

Dialect Conflict and Identity Issues in Tlemcen Speech Community

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Abstract

The present article aims at serving as a reference work in the field of sociolinguistics. It also provides a concise summary of the sociolinguistic situation in an Algerian stereotyped speech community named Tlemcen. In addition, it sheds light on the status of its dialect, which most people consider as one of the most distinguished and stigmatized dialects in the Algerian society. This article also discusses the effect of bi-dialectalism on Tlemcen native speakers' identity. To reach the aim of the study, the following hypotheses are formulated: First, the widespread of the rural variety in Tlemcen speech community may affect the social and cultural identity of Tlemcenians. Second, Tlemcen native speakers show negative attitudes towards the use of the rural variety, especially among females. Yet, the mixed variety is gradually gaining a pleasant status in Tlemcen speech community and its adoption is rather acceptable. For the sake of collecting information about the issue, the researcher has used both qualitative and quantitative instruments. The research findings reveal that dialect shift has negative effects on the social and cultural identity of Tlemcen native speakers which may probably lead to an identity crisis among them. In addition, we have noticed that another variety, the mixed one (a mixture of urban and rural varieties), is progressively displacing the urban one, and may undoubtedly affect the maintenance of Tlemcen dialect.

Keywords: Dialect Contact, dialect shift, identity, language variation, Tlemcen Arabic

Cite as: Kaid Slimane, H. M. (2019). Dialect Conflict and Identity Issues in Tlemcen Speech Community. *Arab World English Journal*, 10 (4) -121-132
DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no4.10>