



## ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

### Reassessing Language Attitudes in Algeria: English and French in Contemporary Sociolinguistic Perception

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This study examines Algerian attitudes towards English and French within a shifting linguistic environment. Drawing on data from a nationwide online survey of 1,032 participants aged 18–45, the research explores how language preferences and perceptions are evolving in light of the global ascendancy of English. The quantitative design employed descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and supplementary qualitative coding to identify key patterns. Findings reveal a pronounced preference for English, widely regarded as a vehicle for academic and professional advancement, and as a global medium of communication. French, while still present in educational and administrative domains, is increasingly associated with colonial imposition and linguistic constraint. The strongest predictor of favorable attitudes towards English was the belief in its instrumental value, whereas negative perceptions of French were rooted in its colonial legacy. These findings challenge earlier portrayals of additive multilingualism in Algeria by pointing to a generational reorientation towards English, often at the symbolic expense of French. The study contributes to broader debates on language ideology and postcolonial identity in the Francophone world by illustrating how language hierarchies are renegotiated in formerly colonized societies. It also raises implications for language policy in Algeria, particularly concerning the future status of French in education and the growing sociolinguistic salience of English among younger Algerians.

**Keywords:** Language Attitudes, Algeria, English and French, Sociolinguistic Change, North African Multilingualism.

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## Introduction

Shaped by its geopolitical position and colonial history, Algeria has a rich sociolinguistic profile, with Arabic and Tamazight as the official and national languages, French as a colonial legacy, and, increasingly, English. While French has traditionally held a key position, particularly in administration, education, and business, English has emerged as a prominent language of global communication, higher education, research, and the job market. This rise of English necessitates a re-evaluation of existing linguistic dynamics, especially concerning French. Existing research on the spread of English as a global language and its impact on local language ecologies, as well as studies on language attitudes in multilingual contexts, provides a valuable framework (Baker 1992; Phillipson 1992). However, while research has explored attitudes towards French in Algeria (Benrabah 2007; Maamri 2009), the rapidly evolving role of English in the 21st century, driven by globalization and technological advancements, demands an updated understanding of the dynamics between these two languages. This study explores current attitudes towards and the perceived status of English and French within the Algerian speech community, addressing the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of Algerian adults towards English and French?
2. What are the main predictors of these attitudes?

Employing a quantitative approach using an online semi-structured questionnaire, this study contributes a contemporary perspective on language dynamics in multilingual contexts, specifically within Algeria's evolving linguistic landscape.

## Literature Review

The following section undertakes a scholarly review of pertinent literature in order to understand the complex linguistic situation of Algeria. By doing so, it establishes the foundation for an in-depth investigation into the dynamic relationship between Algeria's diverse language varieties and the attitudes that influence their use, status, and importance in present-day society.

### The Complex Linguistic Makeup of Algeria

The language situation in Algeria is influenced by several factors, including colonization, nationalism, and language policies. Historically speaking, and before the French colonization in the 19th century, Tamazight and Arabic were the dominant languages in Algeria. During the colonial rule, however, French quickly became the official language imposed on every sector, including administration, education, and culture. This colonial policy marginalized and deteriorated both Arabic and Tamazight. The aim of this "Francization" strategy was to assimilate Algerians into French norms, with the ultimate goal of creating *l'Algérie française*. For the French, it was part of their "civilizing mission" in Algeria (Aziz 2015), which, in reality, resembled a genocidal mission targeting everything native.

Following independence in 1962, the Algerian government implemented a range of policies to reinvigorate the use of Arabic and Tamazight and relegate French dominance. This decision was necessary to reclaim Algerian cultural identity and assert independence from France. It also marked a significant shift in language policy. Arabic was initially established as the sole official language. It was promoted

as a means of unifying and asserting the country's Arabo-Islamic identity and autonomy. According to Benrabah (2014, 46), "[f]rom a quantitative point of view, the results of linguistic Arabization have been spectacular". French eventually lost ground to Arabic in different domains, namely the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Religious Affairs, and town hall registration offices (Benrabah 2014). Arabic also replaced French as the language of instruction, especially in primary and secondary schools, except in scientific and technological fields at the university level.

