English in Algerian Higher Education: A Paradoxical Path to Decolonization

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Abstract:

The article explores the Algerian government's decision to adopt English as the language of instruction in higher education, highlighting its potential for cultural and intellectual emancipation from French colonialism. The transition could diversify Algeria's international academic and economic partnerships, reduce dependence on French educational resources, facilitate access to global knowledge and research, and redefine national identity. However, the article also highlights potential drawbacks, such as the risk of adopting a new form of linguistic imperialism and the challenges of implementing such a significant change in the education system. The research contributes to ongoing debates about language, education, and decolonization in post-colonial societies.

Keywords: Decolonization; Language Policy; Higher Education; English as a Medium of Instruction; Post-colonial Societies; Linguistic Imperialism.

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- INTRODUCTION

Algeria's higher education system reflects its complex linguistic landscape, shaped by French colonial rule (1830–1962). Despite independence, French remains dominant in universities, but the government now aims to replace it with English—a paradoxical yet strategic move in decolonization.

Algeria's language dynamics are intricate: Arabic is the official language, Berber holds national status, and French persists due to historical ties. Introducing English into this mix marks a significant policy shift. While adopting another colonial language may seem contradictory, it could weaken France's lingering influence. As Fanon argues, language is a tool of colonial power; abandoning French may represent mental and cultural liberation.[1]

This study explores key questions: How does English adoption affect Algeria's decolonization? What are the benefits and challenges? How does this reflect broader debates on language and post-colonial identity? The policy is not merely pragmatic but also symbolic, signaling a reorientation in geopolitics, education, and cultural identity.

By analyzing this shift, the research contributes to discussions on language's role in post-colonial societies, revealing how linguistic choices shape national identity and global positioning. Algeria's move highlights the evolving nature of decolonization in a globalized world, where language remains a battleground for autonomy and influence.

Literature Review & Hypothesis

The relationship between language policy and decolonization has been widely debated. Fanon viewed colonial languages as tools of mental domination,[2] while Benrabah highlights Algeria's struggle to balance Arabization with French's persistent influence in education and elite circles.[3] Phillipson warns of "linguistic imperialism" in English adoption,[4] though Crystal argues it can serve as a neutral lingua franca.[5] Mignolo critiques Eurocentrism in academia, advocating epistemic "delinking,"[6] while Anderson examines how

language shapes national identity.[7] Rwanda's shift from French to English (Samuelson & Freedman, 2010) offers comparative insights.[8]

Algeria's move presents a paradox: rejecting French aligns with Fanon and Wa Thiong'o's decolonial stance,[9] yet Phillipson[10] and Mignolo caution that English may reinforce new hierarchies.[11] This reflects Canagarajah's "postcolonial double bind"—decolonization remains incomplete within European linguistic frameworks.[12] However, Makoni and Pennycook's "disinvention" theory suggests languages can be redefined beyond colonial legacies.[13] Thus, Algeria's English adoption may represent neither decolonization nor recolonization, but a strategic reappropriation for self-determined linguistic and academic positioning.[14]

This hypothesis frames Algeria's policy as a pragmatic negotiation of postcolonial identity, leveraging English for global access while contesting Francophone dominance. The study explores whether this shift enables intellectual decolonization or merely reconfigures linguistic imperialism.

Significance of the Study:

This study advances postcolonial and language policy debates by examining Algeria's shift to English in higher education—a paradoxical move in decolonization efforts. Engaging with scholars like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Spolsky, it explores whether adopting a global language can challenge Francophone dominance without reproducing linguistic imperialism. The findings will inform policymakers in Algeria and similar postcolonial contexts navigating language, identity, and power dynamics.

Additionally, it addresses Benrabah's call for more empirical research on Maghreb language policies, offering nuanced insights into North African educational reforms. As higher education internationalizes, this study critically assesses how linguistic shifts impact equity and decolonial goals. By analyzing Algeria's strategy, it contributes to broader discussions on decolonization in an interconnected world, where language choices remain deeply political.

