

Language, Identity, and Literary Expression in Algeria

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Abstract

Carina Lynn Briggs: Language, Identity, and Literary Expression in Algeria
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This work examines the failure of linguistic-nationalism in Algeria through a policy of Arabization after Algerian independence. While French linguistic-nationalism has been successful in France and was successful in French Algeria, Algerian linguistic-nationalism has failed for a number of reasons. There are, however, many advantages to a multilingual-nationalism in Algeria and it is quite possible for a country to be multilingual, unified, and culturally rich and, in some cases, economically rich.

This work also examines the relationship between the choice of written and spoken languages, employing Kateb Yacine and Assia Djebar as examples, and the institution of national languages to contest linguistic-nationalism in Algeria. After independence, writers openly supported and wrote in French and Berber to fight Arabization, which created violence between politico-linguistic groups and internal dilemmas for Francophone writers. Jacques Derrida and Réda Bensmaïa offer solutions for these internal dilemmas, which further demonstrate the possibility of a multilingual Algeria.

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I. Introduction

We live in terror, told that we must choose between being a victim or an executioner.

But that choice is no choice at all. We can and must be neither.

~ Albert Camus

Linguistic-nationalism is the belief that nationality is characterized by a single language, which unifies a nation.¹ The French government came to accept the idea of a French linguistic-nationalism in France by the nineteenth century and began to enforce this language policy in France and then in Algeria when it became an integral part, three *départements* to be exact, of the French nation in 1848. During the colonial period, however, the French government succeeded in integrating the French language in Algeria by making French the official national language and requiring all education to take place in French. The French government, however, was unsuccessful in annihilating all other non-French languages. French, Arabic, and Berber, therefore, continue to survive in post-independent Algeria. After independence, some Algerian elites followed in the French government's footsteps and attempted to create an Algerian linguistic-nationalism by enforcing monolingualism through a policy of Arabization. The development of Algerian linguistic-nationalism resembles the development of French linguistic-nationalism in both France and Algeria because, like the French government, Algerian elites

¹In his book *Imagined Communities* (2006), Benedict Anderson briefly uses the term "linguistic-nationalism" to argue that European nationalisms were impossible until nations were characterized by linguistic unity, which began in the middle of the 19th century (109). The relationship between language and nationalism in Europe is only a part of his larger examination of imagined communities.

attempted to force linguistic-nationalism on Algerian citizens in order to create a nation united by one language.

French and Algerian linguistic-nationalisms in Algeria created both external battles and internal dilemmas for Francophones and Berberophones.² During the post-independent policy of Arabization, many Francophones and Berberophones openly challenged the Algerian state's official linguistic policy and many writers chose to write in French and Berber as a medium for fighting Algerian linguistic-nationalism. As a result, Francophones and Berberophones faced extreme violence for simply speaking and writing in French and Berber because some Arabophones viewed them as enemies of Algerian linguistic-nationalism, particularly Francophones who were viewed as supporters of French colonialism. Algerian writers of the French language also face internal dilemmas when it comes to choosing (or the lack of choice) in which language to write.

Upon examining the relationship between language and national unity and the external and internal dilemmas caused by Arabization in Algeria, linguistic-nationalism is not always successful in uniting multilingual nations and should, therefore, not be used a rule of thumb. As for Algerian linguistic-nationalism, Arabization has failed for various reasons while there are many benefits to an Algerian nation characterized by multilingualism. This paper will also address how Francophone Algerian writers can overcome each of the internal dilemmas they face by writing in the French language.

²Throughout this work, Algerians are discussed as distinct groups of people based on their political views and ambitions concerning language policy in Algeria: Francophones, Arabophones, Berberophones, and secular democrats. At various points in the paper, the politico-linguistic views and ambitions of each group will be discussed. Of course many Algerians speak multiple languages and may choose to identify with more than one politico-linguistic group.

II. The Development of Linguistic-Nationalism in Algeria

The development of French linguistic-nationalism in France and France's subsequent colonization of Algeria led to the French government's enforcement of French linguistic-nationalism in Algeria as well. The post-independent Algerian government also assumed a policy of linguistic imperialism by enforcing Algerian linguistic-nationalism through a policy of Arabization. Francophones and Berberophones openly opposed Arabization and many Francophone writers wrote in the French language as a medium for fighting the Algerian state's post-independent official language policy. As a result, Francophones, Berberophones, and writers of the French language faced external threats (i.e. violence) because some Arabophones viewed them as opponents to Arabization. Francophone writers also faced internal dilemmas by writing in the French language. This chapter will examine the development of French linguistic-nationalism in France and Algeria, the development of Algerian linguistic-nationalism, and the subsequent dilemmas faced by Francophone and Berberophone Algerians because of post-independent Arabization.

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson³ describes "official nationalism" as characterized by linguistic-nationalism (109), which is the belief that a nation is created and unified because of the fiction of a single national language (84). This belief also led to the belief in the fiction that specific languages are the

³Benedict Anderson is an Emeritus Professor of International Studies at Cornell University. In 1983, he wrote the first edition of *Imagined Communities*, which he has revised once in 1991 and again in 2006. In this book, he examines the origins and spread of nationalism, mostly in Europe, throughout the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. He pays particular attention to what he refers to as imagined communities and briefly discusses the relationship between language and nation.

property of the members of specific nations, such as French being the property of French citizens; the daily speakers and readers of a language came to feel entitled to it and to their place as equals within their imagined community, which shares the same language (Anderson 84).⁴ *La Toupie*, a political dictionary, defines *propriété* as “le droit de jouir et disposer des choses de la manière la plus absolue, pourvu qu'on n'en fasse pas un usage prohibé par les lois ou par les règlements. Elle est **exclusive** (un seul propriétaire) dans le cas de propriété individuelle ou partagée avec d'autres dans le cas de propriété collective ou de copropriété” (“Propriété”).⁵ Thus, the French, along with members of other European nations and their respective languages, claimed to own the French language after they came to believe in the fiction that they had a natural right (i.e. a collective ownership) to it.

Languages-of-state, the precursors to linguistic-nationalism, began to develop inadvertently during the seventeenth century in Europe.⁶ Around the middle of the nineteenth century, European governments began to support the idea of “official nationalisms” out of fear of exclusion or marginalization by smaller imagined communities⁷ within nations (Anderson 109-10) and subsequently began to impose

⁴Anderson uses the term “personal property” but he actually defines the term as “collective property” since language ownership is shared by specific groups, not specific individuals.

⁵Note that this dictionary does not refer to ownership as a legal right; it is difficult to refer to ownership in this instance as a legal right since there is no world government that can validate the ownership of languages by members of specific nation-states. In fact, this dictionary even mentions that some, such as Derrida, view ownership as a natural right. The natural collective ownership of languages will be deconstructed in Chapter 2.

⁶Anderson describes the development of languages-of-state in the seventeenth century, not as a choice but, as an unconscious development because they were simply convenient since these vernaculars were the regional languages of power that began to replace Latin in Europe; it was not until the nineteenth century that nations began to impose these languages on their populations (42).

⁷Anderson defines these communities (nations and also the smaller societies within nations) as “imagined” because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (6).

linguistic-nationalisms on their populations (Anderson 42). Thus, during the nineteenth century, the members of many European countries began to claim the ownership of a single official language and encourage and enforce it within their nation in order to sustain linguistic unity as a means toward national unification. In France, for example, citizens spoke languages such as Occitan, Breton, Catalan, and Spanish in addition to various French dialects (Holt 26). With the desire for a united nation characterized by linguistic unity, however, the Parisian dialect of the French language became the only national language and the property of the French by the late nineteenth century since it was viewed as the language of prestige, power, and economic opportunity.

Traces of the development of a French nation unified by the French language are observed as early as the sixteenth century in France. The Ordinance of Villers-Cotterêts in 1539 ensured that the language of the king's court, the Parisian dialect of the French language, would be used in all legal and judicial areas subject to his power (Weber 70). Then, Cardinal Richelieu created the Académie Française in 1635 in order to unite all French citizens under a patrimony characterized by a common language ("Le rôle"). By the mid-seventeenth century, the power of the Pope was in decay, which allowed for the rise in power of European nation-states. This exchange in power and the decomposition of European publishing in Latin (Anderson 38), allowed the French government to replace print-capitalism in Latin with print-capitalism in French, which was viewed as the language of convenience because it was spoken by the king and his court (Anderson 42-3).⁸ As the language of prestige, French had spread to only those citizens most accessible to the king and his court by

⁸During the sixteenth century, only a small proportion of the European population was literate because only elites were able to be schooled in/raised speaking Latin; a greater proportion of the European population, therefore, became literate when the print languages more closely resembled their every-day vernaculars (Anderson 38).

the mid-eighteenth century, including government officials, nobles, clerics, and artists of the middle and upper classes (Weber 70-1).

The end of the eighteenth century represents the beginning of the French government's belief in and enforcement of linguistic-nationalism in France. Linguistic unity was significant during and after the Revolution because linguistic diversity became a threat to political unity; it was important that all citizens understood the interests of the Republic and what it was doing to obtain its goals (Weber 72). The ideal of the Revolution was that the unity of the Republic demanded the unity of language (Weber 72).⁹ The Revolution called for a union among the classes, a nation characterized by political unity with linguistic unity as a means to that end. During the Revolution, the National Convention sought to “abolish dialects and to replace them with the speech of the Republic, ‘the language of the Declaration of Rights.’ It decreed that throughout the Republic children must learn ‘to speak, read and write in the French language,’ and that everywhere ‘instruction should take place only in French’” (Weber 72). The National Convention, therefore, announced the eradication of all languages except for the French language-of-state and it prohibited the use of all non-French languages and non-Parisian French dialects, particularly in education.

The French language, however, remained accessible only to city dwellers, which led to a linguistic division between city and village and, therefore, between the rich and the poor, which included a linguistic division between the rich and poor within the cities as well (Weber 71). Only in the larger towns was the French

⁹“Linguistic diversity had been irrelevant to administrative unity. But it became significant when it was perceived as a threat to political—that is, ideological—unity. All citizens had to understand what the interests of the Republic were and what the Republic was up to, Barthélémy de Lanthemas told the convention in December 1792. Otherwise, they could not participate, were not equipped to participate in it. A didactic and integrative regime needed an effective vehicle for information and propaganda; but it could hardly have one if the population did not know French.” (Weber 72)

language accessible to individuals through colleges and universities and also through their acquaintance with men of the upper and middle classes (Weber 71). This linguistic division continued until the successful education reforms of the Third Republic allowed the French language to become accessible to those poor students within and outside of the cities. Many academics, who functioned around the poor and those individuals outside of the cities, were devoted to the Académie Française and the spread of the French language; they, however, had little effect on the spread of the French language in these areas because the citizens knew little or no French (Weber 71). They would not contribute as transmitters of the French language to the poor and the areas outside of the cities until the education reforms of the Third Republic first made the French language available to the poor students in these areas.

