

## ALGERIA'S 2019 UPRISING AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SLOGANS: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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**Abstract:** In 2019, millions of Algerians staged demonstrations, throughout the entire country, for months against the whole political regime calling for change and democracy. The protesters used the medium of slogans to both communicate their political demands and hopes, and to respond and react to politicians' speeches and the successive decisions made to appease the protesters' anger. This paper aims to analyse a number of slogans as political and social practice performed by protesters, taking into consideration linguistic and semiotic elements in specific context(s). The work draws on a number of devices, such as humour, intertextuality, word plays, etc.; to analyse the persuasive effect of their messages. Drawing on data collected from placards and banners, from several demonstrations over several weeks and locations across the country, this paper reveals that these slogans mirror the sociolinguistic structure of the community, the identity of its members and the linguistic devices employed to reach their goals.

**Key words:** Algeria, Uprising, Slogans, Multilingualism, Sociolinguistics

**Résumé :** En 2019, des millions d'algériens, appelant au changement et à la démocratie, se sont organisés pour manifester contre l'ensemble du régime politique, et ce durant des mois. Les manifestants ont utilisé des slogans visant à exprimer leurs revendications et leurs espoirs politiques, mais aussi à répondre et réagir aux discours des politiciens et aux décisions successives prises pour apaiser la colère des manifestants. Cet article a pour objectif d'analyser un certain nombre de slogans, en déchiffrant les éléments linguistiques et sémiotiques dans un contexte spécifique. L'étude explore l'humour, l'intertextualité, les jeux de mots, etc. ; pour détecter l'effet persuasif des messages. Les données sont collectées des pancartes et des bannières de plusieurs manifestations. Ces slogans reflètent la structure sociolinguistique de la communauté, l'identité de ses membres et les dispositifs linguistiques employés pour atteindre leurs objectifs.

**Mots-clés :** Algérie, soulèvement populaire, slogans, multilinguisme, sociolinguistique

## Introduction

*Yetnahaw ga'* or "they are all to be removed", and *silmiya* or "pacific" are the main slogans of Algeria's 2019 uprising, as they describe the "why" and "how" of this move. A wave of protests began in Algeria when thousands of Algerians took to the streets in order to protest against the government of the then-president Abdelaziz Bouteflika on February, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019. Thousands, then millions of people joined the crowd and continued to protest for months in opposition to Bouteflika's regime, against the government of transition that came after that and the different decisions that were opted for in attempt to appease the protesters. During the different marches, and for weeks, Algerians used slogans, placards and banners to communicate their demands, anger, opinions, delusions, hopes and dreams. This article aims to decipher the linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects behind the different slogans that were displayed on the placards. Every demonstration brought new slogans communicating people's answers and reactions to the politicians' declarations and to political decisions. These slogans, in addition to the political and social demands, reflect the linguistic, social and cultural aspects of Algerian society. The study is based on corpus linguistics, and aims to investigate its discourse via instances of multilingualism, intertextuality, humour, word plays and others. Our study aims to analyse the language used in a defined period of time and space to understand the way in which social power dominates in Algeria and the language used to express ideas which are opposed to current politics. The objective is to observe the languages of use in Algeria, and the relationship between users and their language to criticize the politics of their country.

The main interest of the work is synthesized in the following question: Which languages allow the Algerian citizens to express their anger and discontent and, therefore, which language reflects their identity? To answer this question, research related to the theoretical approaches of the communicative and sociocultural model has been carried out, the objective of which is to describe, explain and predict the relevance of the study. The methodology followed is an empirical one, which consists of analysing and observing a number of slogans that have been taken from different marches over a period of several weeks throughout the country, in the different languages spoken by Algerians: algerian variety of arabic, atandard arabic, tamazight, french, and also english, in order to reach a more general conclusion about language use in the community.

### 1. The social and political context of Algeria's uprising

Algeria is supposed to be a people's democratic republic. Since the constitution of 1996, the president of the republic is elected for a five-year term, and can only be re-elected once. However, the former president was running for a fifth term in 2019, which led to angry citizens taking to the streets to call for the principles of a republic. Bouteflika came into power in 1999, after a civil war that plunged the country into chaos. Algerians re-elected Bouteflika for a second time believing in continuity, and stability. These same reasons also resulted in his re-election for a third and fourth time (Mansouri, 2019). On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019,

Algerians staged the first demonstrations, which were nationwide, calling for change and democracy, with the main slogan “No to a fifth term”. This slogan was the result of two main facts. First and foremost, Bouteflika had been violating the principles of the supposed republic, and the constitution, for the third time. Furthermore, his ailing health, which had prevented him from delivering any kind of speech for over seven years, and which did not allow him to announce his own candidacy, would not enable him to rule the country for another office. Moreover, the society’s young majority was longing for rejuvenation and for processing towards a real democracy. Millions of Algerians continued demonstrating for months on end in what they called “Hirak” (movement/uprising), and was also labelled “the revolution of smile” due to its peaceable character and its humorous and sarcastic slogans (Blidi, 2019).

