Teaching Tamazight in Mostaganem: Challenges and Perspectives

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Abstract
Teachers are crucial agents of any language education planning as they can make it succeed or fail. In this article, we intend to provide state of the art, concerning teaching Tamazight in Algeria through a case study. We conducted research in Mostaganem city where Tamazight is introduced in 9 primary schools. This investigation aims to study the role of Tamazight teachers' entry-profiles and the challenges they are facing. We collect data by employing questionnaires and interviews. These research methods help to give insightful information about the reality, needs, and challenges of Tamazight's instructors. The findings reveal that educators need training, and involvement of specialists to arrange the contexts where Tamazight is being introduced (attitudes). So, more efforts should be spent to improve the situation for achieving the objectives behind the formulation of the Tamazight policy.
Keywords: Education planning, language planning, teachers' training, Tamazight teachers' profiles, challenges

Introduction:
Algeria is a multilingual country par excellence. This linguistic diversity is due to the connections that the country had with different civilizations, and its geographical composition as it covers 2.381.741 square kilometers. The contacts were in forms of conquests, expansions and colonization that lasted from decades to centuries. To understand the origins of this mosaic composition, we should go back to history to describe the complexity of the language situation.

The country witnessed metamorphosis after independence in the education and schooling domain. The post-independence (1962) period urged the policymakers to resolve critical situations they faced in different areas as economy, health, illiteracy, to state but a few. Among the challenges that were prominent in that era was identity reconstruction because Algerians necessitated to identify themselves as a sovereign nation. One needs to emphasize the fact that the French colonizer attempted to eradicate the Algerians from their roots at all levels, including religion, culture, and language. Afraid from division, and following the premise of "one language one nation", the Algerian government opted for Arabic as the language of the nation due to socio-political and religious matters. Hence, postcolonial children in Algeria witnessed a transition from a colonial education where French was the sole medium of instruction, to a monolingual education in Arabic at primary schools (Benrabah, 2007). The situation in Algeria is not similar to any other context. One is to admit the complexity of the language situation in Algeria as Ephraim & Tabory describe it as:"The Algerian situation is complex, as it is at a crossroad of tensions between French, the colonial language, and Arabic, the new national language; Classical Arabic versus colloquial Algerian Arabic; and the various Berber dialects versus Arabic" (cited in Benrabeh, 2005, p. 380).

The language policy and planning, that the decisions makers followed, attributed a status of one language, Classical Arabic as the national and official, to the detriment of all the used varieties. Eventually, all the subjects were taught in Arabic, and French was a foreign language at primary schools (Grandguillaume, 2004). This language policy created many tensions as it does not reflect the segments of the populace. It resulted in many events and riots that took place in Kabylia in 1980s. It was until 1995 that Tamazight has been acknowledged as a language and not a dialect. Some regions started to teach the language in Kabilya (the cities of Bejaya and Tizi Ouezzou).

Due to many elements as globalization, economic reforms and other rebellious events in 2001, the country opens up to plurilingualism (Benrabah, 2005). In 2002, Tamazight became a national language and started to be introduced in some middle schools. However, many schools stopped importing it because of many issues. Among the factors, that hindered the process of teaching Tamazight, was that it was not a mandatory language but optional. Besides, the management of the language has raised other tensions in inserting it at schools as the alphabetical system. This problem was due to the need for an official body that takes the responsibility of managing the linguistic system. Additionally, the lack of trained teachers, who are specialized in Tamazigh, was also an influential cause. In 2016, Tamazight became an official language by a constitutional decree (Algerian Constitution, 2016). Subsequently, the school profile, ipso facto, has changed. Howbeit, despite its official status Tamazight is still optionally taught only in some primary schools of the national territory.

In this paper, we intend to provide state of the art, concerning teaching Tamazight in Algeria. Therefore, we opted for a case study in Mostaganem, a non- speaking Tamazight city. The teaching

of Tamazight in Mostaganem has started in 2017, 4 primary schools, and later in 2018, the ministry of education has added 5other institutions.

The primary objectives for this inquiry are:

-To examine the teaching situation so that we can present data that help for future reforms.

-To shed light on the reality that might cause jeopardy to the entailed education policy.

In this vein, our main research questions are:

-What is the Tamazight teachers' entry-profile?

-What are the challenges and difficulties the Tamazight teachers are experiencing in reality?

In an attempt to answer the research questions mentioned before we hypothesize:

- The ministry of education aware of the context's requirement as Tamazight is taught in many schools since 1995 (Kabylia).

-After twenty years of teaching Tamazight, the problems may still be similar though the change of its status.

