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Language Shock among Learners of Arabic for Speakers of
Other Languages: Case of Chinese Students in Algeria

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DECLARATION

I affirm that this submission is solely my own work and that it does not incorporate any material previously published or written by another person, nor any material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution. I also attest that this work is free of plagiarism and that it is the product of my own investigation, except where otherwise indicated.

GUETTAA Oumaima Amel

29/10/2023

DEDICATION

This work reflects the love and sacrifice of my parents, who have always supported and guided me in my life. I owe them a debt of gratitude that I can never repay.

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Abstract

This study investigated the phenomenon of language shock among foreign learners of Standard Arabic in Algeria, focusing on the case of Chinese students. The term language shock is used to describe the psychological distress and anxiety that learners experience when they are exposed to a new linguistic environment. This phenomenon can significantly influence learners' journey, impacting their motivation, communicative ability, and overall learning experience. The primary objective of this research is to identify the causes and effects of language shock, and to understand how it influences students' motivation and communicative competence. The study also aims to explore the various coping and adaptation strategies that students employ to overcome the effects of language shock. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data and qualitative data. This approach provides a holistic understanding of the students' experiences and challenges. The findings reveal that learners faced considerable challenges when using Standard Arabic in non-academic settings in Algeria. These challenges lead to varying degrees of language shock, which in turn affected the students' motivation and communicative performance. In short, the study underscores that while language shock is a common occurrence in foreign language learning, it can be mitigated. Enhancing learners' linguistic skills and providing them with adequate support and guidance can significantly alleviate the effects of language shock. This research contributes to the broader understanding of language learning in a foreign context, offering insights to educators and policy-makers in the field of language education. It avocates for a more supportive and inclusive learning environment that acknowledges the challenges of language shock, thereby paving the way for more effective language learning strategies and outcomes.

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List of Acronyms

AA: Algerian Arabic

ASOL: Arabic for Speakers of Other Languages

CS: Culture Shock

LS: Language Shock

SA: Standard Arabic

Arabic Phonetic Transcription

Consonants

letter	Arabic	Transcription	letter	Arabic	Transcription
alif	ء	/ʔ/	*ḍād*	ض	/dˤ/
bā	ب	/b/	*ṭā*	ط	/tˤ/
tā	ت	/t/	*ẓā*	ظ	/ðˤ/
thā	ث	/θ/	*'ayn*	ع	/ʕ/
jīm	ج	/dʒ/	*ghayn*	غ	/ɣ/
ḥā	ح	/ħ/	*fā*	ف	/f/
khā	خ	/x/	*qāf*	ق	/q/
dāl	د	/d/	*kāf*	ك	/k/
dhāl	ذ	/ð/	*lām*	ل	/l/
rā	ر	/r/	*mīm*	م	/m/
zāy	ز	/z/	*nūn*	ن	/n/
sīn	س	/s/	*hā*	ه	/h/
shīn	ش	/ʃ/	*wāw*	و	/w/
ṣād	ص	/sˤ/	*yā*	ي	/j/

Vowels

Short vowels	Arabic	Transcription	Long vowels	Transcription
fatha	◌َ	/a/	ا	/a:/
damma	◌ُ	/u/	و	/u:/
kasra	◌ِ	/i/	ي	/i:/

General Introduction

Arabic is one of the oldest linguistic codes. It is one among six official languages of the United Nations. According to studies by the British Council (2023), Arabic has a promising future. The Council has acknowledged that it is one of the top five largely spoken languages worldwide. Arabic is spreading more and more for different reasons, playing a significant role in the global linguistic market. As a result, demands to learn it have increased, leading to a flourishing field of education named 'Arabic for Speakers of other Languages'. However, learning Standard Arabic is not without challenges for non-native speakers; if fact, even for native ones. One serious issue with Arabic relates to its diglossic nature. To say it differently, Arabic exists in two forms: standard for formal purposes and colloquial for informal functions.

Within this line, the growth in trade, economic and politics relations between China and the Arab World has made learning Standard Arabic a desirable skill for many Chinese people. For those who seek to enrol universities in the Arab countries, such as Algeria, they face an intricate linguistic situation. Once in the community, they realize that learning Standard Arabic is not enough to communicate effectively in the Arab context, as local people use Colloquial Arabic more often, especially in informal contexts. Of course, the gap between the standard form and the colloquial one is significant, rendering it very difficult for the non-native to understand the regional non-standard form. This situation is able to create what is termed 'language shock', a phenomenon that has implications for the learners' sociolinguistic adaptation.

The current study aims at measuring the degree of language shock and its impact on communicative competence of Chinese learners of Arabic in Algeria, namely at Tlemcen University. The end of the research is to furnish practical implications for learners, and teachers alike, to minimize the effect of the linguistic shock, and render the Chinese students more able to function communicatively in the host community where Standard Arabic remains of restricted use.

To achieve this objective, two research questions guide the present study:

1. Does the difference between Standard Arabic and Algerian Arabic introduce a significant 'linguistic shock' for Chinese students?

2. To what extent does language shock affect communication abilities of Chinese students of Arabic in the Algerian contexts, provided that Standard Arabic and Algerian Arabic expose large differences?

Based on these questions, the hypotheses are as follows:

1. Being learners of Standard Arabic, Chinese learners are faced with language shock due to the significant differences between the high and low varieties of Arabic.

2. Language shock seriously affects Chinese learners' communication abilities, namely in informal contexts where Algerian Arabic is exclusively used.

The research builds on a mixed methods approach, opting for an exploratory case study design. The sample consists of Chinese students, mainly from Sichuan University. As for data collection, the instruments include a semi-structured interview, a questionnaire and also an observation process. This translates that both qualitative and quantitative analysis are required.

The research work is organized into two chapters. The first chapter, divided into two sections, begins by exploring the unique linguistic characteristics of Algeria, with a specific focus on the phenomenon of diglossia and its impact on learners of Standard Arabic. This sets the stage for the second section, which delves into the theoretical aspects of the research, offering a comprehensive review of relevant literature on the subject of language shock. The second chapter outlines the methodological framework of the study, detailing the research design, sample population, and the instruments used, in its first part. The second part is concerned with the analysis and discussion of the findings, intending to answer the research questions raised earlier and to validate or reject the proposed hypotheses that have been put forward. The chapter concludes with a set of recommendations derived from the study's findings, thereby ensuring a logical progression of ideas and arguments that enhance the academic rigor of the research work.

CHAPTER ONE: **Overview of the Literature**

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1.1 Introduction

Language learning is a complex process, often fraught with unexpected challenges. This is basically true for the growing number of Chinese learners of Standard Arabic in Algeria. One such challenge these learners face, is the stark contrast between their expectations and the linguistic reality of the country. Despite their ability to speak Standard Arabic, they find themselves navigating a complex linguistic environment where the local dialect, rather than Standard Arabic, is the medium through which day-to-day communication is hold. The large gap between the standard form and the colloquial one can make these learners experience what is termed 'language shock', characterized by feelings of frustration and confusion.

The aim is to explore the mismatch between expectations and reality of learning Standard Arabic in a foreign context by adult Chinese learners. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to provide a theoretical background that covers the main aspects of the research topic. Therefore, this first chapter consists of two parts. The first part reviews the literature on the linguistic situation of Algeria, where the study was conducted. It examines the historical and sociolinguistic factors that have shaped diglossia and multilingualism in Algeria, including their impact on learning Standard Arabic as a foreign language. The second part introduces the concept of language shock, which is the main focus of this study. It defines this phenomenon, distinguishes it from culture shock, and displays its effects on language learners. In addition to, the interplay of language shock and diglossia. Furthermore, it evaluates prior research on language shock and identifies the gaps and limitations in the current literature. This chapter lays the groundwork for subsequent sections where research methodology, data analysis, and findings will be presented.

1.2 Part I: Linguistic Profile of Algeria

One of the most fascinating aspects of Algeria is its linguistic diversity. This diversity, a reflection of the country's historical and sociocultural evolution, has been influenced by centuries of interactions with cultures and civilizations such as the Berbers, Arabs, and French. These interactions contribute to Algeria's unique identity. The following section provides an in-depth exploration of Algeria's linguistic situation, serving as a basis for subsequent discussions. This exploration

sheds light on the linguistic reality of Algeria and its implications for Arabic language education for foreign learners.

1.2.1 Historical Context of Diglossia in Algeria

The linguistic landscape of Algeria is deeply influenced by its historical context, which has created an environment where multiple language varieties coexist, each with its distinct function and usage, within the society. This situation is known as diglossia, a phenomenon that characterizes the Arabic speaking World. The term is generally used to describe a sociolinguistic phenomenon "where two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite role to play" (Ferguson, 1972. p. 232). In the case of Algeria, this relationship between Standard Arabic (SA) and Algerian Arabic (AA) underscores their interconnectedness within the country's linguistic framework.

Building on this, the classical diglossic relationship between SA and AA further exemplifies this interconnectedness. SA, the formal variety, is used in official contexts, while AA, the colloquial variety, is used in everyday conversation. This dichotomy, where SA is the 'High' variety and AA is the 'Low' variety, is a classic example of diglossia. Moreover, the extended diglossia involving Berber dialects adds another dimension to Algeria's linguistic diversity. These dialects, spoken by the Berber community, often serve as another 'Low' variety alongside AA in informal contexts, while SA remains the 'High' variety. The use of Berber dialects extends beyond informal settings, reflecting the sociolinguistic complexity of extended diglossia. This interaction between Arabic and Berber varieties laid the foundation for the intricate linguistic interplay observed in Algeria today. In modern Algeria, Arabic and Berber idioms coexist and influence each other in various ways, contributing to a rich and diverse linguistic landscape.

The French colonization of Algeria in the 19th century added another layer of complexity to the linguistic landscape. Algeria was under French rule for more than a century, which lasted from 1830 to 1962. During this period, French became the language of administration, education, and media, while Arabic was marginalized and suppressed. This suppression was implemented through policies that favoured the

use of French in public life, leading to a decline in the use of Arabic. Despite this, the Algerian people maintained their linguistic heritage.

