LANGUAGES OF ALGERIAN DIASPORA IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:
COMPARATIVE STUDY WITH ALGERIAN DIASPORA IN FRANCE

By

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To the Algerian Community in the United States
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This work explores the dynamics of the Algerian languages in contact in the United States in comparison with the first Algerian Diaspora to France. In my case study, I specifically focus on the changes in the perceptions of Algerians towards their languages, and on the dynamics of adaptation in their new linguistic communities. This thesis will contribute to the field of social sciences in that it deals with Algerian languages and their speakers, a linguistic community that has seldom been studied in the United States.

There are five traditionally important languages in Algeria: Quranic Arabic (CA), Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), Darja (North African Arabic dialect), Berber (Kabyle) and French. Neither CA nor MSA are spoken in the homes or on the street in Algeria, but both are important for religious, nationalistic, educational, and/or symbolic reasons. In the recent phenomenon of migration to the U.S., migrating adults and their children have been forced to learn English, thereby drastically reducing the opportunities and/or the need to learn CA, MSA, and French. Both Darja and Berber continue to be transmitted orally to children as both are used for daily communication in most homes. Although CA, MSA, and French are no longer functionally
important for daily communication or survival in an American society, their loss among migrant children generates identity tensions and concerns among the adult migrants. The thesis explores to some depth the ensuing language struggles, successful adaptations (or lack thereof), and losses.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This study explores the dynamics of the Algerian languages in contact in the United States in comparison with the first Algerian Diaspora (which occurred in France). In my case study, I specifically focus on the following aspects: first, the changes in the perceptions of Algerians towards their languages, and, second, the dynamics of adaptation in their new linguistic communities. This thesis will contribute to the field of social sciences in that it deals with Algerian languages and their speakers, a linguistic community that has seldom been studied in the United States.

There are five traditionally important languages in Algeria: Quranic Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), Darja (North African vernacular based on, but not completely mutually intelligible with, other Arabic dialects), Berber (Kabyle) and French. Many Algerians know all five languages. Yet most Algerians know at least three. Neither Quranic Arabic nor Modern Standard Arabic are spoken in the homes or on the street in Algeria, but both are important for religious, nationalistic, and/or symbolic reasons. In the recent phenomenon of migration to the U.S., migrating adults and their children have been forced to learn English, thereby drastically reducing the opportunities and/or the need to learn Quranic Arabic, MSA, and French. Both Darja and Berber continue to be transmitted orally to children as both are used for daily communication in most homes. However, these children no longer have automatic access to the other three languages since the latter owe their continual presence on the Algerian linguistic map to formal/institutional education in public and private schools. Although these three languages are no longer functionally important for daily communication or survival in an American society, the new home for the new immigrants and their children, the loss of these three languages among migrant children generates identity tensions and concerns among the adult migrants. The thesis
explores to some depth the ensuing language struggles, successful adaptations (or lack thereof), and losses.

**Literature Review**

In 1953 Weinreich pioneered the first study on the topic of language contact. Since then, many other scholars have investigated languages in contact and conflict from various angles. In situations of contact with dominant language(s), many researchers focus on the dynamics of maintenance, shift, loss and revival of minority languages. Joshua Fishman, who became known as the father of language maintenance and language shift, was the first to coin it in 1966 in his famous book ‘Language Loyalties in the United States.’ This book was written at a time of Americanization. Fishman became impassioned about studying “the extent and status of cultural and language maintenance efforts” (Fishman 1966: 16) in America at a time of the dominance of ‘English only law’ which was the symbol of ‘one’ integration and assimilation. Yet, thirty years later, in 1992, the complexity of this topic brought him together in a conference with many other scientists and researchers from multiple disciplines such as linguistics, education, psychology, sociology, political science, and anthropology from all over the world (Fishman 1992: 396). Yet, according to Fishman, among many researchers, there is a down playing of language maintenance and over-emphasizing of language shift. He explains that there is a negative side of the language maintenance/shift continuum, a fact evidenced by detailed studies on attrition, shift, endangerment, loss and death. He notes that, in comparison, topics such as reversal, revival, restoration, revitalization and destabilization are much less closely studied and are in fact infrequently mentioned. Or, as he put it:

The inability of living in accord with one’s own preferred model of the ‘historically validated good life’ language maintenance and language shift are not just topics that constitute part of the sociolinguistic enterprise; they are processes; that are part and parcel of the very agony and the very joy of individual and collective life itself. The struggle for reversing language shift is part of the struggle for language shift. These two struggles
always have and always will go on and we are all intimately involved in these struggles ourselves. There is no escape, neither as scientists, as citizens nor even just as human beings (Fishman 1992: 402-3).

In my empirical ethnographic work with the Algerian language community case in the U.S., I add to the previous research a number of new phenomena that have seldom been studied before. I thus show how struggles for shift and reversing, maintenance and loss are expressed and acted upon. In my case study, the contact and conflict is not only with the dominant language—English—but also amongst various Arab dialects (e.g., Egyptian, Syrian, Saudi, or Iraqi.) This makes the aspirations and processes to maintain and transmit the home language much more complex.

In an edited book, “Maintenance and Loss of minority languages (1992),” Fase William, Koen Jaspaert and Sjaak Kroon argue that in various cases of mobility and displacement even the ‘voluntary migration’ has an impact on the transmissibility of one’s own culture (e.g., religion) language to the next generations. Most parents and grand parents wish for the day that their values and behaviors are transmitted to their off-springs. These topics are at the heart of my research. Whether in the first—France—or the late—America—migration, my fundamental question is about the fate of the migrating languages. In the Algerian situation, I suspect that language shift and fluctuation in language use may happen as a result of the following. The dominant group does not know Arabic, Berber or French, thereby forcing Algerians to learn English as quickly as possible in order to survive. Unlike the Pennsylvania Dutch or German immigrants (Fase et al. 1992: 5) who isolated themselves from the majority society and refused to speak English, Algerians do not segregate themselves. To the contrary, they integrate quickly in the community at large and thus face the challenge of communicating in the dominant group’s language. This is how members of the minority Berber and Arabic group shift toward the use of the dominant language in most of their contact with the dominant group. However, much like the
case of other language communities (Fase et al. 1992: 6), the extent of the shift in Berber and Arabic will be determined by the extent of the interethnic communications that is established. As put by Fase and associates:

As long as there is a minority group, as long as the minority group is not demographically broken up, the use of the minority language will not disappear unless the norms of language use within the group are changed [which would make the bilingualism disappear all together] (Fase et al. 1992: 7).

My case study shows that as long as we have a group speaking Arabic, Berber and or French, and English, evolving towards a form of a stable bilingualism, the shift is not complete. A bilingual/trilingual community is established, speaking English with the English speaking communities and the other languages and sometimes as well as English inside the group. I suggest that when looked at from the inside the group might be defined as one of the following categories: Berber, Arab-Berber, North African, Middle Eastern or the larger group of Arabic speaking people.

Investigating within the minority group(s) is a tricky situation however; it reveals many complex issues, tensions, and loyalties. What language(s) or dialect(s) do the members speak? Who is speaking the other language or dialect? Who would try to learn the other’s dialect or language and is it always one way? Who is a minority within a minority group (s)? ‘Dialects in contact’ is a major theme in this thesis. This topic has been studied by many scholars since the 1970s. For example, Giles et al. (1973), Giles et al. (1987), Giles & Coupland (1991) deal with the accommodation theory. Trudjill (1982, 1983 and 1986) considers various cases from the world emphasizing accommodation theory but also studying cases of dialect mixture and even the growth of new dialects. Finally, S’hiri (2002) presents a case of Tunisian and middle Easterners intellectuals in England. She presents attitudes of convergence and divergence of the former speaking to the latter.
“Dialects in Contact” inquiry is essential to the study of language contact in the Diaspora in general and applies well to the Algerian case. However, I noticed that in the previous American literature as well as in the literature that specializes more on the Arabs, such as Sulaiman (2000) and Roushdy (2002), an absence of such studies, that is, on the topic of ‘dialectology’, despite higher levels of contact between the Arab communities in the U.S. with the exception of S’hiri’s study published in Roushdy’s edited book 2002. However, S’hiri’s case was done in Europe not America. In my case I study the perceptions of Algerians when meeting other Arabs and their testimonies about the tensions and accommodations, or lack thereof, when meeting other Arabs. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Algerian dilemma is doubly tested by being in contact with English as a dominant language but also by dealing with other Arab communities and the latter’s attitudes toward Algerians in general as “being” non-Arabic speaking people.

We can say that the categorization of ‘Arab American’ as one homogeneous minority group in America can easily be contested. Outside the group, the members speak the dominant English language. However, within the Arab Americans there are many other subgroups of minority groups. For example, when a North African meets an Egyptian, it is the Algerian, Moroccan or Tunisian who would accommodate by speaking the Egyptian dialect or by refusing to conform and speak standard Arabic or even English. In case of a Berber, on many occasions those who only know Berber, French, and Darja would speak English to an Egyptian because of the latter’s ‘inability’ to understand Darja. So, in order to communicate, members of this minority group, who seem to be part of one unified language community—Arabic, would resort to using within the group the language of the dominant society—English. I would argue that in order to understand the processes of language maintenance and language shift, it is imperative to
investigate changes in language choice(s) in intra-group communications and ask under what conditions and how do these changes occur.

I also focus on the study of language loss or changes as well as language proficiency as it relates to the individual rather than the group. Throughout this work, I focus on addressing the following questions: Who is losing the ability to use the language(s)? What are the characteristics and values of the lost in relation to the individual? What are the linguistic elements that are affected? How does the process of loss affect these elements? Which elements are affected, which are not, and why? In this pursuit, it is important to investigate the people’s sense of being as well as their perceptions on language shift and loss of certain language(s) or dialect(s). In the Algerian languages case study, I thus investigate and try to understand how the human mind deals with language incompetence/competence and competence/performance within the social environments.

Fishman (1966), Fase et al. (1992), Portes & Schauffler (1996) and many others put emphasis on the dynamics of language(s) shift, maintenance and loss in a community. I would suggest that migrating with four or five languages is an asset. To forget them and replace them with one language is a loss for the individual, community and society at large. My study shows through empirical work and ethnographic examples not only the dilemmas, tensions and conflicts in language contact. The study also brings forth and highlights the invisible work of the Algerian migrating speech communities. In the privacy of their homes and in their local communities, the members of these new comers to America work to maintain and transmit their linguistic wealth which has traversed oceans and mountains and come to a continent to have a new beginning.

This beginning is in the hands of those who love to communicate in various tongues and cherish
the human ability to speak in different tongues. Science is proving again and again that a child is able to learn several languages at once; yet it is up to us to prove it in practice.

**Methodology**

In this section, I address the meaning and importance of being a reflexive ‘native’ anthropologist when studying my own culture. In the research design, I explain my fieldwork strategy, how I collected the data, and how I chose my informants, their number and where they are from. Finally, I explain the importance of using comparative study, especially in the case of Algerian migrating groups.

**Native Anthropology and Reflexivity**

When I geared my interest toward the study of cultural anthropology in the year 2001, as a discipline, historically, anthropology had already overcome the problem of positivism. A sustained problematization of ethnographic texts eventually led to the development of the reflexivity approach. In the early 1980s, researchers such as Barbara Myerhoff and Jay Ruby (1982) advocated the topic of reflexivity which became part of anthropology, especially for native anthropologists.

Reflexive anthropology took away the overemphasis on ‘objectivity’ that has been haunting anthropologists for too long. Being reflective during ethnographic work is not about discovering and describing ‘the realities’ of ‘the other’ to ‘us.’ Rather, it is to reflect and be responsible as well as accountable for what we write and how we represent the matter and the people investigated. Through reflexivity we are not shy to say that as researchers we are affected by our informants and they are affected by us. Such work not only reflects the realities of the cultures under study. It also acknowledges the obvious fact that we are humans before being researchers, remain humans as we investigate, and cannot escape being so when we interpret the results of our findings. We interact with each other at a psychosocial/social level before taking
the data and using it in ethnographic writings. Yet, the emphasis on reflexivity when it comes to what is labeled as ‘native’ anthropologist becomes an obligation more than it is for ‘non-native’ anthropologists.

When starting this project, I had in mind the study of ‘my people’ who migrate in the United States of America. Yet, I understood that it does present a variety of challenges. However, I believe that its benefits surpass its limitations. It is true that I am studying the languages of Algerians, languages of people coming from the same ‘culture’ I grew up in and relate to. However, when doing fieldwork, the challenge is not produced as a result of being Algerian, Arab, Berber, Muslim, or a woman. In fact the most daunting challenge I found was that my interviewees think I am joking in asking them what they assume I already know about my culture. It was not a surprise to me, and, as a matter of fact, I went prepared to face such attitudes. Indeed, I formulated my questions and intervened when needed to ask follow-up questions in ways that pushed my interviewees to express their thoughts and opinions in a reflective manner.

Critics of Native anthropology may state that there is a bias toward ‘native’ informants or that we might take for granted what we are supposed to investigate in the first place. However, during my fieldwork and writing, I found that the challenge came from something else. My own understanding might sometimes conflict with my interviewees’ opinions and I sometimes would feel an urge to contest them, much like any other anthropologist. As Ryang emphases in her writings about native anthropologists dilemmas and problems (1997; 2005), it is assumed that being from the same culture means perceiving and applying the same codes the same way. In looking at ‘native’ anthropologists this way, the heterogeneity of cultures and human in general is rather dismissed. This study is important to me as it is not only the story of Algerian
immigrants but also of my own. As Charlotte All Davis says it well: “We must remind ourselves that we tell our stories through others” (All Davies 2007:10).

What I learned from this experience is that being reflexive means remaining in constant social mutuality between me and my informants before, during, and after my fieldwork. Yet, I recognize that my position in the field influences the data that I acquire the same way my interviewees influenced my ideas and writing. As a novel native anthropologist I would hope to stay at a high level of deep thinking and achievement the way many scholars who influenced my thoughts did before and still are. Achievements such as those by Appadurai, Ong, Abu-Lughud, Assad, Ryang and many others as leading native anthropologists encourage me to achieve and achieve to the best. As Ryang puts it best:

Of course not all anthropologists and scholars with various native or other connections can make their cultural assets useful, but at least we should be able to question the validity of the image of anthropologists as a group of scholars who as a rule do fieldwork and stick to writing about the people in the field, who are presumably different from the culture where the anthropologist comes from; fieldwork is here taken as something that is necessarily juxtaposed or counterpoised to her 'native' culture. It would be all the better if the anthropologist could use her own example to explore further the society she studies and that example does not have to be alien to, or far from, everyday practices of the studied society. Putting things this way at least enables us to avoid exoticism and other branches of Orientalism including Occidentalism. It also allows for coexistence of 'nativeness' (in the transformative sense, as in the cases of Ong and Appadurai) with anthropology, rather than dismissing it as contradictory (Ryang 1997: 39).

Data Collection and Fieldwork

I did fieldwork in three places: Gainesville, Florida; Champaign and Chicago, Illinois. I initiated my interviews the first week of June 2006 in Gainesville then traveled on the first week of July to Illinois where I spent three weeks then returned one more time at the end of August for a few days during which I met more Algerians. I chose these three cities because I was interested to find two or three categories of Algerian migrants, namely, professionals, students, and workers. I chose to have a comparative study between the two or three groups as well as compare
the Arabic speaking to the Amazighi speaking Algerians. Finally, I compare the Algerian migrants to those in France.

I got my interviewees in a snowball fashion, through personal connections, family relations and friends. The interviews were all held in a family setting at the homes of the interviewees, except for one focus group of seven women with whom I arranged a meeting in a public park in Chicago for a few hours. My questions schedule was designed in semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions designed primarily around family history and other relevant questions to the topic studied (appendix A). When needed there was a follow up through telephone, e-mails, and/or personal visits. I also did participant observation whenever I got with some Algerian friends and relatives during family and friends visits, ladies for coffee, making Algerian pastries—Baqlawa—and at one Algerian wedding in New York for a few days. In these informal meetings, I had also the opportunity to observe younger generations of various ages and gender of Algerian/Americans in family and ceremonial settings. I conducted 27 personal interviews for more than 30 hours in total, with each meeting lasting no less than two hours. The 26 interviewees were proportionally divided, as revealed by the interviewees themselves; gender: 10 male and 17 female, ethnicity: 15 Arab, 6 Berber, 4 AraboBerber, 1 AraboBerber American, and 1 European American, educational level, and status (Appendix B) (Table 2-4).

My analysis of the data actually started when I chose the topic to study, crafted my questions, decided on my informants, and the use of the language during the interviews. Each interview was recorded on a digital recorder in English, Arabic, or both. I transcribed the tapes in the language they were spoken. If English was used I transcribed them the same way. However, sometimes Arabic is included too and I would thus transcribe it in English phonetics then translate it to English. When the interviews are in Arabic—Darja, I transcribe them using roman
phonetics then translate them by myself (only 13/26 informants spoke in Arabic). During this time consuming but valuable work, I spent about 300 hours transcribing and translating the interviews. The content analysis was done in various ways. Sometimes I started it during the transcription, especially when important information would pop up. I would comment on it, and write in bold the theme that may be of importance later on. I find this activity to be of great importance and very useful because while listening to the taped interviews again and transcribe it, I remember the facial impressions and the meaning of that specific moment. I thus learned that data analysis cannot be done in one step but is rather a multilayer analysis that brings out interesting themes to form the end project.

**Comparative Analysis**

The data I collected in the three previously mentioned American cities was used as my core information for Chapter 6 ‘Language Contact and Conflict in the U.S.’ In the process, I compare my findings with those migrating to France. Of course, I did not do my complete research in France. I relied on personal phone calls with Algerians currently living or who lived in France for a long time and who understand the sociolinguistic situation over there. I can’t say that they were enough to give me a deep understanding on the situation. Thus, I relied on previous work done by Algerians, French, and American researchers on the topic. The French literature on the Algerians in France is rich and varied. In comparison, the American academia on the matter is almost minimum in relation to Algerians migrating to the U.S., especially when we compare American scholarly work on other migrating speech communities. The work I am presenting is I believe one of the first on Algerians in the U.S. I hope that it will contribute to build a larger bibliography on Algerians and North Africans in the U.S.A.
Structure and Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of an introduction and six chapters. Chapter 2 presents the various social groups that have been traced to migrate from Algeria since the beginning of the twentieth century until today to both France and the United States and for what possible reasons. In the first part I address the various social groups who went to France since early twentieth century until independence. I focus on the Algerians who were sent to fight for France during WWI and WWII, the labor workers after WWII, and the expatriates from Algeria at the break of independence including *pieds noir*, Algerian Jews and *Harkis*. In the second part, I present the social groups who came to the United States in the late 1970s first as students and then in the 1990s as voluntary and semi-voluntary migrants, especially through the lottery visas during and after the break of violence in Algeria. In order to better grasp the situation of language(s)/dialects contact and conflict of Algerians with other old and new immigrant communities in the United States, which is the aim of this thesis, this chapter is significant for tracing the development of the Algerian migration to these two important destinations, France and the U.S, focusing on similarities and differences in migrant motivations and linguistic experiences. This chapter answers questions such as: What are the social groups that migrated from Algeria? When and under what conditions did they leave their country to become residents and citizens of two different continents beyond seas and oceans away from their homeland? What made many Algerians like other Africans explore new routes and destinations of migration other than Europe, in the last three decades?

Chapter 3 is a summary on the genesis and development of the languages of Algeria as well as the linguistic tensions in post-colonial Algeria. I present the languages starting with Tamazight then followed by Arabic—CA, MSA, Darja, and finally French. I present these languages’ relationships to the North African region and to each other in phonology,
morphology, and lexical borrowing. I look at these languages role in nation building and the
tensions and conflict that emerge in independent Algeria. I, specifically, analyze the two
dominant languages, Arabic and French and how they compete in independent Algeria at the
political, intellectual, and social levels. I make note of two important points: First, Darja plays a
neutral role as a way of communication between all ethnicities. Second, Tamazight, the language
of Berber ethnic groups, is slowly being standardized and moving beyond its oral character.

Chapter 4 is a linguistic analysis explaining the phenomenon of codeswitching and
borrowing between the languages migrating from Algeria to the United States. In order to do that
it is important to understand the Arabic matrices of both regional (Darja) and standard (MSA) as
well as analyze their mutual relationships. Yet, when meeting the Western languages, first
French and then English, the interaction with each other open new ways of use that are worth
studying in the domain of language contact.

In chapter 5, I discuss the Algerians’ sociolinguistic experience in France. It focuses on
immigrants and French citizens of Algerian origin in France since early migrations and in
contemporary situations. The chapter is divided into five parts. The first explains the importance
of competence in the dominant language a way to escape the émigré state of mind. The second
part investigates the endeavor to teach and transmit mother tongues Arabic and Kabyle. I
specifically examine the efforts to revive and transform Kabyle in France from an oral to a
literary language bearing in mind the political complexities the two nation-states, France and
Algeria. In part three, I touch upon the paradox of nationality and citizenship for the ‘Muslim’
French of Algerian origin and their sense of belonging. Part four deals with the ‘Beurs’, a
reminder of racial exclusion and a voice of solidarity and difference. Finally, part five includes
vignettes of the ‘Beurs’ generation and excerpts of their ‘double socialization’ in a society that ties them to the ‘land of origin’ as a reminder of their forever foreignness.

Chapter 6 presents the case study of this thesis. It explores the linguistic situation of the Algerian immigrants in the US by focusing on changes in their perceptions and attitudes toward their language(s) as experienced in the Anglophone environment. I document when appropriate how linguistic outcomes among Algerians who immigrated to the United States differ from those who immigrated to France as well as those who did not leave the home country. Based on my empirical data done in the three communities mentioned in the methodology section, I attempt to explain how the migrating Algerian languages to the U.S., whether, Kabyle, Arabic including its vernacular Darja, or French play different roles in America than what they played in Algeria or France. I explain how in America the survival of these languages depends on whether they fulfill a practical and/or symbolic meaning and function. This general theme is developed through an approach that probes how the Algerian immigrants in the US represent and use these languages. In this pursuit, the chapter specifically addresses the following issues: (I) the dominance of the English language in a multicultural society and how Algerians perceive the role of proficiency in English as a road to success, (II) the attrition of the French language and its replacement with Arabic and English in spite of the fact that the French language is embedded in the cultural memories of Algerians, (III) the role of parental tongues (Tamazight and Arabic) and the changes in the perceptions and attitudes of the people who speak them, and (IV) the case of Arabic contact and conflict with other Arabs in the Diaspora and the development of new identities and solidarities.

Chapter 7 presents the conclusion and suggests some recommendations. I specially summarize the similarities and differences between Algerian languages in the U.S. and France. I
then compare the Algerian languages in the U.S. to other minority language communities, focusing on two important linguistic characters (either as being oral or written) and how this may or may not affect the transmission of the mother tongues to younger generations. Whether the new Algerian Diaspora would survive in the new world and how its linguistic heritage might evolve are two questions that I try to answer in the section on recommendations. In sum, I propose a method of approaching dialects contact based on an ethics that encourages and accepts variety in language in a multicultural/multilingual society that America is already or transforming to.
CHAPTER 2
BACKGROUND AND ASSESSMENT: THE ALGERIAN IMMIGRATION TO FRANCE AND THE U.S.

Introduction

Since the early twentieth century, Algerians have been traveling and migrating to France which is much closer and familiar to them than the United States, both in language and culture. Various Algerian ethnic and religious groups first immigrated to France. Only much later did Algerians migrate to the U.S. In order to better grasp the situation of language(s)/dialects contact and conflict of Algerians both with other older and newer immigrant communities in the United States, which is the aim of this thesis, it is necessary to somewhat retrace the development of the Algerian migration to these two important destinations, France and the U.S, focusing on similarities and differences in migrant motivations and linguistic experiences. What are the social groups that migrated from Algeria? When and under what conditions did they leave their country to become residents and citizens of two different continents, beyond seas and oceans, far away from their homeland? What made many Algerians like other Africans explore new routes and destinations of migration other than Europe in the last three decades?

In order to answer these and other complex questions, a multi-disciplinary approach that goes beyond the labor migration South/North formula is needed. In the age of globalization, research on international migration can no longer be mono-disciplinary and national in focus. In accordance with Edmondton and Passel (1994), Castles explains that we need an approach that links between the world economy, migratory processes, minority formation and social change (Castles 2000: 90). In studying immigration, ethnicity and the integration of America’s newest arrival, Edmondton and Passel notice an increase in immigration—legal, illegal migration or refugees—in the 1970s and 1980s (Edmondton and Passel 1994: 2–7). In a study of ethnicity and globalization, Castles (2000) gives great importance to non-economic factors such as policy
change, ‘the Immigration Act of 1965’ that reintroduced immigration to the United States or the
world dramatic change in 1980s (e.g., oil crisis, end of cold war, fall of Berlin Wall), leading to a
phenomenal increase in the number of immigrants to the U.S. (Castles 2000: 8). According to
Mobasher and Sadri, “four decades [after the obligation of the National Origin Act and its “quota
system” that have been replaced by the immigration Act of 1965], the volume of immigrants to
the U.S. is again approaching the levels of European immigration of the early twentieth century.
The U.S. has become the desired destination of millions of immigrants from Mexico, the
Caribbean, Central America, South America, Asia, and Africa” (Mobasher & Sadri eds/ 2004:
xi). In this chapter, I follow the chronological development of the Algerian migration to France
then to the US. In this pursuit I focus on the social, political—global and local—with an
emphasis, if need be on class, gender, ethnicity and religion. The information in this chapter
relies on several sources: First, I draw on available secondary literature on the Algerian/France
situation. Second, I utilize fieldwork data that I collected in three American cities where I met
with Algerians individually, in groups and in activities. Finally, I draw on the fact that I am an
immigrant to the states and hence I do draw, when appropriate, on my own insights and life
experiences.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first one deals with the Algerian migration to
France while the second one discusses the case of the United States. In brief, I present a
comparative analysis of the two migrations first to France then to America. In this pursuit I draw
parallels between old and new Algerian migration and hence find the similarities and differences
in demographic, political, socio and economic dimensions that would help in explaining the
cultural adaptations in a new home America.
Algerian Im/migration to France

Algeria’s relation to France started long ago with the French seizure of the then Ottoman capital Algiers in 1830. At that time, the migration was from France and Europe to Algeria. Nearly two million French settlers came in waves and proclaimed that Algeria was French (Cohen 1995: 13). In 1830, the Algerian population was about four millions. Due to poverty and an epidemic of cholera, it dropped to 2.5 millions in 1890. By the Algerian independence 1962, it was less than ten millions peoples. In the 132 years of colonization, the French—European—settlers colonized and controlled the fertile Algerian land to turn it into ‘le grenier de l’Europe’, exporting grains, citrus and other natural resources to benefit them and the French Republic. As a result, Algerians—both Arab and Berber—became laborers and wage workers to the ‘colons’ sometimes in their own ancestral land. Many landless indigenous people had to resettle to urban areas and big cities looking for daily work just enough to keep them alive. By the turn of the twentieth century, many Algerians, especially Berber men from the Kabylia mountainous regions crossed the sea in search of work in France.

I begin with a discussion of the various Algerian ethnic, religious, and political communities and the reason behind their im/migration to France. The oldest migratory flows between the two countries started from the north to the south in the 1830s when settlers from various European countries were encouraged by the French colonizers to immigrate to, settle in, and take control of vast fertile lands in Algeria. In contrast, the south to north migration did not begin before 1900s with at the beginning assuming the form of labor migration. Due to land loss and extreme poverty, thousands of Algerian, especially males from the Kabyle region of Northern Algeria, became guest workers in various French cities. Algerians played an important role in replacing French labor force during WWI. They were also used in many dangerous activities such as clearing minefields, an activity in which tens of thousands of lives were lost.
Contrary to other African colonized countries, because they were ‘French citizens,’ Algerians had the advantage of moving ‘freely’—yet discriminated against from the French—between France and Algeria which was considered a French department. Since the end of WWII, the number of Algerians entering France increased, especially with the intensified violence of the war of liberation. As a result, since the late 1950s the character of migration shifted to a forced immigration of various groups. Among these groups were members who reunited with their families. Yet, others fled the violent situation leaving behind properties, jobs and a homeland. There were the ‘Pieds Noirs’, the Algerian Jews, and the Muslim Harkis. Until today, various political, religious, or ethnic groups remain attached to the memories of a lost ‘home.’ Yet, their social, political and economic adaptations in their new home, France, depend on complex factors which may be beyond personal choices and desires. I dwell on these issues in more detail later in the chapter.

In the second part of the chapter, I present the course of Algerian im/migration to the U.S. focusing on its global and national causes. After Algeria became independent and since the late 1970s, Algerian migrants started looking elsewhere for immigration, especially after France limited the entrance visas for Algerians (as well as other third world countries) due to economic crisis and deteriorating political relations between the two countries. However, by this time, young Algerians were traveling to other Western countries including the U.S. for higher education with the aim to return and engage in the development of their independent nation-state. Despite its smaller number, in comparison to the Algerian migration to France, immigration to the U.S. is significant because of its relation to major global changes. The complexity of the issue suggests that there are several explicit and implicit factors needed to account for a (relatively speaking) massive migration of Algerians from different socio-economic statuses, as
presented in this part of the chapter. I propose that there were in fact two distinct waves of migration from Algeria to the US, one in the late 1970s oriented toward higher education and a second wave starting during the ‘black decade’ of the 1990s. Among those fleeing in these hard times were many graduates of US colleges and universities who had returned earlier to serve a homeland which soon became engulfed in a major and bloody conflict. Entering the U.S. became legalized through the visa lottery and professional or student visas that the American government made available to thousands of Algerians looking for a safe place for their families away from ‘terrorism’ and the chaotic period in Algeria in the 1990s. Deciding to leave their own country and familiar place is not easy, yet, being safe and stable in their social and economic lives became vital. Many young men were fleeing enlistment in the national military service during the crisis, hence preferring to leave the country than to participate in the killing of their people. Many young women found marriage to be a safe way out if they found a good match in the states where they would be able to start a family and be safe. The transition to a new environment such as the U.S would not be easy without social solidarities and the human touch of many Algerians and Americans.

**Labor Migration**

A July 15, 1914 French law considered Algerians to be French subjects, thereby differentiating them from the French citizens. The law however became an advantage for mobility. Contrary to Tunisia and Morocco that were both protectorates after being occupied in 1881 and 1912 respectively, Algeria was “theoretically not a colony but an extension of Metropolitan France” (Cohen 1995: 14). As a result, few thousands of Algerians, predominantly Kabyles migrated to various French cities of Marseille, Paris and the North region as laborers in the chemical, mining and metal industries. During WWI, the number of Algerians in France increased close to some one hundred thousands to replace the French who were in the trenches.
Many were used to clear minefields and in other dangerous activities. According to Stora (1992), “one hundred seventy three thousands Algerians were drafted into the army, twenty five thousands of whom lost their lives during the war” (Stora 1992: 14–15 in Lucassen 2005: 173). Until the 1950s, emigration to France remained male dominated, with a focus on income generation and sending remittances. Like the Mexican farmers in the United States, the early men who migrated to France did not have a need to become fluent in French in order to survive. Their immediate objective was to work hard, collect money and send remittances back to the village, to their families who were in extreme need of resources.

The exceptional arrangement of ‘free mobility’ was also justified by the “blood debt” of France toward the Algerians in two world wars (Mallaird 2005: 64). Algerians believed in De Gaulle’s speech in Constantine on October 3, 1958 when he called the people of Algeria “full-fledged Frenchmen.” Since Algerian Muslims or Arabs, as they were called, already held French citizenship by assimilation, once they were in France, they were allowed to circulate freely between France and Algeria. Yet, upon arriving to France, these young men lived in poor and crowded conditions. They were mostly busy with hard work and had seldom any time to socialize with other French. They were moved to more descent ‘bachelors’ residents and housed with their peers speaking their mother tongue and cooking the same food they used to eat back in the village in Kabylia. This social seclusion from the rest of the French population was also beneficial to the French government to have more control on the Algerian war (1954 – 1962) which the FLN—Front de Liberation Nationale or Front of National Liberation—decided to export to France as a strategy of gaining more international as well as French recognition of their struggle to free the country.
War and Family Reunion

In the 1950s and early 1960s the family reunion and immigration intensified as a result of the war of liberation declared by the FLN in early 1950s. In a personal interview, Fadila, one of the new Algerian—Kabyle—immigrants to the US, narrates the case of her first cousin who left at the age of sixteen to France becoming the first of four generations of Algerian immigrants; she explains in Darja—the Algerian dialect:

It was in 1944. My cousin was 16 years old when he left his village in Kabylia to go to France looking for work. Yet, he was an adherent of FLN against the French colonialism. He got married with his cousin who was only 13 years old and left her behind in the village [with the extended family and sending money and visiting when possible]. 16 years later, in 1960, she joined him to France. They used to speak only Kabyle; however, they knew Darja and fuSHa. He got self educated in French and became a businessman owning a hotel in Barbess, called Le Printanier (personal interview with Fadila. in U.S. 2007).

Scarcity of work during colonialism and extreme poverty pushed many illiterate Algerian men to be enrolled in the labor force in the rebuilding of France after WWII. This first contact with the French outside Algeria will eventually turn out be of a special type.

During the war for independence between 1954–1962, many more Algerians fled the country with their families looking for safety, better living conditions, and education. As Vencent Viet explains:

About 14,000 single workers and 1,800 families fled the country and arrived to France to find poor housing in the shantytowns of Lyons, Marseilles, or the Paris area. More than 130,000 people were considered as not having adequate housing and lived in overcrowded, furnished rental units. Housing had become a crucial issue to the Algerian migration to France. However, the authorities then had only the housing of the bachelor workers in mind. Family housing did not look like a priority, but the tensions in Algeria in the 1950s had triggered a migration of families, raising from three thousand to twenty thousand between 1953 and 1960. These families did not have access to housing because of a lack of available apartments and their lack of assimilation. Thus special public funds were raised to build halfway houses (Vencent Viet 1993 in Mallaird 2005:63-65).
The early Algerian community perceived the economic and labor migration as a shameful and a ‘temporary solution’ (Kepel 1987: 318). They remained socially, linguistically, and culturally isolated. To their dismay, the intensified violent war triggered an immigration that would forever be part of France.

