Tamazight an Official Language in Algeria: a Stop or a Start to Conflicts

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at predicting the future of the language policy in Algeria by defining the factual vis-à-vis the official status of Tamazight, after the last constitutional amendment. This is a small attempt to reveal the authentic use of Tamazight and sketch out the origins of the Berber crisis in the country. The most relevant concepts are first examined theoretically and an overview of the Algerian linguistic situation is then provided. Historical and official documents related, to some extent, to the officialisation of Tamazight are surveyed here. Finally, some dimensions of this shift in the Algerian language policy are described to know whether such a decision is the right choice that might put an end to the language conflict, or is a step for new demands.

Key words: Arabic – Tamazight – officialisation – constitution – Official language – language planning – language policy.

ملخَـــــص

يَهدِف هـذا البحـث توقُع مُستقبل السّياسـة اللَغويـة في الجزائـر بتجسـيد المكانـة الواقعيـة وكذا الرَسمية للغة الأمازيغية، بعد الإصلاحات الدَستورية الأخيرة. هذه دراسـة متواضعة لرصد الاستعمال الواقعي للأمازيغية وكذا الكشف عن أُصول الأزمة القبائلية بالوطن. المفاهيم الأكثر صلة بالموضوع تقدّم لمحة عن الوضع اللغوي بالجزائر. وتدرَس بعدها الوثائق التاريخية والرسمية المتعلقة إلى حد ما بترسيم الأمازيغية. وفي الأخير يقوم البحث بقراءة بعض الأبعاد لهذا التغيير في السياسة اللغوية بالجزائر، لمعرفة ما إذا كان هذا القرار هو الخيار الأفضل لوضع حد لهذا التضارب اللغوي، أم هو خطوة لمطالب جديدة.

الكلمـات المفتاحية: العربيـة – الأمازيغيـة – ترسـيم – الدسـتور – لغـة رسـمية – التخطيـط اللغـوي – السياسـة اللغويـة.

1- Introduction:

'*Tamazight will never be an official language*', repeated by President A. Bouteflika, is the notion that has annulled to some extent expecting a shift in the Algerian language policy. Yet, February 07th, 2016, was a day of triumph for the Berbers, when the state declared officialising Tamazight and Benghabrit [(1)] called for its teaching through the national territory. A clear euphoria marked Kabylia, viz. Tizi-Ouzou and Aurès. Since language planning mostly occurs for solving conflicts in a nation and regulating its language issues, the focal question of this article is to look out if officialising Tamazight, though not yet standard, solves the Berber crisis. In fact, the leading factors to this State's bilingualism and the factual language situation in Algeria are investigated in the present study through a historical sociolinguistic approach.

This article covers three main parts. The first part highlights theoretically some definitions provided in the literature of the concepts 'language planning' and '*language policy*'. The second part summarises the Algerian sociolinguistic situation, outlines a historical background that goes back to the origins of the Berber crisis, and explores the actual conditions of the officialisation of Tamazight. The third part is a synthesis of major assessment about the political and the ideological dimensions of the Berber crisis, and if the last constitutional revision is a convenient response to the 'Kabyle' demands. For the purpose of the study, a selection of some fitting definitions is presented below.

2. Language Planning and Language Policy (LPLP):

LPLP was introduced academically in the late 1950s by the Norwegian–American linguist, Einar Haugen (1959)[(2)] , along with the rise of '*Nationalism*' and '*nationism*'. '*All human beings police, protect and promote language to a degree, and forms of LPLP occur in all societies*' (Llamas, Mullany, and Stockwell, 2007: 164). In the era of decolonisation, new emergent states, like Algeria, sought after a fitting way to make their peoples linguistically and culturally uniform, trying to save their language by undertaking serious plans (language planning), and making measurable decisions to select suitable ways to spread it through education and administration (lan-

guage policy).

2.1. Language Planning (LP):

While some literature use the terms language planning (**LP**) and language policy (**L.P.**) interchangeably, Haugen, Cooper, Haarmann, Fishman and others view the distinction. LP is defined '*simply as language change that occurs as a consequence of conscious and deliberate decision-making,*' (DeBose, 2005: 7). It is a careful attempt, mostly political; fulfilled to influence the function, form or acquisition of a language. '*It involves such massive changes in a society; intended to promote systematic linguistic change in some community of speakers*' (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997: x), and is performed to grant a status to a language or develop its usage. So, LP is formal and '*deliberate... [acted] by an organized body enjoying either legal or moral authority, such as a government agency, commission, or academy.*' (Nahir, in Liddicoat & Baldauf, 2008: 3)

