



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

A Discourse Analytic Study of Practices of Constructing National Linguistic Identity of Algerian EFL Learners

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(Received: 02 February 2025; Accepted: 18 May 2025; Published: 31 May 2025)

In Algeria's multicultural landscape, the sustainable construction of national linguistic identity within foreign language education presents a multifaceted challenge. This corpus-based study aims to investigate official educational discourse to uncover the intent of Algerian educational authorities to establish a sustainable national linguistic identity among young language learners. Grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis, the study examines a documented presidential speech and legislative texts, employing the «absences/presences technique» of textual analysis. This method highlights not only what is present but also underscores the significance of what is absent from the official discourse. The research critically evaluates fundamental assumptions about language functions and the objectives of foreign language courses. The analysis reveals a concerted effort in the official discourse to sustain national linguistic identity among learners, emphasizing adherence to Algerian values and cultural specificities. The documents underscore the importance of mastering Arabic, promoting Tamazight, and learning foreign languages, positioning foreign languages as a conduit for intercultural dialogue and understanding. This study provides insights for policymakers and educators to enhance multicultural education and ensure the effective integration of intercultural principles into classroom practices.

Keywords: Language, Sustainability, National Identity, Official Discourse, Education, Interculturality.

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Introduction

Algeria is a diverse, multicultural country where different linguistic groups coexist. While the concept of 'multiculturality' is recognized in Algeria, the practical understanding of this concept remains limited. The Algerian Constitution of 2016 recognizes and protects the ethnic and cultural diversity in the country, which, in theory, should serve to foster language teachers' multicultural awareness and practices through sustainable approaches to managing this diversity.

Central to this investigation is the process of constructing national identity in a sustainable manner through language education. The formation of a national linguistic identity among young learners can contribute to a stronger sense of unity and belonging without denying the country's ethnic and linguistic diversity. This process reflects the challenges that Algeria's official discourse faces in promoting harmony and inclusiveness in a multicultural society, aligning with ongoing governmental efforts to prohibit ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and racial discrimination.

This paper argues that education lies at the heart of the process of constructing national identity in a sustainable manner. In particular, foreign language programs hold the potential to reinforce discourses centered on mutual understanding and tolerance. Language teaching serves as a platform for developing national linguistic identity while encouraging learners to value both their own identities and those of others (UNESCO, 2021).

Based on this broader understanding of multiculturalism, the aim of this paper is to analyze the official discourse regarding the construction of national linguistic identity through language education programs in a sustainable manner. The general assumption underlying this study is that, as a natural arena for intercultural education, language teaching and learning, when guided by official directives, can play a pivotal role in fostering interculturalism and maintaining national linguistic identity among Algerian young learners who belong to diverse linguistic communities, thus contributing to a transformative educational landscape (Lahmar, 2024).

Despite the growing body of research on multilingual education and intercultural dialogue, gaps remain in understanding how official educational discourse shapes national linguistic identity. Few studies have explored how language education policies contribute to sustaining national identity in a multilingual context like Algeria's. This study seeks to fill these gaps by examining how official discourse promotes the construction and sustainability of national linguistic identity through language programs. In doing so, it will also investigate the role of foreign language instruction in fostering intercultural dialogue and promoting social cohesion within Algeria's educational system.

Sustainability in language education is a growing concern for educational policymakers, particularly in contexts where multilingualism is the norm. According to Trisnawati (2017), sustaining national languages while ensuring global competitiveness through foreign language instruction presents a delicate balancing act. Ashokan (2019) elaborates that sustainability involves preserving linguistic diversity and cultural heritage, suggesting that sustainability in education entails integrating mother tongues and cultural knowledge into curricula to ensure these elements endure over time. Language education in Algeria aims to support the use of Arabic and Berber while acknowledging the practical need for proficiency in French and English. This aligns with UNESCO's (2021) emphasis on fostering multilingualism for inclusion and social cohesion, advocating for policies that not only preserve linguistic diversity but also promote national identity through sustainable educational practices.

In this study, sustainability refers to the enduring integration and promotion of national linguistic identity within educational frameworks, ensuring it adapts to and thrives in a globalized, multilingual environment. This concept aligns with intercultural contact by fostering dialogue and mutual understanding through language education. By embedding sustainable practices, the curriculum aims to balance the preservation of national identity with the promotion of intercultural awareness, creating a dynamic and inclusive educational landscape (UNESCO, 2021).

The present study examines the sustainability of national linguistic policies in Algeria's educational system, specifically in relation to foreign language education. It investigates how language instruction, particularly in EFL classrooms, integrates multiple linguistic and cultural realities, fostering intercultural dialogue and mutual respect among students. For this reason, the learner should be considered as a social being that makes use of the markers of his/her identity to value his/her country and respect those of others.