Those who fled forever the unsafe conditions of war were not only the workers and their families. Many other ethnic, religious, and political groups also fled the country. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the ‘pieds-noirs’, Jews, and Harkis were among the many Algerians leaving their homeland and place of birth forever and seeking their new destination mostly in France, which had lost control over the vast lands of Algeria. At the eve of the Algerian independence, the spread of fear and terror from various resistance groups, the freedom fighter of the FLN or the saboteurs to De Gaulle’s independence proposals, the OAS (Organization de l’Armée Secrète), all set in motion the traumatic flight of hundreds of thousands of families who left with just the clothes they were wearing.

**Pieds Noirs**

The newly formed Algerian communities in France had different experiences, involvement and attachment to the Algerian land, languages and cultures. One of these groups was the *pieds noirs* or black feet, who got their name from the black boots that the early French settlers used to wear. They represent hundreds of thousands of Europeans—French, Italians, Portuguese, Spanish and Swiss—and their families who since the late nineteenth century were brought to form new colonies. The ‘colons’, as they were called, owned and managed the fertile land that had been taken by force from the indigenous population and then used for the benefit of the French administration. They were all eager to control the population with all means necessary to use their labor with little reward. My childhood memories are still vivid with my grandmother’s
stories that she time again and again narrated to me until they became almost a lived experience for me:

_When I was growing up, in newly independent Algeria, I first learned about the ‘colons’ from my grandmother story telling. When she was little in the early twentieth century, in the small town of Benshud in the city port of Dellys, she lived on her family farm. With the advancement of the French administration to the area, 160 miles east of the Capital Algiers, the family farm was seized and the French colon became the legitimate owners and managers, forcing the real owners to live in small mud houses on the farm where the whole family worked daily, the men on the farm and the women in the colon’s house. Like slaves, they work for the gain of the colons without any pay but just enough to be fed as a family. Linguistically, on the one hand, these colons got intimate with the culture of the locals, interacting with them daily and learning Kabyle or Darja and on the other, the locals picked up the colons’ tongues and ways._

The _pieds noirs_ generation didn’t call home any other place but Algeria where they were raised in the peaceful air of the country side. They never imagined being forced to leave their privileged life. Until today, when the safety situation permits, they visit the places where they lived before. Marcel Jeulent, a 40 years old mathematician of leftist, anti-colonial convictions, returned in 1972 for the first time to what had been his family’s orange grove southeast of Oran (Western Algeria) where he grew up. He recalls:

_There is a hill that dominates the village and I climbed it. The orange groves are like an oasis, and very beautiful. And I suddenly had the feeling we should never have abandoned it (cited in Markham, 1988)._  

_A fearful, violent experience and a psychological shift, the _pieds noirs_’ forced return to France has never been fully accepted. Although they were provided governmental housing—HLM—or became farmers in southern France and even were, later on, part of right-wing politics, their situation in France would never replace the fertile lands and peaceful living in various parts of Algeria._

_I wonder how their children, who were raised among other colons and farmers, reacted to the total change around them. I imagine that they would have asked their parents about their fellow villagers, farmers, and classmates. Where is the author’s great grandmother who used to_
say in the Algerian dialect *takul kasra*—you want to eat bread, when she gave the little child a piece of freshly baked agrarian bread fresh from the traditional oven. Such memories kept the Algerian ‘home’ alive in the heart of the *pieds noirs*. However, despite these reminiscences, they quickly assimilated like other French minorities, linguistically and culturally, and disappeared in modern France. Their up-rootedness is similar to that of the little Kabyle who could not forget his village home in the mountain but at the same time who got used to his new environment in the cities of France. The pied noir would incorporate new elements in his ‘French’ culture in constructing his new identity. As Markham states: “[the *pieds noirs*] children are losing the *pieds noirs* sing song accent” (Markham James M. 1988). What remained is a feeling of loss that haunts them deep in their memory.

As concerns their linguistic adaptation, the fluency of the pieds noirs in the languages of Algeria swiftly declined, and they became, for all practical purposes, monolingual speakers of French. The few words in Darja or Kabyle that they might still remember would always resonate in their heads from their golden years in Algeria. Such words would be expressed by some when visiting ‘home’, their place of birth and up-bringing or chatting and reminiscing with an Algerian friend in France. However, other pieds noirs who never reconciled to their exodus would instead shout “vas t’en! Sale Arab!—go home! Dirty Arab!”, a spiteful derogatory term, in addressing the immigrants and their off-spring who become scapegoats to the pied noirs hatred and rage. Colonizers, in adhering to their ideology of land and resources exploitation, do not plan to deal with the psychological effects on the people. As a matter of fact, they do not plan for the millions who are forced to leave the only place they ever knew as ‘home’ (Clifford: 1997: 248) and put them one more time in exile, such is the case of the Algerian Jews.
**Algerian Jews**

As a minority group, the Algerian Jews were put between, on the one side, the French colonizers and, on the other side, the Arab and Kabyle nationalists. Fearful for their lives, truly or falsely accused of collaborating with French colonialism, the well established Jewish families of Algiers, Constantine, or Oran left forever to a foreign land. Although familiar with French culture from their colonized country, going to France was not easy. Despite being, like the majority of Algerians, full citizens of France, it took perseverance and sometimes compliance to get established in France, migrate to the United States or the newly formed Israeli state.

In the modern French society, Algerian Jews are fully assimilated. However, as Professor Hamid has pointed out, until today, some of them still maintain the Algerian Darja. Members of Jewish communities such as the one in Belleville speak fluently both Algerian and French. When going to the Jewish market in Belleville, Hamid was surprised that the Jewish merchant spoke to him fluently in Darja—Algerois or Algiers accent—when he knew of Hamid’s Algerian origin. Hamid was raised in independent Algeria and in the late 1980s became a graduate student in Paris where he has the opportunity, for the first time, to socialize with Algerian Jews who still maintain their language despite being assimilated in the French society (personal interview with Hamid: 2007).

**Harkis**

The *Harkis* are a special category of Algerian immigrants. In Mallaird’s words, these are “the misfortune” Muslim auxiliaries of the French army in Algeria (Mallaird 2005: 68). In contrast with the Jews, some of the *Harkis* clearly collaborated with the French army and administration against the rebels—FLN—and the population. Yet, others were falsely accused by FLN members or other Algerians for various political or personal reasons. The collaborating *Harkis* were Arabs and Kabyles who seized the opportunity to gain wealth, sometimes, violating
the honor of their brethrens and villagers. In the last few years before the end of the war, France was desperate to stop the rebellion and insurgence. Using the population against each other was a tactic that might have worked cheaply for them but devastated, forever, whole villages and pushed its residents to exile both internally and externally. These Harkis lost their humanity before embarking in abusing the people they controlled. The French administration put in charge of the village predatory local individuals called by the locals, gouni/goumia—put in control of locals—or Harki/Harka—traitor. Because of their language abilities and cultural sameness with the indigenous people, the Harkis facilitated many complex tasks for the colonizers. The following is my personal child memories from my grandmother’s and elders’ narratives about a Harki that became imprinted forever with bad meanings in my mind:

I never forget the story of the day my father decided to leave his ‘home’ in the village and move the majority of the family to the urban city of Algiers. Our house in the village was in a French settlement that started to be vacant of its French residents who were fleeing to France as a result of the continuous violence in the mid-1950s. My father bought the house from a colon and moved the extended family of ten, leaving behind their ancestor’s home at the foot of the mountain of Kabylia when the fighting intensified. The mudjahidiins (freedom fighters) were always coming to the ancestor’s house asking for food. Afterwards, the French army raid will follow kicking and harassing the residents for any trace of the ‘fellaga’ – name given by the French to the Algerian rebels meaning bombers. Buying a home in the village was a dream coming true. The most rewarding of all was that the children were advantaged to just cross the street for school where together colon’s and indigenous children learn side by side French literature, math and social studies. My father finally felt that he is giving his kids and his nephews what he was deprived of, an education under better conditions. However, around 1961, one Harki started harassing him and many other villagers asking for information on the mudjahidiins. When the harassments intensified, fearing the worse, my father took the whole family and moved to Algiers in the new governmental housing that France built for the growing ‘French population’. My grandparents stayed behind in the house to watch the animals in the stable. The Harki, without permission or consideration of the family, decided to move in our house. The dilemma is that if they objected they would be associated with the rebels and severely punished. When the Harki did not find my father and brother home, he got mad and started harassing my grandmother for more information. As I know my courageous grandmother, she handled him wisely and avoided his madness. Still, he decided to take the house by force and turn it into a partying place for the French soldiers, drinking, dancing, and using profanities. My grandmother never forgot those hard moments and when narrating the story again and again, she always remembered the young
woman that this vicious man, one day, brought with him to her home. When my grand mother asked her about their relationship, the woman told her about her Kabyle family from a village in the mountain, how the Harki terrorized her family and forced her to accompany him and be his rape victim, abducting her from her family against her will. She would tell this to my grandmother. However, when the Harki is present, to avoid his cruelty she would pretend to be his wife. According to my grandmother, after independence, this specific man who had devastated many other families did not have a chance to escape the wrath of the population. To his misfortune, he was captured and put to death by the angry mob.

Many Harkis, who had escaped the vengeance of FLN and an angry population, fled to various cities of France and hence were able to rebuild their lives if in a controversial and hostile environment that would forever affect their identity and that of their offspring.

France had to fulfill many promises to all those who served her in the colonizing and oppressing millions of families of Algeria. The Harkis and their families were among those flown by boats to France fleeing the retribution of the freed and angry population. According to a 1990 census, there are today about 500,000 Harkis and their descendents in France. However, they are doubly stigmatized, regarded as traitors by their fellow Algerians and as outsiders by many members of the French population. They are, for example, discriminated against and “marginalized in both housing and employment markets” (Hargreaves: 1995: 78). As French subjects of Algerian origin, whether Arab or Kabyle speaking, their social status ranks among the lowest in their new home, France. With little schooling and skills, they remained marginalized and ignored, notwithstanding their struggle to assimilate in the larger French society. In general, their offspring are among the disadvantaged communities who are called the ‘beurs’ and whose linguistic competence in French, Arabic, or Kabyle is poor while their religious allegiance is shaky.

Although I will speak about the Algerian languages experience in France in detail in chapter five, in these few lines, I would like to summarize and compare the linguistic situation of the four groups who left Algeria during colonialism and on the verge of Algerian independence.
First, the Algerian—Kabyle and Arab—laborers in France started leaving Algeria for work in France during colonialism. Many of them remained in France in post colonialism. However, linguistically, they remained isolated thinking they will one day return back home. In comparison to these laborers, the pied noirs, Algerian Jews and the Harkis were forced to leave on the verge of independence, fearing the retribution of the angry populations on them. The pieds noirs were European settlers in Algeria. In Algeria, their offspring grew up speaking Darja and Kabyle in addition to French, Portuguese, Spanish or Italian. After their exile to France, they assimilated into the French population and language. However, they kept their emotional connection to Algeria as their place of birth and childhood memories. Contrary to the pieds noirs who were of European origin, the Jews were of North African origin and spoke Darja like any other Algerian. However, after they were exiled to France, they assimilated in the French population yet kept their linguistic heritage.

Finally, the Harkis are Algerian Muslims, Arabs or Kabyles. They never forgot their language and longing for home. However, because of the stigmatization against them, they are discriminated against in France. In comparison to the other groups, the linguistic competence of Harkis and that of their off-spring is poor. The parents as well as the children are weak both in Arabic and French. In chapter 5, I will focus on language dynamics among the Muslim Kabyle and Arab laborers, Harkis and migrants in general.

In sum, a contact relationship that began more than a century and a half ago between France and Algeria symbolizes strong bitter/sweet cultural relations, conflicts and interdependence at the levels of labor force, population and education. In the newly formed

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1 For more information on Harkis in France see Geraldine Enjevine (2006) who investigated the Harki identity in France; Nina Sutherlen (2006) who has spoken about the silence of Harkis in France; Emmanuelle Brillet (2003) who gave a voice to the Harkis’ heritage in France; and Michelle Chosset (2007) for a general discussion.
Algerian socialist government in the mid-1960s, the understanding was that the remittances and foreign currency play an important role in achieving the economic independence when finally the scattered children would return home to their loved ones and their heritage in free Algeria. As shown in the previous paragraphs, France was and is still in great need for the Algerian cheap laborers and young generations replacing the aging French population. However, in the case of education, Algerians have always been attracted to and reliant on the French in education and administration management. Despite the tightening of entry visas to France in the last twenty years, thousands of Algerians do go to France both legally and illegally seeking work and under/graduate education in various fields. Yet, since the late 1970s, Algerians started looking elsewhere too, especially after France limited the number of entry visas for Algerians (as well as other third world countries) due to economic crisis and deteriorating political relations between the two countries. The young Algerian nation-state looked up at various other modern nations for educating their young generations such as Northern Europe and Russia and later on the United States of America.

**Algerian Migration to the United States**

The Algerian migration to the United States has much in common with those from other African countries, Eastern Europe, and many Third World countries. By the late 1970s, Algerians were in the midst of what the world was going through due to great pressures resulting from the unfolding of the cold war. The Algerian government led by the late president Houari Boumedienne, who passed away in late 1979, left them thinking that everything is well managed. There also were widespread popular misconceptions about how to succeed in life and whom to follow, the East or the West. Nor was it clear which ideology was going to lead them to the success that they had been anticipating for more than a century. Is it Russian socialism or US Capitalistic ideology? Many Algerians entertained the dream that the only way to build their
lives and their country was to travel to the West and learn from the developed countries the sciences, technology and administrative skills and then go back home with enough knowledge and expertise. They wanted to let the world see what they can do as Algerian citizens proud of their rich heritage. This was the context within which Algerian immigration to the US began.

The Algerian immigration to the US was of a special kind; a kind that a single theory of migration cannot satisfactorily explain. Many explanations given to the ‘South/North’ mobility or the ‘brain drain’ are too simple for the Algerian case because they neglect the personal, psychological, social and political driving forces behind it. Those involved in the first Algerian migration to the U.S. remained marginal in many studies, if totally unexplored. Examples of questions that need to be addressed in the Algerian case are: Why did or do Algerians migrate to the US? Who is migrating? Is the migration continuing? Why those who returned from the US to Algeria did eventually leave Algeria again? I suggest that the answer to these questions entails going beyond ‘pull-push’, ‘chain’, or ‘network’ theories of migration. The complexity of the case leads me to argue that there are several factors (some obvious, others hidden) needed to satisfactorily explain the migration of Algerians from different socio-economic strata. Many of these factors, I argue, are not captured by the models of migration that place exclusive emphasis on economic motivations or on the flight from violence. This would be presented in the rest of this chapter.

Mission of Higher Education

As explained below, the search for education is a major factor in the first Algerian migration to the U.S. According to El-Watan (an Algerian national newspaper, widely read inside Algeria), the official statistical data (CREAD) of 2000 shows that 80,000 graduates from higher education have left Algeria since the 1970s and about 3000 would join them each year (Grim in El Watan: 2007). As previously discussed, Algerians have been migrating, especially to
France, for many reasons, including higher learning. However, the first Algerian migration to the United States came in the late 1970s and early 1980s from various regions of Algeria through the Algerian government scholarship with a mission of acquiring knowledge in the developed West. These young men and women were supposed to return home to help build the young nation-state under the leadership of an effective government.

A socialist authoritarian government ruled over independent Algeria until the late 1970s. Although the regime claimed to be somewhat parliamentary, the state was in reality under the control of one man, Houari Boumedienne. As described by Quandt, Boumedienee was at the beginning of his career as president in 1965 “hardly known to the public at large, but quickly, became the formidable leader, ascetic, and a strong nationalist, with more of an Arabist education than most of his contemporaries” (Quandt 1998: 23). Under this presidency, the masses were almost treated like observers who would passively wait for payoff from his technocratically managed social and economic experiment (Quandt 1998: 27). Indeed, the newly decolonized population was spoiled by partially using the riches of petroleum and natural gas sales to subsidize many of the exported merchandise. Free health care and free education were provided to everyone. While less than fifteen percent of the adult population was literate, the majority of the young population was in great need of a well established and consolidated education system. Certainly, the universal education system in the newly independent nation paid off. A good number of bright bilingual students in Arabic and French graduated with honors from Algerian high schools and colleges and were confident enough to travel to Anglophone universities for higher education. Since the late 1970s and for the first time, the best graduates from the Algerian universities were competing with the best students in universities such as the
Although many Algerians had in the past gone to study in France and some are still doing it, it is only in the late 1970s and early 1980s that students of sciences started opting for the US as a place for graduate studies in physics, mathematics, and engineering. From the Algerians interviewed this summer, 5/27 were from among this generation. They all got a government sponsorship for being the best among their class and came seeking higher degrees with the intention of ultimately going back to transmit to their fellow Algerians the scientific and technical knowledge that they acquired at some of the best universities in America. For example, Ahmed, Yasmina, Dawud, Kamel and Salima—two females (Yasmina and Salima) and three males, all came to earn a higher degree in sciences. For these people, coming to the US for higher learning was a privilege for it is known for its advancement in sciences and technology.

Ahmed is married to a European American psychologist, has an eight years son and is successfully settled in Northern Chicago as a computer consultant in a reputed company. When asked about his decision to come to the US, Ahmed explains that it wasn’t planned but it just happened. Ahmed speaks in English still with an accent and mixes some Algerian Darja (D) and French (F). Near the middle of the interview, he stated that:

I never thought about it (giggles.) It just happened. It is not haja alli khammant fiha (D)—something that I thought about. It just happened. In my time, I came to study. I didn’t plan for it. Maybe today people are doing it. I didn’t pack my suite case and say “ok. Assalaamu alaiiku (D)”-peace be with you, meaning good by. It just evolved. So, at first, there was no intention of migration, and the intention was to go back...makansh (D)—no way... c’est a dire (F)—I mean, even when I finished my masters, even when I finished my PhD, it wasn’t even in my mind (why did you choose United States and not France or other countries?) ok... at the time, I had the choice between U S and Switzerland (for your bachelor?) ya, there were competitions...there were companies they give a test...so I did the two. One of them nroH allaswiss (D with word b.f.F2) – I go to Switzerland- and do

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2 Abbrev b.f.F: - the Darja world (allaswiss) - borrowed from French
civil engineering...I didn’t like that. We were a group of students, we all decided to apply
to al marican (D b. f. E then inserted into E sentence) – America. So it wasn’t well studied
and Haja alli khammamna fiha (D)—something that I though about-, jat al marican
(D)—America came up, so let’s go.

His original intent was obvious to him in the 1980s. He was to study in the United States and
then go back home and work as a university professor at the Tlemcen University in Western
Algeria, or maybe become a scientist in Algerian companies. Yet, Ahmed’s life here in the US
steadily evolved in a different direction, making him one of the first Algerian immigrants and
citizens in the U.S.

Yasmina and her husband Dawud earned their PhDs in physics and have been both
teaching at the same college for the last twelve years while raising their teenage son. They both
earned their Bachelor degrees in physics from Bab Ezouar University in Algiers and came to the
US when they earned government scholarships to the US. Yasmina explains in fluent English:

Actually before I went to Bab Ezouar, I thought to go to France. Unfortunately; my family
could not afford to send me there. I wanted to go to undergrad school in France. So, very
early on I wanted to go abroad and leave the environment. After college I did apply to
France to some schools but they didn’t respond to me…then I thought to apply for the
scholarship to come to the states. We had the options of France, England and the US.

Her husband Dawud, whom she met in the US after both finishing their PhDs, had the same
thoughts:

I thought to come to the US when I was in college in Algeria for one thing because of
physics. The United States was the best at the time...maybe it is not the case anymore. In
the 1970s and the 1980s, I was very interested. I wanted to go to Berkley that is why I went
to college to study physics but not before I do my four years in Bab Ezouar. So I was
planning to go later but as I said just for a while not to live but just to study.

The possibility of winning a government scholarship was a great incentive for many students from
the working and low and middle classes to venture outside the country to an environment that is
foreign in language, culture and climate. Like many male students of her generation, as a
woman, Yasmina takes this opportunity and uses it for her advantage:
Les bourse (F)—the scholarships… I just saw the possibility that was offered to me. Actually, most of my friends who did physics went to France. I was one of the few girls who came here. From my class, they all went to France. It was me and another friend who came here. She ended up in Boston. She only did her masters and then went home. When she came here, I have been in touch with her maybe once. She was in Boston when I arrived here. I was in Washington for the language school…

These young men and women were well informed about the possibility of studying abroad and because of their educational placements were able to win government scholarships, an opportunity made available through Algerian scholarship program. This program became the driving force in seeking overseas education.

Kamel finished his PhD in physics in six years in 1988 and is the only one among this group who went back to Algeria with the intention of staying and teaching at the University of Bab Ezouar. Before coming to the US, Kamel explains that he traveled a lot and was not afraid to leave home at the age of 22 years with his new wife who finished her degree in biology. He explains:

I traveled to different places, to Morocco, France, England, either visiting family or as a tourist…it was an eye opener. I was exposed to different cultures, different life styles. It made me more excited for visiting more and even living abroad. So, these were very positive experiences I had since the age of thirteen.

Although coming from a working class family, Kamel and his seven siblings were all well educated. Their father was one of the Algerians who got primary and secondary education in French during colonialism. In independent Algeria, he always worked in an office as a higher secretary or accountant. His mother never went to school yet she was behind many of her children successes and was appreciated very much. Even with a large family, the 8 siblings all got higher education and four of them studied abroad; all are professionals living either in Algeria or abroad.

Salima is Kamel’s paternal cousin. She was among the people interviewed in Northern Chicago. Salima is married to Jawad, a Tunisian man whom she met in Canada while doing her
master’s degree in computer science. After finishing, they got married and since then settled in North America while raising three children. They moved to the US for better job opportunities. At the present time her husband works in a computer company and she works as a free-lance computer consultant. She explains how she decided first to go study abroad. She explains in English:

It was all about going to a foreign country to study… it was all about that and who can do that. When I was working, I wanted to go for six months to study and do some research. First, I wanted to go study in France. And, in fact, I got a scholarship to go to France. I got the money and everything. I just needed a kind of sponsorship from a company… I never got the approval from my company, so I just missed the opportunity to get the scholarship. So, one day, I was just joking with my dad, I said: ‘if I get six months to Canada, would you let me go?’ He said yes, thinking I would never get that opportunity… then I got it. The interesting part, it was meant to be for a senior person [in the company] but he didn’t know anything about the research, so they volunteered me to go. (if you had the opportunity to come to the US would you have come?) No, because it was the barrier of language… ya, I stayed in Canada mostly for Jawad –husband.

Ahmed, Yasmina, Dawud, Kamel and Salima are among the students who came in the late 1970s and 1980s to study in the best universities in the United States and Canada with the obligation to finish their degrees and go back to Algeria. Yet, after finishing their studies, only Kamel went back for two years only to finally come back as an academic working in various universities in the cities of America. While being a professor in physics, Kamel prepared another PhD in social science. Today, he is a professor in political science in one of the top universities. What pushed these people to come to the US was their thirst for knowledge and sciences of the developed west. Their stay was supposed to be temporary to finish their Master’s or PhDs and then go back to the Algerian institutions of learning. They sought to teach the younger Algerian generations what they had learned from the advanced universities of France, Switzerland or America.
Graduates Return to Serve in a Conflict-Ridden Homeland

The future Masters and PhD holders in physics, engineering, mathematics and computer science came from the first generation of independent Algerian intellectuals. In the late 1980s and 1990s, before the great crisis ignited, hundreds of new Algerian scientists returned to their homeland to assume important positions in the large universities in the capital Algiers and other large cities. For the first time Algeria would have Algerian scientists and professors who have knowledge, understanding, and the belief in a common agenda to train the young generation and build a strong developed country.

Chadli Ben Jadid, another military person, immediately took over the presidency after the death of President Boumedienne in 1979. After a decade, the Algerian society, which had been paternalized under French colonialism, began to rebel under the new authoritarian regime. The Berberists from Kabylia were fighting for the right to include the teaching of the Berber language with the roman or its ancient script. The traditional Muslims were unhappy with the moral values and reminded the government that ‘Algerian fought for the Muslim/Arab Algerian identity’. The middle class intellectuals were unsatisfied with the corruption and the weakening of the infrastructure of the government. The Algerian population was transforming and dividing into political, religious, ethnic groups and parties, and a military junta, each with their own agenda for the future government and society. ‘Democracy’ and ‘freedom of speech’ became concepts and slogans that each group used differently, influenced by various ideologies and for their own benefit. By 1988, after the sharp fall in oil prices, the authoritarian government was not able to manipulate the economically disadvantaged population anymore. Rioting, a sign of social dismay with the government became chaotic in the capital Algiers and in many other cities. The tragedy was that the angry society became a tool in the hands of groups with their own ideological and political agendas. Each party was trying to convince the fed-up population that...
they represented the only true and sincere program to correct the mistakes of the previous corrupt
government. Whether the Berberists and the Francophones who were supported by the French,
the Islamists who assumed that their agenda was derived from the ‘pure words of the Quran’, or
the feminists who saw the government as the new colonizer in subjugating women, all were
working to seize power from the military junta and be in control. The weakened President
Benjedid was forced to open some doors for democratization and political liberalization that,
paradoxically, turned into ‘the black decade’, a decade that devastated thousands of lives and
triggered a mass mobility out of the country.

By 1991, there were more than 100 political parties mushrooming with the dream of
winning the municipalities, the parliamentary elections, and finally the presidency. The parties
differ tremendously in their imagination of a future Algeria from Berberism, Arab/nationalism,
Algerian Islamism, universal Islamism, secular atheism, and traditional Arab-Islamism. In the
parliamentary elections and to the surprise of many, the population voted for the Islamic Front
Party (FIS—Front of Islamic Salvation). However, the game of democracy was over when the
army decided to stop all free elections and return to the authoritarian rule, imprisoning anyone
who comes on its way. The armed confrontation between the army and the Armed Groups
ignited a wave of human rights abuses and terrorism, pushing thousands to flee to a safe refuge
for themselves and their loved ones.

These were the conditions within which the returning young scientists from the big US
universities had to work. Some of them took sides with the various parties, others were busy
finding a way to fit into the corrupted system of higher education, others had multiple social
problems to face that made them forget about the scientific dreams and academic research they
were planning to do. In addition, many of those who returned to Algeria from the American
universities with their PhD education state that they were disadvantaged in comparison to those who studied in Europe, particularly in France. French language in Algeria still has great influence in higher education in Algerian universities, especially in Algiers. Going back with a PhD from the U.S. makes those who graduated from France be in a defensive position to a point where some of these people would sometimes try to exclude their colleagues who graduated from American universities. Even prior to the escalating violence in the 1990s that pushed various sectors of the population to leave Algeria, the universities’ competitions for power is one of those tedious reasons that made many Algerian professors decide to come back to the States.

Second Im/migration to the U.S.

It is during the tragic ‘black decade’ of Algeria that the second wave of immigration to the US started in greater numbers, and is still continuing until today if at a much smaller scale. Algerians who decided to leave their homeland used various ways to escape the tragic situation of their country, sometimes going to any country that would allow them entrance. Although many found various ways to enter France it was not an easy task at all. Indeed, during that time the French government restricted the entry of many others fearing the enormous flows of Algerians asking for exile or refuge. Many others were not allowed to enter France because of their age or political affiliation. In the early 1990s, the US launched the lottery visa program, thereby allowing Algerian intellectuals and skilled professionals with their families to become legal residents and eventually American citizens. Applying for the student, professional, or lottery visas became known among the Algerian population as an opportunity for starting a new life away from terror and chaos. Many Algerians, single, males, females, and families won the lottery visa to migrate to America. Every year, hundreds embark, most of them for the first time, to a place that is new in its environment, language, and culture.
Migration for studies or work and the role of network

During the 1990s crisis, many countries, including Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Australia, opened their doors for thousands of Algerians, giving them safe refuge for a short time until they would feel safe to return home. Many of the bright scientists, when not killed in the civil war that became the killing machine of thousands of innocent people, used their connections with friends, universities, and colleagues to facilitate their re/entry to the US. As Sabour (1997: 1–16) puts it in a different context, “the returnees find themselves between the devil and the deep blue sea jammed in powerlessness and frustration.” Of course being parents of American born (citizens) children was for some the safest and easiest passage to the states.³

With several massacres at various populated residential areas and villages, not knowing who is behind the killing made the situation more frightening. The spread of fear, violence and lawlessness became the favorable conditions for illegal immigration to various countries, including the United States. Hundreds of soldiers who defected from the army in protest against the national violence found no other exit except illegal migration to the U.S and other places. Many informal stories are told that many illegal immigrants came to the U.S. from Algeria using illicit and fraudulent papers after going through several countries, including Europe, the Middle East, and even as far as Australia. Were they succeed to pass without being caught, they would end up starting an illicit journey and life that they never anticipated to be part of before. How these immigrants manage to survive in the illicit world is an interesting project to be investigated.

During these hard times, despite the fact that the governmental scholarship program had ended by the late 1990s, many bright students found a way to apply for under/graduate studies in

³ As a structural factor, citizenship laws in the receiving country affect those who had had children born there.
the US relying on their own expenses and networking. After finishing his engineering degree with honors from Algiers University, Nuwar decided to pursue his studies in American universities. He is the youngest child in a family of four. His parents are both practicing medical doctors in Algeria. Nuwar got his scholarship from an American institution on his own and came for graduate school in 2000. His older brother, who had already finished a PhD in civil engineering and was well established in the states, helped him and facilitated many things to make Nuwar’s migration a more or less smooth one. Networks and the presence of kin in the receiving country seems to be another structural factor facilitating the migration from Algeria to the U.S. Nuwar, who is working on his PhD, got marriage to an Algerian American and both are raising a daughter in the US.

Omar also came to do his undergraduate studies in the States when the safety situation in Algeria began to deteriorate and terrorist acts intensified. A child of a military man, Omar used his father’s connections with American academics to get a smoother entrance to an American university. He explains in Darja with few English sentences:

Uum, abuya (MSA), baba (D)—my father—was coming to America a lot. Because he...he is in the army... he has missions in the air force...he used to come here for missions and also go to Europe. So when I told them [parents] that I wanted to go overseas...especially that at that time the situation was not that great, he [father]...he told me ‘ouï (F)—yes—I will find out. It is not a bad idea.’ He helped me...he, Baba knows how to speak English...so I always look up to him. He spoke very well English; he spoke very good French, hu...very good Arabic. He spoke them all...I looked up to him. I thought he was smart (E) I wanted to be like him...so he was the one who helped me. He has an American friend here in America. He called him and helped me to come here. So, non seulement (F)—not only—he encouraged me but also helped me...I wouldn’t be able to get here without Baba.

Although Omar was raised in an upper middle class family, he was planning to finish his undergraduate studies in Algeria. His decision to leave using his father’s high connection came as a way out of the unsafe environment in Algiers in the mid 1990s; he continues:
There was terrorism...I was studying in “Ben‘aknoun” area [suburb of Algiers known for its historical high schools and universities]. In that time, there was terrorism... I didn’t feel safe (E), there was no hope lil-future (b.f.E)—for the future-, I am studying but what I am going to do (E)? I mean the economy (E) was low; even when you talk to people nobody has hope....And also safety...I didn’t feel safe...something happened, I mean...ya, a lot of things happened (E). I remember fil- institute ta‘i (b.f.E)—in my institute—[repeats], one was killed...one day before his graduation...(A student?) Ya a student, they [terrorists] were killing students at that time, ya. And the problem is that nobody knew who is killing...Where is this killing coming from nobody knew. So, I don’t know...I had dix out ans (F)—eighteen years old—...in that time I wanted to live my life. I wanted to study. I wanted to work, I wanted...I had all that energy and knew that I wasn’t going to do anything with it...so of course, like the majority of youth at that time, I thought of migration...I said I have to go. I started looking [for schools] and sending [applications] and asking. Then, I had the opportunity to come to America and I came. But the greatest reason that pushed me to leave was al-irhaab (MSA)—terrorism. But, I would like to return [to Algeria] someday. Ya, I would like that. But I don’t know what to do (make a sound of laughter but not of a happy one) this is the great problem. Would I be able to do what I am doing here? This is the problem.

Those who left during the period of the second migration fit perfectly with migration theories which do include flight from danger as a major trigger of migration. Omar is an excellent example of that class of people who are forced by a crisis to leave. He was raised in a high middle class military family and went to an excellent school. However, the safety situation pushed him to leave. His parents are like many other Algerian parents who worried about the future education of their children, especially among the educated and middle class families. Many such concerned parents pushed their children to leave the country when the crisis struck and the security situation worsened. However, the dilemma for Omar is that he would like to return one day. But, he is not prepared to live in a situation of joblessness or high uncertainty. Today, as a graduate student in education, he is married, has a baby boy, owns a house and works full time at the University of Florida. Looking again at the larger picture one faces a puzzle: Why do people stay in the US instead of returning to their homeland? Economic factors such as a fear of not finding an adequate job at home and family-related changes such as having
children born here and used to the American language and system of education seem to go a long way in explaining the puzzle.

