Deconstructing the Linguistic Practices in the Algerian Harak Slogans: A Content-based Analysis

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Summary:

The ultimate objective behind the current research paper is threefold: (1) to deconstruct and decipher the implicit messages behind the English linguistic practices used in the Algerian Harak slogans; (2) to highlight the incentives that pushed protesters to use such slogans in foreign languages, especially English, and to investigate whether this phenomenon reflects a Bi/Multi-lingual requisite or plurilingual proficiency. In order to conduct this study under the pandemic imposed sanitary measures, a mixed method is adopted an online structured questionnaire, encompassing 19 questions, a structured interview via social media, together with a corpus of 12 foreign languages written slogans. This three-fold analytic endeavour revealed that those who used foreign languages written slogans, mottos, banners, etc. are plurilinguals rather than bilingual individuals regarding the status of foreign languages in the Algerian sociolinguistic context. In doing so, the Harakists wanted to maximize the global dissemination of their protests.

Keywords: Harak movement, bilingualism, multilingualism, plurilingualism, slogans

1. Introduction

On 22 February 2019, the Algerians launched one of the most impressive peaceful social movements for democracy, which the world has witnessed, though largely unreported in the west. The 2019-2020 slogans of Algerian protesters, the so-called Harak Movement, have been so creative in crafting slogans and coining terms (neologism). Each part of Algeria has protested against the ex-government decisions-makers' practices. The so-called revolutions of smile or 'HARAK' movements have succeeded in creating cohesion among different Algerian social groups and categories of the Algerians. In fact, the participants who were from different age brackets participated in this unprecedented movement which is regarded as

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particular in many respects. It was linguistically rich, pacifist, well-anchored in popular masses, and especially, dominated by the young generation. The demonstrators shouted out and carried signposts symbolising their despair, disdain and disillusionment towards the corrupt regime and limited opportunities for the youth. Indeed, they have invented complex metaphorical banners and chants to convey their dissatisfaction and irritability. Such practice is an extension to what has always been chanted by young football fans in stadiums, who soon after went out to the streets claiming change. Relevant to the sociolinguistic situation of the Algerian speech community and the English practices, the current study seeks to deconstruct and content-analyze the protesters' noticeable use of English written slogans to foreground their underlying motives and purposes behind such linguistic options, and to investigate whether these users reflect a bi/multilingual society or it is just plurilingual proficiency.

2. Algerian Sociolinguistic Profile

Herein, the Algerian speech repertoire is discussed from a sociolinguistic viewpoint, as well as considering the language policy, with the aim of analysing the use of such language varieties, including their structural and pragmatic use. Within the Algerian legislation, Modern Standard Arabic (hereafter MSA) is considered the standard as an official language, and French is viewed as the country's first foreign language contrary to what the reality states. Actually, MSA is taught at school as a first language, but it has never been the main communicating language within the Algerian society. The mother tongue for the Algerians is Algerian Dialectal Arabic (henceforth ADA) which is used to express oneself on a daily basis. It is a hybrid language/language variety formed by different varieties which have come about through the coexistence of various civilizations in the North-African lands, like Arabs, Berbers, French, Spanish, Turkish, Italian and also English through its influence being a global language.

3. Language Contact

Language contact stands for the social and linguistic phenomenon by which speakers of different languages or different dialects of the same language interact with one another leading to a transfer of linguistic features. According to, Thomason (2001), "language contact is the use of more than one language in the same place at the same time." (p. 1). In her book, she said that languages have been in contact for thousands of years, and probably since the beginning of humankind or at least very close to the beginning. As soon as humans spoke more than one language, no specific date can be given to this point.

3.1. Outcomes of Language Contact

Contact between people speaking different language varieties can have a wide range of outcomes. In some cases, only a few words are borrowed; in others whole new varieties may be formed. The results of such contact differ according to several factors, including the length and intensity of contact between the groups; the types of social, economic, and political relationship between them;

the functions which communication between them must serve; and the degree of similarity between the languages they speak.

