

Linguistic action between cultural alienation and societal void: towards a renewed perspective on the difficulties of learning Arabic

الفعل اللغوي بين الاستلاب الثقافي والفراغ المجتمعي
- نحو فهم جديد لصعوبات تعلم اللغة العربية -

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Abstract:

Many people tend to overlook the fundamental essence of language and its deeper purpose in terms of use and preservation. Yet, communication as a principle imposes numerous disciplines that must be regulated and cultivated to fulfil its role effectively. Communication, by its very nature, is profound in definition and multifaceted in structure, existing wherever human beings exist. Thus, our concern with language must begin with its recognition as the primary tool for achieving both internal and external communication, whether in written or spoken form.

This neglect has contributed to the marginalisation of the Arabic language and its detachment from other linguistic traditions. Such detachment is reflected, among other indicators, in the tendency of its speakers to engage in knowledge production through the language of the Other, as well as in the uncritical adoption of intellectual frameworks of limited relevance—

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particularly in the humanities and in fields addressing religious plurality.

Keywords: Learning Arabic- Arabic as a Foreign Language - The Arabic Language between the Self and the Other - Language and Identity - Language and Culture

ملخص:

يمكن للعديد من الناس تجاهل المحتوى الأساسي للغة، أو غرضها العميق من حيث الاستخدام والرعاية وبالتالي فإن مبدأ الاتصال، الذي يفرض العديد من التخصصات التي يجب السيطرة عليها وتعزيزها لتحقيق ذلك المبدأ، وكما كان التواصل عميقاً في تعريفه وفروعه من حيث البنية الموجودة في كل مكان تواجد الإنسان كان اهتمامنا باللغة بالدرجة الأولى كأداة أولى، تدرك مبدأ التواصل الداخلي والخارجي، نظاماً واستعمالاً/ كتابة وتداولاً/ حديثاً.

تهدف هذه الدراسة في مجملها إلى إزالة الغبار عن بعض القضايا الثقافية المتسببة في عزل اللغة العربية ثقافياً عن اللغات الأخرى، وذلك بمشاركة أهلها في العديد من المواطن كإنتاج المعرفة بلغة الآخر، واستيراد العلوم التي لا فائدة منها وخاصة في يتعلق بالعلوم الإنسانية والدراسات التي تتعلق بالتعدد الديني.

كلمات مفتاحية: تعلم اللغة العربية؛ اللغة العربية للناطقين بغيرها؛ اللغة العربية بين الأنا والآخر؛ اللغة والهوية؛ اللغة والثقافة.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ibn Jinnī states that language consists of sounds through which each people express their intentions. A contemporary

reading of this statement immediately directs us to the concept of purpose or aim (gharaḍ), regardless of the first part that defines language as sound, i.e., its structural features. From here emerges our proposal for the title of this paper on Arabic for non-native speakers. In Arabic, we do not always find the new element that non-native speakers seek—an element that motivates them to learn the language. This is a crucial point that must be emphasised, since the globally dominant language today is the language of need—the language of science and technology.

When we observe that certain Arabic-speaking countries themselves employ a second language for science, we find that non-native speakers consequently neglect Arabic. Therefore, the Arab nation must take an interest in positioning Arabic as an alternative to global languages by employing it in modern scientific production, particularly in critical fields within the humanities and the technological sciences.

It is equally important to note the inherent features of Arabic that qualify it as a global language—its structural and morphological systems, as well as its syntactic properties. Yet we propose that one should avoid what hinders non-native speakers from comprehending Arabic at its deep structural level, where lexical, contextual, and systemic meanings are difficult to grasp. These aspects must be carefully considered, especially by teachers of Arabic, who are called upon to adapt their pedagogy according to learners' levels

Moreover, Arabic-language production in domains relevant to non-native speakers is still scarce compared to that of other languages. For instance, there is a noticeable lack of targeted stories or works that highlight the importance of Arabic. Many issues, then, accompany the learning of Arabic in the Arab world

for non-native speakers—whether related to its inherent features or to the absence of adequate Arabic production that generates motivation (the purpose of reading in Arabic). All of these matters are addressed in detail in this article.

