



Globalization and English language teaching: A glance into the status of the English language in the Algerian educational context

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Abstract

This theoretical article aims to provide an understanding of globalization's effect on language policy in Algeria. It explores the current status of English language adoption across different educational levels, with a particular focus on higher education within the framework of the Licence-Master-Doctorate system. The globalization process has undeniably led to the widespread use of English as the 21st century's lingua franca, giving it a prominent role in various fields such as science, technology, trade, business, tourism, and education. This global interdependence and cultural integration have facilitated English linguistic dominance. In the Algerian context, this has significantly impacted the local language landscape and presents new challenges for language policy and decision-makers. Although English is not the primary medium of instruction in Algerian elementary and secondary education, it is increasingly seen as an essential tool in higher education to meet various utilitarian needs. The current study delves into globalization's effect on language policy in Algeria.

Keywords: Educational context; English language; foreign languages; linguistic attitude; local languages.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Before clarifying the complexity of the linguistic situation in the Algerian context, it is indeed imperative to mention that the relevance of any conducted research study is undisputedly best appreciated if it is approached from the perspective of the context in which it takes place, viewed from this perspective, certain linguistic facts about Algeria have interplayed in molding a plethora of attitudes toward its educational system in general and English language teaching in more particular that are significant to this study and therefore needs to be considered throughout the present research paper.

Not surprisingly, Algeria being an Arab-Islamic country is characterized by its multilingualism. This linguistic phenomenon can be well described in Tabory's lines (1987, cited in Nadia, 2011) "The Algerian situation is complex as it is at a crossroad of tensions between French the colonial language, and Arabic, the new national language; classical Arabic versus colloquial Algerian Arabic, and the various Berber dialects versus Arabic. The lessons from the Algerian situation may be usefully applied to analogous situations by states planning their linguistic, educational, and cultural policies".

The availability of all these varieties gave birth to language crises from the political and educational sides and even rise to the outcries where everyone claimed a monopoly on the language issue: Arabization, Bilingualism, and the English language status never reaching consensus (Lézé, 2023). Algeria absorbed an extremely heavy French colonial impact, which influenced not only the economic business, and political domains but also education and even the most intellectual life for more than a century. The French occupation in Algeria endeavored to eliminate and suppress the Algerian cultural identity and remold its society asserting that French is the only language of civilization and advancement.

During this phase of colonial legacy Algerians found themselves very obliged to learn French as their national language while Arabic was redefined as a foreign language in 1938 (Benrabah, 2007; Bouherar & Ghafsi 2021). Furthermore, Arabic with its different dialects was neglected and henceforth was not taught at schools, yet they were a symbol of Algerian identity and nationalism even though French, on the other hand, turned out to be an imposed language and part of the spoken dialect even more "there are regions in Algeria where people talk every day using Academic French until the present day" (Nadia, 2011; Benali et al., 2023; Benabbes & Abu Taleb 2024).

Giving such value to the French Language led Algeria to be classified as the second largest-speaking French country after France. Since then, this linguistic tool represented at that time, a cultural imperative vis-à-vis the Algerian government. This diArabization enterprise started to fail after the removal of the French in 1962. In an impulse to break away from French hegemony and regain the Arabic language and Muslim identity, which had been effectively denied during colonialism, the new authority launched the process of status planning called the Arabization process. Theoretically speaking, in one of its broad senses: "Arabization is the extensive use of Arabic in all domains of life, political, social and cultural: it refers to the promotion of Arabic as a medium of interaction in the public and private sector (Grandguillaume, 2004).

1.1. Purpose of study

To shed light on how globalization has affected Algeria's language policy, this theoretical article examines the state of English language adoption at various educational levels, concentrating on higher education in the context of the Licence-Master-Doctorate system.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This theoretical article employs a comprehensive literature review to examine globalization's effect on language policy in Algeria, focusing on the adoption of English across different educational levels, particularly within the Licence-Master-Doctorate (LMD) system in higher education. The literature review includes an analysis of academic articles, policy documents, and reports on global interdependence, cultural integration, and the dominance of English as a lingua franca in various fields such as science, technology, trade, business, tourism, and education. Additionally, the review explores the historical and contemporary influences shaping the local language landscape in Algeria, the challenges faced by language policy and decision-makers, and

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the role of English in fulfilling utilitarian needs in higher education. The collected materials provide a nuanced understanding of the impact of globalization on Algerian language policy and educational strategies.