**The lottery visa**

Since the 1990s and until today many Algerians have taken the chance to win a lottery visa to the United States of America, hoping to get them out of the unsafe conditions and for a better life for them and their families. The data collected during my fieldwork shows that more than half of the Algerian born interviewees came through the lottery visa during the 1990s (14/27 members and their families). They came as families and singles, males and females, looking for a safe place where they hoped to start a productive life for them and their children. However, even after the violence has for the most part subsided during the last few years, people are still coming through the lottery visa, seeking a “productive life” for them and their children, a goal they could presumably not achieve in Algeria.

When Mustafa finished his degree in economics in Algiers, he was not feeling safe and looked for ways to leave the country to America. He explains in Darja how his friend, who already had won the green card through the lottery program and was established at his sister’s place, helped him to get it:

…he [friend] told me; ‘give me your pictures [I will apply for you] for la lotterie (F), al qur’a (D)—the lottery.’ if it was without papers, I wouldn’t have come. [because] I am sure I wouldn’t be able to go back home.

For Mustafa, the lottery visa is a way out of the Algerian crisis and a safe passport to come back home if so he whishes. He got influenced by his friend, yet, he did not choose the illegal road because he is not ready to forget about his country. Would he have applied for the lottery visa had he not known about his friend’s experience?
FatiHa and her husband left their jobs, home and family and moved to Chicago. A mother of two and expecting, winning the lottery visa was a life time opportunity for her. She explains in (D) mixed with (F):

Me, *personellement* (F)—personally—, the day we played—applied for—la lotterie (F)—lottery—to come, I was praying “oh my Lord, [make them] accept us.” I am not lying. I was wishing to come. (Why?) Eeeh! What should I say! Al-maricaan! (b.f.E) that’s what we know, al-maricaan, as we say, the greatest nation in the world…” *pour moi* (F) -for me, the opportunity came up and would not be repeated. Like luck… when we got *la lotterie* (F), we said, ‘c’est une occasion qu’on’peut pas rater’ (F)—it’s an opportunity that we can’t miss, *anraTiwha* (Darja b-f-F)—if we miss it—that’s it…that is why we came.

Being able to come to America represents for FatiHa a win-win issue. Getting the ‘green card’ is a privilege despite facing hardships of other kinds.

Similarly, Nazira explains how her husband was desperate to leave the country despite having a stable job and a nice place to live in Algiers with their four children. After getting the lottery visa, they did not hesitate to come to Chicago. She says in a South-Western Algerian Arabic accent:

When my man –husband- came out in al-lotterie (D b.f.F), he was working *technicien superieur* (F) —higher technician [in a hospital]. I mean, we were al-Hamdullah -Thanks to God [we were ok]. I didn’t have a home and al-Hamdullah; my father bought me an apartment. Then when we got al-lotterie (b. f.F), my man got crazy ‘lal maricaan (D b. f. E) -about America (giggles). My husband was the one who encouraged me [to come.] I mean, there were problems…uu…terrorism. In 1998, in Algeria, life was mixed up…when we got *la lotterie* (D b. f.F), he—husband—told me, “we have to get out, we have to…” my husband’s friends were in Canada but we didn’t know anyone in *Amrica* (D b. f.E)…

Winning the lottery is the first step in the migration process. Deciding of a destination in America depends on the availability of social contacts and/or jobs. Many immigrants choose big cities like Chicago where they would be able to be taxi drivers (or the like) as soon as they land.
Fleeing terrorism looking for stability

While some Algerians focused on the opportunity to enter America and live comfortably (economic factor), others fled the trauma of terrorism (violence factor). Faruja, Fella and Hind and their families were traumatized by terrorist acts before leaving everything behind and depart when they got the lottery visa. Faruja is a Kabyle woman married with three children with the oldest being 20 years old. Although illiterate, Faruja is a wise, courageous and kind woman. She expresses her feelings on the crisis in Darja with a strong Kabyle accent saying:

For me, what brought us here; at that time, between 1995–1996… we were residing in ‘citee La Montagne.’ I mean, there were two of my brothers- in-law who work with the government. They came [terrorists] to kill them many times…my neighbors where killing each other. D’ailleurs (F)—moreover, when my neighbors clean—their houses—and throw assashi (D b.f.F) taa' zbel kHel—the black garbage bag— they put them by the door [for the garbage collector]. Sometimes, you know, I go to open it [bag]...I go and come back—to it,—(repeat), and I close my eyes and open it…I say ‘maybe my husband’s head is in it’…many people at that time were killed… I swear by God, I mean…the safety conditions were very, very hard… all of them left [brothers-in-law.] The house was empty, with no taste…then we left and that’s it. My brother-in-law did for us the lottery and –our names- came out. The one [brother-in-law] who was here, he spent seven years [with a tourist visa], he didn’t get it and my man –husband- got it (a smile on her face.) So, we came…

The daily feeling of terror and fear pushed Faruja and many others to leave their homes, loved ones and familiar places. Only the lucky ones got the lottery visa as an entry to a safer and stable life.

Fella was an Arabic teacher and her husband was a computer analyst who got his bachelor from England. They were both stable in their work. They already owned a car and built a house. They were ready to move in when they were struck with terrorist acts in their families and neighborhood. She explains in Darja and sometimes MSA expressions about the trauma she went through:

[What brought us here was] Terrorism (E), terrorism…they [ the army] killed my brother…they killed him, and they killed my cousin [from father’s side]…my cousin was an Imam. They took him…they imprisoned him for seven days, and he was under
torture… and then, when he was released he run away… he went to the mountains…because he was…he was an Imam…he was giving sermons… and…my brother…my brother, he had no sin –he did nothing–because of my cousin, the army took him. They told him; “you have to tell us where he went [the cousin] or we kill you.” He told them; “I don’t know.” So, for three days, he stood fast…my brother, when they killed him, they didn’t kill him in a merciful way… disfigurawah (D b.f.F) -they completely disfigured him -…they made us run…they made us run, and they told us that he is a terrorist …but he had no relation with terrorism… I mean…So these are the conditions…terrorism… and we were always scared in Barraqi ⁴… once we were in ‘la Montagne’ [at her in-laws] also they came in… [There was shouting] “They are coming, the killers, the slaughterers!!” we had to flee… I mean these are all the conditions … when we got….uu…we got la lotterie (F) we said, let’s go, we better escape.

This educated woman is full of distress, sadness and worries. Although, as a family, they are safer, she is not satisfied with the outcome of immigration. She still speaks of her well established past, a past now gone as a result of terrorism. She says mixing Darja with a little French and emphasizing certain topics in MSA:

[My brother-in-law] didn’t have a house. [The family] encouraged him to come [to US] …but us, they were all against us to come. (Oh, why?) Parceque (F)—because—our conditions were ok …we had everything …because here, all who came to Imarican (D b.f.E), to make more money…we—my husband and I—were all against coming to Imarican (D b.f.E) … and also those who were religious—mdeyneen—used to tell us: “Hram bash truHu lil marican—It is unlawful for you to go to America.” (Shuuf -really) ya’ni al- hidjra lil marican ‘andha ghayaat u ahdaaf (MSA)—I mean, the migration to America, it has its goals and its targets. Hna djina (D) li Talabil ‘ilm (MSA)—we came seeking knowledge. I mean, we brought our kids just to read—study. Now, we understand what they used to tell us, they were right…True, I mean, I regretted and not regretted …when I came, I mean, I wished I remained in Algeria in a simple life…one would at least win the afterlife [Nazira: but, you are…you are going to the mosque, you are praying – performing salat…[Fella: but it is not because of me…it’s [the future of] my kids [that is gone.]

Fella feels that she was forced to leave Algeria. She believes that ‘practicing Muslims’ come to ‘a non-Muslim’ country such as America only for the sake of knowledge. Yet, that goal does not seem to be fulfilled in the way she was hoping for. Fella and her family were well established in

⁴ Barraqi is a region where Fella and her family built their new home. It is of the areas in the suburb of Algiers that had terrorist attacks and hundreds of its residents were massacred not knowing until today who exactly did the killing of the innocent population.
Algeria. Fleeing to America to the big city of Chicago put both her and her husband in a downward mobility situation. Fella seemed ashamed of her first work as a housemaid to an Arab family in Chicago. Later on, she got a teaching position, tutoring Muslim children Arabic. Her husband has lately started working as a taxi driver. What makes her distressed even more is her teenage son who could not familiarize himself with the American school system that is far different from that of Algeria and hence dropped out of school. Would Fella and her family go back to Algeria since terrorism is less frequent? Isn’t she getting used to the American system? Isn’t she finding her own niche in Chicago where a ‘la Montagne’ like community is growing and creating new relations, activities and solidarities with old and new arrivals, relatives and friends from other immigrant communities?

In comparison, Hind is more optimistic and thankful that her kids are away from the traumas in Algeria. Her concern is to provide them with a safe environment to study and grow, she says in Darja:

They [terrorists] were coming forcefully in ‘La Montagne.’ they tell us they are coming to kill you…we were fleeing, running and scared…and the kids, you see them the most traumatized and everything. So, we looked for safety…ya, it was terrorism (E), al-irhaab (MSA) that brought us…uu… so our kids do not have to go through what we went through …he –the person- studies –read- all his life and does not find work…we came for l’éducation (F) -our kids education.

In the absence of safety everything is unstable, including studies, work and more generally daily living. Those who left during the crisis period were driven by the safety dream that they thought would fulfill all their goals of having a decent job, good education for their children, and establishing a family and a community life living in peace. The people from populated neighborhoods such as ‘cite La Montagne’ went through extremely severe conditions and traumas. Those who left did not and cannot forget the horrifying daily images, yet, they are determined to find piece and stability in their new home, despite its strangeness.
Fleeing hard conditions and looking for better opportunities

Although the traumas of terrorism and killing did not directly touch every Algerian, their effects impacted on the lives of the large majority of Algerians. Economic instability, scarcity of work, small wages, and social/cultural conflicts, all contributed to hasten the decision to leave the homeland toward a foreign land. Terrorism was the cause of some of these economic dilemmas, but not all. Asma is one of the seven women interviewed in the focus group in Chicago. She is a homemaker in her mid-thirties, married, with two young children. When asked about her family’s situation before deciding to leave Algeria, she seems relieved to be in better social and economic conditions and does not regret coming to America. She expresses her thoughts in Darja, using little French in the middle, thereby giving an idea of the impact of French language even on women who have little education; she says:

The first thing [is] l’appartement (F)—the apartment. I didn’t have l’appartement (F)… I told you, my son got older and was still sleeping m’aya fish-shambra (b.f.F)—in my bedroom. [we had] no space… too much… we are a large [extended] family, may God bless… a full house as we say, ‘ten coming in, ten coming out…’ el-Maricaan (b.f.E) [was] the only solution. He—husband—won la lotterie (F)… bien que (F)—although, my husband came [alone]… he stayed fifteen days in New York; fifteen days in Chicago; and he didn’t like the situation. He went back to Algeria… and when on his way back, he called his work—in Algeria… he told them ‘I want to come back to my work’… they told him ‘ok. Al-poste a’ata’ak (b.f.F)—your position—is ready, come.’ When he went, they told him ‘no, no, you can’t come back.’ (ooh…) he [husband] said, ‘don’t talk to me about al-maricaan anymore …that country, I won’t go back to it. I want to live by my children, I die by my children.’ So, we said ok. [but] I had already sold everything, my furniture, my gold.

Since she had not much money, Asma had to sell her furniture and gold to buy the tickets for traveling. The undecidedness of her husband on migration gets complicated with his loss of his job, thereby compounding the need for the family to leave for good. She continues:

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5 Asma explains that she had to sell her gold in order to buy her ticket and travel to the US with her family. The gold in the Algerian culture is usually the dowry given to the bride by the groom as a gift on the marriage day. To sell it is a necessity but hard choice on the woman since it holds a special meaning to her.
After that, they [employers] started tricking him…tricking him…tricking him until a month had passed. When one month had passed, the last day, he told them, ‘voila (F)—here—, so I will start working.’ Then they told him, ‘we don’t need you.’ So, he stayed deux mois (F)—two months—[without work] …he didn’t find what to do … as we say, sorry for the bad language, ‘even a garbage man,’ the lowest job, he couldn’t get it… when we were coming back, we were supposed to take the airplane the next day, his friend came to him… he told him, ‘voila (F), they are going to take you back to Al-poste (b.f.F). I told him; ‘it means, they are playing tricks on us.’ That day, my visa [the visa to get to America gained through the lottery] was going to expire… I entered in el-marican (b.f.E) at three o’clock [in the afternoon], at twelve at night my visa and my son’s were going to expire! Ya…so, only [9] hours remained—in the life of the visa. wallahil ‘atheim! (CA)—I swear by God! ya… I told him… I am not lying to you… I told him, ‘as they tricked you the first time, they would trick you the second time. So, that’s it, we go.’ so we came …

These people were pushed to the extreme before departing in devastating uncertainties. Although the husband had gone back to his country resolved not to come back to America with his family, he had no guarantee to get back his job in Algeria, which would put them in severe financial need. This case illustrates the point that the decision to immigrate is developed under circumstances that are harsh and cruel and usually within totally uncertain situations. The would-be immigrants end up leaving in a state of unstable emotions and maybe rage.

The women interviewees—FatiHa, Nazira, Faruja, Fella, and Asma—reside in Chicago with their nuclear families, relatives and friends. Despite being homesick and haunted by the painful memories of terrorism, all feel safer in their new place. However, living in their new destinations confronts them with other challenges such as their children future education, values, life style, religiosity, and sense of belonging. Some are still confused about the way to succeed and their only income is from low wages jobs that may put their families in lower class environment. The sans papiers (F) blalwraq (D), or without papers, status of certain members might add more stress when reunited with the extended family in Chicago or other places. Although all of my interviewees said that they came with papers – lottery or student visa, some
of them mentioned that they have family members who are without papers and are staying illegally in America.

**Escaping the national army service**

Migration success of friends or relatives opened avenues for many young men not only to study or work but also to avoid going to the obligatory national army service during the crisis. The dilemma of going to ‘the army’ was of great concern for many families and their sons. As a matter of fact, many young men were killed during their service. Mustafa explains why he preferred to leave his country and not do his national service during the 1990s:

> When we finish school [college], we have to do the army—the national service…I am not against national service. I love my country but the problem is that [soldier] can die easily. I had a neighbor who was in the marines. He was an officer and they killed him… bi’a – someone told on him- and they killed him. He was the only child in his family, and he died. So, national service yes…you get service back to your country yes…we build, plant yes, but to get killed like that, it is not national service. So the national service is not any more the way they used to say that when a guy goes to the national service he will become a man… so I was doing anything to avoid going to the national service…

Getting his green card visa to America through the lottery saved him from the devastation of killing innocent people and/or being killed. He had the alternative to leave his country, enter the US legally, and begin a successful life. Other people who refused to join the armed service during this chaotic period left the country illegally and looked for illicit ways to enter other borders, which would be the beginning of an underground life and wasted years of survival not knowing what would happen the next day.

**Marriage: Al-maktuub [Providence]**

Many Algerian women migrate because of marriage. Yet, there are those who consider their stay in America temporary. They eventually, one day, would go back to Algeria to settle among the extended family. Among my interviewees, at least four of the women came to the US through marriage to Algerian men in America. Khadra, Fadila, Zahra and Manal have been here
for at least a few years of marriage, yet, they are not sure about their future. They are very satisfied with their marriage and standard of living in the states. However, they still miss their families and do not imagine their future life away from their parents and siblings. Khadra graduated with a degree in economics and worked in an Algerian TV station. She met Mustafa in college and they got married in 1999 after being engaged for a few years. She explains in Darja:

When I got engaged to Mustafa, I knew [that he was coming to America to make some money for sometimes], but I wasn’t thinking of coming. When he decided to come, he told me that we get married then go. I told him I don’t go to America...migration is not my choice…I didn’t like it…after that...(what made you change your mind?) al-maktuub (D)—the written—[providence] giggles.(Algerians and al maktuub every one says it giggle)….

Fadila also came to the US because of marriage. She also never thought of leaving the country but after a few marriage proposals from Algerian men abroad, she finally accepted one of them. Fadila is a Kabyle and was a linguistics graduate working comfortably in an Algerian teaching institution. She explains her decision to accept her husband’s marriage proposal and decision to migrate to the US in fluent English:

I wasn’t thinking to migrate but to go to England for studying. My mom was against the idea. That’s all. I never thought about migration even when I had many...uu...marriage proposals, from immigrants. Even from USA, ones...I always said no. I don’t know I said yes for this one...laughs...al maktuub (D)—the written—[providence]. (how did you meet?) with Fodil? (ya) actually we share a cousin... he was interested...he asked... he asked his mom and sister to talk to me... uu (so that’s it... you didn’t say ‘he is in America I don’t want to go’) I don’t know because of Fodil...I always tell him “your mom did magic to me” (sure black magic laughs) black magic, tmaSkhira (D)—just laughing... (black magic to get you [marry her son] that’s nice). Ngullu (D), c’est pas normal (F)—I tell him, it’s not normal, kifash hakdha saHratni yammak... biddaHk (D)—how is it? your mom did magic to me...[I say it] laughily- giggles... Because his mom was really...(she likes you) ya (that’s nice) when I met Fodil, she was telling my aunt if she [Fadila] says yes to Fodil, I will be very happy...my aunt was telling her ‘no Fadila is not interested to go out of the country.’ When I was 25 -26 [years old], I was telling everyone, ‘I will marry in Koubá’ [an old neighborhood in the suburb of Algiers] (laughing… in your neighborhood) just in my neighborhood, not far from my mom… being far from my mom
10 minutes is too much for me (oh my God!) Now I am not far 10 minutes, I am 20 hours (both saying SubHaan Allah) (eh… al maktuub SaH.)—truly, it is providence.

Fadila would not have accepted to migrate to a foreign country such as America even for marriage. Yet when a Kabyle man, who is also a far relative, approached her for marriage, she did not hesitate to accept and moved to America. In comparison to many marriage cultures and patterns in France, between Kabyles from Algeria and those of France, Fadila is following the tradition of her ethnic group. In addition, marrying a man with an American citizenship facilitates her stay and gives her privileges that other women and men do not have.

Manal also came to America through marriage. She was a teacher before getting married to Omar who has a student visa. Manal also did not think she would one day be in America, yet she accepted the marriage with Omar. She explains in Darja with an Eastern Algerian accent:

When did I think of migration? (Ya) I wasn’t thinking of it AT ALL! Laugh. I was against migrating for whatever reason, marriage or … laugh… I saw people go to France…(you didn’t like going to France?) I know many people who got married, the wife stayed in the country and the man left…(this is the old style of labor migration…) no, even now… it is hard for a wife to get with her husband to France. Now, they get married, he tells her: “I make you the papers” and she is waiting many years. I refused this completely. And with Omar, I didn’t accept until he told me that one day he will come back. (I laugh…even to America?) I never thought of America. France, maybe we think about it but America (so the reason for coming to America…), marriage only.

Manal’s acceptance to marry an Algerian in America away from her family and her country but eventually to go back home. She is waiting for the day she and her family would go back to Algeria and settle there. Yet Omar has no idea how he would survive in Algeria since he got used to the relatively easy and organized life in the U.S. Would they go back? For how long would the temporary migration last? Is this a situation of ‘le temporaire qui dure’—the temporary that lasts? Many young Algerians are marrying in this way. It would be interesting to

6 SubHaan Allah is an expression that means “Praise be to God.” It is used as a surprise statement among many Muslim Arabs and non Arabs after saying or hearing something that they like.
find other young men who got married while here with girls from back home, for example through family ties. For women, especially, this is a big shift; first by getting married and living the family, but to also im/migrate. It would be interesting to test the types of stresses that face young brides coming not only to new husbands but also to completely new environments. How do they survive? Whether married or single for most new comers leaving home to a foreign place is stressful and having a family member or a friend welcoming them is a big relief until they get on their feet.

**How do New Comers Make the Transition?**

Having a family member or a close friend in the States facilitates the transition for many new migrants and their families in their new environments. The hospitality is well appreciated. Yet, quickly enough, the newly arrived ones would like to find jobs to sustain their families. Like many new arrivals from Algeria, SalaH and his wife Sarah came in late 1990s through the lottery visa with their three children. They chose to settle in Florida where a close family member was already there. This case clearly illustrates how social networks are a major structural factor in the adaptation process of the new migrant. In the Algerian ways of hospitality, the relative or kin feel obligated to take care of his visitors at least for a few weeks until they find a job and a place to live. However, the new comers try their best not to abuse this duty as the following case illustrates.

Two years prior to their arrival, Sarah’s younger brother got a research position at the university after finishing his doctorate degree in chemistry from France. They are appreciative of his hospitality as expressed by his brother-in-law: “we came to him directly. Without him, we couldn’t do anything.” But as two educated independently-minded people, SalaH remembers how both him and his wife did not hesitate to take any job that would put food on the table for them and their three children. He says in Western Algerian Darja with an MSA emphasis:
… You have to throw yourself in the society… and forget…you have to focus on something…so you have to go one step ahead or you won’t be able to do anything. So, al-Hamduallah…that hard period… that bottle neck… in a period of two years [ended]. Even if he is a dear one, your family, but he is not forced to be responsible for you and your kids… you come and stay for months… we stayed about 8 months [at the brother-in-law’s place]… that’s a lot… you don’t feel *à l’aise* (F)—at ease. When it gets too long… you say; I have to get out of this situation…

He continues explaining the types of small jobs that he and his wife had to take in order to get economically and socially stable:

I was without a job, and the issue is that I have a family. I had to look for a job. In my first year, I didn’t know much English. I had to look for any job. The most important [at that time] is that I had to get a weekly wage to sustain my family [Sarah: we were a [big] family; [we had] three kids [SalaH: I worked at …at night [at a local supermarket name] almost for two years. That period helped me a lot…I looked for work at Arab [shops] I couldn’t find any. At the same time, I was preparing my exams [GRE] to enter [the university]. [That period] was good so I could keep my family [together]…uuuh…at the same time… I registered in a high school as …as a substitute teacher (E) and I worked well…that also helped me a lot…I taught all levels…there was a teacher, she helped me a lot…may she get rewarded.. I was dealing with her very well…I was also very patient…I was looking for an income mostly…and in that hard period, I needed to get some kind of stability. [Finally] I entered the university. Before that, I worked three or four jobs just to keep my life stable. I was even a paperboy…

SalaH considers work as a means to survival in a new and foreign place. He is not ashamed to work anywhere and anything. Keeping his family together and getting stable was the most important of his goals at this early stage of their new life. Yet, his ultimate goal is not only to just survive but also to get accepted at the university and hence go back to being part of academia.

Today, SalaH is a PhD candidate at one of the top universities in the country and a teacher of the French language. As he said to his wife: “you don’t look for what you are doing look for what you want to do later.” He got past the days of hardship and is focusing now on what he loves to do, teach, read and write.

His wife Sarah also worked in jobs that she would never think doing back in Algeria. Yet when speaking of that experience, she commemorates it as the best learning opportunity among the American people that left her with the most pleasant feelings, thereby somewhat forgetting
her hardship being away from home and the familiar faces of her loved ones. She explains with her husband interfering:

I also worked at [SalaH: I took her with me….she worked with Jane, kaanat al-manager ta‘ al-bakery (bfE and intersected into Darja sentence)—she [Jane] was the manager of the bakery—and for me…my wife needed…she didn’t know any English or anything…I cared that she gets in [society] and speaks to people and learns…[Sarah: they were very nice people….masha’—May God bless…until today [SalaH: I told her [manager] ‘if it is possible,’ so she let her in with her…then she had other offers, I told her ‘stay there where you are, in an environment where you speak English. You learn the language with them… you can learn everything… because you don’t look for what you are doing now look for what you want to do later.’ [Sarah: Hatta (D) l’emploi du temps (F) kaan msa’aﬁn(D). parceque…flexible (F)—even the schedule was working for me, because…[it was] flexible. (At what time were you working?) [SalaH: at the beginning… she started at 4:00 in the morning. (wow (E) mashaa’ allah (CA)) ya…the children were not too small [Sarah: that is why when I talk to Malika [a Moroccan woman in the immigrant community who is stressed because she can’t find a job] I tell her ‘you didn’t see anything… what did you see?’” [What is happening to you is nothing comparing to me] if it was only me and my husband, but having children [SalaH: anyway. her…her husband has more than twelve years here… and he brought her…for us we had different situations. [Sarah: I used to go at four in the morning because they needed someone to work that early…[I worked for] almost two years. But that was the best time to take away that shock…[SalaH: I think working in P… was one of the best steps to get her out of that isolation. [Sarah: you imagine…even now, when I speak of it I feel [emotional]. The lady [manager] Jane… there is no other woman that I knew of at that time that was like that…Jane, this woman…the American…at four o’clock when I wake up to go walking to work….hadhil manager atta’i —my own manager… I find her waiting for me in the car. She parks and waits for me near the door until I go out. When I go out, she picks me up and takes me with her to work…[SalaH: we didn’t have a car…(you mean without asking her if she could pick you up?) [SalaH: she comes by herself [Sarah: I swear she comes by herself. wanhar ‘arfat ana (D) en seinte (F) ‘amlati wahd (D) al-baby shower (bfE)... wala shuftu (D) fil aHlaam (MSA)—and the day she knew I was pregnant, she gave me one baby shower, I didn’t even see it in dreams! [SalaH: giggles. [Sarah: uqsimu billah (CA) wala shuftu (D) fil aHlaam (MSA)—I swear by God, I didn’t even see it in dreams—[Salah: hey..oui (F)—oh, ya… [Sarah: waah!...(D western Algerian accent)—yes! at first I didn’t think of the Americans like that…that level of kindness…Jane, she was older than me by maybe 8 yrs.masha’ Allah (CA) taghwi (D western accent)—may God bless (CA), she is lovely (D). [SalaH: a kind woman,[Sarah: I consider her like my family (do you still have relations with her?) [SalaH: ya.. specially Sarah.

Sarah’s first experience at work and social environment left her with a sense of welcome and comfort in America. Despite the hardship of the first years, human kindness means everything to this couple. As a professor by training in Algeria, she did not mind working as a baker in a local
supermarket. Although she mentions the kindness of a single American person, but coming from her manager meant a lot to her. The manager’s care left her with a positive feeling about the whole society. A woman’s touch that came out of care, kindness and love plays a role in facilitating the transition from the language incompetence and social isolation to a competent and confident citizen. As a new immigrant, Sarah was raised from a level of survival to a level of human relations, communication and planning for big achievements for her and her family. After a few more years, Sarah became a full time Arabic teacher at the same university with her husband where she meets students from various ethnicities and backgrounds. Sarah is one of the best among her colleagues to teach interested students Arabic language, culture and skills to make them successful in life. In her turn, she is influencing many young students who have great goals in life and who respect her and appreciate her love for teaching.

‘La Montagne’ Neighborhood

After winning the lottery visa or maybe coming illegally, many people from the same neighborhood in Algiers meet again in the same neighborhood and community in Chicago. Hind, a mother of five, explains in Darja how her neighborhood in Algiers is moving in name and in many respects to the city of Chicago:

We used to call cite La Montagne (F) [the area or neighborhood called ‘the mountain’ in Algiers], citee Chicago (F)... (no way! Giggle) many of those from ‘La Montagne’ are in Chicago. [FatiHa: (she sings the following in French) they sang o, a, o, a, o, La Montagne Chicago (F) until they came here. [Hind: I mean, Chicago is full of people from ‘La Montagne.’ (they are settled all in Chicago ?) They are all settled in Chicago. When one gets la lotterie (b.f.F), he/she finds all the family here.]

Cite La Montagne in Chicago represents the safe recreated neighborhood in which new comers find solidarity and first support until they find a job.

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7 We are sitting in the park at dusk, the loud sound of adhan al- Maghrib –call of sun-set prayer- comes from one of the ladies cell phones. It is loud like that of a mosque back in Algiers. We were women and children loud in the public park and visible.
Conclusion

This chapter began with a few questions: Why did Algerians leave? Who left? Under what conditions do they end up living in France and the US? In answering them, it was necessary to start with the time of colonized Algeria when conditions were created for the natives, the colonizers and their off-spring to mingle and become connected forever. Until today, France remains the closest destination for Algerian migrants for work, studies or family reunion. Yet, by the end of the twentieth century, the destination of Algerian travelers and migrants moved much farther, reaching the U.S. for similar reasons and new ones.

In comparison to the Algerians immigration to France, which is the largest among the African continent, the Algerian immigration to the U.S. is still new and small. While the first Algerian immigrants to France went for cheap labor, fifty years later, the first Algerians to America came for higher learning. Yet, the two migrations are similar in that violence triggered many migratory flows to both continents. On the one hand, hundreds of thousands left to France as a result of violence during the war of independence in the late 1950s and, on the other hand, thousands entered the U.S. fleeing the fear and instability that terrorism caused during the black decade of the 1990s.

Algerians came in waves to the US; each wave representing different causes and goals. The early comers in the late 1970s and the 1980s were students in search of knowledge in the developed West with the goal in mind to go back home and build their country. The political instability in the 1990s caused the second wave. What started with authoritarianism and corruption led to human rights abuses, concentration camps and detention centers for thousands of members of the opposition to the government. This policy of repression in conjunction with wide spread terrorism led to the civil war that pushed thousands of Algerians to migrate to other countries including America. During the turmoil, there were many kidnappings and killings of
intellectuals, journalists, doctors, academics, lawyers and judges by the hands of the military forces and armed groups. The political situation in Algeria worsened to the point where those who had different opinions from the government or the armed groups received death threats and had to leave under severe circumstances. Their only insurance for survival was to leave their home country to Europe, the Middle East, the U.S., and many other destinations around the world. Those intellectuals who had connections in the U.S. started the process of immigration as soon as they could and left everything behind, including their private practices, their jobs, their houses, and belongings. Fleeing the carnage and instability in their country became of the essence.

Despite thinking of immigration as a temporary situation, like those who are in France and like the majority of immigrants, I would hypothesize that most Algerians in the United States would not return to their home country despite real or perceived threats of racism and discrimination in the jobs. They would say that they are satisfied, that they found safety, peace of mind, and jobs and new professions where, if lucky, their expertise is used well and their income is better than the one at home. I suppose they would be mostly satisfied with the political freedom and civil liberties that they enjoy in America (although, there have been some changes since 9/11). Therefore the question might be why go back? Ethnographic fieldwork and interviews in the Algerian communities in the States would be the final stage to theorize about Algerian immigration and give answers to my speculations. However, the aim of this thesis is to follow this newly formed ‘invisible sojourners’ (Arthur 2000) among the African/Muslim/Arab communities (Abraham et al. 1983; Abraham 1983; Aswad 1974; Haddad: 1983; Sweet: 1980) in their cultural adaptation in their new home where they meet new and old Diasporas and communities and negotiate their settlement. The cultural, linguistic, and religious wealth of this
new Algerian Diaspora in America would be studied closely and compared to the Algerian
Diaspora in France, in its particular and complex forms, hoping to reveal to the reader part of the
‘Algerian heritage,’ a heritage that is intertwined in the languages, dialects, and way of life.
CHAPTER 3
BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ALGERIAN LANGUAGES

Genesis and Development

Strategically, Algeria is positioned in the port of Africa. It has always been desired by superpowers including the Romans, Portuguese, Arabs, Ottomans and finally the French (Zaleza 2005; Hunwick, John O. and Eve Troutt Powell. 2001). Because of its encounters, settlers and colonizers, Algerian culture embodies one of the richest and the most diverse. Its people are varied in languages, dialects and ways of life. The north part of Algeria is the most populated with its cities that are located on the shores and ports of the Mediterranean Sea. It has access to great neighboring countries of the Maghreb (Tunisia and Libya to the East and Morocco to the west) and Europe (France to the North and Spain and Portugal to the North West of the Mediterranean Sea).

The wide south part of Algeria links it to the riches of the rest of the African countries starting with the surrounding nations from west to east, Mauritania, Mali and Niger continuing Algerian natives’ deep relation to ancient Africa. Yet, many contemporary politicians and academics prefer to associate Algerians with Arabs (Middle East) more than Africans. This topic is of great importance and many scholars are challenging such divide (e.g., Zaleza; Okome) that is weakening the African continent by focusing only on elements of racial, ethnic and linguistics criteria. However, in studying the people of North Africa, its African characteristics (phenotype, linguistics, ideology, spirituality, religion, kinship structure) are rooted in the realities of its inhabitants that would be evident in ethnographic comparative studies. Although there is a great variety and heterogeneity within the intra boundaries of the African continent, yet, one cannot neglect the strong bond among its inhabitants that is of a certain complexity that is hard to abridge (Algeria color map: 2008).
On the north east of Algeria lay the Mountains of al-awraass, home of the proud Berbers (Chaouia ethnic group) and the ancient cities of Constantine and Annaba close to the Tunisian and Libyan cultures and dialects which are the route to the ‘Middle East.’ To the West, the great cities of Tlemcen and Oran that were influenced by the migrating moors and Jews of Andalusia and by their neighboring country Morocco in art, music, and love for knowledge. In the middle North, the mountains of Kabylia, home of the major Berber ethnic group Kabyle and its influence on the urban mix of all cultures and dialects in the capital Algiers and surrounding. And finally to the south, the wide ‘grand Sahara’ and its inhabitants that are so diverse in their various ethnic groups such as the berber ethnic groups Mezab and Touareg, who are a mix of African, Berber, and Arab ideologies, religions, languages, and cultures. They are famous for their independent minds, love for tea and dates, sitting on hand made camel-hair rugs, under a tent in the middle of the desert in an oasis which is a symbol of life, stability, hospitality and intellectual and economic exchange.

Between 1830 until 1962, Algeria was well known to the world as being one of the French colonies and as the “grenier de l’Europe” by its rich soil that produced citrus, dates, vegetables, and grains that was sent to feed the people of Europe at the time of the French colonialism. After its independence in 1962 and after a decade of development as a free and young nation-state, Algeria became a member of OPEC and one of the largest producers of natural gas and many raw materials such as iron, copper and gold and gained great revenue from them. This endeavor had to be met by educating its young population with skills and abilities that would be intrinsic to the development of the various branches of science, technology, medicine and administration.