Concerning Berber, also known as Tamazight in official documents, it was recognized as a national language in 2002 and as an official language in 2016, alongside Arabic. Yet, as Calvet (1999) argues, the legacy of colonial language policies continues to shape linguistic hierarchies in postcolonial societies long after political independence has been attained. Despite this recognition, the impact of French colonial language policy on Algeria was far-reaching and long-lasting; it has remained an integral part of the Algerian linguistic profile and a key vehicle of business and economy. French is taught as a mandatory subject starting from elementary school. Although it is officially considered a foreign language, French is covertly or socially regarded as a second language. According to World Population Review (no date), around one-third of Algerians speak French.

Following Fishman's (2017) classification, Algeria can be described as a "Type B nation" or "unimodal" nation, with a dominant language and a literary tradition (Arabic or Tamazight), coupled with a language of wider communication imposed by colonial policy (French). This led to a conflict between the practicality of French and loyalty to Arabic in particular, or, in the words of Benrabah (2013, p. 51), a linguistic "war with diversity".

However, as Makoni and Pennycook (2005) contend, postcolonial societies are not merely passive recipients of global languages but actively renegotiate their meanings and uses. The contemporary sociolinguistic scene in Algeria is no longer shaped solely by internal post-independence policy. Globalization and the rise of English as the lingua franca of international academia, business, and digital communication have restructured the value assigned to foreign languages. Similar to recent developments in Senegal and Cameroon, where English has gained symbolic and instrumental capital at the expense of French (Diallo 2014; Kamdem et al. 2025), Algeria's linguistic landscape reveals a comparable generational reorientation. This trend situates Algeria within a broader pattern of Francophone African states renegotiating their linguistic futures. This realignment reflects a broader trend identified by Blommaert (2012), in which global linguistic flows influence local language ideologies and practices.

English, increasingly viewed as a tool of upward mobility, has emerged as a serious contender to French's historical dominance. This shift is not merely instrumental but also ideological: English represents openness and global participation, while French remains associated with historical subjugation (Park and Wee 2013; Pennycook 2002). The functional expansion of English in Algeria began with educational reforms in the 1990s, which introduced English as an optional foreign language at the primary level, though this initiative ultimately failed due to various linguistic and non-linguistic factors.

Despite past setbacks, there have been renewed calls in recent years to reintroduce English as the first mandatory foreign language in Algerian schools and institutions. In 2022, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune mandated the introduction of English at earlier stages in the primary curriculum. This state-level reform signals a shift in national language planning and likely influences public perception by aligning English with modernization and global integration. This political endorsement has given English institutional legitimacy and may partly explain its favorable perception among youth. Indeed, President Tebboune was famously quoted saying, "French is a spoil of war<sup>1</sup>, but English is an international language" (Kiunguyu 2022). The increasing emphasis on English in Algeria's educational system and public spaces is clear, with some signage now displayed in both Arabic and English. This suggests the country is progressively looking beyond its traditional ties to France and towards the broader global community. Consequently, English is now taught to third-grade primary school pupils, alongside French. The language's growing importance is further emphasized by a training program for university teachers and PhD students, who must now take an English placement test to assess their proficiency.

From the coexistence of the aforementioned languages, it is clear that Algerians are largely bilingual, if not multilingual. Nonetheless, their language proficiency is subject to various internal and external factors, such as education, upbringing, place of residence, age, and attitudes.

#### Language Attitudes

Attitudes can be defined as "a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object" (Fishbein & Ajzen 1977, 6). One of the comprehensive frameworks to conceptualize attitudes is the ABC model (Katz & Stotland 1959; Rosenberg 1960; Smith 1947), which stands for affective, behavioral, and cognitive components. The affective component refers to the emotions or feelings that an object or person evokes, while the behavioral component represents the individual's disposition or tendency to act towards the attitude object. For the cognitive component, it involves beliefs, thoughts, or ideas about the attitude object. Research in social psychology, for example, has demonstrated that individuals may hold negative attitudes towards certain language varieties, such as regional or non-native accents (Senefonte 2016). This negativity may manifest in affective responses, such as annoyance or a sense of superiority, towards speakers of the varieties at play. Their behavioral responses may correspondingly reflect these attitudes by avoiding interactions with the users of such varieties or dismissing their opinions or ideas. Negative beliefs about the language varieties they speak may also be present, such as the perception of the speakers being uneducated or backward.