It is often overlooked that the essence of any language lies in its content and ultimate purpose—its mode of use and the attention given to it. Communication, which language serves, imposes numerous conditions that must be mastered and promoted to realise its function. Since communication is, at its core, a universal human practice that takes multiple forms wherever human beings exist, our interest is directed first and foremost toward language as the primary tool that ensures both internal and external communication, spoken and written.

Communication in language should not be reduced to a closed, binary transaction. Rather, it is a philosophy of interaction that yields benefits for the language itself, as well as for its speakers and learners alike. Like other languages, Arabic has in recent times been afflicted by a chronic ailment, as it has come to be regarded narrowly as the possession of the Arabs. In this paper, however, we seek to address a central question: why do non-native speakers learn Arabic? We approach this question by analysing the counterpoint that ought to have been promoted in ways that would serve the language. We focus in particular on Algeria as an example, given its multicultural and multilingual character, and we attempt to present the study along several axes that address negative factors which may discourage non-Arabs from speaking or learning Arabic. From this, we hope to provide solutions that could contribute to the service of the Arabic language.

2. What Novelty Does Arabic Offer that Motivates Non-Native Speakers to Learn It? The Problem of Knowledge Production

Amidst the global flow of knowledge and the rapid advancement of science and technology, many seek novelty in the diverse fields of knowledge offered by different nations, whether in technology, the natural sciences, or the humanities. This point is of utmost importance, for the world today operates according to the logic Ibn Khaldūn once articulated: “the vanquished is enamoured with imitating the victor.” Thus, we must seriously ask: what new contribution do Arab countries offer that might encourage the study of Arabic as a means of accessing innovative knowledge?

The reality is that the Arab world is in urgent need of what may be termed a “knowledge revolution,” and the first tool to carry such a revolution is language. Yet in Arab countries, we rarely find factors that encourage non-native speakers to learn Arabic, largely due to the noticeable absence of meaningful participation in global knowledge production. Much of the local intellectual output consists either of translations of Western achievements or of secondary analyses and commentaries on them. Consequently, we observe that many Arab researchers turn back to the origin of knowledge in their own mother tongues, rather than producing original contributions in Arabic in fields that dominate global intellectual discourse—such as psychology, sociology, literature, politics, and cultural studies.

As a result, non-native speakers show little interest in the intellectual output presented by Arab scholars, no matter how elegantly packaged it may be. The contemporary world is shaped by a scientific revolution that demands not ornamental

intellectual rhetoric, but rather practical solutions and genuine contributions to pressing cultural and societal challenges facing the global community.

3. Culture, Universality, Identity, the Self, and the Other

-The Question of Cultural Emptiness-

These are expressions now presented on golden platters, deceiving many Arab intellectuals who are called upon to preserve and teach the Arabic language in its particularity. For a human being asserts his existence through what distinguishes him from the “Other,” and thus imposes upon the other the necessity of learning the language he speaks and writes in. Yet the idea of “culture” often neutralises much of this, making the learning of Arabic appear as something marginal, unnecessary for the individual, since it is readily available to everyone in multiple languages.

However, one must not forget that culture, in its global sense, first and foremost dissolves the individual along with all his particularities, thereby effacing him and rendering him unnecessary within the framework of culture and globalisation—especially when the very source of “globalisation” is the Other. Here, the question arises: what need does the Other have to learn Arabic, given that it is framed merely as part of “global culture” and not as an originating reference to which one must return? This poses a grave danger to both the individual and the language, particularly as we witness an increasing number of intellectual elites embracing this idea.

In this context, the logical relation of entailment is overturned and reversed, bringing us back to the very starting point: the failure to realise the desired equality through the

dissemination of scientific knowledge in a manner that would foster its acceptance in its native tongue.

Language is identity, but “identity” is not language. In other words, language is not the sole constituent of identity, even if it is among the most fertile, profound, and complex of its elements. The relationship between language and identity is thus one of the particular to the universal. Identity manifests itself in many forms beyond language, for identity, in its simplest sense, is nothing but those commonalities or shared denominators that unite a group of people and distinguish them. Language alone does not accomplish this task, which brings us back to the other essential components of identity. Since language is an integral part of identity, affirming it is tantamount to affirming identity itself. Accordingly, serving identity obliges the Other—once he respects identity—to respect the language as well.

