from one school to another and from one region to another;
- 4) *geographical progression*, which is based on Arabising primarily rural and southern areas probably characterized by Arabic monolingualism.

From 1967 onwards there have been four major changes in the National Education. The first period was from 1967 to 1970; however in the early 1967 academic year, the second year of primary education was totally Arabised. Then, at the start of the 1968 academic year, some other forms had been totally Arabised such as: two thirds of the 3rd primary school year, half of the 4th and 5th primary years, and one third of the 6th primary year. Similarly some sections in secondary education were totally arabised (Benrabah 2005). As for higher education, this period was essentially characterized by the creation of Arabised sections in the Faculties of Law, and an Arabised History section in the Faculties of Arts. The second period was from 1970 to 1977 which witnessed the split of the Ministry of National Education into three parts by 1970: Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education; Ministry of Higher Education; and Ministry of Original Education and Religious Affairs (Benrabah 2005).

The year of 1971 witnessed the Arabization of not only education, but also other domains. Between 1973 and 1974, the 1st and 2nd years in primary education were totally Arabised, the 3rd and 4th years were also totally Arabised but included teaching French as a foreign language; one third of the 5th and 6th years were totally Arabized but included teaching French as a foreign language. In middle education (from 1st to 4th forms of secondary education) one third of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd forms were totally Arabised with French taught as a foreign language. In secondary education (from 5th to 7th forms) literary sections were totally Arabised with teaching French as a foreign language; one-third of mathematical and scientific sections has been Arabised and French was taught as a foreign language. Arabization in higher education was very slow in 1974 Arabised scientific sections (mathematics, physics and

chemistry) were created at the University of Algiers and an Arabised Law section at the University of Oran. Also in 1974 the generalization of teaching Arabic as a subject matter had been extended to all other disciplines in all institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education (Benrabah 2005).

Thirdly, the short period between 1977 and 1978 involved a real stop of the Arabisation process. The Minister of National Education announced that Arabic is still inadequate for teaching sciences; thus the use of the foreign language seemed necessary in order to accelerate the educational progress (El Moudjahid: 7,8,11 August 1977). The last period started from 1979; it constituted a reaction against the measures held during the previous period aiming at increasing Arabisation initially in primary and secondary education through introducing new subject matters taught in Arabic in secondary schools at the rate of two hours per week, and adapting Arabic for teaching natural sciences, etc. Higher education has faced little changes during the same period. At the beginning of the 1980/1981 academic year, the French sections of social, political, economic and law sciences, which required double sections, one in Arabic and one in French, were suppressed. The process of Arabisation at university level varies from one university to another, depending on the availability of qualified teachers in Arabic (Benrabah 2005).

3. Difficulties of The Arabization Process in Algeria

Mohamed Benrabah (2005:437) considers the implementation of an exclusively Arabic monolingual educational system in the early 1970s as the origin of such 'failure'. In the first educational cycle known as 'Ecole Fondamentale' which lasts nine years and includes Primary and Middle schools, around 80% of the teaching staff have no Baccalaureate. The field of mathematics which is a fundamental discipline witnessed a serious jeopardy: the number of Baccalaureate candidates registered in the field of pure sciences was reduced from 18.46% of the total number of candidates for all disciplines in 1990 to 3.84% in 1998 (Le Matin, 1998: 24). Among 100 pupils entering school for the first time, only over two pass their Baccalaureate exam; i.e. 75% of the total numbers of children leave school before reaching secondary education (El Watan, 1997:01). During the National Conference on the Teaching of Arabic held in Algiers in

April 2000, participants declared that « after nine years in basic education, pupils are still unable to master Arabic properly » (Liberté, 2000:24).

In 1963, there were 19,908 primary school teachers: 3,452 taught in Arabic only; i.e. Arabophones, and 16,456 taught in French only, Francophones . In the meantime, the French language was still present in educational spheres; the Evian Agreements have therefore allowed 12,000 French teachers to return to Algeria after 1962. By the spring of 1963, their number rose to reach 14,872 . Five years after independence, French educators under cooperative programs fell to 6500 of which 345 were in higher education.

In Higher education, more than 75% of the teaching staff are assistant lecturers; the percentage of failure among first year students reached 40% for all fields of study in the academic year of 1989/1990. During the same period, 80% of first year students failed in technological branches and 55% in pure sciences . At the beginning of the 21st century, only one of 10 students manages to gain a degree. According to a medical professor, a substantial number of medical students are unable to measure blood pressure by the time they graduate. On 13 May 2000, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika set up the National Commission for the Reform of the Educational System (CNRSE). In mid-March 2001, the president of the CNRSE handed the final report stating in one of its recommendations that, starting from September 2002, French ought to be introduced earlier in the school system in the second year of basic education instead of the fourth as had been the case since the early 1980s. Finally, the Committee recommended that scientific disciplines in secondary schools should be taught in French rather than in Standard Arabic .