<sup>1</sup> The phrase "spoil of war" was used by President Tebboune to describe the inherited presence of French in Algeria. It alludes to the notion that French, while pervasive, is not embraced as a national or cultural asset but tolerated as a linguistic by-product of colonisation. The framing reinforces Algeria's right to redefine its linguistic future by shifting towards English.

Demonstrating the separateness of the three components, researchers have not halted refining and expanding upon this model (Breckler 1984). However, more contemporary attitude investigators have further modified this model, stating that affect can be better described as consisting of specific and distinct emotional states rather than just positive or negative feelings (Cacioppo et al. 2014; Zanna & Rempel 2008). These theorists also argue that attitudes should be seen as a general evaluative summary of the information derived from the three bases, rather than as a composite of them.

Olufemi (2012) posits that parents, peers, and media are some of the earliest agents of attitude formation. While attitudes may be relatively stable, they are not immutable, and can be influenced and altered through various processes and experiences. There are different theories that depict the attitudinal formation and change, among others are the following:

- Functionalist theory suggests that people's attitudes are shaped by the purposes those attitudes fulfill for them. This theory identifies four psychological functions of attitudes: instrumental (serving one's interests), knowledge (providing understanding), value-expressive (reflecting personal values), and ego-defensive (protecting self-esteem).
- Learning theory emphasizes how attitudes are acquired through various learning processes: classical conditioning (associating stimuli with positive or negative feelings), operant conditioning (learning through rewards and punishments), cognitive appraisal (evaluating arguments), and observational learning (adopting attitudes observed in peers and media).
- The cognitive dissonance theory explains how people experience mental discomfort or dissonance when they hold conflicting beliefs or attitudes and how they reduce this discomfort.
- The Reactance theory suggests that when people feel that their autonomy is being threatened or limited, they may experience a sense of psychological reactance, which can manifest in a variety of ways, such as increased resistance to persuasion attempts, greater willingness to engage in the restricted behavior or attitude, or more positive evaluations of the behavior or attitude.

Furthermore, studies examining traditional research on language attitudes usually identify three main methodological approaches: the analysis of societal treatment approach, the direct methods approach, and the indirect methods approach (Garrett 2010; Giles & Billings 2004; Kristiansen 2022). The analysis of societal treatment approach collects and analyses all kinds of data that may shed light on how language varieties are treated in a speech community, without including the data elicitation from informants. The direct and indirect methods, on the other hand, both involve informants, but differ in terms of how the data are elicited or offered. The direct methods approach involves the direct elicitation of language-related attitudes from informants through tasks like asking for beliefs and feelings about certain languages or varieties. Indirect methods gather data by having participants complete tasks that reveal their attitudes towards the languages or varieties being studied, without explicitly asking for those attitudes. It uses subtle techniques such as the matched

guise test (first used by Lambert et al. 1960). This technique avoids directly asking about attitudes towards specific languages or dialects; instead, participants evaluate speakers of those languages or dialects (Garrett 2010).

However, Kristiansen (2022) points out that the differentiation between direct and indirect methods can be problematic as it is often used to distinguish between attitudes that are explicitly or implicitly offered, as well as between interviewing and experimentation as methodological approaches. Despite the availability of various approaches, the selection of the most suitable method depends on the research questions, the research focus, and the resource availability.

### Methodology

This exploratory research relies on a quantitative research methodology approach with a cross-sectional research design. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017, 33), “[q]uantitative methods involve the processes of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and writing the results of a study.” One of the primary advantages of this approach is the ability to collect and analyze large amounts of data at a single point in time, along with the application of sophisticated statistical techniques to test hypotheses and draw meaningful conclusions.