According to official figures of 1863, French was essentially a foreign language for many Frenchmen, including almost half of school-aged children, since a quarter of the nation's population spoke various languages and dialects and absolutely no French (Weber 67).¹⁰ The Third Republic laws of the 1880's, however, required all children to attend school, allowed them to do so for free, made adequate facilities and teachers more accessible, and provided roads on which children could get to school (Weber 303). Once the French language became more accessible to the lower (i.e. poorer) classes within and particularly outside of the cities, educational experience taught them to recognize the French language as more beneficial than their regional vernacular languages in offering them better economic opportunities (Weber 314). For those children educated in France during the late 1880's and married in the 1890's, the French language would finally become the mother tongue of their

¹⁰Weber fails to differentiate between the languages and the French dialects in France. In fact, he defines patois as "the various languages, idioms, dialects, and jargons of the French provinces" (67).

offspring (Weber 77). Thus, France successfully created a linguistic-nationalism when the revolutionary idea of a nation became more significant than the various local societies, thereby allowing the French language to override all other languages and French dialects.¹¹

The French government extended its policy of linguistic-nationalism to its Algerian colony during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries as well. Alongside the early development of linguistic-nationalism in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the French also established a small settlement in Algeria during the former and gradually began to colonize Algeria throughout the following two centuries.¹² Subsequently, the nineteenth century marked the height of the French belief in the idea of linguistic-nationalism and the year 1830 denoted the beginning of the French invasion of Algeria (Benrabah, *Langue* 44). This invasion was a very long process, which did not end until France finally conquered all of Algeria at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1848, at the height of the belief in the idea of linguistic-nationalism in France, Algeria formally became part of France. To be specific, Algeria became three *départments* of France with French as the official national language (Holt 27).

As a colonial government, France exercised social and cultural imperialism in addition to political and economic imperialism. This cultural imperialism included

¹¹This process supports the idea that nationalism (defined by the intelligentsia and the elite) develops first and then contributes to the development of a nation (Holt 32), characterized by linguistic-nationalism.

¹²Before French colonialism, Algeria had already been influenced by Phoenicians, Berbers, Romans, Germanic Vandals, Byzantines, Arabs, Spaniards, and Ottomans (Naylor XXXV-i). Arabs launched their first invasion of the Maghreb in 647 and Arabization of the Maghreb took place from 1050-1100 (Naylor XXXVi). This is important for understanding the multiplicity of languages in Algeria before and after colonialism. See Naylor for more information on Algeria's pre-colonial history (XXXV-ii).

the assimilation of Algerians, along with other European colonists,¹³ to the French language, the French culture, and the French educational system (Queffélec 23). Even more important than French education in integrating the French language in Algeria was the informal contact between Algerians and the French. This included the increasing urbanization of Algerians and their subsequent proximity to French speakers in Algeria and the emigration of two million Algerians to France between 1914 and 1954 (Holt 31). Many French colonists settled within the cities where they, along with Algerians within the cities as well, could find better schools, jobs, universities, etc. so those Algerians who migrated to cities had more informal contact with both Frenchmen and Algerians that spoke the French language. The informal contact between Algerians who immigrated to France and their friends and family in Algeria contributed to the integration of the French language in Algeria as well.

Thus, in maintaining the belief in linguistic-nationalism during the time of their political control of Algeria during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the French claimed to own the French language and then imposed it on Algerians. *La Toupie* explains that when it comes to the ownership of a good, the owner(s) have “le droit de l’utiliser” and “le droit d’en disposer comme on le souhaite (le modifier, le vendre, en faire donation, le détruire en tout ou partie)” (“Propriété”). Thus, since the French believed they had a natural right to, or a collective ownership of, the French language, they not only believed they had the right to use it themselves but they also believed they had the right to do what they wanted with it, which in the case of colonialism meant imposing it on Algerians.

¹³Algeria was colonized not only by the French but by other Europeans of non-French origin as well (Queffélec 23). These non-French colonists, therefore, also faced assimilation to the French language along with Algerians.

The French language, therefore, became a medium for the unification of the French nation and all of its departments, including the three departments of Algeria. In *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*, Jacques Derrida¹⁴ reveals to us that during French colonialism in Algeria, Algerians were not only forced to speak French but that access to every non-French language was forbidden as well (56-7). Especially in school, Algerians were forced to speak French instead of their previous mother tongues; this included classical Arabic, the Berber language and all of its dialects, and all regional vernacular Algerian Arabic dialects.¹⁵ Algerians were required to speak a single language, French, or “le monlinguisme imposé par l'autre” (Derrida 69).

While the world outside of Algeria, including France, was led to believe in the successful development of French linguistic-nationalism in Algeria, however, the linguistic situation within Algeria was quite different. The fiction and the reality of the linguistic situation in Algeria was a “double interpretation of assimilation” because while the metropole and the outside world believed that French was being universally introduced throughout Algeria, the reality was that Algerians were not receiving the same education as French citizens in France and French education was only reaching the elite so 90% of the population was illiterate at independence (Holt 29). During colonization, the French paid more attention to suppressing indigenous cultures and languages as opposed to providing them with a new one (Holt 27), which

¹⁴Jacques Derrida was a pied-noir born in French Algeria. He was a writer of the French language and the subjects of his many works included philosophy, deconstruction, phenomenology, ontology, literary theory, etc. In the 1990's, his work took what many refer to as a political/ethical turn. This is when he wrote the book *Le monolinguisme de l'autre, ou, la prothèse d'origine* (1996), which examines man's relationship to language and uses his personal relationship (as a French Algerian) to the French language, the language of the former colonizer, as an example.

¹⁵There is a distinction to be made between classical Arabic, which is both a vehicular and a vernacular language, and Algerian Arabic dialects. The latter includes various vernacular versions of the former which alter its phonology and simplify its grammar (Holt 70). It is also important to recognize the Berber language and all of its dialects as a separate vernacular minority language in Algeria; it is spoken by Muslims living mostly in the northern mountains of Kabylia (Holt 72).

is why many Algerians were illiterate in both French and Arabic at independence. What was more effective in implementing the French language in Algeria, therefore, was the informal contact between Algerians and the French, the dismantling of the Muslim educational system, and the marginalization of the other languages and dialects in Algeria (Holt 31).

As for the annihilation of the former Algerian educational system, Kateb Yacine,¹⁶ an Algerian writer, describes it as follows:

The colonialists wanted to destroy our nationalism by attempting to destroy our language. They closed schools which taught Arabic, persecuted teachers of Arabic and burnt down Arabic libraries. Thus, whoever wanted an education had to attend French schools, so much so that intellectuals cannot express themselves in Arabic. (Salhi 102)

Derrida describes this linguistic situation as “une interdiction silencieuse” because officially, it was not illegal to learn non-French languages and Algerians had the right to learn Arabic, Berber, or Hebrew in high school (58-9). Instead, he describes it as an unofficial prohibition because, instead of making these non-French languages illegal, they replaced Arabic with French as the official, daily, administrative, and, most importantly, educational language (Derrida 65-6). As a result, the French succeeded in imposing French as the official administrative and educational language in Algeria with the implementation of their imperial power. They also succeeded in the annihilation of the Arabic educational system but they did not, however, succeed in the complete annihilation of Arabic since many Algerians continued to practice the language outside of their educational environment.

¹⁶Yacine was an Algerian novelist and playwright that advocated, spoke, and wrote in French, Algerian Arabic dialects, and Berber. This paper will not examine his works but his struggle to choose in which language to write. In the book *The Politics and Aesthetics of Kateb Yacine: From Francophone Literature to Popular Theatre in Algeria and Outside* (1999), Dr. Kamal Salhi, a French/Francophone studies instructor, briefly addresses Yacine’s linguistic struggle during a larger examination of his works.

The development of French linguistic-nationalism in both France and Algeria are, therefore, quite similar given that the French elite and intelligentsia first defined the idea of French nationalism, as characterized by linguistic-nationalism as a means toward national unity, and then forced the language-of-state on its citizens, both French and then Algerian. The French elite encouraged and enforced the French language in France and then in Algeria during the colonial period. It even forbade all non-French languages and dialects and non-Parisian French dialects in France during the Revolution and in Algeria during the colonial period. If imperialism is a government's attempt to unite all of its territories under a single national policy, then the French government practiced linguistic imperialism not only in colonial Algeria but within France as well. Despite the multiple languages spoken by its citizens in France and Algeria, the French government enforced a single linguistic policy in France during the eighteenth century and in both France and Algeria during the nineteenth century and forced them to use only the French language in order to unite the empire under the French language-of-state. The enforcement of such a policy that was foreign to most of its citizens can only be characterized as linguistic imperialism.

While the development of French linguistic-nationalism in France and Algeria were quite similar, their outcomes were quite different. In France and Algeria, the French government and the French colonists accepted the language-of-state because they realized the importance of the French nation, and its unity, over the local communities and their languages and dialects. The middle and upper classes surrounding the French government in France and the French colonists in Algeria gradually came to accept French as the language-of-state since it was the language of power, prestige, and economic opportunity. In France, the French government forced most citizens (those unwilling consumers among the lower classes) to speak French

and only French and they had no choice but to accept this linguistic situation in order to have access to better economic opportunities. In Algeria, the French colonists forced most citizens (also unwilling consumers of the lower classes) to speak French and only French but, unlike that which took place in France, French linguistic-nationalism in Algeria failed due to the end of colonialism. The beginning of Algerian independence, therefore, marked the end to French linguistic-nationalism in Algeria and left French, Arabic, Berber, and Algerian Arabic dialects to survive in the post-colonial nation. French linguistic imperialism succeeded, therefore, in France but failed in Algeria.

Since independence, the Algerian elite have followed in the example of the French government and have attempted to create an Algerian linguistic-nationalism. This development also resembles that of French linguistic-nationalism in France and Algeria. Algerians attempted to force an Algerian linguistic-nationalism on themselves through a policy of Arabization directly following independence, just as the French attempted to enforce French linguistic-nationalism in France and Algeria. Like the linguistic policies of the French government in Algeria during colonialism, the post-independence Algerian government did not make the French language illegal but replaced it with Arabic as the national official administrative and educational language of Algeria. Similar to the linguistic imperialism of the French government in France and the French colonial government in Algeria, therefore, the Algerian elite forced the Arabic language upon Algerians, along with the suppression of the French language, immediately following independence. The goal was to replace the French language, as much as possible, with classical Arabic as the official national language of Algeria.

The process, therefore, was both a rediscovery of the Algerian, i.e. Arabic, cultural identity and the annihilation of that of the French language (Soukehal 101). Following in France's footsteps, therefore, the Algerian government also became convinced of the fiction of linguistic-nationalism. After independence, the government came to believe in their natural right to the Arabic language and, therefore, claimed to own it and adopted a policy of monolingualism with Modern Standard Arabic (i.e. Arabization) in order to nationalize Algeria with a single language (Benrabah, "Language and Politics" 59). In an attempt to create nationalism, therefore, the Algerian government, like the former French government, attempted to force one language on its citizens through Arabization, a policy of linguistic imperialism.