3.1.1. Borrowing

One of the sociolinguistic phenomena which refer to the process of integrating words from other languages into the system of the recipient language and becomes part of the host language i.e. the morpho- phonological adoption of a single isolated word from another language such as pizza, la poste, hamburger fast food. Gumpers (1982) confirmed in his definition of this term as "Idiomatic phrases from one variety (i.e. language), into the grammatical system of the borrowing language and they are treated as if they are part of lexicon of that language and share the morphological and phonological system of the language." (p. 66). It is also defined by Rajend et al. (2009) as "a technical term for the incorporation of an Item from one language into another. These items could be words, grammatical elements or sounds." (p. 270).

3.1.2. Code-Switching and Mixing

Code switching is an umbrella term that covers both code switching and code mixing which means the morpho- phonological adaptation of words in phases, clauses or sentences. According to Trudgill (2003) code switching is "the process in which the bilingual speaker shifts back and forth between one language or a dialect and another language or dialect, within the same conversation." (p. 16). Code-switching is a linguistic phenomenon which has attracted many scholars' attention. It occurs when speakers of two languages or language varieties start shifting back and forth from one code to another. Code here means a language or variety of language spoken by individuals as well as the whole speech community. Such sociolinguistic phenomenon has been defined by Gumperz (1982) as "the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages belonging to different grammatical systems or subsystems" (p.59). Accordingly, 'code switching' is a linguistic behaviour of passing from one language to another or from one language variety to another in a spoken or written discourse. In this regard, Myers-Scotton (1993) defined the term as "alternations of linguistic varieties within the same conversations". (p. 01).

The phenomenon is mainly used among bilinguals as Haugen (1956) refers to as a process "which occurs when a bilingual introduces completely unassimilated word from another language to his speech.'' (p. 40)

Poplack (1980) has identified three types of code switching. First, there is inter-sentential code switching, where the switch occurs at the sentence boundaries. As one sentence is in one language and the other in another language, just like an Arab- French bilingual who says: *bnjr, rani mehtadj flash disk urgent. Quand tu viens jybaheli mak S.T.P rani f dar* (Good morning, I am really in need of a flash disk. Please, bring it with you when you come. I am at home.) (Berrabah, 2014)

The second type of code switching is inter-sentential code switching, which has

been characterized as the most complex type in comparison to the others since the speaker has to be competent in both language varieties. It has been called by Poplack as ''flag code switching''. It occurs within and inside the sentence. For instance we say: Bareh Roht lel department, mais mala9it hata wahed (Yesterday, I went to the department, but I found no one.)

The third one is called 'tag switching'. It refers to the occurrence of certain phrases of one language into the utterance. For example, we say: rbaħt, c'est pas vrais (you succeeded that is not true.); whereas, code mixing (hereafter CM) occurs at an intra- sentential level (at the level of words, phrases and clauses). It refers to the behaviour of bilingual speaker who imports words or phrases from one of his/ her languages into the other one within the same discourse. *Example: Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish, Y Termino in Espanol* (Poplack, 1980).

3.1.3. Bilingualism

Bilingualism is one of the main sociolinguistic phenomena and one of the outcomes of language contact. Generally, bilingualism refers the mastering of two languages by individuals and/or the whole society. In other terms, it is the ability to use two different standard languages in communication with the same proficiency. Actually, up till now, no universal definition of the concept "bilingualism" has been provided. Thus, it is a relative concept, meaning differently to different researchers in different fields of studies. As a result, a kind of disagreement has arisen among researchers upon the exact definition of this concept. In this regard, we shall provide some definitions suggested by different scholars and discuss them in detail.

Weinreich (1953) defined bilingualism as "the practice of alternatively using two languages." (p.5). By the same token, Mackey (1970) referred to it as "the alternate use of two or more languages by the same individual." (p.555). So, bilingual(ism, here means the ability for an individual or society to perform linguistically in more than one language in different domains. In this sense, Sayad (1984) added:

> The concept of bilingualism, in its wider acceptance, covers multiform linguistic realities, starting from light sabir, less respectful of the grammar and the morphology of the borrowed vocabulary, to the most accomplished bilingualism which supposes according to the necessities of the discourse, a self-confident, correct and distinct practice of the two languages. (p. 215)