This chapter deals with the genesis and development of the languages of Algerian immigrants. I will speak of Tamazight, Arabic—CA, MSA, Darja—and French. The first part is
a summary about these languages genesis and relationship to the North African region and to each other in phonology, morphology, and lexical borrowing. The second part deals with these languages role in nation building and the tensions and conflict that emerge in independent Algeria. I present an analysis of the two dominant languages, Arabic and French and how they compete in independent Algeria at the political, intellectual and social levels. I also deal with the role of Arabic vernacular as the neutral communication between all ethnicities and Tamazight the oral language that is in a slow process of being standardized.

**Berber Languages and the First Contact with Arabic**

In investigating the origin of the Berbers, there isn’t one place mentioned but several including Western Europe, sub Sahara Africa and Northeast Africa. However, for centuries, various waves settled in North Africa and made up its indigenous populations. The term *Berber* is derived from the Greek in reference to the people of North Africa; however, it was adopted by the Romans, Arabs then the French. When identifying themselves, the people of North Africa may use this term, the term *qabayl*—the tribes—(given to them by the Arab settlers) or the term *Imazighan*—the free men (used by the speakers themselves.) They speak Tamazight or the language of the people of *Amazigh*. In comparison to Algerian languages of today including Arabic (literate and spoken) and French, Berber is the oldest of them all (Saadi Mokhrane 2002: 48). Like Cushitic, and Egyptian languages, Berber is part of the Hamitic grouping within the afro-Asiatic language family.

From a sociolinguist point of view, there are many Berber languages each with mutually intelligible dialects. The Algerian Berber languages are Kabyle (North), Chaouia (North), Chenoua (central and West), Mzab (Mzab region), and Touareg language. For example Kabyle (Taqbailit) has two intelligible dialects: Petite Kabylie dialects (East) and Grand Kabylie dialects (center). The Berber speaking Algerians are estimated to be between 20-25% or as Chaker, a
specialized scholar in Berber studies, puts it: one out of five Algerians speaks Berber (Chaker 1984: 8–9).

The first Berber tribes’ encounter with Arabs goes back to the 8th century. It was through trade, conquer, and the spread of the faith of Islam through the Ulamas (scholars of Quran, Hadith, Arabic and Fiqh). However, the extensive interaction did not take place before the settlement of the Arab nomadic populations such as Banu Sulaim, Banu Hilal, and Banu Ma‘qil in North Africa in the 11th century. The Islamic teaching in madrassas, Zawiyas, and mosques, became the channels for the teaching of the Arabic language. as truly stated by Wardaugh: “the Islamization of the Maghrib preceded its Arabization; and the latter was never completed (Wardaugh 1987: 178). One would say that the Islamization of the Imazighan people and the adoption of Arabic as the language of learning were gradual, through conversion to Islam and the practice of the religion. Yet, Tamazight remained the language of trade and daily communication.

Until today, Tamazight, the oral indigenous language remains spoken and transmitted generation after generation. People in mixed marriages between Berbers and Arabs would adopt either languages or both depending on the social and regional milieu of the family. Yet, the language of the Quran or the Classical Arabic (CA) was the venue for success in learning and power through out the centuries of the Islamic civilization that north Africa and the Imazighan people were part of it (Arab/Berber dynasties: Al-moravids 1044–1148; Al-muhads 1148–1248) (Loimeir 2007). Throughout the Islamic empire, Algerians like other Mediterranean embraced Arabic as the language of progress in mathematics, philosophy, geography, history, medicine and literature (Gafaiti 2002: 40). Today, Algerians, with the rest of the world, honor famous names, such as, Imru’ al-qaiss (Arab poet), al-khawarizmi (mathematician and developer of arithmetic
and algorithm), Ibn Khaldun (father of social science), Ar-Rumi and Ibn Arabi (Sufi philosophers), Ibn Rushd (or Aviros: philisopher), and Ibn Sina or Avissina in medicine.

**Summarized Comparison between Berber and Arabic Phonology and Morphology**

In comparing Tamazight to Arabic we can see many similarities at the level of phonemes and word order, however they different on expressing other grammatical information such as number, gender and tense. Like Arabic, Tamazight is a language with only three vowels; a, i, u, however, Arabic has three letters alif, waw, ya’ that are consonants but also long vowels [aa], [ii], [uu] when following a consonant. Tamazight has 38 consonants in comparison to 28 consonants in Arabic. Tamazight has phonemes that are not found in Arabic such as [tsh], [v], [p], however, the other sounds are similar.

The grammatical information (number, gender, or tense) is different in Tamazight than Arabic or French. For example the plural of amazigh (Berber man) is imazighan and the plural of tamazight (female Berber) is timazighin. However, in Arabic expressing number is much more complex. For example the plural for amazighi (Berber man) is amazighiuun /iin depending on the case. The plural for amazighia (female Berber) is amazighiaat. However, in Arabic making plural is a much more complex than Berber in which nouns have sound and broken plural that require memorizing various pattern. For example plural for man or rajul is rijaal and the plural for woman or imra’a is nissaa’. Most feminine words have the [at] sound at the end, however in Berber an [ta] is added at the beginning of the word

The word order in Tamazight is VERB-SUBJECT-OBJEC. However, the Arabic language has two, this previous one and the SUBJECT-VERB-OBJECT one. For example, “The girl ate the apple” is in Tamazight “ate the girl the apple” but in Arabic both orders work. The phonetic closeness between the two languages is of great importance which made the borrowing from each other extensive (especially from Arabic to Berber). However, like any other two languages
in contact, the borrowed lexeme would always be adapted to the phonology and morphology of the mother tongue.

Classical Arabic

Like Akkadian, Canaanite, Aramaic, Hebrew, and Ethiopic, Arabic is a Semitic language. Semitic is also considered a major subfamily of the Afro-asiatic family of languages making Arabic related to Berber even from far. Arabic was spread into many places including North Africa, through the faith of Islam. Until today, oral and written recitation of Quran remains one of the main sources for the Classical version of the language. (CA) basic structure is similar to that of the Quranic Arabic and the preserved pre-Islamic poetry which are the closest to the Arab Bedouin way of speech. In his book ‘Arabic language,’ Versteegh gives an excellent summary of the development of orthography in the codification of the Qur’an and the codification of the pre-Islamic poetry. He also explains how early Arab Grammarians use the language of the Bedouins as the holders of “Arabic FaSiH”—eloquent—(Versteegh 1997: 50), a concept that until today is used to categorize the literate from the vernacular. In the early stages of the Islamic empire, the Arabic language went through its first process of standardization in connection to three main topics: the invention of orthography, the elaboration of standardized norm of the language and the invention and expansion of the lexicon.

Like many other languages, CA has been affected by contact with other tongues. Even the assumed ‘pure Arabic’ Quranic text has foreign borrowed lexical items. Being arabiyyan mubinan—a recitation that is Arabic and clear, Quran, a revelation from God, contains many borrowed words from other languages. For example Versteegh reports that Muqatil, one of the mid 8th century mufassir—Quranic interpreter, states that firdaws is a Greek word; yamm in a Hebrew word, maqalid is a Nabataean word and Taha is a Syriac word (Versteegh 1993: 89-90 cited by Versteegh 1996). It is due to this flexibility even in a ‘sacred’ language that gave the
first Standardized Arabic language the ability to remain in use until the twentieth century when
the world situation required a second Standardization.

**Modern Standard Arabic**

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) emerged in the 20th century with the ‘rebirth’ of Arabic in
post colonialism in most Arab countries in the 1950s and early 1960s. In the “modernization of
the language,” new methods were used to create new vocabulary such as borrowing foreign
words, integrating foreign words morphologically and/or phonologically, translating foreign
words and extending the semantic of existing words and using analogy to extend existing root

MSA was derived from the CA and with such lexicon reform and modifications became
the language of government and modern instructions. Like the other modern nation-states, after
its independence, the new government in Algeria gave the standard Arabic the status of official
state language. Its prestige is derived from the CA, being the language of the Quran; yet, MSA is
learned only through formal education. The native languages acquired in infancy in North
African countries are Berber and Darja “both low in status since they have no written form or
role in education or administration” (Bentahila and Davies 1992: 198).

**Darja**

Darja is the Algerian Arabic dialect. One of the following terms: darizja, darja, or ‘amiya
are used; yet, they all mean colloquial, vernacular or common speech. Like Berber, Darja is
based on the spoken only. If deciding to write, people switch to CA, MSA or French. it is
important to note that the linguistic discourse continues to position on the one hand, MSA as the
prestigious and correct language and on the other hand, Darja as the deviant one. This attitude
may be due mostly for the excess borrowing and codeswitching with other languages in contact
(see detailed examples with linguistic analysis of various expressions in chapter four).
From contacts with other languages, Darja, the spoken Algerian Arabic, uses lexical items from Berber, Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish, French and lately English. Words such as: *kuskus*, *banio*, *kuzina*, *dey*, *lekol*, and *manager* are consecutively each from the previous languages. Through out the chapters, I put many quotes, in the context of the chapters, collected during my fieldwork among the Algerian immigrants in the US, in which borrowed nouns, verbs, adverbs or articles are used. When borrowing happens, I note it for example (bfF) -borrowed from French. When borrowed from other languages, I similarly note it. The borrowing and complements can be articles, nouns, or clauses. The linguistic flexibility of Darja with its regional variants in Algeria widened its lexical range and gave it the privilege to be understood and used everywhere in North Africa.

**Dialects cline**

Throughout North Africa or as it is called the Maghrib –the sitting of the sun [region]-there is a strong linguistic similarities. One would say that there is a dialects “Cline” throughout Mauritania, Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian, and Libyan geographic areas. Despite using lexical and phonetic variants, in general, the populations of this region are able to communicate without difficulty. Passing that area toward the east, the dialects become more ‘mashriqi’—Middle Eastern—which are ‘less similar’ to western dialects. According to Versteegh, Egyptian Delta is the borderline between Western and Eastern dialects (Versteegh 1997: 134). His map (p. 135) is a good example to visualize one of the most frequently cited isoglosses in Arabic dialectology, which divide the Western from the Eastern dialects. The following table (2-1) is an illustration of the verb ‘I write/we write’ and how it changes from west to east as mentioned in Versteegh book (1997):
While the western region is to some extent different from the eastern region, one would say with confidence that the Middle East is not one region. As a matter of fact, they vary among each other at other levels which are not the subject of this thesis. Following another division of the Arabic dialects, Versteegh presents the geographically classified Arabic dialects (p.145) as follows: the dialects of the Arabian Peninsula, Mesopotamian dialects, Syro-Lebanese dialects, Egyptian dialects and the Maghrib dialects.

In contrast to the Egyptian dialect, Darja is not intelligible to most middle easterners. The reason for the spread of the Egyptian among other Arab countries is that Egypt has been the center for the Arabic/Islamic learning for centuries. Al-azhar University alone, have been visited for centuries by students of knowledge from around the world. Until today, it holds the most prestigious position in the world. Egypt is also well developed in the Arabic/Islamic literature and cinematography. Its productions are read and viewed by all Arabs and as a result spread its dialect. To many Arabs, Egypt is “Umm ad-dunia”—the mother of the world. As a matter of fact, Arab populations including Saudis, the holders of the Ka‘ba in Mecca, which all Muslims face five times a day to perform prayers, tend to admire Egypt and imitate Egyptians. As Vesteegh states, “Egyptian colloquialisms are rapidly gaining a position as prestige variants (Versteegh 1997: 197). However, I would argue that the author is still talking in the past. Today, especially with satellite television and the internet, Arabic people, markedly, its young, are mixing their dialects with English or French as prestige languages not Egyptian dialect as the author claims.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>1st person singular</th>
<th>1st person plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSA</td>
<td>Aktubu / aktub</td>
<td>Naktubu / Naktub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magrebi</td>
<td>Niktib</td>
<td>Nkittbu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashriqi</td>
<td>Aktib</td>
<td>Nkittibu / niktib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>I write</td>
<td>We write</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Algerian multidiaglossia

Algerian speech like that of other Arabs takes place in ‘multiglossic’ and multilingual relationship between the various languages they have. In the Algerian situation, diglossia may take place between FuSHa/ Darja (H variety/ L variety, a concept started by Ferguson 1959) However, as Versteegh notes this model “restricted the notion of ‘diglossia’ to situations where the low variety was genetically related to the high variety, of which it was a simplified version” (Versteegh 1997: 190). In modifying Ferguson’s model, Versteegh also explains that there is no “distinction of two discrete varieties” which means the speaker has to choose one or the other by a process of code-switching. Instead, one can say, there is a continuum of speech where “the two varieties are the extremes” (p.190). In countries like Algeria, intellectuals do not speak one language or the other with each other but use Berber, Darja, French, and MSA depending on the social circumstances as well as their linguistic loyalties and solidarities. I experience this, myself in the United States, adding English to the table, whenever I meet with other Algerians. That is one reason, why most middle easterners do not understand Algerians or maghribis when they speak among themselves. Yet, they maintain that Algerians speak French.

French in Algeria

French entrance to North Africa and specifically to Algeria was in 1830 as a colonizing force. As mentioned earlier, the similarities between the Berber and Arabic speaking people is that both are tribal people of afro-Asiatic bond. However, French language and people are of Romance and Gallic ancestry separated from North Africans by the Mediterranean Sea. Although both based on the alphabetical system, French and Arabic languages bear no resemblance in their script. Yet, for strategic and economic reasons, Algeria was destined an integral part of France. As a way of control, the French language was forced as the language of administration and power. As a result, Arabic, a competing language of knowledge was
suppressed except during Muslim prayers. Algerians, Arabic or Berber speaking, were forced to deal with officials in French. No interpretation was allowed and no official recognition was given to either ones. By the end of the nineteenth century, a policy of assimilation was enforced and the only way of advancement was through French. “In 1938, [Arabic] was declared a foreign language by a law that was rescinded only in 1961, just prior to independence, by Charles de Gaulle” (Saadi Mokhrane 2002: 52). The colonizing administration was enforced by thousands of French and European migrants making the social making of the region more complex. Being at an advantageous place, the colons were against the education of Algerians who were forced to work in the colons farms and estate.

After more than a century of colonization, when the French left, a nation was formed in an environment saturated by a language of discrimination, anger, and violence. Unlike the general population, a minority of Algerians Arab and Berber were educated in French. Among those who did, French elite was formed and used to govern after independence. However, the level of Arabic literacy was at a desperate level and by independence less than few thousands were able to read and write Arabic (Wardaugh 1987: 183). At independence, in 1962, the majority of Algerians were illiterate, and French continued to be the language of administration, power, and education. As a matter of fact, French remain widely used and despite the arabization programs since independence, it retains an important role. Today most educated Algerians are fluent in French and Standard Arabic.

**Linguistic Conflict and Nation Building**

**Arabic/Politics and Linguistics Discourse**

In 1962, Arabic was restored through a massive educational program. A cultural and a political movement that started in the 1930s, continued in post independence as a symbol of ‘linguistic decolonization’ (Berger (ed.) 2002: 3). The shared idiom was “Islam is our religion,
Arabic is our language, Algeria is our land” (first said by Ibn Badis and later echoed by Messali Haaj). Six years after independence, a decree was ordered designating Arabic to be used in all civil service positions. However, French remained used in administration until 1990s. In 1998, a new law generalized the exclusive use of Arabic in institutions and public service, yet, until today, never fully implemented. The government linguistic war against French becomes a complicated issue dividing Algerians between ‘franchophone’ and ‘arabophone’ and bringing in the issue of ethnicity to further division when some Berbers include this war to be against Berbers not French.

In independent Algeria, CA and MSA held not only a heritage and sacred function but also a nationalist and an Arab-Muslim identity revival. It plays a major role in religious functions at the individual level during Islamic worship. However, at the social level, CA is used in common and civil law in marriage, divorce and inheritance. Finally, CA took back its role in the religious discourse and the Mosque.

**Darja the ‘Neutral’ Tongue**

Darja remains the natural medium of ordinary speech. At times of conflict between Arabophone and Francophone nobody think of it as a militant way of speech. Darja remains the channel for freedom in expression and fluidity in word choice. There is constant use of Berber, Arabic and French at various degrees. Yet, in contrast to MSA and French literacy, Darja remains the language of the illiterate and common people. A linguistic discourse takes place between those who defend it as the Algerian language and a colloquial creativity (MalHun poetry) and those who try to correct its laHn or solecism. However, when listening to *Muwashahat* genra of Andalusia or the Algiers *sha‘bi* music Algerians do not consider the colloquial as less than CA or MSA but as a heritage that is rooted in the Maghrib.
Berber Reform and Ethnic Revival

In post independent Algeria, Tamazight remained the oral language of millions of Algerians. However, a movement has formed and requesting the change of the language status to a national language and standardize it to a literate language. At the same time, an ethnic identity revival of the Pre-Arab-Islam presence took place, making the divide not only between Arabophone and berberists but between the Berbers factions. While members from the Kabyles embraced a ‘cultural activism’ speaking against the use of Arabic, many other Kabyles and other Berber groups do not agree with the war against Arabic and Islam. However, the feelings of ethnic belonging and tribalism emerged as a counter response to nationalism and pan-arabism that made Arabic the national language of the land neglecting other heritages and silencing any movement that asks for reform. The Algerian government finally allowed the teaching of Tamazight language at schools. The current Algerian president, President Bouteflika signed a decree which became law; however, the teaching of the language is still at its preliminary stages. There is still a debate on what characters to use; the old Tifinagh (used among Tuareg), Arabic or Roman script. The first classes started in 1995-1996 academic year in Kabiya and as Saadi-Mokrane says: “[it] suggest[s] the possibility that Berber will become the second national language, once it is taught in all the country’s schools” (Saadi-Mokrane 2002: 48).

French: Not National but Integrated Language

As mentioned earlier, the French language asserted itself in Algeria amid the tumult of colonization. The irony is that among those who were fighting French during arabization were the elite whose education was mostly in French. As a matter of fact, the French-speaking elite continued using French at the time of independence as the language of economic, scientific and technological power. Despite declaring Arabic the only national language in the country, French continues to be the tool in bureaucracy and learning. The topic of eliminating French from
Algeria comes and goes like swinging mood in post colonial Algeria depending on the political climate. At times of disenchantment with social and political tensions, French language is blamed for remaining in the nation. At other times, those who were raised during colonialism reminisce about the language of high culture. In present Algeria, many monuments such as street names and buildings remain as a reminder of the time of the French colonial period. As a matter of fact, my neighborhood where I was raise is still called ‘cite Fougeroux’ after a French personality despite renaming it officially ‘Rostomia’ after a figure during the Rustamid dynasty in the 8th century Algeria.

Conclusion

This background information on the origin, linguistic and political situation of the present languages—Tamazight, Arabic, and French—of Algeria is of great importance. One would not value the topic of ‘the Algerian languages in the Diaspora’ (France and the US) unless understanding the connections of the languages to each other and to their users. The Algerian languages starting with Tamazight—the ancestral language, classical Arabic—the language of faith, French—the language of modernization, modern standard Arabic—the national language, and finally Darja—the spoken tongue—are inseparable in the mind and life of every Algerian. As a matter of fact, their fate in the Diaspora depends greatly on the perceptions of their holders as well as other factors in their new homes.
Algerian Arabic (Darja) is characterized as having great lexical borrowing from other languages, especially from French as mentioned in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I discuss a number of ways of Algerians’ speech (all examples are from my data collection), the choices of the matrices or the underlying structures that my interviewees rely on, and a variety of inserted words or expressions that they borrow from other language(s).

However, before presenting examples of codeswitching and borrowing it is important to understand the Arabic matrices of both regional (Darja) and standard (MSA) as well as analyze their mutual relationships. The Arabic matrix is followed by an English and French translation to allow the reader to see how Arabic as a Semitic language differs from French and English (as western languages) and how French and English are closer to each other more than to Arabic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>“Al-‘unSur ta‘ al-‘arabiya Muhim bazzaf (D)</td>
<td>The element Belongs the Arabic Important a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSA (1)</td>
<td>“Al-‘unSur at-taabi‘ lil-‘arabiya Muhimun jiddan</td>
<td>The element Belongs To the Arabic Important a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSA (2)</td>
<td>‘unSur al-‘arabiya Muhimum jiddan</td>
<td>Element The Arabic Important a lot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E trans of D: The element of Arabic is extremely important.

F trans of D: l’élément de l’arabe est extrêmement important.

The matrix of D is the same as that of MSA. However, certain lexical divergences make the words more regional. Some of the transformations may first seem for non speakers or to those who do not understand D to be different. In this example, I have four observations to make that show the morphological explanation behind this divergence:
• The term ta’—of (E) or de (F)—used in D is not found in the structure of MSA (2). Yet, this does not mean it is not Arabic. It is important to note that all Arabic dialects have the ability to use CA or MSA elements and alter them in ways that would fit their needs. The term ta’ is thus a word constructed from the CA or MSA (1) word taabi’ which means belonging to. However, the bilabial phoneme [b] of the later is omitted and the new lexical meaning belonging to is ta’ in Algerian or bita’ in Egyptian (just as in English the contraction of “do not” to “don’t”).

• The word muhim—important—in D is not that different from the CA or MSA muhimun since the only difference is the omission of un (a sign of indefiniteness), which is rare to find in modern Arabic dialects. However, in CA and MSA, un only appears as a case marker in the middle of a sentence, but is omitted at a pausal situation and would be muhim like in the dialect.

• The word bazzaf—very—in D is based on the MSA and CA root word zaf—commotion. However, the word that is mostly used in MSA in this context is jiddan—very. Yet, the word bazzaf originate from an Arabic word bi az-zaf which means with great noise or commotion. Such meaning is also used in Egyptian dialect saying bizzuffa. However, it is used in a different context than the one presented in the Algerian example.

• Finally, when comparing the following possessive clauses: “Al-‘unSur ta’ al-‘arbiya in D to ’unSur al-‘arabiya” in MSA (2) one would say that both are Arabic. However, as a possessive form, the first one would not be proper in MSA in this context but would work in saying ’unSur al-‘arabiya or Al-‘unSur at-taabi’ lil-‘arabiya [the] element of Arabic [language] or the element belonging to the Arabic [language].

We can see how colloquial Algerian Arabic is very strongly related to CA and MSA. However, because of the above syntax or semantics change, D appears, at first, as a separate language from MSA. As shown up above, Arabic—MSA, D, CA—differs tremendously in word order and syntax from the western languages—E or F—which are much closer to each other in word order and in lexical. Yet, Arabic, like other languages, has the ability to insert other languages elements in its matrix or be inserted in other languages matrices, as illustrated in the examples in the following paragraphs.
Description of Codeswitching in General

Using the “insertion approach”, Boumans and Caubet (1999) state that “code switching is viewed as the insertion of smaller or larger constituents from one language, to be called the embedded [inserted] language, into a syntactic frame set by another language, the matrix language” (Boumans and Caubet 1999: 113). They explain that the former governs the selection and relative order of the constituent parts that make up the structure, whether their constituents are from the same language or another language—the embedded language. The process of identifying the matrix language leads to “the conclusions that word order and function morphemes are usually indicative of the matrix language” (Boumans and Caubet 1999:115). They and others also argue that in codeswitching between languages, “marker tense and/or aspect on the verb, verbal inflection is a reliable indicator of the matrix language” (Klavans 1985; Treffer-Daller 1994: 204 in Boumans and Caubet 1999:116). Based on these authors’ extensive and explicit definition, the following examples illustrate how this codeswitching works between French and Darja, Darja and French, Darja and English, and, finally, English and Darja. The examples also illustrate the kinds of borrowed words that are used in each situation and how the inflection works.

Matrix illustration

French Matrix

In the following we see how the two French matrices are used in a continuous going back and forth between various languages French, English, Arabic then French matrices:

Mon prof une fois quand elle ma entendu (F) nahdar (D). Elle m’a dit…en parlant des verbes…les verbes irréguliers et tout ça. Elle m’a dit (F): « french is [a] crazy, crazy language…(E) Wallah ; qalat li : (D ) « le français pour l’apprendre il n’est pas facile (F). » Ana (D), j’ai lu beaucoup de bouquins (F).
In this situation, this recent Algerian immigrant to the Chicago area is still going back and forth between the US and Algeria. She speaks French at home with her husband and daughter and when meeting other Algerians. In this example, she uses French as the matrix; however, she inserts D conjugated verb (nahdar) instead of (je parle) in her first part of speech. In her sentence she is still using the French matrix, however, she inserts what her teacher told her in English: “French is [a] crazy, crazy language.” Then she uses Arabic (D) (wallah, qalat li)—I swear, she told me, when she wants to assure something. She could have said in French: “je t’assure”—I assure you [that she told me.] However, in this situation, she chooses to use the Arabic Islamic oath “wallah”—[I swear] by God—to make her point, following it with an Arabic sentence “qalat li”—she told me. Then she goes back to her French matrix and finishes the sentence without any foreign insertion. She then starts a new French matrix using at the beginning the Arabic pronoun ‘ana’ (me or I) instead of the French pronoun (moi). She finishes her talk explaining how she became competent in French by reading a lot of books. In this small paragraph, we can see how this Algerian interviewee uses the French matrix in general. However, she relies on other matrices from Arabic and English. She clearly demonstrates her various linguistic abilities in retrieving such matrices when needed to express herself with other Algerians who are able to understand all three languages that she uses.

The next example shows other complex uses of French matrix inserted with an Arabic matrix, with the use of French borrowed lexical followed by an English matrix. The expression is followed by a translation in French then in English to highlight the difference.

Je t’en pris telephoni li

Je t’en pris telephone moi

Please call me
In this French matrix the inserted part is a French verb [telephon-er-]. The French verb is uttered phonologically and morphologically. Using the stem of the verb then conjugating it in Arabic in the imperative form (you (feminine)) telephoni and complemented by a prepositional phrase li—to me—based on the verb pattern—doing something to/for me—such as uktubi li—write to me—or uTbukhi li—cook for me—and so on.

The following utterance shows the use of the previous matrix and code switching with English:

Je t’en pris  telephoni - li a n’importe quel moment  email me anything
Je t’en pris telephone moi a n’importe quel moment email moi n’importe
Please call me at any time email me anything

This kind of borrowing is very common in Maghribi languages. Arabic conjugation is applied to French verbs and reinserted to code switch with French matrix as shown in this example or used in an Arabic matrix as we will see in the following examples.

**Arabic Matrix**

My data shows how Algerians vary in using French or Arabic matrices. They do it depending on the speech community and social situation they are in. In the following, I illustrate how French verbs are borrowed and adapted to Arabic morphology. They are conjugated in Arabic and inserted in Arabic matrices. In case of the three following examples, the French verbs are from the regular verbs having an infinitive form—er [e] in French. As shown by Boumans and Caubet, Algerians also use French irregular verbs such as ‘souffrir’ however in morphology; Algerians apply the same form of Arabic conjugation for both regular and irregular French verbs. On the one hand, the French ‘il a souffert’ becomes [sufra]—he suffered—to express the past tense. On the other hand, the French ‘il souffre’ becomes [ysufri] in Arabic—he is suffering or he suffers to express the progressive present (Boumans and Caubet 1999:158-160).

Phonologically, the verb souffre is pronounced with French [r]—a velar voiced. When used in an
Arabic matrix or as a borrowed word, it would be pronounced with an Arabic accent saying sufra with a flapped r.

**Use of (F) adverbial expressions in Arabic matrix**

- d’ailleurs (F) ki jat waHda jdida, kunna nahhadru

As a matter of fact when came one person new we were speaking

As a matter of fact, when a new person came –in the Chicago MCC community-, we were speaking [to her in MSA].

This is a good example of borrowed words; the French word [d’ailleurs] is used as an adverb at the beginning of the Darja matrix.

**Use of (F) verbal expressions in Arabic matrix**

- Difigureweh (they disfigured him)

The verb is borrowed from French regular verb ‘défigurer’ ruled by Arabic morphology and phonology using the Arabic syntax then inserted into Arabic matrix.

D: difigur (flapped r) ewe h
F: défigure ils ont l « ils l’ont défiguré »
E: disfigured they him « they disfigured him »

MSA: shawwah-whoo-h
Remarkit-haa (I noticed it or her).

The verb is borrowed from the French regular verb ‘remarquer.’

The Arabic morphology is applied then inserted into Arabic matrix.

D: Remarkit haa
F: remarqué j’ai l « je l’ai remarqué »
E: noticed I it « I noticed it »

MSA: LaahaDhtuhaa
Kanu issiyu (they were trying).

The verb is borrowed from the French regular verb ‘essayer’ and conjugated using Arabic morphology [issiyu] and syntax then inserted into Arabic matrix.

D: kanu yssiyyu
F: avez essaye ils « ils avez essaye »
E: they were trying « they were trying »

MSA: Kanu yuHaawiluun

Kifaash nexplikihalek (how do I explain it to you).

The verb is borrowed from the French regular verb ‘expliquer’, conjugated using Arabic grammatical rule, and then inserted into Arabic matrix. Phonologically, the verb is pronounced in Arabic accent.

D: kifaash ne xpliki ha lek
F: Comment je explique l’te «Comment je te l’explique »
E: how I explain it [to] you «How do I explain it to you »

MSA: kaifa ashraHuuhaa lek

In these four examples, the French regular verb is used by Algerian and Maghribis in general using Arabic conjugation to inflate the verbs in perfect, imperfect and imperative tenses. The verbs are then inserted in Arabic matrix or reinserted in French matrix.

In the case of English verbs, Algerians in America like other immigrants start using some verbs in the same way. I couldn’t find any one from among my interviewees who uses these verbs. However, I did observe that a few verbs such as ‘to hug’ and ‘to write’ are sometimes
used. A mother would for example tell her daughter ‘hug me’ using Arabic conjugation as follows:

Huggini (hug (f.s.) me).

The verb is borrowed from the English verb ‘hug.’ The Arabic grammar is applied to conjugate it and the result is then inserted into Arabic matrix using the Arabic imperative form.

D: Hug-g- i ni
E: Hug you (f.m) me “hug me”

A conjugation of the verb ‘to write’ [rayt] would be as follow in the perfect, imperfect and imperative Darja as used by Boumans and Caubet with the French verb ‘croiser’ [krwaze] to cross:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Perfect</th>
<th>imperfect</th>
<th>imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SG</td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>SG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>rayti-t</td>
<td>rayti-na</td>
<td>n-rayti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m</td>
<td>rayti-t</td>
<td>raytitu</td>
<td>t-rayti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 f</td>
<td>rayti-ti</td>
<td>raytitu</td>
<td>t-rayti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 m</td>
<td>rayta</td>
<td>rayta-w</td>
<td>yrayti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 f</td>
<td>rayta-t</td>
<td>rayta-w</td>
<td>t-rayti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among other Arab Americans such as Lebanese and Palestinian dialects, Rouchdy (1992) finds that other English verbs are used in Arabic matrices such as: Kalnet id-daar (I cleaned the house); kalnetu (I cleaned it); baraknahaa (we parked it). However, she found that the suffix pronoun is never borrowed such as in kalne it (Rouchdy 1992: 43-44). I would argue along in a similar way that huggi-ni would never be huggi-me and the suffix pronoun would not be borrowed. While names and verbs are borrowed, inflectual affixes and pronouns are not.
Another phenomenon among second generation immigrants is the use of Arabic verbs while applying English morphology and phonology and then inserting them in English matrix. For example, in the case of the verb to pray, that is performing Salat which is not praying as in making a prayer, I noticed many young Algerians using the verb Solly—perform the Salat—in English sentences with an ‘ing’ ending as follows:

Algenglish: I am Solling [I’m Solling]
D: Rani n Solli [ranin-Solli]
E I am praying

When using Arabic verbs into English matrices the stem ‘Soll’ is used before applying any conjugation. The morphology however is that of English. The prefix and suffix, that are markers of progressive present, gender and number in Arabic, are omitted and instead the English grammar (ing) is used. In this way, an Algerian who has limited knowledge of Arabic conjugation would not bother but use just one form “are” or “were sollying.” In Darja, there is already the omission of the dual and third person feminine plural in comparison to MSA. I would say that like the French verbs, many more English verbs would be integrated in this manner among Algerians as it is the case amongst Moroccans and Tunisians as well as amongst other Arabs in the case of English verbs.

**Arabic matrix (borrowed English lexical)**

My Algerians interviewees mentioned many English words that are being used in their Arabic or even French speech with an Arabic phonology, some examples of which are: TV, crib, blanket, cell phone, sofa, car seat, dishwasher, microwave, Christmas, gift, culture, Spanish, Chinese, high school, church, school, teacher, home work, bus, America, American, citizen(ship), cab driver, delivery, September eleven, tee shirt, manager.
I noticed that Algerians use English lexemes on a need basis by introducing them slowly into their speech. Many interviewees either intentionally or unintentionally use these words in their speech. Omar came to the US at the age of twenty years old and has been in the States for more than twelve years. His wife Manal came from Algeria when they got married three years ago. Omar is fluent in English. However, Manal is at a beginning stage of understanding and speaking English. They explain to me that many English words entered their lexical and sometimes replacing Arabic or French words in their speech. Manal explains in Darja:

I mean [we use] small terms. For example (F), we do not say televizium but TV¹, crib of [baby’s name], couverture (F) is almost gone, we use blanket—baby blanket, cell phone, car seat, dish-washer, and sofa.

However, her husband still used the French word for sofa saying: “I use foteye” or fauteuil in French. Yet in using the word thermometer they find themselves mixing both French and English terms depending on what they are speaking of. Omar explains showing his amazement of the changes in their language:

For example (F) [we say] “dirilo (D) thermometre (F)”—measure his temperature. We say thermomètre not thermometer. (Ah, ok) But we read it in English (F) ‘99.5 ninety nine point five.’ If it was in percent, we read it in Arabic or French (F) but in Fahrenheit, we read it in English (F)...that is weird (he is amazed that they do it. It seems he never thought about it).