The institution of education became the first sector to be arabized since "schools function as major socializing agents and (re)produce the dominant social order or the order that the dominant group(s) aim(s) to set up" (Benrabah, "Language and Politics" 65-6). Even before independence, the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), the political party that led the country to independence and then took control of the government afterward, committed itself to the restoration of Arabic in the educational system in 1961 (Holt 37). Then, the post-independence goal of Algerian education was to restore classical Arabic as the main medium of teaching in all disciplines and to reduce the use of French as much as possible (Mostari 33). After classical Arabic became the medium of primary education directly following independence, French became a second language in 1964 and then a foreign language in 1976, Arabization began at universities in 1970, and all teacher training centers were arabized in 1974 (Mostari 29-30). The government invested 25% of its yearly national budget on arabized national public education until 1978 and then 21%

through 1985 (Gordon 137). School, as a perfect ideological instrument, therefore, served as an instrument of alienation from the French language for students (Soukehal 113), just as it served as an instrument of alienation from Arabic during colonialism.

As for the Berber language and its dialects, some Berberophones undertook a school boycott against Arabization, which began in September of 1994 (Queffélec 32). The boycott did not end until the authorities agreed to recognize the status of Berber in February of 1995 (Queffélec 32). Today, the Berber dialects are recognized as languages spoken in Algeria (“Algeria”) but, like Algerian Arabic dialects, they are principally oral so they are not given the same status as French or Modern Standard Arabic. Many Berberophones seek autonomy from Algeria, which is unlikely, but the Algerian government has offered to begin sponsoring teaching Berber in schools (“Algeria”).

Despite government efforts to enforce Arabic and suppress French, particularly through an education medium, both languages remain in existence in Algeria today, just as French colonialism failed to annihilate the Arabic language. In post-colonial Algeria, Modern Standard Arabic is defined as the national and the official language while, officially, the French language is considered an existing and active foreign language in Algeria (Queffélec 68). While each of the two languages has its own institutional functions, there still remain many intersections between the two. For example, a presidential decree of 1969 required that all state institutions translate into Arabic all the official texts and administrative documents that were drawn up in French and there are also many laws that stipulate that all official texts and documents must use only the Arabic language (Queffélec 70). Most official texts and administrative documents, however, are still drawn up in French and then translated into Arabic; only one official document has been drawn up in Arabic and

then translated into French (Queffélec 70) because many local administrators accord a certain prestige to spoken Arabic but to written French (Queffélec 72). In addition, passports and proper names are in both languages while identification cards and contracts are in French and stamps and money are printed in Arabic (Queffélec 71-2).

In terms of education in particular, instruction is conducted in Modern Standard Arabic and French is offered as a second language in the fourth year of primary education; French is also used as a medium of education for certain postsecondary and technical schools, such as medicine, pharmacy, architecture, hydrocarbons, computer science, etc. due to the language's already-existing technical vocabulary (Queffélec 75). It is also the language of sciences and mathematics in most secondary schools and universities with over 3000 French teachers in secondary schools and about 1/3 of the professors at post-secondary institutions (Gordon 138). Arabic remains the language of the majority but twenty times more children learn French than during the time of French Algeria (Gordon 134). In 2000, the Abassa Institute polled 1400 households and found that out of 14 million Algerians aged 16 and over, 60% of them understood and/or spoke French (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 194).¹⁷ This unequal distribution of the two languages demonstrates the continued survival and importance of both French and Arabic in post-colonial Algeria.

Just following independence, linguistic competence in modern standard Arabic was relatively low; Algerians who could read Arabic were estimated at only 300,000 while 1 million could read French and 6 million spoke French (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 194). In addition, Algeria always has been more than just

¹⁷See Queffélec and Gordon for more information on the current role of the French language in Algeria.

bilingual if one considers the Berber language and regional vernacular dialects of Algerian Arabic as well. The development of modern standard Arabic as the language-of-state, however, derives from many motivations. First of all, for most Arab Muslims, Arabic was the language of their history and their religion (Gordon 136) so they felt the need to regain their Arab and Muslim origins and classical Arabic is the language of Arab-Islamic identity since it is the language of the Koran throughout the Muslim world (Mostari 26). It would be hard to imagine a language with a stronger claim to the historical and literary heritage of the majority of the Algerian population (Holt 25). Secondly, like French in France, Arabic was seen as the language-of-power since it is practiced by many Arab nations and language is an instrument of power throughout the world (Mostari 26). In addition, like the Parisian dialect of the king and his court, Modern Standard Arabic was seen as the language of prestige since it was practiced and enforced by the educated Algerian elite, especially the nationalists (Mostari 26). Mohamed Benrabah,¹⁸ therefore, describes Arabization as “identity planning through language planning” (“Language and Politics” 73) since the government was attempting to define Algerian identity and nationalism with the Arabic language as a means to that end (i.e. Algerian linguistic-nationalism).

Similar to linguistic-nationalism, the post-independence policy of Arabization was founded on the fiction that cultural and national identity can be achieved through a linguistic principle of monolingualism. In Algeria, this entailed the search to rediscover the Arabic language (Soukehal 101), the historical and religious heritage of the majority. Its objective, therefore, was to impose one culture and one language (the Arabic language) on Algerians while erasing another (the French language),

¹⁸In his multiple works (books, articles, and essays) of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Benrabah examines language in Algeria. The many linguistic themes in his works include, the survival of the French language in Algeria, the relationship between language and power, language and ethnic identity, language and state politics, language and education, etc.

which was considered to support a neo-colonial tradition (Soukehal 100).¹⁹ The attempt to create an Algerian linguistic-nationalism through a policy of Arabization, however, created more problems than solutions for Francophone Algerians, including both external and internal dilemmas.

Since the Algerian government thought that cultural and linguistic independence would follow political independence, Algerian literature of French expression was seen as a contradiction to decolonization and Algerian nationalism (Bensmaïa, *Experimental* 3). Based on the idea of linguistic-nationalism, therefore, supporters of Arabization mistakenly believe that the practice of the French language denotes support of French colonialism of Algeria. Thus, public rhetoric condemned French-language Algerian literature after independence because it contested Arabization (Valensi 142) and Algerian writers who chose to write in French were “accused of playing into the colonists’ hands and being [traitors] to [their] people for writing in French, publishing in France, and being praised by French critics” (Salhi 110). Francophone writers, therefore, became the enemies of Arabization and Algerian linguistic-nationalism because they were viewed as supporters of French colonialism.

The policy of Arabization led to a linguistic hierarchy in which classical Arabic became the sacred and official language of prestige, Algerian Arabic dialects became vulgar and barbarian, and those who spoke French and Berber became enemies of Arabization and Algerian linguistic-nationalism (Soukehal 105).²⁰ While Berber did not represent colonialism as the French language did, many

¹⁹Some Arabophones also go as far as to refuse contact with the Occident in order to reclaim the preservation of their national identity in the name of Islam (Soukehal 109).

²⁰This linguistic hierarchy is meant to distinguish between the languages in Algeria, not the people that speak them. It is important to recognize that many Algerians speak multiple languages.

Berberophones, along with many Francophones, supported a policy of linguistic plurality, thereby challenging Algerian linguistic-nationalism. This linguistic situation put in place by Arabization forced Algerians to break up into two politico-linguistic groups: secular democrats and Arabophones (Soukehal 107). The former includes Berberophones (who wanted Berber to be recognized as an Algerian language), technocrats (those who inherited the French administration), Francophones, and the few Arabophones who supported linguistic and religious plurality (Soukehal 102-3). The second politico-linguistic group includes many Arabophones, the army, and the supporters of Islam who favored Arabization (Soukehal 102) as a means to Algerian linguistic-nationalism.

Secular democrats did not oppose Arabization or the Arabic language in themselves but they disagreed with the non-democratic way in which they were enforced and the unequal statuses of their own languages (Soukehal 102-3). They carried a torch for democracy, freedom of expression, equality of the sexes, (Bensmaïa, "Phantom" 86),²¹ linguistic and religious plurality, etc. What appeared as a linguistic debate, therefore, was really a political debate because it was a question of nationalism, involvement, and neo-colonialism (Soukehal 111). Thus, along with Francophones, all those who opposed the undemocratic process of Arabization (technocrats, Berberophones, and a few Arabophones) became enemies of Arabization (Soukehal 103).

Directly following independence, therefore, this linguistic policy led to open violence, which even went as far as torture and imprisonment, against all those who

²¹Réda Bensmaïa, Professor of French Studies and Comparative Literature at Brown University, is an Algerian-born writer of the French language. He has written quite a few works on Algeria and the Maghreb, many of which focus on the linguistic situations in these countries. His article, "The Phantom Mediators: Reflections on the Nature of the Violence in Algeria" (1997), focuses on the relationship between language and post-independence violence in Algeria.

contested Arabic and Islam (Soukehal 103-4), the two being inseparable. Thus, the enemies and targets of supporters of Arabization and Algerian linguistic-nationalism became all those who practiced languages other than Arabic. Francophones were at the top of the list since they were seen as associates and supporters of French colonialism (Bensmaïa, "Phantom" 95). Hostilities against Francophones at the hands of various Islamist rebel forces began after independence and led into the years of the Algerian civil war. For example, after independence, the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS), an Algerian Islamic political party that appeared just before the civil war, encouraged the Arabic-speaking majority to rebel against their pro-French minority rulers (Evans and Phillips 150). This meant the rebellion against those who spoke French simply because of the belief in the connection between the language and French linguistic-nationalism in Algeria (i.e. French colonialism).

The violence became a vicious cycle in which each group blamed the others, leading to even more violence. The three crucial events that led into the civil war included the bloody oppression of demonstrations in 1988 by the army, the brutal murder of three young soldiers in the Algerian army in 1991 by an Islamic commando, and the assassination of Mohammed Boudiaf, the hope of the democrats (Bensmaïa, "Phantom" 94-5). Then, a bomb at Algiers international airport in 1992 killed 10 people, wounded 128, and led to the civil war (Evans and Phillips 185). For three decades after independence, intellectuals were put in prison, exiled, killed, or forced to quit being advocates of political freedom, the rights of the person, and a transparent society (Bensmaïa, "Phantom" 86). Francophone writers were assassinated, exiled, and oppressed and banished from the theatre (Bensmaïa, "Phantom" 87). Réda Bensmaïa refers to these intellectuals as "phantom mediators" because they vanished (because of exile and/or secret discourse) before having the

chance to exercise the role that generally falls to them in democracies (“Phantom” 96).

