

Language Policy and Planning in Algeria: Case Study of Berber Language Planning

Jihad M. Hamdan

Department of English Language and Literature, The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Sara Kessar

Department of English Language and Literature, The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Abstract—This paper discusses the Berber language situation in Algeria in a language policy and planning context. It comprises two main parts. The first provides a general account of the linguistic profile of Algeria coupled with a historical context of the Berber language and Algerian Arabic. In order to develop a deeper understanding of the present issue, the second section is devoted to the Berber language planning, and the socio-political context of its recognition as the second official language alongside Arabic. In accordance with Hornberger's (2006) Integrative Framework, the study provides a critical examination of the Berber language planning process, i.e., corpus and acquisition planning, and explores the challenges language planners are facing.

Index Terms—Algeria, Arabization, Berber language, language planning, and language policy

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, indigenous and minority language policy and planning has become a crucially important issue that has gained increasing attention. As a case study, language policy and planning in Algeria represents an interesting subject inquiry. In this regard, Gordon (1966) posits that “the language question is one of the most intricate, conflictual and enduring aspects of Algeria’s post-colonial politics” (p.8). Following 132 years of struggle for independence which ended in 1962, Algeria was confronted with a slew of critical and urgent issues. One of these was restoring the national unity and rectifying the cultural and linguistic situation. The fundamental prerequisite for attaining these objectives was the choice of a national language(s). Despite its cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity which necessitates adopting linguistic pluralism, Algeria’s new leaders opted for Arabic as the only national and official language of the nation. According to Roberts (2003), this decision “overlooked the country’s linguistic diversity, denied any status to the languages spoken in Algeria and promoted literary/classical Arabic developed as the lingua franca of the Arab Middle East” (p.11). Thus, Algeria’s post-colonial language policy and planning was implemented at the expense of Berbers’ rights. However, after years of suppression and marginalization, the Berber language was officially accepted and integrated into the Algerian Constitution as a national language in 2001, as an official language alongside Arabic in 2016, and an immutable language alongside the three pillars of the nation: Islam, Arabic and the national flag in 2020.

In accordance with Hornberger’s (2006) Integrative Framework, the present study discusses the language planning situation in Algeria with a particular focus on the planning of the Berber language. After a general account of the language profile of Algeria, the status, corpus, and acquisition planning of the Berber language are examined. In doing so, the social, historical, and political contexts which are helpful in understanding how Berber language-related changes have taken place are delineated. Furthermore, the core section of the study presents a critical examination of the data provided by the High Commission for Amazighity with regard to the planning of the Berber language in education. Moreover, the main challenges language planners confront with regard to this planning, namely in terms of corpus planning, are underlined. The paper is meant to be a point of reference in addition to providing the reader with some highlights on the planning of the Berber language as it delineates the main policy decisions and planning activities implemented over the last forty years by Algeria’s post-independence governments.

II. THE LANGUAGE PROFILE OF ALGERIA

A. Berber Language

The Berber language (Tamazight) is a separate branch of the large Afroasiatic linguistic family, also known as Hamito-Semitic, which comprises, apart from Berber, Cushitic (chiefly in northeast Africa), Chadic (a set of languages spoken mainly in Chad, Nigeria, and Cameroon), Semitic and Ancient Egyptian (Kossmann, 2013). Given that neither physical anthropology nor prehistoric archaeology could prove, up till today, the presence of non- or pre-Berber substratum, pre-Berber linguistic sediment or could show any trace of an external origin of the language, Berber is considered the indigenous language of North Africa (Chaker, 2004). According to the National African Language Resource Center, Berber encompasses “15 main dialects and over 300 sub-dialects” (n.d, para. 3). It is “spoken all over

the area stretching from the Oasis of Siwa (in Western Egypt) to the Canary Islands and Libya; and from the Northern Coast of the Mediterranean Sea southwards into Mauritania, Mali and Niger” (Achab, 2006, p. 11). It is noteworthy that up to present, no official and accurate census data regarding the Berbers’ demography are available, yet scholars claim that approximately 80 to 90 per cent of the current population of North Africa remains ethnically Berbers, albeit a large portion of this proportion has been Arabized and has therefore lost their original Berber identity markers (Ilahiane, 2006, p. xxxvi). Following the same line of thought, Chaker (2004) asserts that “the huge majority of current Arabic speakers in the Maghreb are in fact Berbers who were “Arabized” at various times in history”. Chaker (2001) adds that “Algeria and Morocco are by far the countries that count the most significant Berber-speaking population, approximately 25% in Algeria, 35 to 40% in Morocco” (p.136).

In fact, the origin of the term Berber is highly disputed and the literature in this regard is full of ambiguities and controversies. The one hypothesis that has received the greatest support in literature is that “Berber is derived from the Latin word ‘Barbarus’, which was first used by the Greeks to designate anybody who was felt to be foreign to the Greeks way of life, especially people who did not speak Greek” (Sadiqi, 1997, p. 11). Subsequently, this word was adopted by the Romans with the same meaning to designate the indigenous people of North Africa. In the meanwhile, the term *barbarous* had strongly acquired a negative pejorative connotation when it was applied to refer to the population of Northern and Central Europe who encroached on the Roman Empire’s territory. Later, in Western languages, the term was reintroduced with the latter meaning as barbarians as in the historical episode known as Barbarian Invasion (Achab, 2006). However, “when the Latin literature was translated into modern European languages, notably French, the word barbarus, which was once applied to designate the populations of North Africa by the Romans, was translated as *Berbère* (Berber) so as to distinguish it from the word *barbare* (barbarian)” (Achab, 2006, p. 15).