Theoretical Review

Multilingualism can be a resource for some communities, yet a problem triggering for many. For instance, conflicts may result and cause harm to nations leading to dangerous consequences. To avoid such calamities, governments opt for remedial solutions to meet the needs of their populations. In this vein, Fishman defines language planning as "the organized pursuit of solutions to language problems, typically at the national level", (cited in Ferguson, 2006, p.1). However, there is no single formula or model that can operate for all language problems. This factor was the main critical point for traditional language planning where the policy adopted should function without taking into account a set of variables such as attitudes, and constant evaluation. Rubin (1971) emphasizes the role of evaluation in improving languages panning by gathering facts that help in readjusting decisions.

The term language planning was coined by Haugen (1959) who defines it as "the activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous speech community" (p.8). Though its existence before, the discipline of language planning flourished after the Second World War because different nations started to emerge (Baldauf Jr, 2012). The majority if not all of these countries are not monolingual. Therefore, they needed to find solutions to get rid of the colonizers' languages and select a language that reflects the country to bring in unity. The principal obstacle in language planning was the selection of the code that gathers the citizens at the domestic level.

The simplest definition that Kaplan & Baldauf Jr (1997) offer is that any intentional acts in changing language use or function in a speech community are language planning. The doers of these efforts vary from governments and ministries until members of families (Spolsky, 2009). In this regard, the governments can assign the bodies to do the activities of the planning and the policy, while we can also find NGOs or groups of individuals.

The process by which language planning and policy functions goes through two main levels: status and corpus planning (Heine, 1967; Kloss, 1969). Status planning refers to the role that a

language acquires by defining its function within society (John, 1996). In the Algerian situation, the national and official languages are examples of status planning that the constitution allocates to Arabic and Tamazight. This level of planning is societal as it deals with the role of the language within society. Corpus planning happens at the linguistic level (Ferguson, 2006). It helps to promote the language by working on its grammar, lexicon and orthography to facilitate the process of standardization. In the case of Tamazight, corpus planning is still struggling as no consensus is reached so far about the alphabetical system by which the language should be written. For instance, Tamazight textbooks are written in three scripts; Arabic, Latin and Tifinagh, hence, it is up to the teacher to choose the alphabetical system to teach the content.

Tamazight in the Algerian Schools
Before addressing the issue of Teaching Tamazight language, we felt a need to sketch the Algerian linguistic landscape. The constitution defines the linguistic structure by naming Arabic, followed by Tamazight the official languages. *Arabic* is a dubious term as it encompasses Classical Arabic (CA) or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). The sociolinguistic reality is quite contrasting. Arabic is not the mother tongue of Algerians but rather learn it at schools. The first language of an Algerian may be Dialectal Arabic (colloquial), Tamazight (one of its varieties) or French and in some cases, two languages are acquired simultaneously.

The shortcomings of language planning and policy in Algeria are still tangible. The aftermath of Arabization cannot be neglected as Mostari (2003) "Arabization of education was the outcome of an authoritarian decision taken with no consultation, no plan and method" (p.34). We may compare this process to the situation of teaching Tamazight. The language that is taught at schools is intricate to define. This language is an amalgam of the Berber varieties such as Cahouia, Tamazight, Taznatit, Kabyle, Mozabite, and Tamahaq. The speakers of those varieties locate different regions in Algeria.
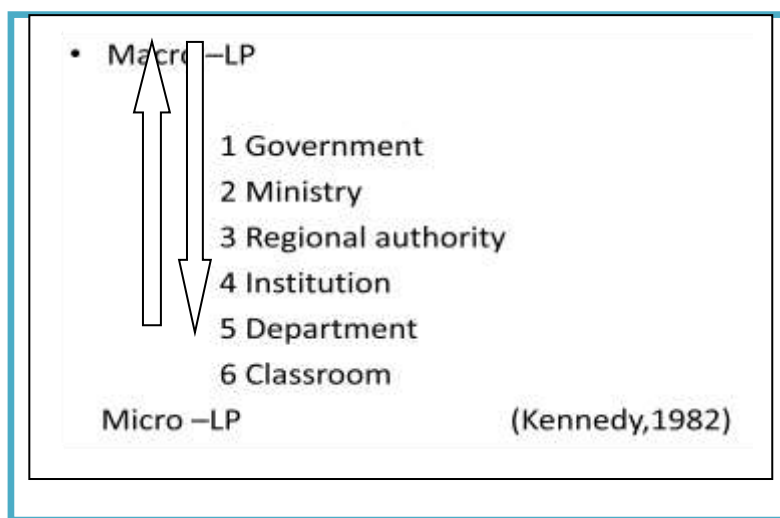
The language, that Algerian pupils learn at schools, is an amalgam of all these beside other new words and forms that were created since the beginning of its teaching. Dourari (2017) defines Tamazight taught at schools as an artificial language that was created. He believes that the process of initiating Tamazight teaching is similar to the process of Arabization. The challenges and difficulties that Tamazight teaching is witnessing are various and at different levels. The problems are jeopardizing the whole process and led to its regression as Sabri (2014) lists:

-The limited number of jobs offers for Tamazight teachers though hundreds of students graduate each year and are available to be instructors.
-The optional aspect of learning Tamazight at schools.
-The quality of pedagogical supports that do not promote the language adequately as they are not practical and written in different scripts. They reflect the lack of a unified and standard variety.
-Teachers are facing difficulties as they are not well prepared to use the approach applied by the ministry of education (Competency-Based Approach)
-Mixed classrooms where Tamazightophones and Arabophones with different levels in language mastery.

Among the instruments used in both language planning and policy is to teach the language that specialists attempt to find a solution through schooling as Ferguson (2006) suggests "education is probably the most crucial, sometimes indeed bearing the entire burden of LP implementation" (p.33). The applied models in the domain of teaching languages have faced different obstacles because the decision-makers took the problems for granted and isolated from their context. This situation has urged planners and linguists to consider other parameters for sound language policy. The evaluation of any process is presumed to view all the elements that are part of the decisions, whether they are the policymakers or the receivers. In this regard, Ingram (1989) posts:

> The language policy should identify the nature of the society whose needs it is to meet, the nature of those needs and hence the goals and objectives (both societal and personal) that are to be sought, and subsequently the policy proposals, their implementation, and the way in which the policy and its outcomes are to be evaluated and adjusted in the light of the evaluation. (p.54)

So, any evaluation is deemed to be undertaken in a dialectic interaction i.e., top down and bottom-up approaches. Otherwise, problems would occur, and the whole process of language policy or language planning in education fails. Kennedy (1982) demonstrates the levelling of the agents involved in language. The decisions about planning languages may be initiated at a high level by national authorities (in the situation of Algeria: the president) reaching its implementation in the classroom. This process proved its ineffectiveness when it does not acknowledge the interaction among all the constituents concerned with the policy.

- Macro –LP

  1 Government
  2 Ministry
  3 Regional authority
  4 Institution
  5 Department
  6 Classroom

  Micro –LP   (Kennedy,1982)

Figure.1 Levels of language planning (Kennedy, 1982, p. 6)

The literature in the fields of language policy and planning in education has given little interest in classroom practices and realities. Teachers' role can neither be restricted to imparting knowledge

nor to the classroom. The instructors' role is significant in influencing language policy in education positively or negatively. Diallo & Liddicoat (2015) indicate that language policy and language teaching (the implementation) are connected intricately. Teachers' profiles, training, attitudes are entangled in shaping their practices. These elements can ultimately determine the success or the failure of a whole process.

Research Methodology

Since it is a case study, the target population of this survey is teachers of Tamazight at nine primary schools of Mostaganem city (the whole number of schools that teach Tamazight). The city is not a Tamazightophone area where Tamazight has been taught since 2017.

Sample

The sample consists of nine educators: four males and five females. Only seven educators accepted to participate in the study. The survey covers both quantitative and qualitative aspects; hence two research instruments were used to reinforce the data collection. We opted for two research tools, questionnaires and interviews respectively. The questionnaire was semi-structured comprising open and close-ended questions that allow for statistical and qualitative data as well. Interviews were the following step for collecting insightful data that needed more clarifications that have not been provided by questionnaires. The interviews were semi-structured for qualitative data that allowed us to delve deeper into the content of the subjects that the teachers had at the university, the content of training they had the inspectors, and the challenges they are meeting and their needs as well.

Results and Discussion

In this section, we summarize the obtained data after conducting the research. The results were elucidated from questionnaires and interviews with Tamazight teachers in Mostaganem. We endeavored to achieve the objectives of this survey by analyzing the gathered information.

Table.1 *Tamazight teachers' Eethnographic profile*

Age	Gender	Experience	Degree	Specialty
30	Male	0	BA	Tamazight language and culture
24	Male	0	BA	Linguistics
31	Male	3	MA	Literature
34	Male	5	BA	Literature
36	Female	1	BA	Literature

26	Female	2	MA	Dialectology
30	Female	2	MA	Linguistics and geography

The table demonstrates general information about the primary school teachers of Tamazight in the city of Mostaganem. Their level varies between Bachelor and Master degree in the studies of Tamazight language. The aim behind emphasizing the specialty of their tertiary course is to see whether they intended to be future teachers from the university. Knowing that each specialty focuses on particular subjects related to the fields, these teachers were not trained to be educators, which means they had a little knowledge about the world of learning- teaching.