What provoked Algerians’ anger was the violation of the constitution. In addition to corruption, a restraint on freedom had been introduced, resulting in lack of an alternative candidate (Sidi Boumedine, 2019, pp.50-51). A few weeks later, the pressure of protests compelled the president to withdraw from the presidential race and to postpone the elections. Protests continued and demands increased - from merely opposing a fifth term for Bouteflika, to seeking the departure of all his entire entourage and all former regime figures, in addition to the dissolutions of the two major political parties; the National Liberation Front (FLN) and the National Democratic Rally (RND). These protests could be heard at international level in large part to advances in modern technology, and mainly to social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These forms of media play an important role spreading news to an extremely wide audience at a remarkable speed in situations of dedication and fear. Social media facilitates communication and the diffusion of messages among the protesters, given how straightforward it is to access these networks nowadays. For instance, instant messaging of images, videos and photos can be sent at the time of events happening and to a large number of receivers (Sidi Boumedine, 2019: p. 31-32). While protesting against the regime and expressing their demands, Algerians bore a variety of slogans and messages. The slogans reflected on, in addition to political demands and ideologies, linguistic and sociocultural perceptions of Algerian society, which will be discussed in the examples’ analyses section.

## 2. The Algerian sociolinguistic scene

The sociolinguistic scene of Algeria is rich and varied. Multilingualism in Algeria is attested by the presence of a number of languages and varieties side by side. Both algerian variety of arabic, known as *Ad dārija* or *Al ‘āmmiyya*, and tamazight varieties, make the first languages of arabophones and amazighophones, which are used in general day-to-day communication. Arabophones is spoken by 75% of the population and the remaining 25% are amazighophones (Le centre de recherche berbère de l’INALCO; Ennaji, 1999; Boucherit, 2002; Benrabah, 2007; Benmokhtar, 2013). Then, there is also, the standard arabic (SA), *Al ‘arabiya al fuṣṣḥá*, which is the language used in formal contexts and in education, and has been recognised as an official language since

the country gained independence in 1962. Tamazight gained national status in 2002, and the official one in the 2016 constitutional amendments. French, which has had no official status since independence, is still used in many walks of life, mainly in areas such as administration, as a medium for science and technology in higher education, arts and media; in addition to the informal functions. The three standard languages are of great importance in the country, while the language mostly used in the everyday life of Algerians is algerian variety of arabic (Kerras & Baya, 2018), such as for humour (Kerras & Serhani, 2019), proverbs (Kerras & Baya, 2018), theatre and folk poetry (Gutiérrez de Terán, 2014). Algerian variety of arabic is similar to arabic; yet, it is still significantly distinct at the levels of syntax, phonology, morphology and, most of all, vocabulary. Almost all of the civilisations that visited the region have left their print on algerian variety (Benrabah, 2013). Its linguistic items are based, mainly, on arabic and tamazight languages, in addition to the heavy loanwords that come from french, and to a lesser extent, from turkish and spanish.

Consequently, it is the vehicle for the history, traditions and the different social and cultural aspects of the country (Taleb Ibrahim, 2004; Chachou, 2012; Kerras & Baya, 2018). The closeness of algerian variety of arabic to standard arabic and their coexistence side by side is what made the situation diglossic. Ferguson's (1959) diglossia is defined as the coexistence of two genetically related varieties that are functionally distributed. In this case, the local variety is what is used in informal contexts, acquired mother tongue of 75% of the population from an early age. The standard one is the variety for formal functions, the second language of the majority of Algerians due to being the language learned in schools and used as a medium of education.

### 3. Theoretical framework

The framework within which this study is conducted is the critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1993). Many studies were conducted in this regard in order to examine the language used in different Arab societies after the Arab Spring Revolution, specifically in Tunisia, known as the Jasmine Revolution (Ben Said & Kasanga, 2016: p. 73). The analysed texts have been chosen from slogans, which are used to show the extent to which they serve as a medium by which political complaints and comments are dispensed and consumed. Such slogans could be introduced via many mediums, including banners, wall graffiti, audio-visual instruments, chanting, speeches and songs (Al-Sowaidi & Banda & Mansour, 2017, p. 621). Lim & Loi (2015) define a slogan as an influential means for effective communication, a short phrase that emphasises the key message, aimed at informing, persuading and motivating. The examples analysed in section 6 will be a sample of this definition. Many scholars focus on the functions of slogans and the effects of their use. Denton (1980), views that these short-worded expressions function to simplify ideas, express ideologies, goals, and hopes, motivate actions, stimulate emotional responses and possess a persuasive impact (cited in Lu, 1999, p. 492). Lu (2004) believes that political slogans share similar functions with ideographs in shaping public opinion, a fact that can be

viewed in three main ways: (1) as a justification for action (2) as a shared symbol for participation in a rhetorical culture; and (3) as a means of persuasion (Lucaites Condit 1993, cited in Lu 2004, p. 52). Slogans are characterised by a set of criteria according to Rey (1996: p. 111-118):

- Short: it expresses much information in a few words.
- Simple: it emphasises just one idea.
- Concise: it shows precise and concise wording.
- Attractive: it displays a clever use of rhetorical devices.
- Easy to remember (Rey, cited in Cabrera Abreu, Almeida & García, 2004: p. 42).

