Option: linguistics

An Exploration of the Main Challenges and Requirements of Introducing English as a Second Language (ESL) to the Algerian Primary School: The case of primary schools in Guelma.

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements of Master's Degree in Language and Culture.

Submitted by: **Supervised by:**

Mr. Mohammed Amin ABBASSI   **Mrs.** Fatima ABDAOUI

Ms. Halima HAKIME

Board of examiners

Chairman:Mr. Med. Walid Chettibi	**(MA/A)**	**8 Mai 1945 University -Guelma**
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Examiner: Mrs. Katia Mebarki	**(MA/B)**	**8 Mai 1945 University -Guelma**

September 2020

PEOPLE' S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

University of 8 Mai 1945-Guelma   جامعة 8 ماي 1945

Faculty of Letters and Languages   كلية الآداب واللغات

Department of Letters and English Language   قسم الآداب واللغة الإنجليزية

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DEDICATION I

I dedicate this work to Almighty God, thank you for your guidance, strength; power of mind,

protection and for giving us a healthy life, your name shall be forever glorified.

To the most precious people to my heart; my beloved mother and father I dedicate this work.

To my sisters, relatives, friends, and classmates who shared their words of advice and

encouragement to finish this study,

To all the teachers who have been a source of inspiration and hope,

To my thesis partner Halima,

To myself,

In the memory of my grandparents,

Mohammed Amin ABBASSI

DEDICATION II

To my beloved mother and father who were patient and caring and to my brothers,

To Meriam and Lilia,

To my precious family, to Aziza

To my special person,

I would like to express my gratitude to a group of teachers who helped me during our journey especially professor **Ladi TOULGUI**, Mrs. **ABDAOUI Fatima** Mrs. **Amina KRIBES**, Mrs**. HENAINIA Hosna**, Ms. **MOUMEN Soumia** who have taught me a lot during my years at university.

To my thesis partner, Mohammed

To all who read this,

To myself

Halima HAKIME

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the aspects of introducing the English language to the Algerian primary school. It focuses on the requirements, the teaching methods, and the possible challenges facing policy makers and education experts when teaching English is integrated into Algerian primary school. The research method adopted in this study is an exploratory method in order to discover the challenges and requirements for such initiative. Moreover, the study is based on a qualitative approach, where data is gathered through an online questionnaire answered by fifteen (15) English university teachers at 08 Mai 1945 University-Guelma. The results obtained allow to evaluate the importance of teaching English in primary schools. Teachers agree on encouraging the teaching of English in Algeria and particularly in primary schools. The research also reveals that the implementation of English into primary schools may face many challenges at the governmental and school levels, teachers' expertise and training, curriculum design and lack of methodologies. The emerging results confirm that introducing English to the Algerian primary schools has many challenges and it needs many requirements, however, it is possible.

Keywords: English language teaching, primary school, children, challenges, requirements, methods.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CA: Classical Arabic

CPH: Critical Period Hypothesis

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESA: Educated Spoken Arabic

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

ICT: Information Communication Technology

LPP: Language Policy and Planning

MSA: Modern Standard Arabic

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the educational system in Algeria is different from that of years ago; more approaches are included, different teaching methods are integrated, and the attention to the learning of languages has increased. Arabic, French, Tamazight are taught in primary, middle, and high school. However, English is not implemented in the primary school yet. In 1993, there was an educational reform, where the pupils have to choose between learning the French or the English languages in primary school. The aim behind this was to ameliorate foreign language learning at a young age. Some primary schools in Algeria applied the discussed reform then cancelled it, because some parents favored French over English (Rezig, 2011).

However, in recent years and due to the positive impact of globalization, English language learning has gained the interest again. Because 1.5 billion People around the world speak English, it becomes the lingua franca for all non-English speakers. Moreover, it is the language of technology, medicine, business, diplomacy, and travel. Therefore, there was a vital need to teach English in almost all countries of the world. In the case of Algeria, English is the second foreign language and it is taught as a compulsory course from the first grade of middle school to the third year of high school, covering seven years of learning. However, due to historical and political reasons, English is still lagging behind French. It is primarily learned for educational reasons, within an academic environment, and has no real use in daily communication of Algerians.

This investigation sheds light on the methods, requirements, and challenges of introducing English to the Algerian primary school. The study promoting cultural diversity and multilingualism, but it is not neglecting the importance of learning the mother tongue or other local languages at first hand. This study is expected to inspire Algerian teachers, parents, and policy-makers, and contribute to a calculated and successful initiation of such foreign language policy.

1. Statement of the Problem

Regarding the government's decision to make English a second language other than French, it would be necessary to include it in primary schools. This produces a generation that is able to master the language at further stages (university and job market). Of course, it is not easy to shift from French, a language that has been used hundreds of years ago as a second language, to English. Education is the primary tool of change. Such shift inevitably faces many difficulties and challenges; for example, it must be a sufficient number of teachers and instructors who can spread the language at different level. This study comes to investigate the major requirements and difficulties that might face pupils, parents, and teachers if English is introduced to primary schools.

