A Sociolinguistic Perspective on the Arab Spring and Its Impact on Language Planning Policy: the Case of Libya

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Abstract
This paper examines the impact of the democratic trend on language planning policy in Libya, where the official language policy was long used by policy makers as a mechanism for not only suppressing the ethnic identity of Libyan Amazigh, but also to strongly resist the introduction of foreign languages such as English for merely political and pan-Arabic objectives. The paper is based on the hypothesis that the current geopolitical changes in Libya are likely to exert certain impacts on the sociolinguistic landscape and provide new opportunities to linguistic, cultural and political reforms. The study attempts to achieve three inter-related objectives. The first objective is to draw a comprehensive image of the sociolinguistic situation of Libya where languages compete with each other for their space; Classical Arabic CA, employed in religious discourse and literary writing, Modern Standard Arabic MSA in the sphere of education and public administration, colloquial Arabic – largely, but not exclusively oral, Berber and recently English as the language of science and technology. The second objective is to account for the growing economic and political changes and the emergence of democratic trends (the 'Arab Spring') in the country and their foreseen impact on future overall development in infrastructure related to language planning and policy (LPP). Finally, the paper seeks to identify and review LPP models that have been previously implemented and suggests the limitation of these models, and finally proposes an integrative model that accommodates some measure of coordination between various decision makers and implementations. In order to achieve these objectives, the methodology utilized is based on situation analysis within the framework of linguistic and political changes. The principle difficulty encountered in this regard is that materials are not easily obtained due to decades of UN and Western backed-sanctions, as well as decades of public sector dominance and government control. Furthermore, many of recent materials regarding current geopolitical reforms in the Arab World have not yet been categorized nor collected. Therefore, the study relies mainly on information that is available on the World Wide Web and, wherever possible, informal conversation with individual linguists, institutional language specialists and officials.
Key Words: Language Planning, Language Policy, Arabic, Arab Spring and sociolinguistics.

I. Introduction

To a certain extent, Libya is unique among other Arab countries where popular uprisings have occurred – notably Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Yemen – not only for its strategic geographical location that has always been a point of attraction to foreign powers, but also for the unstable radical political regime[i] for the last 42 years that has influenced Libyan society by introducing political, economic, social reforms. Located between the Maghreb countries in the west and the countries of the orient in the east and bordered by the Mediterranean Sea and Europe to the north and the rest of Africa to the south, Libya has been a crossroads where great civilizations of the ancient world met and commingled. It has throughout its history been the target of many conquests by Phoneticians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks (Ottoman), and more recently Europeans (Italians, English and French). The name of Libya is originally derived from *Libo*, a name by which a single Berber tribe was known by the ancient Egyptians. The name was later applied by the Greeks to the most of North Africa and the term Libyan to all of its Berber inhabitants. Only since 1934 these names have been used to designate the specific modern territory of Libya and its people. The Arabs constitute the majority of Libyan population (about 6 million according to the latest census, which was carried out in 2006). However, there are some minority groups in Libya, such as Amazigh, who live mainly in Nefusa Mountains, about 60 miles east of Tripoli and stretched into the south eastern area of Tunisia. Other Libyan Amazigh live in the Cyrenaican oases of Augela, Hun, Socena, and Zuara of Tripoltania. They all speak a Tamazight dialect called Zenata or Zanatiyah. In southwest Libya, live Tuareg tribes who speak another Tamazight dialect called Tamahak or Senhaja, live scattered in the area east of Ghat and around Ghadames. Both Libyan Arabic and Libyan Amazigh regional dialects are mutually intelligible to most Libyan Arabs and Amazigh respectively, although they vary to some extent, but as a unified language, MSA is considered the lingua franca of the entire country. Most, if not all, Libyan Amazighes are bilingual and speak Arabic as a second tongue.

One month after the start of the revolutionary movements that begun sweeping the Middle East and North Africa in January 2011 in Tunisia (also referred to as 'Arab Spring'), the protests and demands for changing and removing the world's longest-ruling sitting leader *Muammar Al-Gadaffi* started on the 17th February 2011 in the city of Benghazi (the term '17 Feb. Revolution' is used henceforth to designate the period after Gadaffi regime). The protests led to months of violent confrontations between forces loyal to Gadaffi and the majority of Libyan people whose aim was to oust the Gadaffi and his government. The armed conflict lasted until the 21st of October 2011 when he was captured and killed in his hometown Sirt and the National Transitional Council NTC declared the liberation of Libya a week later to put an end to more than four decades of corruption and an authoritarian regime.

