

THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE OF ALGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Historical, political, ethnic, educational, and socio-cultural factors have all contributed in making Algeria a conglomerate with a mosaic linguistic composition in which three main languages coexist side by side, namely Arabic, Berber and French. Chronologically, Berber, or Tamazight as it is labeled in official documents, figures more in the history of the country. Arabic, which identifies in two forms (dialectal and literary), is a relatively latecomer which was introduced to North Africa since the 7th century. French is a colonial legacy which still survives in independent Algeria in a variety of important domains. As such, Algeria identifies as a multilingual speech community. Also, the ‘functional specialization’ of each language renders Algeria a representative case of both *in-diglossia* and *out-diglossia*.

KEYWORDS: Arabic, Covert Status, Diglossia, French & Multilingual; overt status; Tamazight