2. Aims of the Study & Research Questions

This research focuses on two aspects of introducing English to the Algerian primary school. On one hand, this research aims at exploring the types of teaching methodologies to be used, and the requirements of such initiative. On the other hand, the research describes the possible challenges facing education policy makers and teachers if English is implemented in the Algerian primary school program. Therefore, the present study attempts to tackle the following two questions:

1. What are the requirements, methods, and strategies needed to introduce English as a second language (ESL) in Algeria?

2. What are the difficulties that may confront education policy makers/teachers when initiating English language learning at the primary level?

3. Research Methodology and Design

3.1. Research Method and population

This study is based on an exploratory method, because the topic is new to discover. Moreover, the study is also based on a qualitative approach in order to achieve better results using the questionnaire. Our sample is selected carefully. It is composed of teachers of the English language at the University of Guelma. The reason behind choosing this population is that they are involved in the field of teaching English, which is the field of our study and they are aware of the different aspects and aims of our research.

3.2. Data gathering tools

In order to answer the research questions, an online questionnaire provides the data to accomplish the suggested goals. This tool helps reaching, to some extent, an in- depth insight of the study in order to discover whether it fits the established aims or not. The online questionnaire provides a clear description of the requirements, methods, approaches of teaching English to young children, and the possible challenges and difficulties that they may occur.

3.3. Structure of the Dissertation

This research is divided into two main parts, in addition to the introduction and the conclusion. The theoretical part encompasses the two first chapters, while the practical part includes the third chapter. Chapter one discusses the sociolinguistic situation in Algeria, the status of English in Algeria, as well as foreign language teaching at primary schools. Chapter two covers the early English language education programs, benefits, and challenges. Chapter three includes the practical part in which we present the gathered data, and analyze the participants' answers in order to answer the research questions and discover the possible

requirements and issues that may result from introducing English to primary levels. Moreover, this chapter includes limitations and recommendations for this study.

Chapter One

The Linguistic Profile of Algeria

Introduction

Sociolinguistics, as defined by Hudson (1996), is the study of language in relation to society (p. 1). The sociolinguistic situation in Algeria is as rich as the society. As there are different sub-groups in Algeria, who are the Berber (also known as Tamazight), Chaoui, kabyle, Mozabites, and Tuareg there are also many varieties of languages spoken. Through time, the sociolinguistic situation in Algeria has evolved to reach the status of today.

French is taught together with Arabic in schools, while English is only taught in middle schools, high schools, and as a separate subject matter in universities. To this end, the language in Algeria has witnessed many challenges during the period of evolving and it has adopted many reforms and policies to reach its linguistic status today. The attention to foreign languages has started to flourish when English has been introduced first time as an option to be studies in primary school in 1993.

Today, English has an important status in Algeria as "the Minister Higher Education and Scientific Research Tayeb BOUZID has appointed two commissions to enhance the use of English language" (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Researches, 2019, para. 1). Moreover, as it is the most spoken language in the world and is the language of science and technology, there is always an attempt to spread this language all over Algeria. Recently, some Algerian teachers, students, and parents have opened a Facebook group created in 13 August 2019 (https://www.facebook.com/groups/381744972757971/) that calls for the spread of English in primary schools in Algeria and another Facebook group created in 07 June 2020 calls for the spread of English in the primary schools of Guelma (https://www.facebook.com/groups/1320552774802526/). This chapter sheds light on the sociolinguistic situation of Algeria as well as the different varieties of the languages spoken and used in Algeria, different policies, and the status of English in Algeria.

1.1. The sociolinguistic status of Algeria

Algeria, having more than 40 million people and on an area over 2 million km2, is diversified linguistically and culturally. In this regard, the Algerian population is categorized into two groups: Algerian Arabic speakers and Berber speakers. Considering the Berber speakers there are many sub-groups or varieties: the Kabyle, the Chaoui, the Mozabites, and the Tuareg. Language speakers in Algeria use a variety of Arabic called Derja, which is a mixture of the Algerian spoken Arabic, borrowed words from both Tamazight and Chaoui, as well as French (Belmihoub, 2017, p.2).

The French language, however, has a historical status due to colonization. Therefore, the sociolinguistic status in Algeria is the fruit of a long history. Certain circumstances have made Algeria this rich and largely influenced by the French language. It was until independence, the Algerian government had decided to change the situation by integrating Arabic as an official language through the process of Arabisation, which was a move to help the Algerians to get back to their lost identity (Chaouche, 2006, p.4).

1.1.1. Arabic

Arabic is the fifth most spoken language globally, around 313 million people speak Arabic around the world (Doochin, 2019, para. 7). Arabic, a Semitic language, holds a remarkable status among Arab speaking countries, its spread as a global language dates back to the seventh century CE. Moreover, Arabic has many colloquial forms among Arab speaking countries and they differ from one country to another, which gives Arabic special attention (Al-Huri, 2016, p. 28). Among these countries is Algeria.