Historical background of Arabic Language in Libya (Arabization or Islamization)

The appearance of Arabic language in Libya is inextricably intertwined with the arrival of the Arab conquest and with the rise of Islam as a major religion in North Africa, which started with the conquest of Egypt in 637 under the rule of *Omar Ebnl_Khtab*, the second Caliph after the death of the prophet Mohammad. By the end of tenth century, Arabic was widely spoken and written by all North Africans from Egypt to the western borders of Morocco, displacing Berber languages, the oldest languages spoken by the indigenous people. Before the arrival of the Arabs, the Berber language 'Tamazight[ii]' was the native language to the majority of Libyan population.

The status of the Muslim nation during that historical phase (the 7th century) gives the Arabic language (Classical Arabic CA) an early prominence and dominance. Early in the seventh

century and not long after the conquests of the Arab armies from Arabian Peninsula, the Arabs introduced the unity of Islam and the Arabic language, a concept based on the principle of the unity between the Muslims' sacred text (the Qur'an) and Arabic. Muslim scholars have emphasized the untranslatability of the Qur'an and the use of Arabic language by non-Arabic Muslims in their daily prayers and other religious purposes such as Qur'an recitation. They have stressed the importance of the Qur'anic verses that explicitly states that only Arabic is the vehicle of the divine word, such as

{إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَـٰهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ.} (Qur'an 12: 2)
"*in-naa anzalnaahu qur'aanan 'Arabiy-yal la'Al-lakum ta'Aqiluun*"
"We have revealed the Qur'an in the Arabic tongue so that you may grow in understanding"

Therefore, any attempt to reproduce the text in another language is futile. This conviction, as a mater of fact, is still widespread among Muslims, i.e., "the doctrine that classical language as codified by the Arabic philologists, the language in which are written the sacred Qur'an and the classical works of Arabic literature is unchangeable and is the only one to be used when writing" (Blau 1981, p. 7). As a result, non-Arabic speaking Muslims, like the Amazigh who converted to Islam, began to utilize Arabic script. They had to learn Arabic so that they can use it in their Qur'an recitations and daily prayers, '*salah*'. Being the language of the Qur'an, CA and Islam became inseparable, with the result that Arabic spread widely in the region as part of the new religion as the only suitable tongue with which the masses of newly Muslim Amazigh could approach Allah 'God'.

Development of Arabic (from CA to MSA)

The development of Arabic may be divided into two varieties of Arabic language: CA and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). CA is the language of the Qur'an, the Sunna (prophetic tradition), and the literature of the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods; precisely, between the seventh and the ninth centuries. Being the language of sacred text, CA is still enjoying a great literary and religious tradition. It can be learned in schools and mosques alike. MSA, on the other hand, is the medium of contemporary learning and culture for Arabic societies and is considered to be a development of CA. For the most part, it shares most of its syntax and morphology with CA. MSA is mainly used as a medium of communication in a narrow demographic form only among educated Arabic speakers in conferences, the gatherings of Arabic scholars and for formal school education in terms of reading and writing. The reason for this limitation is the discrepancy that Arabic demonstrates between written and spoken forms. It is also used in printed media (newspapers and magazines) and as a spoken medium in various degrees in radio and television news.

MSA, in its modern form, was born in the period of Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258 AD) It has developed since Arab philosophers – who themselves were translators[iii] – began to translate texts, particularly from Greek – but also from Chinese, Persian, Sanskrit, Sicilian and Spanish to meet the increased research and scientific needs. In this way, they modernized CA with respect to lexicon and phraseology by adding a large amount of vocabulary from these languages into Arabic. Because CA originally was a group of diverse unstandardized dialects spoken by Bedouin tribes in the Arabian Peninsula that were not standardized, Arab philosophers began to standardize CA grammar because of the common belief among them that CA was insufficient for the needs of the time. They began to systematically create new words, grammatical structures

and stylistic elements in order to express new concepts. In this respect, Abdulaziz (1986) points out that "classical Arabic, which further developed in the Middle Ages, was not equipped to cope with the new conceptual demands. It was now a question of developing within a few decades, in response to the various socio-cultural and psychological stimuli, a new and refined Arabic capable of expressing a material and intellectual civilization that had evolved over centuries in Europe" (p. 16).

