


## The Role of Language Attitudes in Language Maintenance: The Case of Kabyle Immigrants in France

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** This sociolinguistic study aims to explore Kabyle immigrants' perspectives of and attitudes towards their home language (Kabyle) and the language of the host country (French). It also investigates the effects of gender and age on their attitudes towards and maintenance of their home language.

**Methods:** To achieve these objectives, an online questionnaire adapted from Al-Rahal (2014) was distributed to 60 Kabyle immigrants (30 males and 30 females) aged between 18 and 78 in the French language. The data were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS.

**Results:** The results showed that the Kabyle participants have positive attitudes to a great extent towards their home language and positive attitudes to some extent towards the host language. Neither gender nor age was found to be effective on the participants' attitudes towards either language.

**Conclusion:** The results are discussed in terms of different sociocultural factors. The study recommends that more investigations about Kabyle be conducted to maintain the language and protect it from loss.

**Keywords:** Language maintenance, language attitudes, Kabyle, France.

### دور المواقف اللغوية في الحفاظ على اللغة: حالة مهاجري القبائل في فرنسا

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#### ملخص

**الأهداف:** تهدف هذه الدراسة اللغوية الاجتماعية إلى استكشاف مواقف ووجهات نظر المهاجرين من منطقة القبائل تجاه لغتهم الأم (القبائلية) ولغة البلد المضيف (الفرنسية). كذلك تسعى الدراسة إلى استنباط أثر عاملي الجنس والعمر على مواقف ووجهات نظر المشاركين في البحث تجاه لغتهم الأم والحفاظ عليها.

**المنهجية:** ومن أجل تحقيق هذه الأهداف، قام الباحثون بتوزيع استبانة عبر الإنترنت- مقتبس من رحال (2014) على 60 مهاجرًا من القبائل، ينقسمون إلى 30 ذكرًا و 30 أنثى، تتراوح أعمارهم بين 18-78 عاماً. تم تحليل البيانات كميًا باستخدام أحد برامج التحليل الإحصائي.

**النتائج:** وقد أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن المشاركين الذين يتحدثون القبائلية يتخذون مواقف إيجابية إلى حد كبير تجاه لغتهم الأم ومواقف إيجابية إلى حد قليل تجاه اللغة المضيفة. ولم تتوصل الدراسة إلى أثر ذي دلالة للجنس أو العمر على المشاركين ومواقفهم اللغوية تجاه أي من اللغتين.

**الخاتمة:** وقد تمت مناقشة النتائج من حيث العوامل الاجتماعية والثقافية المختلفة.

توصي الدراسة بإجراء المزيد من الاستقصاء حول اللغة القبائلية من أجل الحفاظ عليها وحمايتها من الضياع.

**الكلمات الدالة:** المحافظة على اللغة، اتجاهات اللغة، منطقة القبائل، اللغة الفرنسية.



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## 1. Introduction

Attitudes are the predispositions to and perceptions about a particular phenomenon and/or the people who are engaged in that phenomenon. In this regard, Albirini (2016, p. 84) argues that “one of the most important assumptions about language attitudes is that they are part of the deep-seated norms, orientations, and beliefs in a given speech community.” Although it is usually difficult to define the concept of attitude, it is generally explicated in terms of three components: cognitive as it reflects the individual’s intention, affective as it involves reactions and feelings, and behavioural as it shapes one’s behaviours and practices (Garrett, 2010). Language attitudes are the perceptions which speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each other’s languages or to their own language. Expressions of positive or negative attitudes towards a particular language greatly affect learning and acquisition. In addition, the attitudes one hold about a particular language are important socioaffective factors in language maintenance and language shift. This study is an attempt to explore language attitudes and language maintenance among Kabyle immigrants in France.