3. RESULTS

Based on the literature review, the term Arabization has witnessed three important trends: pro-Arabization, anti-Arabization, and undecided Arabization. While the first trend stresses the importance of Arabic for religious matters and purposes, the second one comprises protagonists for nationalistic reasons. The third trend, however, is not conscious of the advantages of Arabization nor the maintenance of the target language (French & English) (Dekhir, 2003).

This policy was undertaken after achieving independence from France seeking to eradicate all that could represent 130 colonization years from public life and restore Arabic to its role as the national language. According to Benrabah (2007), starting from 1962, the Algerian government that inherited the remnants of the education system focused on European contexts and conducted in a foreign language by foreign teachers sought to gradually increase Arabic sessions at all levels and all subjects were taught in Arabic and there was a decrease in the amount of time for teaching French. This policy of course favored national integrity unity and religion (Nadia, 2011).

Nonetheless, even though President Ahmed Benbella made a speech on October 5 1962 in which he declared that “Arabic is the National Language of independent Algeria” he could not disregard the important position of the French language in the acquisition of the Algerian modern technique. Besides, Taleb Ibrahim, the former minister of education and one of the proponents of the Arabization policy, viewed Arabic as the appropriation of the Algerian soul and the French language as the window open to the world. Because the French language was profoundly rooted in the most essential sectors predominantly in education and administration, the decision would restore the use of Arabic as the language of the nation was a bit difficult and extremely complex for the simple reason that the majority of teaching staff and administrations were French.

In the same line of thought, Benrabah (2007) claims that “Algeria has done more to assist the spread of this language than the colonial authorities did throughout the 132 years of French presence”. The impact of the supremacy of the French language was so strong to such an extent that the Algerian authorities understand that the most convenient solution would be to keep it considering Algeria is bilingual in French and Arabic at least until it would be able to function with Arabic. Thus, several measures have so far been taken to implement the policy of Arabization; without however stopping the use of French; by working out a program of gradual Arabization that would have to go through a long phase of Arabic-French bilingualism (Dendane, 2007).

Yet, from the socio-political perspective, a linguistic issue was born once the process of Arabization which resulted in dividing the Algerian society into two parts: on the one hand, those who were entirely against an adversary (favoring Arabization) and on the other hand those who supported bilingualism. While the former (hence monolingualism) looks to Islam or Arab nationalism to strive to restore the importance of Arabic and instill a non-western identity claiming that “bilingualism is a source of suffering and a sign of alienation or acculturation.” (Ennaji, 1991). In other terms, this trend devalues the dominance of the French through a process called “*Linguistic Cleansing*”. This process has been the result of a language shift where Arabic has displaced French in various areas of social life. The latter does not reject Arabic yet remains attached to the idea of maintaining French as a prerequisite linguistic tool that helps Algerian people access modernization.

Thus, confining ourselves to the policy of Arabization at different levels of instruction one may say that starting from October 1962, Arabic was introduced for seven hours per week in all schools. And, at the start of 1963, 10 hours of Arabic instruction were introduced per week. In 1964, the Algerian authority decided to Arabize the first grade of primary school. Nevertheless, due to the lack of teacher personnel, low-skilled Algerian tutors and more than one thousand Egyptian primary school teachers were recruited in 1964 (Benrabah, 2007).

The process of Arabization continued and by 1975, the Algerian primary school was fully Arabized in the first three levels two years later, president Houari Boumediene appointed Lachraf as the minister of education while Rahal was nominated as the minister representing higher education yet, even though the period was so short for it coincides the death of the president in 1993, the introduction of French as a first foreign language was postponed to the fourth grade as it is shown in table 1:

Table 1

Status of Arabization in Primary Schools (1973-74)

Grade	Status of Arabization
1 st	- Totally Arabized.
2 nd	- Totally Arabized.
3 rd	- Totally Arabized.
4 th	- Totally Arabized. - French is a foreign language.
5 th	- 1/3 of the classes are totally Arabized. - French is a foreign language.
6 th	- 1/3 of the classes are totally Arabized. - French is a foreign language.