Drawing on the literature mentioned above, the following research questions were put to the test:

1. What place would national linguistic identity construction enjoy in the official educational discourse in Algeria?
2. To what extent do language education programs in Algeria contribute to the sustainability of national linguistic identity?
3. What role does foreign language instruction play in fostering intercultural dialogue and social cohesion in Algeria's educational system?

Literature Review

In the language education context, multiculturalism refers to the coexistence of diverse cultures and languages within a society, promoting inclusion and equality

across linguistic and ethnic groups. In language education, this concept involves not only teaching the dominant or national language but also supporting the languages of minority communities, which aligns with the broader goals of sustaining cultural diversity and fostering intercultural dialogue. Scholars like Kymlicka (2009) and Banks & McGee Banks (2016) highlight how multiculturalism in education aims to challenge the hegemonic dominance of a single national identity by recognizing and integrating the languages and cultures of various groups.

In Algeria, where Arabic and Berber are the official languages, the legacy of French colonization continues to shape the linguistic landscape. Recent studies highlight how national identity is intertwined with language policies that aim to both preserve indigenous languages and integrate global languages, especially in education (Adder, 2024). The Algerian Constitution of 2016 underscores the importance of linguistic diversity, recognizing the ethnic and cultural pluralism of the country. Yet, the coexistence of Arabic, Berber, French, and the increasing presence of English poses challenges for maintaining a unified national linguistic identity (Rouabah, 2022).

According to Spolsky (2004), national identity in the context of multiculturalism and language education involves a complex interplay of factors, including the use of language to assert identity and maintain cohesion within a nation-state. The selection and promotion of a national language often serves as a symbolic effort to unify a diverse population, highlighting the crucial role of language in shaping national identity. However, this process is particularly challenging in multicultural settings where multiple ethnic and linguistic groups coexist.

Imran and Natsir (2024) argue that the role of language in shaping national identity becomes even more significant in such multicultural societies. They explain that inclusive language policies—such as bilingualism or the protection of regional languages—can foster social cohesion and national pride by creating environments where linguistic diversity is recognized and celebrated. The experiences of countries like Canada, Belgium, and India illustrate how language can function as both a unifying force and a source of tension, as these nations navigate the delicate balance between preserving national unity and embracing cultural diversity.

Algeria's linguistic situation and foreign languages education policies: An overview

Algeria, with a population of approximately 45,017,901 (according to 2021 Worldometer data), enjoys a rich and diverse linguistic heritage. Contrary to a common misconception labeling it as monolingual due to the dominance of Arabic, Algeria is far from being mono-cultural. From a sociolinguistic viewpoint, the country can be broadly categorized into two linguistic groups: Arabophone and Berberophone.

Arabic stands as the predominant language in Algeria, with the popular dialect, often referred to as Algerian Arabic, being widely spoken (accounting for more than 60% of the population). This dialect serves as the lingua franca of Algerians. Classical Arabic -- the language of the Quran -- esteemed for its literary and academic significance, finds limited use, primarily in official and administrative contexts such as governmental documents and educational institutions.

Tamazight, also known as the Berber language, holds the status of an official national language in Algeria. Spoken as the mother tongue by 35% of the Algerian population (Ouahmiche et al., 2017), it was officially recognized in 2002. Tamazight has been incorporated into the educational curriculum since the 2007/2008 school year, with various regional dialects such as Kabyle, Mozabite, Targui, Chaoui, and Chenoua. These diverse oral dialects form the basis of the Tamazight language.

French and English are officially recognized as foreign languages in Algeria's educational system. French instruction begins in the 3rd year of primary school, while English was recently implemented at the same level. Additionally, the secondary school curriculum offers instruction in other languages such as Spanish, Italian, and German.

Based on these linguistic realities, it would be more coherent to expect a curriculum to define educational practices, skills to be developed, and teaching materials reinforcing national identity construction in interculturally contextualized foreign language learning settings.

Methodology

This study adopts a content analysis approach, informed by a constructivist lens, to examine the construction of national identity within Algerian educational texts. Content analysis, as Krippendorff (2018) notes, is a systematic and replicable method for interpreting textual material through the coding and categorization of themes. Guided by Fairclough's (1992) insights, this constructivist paradigm aligns with the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), emphasizing how social realities, such as identity and culture, are constructed through language and discourse.

Data source

The primary data sources analyzed in this study include key official educational texts and curriculum guides designed to represent the national educational framework and objectives. The Official Bulletin of National Education, Law No. 08-04 (January 2008), serves as a foundational legal document establishing principles, goals, and values for the Algerian educational system, with particular emphasis on national identity. Additionally, The General Curriculum Reference Framework (January 2009) outlines comprehensive educational standards and competencies across subjects, promoting a cohesive approach aligned with national priorities. The

Educational Reform and Pedagogical Innovation in Algeria document (ONPS, 2006) highlights efforts toward educational reform, focusing on innovative strategies to strengthen the alignment of the educational system with Algerian national and cultural identity. Finally, the Presidential Speech (May 2000) offers insights into national perspectives on identity, unity, and education, as articulated by Algeria's leadership.