Even within the framework of global culture, we find little incentive to encourage the learning of Arabic, given that most Arab students turn to the West for their intellectual formation. Much of contemporary Arab culture is built upon what we import through translations and readings of Western thought and philosophy, not to mention the mediocrity and weakness that can often be observed.

Conversely, it may well be incumbent upon us, as speakers of Arabic, to establish a deeply rooted and authentic cultural alternative that distinguishes us from others and perhaps compels non-Arabic speakers to seek what is genuinely new in the scientific domains we contribute. Here, we must not forget what is only modestly invoked today, particularly when measured against misleading Western concepts such as “objectivity” and

“ideology”: namely, identity—with its principles, foundations, and components across the various fields of human knowledge.

In today’s world of globalisation and cultural universalism, speaking of a “mother culture” or of personal specificities is increasingly cast as a lapse into unacceptable “ideology,” and thus as inherently unobjective. This is a perilous situation, as it compels us to return repeatedly to the “centre” and abandon all elements that shape the very notion of difference—whether in religion, politics, culture, knowledge, or language. If this is the path we choose, then we must inevitably relinquish what is most our own. How, then, can we expect the other to embrace a cultural offspring that we ourselves have forsaken and cast adrift within the tide of globalisation?

In this regard, Algeria offers a telling example. Former Algerian Minister of Education Ali Ben Mohammed exposed the true dimensions of the battle over language and identity in Algeria, and the role France played during its colonisation—and continues to play—in this struggle.

In a television interview on Al Jazeera’s program “Bila Hudood” (Without Borders), aired on Wednesday (21/10/2015), Ben Mohammed stated that the struggle over language and identity in Algeria never actually “erupted,” because it has never subsided; it has always been present. He further explained that the conflict is rekindled each time an official in the Ministry of Education speaks of reform, particularly when the reformists aim to displace Arabic from the prominent status it attained after the French coloniser was expelled.

Tracing the roots of the linguistic conflict, Ben Mohammed recalled that when France withdrew from Algeria in 1962, it also

removed all French teachers employed in Algerian schools. At that time, only about 3,000 teachers remained in the country, and they soon left the education sector for other fields, as Algeria urgently required skilled professionals and could find them only among its teachers. This created a severe educational crisis, compelling Algeria to seek assistance from its Arab neighbours by recruiting teachers from abroad.

As for the broader Arab world, Ben Mohammed noted that it has become commonplace in the East to assume that “Arabization” is uniquely a problem of the Maghreb, particularly Algeria—an assumption he rejects as erroneous. He argued that Arabic suffers across all Arab countries, describing it as “mummified” within the much-neglected Arabic language academies. Moreover, the majority of Arab universities conduct instruction in English or French while neglecting Arabic.

He added pointedly: *“In some Gulf countries, if you cannot speak English, you cannot even order a cup of coffee.”* Ben Mohammed expressed his astonishment at this situation, remarking: *“Look at Iran, Turkey, and many other Asian and European countries, where education and public life are conducted exclusively in their national languages.”* (2)

The Arabic language, by contrast, has been destabilised amid the forces of cultural globalisation—especially when such destabilisation is deliberately pursued by internal or external authorities, as was the case in Algeria. This, in turn, has negatively affected the willingness to learn Arabic, both among Algerians themselves and among those coming to Algeria, regardless of their nationality.

4. Writing for the Other... Where Do We Stand?

The culture of indifference and reclining in the lap of the West.

We observe that many writings produced today by Arab scholars and authors are addressed to the Self under the guise of the Other—that is, they employ the cultural codes of the Other to articulate issues specific to the Arab intellectual context. In Algeria, for instance, contemporary fiction often takes on a Western style while being set within an Arab environment, bearing Western cultural markers even as it depicts a non-Arab society.

This creates a paradox that ultimately casts its shadow upon the Arabic language. A non-Arabic speaker is not encouraged to read such works in Arabic; rather, he awaits their translation into his own language, since the literary or intellectual product is already gaining traction and reflecting its particularities—even if written in a language other than his own. By contrast, if the work were presented with the authentic characteristics and identity of the producing society, it might encourage readers to engage with that culture as represented in the literary work—even if mediated through another language—and eventually lead them back to the original language.

This trajectory would promote the learning of Arabic, a dynamic that history itself bears witness to. This evidence reinforces our logical obligation: to orient our reception of culture in a way that ultimately serves the Arabic language.