In spite of the fact that the distinction is sometimes hard because CA and MSA share a number of linguistic features, and many grammatical rules that were deduced out of CA are still applicable to MSA (Van Mol 2003), they are different in their phonology, morphology, and syntax. MSA is more flexible in its constructions. In other words, grammatical components are distributed differently in the two language forms. For instance, unlike CA, MSA has an alternative acceptable word order subject verb object SVO (الرئيس غادر, *The president left.*) in addition to the unmarked order verb subject object VSO (غادر الرئيس, *Left the president.).* CA, on the other hand, has a pragmatically unchanged and controlled word order VSO due to the above mentioned religious insistence on keeping the language of the Qur'an and the tradition pure. Its sentences usually start with the verb followed by the subject (غادر الرئيس , *Left the president.).*

Furthermore, when many western scholars started to take an interest in Arabic, their unfamiliarity with CA often resulted in their imposing structures of their own native tongues, such as passive sentences with expressed agents, onto Arabic (Alotaibi and Hussian, 2009). The frequent use of these alien structures in the informal Arabic media has created the impression, particularly among students, that these structures are acceptable and natural in MSA. Stetkevych (1970) states, in this regard, that MSA deviates strongly from CA. For him, "Modern Arabic is moving away from both the classical and the colloquial languages. While retaining the morphological structure of classical Arabic; syntactically and above all, stylistically it is coming ever closer to the form and spirit of the large, supra genealogical family of Western culture bearing languages" (p. 121). One of these imposed alien structures is the agentive passive structure. In English, the agent can occur in passive sentences, e.g., 'The dictator was killed by the rebels,' whereas CA normally uses only the agentless passive. Passive is used when the agent is either unknown or ignored. If speakers want to mention the agent, they must use the active form. There is "No formal equivalent of agentive construction is found in Standard Arabic" (Aziz 65). Farghal (1991) supports Aziz's claim as he points that there is no natural way in Arabic of mentioning the agent in a passive sentence. Thus, the above English passive sentence could be translated into an active Arabic as:

<div align="center">

قتل الثوار الدكتاتور.

Qatala althowar al-dctator

The rebels killed the dictator.

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The effect of Western languages, mainly French and English, has resulted in the introduction of new expressions like 'من طرف' *mintarafl*, 'بواسطة' *biwasetat*, etc. (the equivalents of the agentive 'par' in French and 'by' in English) to indicate the agent in passive sentences, which are basically agentless in CA. Both agentive and agentless structures are now commonly used in MSA:

<div align="center">

(active) قتل الثوار الدكتاتور.

Qatala althowar al-dctator

The rebels killed the dictator. (active)

(agentless passive) قُتل الدكتاتور.

Qotela Al-dctator

</div>

The dictator was killed. (agentless passive)

قُتل الدكتاتور بواسطة الثوار. (agentive passive)[iv]

Qotela Al-dctator bewasitat Althowar

The dictator was killed by the rebels. (agentive passive)

Libyan Arabic dialects

Arabic shows different dialects not only between countries but also within the same country. In Libya, there are three major dialect areas: 1. the western Libyan dialect known as *Gharbawia* 'western,' which is spoken in the areas of Musrata, Tripoli and the West Mount, or what is commonly called Tripolitanien. It is similar to the Arabic dialect spoken in the southern Tunisia. 2. The eastern Libyan dialect (also referred to as *Shergawia* 'eastern') is spoken in the areas of west and east of Benghazi (Cyrenaika or Kyrenaika), and extends beyond the borders of Libya into the western area of Egypt. 3. The west-southern Libyan, spoken in Fessan and the whole area south from Tripoli.

Libyan Arabic dialects

These dialects vary to some extent, but as a unified language, MSA is considered the lingua franca of the entire country. It is more or less comprehensible for any citizen in Libya with a certain level of education. MSA, however, is structurally and functionally different from the spoken dialects.

Indigenous languages (Tamazight)

Besides Arabs there are a number of minority groups in Libya, such as Amazigh, who live mainly in Nefusa Mountain, about 60 miles east of Tripoli and stretched into the southeastern area of Tunisia. Other Libyan Amazigh live in the Cyrenaican oasis of Augela, Hun, Socena, and Zuara of Tripoltania. They all speak a Tamazight dialect called Zenata or Zanatiyah. In southwest Libya, Tuareg tribes who speak another Tamazight dialect called Tamahak or Senhaja, and live scattered in the area east of Ghat and around Ghadames. Both Libyan Arabic and Libyan Amazigh regional dialects are mutually intelligible to most Libyan Arabs and Amazigh respectively, although they vary to some extent, but as a unified language, MSA is considered the lingua franca of the entire country. Most, if not all, Libyan Amazigh are bilingual and speak Arabic as a second tongue. An Amazighan might speak Tamazight at home with her/his family, listen to the news and read books in MSA, use CA at the mosque and in Qur'an recitation, and use Arabic local dialects in everyday interactions with Arabs.