Following the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962), which was not only a political and military struggle, but also a linguistic and cultural one, efforts were made to promote Arabization as a means to replace French across all public domains of life in an attempt to unify the nation under a single language. As Aziz (2015) pointed out, "Algerian governments post-independence attempted to conduct a systemic make-over of national identity through Arabization" (p.37). This policy was implemented through a series of educational and administrative reforms. However, this policy encountered numerous challenges and difficulties, namely by the French-educated Algerians who wanted to keep French and the pro-Berberism who claimed to be marginalized.

Today, Algeria's linguistic landscape reflects a dynamic interplay between these languages, namely Arabic, Berber and French. The sociolinguistic context in the community is marked by delicate balance between SA and AA. As Fasold (1984, p. 47) explains, "the H variety is learned in school and used for most written purposes; it is also spoken in formal situations such as official speeches or university lectures. The L variety is learned at home and used for most oral purposes; it is also written in personal letters or diaries." This distinction highlights that "the H and L varieties are functionally differentiated; i.e., each has a range of social situations in which it is appropriate or inappropriate" (Fishman 1967, p. 30) However, the reality on the ground may differ from this theoretical framework, with individuals often navigating between these varieties based on context, audience, and personal preference.

1.2.2   A Sociolinguistic Perspective on Language Use

In the light of what has been mentioned above, it is evident that Algeria identifies as a diglossic society. Language use in Algeria reflects complex factors that have shaped the country and its identity. Officially, SA holds sway as the sole official language in Algeria (till 2016), as it predominates in formal contexts such as education and media. Algerian dialect is prevalent in everyday conversations, showcasing the regional and social diversity of the speakers. Beyond Standard Arabic and Algerian Arabic, the presence of other varieties cannot be neglected as they all

form an integral part of the Algerian identity. These languages, each with their unique characteristics and histories, contribute to the rich tapestry of the linguistic diversity in Algeria, as discussed below.

1.2.2.1 Status of French in Algeria

The influence of French on the Algerian society is undeniable, especially in certain domains, such as higher education, science, technology, and commerce. Despite not being recognized as an official language, French is widely used in various sectors. For instance, according to Benrabah (2013), 70% of university professors and 80% of scientific publications in Algeria are in French. This prevalence of French extends beyond academia and professional sectors; it is also extensively spoken by the urban elite and the educated youth, who often view proficiency in French as a symbol of modernity and prestige. This is a legacy of the French colonization period, which has left a lasting impact on Algeria's linguistic landscape. On the other hand, Arabic, while being the official language, is often associated with tradition and religion. It is frequently perceived as inadequate for the needs of the contemporary world, particularly in the realms of science and technology.

During the colonial period, French was promoted over Arabic, leading to a linguistic divide in the Algerian society. During post-independence, efforts were made to Arabize the country, but French remained prevalent. A 2008 census conducted by the United Nations Statistics Division revealed that 35% of Algerians were bilingual in Arabic and French as illustrated in figure 1.1, language proficiency of the Algerian population in 2008. (United Nations Statistics Division, "Population by Language," as cited in Hetman, 2018). Despite attempts to replace French with Arabic, French continues to persist.

FIGURE 1. LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF THE ALGERIAN POPULATION IN 2008

■ Arabic ■ Arabic and French ■ French ■ Other

52%
35%
2%
11%
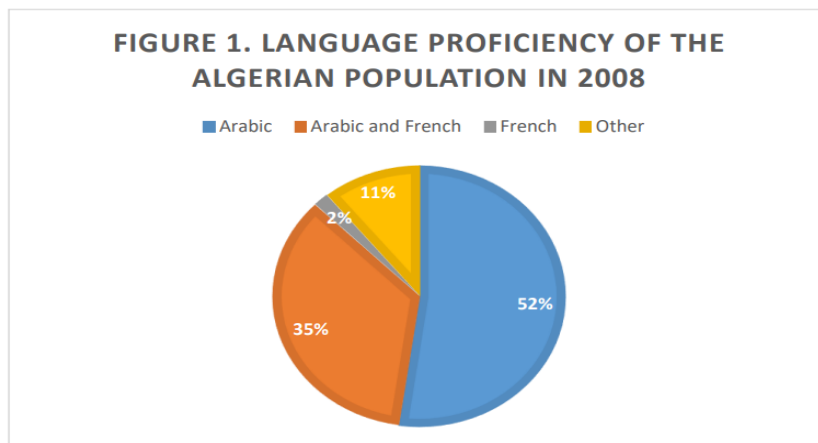
Figure 1.1, United Nations Statistics Division 2008 (in Hetman, 2018)

Nevertheless, attitudes toward French in Algeria are not uniform, varying across different regions and among individuals. The younger generation shows less interest in French compared to English; a trend driven by globalization and policy makers' attempts to introduce English in education. This shift in the government's orientation, influenced by global interactions, highlights the evolving language preferences in Algeria. As a result, there is a possibility for future Algerian generations to transition entirely away from the French language.

1.2.2.2 Berber Varieties

Berber, in its different varieties, play a significant role in shaping the country's identity and symbolizing the cultural heritage. As Bauer (2000, p.55) puts it "A language is not simply a tool of communication or national unification; it is also a very powerful symbol of the cultural and social identity of the man or woman who speaks it." This is particularly true for Berber. Chaker (1998), a leading scholar in Berber linguistics, underscores that Berber is more than just a language. It embodies a rich cultural heritage, history, and identity. Furthermore, Chaker (1998) estimates that Algeria is home to about 12 million Berber speakers, constituting 30% of the population. It is important to mention that this is no other than an estimation as official census remains absent. However, since Algeria's independence in 1962, Berber has been marginalized and by policy-makers due to their endeavour to arabize the country. This policy, which favoured Arabic as the sole official and national language of Algeria, excluded Berber though the real fight was against French. This provoked

resistance from the Berberists, which demanded recognition for their linguistic and cultural rights. The Berber movement clashed with the state on several occasions, such as the Berber Spring of 1980, a series of protests demanding cultural and political recognition of the Berber identity, and the Black Spring of 2001, a period of civil unrest and protest.

In response to these demands. the Algerian policy-makers gradually made concessions to the Berber movement, marking a shift in its language policy. In 2002, in a significant move towards acknowledging the linguistic diversity of the country, it recognized Berber as a national language through an amendment to the constitution. This recognition, while symbolic, was a crucial step in legitimizing the status of Berber in the public sphere. In 2002, it created the High Commission for Amazigh to supervise the development of Berber, indicating a commitment to preserving the language. In 2004, the state introduced Berber as an optional subject in some schools.

In 2016, in a landmark decision, the government amended the constitution again to upgrade Berber to the status of an official language. This status was maintained and reinforced by the last constitution of 2020. This was actually an official recognition of diversity and difference within the one country.

1.2.2.3 Traces of other Languages

In the exploration of Algeria's linguistic diversity, it becomes important to acknowledge the presence of traces of other languages on the local dialect. These traces are not just from the primary influences of Arabic and French, but also from Latin during the Roman occupation, the Mediterranean Lingua Franca in the 11th century, and Ottoman Turkish during the 16th-century Ottoman rule. Each of these languages has left its mark, from the introduction of new words and phrases to changes in syntax and pronunciation.

Further enriching the dialect are influences from Spanish, due to its historical presence in Oran, and other languages such as Italian, English, German, and Hebrew. These have added to the dialect's lexical diversity with new words and expressions. However, these influences are not uniform, leading to regional variations in accents, vocabulary, and expressions. This diversity, reflecting the cultural influences across

Algeria, has resulted in a unique Algerian dialect that stands distinct from Standard Arabic.

1.2.3   Standard Arabic vs Algerian Arabic

Arabic includes several local dialects that vary from region to region. One of these dialects is Algerian Arabic, which differs from the standard form in many aspects. The exploration into the complexities of SA and AA reveals a shared origin yet distinct features. These differences can be seen in the unique pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax of Algerian Arabic, which have been shaped by the country's rich cultural and historical influences.

To begin with, it is crucial to clarify the distinction between 'language' and 'dialect'. As Haugen (1966, p.99) stated, 'every dialect is a language, but not every language is a dialect'. This complexity is further highlighted by Wichmann (2005), who discussed the difficulty of distinguishing between languages and dialects in a non-arbitrary way. It's important to note that simply categorizing a dialect as a type of language does not capture the full complexity of the relationship between the two. These concepts are not completely distinct, but rather exist on a continuum of similarity and difference. This idea is closely aligned with the continuum without sharp boundaries has been further explored by Heeringa & Nerbonne (2001). This continuum is evident in the case of Standard Arabic and Algerian Arabic, which, while sharing a common linguistic heritage, have evolved distinct characteristics that reflect the unique cultural and societal contexts in which they are used.

According to Trudgill (2000), the difference between the two is, ''If two speakers cannot understand one another, then they are speaking different languages. Similarly, if they can understand each other, we could say that they are speaking dialects of the same language'' (p.4). This theoretical understanding is exemplified in the context of SA and AA.

One key difference between SA and AA lies at the sound level. For instance, the pronunciation of the phoneme /q/ (ق) in SA is not merely pronounced as 'g', but varies significantly across different regions and dialects. In many prestigious historical places, it is pronounced as /q/. This variability is a key characteristic of the phonetic landscape of Arabic dialects. For instance, in SA, the word "قلب" (heart) is

pronounced as "qalb." However, in AA, it is articulated as "galb," reflecting the /q/ to /g/ shift. In some regions, /q/ is pronounced as /q/, while in a few places like Jijel, Skikda, and Ghazaouet it is pronounced as /k/, and in Tlemcen, it is pronounced as a glottal stop /ʔ/. This phonetic variation extends beyond individual phonemes and permeates the entire phonological system of the dialect. For example, the vowel sound in "كتاب" (book) may be pronounced as /ktab/ in AA, while in SA it is pronounced as /ki:ta:b/. Additionally, AA exhibits unique stress patterns and intonation contours that differ from those in SA. For instance, the word "مدينة" (city) is pronounced with stress on the first syllable in SA /ˈmadi:na/, while in AA, the stress often falls on the last syllable /madiˈna:/. Despite these differences, the fundamental phonetic and phonological structures of AA and SA are largely similar. Both dialects share the same set of consonant and vowel sounds, and the basic rules of syllable formation and stress assignment are also largely the same. This ensures a degree of mutual intelligibility between the two dialects (Groves:2008), allowing speakers of SA and AA to understand each other to a significant extent.