Another definition was proposed by Bloomfield (1933) who defined bilingual as "the native-like control of two languages" (p. 56). This implies the perfect mastery of two languages. In the same line of thought, Haugen (1953) considered bilingualism as the ability to produce "complete meaningful utterances in the other language." (p. 7). This definition emphasizes on the linguistic competence which is used to produce utterance in the other language. Bilingualism differs among individuals in terms of degrees of proficiency and

competency, according to their motivation, interest, attitude, etc. In this regard**,** Myers-Scotton (2006) stated ''being bilingual does not imply a complete mastery of two languages". (p. 3). This view is also shared by Wardhaugh (2006) who declared "People who are bilingual or multilingual do not necessarily have exactly the same abilities in the languages (or varieties) in fact that kind of parity may be exceptional." (p. 96).

Thus, on this basis, individual bilinguals or societies are classified according to the following categories:

3.1.4. Multilingualism

Multilingualism is a linguistic phenomenon that has received much interest in the wide literature in recent years. Some scholars tend to use the term interchangeably with bilingualism; while, the majority use it to refer to the use of several languages within a speech community or by an individual speaker. According to the Council of Europe (2007) "multilingualism refers to the presence of several languages in a given space, independently of those who use them." (p. 17). Multilingualism is common in Malaysia; Israel, Singapore, etc.

3.1.5. Plurilingualism

According to the Council of Europe (2007) "it refers to an individual repertoire of linguistic competence." (p. 17). Therefore, 'plurilingualism' is solely personal. In general, research in the field of foreign language learning shows socio-economic, cultural and educational benefits for the individual and the society. In fact; People who have the command of more than one language show better performance than monolinguals. They show openness and understanding of cultures. Plurilingualism may be considered as a potential source of power giving opportunity to learners to have access to the other. Though this process may come into conflict with the internal ideological need**s**, it is politically desirable to synchronize between national language management, planning and language policy to cope with the outer world and secure the inner world as far as the national language is concerned.

Plurilingualism and multilingualism are contentious concepts in terms of their ascribed definition(s) among researchers. Some take them as synonymous terms; while, others tend to attribute them to slightly different significations. However, generally, these two notions refer to a simultaneous presence of more than a couple of language**s**.

3.1.6. Linguistic Interference

Language Interference (aka Language transfer or L1 interference, linguistic interference, and cross meaning) refers to speakers or writers applying knowledge from their native language to a second language. Dulay (1982) defines interference as the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language. Lott (1983) defined interference as "errors in the learner's use of the foreign language that can be

traced back to the mother tongue." (p. 256). Ellis (1997) refers to interference as 'transfer', which he says it is "the influence that the learner's L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2." (p. 51). When an individual's understanding of one language has an impact on his or her understanding of another language, that individual is experiencing language transfer. There can be negative transfers, otherwise known as interference, when the understanding of one language complicates the understanding of another language. Alternatively, there can be positive transfers such that knowing one language can aid in developing skills for a second language. Language interference is the effect of language learners' first language on their production of the language they are learning. It means that the speaker's first language influences his/her second or and his/her foreign language. Transfer can be positive or negative. When the language patterns of L1 and EFL are identical, learning could take place easily through positive transfer of the L1 pattern, but when they are different, learning would be difficult and errors may arise as the result of negative transfer or interference (Ellis, 1994). There is a number of manifestations of transfer. Ellis (1994) categorised the types of transfer into:

- Errors (negative transfer)
- Positive Transfer.

4. The Advent of Globalization and English

The effect of globalization is today deeply linguistically felt all over the world and bi/multilingualism is becoming more and more a common linguistic phenomenon. Competence in only one language is no more advantageous and being proficient in foreign languages is rather a requirement than a pleasure. As far as we are concerned with the foreign languages practices in Harak slogans, highlighting the co-relation between globalization and English seems much more relevant.

Being the process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide, Globalization has widely spread due to advances in transportation and communication technology. The increased global interactions has boosted English global use, as it has become the world's lingua franca due to the fact that it is the common language or mode of communication that enables people to understand one another regardless of their cultural and ethnic backgrounds. It makes communication a lot easier and understanding one another has become efficient. Crystal (2003) stated that ''language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country'' (p. 3). Based on this criterion, English is the first global language, and it becomes the main language of most international institutions and bodies as indicated in the following list developed by Graddol (1997) and quoted in Zoughoul (2003).