Methodology:

The study's analytical approach builds on three interlocking theoretical traditions in language policy and decolonial studies. First, Fanon's foundational concept of linguistic colonialism establishes that "to speak a language is to assume a world, a culture," providing the basis for analyzing English adoption as either replicating or resisting colonial structures.[15] This is complemented by Wa Thiong'o's theory of linguistic decolonization, which frames language choice as fundamental to mental liberation from colonial epistemologies.[16]

Second, Phillipson's linguistic imperialism theory and Mignolo's concept of "epistemic delinking" offer competing lenses to assess whether English merely substitutes French as a new vector of Western hegemony. Finally, Cooper's language planning typology and Spolsky's tripartite model of language policy (practices, beliefs, and management) provide the structural framework to examine policy implementation dynamics.[17] Together, these theories form an integrated analytical matrix for understanding Algeria's linguistic transition beyond empirical observation into the realm of ideological and epistemological transformation.

1. Theoretical Framework

Algeria's shift to English in higher education must be examined through postcolonial theories on language and power, alongside language policy frameworks. These perspectives reveal the complexities of linguistic decolonization, showing how English adoption challenges French dominance while raising concerns about neocolonial influences.

1.1 Postcolonial Theory and Language

Postcolonial theory highlights language as a tool of power and identity. Fanon argues that "to speak a language is to take on a world, a culture," suggesting that linguistic choices in education reflect deeper colonial legacies.[18] Wa Thiong'o extends this, viewing colonial languages as instruments of "spiritual subjugation".[19] In Algeria, Benrabah applies this framework, showing how French dominance

perpetuates colonial power structures despite independence.[20] Said's *Orientalism* further critiques Western epistemological dominance, framing English adoption as both a challenge to Francophone hegemony and a potential new form of Western influence.[21]

1.2 Language Planning and Policy

Cooper's model of language planning—status, corpus, and acquisition—helps analyze Algeria's policy shift (*Language Planning and Social Change*). Spolsky's framework emphasizes the interplay between policy, practices, and beliefs (*Language Policy*), while Belmihoub notes that successful English implementation requires alignment between official policy and societal attitudes.[22] Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas' linguistic imperialism theory warns of English reinforcing global hierarchies, complicating Algeria's decolonial goals.[23]

1.3 Algeria's Linguistic Landscape

Algeria's multilingualism reflects its colonial history. French, imposed during 132 years of occupation (1830–1962), remains dominant in education and elite domains, despite post-independence Arabization efforts.[24] English's recent introduction disrupts this Francophone hegemony but risks replicating colonial patterns.

1.4 Decolonial Language Policy

A decolonial approach critiques both French and English as Eurocentric tools. Mignolo advocates "border thinking" to appropriate dominant languages critically,[25] while Phillipson warns of English creating "intellectual dependency".[26] Spolsky and Cooper's models provide practical frameworks for policy implementation, emphasizing the need to reconcile decolonial aims with global academic demands.

Together, these theories offer a nuanced lens for analyzing Algeria's language transition — addressing why (postcolonial critique), whether (geopolitical implications), and how (policy implementation) this shift unfolds.

1.5 Thesis statement on the paradoxical nature of adopting English

Algeria's adoption of English in higher education represents a paradoxical decolonial strategy—challenging French dominance while risking new linguistic dependence.[27] While English may facilitate global engagement and reduce Francophone hegemony,[28] it complicates national identity formation in a multilingual post-colonial context.[29] This shift reflects the tension between decolonization and globalization, where languages are neither neutral nor fixed but socially constructed tools of power.[30] Algeria's policy thus navigates competing imperatives: resisting colonial legacies while negotiating global academic integration..

2. Historical Context

Algeria's shift to English in higher education reflects its postcolonial linguistic struggle, balancing French colonial legacies, Arabization policies, and global aspirations. This transition underscores ongoing tensions between language, identity, and decolonization in reshaping Algeria's educational future.

2.1 French colonization and its impact on Algerian education

The French colonization of Algeria, beginning in 1830, profoundly reshaped the country's educational system. As Colonna explains, the French implemented a two-tiered system that reinforced colonial hierarchy.[31] Traditional Islamic institutions like Quranic schools (kuttabs) and madrasas, which focused on religious and Arabic education, were marginalized as obstacles to the French "civilizing mission".[32] Initially, education primarily served European settlers, but by the late 19th century, "écoles indigènes" were established to create a small Algerian elite to mediate between the colonial administration and the populace.[33]

Language policy was central to colonial control. French was imposed as the official language of government and education, sidelining Arabic and Berber to private and religious spheres.[34] This linguistic strategy had profound effects, fostering psychological

colonization, as Fanon describes in Black Skin, White Masks, where the colonized internalized the perceived superiority of French language and culture.[35]

By independence in 1962, much of the Algerian elite was French-educated, creating a lasting linguistic and cultural divide.[36] Post-independence Arabization efforts faced significant challenges due to French's entrenched role in higher education and administration.[37] The colonial legacy continues to influence Algeria's educational and linguistic landscape, reflecting the enduring impact of French rule.