Given the derogatory sense attached to the term Berber and its external origin, pioneers of Berber linguistic studies namely, Mouloud Mammeri and Mohamed Chafik, the father of the Tamazight movement, adopted the terms Tamazight and Imazighen in their seminal academic research. However, the word Berber is commonly used in Western scientific productions today and is highly adopted by scholars advocating the Berber case such as Amina Mettouchi and Salem Chaker, recognized as the dean of modern Berber studies. Additionally, and most importantly, Tamazight coincides with the name of the regional variety ‘Tamazight’ spoken in Central Morocco, so the use of the term in academic context runs the hazard of confusion. Accordingly, the term Berber will be used throughout the present work, with a specification of the regional varieties when necessary.

B. Algerian Arabic

Historically speaking, Arabic was introduced, along with the Islam religion, to Northern Africa in general and the Maghreb region in particular, as a consequence of the Muslim conquest of North Africa (7th century). However, the three main waves of invasions (647-709 AD) were mainly military and did not lead to a massive Arabization of the Maghreb region, which remained basically Berberophone (Achab, 2006). It was only from the 11th century and as an inevitable result of the migration of the Bedouin tribes, namely Banū Hilāl, Maṣqil and Banū Sulaym out of Egypt into North Africa, an event which was later referred to as Hilalian migration ‘Tagheribat Bani Hilal’, that the conquered region was exceedingly Arabized (Pereira, 2017). Given these two historical events, Arabization of the Maghreb region is commonly considered to be a two-stage process.

Following the categorization advanced by Ibn Khaldoun, the Maghrebi group of Arabic dialects is divided into: the non- Hilālī (or pre-Hilālī) sedentary *ḥaḍarī* vernaculars and the Bedouin *badawī* vernaculars (Pereira, 2017). The pre-Hilālī dialects are spoken in the oldest cities of Northern Africa, namely, Soussa, Mehdiya and Kairouan in contemporary Tunisia; Badis, Tangier and Fez in today’s Morocco, in addition to Djidjelli, Collo and Constantine in today’s northeast part of Algeria: the area between Nedroma, Rashgoun and Telmcen in northwest Algeria.

As regards the Hilālī Arabic dialects, the following division is proposed by Versteegh (2014): the Central Hilal (central and south Algeria), the Eastern Hilal (eastern Algeria and central Tunisia), Sulaym in the East (southern Tunisia and Libya) and the Maṣqil (Morocco and western Algeria). A sub-tribe of the Maṣqil, Banu Hassan, settled in Mauritania, south of Morocco and the Western Sahara and so the Bani Hassan dialect, Hassaniya Arabic, became used in the mentioned regions.

In Algeria, the Hilālī Arabic has been divided by Marçais (1986) into four main dialects:

- (1) *Sulaymite* dialect, which is connected with Tunisian Bedouin dialects
- (2) *Ma’qilian* dialect which is connected with Moroccan Bedouin dialects
- (3) *Hilālīan* dialect contains three nomadic sub-dialects: (i) the *Hilālīan Saharan* that covers the totality of the Sahara of Algeria, (ii) the *Hilālīan-Tellian* dialect the speakers of which occupy a large part of the Tell of Algeria, and (iii) the *High-plains of Constantine*, which covers the north of Hodna region to Seybouse river
- (4) *Completely-Bedouin* dialect that covers Algiers’ Blanks, and some of its near seacoast cities (Bougrine et al., 1968/2018, p. 141).

III. BERBER LANGUAGE PLANNING

A. Status Planning and Context of Recognition

Following its independence in 1962, Algeria's new decision makers opted for Arabic as the only national language of the nation, an action that kicked off the Arabization process. Aziz (2015) pointed out that, "in the same manner in which the French attempted to convert Algerians into Frenchmen.... Algerian governments post-independence attempted to conduct a systemic make-over of national identity through Arabization...to carve a geopolitical Arabo-Algerian identity, which had not existed prior to independence...." (p.37). Thus, Algeria's successive governments have always marginalized the Berber dimension of the nation. In fact, it was presented as "a threat to national unity" (Benali, 2007, p. 1). Therefore, Berbers intensified their attempts to halt or at least to decelerate the Arabization policy, which had led to a constant antagonism between this ethnic group and the government.

According to Youcef (2020) "Berberphones, had not been pros to Arabization itself, but rather against its imbalances that tended to favour one language at the expense of another without paying a sizable attention to the fact of diversity" (p. 84). This precarious and hostile situation had decisive consequences, which can be marked by a "definite awakening of the Berber identity consciousness" (Chaker, 2001, p. 137). In 1980, Algeria was shaken by the first and most grave riots of its postcolonial history. On 10 March of the same year, the Algerian Berber writer, linguist, and anthropologist Mouloud Mammeri was invited by the university of Tizi Ouzou (the administrative centre of Kabyle Berber ethnic group) to hold a conference on his newly released collection of antique Berber poetry. However, the conference was banned by the authorities and the entire region (Kabyle province) went into general strike and civil disobedience for several weeks. Following this tragic event which came to be known as Berber spring (tafsut imazighen), "the socio-political panorama would never be the same again" (Benrabah, 2005, p.432). As long as December 1983, president Chadli during his speech to the National Liberation Front (FLN) party officially acknowledged that "Imazighen" are the ancestors of most Algerians and that Algeria in essence is not exclusively an Arab nation (International Crisis Group, 2003). The regime had made some concessions but its refusal to recognize Berber as a national and official language remained the major dilemma.