Regarding vocabulary, AA has been influenced by various foreign languages, resulting in unique lexicon features absent in SA. For instance, the term /tɔmɔbil/ is utilized in AA to refer to a "car," derived from the French word "automobile," whereas in Standard Arabic, the equivalent term is "سيارة" /sajja:ra/. This linguistic fusion not only enriches AA but also highlights the cultural and historical influences that have shaped its vocabulary therefore pose challenges for learners. Additionally, AA has developed some idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms that are not found in SA, such as the phrase for "ما اسمك" /ma: ismuka/ in SA, is "واش سميتك" /waʃ smi:tek/ in AA, which means "what's your name". These phrases reflect the cultural and social aspects of AA speakers and add more flavour and nuance to their communication. However, they also create difficulties for learners who are accustomed to the more formal and standardized SA vocabulary.

Despite these lexical disparities, both dialects maintain similarities in syntax. The sentence structure in both SA and AA typically follows a Verb-Subject-Object (VSO) order, ensuring consistency in conveying meaning across different contexts (Boudelaa and Marslen-Wilson 2013). For example, the sentence "The boy ate the

apple" would be "أكل الولد التفاحة" /ʔakala lwaladu ttuffa:ħa/ in both dialects, with the verb "ate" (أكل) coming before the subject "the boy" (الولد) and the object "the apple" (التفاحة). Furthermore, differences in grammatical structures between SA and AA contribute to the complexity of these linguistic forms. While SA adheres closely to classical Arabic grammar rules, AA exhibits more flexibility and informal structures. For instance, the use of verb conjugations and sentence formations may vary significantly between SA and AA. This divergence in grammatical rules underscores the dynamic nature of language evolution within different Arabic-speaking communities. For example, in SA, the verb "to work" is conjugated as "يعمل" /jaʕmal/ in the present tense, while in AA, it is often expressed as "يخدم" /jaxdam/.

Both SA and AA share a common root, which allows for some level of mutual intelligibility. However, foreign learners proficient in SA may struggle to comprehend AA due to its localized expressions and borrowed terms. This highlights the intricate relationship between languages and dialects, emphasizing the complexities of language learning and comprehension.

1.3 Part II: Language Shock as a Concept

Language shock, a concept intricately linked with culture shock, delves into the disorientation experienced when immersed in a foreign language environment. This phenomenon often occurs among individuals who have diligently learned a language within an academic setting, only to find themselves grappling with unexpected variations in the language when they engage with the local society. Despite their proficiency in the language as taught, their exposure to an unfamiliar linguistic environment that diverges from their expectations leads them to a sense of frustration and anxiety as they struggle to communicate effectively.

1.3.1 Definition of Language Shock

Language Shock (LS henceforth), as the term implies, revolves around the challenges individuals encounter when they are exposed to an unfamiliar linguistic environment. This shock is often experienced by individuals who have studied a language extensively in a formal educational setting, but find themselves struggling when they attempt to use the language in a natural, informal context or when traveling abroad. For example, a student who has studied English in a classroom might

experience language shock when they travel to an English -speaking country and encounter regional dialects or slang that were not covered in their textbooks. This struggle can lead to feelings of frustration and anxiety, and can significantly impact an individual's confidence in their language skills and process.

Grasping this concept requires a foundational comprehension of Culture Shock (CS hereafter). Adler (1975, p.13) defines CS as "a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcements from one's own culture, to new cultural stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences". This definition highlights the emotional disorientation that individuals can experience when they are immersed in a new culture, and the challenges they face in understanding and adapting to new cultural norms and practices.
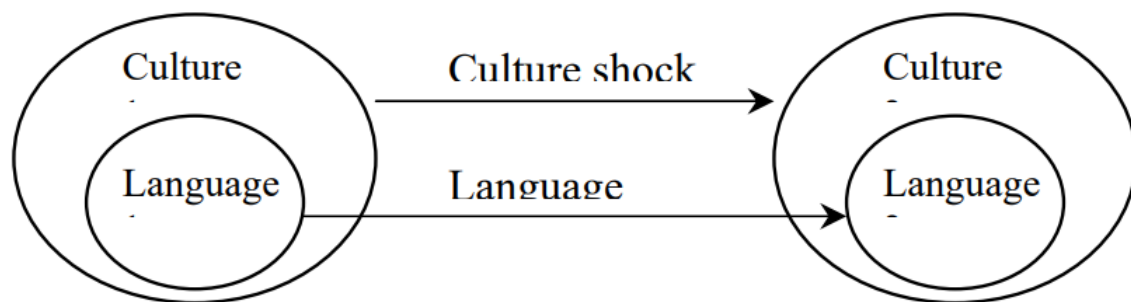
Figure 2.1: Culture Shock and Language Shock (Si Fan, 2010.p 43)

Building upon Adler's definition, LS can be considered a subset of CS, where the primary obstacle is "language difference … because culture and language are often linked together" (Brown, 2020, p. 6). "In other words, language shock is one of the less recognised aspects of cultural shock as its emotional impact is not so overtly strong that it could cause great harm or destruction to individuals who experience it" (Fan, 2010, p.42). To define LS more precisely, Smalley (1963, as cited in Kovtun et al., 2018) describes it as "emotional disturbance which results from adjustment to new cultural environment". it is the disorientation and discomfort that individuals experience when they are unable to communicate effectively in a new language environment. This phenomenon is not limited to just verbal communication but also extends to non-verbal cues and written language. For instance, gestures, facial expressions, and body language can vary significantly between cultures (Tidwell,

2018), adding another layer of complexity to the communication process. The inability to interpret and convey messages accurately can lead to miscommunications and misunderstandings, further exacerbating the sense of alienation. For example, a learner of Arabic might struggle to understand the local dialect and non-verbal cues during a visit to Algeria, leading to LS even if they are familiar with the culture.

Delving deeper into the concept of LS, it becomes evident that it encompasses more than just the struggle to understand and be understood in a foreign language. It also includes the psychological impact of constantly navigating communication barriers, which can lead to feelings of frustration, isolation, as individuals grapple with the inability to express themselves effectively or understand others. In some cases, it can even lead to a sense of identity loss, as language is a crucial part of one's identity (Abbey, 2021). These emotional responses are akin to those experienced during CS, but are specifically triggered by linguistic obstacles (Kovtun et al., 2018).

1.3.2 Language Shock vs Culture Shock

Language shock and culture shock are two distinct phenomena that individuals commonly experience when they encounter new environments. This can occur through various means, such as travel or immersion in a foreign country. While these terms are often used interchangeably, they represent distinct yet interconnected experiences that can significantly impact an individual's ability to adapt in unfamiliar surroundings. In today's globalized world, understanding these concepts is crucial as cross-cultural interactions become increasingly common.

LS primarily refers to the difficulties individuals face when trying to communicate in a new language. These challenges can range from understanding the grammar and vocabulary of the new language to interpreting non-verbal cues. In contrast, CS is a broader concept that had been widely discussed and used by researchers and educators for decades (e.g. Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Oberg, 1960) to refer to the feeling of disorientation experienced by someone who is suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes (Oxford Languages, 2020).

 While LS mainly focuses on linguistic challenges and communication barriers, CS delves into emotional responses to cultural disparities and social norms. Both

phenomena share commonalities as they require individuals to adapt to new environments by adjusting their perceptions and behaviours. i.e. Language plays a pivotal role in mitigating CS by facilitating communication and fostering intercultural understanding (Flanja, 2009). Recognizing the interconnected nature of LS and CS can enhance individuals' ability to integrate successfully into diverse cultural settings.

In conclusion, LS and CS while being different facets of the same coin, should be distinguished for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by individuals in cross-cultural encounters. Recognizing the unique characteristics of each phenomenon while acknowledging their interconnectedness can equip individuals with the necessary tools to navigate the complexities of adapting to new languages and cultures, thereby fostering effective cross-cultural communication and global understanding (Brown, 2020).

1.3.3 The Impact of Language Shock on Language Learners

The impact of Language Shock (LS) can vary greatly among individuals, influenced by a multitude of factors. These include their previous exposure to the language, their learning style, psychological resilience, age, cultural background, and the level of support available in the new environment (Kızıltaş, 2022). For some language learners, LS may manifest as a minor inconvenience, a temporary hurdle that is quickly overcome with practice and exposure. They may experience initial difficulties in understanding and using the new language, but with time, they adapt and improve their language proficiency. For other learners, it can pose a significant challenge, affecting their overall adaptation to a new environment (Abbey, 2021). The impacts of LS are particularly apparent in the learners' communicative skills, affecting their ability to express themselves effectively and understand others. This can lead to misunderstandings and frustrations, which can further impact their overall motivation to learn the language and engage with the new culture (Agar, 1994).

1.3.3.1 Impact on Communicative Competence

LS can have significant effects on an individual's integration into a new society. The ability to speak and understand the language of the host country is often a prerequisite for accessing essential services, participating fully in community life,

and forming meaningful connections with others. In the absence of these interactions, individuals may feel marginalized and disconnected from their surroundings, which can impact their self-esteem, identity, and even mental health.

In this context, the concept of communicative competence, coined by Dell Hymes in 1966, plays a crucial role. Communicative competence refers to a language user's knowledge of words and grammar, as well as their social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately. It encompasses a language user's grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology, and the like, but reconceives this knowledge as a functional, social understanding. Developing communicative competence can be a complex process, often requiring structured language learning, immersion in the language environment, and plenty of practice through social interactions (Helt, 1982). These experiences help language learners not only understand the linguistic aspects of the language but also the cultural nuances and social norms associated with its use.

When language learners travel abroad, they are not only faced with a different linguistic environment but also a different social environment. Their communicative competence, or their ability to use language appropriately in this new social context, is put to the test. This can lead to language shock, especially if there is a significant difference between the social norms and rules of language use in their home country and the country they have travelled to.