Language planning and policy LPP

Since the early 1980s, the interrelated concepts of language policy and language planning (LPP) have been the major focus of research in the general language disciplines, particularly in sociolinguistics, politics and applied linguistics. Prator (cited by Markee 1988) considers language policy as political decisions or orientations to guide and implement language planning proposals. He defines language policy as "a process of decision-making concerning the teaching and use of language and the careful formulation by those empowered to do so, for the guidance of others." Spolsky (2004) also considers LP as one of the components of language policy. He distinguishes two other components besides LP: language practices and language beliefs. The former concerns the choices of community members among varieties available for use, whereas the later includes attitudes and beliefs towards these varieties. LPP has recently undergone significant theoretical shifts in the understanding of LP more broadly.

LPP in Libya (Top-down vs. Bottom-up model)

In many developing countries, LPP is generally top-down, and involves an engineering process through which a linguistic group is manipulated by policy makers, usually politicians who do not leave anything to individuals to decide. It determines the number of languages to be developed as official languages (e.g., monolingual, bilingual or multilingual) and thus functional languages for educational, administrational and political systems. Many decisions regarding LPP are initiated and formulated by government agencies and largely underpinned by political government objectives, according to which "Nothing is valued in politics unless it is believed to be useful as a means of keeping a stronger group in power or of embarrassing or defeating one's opponents" (Hudson, 1978, p. 121).

In Libya decisions related to LPP have been made by the government and its representatives, who hold the highest positions on the administrative pyramid and who dominate the economy. They lack the competence to make policy or language strategic planning. They even lack basic principles in, for instance, psychology and sociology, which can improve the quality of language education output. Policies tend to come directly from the authority, without any consideration for independent sources of expertise.

Since Libya obtained its independence in 1954, the country undertook a policy of Arabization[v] as an attempt to eliminate the presence of any other language, foreign or local, and restore Arabic and Islamic identity. MSA was immediately imposed as the national language in the constitutions. It became the language of the governments, the administration and the vehicle of teaching in national school systems. It has been a national priority to promote Arabic as a component of national identity and to advocate a 'monoglot ideology', a phenomenon defined by Silverstein (1996, p. 8) as an "Ideologically configured belief that a society is monolingual coupled with a denial of practices that point toward factual multilingualism and linguistic diversity". No significant efforts, as a matter of fact, were made to consult professionals and specialists in areas such as academia, sociology, etc. for their view on language planning. However, decisions concerning LPP are often influenced and determined by both individuals (e.g., linguists, researchers, teachers, etc.) and formal organizations and institutions (e.g., universities, schools, professional associations, printing and publishing houses, etc.). They also require official intervention (by governments and their representatives) in order to be effective.

The fact that LPP ultimately requires political decisions does not imply that societies cannot have any kind of implementations and influence on their linguistic environment. Grin

calls this 'public policy' and Fishman (1968) states that these efforts are frequently overlooked as topics in the field of LPP. Fishman writes that:

> [t]he role of individual language planners has also been slighted in our deliberation. Many languages have benefited from the contribution of particularly charismatic and authoritative advocates, innovators and normifiers. We really know all too little about more than a mere handful of them, and as a result, we really lack any theoretical approach to their success and failure. (p. 423)

For example, private operators may run television channels to promote a minority language or to improve foreign language skills among a school population without state intervention. He argues that "government should not intervene, and that maximum welfare [feeling of safety and satisfaction in one's identity] will automatically flow from the de-centralized actions of people (individuals, firms, third-sector organizations" (ibid).

The status of Tamazight in Libya before the 17ᵗʰ Feb. Revolution

The use of the Tamazight language in Libya has always been in a critical condition. Until recently, it has been restricted to family circles, although there is a graphic representation for Tamazight known as *tifnag*, but it is going through a static phase due to a lack of use as a written form over the centuries. The strong wave of nationalism accompanying the September coup of 1969 found expression in a campaign designed to elevate the status of the MSA. As a result, the Tamazight language has been officially excluded from prestigious linguistic domains for many decades by Libyan politicians in favour of MSA. The former Libyan leader, Gadaffi, never gave full recognition to the Amazigh and their language. For him, "... the will to use and maintain the Berber [Tamazight] is reactionary, inspired by colonialism ...." He neglects any distinct Amazigh identity and considers them as being *genus Arabs*. In a speech to Tuareg tribal leaders in Niger in 2007 Al-Gadaffi went so far as to deny the existence of Amazigh in the whole of North Africa. He stated that "Berbers are the Arabs that came via *barr* البر [*land* in English] ….then colonialism arrived and said that Berbers are not Arabs to divide and dissipate us." Therefore, the phenomenon of Amazigh language and culture was not publicized and people had troubles talking about it, thus very little work on research questions dealing with LLP and the sociolinguistic structure in general has been conducted in Libya. During Gadaffi era no empirical or descriptive research, to the best of my knowledge, had been conducted *in Libya* that addresses LLP and Libyan sociolinguistic structure.