Kabyle is a dialect of the Berber language; it has the majority speakers of Berber in Algeria (Alghazo, Zemmour, Al Salem & Alrashdan 2021). According to Mettouchi (2006), Kabyle is the most spoken Berber dialect in Algeria with about 7-8 million speakers out of 40 million citizens who reside in the country. Kabyle speakers in Algeria live Kabylia in the northern part of Algeria (p. 265). The area of Kabylia has five territories: Tizi Ouzou which is the capital of Great Kabylia, Bejaia, Bouira, Boumerdes and Bourj-Bouararij (Ait Habbouche, 2013). There are also some Kabyle speakers in France, Belgium, Canada and a number of other countries (who live there as immigrants). The Kabyle immigrants represent one of the largest and oldest communities in France. They (and other Berber speakers) are considered part of the so-called ‘Arab’ (or now ‘beur’) population in France (Direche-Slimani, 1997). Because of the Kabyle uprising in 1871, Kabylia residents was the first in north Africa to immigrate to France. In 1914, there were already 13,000 Algerians in France, of which more than 10,000 came from Kabylia. The Kabyle immigrants in France not only worked in various industries and professions, but also began to impose and implement their own culture and identity in the host country. As Direche-Slimani (1997) notes, there were cultural movements such as the Berberist groups in the 1960s which resulted in a huge political and cultural discourse of identity construction in both Algeria and France. The Kabyle speech community showed a will to impose itself and construct its own identity in the host country since the 1960s.

As for French in Algeria, it is worth mentioning that France colonised Algeria for a long period of time. This colonisation had its impact on the Algerian community, and particularly, the Algerian speech community. The French language became the most common spoken language in Algeria because of the wide use of French in various sectors such as the media and education. Nowadays, Algerians still use French in their daily interactions. However, the Algerian authorities attempted to resist the power of the colonizer and the wide use of the French language at the expense of the home languages. These efforts resulted in some regulation of the use of language: they promoted Arabic as the official language of the country. However, these attempts did not prevent Algeria from becoming the second largest area where French is spoken (Benrabah, 2014). Indeed, the use of French in Algeria has become an arena for research in sociolinguistics (see, for example, Chemami, 2011). This study seeks to investigate the Kabyle immigrants’ attitudes towards their heritage language and the dominant language used in the host country (France). In the light to the two sociolinguistic variables of age and gender, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of Kabyle immigrants towards their home language in France?
2. What are the attitudes of Kabyle immigrants towards the host language in France?
3. What is the effect of gender and age on their affection towards both Kabyle and French?

## 2. Conceptual framework

This study is concerned with the concepts of language attitudes, language maintenance and language shift. Language attitudes are defined by Jamaï (2008) as the feelings people have about their own and others’ language and their (and other) speech community. As noted above, language attitudes play a great role in language maintenance and language shift. In this regard, Hatoss (2013) shows that language attitudes cover people’s predispositions to their heritage language, the dominant

language of the host country, and speakers of these languages. However, gauging people's attitudes towards language is not an easy task (Albirini, 2016). Therefore, there emerged different approaches to study language attitudes in sociolinguistic research. These approaches examine minority speech communities such as that of Kabyle speakers in France. They are also used to study other sociolinguistic constructs such as identity, religion, and beliefs and how these constructs affect language maintenance or shift in the host country.

### **3. Literature review**

Research on languages in Algeria has mainly focused on Algerian Arabic, being the majority language (see, for example, Alghazo, Bekaddour, Jarrah & Hammouri, 2021). Minority languages such as Kabyle has rarely been the focus of linguistic and sociolinguistic studies (cf. Alghazo, Zemmour, Al Salem & Alrashdan 2021). The language attitudes of Kabyle speakers toward their home language have already been studied in Arabic speech community in Algeria—the homeland of the Kabyles. For instance, Ait Habbouche (2013) explored language maintenance and language shift among Kabyle speakers in Oran which is an Arabic speaking community. The researcher explored the language attitudes of Kabyle speakers who live in an Arabic city in their home country towards their heritage language. The present study, however, is different in terms of the context in which Kabyle speakers maintain their language. This study is concerned with Kabyle immigrants in a foreign country (France) where they are a minority speech community. In this regard, the study is significant as it contributes to expanding our understanding of how minority speech communities in host countries maintain their language, and particularly with reference to Kabyle in France, a language that has not been extensively studied.