This recommendation had been supported by the Algerian government in 1999, and it revealed that 75% of the Algerian population prefers their children to study scientific disciplines in French. During his first presidency period, President Bouteflika did not intend to reform the educational system, but after the presidential elections of 2004, he clearly perused the reforms to the end. Then, since September 2004, the French language has finally been introduced as the first mandatory foreign language in the second year of primary education with three hours per week (Benrabah 2005). This innovation with the recruitment of 1500 French teachers reflects the involvement of the authorities within educational changes . The reform reflects a dramatic change of policy after decades of

monolingualism, “..., *it became apparent that the overtly stated goals of Arabisation create a monolingual policy and eradicate first languages and French were not being reached, and a change was needed*” said Benrabah (2005:438-439).

Many educationalists agree on the fact that effectiveness in MSA teaching and learning is not yet reached for the lack of proficiency among teachers. Many of them even indicate that the teachers of MSA don't possess enough knowledge to effectively supply the students with the information they need. Moreover, most of the Arab countries are not interested in providing training courses of Arabic for the teachers. This idea has been suggested by Maamouri (1998) who claims that the educational authorities should establish training courses for Arabic teachers so as to enhance their capacities in teaching. He thinks that if the teacher proves his fluency in the language of instruction, i.e. MSA, his students will be satisfied and will show their desire to learn from him. Thus, MSA will no more be difficult to learn. Maamouri (1998) describes the situation of MSA in Arabic classrooms as very complex because of the mixture of Arabic language patterns which “ leads serious pedagogical problems and even to feeling of linguistic insecurity in formal school communication among high numbers of young Arab learners. This lack of security comes from a general feeling of low understanding of Modern Fusha and of low identification with its norms” Maamouri (1998:40). Such case pushes many Arabic course teachers to move to dialectal Arabic in order to communicate with their learners.

Bouamrane (1986) notices that the teaching staff in some secondary schools was not homogeneous since they came from different regions and had various backgrounds, thus pupils found themselves moving back and forth from one Arabic dialect to another and from one accent to another in each lesson, some of them even declared that they could not understand what their teachers say at all. Benrabeh (2005:442) also referred to the absence of competence in SA which was derived from the lack of qualified teachers and the limited number of pupils. Another reason lies in the lack of sources and documents mainly books, especially those of Arabic grammar, phonology, literature, etc, and the Algerians were dissatisfied with available textbooks imported from France which were sometimes culturally inappropriate (Thomas and Shan 1999:27). Many educationalists believe that learning and understanding MSA is not an easy task, this has in turn lead many learners to neglect it and avoid its use. Additionally, many teachers

were not fluent speakers in MSA, such act pushed them to use their dialect and sometimes the French language when explaining the lesson. Thus, children were exposed to various languages and this will probably handicap the process of learning the pure form of Arabic.

4. Standard Arabic in Education

After the independence, Algeria followed the French educational system. During the period of 1962 to 1976 primary education was lasting six years, intermediate education was lasting four years leading to the certificate of intermediate education (BEM), while secondary education was lasting three years ended by the baccalaureate (BAC). Then, the 1976 reform created two types of education: compulsory basic education for children between the ages of six and 16, an educational level that lasts for nine years and is comprised of three year cycles which finally leads to the certificate of basic education (BEF) (Benrabah 2005). Secondary education that lasts for three years is organized into three core curricula in the 1st grade and splits into three branches of education from the 2nd grade: general, specialized, and technical. The 2004 reform marked a return to the previous system, i.e. primary education lasting six or possibly five years, intermediate education lasting four years, and secondary education lasting three years.

The main task of schools is therefore directed to correct the child's language and expressions he has acquired prior to attending school. Thus, the policy of Arabization started mainly in schools. Arabic does not appear alone in education, it is accompanied with French, English, Berber, and other languages, but it is still regarded as the corner stone of education since the primary level. However, the majority of modules are submitted in Standard Arabic mainly in the primary schools, even in the middle and the secondary levels it takes the lion's share among the modules in order to achieve better results in Arabic competence. Among the scientific specialties there are some modules which are still taught in French but again with Arabic intervention of course, i.e. code switching.

The role of Arabic in education is extremely important; it reinforces the status of the language and the nation as well. The main objective of teaching and learning Standard Arabic is to equip the student with the ability to master language skills, and to recognize and realize the meaning of many chapters in

Quran. The main reason for introducing Arabic since the primary school is to reach the following objectives:

- Listen to the sound of the Arabic language, alphabets, words and sentences and understand them;
- Articulate those alphabets, words and sentences accurately;
- Utter in Arabic according to certain situations and understand them;
- Read accurately and understand the words and sentences that you read in the Arabic language;
- Write the Arabic language alphabet, words and sentences accurately;
- Recognize the grammatical rules of Arabic;
- Write passages based on certain situations using simple sentences and understand them.

5. Conclusion

The process of Arabization had a significant role in the Arab region at all levels such as: the social, cultural, educational, and political ones since it represents the symbolic significance, status, roles, and functions of the Arabic language. It is also related to the attitudes of Arabs and non-Arabs towards the Arabic language and their valuation of its importance. Arabic is completely interlocked with the religious culture and with the turbulent Arab political events; thus it is only natural that Arabization will have a differentiated definitional framework which will reflect the specific nature of each of the major areas of the Arabic-speaking world. The arabization of the Algerian education

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