Following the *intifada* of October 1988, the Berber Cultural Movement called for a general strike (known as *grève des cartables*) which lasted from 24 September 1994 till 9 April 1995. The strike paralyzed the entire education sector in Kabyle region and led to the creation of the High Commission for Amazighity by a presidential decree in 1995, under the mandate of President Liamine Zeroual with the main mission of documenting, promoting and standardizing the language taking into account all its linguistic, cultural, scientific and historical dimensions (Mahè 2001; Bencheфра & Derradji, 2004). Additionally, "to defuse Amazigh demands, the government simultaneously made exceptional cultural concessions. In 1996, a constitutional referendum passed a three-pillar construction of the Algeria nation: Islamness, Arabness, and Amazighness" (Roberts, as cited in Terriche, 2020, p. 62). At the level of education, data have partially changed in favour of the Berber language.

In April 2001, during the annual remembrance of the Berber Spring hundreds of activists maintained their claims for official recognition, yet things turned to unprecedented violent riots when a gendarme shot dead an eighteen-year-old student (International Crisis Group, 2003). The violent clash between the authorities and the protestors lasted for weeks in Kabylie region, resulting in 120 dead and thousands wounded (Boudhane, 2017). This incident which has come to be known as 'Black Spring' constitutes a turning point in the history of Berber language in post-colonial era. On 11 June of the same year, the representatives of the Kabyle Berber ethnic group (Arouch Movement) forced the authorities to start negotiations by drafting a list of 15 demands known as the El Kseur Platform. Article 8 of the platform stipulated "the satisfaction of the Amazigh claim in all its (identity, civilizational, linguistic and cultural), dimensions, without a referendum or any conditions, and the consecration of Tamazight as an official national language" (International Crisis Group, 2003, p. 38).

Following the approval of the parliament, the ousted president Abdelaziz Bouteflika eventually reconsidered the 3rd article of the constitution via incorporating Berber as the second national language. Subsequently, under the pressure of the Kabylie's representatives and after several rounds of talk, the parliament passed a constitutional amendment conferring Berber language an official status alongside Arabic on February 7, 2016 (Boudhane, 2017). Consequently, in the fourth article of the constitutional amendment it is stated that: "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" (Algerian Official Journal N.14, 2016, p. 6). This hard-won legitimization has in turn given the Berber language a new status in various domains. More recently, in 2020, Berber language has been conferred the status of an immutable language (excluded from any future constitutional amendments) alongside the three pillars of the nation: Islam, Arabic and the national flag.

B. Corpus Planning

(a). Standardization

Given the linguistic diversity of Berber language, two options were open for language planners as regards the standardization and selection process: polynomic standard or codifying and promoting either Kabyle or Touareg dialect to be the standard language. Commenting on this issue, the Algerian writer Idriss Rabouh claimed that "the new status accorded to Tamazight would open the "gates of hell" in Algeria, as different Amazigh groups would fight to have their particular dialect chosen as the official one" (cited in Terriche, 2020, p.62). Inspired by the polynomic and convergent planning process, contrary to expectations, the High Commission for Amazighity proposed to linguistically unify the

existing dialects by considering the geolectal variation over the other possibility proposed by some academics. For this sake, in 2018, the People's National Assembly (APN) approved a draft law presented by the minister of higher education and scientific research on the founding of the Algerian Academy of Tamazight language. The draft law delineates the mission, organisation, composition and the functioning of the Academy of Tamazight language as stipulated in Article 4 of the Constitution, amended in 2016. The academy is composed of about 50 qualified Berber experts with proven skills in the field of education, pedagogy and didactics, Berber linguistics, planning, anthropology, history, and computer science. Given the legal status the Academy enjoys, its most urgent mission is to resolve the issue of Berber script and to create a standardized language that will guarantee mutual understanding among all Algerian Berber groups and facilitates its use for government purposes. In this context, the Secretary General of the High Commission for Amazighity said: "this is a historic decision and breakthrough which completes the Tamazight rehabilitation process, opening up considerable prospects for work in multiple fields for the promotion and development of the language" (Sawahel, 2018, para. 2). One of the most complex issues facing researchers in the process of unification is linguistic variation. Nowadays, the Algerian Berber language shows up in the form of several regional dialects with interdialectal and intradialectal variations particularly at the lexical level, which constitutes the most marked and most immediately apparent divergence. Considering the development of a polynomic Berber as an immediate objective at this phase entails creating a reference language in the laboratory as a sort of neo-Berber, starting from the different dialects by eliminating all the differences and elaborating a common language. According to Chaker, 1998, this would create a new diglossic situation of the Berber language, which would be completely counterproductive in relation to the objective of promoting Berber language and in particular to its generalization. Thus, it would be particularly dangerous to elaborate an additional standard monster a "classical Berber", which would be necessarily very far from all real uses, under the pretext that a "unified" language would also be needed for the Berbers.

Alternatively, Chaker (2010) stated that in the immediate future, and probably for the next decade, we will aim to create a standard (written) form of each Berber regional variety (standard Kabyle, standard Tachelhit, standard Chaoui, etc). The objective of a pan-Berber standard will only be envisaged over the long term, through habituation and gradual convergence between the different codified varieties. Thus, a common orthography should be unified for all Berber dialects, except for very marked regional phonemic features. The predominant usages of Berber Latin script and the codified neo-Tifinagh represent an example of 'Pan-Berber' notation tendency, acceptable to almost the entire Berber world, neutralize (in writing) most of the differences and present no serious distortion. In terms of syntax, there is already a great grammatical convergence, and even the existing differences rarely pose serious obstacles to mutual understanding; yet morpho-syntactic regularity must be ensured (Touati, 2018).