Despite these hostilities, however, Berberophones and Francophones were not discouraged from their political attempts to encourage a pluralistic society, which led to even more violence against them. Intellectuals continued to do the work they felt they needed to do in secret (Bensmaïa, “Phantom” 89). They committed themselves to a mission against those who replaced the colonial authority and sought to tear down their liberty (Soukehal 93). In addition, Berberist democratic groups such as the Front des Forces Socialistes (FFS) and the Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie (RCD) openly encouraged cultural pluralism, including linguistic pluralism, because they saw it as inseparable from the post-independence multiparty political system in Algeria (Evans and Phillips 154). Such groups, however, were enemies of the FIS which viewed them as agents of France who were trying to fragment the political system with Francophony and Berberism (Evans and Phillips 156). Islamist groups such as the FIS and the Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA), therefore, resorted to intimidation and murder against these groups in order to demonstrate the minority status of Berberophones and Francophones (Evans and Phillips 191). With the confusion of all the parties and their politico-linguistic beliefs, survival came to depend on the language in which one greeted others (Evans and Phillips 202).

Francophone and Berberophone writers also continued to write about their support of pluralism, leading to more violence against them as well not only for supporting linguistic pluralism but also for simply writing in French and Berber. Writers continued to battle the FLN’s and then the FIS’s “ruling thought” of one language, one religion, one nation, one race, one party, one cultural experience, one country, etc., and support secular thinking in which freedom was the privilege of all

and not just those in power (Bensmaïa, “Phantom” 92). Academics, teachers, writers, and journalists were silenced by a campaign of assassination and more than five hundred journalists left the country in fear of this violence (Evans and Phillips 191). For example, the poet Youssef Sebti was murdered in 1993 and editor-in-chief of *Le Matin* Said Mekbel was assassinated in 1994 (Naylor xlii-i).

In *La disparition de la langue française*, Assia Djebar²² addresses the danger of being a Francophone writer in Algeria. In addition to the internal dilemmas that the protagonist Berkane faces because of his multilingualism after returning to his native Algeria from France, the book ends under the assumption that his disappearance is the result of his writings in the French language. Other Algerian writers of the French language have faced similar outcomes. Kateb Yacine, who died in France in 1989, was scorned by activists of Islamist groups for writing in French and inspiring other writers such as Tahar Djaout to do the same (Evans and Phillips 152). The latter received numerous death threats for writing in French until he was finally shot to death in 1993 (Evans and Phillips 192) by the orders of a GIA commander (Evans and Phillips 194). Other writers and poets that paid dearly with their lives include Youcef Sbeti, Laâdi Flici, and Jean Sénac (Soukehal 120).

Linguistic-nationalism put in place by the French colonists and the post-independence Algerian government has created a double combat for Algerian writers: an exterior combat and an interior combat (Soukehal 91-2). The former, as previously discussed, is the fight in which intellectuals and writers battle the system, those in power, injustices, regressive ideologies, one “ruling thought,” etc., which results in harassment, censorship, torture, imprisonment, exile, death, etc. (Soukehal 92). The

²²Assia Djebar was born in French Algeria. She is an Algerian writer of the French language. In her novel, *La disparition de la langue française* (2003), Berkane, the protagonist, faces violence for writing in the French language.

latter is the fight in which they battle against themselves, their interior struggles, their weaknesses, their thoughts, their dreams, their nightmares, their deceptions, their envies, etc. (Soukehal 91). More specifically, many Algerian writers struggle with the linguistic qualities of their writing: in which language to write, how to express themselves in this language, and how to demonstrate their multilingual perceptions in their writing.

In addition to the exterior threats, therefore, linguistic-nationalism has created two internal dilemmas for Algerian writers as well. As for the first internal dilemma, there rests the choice between writing in French and writing in Arabic or Berber. In *Experimental Nations*, Réda Bensmaïa²³ says, “For Francophone writers, the questions remained the same: to write, of course, but in which language?” (4). He adds that “it has become impossible to write in French, the language of the colonizer, while it is just as impossible to go back to writing in Arabic or, as we shall see in other instances, Berber” (Bensmaïa, *Experimental* 102). Thus, for Algerians educated during French colonialism, it is difficult to write in French because it is the language of the colonizer. Since it is so difficult to write in the language of the colonizer, Albert Memmi, a Tunisian writer who faces these same internal dilemmas, describes doing so as “linguistic wrenching” because it is one of the most painful instruments of alienation (Bensmaïa, *Experimental* 1) from Algerian linguistic-nationalism (i.e. the Arabic language and Algerian nationalism). In addition, since French linguistic-nationalism characterizes the French language as the property of the French, it portrays French as a borrowed language to which Algerians had no legitimate claim after independence (Salhi 109). Thus, both French linguistic-

²³In his book *Experimental Nations, Or, the Invention of the Maghreb* (2003), Bensmaïa examines the post-colonial linguistic situation in the Maghreb, particularly the internal dilemmas faced by writers of the French language and the literary strategies they use to escape these internal dilemmas.

nationalism and Algerian linguistic-nationalism alienate the Algerian writer from the French language.

In addition, Algerian writers wonder if they have the capacity to express themselves in this other language, in the language of the former colonizing power. One should consider verbs of expression such as “to think,” “to speak,” and “to feel” to determine if Algerians can really experience life and perform their literary expression in the language of the colonizer, the language that was first forced upon them by the colonizer and from which they were alienated before and after independence. In the works of Derrida and of Bensmaïa, the two authors address this internal dilemma. In *Experimental Nations*, Bensmaïa says:

And indeed we cannot help but be struck by the muffled yet insistent presence of a series of formidable problems that each of these writers must face in exile: Can one (learn to) love in a foreign language? Can one think, write, dream, sing in a foreign language? These questions may appear trivial on the surface, yet they have continued to haunt the consciousness and thinking of Maghrebi and African writers (both Francophone and Anglophone) since independence. (100)

Likewise in *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*, Derrida says, “Car c’est au bord du français, uniquement, ni en lui ni hors de lui, sur la ligne introuvable de sa côte que, depuis toujours, à demeure, je me demande si on peut aimer, jouir, prier, crever de douleur ou crever tout court dans une autre langue ou sans rien en dire à personne, sans parler même” (14). Thus, it becomes unbearable for Algerian writers to express themselves in the language of the former colonizing power.

At the same time, however, it is just as difficult to begin or, for a few, to return to writing in Arabic when French is their only written language or has been their only written language for so long. In *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*, Derrida presents this lack of options for Algerian writers as a “double interdit”:

Dans quelle langue écrire des mémoires dès lors qu’il n’y a pas eu de langue maternelle autorisée? Comment dire un « je me rappelle » qui

vaille quand il fait inventer et sa langue et son *je*, les inventer *en même temps*, par-delà ce déferlement d'amnésie qu'a déchainé *le double interdit* ? (57)

Derrida refers to the Algerian linguistic situation as a “double interdit” because Algerians were and are alienated from both French and Arabic. During colonialism, French was the language of “exile,” for both the writer and his people (Salhi 111) because it represented colonialism and the colonizing power. At the same time, however, they had no choice but to abandon their mother tongues and turn to the French language when they left their homes to return to school or work (Salhi 117).

After independence, Algerians felt alienated from the classical Arabic they learned at school, which was distinct from the Algerian Arabic dialects that they spoke at home. In addition, French remains the language of exile because both French linguistic-nationalism and Algerian linguistic-nationalism alienate Algerian writers from the French language. At the same time, however, French remains the only written language for some Algerians who were educated in Algeria during French colonialism, leaving them alienated from Arabic as well. If Algerian writers feel alienated from both the French language and classical Arabic, they cannot identify themselves with any written languages and find themselves without a linguistic identity, or a “*je*” to write their memoirs so they cannot write in either language. This inability to identify with a language leaves Algerian writers of the French language feeling like outsiders to the languages in which they do (French) and do not (Arabic) write.

The second internal dilemma that Algerian writers face derives from the duality of first-order languages, French and Arabic (Bensmaïa, *Experimental* 102). For many Algerians today, they perceive life and experience emotions in Arabic or simultaneously in French and Arabic. This is precisely the situation for Abdelkebir

Khatibi,²⁴ a Moroccan writer of French education who experiences these same internal dilemmas, and the reason for which he says, “Bilingualism is the space between two exteriorities” (“Diglossia” 158) because he perceives life in both languages at the same time. In *Amour bilingue* he refers to the impossibility of writing in only one language when he says, “le pur langage, à la pointe de l’intraduisible” (Khatibi 27). Thus, in recounting events, the languages of bilingual speakers are not interchangeable because specific experiences take place in specific languages or in both languages at once. Khatibi is referring to the difficulty of experiencing life in one language or both languages and having to express it in another or in only one language.

Thus, if languages are not interchangeable and Algerians of French education perceive life and experience emotions in Arabic, or simultaneously in Arabic and in French, it becomes difficult to write in another language, French, or only in French when one is bilingual. The challenge, therefore, becomes finding a new space of writing and thinking in order to go beyond the duality of languages (Bensmaïa, *Experimental* 102). Bensmaïa says, “Writers now need to forge instruments that will allow them to say what they *want to say*, *what they mean*, rather than merely what they *can say*, *are able to say*, in the language of the former colonizing power; in other words, they need to find a way to escape from the prison house of (colonial) language” (*Experimental* 102). The prison house of colonial language refers to those writers who feel trapped because they can write only in French, their only written language and the language of the former colonizer. Thus, writers must find a space in

²⁴Abdelkebir Khatibi was a Moroccan-born writer of the French language. In his short essay “Diglossia” (2002), he discusses the internal dilemmas faced by bilingual writers. In *Amour bilingue* (2002), a novel, he demonstrates a literary strategy that allows him to escape these internal dilemmas, which will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 2.

which they are not limited to one language (French) but can express themselves in both languages at once, thereby escaping the prison house of colonial language.

The French language entered into the lives of Algerian writers in many different manners, depending on their age, their family background, their situation during a precise era, etc. (Soukehal 116). For the first Algerian writers in French, French school was forced on them, especially if they wanted to succeed in life (Soukehal 121). For writers such as Malek Haddad, therefore, writing in the French language represented a progressive loss of identity because he could not overcome its colonial significance so he entered into literary silence from the middle of the 1960's until his death in 1978 (Soukehal 118). For Kateb Yacine, one of the first Algerians to write in the French language, the entrance of French into his life during French colonialism meant the breaking of his "umbilical cord" (or the break from his mother tongues) and he always suffered from this loss of linguistic identity (Soukehal 116).

Yacine, therefore, constantly struggled with the choice between writing in French, Arabic, and Berber. Most of his early works were written in French, the language of the colonizer, during the war for independence and just after independence (Salhi 102). Even this early in his writing career his work already demonstrated his indecision between the languages because although he wrote in French, the influence of Arabic literature in his works was clearly evident (Salhi 111-2). In an interview, he stated that, "From our earliest youth, Algerians of my generation were torn between who they were and what they learnt. I discovered that what I learnt during the day isolated me from my background. I became an intruder, almost an enemy. My people found the conquerors' language coming from my lips" (Salhi 104). During the early part of his writing career, therefore, Yacine felt detached from his background, his family and their culture, because he was of French

education and wrote in French but was an Arab of a different historical, religious, linguistic, and political inheritance than that of the French language.