Other characteristics of slogans are related to the direct and indirect forms of the slogans that depend on the intentions and objectives of the author, the rhetoric as related to the culture of addresser, the required rhyme, semiotic values, etc.

Many studies were conducted around political speeches and the language of slogans in political protests (Ben Said & Kasanga, 2016: p. 73), analysing the protests in countries such as in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and Morocco. The revolutionary tsunami which has broken out in several countries of the Middle East in the last few years has brought about a massive number of slogans and has initiated a new sub-genre of political discourse in the Arab world (Al-Sowaidi & Banda & Mansour 2017, p. 622). The authors attest that the slogans reflect the use of language in Arab society and argued that the Arab Spring slogans constitute a political discourse, like the discourse of "political parties, the mass people, work unions, educators, students, proletarians, women's associations, etc. are involved in various political activities including peaceful demonstrating, protesting, civil disobedience and long marches.

In terms of content, the slogans deal with a range of politically-related issues such as political change, dictatorship, oppression, democracy, justice, freedom, equality, accountability, reconciliation, toppling the regimes and trialling their officials, etc." (Al-Sowaidi & Banda & Mansour 2017, p. 624). Yakulu Yusuf & Ismai'l (2017: p. 5) claim that slogans are fast-changing depending on social circumstances. Therefore, this paper attempts to describe social and political situations in Algeria by using a linguistic perspective with regard to its sociological context. Similar studies have been done to discuss two main discourse phenomena: frames or perspectives of interpretation of the social act of protesting, and intertextuality across the protests in Tunisia and Egypt (Ben Said & Kasanga, 2016: p. 74). This analysis is based on Algerian society to specify the language use and its relation with the social factors and power. In this article, a sociolinguistic reflection is exposed to analyse the language in a specific society and time, explaining a property of a social interaction, to challenge the relation of power in the society, analysing a sub-genre of political discourse; and the analysis is based on quantitative content analysis method.

#### 4. Research method

This study aims to explore the linguistic characteristics of the political slogans used by Algerians during the *Hirak*, and the sociolinguistic structure of the community. A random sample of slogans written on placards and banners that were used by protesters in Tuesday and Friday rallies during the first months of this uprising was collected. Slogans' objectives, humorous nature, sources of intertextuality, word play and other linguistic devices employed were then outlined. This study is not based on newspaper documents, but data collection on the street and through social networks. The discourse analysis is not analysing grammatical features, but the study of context and communicative events of the text. The study takes into consideration two important elements: time and place. The latter elements of the context are important as they contribute to the meaning and effect of slogans. The utterances that are analysed in this work have a precise place (the streets of Algeria) and a concrete time (the first half of the year 2019). Algeria, as the place, is a territory which has a history, culture and political conditions that led to the emergence of this type of discourse. Time is an essential factor because it is linked to precise political conditions, Bouteflika's decision to run for a fifth term in office in 2019, that led to sequence of marches and demonstrations for weeks and months to voice their demands. In fact, social, educational, economic values, gender, occupation, etc. are aspects that affect the use of language. While this work shows how these same elements, together with political position and ideologies, affect the way language is used by the different social classes. It is also worth mentioning the importance of new technology in the social movements and the new forms of citizen participation (Flores Morador & Cortés Vásquez, 2016) in influencing the language use. In the analysis of the selected slogans (50), a number of aspects are taken into consideration such as multilingualism and code-switching that characterised the sociolinguistic situation of the country, humour that reflects the mentality of the people, the role of the register in profiling the speaker, intertextuality, puns and other linguistic devices, and how they are employed to reach some objectives in relation to the whole situation. Some photos are not revealed so as not to expose those who were holding the placards and banners without permission.

#### 5. Analysis examples

The Algerian sociolinguistic landscape is characterised by a set of languages that coexist side by side and are used alternatively in different walks of life: standard arabic, algerian variety of arabic, tamazight, and french. All the aforementioned languages, in addition to english, were identified in the different placards and banners that were used by protesters during the "*Hirak*". The slogans to be analysed are utterances written in one of these languages, sometimes in a mixed code. Despite the attested multilingual slogans and placards, it was noticed that most of them were written in algerian variety of arabic, the native language of the majority of Algerians. Dewaele (2004) claims that it has been documented in previous research on the language choice of bilinguals, that L1 is always preferred to express personal involvement. L1

retains very strong emotional connotations even if that language is not used regularly. Algerians resorted to algerian variety for the connection they have with their first language, seeking what best gives an outlet for the deep feelings, emotions, opinion, attitudes and hopes. The slogans in algerian are characterised by a sarcastic, ironic and poetic tone in order to convey a message in a peaceful and pleasant way. These are elements that are to be considered for the practical analysis.