A review of the literature on language attitudes and language maintenance reveals that there are many studies all over the world which have examined the variables that influence heritage language maintenance or shift, of which language attitude is key. We review the literature on language attitudes under two sub-headings: studies conducted at micro and macro levels.

#### **3.1 Language attitudes at the macro level**

At the macro level, a minority language is used by immigrants who form a small community in a host country. This type of studies in sociolinguistics is classified as non-indigenous minorities research. It is the widely conducted type of research in literature. Al-Rahal (2014), for example, is among the recent studies which dealt with the influence of language attitudes on language maintenance and shift among the Turkmen in Baghdad, Iraq. The researcher investigated Turkmen's attitudes towards their ethnic language and Arabic. Moreover, the researcher looked at the variables that have a role on either maintaining or losing their home language. To achieve this objective, Al-Rahal (2014) used an interactive research design by means of community profiles, open-ended interviews and a sociolinguistic questionnaire as instruments to collect data. The results demonstrated that the Turkmen in Baghdad—despite the dominance of the Arabic language—preserved their ethnic language and showed positive attitudes towards it.

Moreover, Kuncha and Bathula (2004) examined the role of immigrants' attitudes in language shift and maintenance. The focus of the study was on the Telung language; the researchers conducted an investigation about language attitudes that mothers and children of Telugu living in New Zealand hold. Telung is the second largest spoken language after the national language, Hindi, in India. The sample of the research included the Telung families who go habitually to an Indian church in New Zealand. The researchers collected data from these families asking both mothers and children about language proficiency, their attitudes towards their heritage language and the dominant language spoken in the host country (English), and attitudes about bilingualism and language maintenance through individual interviews. The results showed that the Telugu people use their native language at home, but that their children are losing their language rapidly.

In another sociolinguistic investigation, Park and Sarkar (2007) examined the attitudes of Korean parents living in Montreal towards language maintenance of their children and the parents' attempts to support their children to maintain their heritage language. The researchers used interviews with nine Korean immigrant parents who have children between the ages of 6-18. The interviews were used to collect data about the parents' attitudes about their heritage language and cultural identity maintenance for their children and about the Korean language, society and religion. The results revealed

that their children are proud of their heritage language and that they hold positive attitudes leading to maintaining their own cultural identity.

### 3.2 Language attitudes at the micro level

At the micro level, the language studied is considered a minority speech community inside the native country; that is, this type of research does not treat the issue of language maintenance and shift by immigrants. Rather, it examines language attitudes and language maintenance or shift by ethnic groups in their home land. For example, Birahmani and Lohar (2019) examined two local languages in Pakistan: Brahui and Sindhi. The researchers sought to find the attitudes of Brohi people towards the Sindhi and Brahui languages in Sindh. By investigating Brohis' attitudes, the study focused on determining the status of their language in Sindh which is considered the second largest province by population after Pakistani Punjab. The researchers relied on qualitative approach for data analysis by adopting the thematic method in treating the data collected by semi-structured interviews which were conducted with 20 Brohi parents living in Dadu city (in Sindhi province). The results indicated that the parents have negative attitudes towards their heritage language, but they have positive attitudes towards the dominant language in Dadu city. Moreover, the results showed that the participants considered the Brahui language of low status whereas they perceived the Sindhi language as superior and more valuable than their language. Hence, the Brohi parents shifted to the Sindhi language.

Unlike other studies that seek to determine the attitudes of a minority group towards two languages: the heritage language and the dominant language, Wati and Zulaikha (2019) aimed to investigate attitudes towards the dominant language only; they explored the language attitudes of Sundanese towards English. The participants were 140 Sundanese who speak Sundanese as their mother tongue, Indonesian and English. They were interviewed, and they responded to questionnaires to identify their attitudes towards English. The data were qualitatively analyzed following Miles, Hubberman, and Saldana's (2014) framework. The researchers analyzed the attitudes in terms of three components of attitudes referred to above: cognitively, the Sundanese preconceived attitudes towards the importance of the English language; affectively, the participants' feelings about English; and behavioral, their social practices such as the use of English in everyday communication.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Participants

The participants in this study are Kabyle speakers who have been living in Paris for over 15 years. They have originally come from different Kabyle provinces in Algeria namely, Bouira, Bejaia and Tizi Ouzou. Sixty participants (30 males and 30 females) have kindly agreed to fill the questionnaire. The participants share the same mother tongue: Kabyle. In Algeria, the official language is Arabic. Recently, Tamazight has become another official language. French is the first foreign language in Algeria. In France, the official language is French, and English is the first foreign language. Kabyle speakers represent a small minority group in France. Table 1 below presents demographic information about the participants.