In order to destroy his position as an Algerian writing in the enemy's language, therefore, he began writing in both French and Arabic in the 1970's (Salhi 116) and in French, Arabic, and Berber in the 1980's (Salhi 121). Thus, since he felt as though he was detached from his background by writing in French, he began writing in his native Arabic and Berber in order to rediscover his country, his people, and his languages and to revive the voice of his people (Salhi 119-20). His return to writing in his mother languages, therefore, was his attempt to return to the language of his family's and his people's Arab-Islamic background. He describes his decision as follows: "My objective has always been to reach my country and its public. From that point of view, my way is clear...I am returning to what I always wanted to do: a political theatre in a language widely accessible to the masses of common people. Henceforth I am going to wield two languages: French and especially Algerian Arabic" (Salhi 116-7). As Berber is the language of his family yet remains a minority language in Algeria, Yacine chose to focus on Arabic in order to reach a larger audience, the majority of the population who identify with an Arab-Islamic inheritance.

While linguistic-nationalism was successful in uniting the multilingual French nation, it was not successful in uniting the post-independent multilingual Algerian nation. In fact, Algerian linguistic-nationalism, through the policy of Arabization, has created more problems than solutions. In an effort to challenge Arabization, Francophones and Berberophones openly protested the policy and wrote in French and Berber as a means of challenging the policy and the unfounded linguistic hierarchy, which led to extreme violence between these groups (particularly against

Francophones who were viewed as supports of French colonialism) and internal dilemmas for multilingual Algerian writers, particularly Francophone writers. In addition, it became impossible to write in French, because it is the language of the former colonizer, while it was just as impossible to start or, for a few, to go back to writing in Arabic when French was their only written language for so long (as a result of the French educational policy in Algeria during colonization). It also became impossible to express oneself in this other language, the language of the former colonial power. In addition, it is difficult to write in only one language when one perceives life in multiple languages, including French, Algerian dialectal Arabic, and Berber.

III. Deconstructing Linguistic-Nationalism in Algeria

There are many logical reasons for the implementation of Arabization after independence. In addition to the external violence and internal dilemmas faced by Francophones and Berberophones, however, Arabization in Algeria has failed for many reasons and in various ways. This includes alienation from multilingualism and multiculturalism, illiteracy in Arabic, Berber resistance, teaching violence in education, the failed promises of the elites, the choice of Arabic as the language-of-state (instead of an unconscious development), the unpreparedness of Arabization (particularly in education), and the survival of French. This chapter will deconstruct the unfounded linguistic-hierarchy created by Algerian linguistic-nationalism and demonstrate the benefits to a multilingual Algerian nation. It will also discuss literary strategies that Francophone writers can use in order to overcome the internal dilemmas they face by writing in the French language.

The desire for an Algerian linguistic-nationalism and the efforts toward Arabization are both understandable. In theory, linguistic unity facilitates national unification, as observed in the outcome of French linguistic-nationalism in France. By consequence, the desire for a united Algeria led to the policy of Arabization, Arabic being the most logical choice after independence for a number of reasons. The French language was obviously unwanted as the language-of-state since it was the language of the former colonizer. The Arabic language, however, represents the historical and literary heritage of most Algerians and remains the only other written

language in Algeria, aside from French, since the Berber language²⁵ is principally vernacular. In addition, the French colonial government practically defined the emerging independent Algerian nation as Muslim and Arabic/Berber through the exclusion of this religion and these languages from the economy, the educational system, and the law (Holt 33). Islam and Arabic also gained legitimacy after independence (and were used as instruments of political power for those trying to gain political legitimacy after independence) because they were the instruments of resistance during the revolution so Arabic came to represent the language of revolution and independence (Benrabah, "Language and Politics" 62-3).

Despite the reasoning behind it, however, the attempt to create an Algerian linguistic-nationalism through a policy of Arabization has clearly failed in a number of ways and for various reasons. As previously stated, it created both external and internal dilemmas for Francophone Algerians. In addition, the Algerian identity is a mosaic of different cultures, different races, different religions (Soukehal 115), and different languages so instead of nationalizing, it deepened the division of Algeria (as observed by the multiple groups practicing violence against each other) because it tried to implement a single language in a country characterized by multilingualism (Benrabah, "Language and Politics" 65). If a linguistic-nationalism further divides a nation, then, by definition, it has failed since its goal is national unification.

It also became difficult to nationalize a language in which the majority of Algerians were illiterate after independence (Soukehal 103). French and Arabic also both felt unnatural to Algerians after independence since French is the language of the colonizer and Algerian dialectal Arabic (or Berber), as opposed to modern standard

²⁵The Berber language encompasses many dialects, including Chaouia, Tamazight, Taznatit, Kabyle, M'zab, and Toureg (Mostari 34). Each dialect has its own poetry, myths and legends, customs, music, and syntactical rules (Salhi 105).

Arabic, is the language they left behind to go to work or school during colonization. Arabization also eliminated the historical consciousness of students because Algerian history under the policy of Arabization is characterized by amnesia in that it only goes as far back as the beginnings of Islam (instead of including Antiquity as well), falsifies Arabic conquerors as Muslims and liberators of the native inhabitants, and focuses on the history of the Middle East and leaves out five centuries of Roman presence in Algeria (Benrabah, "Language and Politics" 69-71). It is true that a large majority of Algerians are descendents of the Arabic conquerors. For the rest, however, whose family's historical, cultural, social, and linguistic heritage fails to resemble that of what they are taught to perceive as heroic Arab conquerors, this incomplete historical education leaves students feeling hostile toward instead of only frustrated with their linguistic situation.

The supporters of Arabization believed that in an Algerian nation in which one language played a major role, there would be a reduction of conflicts because with one language, there would be less miscommunication and less inequality and exclusion (Benrabah, "Language and Politics" 59-60). Instead of reducing conflict, however, the state's official institution of language (the policy of Arabization) increased it, leading to a vicious circle of violence in which the enforcement of classical Arabic and the suppression of all other languages, spoken and written, was the root cause. The refusal to acknowledge the sociolinguistic reality of the Algerian nation, produced a language policy that pitted Arabophones against secular democrats, including Francophones, Berberophones, and the few Arabophones that supported linguistic plurality (Benrabah, "Language and Politics" 74), leading to the danger of death for many non-Arabic speakers and writers. In addition, the teaching of history was the first to become arabized in 1966 and selective historical education

in which students are openly confronted with the atrocities committed by the French army encourages violence as a means for founding an Algerian nation (Benrabah, “Language and Politics” 70). If the implementation of linguistic-nationalism not only creates linguistic divisions within a nation but also leads to violence amongst these linguistic groups, then, by definition, linguistic-nationalism in Algeria has certainly failed to create a united nation.

One of the major obstacles to successful Arabization was Berber resistance. The Berber population, which represents 20-25% of the Algerian population (about six or seven million Algerians speak a variety of Berber),²⁶ intensified its efforts to slow down Arabization campaigns since it did not include the Berber language and its dialects as an integral part of the process (Mostari 34-5). They partook in political protests, massive demonstrations, and strikes during the 1960’s and 1970’s and their efforts increased remarkably after 1991 (Mostari 35). When the Arabization of higher education began in the 1980’s, Berber movements fiercely opposed the process (Mostari 36). In 1980, the authorities prevented Algerian writer Mouloud Maameri from giving a lecture on Berber poetry at the university campus of Tizi Ouzou, located in Kabylia, the principal Berber-speaking region (Benrabah, “Language and Politics” 74). The entire Kabylia region went into civil disobedience, triggering a series of violent outbreaks all over the country (Benrabah, “Language and Politics” 74).

Berber writers also fought against Arabization. By writing in Berber during the 1980’s, Algerian writer Kateb Yacine was refusing to subscribe to the nation’s goal of encouraging national unity by imposing classical Arabic throughout Algeria

²⁶This number is disputed among many academics. There are problems with the numbers represented by censuses because many individuals claim to speak more than one Berber dialect so they tend to be double or triple counted. Considering this, it is most likely that the number is less than 20%.

(Salhi 121). The Berber efforts paid off in 2001 when the government announced that the constitution would be amended to make Tamazight, one of the many Berber dialects, a national language (Mostari 35). As long as open and successful opposition to it survives, Algerian linguistic-nationalism will never succeed.

The biggest obstacle to successful Arabization was the gap between the promises of the ruling elites and the actual implementation of these promises (Souaiaia 109). Colonialism was successful in coalescing the post-independence elites with Islam and Arabic, giving them no option but to follow through with Arabization since Arabic represented revolution and independence (Souaiaia 112-3). The same elites, however, personally support bilingual education (Souaiaia 113). They generally enroll their children in bilingual schools, French mission schools, or send them abroad for higher education because they understand the privileges associated with bilingualism (Souaiaia 118).

In other words, the elites are able to remain in power by using bilingualism as a tool for class domination; the poorer children are handicapped by their inability to obtain a French education, leaving the elites with no challengers to their ruling power (Souaiaia 118-9). In order to prevent a fully arabized Algeria, therefore, Algerian bureaucrats use their positions to derail the process; for example, the government would argue that the economic crisis prevented the importation of textbooks from the Middle East and then it would delay the payment for printed materials imported from the Arab world while making the payments to French publishing houses on time (Souaiaia 118). These same elites also support the dominance of French economic interests in Algeria in order to remain in power (Souaiaia 120). In 1980, France financed *Le Printemps Berbère*, a cultural movement which called for the introduction

of Berber in Algerian schools and the continued presence of French as a dominant language of education (Souaiaia 120).

It is important to note that Arabic, like French before it, was chosen as the language-of-state in Algeria, unlike French linguistic-nationalism in France. In France, the “choice” of French as the language-of-state during the seventeenth century was not really a choice at all but an unconscious development since it was already the language of power since it was the language of the king and his court. The French government then enforced the already-existing language-of-state on its citizens. In Algeria, however, the French government chose French as the language-of-state and the post-independence Algerian elite chose Arabic as the language-of-state. As long as the Algerian elites force a linguistic-nationalism (Arabic) on their citizens but follow a different language policy themselves (French and Arabic), Algerian linguistic-nationalism will never succeed. In France, the French were forced to accept French as the language-of-state in order to have access to better economic opportunities since it was the only language of power and economic opportunity. In Algeria, on the other hand, the citizens will never accept Algerian linguistic-nationalism as long as the elites use bilingualism (French and Arabic) as an instrument of power and economic opportunity.

The institution of education demonstrates the failure of Algerian linguistic-nationalism through the policy of Arabisation as well. Even if Arabisation is completely achieved in primary and secondary education, this is not the case in universities (Mostari 30). At the university level, Arabic is integral in literature, history, and pedagogy, partial in geography, law, journalism, sociology, and psychology, and non-existent in scientific and technical specialties such as medicine, the hard sciences, and engineering (Mostari 30). The exclusive use of French in

scientific and technical specialties derived from its already-existing scientific and technical terminologies (Mostari 39). The French language was already present in and equipped for these fields while Arabisation, particularly in education, was much unprepared after independence and ill-equipped for these specialties.

