

Anglophonisation in Algeria's complex linguistic context

الانجلوفونية في السياق اللغوي الجزائري المعقد

Anglophonisation dans un contexte linguistique algérien complexe

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ملخص

يتطرق هذا المقال إلى موضوع الأزمة اللغوية في الجزائر في ظل تصاعد الأصوات لصالح استبدال اللغة الفرنسية بالإنجليزية في الوسط الجامعي ويهدف إلى توعية صناع القرار إلى التخطيط المحكم والمسبق فيما يتعلق باللغات التعليمية حتى نتفادى الأخطاء السابقة التي كان لها عواقب وخيمة على المدرسة والجامعة الجزائرتين. يمكن أن تكون التجارب العالمية الناجحة في مجال التعدد اللغوي مرجعا لإيجاد حلول لمعالجة الأزمة اللغوية في الجزائر البلد الذي هو أصلا متعدد لغويا لكن أحادي اللغة رسميا. للتعدد اللغوي الرسمي فوائد عدة أبرزها الوحدة الوطنية والتقدم العلمي وعليه فان اللغات الأربعة المستعملة في الجزائر والتي هي العربية، الأمازيغية، الفرنسية والانجليزية يمكن لكل واحدة منها أن تحظى بفرصة تطويرها حتى تعود بفوائد على البلاد في مجالات محددة.

الكلمات الدالة: الانجلوفونية؛ التعريب؛ الفرنسية؛ التعدد اللغوي.

Abstract

This paper is a reflection on the language situation in Algeria in the light of the raising voices to replace the vehicular French language with English in higher education. The purpose of this paper is to sensitise policy makers in the field of language education to avoid past mistakes which brought failure to the educational system. Thus, the paper first discusses some important language-based issues that the country inherited historically and politically. It then considers the consequences of the policy to monolingualism the country on both education and society. The paper deals also with the rivalry between French and English in Algeria as English has started to gain ground in the country and is voiced to replace French as a primary foreign language. The benefits of promoting the two languages are indicated in this paper to show that the solution is not in exclusion but in valuing diversity. Promoting the Berber language and developing the Arabic scientifically are also needed to conserve the former from extinction and use the latter in scientific disciplines at university. Psychological and social benefits of multilingualism are presented and reference is made to various multilingual contexts over

the world wherein local and foreign languages co-exist to bring evidence that achieving official multilingualism is important and feasible.

Keywords: anglophonisation; arabisation; defrancisation; multilingualism.

Résumé

L'article propose une réflexion sur de la situation linguistique complexe en Algérie à l'instar des voix qui s'élèvent en faveur de l'anglophonisation à l'université. Son objectif a sensibilisé les décideurs politiques dans le domaine de l'éducation à la vigilance dans la prise des décisions liée aux langues d'éducation pour éviter les erreurs du passé qui ont engendré le chaos dans l'école et l'université algériennes. L'article résume en premier les problèmes linguistiques hérités politiquement et historiquement et les conséquences qu'ils ont eues sur l'école et la société. La discussion s'étale ensuite sur la rivalité entre les deux langues étrangères qui sont le français et l'anglais qui gagne du terrain en Algérie. Dans ce cadre, l'article défend le multilinguisme qui valorise la diversité et repousse l'exclusion et le monolinguisme. La promotion des deux langues étrangères est plus bénéfique que l'abandon d'une au profit de l'autre. La promotion du berbère et le développement de l'arabe sur le plan scientifique sont aussi nécessaires pour éviter à la première l'extinction et permettre à la deuxième d'être un medium d'enseignement dans les disciplines scientifiques à l'université. Le multilinguisme est aussi défendu pour son impact positif sur le plan social et psychologique et sa réussite dans plusieurs pays dans le monde dans lesquels plusieurs langues coexistent ce qui montre que le multilinguisme est nécessaire et faisable en Algérie.