The choice of the last document as a support for analyzing the official discourse regarding the instructions given to the educational sector in Algeria vis-à-vis identity-related issues can be explained in two ways. First of all, this document is the latest legal provision dealing with the identity issue in Algeria. Second, some of the documents are legislative texts which organize the question of national languages in the national education sector. This is the reason why they will be considered the most recent official discourse regarding language policy and identity construction. Moreover, these documents are preceded by a reform launched in 2003. According to the literature, documents such as policies are deemed more trustworthy than other sources (Burns, 2000), due to the legitimacy inherent in such documents. Bowen (2009) claims that "availability, cost effectiveness, lack of obtrusiveness and exactness" (p. 31) make document analysis an easy approach as a source of data. According to Merriam (1988), one advantage of using documented material is its stability.

Theoretical and Analytical Framework

This study adopted Fairclough's (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model as its theoretical and analytical framework, with a focus on the absences/presences technique. This technique helped us highlight the elements, aspects, and concepts of national identity which are present in or absent from the official documents. Therefore, it is very pertinent to mention that "textual analysis can often give excellent insights about what is 'in' a text, but what is absent from a text is often just as significant from the perspective of socio-cultural analysis" (Fairclough 1995, 5).

Research Paradigm

Informed by Fairclough's (1992) insights, this study adopts a constructivist lens to examine how national identity is constructed and conveyed within Algerian educational official texts. According to Fairclough (1992), constructivism aligns with CDA by focusing on the idea that social realities, such as identity and culture, are actively constructed through language and discourse. This perspective supports the study's aim to reveal how specific linguistic choices in educational discourse reflect and reinforce societal structures, ideologies, and values within a multicultural educational context.

Therefore, Fairclough's three-dimensional framework has been employed:

- i. Textual Analysis: Examining linguistic features such as word choice to identify explicit and implicit messages.
- ii. Discursive Practice Analysis: Investigating how the texts are produced.
- iii. Social Practice Analysis: Situating the discourse within its broader socio-cultural context to reveal its ideological underpinnings.

The analysis focuses on identifying linguistic moves and patterns that align with the themes of national identity, interculturality, and sustainability. That said, specific criteria for analysis would include:

- Themes and Keywords: Identifying recurring terms and phrases related to national identity, such as references to Algerian identity, Islam, Arabism, and Amazigh culture.
- Foreign language education: Exploring how foreign language constructs and maintains relationships of unity between various linguistic and cultural groups across Algeria, promoting national identity, multicultural understanding, and global engagement.
- Interculturality: Analyzing the extent to which the texts promote intercultural understanding and dialogue.

By integrating these analytical moves, the study seeks to reveal how educational discourse in Algeria reflects and reinforces the nation's sociocultural and ideological frameworks.

Data collection

Given the depth and complexity required for a CDA, this study utilized a manual approach to data collection and analysis. This method allowed us to perform a direct, iterative engagement with each text in question, enabling a more nuanced interpretation of themes related to national identity, multiculturalism, foreign language education, and interculturality. According to Krippendorff (2018), a systematic and careful reading of documents is essential for extracting rich, context-specific meanings, especially when dealing with ideologically significant content. By manually analyzing each source, the researcher was able to interpret the data with sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic nuances that automated tools might overlook.

In line with the approach described by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), the researcher began by closely reading each document line by line, recording initial observations and identifying key themes that aligned with the study's objectives. This initial analysis facilitated the development of a thematic framework that was refined over successive rounds of reading and coding, allowing for patterns and relationships to emerge. This approach ensured that the analysis remained flexible and responsive to the evolving insights within the data, reinforcing the depth and rigor of the study.

Measures

The researcher employed a thematic framework to measure key constructs that align with the study's purposes, including national identity, multiculturalism, foreign language education, and interculturality, within Algerian educational texts. As Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) explain, qualitative measures are often established through iterative coding and thematic development, allowing the researcher to identify, refine, and consistently apply categories relevant to the study's objectives. The thematic categories were developed through repeated readings and careful coding of each text, which Krippendorff (2018) notes is essential for capturing nuanced meanings embedded in language. These measures provided a structured way to assess the presence and representation of themes, enabling a systematic analysis of how educational discourse in Algeria frames national identity in relation to multicultural and global contexts.

Results

Through qualitative content analysis, several key themes emerged in the discourse surrounding national identity within Algerian educational texts.