In addition, a 1989/1990 study demonstrated that university students were much weaker in French but remained incompetent in Arabic as well (Benrabah, "Language and Politics" 72). This inability to adequately learn Arabic derives from the unpreparedness of the policy of Arabization beginning directly after independence. For example, to compensate for a shortage of teachers after independence, one thousand Egyptians were hired, even though most of them had no training in teaching (Benrabah, "Language and Politics" 66). Studies from the early 1990's also demonstrate that the institution of education produces students who value religious beliefs and Islam more than the Arabic language itself (Benrabah, "Language and Politics" 72). In addition, since Arabization never went beyond the limits of education, it never had a great impact on the out-of-school environment, leaving families hostile to Arabization (Mostari 39-40). As long as education reforms are not put in place to require the use of Arabic only in schools and universities, like they did with French in France, students will always use French in certain fields of education and the nation will never reach linguistic-nationalism because it will never be unified under a single language in all areas of society.

The survival of the French language in Algeria also demonstrates the failure of Algerian linguistic-nationalism through a policy of Arabization. Algeria is the second largest French-speaking country in the world; out of 8,325 young Algerians polled in 36 provinces in 2004, 66% declared they spoke French (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 194). The French language has remained and the number of its users

has increased since independence for a number of reasons. As for economic causes, by the mid 1990's, 800,000 Algerians had emigrated to France in search of better living conditions and many of them have kept close ties with their family members in Algeria and favor the maintenance of French in Algeria (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 197). In addition, the transition to a market economy in the late 1980's led the authorities to commit to Arabic-French bilingual reforms in the educational system with French as a medium for teaching science and technology; in 2003, French also became the first mandatory foreign language of primary education and schools now introduce it to Algerian students in the second grade (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 199).

As for demographic causes, increased birth rates left 70% of the population aged 30 and under in the 1990's and this new generation was less resentful about France and its heritage in their country than the generations before them (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 200). A 1999 survey revealed that 75% of Algerians supported the idea of teaching scientific school subjects in French (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 199). A 2004 survey also revealed that 49% of Algerians did not view French as a foreign language and 44% of them viewed French as a part of Algeria's heritage (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 200-1). Urbanization has also been favorable to the spread of French in Algeria because the economic policy of industrialization of the 1970's forced landless peasants to migrate to the outskirts of towns and cities near French-speaking regions (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 201).

As for institutional support, since independence, Algeria has witnessed an increase in student enrollment, providing those in school with increased contact with the French language; in 1962, there were 600,000 students in primary school, 48,000

in secondary school, and 2500 in universities (only 600 of which were Algerians) while there were 600,000 students in universities in 2000 and 7,805,000 in primary, middle, and secondary schools in 2003 (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 204). The language status of French has also contributed to its maintenance in Algeria. Speakers of languages that are defined as "minority" or "foreign" tend to feel closer to their language than speakers of the "majority" or "dominant" language (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 205-6). Many Francophone Algerians tend to feel close to the French language because it represents their colonial/historical consciousness and their struggle for independence so they, therefore, fight harder to keep the French language alive in Algeria. In fact, many Francophone and Berberophone writers chose to write in French after independence, despite the external threats involved in doing so, in an attempt to fight the linguistic status of the French language. The elite have also successfully kept the French language alive in France by maintaining a social inequality in which they implement a language policy for the majority (Arabization) but enable their children to be educated in French and Arabic so they will have less competition for well-paying jobs and prestigious careers, which require competence in French and Arabic (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 207).

Publication and the mass media have also facilitated the survival of the French language in Algeria. As for television, Algerian viewers prefer international channels because of the dull quality of programs on the single national channel; in 1992, between 9 and 12 million Algerians watched French channels and 52% of Algerian households watched French channels on a daily basis (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 205). Satellite television also allows young Algerians to learn to speak acceptable French without any previous instruction in the language (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 205). In addition, more than half of the total publications

by the public and private sectors are published in French, the circulation of French dailies was more than twice that of Arabic dailies in 1998, and there were 26 francophone dailies in 2004 and only 20 Arabic dailies (Benrabah, "Language Maintenance" 205).

As for literary publication in specific, the difficulties of publication and distribution in Algeria deprive Algerian writers of the Arabic language with a readership corresponding to their aspirations (Saadi-Mokrane 57). The first literary works written in Arabic began to appear in the 1970's but from 1967 to 1985, there were only about thirty novels and short stories published in Arabic (Saadi-Mokrane 57). Very few Algerian writers of the Arabic language are known to the general public and most of those who are (such as Tahar Ouettar, Abdelhamid Benhedouga, and Waciny Larej) commonly translate their works into French so they can publish them in France (Saadi-Mokrane 57). "[Thus], Francophone newspapers and literary texts, born of the Western tradition of readership and relying on a well-established publishing and distribution network with ties to metropolitan France, are thriving" (Saadi-Mokrane 70-1). As long as French continues to survive in Algeria, the nation will never reach an Algerian linguistic-nationalism because it will never be linguistically united with Arabic and only Arabic.

Due to the failure of complete Arabization and Algerian linguistic-nationalism and the survival of multiple languages in Algeria (including French, Modern Standard Arabic, Algerian Arabic dialects, and the Berber language and its dialects), the current linguistic debate in Algeria is twofold. The problems are between Modern Standard Arabic and vernacular dialects (Algerian Arabic dialects and Berber dialects) on the one hand and between the French language and the Arabic language (the vehicular languages) on the other hand (Grandguillaume 32). As for the first side of the

problem, it is important to recognize the distinction between the vernacular languages of Algeria and classical Arabic. After independence, the policy of Arabization aimed not only at replacing French as the language-of-state but also at replacing Algerian dialectal Arabic and effacing Tamazight, the Berber languages (Berger 69). After independence, a vast majority of the population was illiterate and spoke dialectal Arabic or Tamazight and the minimal French necessary to perform their jobs for the French colonizers (Berger 69). The purpose of educational Arabization, therefore, was twofold: to give post-independence illiterate Algerians access to literacy and to overcome the gap between spoken and written Arabic (Berger 70).

Whereas the justification for the fight against French was clearly ideological and political and based on nationalistic rhetoric, the attack on Algerian Arabic and Berber derives from the admiration of Arabic as a superior and even sacred language (Gafaïti 29). Salhi explains that Arabization created a linguistic hierarchy in Algeria in which classical Arabic is at the top of the pyramid and all other languages and dialects are below it, including French, Algerian dialectal Arabic, and the Berber languages (105). After independence, language became a question of prestige in which those who used classical Arabic considered themselves the undisputable masters because they viewed their language as a sign of bourgeois status and supreme patriotism (Salhi 105). Then, those who used Berber and French were enemies of revolutionary and independent Algeria (Salhi 105).

Finally, those who used Algerian dialectal Arabic were vulgar and found at the lowest possible rung of the social ladder (Salhi 105). The overall goal of Arabization, therefore, was to convince the masses to adopt the ideology of the elite and to persuade them that the dialect of the elite was more suitable, elegant, aesthetically pleasing, etc. in order to convince them to accept it as the language-of-state (Holt 40).

The process of enforcing an Algerian linguistic-nationalism, therefore, appears more difficult than it was with French linguistic-nationalism in France. Since bilingualism (French and Arabic), as opposed to Arabic, determined power and economic opportunity after independence, the Algerian elite could not force Arabic on Algerians as the language of power and economic opportunity so they were forced to try to convince the citizens of its social superiority instead.

The linguistic hierarchy is completely unfounded because no language is inherently more prestigious than another. If all the vernacular languages in Algeria are equal, therefore, it becomes basically impossible to claim that Arabic (which is the current language-of-state, even though the elites use bilingualism as an instrument of power) is superior and force it on Algerians. Instead, Algerians could benefit from the implementation of a language policy that would preserve and encourage multilingualism and not linguistic-nationalism. Benrabah refers to such a language policy as “linguistic democracy,” which is pluralism in general and multilingualism in particular (“Language and Politics” 75). First of all, there are numerous benefits for multilingual citizens, including more economic opportunities, more academic opportunities, better international relations (with France, Arabic nations, and Francophone nations), etc.

Second of all, Algeria is characterized by its diversity and pluralism. Taking such a characteristic away would create a fictitious nation in which the citizens do not feel at home. Encouraging and preserving such a characteristic, however, would also preserve the nation’s historical consciousness. If future generations continue to be surrounded by multiple languages, they will always be aware of and sensitive to the many Algerian linguistic heritages, including that of French colonialism. While linguistic pluralism distinguishes Algerians as Algerians, therefore, linguistic-

nationalism through a policy of Arabization threatens the existence of multilingualism within the Algerian nation and, instead of unification, led to the division of its citizens.

The acceptance of a multilingual Algerian nation would obviously destroy any attempt at an Algerian linguistic-nationalism by way of an Arabization policy. The nonexistence of a linguistic-nationalism, however, does not guarantee the nonexistence of nationalism or a united Algeria. The symbolic language of revolution and independence does not necessarily have to be the symbolic language of nationalism after independence. In Ireland, for example, Gaelic represented revolution and independence but after independence, English, the language of the former colonizing power, became the official national language (Benrabah, *Langue* 238) while Gaelic is taught as a second language in which children receive an hour's worth of compulsory education for eleven years ("Why"). Arabic, therefore, the language that represents the fight for independent Algeria, does not have to be the only representative language of nationalism after independence.²⁷

In addition, a nation is able to remain united whether it is monolingual or multilingual. The existence of linguistic plurality in three European countries, Luxemburg, Norway, and Sweden, proves that nations can remain united *and* multilingual and that pluralism does not prevent unity *or* create division between citizens. The fact that these are three of the richest countries in Europe, countries in which multilingualism is recognized and encouraged, also proves that multilingualism does not halt the socio-economic status of a country (Benrabah, *Langue* 348).

²⁷French and Berber dialects are recognized as spoken languages in Algeria but Arabic remains the only official national language of Algeria.

The second side of the linguistic problem is the debate between the vehicular languages, classical Arabic and the French language. This side of the debate is even more significant than that of the vernacular languages since Algerian dialectal Arabic and the Berber languages are principally oral and, therefore, cannot function as both vernacular and substantially vehicular languages. Native Algerian languages are noticeably absent from literature; since they are principally oral, they nourish literature through stories and legends, proverbs, and multilingual plays, but never gain full access to literature as vehicular languages are able to do (Saadi-Mokrane 56). It is, therefore, the opposition between Modern Standard Arabic and French that should be stressed since neither Berber nor Algerian Arabic have developed as complete vehicular languages or as languages of technology and administration (Gafaïti 42). As previously stated, however, French remains the only written language for many Algerian writers today, exposing them to two internal dilemmas: writing and expressing themselves in the language of the former colonizer and writing in only one language when they experience life in multiple vernacular languages.