1.3.3.2 Effects on Learners' Motivation

The phenomenon of language shock can profoundly influence a learner's motivation, which is a crucial element in the process of acquiring a new language. Motivation may be intrinsic, stemming from the learner's personal interest or pleasure in learning the language, or extrinsic, motivated by external factors such as academic grades, public acknowledgment, or professional growth opportunities. Both positive and negative experiences can shape this motivation, leading to one of the forms identified by Gardner (1985) and Brown (2000). When faced with the challenges of a new linguistic and social environment, a learner's motivation can be influenced in various ways. On one hand, the desire to overcome these challenges and successfully communicate in the new language can bolster their intrinsic

motivation. On the other hand, feelings of frustration and inadequacy due to language shock can hinder both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, affecting the learner's self-confidence, self-efficacy, and persistence in language learning (Abbey, 2021).

a. Negative Impact on Motivation

When language learners travel abroad, they often carry with them high expectations about their ability to use the language effectively in real-life situations. These expectations, which might be influenced by media portrayals, previous learning experiences, or overconfidence in their language abilities, can include communicating easily with native speakers and understanding cultural nuances without difficulty. However, when these expectations are not met and clash with the reality of the linguistic and cultural complexities of the new environment, the learners can experience a sense of frustration and inadequacy (Fan, 2010). This mismatch between expectations and reality can lead them to feel overwhelmed and affect their self-confidence, self-efficacy, and persistence in language learning, which can in turn slow down their language learning process thus decrease their motivation to learn the language (Abbey, 2021).

b. Positive Impact on Motivation

Despite the challenges, language shock can also have a positive impact on motivation. The experience of language shock can serve as a powerful motivator, pushing learners to work harder to improve their language skills and to better understand and fit in the culture of the foreign country. The challenges and difficulties encountered can spur learners to strive for mastery, fostering a growth mindset that can be beneficial in all areas of life. The experience of overcoming language shock can also build resilience and increase self-confidence. As learners navigate through the stages of language shock, they develop coping strategies and learn to adapt to new situations. This can enhance their problem-solving skills and increase their cultural sensitivity, both of which are valuable skills in language learning and intercultural communication (Abbey, 2021).

1.3.4 Interplay of Language Shock and Diglossia

Language learners, particularly those who travel or relocate to regions where the local language differs significantly from their native or learned language, often

experience LS. In this case, this phenomenon is primarily triggered by the sudden immersion into a new linguistic environment. LS could include the intensity of language use in the new environment or the degree of difference between the native and foreign languages.

As learners reach a certain proficiency level, they often experience a sense of achievement and confidence in their ability to communicate effectively. However, this is when they may face a different form of language shock. Despite their high proficiency, learners can still encounter unexpected challenges when using the language in real-life situations. These challenges may stem from colloquial use, regional dialects, cultural references, and idiomatic expressions not typically covered in formal language education.

In diglossic societies, the interaction between LS and diglossia creates a complex dynamic. Diglossia involves the coexistence of two linguistic varieties within a community, used by speakers under different conditions (Ferguson, 1959: 325), impacting cognitive functions, including executive functions (Alrwaita, 2021). Language shock, arising from exposure to a new linguistic environment, can lead to cognitive dissonance and emotional discomfort due to unfamiliar linguistic structures and cultural norms. This shock can be heightened in diglossic contexts, adding another layer of linguistic complexity for learners (Jumaily, 2023).

The divergence between the standard language (or H variety) and dialects (or L variety) can be significant, encompassing differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. For learners familiar with Standard Arabic structure, these variations can be disorienting. Dialects may vary not only between countries but also within regions of the same country, further complicating the linguistic landscape for learners.

The impact of diglossia on cognitive processes and language usage emphasizes the intricate interplay between sociolinguistic factors and personal experiences (Liu & Zhu, 2022). As individuals strive for proficiency in the high variety for social advancement or academic success, they must also adapt to the low variety for social integration and personal relationships. This dual challenge can pose barriers to

language learning and increase cognitive load, affecting an individual's self-confidence, social interactions, and academic performance.

While a direct causal link between LS and diglossia has not been conclusively established, these observations highlight the complex dynamics at play in societies with diglossia, which make this phenomenon the main cause of LS for foreigners in Arab-speaking countries (Harbi, 2021). However, while LS is predominantly observed during major life changes such as traveling or relocating to a foreign country, it should be acknowledged that it is not limited to only these situations. There may be many other possible scenarios where it can arise and be encountered by language learners.

1.3.5 Gaps and Limitations in Current Literature

Existing studies on language shock present several unaddressed areas and limitations that need to address for further exploration. To begin with, there is a noticeable lack of research focusing on the specific experiences of adult bilingual students, particularly foreign learners of standard Arabic, like Chinese learners of Arabic, who are expected to encounter language shock in informal situations. Most of the previous research has focused on other languages, cultures, or regions, and has not addressed the specific challenges and opportunities that Chinese learners face when learning Standard Arabic in a diglossic community like Algeria. Understanding how this phenomenon affects language learners in their learning process and outcomes is crucial for developing effective support mechanisms and intervention strategies.

In addition, the existing literature predominantly focuses on culture shock, often marginalizing language shock as a distinct concept. Further studies are required to identify the specific features and impacts of language shock, especially in comparison to culture shock. This distinction is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by individuals navigating linguistic and cultural transitions.

Furthermore, the psychological aspects of language shock and its influence on Arabic language learners are not sufficiently explored in the existing literature. More research is needed to examine the psychological processes that underlie language

shock in particular. Investigating the emotional and cognitive aspects of language shock, can enhance our understanding of its impact on the well-being and academic success of Arabic learners.

Lastly, another significant limitation is the lack of accessible resources.

1.4 Conclusion

This introductory chapter has provided a comprehensive overview. It presented the linguistic profile of Algeria, highlighting the diglossic relationship holding between Standard Arabic and Algerian Arabic. The chapter also introduced the concept of language shock, defining its effects and implications for language learners, and distinguishing it from culture shock. Moreover, it reviewed some gaps and limitations in the existing literature on language shock. The next chapter describes the research methodology adopted for this study, including the research design, data collection methods, instruments, and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER TWO: **Research Methodology and Results**

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    2.2.2   Sample population

    2.2.3   Data Collection Instruments

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        2.2.3.2 Interviews

    2.2.4   Ethical Considerations

    2.2.5   Limitations of the Study

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2.4 Recommendations

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2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts, outlining the study methodological structure of the investigation, data analysis, and subsequent discussion. The initial section begins with an overview, setting the stage for a detailed examination of the research design, which forms the foundation of this study. The sampling process, a critical aspect of the research, is explained next. Moving forward, it delves into an exploration of the diverse data collection instruments employed, namely the questionnaire, and interviews, explaining the rationale behind their selection considering the ethical aspects of the study, and acknowledging its limitations, thereby providing a holistic view of the research process. The second part of this chapter focuses on providing a comprehensive analysis of the results obtained from each tool. The findings are critically examined and compared against the research questions and hypotheses. Derived from these insights, recommendations emerge as invaluable contributions, offering invaluable insights for future research. The chapter concludes by summarizing the main findings, and a conclusion. This provides a complete overview of the research process, ensuring that it acts as a clear and structured guide through the methodological path of the investigation.

2.2 Part one: Methodological Framework

The methodological framework outlines the blueprint of the research process, detailing the research design which guides the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data.

2.2.1 Research Design

A research design is a comprehensive plan that specifies how a research project will be conducted. It guides the researcher to address the research questions in reliable, valid, accurate, and efficient manner (Bryman, 2012: 46). A research design is similar to "the roadmap for a research project" (Creswell, 2013: 58), as it shows the researcher the best path to follow to achieve the research objectives (Creswell, 2013: 59). Therefore, choosing an appropriate research design is crucial for the success of any research project.

In the context of the present study, the phenomenon of language shock among Chinese learners of Standard Arabic in Algeria is investigated using an exploratory,

single, holistic case study approach. This approach is suitable for investigating relatively unexplored areas and offers a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter by allowing investigation of phenomena within its real-world context. The exploratory case study enables delving into the intricate dynamics of language shock experienced by Chinese learners in Algeria, a topic that has not been extensively explored. A single case study is selected to provide an in-depth analysis of a specific instance, the experience of Chinese learners of Standard Arabic in Algeria, allowing focus on the unique aspects of this particular group and providing rich, detailed insights. An intrinsic case study approach is incorporated into the research design, allowing for a deep understanding of this specific case and its inherent complexities. A holistic case study is employed, crucial in this study as it enables understanding not just the individual experiences of the learners but also how these experiences are influenced by and interact with various factors such as their prior knowledge, expectations, and the sociocultural context of Algeria. Furthermore, a mixed-methods approach complements this by combining qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data offers nuanced insights into learners' experiences and perceptions, while quantitative data provides measurable evidence of the extent of language shock. Together, they provide a more complete and robust understanding of the research problem.

The choice of a case study design is motivated by the need to understand the unique experience of Chinese learners of Arabic when faced with the Algerian dialect. The aim is to improve the current situation by providing solutions and suggestions, which will serve as a starting point for further research.

2.2.2 Sample population

Sampling is a pivotal component of research methodology, involving the selection of a group of individuals that ideally represents the larger population. The sample, a subset of the population, should be optimal, balancing efficiency, representativeness, reliability, and flexibility. Tavakoli (2012) emphasizes these characteristics. There are two primary sampling paradigms: the information-rich paradigm, which prioritizes depth of data over sample size, and the representative paradigm, which seeks a large sample to facilitate generalization of findings. The

current study adopts the information-rich approach, presenting results for the reader's interpretation rather than aiming for broad generalization. This approach underscores the concept of transferability, where data are shared with the reader, leaving the onus of generalization to them.

Inspired by the need to explore the experiences of Chinese learners of Standard Arabic in Algeria, observation was employed as a foundational approach. Linguistic challenges, coping strategies, and interactions with the Algerian dialect were uniquely illuminated through unstructured and uncontrolled observations. These observations maintain conceptual consistency, aligning with the central thesis.

Different sampling techniques were applied depending on the tool used in this study. For the questionnaire, a snowball sampling method was employed, which was administered to 20 students. For the interviews, a convenience sample of six students was chosen. These students were divided into two groups based on their study period and were interviewed either face-to-face or online via WeChat.

2.2.3 Data Collection Instruments

Within the scope of this research, a mixed methods research approach is strategically employed to enhance the depth and breadth of the research findings. The use of both a questionnaire and an interview as data collection tools allows for a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The questionnaire captures trends and patterns from a large sample, collecting measurable data on their experiences and attitudes. In contrast, the interview offers an in-depth exploration of individual perspectives. This combination not only improves the validity of the research findings but also broadens the appeal of the study to a wider audience. Thus, they contribute to a more complete understanding of the research problem, emphasizing the importance of using diverse research methods in scholarly investigations.