Berrahma in her thesis has stated that "Arabic is the dominant language in Algeria. It is identified in two forms: classical standard Arabic (also called modern standard Arabic today) and Colloquial or Dialectal Arabic." (2018, p. 5). However, classical Arabic has not to

be defined as the modern standard Arabic (Kerma, 2018, p.135). Classical standard Arabic, which is the ancient form of Arabic, is defined as the language of the Quran and the old literature of the ancient Arabian area (Abbas, Herrat, Meftouh, and Smaili, 2016, p. 385), while modern standard Arabic is the language that is used in today's speeches and studies.

1.1.1.1. Modern standard Arabic

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the ideal form of the Arabic language. It is the formal language of education, media, literature, or any other formal context in the Arab-speaking countries. In Algeria, MSA is the official language of many domains; it is highly used for governmental, political, and religious purposes (Bagui, 2012, p. 48). Moreover, Kerma states that MSA is the language of contemporary literature, journalism, some political speeches, television and radio newscast, administration, and diplomacy (2018, p. 135). Therefore, MSA is regarded as the new version of the classical Arabic that is more used nowadays.

Moreover, MSA is a variety of classical Arabic (CA) that has gone through many changes, such as adding foreign and new words or expressions. MSA and CA are quite different because one is ancient (CA) and the other is the standardized version of it (MSA). Moreover, CA is different from MSA at many levels. For example, CA is synthetic i.e. it uses a special case ending known as 'el-harakat' that determines the functions of the words within the sentence; while MSA is analytic i.e. the order of words within the sentence determines their functions (Bagui, 2012, p. 49).

1.1.1.2. The Algerian Spoken Arabic

In Algeria, Arabic is the official language of the constitution and the formal institutions. However, a variety of it is used in everyday communication, which is the Colloquial Arabic dialect or the Algerian Spoken Arabic. In addition to that, there are 48

regions in Algeria: the northern, the eastern, the western and the southern, all of which use a different variety of the Algerian dialect in their day-to-day conversations. For example, sometimes it is hard for people from the eastern regions to understand a certain word or expression that of the western regions due to these different varieties that are spoken in Algeria, and it is the case for northern/southern, eastern/southern, and western/southern. Moreover, people in Algeria use different accents according to the region inhabited. There is special accent for people from Oran, Algiers, Guelma, Annaba, Souk-Ahras, Skikda, Ouergla, and many more.

The Algerian Spoken Arabic, the Algerian dialect or the Algerian Arabic, refers to the linguistic variety that most Algerians use today. Moreover, it is the oral colloquial Arabic, which is unwritten (Kerma, 2018, p. 136) but rather used spontaneously by the Algerian people.

1.1.2. Tamazight

Three thousand years BC, old Egyptian writings detected the real history of the Amazighs, and in ancient Europe; many names were given to them, such as the Moors (Mauri). In Greece, they were called the Mazyes, and often the Greek historian Herodotus used the Amazigh term Maxis to refer to it. The Romans called them Numidians and the Arabs called them Berbers, which is a Latin word that describes any person who does not speak Latin or Greek back in that time (Ahfir, 2018, p. 67).

Tamazight is known as the Berber language in western literary works and its speakers are known as the Amazigh people (Achab, 2001, p. 2). It is a language that is mostly used by the Kabyle, Chawi, Mzabi, and Tergui in Algeria (Berrahma, 2018, p.6). Today, Tamazight is an official language in Algeria and it is taught in schools, it has manuals, and it has written dictionaries.

1.1.3. Educated Spoken Arabic in Algeria

Separately, the Educated Spoken Arabic (ESA) is closely a little bit different from Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) (Kerma, 2018, p. 139). The former is a fusion between the MSA and the colloquial Arabic, which creates an intermediate Arabic (p.139). This new form of Arabic exists due to two main reasons. The first reason is the failure of colloquial Arabic to cope with the changes within the educated masses. The second reason is the failure of most Algerians to use the MSA spontaneously (p. 139). Kerma also stated that ESA has many forms due to different regional, linguistic, stylistic, and structural variations (p. 139). It is not a native language of anybody. Therefore, it is on the process of development until today in order to tighten the gap between Algerian Arabic and MSA. Nowadays, it is well spread what is called "triglossia" among the Algerian society in which we distinguish three types of Arabic.
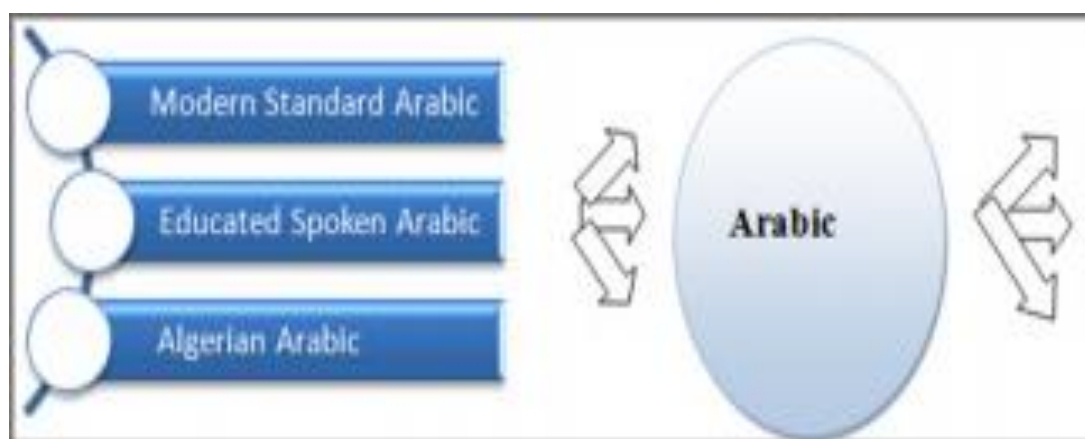
Figure 1.1. Different facets of Arabic.