2.2 Post-Independence Language Policies

Following Algeria's independence in 1962, the government embarked on Arabization to reclaim the nation's Arab-Islamic identity and distance itself from its colonial past.[38] This policy, formalized in 1962 and intensified in the 1960s and 1970s, aimed to restore Arabic as the national language, affirm Algeria's Arab-Muslim identity, and expand access to education for the masses.[39] Arabization began in primary education and gradually extended to secondary and tertiary levels, though French remained dominant in higher education, particularly in scientific and technical fields, creating a linguistic divide.[40]

Under President Houari Boumediene in the 1970s, Arabization intensified, with primary, secondary, and humanities education fully Arabized. However, scientific and technical university programs remained French-medium, forcing students to switch languages abruptly.[41] The 1990s brought further challenges, as the Berber cultural movement demanded recognition of Tamazight, leading to civil unrest and language debates, especially in Kabylia.[42] Tamazight was recognized as a national language in 2002 and an official language in 2016.

In recent years, Algeria has embraced multilingualism, balancing Arabic with the teaching of French and English to meet global economic demands.[43] This shift reflects a nuanced approach to

linguistic identity in a post-colonial, globalized context.

2.3 The persistence of French in Higher Education

Despite post-independence Arabization policies, French remains deeply embedded in Algerian academia, particularly in STEM fields.[44] This endurance reflects both colonial legacies and practical realities: French-language academic networks, textbooks, and knowledge systems established during 132 years of colonization persisted after 1962.[45] Practical constraints reinforce this, as Arabic translations of technical materials remain insufficient, and many professors were trained in Francophone systems.[46]

Socioeconomic factors further entrench French, with fluency linked to employment opportunities in Algeria's private sector and international markets.[47] This creates a paradox where students transition abruptly from Arabic-medium secondary schools to French-dominated universities—a disorienting shift termed "linguistic schizophrenia".[48]

While recent policies promote multilingualism, incorporating English and Tamazight,[49] French retains institutional dominance. Its persistence encapsulates Algeria's ongoing negotiation between decolonial aspirations, educational pragmatism, and globalization pressures.[50] The language debate remains central to Algeria's identity, reflecting unresolved tensions between its colonial past and post-independence ambitions.

3. The Government's English Adoption Project

Algeria's shift to English in higher education seeks global academic integration but faces challenges in equity, identity, and implementation. This policy reflects postcolonial linguistic struggles while navigating educational reform in a globalized world.

3.1 Overview of the Initiative

Algeria's 2019 initiative aims to gradually replace French with English in scientific and technical university disciplines,[51] aligning with its 2020-2024 higher education reforms.[52] The shift seeks to

enhance global competitiveness, access to scientific research, and linguistic diversification beyond French,[53] reflecting a broader Maghreb trend favoring English.[54]

Implementation follows a phased approach starting with expanded English courses before full adoption in STEM fields.[55] Key to this transition is faculty training, including international partnerships and language upskilling programs,[56] ensuring educators can deliver English-medium instruction effectively.

Algeria's English adoption project extends to pre-university education, introducing English from primary school to prepare students for English-medium higher education.[57] While aiming to enhance global integration, the initiative has sparked debates about linguistic identity and implementation readiness.[58] Despite challenges, the government views this linguistic shift as crucial for Algeria's future educational and economic development.[59]

Year	Key Development
2019	Initial announcement of the English adoption initiative in higher education by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education
2020	Introduction of the project in the government's 2020-2024 action plan
2020	Launch of pilot programs in selected scientific and technical departments at major universities
2021	Implementation of expanded English language training programs for university faculty
2021	Introduction of English as mandatory language from primary school (third year)
2022	Expansion of English-medium instruction to additional university departments
2023	Development of new English-language curricula and teaching materials
2024	Planned full implementation in scientific and technical fields at postgraduate level
2025	Projected expansion to undergraduate programs in scientific and

	technical fields
2026	Planned evaluation of the initial phase and adjustment of implementation strategies

Table 1. Timeline of Algeria's English Adoption Project in higher education

3.2 Goals and Objectives

Algeria's shift to English in higher education aims to enhance the quality and global competitiveness of its universities.[60] The primary goal is to align Algerian institutions with international academic standards, particularly in STEM fields, facilitating student participation in global research and professional opportunities.