LP is acted to develop a 'dialect' to a 'language' or a 'vernacular' to a 'standard variety' up to Haugen's '*canonical model of LP*' (Bamgbose, ibid: 216). He views LP from 'societal' and 'language' focus, i.e. 'status planning' and 'corpus planning', or from 'form' and 'function', i.e. 'policy planning' and 'language cultivation'; stressing four LP stages: selection, codification, implementation and elaboration. '*These activities can be said to describe the overall LP process*' (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997:29). Yet, Cooper (1989) '*has usefully added the classification, acquisition planning*' (Wright, 2004: 42) and then Haarmann (1990) has provided '*the dimension of prestige planning*' (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997: 60). In this order, four LP types can be distinguished:

a. Status P.: formal and lawful '*decisions about which language [is] to be the national or official language of particular nation-states*' (Trudgill, 1992: 71), usually top-down and planned by the government or official sub-governmental bodies.

b. Corpus P.: '*Codification/standardisation*' of the selected language via establishing its norms; (functions' '*allocation*' vs. '*reallocation*'), or '*Elaboration*'; (*the extension of the linguistic functions of language,*' (Kaplan &

Baldauf, 1997: 38).

c. Acquisition P.: the implementation of status and corpus planning; '*a feature of the instructional enterprise at every level of organization, from the Director General of the Ministry of Education to the classroom teacher*' (Cooper, 1998: 160).

d. Prestige P.: an accessible and a value process through which the language can be given a status of prestige.

So, if status planning is performed to select a particular language/variety for definite ends mostly to solve some issues, corpus planning is rather followed to endorse decisions in the way to be applied. The selected language, up to its status, is either implemented at a large scale in public institutions to make it acquired and used or expanded for some specific or prestigious ends. So, LP is related to a certain extent to what is planned by language planners, and to the policy undertaken by decision makers to decide how to implement the language in question. Thus, some literature does not distinct clearly between planning and policy, but consider them similar activities.

2.2. Language Policy (L.P.):

L.P. relates to official efforts undertaken to modify the relative language status and practice, mostly for endorsing an approved and standard linguistic structure. It is up to Prator '*the body of decisions made by interested authorities ... educators, media directors, etc., regarding the possible implementation of prior basic decisions,*' (ibid). Likewise, Shohamy (2006: 45) views L.P. as '*the primary mechanism for organizing, managing and manipulating language as it consists of decisions...[to]be legitimized, used, learned and taught in terms of where, when and in which context.*' So, it refers to formal directions, decisions, laws and practices for causing linguistic change in a given community. Grin, as well, (Liddicoat & Baldauf 2008: 56) defines L.P. as:

> '…a systematic, rational, theory-based effort at the societal level to modify the linguistic environment with a view to increasing aggregate welfare. It is typically conducted by official bodies or their surrogates and aimed at part or all of the population living under their jurisdiction.'

Spolsky deals with L.P. '*in the widest context*,' as it '*exists within a complex set of social, political, economic, religious, demographic, educational and cultural factors that make up the full ecology of human life*,' (Spolsky, 2004: x- ix). He considers three elements for performing the policy of a speech community: '*its language practices… its language beliefs or ideology… and any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice by any kind of language intervention, planning or management*,' (ibid: 5). So, L.P. changes up to situations, as if it '*is an instrument in the hands of those in power to 'manipulate' people into adapting a certain linguistic behaviour*,' (Shohamy, 2006: 49).

So, L.P. as Bugarski sees is '*the policy of a society in the area of linguistic communication*', (usually formulated in an official document), while LP is '*a set of concrete measures taken within L.P. to act on linguistic communication in a community*,' (in Schiffman, 1996: 3 - in Liddicoat & Baldauf, 2008: 56). Hence, LP is distinct from L.P. in terms of performance. The former relates to the '*deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of language codes*,' (Cooper, 1989: 45), or as Tollefson (1991:16), sees '*all conscious efforts to affect the structure/function of language varieties*', while the latter is 'LP by governments,'(ibid). So, it is then a matter of setting up an official plan (LP) and putting it into action (L.P.) by those in political authority.