### Participants

In this study, individuals aged above 45 years and below 18 years were excluded because they could potentially skew the results or introduce heterogeneity in the sample. These age cohorts (i.e., teenagers or older people) may have different experiences, knowledge, and perspectives, whereas younger individuals may have less life experience and education. The resulting sample thus comprised individuals likely to have completed their education and been exposed to diverse language contexts. According to the World Bank (2023), approximately 63% of Algeria's population was aged 15–64. Assuming a similar age distribution in 2025, the 18–45-year-old demographic is estimated at 13.3 million (28.1% of the total projected population of 47.4 million). This group represents 44.6% of the 15–64-year-old segment and constitutes the study population (World Bank 2023).

Participants were recruited using convenience sampling, a non-random method where individuals were chosen based on their accessibility and willingness to take part in the study. This technique was chosen for its practicality and the ease with which it allowed for the collection of data from a diverse group of participants, especially since the population of interest is large and spread out. To determine the sample size, the Cochran (1977) formula was adopted and is given by:

$$n = \frac{N \times Z^2 \times p \times q}{(N - 1) \times E^2 + Z^2 \times p \times q}$$

Where:

- n: the sample size
- N: the population size (28.16 million people in this case)
- Z: the standard normal deviate for the desired level of confidence (e.g., 1.96 for a 95% confidence level)
- p: the estimated proportion of the population that has the characteristic of interest
- q: 1 – p
- E: the desired margin of error as a decimal

Z is set at 1.96 and E at 0.03, assuming a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 3%. Since the population proportion (p) is unknown, a conservative estimate of 0.5 is used. The result is:  $n = 1,068.61$ . Rounding up to the nearest whole number, the calculated sample size is 1,069.

In this study, a total of 1080 individuals participated. Forty-eight responses, however, were eliminated because some of them were outliers or missing responses. Thus, the final sample includes 1032 participants. This sample size was considered sufficient to achieve a reasonable level of accuracy while balancing the resources associated with data collection.

### **Materials**

To collect the requisite data, a direct method was employed through the use of an online semi-structured questionnaire. It is composed of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The latter aimed to elicit detailed responses that could be used to contextualize and supplement the quantitative data. The entire format of the questionnaire is divided as follows:

- Biographical information: such as age, gender, place of residence, occupation, education level, and mother tongue.
- Language proficiency: on a scale of 1-5 (1 = no proficiency, 5 = native-like proficiency), participants were asked to rate their level of proficiency in the languages at play
- Attitudes towards English and French: on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), participants were asked to rate their attitudes towards both languages.
- Language use and preferences: participants were asked about their language use and preferences in different contexts.

The online semi-structured questionnaire was administered in Arabic, as using another language (French or English) might have introduced response bias. Arabic is also a widely understood language in Algeria, regardless of educational or linguistic background, which makes it an appropriate choice for the questionnaire administration. More importantly, it ensured accessibility to the questionnaire for individuals who may not be proficient in English or French. In addition, a pilot study was conducted with 50 participants from the target demographic to assess clarity, reliability, and internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the Likert-scale items to measure internal consistency, yielding a value of 0.87, which indicates high reliability.

### **Procedures**

The online questionnaire was disseminated through different Facebook groups that were specifically aimed at reaching individuals from the Algerian community. We created posts in several groups, explaining the purpose of the study, the target population, and the online questionnaire. The posts included a link to the questionnaire hosted on Google Forms. It was open for a period of two weeks, during which interested participants clicked on the link provided in the post to take part in the study. The informants were not explicitly asked for their consent to participate in the study; it was an opt-in and voluntary sample. Yet, the study's

purpose and procedures were clearly stated and explained, and the subjects were informed that their participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Concerning the statistical procedures, several comprehensive steps were taken to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings. The data were thoroughly cleaned to identify any response errors or outliers in the data entry. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode) and dispersion (standard deviation), and linear regression analysis to identify patterns and trends in the responses. The qualitative data were coded and integrated with the quantitative data by assigning numerical values to the responses. All analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27.0.1). Finally, the results were interpreted, and any unexpected patterns or trends in the data were highlighted.