2.2.3.1 The Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire, a standardized tool for gathering information from a large number of individuals, was chosen as the primary research tool for this study due to its versatility and efficiency. It allows for the collection of data from a large number of individuals in a standardized manner, ensuring consistency across responses. This

is particularly important in this study, which seeks to understand the linguistic challenges encountered by Chinese students in Algeria, a topic that requires insights from a diverse range of experiences.

The current study questionnaire merges between open-ended and closed-ended questions to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, offering a holistic view of the students' experiences. It is divided into five distinct sections, each focusing on a different aspect of the students' linguistic experiences in their learning journey. This structure ensures that all relevant areas are covered, from their prior knowledge of Standard Arabic to their interactions with locals and personal experiences of language barriers. The choice of a questionnaire also aligns with the sampling methods employed in this study. (For further details on the questionnaire design, consult the Appendix).

In order to gather rich, detailed data from Chinese learners of Standard Arabic, a non-probability sampling method was employed. Specifically, snowball sampling was used, which is particularly effective when the population is difficult to access. This approach allows for information-rich participants to be included in the study, enhancing the depth and detail of the findings.

The questionnaire was administered to students from the 2019 and 2023 cohorts in Tlemcen. The gap between these two years can be attributed to the global COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly disrupted academic activities and international travel. Initially, the questionnaire was distributed to a few students. Then, snowball sampling was implemented, where a Chinese student in China assisted in distributing the questionnaire to other potential participants within their network. This method resulted in a total of 20 responses. These 20 responses represent the entire sample for this study, encompassing both the students the researcher knew personally and those reached through the Chinese student's network. This approach does not require knowledge of the total population size and focuses on gathering detailed information from a subset of the population.

It is noteworthy that post the cessation of the pandemic around 2022, the University of Tlemcen welcomed an influx of four Chinese students. However, these students were excluded from the sample for a specific reason: their focus before their

arrival was on learning the Egyptian dialect rather than Standard Arabic, which introduced additional complexities that were beyond the scope of this study.

2.2.3.2 Students' Interview

The interview is a widely used tool in research for gathering data via a spoken interaction between the researcher and the respondents. This decision is reinforced by Wheeler and Morgan Brett (2021), who underscore the value of interviews as they "provide access to a wealth of data encompassing participants' experiences, recollections, and emotions" and serve as "an adaptable method, enabling the exploration and follow-up of issues pertinent to each participant". This capability to delve into the depths of human consciousness and experience is priceless, offering a multi-faceted perspective on the topic at hand. In a similar vein, Patton (2002) accentuates the unparalleled potential of interviews to reveal the elusive facets of human experience, asserting, "We are unable to observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions… We are compelled to pose questions about these aspects".

Interviews can be categorized into three main types: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. The current study employed semi-structured format of the interviews to offer a balance between the rigidity of structured interviews and the flexibility of unstructured ones, providing a set of planned questions while allowing room for additional exploratory questions as needed. These interviews can be conducted face-to-face, which fosters a personal connection and enable to read non-verbal cues. Alternatively, it can be carried out via various mediums, such as video calls. In this study, both online and on-site semi-structured interviews were employed. This dual approach ensured a comprehensive and flexible data collection process.

The interviews were conducted with a convenience sample of six adult Chinese learners of Standard Arabic in Algeria. The sample was divided into two distinct groups based on their study period. The first group, from the 2023 cohort, consisted of three students who were still residing in Algeria at the time of the study. These students were interviewed face-to-face, allowing for a direct and personal interaction. The second group comprised three students from the 2019 cohort who had completed

their studies in Algeria and had since returned to China. These students were interviewed online via the popular application, WeChat.

Despite the four-year gap between the two cohorts, which was due to the pandemic of COVID-19 and some temporarily changes in scholarship program that halted the arrival of new students, both groups provided valuable insights into the experience of learning Arabic in Algeria. The interviews, lasting approximately half an hour each, were conducted in Arabic, and the responses were later transcribed and translated for analysis.

2.2.4 Ethical considerations

In this study several ethical considerations were paramount. Participants, who were mature adults, were fully informed about the research's purpose and their voluntary participation, with the right to withdraw at any time. Privacy and confidentiality were respected, with all personal information kept confidential and used only for agreed-upon purposes. The research did not exploit participants and was conducted with honesty and transparency. Cultural differences were respected. and a risk-benefit analysis ensured the research's benefits outweighed potential risks. Notably, all participants were aware that the interviews were recorded and expressed no objections, further demonstrating the ethical integrity of the data collection process.

2.2.5 Limitations

The investigation into language shock experienced by foreign learners, especially Chinese students mastering Standard Arabic in Algeria, represents a nuanced and layered area of research. It offers crucial perspectives on the obstacles encountered by these students, yet it also encounters certain constraints, most notably in the realm of data gathering. These limitations can affect the comprehensiveness and applicability of the research findings, underscoring the need for innovative methodologies in data collection to enhance the validity and reliability of the study.

Apart from the pandemic, the specific Arabic dialect learned by Chinese students significantly influences their language shock experience. The first group of students arriving post-pandemic were exposed to a different Arabic dialect (the Egyptian dialect) rather than Standard Arabic. This dialectal variation not only affects

the learning process but also poses questions about the study findings to learners of different Arabic dialects.

Accessing participants for research purposes can present a significant hurdle, as demonstrated by instances where teachers decline to share contact information of universities with students, limiting the pool of potential participants. This limitation can result in a smaller sample size that may not accurately represent the broader population of Chinese learners of Standard Arabic in Algeria. Moreover, ethical considerations regarding consent and privacy in research become paramount when faced with challenges related to participant recruitment and engagement.

Lastly, the reliability of self-reported data poses a concern. The study frequently relies on such data, which can be subject to influences such as memory bias, social desirability bias, and the participants' current emotional state. These influences can compromise the data's accuracy and reliability. For instance, participants may not recall their experiences accurately, or they may portray their experiences in a more favourable or unfavourable light due to social desirability bias.

2.3 Part two: Results and Discussion

This section presents the results and discussion of the research, focusing on the data analysis that supports the findings. The analysis plays a crucial role in understanding the implications and interpretations derived from the collected data.

2.3.1　Data analysis

This research is built on a mixed-methods approach, a robust strategy that integrates the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research. The data, therefore, will be analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. This dual-mode analysis is integral to the research design, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the data. By combining the empirical rigor of quantitative methods with the depth and nuance of qualitative ones, the research aims to provide a well-rounded analysis that can address the complexities inherent in the research problem.

2.3.1.1Questionnaire Results

The forthcoming part unpacks the data gathered from the questionnaire, offering a comprehensive exploration into the experiences of Chinese students

learning Arabic in Algeria. Each section of the results provides a different perspective on the language acquisition journey.

a.   Section one: Pre-Arrival Preparation

In the first section of the questionnaire, which focused on pre-arrival preparation, participants were asked about their duration of studying Arabic. The responses revealed that a majority of the students (87.5%) had been studying Arabic for more than two years, indicating a substantial exposure to the language prior to their arrival in Algeria. On the other hand, a smaller proportion of the students (12.5%) reported studying Arabic for less than two years. Interestingly, none of the participants reported a study duration of exactly two years.

Table 2.1, Pre-arrival Standard Arabic Learning Duration

Duration	more than 2 years	less than 2 years
Percentage	87.5 %	12.5%

The students' self-assessment of their command of Standard Arabic before coming to Algeria varied. Most students rated their command as below average (37.5%), followed by average (31.25%). Fewer students felt they had a good command (18.75%), and a small proportion rated their command as poor (12.5%).

Figure 2.1, Command of Srandard Arabic Before Arrival
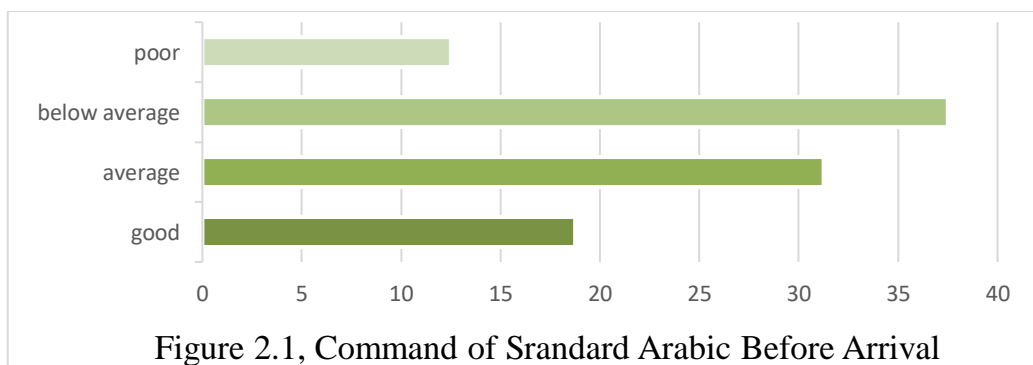
When asked if they were aware of the parallel use of two forms of Arabic: standard and colloquial, 75% of the students said yes, while 25% have said no.
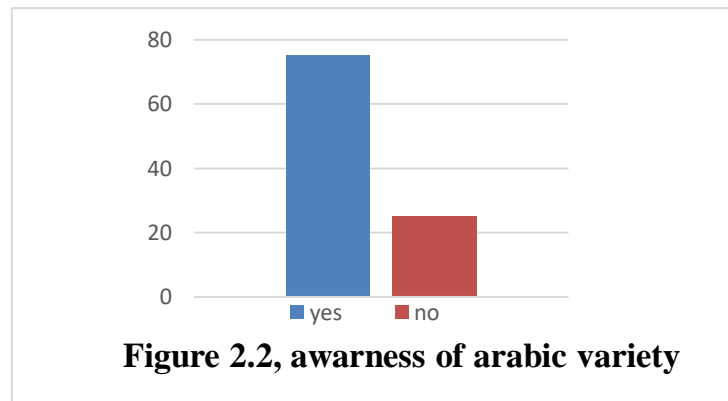
Figure 2.2, awarness of arabic variety

b. Section two: Initial Experience in Algeria

The second section of the questionnaire focused on the initial experience of the students in Algeria. The responses revealed that a majority of the students (81.25%) had stayed in Algeria for three months, while 18.75% had stayed for one year. None of the students reported a stay of six months or any other duration.