Key objectives include improving access to English-dominated scientific literature,[61] boosting research output, and enhancing graduate employability in a globalized job market.[62] The initiative also seeks to reduce linguistic dependence on French, repositioning Algeria within the global knowledge economy.[63]

Additionally, English-medium instruction aims to attract international students[64] and promote innovation through improved access to technology and collaborations.[65] Another critical objective is addressing educational inequality by replacing French—which disadvantages Arabic-medium students—with English, introduced earlier in schools to create a more equitable foundation.[66]

This multifaceted strategy reflects Algeria's efforts to move beyond colonial linguistic legacies while embracing a language perceived as neutral and globally relevant.

3.3 Implementation Strategies

The Algerian government has adopted a comprehensive, multi-stage approach to implement English as a medium of instruction in higher education. Recognizing the complexity of this linguistic transition, authorities have prioritized gradual implementation across educational levels.[67] A foundational strategy involves strengthening English instruction in primary and secondary education, with English now introduced from the third year of primary school.[68] This early

exposure aims to build students' language proficiency before they enter university.

At the higher education level, the transition follows a dual-track approach. All disciplines now incorporate enhanced English language courses, while scientific and technical fields are progressively shifting to English-medium instruction, beginning with postgraduate programs before extending to undergraduate studies.[69] This phased method allows for systematic adjustment while maintaining educational continuity. Faculty development constitutes a critical component, with intensive language training programs and international exchange opportunities helping academic staff improve their English proficiency and teaching methodologies.[70]

The government is simultaneously addressing resource needs through collaborations with international publishers to develop English-language textbooks and digital materials, particularly for STEM subjects.[71] Technological infrastructure investments support this transition, including expanded e-learning platforms that provide supplementary English-language resources.[72] Strategic international partnerships with anglophone institutions facilitate staff exchanges, joint degree programs, and curriculum alignment with global standards.[73]

A dedicated national oversight committee monitors implementation progress, collecting data from universities to evaluate effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.[74] This adaptive management approach ensures the initiative remains responsive to institutional needs while maintaining consistent progress toward linguistic transition goals. Together, these coordinated strategies aim to build sustainable capacity for English-medium instruction while minimizing disruption to Algeria's higher education system.

4. Potential Positive Impacts on Decolonization

Algerian higher education is adopting English as a strategic decolonization approach, potentially reducing French reliance, diversifying international partnerships, and accessing global research.

This shift is complex and contentious, contributing to discussions on decolonization, globalization, and educational reform in post-colonial societies.

4.1 Diversification of International Academic Partnerships

Algeria's transition to English in higher education presents significant opportunities for diversifying its international academic collaborations beyond traditional Francophone networks.[75] As the dominant language of global academia, English proficiency could enhance Algeria's participation in international research projects and publications,[76] exposing its academic community to broader perspectives and methodologies.

The shift may also expand student and faculty mobility. Ghouali and Haddam Bouabdallah note that English proficiency is often required for exchange programs outside Francophone regions, potentially increasing Algerian participation in global academic exchanges.[77] Additionally, English-medium instruction could make Algerian universities more attractive to international students and scholars,[78] fostering more diverse campus environments.

Institutional collaborations stand to benefit significantly. Messeded highlights how English adoption could facilitate joint degree programs and research centers with universities worldwide, bringing new resources and expertise into Algeria's higher education system.[79] These partnerships could help align Algerian institutions with global academic standards while reducing historical dependence on Francophone networks.

Ultimately, this linguistic shift may help reposition Algeria in the global knowledge economy,[80] enhancing its academic influence through diversified international engagement.

4.2 Access to a Broader Range of Global Knowledge

Algeria's shift to English in higher education significantly expands access to global academic resources. As Benrabah notes, approximately 80% of scientific journals publish in English, offering Algerian scholars unprecedented access to cutting-edge research.[81]

This is particularly transformative in STEM fields, where most breakthrough studies appear exclusively in English.[82]

The transition also enhances digital learning opportunities. Rahmani emphasizes that English proficiency unlocks access to dominant online academic resources, including MOOCs, research databases, and educational platforms.[83] This digital access complements traditional academic materials, creating richer learning ecosystems.

