

From Mobility to Complexity: French Language Use among Algerian Doctoral Postgraduates in Scotland

Authors : Hadjer Chellia

Abstract : The study explores the phenomenon of second language use in a migratory setting and uses the case of Algerian international students in Scotland, United Kingdom. The linguistic history of Algeria reveals that French language has a high status among the Algerians' verbal repertoires and Algerian English students consider it as a language of prestige. With mobility of some of these students towards Scotland -in the guise of internationalization of higher education, mobility and exchange programs, the transition was deemed to bring more complexity to their pre-migratory linguistic repertoires and resulted into their French language- being endangered and threatened by a potential shift to English. The study employed semi-structured interviews among six Ph.D. ethnically related students, and the main aim behind that is to explore their current experiences with regards to French language use and to provide an account of the factors which assist in shifting to English as a second language instead. The six participants identified in interviews were further invited to focus group sessions based on an in-group interaction fashion to discuss different topics using heritage languages. This latter was opted for as part of the methodology as a means to observe their real linguistic practice and to investigate the link between behaviors and previous perceptions. The findings detect a variety of social, individual and socio-psychological factors that would contribute in refining the concept of language shift among newly established émigré communities with short stay vis a vis the linguistic outcomes of immigrants with long stay, across generational basis that was -to some extent-the focus of previous research on language shift. The results further reveal a mismatch between students' perceptions and observed behaviors. The research is then largely relevant to international students' sociolinguistic experience of study abroad.

Keywords : complexity, mobility, potential shift, sociolinguistic experience

Conference Title : ICASSL 2018 : International Conference on Applications of Sociolinguistics and Sociology of Language

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : April 19-20, 2018