**Table 1 Demographic Information about the Participants**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	30	50%
Female	30	50%
Total	60	100%

### 4.2 Data collection and analysis

A questionnaire was designed on the basis of that of Al-Rahal (2014). We adapted and modified some items to suit the case of the current study. The questionnaire included multiple choice questions as well as items on a five-point Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. It was administered in the French language after it has been translated by professional translators. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: The first section is about the

personal information (gender and age) of the respondent, the second is about the attitudes of Kabyle speakers towards their mother tongue, and the third section is about their attitudes towards the French language. The questionnaire was distributed to the adults of Kabyle immigrants in France (their ages are between 18 and 78). Table 2 shows the age information of the participants. It shows that (68.3%) from the study sample were less than 40 years old, and (31%) were more than 40 years.

**Table 2 Age Information of the Participants**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 40 years	41	68.3%
More than 40 years	19	31.7%
Total	60	100%

The questionnaire was validated by three linguists from different universities. They agreed on the content of the study tool after two rounds of revisions. Qualitatively, the numerical results were discussed with reference to different social variables and themes were generated to better explain the results.

#### 4.3 Reliability

To identify the reliability of each item of the questionnaire with the dimension to which the item belongs, the researchers used the correlation coefficients between each of the items in the questionnaire by using (Cronbach Alpha). The values of the Cronbach alpha of the study tool were generally higher than (0.70), which is an acceptable ratio (Hair et al., 2010) in research as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Statements	Cronbach Alpha
Attitudes towards the Kabyle language	1-10	0.89
Attitudes towards the French language	11-19	0.96
All statements	1-19	0.96

Table 3 reveals that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total degree of the scale was (0.96). The stability coefficient of the attitudes of Kabyle immigrants towards their home language was (0.89), and their attitudes towards the French language was (0.96). Thus, these values indicate that the scale is reliable and provides stability for the current research.

#### 4.4 Data analysis techniques

To answer to the study questions which were formulated to examine the language attitudes of Kabyle immigrants in France, a mixed-method approach was used in the analysis. Quantitatively, a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version-22 was used to test the research questions and the following statistical techniques and tests were used in data analysis:

- Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the demographic variables.
- Cronbach's Alpha reliability ( $\alpha$ ) was used to measure the strength of the correlation and between the questionnaire items and the consistency of the instrument.
- Descriptive statistical techniques including means and standard deviations were used.
- Independent sample t-test was used to show the source of the statistically significant differences according to gender and age.

As noted above, a five-point Likert scale was used in the study, and its relative importance was graded as follows:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Based on the foregoing, the values of the arithmetic averages that were reached were dealt with as follows, according to the following equation:

Class Interval = Maximum Class – Minimum Class

Number of Level

$$\text{Class Interval} = \frac{5 - 1}{3} = \frac{4}{3} = 1.33$$

- The Low level from 1.00- 2.33
- The Medium level from 2.34 – 3.67
- The High level from 3.68 – 5.00

## 5. Results and discussion

This section presents the results of the three questions raised in this study.

### 5.1 Results related to Question One

It may be recollected that the first research question asked about the attitudes of Kabyle immigrants in France towards their home language. To answer this question, the researchers used the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, item importance and importance level to show the attitudes of Kabyle immigrants (males and females) towards their home language in France. Table 4 below shows the results.