Berber lexical planning has already taken two directions. The first direction focuses on lexical purification of Berber regional dialects following two main processes; (a) rehabilitation of endogenous lexicon that have been disregarded in favour of Arabic borrowing, and (b) importation of endogenous terms used in other Berber dialects (Taifi, 2012). Historically speaking, the first deliberate attempts to enrich the lexicon date back to the 1940s when certain Berber activists began translating religious texts, literary works, folk music... etc, into Kabyle dialect. In the course of doing so, they resorted to borrowing from Arabic to express abstract concepts not found in Berber and to make their message understandable without changing the meaning of the source language (Chemakh, 2010). Following the 'Berbersist Crisis' of 1949, the process of borrowing was swiftly abandoned in favour of native neologism and the words that were already borrowed were replaced with Berber equivalents found in dialects other than Kabyle. The second direction concerns terminology creation in polynomic Berber. To cope with the demands of the new age and the flow of modern terminology, Chaker (2010) pointed out that researchers and specialists in the field must ensure the creation of a unified modern, scientific, and technical terminology in Berber to avoid obsolete and imprecise scientific terms, and most importantly multiplicity of synonyms. Neologism in Algerian Berber was first introduced by Mammeri in his work ' *Les Isefra de Si Mohand*' (1969). One year later, he published the first edition of ' *Amawal*' which constitutes the second contribution of Mammeri to the standardization of Berber and remains the founding act of modern neology in Berber.

Overall, Chaker (1998, 2010) noted that the regional codified dialects should not be considered as coercive and immutable norms, but rather fluid frameworks, where we can leave a certain margin of variation and choice. In all situations of undecidability, the different possibilities must be integrated into the norm "polynomic standardized Berber". The whole process can be summarized as follows: the a priori competing forms in one geolect are first treated as synonymous; hence, the user is left with choosing the standard from, then, "in a second stage, a normalized form is favoured, while leaving open the range of competing forms in order to raise the user's awareness to inherent variation in Amazigh as a whole" (Boukous, 2014, p. 9). Tolerating the regional pronunciation and adopting the most common morphosyntactic forms as well as the mostly used lexis in the geolects will be a prerequisite. According to Chachou, (2021), though the ongoing linguistic unification project (i.e., Polynomic Standard) is a long-lasting process, it seems to be the ideal policy for rehabilitating and legitimizing the Berber language without imposing any hierarchy between the regional varieties.

(b). Graphization

Originally, Tifinagh (also called Lybico-Berber or just Lybic), one of the most ancient scripts of humanity, is the native writing system of the Berber language. However, its use decreased dramatically due to colonisation in favour of Arabic and Latin and only the Tuaregs kept the Tifinagh alive. According to Blanco (2010) "From the 1960s onwards, a

modified Latin alphabet (using diacritics for Amazigh-specific phonemes) has become a standard that has gained great acceptance, mainly in Algeria” (p.11). The first works in which the Latin script was used to transcribe Berber Kabyle and Cheluh are: (1) the dictionary compiled by J.M.D. Venture Paradis, published in 1844 under the title ‘*Grammaire et Dictionnaire Abrégés de Langue Berbère*’ and (2) ‘*Essai de grammaire kabyle*’ written by A. Hanoteau in 1858. Following the establishment of a chair in Berber studies at the faculty of Algiers (1887), three outstanding guides were published (Chemakh, 2010):

- ‘*Manuel de Langue Kabyle*’ by R. Basset.
- ‘*Cours de Langue Kabyle*’ by B.Bensedira.
- ‘*Une Première Année de Langue Kabyle*’ by A.Boulifa.

In addition to using Berber Latin alphabets, R. Basset proposed a phonetic notation that Berbers could henceforth use to transcribe the Berber dialects they study. Afterwards, Basset’s phonetic notation was rearranged and refined by Les Pères Blancs ‘the White Fathers’ in their seminal work ‘*Fichier de Documentation Berbère*’ published in 1946. Inspired by Basset and White fathers’ Berber phonetic systems, the Algerian linguist Mould Mammeri created a new system of phonetic notation intended for public use. His system was published for the first time in ‘*Grammaire Berbère, Dialecte Kabyle*’ (1966). Two main features have distinguished Mammeri’s system (Chemakh, 2010):

- The use of Latin (and Greek) graphemes in the notation, adding diacritics when necessary.
- The negligence of dialectal features (such as spirantization in Kabyle) to make the notation of Berber dialects as homogeneous as possible.

Although his system of Berber phonetic notation has attracted the attention of the Berber academy, given the momentous role of Mammeri in Berber movement, it was marginalized at the expense of Neo-Tifinagh that has witnessed a massive diffusion in Berber regions since the 1970s. This can be attributed to the position held by Berber activists working under the Berber academy who did not share Mammeri’s view regarding the Latin script. However, with his publication of ‘*Tajerrumt n Tmazight*’ (1976) and Chaker’s ‘*Propositions pour une Notation Usuelle du Berbère*’ (1983), Mammeri’s phonetic system dating back to the 60s has once again received substantial scholarly consideration.

The Berber Latin Script has witnessed significant modifications since Mouloud Mammeri’s time, following the literary production movement and the numerous linguistic studies in phonetics and phonology carried out on Berber regional dialects, which made it possible to identify the phonemes and their variants. In this regard, several meetings, conferences and symposiums around the issue of Berber orthography took place (Hassani & Hadad, 2010):

- In July 1989, a meeting was organized in Tizi-Ouzou with the aim of renewing the use of Mammeri’ notation (Tamaa ânrit).
- The seminars organized at the National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations (INALCO) in 1996 and 1998.
- In 2007, a symposium on the ‘Standardization of Berber Language: The Latin Script’ was organized in Barcelona.