Zahra, a mother of two boys, uses intentionally more Arabic words when possible. Yet in certain situation, she explains; only English lexical apply. For example, she finds herself using English words for new appliances, such as microwave but still says khizaana (MSA) for cupboard or any other holding closet or chest. Yet she chooses to use only Arabic words in her home and does not use, for example, the French word Frigidaire—used in Darja for refrigerator. She rather uses thallaja from MSA. To know more about the borrowed words from English to

¹ It is important to mention that televizium is already a borrowed word that have been arabized long ago and used as an Arabic word that is been replaced with the English word TV.
Darja in their context, see Table 2-3 at the end of this chapter. Choosing a word, as simple as the word cup, may have a different explanation for different persons and families. Why would one use cup in English, kaass in Arabic, or verre or tasse in French? Memories and various perceptions and influences shape people’s attitudes and speeches when they move with their culture and language to a foreign land. Investigating how and when they do start using the dominant language lexical reveals other sentiments, attitudes, and loyalties as it will be shown in chapter four and six.

The definite article [al]

Like many other Arabs, Algerians apply the Arabic definite and indefinite rules in borrowing words from English, something they have already been doing before with French. In Arabic, a word is indefinite if mentioned without the [al]. For example, while the word khizanah—closet—is indefinite, al-khizanah is definite. However, the word starting with the phoneme [t], when defined, would be assimilated such as in televiziun / at-televiziun. The same rules are applied to words borrowed from other languages. Many examples have been mentioned in this data whether the borrowed words are Portuguese Sala / as-Sala, Spanish banio / al-banio, French cadeau / al-cadeau, or English manager / al-manager. In the Arabic language, the alphabet is divided into two categories depending on whether we are able to assimilate the al in the letter or not, respectively calling them (lam shamsiya) and (lam qamariya) based on a comparison with the two exemplar models of shams / ash-shams (sun) and qamar / al-qamar (moon). These two models are to be followed depending on the proximity of the [l] and the next phoneme to the place of articulation. From the data in Table 2-3, most words are assimilated except if the words are used as predicate. For example labes ti shurt (flapped r)—he was wearing a tee shirt. Or ana rajli kabi My husband [is] a cab driver, using cabi in a singular form. However, it is used in plural when speaking of many cab drivers such as in the following
example: *safi hathu rjalhum ga' kabiya*—so, all of these [women’s] men [husbands] [are] cab drivers. Modifiers are borrowed and used mostly in this indirect way. It is however hard to find borrowed adjectives as direct modifiers. One possible explanation for this scarcity is word order because the orders of the words are different in Semitic from western languages. For example, ‘the beautiful flower’ in English or ‘la belle rose’ in French would be al-warda al-jamila in Arabic, having the modifier following the noun and agreeing in definiteness, gender and number.

In the following pages, Table 2-3, I present more examples for the use of definite and non-defined words in context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
<th>Algerian pronunciation</th>
<th>D (Algerian spoken)</th>
<th>D. context</th>
<th>Translation to English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 TV</td>
<td>Tivi</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>Asha’li at-tivi</td>
<td>Turn (FS) on the TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Crib</td>
<td>Krib (flapped r)</td>
<td>Sriir (flapped r)</td>
<td>Fil- krib</td>
<td>In the crib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Blanket</td>
<td>Blanket</td>
<td>Kuvertur (flapped r or F r)</td>
<td>Taqriben, <strong>couverture</strong> (F r)</td>
<td>The [word] couverture, is almost gone [from our speech] we use blanket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cell phone</td>
<td>Selfown</td>
<td>Mobayl –mobil</td>
<td>Al-coor siit fit-tonobil</td>
<td>Call me on the cell phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Sofa</td>
<td>Sofa</td>
<td>Fotideye (fauteuil)</td>
<td>Ngulus-Sofa</td>
<td>We say: sofa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 car seat</td>
<td>Coor siit (flapped r)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Al-coor siit fit-tonobil</td>
<td>The car seat [is] in the car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Dishwasher</td>
<td>Dishwashar (flapped r)</td>
<td>Ghassalah</td>
<td>At-Tbassa fid-dishwashar</td>
<td>The dishes [are] in the dishwasher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Microwave</td>
<td>Maycrowev (flapped r)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Hathal-maycrowev jdid</td>
<td>This microwave [is] new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Manager</td>
<td>Manager (flapped r)</td>
<td>Mas’uul /responsible (F r)</td>
<td>Al-manager ta’i</td>
<td>My manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Christmas,</td>
<td>Krismess</td>
<td>La nowel</td>
<td>bash meytab’ush al-krismess hatha.</td>
<td>So they don’t follow this Christmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLISH</td>
<td>Algerian pronunciation</td>
<td>D (Algerian spoken)</td>
<td>D. context</td>
<td>Translation to English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Gift</td>
<td>Gift</td>
<td>Kado / hadeya</td>
<td>nashriwalhum les (F) gifts nakhud al-bus</td>
<td>We buy them gifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Bus</td>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>Troleys (flapped r) / Hafilah</td>
<td>ma Hebsh yaq’ud fes-skuul</td>
<td>I take the bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 School</td>
<td>Skuuul</td>
<td>Lekul / l’ekol / msiid / madrassa (flapped r)</td>
<td>msiid / madrassa (flapped r)</td>
<td>He didn’t want to stay in the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Teacher</td>
<td>Titcher</td>
<td>ash-shikha / al-mudarissa / lanstitutris</td>
<td>At-titcher dyalu, s un amerikan (F r)</td>
<td>His teacher is an American (f)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 High school</td>
<td>haye skool</td>
<td>Lissey / lissi / thanawiyah</td>
<td>ma Hebsh yaq’ud fes-skuul</td>
<td>He didn’t want to stay in the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 High school degree</td>
<td>haye skool degri (flapped r)</td>
<td>Bak / bakaloriya (flapped r)</td>
<td>‘alal’aqal tgeeb al-hay skuul degri</td>
<td>At least she gets the high school degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Culture</td>
<td>Coltchor</td>
<td>Al-’adaat / atturaath / tradision (F r)</td>
<td>Al-coltcher ta’al’jazaer</td>
<td>The Algerian culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Church</td>
<td>Tchurch</td>
<td>L’eglize / kaniissa</td>
<td>rajul khruj m’a zuj nssa m-tchurch</td>
<td>A man came out of the church with two women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Spanish</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Isbaniya / sbeniyuliya</td>
<td>To me, lukan yat’allam as-spanish it’s better</td>
<td>To me, if he learns Spanish, it’s better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Chinese</td>
<td>Tchainiiz</td>
<td>Siiniy</td>
<td>Walla yat’allam ach-chiniiz</td>
<td>Or he learns Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Home work</td>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>Al-wajeb / le devoar (F r)</td>
<td>dart al-homwork (flapped r)</td>
<td>Did (I or you m-) the homeword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 whole sale</td>
<td>Hol sail</td>
<td>Bal-jamla</td>
<td>Yakhdam hol sail</td>
<td>He works as whole sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Delivery</td>
<td>Delivri</td>
<td>Muwazzi’ / edelivri</td>
<td>Yakhdam hol sal …edelivri</td>
<td>He works as whole sale…delivery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2-3. Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
<th>Algerian pronunciation</th>
<th>D (Algerian spoken)</th>
<th>D. context</th>
<th>Translation to English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 Cab driver(S)</td>
<td>Caabi/caabiya</td>
<td>Taxieur</td>
<td>ana radjli kabi/ safi hathu rjalhum ga’ kabiya</td>
<td>My man [husband] [is] a cab driver /so, all of these [women]’s men [are] cab drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 America</td>
<td>Marikan (flapped r)</td>
<td>Marikan / amriika</td>
<td>hna fil-marikan</td>
<td>Here in America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 American (f.s)</td>
<td>Amrikiya (flapped r)</td>
<td>Amrikiya (trilled r) / ameriken (F r)</td>
<td>nHass ruHi rani amrikiya</td>
<td>I feel [myself] I am an American (f.s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Citizen(ship)</td>
<td>As-sitizen</td>
<td>Al-jinsiya / la nasionaliti</td>
<td>Madam ad-diit as-sitizen</td>
<td>Since I took the citizen[ship]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 September eleven</td>
<td>Sebtember alleven (flapped r)</td>
<td>Hdesh sebtember / onz decembre (F r)</td>
<td>Fi Darbet sebtember alleven</td>
<td>When september eleven happened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 tee shirt</td>
<td>ti shurt (flapped r)</td>
<td>Triko (flapped r)</td>
<td>labess ti shurt (flapped r)</td>
<td>He wore a Tee shirt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, we have seen how two linguistic phenomena, borrowing and code switching, are used amongst the Algerian immigrants in language contact. While those who have contact with French, back in Algeria or in France, inter-exchange between French and Arabic, those who come to the US start borrowing and code switching between English and Arabic in addition to French, and sometimes replacing the French speech. During language contact, gradual changes take place within the native language as well as on the dominant language, thereby providing us sometimes with information on other attitudes, sentiments, and loyalties that would always play a role in language maintenance, shift or loss.
CHAPTER 5
LANGUAGE CONTACT AND CONFLICT IN THE EARLY ALGERIAN DIASPORA:
FRANCE

Introduction

In chapter two, I presented the various ethnic, religious, and political communities of Algeria who were pushed into migrating and exile as groups and individuals. It embodied the elements necessary to reconstruct their identities and that of the future generations in the diaspora. The present chapter examines these elements in the paradoxical situation of the new home, France, which represents a complex political environment producing conflicting identities and belonging.

This chapter is divided into five parts. The first part focuses on the language, a door to other cultural codes that is never neutral in the human experience, especially that of the Algerians in a post colonial era in the land of the colonizer. In this part, I will first look at the French language competence, a critical step to escape the émigré state of mind. I then examine the endeavor of teaching and transmitting mother tongue. In part two, I examine the efforts to revive and transform Kabyle in France from an oral to a literary language bearing in mind the political complexities the two nation-states—France and Algeria. In part three, I touch upon the paradox of nationality and citizenship for the French of Algerian origin and their sense of belonging. Part four deals with the ‘Beurs’, a reminder of racial exclusion and a voice of solidarity and difference. Finally, part five includes vignettes of the ‘Beurs’ generation and excerpts of their ‘double socialization’ in a society that ties them to the ‘land of origin’ as a reminder of their forever foreignness.

Linguistics Performance and Cultural Belonging on the French Soil

Language is a social, cultural and political artifact. Therefore, debates on language policies are of concern to all individual speakers of a language. France, like many other modern nation-
states, exercises its power in nationalizing its culture by controlling the means of cultural reproduction. As stated by Hargreaves, “while it is difficult for the state to exercise direct control over day-to-day family life, it exerts strong and sometimes a decisive influence over education and the media” (Hargreaves 1995: 87). In the formal system of education through which the child passes in preparation for adulthood, while subject-matters such as history and geography familiarize the child with landmarks and events of national significance, national language occupies a place of pride. Like their counterparts who have native parents, immigrant children first linguistic influence would be their families. “Linguistic, moral and other codes inherited from their country of origin naturally dominate during these early years” (Hargreaves 1995: 88).

Mother tongue and culture maintenance is also facilitated by the chain migration and mutual support and cultural practices shared by immigrants originating in the same village, region or city. It is as well supplemented by associations with social, cultural and sometimes political objectives which were until 1981 (Socialist-led administration) illegal in France (La Tribune Fonda 1991 in Hargreaves 1995: 89). For many French, the ‘foreigners’ right of association’ undermines ‘la France pour les Français’ and the total assimilation of all immigrants into the French society. French politicians and educators maintain an ideology and a process of assimilation. They believe that, for the long run, acculturation works and every immigrant would become French. Yet, for the migrant, adapting to their new environment is based on a different imagination.

When they first migrate, foreign workers and students often expect to pursue economic or educational project without having a major effect on their cultural identity. As Hargreaves states it well:

In reality it is impossible to separate politics from culture. At the same time, certain kinds of cultural competence are indispensable to effective economic participation which require
of most workers and students to acquire a minimal competence in the language of the receiving country if they are to function effectively in the employment, schooling, and housing markets. They may take a purely instrumental view of foreign-language acquisition, thereby retaining a primordial attachment to their native tongue, but in this and other respects their cultural repertoire widens significantly as the length of their stay extends (Hargreaves 995: 95).

Like many other ethno cultural French groups, as regard to their linguistic performance, Algerian immigrants who originate from various regions in Algeria have different dialects and accents, yet, they communicate in mutually intelligible due to their agreement on the same cultural codes. Being able to use French, Arabic or Kabyle would be a means of inclusion or exclusion from ‘a wealth of communicative acts,’ (Hargreaves 1995: 86). Because children are around the family in early age, they will be influenced by the family’s culture. However, in France the state not only requires by law that all children, regardless of their nationality, attend school from 6 to 16. The state also provides free nursery schools since three years old as well as encourages students to remain in it well beyond the minimum school-leaving age (Hargreaves 1995: 89).

**French competency**

Like many other ethnic groups in France, such as the Portuguese, Italians or Turkish, in the 1960s and 1970s, Algerians’ French language competency was little. Algerian men laborers were little or never schooled. In comparison to the men, the Algerian women were less educated. And even with free classes, many of them would never reach the level of competence as shown by the 1992 household survey conducted jointly by INSEE and INED on Immigrant women coming in early 1970s. The study shows that only 35% Algerian born males and 25% Algerian born females had some schooling. 10% males and 46% females had difficulty understanding French TV news. Finally, 16% males and 57% females spoke little or no French. In choosing the language of communication among each other, whereas Kabyle men tend to valorize French and speak it among each other, with women speak Kabyle. However, when speaking to their kids,
they all speak French, if in a simplified way. Interestingly, as mentioned in chapter two, among the stigmatized harkis, even the young ones, speak Algerian Arabic (personal communication with Tassadit: 2007). In comparing Algerian to Portuguese immigrants, Hargreaves reports that “the proportion of Algerian men who said they had had some schooling in French was twice as large as that reported by Portuguese men. And with the longer average period of settlement, Algerian men still speaking little or no French were far less numerous than their Portuguese counterparts” (Hargreaves 1995: 99). This finding is to be expected since most Algerian immigrants were born under French colonialism and would be much more familiar with French than Portuguese or other foreigners in France.

When landing into France, the first migrants arrive with their primordial cultural attachments from countries of origin. Their aim is not to stay but to make a living and go back home. In dealing with their offspring, on the one hand, they expect them to profit instrumentally from school and work hard, for education is seen as a passport to better jobs than those held by most immigrant workers. On the other hand, they take it for granted that their kids would be like them in their cultural norms and codes. One might imagine that this approach would work. However, in reality, the result may put these parents in a state of hysteria in dealing with the seeming rebellious children. Despite the parents’ insistence on remaining distant from the cultural norms dominant in the receiving country, the children, whose formative years are spent in the land to which the older generation has moved to, tend to internalize their peers’ cultural codes not only as means but as desirable objects in their own rights.

It is true that language competence is derived from language performance. However, every experience is different and one could not generalize this hypothesis. As Hargreaves finds, linguistic competence is not particular, nor is cultural competence a zero-sum game. He
continues saying that: “An individual may learn new languages without reducing their competency in their native tongue. As a matter of fact, elements of diverse cultures frequently co-exist within a person. This does not mean that conflicts may not arise, however, frequently; cultural diversity provides a stimulus for the creation of new synthesis” (Hargreaves 1995: 98). At the same time, an individual may have competency in a cultural code without identifying with the ethno-cultural group with which it is most closely associated. So French citizens of Algerian origin may be fluent in the French language, which is the dominant language of the society in which they live, yet they would perceive it as a code which remains fundamentally foreign to them, even if their native tongue falls into disuse. At an affective level, a mother tongue is likely to retain a strong hold on the mind of many immigrants and their off-spring, for whom it remains a sense of belonging more than of daily communication.

**Mother tongue teaching**

The French political and legal institutions, paradoxically, until 1980s, considered the populations of Algerian origins ‘foreign migrant workers.’ Despite their large numbers, length of stay and their French citizenship, they were simultaneously racialized by the European Marxist and praxis theories as the permanent uprooted and suffering victims of modernity (Silverstain 2005: 373). Also, the workers themselves believed in the ‘myth of return,’ a dream that is pushed to its ultimate point and beyond. Only after death, with a burial place in the land of birth, will many immigrants finally accomplish their return journey of which they have dreamed since their initial departure (Chaib 1994 in Hargreaves 1995: 133). This mosaic of perceptions had long hidden the social, cultural and psychological realities. These temporary situations escalate the neglect of the minority rights represented in the language, culture and religion of these ‘transient’ populations and remove the burden of the French institutions and society. Between 1970s - 90s, with the French agreement, Algeria was part of the sending countries providing Arabic teachers
to teach Standard Arabic in primary French schools to the children of immigrants. However, only a small number of schools participate (14% in primary and 7% in secondary schools and declining), which means, only a minority of children are getting tutoring in their ‘native language’ (Hargreaves 1995: 101-102). According to Hamid who taught in French schools for twelve years, the Arabic class is one to three times a week, not mandatory on Arabic speaking students, and unpopular among other students (personal interview with Hamid: 2007). In general, the languages of migrants are the most stigmatized and when choosing a foreign language most students choose European languages and most of the time “English which is associated with image of glamour and commercial utility” (Hargreaves 1995: 102).

In case of Algerians and other Maghribis in France, the dilemma is that the Arabic they are taught (MSA or fuSHa) at school is a different form that of their mother tongue Darja, Kabyle or other dialects of berber language. As shown in chapter two, the fuSHa “bears only a distant resemblance to the dialects spoken by their parents” (Jerab 1988 in Hargreaves 1995: 101). Religious discourse—Friday sermon, short TV program or special lectures—to the Algerian ethnic communities are challenging as shown by Kepel in the following example. At the ‘grand Mosquée de Paris’, Cheikh Abbas, the designated Imam from Algeria, would speak in ‘middle language’ to facilitate the message to the French audience of rural Algerian origins who are mostly used to the Algerian dialect more than Standard Arabic. This type of speech is based on simple syntax used in dialect but uses once in a while more sophisticated expressions from the written Arabic. In speaking about tolerance, cheikh Abbas says: “al islam salama wa ukhuwa wa tassamuh” – Islam = peace, brotherhood and tolerance” (Kepel 1987: 332). However, their young children, if present, and other non-Arabic speaking Muslims and converts would need his translator, Mr. Guessoum, the bilingual professor who was sent by the Algerian government to
fulfill the task. Lately, there has been a call for ‘a French Islam’ which would exclude the fluent Arabic speaking preachers and teachers brought from Algeria and other Arabic countries such as Morocco, Syria, and Lebanon. What would this forced isolation from universal Islam do to adherents of the Islamic religion? Would they forget about Arabic or valorize it symbolically in their minds as the language of the Quran? Policies related to language, cultural and religious adherence in France have been contested on many levels depending on the political climates. As a result, peoples respond to it in their own ways that may surprise the policy makers with what they did not expect.

The Kabyle revival in France: from oral to literary language

Until recently, the majority of Algerian immigrants to France were Kabyle/Berber (Chaker 1988 in (Hargreaves 1995: 101). However, when it comes to teaching mother tongue, only politically recognized languages are taught. Unfortunately, Kabyle is still conceived by many Algerians and French—government and population—as an oral language and sometimes, out of ignorance, a dialect of Arabic. Karima Direche-Slimani, an Algerian born History professor at a secondary school at Marseille, devotes her study to the recent immigration flux in the Mediterranean Basin. In her book “Histoire de l’émigration Kabyle en France au XXème siècle” (1996), Direche-Slimani focuses not only on the reasons behind the journey but analyzes the attitude and perspective of the Kabyle people on their own migration experience. For her, from the beginning of its history in the twentieth century, this migrant group has been distinctively producing intense militant, political and identity actions and discourses. She adds that for many Kabyles exile becomes the hub for political, militant and cultural action. In the 1980s, Berber identity was revived at a time when official Algeria preached a cultural monolithism and rigid linguistics planning. The author’s studies on various cultural and political associations founded by young French of Kabyle origin conclude that in their efforts, they pursue an extraordinary
continuity of the tradition in valorizing Berber identity in its cultural and militant form. This book represents a rupture from the image of the simple labor or Muslim Maghrebin migration. Instead, the Kabyle immigrants to France are depicted by their identity sentiment, which is preserved in the various contexts since the first migrants put their feet in the foreign land. According to the author, there are three types of identity manifestations: linguistic valorization, the matrimonial strategies represented in endogamy believed to preserve the continuity of the community, and the strong attachment to the country’s customs and village. “While tamurt—home—becomes a mythical and fantastic place, where all hopes and dreams are possible, paradoxically, it is the loss of hope that made it possible” (my translation: Direche-Slimani: 1007: 129). Yet, for many Kabyles, a fantasy of the ‘imagined community’ of the Tamazight—Berber homeland—would be all what they need to organize and politically unite, notwithstanding their inability to speak the language intended to revive and emancipate it from oral to written status. In the world of politics, many Kabyle activists in France and Algeria, who seek to valorize Kabyle, speak French, and while denigrating Arabic and portraying it as the language of the colonizers.

Kabyle is considered the major dialect/language among the Berber diasporic communities, a bond between the Kabyle speaking and a symbol of difference from the Arab, French or other language communities. In the last twenty years, the language and culture of the Kabyle and other Berber languages have been revived and revalorized under the banner of ‘Pan-Berbere’ identity. Tifinagh ancient script (used by Touareg, one of the Berber groups in Southern Algeria), has been revived and used with roman script to write the Kabyle since the latter has been for a long time used only as an oral language and tradition. In these efforts, the Berber revivalists—
researchers and activists—aim to bring the Berber language and dialects to the same rank as Arabic or French; a linguistic, political, and identity redemption which could take intense forms.

The revival of Kabyle that was planned in France was politically manifested in the form of riots against the Algerian government in the Grand Kabylian major city Tizi Ouzou. In early 1980s, the social dissatisfaction was a protest of the Kabyle ethnic group against the government denial of the teaching of the Berber language. The aim of the Berber activists is for Berber to have the same national status as standard Arabic in Algeria. Recently, Berber language started to be taught in certain areas in Algeria where there is a majority of Berber ethnic groups, however, to this day, it is based on voluntary basis where it remains optional for the schools to teach. In France, the only major success of Kabyles activists is still at the level of oral preservation.

According to Chakir, there is a desire to valorize the Berber language and convert it to a written language which is seen in the rise in the number of candidates in the baccalaureat oral exam, and in the classes given by the Berber associations (Kratochwil 1999). Interestingly, at the baccalaureat exam, Berber has shown to be the second after the regional languages of France (Breton, Occitan, Basque, Alsatian, Corsican, etc) to be requested as an optional oral exam. The numbers that started in the range of 30s and 40s in 1979 became 500s in 1987, and in the thousands in 1992 (Chakir 1999: 7), a fact that Berber language is somehow transmitted orally to the second generation of children of France. However, we don’t have the details on how hard or easy is the exam in comparison to the spoken language. Would these exams be done as a political gesture to satisfy the minority language holders? How do these children prepare for these oral exams? How challenging is it? However, we can say that there is a basic knowledge of the simple language that has been preserved and transmitted among some Berber speakers in France. As Chakir puts it:
From the sociolinguistics point of view, the numbers reflect a strong bond of the young Berber speakers of France to their language: one can even speak of a militant adhesion, and the data confirm that Berber is in fact objectively a language of France (Chakir 1999: 7).

Berber has been present as an academic discipline since 1913 at INALCO (and also until the decolonization, in Algiers and Rabat). However, until late 1990s the Berber as the language of a minority population has been ignored except in the form of traces in venues such as special radio programs for the immigrant workers or translators/interpreters for the Berber (Algerian Kabyle and Moroccan Tachelhit) language in courthouses in the major metropolitan areas. As Chakir puts it:

One will easily agree that these traces are tenuous and do not represent an acknowledgement of Berber or the Berber speakers of France: this is at the most a discrete consideration, a marginal tolerance of the sociolinguistic reality (Chakir: 8).

Despite these efforts, maintaining mother tongue Arabic and Kabyle alike is in danger of attrition since the immigrants resort to speak French to their kids. As Fadila, herself a Kabyle immigrant to the U.S., tells me about her second and third generation cousins in France;

When they reach 18–20 years of age, they seldom visit Algeria especially if they marry someone from France. Even when they were little, we would speak to them in Arabic or Kabyle but they respond in French—a universal behavior of immigrants’ children. Today, the 2-3 generations in the family speak only French. Even when marrying a cousin from Algeria [who knows Arabic and Kabyle], she speaks to her kids in French and would only resort to Arabic when she is mad at them (Personal interview with Fadila in U.S. 2007).

Analyzing a language survey conducted on 2000 parents from nine immigrant communities, on mother tongue maintenance, Hargreaves finds that when Algerian immigrants were asked which language they usually spoke when addressing their children; the results indicate that 70% among Berber and 50% among Arabic speaking responded to speak French to their children. From my own observations, I would agree with Hargreaves that Kabyles tend to speak more French to their kids than Arabic speaking Algerians. However, if the parents are illiterate, their communication would be very simple and limited either speaking in Kabyle or French since both
parents and children are incapable to understand each other fully except on common daily needs. Alain Romey in his book “perception de la culture d’origine chez les enfants des immigres algeriens” (pp151–159) in “L’Islam en France ed. by Bruno Etienne”, explains that spoken Arabic or Berber are linguistic vehicles used in customary actions only, such as solving everyday problems. Yet, on the literary or symbolic level, the students admit not to be able to know this level of abstraction in their mother tongue. To the disappointment of the parents, the children who are cut off from their cultural and normative milieu would only know the practical language (Romey 1991: 153). On the other hand, the majority of the parents do not master French to express to their kids these abstract visions which represent the principal base in relation to the culture of origin. From a linguistic point of view, the children do not accept the norms because they don’t understand the language and do not have the necessary language that refers to the cultural norms. As a result, the dialogue with the parents becomes harder and harder, the language of the foundation ‘infrastructure’ is impoverished and the communication weakens which restrict them more and more at the linguistic level and leads them to refer to new concepts conveyed by the French language (Romey 1991: 153). In observing the children listening to vernacular poetry (Arabic or Kabyle songs), Romey noticed that the children do not understand its symbolic aspect. Yet, when asked about their future children and language, they hope that they would teach them the language and even dream that just by talking to their children Arabic or Kabyle they would know the culture. I would agree with the author, if this is the situation of the second generation which lost tremendously the comprehension of the language of origin, what would be the situation of the third generation (Romey 1991: 154)?

In addition to the absence of their cultural milieu, in France, there is a linguistic unification tradition hostile to diversity. A highly centralized country, the French state has a quasi-monopoly
on the national education system, intervening heavily in cultural matters, and has forever been conducting a linguistic policy exclusively oriented toward French. Given this situation, one would wonder, how would Berber or Algerian Arabic be given any importance while the regional languages of France (Breton, Occitan, Basque, Alsatian, Corsican, etc) have been marginalized for several centuries? As Chaker rightly analyzes:

Berber was neither a modern foreign language nor a regional language of France, which consequently put Berber in a position of not considering it to be taught. As a matter of fact, the teaching of minority languages Berber and Arabic is considered an impediment to integration into French society.

This linguistic ideology aims at linguistic assimilation, implying the disappearance of the origin language of the immigrants. Chakir does not ignore the politics of France saying that, those welcomed to become French citizens are asked to erase any visible or audible traces of an external origin which is the reason for the tenacious opposition to any ‘communitarian drift’. As a matter of fact, American and Anglo-Saxon communitarianism is considered as a counter-model by the vast majority of the political class and of the elites (Chakir 1999: footnotes 9).

**The Paradox of Nationality and Citizenship**

Today, French of Algerian origin do not all hold French nationality, despite being part of a French department during colonialism and/or living for a long time in present France and being a French born. By the Algerian independence in 1962, the status of French was changed to that of Algerian except for those who asked for the French nationality or those promised protection such as shown in the case of the pieds noirs, Jews and *Harkis* and their children who kept their nationality by entering the French territory. Until the 1993 reform of the nationality code, the law was that migrant workers, even those who had been in the country since the 1960s, do not have citizenship unless they apply for it and get accepted. However, their children born in France would get French nationality by birth. After 1990s, the 3 million Frenchmen who fought during
French colonialism resented the automatic acquisition of citizenship by the children of those who fought against them. As a result, the law changed to that any immigrant or even their French born children would be able to obtain citizenship only through ‘acquisition;’ that is, if they apply for it. On the other side, the Algerian government after independence gave every person of Algerian origin the right to an Algerian nationality which could automatically be passed to children. This is a law based on *jus sanguinis*, which therefore create *de facto* bi-nationals at birth (Hargreaves 1995: 137–8). In their minds, the workers who left their homeland at a time of war are still living in the time of liberating it from colonialism and dream of going back to it as an Algerian citizen shouting ‘taHya al-Jazair—long live Algeria!’ For these men, embracing the enemy’s nationality, despite living on its land, would be a sign of treason for the *patrie* and be *Harkis*. When deciding to get the French nationality, they would prefer the paradox of living under one roof with “two nationalities, separated by a history full of controversies constantly exhume” (my translation: Kepel 1987: footnote 330), rather than sell out their evidence of their rootedness to the land of their ancestors. This attitude is emphasized by the continuous political changes between France and Algeria and is truly affecting the population especially the second and third generation by being ambivalent to sending and host countries.

**The ‘Beurs’: An Identity Construct and a Racialized Generation**

The second generation of Algerian immigrants has been categorized in France as the ‘beurs.’ They have been classified in general as a low economic and social class. After the 1970s, with the unification of the immigrant families, despite their successful acculturation, the second generation remained second class citizens. The literature is full of examples of the daily reminders of racial exclusion, represented in institutional forms (education tracking, police brutality and judicial prejudice), racially motivated assaults or more ordinary difficulties (for example, in searching for job and apartment) (Derdurian 2004; Gafaiti 2001; Souida 1989;

In speaking of the ‘beurs’ and the hybrid identities, many researchers find that the children of immigration express themselves in every mean of expression, including among others videos, projections, traditional musicological supports, paintings and sculptures (Coulaud 19–20 in Derdurian 2004: 106). These authors represent the ‘beurs’ as being ‘Muslims, who are refusing assimilation in the French society.’ For these authors, in their suburban cities of France, ‘Muslims of North African or sub-Saharan origins, living in France consider religion the prime point of reference of their identity over and above concurrent citizenship.’ It is thought as being the obstacle toward full assimilation into French society and to be absorbed into the main culture in the French sense of being a citizen. What these authors miss is that the issue is much more complex and sometimes has primordial attachment that makes ‘devotion to Islam’ explanation a superficial and simplistic one. Yet other researchers, who specialize in North African ethnic minorities, dig deeper in the meaning of these youth’s ‘Islamic’ attachment. For example, Hargreaves explains that:

For many people brought up by Muslims immigrants would be impossible to break altogether with Islam without causing profound distress to their parents. Islam is in this sense a primordial attachment, the denial of which is almost literary unthinkable. Yet, this is not the same as saying that it is a primary source of values in the life projects of young Muslims (Hargreaves 1995: 122).

This intricate reality of Muslims of Algerian origin is just one example of many other scenarios of independent and group adherence.

The term ‘beurs’ was a creation of the second generation of immigrants from the French ‘verlan’ or slang, originating from a reversal of the word ‘Arab’. In the eyes of the ‘French de souche’, the ‘beurs’ and ‘beurette’ are the off-spring of the Arabs who are associated with violence, crime, backwardness and an unwillingness to be part of the French republic during the
expansion. In his book “histoire coloniale et immigration”, Eric Savarene, depicts the continuity of the colonial stereotypical imagination of the Algerian in present France cinema:

A dominant stereotype is elaborated during the colonial period, in which the Arab—in the generic and abstract sense—would be at the same time, aggressive and dangerous, a cheat and a thief, traitor and liar, fanatic and intolerant. Adding to this qualification, [an Arab is] refractory—resistant—to the French culture. Since the 1960s to the 1980s, the cinematographers inherit this imaginary and stereotype and should self appropriate these different cliché (my translation of Savarene 2000: 37).

These clichés include generations of kids and teenagers called ‘issue d’immigration’ of North African origin and their parents. However, as shown by Gafaiti, this terminology is worthy of being seriously used as a social science category much like the ‘Black’, ‘African American’, ‘hispanic’, ‘latinos’ in the U.S literature (Gafaiti 2001). Echoing many others, Hargreaves shows how this term took many turns and was finally embraced in the 1980s by the youths as a symbol of difference and fight against discrimination and racism saying:

As a symbol of in betweeness, they position themselves both within and beyond the cultural norms dominant in France, such as using English mixed with slang instead of ‘good French’ just to make a point, which could be troubling for some parents who see the international youth culture as a sign of being influenced by peers without ostensibly submitting specifically to French norms (Hargreaves 1995: 108).

The marginalization of the Beurs does not occur only in the ghettoes and low social status neighborhoods where Algerians, Arab and Kabyle, and other African immigrants would be secluded in a ‘communitarianism’ that symbolizes the rootedness of the immigrants to their language, and other cultural codes. Discrimination is sensed by many children of immigrants in being singled out for their ethnicities and foreignness despite their success in life, French cultural attachments and citizenship.

**Vignettes of the ‘Beurs’ generation:** In this section I present some anecdotes that symbolize the realities of the Beurs, issue d’immigration and the French of Algerian origin
focusing on their anguish and aspirations due to their duality in their socialization and to the condition of their social and professional insertion in France (Said Bouamama 1996).