5. The Inferiority Complex and the Language War

5.1. Fear of Criticism

Many Arab intellectuals suffer from an inferiority complex regarding the production of knowledge in Arabic, especially

within today's dynamic intellectual landscape. They write very little in Arabic, and when they do, their work often consists of translating Western texts. This situation presents a central dilemma: who, in fact, is encouraging whom?

This problem is particularly acute in the humanities, which play a fundamental role in shaping a nation's identity and unique characteristics, whether positively or negatively. In this context, Arabs have become followers rather than innovators; they produce knowledge that serves other cultures, while their engagement with their own is frequently reduced to harsh criticism. They measure their own intellectual traditions with a yardstick of corruption and view Arab intellectual output through a lens of diminishment—applying Western tools of analysis, particularly in literary criticism and, more specifically, theories of reading and interpretation.

Linguistic hegemony is the phenomenon in which a dominant foreign language exerts control over a people's mindset at the expense of their native tongue. Under such conditions, speakers begin to believe they must adopt the foreign language in their daily interactions, in education, and in domains such as philosophy, literature, governance, law, and administration. This hegemony operates through a mechanism that allows it to influence even the intellectual elite, leading them to assume their mother tongue is inferior to the dominant language. Consequently, they gradually abandon their native language and may even come to disparage it (3).

Many may describe these words of mine as reactionary or as a departure from the authority of global epistemology. Yet the truth of our Lord—exalted be He—is confirmed in His words:

“Never will the Jews or the Christians be satisfied with you until you follow their way” [Qur’an 2:120].

The term *millah* (way) need not be confined to religion alone; it can extend to encompass everything that constitutes the essence of human existence. It is therefore incumbent upon us to begin from our own particularities—those capable of enriching what is called “universality”—rather than interpreting universality in a way that strips us of our specificity. Without our unique contributions, we are left with nothing new to benefit either ourselves or the Other.

Learning a foreign language signifies more than acquiring a communication tool; it implies adopting a new way of life, a new culture, and a process of identifying with the Other to the point of conflating it with the Self. When such a language enters the sphere of another, it tends to displace and ultimately replace it. Even if the foreign language later recedes, its influence remains woven into the fabric of the original language. This process simultaneously humanises (or domesticates) and alienates the native tongue.

As Day points out, there is a legitimate fear that the tide of English dominance as a second language exacerbates this injustice by privileging only a limited segment of people who achieve proficiency in it (4).

5. 2. Reading Society... Language and Society: (A Personal Viewpoint)

While I am neither a specialist in sociology nor deeply versed in its global theories, I am firmly convinced that every society advances through its own particularities. I also believe that no individual can truly assume another's identity, let alone

that of an entire society. The value of particularity is evident across all domains of knowledge and culture. Importing modes of life alien to an Arab Muslim society—especially those drawn from Western contexts—and attempting to reproduce them in our daily practices and behaviours only generates contradictions that ultimately cause individuals to lose themselves.

Language is the emblem of existence and identity. It is the faithful repository of belonging and the memory of the future, vanishing only with the disappearance of the nation itself. Language constitutes the nation's essence—the source that defines its fundamental features and expresses its nature. It is bound to heritage, past, and present, and it delineates the future as it develops in tandem with the evolution of human and technological relations.

Discussing the relationship between language, discourse, and society requires examining a network of interrelated issues: the relation of language to power, ideology, and culture; theoretical levels and epistemological questions such as the origin of language, the authority of language and the authority supporting it; and the distinctions linguistics draws between langue, parole, and discourse, as well as the constitutive units of discourse, and the division between internal and external linguistics. It also entails considering epistemological questions raised by these relationships within a field of knowledge still striving to establish its methods, concepts, and research problems—namely, sociolinguistics (or the sociology of language). This field presents numerous difficulties, not least the enduring debate between linguists and sociologists over the social nature of language (5).

6. The Machine... Technology... Technological Modernity The Technological Obsession

This subject is familiar to both specialists and laypeople; nevertheless, any serious study must address it. This is particularly true regarding the phenomenon often described as a "technological invasion." Technology imposes its own language upon societies, irrespective of their particularities, cultural attachments, or claims to neutrality. This dynamic is especially evident in the realm of technological applications.