Beyond content access, English adoption exposes Algerian academia to diverse epistemological traditions beyond Francophone scholarship.[84] Engagement with English-language discourse facilitates exposure to varied research methodologies and non-Western perspectives published in English.

Critically, this linguistic shift enables fuller participation in global academic conversations. As Djebbbari and Djebbbari argue, English proficiency allows Algerian researchers to transition from knowledge consumers to contributors, sharing their work with international audiences.[85] This reciprocal knowledge exchange could elevate Algeria's role in global scholarship while enriching local academic practices through cross-pollination of ideas.

4.3 Redefinition of National Identity

Algeria's adoption of English in higher education presents a unique opportunity to reshape its post-colonial national identity. Benrabah contends that language choices in education are fundamentally tied to questions of identity and cultural authenticity, suggesting that transitioning from French to English may help Algeria develop a linguistic identity less constrained by colonial legacies.[86] Historically, French dominance in academia has perpetuated a form of linguistic dependency that complicates Algeria's post-colonial self-definition.[87]

The shift to English—a language not directly associated with Algeria's colonial experience—offers several potential identity benefits. First, it may help bridge societal divides between

Arabophone and Francophone populations by introducing a perceived "neutral" academic language.[88] Second, English proficiency could enable Algeria to engage globally on more autonomous terms, beyond the framework of its former colonial relationship.[89]

Importantly, this transition allows for a renegotiation of Algeria's international positioning. Senouci and Gacem argue that English adoption facilitates a cosmopolitan identity that balances global engagement with cultural preservation.[90] Rather than rejecting multilingualism, the policy reflects an adaptive approach to identity formation in a globalized world—one that acknowledges colonial history while actively redefining Algeria's place within contemporary international networks.

5. Challenges and Criticisms

The adoption of English in Algerian higher education presents potential benefits for decolonization but also faces challenges such as linguistic imperialism, implementation difficulties, cultural resistance, and economic implications. Understanding these challenges is crucial for developing effective strategies to ensure the success of this educational reform initiative.

5.1 Risk of New Linguistic Imperialism

The adoption of English in Algerian higher education risks replacing French linguistic dominance with Anglo-American hegemony. Phillipson warns that English perpetuates neocolonial structures, even when voluntarily adopted,[91] potentially creating new dependencies in knowledge production.[92] While English facilitates global academic access, its dominance may marginalize Arabic and Tamazight scholarship, reinforcing Western epistemologies over local traditions.[93]

Bourdieu's linguistic capital theory further complicates this shift;[94] English offers global mobility but may erode "epistemic sovereignty".[95] Spolsky notes an "implementation gap" between policy and practice, where colonial legacies persist despite reform

efforts.[96] Santos B.'s "abyssal thinking" frames this as a broader dilemma—European languages structurally exclude indigenous knowledge systems.[97] Thus, Algeria's transition highlights the paradox of decolonial language planning: strategic engagement with global academia risks recentering, rather than dismantling, linguistic hierarchies. A balanced multilingual approach remains critical to navigate these tensions.

5.2 Implementation Difficulties in the Education System

Significant practical obstacles stand in the way of Algerian higher education's transition to English-medium instruction. The lack of trained teachers who can teach specific courses in English is a major issue. "There is a severe shortage of qualified teachers who can effectively teach subject matter in English, particularly in scientific and technical fields," according to Belmihoub.[98] The shift runs the risk of compromising student understanding and instructional quality in the absence of adequate teacher preparation and professional development initiatives.

Beyond human resources, infrastructural and material deficiencies further complicate implementation. Rahmani, A. notes that "many universities lack adequate language laboratories, updated English-language materials, and access to international academic databases."[99] Without modern resources and a well-developed support system, students and faculty may struggle to fully engage with English-language instruction, potentially widening educational disparities.

Additionally, many students entering higher education have limited proficiency in English due to an educational system that has historically prioritized Arabic and French. This linguistic gap could hinder student performance and deepen inequalities between institutions with better resources and those struggling to adapt. Addressing these challenges requires substantial investment in teacher training, curriculum development, and infrastructure to ensure a smooth and equitable transition.