Furthermore, for an ideal LP paradigm, '*both policy (i.e. form) and planning (i.e. function) components need to be considered as well as whether such policy and planning will be overt or covert in terms of the way it is put into action…[the] level(s), i.e. macro, meso and micro*,' (Baldauf, in Liddicoat & Baldauf, 2008:18), and then if '*top-down*' or '*bottom-up*' (derived from public's motivation). Accordingly, planning for a goals' oriented approach, Cooper's accounting scheme (1989)underlines the need to know '*who plans what for whom and how*,' (Spolsky, 2004: 14), more openly; '*what actors attempt to influence what behaviours of which people for what ends under what conditions by what means through which decision making processes with what effect*,' (Cooper, 1989:46-7, Kaplan & Baldauf: 1997: 60, Liddicoat & Baldauf, 2008: 25).

In fact, LP is directed to solve language issues. Nahir et al suggest

eleven goals[3] for a coherent LP: language (L.) purification, L. reform, L. standardisation, L. revival, L. spread, L. maintenance, stylistic simplification, lexicon modernisation, auxiliary code standardisation, interlingual commu-nication, and terminological unification. Yet, this – if concerned - may occur once a time, as many policies are often executed unexpectedly, and without defining reliable goals; '*It is hardly possible to reach a level where all of the relations would be in balance' and it is 'a well-known fact that the objectives of LP are often incompatible*',(Haarmann, in Baldauf and Kaplan, 1997: 59). Baldauf argues that a '*LP problem may also have a number of different goals, some of which may even be contradictory… often tackled independently*,' (Liddicoat, & Baldauf, 2008: 23).

Conclusively, making a shift in L.P. with definite goals varies up to sociolinguistic situations, language needs, the type of the policy, who puts LP into action and how. Therefore, many states do not succeed their language policy, as '*there is no overt and consistent policy which describes LP goals*,' (Liddicoat, & Baldauf, 2008: 70)and the '*LP activity may itself ultimately be the cause of serious problems as well as major conflicts*' (Jahr, in Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997: 60).

In view of that, Algeria stands for a good example where constitu-tional reforms are sudden and usually without referendum. The last amend-ments, pointing out here the officialisation of Tamazight, were not expected, since postponed and even rejected and denied many times by the government. What has occurred lately was evidently a result of a historical accumulation of a sequence of events. What rationales could lead to this sudden state bilin-gualism? What are the main factors behind the conflict between Arabic and Tamazight? And then can the latter be easily accepted as an official language by the Algerian people though not yet standard? Seeking for an answer, the following section in this article highlights the context of Tamazight in the Algerian sociolinguistic situation with the most relevant stages of the Berber crisis.

3. The Algerian Sociolinguistic Situation: the Status of Tamazight:
The Algerian population consists of about 80% of Arabs and around

20% of Berbers. Arabic was the unique language recognised officially in the constitution before officialising Tamazight later in 2016. So, its language policy has shifted officially from monolingualism to a State bilingualism. From a sociolinguistic perspective, Algeria presents a diglossic and a bilingual to multilingual situation for; the two levels of Arabic, high (Classical/Modern Standard Arabic- MSA) and low (Algerian Arabic - AA), spoken Berber dialects, and the officialised Tamazight – along with French – as the first foreign language highly revived in the political discourse – and English as the second foreign language widely used in economy, education, and scientific researches.

It is generally agreed that the concurrence of more than two languages within a territory depicts complex contexts, like that of Algeria whichprovides an authentic image about some LP applications '*as it is at a crossroad of tensions between French… and Arabic…; Classical Arabic versus colloquial Algerian Arabic; and the various Berber dialects versus Arabic,*' (Tabory & Tabory, in Kaplan & Baldauf, 2007:7). Yet, the language issue in Algeria is more often associated with the Arabic/Tamazight contact which has old roots that go back to how they have overlapped. Understanding such an issue requires the perseverance of a variety of strata in terms of the historical factors that define the real agenda of the current Algerian socio-linguistic situation.

History records that the Berbers[4] are the natives of North Africa which '*served as a transit regionfor peoples moving toward Europe or the Middle East,[as] Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines and Arabs*' (H. Chapan Metz: 1994)[5], and that the spread of Islam by the Arabs in the 7th century had '*a profound impact on North Africa (or the Maghrib)*' (ibid). She also argues that the origins of the Berbers '*are unclear*', and not exactly definite, *as traces of diverse peoples have been found; 'some from Western Europe, some from sub-Saharan Africa, and others from Northeast Africa*' (ibid).