It is worth highlighting an often-overlooked fact: technological innovation, in all its forms, demonstrates that imitation and parallel production do little to promote the learning of Arabic. Such efforts primarily benefit the local context and fail to compel others to engage with the language. For instance, while Algeria has many factories producing cars, electronics, and other industrial goods, their marketing is largely confined to Algeria and, at best, neighboring countries. The primary justification offered is self-sufficiency, overlooking the fact that cultural "particularity" imposes demands that extend far beyond it. This reality is readily apparent in the language and concepts of economics.

In the era of globalisation, no country can afford to remain isolated from global developments. This reality underscores the necessity of learning a dominant foreign language—particularly one that is highly dynamic and integral to technological advancement, like English. Mastery of such a language facilitates communication with the wider world, enables societal integration, allows for the adoption of global achievements, and even contributes to the pool of global innovation. However, this pursuit must occur in tandem with the mastery of one's primary

instrument of communication: the mother tongue.

Many countries today find themselves torn between two opposing orientations. The first insists on embracing the achievements of modern civilisation—including the teaching of one or more foreign languages—convinced that isolation is futile in an age of globalisation. Proponents of this view argue that learning another language alongside the native tongue is the optimal path to broadening horizons and enriching experience.

The second orientation, however, warns that introducing a foreign language into the general education system—particularly at the foundational level—risks fragmenting culture and national identity, both of which are embodied in the mother tongue. Proponents of this view argue that a foreign language is never taught in a vacuum; it is not merely a system of vocabulary and grammar, but a vessel for the cultures, customs, and values of its speakers. Consequently, it inevitably shapes the learner's emotional and cultural fabric (6).

Here in lies the crux of the matter: particularity demands caution in keeping pace with civilization, just as integration demands caution to avoid the loss of that particularity. Consequently, the relationship risks becoming an equation with two unknowns—identity and modernization—unless we exercise vigilance in both directions. This necessity compels us to strategically leverage key institutions to establish a balance: enforcing the primacy of Arabic in all local domains while simultaneously learning and engaging with the modern world through a second language.

7. The Second Language: Concept, Equivalence, and Disparity

• Sleeping on the Paved Sides

In numerous Arab states, the introduction of a foreign language at an early educational stage has generated profound implications for the acquisition and mastery of Arabic. Within the dense technological environment—dominated by languages other than Arabic—Arabic speakers themselves often become alienated from their own linguistic capital. For non-Arabs, the situation is even more pronounced: upon entering an Arab country, they frequently encounter their own language—whether French, English, or another—in public spaces, bookstores, cafés, and commercial centres. This ubiquity reduces the perceived necessity of learning Arabic as a functional or symbolic medium of integration.

Algeria exemplifies this tension. The early introduction of French at the primary level, often before students have developed full competence in Modern Standard Arabic, places them in a linguistic field where French dominates both formal and informal domains—from school to household to street. The sociocultural environment further valorises foreign languages, particularly French and increasingly English, while relegating Arabic to a secondary status limited to colloquial use. This reproduces what Pierre Bourdieu describes as linguistic inequality: the unequal distribution of linguistic capital that confers prestige and power upon certain languages at the expense of others. The result is an internal cultural struggle, where Arabic is devalued locally even before facing external global pressures.

Consequently, foreign residents in Algeria and the broader

Arab world rarely invest effort in learning Arabic, except in exceptional cases, as the linguistic economy of daily life does not necessitate it. This reality underscores a fundamental principle of language planning: a language thrives not through rhetorical glorification or nostalgic celebration, but through institutional investment and demonstrable utility.

Therefore, supporting Arabic necessitates a deliberate reconfiguration of linguistic hierarchies. This entails confronting the psychological barriers—a kind of linguistic inferiority complex—that diminish the language's stature in the eyes of its own speakers. As the late Algerian president Houari Boumédiène asserted, true respect for Arabic is demonstrated not by poetic hymns to its past glory, but by its active deployment as a medium of production across all fields of knowledge. Only through such praxis can Arabic reclaim its role as a language of epistemic sovereignty, compelling both native speakers and foreign communities to acknowledge its central importance.