Sustaining National Identity

The former president's speech on educational reform implemented in 2003 was analyzed first. With regard to the role of the school in constructing national identity, the former president A. Bouteflika stated in 2000 that:

The renovated Algerian school... will train a citizen with indisputable benchmarks, faithful to his principles and values but also capable of understanding the world around him.

The role of the school being very important, the president's speech proves that the educational reform was initiated in order to put the Algerian school back on a global level. As stated above, the new educational policy is expected to enrich the personality of the Algerian citizen and equip her/him with the necessary tools to face the world without denying her/his origin.

As for the other documents at hand, the internal diversity of Algerian society mentioned above is well represented in both *Law No. 08-04 of January 23, 2008 on the Framework Law on National Education* and the *Law on National Education Orientation* (2008). The statements and texts of the two documents do mention ethnic and linguistic specificities with great emphasis. In that regard, the three dimensions of Algerian identity -- Islam, Arabité, Amazighité -- are given great importance.

Moreover, the concept of national identity comes up eight (8) times in *Réforme de l'éducation et innovation pédagogique en Algérie* (2006); nine (9) times in the *Law on National Education Orientation* (2008), and thirteen (13) times in the *General Curriculum Reference Framework* (2009). Throughout the documents,

derivative terms such as "national community," "national education," "national unity," "national conscience," etc., are recurring. Within the theoretical framework of the document designers, these concepts have been inserted within the targeted skills and values aimed at preparing learners for interculturally responsive citizenship.

In Article Two, Chapter One, Title One of the Law (page 36), the fundamental principles as well as the purposes of the school are formulated as follows:

The Algerian school aims to train a citizen endowed with indisputable national benchmarks, deeply attached to the values of the Algerian people, able to understand the world around them, to adapt to it, to act on it, and able to open up to universal civilization.

In the same chapter, the aims of education in regard to the construction of national identity in a sustainable way are outlined as follows:

- *Rooting in our children the feeling of belonging to the Algerian people; raising them in the love of Algeria and the fertility of belonging to it as well as in the attachment to national unity, territorial integrity, and representative symbols of the nation;*
- *Strengthening awareness, both individual and collective, of national identity, the cement of social cohesion, by promoting values related to Islamité, Arabité, and Amazighité;*
- *Creating the foundations for constructing a society committed to peace and democracy and open to universality, progress, and modernity, by helping students to appropriate the values shared by Algerian society, based on knowledge, work, solidarity, respect for others and tolerance, and ensuring the promotion of positive values and attitudes in relation, in particular, to the principles of human rights, equality, and social justice.*

Very close to this, the General Curriculum Reference Framework stipulates that teaching/learning programs must prepare learners for:

Essential competitiveness by strengthening attachment to national identity and developing the skills necessary for successful adaptation to the world of intercultural communication and the international labor market. (p.5)

The *Réforme de l'éducation et innovation pédagogique en Algérie* (2006) emphasizes the restoration of national identity through education by incorporating Arabic and Amazigh languages, viewing them as crucial for the formation of Algerian identity:

The generalization of the teaching of the Amazigh language now functions, alongside the official Arabic language, as an element of rehabilitation of all the cultural components of the Algerian personality. ... All things called upon to

function, in the social imagination, as an element of rehabilitation of the founding community national values of the collective identity. (p. 6)

The document highlights efforts to reverse the old approach that previously narrowed identity to a single dimension. This shift aims to restore Algeria's cultural balance while embracing modern educational methodologies.

These results suggest that the documents emphasize sustaining Algeria's unique identity, rooted in Islamité, Arabité, and Amazighité, aligning national identity with shared religious, linguistic, and cultural heritage. This unity is a recurring theme in all four documents, especially highlighted in the educational framework for instilling values through national symbols like the anthem, flag, and historical figures. Similarly, the Official Bulletin strongly focuses on fostering a shared Algerian identity through Islamité, Arabité, and Amazighité as foundational elements, emphasizing a curriculum centered on Algeria's cultural, religious, and linguistic heritage.

Multiculturalism

The *President's Speech (2000)* emphasizes that the commission charged with reforming the education system must base its efforts on the specific characteristics of Algerian society: "The commission must... rely on the specific characteristics of Algerian society." This approach suggests that the educational system should embrace and integrate the various cultural, linguistic, and social aspects of Algeria, ensuring that all groups are represented and included. Such inclusivity would acknowledge the cultural richness within Algerian society, thereby fostering a more equitable and culturally responsive educational environment.