The term 'Berber' actually covers a continuum of related but not always mutually comprehensible languages, belonging to the Hamito-Semitic family, which is distantly related to Arabic and other Semitic languages. Berbers themselves use another term to refer to the Berber community, Imazighen (singular, Amazigh), with the derivative Tamazight for the

language, to encompass all varieties, not just the one in Morocco (Middle Atlas) traditionally called Tamazight. This term is used in the modern Berber cultural movement which attempts to unite the different tribes and varieties, in their struggle for cultural recognition and survival. Imazighen live not only in the Maghreb but across a much wider area of North-West Africa, extending across Libya and down into the Sahara.

The indigenous peoples of the Maghreb, the Berbers, resisted shifting to Latin or the language of any other invader until the seventh century, when the Arabs introduced Arabic, the language of Divine revelation. Although the Berbers did not rapidly shift to Arabic – even today there are still non-Arabic speaking Berbers – a diglossic situation evolved in which Arabic was the H language for religious, administrative and other formal functions. Over the course of several centuries, bilingualism also became the norm in towns, and much later in rural areas, as Arab settlers mixed with the indigenous population. Turkish, on the other hand, despite centuries of Ottoman rule in Algeria and Tunisia, seems to have had as little linguistic influence as Latin.

Besides, when Arabic was introduced by the coming of Islam, many nomadic Berbers converted quickly, and learnt Arabic to understand Quranic rules. She says:

> '... The coming of Islam, which was spread by Arabs, was to have pervasive and long-lasting effects on the Maghrib. The new faith, in its various forms, would penetrate nearly all segments of society… replacing tribal practices and loyalties with new social norms and political idioms.'

Hence, Algeria has known a unique linguistic richness, mostly caused by the fusion of the peoples who settled in North Africa and coalesced with the Berbers. Yet, none of the crossing peoples has left such an influence that a lot of natives merged into the Arabs, and gave birth to generations that mastered Arabic, and grown dynamically over time. So, from a total Berber nativity to a large Arab majority, Algeria lays today among the Arabic-speaking countries, populated by children of Berbers, Arabicized Berbers and Arabs; all viewed as indigenous and having the same rights.

The French colonizer has also changed the Algerian sociolinguistic

life, as it followed the policy of Frenchification which was undertaken within the 'civilising process'[6], that aimed at dismembering the Algerian allied kin, intellects to the fore, at displacing Arabic from the position it has gained through time, and at growing illiteracy and ignorance to ensure its supremacy in a 'French Algeria'. French was the official language taught in schools unlike Arabic which was uniquely allowed to be used in religious schools (`Zawiya`, or `Me`dersa`). M. Benrabbah (2007: 46) says about that:

> 'The Jacobean centralist hegemonic model of French colonialism aimed at dismantling the polyglot aspect of Algeria and reproducing another France, a linguistically and culturally homogeneous Algeria (Frenchification). It was a particularly destructive tool in the hands of French colonialists which was soon to 'colour' the new elites of independent Algeria in their nation-building endeavour.'

Yet, the category influenced by such a process, mostly Kabyle, was greatly welcomed in France. In contrast, the fact of imposing French by the coloniser to replace Arabic, created hate against it in many places viewing it as the language of the enemy, and lessened its value among many Algerians, widely in the South and in rural areas.

Hence, the triangulation of Arabic, Berber, and French is not new in Algeria. However, the Berber/Arabic issue did not take a conflicting aspect before deciding Arabic the unique national official language by the first Algerian constitution (1963), as it was the most dominant language in the country. The state followed the same policy undertaken by the Arabic speaking countries at that time, but without any sign to the Berber dialects. The most relevant reasons for this language conflict are clarified below.

3.1. Historical Dimensions of the Berber Crisis:

The origin of the Berber Crisis goes back to an old ideological conflict raised on April 1949 between the leading members of the party of the Algerian People;[7] the pro-Amazighity activist Houcine Ait Ahmed, and the nationalist Messali L'Hadj. It was the effect of the revolutionists' political decision considering that 'Algeria is Algerian' and 'all Algerians should be united'. When it was not at all defensive to be separated, unity and national identity were the central goals, to which Arabic was adjoined when the colonizer

changed its status to a foreign language in 1936. 'Nowhere else in Africa has the language issue been so central in the fight against colonialism [as in Algeria]' (Djité, in Kaplan & Baldauf, 2007:25). Yet, that was frustrating and hard for the Berbers, though the War of independence (1954) lessened such ideological conflicts.

In the late 1960, the Berber Academy was founded in France; the host country of Berber activists and the heart of free democratic Amazigh expression. H. Ait Ahmed created FFS[(8)] in 1963, in Tizi Ouzou, and led an open revolt against Ahmed Ben Bella the first Algerian president (1962-1965) for his monolingual policy. Besides, Ait-Ahmed and many pro-Amazighity activists have been exiled to Europe, but welcomed by France, in the era of Houari Boumedienne, the following president, when FFS was banned and suppressed in 1966. Hence, Berber movements have spread out among various cultural organizations, in Algeria, North Africa, and in France.