Mots-clés: anglophonisation, arabisation, defrancisation, multilinguisme

Introduction

The article considers objectively the linguistic issues in the Algerian school and university and seeks to find ways on how various languages might be used to satisfy our needs be them economical, cultural or scholar. The linguistic situation in Algeria is as follows: in childhood we speak an Arabic dialect or a Berber variety; at public school, we receive instruction exclusively in standard Arabic; French and English are two main foreign languages that are taught as separate subjects at the age of eight for French and twelve for English. In university, French is the medium of instruction in scientific branches, though students' most needed published materials are in English. The later consists the motivation behind the political will to anglophonise university.

The idea of anglophonisation can have many benefits but the process needs to be fully and well controlled in order to avoid any mess. We remember that defrancisation was not beneficial because it was sudden and Arabisation



could not even be complete. Since independence the Algerian governments have tried to arabise education and administration as an attempt to achieve national unity and cultural independence. French has since started to get undermined, restricted to banned in some contexts. In Higher education the arabisation process was incomplete because it was not easy to defrancize the fields of science and technology, so here came the split and the disruption which created the linguistic chaos in Algeria and impacted critically and badly on our students' competencies at all levels. As far as Berber, the original language of Algerians that is spoken by a minority, it just rejoices an official recognition as being an official language in the constitution but in practice it lags behind what the locals hope for it to be, i.e., taught obligatorily in school, promoted at a larger scale and be officially used by the state. In this already complex linguistic situation, English begins to be very appealing to the country today.

There seems to be a desire to replace French by English and as a first step towards this goal the ministry of higher education in Algeria has decided in 2020 that doctorate theses should be written in English. Outside Algeria, such as in Europe and Africa the governments are seeking to achieve official multilingualism via which the indigenous languages are revived, the national languages are reinforced and important foreign languages are made official. Multilingualism in many countries has proved successful and beneficial at different levels, social, scholar, economical and even psychological.

1. The linguistic crisis in Algeria

To get a better understanding of the linguistic crisis in Algeria, it is first necessary to consider the historical perspective of the issue. Originally, the indigenous people in Algeria used to speak varieties of the Berber language, and then with the spread of Islam in the region of Maghreb, North of Africa around the 7th century the country started to be arabised. In the 19th century, French colonized Algeria and occupied it during 132 (1830-1962). Thus, both Arab-Muslims and French had had a great linguistic and cultural impact on the local Berbers. However, since independence in 1962 the Algerian governments tried their best to monolingualise the country through arabisation for the sake of preserving the country's unity. As an effort to fulfil arabisation thousands of Egyptian and Syrian teachers were recruited in the 70's to teach subjects in Arabic. In 1976, French was taught in primary school at the fourth grade and not at the first grade as it used to be. Gradually, French was replaced by Arabic in all subjects, in all disciplines in the three educational stages, elementary, middle and secondary. Unfortunately, this political decision to shift to a new linguistic medium of instruction in the educational system was so hasty and sudden that it brought about big failure to the Algerian school.



The policy to arabise the country which was driven by patriotic sentiments seemed to ignore realistic needs of scientific knowledge vehicled by French. The politicians should really have thought of how to develop Arabic scientifically and put it at the service of science first before depriving science from its scientific language. The desire to rush into arabisation was justified by the president Houari Boumèdiène (Lionel, 2015) as follows:

«Sans la récupération de cet élément essentiel qu'est la langue nationale, nos efforts resteront vains, notre personnalité incomplète et notre identité un corps sans âme»

Understandably, defrancising is a means to confirm independence, but we cannot deny that French is a means to reach scientific knowledge. The outcomes of the rapid application of arabisation angered educationalists, students, parents and even media in the country. All were and still are scared about the low level of students' competencies in all disciplines. Lamria Chetouani (2001) who reviewed some newspaper articles concerning the Algerian school issues explained:

L'arabisation effectuée sur simple décision par loi et décret n'a pas pris en compte la réalité des Algériens [...]. Ce choix, selon *Liberté*, « ... [a] sacrifié la dimension pragmatique [...] ; ... Les candidats au bac décrochent les notes les plus médiocres dans la langue d'étude, l'arabe et la philosophie ». ...L'accélération du processus d'arabisation-algérianisation débouche, selon *La Tribune* (T : 2-3/10/98), sur une impasse à l'université. En conséquence, la qualité de la formation est menacée, le danger du clivage engendré par le choix de filières en fonction de l'outil linguistique est réel et la cohésion nationale en subit les contrecoups.

