

Analyzing the Sociolinguistic Profile of the Algerian Community in the UK in terms of French Language Use: The Case of Émigré Ph.D. Students

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Abstract : the present study reports on second language use among Algerian international students in the UK. In Algeria, French has an important status among the Algerian verbal repertoires due to colonial reasons. This has triggered many language conflicts and many debates among policy makers in Algeria. In higher education, Algerian English students' sociolinguistic profile is characterised by the use of French as a sign of prestige. What may leave room for debate is the effect of crossing borders towards the UK as a result of international mobility programmes, a transition which could add more complexity since French, is not so significant as a language in the UK context. In this respect, the micro-objective is to explore the fate of French use among Ph.D. students in the UK as a newly established group vis-à-vis English. To fulfill the purpose of the present inquiry, the research employs multiple approaches in which semi-structured interview is a primary source of data to know participants' attitudes about French use, targeting both their pre-migratory experience and current one. Web-based questionnaires are set up to access larger population. Focus group sessions are further procedures of scrutiny in this piece of work to explore the actual linguistic behaviours. Preliminary findings from both interviews and questionnaires reveal that students' current experience, particularly living in the UK, affects their pre-migratory attitudes towards French language and its use. The overall findings are expected to bring manifold contributions to the field of research among which is setting factors that influence language use among newly established émigrés communities. The research is also relevant to international students' experience of study abroad in terms of language use in the guise of internationalization of higher education, mobility and exchange programmes. It could contribute to the sociolinguistics of the Algerian diaspora: the dispersed residence of non-native communities - not to mention its significance on the Algerian research field abroad.

Keywords : Algerian diaspora, French language, language maintenance, language shift, mobility

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