Table2: *Tamazight teachers' career choice*

Yes	No
06	01

The researchers asked Tamazight teachers if they embraced the world of teaching by choice. The answers of 6 teachers show that they opted for careers in the domain of education. On the other hand, only one practitioner admits that it is not his/her choice. It is noticeable that, though the different backgrounds that the teachers come from, the majority of the population has chosen to be teachers.

Table3: *Tamazight teachers' training*

Number	University	High Commission for Tamazight Affair	Department of National Education
Teachers	7	2	6

A significant constituent shaping teachers' profiles is the training they receive, as they are the basis that has them acquainted with the educational context. In this respect, we asked the educators about the types of training they did since they have started their careers. All the teachers did training at university as part of their course. In their training, they attend classes where they observe how teachers make their lessons, and a few occasions, the trainees are invited to present a section or a whole lecture. Six teachers out of seven benefited from training with the inspector throughout different periods. The duration of these training (pre-service and in-service) does not exceed two weeks. The entry or pre-service training are mandatory where they learn some basic notions of teaching methods and official documents.

Table 03*: Necessity of continuous training*

Yes	No	Needed Elements
7	0	Teaching methods
		Classroom and time management

All teachers believe that there is a necessity for other training as they lack mastery of teaching methods and classroom management. These elements are crucial for any rewarding teaching. If the teachers continue to struggle with these issues, reaching the objectives of the education policy would be challenging.

Interviews:

To have more insights and clarifications about the data gathered from questionnaires, we opted for interviews. The researchers asked the interviewees about the modules they had at university. The purpose of this query is to discerning their entry-profile .i.e. if they are aware of the basic notions of teaching. All the teachers had as subject modules teaching and learning theories and educational psychology in the BA degree. The specialties of those, who continued to Master degree, have no relation to teaching and learning. As far as the training are concerned, we divided the teachers in the sample into two categories: 4 teachers who started in 2017 and 5 in 2018. The educators had a pre-service training of 2 weeks that covers how to teach, some basics on classroom management, and official documents. However, in 2018, a designed syllabus was elaborated for non-Tamazight speakers where some elements have been omitted or added.

Since we noticed from the questionnaire that the teachers are facing challenges to perform their job, we asked the educators about the contact frequency with the inspectors and meetings. The newly recruited (2018) did meet him only once, whereas (2017) teachers met him twice in (trainings). Even though, teachers contact him frequently for the obstacles or problems they face for instance: neology (new terms and concepts that still emerge due to the lack of unification). Many new words are emerging as the process of Tamazight management is still taking place. This urges teachers to seek explanations from their inspectors due to the lack of dictionaries that cover all the new linguistic items.

As a concluding question, we asked the teachers about the challenges they are confronting in performing their task. They believe that there are elements that are making teaching Tamazight exhausting. Since all of the instructors are novice, they feel that some problems cannot be treated at their level but instead should already have been considered before introducing Tamazight at schools. Attitudinal issues where parents and even administrative staffs did not accept the Tamazight instruction in schools as its insertion is abruptly precipitous. Though its official status, Tamazight still struggles to position itself with the other languages taught in Algerian schools because of its optional learning.

Recommendations

Relying on the data we gathered from this research and the body of the literature that has been written in this field we suggest that:

-Tamazight teachers need in-service training frequently to learn about how to remedy issues as time and classroom management.

-The ministry of education is supposed to train more inspectors to cover the needs of instructors as the number of demands and challenges is increasing. Four inspectors to cover a whole country are not enough.

-The schools, where Tamazight is to be introduced, should be prepared ahead as the success of teaching Tamazight does not depend solely on teachers but on a whole educational context.

-Parents are also influential agents in affecting the motivation of the pupils, thus their attitudes should be considered.

Conclusion

For any sound language planning and policy, evaluation is key for its success or decline. The previous studies dealt mainly with the macro levels and paid little attention to the microstructures such as the classroom. Thus, in this article, we address the issue of teachers' profiles since they are fundamental agents in mediating language learning and acquisition. Their university level, trainings, the challenges, and their needs, are elements that researchers need to scrutinize as they may hinder the objectives that the planners have set. From the result we obtained in Mostaganem city which is a non-Tamazight speaking community, we can deduce that different agents (policymakers, linguists, ministry of education) need to spend more efforts such as conducting attitudinal analyses and continuous specialized training for the Tamazight teachers in non-speaking Tamazight regions. For a change that leads to progress, we need all the linkages of language planning and policy to be invested so that the context would be in favor of promoting Tamazight education planning.

Note: In the body of literature, there was no agreement on using the terms language policy and planning interchangeably. Some theorists assign each concept a particular definition. In this article, we used the terms of language planning and language policy synonymously.

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