8. National Language Policy in Universities and the Language Struggle

8.1. The Intellectual Authority as a Complex Mechanism...?

In Algerian universities—particularly within technical fields—French remains the dominant medium of instruction, with English being timidly introduced. This situation places Algerian students in a severe dilemma regarding their academic trajectory, and it negatively affects the status of Arabic. The Arabic language greatly depends on universities for its practical application across diverse fields of knowledge, given that the university functions both as a scientific platform of crucial importance and as a vital locus of cultural production and representation. Addressing this issue inevitably intersects with

political considerations, especially when examining state policies that appear to support Arabic while simultaneously privileging other languages. This is evident in the fact that many Algerian officials deliver their public speeches in French, thereby undermining Arabic's prestige on the international stage. Genuine service to the Arabic language must begin with such institutional platforms, since respect for a language necessitates its active use, rather than leaving it confined to mere slogans propagated by marginalised segments of society.

8. 2. Language and Religion: Defending God...?

The interplay between language and religion necessitates learning and knowledge, especially within the global context of today. Numerous religious questions—whether framed positively or negatively—are tied directly to Arabic. Islam itself is inextricably linked with the Arabic language and with Arab identity. For non-Arabs and non-Muslims, entering Islam requires learning Arabic to access its teachings, principles, and the reading of both the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition. Yet, within the framework of global politics, Islam is often equated with extremism, radicalism, and terrorism, which indirectly stigmatises the Arabic language. Under such a distorted equation, learning Arabic and engaging with its texts are perceived as synonymous with learning extremism and rejecting modernity and universal human values. This perception leads non-Arabs to pose the recurring question: Why should I learn Arabic, a language associated with violence, intolerance, and fanaticism? Such misperceptions—whether accurate or not—are largely the result of the intellectual and ethical “commodities” we ourselves project to the world.

Nevertheless, many Westerners embrace Islam precisely for

its principles that serve humanity—justice, tolerance, love, and cooperation—as well as for its spiritual dimensions that provide psychological comfort, such as prayer, supplication, communal worship, charity, and acts of kindness. For this reason, many Westerners pursue the study of Arabic, viewing it as the sole linguistic medium granting access to the path of salvation and the spiritual dimension absent from their own lives.

It is therefore incumbent upon speakers of Arabic to capitalize on this reality. This can be achieved by embodying the ethical and spiritual teachings of Islam, simplifying religious discourse—including fatwas and guidance—and avoiding excessive rigidity when addressing social issues. Such an approach, aligned with the exemplary model of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), fosters acceptance. History attests that similar conduct has greatly contributed to the spread of the Arabic language.

Moreover, the well-known maxim that “the defeated is always enamoured with the victor” applies here: culturally, linguistically, in dress, and even in modes of thought. This dynamic has led young people to turn away from Arabic, perceiving it as incapable of meeting their aspirations or addressing their future ambitions. Labour market requirements further intensify this tendency, as fluency in French or English is often indispensable for securing employment to meet the necessities of life.

Despite these challenges, Arabic will inevitably reclaim its rightful position and achieve global status, for two principal reasons: first, because it is the language of the religion that God has promised to make prevail over all others—“It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to make it

prevail over all religion” [Qur’an 9:33] ; and second, because Arabic is inherently equipped to carry this universal, civilizational, and humanistic message.

This truth has been affirmed by numerous scholars and thinkers. For this very reason, however, Arabic has been portrayed by the architects of “Islamophobia” as a threat to Western civilisation. Within the framework of systematic globalisation, any culture or language that distinguishes itself from the West is viewed as a civilizational threat. As the Islamic identity is the most distinct from Western civilisation, it has been positioned as the greatest obstacle to globalisation. Consequently, the primary target becomes the Arabic language itself, as it embodies the essence of this religion. (7)

9. Popular Discourse and the Characteristics of Linguistic Exchange Cultural Emptiness as a Postcolonial Substitute...

One of the most significant factors that drives the learning of Arabic into obscurity lies in popular linguistic practices and the absence of linguistic regulation. When speaking broadly of Arabs, the Algerian case is illustrative. Within Algerian society, large segments of the population—despite their linguistic vulnerability—strikingly abandon Standard Arabic, even though they do not possess true mastery of foreign languages. As a result, many Algerians resort to a hybrid linguistic practice that combines colloquial Arabic with French. This situation generates two interrelated problems.

