

## MULTILINGUALISM: A CHALLENGE TO THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN ALGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

In Algeria, multilingualism can be considered a norm rather than an exception because of the coexistence of Arabic with its different varieties, on the one hand, and French and Berber varieties, on the other. This linguistic situation comes from its intricate history. Education is therefore perceived as the terrain *par excellence* where language-related rivalry is manifested. This, in fact, creates a kind of challenge for policy-makers, concerned with difficult decisions to undertake with regard to languages, schooling and the curricula in which the technical and the political often overlap. Language and, in particular, the choice of language of instruction in education is one such concern and often invokes contrasting and deeply felt positions. Questions of identity, nationhood and power are closely linked to the use of specific languages in the educational sphere. Language itself, moreover, possesses its own dynamics and is constantly undergoing processes of both continuity and change, impacting upon the communication modes of different societies as it evolves. The purpose of this work, therefore, is to consider some of the central issues concerning languages and education in the Algerian context and the ways the country's multilingual history has influenced and continues to direct the choice of languages used in educational institutions.

**KEYWORDS:** Multilingualism, Foreign languages in Algeria, Language Policies, Educational Reform