5.3 Potential Cultural Resistance

The adoption of English in Algerian higher education faces cultural resistance from multiple fronts. Francophone elites, who have historically benefited from French linguistic dominance, view this shift as a threat to their privileged position in academia, government, and professional sectors. Djebbbari, H., & Djebbari, Z. highlight that resistance from Francophone elites who see their privileged position threatened, as well as from Arabic language advocates who fear further marginalization of Arabic in higher education, poses a significant barrier to the policy's acceptance.[100]

Arabic language advocates argue that prioritizing English could further erode the role of Arabic in higher education, reinforcing long-standing concerns about linguistic identity and national sovereignty. The Arabization policies implemented after independence were designed to reclaim Algeria's linguistic heritage from colonial influence, and some fear that English-medium instruction could undermine these efforts.

Beyond linguistic concerns, there is also apprehension about the broader cultural implications of adopting English. Khenioui, N., & Boulkroun, M. point out concerns about the potential impact on Algerian cultural values and identity, particularly given the association of English with Western cultural influence.[101] If English is perceived as a vehicle for Westernization rather than a tool for global engagement, resistance could intensify, complicating efforts to implement this policy effectively.

5.4 Economic Implications

The transition to English-medium instruction in Algerian higher education carries substantial economic costs. Amara N. estimates that the financial investment required for teacher training, resource development, and infrastructure upgrading would be significant.[102] Implementing this shift requires large-scale funding for training educators, developing high-quality English-language curricula, and equipping universities with modern learning resources such as

language laboratories and digital platforms. Without sustained investment, the initiative risks being incomplete or unevenly applied across institutions.

Beyond direct costs, there are concerns about economic inequality. Essayahi, M. L. B., & Kerras, N. warn that the transition to English could potentially disadvantage students from less privileged backgrounds who have had limited exposure to English language learning opportunities.[103] Many students, particularly those in rural or underfunded schools, have minimal English proficiency due to an educational system that has traditionally prioritized Arabic and French. If English proficiency becomes a prerequisite for academic and professional success, it may further marginalize students from lower-income backgrounds, deepening existing socioeconomic disparities.

For the initiative to be equitable and effective, policies must be in place to provide financial and educational support for disadvantaged students, ensuring that the benefits of English-language instruction are accessible to all rather than reinforcing social divides.

6. Comparative Analysis

Examining comparable language policy changes in other post-colonial contexts might help us better comprehend the ramifications and possible results of Algeria's English adoption drive. As Algeria moves forward with its own language reform in higher education, we may learn from these foreign experiences on successful implementation tactics and certain pitfalls to avoid.

6.1 Comparable programs in other post-colonial nations

Several post-colonial nations offer valuable insights for Algeria's transition to English-medium higher education. Rwanda's 2008 shift from French to English demonstrates both the potential and challenges of such a change, driven by similar motivations to reduce colonial linguistic ties and enhance global competitiveness.[104]

Hong Kong presents a nuanced model for multilingual societies.

While maintaining English as the primary university language post-1997, it incorporates Chinese (Cantonese/Mandarin) through code-switching to improve accessibility.[105] This balanced approach sustains internationalization benefits while addressing equity concerns,[106] suggesting that gradual, context-sensitive implementation may prove more effective than abrupt shifts.

Tunisia's experience reveals an alternative pathway, preserving French in scientific fields while selectively introducing English in business and technology programs.[107] This targeted strategy allows for manageable transitions while capturing key advantages of English instruction.

Malaysia's fluctuating policies highlight the tensions between nationalist aspirations and globalization demands.[108] Its vacillation between emphasizing and de-emphasizing English in higher education underscores the need for consistent, well-calibrated policies that balance local identity with practical economic needs.

Collectively, these cases demonstrate that successful English adoption requires: (1) clear alignment with national development goals, (2) sensitivity to local linguistic contexts, and (3) sustained institutional support. For Algeria, these examples suggest the value of a phased approach that considers both global competitiveness and domestic educational realities.

6.2 Lessons learned and best practices

Comparative analysis of post-colonial nations reveals several critical lessons for Algeria's English-medium transition. First, gradual implementation proves essential – Rwanda's abrupt shift created systemic challenges, while Malaysia's phased approach yielded better outcomes.[109] A multi-year transition allows institutions to adapt curricula and build capacity.

Faculty development emerges as the cornerstone of success. Turkey's experience demonstrates that targeted training programs combining English proficiency with pedagogical skills significantly ease implementation.[110] Algeria must prioritize comprehensive,

ongoing professional development for educators at all levels.