Although there is a significant large population of Amazigh in Libya (estimated 10% of the entire population[vi]), the 1977 Declaration of the Establishment of the Authority of People (DEAP) repeatedly places emphasis on the Arabic nature of Libya. Even the 11 December 1969 Libyan constitutional declaration (replaced later by the DEAP) defines Libya as an Arab nation (e. g., the official name of Libya was *The Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*) and stresses that Arabic is the country's only permitted language. This requires that all street signs, shop window notices, signboards, and traffic tickets be written in Arabic. There is no mention of the Tamazight, and accordingly it was not officially recognized, despite the fact that it was, and still is, a living reality in Libya.

Amazigh and their language are also regarded to be a threat to Arab Muslim identity (Brenzinger 2007). For this reason, according to a report about the Amazigh of Libya, which was submitted in 2004 to the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination CERD, Arabic

language had succeeded in weakening Tamazight language and seriously threatening its survival although it has been able to resist almost all the conquering empires (Phoenicians, Byzantines, Romans, etc.). The negative attitude toward Tamazight held by Libyan officials is also reflected in general public view. For most Libyans, Tamazight is a dialect that is neither a language of wider communication nor a language with a rich written literature. These are seen as grounds for believing it is not worth introducing into schools because it is neither standardized nor codified, which, in turn, resulted a decrease in Tamazight speakers in Libya.

The status of Tamazight After the 17th Feb. Revolution

The geopolitical re-composition of the Arab World in general and in Libya in particular, and the emergence of new democratic trends will definitely made room for the reassertion of a wide range of local and regional identities which had been suppressed for decades and which give rise to new linguistic contexts. In Libya today, the Tamazight language has a historical opportunity to be recognized as an official language, or at least, to be protected against the hegemony of Arabic language in the new Libyan institution, in spite of the fact that the NTC has made no mention of Tamazight as an official language in its recent Constitutional Declaration of August 2011. The Language, which has been marginalized in Libya for centuries and has been officially excluded for many decades by Libyan politicians, has in recent two years experienced a dramatic change in fortune thanks to the current economic and political reform and the emergence of democratic trends. For instance, after the 17th February revolution against the dictatorial Gaddafi regime, the Tamazight language has gained significant status with Arabic language in Libyan's media because of the Amazighs' pivotal role in the uprising; they participated massively in the protests and fighting the regime as well as in supporting the interim government[vii]. Therefore, in a short time, a number of Tamazight printed and online journals and publications have sprung up in Libya and abroad, radio and TV stations broadcasting in both Arabic and Tamazight. A situation that is summed by Peter Graff, a correspondent of Reuter News Agency, who was reporting from the Amazigh town of Jadu during the uprising:

> For a few weeks, a radio station has been broadcasting from here in both Arabic and Amazigh, in what Berber activists believe are the first conversations in their language over Libyan airwaves in four decades. An Amazigh publishing house has printed four books so far over the past month, billed as Libya's first publications in the language since Gaddafi seized power (RNA 2011).

Libya now has the most positive prospects for the future of Tamazight language and culture. There are growing demands to allow for the recognition of Tamazight language, along with Arabic, as a national and official language, and that support be offered in educational institutions, governmental and public offices and media. For instance, the Libyan National Amazigh Conference (LNAC) (also known as CNAL), which was held in the capital Tripoli on September 17th 2012 to demand the protection and development of Amazigh cultural identity, has specified one of its goals and objectives as "the recognition of Tamazight language, along with Arabic, as a national and official language, and provision of support to be made available in educational institutions, governmental and public offices, media, and public use." The conference also called for the immediate termination of all suppressive orders and actions imposed during Gadaffi era against Berbers and their rights.

The status of English in Libya before the 17th Feb. Revolution

Since independence in 1951 and until the mid-1980s, the English language enjoyed a significant status in Libya. Although Italian language is well understood especially by elder generations, because Libya was subject to Italian colonialism between 1911-1943 and of course there are linguistic remains from that period, English is the main foreign language. With the speed of industrial, economic and social development, Libyan authority at that time realized the need for Libyans who are capable of speaking and understanding English as a common means of communication. Thus, the overall framework of the Libya Ministry of Education is to provide English language training as a compulsory subject from elementary level through the preparatory and secondary levels to the tertiary level in all institutions. However, the plan to introduce English into the elementary curriculum was abandoned due to the critical shortage of qualified teachers (for further details see in particular UNESCO, 1968).