## Results

### Participant Demographics

As Table 1 illustrates, the majority of participants (61.7%) were between 18 and 25 years old. Those aged 26-35 constituted 31.6%, while 6.7% were 36-45 years old. Regarding gender distribution, females comprised 66.6% of the sample, and males 33.4%. Most respondents (91.1%) resided in northern Algeria, while 8.9% lived in the south. The predominant mother tongue was Arabic (93.5%), followed by Tamazight (5.1%), both Arabic and Tamazight (0.8%), and French (0.6%). In terms of occupation, 74.6% of participants were unemployed, 5.4% worked in education-related fields involving French or English, 18.0% had non-education jobs related to French, and 1.9% had non-education jobs involving English. The majority of the sample (95.2%) had university-level education, 3.9% were high school students, and 0.7% had less than a high school education. Participants also reported slightly higher proficiency in English ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = 0.912$ ) compared to French ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = 0.954$ ) on a 5-point scale.

**Table 1. Participant Demographics (N = 1,032)**

| Variable             | Category                       | %                 |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Age Group            | 18–25 years                    | 61.70%            |
|                      | 26–35 years                    | 31.60%            |
|                      | 36–45 years                    | 6.70%             |
| Gender               | Female                         | 66.60%            |
|                      | Male                           | 33.40%            |
| Region of Residence  | North                          | 91.10%            |
|                      | South                          | 8.90%             |
| Mother Tongue        | Arabic                         | 93.50%            |
|                      | Tamazight                      | 5.10%             |
|                      | Arabic and Tamazight           | 0.80%             |
|                      | French                         | 0.60%             |
| Occupation           | Unemployed                     | 74.60%            |
|                      | Education job (French/English) | 5.40%             |
|                      | Other job (French-related)     | 18.00%            |
|                      | Other job (English-related)    | 1.90%             |
| Education Level      | University-level               | 95.20%            |
|                      | High school                    | 3.90%             |
|                      | Below high school              | 0.70%             |
| Language Proficiency | English (Mean)                 | 3.43 (SD = 0.912) |
|                      | French (Mean)                  | 3.31 (SD = 0.954) |

#### Likert Scale Responses

The results from the Likert scale questions indicate that the participants generally held positive attitudes towards English, viewing it as a valuable language for academic and professional success ( $M = 4.09$ ) and a global language ( $M = 4.68$ ). They also perceived English as easier to learn compared to French ( $M = 4.12$ ). However, speaking English was not considered as important for social status ( $M = 2.87$ ) as speaking French ( $M = 2.74$ ). While French was not viewed as valuable for academic and professional success as English ( $M = 3.02$ ), some participants associated it with colonialism ( $M = 3.87$ ). The majority expressed a stronger desire to improve their language skills in English ( $M = 4.66$ ) than in French ( $M = 3.75$ ) and believed that English should be promoted as a second language in Algeria ( $M = 4.45$ ).

#### Language Usage and Preferences

According to the results, most participants (60.5%) used a language other than French or English at home (viz., Arabic or Tamazight), which is consistent with their official status in the country. While English was used by only 10.2%, French was the second most frequently used language at home (20.8%). Only 8.5% of the informants said they speak both English and French at home. This indicates that the participants may have limited exposure to English in informal settings.

Concerning the use of languages in education, French is the primary language of instruction for more than half of the participants (54.4%), owing mainly to its prevalence in scientific and technical fields in Algeria. Nonetheless, most responses

stated that French is an imposed language. This sentiment is particularly strong among those who advocate the use of Arabic and English in education. While 10.6% had English as their language of instruction, 29.7% of the participants received instruction primarily in Arabic. Since the integration of English alongside French, 5.4% of respondents used both languages as the medium of instruction. The participants generally had relatively high exposure to French, which could explain the reported high use of the language at home.

In terms of language preferences for communication, most informants (41.1%) preferred speaking English with others, followed by French (15.5%), and only 5.4% favored both languages. Similar to language use at home, 38.0% claimed using languages other than English or French for communication.

#### **Frequency of English and French Use**

The data on the frequency of language use in daily life showed that the majority of participants used English occasionally (44%) or rarely (25.6%), while 19.0% used it always. In contrast, the use of French was more evenly distributed, with 39.8% using it sometimes, 31.9% always, 16.7% rarely, and 11.6% never.

#### **Preferred Fields to Use English and French**

The results indicate that the participants preferred to use English in education (28.5%), business (17.4%), and media/daily communication (14.5%). For French, the preferred fields were education (19.7%), business (17.9%), and media/daily communication (13.5%). A significant proportion of respondents (30.2%) claimed they would not use French in any field, while only 1.2% reported not using English in any field.