**Table 4 Results Related to Question One**

No	Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Importance Level
1	I like this language and I am proud of it.	5.00	0.00	1	High
9	This language is associated with the Kabyle's heritage and history.	4.90	0.35	2	High
3	This language defines my identity.	4.87	0.39	3	High
4	Knowledge of this language is necessary to maintain the unity of the ethnic group	4.78	0.52	4	High
10	It is important that my future children speak Kabyle language fluently.	4.77	0.62	5	High
5	This language is a symbol of my individual identity	4.75	0.63	6	High
2	I can express myself best in this language.	4.38	0.98	7	High
7	The Kabyle language does not help me in the work.	3.87	1.13	8	High
6	Knowledge of this language is a symbol of prestige and social status.	3.30	1.61	9	Medium
8	The Kabyle language has many dialects that make the communication more difficult	2.57	1.17	10	Medium
Total		4.32	0.62		High

Note: High score is out of 5

Table 4 shows that the means of this dimension (*attitudes of Kabyle immigrants towards their home language in France*), ranged between (5.00 – 2.57), where the whole dimension earned a total means of (4.32), which is a high level. Statement (1) (*I like this language and I am proud of it*) ranked the first with a mean of (5.00), with a standard deviation of (0.00) which means that all the participants without like their own language, and they are proud of it. Statement (9) (*This language is associated with the Kabyle's heritage and history*) ranked second with a mean of (4.90), with a standard deviation of (0.35), which is of a high level. The other statements also displayed a high level by their means. For instance,

Statement (10) (*It is important that my future children speak Kabyle language fluently*) which ranked fifth in terms of mean (i.e. the majority of the participants need their children to master their mother tongue) showed a high level of importance. This outcome may guarantee at least to some extent the protection of the language though its population represents a minority speech community.

Another statement that displayed a high level of agreement among Kabyle immigrants is Item (07). The results of this sentence (*The Kabyle language does not help me in the work*) were contrary to expectations because the participants disagreed that the Kabyle language helps them to find good work. However, two statements out of 10 have a medium level. Statement (8) (*The Kabyle language has many dialects that make the communication more difficult*) ranked last with a mean of (2.57), and a standard deviation of (1.17). This ranking (medium) does not significantly affect the positivity of the Kabyle immigrants' attitudes towards their mother tongue. On the contrary, the participants showed that they do not face obstacles because of the varieties of that language. Statement (6) (*Knowledge of this language is a symbol of prestige and social status*) ranked the second last in terms of mean which is (3.30) with a standard deviation of (1.61). It is obvious that in France the language of prestige is French. Although the participants live in France and realise this fact, they did not totally agree to this statement because they always had pride in their home language.

In fact, the themes raised in the statements above are important messages that describe the status of the home language among Kabyle speakers. To illustrate, if we take the last ranked item in the questionnaire given to the participants which states that (*The Kabyle language has many dialects that make the communication more difficult*), we realise that, for Kabyle immigrants, this is not completely true as they disagreed on this statement. This does not mean that they have negative attitudes towards their home language, but that they wanted to transmit a message that they do not see their language as such. The participants' responses to Statements (03) (*This language defines my identity*), (04) (*Knowledge of this language is necessary to maintain the unity of the ethnic group*) and (05) (*This language is a symbol of my individual identity*) are clear messages that show a favorable perception of the immigrants towards their home language. They view it as part of their own being and existence. The majority of the participants noted that the Kabyle language has a very valuable position as they believe that their home language is a fundamental component of their identity. According to the mean (4.78) of Statement (04), it could be deduced that the Kabyle language is being maintained by its speakers in France because they were aware of the importance of knowing and using their home language in their local community to show solidarity despite being a small ethnic group in a multilingual context.

Moreover, Statement (02) (*I can express myself best in this language*) ranked a high level with a mean of (4.38). It seems that the Kabyle immigrants prefer to use their home language to better express themselves. The reason could be related to various factors such as having a vocabulary that speaks deeply their cultural utterances. The Kabyle language remains the language that expresses deeply their thoughts. However, we cannot guarantee the same results if the participants were children due to the years of influence in the host country.