Following the recognition of Berber as an official language, script choice and standardization of orthography posed a delicate issue for language planners and created a strong disagreement among academics. Advocates of the Tifinagh script “contend that the natural choice for a language is to be written with its original script” (Blanco, 2014, p. 11). From their perspective, any other alternatives would mean ignoring the Berber identity. Moreover, its critics question its acceptability on the part of Berbers and the rest of the Algerians since all of them are acquainted with Latin and Arabic prints. In this regard, Kamal Nait Zerrad claimed that only if the Arabic script is adopted, Arabophones would better be tolerant with regards to Berber language. Advocates of Latin script, on the other hand, consider the use of Tifinagh and Arabic scripts as a step backward and believe that only Latin script would lead the Berber language to be internationally recognized. Besides, most, if not all, literary productions and scientific publications related to the Berber language are written in Latin script and it is the only adopted script by the educational institutions of Berber in Europe (France, Spain, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy) and in North America (the USA and Canada).

In fact, for several decades, the same controversy returns cyclically in public debate-political and academic- on the question of the optimal script for the Berber language: Latin script, Arabic script, or Tifinagh? A pseudo-debate, entirely predetermined by ideological choices, and ultimately by political authority: such pseudo-debate was the case in Morocco with the abrupt decision of the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture (IRCAM) to officially codify and adopt the Tifinagh script in 2002, and so it is in Algeria with those wishing to impose the Arabic script (Chaker, 2010). To contextualize the debate, one should recall the declaration of the National Liberation Front (FLN) and the president Chadli” ‘*Oui à l’enseignement du Berbère, à condition qu’il soit écrit en caractères Arabes*’ [Trans. Yes to teaching Berber, provided it is written in Arabic script] (Chaker, 2010, p. 54). Therefore, this idea is old and still stems from circles that are strongly characterized by Arabist ideology.

In the midst of all this controversy, the High Commission for Amazighity declared the implementation of the language in Tifinagh, Arabic and Latin scripts. Thus, so far, no official commitment to adapting one definite script has been made. However, the Secretary-General of the Commission, Professor Hashemi Assad, stated that researchers working under the Commission and specialists in this language highly recommend the Latin script as the optimal choice for purely technical and academic reasons, yet; he does not mind the preference of some to write the language with

Tifinagh or Arabic scripts. Therefore, at this phase, the issue of orthography is never an issue and the script which would better contribute to the language in the next few years will be officially adopted. Thus far, the debate over script choice has been settled by making official materials related to the Berber language obtainable in the three scripts: Tifinagh, Latin and Arabic. According to Benali (2007) "from a democratic point of view, it is fair to let the society decide through practice and use, rather than impose on it a writing system which is more likely to be refused, and, subsequently, useless" (p. 255).

C. Acquisition Planning

(a). Media landscape

One of the changes noted since the political liberalisation of 1988, is the status of Berber language in the Algerian audio-visual era. At the end of 1991, the Public Establishment of Television began broadcasting a daily news bulletin in Berber language with a period of 20 minutes in Kabyle and Chaoui dialects for the first time in Algeria's history. Subsequently, further dialects were added, namely Mozabite dialect (1996), Targui dialect (2005) and Chenoui dialect (2007). Post-2001, Canal Algérie and A3 public international television channels started airing two daily 15 minutes news in the five major dialects of the Algerian Berber. Thus, Algerian Berbers have finally won the right to broadcast news in their native language on more than one national TV station. Following its recognition as a national language, the state emphasized the use of Berber in public TV channels and stressed the need to promote its linguistic diversity. Another milestone was attained in 2009, when TV4 (also known as Tamazight TV), the fourth Algerian public national television channel dedicated only to Berber language and culture, was launched in 2009.

Apart from the general public national television channels, Berbère Télévision, the first Berber satellite TV station based in Paris, started broadcasting since 2001. Afterwards, in 2014 the Algerian authorities permitted this privately owned television channel to be licensed in the country. After decades of the state monopoly over the audio-visual sector, in September 2011 the ousted president Bouteflika opened the door for private channels (Azeredo, 2015). Given the new Law of 2014 on Audio visual Activity (14-04), which "defines the general and common duties concerning public or private broadcasters... all audio-visual communication services must... promote in their programmes the two national languages (Arabic and Tamazight). The use of both national languages must be privileged in all programmes and also in publicity" (Azeredo, 2015, p. 19). Consequently, the majority of the privately owned channels broadcasting either in Arabic or Arabic- French, such as, Numedia New (2012), Dzair TV (2013), Djurdjura TV (2013) and the most-watched channels in the country, Ech Chourouk TV (2011) and Ennahar (2012), started promoting Berber culture and airing one news bulletin per day in Berber language. This has led, on the one hand, to acquainting people either inside or outside the Algerian territory with Berber language and culture and, on the other hand, providing job opportunities for graduate students majoring in Berber Language, Culture and Civilization. Although this remarkable recognition cannot be underestimated, the private channels were asked to allocate a higher percentage to Berber programming.

While Berber language did not enter Algerian television until the early-1990s, it has been present on Algerian radio since Chaîne 2 was launched in 1948. This Chaîne is the oldest Berber radio station in Algeria that was inherited, in addition to Chaîne 1 which targets Arabophone listeners and Chaîne 3 devoted to Francophone audiences, after independence by the Algerian government (Benrabah, 2005). Chaîne 2 was restricted to the Kabylia Berber community, but in the mid-1990s started to include other Berber varieties. Recently, the Director General of Algerian Radio, Mohamed Beghali, stated that today about 25 local stations dedicated primarily to Berber culture broadcast solely in Berber dialects, without neglecting the role of the rest of the Algerian radio local stations interested in Berber cultural heritage. These attempts have strengthened the position of Berber language and culture in public broadcasting.

(b). Education

1. Higher Education

Historically speaking, Berber language teaching was institutionalized in 1880s (pre-independence), at the faculty of Humanities in Algiers: a course was given from 1880 by Emile Masqueray; it was later entrusted to René Basset (1884). Throughout the 1885 and 1887, a General Certificate of Secondary Education (brevet) and a degree in "Berber dialects" were created for the first time ever in Algeria's history (Sabri, 2014). Berber teaching was also supported by the famous French National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilization (INALCO), particularly the Berber Research Institute (CRB) since 1913. After gaining its independence, Algeria's new leaders abolished Berber language teaching except for the complementary optional course offered by the linguist Mouloud Mammeri 1965-1972, which was later banned by the authorities.