The authorities themselves recognized the importance of French as a vehicular language in the scientific field and as a language which keeps Algeria open to the western world particularly Europe. In the *Sommet de la Francophonie* in Beyrouth held in 2002, the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who once obliged private francophone schools not prioritizing Arabic to close, claimed that the use of French maintained the Algerians' unity. He advanced (Lionel, 2005): aujourd'hui, nous devons savoir [...] nous ouvrir sans complexe à la culture de l'autre, afin de mieux affronter le défi de la modernité et du développement [...] L'usage de la langue française est un lien qui assure notre unité.

This is an official recognition that monolingualising Algeria was a failure. As a matter of fact, the hasty arabisation and its negative effects on education led the political elite in the end of the 90's to make new decisions such as teaching French as early as second elementary year and allowing to reopen private French-medium schools. But because failure continues to prevail in



education another envisaged solution seems to reside in achieving complete arabisation.

In 2020, the new President Abd Almadjid Tebboune in his first official televised discourse to the nation promised the use of a single vehicular language (probably meaning Arabic) in teaching from primary school to university. It goes without saying that continuing higher education in the language students have a better control on would facilitate access to knowledge. But the problem again is that most scientific knowledge is accessed through French or English. Studying subjects in French at university adds a cognitive challenge to students who in addition to knowledge acquisition they also need to master the foreign language. This is the issue which urgently needs to be solved in Algeria to produce highly competent students in future.

But again, using Arabic as a single vehicular language can really jeopardize the quality of scientific knowledge in our country in case this is materialized. Arabic is not a dominant language in science over the world and not even in the Arab world where the most important Arab countries such as Egypt and Gulf countries rely so much on English in science, technology, business, economy and international interaction which might also contaminate our country soon. It is of course unfortunate that Arabs are so dependent on the western world both scientifically and linguistically knowing that they were pioneers in enlightening the world. President Obama (in his 2009 speech in Cairo) praised Arab Muslims for their historical scientific and intellectual contributions to civilization by saying that:

It was Islam that carried the light of learning through so many centuries, paving the way for Europe's Renaissance and Enlightenment. It was innovation in Muslim communities that developed the order of algebra; our magnetic compass and tools of navigation; our mastery of pens and printing; our understanding of how disease spreads and how it can be healed.

Unfortunately, the western imperialism contributed to a great extent to get Arabs turned away from science and get busy with independence from the western occupation. Today the Arabs are getting more and more divided mainly with Israel normalising ties with many Arab countries, Morocco being the latest one, so hopes for Arabs to thrive and develop Arabic language are at risk. Developing any language is a matter of politics first and last. If Arabic is to be used as a scientific language, it will need the will of all the Arab governments to unite and work on the project of arabising science why not innovate in science as it was the case centuries ago. If neither translation nor innovation happens, Arab countries, including Algeria, will continue undergoing the bad consequences of switching into a different



medium of instruction in universities after years of arabised schooling, which yields incompetence in all fields and continues hampering the educational systems.

In the mid of the linguistic tumult the Algerian educational system is going through, university students are becoming very eager to switch to English instead of French. This interest in this language is imposed given that English is a universal language and that most scientific literature is in English. In addition, most of the Arab countries use English as an instructional medium and an interactional language at high institutional, academic and diplomatic levels. Even the Euro zone has opted for English as an official language. In 2020, the ex-minister of higher education in Algeria, Chams Eddine Chittour, has recommended to replace French by English as a way to cut short access to knowledge that is mostly in English for the students. The university students enrolled in scientific branches find themselves in need of translating documents written in French to English. So, the big picture in our universities is that our students are facing a double challenge: the first is the switch to French when they enter university after years of arabised schooling, the second is the need of English to access most of important scientific knowledge. But what is worse is the fact that after more than half a century of independence policy makers have not yet adopted a unified or a final decision to solve the country's linguistic crisis.

