

From language shift to linguistic hybridity: The status and perceptions of Tamazight in the Algerian higher education system

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Imene Medfouni & Yousef Barahmeh



This article examines how Tamazight, the indigenous language of Algeria and the wider North African region, is perceived, used, and hybridised within the Algerian higher education system. It considers how Tamazight intersects with the concepts of indigeneity and linguistic hybridity, particularly among the Imazighen in the Chaoui region, an Amazigh-populated area in eastern Algeria. To achieve these objectives, this research uses a mixed-methods design that draws on survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and

focus group discussions with students and academics at three universities in eastern Algeria: Annaba, Batna, and Oum El-Bouaghi. The analysis shows that most students and academics do not view their indigenous language, Tamazight, very favourably. This is largely due to dominant ideological and positive preferences towards Arabic, French, and most recently English. In contrast, Tamazight continues to be stigmatised and devalued as a language suitable for higher education. These negative perceptions highlight the persistent challenges that face the revitalisation of Tamazight in the Algerian higher education system. They have also indicated that hybridity is a sign of the Imazighen's linguistic resilience and adaptability. It is not a total loss of their authenticity and indigeneity.

More Information

<https://web.aou.edu.lb/research/online-journals/Pages/CALR-Issue-16-Issue-1.aspx>

About the Authors

Imene Medfouni is Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics and the former Head of the Department of English Language and Literature at Middle East University in Jordan, which she joined in 2023. She received her PhD in 2020 from the University of Portsmouth, UK, focusing on the views and attitudes towards the languages of Algeria in higher education.

Yousef Barahmeh is a Jordanian Early Career Scholar working in the field of language and politics, with a particular interest in humour, media and identity politics in the Middle East and North Africa. Since completing his PhD at the University of Portsmouth, UK, in 2020, he has been working as Assistant Professor of Linguistics at Isra University in Jordan, within both the Department of English Language and Literature and the Department of Translation.