(Retrieved from kerma, 2018, p. 139)

In addition, "ESA consists of a spoken form that borrows extensively from the High variety, i.e. MSA, and being expressed fluently in the "Low" variety, i.e. Colloquial Arabic, so as to be intelligible to the uneducated people." (p.139) This is because most educated

people in Arab-speaking countries consider ESA as a simplified version of Classical Arabic. Moreover, ESA is subject to change structurally and its use differs from one context to another. However, Speakers of this variety have inter-regional intelligibility; it is shared among them and it is well understood within the education sector especially because of the fusion between MSA and colloquial Arabic that leads most people to grasp it easily. Hence, they can cope with any regional variety since they belong to the same diaspora (Kerma, 2018, p. 139).

1.1.4. French

According to the CIA, French is considered as a lingua franca in Algeria, and it all has to do with a bit of history. Since 1870, Algeria was declared as a French territory, because of the long colonization period, Algeria is considered the second largest country in the world that speaks French. In the Algerian educational system, French is taught from the 2nd year of primary school and presumed in the following levels (middle school and high school) as the first foreign language. It is present in Higher education, precisely in the scientific fields such as medicine and biology, therefore, students use French in order to study or to get an employment that requires French like in medicine (Chemami, 2011, pp. 230-231). This shows that French has a significant status in Algeria, especially in higher education, A rigid status that it seems difficult to replace French with English or Arabic.

1.2. Language Planning and Policy

Haugen (1959) is the one who introduced the term 'language planning' while he was developing a new standard language in Norway. He defines it as the process of preparing orthography, grammar, and dictionaries of a language to guide its users (as cited in Ghoul, 2013, pp. 39-40). Language Policy and Planning (LPP) are intents and implementations that

are meant to influence the language not to change it. Four possible general developments may direct LPP. They are cited as follow:

- Levels of language planning: many researches cited that LPP has focused on the macro level planning; it also focuses on the micro level planning that is concerned with specific practices like literature.

- Covert language planning: failing to make LPP explicit and to focus on some language issues. This can influence how languages are learnt and taught, and how they are observed.

- Who are the planners and what are their roles? LPP focuses on the context rather than being purely scientific, the planners' being motivated towards this process has an important role.

- Planning for Compulsory Early Foreign Language Learning, especially English: many countries around the world have the attempt to introduce English at early ages in order to increase proficiency. The influence of these programs on society because of the introduction of this additional language is under the consideration of LPP (Baldauf, 2004, pp. 1-2).

In his book, Language Planning and Social Change, Robert Cooper defines language planning as the authority's long-term treatment of a language either to change the language itself or to change its function among its speakers. This effort happens to help the users of the language to solve their problems and issues while communicating i.e. to make a certain language cope with the different changes that may occur with time (1989, pp. 30-31). Another definition by Cooper, who considers language planning as an authorized and purposeful change in the language system itself or the language use in order to accomplish certain purposes. (Cooper, 1989, p.30). Moreover, language planning is an organized framework by

the government or a specialized authority, which treats language as an evolving subject matter that needs changes through time according to the speakers' needs of use. (Djennane, 2016, p.9). Therefore, this process makes the language cope with different changes that happen within society and makes the language suitable to use at any time.

Some scholars assume that language planning and language policy are related terms but different activities. Johnson states:

> The exercise of language planning leads to, or is directed by, the promulgation of a language policy by government (or other authoritative body or person). A language policy is a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices intended to achieve the planned language change in the societies, group or system. (2013, p. 4).

The quote suggests that language planning is the result or the outcome of the language policy. In this context, certain rules and regulations need to be done in order to achieve language planning. Therefore, language planning is not an easy task; however, it needs time, effort, and an authorized board of experts.