#### **Public Perception of the Dominant Language in Algeria**

The majority of respondents (73.7%) believed that French is the dominant language in Algeria, while 26.3% perceived English as the dominant language.

#### **Perceived Qualities of French & English**

Participants were given a list of positive qualities (modern, intelligent, attractive, erudite, high social status) and a list of negative qualities (old-fashioned, stupid, unattractive, weird, arrogant, ignorant, low social status). The data show the percentage of respondents who selected a specific number of qualities (from 0 to 7) for each language within each attitude category (positive or negative). Specifically, a significant portion of respondents (29.3%) did not select any positive qualities for French, while 57.8% selected only one positive quality for French. In contrast, a higher percentage (65.9%) of respondents selected one positive quality for English, and an overwhelming majority (91.6%) did not select any negative qualities for English. The data reveal a more favorable view of English compared to French. A higher percentage of respondents selected positive qualities for English, and a significantly higher percentage did not select any negative qualities for English.

#### **Should English Be Taught Early in Primary School?**

The majority of responses (73.9%) supported the idea of including English in primary schools in Algeria. However, 13.9% expressed concerns about the practicality of implementation, 9.3% were completely against the idea, and 2.9% had neutral comments.

### English vs. French: Public Preferences for the Language of Instruction

The data reveal a strong preference among Algerians for transitioning from French to English as the language of instruction in higher education, particularly within scientific disciplines currently taught in French. A significant majority of respondents (74.8%) favored this shift, while only 25.2% opposed it. The reasons cited by those who supported the change included the increasing importance of English in international communication and the global economy. Another factor is the association of French with colonialism, a sensitive topic in Algeria that influences this desire for a language shift.

### Report on Linear Regression Analysis of Attitudes towards English

The linear regression analysis examined the influence of various predictors on attitudes towards English. Predictor variables included negative attitudes towards French, occupation, age, educational attainment, and beliefs about the value and importance of English. The regression model explained 47% of the variance in attitudes ( $R^2 = 0.47$ ). The strongest predictor was the belief in English as a valuable academic and professional tool ( $\beta = 0.243$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Negative attitudes towards French also showed an inverse relationship ( $\beta = -0.189$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a predominantly positive attitude towards English among Algerian participants, who were mostly young (aged 18–25), female, and from northern Algeria. English is perceived as a valuable asset for academic and professional advancement, as well as a global medium of communication. These conclusions are supported by high mean scores for statements such as “*English is a global language*” and “*I hope to develop my language skills in English*,” alongside the results of the linear regression analysis. Participants’ perceptions of English as easier to learn than French likely reflect its status as an international lingua franca and its perceived utility in diverse professional contexts. This preference is further supported by the significant majority favoring the replacement of French with English as the primary medium of instruction. Such responses illustrate English’s growing prominence in Algeria’s socio-economic and educational domains, despite the continued dominance of French in formal institutions.

Conversely, the data reveal complex and often ambivalent attitudes towards French, which many respondents associate with colonialism and regard as an imposed legacy rather than a language of choice. While French retains practical value in specific professional sectors and carries a degree of symbolic capital, it is increasingly viewed through a critical lens. Most participants rejected the idea that French is more useful than English ( $M = 2.11$ ), a result consistent with Belmihoub (2018), who identified English as the language with the highest perceived utility. However, French was considered more closely tied to social status ( $M = 2.74$ ) than English ( $M = 2.87$ ), indicating that the cultural capital historically linked to French still lingers in some domains. The desire to improve English language skills ( $M = 4.66$ ) was markedly higher than that for French ( $M = 3.75$ ), suggesting a broader societal shift towards English.

These results diverge notably from earlier findings by Benrabah (2004, 2007, 2014), who emphasized a model of additive multilingualism that integrated Arabic, French, and English. The current data indicate a stronger preference for replacing French with English, likely driven by the latter's global rise and the evolving linguistic aspirations of younger Algerians. This shift also reflects broader sociopolitical dynamics, in which the colonial legacy of French is increasingly scrutinized.