Further, the *President's Speech* establishes a balance between preserving Algeria's cultural heritage and embracing modernity through educational reform: "The reform ... will have to express the attachment to the values of our cultural and civilizational heritage, but also the legitimate aspiration of our youth to build their future in a democratic, modern society open to the world." It could be understood that, on the one hand, the reforms are framed as essential for reinforcing Algeria's cultural and civilizational values, ensuring that younger generations remain connected to their *Algerianité*. This emphasizes the importance of instilling a sense of pride in the cultural and historical legacy of Algeria. On the other hand, the speech highlights the legitimate aspirations of the youth to build a future in a democratic, modern, and globally connected society. This recognizes the freedom of the younger generation to engage with global ideas and modern societal structures, promoting openness and the ability to navigate a diverse, multicultural world.

Moreover, the *Réforme de l'éducation* (2006, p. 172) outlines what should be included in the curriculum by emphasizing key educational priorities. It suggests

that a curriculum should focus not only on content but also on processes that address the needs of learners:

The term "curriculum" places more emphasis on processes and needs, rather than on content. ... aiming to make learning meaningful and centered on societal problems, movements aiming to identify hidden forms of racism and cultural stereotypes in educational materials and in teaching practices, or currents centered on student autonomy.

This broader perspective on the concept of curriculum reflects an approach aimed at making education more relevant, inclusive, and focused on empowering learners in a diverse and evolving society.

The *General Curriculum Reference Framework* (2009) emphasizes the constitutionalization of the Amazigh language and culture, marking a clear shift towards acknowledging and integrating this cultural dimension of Algeria within the national educational framework: "The introduction of the teaching of the Amazigh language and cultural heritage into the curricula is a first expression of the desire to devote the place of this fundamental attribute of the Algerian personality" (p. 14). The introduction of Amazigh language and heritage into the curriculum is presented as a critical step in reflecting the diverse cultural richness of Algerians. It also mentions the need to create the necessary conditions for the generalization and flourishing of this educational inclusion.

Finally, the document *Law on National Education Orientation* (2008) identifies the school not only as a place of learning but as a forge for respect toward Algeria's diverse heritage:

The school becomes not only the place of knowledge but also the crucible where respect for the historical, geographical, religious, linguistic, and cultural heritage and all the symbols that express it such as the national languages, the national emblem, and the national anthem are forged. (p. 9)

By highlighting the importance of national languages, alongside historical, geographical, religious, and cultural symbols, the document recognizes the multicultural reality of Algerian society. The inclusion of multiple national languages is a clear sign of multiculturalism, recognizing the linguistic diversity present in Algeria, particularly with Arabic, Amazigh, and their various dialects. Throughout the analyzed documents, there seems to be a conscious effort to promote multiculturalism in the Algerian educational system. The official discourse tends to make education more inclusive by embedding multicultural values, promoting pluralism, and ensuring the representation of Algeria's diverse cultural and linguistic heritage. It advocates for an inclusive approach that acknowledges Algeria's regional and cultural diversity, specifically encouraging the integration of local identities.

This is framed as essential for reinforcing unity while respecting the diverse backgrounds of Algeria's population.

Language Education and Inter-Culturality

The *President's Speech* (2000) highlights the necessity of global awareness. It explicitly recognizes the need for Algeria to be more open to the world, driven not only by the imperatives of common sense but also by the demands of globalization: "*Mastering foreign languages has become essential. Teaching students one or two other widely spoken languages from a young age gives them the essential assets to succeed in tomorrow's world... and promote openness to other cultures.*" This approach positions Algeria to navigate the challenges of modernization and globalization by preparing students to engage with other cultures and navigate international contexts through intercultural pedagogy.

Conceptualizers of the *General Curriculum Reference Framework* (2009) seem to be aware that in a constantly changing world, it has become imperative to reframe the fundamental missions of the school. The school, in its mission of socialization, has evolved towards learning how to live together where "the individual must develop attitudes and behaviors in order to be able to live with the citizens of the world" (p. 7).

As far as language education is concerned, this document explains that:

Language teaching in the education system is based on three guiding principles: mastery of the Arabic language, promotion of Tamazight, and learning of foreign languages (p. 43)

With special reference to foreign language education, Chapter Three of the same document states that one of the school's missions is to:

Allow learners to master at least two foreign languages as an opening to the world and a means of access to documentation and exchanges with foreign cultures and civilizations.

All these citations indicate that the official discourse punctuates the teaching action and advocates training that reinforces both identity traits in learners as well as openness to the culture of others and to universal civilization through foreign language settings. This objective must logically be followed by activities and texts that exploit the two aspects of interculturality. The need for intercultural education is essential, because in the presence of heterogeneous profiles and a society increasingly open to the cultures of the world, intercultural education must allow a dialogue between these cultures. This trend must be really translated into teaching materials and teaching approaches in the classroom.