5. Methodology: Data Collection Procedures, Findings, and Discussion

The second part is devoted to data collection, their analyses, and interpretations. Therefore, we endeavour to bridge the gap between the theoretical and the practical frameworks of our research work. More to the point,

the gleaned data will be analysed and interpreted in relation with the existing knowledge about the subject under investigation (linguistic, mainly English, practices in Harak slogans).

5.1. The Research Instruments

To conduct this study, three different instruments were adopted, namely a questionnaire, interview and slogans content analysis. In so doing, scientific validity can be reached.

5.1.1. Questionnaire

Written in English and then translated into French and Arabic, the questionnaire comprises four sections. The first of which is about our participants' personal information. The second is about their linguistic competence, and the third is designed to elucidate the reasons and motivations behind using English particularly in their daily life. As it is the crux of our study, The last section includes questions which deal with the most pertinent part of our research that is the real intentions behind the English practices in the Harak movement. The aim of the questionnaire is to collect detailed data about the subject matter under investigation (English practices in Harak slogans).

5.1.2. Interview

The aim behind using this instrument is that it gives immediate and sincere answers about the subject matter .Therefore it helps to guarantee certain objectivity. In this respect, another group of teachers (5 teachers) who are specialized in psycholinguistic and sociology are the main members of my interview.

5.1.3. The Selected Slogans

For the sake of scientific validity, it was necessary to select some of the collected slogans raised during the movement, and to content-analyse them, relying on Content Analysis Approach (CAA). In fact, among the seventy eight (78) slogans, we focused only on twelve (12), representing 15.38%, for their appropriate matching of the outcomes of language contact.

5.1.4. Research Setting and Participants

Since our investigation considers the English language students and teachers at Ibn Khaldoun University as its case of study, we shall first give a brief overview of the circumstances of creating the section of English at Tiaret, which was established only few years ago, exactly in 2012, by agreement with Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem. Since 2019, the Section of English has been in development regardless the obstacles that both teachers and students find themselves confronted to. Currently, there are two different MA specialties; linguistics and didactics in addition to three BA grades. The number of students who are subscribed in the section exceeds one thousand (1000) students from different regions in Tiaret as well as from other neighbouring wilayas. Due to the differences at the level of regions that are in this section at various levels, we

found ourselves so motivated to conduct such research. Concerning the questionnaire, the participants are randomly selected students and teachers of foreign languages who participated in Harak, or were interested in Harak as iconic observers of the phenomena of English practices in Harak slogans, whereas the interviewees are teachers (experts) of psycholinguistic and sociology.

5.2. Questionnaire Findings Analysis

The targeted population consists of 28 males and 26 females. Their age-bands vary between 20-30 (68.5%), 31-40 (14.86%), 41-50 (13%) and 51-60 (3.7%). It is noticeable that the heavy majority of the respondents, i.e., 83.36% (n=45/54), are young, age**d** between 20 and 40 years old. The remaining portion, i.e., 16.7% (n=9) is aged between 41 and 60.

Table 1: the Distribution of Participants According to Mother Tongue

Language variety	Number	Percentage
ADA	50	90.7%
Berber	4	9.3%

The sixth question-item was asked for the sake of identifying the respondents' mother tongue. The responses revealed that 90.7% (n=50) of the respondents are ADA speakers. Only, 9.3% are Berberphone**s**.

To detect respondents' English language level, **a** question-item was asked. In fact, 58.30% attested that their level at English is medium. The rest is shared between high and low level; 36.8% for the first and 4.90% for the second.

Table 2: Respondents' English Language Usage Frequency

Options	Number	Percentage
Always	19	35.18%
Often	15	27.77%
Sometimes	17	31.48%
Rarely	3	5.55%
Mean	13.5	
Median	16	

Question-item 9 was asked with the intention to check the frequency of the English language use in daily interactions. The statistics revealed that 35.18% (n=19) of the surveyed sample always use English in their daily life. For 31.48% (n=17) of them, English is sometimes used in discussions. Besides, 27.77% (n=15) of the targeted population affirmed that English is often used in their daily talks. However, 5.55% (n=3) asserted that English is never used in their speeches.