Furthermore, the preference for English can be unpacked through the ABC model. The affective dimension is evident in emotional rejection of French as a colonial imposition; behavioural tendencies include greater willingness to engage with English in academic and professional settings; cognitive beliefs revolve around the perceived utility of English as a global lingua franca. Conversely, the affective attachment to French is largely negative, shaped by historical grievances, even where cognitive evaluations recognise its continued relevance.

The findings also support the learning theory of attitudes (Bandura 1977; Bem 1970; Eagly and Chaiken 1993), which posits that attitudes are acquired through associative learning, modelling, and reinforcement. Participants' favorable views of English appear shaped by its associations with modernity, mobility, and opportunity, particularly as mediated through peer networks and digital media. In contrast, negative attitudes towards French seem rooted in its colonial legacy and enduring sociopolitical connotations. This orientation towards English thus goes beyond linguistic preference—it represents a symbolic challenge to established postcolonial language hierarchies (Makoni and Pennycook 2005; Pennycook 2002), echoing wider shifts in the linguistic economy of the Global South (Canagarajah 2005).

This study acknowledges several limitations. The sample of 1,032, although statistically robust, may not fully represent the diverse linguistic realities of Algeria. The sample skewed heavily towards northern, urban, female, and university-educated demographics. While this reflects a digitally active population, it limits the generalisability of findings to rural, southern, or older populations. Also, the use of self-reported data may have been influenced by social desirability bias, mainly concerning the perceived prestige of English. While anonymity mitigates some risk, discrepancies between attitudes and actual language use are well-documented in sociolinguistic literature (Garrett, 2010). The cultural focus on Algeria offers valuable insight but limits generalizability beyond national boundaries. Moreover, the cross-sectional design offers a snapshot rather than a causal narrative. The convenience sampling strategy—primarily via Facebook groups—favored younger, digitally connected individuals, leading to geographical and demographic imbalances, particularly underrepresentation of rural or southern populations. Furthermore, excluding those under 18 and over 45 narrowed the age range, although this decision was methodologically grounded. Younger participants raise ethical considerations and developmental variability, while older individuals are less engaged in the digital platforms central to this study. Nonetheless, focusing on the most active demographic enhances internal validity.

Future research should adopt stratified or quota sampling and integrate qualitative methods like interviews or ethnographic observation in rural and

southern Algerian communities to capture a more representative national linguistic profile. Investigations should also explore regional disparities in language attitudes to uncover localized dynamics. Mixed-methods approaches, incorporating interviews and focus groups, would help triangulate self-reported data. Besides, longitudinal studies would be valuable for tracing attitude changes over time, especially in response to educational reforms or language policy shifts. Finally, studies into the practical dimensions of transitioning from French to English in schools (e.g., teacher preparedness, curriculum adaptation, and infrastructural needs) would provide actionable insights for policymakers.

In the broader context of *la Francophonie*, the declining symbolic capital of French among Algerian youth signals more than a shift in preference; it represents a deliberate re-evaluation of colonial legacies. The growing attraction to English, perceived as a global, neutral, and future-oriented language, marks a departure from the elitist and exclusionary connotations historically associated with French. This trend resonates with broader patterns observed in other postcolonial Francophone societies, where French is increasingly viewed as a symbol of cultural domination rather than shared heritage (Ager 2003; Calvet 1999; Shohamy 2006).

### Conclusion

This research offers timely and substantive insights into Algerian attitudes towards English and French. Participants generally viewed English positively, associating it with academic advancement, professional mobility, and global integration. Conversely, French evoked more negative associations, primarily linked to its colonial legacy, and was perceived as less useful than English—despite its lingering association with social status in certain domains.

The study identified several key factors shaping these attitudes: the perceived instrumental value of English, negative historical associations with French, educational background, age, and perceived ease of English acquisition. Although French remains prevalent in education, many participants viewed it as a colonial imposition rather than a linguistic asset—particularly those educated primarily in Arabic, who often experience institutional challenges due to the dominance of French in higher education. These tensions echo similar postcolonial dilemmas in other multilingual societies.