1.2.1. Activities of language planning and Policy

Schermerhorn, Hunt, and Osborn understand planning as a "process of setting objectives" (as cited in Zaidi, 2013, para. 6). As for the language planning and policy, the government organizes this process; therefore, it requires some measurements to be taken into consideration. Language planning dimensions are the language planning activities or the 'what' that means what do the language planners do? (Ghoul, 2013, p. 42).

Language planning is a set of rules, principles, regulations, or decisions that are directed by the society or community's relationship with the language used. These regulations

and rules can be either written as in laws or unwritten but rather understood by the community through attitudes (p. 11). In addition, language-planning tries to solve problems related either to language use, form, or both at the national level. Language policy has different goals; this depends on the nation, the community, or the organization itself. According to Nahir (1984), these goals are purifying language from any error or foreign elements and restoring what was forgotten. Also, reforming the language in order to improve its effectiveness, as well as standardizing it to be spoken and accepted as a major language. Additionally, help spread the language and expand its domains and speakers. Furthermore, creating new words to fit the new changes and standardizing the existing ones. Moreover, making technical or legal language comprehensible, and reduce bureaucratese. In addition, make the suitable language planning, translation, and interpretation that is known by Interlingual communication. It is also important to preserve the domains in which a language is used (language maintenance) (as cited in Bagui, 2012, p. 12).

Accordingly, Language planning is divided into three types named respectively: corpus planning, status planning, and acquisition planning.

1.2.1.1. Corpus planning

Corpus planning is defined as "those aspects of language planning which are primarily linguistic and hence internal to language" (Djennane, 2016, p.14). Thus, when the term language planning first appeared it was mainly a task devoted to the preparation of dictionaries in order to help speakers in a mixed speech community. Hence, the definition propose that language planning is perceived as corpus planning that is concerned with language form and not language use (p. 14). This means that corpus planning has to do with interventions and management of language forms i.e. it tries to modernize and standardize the language forms, which already exist, to cope with the needed communication purposes (p.

31). Moreover, it refers to the activity of inventing new forms of language that are extracted from the older forms as a sort of a modification to them, these forms might have existed either in spoken or written systems (Cooper, 1989, p. 31).

Experts (linguists) under the supervision of the higher authority (the government) handle corpus planning activities, the latter decides which language to be used for administrational, educational, and judicial matters, while linguists or other people take the responsibility of its spread and use. Corpus planning deals with the language forms and produces its grammars, dictionaries, and literacy manuals. The entire process of this corpus planning is to standardize the language script and the spelling to facilitate interaction, while the production of dictionaries helps to translate what is difficult to understand in other cultures. The standardization of the language participates in the creation of new knowledge and polishing the existing one; for example, adding new words in the dictionary, correcting the use of certain words, and/or adding more definitions to certain words or expressions (Ghoul, 2013, p. 44).

1.2.1.2. Status planning

According to Kaplan (1997), status planning is the activity that deals with all that surround the language i.e. the external factors that may influence the use of language in a given society (p.30). Moreover, status planning has to deal with many aspects such as the selection and use of language concerning education administrations, mass media, judiciary, trade, and international relations. Thus, language status may target certain important matters such as the choice of the regional variety of the language or the choice of the language itself. In addition to that, it decides which language or a variety of a language must be official, national, or regional (Berrahma, 2018, p.8).

Some scholars have made a distinction between the corpus planning and the status planning, while others have decided that it is impossible to do so, because any change in the form of language results in a change in its use and the opposite is correct (Ghoul, 2013, p.44).

1.2.1.3. Acquisition planning

Acquisition planning is the third activity that is presented by Cooper in 1989 (Bagui, 2012, p. 16). It refers to the well-planned task to advertise for the learning of the English language. It is a major type of language planning that is separate from the other mentioned ones. This activity helps to spread the language and it is related to "language learning and literacy skills as well as literature production and language use in the media" (Ghoul, 2013, p. 47). This means that this task, which is also done by experts, aims at widening the number of speakers, listeners, readers, and writers of a given language over the use of another one (Bagui, 2012, p. 16). Acquisition planning is an effort to manage a regulation for the distribution of given verbal resources of a given language (Ghoul, 2013, p. 47). This activity aims at extending the use of a certain language in a specific community (Bagui, 2012, p. 16).

For Cooper, acquisition planning differs from status planning. The latter is responsible for the adjustment of the language resources, while the former is responsible for the distribution of these resources. Moreover, status planning is how people think about a language, while acquisition planning is how the people learn the language. Furthermore, acquisition planning can be known as 'language education policy'. It is linked to education because it is about how a language is learnt. Acquisition planning activity helps promoting for status planning through showing how the language use is developed in certain domains like education, workplace, media, organizations and religion (Cooper, 1989, p. 17).