2. Anglophonization in Algeria

While our students are lost between Arabic and French, English is said to replace French in university. The Algerian government is preparing a budget of 20 million Euros to train 400 doctorate Algerian students in Irish universities in the four coming years as a step towards generalising English as a medium of instruction in universities and abandoning French (Dhahbi, 2020).

Is this the solution to our linguistic problems? Are we going to repeat the same mistake as in 1976 (sudden shift to arabisation)? Do we need to sweep away a language that Algerians are more familiar with, and which represents an important medium of instruction in some fields in higher education, and replace it by another one that is not used outside classroom? Do we have experts able to put in place the anglophonisation process gradually and safely to ensure seamless transition? Are we able to ensure high-quality training for teachers before they converse to English? Is the objective integrating English into the system or defrancising the system? All these questions should not be neglected if ever anglophonization is to be taken seriously and envisaged in future.



We should not neither lose sight of the fact that English as its French counterpart is sceptically looked upon in the Arab World where it is a medium of instruction in many universities, public institutions and private schools. The Arabs in general consider that "if English is the language of the future... Arabic is already part of the past" (Lindsey, 2005). This is a view that is held by those who see English as a system of values and way of thinking. Nevertheless, English has been promoted in the Arab countries as a strategy to cope with modernization. Unfortunately, the conversion to English in universities in the Arab countries was a hurdle to many students who were not proficient in English and hence could not have chance to get enrolled in universities such as the case in Qatar.

The conversion to English in Qatar heated the debate between the pros and cons of teaching in English in national universities. This issue led the country to decree Arabic as the official teaching language except in some faculties (e.g. engineering) which were allowed to continue teaching in English. This Qatari experience with English should open our mind and our eyes to any abrupt conversion to any new medium of instruction before well planning for it.

In Algeria, there was a political move in the 90's towards replacing French with English in fourth grade by giving the choice to pupils to choose between French and English. However, the majority of parents chose French for their children because they were not familiar with English. In 2020 the picture is different; the Algerian youths are more familiar with English due to the social media and the new technologies. A survey that was carried out in universities in 2020 revealed that 90% of university students opted for English as a medium of instruction instead of French. Though English is very appealing today in Algeria, French still preserves its high status.

In the same year (2020), thousands of students queued at the French Cultural Centre to take a French language test to obtain a scholarship to study in France. This is simply an indicator that French is also highly demanded by the new generation. What is certain is that the two languages, French and English, seem to compete naturally in Algeria and that English is no longer rejected as it was before. As a parent I myself noticed that children use more and more English. I was once surprised when I received a message from my 14 old child who messaged me as follows: "*Sorry, i was busy...yeah everything is okay,my sister won't study today coz she's in group B so she will go to school tomorrow...i'll tell you details when you come, love yu*". Knowing that I never use English at home to interact with my family, I found the message as an indicator of a new linguistic reality among the youths. English is a highly accessible language that is gaining ground in our society, so being it not spoken by the elderly or even not taught as earlier



as French in the Algerian school does not devalue its status and does not prevent the youths from learning it easily, quickly and efficiently.

Borni (Belmihoub, 2016) explored Algerian Master students' use of English outside of the classroom in 2015. The researcher found that 89% of students agreed and strongly agreed that it was important for Algerians to learn English, 70% of them used English at home, 46% used English with native speakers and the majority of participants (70%) set their phones in English and used the language in public. In relation to French, 96% of participants believed that French was dominant because of colonization, and 86% agreed and strongly agreed that, if English were to gain the status of primary foreign language, Algerians would use it more than French.

In the same token, Slougui (Belmihoub, 2016) found that between 1998 and 2003, 681 scientific materials (48%) were published in English, followed by French with 528 (37%) and this shows the importance of English among Algeria's scientific community who even if they receive instruction in French, they end up using English to publish the most professionally scientific literature.