They also show the importance that Algerian stakeholders attach to foreign language education. According to the documents analyzed, learning foreign languages is mandatory in the school curriculum to foster global engagement and

enhance learners' social and professional opportunities. It is clearly stated in the document that, through foreign language education, educational authorities allow openness to otherness and maintain adherence to national ideas. In other words, foreign language teaching is intended to allow dialogue between cultures; it broadens the perceptual horizons of learners. This should not, however, result in a loss or rejection of one's own identity, or of one's own values. Therefore, dialoguing with the other presupposes knowledge of the Self as a prerequisite.

From this perspective of intercultural education, Byram (1997) speaks of an intercultural approach where, both the teaching content and the approach used must be reviewed with a view to an approach whose stake is to act on the learner, by establishing a *savoir-fair* to perceive a world that is as heterogeneous as it is reconciled with its cultural differences. These must be perceived as a source of wealth and the teaching aids must be chosen with the aim of showing culturally reconciled specificities.

In Byram's (1997) model of ICC, otherness and interculturality constitute a paradigm of self-identification. The definition of learner's national identity stems from the opposition of culturally distinctive features of his/her identity compared to those of the other: the opposition is not considered here in clash and conflict, but enrichment and diversity. Taking into account the foreign culture in the definition of learner's own culture and his/her identity is a necessity as an essential vector of the training for citizenship stipulated by *la loi d'orientation de l'éducation nationale* (2008).

Discussion

This study examined how national identity is constructed and conveyed within Algerian educational official texts. The key elements of the study revolve around the interplay of foreign languages, cultural, and intercultural competencies and their role in shaping a sustainable sense of national identity among young Algerian learners.

National Linguistic Identity Construction in Official Educational Discourse

The findings indicate that educational directives in Algeria place substantial emphasis on national identity construction through the promotion of Arabic and Tamazight. This focus serves to preserve linguistic diversity while reinforcing a sense of unity and belonging among learners. Mastery of these languages is framed as essential not only for linguistic competence but also for cultural continuity, ensuring a sustainable construction of national identity.

This approach aligns with Byram's (1997) assertion that national identity cannot exist separately from cultural values, positioning language as a core aspect of cultural identity. Similarly, Starkey (2002) supports the idea that educational policies aiming to preserve linguistic diversity are essential in multicultural

societies, suggesting that Algeria's strategy reflects a universal educational philosophy prioritizing both national cohesion and individual cultural expression.

The Algerian policy contrasts with the concerns raised by Banks and McGee Banks (2016) regarding multicultural education. By integrating both Arabic and Tamazight into the curriculum, Algeria fosters inclusivity and prevents the marginalization of linguistic minorities. In contexts where linguistic representation is insufficient, minority students may experience exclusion, weakened academic engagement, and a diminished sense of belonging. The Algerian case demonstrates a conscious effort to prevent these challenges by ensuring linguistic representation in official discourse.

Comparative insights from Ling-Yin's (2007) study on England's Curriculum Guidance further highlight the significance of the inclusive linguistic policies in Algeria. While in England the framework emphasizes inclusivity, it fails to provide sufficient guidance for incorporating cultural diversity in a meaningful way. The binary categorization of English-speaking and non-English-speaking students oversimplifies linguistic diversity, unlike the Algerian approach, which actively integrates multiple linguistic identities into the national educational framework.

Contribution of Language Education to the Sustainability of National Linguistic Identity

The findings suggest that language education policies in Algeria are designed to sustain national identity by prioritizing Arabic and Tamazight within the curriculum. This approach ensures that young learners are deeply connected to their linguistic heritage, reinforcing cultural preservation across generations. The emphasis on native languages aligns with research highlighting the role of heritage languages in maintaining sustainable cultural identity (Conley, 1993; Orgoványi-Gajdos, 2016). These scholars argue that policies supporting heritage languages in multilingual settings foster inclusivity and social cohesion---an outcome observed in the Algerian educational system throughout the analyzed documents.

A comparison with the Colombian case (Nieto, 2009) underscores the importance of the Algerian linguistic strategy. In Colombia, the prioritization of Spanish and English in official discourse has led to a linguistic hierarchy that marginalizes indigenous and Afro-Colombian languages. This policy perpetuates social inequalities by positioning dominant languages as symbols of modernization while devaluing minority languages. By contrast, the Algerian policy framework actively works against such disparities by affirming the equal cultural significance of Arabic and Tamazight.

Similarly, Tsui and Tollefson (2007) illustrate how increased English curriculum time in Asian countries can create social and class divides, as English fluency becomes associated with elite status. Countries such as South Korea and Japan

model their English education on Anglo-centric norms, sometimes reinforcing linguistic hierarchies that undermine native languages. The Algerian model presents a different paradigm by ensuring that foreign language instruction complements rather than replaces indigenous linguistic and cultural identity.