### 5.1 Multilingualism and humour

What characterised Algeria's Uprising the most is the use of humour, just like the different revolutions of what is known as the Arab Spring (Srage, 2013; Abu Hatab, 2016). Abu Hatab (2016: p. 72) states that Arabic humour has always followed social and political changes. During such times of crises, humour is used in order to channel anger, express opinions, and criticise and blame positions and figures of the regime. Humour is opted for as it is a "persuasive communication technique" towards stimulating positive attitudes and strengthening mutual bounds among the protesters. Humour as a mode of discourse is related to the quality of being comical, funny and amusing, provoking laughter. In one way, humour and laughing is emotion by itself, feeling entertained. In another way, humour is triggered by emotions that may be positive, but mostly negative, "due to the fact that it is very much created from serious issues and social problems" (Kerras and Serhani, 2019: p. 96). The seriousness of the social and political issues and the tense situation is what made Algerians opt, mostly, for funny slogans. And it is the emotions of anger and disappointment that triggered most of the amusing utterances in their first language, algerian variety for the arabophones and tamazight for amazighophones.

In the following paragraphs, examples of humorous placards will be analysed. It is worth mentioning that some humorous placards were in french, which is the first language of some Algerians and acquired by others at an early age. The use of standard arabic and even of english will also be attested in a number of examples. Abu Hatab (2016) claims that when protesters grow more negative attitudes against political figures and leaders, they usually approach political humour with the objective of harming the image and the reputation of the politicians. On many banners and posters, the written were slogans aimed at denigrating Algerian political figures who Algerians protested against. The following examples show how humour was used to portray a negative image of the then-president Bouteflika, as well as his entourage.

The following examples represent denigration of Bouteflika. One of the banners reads "يا بوتغليفة انا في الريستو و ما ندوبلش 5 خطرات" which means "Hey Bouteflika, even in the university canteen, I don't repeat 5 times". It is plainly obvious that the protester is a university student declaring his opposition to Bouteflika's candidacy to a fifth term in a comical way. This placard is written in algerian variety using the arabic alphabet. In addition to the president's name, the utterance has three content words, and five functions words. While all

function words have their source in SA, two of the content words originate from french, morphologically adapted to the structure of algerian. The first word comes from the french word “resto” to which the definite article of algerian variety was added. The second word is “ندوبلش” (I don’t repeat) which comes from “doubler” (to repeat) to which a prefix for the first person singular and a suffix for negation were added. This slogan implies Bouteflika is a greedy, inconsiderate human being, with his running for a fifth term seen a discourteous act considering his ever-deteriorating health.



Figure 1. Slogan [Hey Bouteflika, even in the university canteen, I don’t repeat 5 times]

The following placards have the form of advertising posters. “Boutelsika: اللسقا لي تشد 20 سنا” (Boutelsika (Bouteglue): the glue that lasts 20 years), “bouteflitox يقضي حتى على الدستور” (Boutefly-tox (Boutefly-spray): it even eliminates the constitution). In such placards, in addition to the humour, intertextuality and comparisons are used. In the first utterance, the first two syllables of the former president’s name **Bou te** flika were maintained and the last syllable “flika” was replaced by “lsika” keeping the same rhyme of the name. “Lsika” in algerian variety means glue. This play on words was followed by an advertising-like slogan “the glue that would last for 20 years”, implying the fact that the former president, who had so far ruled for twenty years (four terms), who had violated the constitution when he presented for a third and fourth term office, and still refusing to leave, was stuck. This utterance is in algerian variety, in which all words come from SA but adapted to the structure of the local variety morphologically and phonologically.



Figure 2. Slogan [Boutelsika (Bouteglue): the glue that lasts 20 years]

The old age of the president and the government's members, in which the majority are in their 70s, inspired the youth to criticise this fact, referring to them as old and outdated in a country that requires new ideas and new beginnings. Placards read slogans such as *"Wifi: peuple connecté, système déconnecté"* (Wifi: people are connected, the regime is disconnected).



Figure 3. Slogan [Wifi: people are connected, the regime is disconnected]

Criticising Bouteflika's old age and ailing health, a placard reads *"ان رصيد حياتك غير كاف لإجراء هذه العهدة"* (You do not have enough life credit to complete this term): a case of intertextuality in which the text is in SA, shaped by the text we receive when there is not enough phone credit to complete this calls *"ان رصيدك غير كافي لإجراء هذه المكالمة"* (Your credit is not enough to complete this call). The word "credit" for phone units was replaced by "life credit" and the phrase "to complete this call" was replaced by "to complete this term".



Figure 4. Slogan [You do not have enough life credit to complete this term]

Insisting on the need to have new, younger government members instead of the old corrupt ones, the following example in SA says *"لا يمكن بناء سفينة جديدة بخشب قديم"* (It is not possible to build a new ship with old wood). In a similar context, the following slogan says *"On est des jeunes motivés, vous êtes des vieux périmés"* (We are motivated young people, you are expired old people). This idea and struggle for change is persisting from the first days of the *Hirak* until now (Sidi Boumedine, 2019: p. 63).