New independent Algeria joined the policy of '*nationism*' and '*nationalism*', to support the emblems of national identity; Arabic and Islam, as the major population were Muslim and Arabs. Although LP was a 'modernising' process (Henze & Davis, 1999) undertaken to solve communication and language problems (Weinstein: 1983 – Jernudd & Das Gupta 1971) that could rise from multilingualism (Fishman, in Abid, 2006: 66), the top-down policy of Arabisation was performed.However, for national unity and growth, Ansre (in S. Wright, 2004: 74-75) sees that the government's LP needs to fit the whole nation and so to select '*a language or major languages which can be used widely throughout the country not only so that government can communicate with the governed, but also that it could serve as the medium of national interaction at all levels.*' Thus, Francophone pro-Amazighity activists opposed this monolingual policy, and the Berber crisis reappeared with a new political dimension in the 1980s.

3.2. The Berber Spring:

Since 1980, Amazigh, mostly Kabyle demands, have taken a new aspect that have turned into overt protests, rejecting the social and economic reforms introduced by Chadlie Benjedid, the 3rdAlgerian president, but conci-

sely pointing the recognition of their cultural and linguistic rights. The first street riots originated from students' protests on 10.03.1980, because of preventing a lecture on 'Ancient Berber Poetry' by Mouloud Mammeri[9] at Tizi Ouzou University; to become, then, more popular on April 20th, but severely banned by the authorities. Riots spread to France, for the same demand, in front of the Algerian embassy in Paris supporting protesters in Algeria. Since then, yearly uprising are known in Kabylia under the name of the 'Amazigh'/'Berber Spring'.

Still under Benjedid control, protests continued and often turned into violence to end up into fatal clashes. In 1985 many Berber militants were arrested by authorities, while other movements such as MCB and MCA[10] were founded. When the 1989 constitution was reformed by Benjedid, other political parties like RCD[11] appeared and FFS returned to the political space supporting Amazigh major demand. Yet, instability saw its onset in the 1990's providing a good floor for the rise of terrorism. Among the main protests Algeria knew in that era was the eight-month 'school boycott' (1994)by a million of teachers and students in the Kabylia for the recognition of Tamazight; soon followed by massive marches commemorating the Berber Spring 15th anniversary.

As a pace forward; Liamine Zeroual (president of Algeria: 1994-1999) passed a presidential decree on May 29, 1995[12] for the creation of the HCA (High Council for Amazighity), and allowed the use of Tamazight in national TV programs and in education. In many schools in Kabylia and Aures, 'Taqbaylit' was taught and some Berber TV and radio channels saw life later to join the Kabyle demand. Later, the constitution was revised, maintaining the monolingual policy, but stating the term 'Amazighity' for the first time in its preamble:'…the fundamental components of its identity…are Islam, Arabity and Amazighity' (Constitution Revision: 1996).In 1998, Lounes Matoub, a famous singer and a political militant was assassinated: a new cause for riots in Algiers and Tizi Ouzou. Though the GIA[13] claimed responsibility for the murder, thousands of Kabyles gathered in his funeral, accusing the government and repeating in French 'Pouvoir Assassin' (Assassin Government). Hence, yearly protests are organised to commemorate Matoub's death,

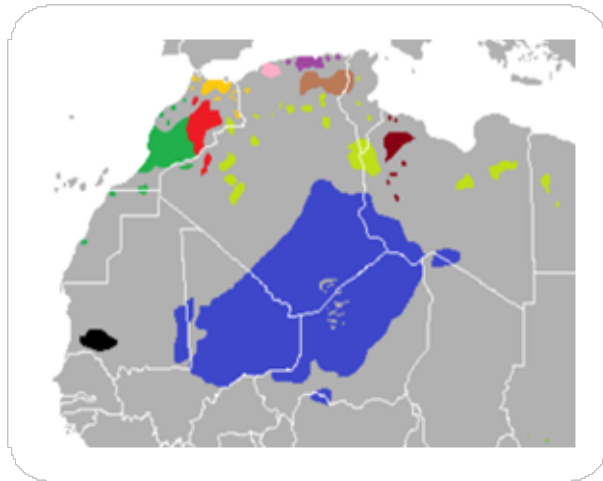repeatedly calling for the same demand.