Conversely, Aung (2023) describes a contrasting case in Myanmar, where education policies have been used to reinforce national unity by diminishing ethnic minorities' individual identities. Since 1962, the Burmanization strategy has aimed to create a singular national identity, sometimes at the expense of ethnic diversity. While this has maintained national cohesion, it has done so by eroding linguistic and cultural pluralism. In contrast, Algeria sustains national unity through an inclusive framework that integrates multiple linguistic and cultural identities rather than suppressing them.

Role of Foreign Language Instruction in Fostering Intercultural Dialogue and Social Cohesion

The analysis of the official educational discourse in Algeria reveals that foreign language instruction plays a significant role in fostering intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. The 2003 educational reform emphasizes student-centered learning and aligns with broader globalization trends, acknowledging the multicultural nature of Algerian society. This approach reflects Starkey's (2002) concept of a universal teaching philosophy that promotes human and citizen rights while preserving ethnic, cultural, and linguistic specificities.

Intercultural education in the Algerian foreign language curriculum is designed to contribute to national identity construction by placing students in an environment that nurtures their awareness of both their own cultural identity and that of others. This aligns with Bennett's (1986) model of intercultural sensitivity, which posits that exposure to diverse cultural perspectives enhances students' ability to appreciate and adapt to cultural differences.

The discourse suggests that foreign language instruction in Algeria has a twofold purpose:

1. Promoting intercultural dialogue – By exposing students to different linguistic and cultural contexts, the curriculum encourages open-mindedness and cultural exchange.
2. Reinforcing national identity – Rather than eroding local cultural identities, foreign language instruction strengthens learners' awareness of their own heritage by positioning it within a global framework.

Research in different contexts corroborates these results. For example, Chaika (2023) highlights that foreign language instruction plays a significant role in fostering intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. She argues that, through task-

based approaches, foreign language teaching promotes social cohesion by preparing learners to navigate and appreciate cultural diversity.

Similarly, the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) implemented the "Languages for Social Cohesion" programme (2004-2007), involving approximately 4,500 language professionals. This initiative emphasized that language education is of high importance for promoting linguistic and cultural diversity, thereby enhancing social cohesion in European societies.

Despite these results, some researchers have reservations about fostering intercultural dialogue through foreign language instruction. Iswandari and Ardi (2022) suggest that traditional models of ICC may overemphasize the ideal native speaker as a benchmark, which can be unrealistic and may not fully address the complexities of intercultural interactions. This perspective calls for an approach that considers the dynamic nature of cultural identities and interactions.

Another concern has been raised by Abu-Nimer and Smith (2016), who argue that while intercultural pedagogy aims to promote dialogue and peace, its effectiveness is limited if not accompanied by participatory teaching methods. They emphasize that without active engagement, such educational initiatives may fall short in promoting cross-cultural understanding. This means that the effective implementation of intercultural pedagogy presents challenges. Adopting multicultural policies is not the same as ensuring their functionality in everyday classroom realities. A key issue remains the gap between policy and practice, requiring targeted interventions.

Sustainable multicultural education demands more than curriculum reforms; it necessitates a shift in pedagogical practices. Teachers need greater support in integrating intercultural elements into their teaching, and educational materials should more explicitly reflect the diverse fabric of Algerian society. Sustainable identity construction requires continuous adaptation, ensuring that education evolves alongside social transformations (Conley, 1993; Orgoványi-Gajdos, 2016).

In response to these critical perspectives, the following implications and applications are outlined:

- **Language Policy Implications:** The emphasis on Arabic and Tamazight in educational directives underscores the importance of supporting bilingual education models. Policymakers should continue to develop and implement curricula that balance both languages, ensuring that linguistic diversity is preserved while promoting national unity.
- **Foreign Language Educational Practice:** Educators are encouraged to adopt teaching strategies that integrate intercultural elements into foreign language instruction. This practice not only enriches the learning

experience but also prepares students to engage in meaningful intercultural dialogue, thereby enhancing social cohesion.

- **Cultural Preservation:** The deliberate inclusion of native languages in education serves as a tool for cultural preservation. By embedding linguistic heritage into the learning process, educational systems can contribute to the continuity of cultural identities across generations.

While this study provides valuable insights into the role of language education in national identity construction, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations:

- **Scope of Analysis:** The study primarily focuses on official educational documents, which may not fully capture the on-the-ground realities of classroom practices. Future research could benefit from observational studies or interviews with educators and students to gain a more comprehensive understanding.
- **Generalizability:** The findings are context-specific to Algeria and may not be directly applicable to other multicultural societies with different linguistic landscapes. Comparative studies across different contexts could provide a broader perspective on the interplay between language education and national identity.

Building upon the current study, future research could investigate the challenges and successes in the practical application of bilingual and intercultural education policies, offering insights into effective strategies for educators and policymakers. It is also of high importance to explore the long-term effects of bilingual education on students' national identity and cultural integration, assessing how sustained exposure to both native and foreign languages influences their sense of self and societal cohesion.