Source: Adapted from Grandguillaume (1983)

In the same year (1983), the Algerian educational system favored the implementation of the English language to enhance foreign language teaching at a very early age by giving primary school pupils the chance to either choose French or English as a compulsory foreign language. Nevertheless, it was noticed that a small percentage of parents tended to favor French rather than English language. Accordingly, French was reinstated as the first foreign language taught in the fourth year of primary school. However, English was taken back from primary school to be taught in the subsequent level of instruction and was not re-implemented at the same level until September 2022.

In the intermediate schooling system, all subjects were taught in Arabic except for French and English, this type of education was Arabized for one-third of the section (table 2). Following the election of Lachraf Mostapha as a minister of education the Algerian ministry implemented French in teacher training and subjects such as maths and biology were delivered in French, whereas English was taught at the age of 13 which is not beneficial for learners.

Table 2

Status of Arabization in Intermediate School (1973-74)

Grade	Status of Arabization
1 st	- In each of the first three grades, 1/3 of the classes were totally Arabized whilst the remaining 2/3 were bilingual. Scientific subjects were taught in French.
2 nd	
3 rd	
4 th	- All subjects were taught in Arabic except Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and geography.

In secondary education, the humanities section was totally Arabized together with 1/3 of the maths and science sections. The teaching of Standard Arabic began to be gradually introduced in higher education and French remained the main language for instruction despite the demands of Arabists. Initially, the degrees of Arabic literature, philosophy, and history had been Arabized and by 1973, pedagogy, sociology, and geography were also Arabized. Yet, only 19% percent of all students were in Arabized sections. Conversely, medicine and engineering continued to be taught in French.

Besides Arabic, the Berber language represents the local variety that was spoken by the first inhabitants of Algeria before the Arab expansion. Because it constitutes one of the most fundamental linguistic

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components of Algerian identity, the Algerian government implemented it at all levels of instruction to a greater or lesser extent.

As an afterthought, learning foreign languages proves to be exceptionally instrumental as the language functions as a linguistic tool that helps learners open the world and access modern sciences and technologies. Therefore, it is judiciously thought to classify the aforementioned goals stated in the national chart of 1976 in Table 3 which juxtaposes the two lists of foreign language teaching goals:

Table 3

Classification of the National Chart Goal

Openness- Targeted Goals of the National Chart (1976)	Science and Technology Targeted Goals of the National Chart (1976)
1- To communicate with the different parts of the world.	2- To have access to top sciences and technologies.
4- To make the pupils autonomous and self-sufficient in exploiting and exploring material having relation with their field of study.	3- To encourage pupils' creativity in its universal dimensions.
5- To successfully sit for examinations.	

3.1. English language teaching status: a pre-tertiary descriptive phase

Doubtlessly, English is neither the language of kings and queens nor the patrimony of Anglo-Saxon, but rather a genuinely global language that is vitally required in people's daily lives mainly for fulfilling different communicative and utilitarian purposes (Gao & Bu 2024; Yaccob et al., 2022). In this regard, Askare (2010) contends that English “is now a universal public property. The English colonial train traveled almost the entire world, came in touch with myriad people and their languages, and enriched itself as the world's number one language (Liton, 2012).

Although it does not represent the official language of a nation (Algeria for instance), it has been emerging as the chief foreign language to be encountered in schools and universities. Au fond, English currently seems to be increasingly used in every corner of the globe in miscellaneous fields such as science, trade, business, transport, tourism, and more importantly in the world of technological advances. Linguistically and politically speaking, compared to French linguistic policy; which was said to have used coercive- based tactics to substitute Arabic with French as it is mentioned in Poddar (2008) “we will never be the masters of Algeria until Algeria speaks French”.