Table 3: Respondents' Participation in Harak Movement

Choices	Number	Percentage
Yes	35	64.80%
No	19	35.20%

The responses to question-item 11, enquiring about Harak movement participation, disclosed that 64.80% (n=35) of the surveyed sample took part in Harak movement. The rest, i.e., 35.20% (n=19) confirmed that they had not participated in that popular passive movement.

Table 4: Slogans and Respondents' Eye catching

Choices	Number	Percentage
Yes	54	100%
No	0	0%

The twelfth question-item was meant to check if foreign language written slogans/banners were noticeable and attracted the demonstrators' and onlookers' attention. In fact, all of the targeted respondents (100%) attested that they had observed English banners during Harak protest movement.

Table 5: Respondents' Deciphering of Harakists' Intents behind Foreign Language Banners Use

Options	Number	Percentage
To get rid of French as being the language of the colonizer	6	11.3%
English is a global language	10	18.9%
To assign the English language the status of first foreign language	13	24.5%
To transmit their protests to the whole world	20	37.7%
To substitute French by English	5	7.5%

The collected data from question-item 14, **e**nquiring about the intention behind the use of such foreign language banners, revealed that 37.7% (n= 20) of the surveyed sample believe that the main intention behind the use of English written banners is to convey their disenchantments and dissatisfactions across borders. For 24.50% (n=13), the use of the English language is to displace French language and substitute it by English as a first foreign language. For the rest, the answers are shared among 'getting rid of French for being the language of ex-colonizer' with 11.30% (n=6), English is a global language, with 18.90% (n=10), and to replace French by English, with 7.50% (n=5).

5.3. The Analysis of the Interview Data

For the question regarding the implicit reasons behind foreign language banners, all interviewees believed that this is mainly due to the impacts of globalization within the advent of the New Information and Communication Technologies (NICTs), especially social media websites (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Viber, etc.) In fact, such technological inventions have caused unprecedented changes at all spheres. All these swift alterations have transformed the world into a small village. Therefore, it is impossible to isolate Algeria from the global context which is controlled by foreign languages,

especially the English language.

Most of the above answers alluded to the impact of NICTs on people's easy communication, especially through English. Being a global language, English has become the world's lingua franca, enabling people to understand one another regardless of their cultural and ethnical backgrounds. In fact, as a global language, English enables people around the world to transmit knowledge and reinforce connectedness within the current era of globalization of trade and commerce. Hence, English acts as a link between people who have common interests, but do not necessarily share the same language.

Besides the occurrence of certain processes allow the spread of the information and experience around the world nowadays, which is, of course, tightly connected to the new era of information-driven society and exponential development of new technologies. Undoubtedly, the new era of globalization provides us with loads of new opportunities to share and exchange our knowledge, findings, experience and ideas with anyone from other parts of the globe. Against a background of rapid technological change, globalization and resulting cross-cultural interaction in recent decades has dramatically impacted the types of communication skills needed.

5.4. Analysis of the Selected Slogans

A) Slogans in Connection with Bilingualism

Example 1: *(Justice is the basis of governance.)* العدل أساس الحكم، **(cf. Appendix 1 p. 16)**

The above slogan represents the diverse linguistic profile of Algerians' speech communities.

This slogan implicitly denotes the lack of justice in the society, and the prevalence of injustice instead.

Example 2: *(l'Algérie n'est pas une monarchie) (RIP dear martyrs, we are here to take the lead (cf. appendix 1 p.16)*

The second slogan consists of two different foreign languages, i.e., the first one (l'Algerie n'est pas une monarchie.) in the French language; whereas, the second one (RIP dear martyrs, we are here to take the lead.) in English. This demonstrates that the banners' users are bilinguals.

As far as the implicit meaning is concerned, we may understand that the succession to rule is inacceptable. Besides, the Harakists made an oath/vow to themselves and addressed a call to Martyrs to remind them that they will carry on their legacy, albeit through a strategy of non-violence.