Following the *intifada* of October 1988 and the pressure of Berber Cultural Movement, the Ministry of Higher Education announced the creation of Berber Language and Culture Department at the University of Tizi-Ouzou in 1990. The main goal of the department was the training of researchers and setting up a Master level curriculum in three main majors, namely, Linguistics, Literature and Civilization. The department also has a very active research laboratory in Linguistics and Language Sciences which catalyses the various academic works related to the Berber language produced by professors and researchers from any Algerian university (HCA, 2014). One year later, a similar department was established at the University of Bejaia with more specializations than those found at the department of Tizi Ouzou.

At the beginning of the academic year 1996-1997, the Ministry of Higher Education decided to set up a bachelor's degree in Berber Language and Culture in both departments. In this regard, Chaker (2001) posits:

Berber experts and many of the faculty in charge locally expressed reservations, considering the fact that minimum conditions to ensure satisfactory training had not been met yet.... Far from being realistic and obviously premature, the decision to create a license degree in Berber had in fact, political motivations (p.139).

However, considering the statistics provided by the High Commission for Amazighity (2014), significant progress in Berber language teaching in higher education can be noticed. The number of diplomas issued by both departments (1995-2014) is displayed in the following table:

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF DIPLOMAS ISSUED BY TIZI OUZOU AND BEJAIA DEPARTMENTS (1995-2014)

University	Bachelor	PhD	Master	Total
Tizi Ouzou	2527	10	72	2609
Bejaia	2315	12	83	2365

After recognizing Berber as a national language, two other departments in Berber speaking regions were created. In 2010, the Ministry of Higher Education declared the establishment of a department of Berber language and Culture at the University of Bouira, followed by an analogous department at the University of Batna in 2013. According to the High Commission for Amazighity, in 2014 the total number of bachelor students graduated from the department of Bouira was 223 and the number of those enrolled in the PhD program was 06. As regards the department of Batna, 80 undergraduates were registered as first year bachelor students in 2014. Until 2015, most supervision of the Berber language was provided by the two Berber departments of the universities of Tizi Ouzou and Bejaia universities, followed by the departments of Batna and Bouira as of 2013. Following the recognition of Berber as an official language, a further Berber department was set up in 2016 at the preparatory school for teachers training, Bouzareah, Algiers, with the main aim of providing quality training to the enrolled students who would be directly appointed as teachers of Berber language. Interestingly, the head of Bouzareah preparatory school revealed that the school noticed the enrolment of Berber speakers in addition to Arabized Berbers and Arabs, both of whom do not speak any Berber regional variety. A progress which reflects the effectiveness of the High Commission for Amazighity's attempts to revitalize and promote the Berber language in all its linguistic, historical, and cultural dimensions among all Algerians, regardless of their ethnic origin.

2. Pre-Tertiary Education

After years of marginalization and attempts to eradicate Berber language, experimental classes for its teaching were eventually set up in 1995, following the school boycott that paralyzed the entire education sector in Kabylie region. The new ministerial initiative was supervised by the High Commission for Amazighity, whose task was teacher training and introducing the language as an optional subject in different middle and high schools. In the first academic year 1995-1996, Berber was introduced in 16 provinces (Boumerdès, Khenchela, Tamanrasset, Batna, Bêjaia, Bouira, Alger, Oum El Bouagui, Sâïf, Tizi-Ouzou, Biskra, Tipaza, Illizi, El Bayadh, Oran, Ghardaia) only to learners sitting for a final national exam, i.e., final year of middle school and higher school (Benrabah, 2005; Alik, 2010). However, given "Circular N 887 issued on 5 September 1996" and "Circular No 789 20 issued on 20 August 1997" issued by the Ministry of National Education, the teaching of Berber extended to a four-year period in middle school and a three-year period in secondary school (Benrabah, 2005, p. 447-448).

Until the founding of the National Pedagogical and Linguistic Centre for the Teaching of Tamazight (CNPLET) in 2003, there were no available textbooks for Berber learners to rely on, and the recruited teachers were responsible for selecting the appropriate material based on the syllabus recommended by the Ministry of National Education and the High Commission for Amazighity. Following the creation of the CNPLET, the Ministry of National Education decided to adopt new pedagogical approaches, namely Project-Based Learning and Competency-Based Learning. Given these new pedagogical approaches, the teaching of Berber at all levels of compulsory education, envisages three main objectives to be achieved (Alik, 2010). In elementary and middle school, learners should develop competency in the four basic language skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) in their Berber variety, and acquire the skill of cultural awareness. In the first grade of secondary school, learners will gradually move to dialectal intercomprehension, which increases mutual intelligibility by making learners aware of and familiar with Berber linguistic varieties. In the second and third grades of the same level, learners will be introduced to a Unified Berber Language based on the different regional varieties they have encountered in the past year (the High Commission for Amazighity, 2014). With regard to non-Berber speaking learners, it was recommended to accompany the content of the same syllabus with foreign language teaching/learning methods, while relying more on differentiated pedagogy.