The discovery of oil in the late 1950s also plays a major role in the development of English language in Libya. Major foreign petroleum companies such as Shell, British Petroleum BP, and ExxonMoble rushed to Libya for exploration and drilling. By the end of 1977, there were forty two foreign companies conducting exploratory and drilling activities in Libya (Hassan and Kendall 2008). Therefore, the oil and gas industry has become increasingly the main job market for Libyan people in which English language is the means of communication between Libyans and native and non-native speakers of English alike. Upon entering the industry, all workers are required to have at least basic knowledge of English for the effective and safe operations (National Oil Corporation 2009). This, in turn, brings a very significant requirement for English language learning and training, particularly with regard to technical operations. English is, therefore, seen not only as the key to securing a better job in the Libyan oil sector, but also as the means of developing social, economic, commercial and scientific relations with non-Arabic companies and individuals from within Libya and internationally.

However, the status of English has undergone tremendous changes in the past decades for pure political reasons. Influenced by Nasser's Revolution in Egypt, Libya proclaimed a Cultural Revolution in 1973. The authority sought to shift from a Western-oriented capitalism into a strongly nationalist and socialist country (which was at the time perceived as 'anti-Western'). Thus, everything originating from the West and from the United States and United Kingdom in particular is unacceptable and prohibited, including language, which was considered as an imported culture that has to be rejected. As a result, English books, magazines and newspapers and even western musical instruments were collected and burned in public squares. These measures were extended, according to Maghur (2010), to private schools and foreign centers; several private foreign schools and foreign centers such as the British Council and the American Cultural Institute were shut down. An acute subsequent problem now exists, where Libyan schools and universities in general do not enjoy having a satisfactory stock of books and other references related to foreign language teaching and learning. In fact, most, if not all, of Libyan students depend on their teachers to provide them with the books and references they need. There is also unsatisfactory infrastructure related to language teaching industry in general, for example, in the field of information technology, both hardware and software, due to the restrictions that the government imposed. A specific permission had to be obtained from the Interior Security Office in order to be able to own a computer, fax machine, internet connection and even a printer.

Since the early 1980s the status of English in Libya has deteriorated considerably as a result of political tension between Libya and the West. The air raid on Libya on 15 March 1986

and the accusation against the Libyan regime for the bombing of a Pan Am flight over Lockerbie Scotland in 21 December 1988 led to Libya's political and economic isolation for almost a decade. In 1986, as retaliation on the part of Libyan authorities, the teaching of English was banned from schools and universities across the country, and was replaced with Russian as the primary foreign language in education (Abdullah, 2006). Nevertheless, teaching in certain science faculties, such as medicine, pharmacy and engineering, remained mainly in English (Maghur 2010). Libyan English teachers were also ordered to teach other subjects such as history and geography. Non-Libyan teachers and professors of English and even French, especially those from western countries, were notified that their contracts would not be renewed for the following school year (Najeeb and ELdokali 2011). Later, the government realized the error of this decision and determined to re-incorporate English into the curriculum in 1997. Therefore, non-Libyan teachers and professors were replaced by Libyan graduates who were neither qualified nor well-prepared to carry out the task of teaching English after. The government went so far to the point that a law was passed in November 2007 requiring all visitors from the US or UK to have an Arabic translation of their passports. The negative consequences of this isolation with regard to the English language were becoming evident. The policy was leading to inadequate standards of English teaching and the lack of a sufficient number of trained English teachers, a phenomenon which lasted for the next few decades. Orafi and Borg state that "English language teachers in Libya typically graduate from university with undeveloped spoken communication skills in English" (Orafi and Borg,2009, p. 251). The same view is found in Alhmali (2007), who points out that "a common feature shared by the majority of graduates from the English departments of Libyan university is their undeveloped listening and speaking skills" (p. 20).