Figure 5. Slogan [We are motivated young people; you are expired old people]

The aforementioned examples were aimed at denigrating the opposed political figures. This aim was achieved through portraying them as indecent, inconsiderate, outdated, too old to rule, and hated. Another slogan that expresses Algerians' disgust for how much the constitution is taken lightly by this government is "هذا مشي دستور. هذا كراس محاولة" (This is not a constitution, this is a drafting notebook). This text reflects a sociolinguistic phenomenon that is very common in Algeria which is conversational code-switching. Mostly, Algerians shift between algerian variety and french, or tamazight and french. Yet, and to a lesser extent, it can happen that there is shift between algerian variety and SA as in the previous example. The first part of this text is in algerian variety which is revealed in the use of the structure of negation "هذا مشي دستور", because the demonstrative and the noun are the same as in SA "هذا دستور" (This...constitution). Part of the High and Low varieties' vocabularies is shared (Ferguson, 1959). The second part of this slogan is in SA "هذا كراس محاولة" (This is a drafting notebook). The funny part is that the drafting notebook is only used in elementary school by children under eleven years old. The slogan implies that these politicians are immature and failed to write a coherent constitution that they could respect.

A lot of other humorous slogans were written in algerian variety of arabic. Placards read: "قاع للحراش", (All to El Harrach) El Harrach is a famous prison in the capital city of Algeria; "ارحلوا باغي نسيقوا", (Leave, we want to clean the floor), it was a way of telling the politicians to resign as they wanted to clean the country; "عام 37 ما عنديش مقلة", (37 years old and I still don't have a pan), that was a way to say that at this age and this man was still living with his parents as he still did not have an independent home; "حنا ماشي الريال باش نروحو ب 5", (We are not 'Real Madrid' to concede 5 goals), this placard was held the same week as when the famous football club lost conceding 5 goals; "حنا نقولولهم الشربة مالحة و هو ما بيدلونا في", (We are telling them that the soup is salty and they are changing the spoons), this placard reads a famous proverb as a response to the different actions taken by the government when trying to appease people's demands, through distracting them by some unrelated changes which were not being called for. "ياو", (Leave! I am busy next Friday), a sarcastic way to ask for the departure of all these corrupt politicians. Friday is the day of the weekly march but it is also the weekend in Algeria, in which people have activities to do.



Figure 6. Slogan [Leave! I am busy next Friday]

The use of the french language is documented in a number of humorous placards. The first illustrating placard reads in french “*Il n’y a que Chanel pour faire le N°5*” (There is only Chanel that makes N°5). The intertextuality is displayed in using the famous Chanel perfume range “N°5” when hinting ironically at refusing the other thing that this protestor is relating to N° 5, which is Bouteflika’s fifth term in office.



Figure 7. Slogan [There is only Chanel that makes N°5]

Another humorous placard in french is “*Ce n’est pas à mon ex de me choisir une femme*” (It’s not for my ex to choose a woman for me). This witty placard was in answer to the government’s move to appease angry protesters, which suggested dismissing the old government and internally appointing a new prime minister to form a new government, while protesters were asking for the departure of all old figures. Consequently, the following Friday a larger scale march was staged, campaigning against the current government being the one deciding the next moves, which this placard implies. The Algerians were confronting what seemed to be irresolution, yet they insisted on change. This is seen in the following slogan in french language “*L’Algérie en état de choc, laisser la jeunesse la réanimer*” (Algeria is in a state of shock, let the young people resuscitate it). This utterance is a metaphorical one, comparing the country to a patient and the young people as the cure.



Figure 8. Slogan [(Algeria is in a state of shock, let the young people resuscitate it)]

While another placard says “*Même le cancer a seulement 4 stades. Non au 5 mandat*” (Even cancer has only 4 stages, no to a fifth term). The seriousness of the situation is conveyed through this metaphor, that the political situation in the country is more critical than a patient having cancer at its fourth stage. Knight (2015) claims that slogans endue provocative perspectives on daily aspects, in such the use of metaphor offers a deviation from what is expected. The principle objective of politics is to persuade, in which case rhetoric plays an influential role in such type of discourse (Al-Sowaidi & Banda & Mansour, 2017: p. 625). The slogans produced during this uprising use a set of language devices aimed at persuasive impact, one of which being the metaphor. The previous two metaphorical expressions were communicated through the register of medicine. The latter is evoked (through the semantic field of illness and health) in order to produce an influential political image. These slogans suggest that the protesters are connected to the field of health. This fact has been observed through the similar discourses of the protesters. The following examples fall in the same context. A placard held by a dentist reads the following “*Ni couronne, ni bridge, l’extraction*” (Not a crown, nor a bridge, the extraction). This utterance uses the terminology of odontology in a political context, in an attempt to produce a relevant political image.



Figure 9. Slogan [Not a crown, nor a bridge, the extraction]

Throughout the paper, different registers are attested for, such as the ones of medicine, dentistry, computing and informatics, public signs, advertising and football. Register describes the variation of language that is linked to people's occupation and activities. Slogans reveal the identities, social values, attitudes and even culture and traditions of their producers (Chiluwa & Ajiboye, 2016: p. 7). More slogans are produced in french, humorous and non-humorous ones, such as in the very common slogans "*Système dégage*" (Regime, leave!); "*Non au 5 mandat*" (No to the 5th term); "*Seul Héros, le peuple*" (One hero, the People); "*Nettoyage général: non-recyclable*" (General cleaning: non-recyclable) implying that all figures of the old regime would never be accepted again. "*Vous ne voulez pas nous laisser rêver, on vous laissera pas dormir*" (You don't want to let us dream, we won't let you sleep), a placard that sends the message that people would never stop, rather they would make them go grey. "*Ce n'est pas un match de football, non aux prolongations !!*" (It is not a football match, no to extra time!). In this example, young people express how tired they are of giving more chances. What is at stake is the future of the country, and their demands are serious and legitimate, this is not a game.