The overall results show that the attitudes of Kabyle immigrants towards their home language in France is positive. It is not unexpected since the Kabyles—similar to many other ethnic groups—are always known by their love for their belongings. The Kabylia is known as a community that imposes its culture and language though they represent a minority group in their own country. Achab (2001) supports this and argues that the Kabyle people stick to their home language and are very proud of their culture. Based on the previous arguments, we can safely conclude from the participants' responses that the attitudes of the Kabyle participants are positive which is an important factor in the maintenance of the language.

## **5.2 Results related to Question Two**

As for the second research question (What are the attitudes of Kabyle immigrants towards the host language in France?), the researchers used the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, item importance and importance level to demonstrate the participants' attitudes towards the French language. Table 5 below presents the results of the analysis.

**Table 5 Results Related to Question Two**

No	Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank	Importance Level
7	French is the official language, so it must be learned.	4.62	0.74	1	High
3	It is necessary for communication with other constituents of French society.	4.60	0.98	2	High
4	It is necessary for getting job	4.40	1.14	3	High
5	It is necessary for conducting Business.	4.35	1.05	4	High
1	I prefer to use French for social mobility.	3.90	0.97	5	High
6	It is important that I speak French in all domains.	3.85	1.29	6	High
9	It is better to learn French in order to spread social and cultural values of the French society.	3.43	1.44	7	Medium
8	French is more important than Kabyle.	2.73	1.38	8	Medium
2	It is important for promoting religious unity in the community.	2.57	1.33	9	Medium
Total		3.83	1.01		High

Note: Higher score is out of 5

Table 5 shows that the means of this dimension (Kabyles' perceptions of French, the dominant language in the host country) ranged between (4.62 – 2.57), where the whole dimension earned a total mean of (3.83), which is a high level. Statement (7) (*French is the official language, so it must be learned*) ranked the first with a mean of (4.62), and a standard deviation of (0.74), which is a high level. It is obvious that the number of participants who agreed on the statement is not unsurprising; however, it is also obvious that it is necessary for the dominant language to be learned so that immigrants can successfully communicate with the people of the host country and get involved in the social activities of the host community. This is because the first and most important condition for socialization is learning the language of the community. Otherwise, immigrants feel unintegrated or detached from the society.

The results also show that Statement (3) (*It is necessary for communication with other constituents of the French society*) is another item that the Kabyle immigrants most generally agreed on which gives the item a high level. Here, the same interpretation given above about socialization and integration in the host community applies. That is, not only the language but also other norms and cultural values need to be acquired by immigrants; thus, the Kabyles feel this need to acquire the French traditions and customs to participate successfully in the community and to get their everyday social practices accepted. If they do not develop the French traditions directly and intentionally, they are indirectly doing this; for example, by following the customs of the society during holidays and celebrations. Indeed, their answers seem to be logical and rational.

Regarding the example just mentioned above, Statement (4) is about one important need in society which is the job. A high number of the participants agreed that French is necessary for getting a job. It is stated in the literature that what makes the Kabyle community different from other Berber population is their tendency to immigrate to work particularly to France in addition to some European countries such as Belgium and Germany (Roberts, 2014). Therefore, they leave their country to get a job, and they are certainly aware that French is needed for that matter; they may prepare themselves before immigrating. If they do not know the language, they take courses in French as soon as they arrive.

Another statement that obtained a high level of importance is Statement (5) with a mean of 4.35 and a standard deviation of 1.05 (*It is necessary for conducting Business*). It is always said that a local language is essential in internal communication because the first customers are the native citizens. However, we may explain the standard deviation found in the statistics that represents the participant who did not totally agree that the French language is necessary for business purposes by arguing that the Kabyle immigrants master the English language which is a lingua franca in the world, a skill which may suffice to conduct business. These immigrants believe that French is not enough to conduct business in France; they may



have been succeeded only by using English since it is as an international language and the first foreign language in France. In fact, both the local language and the international language (English) are necessary to conduct business and different commercial affairs. Becker (2020) believes that language use affects business in two ways: 1) it makes the foreign clients confident when using their language, and 2) it helps to avoid unwanted reactions from the local employees.