Starting with the coup in 1969 all mass media were controlled by the government through the Secretariat (Ministry) of Information. The media were structured and centralized to support the objectives of the coup and to promote faithfully the ideology of its leader. McDaniel (1982, p. 187) states that "the Libyan broadcasting system has been a primary vehicle for political development along with the revolutionary goals set by Qadhafi." As a result, the number of newspapers and periodicals has declined sharply. Fewer than a dozen of newspapers were published in Arabic language and three in English; Al-fajr aljadid (the official mouthpiece of the regime which was published in Arabic); Az-zahf Alakhther (the ideological journal of the Revolutionary Committees RC[viii]); Al-Watan Alarabi (devoted to promoting pan-Arabism); Al-Jamaheria (a political journal of the RC); Reesalat Al-jehad (monthly published in Arabic, English and French to promote the Palestine case) and Aldawa Alislamia (a weekly journal published in Arabic and English by the World Islamic Call Society). All these newspapers were printed and distributed by two governmental-publishing houses; Aldar Al-arabia Lil-keetab and the General Company for Publishing. The number of works translated from and into Arabic also declined in Libya due to this centralization of publishing as well as the negative attitude towards foreign language, particularly English. For instance, in 1985 only two book were translated from Arabic into English.

The status of English language after the 17th Feb. Revolution

Today, English language is booming in Libya after the interim authority restored its relations with the West. Following the government decision to reintegrate English in the curriculum of Libyan schools at the elementary level, many decisions have been issued to improve the quality of English language teaching and learning. These include, but are not limited, to the decision to start teaching English in Libyan schools starting in the fifth grade

instead of at the seventh grade[ix], and the decision to pursue sending students abroad, especially to the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, on government scholarships. Nevertheless, many students have been unable to obtain admissions, simply due to their lack of English language proficiency. Currently there are more than 2000 Libyan scholarship students in the United States and about 500 in Canada according to the Canadian Bureau for International Education CBIE, many of whom have returned back to Libya after a year in ESL university schools as they could not meet the required English language proficiency. English is a mandatory subject that is first introduced at the elementary level, and it is the language of instruction in most faculties in national universities. Many university subjects such as medical and computer sciences, except for Arabic, are taught in English. However, the current shortage of qualified English language teachers and the unavailability of adequate teaching and learning materials, among other factors, will have a negative effect on the output of the English language teaching proves in Libya on the long run.

English is also increasingly playing a significant role in the popular culture of Libya; it is used alongside Arabic in road signs and names of the shops and cafés. Printed materials in places such as hotels, restaurants, banks, airports, travel Agencies and post offices are usually written both in English and Arabic. Global company's names such as MacDonald's, KFC, Subway, StarBucks, etc., are written only in English using the Latin alphabet and without any kind of translation, a practice that was completely forbidden during Gaddafi era whose aim was to eliminate foreign influence.

Moreover, thanks to the vast improvement in mass communications Libyan people, particularly younger generations, are more exposed than ever before to the English language through satellite television, the Internet, electronic and printed materials (videos, newspapers, magazines, etc.) and thus are aware, as never before, of western culture and civilization. English teaching centres are opened in major cities like Tripoli and Benghazi, and radio stations and TV broadcasts are encouraging wide public interest in English language and culture. For instance, before the uprising, Benghazi city had only two printed publications, *Benghazi Akhbar* and *Al-Qurnya*. Both were established during the limited reform period led by Gaddafi's son Saif Al-Islam. After the uprising, around 60 new print publications have been registered with the Benghazi Municipal Council with another seven pending by late May 2011 (Ghannman 2012). Many of them are produced on external printers and are all run by volunteers. To name some, *Intifahat Alahrar (*published weekly in both English and Arabic by Attawasul Foundation); *Libya Post* (published weekly in English and Arabic). According to Libya Post editor 'Tawfik Mansurey', "it [Libya Post] aims to provide both Libyan news and link to an international perspective, reproducing international stories with the aim of bringing the Western view to a Libyan audience".

In spite of the fact that the use of English in Libya is becoming increasingly widespread at both formal and informal levels, Arabic is without question the dominant language. It is the language of choice for most Libyans, not only when they speak informally in their everyday communication, but also in more formal contexts such as communication in higher education, business and policy.

Future scenarios and conclusion

The official LPP was long exploited by the Libyan regime as a mechanism for controlling the ethnic identity of Libyan Amazigh and for excluding their language and culture from education, media and administration. It was also used to resist the introduction of foreign

languages such as English, which was considered to be an imperial language that had to be rejected. Therefore, LPP in Libya was less about the function and structure of languages; rather it was more about ideology and hegemony. It gave privilege authority and legitimacy to Arabic language and thus created a hierarchy in which other languages and cultures were neglected and marginalized.