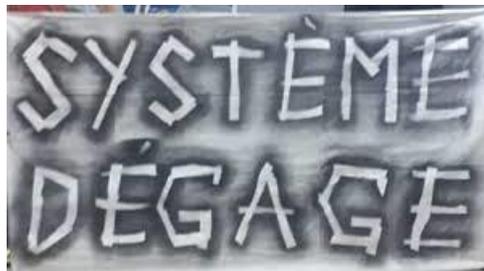


Figure 10. Slogan [Regime, leave!]



Figure 11. Slogan [No to the 5th term]



Figure 12. Slogan [One hero, the People]



Figure 13. Slogan [General cleaning: non-recyclable]

Consequently, they say no to "extension" of Bouteflika's office. "*Regarde ta Rolex c'est l'heure de dégager*" (Check out your Rolex, it's time to leave), the placard used the brand Rolex instead of the french word "*montre*" (watch) referring to the comfortable easy and luxurious life the regime figures are having, when the majority of people struggle for the minimum of a decent life. "*Vous êtes mal barrés, votre système nuit gravement à notre santé (Marlboro)*" (you are in deep trouble, your regime is extremely harmful to health), the first part of this slogan "*mal barrés*" was shaped on the logo of the tobacco brand "Marlboro", followed

by the second part “your regime is extremely harmful to health” which derives from the well-known slogan written on cigarettes boxes “Tobacco is extremely harmful to health”.



Figure 14. Slogan [Check out your Rolex, it's time to leave] Figure 15. Slogan [you are in deep trouble; your regime is extremely harmful to health]

The poster containing this slogan, just like all other slogans based on brands, commercials, public signs, movies titles, etc., was accompanied by demonstrative photos. The latter is a strong visual metaphor holding persuasive elements and revolutionary propaganda. The place that the french language still has in the Algerian sociolinguistic landscape is illustrated in the aforementioned examples. Moreover, it is also seen in the political neologism. Young people coined the verb “*vendredire*” which was derived from the noun “*vendredi*” which is the equivalent of “Friday” in English and “*dire*” that is the equivalent of “to say”. The verb was given the definition of “take to the street on Friday to speak up and protest against the government”. “*Nous vendredions*” means “we go out on Friday to protest against the government”. Algerians took the street every day to protest through different communities; for instance, Tuesday was the day of the university community, and Wednesday was the day for lawyers, while Friday was the day in which all Algerians, regardless of age, gender or status, staged demonstrations protesting against the government. The language with the most humorous slogans were in algerian variety, followed by french, but standard arabic has a share as well, as is highlighted in the analysis.

In Algeria, english is not as important as the other languages but there was a considerable number of placards written in the language. English has been gaining momentum in the sociolinguistic scene in different sectors: the oil sector, science and technology, computing, etc., and also in some daily activities of a small portion of young Algerians. In addition to education, there are two other main reasons that are helping the spread of English. English speaking movies, series, TV shows, mainly American ones, that used to be accessed via networks dubbed into French, are nowadays, available in their original version via many TV channels and the internet. This has changed the ways of communication dramatically and reinforced the use of english in Algeria. Some placards show the language practice of code-switching such as in “Wanted: *vifs ou morts*” (Wanted: dead or alive). More examples of conversational code-switching are illustrated in the following examples. “*Cachir me if you can*” is a case of

intertextuality shaped by the title of a movie “catch me if you can”. “Catch me” was replaced by “*cachir* me”, in which “*cachir*” the verb is a neologism derived from “*cachir*” the noun which is an Algerian type of cured sausage. This food gained this political connotation amongst government sympathisers, and to people totally submissive to government and rulers; after the presidential elections of 2014 when people animating Bouteflika’s campaign offered sandwiches of *cachir* to attract more people to attend their gatherings.



Figure 16. Slogan [*Cachir* me if you can]

“There will be a *3ohda* #5 the day my crush loves me back (never)” “*3ohda*” (*ohda*) is a SA word which means “term”. It shows that the writer of this placard has some command of English but not enough to know the word “term” or “office”. The protester found a solution by inserting the Arabic word given the fact that conversational code-switching is a language practice that is very common in Algeria. Many other placards in English were observed every Tuesday and Friday, the students’ day and the day for all Algerians. We state “Dear USA there is no oil left so stay away, unless you want olive oil” as an answer to some declaration that came from American officials commenting on the events in the country. The protester believes that the USA always interferes when it comes to oil and is assuring them there is no remaining oil in the country, unless they want olive oil which is a product that is produced in Algeria, and of high quality. In fact, this whole placard is a message for USA to not interfere in an Algerian affair. More placards read in English: “Hope is in the street”, “Mission Possible 007”, “We are not in danger, we are the danger #Breaking Mafia”, “Watch your watch it’s time to leave”, “Change begins with you and me”, “Get out now”, “Get out, we are not slaves”, “We need a government not a mafia: game over”, etc. Another placard in English reads “Who would win? 40 million angry Algerians or an old oil painting”, a placard that is mocking the fact that the president is absent on most occasions and activities and what is present is his picture. Protesters also express that they are better without the corrupt regime: “We don’t need you, don’t worry, we can be better”.