Statement (1) in the questionnaire (*I prefer to use French for social mobility*) ranked fifth in terms of the mean (3.9) which is considered of a high level which means that the answers to this item show agreement. It is deduced from the statistics that the Kabyles are aware of the necessity to adapt to the new society to avoid certain cultural or social uncomfortable acts. Therefore, they choose to use the dominant language to be familiar with the French society. Probably, the Kabyle immigrants were already prepared and ready mentally before they move to France for the social shift that is expected to take place when they become part of the French society. This is why we find that Statement (6) which is the last statement of a high level alludes to the fact that it is essential to use the French language in all domains for the social mobility.

As shown in Table 5, there are three statements which display a medium level of importance. Statement (9) (*It is better to learn French in order to spread social and cultural values of the French society*) ranked 7/9 in terms of mean. The Kabyle immigrants do not share the same opinion about this statement; some of them believe that it is preferred to learn the dominant language so that they could spread social and cultural values of the host community and that they need to belong to this community to feel familiar with its members. However, some others think that being a member of a community does not necessitate sharing with them their cultural values and that they feel like they are not obliged to do the same social practices as the natives do.

In addition, for Statement (8) (*French is more important than Kabyle*), the answers vary among the participants. The fact of the matter in this setting is that the French language is more important than Kabyle. However, according to the results, we find something different. The participants did not declare by their answers that French is more important than their home language. The reason behind this could be their feelings; that is, they are surely aware of the great role of the French language in their new context but when it comes to the comparison between the two languages, they still perceive their language to be more important. This answer to Statement (8) is not unexpected: the Kabyles in general are characterized by their pride of their origin and language. This is supported by Belmessaoud (2011, p. 515) who argue that “Kabyles are very conscious and proud of their so much identity founded on their quality of Imazighen (free man).” Although this feature is given to explain the first group of the participants, we cannot neglect the other part of the participants who preferred to be realistic and see French more important than their mother tongue, at least in the community where they live as immigrants.

The least ranked statement is (*It is important for promoting religious unity in the community*) with mean of (2.57); this number reveals that the participants have different opinions about the statement. Some of them believe that the French language is essential to enhance religious unity in the community. For them, using French helps to create a unified community with consistent beliefs. Thus, they agreed to Statement (2) because they want to be members of the host community. It is well-known that religion promotes unity amongst people who adopt the same religion. However, the other Kabyle participants disagreed to the statement which does not mean that if they do not share the same religion with the dominant community, they construct a division in society; rather, they may not mix between religion and other social behaviors. In other words, they could build social unity without religion.

To sum up, the respondents have positive attitudes towards the French language. However, they show negative attitudes when the French language is compared to their home language. Therefore, we can conclude that the Kabyles’ perceptions of French, the dominant language in the host country, are positive to some extent.

### **5.3 Results related to Question Three**

The third research question asked about the impact of the informants’ gender and age on their affection towards both Kabyle and French. The present study used Independent Sample T-test to show the impact of the informants’ gender and age on their affection towards both Kabyle and French as follows:

*a. Gender*

Table 6 below shows the results related to the impact of gender on the attitudes of the participants towards both Kabyle and French.

**Table 6 Independent Sample T-test regarding gender**

Affection towards both Kabyle and French	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	(t) value	Sig.
Attitudes of Kabyle immigrants toward their home language in France	Male	30	4.42	0.60	58	1.238	0.221
	Female	30	4.22	0.63			
Kabyles' perceptions of French, the dominant language in the host country	Male	30	3.71	1.05	58	-.865-	0.390
	Female	30	3.94	0.97			

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6 shows that the arithmetic mean of the responses of males about the attitudes towards the participants' home language in France was (4.42), which is higher than the arithmetic means of the responses of females, which amounted to (4.22). Based on the results of the t-test for independent samples, the study shows that there are no statistical differences at the level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the attitudes of Kabyle immigrants towards their home language in France due to the gender variable, where the t-value was (1.238) at the level (0.221), which is not statistically significant. Table 5 also shows that the arithmetic mean of the responses of males in terms of Kabyles' perceptions of French (the dominant language) in the host country was (3.71), which is less than the arithmetic means of the responses of females, which was (3.94). Based on the results of the t-test for independent samples, the study reveals that there were no statistically significant differences at the level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the Kabyles' perceptions of French due to the gender variable, where the t-value was (-.865-) at the level (0.390), which is a value that is not statistically significant.