When asked about their understanding of local people upon their arrival in Algeria, 50% of the students reported a great extent of difficulty, 43.75% reported some extent of difficulty, and only 6.25% reported no difficulty at all.
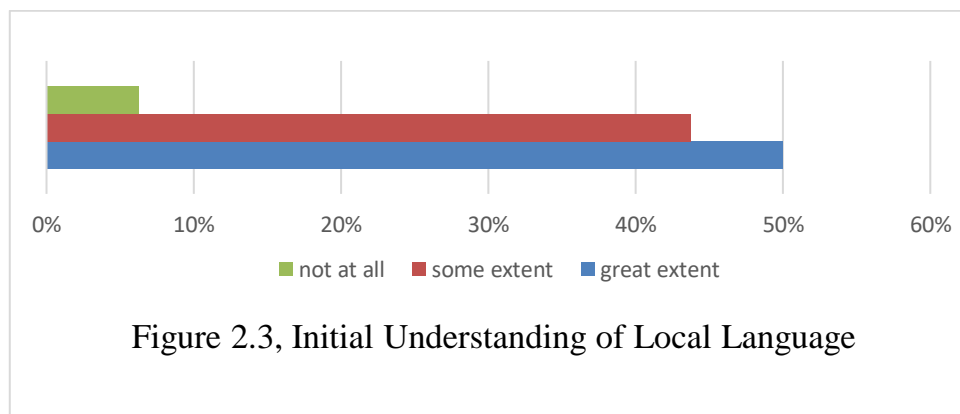
Figure 2.3, Initial Understanding of Local Language

In terms of the challenges faced in understanding Algerians, both the accent and vocabulary were reported as difficulties by 68.75% of the students. The speed of speech was a challenge for 50% of the students, and 6.25% reported other challenges. Table 2.2, Difficulty in Understanding Algerians

Accent	Vocabulary	Speed of speech	Others
68.75%	68.75%	50%	6.25%

Finally, when asked about the potential benefits of knowing French for effective communication in Algeria, 62.5% of the students strongly agreed and 37.5% agreed. None of the students partially agreed or disagreed with this statement.

c. Section three: Interaction with Locals

The third section of the questionnaire focused on the interaction with locals in Algeria. The responses revealed that 50% of the students interacted with locals every day, 18.75% interacted weekly, 25% sometimes, and 6.25% rarely. None of the students reported never interacting with locals.

Figure 2.4, Frequency of Interaction with Locals
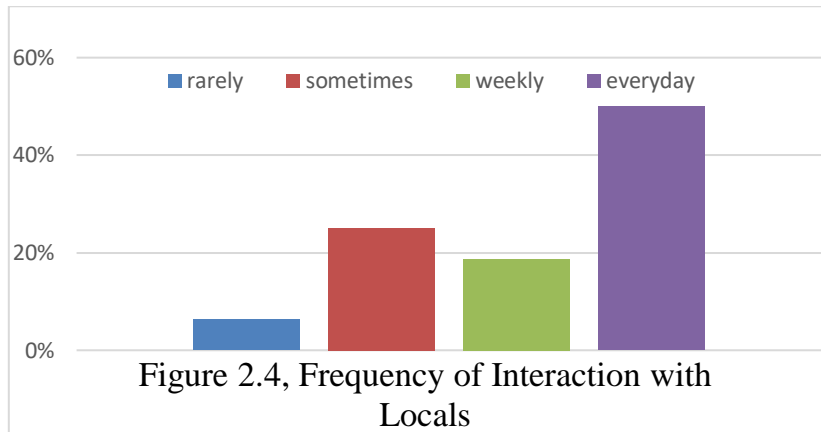
When communicating with Algerians, 68.75% of the students used Standard Arabic, none used Colloquial Arabic, 25% mixed both Arabic varieties, and 6.25% used English. The locals' reactions to the students using Standard Arabic were mostly surprised (62.5%) and supportive (56.25%). None of the students reported the locals being indifferent or other reactions. In terms of challenges in understanding and communicating with locals, 68.75% of the students found challenges in the market, 43.75% on public transportation, 37.5% at social events, and 6.25% reported other challenges.

Figure 2.5, Language Used for Communication
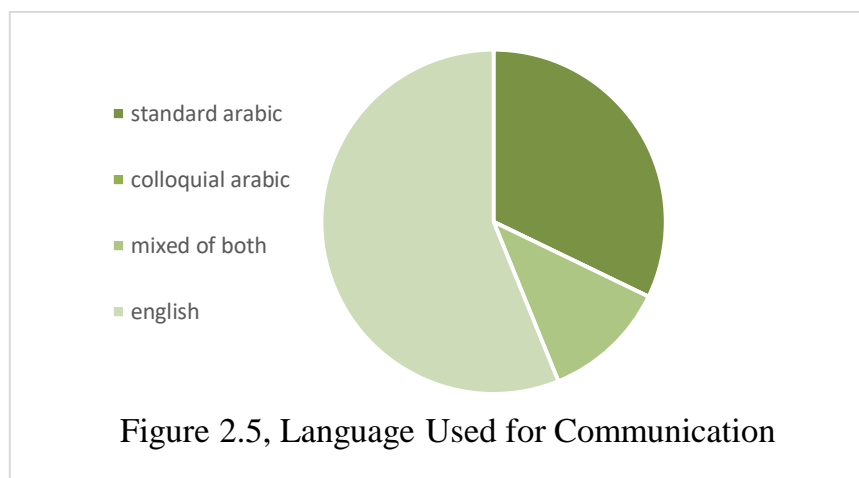
Finally, when asked if they rely on non-verbal cues (like gestures or facial expressions) to express or understand conversations with locals, 81.25% of the students said yes, and 18.75% said no.

d. Section four: Language Use and Improvement

The fourth section of the questionnaire focused on language use and improvement. The responses revealed that 56.25% of the students used Standard Arabic the most in academia, 62.5% in daily interactions, and 31.25% at social events. None of the students reported using Standard Arabic the most in other situations.

Figure 2.6, Predominant Usage of Standard Arabic
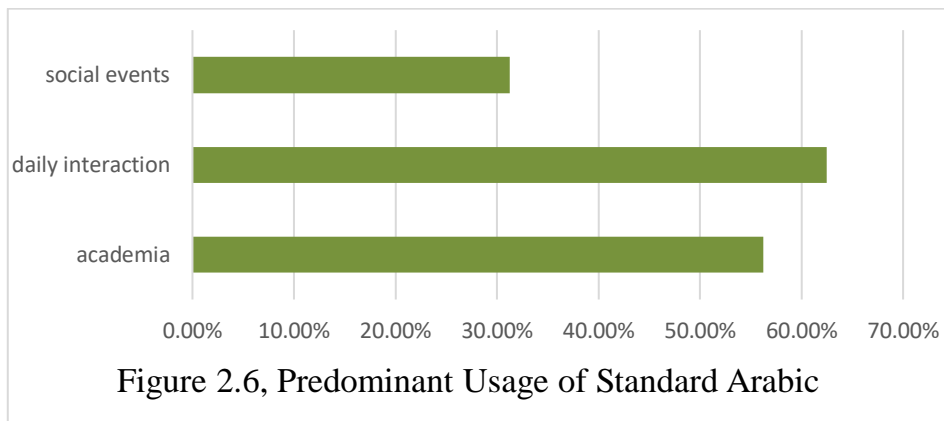
In terms of language improvement since their arrival to Algeria, 31.25% of the students reported that their command of Standard Arabic has significantly improved, 56.25% reported partial improvement, and 12.5% reported no change. None of the students reported their command of Standard Arabic worsening.

Figure 2.7, Improvement in Standard Arabic
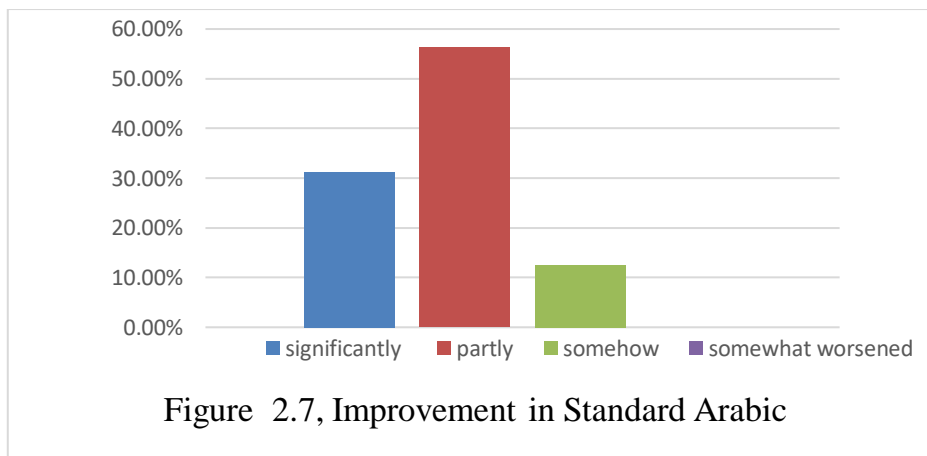
Finally, when asked if they plan to continue improving their Standard Arabic after leaving Algeria, 75% of the students said yes, 6.25% said no, and 18.75% were unsure.

Figure 2.8, Plan to Improve Standard Arabic Post-Departure

e. Section five: Reflections and Suggestions

The last section of the questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions aimed at gathering the students' reflections and suggestions. This section provides valuable insights into the students' personal experiences and their recommendations for future Chinese learners of Arabic who plan to come to Algeria.
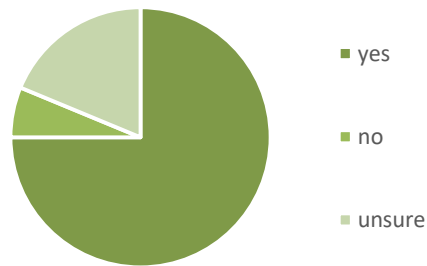
The responses revealed a variety of situations where language barriers led to misunderstandings. These ranged from everyday situations like shopping, where respondents struggled with understanding prices in a different language, to more complex scenarios like miscommunication due to direct translations. For instance, one respondent shared an experience of overpaying for dates due to their inability to explain addition and subtraction in Arabic. Another respondent recounted a misunderstanding over time arrangements, which was finally resolved using English. These instances highlight the practical challenges faced by individuals in cross-cultural communication.