Figure 17. Slogan [Who would win? 40 million angry Algerians or an old oil painting]

The aforementioned examples reveal that even English which had previously been scarcely used outside of the classroom, was being increasingly used in more contexts. Another placard reads "Summer is coming, *libérez les clubs des pins*" (Summer is coming, free "Clubs des Pins"). "Club des Pins" is a residence for politicians and rich people. This form of code-switching is not very common in the language practices. Algerians frequently switch between the national languages, Algerian variety of Arabic, Tamazight and Standard Arabic, or between them and French. In this placard, the shift is between French and English. When code-switching is a language behaviour, the speakers may shift between any languages, even when they are not used in everyday communication.



Figure 18. Slogan [Summer is coming, free "Clubs des Pins"]

Every Friday new slogans were written, and multilingualism was attested through them. The different languages spoken in the country assert their presence. Algerian variety accounted for the majority of them, due to it being the first language of over 75% of Algerians, followed by French which still has an important place in the sociolinguistic scene despite the decay. Standard Arabic, which is the language for formal functions, was also significantly present despite the informal context. Many placards and slogans in Tamazight were used by

amazighophones due to it being their first language, in addition to english, which is gaining ground in different walks of life of Algerians each and every day.

### 6.3 Intertextuality

In this section, there will be an analysis of the slogans that build upon other texts already known to Algerians. Intertextuality is claimed to be a tool of ideological expression and of social transformation (Giere, 2009: p. 3). It is defined as the following by Fairclough:

We can begin by noting that for any particular text or type of text, there is a set of other texts and a set of voices which are potentially relevant, and potentially incorporated into the text. It may not be possible to identify these sets with great precision, and they may be rather extensive and complex.

Fairclough (2003, p. 47)

Intertextuality is detected in the following example: “جوع شعبك ياكلك” (Make your people hungry and they eat you) it builds on a text which is built on another text itself. There is a proverb in algerian variety that which says “make your **dog** hungry and it follows you”. Related to the former proverb, one of the important figures - whose immediate departure and imprisonment Algerians demanded - is the former prime minister *Ouyahia* who was famous for his disrespect towards people, built his text in which he said “make your **people** hungry and they follow you”. When people took the street and after the ruling clan sacrificed him, people built on his text expressing that “make your people hungry and they **eat** you”, referring to his elimination from the government. The following placard that reads “...الى"dream" للعهدا الخامسة للعهدة "ارسل "حلم" او الخامسة للعهدا الى...” (For a fifth term, send the word *hulm* (dream in Arabic) or dream (in English) to...). The text on which this slogan builds is extremely famous for most Algerians as it is the utterance repeatedly used a very well-known sports show aired on a very well-known channel with high viewing figures. The original text says “To win (a significant amount of money) send the word “*hulm*” (dream in arabic) or the word dream to...”. The following slogan builds on a line from the Algerian national anthem. The last line of the different parts of the Algerian song says “and we decided that Algeria will live, be witness, be witness, be witness”. The slogan says “و عقدا العزم ان تحيا الجزائر فارحوا و عقدا العزم ان تحيا الجزائر فارحوا” (We decided that Algeria will live, **so leave, so leave, so leave**). Be witness and so leave in SA have exactly the same morphological structure, first there is a prefix that functions as a conjunction “*fa*” and followed by the verb conjugated in the imperative, second person plural.



Figure 19. Slogan [We decided that Algeria will live, so leave, so leave, so leave]

In the following cases of intertextuality, code-switching is the other noticeable aspect. In the slogan *"Ici ce n'est pas le Walking Dead pour être gouverné par un Zombie"* (Here, is not the Walking Dead to be ruled by a Zombie), the utterance has french as its main language with two items from the english language inserted: "Walking Dead" which is the title of an American TV series and Zombie which is a loanword for a fictional creature. By Zombie the protester refers to Bouteflika's critical health condition. The other mixed code slogan says *"Ce n'est plus bled Miki"*, which builds upon a line from a famous rap song *"Bled Miki"* (Country of cartoons). The song criticised the whole situation in the country comparing it to a cartoon. Building on this song's line the placard reads *"Ce n'est plus bled Miki"* (It's not bled Miki anymore), because people reacted against corruption, they took to the streets to protest.



Figure 20. Slogan [It's not bled Miki anymore]

Cases of intertextuality do not only show in local languages, but also in english. During the first period of demonstrations the president was sick in a hospital in Switzerland, but he had not delivered any speeches even before that for over seven years. Reacting to such a situation a slogan builds on the famous utterance "Error 404: page not found" when the server could not find the requested page. The placard reads "Error 404: President not found".