From the analysis, we deduce that there is an agreement to a great extent between Kabyle males and females in terms of their perceptions towards both their mother tongue and the dominant language. As Table (4) has shown, the Kabyle immigrant in France have positive attitudes towards their home language, and the same conclusion is given in Table (6) because no difference has been found in terms of gender, so we can say both males and females have good affection towards the Kabyle language. Both Kabyle women and men have a role in demanding and defending their identity and language. It seems that this strong will is established in their innateness. They did much to make their berberity stand by different Berber movements. Silverstein (2016) have cited an example of those movements which is the 'Berber Spring' where Kabyle men and women created hundreds of associations in all the regions of Kabylia in order to promote the Berber language and culture under Berber Cultural Movements (MCB) (p. 289). As mentioned earlier, it is not possible to exclude any gender from the important role in boosting the Kabyle language. The present study proves that by concluding that there is not significance difference between Kabyle males and Kabyle females.

*b. Age*

Table 7 shows the results of the Independent Sample T-test regarding the impact of the informants' age on their affection towards both Kabyle and French

**Table 7 Independent Sample T-test regarding age**

Affection towards both Kabyle and French	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	(t) value	Sig.
Attitudes of Kabyle immigrants toward their home language in France	Less than 40	41	4.29	0.62	58	-.604-	0.549
	More than 40	19	4.39	0.63			
Kabyles' perceptions of French, the dominant language in the host country	Less than 40	41	3.80	1.07	58	-.347-	0.730
	More than 40	19	3.89	0.88			

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 7 shows that the arithmetic mean of the responses of those under 40 years old about attitudes of Kabyle immigrants towards their home language in France was (4.29), which is lower than the arithmetic means of the responses of those over 40 years old, which was (4.39). After counting the t-test for independent samples, it showed that there were no statistically significant differences at the level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the attitudes of Kabyle immigrants towards their home language in France due to the age variable, where the t-value was (-0.604-) at the level (0.549). It is a non-statistically significant value. Table 7 also shows that the arithmetic means of responses of those under 40 years about Kabyles' perceptions of French, the dominant language in the host country, was (3.80) which is less than the arithmetic means of the responses of those over 40 years of age which was (3.89). Based on the results of the t-test for independent samples, the study reveals that there are no statistically significant differences at the level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in Kabyles' perceptions of French due to the age variable, where the t-value was (-0.347-) at the level (0.730), which is not a statistically significant value.

In fact, although the ages of the participants are between 18 and 78 which is a big range, we decided to divide the informants into two groups or generations (under 40 years and more 40 years). Statistically, there is no difference in their responses regarding their attitudes towards their mother tongue. Thus, both generations have positive attitudes towards the Kabyle language as Table 4 above has revealed. Moreover, the answers of both young generation and the old one were mainly the same. The statistics did not show any significant difference. Thus, both generations have positive attitudes to some extent towards the French language as Table 5 has shown. Overall, Table 7 showed that there is no difference in Kabyle immigrants' stance between old generation and young generation towards their language of origin in which they perceive their language as a favorable one, and their answers do not reveal anything that can underestimate the Kabyle language.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has explored the language attitudes of Kabyle immigrants in France towards their language of origin (Kabyle) and the dominant language (French). The study has used a statistical method to analyse the questionnaire. It has been noted that the Kabyle immigrants in France have positive attitudes towards their home language. This result has been discussed by many real social practices among them; the Kabylia is always described as a community that imposes its culture and language though they represent a minority group. Moreover, the Kabyles in France have positive attitudes to some extent towards the French language. The study has explained that fact by listing some reasons. For instance, they are surely aware of the great role of the French language in the host country, but when it comes to the comparison between the two languages, they perceive their language to be more valuable. Finally, neither gender nor age had an impact on the respondents' answers; that is, no statistically significant differences have been found in the analysis. We recommend that other researchers use interviews as a data collection tool to obtain deeper insights into language attitudes of minority groups in multilingual societies.

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