Both Karim Kacel, a singer and a musician and Mohand Amara, a sculptor graduating from the prestigious Fine Arts School show their frustration with the French public and media focus on their ethnicity more than their artistic achievements. “Seventy percent of the people think I am an Arab who sings in French and thirty percent [think] uniquely of my work” says Kacel (Lotfi in Derdirian 2004: 60). As a sculptor, Mohand Amara expresses the same frustration about journalists who interview him with very little interest in his work, he says:

Someone would come. He would ask if I’m a sculptor. He would look at my work for two minutes and would then say ‘let’s talk about you.’ What interest the person was essentially my social context…they didn’t care about my work. It was always journalists who had nothing to do with the work of art. I got to the point where I was so fed up that I refused all [interviews] (Derdirian interviews 1994 in Derdirian 2005: 60).

The ethnicity of minority artists and novelists represents both a source of creative inspiration and a potential threat to their freedom of expression. As Derdian wonders, “[the challenge is how to find ways of] exploiting the creative resources of their ethnicity without becoming submerged within and subsumed by it” (Derdirian 2005: 67).

In France, acquiring citizenship is highly politicized and many among the children of immigrants despite their civic participation would be denied or delayed that right and privilege and would forever inherit the immigrant status from their parents. Farid l’Haoua, a second generation immigrant, uses “main dans la main”—hand in hand—slogan in solidarity with other immigrants to stand against racism. He does not have a citizenship despite being in France for more than twenty years, being married to a French woman and having a child born in France. He was an active leader of ‘l’égalite et contre le racisme’—equality and against racism—march in 1983. Twenty years later, his pessimism is stronger:
Every body is French except me…today, discrimination is worse than any other time before….there is a radicalization among the French population…we don’t hesitate to say for renting an apartment: “sorry sir, we don’t take Arabs or blacks.” One thing to recognize, for sure, today, people are more frank…they don’t take any trouble saying it and the worse, this racist attitude is among the elite and middle class…it is not any more shameful to teach at the university and to have xenophobic or revisionist remarks…youth who are French for two or three generations and they are still called “les jeunes issus de l’immigration”! -youth originating from or descended from immigration! (Interview by Barsali 2003)

In comparison, Abdel Aissou is an optimistic who found a way to serve his community. He proudly states that he is “ni Français plus, ni Français moins, mais membre de la mosaïque France”—not more nor less French, but a member of the mosaic of France. Born in Algeria in 1959 and a child of an illiterate mother, speaking Arabic, Kabyle and French, today, Aissou is happy that his children have a better childhood than his. He took part in the march against racism, started ‘radio beurs’, wrote a book on the ‘les beurs, l’école et la France’ (1987) and in 1991 got his Doctorate in political science and finally became the ‘sous préfet’, working as a politician. For him, “the march brought consciousness in us that our generation was different than that of the generation of our parents. We want to exist under the norms of the French society.” He works for the religious rights of Muslims in France, that is, to be able to live their faith and pray in decent and recognized places. Twenty years later, he thinks that they got something out of their civil right movement. For Aissou, people shouldn’t neglect the achievements of the second generation in various institutions such as teaching, art journalism, who have a role in shaping the French landscape. His dream is to keep the movement going and give a hand to the graduates of the banlieux in finding jobs. Disadvantaged children count on these activists to give them support and guide them in escaping the social determinism. The singers, activists and artists are the inheritors of the marchers in imagination and action. Aissou’s optimistic prospect is to “put a cover on the pains of yesterday [and] move. His motto in life is a phrase of Rene Char who guides [his] steps of a man, an official and a civil servant: « vas ta
chance, serre ton bonheur, a te regarder ils s’habitueront” (take your chance, be in the service of your happiness, looking at you, they will get used to [it].) (My translation) (Barsali: 2003)

Chafia Amrouche was born in Algeria in 1969. Coming from a Kabyle family, she is fluent in all three languages, including Darja and French. Amrouche is the oldest of six children all successful men and women of immigrant parents to France. She is a designer and professor in architecture in ‘l’ecole d’architecture de Paris’. In her family, she is a sister and a second mother. According to her brother Nabil, whom she helped design his restaurant ‘le Chant du couvert,’ “she is the shoulder of the family,” that is, every one in the family counts on her. A successful entrepreneur, Amrouche seems disturbed by the discrimination in France expressing her imagined world without faces or skin color…an imagined city where they all meet, with clean streets, green landscape, and small houses. Her slogan is “afous Fatima”—The Hand of Fatima—in Kabyle is the woman’s hand painted with Henna that spreads friendship among its people. As a child of an immigrant, Amrouche is a successful professional in her country France, yet still related to her Kabyle roots, language, and family solidarity, the way it has always been done in the Algerian culture. She describes herself as being a daughter of dominant Kabyle women (Barsali 2003)

Finally Zair Kedadouche represents an acculturated child of immigration in France. ‘Zair le Gaulois’ is an autobiography of an immigrant child who feels very assimilated despite poverty and racism. The book summarizes the invisible elements that made the author proud of his past, a past represented in his immediate family and in his Frenchness and in being a Gaulois, without forgetting his father, a garbage collector, carrier of FLN suitcases, who is buried in Algeria, and his mother, illiterate but trilingual who speaks Arabic, Kabyle and French. He describes his grandmother who visited them after his father’s death as ‘coming from a different culture’ who
speaks only Kabyle but uses French words such as ‘dégueulasse’ to insult him in Kabyle. His mother tongue was his mother simple French. Darja and Kabyle were spoken among relatives but he never picked it up. For Kedadouche, his mother believed that Algeria was French; she loved France and its ‘modern culture.’ As a young bride, she came to join her husband in France, dreaming to move to a palace but was instead shocked to get the dilapidated houses of Bidonville, a place where brothers, sisters, and cousins met once again, just like in the village to face the harshness of life that they have to quickly accommodate to. After the tragic death of her husband, Mrs. Kedadouche raised her five children in the bidonville—slumps—of Aubervilliers before moving to a more spacious and more descent apartment in the HLM. From his childhood memories, Zair recalls the parties (weddings, baptism, or Ramadan and sometimes Noël). These ceremonies and happy occasions are the recreated traditions in the diaspora, where Kabyle, Arab and even communist French workers listen to Arabic and Kabyle music, shouting the ‘youyous’ and eating a lot of couscous and pastries.

The tragic death of the father and later on the sickness of the mother changed his life forever. Zair as well as his siblings were put in different adoptive families and institutions in Belgium, Switzerland, and France. The author and his brother Said were placed in an institution in France. The loss of his father started a new chapter that represents the construction of Zair French identity engrained in the belief in “nos ancêtres les gaulois”. This tragic life seems to affect the author’s psyche forever, as represented in his childhood antagonism, confusion, and then decision to stick with one thing that is profitable and that made a difference in his life, proud to be gaulois. It is in this institution and the summer vacations in the French country side that he learned that shoes of little students have to be polished, how to say ‘mademoiselle’
instead of ‘mamzelle’ and ‘non merci’ instead of ‘non!’ However, as a poor child, when returning home, old manners quickly take over.

As a French speaking, the author is sensible to the illiteracy of many Algerians including his mother. He is proud of her personal effort in learning much just by imitating. He still remembers his mother’s innocent pronunciation mistakes that would give different meanings when speaking French. She would say ‘la quirche’ instead of ‘la quiche’ and l’aziatique instead of ‘la sciaticque’ and would sing to his daughter ‘ainsi font font font les petites marionettes’ saying ‘un chiffon fon fon les petites marionettes’ that today are things to remember and laugh about.

In his poor neighborhood, school was the only secure place. He does not comprehend how 95 % of the students would be oriented toward handicraftship or technical schools and only a minority would be able to go to classical high schools where most French de souche students go. At school, there were two groups the ‘fous’ crazy kids and the ‘others’ who were ‘les francais de souche’ and those children of immigrants, like him, who called themselves the ‘gaulois’.

Although, his mother decided from the beginning to speak to her kids in French even if it is simple, she succeeded in transmitting to them many manners and norms that were from her country of origin. Kadedouche cannot stop childhood traditions such as eating couscous with water melon that he first found weird but started to like and appreciate. He never visited Algeria. He never had the opportunity to go for two or three months for summer vacation and get accustomed to Algerian languages, cultures and learn of his roots like many children of immigrants. Instead, every summer, during the long summer vacation he used to go to ‘colonies de vacance’ for the school kids of the Aubergine neighborhood where he discovered France and constructed his gaulois identity.
Kedadouche, secular French, sees Islam as an outsider. For him, France is the best country in Europe for mixed marriages between French and foreigners where integration is working wonderfully. For him, the French secular system means diversity of origins and unity of men, with an emphasis on the foreigners forgetting, ignoring or detesting their origins and cultures of their ancestors.

In choosing a name for his daughter, he made sure that it won’t be an Arab name. Her name is Oriane, a gaulois name and a choice of his French wife, meaning ‘duchesse de Guermanes.’ Her middle name is Sarah, found among Arabs, Jews and Catholics. He thinks this way no one would suspect her Arab origin that his generation is stigmatized with forever. Interestingly, others of his generation may play the ‘naming game’ for other human reconciliations. As Bouamama reports, the naming of the child plays a great role in reopening communication channels with maghribis families that have been in marital conflict. He states that in intercultural marriages, opting for a name that would be acceptable by both cultures is the best choice. Some could see this attitude as a sign of integration, however, the author see it as a way of exiting from the intercultural confrontation, especially in case of a maghrébi woman marrying a French man (Bouamama 1996:132). Bouamama cites B. Augustin saying:

> The choice of a name is never neutral. Looking of one, sometimes being conflicting become the object of long discussions before getting to an agreement. Most of the time, the name that goes in both countries would be chosen. As a matter of fact, this child might become a ‘fix’ between the parents, because it is the objective link of educative marks.” Bouamam adds “and the place of symbolic and identity competition” (my translation).

When a French student says to his niece who has an Arabic name: ‘enlève tes sales mains d’arabes’—take out you dirty Arab hands, Kedadouche is not alarmed that old discriminatory French attitude is transmitted to the youngest generations. Instead, he laughs and remembers how they, the ‘beurs’ used to call each other that.
In speaking about the Muslim community, Kedadouche, whose relation to being Muslim ends on being ‘involuntarily circumcised’, resorts to the French secular ideology in criticizing Islam and Muslim as well as in defending them. The author admits frankly that he does not believe in God. He sees the foulard or veil as oppressing woman and thinks that French should unite in forbidding women wearing it in France. Yet, he accepts the growing presence of Muslims in France—about 5 million people. He supports the passing of a legislature that puts the government in charge of building and controlling mosques, short of which [Muslim] foreign financiers would build these places of cults (mosques). He imagines the French Muslim community free from hardliner foreign governments’ influence, with no exported Arabic speaking imams from the Arab countries (such as Algeria). He wants an open-minded Islam which authorizes the sermon of Baudelaire or Voltaire. He is for mosques that are built by French and controlled by French where Muslims like his mother would go to pray without being targeted as suspects, or feeling intimidated by the imam’s eloquent sermon in Arabic that the majority of attendees do not understand anyway.

As a child of an immigrant who is proud of being gaulois, he is aware of the continuous discrimination against ethnic minorities, French of Algerian or other Muslim or African origin. As a politician, he expresses his frustration saying:

Integration would be complete when the night news (20 heurs of TF1) would be presented by Louisa Chabana or by Mohamed Mondlaki…or when there will be judges from the ‘beurs’-it is not yet done! It would be a wonderful sign. I am against affirmative action of America but yet, it is unbelievable, not one ‘beur’ in the assemblée! (Kedadouche 1996: 216)

When visiting the US in a series of conferences on integration, right after the bombing of the world trade center, he visited the ghettoes of New York. In comparison to France, he could not believe the extent of violence and disparities. An important incident made him think of the extent and deep global prejudices against Arabs. He says: the host of the house I was invited to, asks
me: “you have a lot of Arabs [in France]?” what to say? “oh ya, a lot!”… “So keep them!” she tells me. Hours later, she tells me that she wasn’t able to find my name in the Christian calendar. And I said it came like this: “Zair, vous savez, c’est d’origine espagnole…” Zair, the ‘gaulois’, has a name that would forever remind him of his ‘Arab’ origin, yet, he chooses to cover it up and evades the narrow minded people to escape their discrimination that may spoil his present and future situation. Though, he could have told the lady the truth, that the name ‘Zair’ is of Arab origin and that it means ‘hope’ and use it as a means of reaching out to others in the U.S., the multiculturalist country and the land of immigrants. But Zair, le gaulois, chooses his answer and his road of integration that fits his personal character, philosophy and dreams.

Conclusion

The Algerian Diaspora in France is one of the most multifaceted on many levels, culturally, linguistically, religiously, politically, and historically. As shown above, there is a continuous dialectic between these elements producing identities that diverge at times and converge at others to both home and host cultures and countries. In all that, language plays a consequential role in emphasizing certain belongings and solidarities in time and space. A focus on language maintenance, loss, or performance creates the illusion of a superficial identity that if working alone would mean one culture one adherence. However, in diasporic communities, national, religious, or ethnic identities surface at specific changing times and disclose old, hidden and complex loyalties such as those illustrated in the profiles of the ‘beurs’ generation and their “double consciousness.” The next chapter, based on this significant information about the Algerian Diaspora in France, addresses the question of how Algerian in the United States are culturally, politically, and psychologically different or similar with their counterparts in France.
This chapter explores the linguistic situation of the Algerian immigrants in the US by focusing on the changes in their perceptions and attitudes toward their language (s) as experienced in the Anglophone environment. The chapter will document how linguistic outcomes among Algerians who immigrated to the United States differ from those who immigrated to France as well as those who did not leave the home country. In case of the migration to the US, Algerian languages, whether, Kabyle, Arabic—including its vernacular Darja—or French play different roles in America than they played in Algeria or France. In America the survival of these languages depends on whether they fulfill a practical and/or symbolic meaning. This general theme is developed through an approach that probes how the Algerian immigrants in the US represent and use these languages. In this pursuit, the chapter specifically addresses the following issues: (I) the dominance of the English language in a multicultural society and how Algerians perceive the role of proficiency in English as a road to success, (II) the attrition of the French language and its replacement with Arabic and English in spite of the fact that the French language is embedded in the cultural memories of Algerians, (III) the role of parental tongues (Tamazight and Arabic) and the changes in the perceptions and attitudes of the people who speak them (on the one hand, perceiving them as the off-spring’s connectors to the rich heritage in time and space and, on the other hand, accepting the reality of the limited use in the English-dominated environment), and (IV) the case of Arabic contact and conflict with other Arabs in the Diaspora and the development of new identities and solidarities.

**English Language Dominance in a Multicultural Society**

Upon their first arrival to the US, Algerians quickly understand that in order to succeed in their new home they have to acquire survival skills, thereby placing English proficiency as the
most significant. ‘American English is different from the one taught in Algeria’ is one of the very first remarks they make. Back home, they were used to the lexicon and phonology of British English. Moreover, the few hours of English classes per week at junior and high school do not prepare them well, at least not enough to become as proficient as they are in Arabic and French. Despite being able to communicate, the new comers nonetheless have weak English.

We will further see that linguistic outcomes are in part a function of the economic position and aspirations of the migrant. In the struggle with the linguistic limitations, they also become aware of the phenomenon of individualism and the role it plays in economic success. Back home, the individual depends greatly on various networks in every aspect of life activities. Yet as new immigrants, they are determined to learn the ways of success. However, individualism and personal choice become both a blessing and a curse. Upon arrival to America, Algerians can be divided more or less into two broad orientations. The members of the first attitude rationalize that it is too late for them to start over and build a better life. They hence remain working in their primary survival jobs, such as taxi drivers or wage workers in factories. As a result, they almost never move beyond from a working class position. The members of the second opinion learn from the experiences of previous immigrants that without acquiring adequate English language and other skills, it would be hard to find decent jobs. Resolving to achieve a better life for them and their families, many Algerian immigrants are able to realize in a short period of time what many immigrants do not achieve during decades.

As discussed in chapter two, Algerians started coming in the late 1970s at a time when the American people were experiencing great social developments which eventually resulted in a change in the perceptions of various social, ethnic, and religious groups. It is in fact not unreasonable to argue that the civil rights movement is one of the greatest achievements that new
immigrants have been benefiting from since the 1970s. Indeed, it has been a major catalyst in creating new mindsets among Americans to denounce racism against African Americans. This historical development in America stimulated further tolerance and opened the way to new immigrant populations to keep and share their memories, traditions and languages in the multicultural society of America. There is a shared impression among my Algerian interviewees that ‘Americans’ are ‘gentle’, ‘nice’, and ‘friendly.’ The interviewees notice the openness of the American society to foreigners as a unique feature which is not found everywhere, and to some extent true even after 9/11. In contrast with those going to France, at the time of their arrival to the multicultural context of the American cities, Algerians feel at ease in a foreign land within which they are today settling in and adopting as their new home.

In the US, until a decade ago, despite English dominance in all institutions, the debate with or against making the English language the official language of America by law was still at its peak, as shown by Christal (1997) in his book “English as a Global Language.” For example, one of the most moderate bills on the English language sponsored by Representative Bill Emerson in 1996, titled “the Bill Emerson English Language Empowerment Act,” “saw itself partly as a means of empowering immigrants giving them greater opportunities to acquire English.” When it went to a vote in August 1996, the House of Representatives passed it but the bill did not reach the Senate (Christal 1997: 119–23). However, what captured my attention in this process are the responses that came in favor or against it. On the one hand, the officials who were supporting the bill see the passing of the law as a move to protect the nation from ‘balkanization’, as referred to by Newt Gingrich, the Speaker of the House at that time. According to the logic of this view, English is like the ‘glue’ uniting the various ethnic groups and languages under its umbrella. On the other hand, the political argument against this bill argued that making English official is
unnecessary since most immigrants since a long time have been assimilated anyway by the time they reach the second or third generation.

These politicians’ debate and similar ones notwithstanding, neither the Algerian immigrants nor most other immigrants desire isolation and separatist ethnic groups. Their attachment to their native language derives from fear of a quick disappearance of these languages. From the migrant point of view, what is in danger is not English but the other languages. Fatiha, a newly Algerian immigrant to Chicago, expresses this feeling well in a discussion with her English teacher:

When I was studying [English,] my teacher, she knew I had a son who was five years old. He was in kindergarten going to first grade. She used to tell me: “why don’t you speak to your son in English so your English improves?” I used to tell her: “no.” I remember like today, I told her: “[if], I don’t learn [English] today, I learn it tomorrow. But,” I told her: “if I get my son used to speak to him English (F) so I learn…I make him lose his language…but, my son is five years old, if he loses the language, he will never get it back.” I remember very, very well (Fatiha: Kabyle).

The fear of losing the parental language haunts Fatiha’s thoughts. Despite being open to learn English for communication with non-Arabic speaking people, Fatiha as well as many other Algerian immigrants keep speaking to their children in their mother tongue. They fear a quick loss of their language and the unlikelihood to regain it. In their new home, they understand that they can’t function without good English skills, yet, they are consistent in speaking to their child in their mother tongues.

**Algerians’ Perception of English vs. Migrating Languages**

Despite their attachments to their parental languages and dialects, like many other new immigrants, Algerians acknowledge the dominance of English, not only in the US but also in the rest of the world. They perceive English as ‘alive’, ‘good’ and the first language in the world today. They notice that even in Algeria, many are speaking English. Fella explains:
Before, we only heard it [English] in **high schools** (F). Now, in homes, you hear them speak **English** (F). Last year, we [when visiting Algeria] were so surprised. We said, when we learned **English** (F), all people—in Algeria—are learning it (laughing) (Fella: Arab).

This global interest in English is illustrated by Nuwar, a PhD student in ‘Nano-technology’ in one of the best universities in the country. For this young immigrant, English is a scientific language that is technologically and globally dominant over French (Nuwar: Arab). The wish of many Algerian Arab and Berber newcomers is to speak English well even if they don’t end up permanently residing in the US (Zahra: Arab). However, for many, learning it and keeping Algerian mother tongues are at the same level of priority and they don’t see this as a threat or obstacle to developing/having a strong sense of citizenship and belonging in America.

**Proficiency in English, Names, Citizenship and Success**

For many, being a ‘citizen’ and American born, means fluency in English. For Algerians, fluency in English is not a choice because success depends on it. Being immigrants and bearing the ‘labels of otherness’, such as having Arabic names and profiles, as stated by Dawud and others, unconsciously creates a pressure to be fluent in English, which in the final analysis may or may not minimize the frustration and tension. When speaking about his fourteen years old son, Dawud explains:

Well, he needs to [be fluent in English,] because one of the things that have been a problem is his name. Uuu…having a name like Farid already labels him as an outsider. And soo… if on top of it, he had a language problem, a lot of people, they see his name, they think Egyptian. ya, and before he opens his mouth, they already have a perception about him, which is totally false. So, he has to speak like a native, otherwise… (Dawud: Arab/Berber).

Dawud represents parents of the most assimilated children among the interviewees also interestingly the one who expresses the most this impression of xenophobia after 9/11/.

Although no other immigrant (parents or children) raised the issue of the stigma of Arabic names in America, it is an important phenomenon worthy of exploration in a future project.
Despite the existing openness toward multiculturalism, immigrants are forced to focus on English more than any other language, including their mother tongue. Yet, many remain incompetent in English; a situation that may deprive them of higher positions if going on the job market. Having English only in governmental and educational establishments (although in certain areas Spanish is also used) forces the new comers to assimilate in the language as soon as possible for education, professional work, public service or just to be able to carry out daily routines such as shopping, going to the doctor or having a chat with a neighbor.

Algerians, old and new comers, educated and less educated, professionals and workers, all are aware of the dominant status of English in this country. They understand since the day they decide to immigrate and settle in any American city or suburb that they and their families have to learn English (Ahmed: Arab; Yasmina: Berber; Hind: Arab). In short, as expressed by Asma who is excited to start for the first time in her life English classes since she immigrated in 2001, “English (F) is necessary” (Asma: Arab). Today, she is able to communicate with people such as her child’s teacher and the people in her neighborhood Chicago parks. While the use of Arabic and French is more limited to interactions with Arab and North African language communities, English is the means of contact with the majority of American residents irrespective of their ethnic, religious, generational or social status. In speaking about the importance of English to their children, Algerian immigrants perceive it as natural for a child to learn the language of the environment. They actually would be worried if their child did not speak the language of the school and the playground with other kids. Their statement is: “[He] is American of course he has to learn English. In their identity, the following generations are perceived by their parents as ‘Americans’ without forgetting their ancestral languages, which is the link to their roots.
**English Proficiency and Identity**

English proficiency and the identity theme appear to be much more emphasized within the second generation of Algerians in comparison with the first generation. Lamia sees her proficiency and fluency in English not just as a means for success but also as an essential part of her ‘American identity.’ She imagines her baby daughter as becoming an excellent speaker in English, saying:

I don’t know, for me, it is very important for her to learn English. For me, English is a big part of my…I guess, my identity. And even if we have to live in another country, I would imagine coming to the US frequently and, it...It...I don’t know…I feel it’s more my home than any other place (Lamia: Arab/Berber/American).

Although she is firm in expressing her feeling of ‘American belongingness,’ Lamia does not neglect her roots. She believes in the importance of keeping the languages of Algeria alive and in transmitting them to her daughter at her first stages of learning abilities:

I think, Darja is important to be able to maintain our Algerian roots, and then CA is important from a religious point of view. So, she can read the Quran and other texts and then umm...English is important from what we said before. For me all three are ranked… I don’t know…I think when she is young, I rank Arabic and Darja as first especially Darja it’s more important; and then as she gets older for her to learn Arabic because, as we said; if we are here, English would be the easiest for her to learn. But, also for me, it is important that she learns English at a high level. You know, at an intellectual level as she gets older.

Lamia, a second generation mother, includes Darja in her daily communication with her toddler with the intention of transmitting and maintaining the dialect at the personal and social levels—such as being with grand parents, Algerian friends and relatives in the states or back home in Algeria. Being American interacts with also being Algerian and Muslim. Each sense of belonging influences the others in sometimes harmonious and at other times conflicting ways, depending on personal, social and environmental claims.

In sum, Algerian immigrants’ interest in success might be the driving force behind their focus on proficiency in the dominant language in the US. Upper mobility is an aim that new
comers target. Yet, they acknowledge that they cannot move on from the condition that they began with unless they excel in the language of communication and acquire a good understanding of the skills needed for economic success. Their children also do not have a choice except to excel. The professional Algerian immigrants expect their children from the first years of school to enroll in gifted programs in English and other subject matters. In comparison to their level of English (with an accent), parents see their children no less than being at the top of their schools. Their children are their pride in learning the language of success in the US, much in the same way that they had been the pride of their parents back in Algeria by becoming proficient in French the language of intellectual emancipation, education and success at the time.

**French (F) Maintenance among Algerian Americans**

Despite English being introduced strongly in Algeria today as mentioned earlier, French is still perceived as the language of education. Yet English is replacing it among Algerian immigrants in the US. Moreover, when asked which parental languages do they teach their kids, many parents choose the Arabic language. In contrast to the first generation of Algerian immigrants wherein French was more or less dominant, French is omitted from the second generation repertoire of languages. This is illustrated in the following paragraphs which show some of the changes in Algerians’ perceptions and attitudes toward French. In general, there were three general perceptions on the question of the importance of French transmission among the interviewees, both intellectuals and non intellectuals: (1) French is important because Algerians speak it; (2) French is one of the ties to Algerian history; (3) French is not important and other languages are much more important in the US.

**French, a Language of Communication in Algerian American Families**

Many Algerian migrants—especially among recent first generation migrants—believe that their kids should learn French because it is still a spoken language in Algeria. These
Algerians share the common goal of planning to return eventually to Algeria or go to France, in the near or far future. During my fieldwork among the Algerian interviewees, I found a variety of attitudes towards the use of French within their families. That they all belong to the same generation and that all were educated in French does not prevent them from holding different attitudes and displaying different degrees of loyalty toward the daily use and transmission of French. Some embrace French as a way of communication, others totally reject it, yet still the majority uses it (unconsciously) in their daily speech in Darja. For example, in addition to English, Yasmina and Dawud, who use French as a means of communication at home, explain the importance of the French language in their family and to their teenage son as follows:

I have no doubt, because he [teenage son] already picked it [French] up on his own…it is important because I communicate in that language and most of my family communicate in that language. So it’s important to him, to learn French first [before Darja]” (Yasmina: Kabyle) [When visiting France, French would be the way of communication and especially with his cousins (Dawud: Arab/Berber).

Contrary to this couple who are maintaining French speaking at home and even aspiring to live, in France one day, a very different scenario is presented by Ahmed. This Algerian American intellectual has eliminated French from his repertoire of daily used languages and has instead replaced it with both Arabic and English. He would not consider French as a priority despite being fluent in it and despite recognizing its importance in the historical literature of Algeria. He explains, mixing English and Darja:

French, manahadrush biha ga‘…for me, French idha t‘allamha it’s good for him idha mat‘allamhash I don’t really [care]. Again, to me, it’s not really a priority².

² “French, we don’t speak with it at all. For me, French, if he –son- learns it, it’s good for him [but] if he doesn’t learn it, I don’t really [care]. Again, to me, it’s not really a priority (Ahmed: Arab).
Ahmed does not consider French a priority in the US, yet, others may do. In the Diaspora, deciding on their language repertoire depends on various reasons such as keeping the ties with relatives or personal attachment to the French language historical legacy.

**French, a Language of a Rich Literature and its Rootedness in Algerian History**

My interviews of Algerian intellectuals indicated that French is not only important at the communicative level but also because of its interwoven complex relations with Algerian history and culture. Dawud, Kamal, and Salima believe that it is important for their children and grand children to learn and maintain a good intellectual level in French because of its rich literature, especially as it relates to Algeria. In addition to using it as a means of communication at home, they believe that the next step for their children is to learn how to read and write French and hence take advantage of the French literature to learn more about Algerian roots. Again, Dawud explains:

Because, if he [son] is interested again in his roots; he could learn a lot through French. He needs to learn it to be able to read things in French about Algerian history and things like that. So, either French or Arabic or preferably both would be very useful to him (Dawud: Arab/Berber).

Dawud and many others like him grew up in the early sixties in Algeria. They understand the importance of French literature to their intellectual growth. They would love to see their children being familiarized with some of that rich heritage. Ahmed does not use French in the US, yet he expects that he would encourage his son later on to learn French, too (Ahmed: Arab). Kamal who is a professor in social sciences, not only taught his daughter French but would like to see his grand daughter following on that tradition too, he says in English:
Ya, it is extremely important…to understand the history of her [his grand daughter] parents, place of birth al-jazair (MSA)...to understand the history of colonialism and to get a broader perspective on the literatures from Europe (Kamal Arab/Berber).³

Salima, Kamal’s cousin, also a French lover and a first generation immigrant, emphasizes that French rich literature cannot be replaced by any translation, she says in English:

[French] is also a rich culture. When you read in French, you would have a wide range of opportunities of literature, and the French are known to have a great literature. I wish they [kids] can read [books] like ‘the Prince’ in French “le petit prince” which, in translation, they always give different meanings. Reading a book in its native language [is important]. I loved French, fortunately most of my education was in French…and we have been pushed to learn French more than Arabic (MSA) (Salima: Arab).

Although Salima has a strong desire to transmit French heritage to her kids in the US, she does nonetheless put Arabic (MSA) at a higher position, stating that “I would love them [kids] to learn French but not as much as Arabic.” In Salima’s situation and similar ones, it seems that the priority is put on Arabic as a much more instrumental and needed language due to its daily use, as a dialect, and its role in religious learning, practice and identity.

**French Neglect, Loss and Replacement in the US**

Despite, its ‘precious’ place in the minds of many Algerians, many Algerian immigrants have more or less ignored the transmission of the French language to their children. It is not as simple as it might look according to Duniya, a Berber immigrant who speaks more French than Darja or Kabyle even with her small daughter. She explains: “it’s a good language (F) …that is not easy…its grammar…is not easy (F)” (Duniya: Berber). To be realistic, Fatiha, a Berber young woman who is fluent in French and who works as a translator at a US airport, explains

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³An interesting discursive exchange took place between Kamal and his daughter Lamia, thereby providing a good example of generational shift over language perceptions and value. Speaking of her young daughter future with French she says: “by the time she gets older probably everything will be translated into English. For Kamal who learned French in Algeria, its intellectual supremacy is valorized. However, in the American cities, in the age of fast electronics, Lamia does not perceive French in the same way as her father.
that in the US this language, which has been part of the Algerian identity, is not needed anymore.

She says code-switching between Darja and French:

For those who are in Algeria, French concerns them. But when I speak about my son, here, in America, I don’t see at all why he should learn French. After my experience in the airport, I translated few times. They [Americans] don’t speak French — giggles. I am saying the truth, I am telling you… uu… it’s high class — to speak French —, but, I translated at the airport. I mean French in this country, is not important (Fatiha: Berber).

Fatiha appears to be influenced by French as she goes back and forth between Darja and French often and borrows words from French. Yet, as an immigrant, she describes French as not needed for her children’s success in the US.

As a matter of fact, the majority of Algerians in the US express a clear preference for teaching and encouraging their children to learn languages other than French. I noted this attitude across generational, educational, ethnic, and gender differences. The interviewees prefer that their children learn a language that is more needed in the US and at the global level. Fatiha does not hesitate to put Spanish as the second most important language in the world after English. She has already decided that her son’s second language would not be French but Spanish, should he have a choice. Some children are already aware of the unimportance of French in the US as stated by Asma: “my son does not want [to learn French]. He told me, ‘if I learn it [French] no one would understand me.’ So, I prefer (F) him to study Spanish. We are not going now—to Algeria” (Asma: Arab).4 Asma is realistic and valorizes what would make her son more successful in ‘his country,’ America. In comparison to most individuals and parents of the first generation, second generation Algerian parent do not see French as part of their children’s future. For example, Lamia doesn’t see French in her baby girl’s future unless she chooses to:

4 Yet in comparison, a Berber would not consider Spanish to be more important to her child than CA or Darja.
Ya for me, it is more important that she [daughter] learns English than French.” [“You learned French yourself,” I say [“ya, if she learns it at school, if she chooses to learn it that is fine, but we are not going to teach her ourselves. And it depends where we live; if we live here maybe French isn’t that important. It is better to learn Spanish than French.

As shown by the various interviewees, the relationship of French language with Algerians in America is an important theme. Symbolically, this connection expresses the complexity of a long, ongoing relation at home and in the Diasporas. Yet, practically, many Algerians would prefer to replace French by another language that appears to be more useful in the US and would make a difference in their children’s success in life.

In sum, though we have a diversity of opinions regarding French, the dominant reaction seems to be to consider it unimportant for children in America. This devaluation of French in the eyes of many Algerian immigrants is interesting. Let’s not forget that French is perceived, intellectually, as having been the dominant language during and in post colonial Algeria. French is also still embodied in many immigrants’ daily linguistic repertoires. Many French words have been incorporated into Darja and some still use French with family members or friends.

However, in choosing instrumental language skills and performances for them and their children, Algerian immigrants use the changing world—the hegemony of English and globalization—as their point of reference. Hind explains that “even (F) [in] Algeria, now, it becomes all English (F)” (Hind, Arab). This statement would force us to ask: if even in Algeria English is displacing French, how much stronger will that tendency be in the U.S.?