Slougui (ibid) argues that there is work to be done to meet Algerian scientists' discourse and language needs in English so that they can reach their full potential and publish in English internationally. Bringing these scientists to the higher end of the bilingualism cline so that they can publish as comfortably in English as many are capable of in French requires continued support by all parties involved in English education. Understandably, English is required in a scientific field, but what about local languages, Arabic and Berber and even French which still rejoices a high status in Algeria? Is the solution banning a language to impose another? What is left to policy makers is to take into account the sociolinguistic changes in the country and cater for all the languages used by people to find ways how to promote them so as to meet the needs of all parties. Maybe we should consider the European experience which instead of excluding or replacing languages it ties together local and foreign languages to the benefit of the individual countries and the European entity as a whole.

3. Solving the linguistic problem in Algeria

English is unequivocally a universal language; the Europeans themselves use it as an official language, but as Europeans we should think of how to integrate it in our institutions amid a plurilinguistic environment rather than using it as a substitute to French. French has still its place in our country as a language of science and a language that preserves our long and rich history



with France. Why we should fear that promoting French is risky to our identity and sovereignty while many countries around the world count several official languages (e.g Canada, Switzerland and Finland). Algeria should think of ways how to promote both local and foreign languages for different purposes and functions instead of monolinguisng education. It is highly important that linguists and specialists in education intervene in the linguistic crisis because politicians' decisions on educational languages tend to be influenced by their patriotic sentiments only without taking into account the scientific and economic values foreign languages can bear. This single perspective in policy making explains the Algerian politicians' unsteady positions towards languages.

Solving the linguistic crisis in Algeria is not only a political matter; all Algerians should be consulted to know their needs in terms of languages to promote. Excluding any language can only lead in social outburst as it happened in the 80's with the emergence of the Berber Spring (Printemps Berber), a cultural movement which ended up in confrontations and deaths. We should look at the linguistic needs of all the people to maintain the national unity and restore trust between people and high authorities in the country. Then, we should consider the important functions of each language to decide about the fields in which each one should be promoted. We should also think about how to promote the four languages (Arabic, Berber, French and English) in a way it does not end up in producing students who are 'illiterate bilinguals', i.e, mastering no language. Thus, the real debate today is not which language to adopt or abandon but how to promote all the languages and assure high proficiency in all of them. We should first consider the challenges each language faces and seek appropriate solutions as suggested in what follows:

- **Arabic:** This language faces difficulties in being used as a medium of instruction in scientific fields in university. So great efforts must be engaged in translating scientific literature into Arabic and training instructors in using science in Arabic. Of course, this should not be nationwide only; a coordination with other Arab countries at least to standardize the scientific language in Arabic should precede any attempt to develop the scientific language in Arabic locally otherwise we will be alone in using a kind of language not understood by Arabs themselves. Actually, all Arab countries use English or French in universities except Syria. Arabic language has roots that could make



more words than English and it is able to be used at the service of science; it just needs scientists and linguists to work continuously on coping with the newness in science and translating the new invented terms in any dominating language into Arabic.

- **French:** This language faces a negative attitude on the part of many Algerians as it represents the colonizer's identity and culture. This problem needs consciousness-raising towards the importance of French as a medium of instruction and not of colonization by showing examples of countries using foreign languages, including France itself, for the sake of developing important sectors such as economy, business and education. The language also is being devaluated because it is taught as a subject in school and is not a medium of instruction, as a result, a breakdown occurs when students enter university where most studies are done via French and where part of the failure in university is due to a shift to a new medium of instruction. Thus, some subjects can also be taught in French earlier in school to solve language problems in higher education.
- **Berber:** This language is the original language of the Algerians but it is spoken by a minority. It is a language that preserves our history, original identity and culture. It has been a written language for about 3000 years. Authorities in Algeria recognize today that ignoring this language is ignoring part of Algeria's history. It is a language that still survives not only in Algeria but in other parts of the world: Morocco, Libya, Mali, Tunisia, Egypt and Canary Islands. Being it optional at school devaluates its status and thus it first needs to be generalized and mandatory. Moreover, authorities should develop a long-term scheme for its promotion via opening departments of the Berber language, producing more literature in Tifinagh (the berber alphabet) and carry out teachers training on vast territory in the country. Berber is vital for Algerians because it will secure the country from ethnic, cultural and political division. The Berbers represent one third of the Algerian population. Several countries including Canada, Switzerland and Finland have at least two official languages of minority communities that count a fewer number of people as compared to the number of Berbers in Algeria. The Berbers are more and more claiming for making justice to their