Since no official commitment to adapting one definite script has been made, elementary, middle and secondary education Berber textbooks and teachers' manuals are written in two main scripts: Latin and Arabic (High Commission for Amazighity, 2014). Based on Alik's (2010) content analysis of Berber textbooks and teachers' manuals, Tifinagh symbols appear only on a few pages of middle school textbooks in the Latin version, with a complete absence in secondary school textbooks. It should be noted that Berber teachers were given the full right to choose the script they deem more suitable for their teaching. The High Commission for Amazighity (2014) reported the use of Tifinagh only in

Tamanrasset province (the region of Touareg Berbers). The provinces of Bejaya, Bouira, Tizi-Ouzou, Boumerdès, Sàïf, Bordj Bou Arreridj, Khenchela, Oum El Bouaghi, and Algiers opted for Latin script. In Batna province, the choice of the script depended on the initial training of teachers. Overall, the report indicated that the majority of teachers were neither in favour of teaching Berber through Tifinagh script, nor through Arabic script. Besides, given that most, if not all, literary productions and scientific publications related to the Berber language are written in Latin script, it is conspicuous that the decision of the High Commission for Amazighity to adopt Tifinagh, Arabic and Latin scripts is merely taken to please Arabists and Berberists. Although this decision is in the interest of the language, especially at this sensitive stage, it would be safe to say that, putting learners in a dubious situation through exposing them to both scripts at the same time or one at the expense of the other will not allow them to determine their choice on this aspect and would be a way of involving them in an ideological conflict that they did not even know what it was all about.

From a quantitative perspective, during the second half of the 1990s, the number of teachers decreased slightly: from 233 in the school year 1995-1996, it dropped to 184 in 1998-1999 as shown in table 3 (HCA, 2014). According to Tigziri, (2018), this shortfall was offset by quality staff training as the number of contract personnel decreased to 43 in the academic year 1998-1999. However, post-Black Berber (2001) and the recognition of Berber as a national language in 2003, the number of teachers has increased dramatically from 217 in 2001-2002 to 1654 in the academic year 2012-2013.

TABLE 2
OVERALL EVOLUTION OF LEARNERS AND TEACHERS' NUMBER IN BERBER LANGUAGE 95-2013

School year	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-2000	99-2001
Learners	37690	57934	63898	55730	55958	72359
Teachers	233	196	222	184	191	193
School year	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Learners	68995	79342	92084	94047	105182	130591
Teachers	217	257	334	387	520	688
School year	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Learners	139293	162807	193226	213075	225210	234690
Teachers	670	909	1148	1330	1427	1654

Concerning the number of learners, during the first seven years of Berber teaching experience, the number of learners enrolled in Berber course was marked by fluctuation. Overall, the number of learners reached 63898 in 1997-1998 but started to decline slightly; it fell to 55730 in 1999-2000. In the academic year 1999-2001 the number of learners witnessed a significant increase (72359) but dropped again to 68995 during the violent incident of Black Berber. However, since this event the number of learners almost doubled within five years; from 68995 in 2001-2002 to 130591 in 2006-2007 academic year. Additionally, it can be noticed that the number reached 234690 in 2012-2013 which can be attributed to the fact that the Berber language was expanded nationwide. In 2005, Berber was introduced as an optional language in the 4th grade of primary school. In 2017, the Ministry of Higher Education and the High Commission for Amazighity announced that the total number of learners enrolled in Berber course in primary, middle and secondary schools reached 600,000 learners, in response to the officialization of the language. In the 2014-2015 academic year, Berber teaching decreased to 11 provinces, whereas in 2017-2018 the number rose to 38 provinces. By the school year 2019-2020, the Secretary General of the Commission, Professor Hashemi Assad, reported that the total number of Berber teaching classes reached 15.000 distributed in 44 provinces. According to the High Commission of Amazighity, the evolution of Berber language teaching requires more efforts to enhance its acceptance by both Berberophones and Arabophones. This would facilitate its generalization as a mandatory course in the next 10 or 20 years.

IV. CONCLUSION

In this study an attempt has been made to describe the language planning situation in Algeria, with a particular focus on Berber language planning. In fact, predicting language changes is a tricky matter that is generally non-accurate as language related decisions are often made on ideological and non-linguistic premises. However, by comparing the current status of Berber as a constitutionally protected language to its former highly hostile political status and the longstanding aggressive assimilatory language policy towards it, one might assume that there are grounds for optimism.

One of the key issues highlighted in this paper is dialect diversity which made it challenging to reconcile the experimental polynomic standard with the realities of actual usage. Actually, the linguistic diversity of Berber language cannot be underestimated and necessitates, as Chaker proposed, Berber planners to integrate the variation in the definition of Berber norm. Given that the current Berber dialects have evolved separately and formed distinct sociolinguistic communities for almost ten centuries, and that each dialect conveys distinctive literature, culture and tradition, a pan-Berber linguistic standard would immediately cut off Berber speakers from this cultural heritage and make Berber language a new 'wooden language', without real social anchoring and without cultural dynamics. The objective of a pan-Berber standard will only be envisaged over the long term, through habituation and gradual convergence between the different codified varieties. Any rigid and excessive attempts to impose the artificially constructed standard, would be inevitably rejected and its promoters would have no way to gain acceptance.