Algerians and other Arabs conceive the British policy as innocuous as far as language is concerned. This reason may account for the growing number of Arab-owned all-English language channels, the ever-increasing numbers of students of English in both Algerian and other universities across the Arab world, and more importantly the partnerships with Anglo-American universities. This implies that English does not appear a threat too much sought Arab culture and language. Differently stated, English has almost nothing to do with colonialism and linguisticism as far as its incorporation in the post-independence. Algeria as was the case of the French language, rather it enjoys a most favorable kind of additive bilingualism, where the addition of a second language and culture is unlikely to replace or displace the language and culture (Lambert, 1980).

It is indeed imperative to note that the explicit recognition of English as a single lingua franca across the globe is thanks to the advent of the globalization process worldwide which dates back to the 1990s. Metaphorically speaking, compared to other languages of wider communication: “Knowing English is like possessing the fabled Aladin's lamp, which permits one to open as it were, the linguistic gates to international business, technology, science, and travel. In short, English provides linguistic power” (Kachru, 1986).

The widespread of the English language is indeed noticeable in Kachru (2006) where he explained and described the type of spread of the English language in three concentric circles namely inner circle, outer

circle, and expanding circle. As far as the inner circle, it considers the countries where English enjoys the status of primary language. An illustrative example of such kind is the USA, UK, Canada, and Australia. The outer circle comprises the former colonies where English alongside other local languages serves the role of an official language such as India and Singapore. The expanding circle refers to the speakers of English as a foreign language. As an EFL country, Algeria belongs to the third circle where English is primarily used at high schools and universities as a second foreign language. In this vein, Rubdy and Saraceni (2006) state that: "...many language learners today are studying English speakers of inner circle countries but rather because of the benefits which knowledge of English brings."

By and large, English has proved its a "passe partout" language that fills many world roles that no other language can do. Building upon Dhamija's (1994) long list of English world roles, Tomlinson (2005) outlines the different roles English currently plays. Table 4 juxtaposes the two lists of English world roles:

Table 4

English world roles and function

Dhamija's List of English World Roles	Tomlinson's List of English World Roles
1- English as a link language.	1- English as a conference language.
2- Medium of literary and creativity.	2- English as an academic language.
3- Medium of science and technology.	3- English as an internet language.
4- Language of reference and research.	4- English as a business language.
5- A source language or media language.	5- English as a commercial language.
	6- English as an industrial language.
	7- English of arts and control.
	8- English as a social intercourse.
	9- English as a diplomatic language.
	10- A language of sport, entertainment, and popular song.
	11- English as a travel language, migration, and holidays.
	12- English is an access to the language of news.
	13- English as a language of self-expression.

Undeniably, the present section mentioned above is believed to be more or less represented in the ordonnance of April 16th, 1976 which outlines the main goals of teaching, and learning foreign languages in the Algerian schools. As previously mentioned in the preceding section the Algerian pre-tertiary educational system comprises three levels of instruction, notably the primary school (lasting for 5 years), the middle school (lasting for 4 years), and secondary school (lasting for 3 years). The first five years of schooling are compulsory for all children (usually age six and above). At this level, the pupils are taught mainly in standard Arabic, while French is the only foreign language that is introduced in the second year of primary education.

As for English language, it was not taught in the primary school until 1992. From that year, and in a small number of schools, parents had to choose either the teaching of French or English for their children. Nonetheless, this reform did not prove to be fruitful. English is taught in the first year of the intermediate education and continues till the third year of the secondary school level as a compulsory subject. While at higher education it has undisputedly become an obligatory subject in all fields of study such as physics, biology, medicine, political sciences, Arabic Literature... and so forth or it may be simply a field of study whereby students can obtain a license degree in English. Suffice it to say, that EFL learners accumulate an EFL learning experience of seven years.