original language, so more measures are needed to be taken to make it equal to Arabic and be officially used by the state.

- **English:** It is a universal language of science and business. So far in Algeria, the status of English lags behind that of French which still continues to be predominant. English is taught for the first time in the first year of middle school (when schoolers are about 11 years) while French is taught as early as third year in primary school (when schoolers are about 8 years). Though in middle school both English and French as subjects are allotted nearly the same number of teaching hours (5 hours per week for English and 4 hours per week for French, in 2020), outside school French still reigns in many fields. For instance, legal and administrative documents are produced in French alone, or Arabic alone or both but not in English except if a document is used internationally like passports. For anti-colonialists, English represents a best substitute to French given that Algeria has no sad history with the Anglophone countries. But it still encounters some resistance from the pros of the French language on the basis that French has been so far the most important medium of instruction in some universities, national institutions and even private schools. There is a fear that promoting English will dismiss French. On the other hand, there is also fear to get lost between the two languages ending with getting proficiency in neither of them. Gaining proficiency in a language requires the use of that language as a medium of instruction and not only teaching it as a separate subject. This implies that teachers should be trained to teach subjects in English at different levels from primary to university level. We should also stop the wars between languages and allow for their competition for the benefit of developing the country economically, culturally, linguistically and maintain the national unity.

The debate of which language to choose is fruitless, so better think about achieving official multilingualism which implies first entrenching the languages into the county's constitution, second using them as mediums of instruction in education and third using them in official engagements such as parliamentary proceedings, judicial activities and national or international conferences. Many countries around the world count many languages among which two or three are official such as the case in Canada, Europe and some African



countries. In Europe, for instance, the educational systems have to include two native languages and two other European languages. Europe also has aimed to revive minority languages after the Second World War by training pre-service teachers to teach in/through these languages.

Today, there is a relative balance in the competence of the majority and minority languages. The bilingual communities of Catalonia and Galicia in Spain, and Ireland and Malta are very good cases in point, as there are no differences between the minority and the majority languages (Huguet et al, 2006). Another example is that of the Basque Country wherein less than three decades ago, only 5% of state primary teachers could speak Basque and there was little chance for training teachers to be able to teach in and through Basque. Nowadays, it is estimated that about 65% of practising teachers are qualified to teach in Basque. The main reasons behind revival of minority languages and achieving multilingualism in Europe are promoting tolerance, strengthening social cohesion and decreasing xenophobia (Huguet et al, *ibid*).

Another example of a successful multilingualism in Europe is that of Luxembourg. Luxembourg counts three official languages: French, German and Luxemburgish. People use the three languages in their everyday life for different purposes in addition to other less used languages such as Portuguese, English and Italian. For example, French is used when shopping, going out, for formal writing and at work. English is used in reading, informal writing, at work, in speaking with friends. German is used at work and formal writing. Luxemburgish is mainly used among family, friends and when going out and when listening to radio stations (Stojan et al, 2017). In fact, Luxemburgish as a mother tongue was just recognized an official language in 1984. Today, the government is considering negotiating with the European Union to have Luxemburgish also acknowledged as a lesser-used but officially recognized language. This will allow the citizens of Luxembourg to write to the EU in their "mother tongue" if they wish to do so. This just shows that, in the words of Stojan & al (*ibid*), the development of languages is related to socio-political rather than only linguistic factors. The politicians in Algeria can also make more steps forward to promote the Berber language as there are many less used indigenous languages around the world that are revived and



regaining their deserved status in their societies and it also shows that multilingualism in general is more and more applied in the world due to its advantages.

