



## **The Official Language is a Minority Language: Language-in-education Policy and Planning in Egypt**

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### **Abstract**

“A minority language is one spoken by a numerically smaller group of the population in a state, and is not the official language of the state” is the straightforward oversimplified definition coming from The European Charter for Minority Languages [1]. This definition and similar ones do not account for a country like Egypt in which English, the language of the elite minority, has become the dominant language of education, research, and academic and professional achievement against which Arabic, the official language of the majority becomes a minority one!

The national language-in-education policy in Egypt has extensively moved from English and French to Arabic since the coup d'etat of 1925 accompanied with a bumpy foreign language-in-education policy [2]. This stands side by side with an avalanche of international and foreign educational institutions catering for middle and upper classes [3]. As a consequence, Arabic is the language of the majority in all aspects of life with the exception of higher education and employment in which English takes the lead in pursuing graduate education and job-hunting [4]. In this linguistic landscape, Arabic, the official language of the Egyptian state, becomes a minority language in the context of education, career achievement, and social mobility, whose monolingual speakers are marginalized. Nonetheless, Egyptian students in national education settings suffer an obvious lack of proficiency in English [5] [6].

The study examines a broader definition of minority languages that does not limit the term to regional and demographic criteria but rather looks at languages contextually, in the light of the national language-in-education policy and planning in Egypt. The tension between the macro language-in education policy and the learning pedagogies used) in foreign language-in education planning resulting low proficiency levels of Egyptian students is explored in this research.

### **References**

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