The responses to the second question revealed a strong desire among respondents for more immersive and interactive language learning experiences. They expressed a need for more teaching methods that involve daily situations, as they believe this helps in remembering vocabulary by establishing a relation between words and their context. Many respondents expressed a wish for more interaction with Arabic speakers. They believe that having local friends speak Arabic to them and communicating in Arabic every day would greatly enhance their language skills. They also expressed a desire for more voice communication with Arabs. The respondents also showed interest in media content in standard Arabic, such as TV

shows or movies, as a means of language learning. They believe that this could make the learning process more interesting.

The final question's answers provided insights into the strategies for effective language learning and cultural immersion. Respondents emphasized the importance of learning Arabic as well as possible, particularly because they believe Algeria is one of the countries where people are known for their hospitality towards foreigners. This welcoming nature does not necessarily correlate with the language but more with the people's interactions and treatment of foreigners, especially those who speak Arabic. Respondents also stressed the need to focus on listening and speaking skills and to immerse oneself in the Arabic-speaking system. They suggested learners should strive to think like a native speaker. Adaptability and courage were identified as crucial traits for interacting with native people. Respondents also highlighted the importance of having a basic understanding of the local religion, culture, history, and traditions.

2.3.1.2 Interview results

The semi-structured interviews revealed that the majority of participants had been learning Standard Arabic for over 2 years. Their primary motivation was the growing trade relationship between China and the Arab world underscored the job opportunities for Chinese individuals fluent in Arabic beside their perception of Arabic speakers in China as knowledgeable and competent. However, their use of Standard Arabic was largely limited to academic settings, with minimal use in everyday communication.

Interacting with Algerian locals posed unique challenges for the Chinese students. Despite their proficiency in Standard Arabic, they often encountered communication barriers as Algerians instinctively used French with foreigners. This was particularly evident in public places like restaurants, where signage and menus were predominantly in French rather than Standard Arabic. These experiences often led to feelings of confusion, loss, and discomfort, and a shift in their attitudes towards the linguistic situation. Despite these challenges, they expressed a desire to continue learning Arabic, viewing these obstacles as part of the learning journey.

Participants noted pronounced differences between Algerian Arabic and Standard Arabic, particularly in pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence structure. However, they found this aspect of the learning process enriching and insightful. These linguistic differences, coupled with the initial language shock, impacted their confidence and motivation to learn Arabic. However, as they became more familiar with the language, most participants reported an increase in both confidence and motivation.

To cope with the challenges of Algerian speech, participants employed various strategies, including regular practice, seeking help from Arabic-speaking friends, and using language learning apps for some basic French words. They found the French borrowings in Algerian Arabic challenging but interesting, often leveraging their knowledge of French to understand these borrowings.

When asked about advice for future Chinese learners of Standard Arabic facing the same linguistic issue, participants suggested immersing oneself in the local culture and language as much as possible. They also recommended leveraging language learning apps and seeking help from Arabic-speaking friends or locals.

2.3.2 Discussion of the results

Prior to the evaluation of the research hypotheses' validity, it is essential to comprehend the results derived from each research tool. This understanding is crucial as it forms the basis for subsequent analysis and interpretation. It ensures that the hypotheses are examined in the light of accurately interpreted data, thereby enhancing the reliability of the research outcomes.

2.3.2.1 Discussion of Questionnaire's results

The fact that a majority of the students (87.5%) had been studying Arabic for more than two years prior to their arrival in Algeria suggests a strong interest and commitment to learning the language. However, despite this substantial exposure, most students rated their command as below average or average. This could indicate that the methods or resources used for learning Arabic prior to arrival might not have been effective enough, or perhaps the students had unrealistic expectations about their language proficiency. The fact that 75% of the students were aware of the parallel use

of two forms of Arabic suggests a certain level of sophistication in their understanding of the language.

The data from the second section reveals that most students stayed in Algeria for a relatively short period of time (three months). This could potentially limit their opportunities for language immersion and practice. The difficulties in understanding locals upon arrival, reported by a significant majority of students, underscores the challenges of real-world language use, which can be quite different from classroom learning. The fact that accent and vocabulary were the most common challenges points to specific areas that future language preparation could focus on. The strong agreement on the benefits of knowing French suggests that multilingualism could be a valuable asset for effective communication in Algeria.

The responses from the third section show that half of the students interacted with locals every day, which is a positive sign for language practice and cultural immersion. The surprise and support from locals could indicate that the use of Standard Arabic by foreigners is not common, and locals appreciate the efforts made by the students.

The fourth section reveals that most students used Standard Arabic the most in academia and daily interactions, suggesting that they had ample opportunities to practice the language in different contexts. The reported improvement in their command of Standard Arabic is a positive outcome, demonstrating the benefits of language immersion. The fact that a majority of students plan to continue improving their Standard Arabic after leaving Algeria indicates a sustained interest in the language, which could be due to personal interest or perceived career benefits.

The findings of the last section suggest that overcoming language barriers involves both technology, like translator apps, and human elements, such as patience and cultural understanding. Language learning is not just about vocabulary or grammar, but also about cultural immersion and practical usage. The respondents value real-life interactions and experiential learning, suggesting that language programs could benefit from more interactive activities. They also advocate for a holistic approach to language learning that includes understanding local customs and traditions. The advice to bring familiar food items and learn French in advance

reflects the practical challenges of living in a new country. These insights provide a guide for anyone planning to live in an Arabic-speaking country, highlighting the importance of preparation, adaptability, and engagement with the local culture.

2.3.2.2 Discussion of interview's results

As previously stated, semi-structured interviews were chosen due to their ability to provide rich, qualitative data that captures the depth and complexity of human experiences. This approach is particularly valuable in the context of this study, which seeks to understand the linguistic challenges faced by Chinese students in Algeria, a topic that requires deep insights into individual experiences and perspectives.

When evaluating the participants' proficiency in Standard Arabic, the majority revealed that they had been learning the language for over 2 years. This indicates that they possessed the fundamentals of the Arabic language which enabled them to express themselves, with some showing a kind of dexterity. However, their use of Standard Arabic was largely limited to academic settings, suggesting a lack of exposure to the Arabic language in everyday communication.

Despite their proficiency in Standard Arabic, they frequently encountered communication barriers as Algerians instinctively conversed in French with foreigners. This unexpected linguistic environment elicited feelings of confusion and discomfort, instigating a shift in their attitudes towards the linguistic situation in Algeria. This highlights the complexity of Algeria's linguistic landscape, where French and various forms of Arabic coexist, and underscores the importance of cultural competence in language learning.

Moreover, the interviews revealed that the students faced an additional layer of complexity when they encountered Algerian Arabic. The pronounced differences between Algerian Arabic and Standard Arabic, particularly in pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence structure, initially impacted the students' confidence and motivation to learn Arabic. However, as they became more familiar with the language, most participants reported an increase in both confidence and motivation.

Interestingly, these challenges did not deter the students. Instead, they viewed them as part of their learning journey, employing various strategies to cope with the linguistic complexities. These strategies included regular practice, seeking assistance

from Arabic-speaking friends, and using language learning apps for basic French words. This suggests that language shock, while challenging, can also be a catalyst for learning and adaptation.

In conclusion, the semi-structured interviews provided valuable insights into the experiences, challenges, and strategies of Chinese students learning Standard Arabic in Algeria. Their stories underscore the complexities of language learning in a multilingual context and provide valuable insights for educators, policy makers, and future learners. Despite the challenges, they expressed a desire to continue learning Arabic, viewing these obstacles as part of the learning journey. This resilience and positive attitude towards learning are commendable and can serve as an inspiration for future learners.

2.3.3 Discussion of the main findings

The study reveals that the presence of diglossia in Algeria adds an extra layer of complexity for Chinese students learning Arabic. Despite their commitment to learning Standard Arabic, they often find that their classroom-acquired skills do not fully equip them to communicate effectively with locals, who often use Algerian Arabic or French in daily conversations. This gap between their learned language and the language used in practice could contribute to their self-assessment of having below average or average command of Arabic.

The students' relatively short stay in Algeria, typically three months, could limit their opportunities for language immersion and practice. This limited duration might not be sufficient for them to fully adapt to the linguistic environment and effectively improve their Arabic skills.

The difficulties reported by students in understanding locals upon arrival underscore the challenges posed by diglossia. The differences in accent, vocabulary, and sentence structure between Standard Arabic and Algerian Arabic can initially impact the students' confidence and motivation to learn Arabic.

The study also found a strong agreement on the benefits of knowing French for effective communication in Algeria. This finding underscores the importance of considering the multilingual context of Algeria in language education, indicating that

multilingualism, particularly the knowledge of French, could be a valuable asset for these students.

2.4 Recommendations

In light of these findings, several recommendations can be made. Future language preparation could place a stronger emphasis on accent and vocabulary, as these were identified as the most common challenges faced by the students. Additionally, given the benefits of effective communication in Algeria, fostering multilingualism, particularly in French, could be a valuable asset for the students. However, the most significant recommendation would be to extend the duration of stay in Algeria, if feasible. This would provide more opportunities for language immersion and practice, enhancing the overall language learning experience. In addition, a beneficial strategy could be to pair each Chinese student with a local student. This pairing would allow Chinese students to practice Arabic in real-world contexts and gain a deeper understanding of the local culture. The local student could also guide the Chinese student, helping them navigate the new environment and overcome practical challenges associated with living in a new country. This approach combines formal education with real-world practice and cultural immersion, could significantly improve the language proficiency and cultural competence of Chinese students in Algeria.

2.5 Conclusion

In wrapping up this chapter, the methodological structure that underpinned this study has been reviewed. The research design, data collection tools, and sampling process were all integral to the investigation. The analysis of results from questionnaires, interviews, and observations provided a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the study, and limitations were acknowledged, offering directions for future research. This methodological journey, while rigorous, was necessary to ensure the validity and reliability of the study. The insights gained from this process not only addressed the research questions but also contributed to the broader field of study. This chapter, therefore, serves as a testament to the meticulous research process undertaken in this study.