In the African continent a similar situation is taking place. Okal (2014)' survey of multilingualism practices in Africa shows that Multilingualism is witnessed in many African countries where people speak three languages among which the mother tongue, the national and even the official languages. For example, South Africa which counts up to 50 languages has official multilingualism status generally enshrined in the country's constitution. In South Africa numerous indigenous languages (isiZulu, isiXhosa, Afrikaans, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Xitsonga, Siswati, Tshivenda and isiNdebele) are official besides English. The same survey reports also revival and officialising of indigenous languages. Since 2002 children throughout the country in Senegal have been taught in schools using Wolof, Pulaar, Serere, Diola, Mandingo and Soninke which were picked from among the 25 languages spoken in Senegal. This is done besides the official language which is French. Guinea also launched a linguistic decolonization by proclaiming the country's eight most widely used languages to be official and launching literacy campaign besides officially using French in the education system.

Multilingualism is not a heavy load on people; on the contrary it has more benefits than monolingualism both cognitively and socially. Bolinger (in Okal, 2014) states that a monolingual can be described as a restricted animal with a barrier in communication called 'fixity of reference'. This means that animals have messages connected with just one thing in the real world like a growl to an enemy or a particular scent to an attraction to mate. Monolingualism is also equated with a holophrastic stage of language development. This means that a monolingual can be regarded as one who is still in the process of language acquisition and development and should learn other languages to effectuate multi-communication. Multilingualism results in high intelligence. Many studies have shown that knowing and using multiple languages have positive effects on the human brain and thinking. The first macro meta-analysis of studies about effects of multilingualism is the report of the European Commission research team, "The Contribution of Multilingualism to Creativity," which revealed that multilingualism benefits six areas namely general,



complex thinking and creativity, mental flexibility, interpersonal and communication skills, and even a possible delay in the onset of age-related mental diminishment later in life (Academy of Finland, 2009). It is also mentioned in the report that multilingualism enhances memory and this is one reason why multilinguals show superior performance in handling complex and demanding problem-solving tasks when compared to monolinguals.

The research also assumes that changes in the brain occur when a person learns a new language. According to the same research, such benefits are met when languages are embedded into disciplines and not when taught as separate subjects in the curriculum. In Algeria, unfortunately foreign languages are taught as separate disciplines, this means that most Algerians are not true bi-or multilinguals. Efforts need to attain multilingualism to profit from its advantages. Okal (2014) reports studies showing that children speaking more than one language from an early age are more intellectually flexible than those who speak one language and can easily learn a third or fourth language.

Conclusion

As more voices are raising in favour of the English language to become a vehicular language instead of French, the already complex linguistic situation in Algeria risks to be aggravated if any new decisions are not well planned beforehand. Anglophonisation might bring to minds the abrupt arabisation in the country which resulted in a real chaos because of the mismatch between the schooling and the university vehicular languages. In addition, monolingualising the country by declaring Arabic as the only official language in the 70's resulted in tensions between Arabophones and Francophones followed later by the uprisal of the Berberophones who claimed for the recognition of the Berber language as a national language entrenched in the constitution. Thus, to avoid other future tensions, the solution is not in banning French again but it is in achieving official multilingualism that secures both Berber and Arabic as local languages and integrates the two competing foreign languages French and English in society to serve different functions. Multilingualism around the world has proved beneficial in various aspects; it maintains social cohesion, eradicates ethnical conflicts and racism, reduces the danger of social exclusion, it allows for more openness to different cultures, leads to more job opportunities than monolingualism, and many studies have shown that it has positive effects on human brain. Many countries around the world count many official



languages and witness successful multilingualism. Algeria could also follow in the path of those countries which united local and foreign languages for the service and benefit of their countries.

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