There is a sharp contrast between the attitudes of Algerian immigrants in France and the US as regard to their children adopting English as a language. Whereas Algerians who immigrate to the US for the most part embrace the fact that their children opt for English, those in France worry when their children prefer English over French. As explained in chapter five, this behavior is interpreted by Algerian parents in France as a sign of teenager’s rebellion and hybridism. The
hegemony of the American technological power draws the minds of millions into using English instead of French even in its own land, France. Despite the rich culture and philosophy of France, Algerians in America perceive French as simply not useful. Some go as far as replacing it by a much more useful language such as Spanish. I would say that being fluent in a language does not necessarily mean being ‘loyal’ to its use and transmission to the next generations. For many immigrants, they speak fluently French and their common speech—Darja—is mixed with French at various degrees. Yet as a language, French most probably would not be the first on their list to transmit to their children in America. However, they also use more English with their children, at the work place, and in other activities outside the home. The incentives to maintain the spoken French are rather limited. Therefore, to teach how to read and write French is not a priority. This is illustrated in the case of Lamia who learned French in American schools. Because French is absent from her daily repertoire of linguistic communication, she is not attached to it as she is to her mother tongue Arabic.

**Algerian Mother Tongues in the Diaspora**

When asked about their mother tongue(s), Algerians specify them as Kabyle or Darja. Algerians still speak these “languages” daily within their families and with North Africans in general. In the following paragraphs, I present the three ways of speech among Algerians in the US focusing on the attitudes of the speakers and non-speakers among Algerians toward these ways of speech. I also address the issue of what it means to them whether these ways of speaking are or are not transmitted to their kids. I begin with Kabyle as a separate language then focus, first, on spoken Arabic or Darja and, second, on literate Arabic MSA.

**Tamazight/Kabyle/Berber Language in the Diaspora**

As well put by Faruja, “language opens the doors to the place we enter.” According to ‘Kabilya’ tradition, when entering a ‘souq’ (a village bazaar) traders would have to speak the
local language should they want to succeed in their trades. Yet, as a result of inter-marriage between the Arabs and Berbers, Darja may become the spoken language however with some influence from Berber. Today, Darja or common Arabic is intelligible to Arabs and most Berber, thereby contributing to make and preserve an interactive relationship between the two traditions, with as, little friction as possible. However, for many Berbers, Tamazight—the language of the free—or Kabyle—the language of the tribes—is the language that has been orally transmitted for thousands of years from their ancestors. In the Diaspora, Kabyle is the mother tongue and the language of communication among Berbers. For the majority of the Berber interviewees (5 out of 6), Kabyle is the only language of communication with relatives who do not know much Arabic such as grand parents. However these parents all know Darja and speak it to their Algerian Arab friends and sometimes even to their kids or other Berbers. They consider Kabyle as a defining part of their identity. As Duniya proudly puts it: “It is an honor [to know Kabyle,] I am Kabyle.” Their sense of belonging and representation is expressed in Kabyle words and phrases which are impregnated with long collective memories. When speaking of her toddler, Fadila does not hesitate to state that “It’s our identity. So she [daughter] has to speak Kabyle.”

Yet, there are others who have already drifted away from using this language in their daily speech, thereby more or less jettisoning cultural continuity. They however are aware of their limitation and express it with a sense of guilt. Among the intermarried with Darja speakers, there are those who left Kabyle fall.

I think for me it would be very helpful if I learned it with him [son] too (giggles) because, I feel I didn’t do my job, transmitting [Kabyle] (Yasmina, Berber).  

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5 Yasmina followed this expression with a gesture pointing to the various Berber artifacts displayed on a mental in her living room.
Yasmina and people like her find themselves in situations where they have been away from their original habitus for a long time – some twenty years or so. They do not see themselves as transmitters of their language and culture to their children. They feel that they have lost the “milieu” which would have provided a smooth and mostly unconscious transmission of language to the children. A sense of ‘guilt’ turned into a motivator for linguistic and cultural continuity is what has remained. Kabyle would be hard to fulfill the role of a mother tongue except for those who made a decisive choice that ‘Tamazight,’ the language of the free, would remain a defining feature of their habitus in the Diaspora.

However, the conflicting emotions between continuity and loss are not expressed homogeneously among all Algerians. In comparison to the Berber immigrants, the majority of Arab Algerians are indifferent to the issue of preserving Kabyle in the Diaspora. Despite being part of their heritage, they are unable to speak Kabyle and it is seldom that an Arab learns this language unless living in a household or region where everyone speaks Kabyle. Kabyle is alien even more in the Diaspora since when meeting Darja speaking Algerians, they switch to Darja since most Kabyle are fluent in Darja. This thus makes a child of an Arab much less acquainted with Kabyle than his/her parents. Algerian Berber ethnic groups are the only ones who use Kabyle. Darja speaking Algerians do not see any necessity to learn Kabyle or teach it since all Berbers speak Arabic (both Darja and MSA). Zahra, an Arab Algerian in the US, states that:

I don’t speak Kabyle, so I don’t teach it. I don’t see it necessary... I am not in the environment where they use Kabyle where they need to speak it. I don’t say there is no way; there is always a way but I don’t see it necessary to teach it (Zahra: Arab).

Such Arab Algerians are neither able nor interested in teaching Kabyle because their children won’t need it, especially those who have no Kabyle background in their families. Others, if only

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6 As my advisor Dr. Murray (2008) points: “it may be determined by chronological variables. The desire to transmit Kabyle may dwindle after 15 -20 in the states.
hypothetically though, would not mind their children learning Kabyle as the language of their friends, such as those in ‘La Montagne’ community in Chicago. For others, despite considering Kabyle a part of their culture ta' al-bled (Darja) [of the home country] (Ahmed, Arab), they do not give it a high priority when contemplating teaching it to their kids. Ahmed, whose wife is European American, states that:

…to be honest at this stage, he [son] is still young, and there are too many things on the plate to deal with (Ahmed: Arab).

Although many Algerians consider Kabyle a part of their ‘Algerian heritage,’ Kabyle is valorized like any other foreign language. Such parents would thus encourage their children to learn it only if the children are themselves interested in doing so. Yet, they acknowledge that Tamazight has been neglected in Algeria at the policy level. They hope that future generations in Algeria would have better opportunities to learn it as a second language at school. Souad, an intellectual and Arabic literature teacher, expresses her disappointment that until today Algerian children are not allowed to learn Kabyle like they learn Arabic at school: “I am very sorry that Kabyle was not taught in Algeria” (Souad: Arab). As a matter of fact, neither the institutions of learning nor the families that are formed from mixed marriages care about Kabyle learning and maintenance. Among those in the Diaspora, those who are still eager to maintain and transmit this old, rich, oral language are but a minority abroad.

Moreover, many Arab/Berbers from mixed marriages feel awkward not to be able to use a language which is a defining element of their sense of identity. Despite knowing words here and there in Kabyle, they usually don’t feel confident enough to transmit them to their kids. Exiled from its milieu, Kabyle, which is an orally transmitted language, is faced with tremendous difficulties. Nonetheless, the Arab/Berbers, much like the Arabs, hope that the young and future generations of Algerians would be able to learn Kabyle at school. We have indicated that there
are Kabyle speakers and activists intent on reviving the language in France. This linguistic activism vis-à-vis Kabyle is totally absent among Algerian migrants in the U.S.

In conclusion, in comparing Berbers’, Arabs’, and Arab/Berbers’ perceptions and attitudes toward one of their language heritage I find that the degree of attachment to language depends on the level of language fluency. For Berbers who are competent in using their language, it is natural to think of transmitting Kabyle to their children as a means for communication, keeping and strengthening family attachment, and preserving identity and lineage continuity. However, the Arabs do not have any attachment to the Kabyle language despite acknowledging it as part of their heritage. They also do not see any necessity to learn it or teach it since all Berbers speak Arabic (both Darja and MSA). In reality, it has generally been taken for granted for a Berber to learn Arabic but not the other way around. Being part of the identity or heritage would not be an incentive to learn Kabyle since everybody in Algeria is assumed to know Darja, and, if not, they would know French.

**The Arabic Language and dialect Maintenance and Transmission in the Diaspora**

Algerians consider the Arabic language as a mother tongue and as the language of ancestry; whether in its former/written form or its dialect/spoken form. Whereas Classical Arabic—CA—and Modern Standard Arabic—MSA—are for the most part used at the religious and intellectual levels, Darja is used in the common daily speech. In it various accents and tones, Darja is the language that connect the people of the Maghreb.

**Darja, the Langua Franca among North Africans**

Like Kabyle, Darja is more specific to the Algerian region in North Africa. Darja is the mother tongue and language of daily communication for the majority of Algerians, whether Arabs, Arab/Berbers, or Berbers. “We have to talk to them [kid] [in Darja] so they understand us. We don’t have to teach it,” says Fella (Arab). “It is a must (F)…they can’t forget it,” says Asma
Darja, which is an oral language, just like Kabyle, is transmitted through performance and practice and as such it is often the only communication channel with grandparents (Asma; Nuwar; Zahra). Kamal, an Arab/Berber, who has already raised a daughter in the US and who is fluent in Darja, MSA, French and English, expresses his thoughts about his grand daughter (third generation) who is about two years old:

You don’t have to teach it [Darja], she is learning it. It is the main means of communication with her parents, grandparents or with the family back in Algeria. It is part of the environment, the family… it is crucial.

In comparison to other immigrants in the U.S., the intergenerational transmission of Darja by Algerians is much less secure than the transmission of Spanish by Mexicans or Portuguese by Brazilians because there is no written language in Darja. Yet, most Algerians, even those who did not transmit Darja to their children and do not consider it part of their linguistic repertoire, still perceive it as the most important component of their Algerian identity. Dawud is an Arab/Berber and married to Yasmina, a Berber woman. They both speak French and English with each other and with their fourteen years old son. He shared with me the following dream that he had about his son’s future:

Many years ago, I had this silly dream… [I thought] maybe I can teach him [Darja] well enough, so he can go to Algiers on the street and nobody would recognize he was from America (Dawud: Arab/Berber).

Yet, Dawud realizes that being away from the Algerian social milieu and not speaking to his son in Darja in time makes his wish turn into a mirage, not a dream. He blames his ‘failure’ with his son on the oral character of the language and highlighting a widely common belief that ‘Darja has no structure’:

Again, the same problem, [like Kabyle] because of the lack of writing and structure [in Darja], it is not an easy thing to learn as an outsider. To me it’s like these foreigners who learn Arabic from Egyptian books then go to Algeria –giggles (Dawud: Arab/Berber).
Being away from the milieu, the place of continuous cultural interaction, Dawud accepts his loss. Despite dreaming of maintaining continuity in and through language, being away from home is the beginning of a generational split and hence the birth of a new generation which is far from the influence of various cultural mnemonics. However, the rupture does not take place for immigrants who are not completely isolated from other Arab or Algerian communities. Yet, new views materialize when the Arabic linguistic varieties meet, as we will see later.

**Algerians’ attitude towards the vernacular (D) vs. literate (MSA):** Algerian people's perception of the standard and the vernacular takes sometimes contradicting opinions. For an outsider, it is important to understand that in general in Arab countries, whereas Darja / 'amiya is not a written language, likewise MSA is simply not a spoken language. Darja is the way of communication among Algerian immigrants and with family members back in Algeria as well as with other Maghribis. However, many Algerians valorize MSA and perceive it as more important than Darja. Although, like all Arabs, no two Algerians speak to each other in MSA, and would feel like a reporter or a school teacher doing it, yet, they proclaim greater importance to MSA. This attitude toward their spoken tongue may be related to factors such as their linguistics ability to use both Darja and MSA in their social environment with fluidity. For example, Manal, who came to the US three years ago, is more fluent in Darja and MSA than French and English. She perceives Darja as secondary to MSA. By learning Standard Arabic, she believes that in no time, her child will be able to know Darja and speak it. Speaking in Darja, she says:

…if he [son] learns MSA, automatikian (F), he would learn Darja.” I interfered saying: “humm… taDrbi ‘uSfurain be Hajar (MSA) [you are targeting two birds by one shot].” She smiles and replies: “ya… Arabic fuSHa [MSA] is the one that would make him learn Darja…for sure… (Manal: Arab).
On the other hand, her husband Omar has been in the US for more than twelve years and is less fluent in MSA than Darja, French and English. Omar disagrees with Manal in putting Darja in a secondary position; he says, code switching between (D) and (E):

[For] me, Darja… is very important…like Arabic [MSA]…he has to know it… I think, it is very, very important…because Darja is the way of communication. When he goes there—to Algeria—he has to know how to deal with people (Omar: Arab).

I found these conflicting attitudes stimulating for further investigation among other Algerian immigrants. And, indeed, it turned out that the split was more complex than I had previously thought. Various reasons seem to explain the occurrence of such conflicting attitudes. Ahmed, who is married to a European American and who is fluent in four languages, decides to omit Darja from his child’s repertoire altogether and instead prefers using only MSA and English. Notice that in the following paragraph, during the interview, Ahmed codeswitchs in a skillful way between (E) and (D), not between (E) and (A) revealing his approach to the maintenance of parental language:

[Darja] is not a priority to me. It’s important, ‘labali, kiyruH lil zjazair. BaSSaH, if he can yahdar al-lughal ‘arabiya, he can communicate … yanzjam; he can communicate filzjazair always. He can always do that. Although, Darizja is also important to him…it’s good to practice. YatsarraH alsanah. Yafham shwiya kiman gulu… al-culture ta‘ al’zjazair fimatkhaS bil zjazair… tudkhul fiha ad-darizja hadhik. Hadhik rubbama.

As I said there are too many things. I emphasize ‘ala al ‘arabiya giggles (Ahmed Arab)7.

Although, when speaking to other Algerians, Ahmed uses Darja with English, when teaching his son Arabic, he excludes Darja and uses MSA during Arabic or Quranic lessons. For a person who has been in the US for more than twenty years, with little contact with Algeria and married to a European American, his aim is not to preserve a regional dialect used among Algerians from

7 [Darja is not a priority to me. I know it’s important when he goes to Algeria. But, if he can speak MSA, he can communicate…he can, he can always communicate in Algeria. He can always do that. Although Darja is also important to him, it’s good to practice. His tongue gets fluent; he understands some, as we say…Algerian culture in which Darja is part of that. In that sense, maybe [he is going to miss some of it.] As I said, there are too many things. I emphasize on Arabic [now] giggles.
various regions. He rather prefers MSA and CA, that is, the languages of reading and writing and international communication.

Many other Algerians as well as other Arabs disagree with such an approach to learning Arabic which concentrates purely on MSA. Fadila is a Kabyle speaking linguist. She explains that learning Darja comes prior to going to school and learning MSA. Today, with her three years old daughter, she uses both Darja and Kabyle, focusing on the spoken language only. Speaking in English, she says:

If I teach her MSA, first, no one will communicate with her, it won’t help her to speak MSA with her cousins (Fadila Berber).

Similarly, Samir and Lamiss believe that the spoken precedes the standard, focusing on the importance of accumulating a wide range of vocabulary. Samir comes from a mixed marriage of a Syrian father and an Algerian mother. He is married to Lamiss who is Syrian. Although Samir gives greater prestige to MSA, he agrees with his wife that learning of the spoken language comes “naturally.” Contrary to what Manal and Ahmed say about the use of MSA, Lamiss explains in Syrian:

Those who learn MSA only are going to be limited in their language, but those who speak Darja or ‘Amiya [in Syrian] would have wider range of vocabulary (Lamiss Syrian).

Her husband supports her on this idea, saying:

Because the Arabic language in not present in the American environment, and if the parents do not pay extra effort, the children would not learn Arabic. That is why the learning of Arabic should be with great effort and Darja should support that; because, the thinking process is going to be in Arabic. After that, the child would need extra effort in MSA [writing, reading and morphology] (Samir: Syrian/Algerian).

On the one hand, according to this couple, there is continuity between Darja and MSA. On the other hand, those who give more significance to MSA than Darja may limit the natural context within which their children practice their mother tongue. However, these seeming differences between Darja and MSA are more hypothetical than practical. In reality, every situation is
different. For example, in case of mixed marriages between Algerians and non-Arab Americans, the spoken tongue is English, and MSA is taught for reading and writing only. But in Algerian households, where Arabic is the spoken language at home, the interaction is in Darja, not MSA. Yet, others, especially when transmitting both Darja and MSA, face problems that did not fall under parents’ responsibilities in the past but rather under that of the school, a topic that we will come back to when we discuss the issue of contact with other Arab communities.

In summary, much like Kabyle, Darja is the spoken tongue among the various Algerian ethnicities. Although, in principle, some valorize MSA more than Darja, in practice, Darja is the mother tongue and precedes MSA in being transmitted to the child orally. In comparison to the written practices, that would come later, Darja is incorporated in daily practices, activities and ways of expressions (Connerton, 1989: 39), nevertheless, both –Darja and MSA- being transmitted ‘in and as traditions.’

Although, like other Arabs, Algerians do not perceive the colloquial as being a written language yet, they don’t consider it a distinct language from MSA or CA. Darja seems to play the role of a foundational stage for later learning of writing and reading Arabic. Having said this, because they are in the Diaspora and in contact with other Arab—Middle Easterners—dialects, some Algerians wish they had only MSA as oral and written language. They believe that by learning the ‘proper Arabic,’ an Algerian American would be able to communicate not only with his/her fellow Algerians and North Africans but also with other Arabs, and any one who understands and knows Arabic. This approach, although very pragmatic, is not realistic since the language of communication in most Algerian households is Darja, not MSA. Yet, one may wonder: Given these perceptions of self and cultural codes in the minds of many Algerian
immigrants, would Darja be transmitted to and maintained in the next generations? Such a question would be a good topic for future inquiry.

**Arabic FuSHa: MSA and CA**

For many, speaking FuSHa—the language of eloquence—enables them to communicate with any one, both in the ‘bled’—country—and the world (Fella Arab; Zahra Arab; Hind Arab; Duniya Berber; Ahmed Arab). The significance of Arabic derives from its widespread use by millions of people around the world (Zahra Arab; Hind Arab; Dawud Arab/Berber). Yasmina, a Berber with no proficiency in MSA, perceives Arabic as a desired language for her teenager son to learn (Yasmina: Berber). However, “other Berbers [not my interviewees] who are against the use of Arabic in Algeria, would not incorporate Arabic teaching” explains Tassa’dit (Berber).

For those promoting it and who are fluent in its standardized version, Arabic is a rich language for its “scientific and intellectual ability” (Samir Syrian/Algerian). Such immigrants anticipate teaching Arabic not only at a basic level but also at the level where one can excel in using it to speak and write, that is, at a high level of proficiency. Lamia, a second generation Algerian American, imagines her toddler learning it at the level of intellectual proficiency. For her, reading and writing Quran is basic, however a deeper learning is still required. She says:

> I think it is good to learn [Arabic] as much as possible because I see it with myself. I am able to read any book in Arabic [Such as] religious books. [My ability to understand,] depends on the books. If they are complex, I can understand parts and some parts I can’t. But if it is basic, I can understand. I can get the jist of it (Lamia: Arab/Berber/American).

Although she is able to understand, for example, the context and meanings when reading Arabic books, Lamia would like her daughter to become “better” than her. This is the story of a successful second-generation parent that many new comers see as possible to achieve. Many however don’t know about the ‘invisible work’ (Okita 2002) that Lamia’s parents had invested in her to make her who she turned out to be. Such an achievement is realized with a clear
‘perception of self and place’ (Casey, E. S. 1996) as well as strong dedication to cultural maintenance in the Diaspora. One can only wonder whether, as a new couple, Lamia and Nuwar would be able to achieve what the first immigrant parents did.

**Arabic and religious continuity**

Whereas many Algerians consider Darja as the maintainer of cultural continuity between the Diaspora and the homeland and roots, they valorize Arabic as a means for preserving their religious identity. “*Hiya Halaqat al waSl bid-deen* (MSA)—[Arabic] is the link to the deen (Islam as a way of life),” says Samir. Following Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’ (1991), I would say that Arabic is collectively imagined and remembered as the bond between Algerians, other Arabs, and Muslims in general. This connection extends over thousands of years in sharing a strong past that originated in Arabia and stretched to many world regions with the flourishing of Islam as a religion and a civilization. This standing is not only achieved as a result of its use in specific performances but also because of its embeddings in the Muslim daily life. Algerian immigrants from the various ethnic groups were raised in a mixture of Islamic/Arabic/African cultures and environments where the distinction between profane and sacred is less than in the secular West. Reading, writing, listening and reciting of Quran (Revelation), du’aa (prayer), and dhikr (meditation), are not only included in mosques and schools but are also practiced, sensed, and enjoyed in various landscapes. Whether at the mosque, the zawia, the ‘madrassa’, the home, the market, on the street, or on radio and television, Islamic expressions which are most of the time expressed in the Arabic language are hard to avoid. The majority of my interviewees do valorize the transmission and maintenance of Arabic for the sake of their religious sense of belonging, despite a high level of heterogeneity in their ‘religiosity’. There is a widespread desire to see their children becoming able to read, write, and understand Quran in its original language.

Salima, a professional in an American company in Chicago, expresses this shared perception:
CA is very important to us basically because of the religious matter. Our sacred book Quran is in Arabic. We want them [children] to be able to read it and comprehend it (Salima: Arab).

In order to achieve such a ‘noble’ achievement, Ahmed, who also is a professional in upper Chicago, is giving his son the foundations of Arabic, on his own and on a daily basis. Ahmed does so because: “Al-‘unSur ta’ al-‘arbiya muhim bazzaf (D) [the Arabic element is extremely important].” Arabic is a key element not only in understanding religion but also in understanding Algeria’s history.

**Arabic and historical continuity**

For many Algerians in the US, Arabic is not only the language of religion and Quran, it also is the language of the Algerian/Arab/Muslim history. Like French, the Arabic language is intertwined with Algerian history. Being fluent in it is a chance to study ancestral history, roots and culture, or as put by Ahmed:

…[son] to know his history. If he doesn’t know his native language, he will miss a lot. So I want him to learn that, so he can understand a history book in Arabic (Ahmed: Arab).

Ahmed’s approach is based on the idiom that ‘the culture of any society can only be known from within,’ and language is essential to achieving that goal. It is through learning and performing stories, songs and oral history in Arabic that a strong and lasting bond with the roots would form (Dawud: Arab/Berber). Bob, an American convert to Islam and Tassa’dit’s husband, understands that the culture of any people has to be taught in its original language. In their sense of belonging and continuity, there is contiguity between the written, spoken, profane and religious. Arabic is the language that ties Algerians to their deep temporal and spatial sense of belonging that they would like to see continue among their children in the Diaspora.
Arabic and the Arab/Muslim identity

In America, Algerians settle in many cities where they become part of large Arab Muslim communities, making Arabic language become a part of their sense of identity. As expressed by Ahmed, the Arabic language is the link that brings together Arab Americans or Algerian Americans in one identity. When asked about their ethnicity and identity many Algerians—especially Arabs—say that they are ‘Arab’. Yet others do prefer to define themselves as ‘Muslim’, thereby mixing religious and ethnic identities together. For some of them, being a Muslim is connected to being an Arab (Omar: Arab). Yet, others like Lamiss, who is originally from Syria, would disagree with this hybridism, explaining that learning how to speak Arabic is something fundamental. “We are Arabs [and] we have to learn Arabic. I don’t think that someone who is ‘religious’ is Arabized,” she explains. According to her, if a person claims an Arab identity, he or she has to know the language. However, her husband differs with her saying: “I think of myself as an Arab even if I spoke another language (Samir: Syrian/Algerian). Much like to what happened to many immigrants such as Spanish, Italian or Indian; Arab immigrants in America may lose their Arabic language. However, their sense of Arabic identity may become stronger, valorizing the ‘symbolic belonging. The next generations may forget how to speak Kabyle, Darja or read Arabic. Yet, remembrance of their ancestors and roots would always remain, even if only in a diminished form. As pointed out by many scholars (Rouchdy ed. 2002), the parental language such as Arabic may reappear in the following generations when conditions permit it to become valorized and used again, thereby prompting the new generations to relearn the language as well as reinvent the traditions of their ancestors and homeland.

The Arabic language and the American foreign policy

In the last decade or so, and, especially after 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq, the Arabic language have become more valorized in the US to a noticeable level, not only by those who
speak and use it and see it as part of their sense of identity but also by state policies and institutional programs. Algerians like other Arabs take notice how various Americans are interested to work in or visit the Middle East and value the learning of MSA to a level of fluency at which they would become able to communicate with the Arab people. As an Arabic teacher, I am amazed to find how many American students want to learn Arabic and want to understand it to go to the Middle East and do research or be in diplomatic workplace. During the interviews, I wasn’t surprise to find that Algerian immigrants take the contemporary world condition seriously, much like most other people in the post-modern world. Among the Interviewees, Algerian Intellectuals such as Ahmed and Dawud identify the political and diplomatic advantage for future generations to become proficient in Arabic today. As mentioned earlier, Ahmed is completely committed to teach MSA to his seven years old son. However, when speaking about his fourteen years old son, Dawud emphasizes the advantage of having a North African background and speaking Arabic, while at the same time emphasizing that at this stage it is a choice that his son would have to make for himself in the near future. In today’s world, Kamel wishes for his grand daughter and future generations to embrace and learn Arabic not only for ethnic, national, or religious functionalities and belonging, but also for being part of an increasingly more cosmopolitan world.

Arabic Dialects Contact and Conflict

Darja and the Accommodation of Other Arabic Dialects

It is not a surprise to hear Arabs who originally are from the Middle East say to North Africans: “You speak Berber and French.” This attitude toward North Africans is an example of dialect contact and linguistic accommodation (Giles 1987) between conformity and resentment of the Algerians toward Middle Easterners. The topic of “dialects contact” (Trudjill 1986), and, specifically the ‘accommodation theory’, was developed two decades ago (Giles et al. 1991;
Giles & Coupland 1991). This theory is essential to the study of language contact in the Diaspora in general and applies well to the Algerian case. As Giles explains, “each one of us will have experienced ‘accommodating’ verbally and non-verbally to others, in the general sense of adjusting our communication actions relative to those of our conversation partners, and been aware of others accommodating (or failing to accommodate) to us” (Giles & Coupland 1991:60 in S’hiri 2002:149). Yet, as mentioned by S’hiri (2002) in her case study between Tunisian and Middle Eastern journalists, and as I found in my own Algerian case study during my field work, the accommodation process is more often then oriented in one direction, from the Tunisians, Algerians or Moroccans to the Middle Easterners. However, in such communication, there is always a set of other factors that play an important role in deciding how to accommodate the interlocutors, why they do accommodate them, and how the process would become reciprocal.

When meeting other Arabs, Algerians are sometimes pressed to change the way they speak. When meeting in the Diaspora, many Arab communities in the US make the following remark to an Algerian: ‘I don’t understand what you are saying. You speak French and Berber.’ The ‘Berber’ classification as ‘not understandable or barbar’ seems to follow Algerians even outside Algeria. The term Berber originated with the Romans and Greeks which they used to characterize other languages than theirs. Yet, until today, Algerians whether Arab or Imazighen are still called Berber by Arabs when they hear Algerians speak Darja or Kabyle. In many cases, when it happens for the first time, many Algerians become extra sensitive about their differences with the other ‘Arabs.’ Until then they believed that their sense of self is that of ‘Arabs’. However, the moment they open their mouth to speak when what for them counts as part of Arabic, their sense of ‘Arabness’ disappears. At that moment, they have to decide in what
language they speak to the Egyptian, Syrian, Saudi or any other Middle Easterner ‘Arab.’ As Omar explains:

When I speak to an Egyptian or a Syrian my speech changes and I don’t feel a l’aïse (F) [comfortable.] I don’t use French. I only use Arabic (MSA)…I [also] use English, if I don’t know a word in Arabic, or I can’t remember it. But usually I use Arabic with them. They don’t understand French. Sometimes we use their dialect…personally, I don’t like it. I would try not to do it (Omar: Arab).

This conscious switch in language makes both Algerians and other Middle Easterners aware of their linguistic differences. Despite accommodating to the interlocutor and deciding to speak in MSA, Omar refuses to use their dialect on the ground that “they don’t speak my dialect, why should I?” He disagrees with his wife who converses with other Arabs in their dialect so that they would feel comfortable with her.

Manal is much fluent than Omar in MSA. She also is fluent in a variety of Arabic dialects, such as Egyptian which is the most understood among other Arabs. She realizes the limitation of many Arabs in understanding North African speech and, as a result, she accommodates them in a friendly gesture. She makes sure she doesn’t use any French and uses words and expressions that are common in her interlocutors’ dialect. Like Manal, many other Algerians are very flexible. They seem able to switch from Darja, to MSA, to other Arabic dialects, to French, or to English. This ability to go from one linguistic repertoire to another is very common among the intellectuals who are able to understand their languages and various Arabic dialects. Their strategy to accommodate others is very tactful. It is a skill that gives them the ability to adapt to various linguistic/cultural environments. However, conversing using others’ languages or dialects does not mean neglecting one’s own dialect or language. These intellectuals do have many other opportunities to switch to their language(s) and speak it/them. Yet, sometimes they refrain from using others’ dialects and instead use MSA, the language which is shared by all Arabs, as a sign of solidarity but also as a code of linguistic neutrality.
During my field work as well as from general observation of Algerian immigrants, I find that among Algerians, these conflicting situations do not seem to be bothersome. To the contrary, Algerians show their gratefulness of being with other people who share many codes of their cultures. Being among other Arabs, even if they have to accommodate and converse using others’ dialects and ways of speech, many Algerians care to protect and enrich their sense of belonging to the Arab/Muslim community. For example, in accommodating the new and old Arab residents in Gainesville Florida, Manal is pleased to have many friends from various Arab countries such as Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, to name a few. As a young couple, Manal and Omar interact with other Arabs at various social levels and with many other American friends, taking pride in the multicultural community they enjoy and call home.

Dialects vs. MSA and the Dilemma of Having a Middle Eastern Arabic Teacher

Algerians do not fully come to realize the differences amongst the Arabic tongues until Middle Easterners begin to teach their kids. The use of spoken dialects in teaching becomes a problem. On the one hand, the Middle Eastern teacher thinks that the Algerian child who speaks the Algerian dialect does not really speak Arabic. And, on the other hand, the Algerian parents protest the use of Arabic dialects in classroom teaching. Yet, in the communities under study, people do recognize two important limitations. First, the availability of linguistic continuity in the Diaspora requires cooperation and resources among Arabs. Second, although not desired, the use of dialects in the teaching of Arabic remains a common practice. However, Algerian and other Arabs take the situation with an open mind and learn how to benefit from skillful members of the communities in working together and transmit their language, what they value as essential.

When attending Sunday school at the local mosque, the Algerian child goes “yaqral-‘arabiya,”—read/study Arabic, the language they speak at home. However, when the teacher
speaks, the student is puzzled that her/his language is not exactly the same as the one used at home. This primary interaction brings frustration to the “natural” linguistic environment of many Algerian families and may sometimes develop into a persuasion that Darja is not Arabic. Fatiha, a Berber who is able to speak Kabyle, Darja, MSA, French and English fluently, is disturbed by the reality that she faces in America when interacting with other Arabic dialects at the Arabic institutions of learning:

We, our kids, nakhdu shi’a. For example (F) when I put him in the mosque — to study Arabic— …my son… his name is A.A.Y (Arabic first and last name). Of course (F) his name is Arab… “TaHki ‘Arabi?” (Middle Eastern Dialect) [you speak Arabic?] his Middle Eastern teacher would say. My son would answer in Darja. They (the teachers) are right; our kids do not speak Arabic at all. The Darja did not help them at all… did not help them at all… the big problem with us the Algerians and Maghrebis, we can understand the language [Arabic]… but our dialect, it has no relation with Arabic, our speech is French (F) more than it is Arabic (Fatiha: Berber).

For Fatiha, the Algerian dialect is not Arabic. Because it seems to her not intelligible to other Arabs, she perceives it as a waste of time to first speak Darja then learn MSA, an idea that is shared by other interviewees (e.g., Ahmed; Salima; Fella). They live in a dilemma between pride and frustration. When they meet with other Algerians or relatives, Darja is used in their casual and commemorating expressions (see Appendix C for the Henna ritual songs). Yet, as shown in the previous example, the interviewee believes that Darja is not worth calling an Arabic dialect. One might explain Fatiha’s dilemma by her ‘Imazighen’ ethnicity since in her situation, Darja and MSA are both second languages anyway. Ethnically, she does not consider herself Arab but rather Tamazight. Yet, a second explanation might be that these Arabs are not challenged enough to learn how to listen and pick up the regional ‘Arabic’ lexical that Algerians use and that may more or less differ from other Arab dialects.

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8 Nakhdu shi’a is an expression in Darja that cannot be translated literally. However, it means ‘supposedly we speak Arabic.’
However, not many Algerian immigrants share Fatiha’s perplexity. As a matter of fact, many others are concerned that other Arabs use their own dialects instead of MSA in teaching children the Arabic language. If that is indeed the case, they believe that the Algerian children are hence not learning MSA, which would be useful for reading and writing. They instead are learning other Arabic dialects. For example, there have been reports that in the classroom, teachers use lexical such as “gamussa” (meaning cow in Egyptian instead of baqara in MSA) or “shu baddak?” in the Levant dialects instead of “matha tureed?” in MSA—what do you want? For these frustrated Algerian parents the solution for the ‘dialect problem in the classroom’ is as follow: First, the teacher should speak only in MSA without relying on any dialect or English. The parents then need to practice speaking MSA at home after returning from the ‘madrassa’—the school at the mosque. In multiethnic Arab/Muslim communities, this is seen as the best way for the children to learn quickly and become competent in reading and writing Arabic, specifically Quranic text.