The first challenge is the predominance of colloquial speech, which discourages non-native speakers from learning Standard Arabic. The objective is not to eliminate dialects but to regulate their use, particularly in sensitive domains involving

interaction with foreigners. These domains include economic institutions like banks and educational institutions like universities—spaces characterised by significant contact with outsiders. Enforcing Standard Arabic in such contexts would encourage, and even compel, non-native speakers to learn it.

Airports offer a telling example: passengers—both Arab and foreign—are permitted to communicate in any language, most often French in North Africa and English in the Arab East. This practice undermines the credibility of Arabic and diminishes its appeal, as it negates any practical need to use the language. However, if the use of Arabic were mandated and systematically institutionalised in these spaces, we would witness tangible results. Such institutional efforts must be supported by complementary actions: producing learning resources tailored for non-Arabs, establishing specialised schools, and seriously studying the difficulties associated with learning Arabic. Once a practical need or willingness to learn is established, effective scientific methods can then be developed to facilitate acquisition, both at the cognitive level (through books and curricula) and the practical level of daily communication.

A similar challenge emerges in the domain of advertising, both in audio-visual media and in public spaces. In Algeria, for example, most commercial signage is displayed in French, with limited instances in English, but rarely in Arabic. This discourages engagement with Arabic as a language of modernity and communication. While the economic utility of foreign languages is undeniable, their dominance in the public sphere inevitably undermines the Arabic language, regardless of the positive intentions behind their use.

The prevalence of foreign-language labelling on consumer goods, no matter how basic, has become a cultural trend in contemporary society. But what kind of culture compels individuals to uproot themselves, abandon their linguistic heritage, and seek belonging in a soil where they cannot cultivate an identity—thereby subjecting themselves to unnecessary cultural conflict?

This phenomenon permeates broader social and cultural practices across the Arab world. As Ibn Khaldūn observed, the vanquished invariably emulate the victor, adopting the latter's culture, language, dress, and even modes of thought. This dynamic is perpetuated by what Malek Bennabi termed the “colonizability” of a people. Today, many Arab societies have internalised the perception that Arabic is inadequate for the demands of contemporary social and technological life.

This leads us to a crucial area of inquiry: the role of power and politics in shaping Arab individuals’ attitudes toward the Arabic language. In particular, we must ask how intentional state policies can be mobilised to foster an awareness of Arab identity and to reaffirm Arabic as a central vehicle of cultural self-definition.

10. CONCLUSION

This study yields several findings and recommendations aimed at streamlining the effort to restore Arabic to its rightful global standing. The proposed solutions address structural aspects of the language, including grammatical simplification and other key linguistic concerns.

We argue that the problem runs deeper than many of the

theoretical frameworks currently under discussion—frameworks whose time may not yet have come. Among the critical issues are the following:

- ▬ The cultural dimension within Arab societies. The adoption and imposition of foreign cultural practices—particularly Western ones—undermines Arabic both locally and internationally. Thus, it is necessary to reassert Arab culture in all its linguistic, scientific, and religious dimensions. Success in this endeavour at the local level would inevitably reinforce the global status of Arabic.
- ▬ Local pedagogical frameworks. Current approaches to the teaching of Arabic and foreign languages must be reassessed to ensure that Arabic does not lose its centrality within Arab societies. The excessive reliance on foreign languages in local contexts weakens Arabic, thereby elevating the status of these languages—even in the eyes of non-native speakers who engage with the Arab world. Arab educational policy must therefore strike a balance: without rejecting global scientific engagement, it must nonetheless secure for Arabic a status of equal standing with other world languages, beginning at the local level.
- ▬ Writing as a vehicle of linguistic authority. Writing enforces the use of a language. Arab scholars and intellectuals must therefore work to promote Arab culture and Islamic thought through scholarly works disseminated within global knowledge networks. This would serve a dual purpose: the assertion of Arab culture, and the reinforcement of Arabic as its primary medium.
- ▬ The role of universities. Algerian and Arab universities in general can serve Arabic by mobilising individuals proficient in foreign languages to engage in translation, thereby enriching

Arabic with global knowledge and ensuring its use in instruction. At the same time, foreign languages should not be neglected, as they enrich Arab-Islamic culture with access to global knowledge and facilitate engagement with the wider world.

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