1.2.2. Language policy in Algeria

Recovering back the identity of the Algerians after the French colonization was the most difficult thing to do because language as an important part of identity was highly affected. French colonizer forbade the use of Arabic or any other language rather than French, and this, through many years has created a new identity for the Algerian people, that it was hard to get rid of French and get back to Arabic. Note that even few years after independence, French was highly appreciated and used among our population, education was still in French because of the lack of teachers who can teach it Arabic that the government had to bring teachers from other Arab countries like Palestine and Egypt. Therefore, the government, back then, has made some reforms in order to regain its identity and language. They needed to cover mostly the educational, cultural, and linguistic areas due to the linguistic diversity of Algeria (p. 4). Later on in the 1960s, Algeria planned for the Arabisation policy in order to defuse the use of Arabic over French (Benyounes, 2017, p. 4).

1.2.2.1. Arabisation policy

Bossut (2016) states that Arabisation policy is "the language policy implemented to displace French altogether and to promote Arabic monolingualism in place of Arabic-French Bilingualism." Therefore, the focus of the Algerian revolution back then is to regain the Arabic language as it is seen the language of dignity and civilization and because the French colonizer underestimated the Arabic language, it made it a language of liberation for the Algerians to get their independence. The value of this language was later increased because of Islamic religion and both Arabic and Islam were strong bases for the revolution to achieve its goals (Bossut, 2016, p. 10).

Thus, after the independence in July 1962, Algeria was a mixture of many ethnic groups, such as the Berber, Phoenician, Roman, Vandal, Byzantine, Jewish, Moor, Arabic, Spanish, Ottoman and finally the French. After the independence, people used French, Tamazight, or Algerian Arabic. However, the Arabisation policy disdained any diversity that existed, refused any other status of any other variety of language, and called for the classical Arabic to be the lingua franca that united Algeria with other Arab countries (Benrabah, 2007, p. 229).

A debate was raised after the independence because of the choice of the Arabic language. Some prefer French because it the language of innovation and the new technologies, and others prefer Arabic due to cultural and religious reasons.

After introducing the Arabisation policy by President Ahmed Ben Bella in 1963, teaching French in the Algerian schools decreased and the lack of teachers of Arabic increased. Therefore, there was a high need to recruit teachers from the neighbor countries like Palestine, Syria, and Egypt. However, most of them did not achieve any success due to their spoken Arabic and the traditional way of teaching such us rote learning (pp. 5-6).

One of the criticisms of the Arabisation policy was that French was still used in the public places or at homes. During the presidency of Houari Boumadiene, Arabisation policy was a confirmation that Algeria is an Arabo-Islamic country despite ignoring the country's diversity. The failure of the Arabisation policy was no escape because the process lacked planning and did not have any scientific basis or the suitable materials such as scientific books, unlike in French. As a result, the Algerian government took another measurement towards bilingual Algeria and shed light on the education system of the country (Benyounes, 2017, pp. 5-6). Furthermore, in 2007, the Arabisation policy reached its purposes in elementary and secondary education, while French gained a prestigious status in the higher education and it was used in the scientific fields (Arab, 2015, p. 11).

1.2.2.2. Education reform policy

Since 2000, there was a serious debate between two parts of the Algerian population whether to keep the status quo of Algeria as a monolingual country or to become a bilingual Arabic- French country. In 2001, the National Commission for the Reform of the Educational System (CNRSE) suggested a reform of implementing French in elementary level at the second grade and not the fourth one. The CNRSE added that French replaces Arabic in scientific fields in secondary school. Therefore, French is taught as a separate subject matter in order to enhance students' level of bilingualism (Benrabeh, 2007, pp. 227-228).

Moreover, Benrabeh (2007) noted that the need for an educational reform was as old as it could ever be. Both Presidents Mohammed Boudiaf (1992) and Abdel Aziz Bouteflika (1999) described the educational system as being doomed and unworthy. People added; this educational system is only producing illiterate generation in both Arabic and French. During his rule, President Abdel Aziz Bouteflika made a total revision for the educational system, curriculum, textbook, and teacher training as well as legalizing private school that taught French and Arabic (Benrabeh, 2007, pp. 227-228).

As a third reform in 1993, pupils of elementary school could choose between studying French or English in order to elevate the foreign language teaching and learning. However, some schools performed this decision and stopped afterward, because some parents favored French over English (Rezig, 2011, pp. 1329-1330). This fact was because English was totally unknown and foreign for the Algerian population back at that time, while French was the most used and somehow familiar to them.

1.3. English as a Global Language

English is the most spoken language all over the world. Closely to 1.5 billion (Lyons, 2017) people speak English whether as their native or learned language. According to Crystal

(2003), English has become the most used internationally due to one important reason that is the power of its people especially politically speaking (p.09).

Crystal states that English is used as a lingua franca in many countries for advertising, broadcasting, press, cinema, and popular music. Moreover, The Asia–Pacific Broadcasting Union adopts English as an official language (2003, pp. 91-104). "In fact, most of the literature works are published in this language than any other language. Thus, with the advance of technology, over 90% of the electronic internet contents are stored in English." (Arab, 2015, p. 7).