REFERENCES

- [1] Achab, K. (2006). *Internal structure of verb meaning: A study of verbs of (change of) state in Tamazight (Berber)* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Ottawa, Canada.
- [2] Alik, K. (2010). *L'aménagement linguistique du Tamazight à travers son enseignement. La norme envisagée dans les manuels scolaires* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Mouloud Mammeri.
- [3] Azeredo, J. A. (2015). *Assessment of Media Legislation in Algeria*. Med Media.
- [4] Aziz, A. (2015). *Al-Arabiyah, le Français, and the soul of Algeria: The language tango between Arabic and French in Algerian education policy and defining post-colonial Algerian national identity* [Unpublished Bachelor's thesis]. University of Mississippi.
- [5] Benali, M. (2007). *A sociolinguistic investigation of Tamazight in Algeria with a special reference to the Kabyle variety* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Oran.
- [6] Benchehra, C. Y., & Derradji, Y. (2004). La politique linguistique en Algérie. *Revue D'aménagement linguistique*, 107, 145–170.
- [7] Benrabah, M. (2005). The language planning situation in Algeria. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 6(4), 379-502.
- [8] Benrabah, M. (2007). Language-in-education planning in Algeria: Historical development and current issues. *Language Policy*, 6(2), 225-252.
- [9] Blanco, J. L. (2014). *Tifinagh & the Ircam: Explorations in cursiveness and bicameralism in the Tifinagh script* [Unpublished Master's thesis]. University of Reading.
- [10] Boudhane, Y. (2017). *What have the Amazigh Achieved in Algeria?* Retrieved from <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/what-have-amazigh-achieved-algeria>. 14/5/2022.
- [11] Bougrine, S., Cherroun, H., & Abdelali, A. (2018, April 25-26). *Spoken Arabic Algerian dialect identification* [Paper presentation]. Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Natural Language and Speech Processing (ICNLSP), Algiers, Algeria.
- [12] Chachou, I. (2021). Key issues in the field of macro-sociolinguistics of the Maghreb: Societal debates and contentious discourse. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 25(4), 513-532.
- [13] Chaker, S. (1998). *Orientations Générales pour L'aménagement de la Langue Berbère*. Le Travail sur la Langue: Urgence et Réalisme. Atelier Aménagement Linguistique de la Langue Berbère.
- [14] Chaker, S. (2001). Berber challenge in Algeria: The state of the question. *Race, Gender & Class*, 8(3), 135-156.
- [15] Chaker, S. (2004, September 25-26). *Berber a "long-forgotten" language of France. Language and (im) migration in France, Latin America, and the United States: Sociolinguistic perspectives* [Paper presentation]. University of Texas, Austin.
- [16] Chaker, S. (2010, September 20-23). *La codification graphique du Berbère: Etat des lieux et enjeux* [Paper presentation]. La standardisation de l'écriture Amazighe, Boumerdes, Algeria.
- [17] Chemakh, S. (2006). L'aménagement de Tamazight (Milieu Algérien): Etat des lieux, critiques et propositions. *Timsal n Tamazight*, 3(1), 15-28.
- [18] Gordon, D. (1966). *The Passing of French Algeria*, London. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [19] Hassani, S., & Hadad, S. (2010, 101-124). *Le kabyle entre l'usage oral et l'écrit : Quels principes faut-il retenir pour adopter une norme orthographique à base latine?* [Paper presentation]. La standardisation de l'écriture Amazighe, Boumerdes, Algeria.
- [20] High Commission for Amazighity. (2014). *Rapport sur la Situation de L'enseignement de Tamazight en Algérie*. Rapport.
- [21] Hornberger, Nancy (2006), Frameworks and Models in Language Policy and Planning. In: Thomas Ricento (Ed.), *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*, (24- 41). Blackwell Publishing.
- [22] Ilahiane, H. (2006). *Historical dictionary of the Berbers (Imazighen)*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- [23] International Crisis Group. (2003). *Algeria: Unrest and Impasse in Kabylia*. International Crisis Group, Report n15. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/algeria/algeria-unrest-and-impasse-kabylia-0>. 13/5/2022.
- [24] Kossmann, M. (2013). *The Arabic influence on Northern Berber*. Brill.
- [25] National African Language Resource Center. (n.d). *Tamazight (Berber)*. <https://nalrc.indiana.edu/doc/brochures/tamazight.pdf>. 12/6/2022.
- [26] National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations. (2011). *La Kabyle (Algerie)*. <https://www.centrederechercheberbere.fr/kabyle.html>. 22/5/2022.
- [27] Pereira, C. (2017). Waves of Arabization and the Vernaculars of North Africa: An Annotated Bibliography. In: E. Benmamoun, & Bassiouney, R. (Eds), *The routledge handbook of Arabic linguistics* (pp. 488-503). Routledge.
- [28] Roberts, H. (2003). *The Battlefield: Algeria 1988-2002: Studies in a broken polity*. Verso, London, New York.
- [29] Sabri, M. (2014). L'enseignement de Tamazight dans les différents paliers: Peut-on parler d' évolution?. *Iles d imesli*, 1(6), 189-211.
- [30] Sadiqi, F. (1997). The place of Berber in Morocco. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 1997(123), 7-22.
- [31] Sawahel, W. (2018). *Draft Law Paves Way for Amazigh Language Academy*. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20180619150018159>. 02/5/2022.
- [32] Taifi, M. (2012). Aménagement linguistique et linguistique de L'usage. *Iles d Imesli*, 4(1), 15-24.
- [33] Terriche, A. A. (2020). *Language planning and endangered minority languages. Schools as agents for language revival in Algeria and Australia* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Sidi Bel Abbes.
- [34] Touati, R. (2018). Fragmentation et aménagement polynomique de Tamazight. *Timsal n Tamazight*, 10(1), 349-362.
- [35] Tiziri, N. (2018). Enseignement de la langue Amazighe: État des lieux. *Revue des Études Amazighes*, 2(1), 121-128.
- [36] Versteegh, K. (2014). *The Arabic language*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- [37] Youcef, I. (2020). Native languages in post-independent Algeria: The case of Berber. *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research*, 8(10), 80-86.

Jihad M. Hamdan holds a Ph.D. in Psycholinguistics. He is currently a full Professor at the Department of English Language and Literature, University of Jordan. His research interests focus on Psycholinguistics, Sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis and Translation. He published many papers in international Scopus indexed journals.

Sara Kessar is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of English Language and Literature, University of Jordan. Her major area of study is linguistics. His research interests focus on Critical Discourse Analysis, Psycholinguistics, Phonology, and Sociolinguistics.