Algeria stands at a pivotal juncture where linguistic choices reflect broader ideological and geopolitical realignments. The continued decline of French, coupled with the rise of English, may accelerate a reconfiguration of Algeria's educational priorities and economic orientations.

These findings point to an urgent need for policy recalibration. Decision-makers should respond to the growing demand for English by integrating it more fully into national curricula, while safeguarding the country's linguistic diversity and promoting equitable access to Tamazight and Arabic. Although the study's limitations—including geographic concentration and the overrepresentation of younger, urban participants—require caution in generalising, future research should adopt broader, more inclusive samples and mixed-methods designs to assess how these language attitudes evolve over time.

Ultimately, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of language ideology and policy in Algeria. More than a shift in preference, the rise of English signifies a generational renegotiation of identity, global belonging, and postcolonial agency. The implications extend beyond Algeria: as a case study in the wider Francophone world, these findings shed light on how postcolonial nations navigate shifting linguistic hierarchies in the 21st century, influenced by globalisation, historical memory, and socio-economic transformation.

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## بازنگری در نگرش‌های زبانی در الجزایر: انگلیسی و فرانسوی در بافت

### جامعه‌زبان‌شناختی معاصر

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دانشجوی دکترا، آزمایشگاه پژوهشی «سیاست‌گذاری زبان‌های خارجی در الجزایر و حرفه‌ای‌گری معلمان»، دانشگاه تلمسان، الجزایر.

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این پژوهش به بررسی نگرش‌های الجزایری‌ها نسبت به زبان‌های انگلیسی و فرانسوی در بستر یک محیط زبانی در حال تحول می‌پردازد. با بهره‌گیری از داده‌های یک نظرسنجی آنلاین سراسری شامل ۱۰۳۲ شرکت‌کننده در گروه سنی ۱۸ تا ۴۵ سال، این مطالعه بررسی می‌کند که چگونه ترجیحات و ادراکات زبانی، تحت تأثیر سلطه جهانی زبان انگلیسی، دستخوش تغییر شده‌اند. در این طرح پژوهشی کمی، از آمار توصیفی، تحلیل رگرسیون و کدگذاری کیفی تکمیلی برای شناسایی الگوهای کلیدی استفاده شده است. یافته‌ها نشان‌دهنده تمایل آشکار به زبان انگلیسی است؛ زبانی که به‌طور گسترده به عنوان ابزاری برای پیشرفت تحصیلی و حرفه‌ای و همچنین به‌عنوان زبان ارتباطات جهانی شناخته می‌شود. در مقابل، زبان فرانسوی - که همچنان در حوزه‌های آموزشی و اداری حضور دارد - به‌طور فزاینده‌ای با تحمیل استعماری و محدودیت‌های زبانی پیوند خورده است. قوی‌ترین عامل پیش‌بینی‌کننده در شکل‌گیری نگرش‌های مثبت نسبت به انگلیسی، باور به «ارزش ابزاری» آن بوده است؛ در حالی که دیدگاه‌های منفی نسبت به زبان فرانسوی، ریشه در میراث استعماری آن دارد. این یافته‌ها با اشاره به تغییر جهت نسلی به سوی زبان انگلیسی - که اغلب به بهای تضعیف جایگاه نمادین زبان فرانسوی تمام می‌شود - تصورات پیشین مبنی بر وجود «چندزبانگی افزایشی» در الجزایر را به چالش می‌کشند. این مطالعه با نشان دادن چگونگی بازتعریف سلسله‌مراتب زبانی در جوامع پیش‌تر استعمارشده، به مباحث گسترده‌تر پیرامون «ایدئولوژی زبانی» و «هویت پسااستعماری» در جهان فرانسه‌زبان کمک می‌کند. همچنین، این پژوهش پیامدهایی برای سیاست‌گذاری زبانی در الجزایر به‌ویژه در خصوص جایگاه آینده زبان فرانسوی در نظام آموزشی و اهمیت فزاینده زبان انگلیسی در بافت اجتماعی-زبانی نسل جوان الجزایر به همراه دارد.

**واژه‌های کلیدی:** نگرش‌های زبانی، الجزایر، انگلیسی و فرانسوی، تحول جامعه‌زبان‌شناختی، چندزبانگی در شمال آفریقا.

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