3.3. The Black Spring:

Although the Kabyle political movements were very firm in calling insistently for the recognition of Tamazight, in any possible occasion, they could not make any change at least until 2000. On April 2001, and this time in the era of President Bouteflika, hundreds of activists memorialized the anniversary of the Berber Spring, maintaining their demands. However, things turned to violent riots when the authorities moved to the Kabyle regions to calm down the situation, but unfortunately brought about 126 victims. This caused a shift from the 'Berber'/'Amazigh' to the 'Black' Spring and led unexpectedly to the recognition of Tamazight as a national language.

After a long delay, '*Tamazight is also a national language*' declared officially by the president via 2002 constitution revision without popular referendum. Again a top-down policy occurred but to lessen Kabyle uprisings. Some Amazigh movements, like MCB and MCA, continued calling for official status, while the MAK (Movement for the Self-determination of Kabylia), GPK (Kabyle Provisional Government) and the MAM (Movement for Autonomy of Mzab), stood more active seriously targeting self-autonomy. Their chief aim is rather greater than to nationalise or officialise Tamazight.

4. 'Tamazight' in Algeria: Evidence:

The Berbers, though converged on '*Tamazight*', are clearly diverged ethnically and linguistically.Algeria is home to '*18 living languages…14 are indigenous and 4 are non-indigenous…3 are institutional, 3 are developing, 3 are vigorous, 7 are in trouble, and 2 are dying*' (Lewis, et. al, 2016). There are four major Berber minorities; Kabyles, Tuaregs, Mzab, Shawiya, with small isolated minorities such as Chenoua and Chleuh. The Kabyles (Imazighen) the largest group in the great and small Kabylia speak Taqbaylit. The Shawiya, the second largest group, speak Tachawit.

🟧	*Tarifit* (Riffian)	🟫	*Tacawit* (Shawiya)
🟥	*Tamazight* (Central Atlas)	🟪	*Taqbaylit* (Kabyle)
🟩	*Tashelhit* (Shilha)	🟪	*Tashenwit* (Shenwa)
⬛	*Tuddungiyya* (Zenaga)	🟥	*Tanfusit* (Nafusi)
🟦	Tuareg	🟩	Other (Wargla, Mzab, Siwa…)

Berber-speaking populations are dominant in the colored areas of modern-day North Africa. The other areas of North Africa contain minority Berber-speaking populations.

The Berber-Speaking Population in North Africa
Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berber_languages / retrieved
17/06/2016 at 10:22

The language issue in Algeria has often been complex with a monolingual policy in favour of Arabic. Once declaring Tamazight official, i.e. to be taught and accepted in administrations, the Academy for the Amazigh Language was created, and the Ministry of National Education announced

its teaching by 2016-2017.Up to Wright (2004: 52), a language '*would be spread most efficiently to non-speakers in the population if its written form was stable and if there were clear rules on its grammar, syntax, lexis and orthography that could be taught formally in the education system*,'. So, Tamazight needs to be written, standard and then acceptedfor its implementation and elaboration. Yet, '*top-down policies cannot compensate for lack of bottom-up support and that use in the family is ultimately more important than use in institutions*,' (Fishman, ibid: 232).

It is worth noting here that language spread in bi/multilingual settings is usually in favour of the most dominant one, while those which have a restricted use can hardly achieve wide public acceptance, though they represent national symbol. According to Wright (ibid: 46), '*Certainly societal competence in a language which comes to be highly symbolic but which is little used in communication is not secure.*' If Algeria, seeking for a solution has officialised Tamazight, it has at the same time retained the status of Arabic with a support as stated in the Draft of the Constitution (Dec; 2015):[14]

> **ART. 3:** Arabic is the national and the official language.
>   Arabic remains the official language of the State.
>   A High Council of Arabic, to the President of the Republic, is created.

> The High Council is in charge particularly of executing the expansion of the Arabic Language and the generalization of its exploitation in the scientific and technological domains, as well as encouraging the translation into Arabic for that purpose.

> **ART. 3 B:** Tamazight is also a national and official language
>   The State works for its promotion and its development in all its linguistic varieties in use throughout the national territory.

>   An Algerian Academy of the Amazigh Language to the President of the Republic shall be created. The academy, relying on experts' works, is in charge of gathering the conditions of the promotion of Tamazight in view of validating, its status as an official language.

> The means of the application of this article are fixed through a gradual law.