Given the current state of affairs in Libya, adopting a monolingual official language in which Arabic is the only official and dominant language would be the most unenviable future scenario. Even if the Libyan government constitutionally adopts a policy of equality between Arabic and Tamazight, Arabic remains the dominant language in Libya. A typical example is South Africa; in spite of the post-apartheid South African constitution that makes all the eleven major languages equal and official in South Africa, Afrikaans and English are still privileged languages among the others (Brock-Utne 2002). Nevertheless, the new democratic trend will provide the opportunity for Tamazight to be acknowledged as an unofficial sub-national language. One of Tripoli LNAC recommendations is to constitutionalize Tamazight as an official language along with Arabic. It also is expected to provide educational rights to Amazigh population and will give practical support for Tamazight language and its implementation, e.g., teaching Tamazight in Amazighian educational settings as a second language with an adequate number of hours. The immediate challenge in this regard is the shortage of the implementation materials (school curricula, textbooks, assessment criteria, resource materials, etc.). Furthermore, the current language ideology connected to Arabic language as the only language permitted in educational system may also function as a handicap in learning and teaching Tamazight. Moreover, the collapse of Gaddafi regime in February 17, 2011 and the increased prominence of English as an alternative option which gives access to advanced technology and science as well as the current shift in social attitude toward English are introducing it as another powerful competitor in the linguistics landscape of Libya.

In stead of a top-down approach, the future LPP may be derived from a bottom-up model in which governmental and nongovernmental organizations as well as individuals play an influential role in determining the basic principles of this policy. LPP, in fact, is a multifaceted phenomenon; it is basically controlled and constructed from above, but cannot be understood unless analyzed from below by the ordinary persons who are the object of the above actions from governments and their spokesmen and activists for national movements (Hobsbawm 2012). Decisions influenced by these activities are determined by both individuals (linguists, researchers, teachers, etc.) and formal organizations and institutions (universities, schools, professional associations, printing and publishing houses, Islamic schools, etc.). They also require official intervention (governments and their representatives) in order to be effective. Therefore, LPP in Libya should be an interdisciplinary, two-way process "*integrative model*" in which various external factors have influence and thus have to be considered, and neglecting these factors will endanger the success of this policy. Concerns include: demographic factors, cultural factors, ethno-linguistic factors and socio-ideological factors. Some of these factors, however, which may influence policy decisions, cannot always be predicted (e.g., political and economic changes). Surveys of attitudes toward Arabic, Tamazight and foreign languages, questionnaires and census reports carried out by the Ministry of Education, universities, researchers, etc., could be useful at this point in order to develop real assumptions and decisions on LPP based on empirical evidence. These activities may be helpful for Arabs and Amazigh alike in investigating and understanding their relationship to the particular sociolinguistic stetting of which they are part of.

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Fawzi Younis Hamed is a doctoral student of translation studies at Kent State University, Kent Ohio. He received his MA in translation studies from the Academy of Postgraduate Studies in Benghazi and earned his position as a staff member at Benghazi University. His research interest is focused on language planning, terminology planning and policy, terminology management and corpus terminology.

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[i] Since his coupe in 1969, Gadaffi had kept the country in a continuous political turmoil and economic unrests in order to maintain his iron grip on the country.

[ii] Different terms are used by different Berber groups to refer to the language they speak, e.g., Algerian Berber call their language 'Taznatit', while in Tunisia, the local Berber language is usually referred to as 'Shelha'. The term 'Tamazight' is used throughout this study to refer to all Berber languages because this term is commonly used by many Berber linguists. The term 'Amazigh' is also used to refer to Berber people.

[iii] Such as Al-Kindi who translated many Greek scientific and philosophical texts into Arabic and Thabit Bin Qurrah who translated ancient Greek philosophers like Apollonius, Archimedes, Euclid and Ptolemy.

[iv] This structure is unnatural in modern Arabic standards.

[v] In this context, Arabization is a post-colonial policy that attempts to stamp out the presence and influence of foreign languages, mainly French and English, and restore Arabic and Islamic identity in the Arab World.

[vi] The exact population of Amazigh in Libya is hard to ascertain because the government did not record Amazigh population in its census data. Official's population statistics usually group Arabs and Amazigh together.

[vii] One of the famous songs that Amazigh people sang during the uprising was a song called 'الثائر نجمنا' or 'Rebel Is Our Star.' This song helped in overthrowing Gadaffi as it was used as a homage to the fighters.

[viii] RC is a Movement that was established in 1985 mostly of youth individuals with modest education to promote and defend Gadhafi's revolutionary vision.

[ix] Primary education in Libya includes six grades (1-6). This basic education covers lessons in Arabic language, mathematics, science, history, geography, Islamic studies and Qur'an, art and recently English. The next three years (grade 7-9) take place at the preparatory level (middle school) followed by three years at secondary level (grade 10-12) where students may choose between studying science or arts to prepare to go on to university.

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