B) Slogan Reflecting Plurilingualism /Multilingualism & Bilingualism

Example 3: *(never give up, the people have the power, ché ha dettoche la democrazia, non ruiscera in Algeria, /Translated into English: because he said that democracy will not ruin Algeria/) (cf. appendix 1 p. 16)*

The banner comprises two slogans in two different foreign languages, viz., English and Italian. If the slogan holder masters the foreign languages, he can be

considered as a plurilingual. If he does not, he can be regarded as code-mixer. (cf. difference between plurilinguilism and multilingualism in the theoretical part of the article)

Similarly to the above bilingual slogan, the English sentence reflects the determination of the rioters to continue their protests, whereas the one in Italian language seems to be satirical in the sense that democracy can never ruin Algeria.

C) Slogans Reflecting Code-Switching & Mixing

Example 4: *we don't need no prolongation, Hey system leave the cha3b alone. (Cha3b in Arabic means people, and the sound /3/ refers to /ع/)*

The fourth example embodies English language sentences where the switch occurs in the second sentence 'cha3b'. This denotes the morpho-phonological adaptation.

From a semantic point of view, the fourth slogan reveals the protesters' not backtracking and speed in application. It is explicitly expressed that people should recover the power.

Example 5: (يُخَتومَا super glue الله يبارك)(ADA/Fr CM) (cf. appendix 1 p.16)

The intra-sentential switching is well noticed in the above slogan.

The implicit connotation conveyed by the slogan denotes a sarcastic attitude towards current managers who seem to be riveted to their seats. Differently couched, the Harakists wanted to say that it is time to quit the responsibility.

D) Slogans Reflecting Borrowing

It is well-said "Every code-switching instance starts life as borrowing." (unknown source).

Example 6: (*stop لا, corruption للفساد*)

The sixth slogan reflects words adopted morpho-phonologically from English and used to represent the holders' stances toward corruption.

The sixth slogan denounced explicitly the prevalent corruption which overwhelmed all spheres of the state. Via this slogan, the protesters sent a clear message denoting that the corruption torrent has reached its climax, and it should be stopped at once.

Example 7: (*Frexit*)

The word 'Frexit' corresponds to 'Brexit'. This picture represents a slogan written in English with ambiguous meaning. This slogan represents an idea held by a protestor expressing his/her beliefs against the existence of the French language in the Algerian political system. Furthermore, the word 'Frexit' consists of blending two different words in order to create a new one (neologism). 'Fr' means France or French language and 'exit' means refute the French language. So, from this slogan, it shows the real status of the French language from Harak perspective.

From the above slogans, we can deduce that besides refuting Algerian political management, the Harakists also sent messages towards language policy. With

reference to different outcomes of language contact, we can also notice that most of them are used in these slogans.

5.5. Discussion

The transgressive and subversive character of popular slogans is a major fact that is imposed by the power of communication and is exposed by opposing the dominant discourse of political power. The street, a platform of expression par excellence, has become a hotbed of contestation where individuals openly say what they think/want. In fact, the power to say, write, read and interpret is reduced to the common demands put into slogans by the demonstrators. Thus, different languages echo the thoughts written down and the line of conduct prescribed by the Harakists, which, in our opinion, is speakable. In addition to the freedom of expression, it can be underlined that freedom of linguistic choice has emerged, thus making visible several languages transcribed in different spellings. Obviously, the languages and the spellings are harmoniously articulated in a multicolored and multifaceted decor where the words are conjugated in the plural through a de facto plurilingualism understood as "a linguistic seizure of power." (Morsly, 2016, p. 156). In fact, slogans can be regarded as the founding principles for new Algeria.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, and with reference to the collected data, it can be noted that those who use foreign languages are plurilinguals, rather than bilinguals regarding the Algerian sociolinguistic context.The main motives behind English language banners in Harak are mainly to notify English speakers, inside the country and, especially those outside the borders of country, of their despair and disillusionment towards decision-makers and publicly denouncing the flaws in managing Algerians' affairs. In fact, English fulfills the needs of the global lingua franca because it has spread to large areas of the world due to technological development. Thus, English has become a language that plays an important communicative role among worldwide countries.

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Appendix 1