Despite being very critical of the Arabic teaching at the level of the community and of their efforts as parents, the focus group in Chicago and many other Algerians are actively involved in their children’s lives. Despite the daily pressures of English language dominance around them and the multiethnic environment, their efforts seem to be fruitful. In my presence, the Algerian children were able to communicate with their parents in Darja, Kabyle or English. As a community, their mutual solidarity as well as with other Arabs is strong, with the new comers often providing a means of continuity with their heritage.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, Algerians come to the United States with a rich and complex linguistic heritage. Yet, when embarking in the states, on the one hand, Algerians find themselves obliged
to become quickly proficient in English, the language of intellectual and economic dominance, social integration and success. On the other hand, they are reluctant, at least at the first and second generational level, to abandon certain elements of their linguistic heritage French, Kabyle, Darja and MSA. Their effort to maintain their language performance of and proficiency in their mother tongues is fascinating to investigate. Despite being imbedded in the Algerian common speech, yet, as a separate language, French is hard to maintain in America. With the prevalence of English, French become unnecessary, neglected, and vanish quickly from the Algerian immigrants’ repertoire in general. Kabyle, a Berber dialect may have one of the two fates among Algerian immigrants. Where there is a large community of Kabyle speakers, Berber maintenance could be possible at least among the first generation. However, since Algerians, Arab and Kabyle speakers, interact with each other in Darja, the possibility for the second generation of Berbers to speak it is very little. Since Darja is the mother tongue of the majority of Algerians, ever among Berber, it could be preserved for generations. However it would be transformed tremendously. As mentioned earlier, Darja is already influenced greatly by other languages and specially borrowed words from French. However, in the U.S., its speakers start borrowing from English, as shown earlier. This phenomenon could make Darja harder to be understood for middle easterners. However, in case of exchanging French with English words this may facilitate other Arabs to understand Darja better than before. Finally, as a literate language, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is perceived as the way to preserve Islamic religion and teachings, in maintaining historical continuity with the Arabic/Islamic heritage, and in strengthening the bond among Arab Muslim Americans. With the solidarity with other Arab Muslim communities, some elements of the MSA could be transmitted and maintained.
However, in comparison to those in Algeria, the second generation of MSA proficiency remains, in general, at a basis level.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter consists of two sections: a conclusion and a recommendation. In the conclusion section, I first compare the situation of Algerian languages in the United States to that of France. Second, I compare Algerians to other immigrants in the U.S. In the recommendation section, I suggest a methodology for teaching and transmitting language in multicultural/multilingual communities in America.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would first observe that being fluent or competent in the language of the host country represents the way to economic and educational success among both Algerians in France and the United States. As shown in chapters five and six, those who do not understand the game of upper mobility remain stuck for years in their initial situation. The literature about Algerians in France is rich of stories and documentations of those early migrants who remained linguistically isolated for generations in France. This situation not only harmed their economic accomplishments but also their social image and that of their future generations. The laborers, low class workers and exiles and their families, whose aim and hope was to return to the ancestral land were forced into isolation, classified as the ‘beurs’ neighborhoods and ostracized from the dominant culture and the society at large. However, in the case of Algerian migrants to the U.S., it is seldom to find a large Algerian or Maghribi community that remains isolated from the dominant language and culture. As a matter of fact, in comparison to France, in America they are forced to quickly learn English in order to survive. Yet, Algerian parents, especially the educated ones, in both countries, see their success and that of their children in being fluent in French in France and to be fluent in English in America. They very much follow the template of
their own upbringing: they were the pride of their parents back home in Algeria by becoming proficient in French, the language of intellectual emancipation, education and success at the time.

The second section of comparison between the French experiences to that of America deals with the dynamic of maintenance and loss of mother tongue languages, specifically Kabyle and Darja. Logically, being in close proximity to the home country, Algeria, one would think that Algerians in France favor the maintenance of mother tongues in the Algerian communities. However, as shown in chapter five, among the offspring of the early immigrants, French is becoming the most prominent language while Darja or Kabyle are lesser and lesser used. Having a large sub-community of the same language community does not necessarily keep the language spoken. Three main reasons explain why this is the case: 1. Most educated Algerians in France are francophone which means their means of communication in the intellectual and work environment was French even before they or their parents migrated. 2. The early illiterate Algerians who migrated to France for labor work or were exiled—Harkis and Algerian Jews—still speak Darja and/or Kabyle, there is however a generational gap between them and their off-spring. The transmitted language lexically and morphologically is performed only at a minimum level. 3. Children spend most of their development years in school where French is the only means of formal education, which minimizes their exposure to the Arabic and/or Kabyle languages. Similar conditions apply to those coming to the U.S., however with the difference that English is the predominant language at school, work, and most intellectual environments. The second generation if they understand their parents’ languages, in general, they tend to feel more comfortable expressing themselves in English than Kabyle, Darja, MSA, or French.

Having said that, it is only fair to note that there are those among the immigrants, whether in France or the U.S., who are conscious about their language identity and who spend extra effort
to maintain the mother tongue(s), both at the spoken and literate (written) level. While this is a minority it is important to mention that the similarity between those in France and those in the U.S. is in the availability of the social and community support to perform and maintain the languages in a natural environment.

The two groups can also be compared along the dimension of teaching Arabic. In France, teaching the children of Algerian origin has been coordinated between the sending and the hosting countries. However, in the US, there is no program set up in public schools to teach Arabic as a foreign language for any Arabic community. Hypothetically, one would say that having the migrating or paternal language taught at school is the best way of transmitting it to the children of migrants. However, as shown in Chapter five, the program in France is a failing one for many political, social, and pedagogical reasons. Yet, at the community level, what is practiced in both countries is that Arabic is taught by the Maghrebs—in France—and by the Arabs—in the U.S. However, this teaching is done on a voluntary basis and in an experimental fashion. Some results are achieved but without going much beyond the minimum basic level of reading, writing, and language skills, both in France and America. This dilemma is expressed by Algerians in both countries. However, what many Algerians are aware of at this tentative way of maintaining the language is the extreme difference between the spoken—Darja—and literal Arabic—MSA. In both countries, the younger generations of whether French or American of Algerian origin become frustrated when they begin to learn the Standard Arabic only to find out that they are learning a new language, rather than their mother tongue as they were expecting. Politics is one of the reasons behind such a challenge. When it comes to teaching the mother tongues, only politically recognized languages are taught. Unfortunately, many Algerians and French, government and population alike, still think of Kabyle as an oral language and,
sometimes, out of sheer ignorance, a dialect of Arabic. While in France Kabyle is being revived by Berber activists, their primary aim is to be able to organize freely and set up programs that would be implemented mostly in Algerian schools. In the U.S., such programs do not exist. Therefore, being far from home and isolated from the Kabyle influence, the language at the spoken level seems to go rapidly into disuse, much more than in France.

Another point of comparison between the two migrations is that the Algerians in France perceive the French people as discriminating against Algerians and Maghribis in general but those in the U.S., do not. This post-colonial consciousness seems to influence the younger generations in the way they approach French or English learning in either country. Those in France are always reminded of their inferiority and foreignness to the French despite the claims of integration constantly made by officials from the government. This simply means the obvious fact that the political and social rules and norms influence the individual and collective perceptions of the codes of the parental culture and that of the dominant culture. Hence, French citizens of Algerian origin may be fluent in the French language, which is the dominant language of the society in which they live, yet they would perceive it as a code which remains fundamentally foreign to them, even if their native tongue falls into disuse. At a practical level, it seems that mother tongue often retains—at least symbolically—a strong hold on the minds and hearts of many immigrants and their offspring because it shapes their sense of belonging more than just providing a means of daily communication. Moreover, in comparing Algerians in France and America the most important component that surfaces is the geographical, historical, and political contiguity of France to Algeria. However, in comparing Algerians to other migrating communities in the U.S., one can find other types of comparative factors in relation to the maintenance and loss of their paternal language(s).
Like other, old and new, migrating communities, Algerians have great code switching and lexical borrowing from other languages in contact. As presented in chapters three and six, there is a great deal of code switching and lexical borrowings among older and younger Algerian generations. For example, there are a lot of English words brought into Darja that would not be spoken by Algerians in France or in Algeria. As presented in chapter three, there is a great lexical borrowing such as manager, crib, cell phone and others that have been included little by little into Darja in America, sometimes replacing an Arabic or French word and at other times adding to them.

Algerians in America are similar to newer migrant communities in their desire to learn English while at the same time maintain their mother tongue. This new phenomenon, as explained in chapter six, was not common in early 1900s when the Italians, Germans, or Irish did not want their children to speak Italian, German or Irish but to speak English as a sign of being ‘true American.’ it seems to be a universal desire to learn English but also a desire to maintain their native language. Like the Jews in the mid-twentieth century who tried to preserve Yiddish, the Lebanese to preserve Lebanese, or Hispanics who tried to preserve Spanish, the new Algerian communities embrace English proficiency; yet, they also desire to transmit their paternal tongues to their off-spring in America.

However, the dilemma that Algerians and other Arabic speaking migrants face is that their Darja/Amiya is going to be more difficult to preserve than the preservation of Spanish among Hispanics or Portuguese among Brazilians. I suggest that one of the reasons is that in comparison to Spanish neither Darja nor Kabyle would receive official support because they are not written languages. As a matter of fact, while the US government is involved in the teaching of other languages, such as Spanish, French, or Chinese, Arabic—the mother tongue of majority of Arab
Americans—is not yet supported to be taught at schools as a foreign language except in some Universities.

In contrast with other migrants, Algerians do not expect their spoken language to be written. They differentiate between the formal Arabic fuSHa—the language of eloquence—and the informal Darja—common or vernacular. Despite being proud of their tongue, they perceive Darja as laHn—deviant—and not appropriate for being written, preservation, or documentation. By sitting in a class to learn Arabic, they believe Darja, or the common speech, would contaminate Arabic, the language of Quran and poetry. This lingering sense that Darja is ‘contaminated,’ ‘not really Arabic’ or ‘not a good language’ seems to be one of the most important factors of dialect / language conflict in the Diaspora. The Algerian dialect with other middle easterners can be compared to the linguistics situation among Hispanic communities, Peruvian, Mexican, Dominican, or Cuban migrants, who more or less understand each other. Although there is some sense that Cubans speak ‘bad Spanish,’ there is a sense that all Hispanics speak the same language and understand each other. However, the Arab migrant communities perceive Maghribis and especially Algerians as not speaking Arabic but rather Berber and/or French. Whether Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Syrians or ‘Golfians, Arabs have difficulty to understand Darja. One of the difficulties of Darja is that it has such a high percentage of French vocabulary, much like the way Puerto Rico Spanglish is. As shown throughout my informants’ speeches, the spoken Algerian may be totally Arabic with a few French borrowed words or with extreme borrowing and codeswitching such that the person has to be bilingual in both French and Arabic to be able to understand; which is not the case for most Arabs.

In analyzing this conflict one would understand the genesis of the linguistic tensions between Algerians and North Africans on the one hand and Middle Easterners on the other. As
put by Professor Murray: “[in America, Algerians have] a dual history of lexical borrowing”
(Murray 2008: personal communication). The Algerian spoken language has incorporated a large
number of French idioms which have become a standard part of Darja. When migrating to the
U.S., they bring that with them. They don’t drop their French idioms. They use them in their
speech with each other and add to them English ones as well. On the one hand, one can argue
that the American Darja becomes exceptionally rich in terms of adding vocabulary idioms
borrowed from two European languages—French and English. On the other hand, it becomes
‘doubly contaminated.’ In other words, the Algerian Arabic is rejected by Middle Easterners
similarly to the way the Spanish from Puerto Rico is rejected by Argentineans because there is so
much English in it. However, the Argentineans nonetheless understand the Puerto Ricans –
because they understand English – but Egyptians or Saudis who understand English do not
understand this new Algerian Arabic, as they didn’t understand the old one1. This might irritate
some Algerians and North Africans because they become conscious about their speech with
other Arabs who are ‘Arabs’ like them. Unlike an American who won’t change her English when
meeting a British or a Cuban who won’t change his Spanish when meeting a Mexican, Algerians
change. The irony sometimes is that even if they try to speak standard Arabic, in a way that all
Arabs understand or are expected to understand, they are laughed at because the Arabs do not
speaks it in common communication saying “ya-khti, ‘arabi?!”—what [you speak MSA]. In the
end, speaking Darja is not understood and speaking literate Arabic is ridiculed by the other Arabs
who might think, for example: “she speaks like a reporter or a president.” We can thus conclude
that Algerians suffer in the Arab world serious linguistic discrimination. This is not much
dissimilar to Puerto Ricans and Cubans who are laughed at by Columbians and Argentineans,

1 I thank my advisor Dr. Murray for the discussions on this topic and for his insights in relation to linguistics matters
in which he is the expert.
with the important difference that the pressure is much stronger in the Algerian case. The Algerians actually try to change their language whereas the Puerto Ricans and Cubans will continue talking the way they do.

Another important difference with other language communities is that the situation of Arabic in the U.S. has become politically sensitive in positive and negative aspects since the September 11th, 2001 bombing of World Trade Center, the beginning of the war on terrorism and the 2003 war invasion of Iraq. Arabic speakers including Algerians are aware of the greater interest in Arabic learning in the country. Yet, they see that the language is taught at the college level only. Algerians, like other Arabs, are more reluctant to speak Arabic on the street for fear of discrimination and racism against them because people might associate them with terrorists. In that sense, there seems to be a tendency from the Arabic speaking people not to show their Arabic language. After 9/11, the interest in studying Arabic now seems much similar to how the Russian was “the language of the enemy” during the cold war. Likewise, contrasting how Arabic and Spanish are perceived by those who seek to learn them is also instructive. Currently, people study Spanish not because it is the language of the enemy. However, Arabic is becoming the most taught and studied language at top colleges but perceived as the language of those who ‘hate us.’ In conclusion, I would say that the situation of Algerians as migrants to the U.S. is somewhat unique. Algerians experience a “double socio-pressure” against their language. On the one hand, they are self-conscious with their Darja when speaking to Middle Easterners for linguistic reasons and on the other hand, with Americans for political reasons.
Recommendations

I now suggest an alternative approach to language contact in multicultural Arabic communities. Doing the interviews with my Algerian informants reminded me of my own experience as an immigrant living among various linguistic communities. My impressions about language and dialects in contact are somewhat different from the views of certain of my interviewees as I try to show in the following paragraphs. In analyzing the statement of the “Middle Easterners’ inability to understand the Algerian dialect,” I would say that I accept their unfamiliarity with French—since Darja may have a fair number of French lexemes. However, when an Algerian does not mix French, I argue that it is easy to communicate with other Arabs if they change their attitude and pay closer attention to what is being said. I remember years ago in the mid 1980s, I lived around many Middle Easterners and interacted with various Arab nationals on a daily basis, with some at the level of friendship. I was raising a daughter and spoke to her in Darja everywhere, at home and around my Arab friends, whether Egyptians, Iraqis, Saudis or Palestinians. My close friends, especially two neighbors, an Iraqi and an Egyptian, were picking up Algerian lexical idioms as well as my family picking some of theirs. After a while, we all comfortably understood each other’s dialect and interacted with each other in our own dialects, sometimes even using each other’s vocabulary² or MSA. For example, a dialogue would go between my then five years old daughter who speaks Darja and my Egyptian friend who speaks Egyptian (Appendix D).

The short dialogue between an Algerian child whose mother tongue is Darja and an Egyptian woman whose tongue is Egyptian that took place in 1987 is an example of ‘mutual’ dialect contact in the Diaspora. In the following paragraph, I use the dialogue (appendix D) to

analyze various linguistic elements. I translated each utterance based on the way the other would say it, to MSA, and then to English. The context of this conversation is at my Egyptian friend’s house. She is a generous woman and always insists on her visitors, young and old, to eat or drink something when visiting her saying “laazem Tashrub Haagua—you have to drink something!” She interacts with my daughter and without difficulty they would both understand each other. On the one hand, my Egyptian friend got used to Algerian words and expressions such as manhabbush, bazzaf, bark, barkay, [I don’t like it, a lot, only, enough or stop it (fem)] that are not part of her Egyptian dialect. And, on the other hand, my daughter got used to Egyptian words and expressions such as ‘aiza, ’eh, leesh, mish ‘aiza, maa bahhabbu, ’awi, bass, di, kifaya [you want (fem), what, why, don’t want, I don’t like it, a lot, only, this, enough] that are not part of her Algerian dialect.

In comparing the two dialects to MSA, it is obvious how different both Algerian and Egyptian are from the standardized language. For example, the word what is expressed in Egyptian as ’eh and in Algerian as wash or ’ash, but in one of the MSA variety, it is madha or maa, which seem at first without any mutual relations. Yet, when going back to the ‘fabrication’ and ‘creation’ of the Arabic varieties, one can find them most of the time related to CA which in time became used as specific and regional lexical only. I would say that all three originated from the CA. For example, the MSA or CA expression ’aiyu shay’in –Which or what thing, is in case of the Egyptian, only the first phoneme—glottal stop—[‘] followed by a schwa and ended by a soft [h] is preserved as ’eh. In the Algerian case, from the expression ’aiyu shay’in only the first consonant [’] followed by a vowel [a] of the first word then the first phoneme [sh] of the second word are combined and preserved as one new lexical ’ash. In other situations, the phoneme [’] is
replaced by [w] to form *wesh* and sometimes *'ashin* or *washin* keeping the [in] grammatical case at the end.

At school, children learn MSA which is a standardized form of Classical Arabic, wherein both *madha* and *'aiyu shay* would be learned depending on the context. Yet, educators, especially in the Diaspora, do not approach the teaching of language from a sociolinguistic and a comparative approach which is essential to contextualizing the language taught at school. As a matter of fact, the approach of teaching MSA, at least in the Diaspora with very limited educational skills, is too systematized and exclusivist. A child saying *wash hadha* – what is this in Algerian or an Egyptian saying *'eh* or *'esh da* – would be corrected by certain teachers to say *maa hadha* only. As shown in Chapter six, parents also object to teachers using a variety of Arabic in the classroom. In these situations, the student would be expected to correct his home language or to keep the divide between the home and school language. For many Arab educators and others who are not familiar with the linguistic richness of Arabic, ‘Standard Arabic’ is the only ‘true language’, thereby neglecting other ways of speech as being *lahn* – deviant. This approach to the teaching of Arabic language affects, on the one hand, the rich language by restricting it and, on the other hand, affecting the Arabic speakers and their off-spring in neglecting their rich heritage. The Arabic language is able to incorporate various tongues. Yet, for reasons such as lack of knowledge and sometimes political aims to control through language planning, people approach Arabic learning from a constricting and exclusivist venue, which would restrict the students to only read and write the script with limited comprehension. Their understanding and use of the language at an intellectual level would always be at its lowest, lacking strong socio-linguistic foundations.
To become proficient in a language, continuity must develop between the spoken, the read, and the written, between the sacred and the common, as well as between the old and the new. Language is dynamic, however, not in a sense of becoming restricted and different, but rather in being full of life using the information from the past and the present, the corporal and the abstract, with fluidity and ease. Language transmission and language maintenance incorporate embodied practices—performed and inscribed—that come naturally, with ease and even at the unconscious level of social memory (Connerton 1989). Children of many Arab immigrants grow up to appreciate the various linguistic repertoires around them and use them in their favor. Because an early influence by various Arabic dialects on such children in their natural settings, today, as adults, they are able to interact with Egyptians, Iraqis, Syrians, Algerians, or other Arabic dialects, as well as English speaking, all without having to tell any one that she or he does not understand what they are saying to them. It is through performance and living among other ethnicities and cultures that the second generation is able to acquire this skill to become multi-language/dialect proficient in the multicultural environment of America.

Although this example is related to the Algerian dialect in contact with the Egyptian dialect meeting in the Diaspora and how both speakers are able to understand each other, the approach can be applied to many other communities in the world. As a matter of fact it shows how humans are capable of understanding each other using various codes whether speech, sign, or thoughts. Another application in which this approach would be used is in preparing language teaching curriculum that is inclusive of various dialects of a language.
APPENDIX A
SCHEDULE INTERVIEW

1. Where were you born?

2. Tell me about the places you lived in prior coming to the United States?

3. Where did you get your various levels of education? (From pre-school to highest level) and in what language(s)?

4. What is your highest level of education?

5. What is or are your mother tongue(s)?

6. How many languages do you know and speak? What are they?

7. When and where did you learn each one of them?

8. Who taught you these languages?

9. When, where, and with who do you use and/or speak the specific language(s)?

10. In what language do you speak with your child?

11. Do you teach your child how to write, read and/or comprehend your mother language(s)?

12. If you don’t teach your child yourself, do you have other ways of transmitting your native language(s) to your child, explain how and how often do you do that?

13. Tell me what it means to you to teach your child each of the following languages; Amazighi, Arabic, Darja, French, English or other languages?

14. What activities do you have with your child that you believe teach your child something about your culture, ethnicity and/or religion?

15. Do you socialize with other migrants from Algeria?

16. What type of social activities do you have that you think are helping your child to learn your native language(s), religion, and/or your culture?

17. If you where working prior to migration, what type of work did you do?
18. After migrating, what type of study (ies) and/or work(s) did you do?

19. If you are a student now, what are you studying? Are you satisfied or not with the type of studies you do now? Explain why?

20. If you are working now, what type of work do you do? Are you satisfied or not with the type of work you do now? Explain why?

21. How would you compare your life today to the one before you migrated?

22. When, if possible, did you think of the possibility to migrate?

23. What or who influenced you to migrate? Tell me about how she/he/they influenced you?

24. How would you describe the person you were before migrating?

25. How would you describe the person you are today?

26. Would you describe the event that led to your migration?

27. Before migrating, would you describe your life then?

28. How would you describe how you viewed America then?

29. Tell me about what does it meet to be an immigrant?

30. What is your sex; age; and ethnicity?
Table 2–4. Informants background information (AR=Arabic, FR=French, EN=English; GNV=Gainesville, FL; CMI=Champaign, IL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudo-name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Formal language</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>GNV</td>
<td>Arab-Algerian</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>AR, FR, EN</td>
<td>Darja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Manal</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>GNV</td>
<td>Arab-Alg</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>AR, FR, EN</td>
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APPENDIX C
AL-HENNA

An Algerian bridal Henna ritual from K. Arfi’s fieldwork for Master’s in Cultural Anthropology done in summer 2007.

Al-Henna Taqdiim/Tbughir (Songs) and Twalwiil (Ululations)

At an Algerian friends son’s wedding in New York, one of the invited friends of Algerian origin sang these very traditional songs that are specially sung when the Henna is done on the bride’s hand in Darja. The Henna powder was mixed by one of the friends and brought to the bride to be applied on her hands. All the women, teenage girls and children—all of Algerian origin – were sitting and standing around the bride ready for singing and/or performing the twalwiil. Yamina was the expert in the taqdiim so she is leading the songs and those who know the words would sing along. However, it seems that she is the only one who knows them and once in a while I remember few lines from my childhood memories when I used to be in Algeria and be around my family especially my aunts who were professionals. Traditionally, in Algeria, the Henna is done by the most revered women in the house. The mother-in-law of the groom’s aunt (Zahra) was visiting from Algeria and she was honored and asked to perform the Henna to the bride. Later on, another young woman of Moroccan origin, who moved from Orlando Florida and got married lately to an Algerian man, finished the Henna by making designs on the hands of the bride. The bride’s two hands were beautifully designed and colored in the orangey color that would take few days to go away. This is the symbolic sign of being a bride that night and having the two families come together on this happy occasion.

Yamina performed several traditional songs while the Henna was designed slowly on the hands of the bride. At the end of each taqdiim, a large group of women and young girls performed the twalwiil in one voice which make it sound like a musical instrument. In the
following, I will transcribe the taqdiim with a tentative translation, followed by twelwiil. I divided the taqdiims into themes that were mostly said in that order. However the procession always starts with a prayer bringing the audience and performance together.

Prayer Songs

Bismillah bismillaah..u biha yabdal-baadi, u biha yabdal-baadi..Qaddemt rabbi wan-bii Mohammed siid syaadii… Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuuuiiiii

[We start] by the name of Allah, by the name of Allah…and by it starts the one who starts [when one starts something important]…I present before me my Lord and the Prophet Mohammed the Master of my Masters [my ancestors]… Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuuuiiiii

Sallu Sallu ‘anbii u ya naass al matlaayma.. u ya naass al matlaayma..alli ma Sallaa ‘anbi u maahuushi minnaa.. Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuuuiiiii

Pray upon the Prophet Oh you who are gathered… Oh you who are gathered…any one who does not pray upon the Prophet is not one of us… Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuuuiiiii

Songs Praising Bride’s Beauty and Clothes

U ya raqbat al-jammaaraa, U ya raqbat al-jammaaraa. Jaa yar‘a fiha nHel u yaHasblu nuwwaara…Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuuuii…

Oh [bride with] a neck [like] pearls, Oh [bride with] a neck [like] pearls. Flew around it bees, thinking it was a flower…yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuuuiiiii…

ESghira kharjat lil Hanna u fatHat darbet eelayzaar, u fatHat darbet eelayzaar. al-‘ain mkaHla mghamja wal wajh yaDwi kii nhaar… yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuuuiiiii..

The young one is coming out for the Henna and she took off part of the veil, and she took off part of the veil, the eye is [beautified by] eye liner [kuHl] and the face is lighting like the day [light] … yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuuuiiiii…

Wer-rahii lalla Sghiraa…u rahii talbess qaaTha, u rahii talbess qaaTha, satr Allah wa jnaaH jibril wal-HaTTa wataat-ha Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuuuiiiii

Where is she my young miss…she is putting on the Caftan, she is putting on the Caftan, may Allah’s protection and Jibriil’s [Angel Gabriel] wing be over her [from evil eye] and [look how] the elegance fits on her. Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuuuiiiii

Songs Praising Bride’s Attributes and Praying for the Groom

Wa Hmaama rahii t’alli wa Hmaama rahi maajia, wa Hmaama rahi maajia, hadhi martek yaakhuya yaj‘alhaalek saajia. Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuuuiiiii
One pigeon is flying away and one pigeon is coming down, and a pigeon is coming down, this is your wife Oh little brother may she be agreeable. Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuiiiii

Al Hmaama HaTatlu fis-saaHa, u HaTatlu fis-saaHa. Hathi martek yaakhuya u yaj’alhaalek SaalHaa. Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuiiiii

The pigeon landed in his terrace…landed in his terrace, this is your wife Oh little brother may she be among the pious. Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuiiiii

**Songs of In-laws Praising the Bride**

RaHna lTriiq ab’ida, wa tmash-shinaa wa ‘eenaa… wa tmash-shinaa wa ‘eenaa…wal qinaa sajraal Hluwaa u laqqamnaa wad-diinaa…(mashaa’ Allah, haila.—praise the Lord, this song is great.) Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuiiiii

We went to a long journey, and we walked and got tired… and we walked and got tired…and we found a sweet tree and we cut [a branch] and took from it [the tree]. Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuiiiii

RaHna lTriiq ab’idaa u faaress yardef faarass, u faaress yardef faaress..Kath-tharti ‘linaa shruTaak ya ramgat aT-Taawass (all laugh) Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuiiiii [the groom’s mother: lukaan kayan alli y’awanha (ayya Tal’u..win rahii? Waluu?)] [a guest: ana? Ana ma na ‘rafsh…(Walu?)

we went on a long journey and horses running after horses, and horses running after horses, you made your demands too many Oh the [beautiful] one like the tail of at-Tawaass [a peacock with colorful upper tail] Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuiiiii [the groom’s mother: some one should help her (come on say what you know…nothing?) [a guest: me I don’t know nothing…] (nothing?)

**Songs of In-laws Bribing the Bride who is Supposedly Sad Leaving her Parents**

U yaa lallaa Sghiira, was-sukti maa tabkiishii.. was-sukti maa tabkiishii..jabnalek u qaaT edh-hab u bsarwaal Hshaaishi.. Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuiiiii

Oh my young miss stop and don’t cry… and stop and don’t cry…we brought you a QaaT [vest in gold embroidered velvet] of gold and with it greenish pans ….(traditional bridel suite) Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuiiiii

**Songs of the Bride Consent of Marriage and the Father’s Role as her Delegate**

Kharjet najmet aS-SbaaH u shufu baash atkalmat.. u shufu baash atkalmat.. khraj baabahaa lil jma’a u ghiir klaamu elli thbaat. Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuiiiii

Came out the morning star and see what did she say…and see what did she say … came out her father to the ljma’a [group] and only his talk was heard [his words were respected and taken well]… Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuiiiii
The Song of the Bride Close Relatives Comforting the Bride and Each Other that the Groom is of a Good Stock

U yaa lalla Sghiraa u ma tabkiish gbaalii.. u ma tabkiish gbaalii..wantiya lalla Sghira waddek wliid Hlaali Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuiiiii

Oh my young miss…don’t cry in front of me… don’t cry in front of me…and you are my young miss and the one you took you [for marriage] is rightful [from a good family].

Song Praising the Bride’s Family

RuHu ruuHu yaal Hrayeer u ruHu Trig gbaalaa.. u ruHu Triig gbaalaa..jibu ziinat aal'rayeess u mahishii manwaalaa… Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuiiiii

Go, go, Oh women [of good families] and go on the straight path…and go on the straight path…bring the most beautiful bride who is from a good family…Yuuyuyuyuyuyuyuuuiiiii. End of Taqdiim

The Second Generation and the Algerian Heritage

I started talking to Farida, who is born and raised in the U.S. She is a college student.

Farida (Fa) is Yamina’s (Y) niece. We spoke in Darja.

I: kash ma Hfatti A?
Fa: eh
I: kash ma Hfatti min khaaltak? saHiiH? shaaTra banti…haakdhaak..non…parceque
(F) hadhu maa bqawsh..qlaal annaass alli ya‘arfuhum…(…) al mafruuD hakdhak
atbughiir… yakhruj hakdhaak.

Y: Khti waHHad-ha..tbuqar ‘la wlad-ha.. ‘la rajal-ha.. ‘liha (hadha huwal ’aSl..tkharjuhum
sur place (F) kayen kalimaat ’assassiya..u mba‘d tsammi..kul waHed bismuu…
I: ana justement dirasti habba na ‘raf kifash elwaldiin rahum inaqlu attaqaliid watturaath
lawladhum

Y: eeh…mashaa allah! Wash min domain
I: ana fil anthropology

Y: eeh..
I: cultural yassamma… justement Habbit taqaliid ‘aishinha annass..hadhil furSa..aHssan
waHda (giggle) baSSaH hadhuma…el waHad iHab yafham..esque (F) lawleed…qui,qui
tqulihum…es-que lewlaad yaffahmu el kalimaat u ma‘anihuum?

Y: Banti mazalet Sghira ‘ala kulli Haal tabghihum..tabghi zHuw…
I: Kima mathalan..bnaat Hania?
Y: El-kbaar yaffahmu el-Hanna yHabbuha…kishghul idiruha fi munaasabaa la‘raass.
Iqullek, nalbsu ta’ hna…baSSaH el-Hanna tandaar …

In translation:

I: did you memorize any Farida?

Fa: ya..

I: did you memorize any from your aunt? Really.. Good girl…good… because (F) these are
not anymore…very few people who know them…this is how should a taqdiim/tbughiir
be…it comes out [naturally] like this…
Y: My sister, she tbughar [sings] alone about her kids…about her husband…about herself…this is the way it used to be. It comes out right away (F). There are basic words and you name after that every one by his name…

I: I am, as a matter of fact (F) in my study; I would like to know how are the parents transmitting the tradition and culture to their kids?

Y: Ya…praise be to God. In which domain (F)

I: I am in anthropology (E)

Y: Ya..

I: Cultural.. I mean…as a matter of fact (F) I wanted to see how people practice their tradition this is an occasion…the best (giggle)…but these [taqdiim] one would like to understand…are (F) the children…when you tell them…do (F) the kids understand the words, their meanings?

Y: My daughter is still young, but she likes them. She likes fooling around [with words]…

I: Like for example Hania’s daughters? (Yamina’s nieces)

Y: The older ones they understand …the Henna they love it…they put it on in special occasions…like weddings; they tell you they wear clothes of here (Western)…but the henna will be done…
APPENDIX D
DIALOGUE BETWEEN AN ALGERIAN AND AN EGYPTIAN

The following is a dialogue between an Algerian child speaking Darja and an Egyptian woman speaking Egyptian. Under each utterance, I write the other’s way of saying it, then in MSA then in English:

Egyptian friend:  ‘Aiza takli ’eh (name)? (Egyptian dialect)
Wash Habba takli (name)? (Algerian dialect)
Matha tuhibbin an ta’kulii (name)? (MSA)
[What would you like to eat (name)?]

Daughter:  Manish habba nakul (Algerian dialect)
Mish ‘aiza aakul (Egyptian dialect)
Laa ‘uriidu an aakul (MSA)
[I don’t want to eat.]

Egyptian friend:  Leash mush ‘aiza? (Egyptian dialect)
A’laash makish Habba? (Algerian dialect)
Limaadha laa turidiin? (MSA)
[Why you don’t want to?]

Daughter:  Manhabuush bazzaf (Algerian dialect)
Ma bahabbush ’awi (Egyptian dialect)
Laa ‘uHibbuhu kathiiran. (MSA)
[I don’t like it a lot]

Egyptian friend:  Bess di! (Egyptian dialect)
Bark hadhi (Algerian dialect)
[Khudhi] hadhihi faqaT (MSA)
[[Take] just this [piece]]

Daughter:  Lalaa! Barkay! (Algerian dialect)
La’’a! kifaaya! (Egyptian dialect)
Laa! [hadha] Yakfii! (MSA)
[No! [this is] enough!]
LIST OF REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Khadidja Arfi was born and raised until early adulthood in Algeria. She obtained a teaching degree, a Licence in Biological Science in 1981 from The University of Houari Boumedienne in Algiers, Algeria. She received a second bachelor’s degree in anthropology from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale in 2006. She was admitted to the anthropology department at the University of Florida in 2006 in the subfield of cultural anthropology. She obtained a TA position in 2006 as an independent instructor to teach a course on beginning Arabic (levels one and two) in the African and Asian languages program. She taught in summer 2008 an Arabic culture course at UF. She has been tutoring and volunteering to teach the Arabic language and the religion of Islam in various communities, where she has lived with her husband and daughter in various cities in the United States for the past two decades. She currently lives with her husband in Archer, Florida.