At the end of basic education, students take the national basic education examination BEM (Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen) which grants them access the secondary school. Apropos of teaching methodologies, which are said to be an inherent part of the school reforms and practically a recurrent pattern that accompanies each school reform, Algeria like any other country has progressively been witnessing a slow but prominent shift regarding its teaching curriculum. This shift is indeed supposed to manifest as an urgent solution to the ills of merit learning whose tenet and tenet and objective consist of obtaining hopefully-guaranteed outcomes. Differently stated, after a long series of methodologies that have mirrored the historical eras in Algerian education namely, the Audio Lingual Method ALM (the 1960s), the Functional

National Approach (NFA) in the early 80s, and the Communicative Approach (in the mid-80s), a newly trendy fashionable approach labeled Competency- Based Approach/ Education (CBA/E) has been adopted in 2002 based on developing learners' autonomy, creativity and enhancing their problem-solving skills in their fields.

This approach to teaching and learning is Chameleon-like -in nature as it appears as a substitute for an otherwise known approach or attributed to various colorful labels; Comprehension Based Education (CBE), Competency-Based Education and training (CBET), Competency Based Approach (CBA), Competency Based Learning (CBL), Competency Based Instruction (CBI), Competency Based Program (CBP) and Competency Based Language Teaching (CBLT). Yet, CBA seems to be the umbrella term that is more frequently used as compared to the aforementioned terms and acronyms.

From the bulk of the literature, one may come across ample definitions of CBA. Yet, we will attempt to provide the most comprehensive one that is presented by the Ministry of National Education (2003). Concerning the term competency, it is defined as: "... a know-how-to-act process which interacts and mobilizes a set of capacities, skills and an amount of knowledge that will be used effectively in various problems situations or in circumstances that have never occurred before."

Comparatively speaking, Competency-Based Education Training seems to be very different from the traditional paradigms in several ways. In this respect, Dennison (1995) believes that CBET is characterized by its, self-paced, learner-centered, and task-specific nature. Table 5 will therefore juxtapose the divergent nature of both conventional traditional education and CBE.

Table 5
Traditional Education vs Non-Traditional/ CBE

Processor Issue	Traditional	Non-traditional (CBE)
Admission	Once a year.	Any time during the year.
Scheduling	Fixed starting date for all students.	Flexible schedule based on the availability of facilities and instructors.
Teaching	Teacher centered/ lecture.	Student-focused.
Methodology	Method to large groups of students. Students copy notes written on the board. Quality of learning largely depends on the quality and commitment of the teacher. Demonstration of practice skills may be effectively seen by a few students in teaching large classes.	The teacher serves as a resource when students require clarification of learning materials. Demonstration of skills. Quality instructional materials provide the basis for students learning. Individual or small groups of students receive assistance from the teacher when such help is required.
Evaluation	Normative according to class average and group performance. Regardless of the evaluation results, the teacher proceeds to the next topic in the program.	Objective criteria-based written examinations demonstrated competence. Students must prove competency before proceeding to the new learning.

Source: (Dennison,1995).

Before speaking about the teaching of English and its major objectives at secondary school, it seems imperative to mention that this level lasts for three years, comprising two different common courses: Literary

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and Scientific, and each of them contains three sub-branches with different time allotted to the teaching of English.

At the end of the third year of secondary education, and admission to the tertiary-level institution, students sit for the Baccalaureate examinations, which is a requirement for university entrance. Thus, the examination is based on student performance in each subject studied during their final year. At this level of instruction, the teaching of English as stated by the Algerian Ministry of National Education (2003) “aims at setting up and developing communicative linguistic, cultural, methodological competencies that would permit to the learner to face situations of oral or written communication that have to take into consideration his or her future needs and those of the society in which he/ she evolves.”

The following table 6 juxtaposes the four chief goals of ELT at the secondary school level (syllabus of English of 1st year, 2005; syllabus of English of 2nd year, 2006; syllabus of English of 3rd year, 2011).

Table 6
Objectives of ELT in the Algerian Secondary School

Linguistic/ communicative objectives	Methodological objectives	Cultural objectives	Socio- professional objectives
To consolidate the learner with the basic knowledge he has already acquired in the intermediate school to help the learners carry on with their learning of the English language. To keep them equipped with the necessary tools to pursue.	To consolidate and develop the strategies of learning and of self-evaluation that the learners have already acquired in the intermediate school. Reinforce and strengthen the study skills and techniques of what has already been acquired.	Stimulate the learners' curiosity to contribute to the broadening of their minds by exposing them to the various contexts of culture and civilization of the English language. To place the learners in an environment that suits their needs and interests in conceiving and planning activities in real-life situations? To favor the pedagogy of success by creating an environment in which the learners will develop positive attitudes towards learning English.	Allow the learner to be an active participant in life after finishing his studies.