('AVANT PROJET DE REVISION DE LA CONSTITUTION' - 28/12/2015)

Hence, saying 'is created' for the High Council of Arabic and 'shall be created' for the Academy of Tamazight reveals a support to Arabic, via elaborating its use in scientific and technical fields, i.e. an expansion to Arabisation. As for Tamazight, it is 'theoretical concept that has no real existence… a linguistic working hypothesis' as reported by (Y. Temlali)[15], will wait for a long-term process of codification and standardisation, to be suitable for teaching and administration. Thus, the process seems to be notional to some extent, mainly when the government, within an economic crisis, needs to allocate funds for its promotion and elaboration, to set up educational needs (syllabuses selection, teachers/staff training, methods and programmes assessment).

Indeed, the most fitting script is another story that has raised a flood of arguments; favouring X calligraphy to Y or Z is controversial and might well lead to more conflicts as every Berber group is used to specific writing. Kabyle and Chenoua are used to Latin; Chaouia, M'zab, Gourara and Oued Righ use Arabic scripts, but Djanet and Tamanrasset write in Tifinagh. R. Hugh [16] (2007) argued that it is chiefly a matter of ideologies; Tifinagh for Amazigh authenticity, Arabic for the national unity and Latin for modernity and universality. So, it is complex, to some extent, to make a choice that satisfies the Berbers in particular and all the Algerians on the whole.

In fact, the fourth estate and social networking reported a continuum of antagonist and protagonist speculations. On the one hand, the policy was approached by some as a step of merit and respect to the authentic socio-cultural diversity to satisfy all the Berbers and regulate their language issue, since 'official support for a language should be a key component of language maintenance,' (Bourhis, Skutnabb, Kangas, in Wright, 2004: 232). On the other, a lot wondered ifTamazight could answer the needs of all the groups and function for socioeconomic, technical and modern fields of life both nationally and internationally.Up to Kelman (in A. Ouane, 2003: 60):

'If a language policy aims to satisfy individuals, community and national needs, it must attempt to establish and facilitate patterns of communication (both internally and internationally) that would enable its socioeconomic institutions to function most effectively and equitably in meeting the needs and interests of the population.

It must also assure equal access to the system and opportunities to participate in it for the different groups within the society, varying in their linguistic repertories (for either ethnic or social-class reasons).'

Therefore, the shift was deemed '*very dangerous…and would em-power French*' by A. Djaballah (Leader of the Islamist Justice Party) and that it 'would open the gates of hell' by I. Rabouh (Algerian Pundit), while others showed optimism. Opposing movements as the CMA[17] were frustrated with the shift that 'consecrates the supremacy of Arabic' and made Tamazight wai-ting for the work of specialists and academies. The MAK argued that '*the only thing that the Kabyle people want is the recognition of their right to freely decide their own future…it is Kabyle and not Tamazight which should be declared an official language in Kabylia,*[18]' considering Kabyle as a lan-guage of its own, while Tamazight as a group of related languages. This might well trigger noise calling for more linguistic rights by other Berber groups; it is really challenging.

Others related the new L.P. to the promotion of dialects in education, mainly associating that to Benghabrit's plan of teaching in AA in primary school.[19] Some political analysts went back to the collapse of the prices of oil that caused the economic crisis, describing it as 'difficult' or 'badly degraded' by Caterina Roggero[20] and Remi Piet[21] (2016) respectively. They also stated that the process was launched just after '*the dissolution of' or 'dismantling of the powerful Department of Intelligence and Security (DRS)'. R. Piet says that 'the constitutional changes seem progressive on paper… [and] arrive at a turning pointfor Algeria'. He argues that 'it is still too soon to tell if these represent a commitment to reforms or if they are simply a façade.*'

In view of that, the Algerian new policy seems to occur in a difficult setting; viz. the President's health conditions and the economic crisis. None of the indigenous Berber dialects is of a wide national spread; i.e. macro acceptance is problematic, then '*language is not only an element of identity but also a means of communication*' (S. Wright, 2004: 44).Yet, the authentic use of Tamazight –Berber dialects rather, among which some are endangered –could not surpass its geographical borders. Though it has reached a signifi-

cant step forward, Tamazight does not represent a language of national communication, and still requires elaboration and spread via corpus planning and acquisition planning. It has been taught since 1995 in its native regions, but exclusively as an optional subject; so, how it can be accepted where it is seen a minority language.