Conclusion

This study investigated whether national linguistic identity is constructed and sustained within the framework of Algeria's language education programs, focusing on the role of official discourse in fostering a balanced approach to multilingualism and cultural preservation. Reflection on the link between foreign language teaching and national linguistic identity construction has been the main concern of this research. An ideological apparatus par excellence, official educational discourse has been regarded in this paper as a means through which the government models its citizens of tomorrow: by offering them a general framework of thought accentuating a certain number of perceptions, values, behaviors, and reactions presented as the corollary of belonging to the Nation.

Bearing this in mind, official documents were analyzed with a focus on the mission and purposes of the Algerian school regarding language teaching/learning and national linguistic identity construction they stipulate. The analysis indicated

that the official educational discourse puts forward an Algerian national identity whose pillars are Islam, Arabité, and Amazighité. The official educational discourse acknowledges the Arabic-Tamazight bilingualism aspect of Algerian society.

With regard to foreign language education, they highlight the need to promote the mastery of at least two foreign languages. They give clear signs of official recognition of the importance of foreign languages to support the education system in enhancing Algeria's opportunities in the era of globalization. This discourse legitimates the intercultural approach to education. By including foreign languages in Algerian education policy, official discourse envisages the construction of a new Algerian citizen able to cope with global challenges.

It can be concluded that stakeholders' intention is not to make school simply a place for building knowledge. According to official discourse, educational institutions, through language education, constitute a place with various functions including the construction of national linguistic identity among young learners. Crucially, the official educational discourse not only recognizes but also celebrates the rich cultural and linguistic backgrounds that students bring. Instead of negating their diverse origins, it embraces this wealth of diversity and plurality. This inclusive approach fosters an environment where learning foreign languages becomes not just a syllabus-based exercise but a profound multicultural experience that contributes to sustaining a national identity among young learners.

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HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Selama, Sid Ali (2025). National Linguistic Identity Sustainability in Multilingual Education Settings in Algeria: A Corpus-Based Analysis of Official Educational Discourse. *LANGUAGE ART*, 10(2). 55–76. Shiraz, Iran.

DOI: 10.22046/LA.2025.10

URL: <https://www.languageart.ir/index.php/LA/article/view/431>





مطالعه‌ای تحلیلی از شیوه‌های ساخت هویت زبان ملی زبان‌آموزان رشته انگلیسی به عنوان زبان خارجی الجزایر

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(تاریخ دریافت: ۱۴ بهمن ۱۴۰۳؛ تاریخ پذیرش: ۲۸ اردیبهشت ۱۴۰۴؛ تاریخ انتشار: ۱۰ خرداد ۱۴۰۴)

در چشم‌انداز چندفرهنگی الجزایر، ساخت هویت زبان ملی به شیوه‌ای پایدار در چارچوب آموزش زبان‌های خارجی، چالشی چندوجهی به نظر می‌رسد. این مطالعه مبتنی بر پیکره زبانی، با هدف بررسی گفتمان آموزشی رسمی برای آشکار کردن نیت مقامات آموزشی الجزایر در ایجاد هویت زبان ملی پایدار در میان زبان‌آموزان جوان انجام شده است. این مطالعه که ریشه در تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی دارد، به بررسی چنین سخنرانی مهم مستند ریاست جمهوری و متون قانونی می‌پردازد و از «تکنیک حضور/غیاب» تحلیل متنی استفاده می‌کند. این روش نه تنها آنچه را که وجود دارد برجسته می‌کند، بلکه اهمیت آنچه را که در گفتمان رسمی وجود ندارد نیز برجسته می‌کند. این تحقیق به طور انتقادی فرضیات اساسی در مورد کارکردهای زبان و اهداف دوره‌های زبان‌های خارجی را ارزیابی می‌کند. تجزیه و تحلیل، تلاشی هماهنگ در گفتمان رسمی برای حفظ هویت زبان ملی در میان زبان‌آموزان را با تأکید بر دلبستگی به ارزش‌ها و ویژگی‌های فرهنگی الجزایر نشان داد. این اسناد بر اهمیت تسلط بر زبان عربی، ترویج زبان تمازیقی و یادگیری زبان‌های خارجی تأکید می‌کنند و زبان‌های خارجی را به عنوان مجرای برای گفتگو و درک بین فرهنگی قرار می‌دهند. این مطالعه بینش‌هایی را برای سیاست‌گذاران و مربیان فراهم می‌کند تا آموزش چندفرهنگی را ارتقا دهند و ادغام مؤثر اصول بین فرهنگی را در شیوه‌های کلاس درس تضمین کنند.

واژه‌های کلیدی: زبان، پایداری، هویت ملی، گفتمان رسمی، آموزش، بین فرهنگی.

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