Source: Belouahem, 2008

3.2. The English language and the university sector

As a result of the ongoing globalization trend, English has emerged as the backbone of global postsecondary education. The language has accordingly gained momentum due to its contribution to the growth of science and technology on the one hand, and the essential role it plays in the dissemination of internationalization policy on the other.

Thus, likewise, the implementation of English within the curriculum of middle and secondary schools has also a fundamental role at the higher educational level Using English in higher education institutions and universities for research and educational purposes tends to be an inevitable path that should be highly considered by policymakers in all over the world. In this respect, Balan (2011) notes that the process of using English in higher education is regarded as "a parallel and unavoidable process resulting in improved international academic communication worldwide". More than that, the benefits of this adoption can be unmistakably noticed in the exchange program between universities where learners do not face any linguistic hindrances when they are doing their research as they master English.

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Obviously, access to post secondary studies is open to students who hold their baccalaureate or foreign equivalent. Besides, they are supposed to meet the requirement set annually by Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research on the following considerations:

- Students' choice computer.
- Field of the study in the secondary level.
- The number of available seats in each field.

The enrolled students being Baccalaureate holders from different streams namely; Life and Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Foreign Languages choose to specialize in the particular branch that fits the average obtained in the BAC exam. As far as the English language is concerned, students enrolled to major in the English language, study it for three years to obtain a license degree (the equivalent of the BA in the Anglo-Saxon educational system). During this period, the students are trained to become either future teachers of English at all levels of instruction, or upon the admission test to carry out their post-graduate studies.

Apart from the English department in which English is taught as a branch of study for Academic general purposes (EAP/ EGP) English is also introduced in different curricula at different Departments nationwide and holds the status of an additional module but compulsory in response to specific occupational graduate and postgraduate courses. Thus, students enrolled in scientific branches such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, Economic and Political sciences, Architecture, and Biology, in addition to some other specialties of Human Sciences including Islamic Sciences and Arabic Literature are required to follow ESP courses depending on their area of research and their needs as well.

In this respect, different ESP courses are provided under different labels depending on the aforementioned specialties. The most common ones are English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Social Sciences (ESS), and English for Business and Economics (EBE). Accordingly, English is taught alongside their current modules. This, tendency toward teaching English in the aforementioned fields of study is the result of the impact of the globalization process.

4. CONCLUSION

In today's globalized world, English is progressively becoming a linguistic instrument of progress wherein the language is essentially the driving force of scientific research, technological innovation, and educational progress. It occupies a very primordial place in the Algerian education system, especially after the advent of the globalization process Accordingly, its implementation as a teaching tool in the Algerian university has always been of lasting interest to the Algerian authorities. Correspondingly, adopting English as a means of education at the tertiary level has not developed in a vacuum; rather, it is based on several considerations. Although it is not the primary medium of instruction, accessing key information in diverse fields is often dependent on having reading ability in English. Reading is therefore the most essential requirement for native readers as it is to non-native readers.

In light of what has been discussed earlier, the present paper briefly portrays and describes the linguistic system of Algeria shedding more light on the Arabization process; a term denoting a process that intends to make Arabic the state's national and official language, as well as the medium of teaching in all grounds. However, the process seems to face obstacles since Algeria is a multilingual country where French and Tamazight are used alongside Arabic, in addition to English which is taking ground, mainly in higher education. Furthermore, with the onset of Globalization and the global expansion of English, most scientific and technological fields are found or taught in English. Thereafter, English became a primary requirement in the Algerian education system, and the world, including Algeria. This article has also attempted to look into the way English is taught at different levels of instruction; shedding more light on its teaching at the tertiary level in the light of the LMD system.

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