Up to Haugen a top-down policy succeeds '*only… when bottom-up patterns of behaviour are (or can be brought to be) in accord with it,*' (S. Wright, 2004: 74), and Algeria's L.P. is top-down 'Jernudd & Rubin posed the question (1971) 'Can Language be Planned?' and concluded that some studies show 'the absence of planning from language planning,' (Jernudd and Das Gupta, ibid). This might well lead to think if the AlgerianL.P.is so, or the Berbers have driven the state to a LP that is 'nothing but a way of accommodating society to linguistic diversity,' Mackey (A. Ouane, 2003:11).

5. Conclusion:

Algeria, once independent, aimed at fusing the whole population under the emblem of national identity and unity when it selected Arabic and Islam, because Standard Arabic was the only language that could be taught officially and replace the coloniser's. It could neither keep French in education or administration nor use spoken dialects, and so implemented the process of Arabisation which succeeded to a certain extent. The Arabic/Tamazight issue seems to have ideological rationales then. However, by officialising Tamazight, the country supposed to solve the Berber crisis to some extent, moves from state's monolingualism to official bilingualism, opening the door to more language rights' recognition, i.e. to linguistic diversity or future multilingualism.

However, the newly official Tamazight, whether a neutral variety restraining all the Berber spoken dialects, a synthesis of all or at least the major existing varieties, or one specific variety –Taqbaylit to the fore - its verity is that it is widely viewed as a minority dialect, mainly by the majority of Algerian Arabic speakers. To conclude with, there are some signs through the Algerian language policy for more spread of the policy of Arabisation vis-à-vis its elaboration in the technical and scientific fields. Then, it promotes

Tamazight to settle the Berber crisis and annul the possibility of a 'State within the State', in terms of the Kabyle demands to determine their autonomy. So, if Tamazight has spent over forty years to gain the national status, then fourteen years to be official, how long will it stay waiting for being standard? Which form will it take, and then which Berber dialect(s) will be favoured as standard?

End Notes:

(1) Nouria Benghabrit: Minister of National Education actually.

(2) It was Uriel Weinreich who used the term language planning for a 1957 seminar at Columbia University, but it was Haugen (1959) who introduced it to the literature.

(3) Suggested by (Nahir (1984), Paulson et.al (1993), Annamali & Rubin (1980), Bentahila & Davies (1993), Eastman (1983) in Kaplan & Baldauf (1997: 60-79)-(for more details, review the source).

(4) Berber minorities still live in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania, Niger, Mali, and Egypt (Siwa).

(5) Helen Chapan Metz, ed. Algeria: A Country Study. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1994. Retrieved from http://countrystudies.us/algeria/, on 12/04/2016 – 20:40.

(6) In French 'Mission civilisatrice'.

(7) In French: 'Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques', founded by L. Messali (1946) .

(8) (Front des Forces Socialistes)- Front of Socialist Forces.

(9) Mouloud Mammeri (1917 - 1989) a Kabyle linguist and author, who by the help of Pierre Bourdieu founded CERAM (Centre d'études et de recherches Amazighes) in 1985 in Paris.

(10) 'Mouvement Culturel Berbère' - 'Mouvement Culturel Amazigh' in French.

(11) 'Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Democratie' in French = Assembly for Culture and Democracy.

(12) It followed the agreement of April 22, 1995, reached by the Government with MCB, MCA, and M'zab.

(13) GIA: 'Groupe Islamique Armé ': an opposing group, responsible for many terrorist acts in the 1990s.

(14) All additions are written in bold type.

(15) Algerian journalist, writer and researcher, in his article - Sunday 10/01/2016 at 13:53 - Huffington Post.

(16) In the 1st international colloquium on 'l'aménagement de tamazight' in Sidi Fredj on 05-07/12/2007.

(17) CMA: Congres Mondial Amazigh (in French) – an organisation seeking to represent the political and cultural Amazigh movements - Retrieved from: http://www.amazighworld.org(14/06/2016 - 13:24).

(18) Retrieved from http://www.tamurt.info (14/06/2016 at 15:10).

(19) Benghabrit's plan to teach in AA the first two grades of primary education caused a great noise. Some MPs signed a manifesto (29/07/2015) against it. It was seen as 'dangerous' by the president of the teachers' union (UNPEF) who called for her dismissal, and as a threat on the national identity by the Association of Muslim Ulama who decided to call for a school boycott (also here). Retrieved from http://lughat.blogspot.com/2015.08/algerian -arabic-in-schools-more-smoke.html (10/08/2015-17:38).

(20) Author: L'Algérie au Maghreb. La guerre de libération et l'unité régionale (Mimesis-France, Paris 2013).http://www.oasiscenter.eu/authors/caterina-roggero (14/06/2016 at 12:24:00).

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