In *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*, Derrida supports the adoption of the French language in order to address the first internal dilemma (writing in the former colonizer's language) that Algerian writers of French language face today. It appears contradictory for Algerians to write in the language from which they were alienated during colonization but one should consider the argument of Derrida and the natural ownership of languages. There are two dimensions to the expression "le monolinguisme de l'autre" (Derrida 69). On one hand, as mentioned previously with "le double interdit," Algerians were required to speak a single language, French, or "le monolinguisme imposé par l'autre" (Derrida 69).

On the other hand, however, Derrida uses the word “l’autre” to describe the impossibility of owning a language. At the beginning of the book, he says, “Je n’ai qu’une langue, ce n’est pas la mienne” (Derrida 13). In this sentence, he is claiming that one cannot own a language and that is why he does not own the language in which he writes, French. One cannot own a language “parce qu’il n’y a pas de propriété naturelle de la langue” (Derrida 46). Thus, one can never own the language that one speaks because people do not have natural rights to the ownership of languages.

If this is the case, then “le double interdit” is a “structure d’aliénation sans aliénation” (Derrida 47-8). One cannot miss a language, or be excluded from a language, that one has no natural right to own in the first place. By deconstructing the belief that the individual speakers within nations own languages, therefore, Derrida falsifies the idea of linguistic-nationalism. If the members of a specific nation do not own a language-of-state, such as the French owning the French language, then they cannot legitimately force it on their citizens in order to enforce a linguistic-nationalism.

Thus, if languages are entities detached from the ownership of members of specific nations, they can be shared amongst diverse communities. Members of other nations, therefore, can claim the ownership of languages in order to apply them to their national identities, regardless of borders and linguistic heritage. Derrida demonstrates that the French claimed ownership of the French language in order to claim it as their property. He says that:

[Le] maître ne possède pas en propre, naturellement, ce qu’il appelle pourtant sa langue... parce que la langue n’est pas son bien naturel, par cela même il peut historiquement, à travers le viol d’une usurpation culturelle, c’est-à-dire toujours d’essence coloniale, feindre de se l’approprier pour l’imposer comme « la sienne. » (45)

This means that the French could not really own the French language but they *claimed* it as their property in order to apply it to French nationalism and to force it on Algerians when Algeria became an integral part of the French nation. The Algerian elite did the same thing with classical Arabic after independence. Even though they have no natural right as owners of classical Arabic and this language exists in various other Arabic countries, they *claimed* it as their property in order to apply it to Algerian nationalism and force it on Algerians.

Thus, according to Derrida's deconstruction of a natural right to the ownership of languages, the definition of *propriété* becomes something new. *Le Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé* defines *propriété* as a "caractère distinctif qui appartient à un être, une espèce, mais qui ne lui appartient pas toujours exclusivement" ("Propriété," *atilf.fr*). According to this definition, the French language may belong to the French but it does not belong to them exclusively. Algerians, therefore, also have a natural right to claim ownership of the French language as well. This is why Derrida explains that "il n'y a jamais d'appropriation ou de réappropriation absolue" (46) because a person or a group of people cannot completely appropriate a language if they have no exclusive natural right to it. They can only claim to own a language, leaving others the natural right to claim to own it as well.

The situation with French in Algeria of course is somewhat different; the Algerians' relationship with French is more complex since it is the language of the former colonizing power, making it unbearable for them to claim it as their property and apply it to their Algerian identity. As previously stated, however, there is a distinction to be made between the sentiments of the Algerians from the generations directly following independence and the sentiments of the more recent generations

toward the French language. For the latter, the linguistic problem is presented to them but they never actually faced it themselves so they are less resentful about the French language being the language of the former colonizing power. In fact, most students today not only support the use of French in teaching science and technology but they also do not view the French language as a foreign language but as part of the Algerian heritage. Thus, if each generation becomes less and less hostile and resentful toward French and the French colonists, especially if students could receive a more accurate and complete historical education, one day they may be able to escape their “colonial subconscious.”²⁸ If so, as time goes by, Algerians will become more and more willing to accept French as a language of their heritage and then *claim* it as their property in order to apply it to an Algerian nationalism characterized by multilingualism, as opposed to linguistic-nationalism, especially if the French have no natural right as owners of the French language.

Partly because they had been recognized internationally and partly because they maintained an Algerian readership, many Algerian writers have already reversed their stance on the political use of language and begun to express themselves openly in French, claiming that French is the literary language most appropriate to express their feelings and thoughts and to describe Algerian reality (Valensi 143). They have, therefore, decided to claim a right to the French language and apply it to their Algerian identity, instead of viewing it as the language of the former colonizer. For Assia Djebar, French was initially the “*langue de l’autre*,” as she used to describe it

²⁸Gafaïti states that, “Algerians are to a large extent the victims of their own perpetuation of what one might call the colonial subconscious” because their continued policy of monolingualism after independence continues to tear the country apart (43). This is not to minimize the indisputable effects of colonization on post-independent Algeria but to underscore the fact that as long as Algerians continue a policy of monolingualism like the former French colonizer, the violence of which the linguistic situation is the root cause will continue.

during her early writing career (*Ces* 44).²⁹ She felt that the colonists separated her from her maternal language and forced her to write in a language that she did not choose. At the same time, however, French remains her only written language so she describes her early writing career as “une lutte intérieure avec son silence porteur de contradictions et qui s’inscrit peu à peu ou d’emblée dans l’épaisseur d’une langue, la plus légère, la plus vive ou n’importe laquelle” (Djebar, *Ces* 28). In 1979, however, she had a change of heart and decided that she was *voluntarily* a French writer (Djebar, *Ces* 39) after she accepted the fact that the French language is part of her Algerian identity because she is of “éducation française...en langue française, du temps de l’Algérie colonisée” (Djebar, *Ces* 26). She even admits that “le français est en train de me devenir vraiment maison d’accueil, peut-être même lieu de permanence où se perçoit chaque jour l’éphémère de l’occupation” (Djebar, *Ces* 44).

For many Algerians writers, writing in French also became a political machine, a fight for liberty and democracy. In *Kafka*, Deleuze and Guattari³⁰ define a minor literature as a literature written by a linguistic minority in a major language (what is a minority language in their nation is a major language elsewhere in the world) and they characterize it as political and of a collective value (29-31). According to their definition, therefore, these writers, who represent a linguistic minority in their respective nations, choose to write their works in these major languages and writing in these specific languages becomes in and of itself a political rebellion against the status of these languages within their respective countries, which

²⁹In *Ces voix qui m’assiègent* (1999), a compilation of essays, Djebar explores the multilingual post-independent politico-linguistic situation in Algeria, along with her own linguistic situation and her internal struggles as an Algerian writer of the French language.

³⁰In the book *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure* (1975), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari explore the novel *The Metamorphosis*, written by Franz Kafka in 1915, and minor literatures, particularly the use of the German language by the Jewish minority in Prague.

represents the politico-linguistic ambitions of their linguistic minority. Algerian literature of the French language corresponds to this definition and these characteristics; it is written by a Francophone Algerian minority in a major language (French) and Algerian writers of the French language are fighting for a common political cause: liberty and democracy, especially linguistic democracy. Despite the threat of violence and even death, Francophone writers did not want to remain quiet but chose to defend the interests of their people who had already been silenced for long enough (Soukehal 112). Thus, they began to openly criticize Modern Standard Arabic for being alien to the Algerian public since the majority of Algerians spoke dialectal Arabic and Berber as their mother tongues (Valensi 143).

The Francophone writer claimed and reclaimed a liberty in which Algerians were free to think and write, not as determined by the Occident or the Orient but as Algerians in the language of their choice (Soukehal 99). “Algerian literature shows that literary language reflects individual interiorizations of social life, which, in their turn, sustain linguistic, religious, racial or class interests” (Kaye and Zoubir 130). Thus, the French language became a political instrument: *la Francophonie* (Soukehal 119). The very act of writing in French during the implementation of Arabization in Algeria became in and of itself an act of subversion (Valensi 145). It became not only subversive to Arabization but also to linguistic-nationalism. The act of writing in French challenged the enforcement of an Algerian linguistic-nationalism (writing in one and only one language, Arabic).

Thus, if the French language is no longer the language of the former colonizer and the Algerian nation begins to support linguistic democracy, then Algerians can claim ownership of the French language and apply it to their Algerian identity. Since Algerian Arabic and Berber are principally oral, this leaves only French and classical

Arabic as the possible medium for education. Currently, students are educated in classical Arabic and French is introduced as a second language in the second grade. Research proves that after three or four years at school, children's linguistic competence becomes fossilized (Benrabah, "Language and Politics" 71). This means that while the Francophones of the first generations following independence were true bilinguals, the younger generations that are taught in monolingual schools and learn French as a second language will not ever be truly bilingual (Berger 71). The major problem with this language policy is that those who receive Arabic-only education are handicapped in obtaining important jobs because they are monolingual in Arabic (Gordon 139) while the children of the elite who are blessed to receive bilingual education are free to occupy all the prestigious positions with no challengers.

In addition, there are many advantages to adding the French language to instruction and choosing bilingual education and becoming truly bilingual at a young age. Classical Arabic makes it possible for Algerians to join the mainstream of Islamic and Arabic culture, allowing them to communicate with other Arabic nations (Gordon 148) and the French language makes it possible to associate with the wider world, particularly the West (Salhi 108). The French language would also allow students to fully engage in modern life and its future since it is more adequate for technology and sciences (Salhi 111). As more and more generations become less resentful about the French language, Algerians will accept Algerian nationalism as characterized by multilingualism, instead of linguistic-nationalism, and recognize the benefits of using both vehicular languages (French and Arabic) as languages of instruction.

As for the second internal dilemma that Algerian writers of the French language face, many such as Kateb Yacine and Assia Djebar have struggled with the

linguistic gap between oral and written expressions (Kaye and Soubir 110), making it difficult to experience life in multiple languages and then have to express themselves in only one written language. Assia Djébar says, “J’écris donc, et en français, langue de l’ancien colonisateur, qui est devenue néanmoins et irréversiblement celle de ma pensée, tandis que je continue à aimer, à souffrir, également à prier (quand parfois je prie) en arabe, ma langue maternelle” (“Idiome”).³¹ Thus, even though she chooses to write in French, she continues to experience life in the Algerian vernaculars. In *Ces voix qui m’assiègent*,³² Djébar states that every Algerian is introduced to four languages: Berber, Arabic, French, and the body (13-4). Algerians live, therefore, between two worlds and two cultures: that of the French language and that of the Arabic dialects (Djébar, *Ces* 15). Djébar, therefore, describes herself as an Algerian of French education, in the French language, but she is of Arab-Berber sensibility (*Ces* 26). She says, “Les multiples voix qui m’assiègent...je les entends, pour la plupart, en arabe, un arabe dialectal, ou même un berbère que je comprends mal, mais dont la respiration rauque et le soufflé m’habitent d’une façon immémoriale” (Djébar, *Ces* 29).