General Conclusion

Arabic is anticipated to be among the top five most spoken languages globally according to studies by the British Council (2023). This increasing influence of Arabic, driven by various factors, has led to a surge in its worldwide learning demand, thereby fostering the growth of 'Arabic for speakers of other languages'. However, the journey of learning Arabic presents challenges for non-native speakers, especially due to its diglossic nature, which encompasses a standard form for formal use and a colloquial form for informal use. Interestingly, the expanding trade and economic ties between China and the Arab World have heightened the attractiveness of learning Standard Arabic for many Chinese individuals. Yet, those aspiring to enrol in Arabic universities, such as Algeria, find themselves in a complex linguistic environment. They quickly realize that mastering Standard Arabic alone is insufficient for effective communication in the Arab context, as locals predominantly use Colloquial Arabic in informal settings. This significant gap between the standard and colloquial forms can lead to 'language shock', a phenomenon that carries significant implications for learners' sociolinguistic adaptation, thereby presenting an intriguing area of study.

This research is divided into two chapters: the first one outlines the theoretical framework that informs the research; The second chapter details the research methodology, and presents the findings. This structure ensures to explore the topic, from foundational theories to practical outcomes. The study primarily aims to reveal insights about the impact of language shock on Chinese students studying Arabic in a cross-cultural context, namely Algeria.

Building on this, the significant linguistic variation between Standard Arabic and Algerian Arabic indeed introduced 'language shock' among Chinese students learning Arabic in Algeria. The formal language taught in academic settings, Standard Arabic, is starkly different from Algerian Arabic, the dialect used in everyday communication. This discrepancy presents a real challenge for Chinese students who, despite their proficiency in Standard Arabic, encounter a linguistically unfamiliar environment in Algeria. This unexpected divergence

between the classroom language and the colloquial dialect led to 'language shock', resulting in a sense of disorientation, confirming thereby the first hypothesis.

The second hypothesis, concerning the impact of 'language shock' on the communication abilities of Chinese students in informal Algerian contexts, was also validated. Despite their academic preparation in Standard Arabic, these students often struggle to comprehend and engage in casual conversations, which predominantly use Algerian Arabic. This difficulty extends beyond mere linguistic comprehension to include cultural nuances and idiomatic expressions unique to Dialectal Arabic. Therefore, the 'language shock' experienced due to the divergence between Standard Arabic and Algerian Arabic significantly hinders the communicative competence of Chinese students in the Algerian context. This effect on their social interactions and immersion into the local culture confirms the second hypothesis.

Chinese learners found themselves confronted with a form of Arabic that they completely ignore. This form is overpopulated with French borrowings. A situation as such has far-reaching implications. These implications extend not only to these students in Algeria but also resonate in the broader field of language learning and cross-cultural communication. By understanding this 'language shock', educators can develop more effective language instruction methodologies that incorporate elements of Colloquial Arabic into the curriculum (though the colloquial also shows differences across Algeria, and mainly across the Arabic-speaking countries). This measure helps prepare students for real-world communication in the Algerian context, significantly enhancing the communicative competence of foreign students and facilitating their social interactions and cultural immersion. These insights also hold value for policymakers and stakeholders in the education sector, who can leverage this understanding to design language programs that consider the local linguistic environment, promoting a more holistic and practical language learning experience. In our increasingly globalized world, where cross-cultural interactions are commonplace, this research contributes to minimizing communication barriers and fostering mutual understanding among different cultures. It underscores the importance of understanding not just a language in its standard form, but also its

colloquial usage and cultural nuances, leading to more effective communication, deeper cultural understanding, and ultimately, a more interconnected world.

Despite the insights this study provides, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The research primarily focuses on Chinese students learning Arabic in Algeria, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other linguistic or cultural contexts. The study also relies on the subjective experiences of students, which can vary greatly and may not fully capture the complexity of 'language shock'. Furthermore, the study does not extensively explore the impact of individual factors such as prior language learning experience, motivation, and personal resilience, which could influence the degree of 'language shock' experienced. Lastly, the study that Standard Arabic and Algerian Arabic are completely separate, while in reality, there may be a continuum of different dialects and variations that blur the lines between these two categories. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating a more diverse sample of learners, considering individual learner factors, and exploring the nuances within Arabic dialects.

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Students Questionnaire

Appendix1 (English version)

Dear participants,

The purpose of this survey is to understand the linguistic challenges faced by Chinese students during their stay in Algeria. Your answers are supposed to help eliminate, or at least minimize, linguistic issues for future students. The answers are kept confidential and anonymous.

Section 01: pre arrival preparation

1. How long have you been learning Arabic?

    o Less than 2 years

    o 2 years

    o More than 2 years

2. How would you rate your command of Standard Arabic before coming to Algeria?

    o Good

    o Average

    o Below average

    o Poor

3. Were you aware of the parallel use of two forms of Arabic: standard and colloquial?

    o Yes

    o No

Section 02: initial experience in Algeria

4. How long was your stay in Algeria?

    o 3 months

    o 6 months

    o 1 year

    o Others: …………..

5. Did you find yourself unable to understand local people when you first arrived to Algeria?

o To a great extent

o To some extent

o Not at all

6. In case you faced any difficulty to understand Algerians, is that attributed to the:

   o Accent

   o Vocabulary

   o Speed of speech

   o Others:……………

7. I think knowing French would have helped me communicate more effectively in Algeria:

   o Strongly agree

   o Agree

   o Partly agree

   o Disagree

Section 03: interaction with locals

8. How often do you interact with locals in Algeria?

   o Everyday

   o Weekly

   o Sometimes

   o Rarely

   o Never

9. When I communicate with Algerians I use:

   o Standard Arabic

   o Colloquial Arabic

   o Mixing both Arabic varieties

   o English

10. How do locals typically react when you interact with them via Standard Arabic?

    o Surprised

    o Supportive

    o Indifferent

o Others…………

11. I find challenges in understanding and communicating with locals:

    o In the market

    o On public transportation

    o At social events

    o Others………….

12. Do you rely on non-verbal cues (like gestures or facial expressions) to express or understand conversations with locals?

    o Yes

    o No

Section 04: language use and improvement

13. In which situation do you use Standard Arabic the most:

    o Academia

    o Daily to day interactions

    o Social events

    o Others…………..

14. Since my arrival to Algeria, my command of Standard Arabic has:

    o Significantly improved

    o Partly improved

    o Remained the same

    o Somewhat worsened

15. Do you plan to continue improving your Standard Arabic after leaving Algeria?

    o Yes

    o No

    o Unsure

Section 05: reflections and suggestions

16. Can you share an instance where a misunderstanding occurred due to language barriers? How was it resolved?

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17. What kind of support do you wish you could obtain to help you better communicate in Standard Arabic?

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18. Do you have any suggestions for future Chinese learners of Arabic who plan to come to Algeria?

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…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………...

Thank you!

Students Interview

Appendix 2 (English version)

1. How long have you been learning Standard Arabic? What motivates you to learn it?

2. How often do you use SA in your day-to-day communication, i.e. I mean beyond formal contexts like the classroom setting? and for what purposes?

3. When you interact with Algerian speakers outside the university, how do you feel when they use the Algerian dialect?

4. Does this affect your ability to communicate effectively, especially in terms of understanding?

5. How does your experience in this situation influence your attitude toward the linguistic situation?

6. Being quite familiar with both varieties, how can you describe the differences between Algerian Arabic and Standard Arabic?

7. How does all this affect your self-confidence and motivation to continue learning Arabic?

8. How do you cope with the difficulties and challenges in dealing with Algerian speech?

9. As you know, today Algerian Arabic is overpopulated with French borrowings, how do you deal with this?

10. What suggestions can you make to future Chinese learners of Standard Arabic facing the same linguistic issue?

ملخص

تعنى هذه الأطروحة باستكشاف ظاهرة الصدمة اللغوية بين الطلاب الصينيين الذين يتعلمون اللغة العربية الفصحى في الجزائر. كما تقوم بالتحقيق في الضغوط النفسية التي يعاني منها المتعلمون في بيئة لغوية جديدة وأثرها على دوافعهم وكفاءتهم في التواصل. يبني هذا البحث على المنهج المختلطَ الأساليب لفحص تجارب الطلاب وتحدياتهم في هذا السياق اللغوي. تقوم النتائج بالكشف عن صعوبة استخدام العربية الفصحى في بيئة خارج الإطارات الأكاديمية، مما يؤدي إلى صدمة لغوية تؤثر على أداء الطلاب.تخلص الدراسة إلى أنه يمكن التخفيف من الصدمة اللغوية عن طريق تعزيز المهارات اللغوية وتوفير الدعم الكافي للطلاب الأجانب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصدمة اللغوية، اللغة العربية الفصحى، اللهجة العربية الجزائرية، الكفاءة التواصلية.

Summary

This thesis explores the phenomenon of language shock among Chinese students learning Standard Arabic in Algeria. It investigates the psychological distress experienced by learners in a new linguistic environment and its impact on their motivation and communicative competence. The research employs a mixed-methods approach to understand the students' experiences and challenges within this linguistic context. Findings reveal significant challenges in using Standard Arabic in non-academic settings, leading to language shock that affects students' performance. The study concludes that language shock can be mitigated with enhanced linguistic skills and adequate support.

Keywords: Language shock, Standard Arabic, Algerian Arabic, Communicative competence.

Résumé

Cette thèse étudie le phénomène du choc linguistique chez les étudiants chinois qui apprennent l'arabe littéraire en Algérie, elle étudie également la détresse psychologique éprouvée par les apprenants dans un nouvel environnement linguistique et son impact sur leur motivation et leur compétence communicative. La recherche s'accentue sur une approche méthodologique mixte pour comprendre les expériences et les défis des étudiants dans ce contexte linguistique. Les résultats révèlent enfin des défis significatifs dans l'utilisation de l'arabe dans des contextes non académiques, ce qui entraîne un choc linguistique qui affecte la performance des étudiants. L'étude conclut que le choc linguistique peut être atténué avec une amélioration des compétences linguistiques et un soutien adéquat.

Mots clés : Choc linguistique, Arabe littéraire, Arabe algérienne, Compétence communicative.