Furthermore, Berrahma states, "…it is also the language of international traffic control as well as the principle language of a world publishing science and technology. Likewise, English is the language of debate at the United Nations and the language of command in the NATO." (2018, p.11).

1.3.1. The status of English in Algeria

The selection of teaching or learning any language is based on the status of that particular language within a society. The state's effort is to make this process easier by promoting agreements, providing materials, and preparing a good curriculum (Arab, 2015, p.4).

The English language is taught in Algeria as a foreign language starting from first grade at the secondary school and lasting for seven years until high school. Additionally, students are introduced from the beginning to the English alphabet, grammar, lexis, and conversational aspects; such as greetings, apologizing, requesting, and others. Consequently, there is a high claimed will to give English a remarkable position due to the cooperation with the United States of America and Canada in order to promote this educational policy in Algeria. Thus, the aid is mainly assisting in making new textbooks, training teachers to be

eligible, and building up knowledge about the use of new technologies in teaching (Chemami, 2011, p.231).

Conclusion

The linguistic situation in Algeria is rich and diversified, where varieties of Arabic and Berber co-exist together and they are used in everyday life communication along with French. Algeria proves to be a multilingual country, which has interests to enrich its linguistic baggage by paying more attention to the English language and tries to include it further in its educational system. The status of languages in Algeria today is different from that of 1962, because Algeria is welcoming any path towards science and new technologies. It tries to cope with the different changes that happen around the world starting from the production of new manuals, support middle and secondary schools with the new technologies like the data show, and encourage the online schooling system in order to provide great help to its learners. The attention that the Algerian government pays towards the English language is remarkable, as the minister of higher education has noted, it is now considered essential to write any thesis of any field in English and it is taught in universities. The status of languages in Algeria continues to grow if the government focuses on how to promote the learning of these trending languages in order to make Algeria rich and open to new cultures and knowledge.

CHAPTER TWO

Early English Language Education: Programs, Benefits, and Challenges

Introduction

The current educational system in Algeria is different from that of years ago. More approaches are included, different teaching methods are integrated, and the attention to the learning ~~of~~ languages has increased. Arabic, French, Tamazight are taught in primary, middle, and high schools. However, English is not implemented in the primary school yet. In 1993, there was an educational reform, where the pupils have to choose between learning the French or the English languages in primary school. The aim behind this was to ameliorate foreign language learning at a young age. Some primary schools in Algeria applied this reform then cancelled it because the majority parents favored French over English (Rezig, 2011, pp. 1329-1330).

In the recent years, due to the positive impact of globalization, English language learning has gained more interest. Because of 1.5 billion people around the world speak English; it becomes the lingua franca for all non-English speakers. It is the language of technology, medicine, business, diplomacy, and travel. Therefore, a vital need to teach English in almost all countries over the world arises. In the case of Algeria, English is the second foreign language and it is taught as a compulsory course from the first grade of middle school to the third year of high school, covering seven years of learning. It is also taught at the university as a course, usually as ESP.

However, due to historical and political reasons in Algeria, English is still lagging behind French. It is primarily learned for educational reasons, within an academic environment, and has no real use in the daily communication of Algerians. Teaching English at primary levels is a difficult task. Researchers argue about the starting time of teaching English, and they attempted to define the methods and techniques that work best with this primary level. They suggest that the implementation must have clear goals; otherwise, it

cannot be fruitful (Straková, 2015, p. 2442). This chapter discusses the different programs and implementation of English in primary schools over the world as well as the importance, and challenges of introducing English to this level.

2.1. Attempts to introduce English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in primary schools over the world

Many developing countries, specifically in Latin America, have recently started incorporating English Language Teaching (ELT) in primary schools. It is unquestionable that the reasons behind this were the widespread of English learning and its significant importance. English, in one way or another, became the most important language in the world, and speaking it became a necessity in many countries, whether it is a job-related matter, a holiday abroad, or an article publication, English is highly required. Mexico, Argentina, Chile, and many other countries inside and outside of Latin America have recognized the importance of speaking English, and consequently, they initiated EFL programs to ensure that their youngest learners can benefit from this widely spoken foreign language. The respective governments have funded all of these programs. The programs became the central issues discussed by education policy makers and they earned publicity and recognition in the topics under consideration and discussion in the area of education policy (Banfi, 2015, Lessons to Learn, para. 2). However, these programs had several drawbacks and challenges. This research focuses on these programs so that such implementations in the Algerian primary schools can take them as an example, to learn from their successful application, and to avoid their critical fails and mistakes.

2.1.1. English from First Grade – Idiomas desde Primer Grado, Argentina

English from First Grade is a program of teaching English that was added to primary schools at the end of the 1960s and spread to all state schools in Buenos Aires, Argentina by

1996. In addition, this program was followed by the creation of a network of state-run language schools called Foreign Language Complementary Educational Centres (CECIEs Centros Educativos Complementarios de Idiomas Extranjeros) in which children can develop their language skills in extracurricular activities (Banfi, 2015, English from First Grade, para. 1).