Resource investment equally matters. Tunisia's selective success in English-medium programs correlated directly with available teaching materials and technological infrastructure.[111] This underscores the need for parallel investments in digital platforms, textbooks, and learning tools. Stakeholder engagement proves equally vital. Kirkpatrick found that Southeast Asian implementations succeeded through extensive consultation with academic communities.[112] Algeria should incorporate feedback mechanisms for faculty and students throughout the transition process.

Finally, maintaining linguistic balance is crucial. As Lei and Hu note, sustainable models preserve local languages while adding English.[113] Algeria should position English within a multilingual framework that values Arabic and Tamazight, ensuring cultural continuity alongside global engagement. These lessons collectively suggest that successful implementation requires: (1) phased timelines, (2) robust faculty support, (3) infrastructure investment, (4) inclusive policymaking, and (5) multilingual equilibrium.

7. Future Prospects

The analysis of opportunities and challenges offers insights into the potential linguistic shift that could significantly impact Algeria's educational landscape and national development.

7.1 Predicted outcomes of the English adoption project

The predicted outcomes of Algeria's English adoption project in higher education suggest both opportunities and challenges for the coming years. According to Benrabah, "The initial phase of implementation is likely to see varied levels of success across different institutions and disciplines, with scientific and technical fields potentially adapting more quickly due to the existing prevalence of English in these areas."[114] This observation points to an uneven but progressive adoption pattern.

Short-term outcomes are likely to focus on institutional capacity building. As Belmihoub projects, "the first five years of

implementation will primarily center on developing teacher training programs, creating appropriate educational materials, and establishing necessary language support systems."[115] This foundation-laying phase is crucial for the project's long-term success.

Medium-term outcomes may include shifts in academic publishing patterns. Rahmani, A. predicts that by 2030, Algerian researchers could see a significant increase in international publications and citations, particularly in scientific fields, as English proficiency improves.[116] This could enhance Algeria's visibility in global academic discourse.

Djebbbari, H., & Djebbari, Z. suggest that successful implementation could lead to increased international student enrollment in Algerian universities within the next decade, particularly from non-Francophone African countries.[117] This internationalization could contribute to the diversity and quality of higher education in Algeria.

7.2 Potential long-term effects on Algerian society and economy

The long-term effects of the English adoption project could fundamentally reshape Algerian society and its economy. Khenioui, N., & Boulkroun, M. argue that the widespread adoption of English in higher education could lead to a significant shift in Algeria's economic partnerships, potentially reducing dependence on French-speaking markets and opening new opportunities with English-speaking countries and emerging economies.[118]

The social impact could be equally profound. According to Munandar I., the generational shift towards English proficiency could alter social mobility patterns, potentially creating new pathways for advancement that are less dependent on traditional Francophone networks.[119] This could lead to more diverse and equitable social opportunities.

Economic prospects could be significantly affected. Essayahi, M. L. B., & Kerras, N. projects that improved English proficiency among graduates could enhance Algeria's competitiveness in sectors such as

technology, international business, and tourism, potentially contributing to economic diversification beyond hydrocarbon dependence.[120] However, these changes may also present challenges. Benrabah cautions that "the long-term success of the English adoption project will depend on sustained investment in education infrastructure and continued political support for the initiative, as well as careful management of potential social tensions arising from linguistic change."[121]

- CONCLUSION

This analysis offers three key contributions to decolonial language studies. First, while supporting Wa Thiong'o's emphasis on linguistic liberation, Algeria's strategic adoption of English challenges Phillipson's monolithic view of linguistic imperialism, showing how postcolonial states engage with colonial languages based on current geopolitics rather than history alone.

Second, it validates Mignolo's *border epistemology* by examining Algeria's attempt to "delink" from Francophone academia while selectively appropriating Anglophone resources—illustrating Santos's "epistemic tightrope" between global academic demands and decolonial imperatives.

Finally, it extends Benrabah's *language conflict* framework, revealing a shift from French/Arabic binaries to a more complex French/Arabic/English triangulation, reflecting greater postcolonial agency amid global constraints.

Algeria's case redefines decolonial language planning in the 21st century, highlighting tensions between dismantling colonial legacies and engaging global knowledge economies, preserving identity while accessing international research, and asserting sovereignty despite linguistic path dependencies. This underscores the evolving complexities of decolonial language policy in an interconnected world.

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