These multiple languages that surround her are also the languages with which she portrays the characters in her literary works, including *Femmes d’Alger dans leur*

³¹In her speech, “Idiome de l’exil et langue de l’irréductibilité” (2000), she again explores the multilingual post-independent politico-linguistic situation in Algeria, along with her own linguistic situation and her internal struggles as an Algerian writer of the French language. In addition, she explains her final choice and acceptance of French as her written language.

³²Djébar states that the first three languages combine to form a fourth language: that of the body with its dances, trances, suffocations, asphyxia, delirium, etc. (*Ces* 14). As previously mentioned, each language/dialect has its own songs, dances, etc., which Djébar combined and characterized as a fourth language.

appartement and *La disparition de la langue française*.³³ In the former, the various characters in her short stories each have their own linguistic background, as a result of their individual educational and familial backgrounds. Some characters speak only French, others may be competent in classical Arabic but only speak dialectal Arabic or Berber in public, and others are bilingual in French and Arabic and act as translators for those who only speak French or only dialectal Arabic or Berber. No matter their individual linguistic characteristics, however, every character is confronted on a daily basis with every Algerian language and dialect. In the latter literary work, the protagonist, Bekrane, returns to Algeria from France and is forced to speak the Algerian dialect of his childhood while he continues to write in French. Another character, Nadjia, speaks French and her own distinct dialectal Arabic and also studies classical Arabic in school. The two characters address each other in both French and in their own dialects. The linguistic backgrounds of Djébar's characters clearly represent the various linguistic characteristics of individual Algerians and, regardless of their own linguistic backgrounds, how they experience multiple languages at once and communicate between them.

Bensmaïa also explains that Algerians deal with multiple voices: a vernacular language, a vehicular language, a referential language that acts as an oral or written reference through proverbs, sayings, literature, rhetoric, etc., and a mythic language that acts as verbal magic, the sacred, spiritual, religious, etc. aspect of language ("Tetraglossia" 91-2).³⁴ Due to this disparity between the written and the verbal,

³³*La disparition de la langue française* (2003) and *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* (2002) are novels in which Djébar again represents the multilingual post-independent politico-linguistic situation in Algeria.

³⁴In his article "Introduction to Tetraglossia: The Situation of Maghrebi Writers" (2003), Bensmaïa explains the four languages that Algerians experience in post-independence Algeria and that theatre is the most adequate literary production for representing the Algerian multilingual oral tradition.

Bensmaïa believes that the theatre is the most accurate medium for representing speech as a form of art because there is an immense difference between seeing it in writing and hearing an actor say it on stage (“Tetraglossia” 93). He says:

Because it is an oral art, the theatre can “stage,” can set in motion all that is necessary and play on various registers: speech, gestures, mime and music which, even if they are “regional” or local, will be able to merge the accents and the sayings, tales, stories which will contribute to “narrating” the Nation. It is true that this kind of “mixing” will be done with more or less success, talent or genius, but still with a certain ease, which poets and writers—limited as they are by one language—can only dream about. (Bensmaïa, “Tetraglossia” 93)

Since oral art is the best way to represent multilingualism, therefore, Yacine turned to theatre (as previously discussed) and Djebbar turned to cinema (early in her career during her dilemma with writing in French) in order to represent and communicate the multiple vernaculars that they experience in everyday life.

During a period of ten years, from 1968 to 1978, Djebbar discontinued her literary publication in order to “chercher, sinon sortir de [son] français, langue d’écriture, du moins à l’élargir” (*Ces* 35). Instead of literature, she turned to cinema which gave her the opportunity to confront the sounds of her maternal language (Djebbar, *Ces* 36). Thus, this type of work allowed her to reunite with “les voix qui m’assiègent” (Djebbar, *Ces* 38). In the end, however, their decision to turn to theatre and the cinema was not a solution to the problems that they faced with their solely written expressions.

In order to address this internal dilemma faced by Algerian writers, one should consider the argument of Bensmaïa. In *Experimental Nations*, Bensmaïa considers the French language in the literature of the Maghreb, including Algerian literature. He says, “Contrary to pessimistic forecasts, Maghrebi literature has continued to be

written in French after Kateb.³⁵ Other writers have appeared on the scene to face the challenges not only of language and identity but also of existence itself” (5). Thus, there are many Algerians today that continue to use the French language in order to face their dilemma of experiencing life in multiple languages but expressing these experiences in only one language.

Today using a broad variety of styles and themes, Maghrebi literature is producing works in French that contribute to an understanding of the “new world” (Farès) that has come into being since Algerian independence. This literature has also become an indispensable tool for the elaboration—or perlaboration and anamnesis—of something that was believed to be lost for good: the idiosyncratic nature of indigenous cultures. (Bensmaïa, *Experimental* 5-6)

In this book, Bensmaïa demonstrates the success of various Maghrebi writers that apply new literary strategies, in the French language, in order to appropriate their Maghrebi identities through literary expression (*Experimental* 7). He also explains that the result of these literary strategies is to escape the limitations of language and be able to express themselves in French with no internal dilemma.

Writers now need to forge instruments that will allow them to say what they *want to say*, *what they mean*, rather than merely what they *can say*, *are able to say*, in the language of the former colonizing power; in other words, they need to find a way to escape from the prison house of (colonial) language. (Bensmaïa, *Experimental* 102)

Thus, with these new literary instruments, Algerians can successfully escape the limitations of writing in only one language when they experience life in multiple languages.

Amour bilingue is an example of such a literary strategy used to escape the limitations of language. In his book, Khatibi writes in classic French but uses the Arabic language from time to time in order to demonstrate that he perceives situations

³⁵Bensmaïa refers to Yacine as “Kateb” because Yacine Kateb is his given name; Kateb ironically means “writer” in Arabic but of course he was expected to become a writer in Arabic, not French (*Experimental* 4).

simultaneously in two languages because he is bilingual (Bensmaïa, *Experimental* 106-7). For example, at the beginning of the book when the narrator is swimming in the sea, he experiences nostalgia: “Nostalgie qu’il aimait prononcer, penser aussi dans le mot arabe: *hanîne*, anagramme d’une double jouissance” (Khatibi, *Amour* 14). This sentence demonstrates that the narrator experiences nostalgia in French and Arabic at the same time. Djébar also writes *La disparition de la langue française* in classical French but also uses the Arabic language from time to time in order to demonstrate that she perceives life in both languages as well. In the first chapter, she also refers to her feeling of nostalgia as “el-ouehch” (Djébar, *La disparition* 26).

Thus, Khatibi and Djébar succeed in creating a space where Arabic and French can meet without merging (Bensmaïa, *Experimental* 108). Bensmaïa describes this space as “between-two-languages” (*Experimental* 108). The space between-two-languages is significant because it allows multiple languages to meet without mixing in order to create something new, thereby preserving each language in its classical form. It is also important because it allows writers to demonstrate in their work their multilingual perception of life in which they experience multiple languages in their classical forms.

The literary strategy of Khatibi and Djébar is, therefore, a success because now they can show, in their writing, that they perceive life and experiences emotions in two languages at the same time (Bensmaïa, *Experimental* 104). Bensmaïa affirms his success when he says, “So there is no suffering, no heartbreak, no renunciation: There is affirmation, nothing but affirmation!” (*Experimental* 106). Algerian linguistic-nationalism, on the other hand, would require Algerians to write in a single language (Arabic) and force them to suppress the life experience that they perceive in all other languages. Literature between-two-languages, therefore, not only closes the

gap between oral and written language; it also challenges the fiction of linguistic-nationalism and proves that Algeria can remain united *and* multilingual.

Due to the failure of Arabization, it would be constructive for the Algerian government to consider linguistic policies other than an Algerian linguistic-nationalism through a policy of Arabization. The linguistic hierarchy is unfounded and the acceptance of a multilingual Algerian nation would be economically and politically beneficial for Algerians. In addition, the support of a multilingual policy would maintain the Algerian identity, which is based on multilingualism and multiculturalism. The continued survival of multilingual countries such as Luxembourg, Norway, and Sweden that are both unified and economically successful proves that a country can remain multilingual and unified. As for the internal dilemmas faced by Francophone writers, as more and more recent generations become less resentful of French as the language of the former colonizer, more and more Algerians may be able to claim the French language as their own for their written expression. In addition, Algerian writers can employ literature between-two-languages in order to represent their multilingual life experiences in their work.

IV. Conclusion

As observed with French in France, linguistic-nationalism can be successful and effective in unifying a multilingual nation. As observed with Arabic in Algeria, however, it is not always successful and does not always achieve national unification in a multilingual nation. Algerian linguistic-nationalism, through the policy of Arabization, has failed for a number of reasons. The most significant cause of this failure is the Algerian elite's lack of complete implementation and enforcement of the language policy, unlike that which took place with French linguistic-nationalism in France. In addition, Arabization has created more problems instead of offering effective solutions. These problems include a division between politico-linguistic groups, extreme violence for Francophone and Berberophone speakers and writers because of the Algerian state's official institution of language, an unfounded vernacular hierarchy, and internal dilemmas for Francophone writers. Linguistic-nationalism, therefore, should never be considered as a rule of thumb in unifying a nation since it does not always prove successful.

Instead of linguistic-nationalism, therefore, Algerians should encourage and enforce Algerian nationalism characterized by multilingualism. This would be beneficial not only because Algerian linguistic-nationalism has failed but also because there are many advantages to multilingualism and the Algerian identity is strongly characterized by its diverse heritage and linguistic plurality. The acceptance of a multilingual nation may also create less external conflicts between politico-linguistic groups. As for French in particular, as more and more generations of Algerians

to resent French colonists and the French language less and less, Algerians may find it less unbearable to claim the language of the former colonizer as their own in order to apply it to their Algerian identity. In addition, an Algerian nationalism characterized by multilingualism, unlike the failed attempt at an Algerian linguistic-nationalism through a policy of Arabization, is quite possible, as proven by other triumphant multilingual nations.

Of course an official national language policy directly affects Algerian writers' relationship to language. For example, during Arabization and the efforts toward an Algerian linguistic-nationalism, Francophone and Berberophone writers chose to write in French and Berber as a medium for fighting Arabization and they faced both external and internal dilemmas when it came to writing in languages other than Arabic. With the acceptance of a multilingual Algerian nation, however, Algerian writers may face fewer external threats for writing in languages other than Arabic. Internal dilemmas would also be less likely, thereby allowing them to feel more comfortable with writing in French and Berber, especially if they have less choice when it comes to vehicular languages because many have only one written language. In addition, new literary strategies, such as literature between-two-languages, have proven successful in assisting multilingual Algerian writers in demonstrating their bilingual perceptions in their written work.

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