Figure 21. Slogan [Error 404: President not found]

Following the government's decision to appease the people's demands, a few changes were proposed by the government itself. However, protesters, who did not trust the current regime, did not want to pass to a new government or

changes that had been dictated by them, as the following slogans wittily expresses “الشعب يريد: CTRL+ALT+SUPPR” (People want: CTRL+ALT+ DELETE). Through signs people want to express that they want to start all over. The slogan builds on “CTRL+ALT+SUPPR, which is a way to reboot computer.



Figure 22. Slogan [People want: CTRL+ALT+ DELETE]

The creators of the above slogans made their expressions relate to a variety of prior texts that come from different sources, mentioning: political leaders' names, slogans of competition shows, proverbs, quotes from national anthems and songs, movies titles, public signs, and many more.

### **PUNS**

Punning requires more extra cognitive effort for the double meaning interpretation. In the following example “*On est pour l'application de l'article sans 2*” (We are for the application of the article “*sans 2*”). “*Sans 2*” here means “minus 2” or “without 2” referring to the president and his brother who were ruling the country. But *sans 2* is pronounced the same way as *cent-deux* (102) which is the number of the constitution article that Algerians had been calling for the application of since the beginning of the “*Hirak*”. The article says that in case of critical health conditions of the ruling president, the constitutional council has the right to a meeting to propose the removal of the president from their position in parliament. The application of the article (102) means eliminating the (2), the president, and consequently, his brother too.

Another placard reads “*Ce vendredi ça sera la « Gaid » Pride*” (This Friday is the “Gaid” Pride). Gaid Salah is the Lieutenant General who seized power after removing many of the old regime figures. The protests suggest that many Algerian people are against the military seize of power and the slogan expresses that this Friday has one message that is against Gaid Salah (military control). The play on words is on the family name of the Lieutenant General which pronounced as “Gay-d”. This is the fact that made the protester label the Friday dedicated for seeking his departure as “Gaid (Gay-d) Pride”, clearly making a reference to the famous “Gay Pride” festival.



Figure 23. Slogan [This Friday is the “Gaid” Pride]

Another example with play on words is “*J’ai testé le régime et je n’ai pas maigri, alors je change de régime*” the play on words is with the polysemous word “régime”, the first use of the word stands for “diet” in English, and the second use of the word stands for “diet” and “regime”. A diet is adopted by those wanting to lose weight and to promote wellbeing. If a diet that is adopted does not work then it is better to adopt another one. This is why the second “régime” refers to both diet and regime. The slogan says “I tried a diet and I did not lose weight, so I changed diet/regime”.



Figure 24. Slogan [I tried a diet and I did not lose weight, so I change diet/regime]

The final example for play on words is “*FL Haine, c’est réciproque*” *FL Haine* is for “*FLN*” (National Liberation Front) the political party ruling since the independence of the country in 1962, and of which the majority of its partisans are not accepted by Algerians anymore. In French, the letter “N” is pronounced exactly like the French word “*Haine*” which means “hatred”. *FLN* was replaced by *FL Haine* and both are pronounced exactly the same. The slogan says “FL Hatred, it’s reciprocal”. The protester believes that the partisans of this political party put their own interests before those of the country and the people, and that they never cared about the general interests of the country. And the people do not care about them either now.

## Conclusion

The study shows that Algeria is a multilingual country, which is reflected in the use of the different languages of the country, Algerian variety of Arabic, standard Arabic, Tamazight, and French, are all well presented in the slogans and placards held by Algerians during the protests and marches from the beginning of the "Hirak". Algerian variety was the variety to have the lion's share of the slogans and placards due to being the first language of the majority of Algerians. This fact supports the claim that the mother tongue is the language of emotionality: anger, happiness, deception, delusion, hope, humour, etc. The first language of the other proportion of Algerians is Amazight, which was present through its speakers in a number of slogans and placards mostly noticed in Amazighophone regions. A significant portion of placards written in French reveals the place and prestige that the French language still enjoys in Algeria, 57 years after the independence of the country. The striking observation was the fact English words were increasingly seen on many placards and slogans, in which the context is informal; a fact that was not observable a few years before. The examination of this set of randomly collected slogans attests important usage of some linguistic devices in relation to some functions. The effectiveness of various slogans was linked to the use of communicative strategies and language devices. Aiming at alleviating the critical and intense situation, protesters opted for the use of humour. The latter has more functions such as denigrating political figures and ideas, anger release and persuasion. In order to evoke emotional response and rousing collective support through attracting audience attention, protesters opted for linguistic devices that require interpretive and more cognitive efforts. These linguistic devices are intertextuality, punning, polysemous words, ambiguity, repetition, figurative speech such as metaphor, irony and sarcasm. Another important characteristic that was observed during Algerian *Hirak*, and was shared with the previous Arab Spring's revolutions in the different countries, was that slogans used expressions that are easy to use and memorise (Al-Sowaidi & Banda & Mansour, 2017: p. 625). For such reasons, it was important to their producers to consider the rhetorical devices when writing slogans aimed at reaching the receiver (Bagué Quílez: 2018).

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