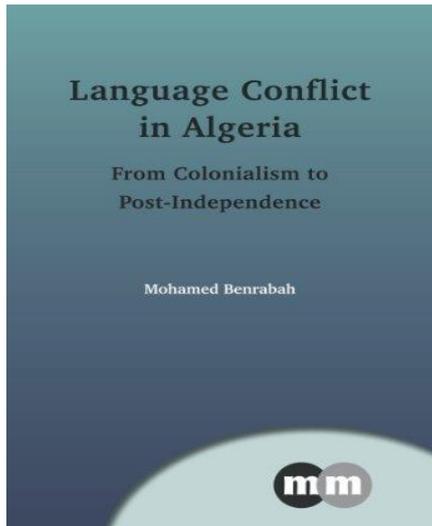


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**LANGUAGE CONFLICT IN ALGERIA: FROM COLONIALISM TO POST-INDEPENDENCE:
BOOK REVIEW**



Author: **Mohamed Benrabah**
Title of the Book: *Language Conflict in Algeria: From Colonialism to Post- Independence*
Year of Publication: **2013**
Publisher: **Multilingual Matters, Bristol**
Number of Pages: xiv + **199**

Benrabah's *Language Conflict in Algeria: From Colonialism to Post-Independence* (2013) is an outstanding book in the Anthropological/Contact Linguistics and the Sociolinguistics of Algeria. Through his book, he could successfully and rigorously deliver a historical and sociolinguistic description and draw a vivid portrait of Algeria from the early days of French colonialism to nowadays post-independence (modern) Algeria. Appreciably, the publication of the volume came with the celebration of the fiftieth independence day of Algeria (1962-2012). Noticeably, for a Professor of Linguistics, the sociolinguistic situation and the language policy/politics in Algeria are at the core of his text. Linguistically, it is written in highly academic English including many specific concepts that describe best '*l'Algérie Profonde*'. Notably, the author built his book on five chapters preceded by a prologue and followed by an epilogue, presented in a logical and chronological order regarding the linguistic and cultural issues and developments in Algeria.

After reading the whole book, we modestly divided it into two main parts respectively the sociolinguistic situation of (pre)colonial Algeria and (post)independent Algeria. First, the author discussed several language conflicts related issues with pertinent illustrations. Also, he introduced language conflicts as emerging from language contact situations where some language users try "*to carve out a space for their own tongue which expands to other linguistic*

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'territories'" (2). After that, Benrabah linked the language conflicts to the linguistic imperialism as: "*the establishment of unjust and violent structures in societies in general and colonized communities in particular generates the necessary conditions for linguistic oppression and conflict*" (4). Moreover, he added that the colonizers imposed their alien language on the colonized and prevented them from keeping and maintaining their mother tongues especially in education. Besides, the author discussed diachronically the French conquest of Algeria and summarized meticulously the long period of colonization till the Algerian Independence in 1962. And he thoroughly described the French linguistic and cultural policies during the French occupation (1830-1962), where France adopted the policy of "*deculturization*".

Second, Benrabah moved to the description of the sociolinguistic situation of post-independent Algeria. He started by the introduction of the different linguistic and educational policies implemented in the country and he made connection with the main reasons behind the post-independence Algerian linguistic conflicts. Importantly, he thoroughly presented the linguistic Arabization directed in Algeria and how it generated several conflicts. According to him, the linguistic issue was twofold: the status of French and the policy of Arabization (53). Also, the Arabization issue was related to agenda, language choice, and the way of implementation. Furthermore, the author asserted that the Algerian language planners were looking for a substitute for the ex-colonizer's language (i.e., French). Moreover, they were motivated by the following two reasons: firstly, French should be replaced by a new foreign language that should be more powerful than French. Secondly, this language should be in peace with the society without any link with colonialism (90). In this respect, the English language is perceived as the ideal language for the Algerian language planners. Finally, he closed his book by a survey of the linguistic issues in Algeria from the Algerian intellectuals and writers' standpoints. For instance, the Algerian intellectuals educated in French started to write remarkably in French against the French colonizer and their works (in French) are writings/answers back to the colonizer (128).

In short, *Language Conflict in Algeria: From Colonialism to Post-Independence* (2013) is a must reading book for everyone who seeks to understand the linguistic issues in Algeria. Besides, it is a source of well documented facts and events that Algerians witnessed through decades of politico-linguistic conflicts and socio-linguistic changes. Thus, we recommend this book to the students and lecturers of Sociolinguistics in general and to those interested in the sociolinguistics of Algeria in particular for a better understanding of mainly the Arabization policy and the present sociolinguistic situation in the country. Moreover, Arab sociolinguists from the Middle East are kindly invited to read the present book for a panoramic outlook of the linguistic situation in North Africa.

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