Another program was developed in 1999 called Ecuelas Plurilingües (Plurilingual Schools), in which 26 schools taught English intensively. From 2009 to 2011, the City Council initiated an innovative project that included full foreign-language coverage for all state-run primary schools. The government further provided schools with the necessary textbooks and different teaching materials that worked well for the lower-class individuals who could not afford such materials. The government did not face any problem in providing a sufficient number of well-trained teachers due to the well-developed teacher training programs provided to all sectors of education (Banfi, 2015, "First Grade" , para. 2).

2.1.2. English Opens Doors - Programa "El inglés abre puertas" (PIAP), Chile

The program had a clear aim of developing learners' English language performance from the 5th year of primary school to the 4th year of secondary school. It was launched in 2003. The program included developing national standards for English language instruction, as well as English teachers and their professional development. Approximately 1000 teachers have engaged in "English Summer Village" and "English Winter Retreats" workshops coordinated together by the British council, the department of state and English Open Doors (Programa Ingles Abre Puertas PIAP), and spread over 12 separate locations across the country (Banfi, 2015, "Open Doors", para. 2).

Banfi (2015) states that the program encourages teachers to participate in educational learning programs, and over 4,575 teachers in Chile took this opportunity to improve their language and teaching skills. They were offered a preliminary placement test and the chance

for those who succeed with a B2 level to receive an international qualification. This offer was meant for teachers below the average level, it was set to enhance their professional background, and to give them a chance for a scholarship abroad. This has been accompanied by the introduction of training classes and career development services for distance learning opened by an official body (the British Council) with the collaboration of local and international trainers ("Open Doors", para. 1-2).

2.1.3. The National Plan for English for Basic Education – Programma Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica (PNIEB), Mexico

In Mexico, a national language program called the *Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica* (PNIEB) –The National Plan for English for Basic Education, initiated in 2009 to introduce English as a subject in Mexican primary schools. The program is said to have created many opportunities. Sayer (2015) reported that the PNIEB has hired 98,000 primary school teachers. The motives behind it are to address the Mexican population with the new challenges of the 21st century, and to develop the linguistic and digital skills among Mexican students (p. 258).

Sayer, (2015) also reported that the implementation of such program produced various obstacles and critical challenges to the Mexican government and educational system. Thus, it has not been an easy and quick process (p. 263). The program had to be replaced by another called the S246 program. The PNIEB was launched in a period of political reforms, instability, and turmoil, which hindered its expansion pace and resulted in its replacement. The federal government in 2013 initiated the S246 project (or PFCEB) replacing the PNIEB program. This new program aimed to support states, schools, and teachers in the creation of essential initiatives to increase the educational outcomes of students in basic education through a set of conditions. One of the conditions includes the implementation of English in

public primary schools. Two main reasons were behind this replacement. On one hand, the clash of this program (PNIEB) with numerous curriculum changes, on the other hand the presence of a national instability (Ramírez-Romero and Sayer, 2016, pp. 7-8).

2.1.4. Ceibal in English – Ceibal en inglés, Uruguay

In Uruguay, a similar program was initiated in mid-2012 via collaboration between Ceibal, a program to support Uruguayan education system with technology, and the British Council (Plan Ceibal, n.d.). The program was widespread across 400 primary schools and 50,000 children benifited from it. They learned English for fifty-three minutes per week, taught by both a remote teacher and a classroom teacher. As part of the curriculum, both the remote teacher and the classroom teacher adopt thorough learning activities, engaging their learners in large-scale summative tests similar to those of international certifications such as Cambridge English test for young learners (Banfi, 2015, Ceibal in English, para. 1).

This program was closely associated to the One-Laptop-Per-Child program. One-Laptop-Per-Child aims to provide a budget laptop for each child. With exposure to this kind of learning resource, children are ensured a bright future because they are involved in their own schooling, and together they study, connect, and develop their cognitive skills (One Laptop per Child, n.d.). Both programs (Ceibal in English and One-Laptop-Per-Child) have the power and influence of providing an innovative way to solve the problem of shortage of English teachers in primary school using various means of technology, meaning that the unavailability of a local classroom teacher can be solved through an assistance with a remote teacher using online classes. (Banfi, 2015, Ceibal in English, para. 1-2).

2.2. Benefits of English language learning

The English language has gained an important status on a global level. The use of English has spread all over the world that it is very rare to find a country, which does not

teach English as a second or foreign language in the primary level. In average, in Europe, around half of primary school pupils around the EU are studying a foreign language, which is in many cases English. Mandatory lessons in a foreign language usually begin at the end of primary school or at the beginning of secondary school. In 2016, many countries such as Romania, Spain, and Austria, initiated mandatory foreign language learning before the age of eight, i.e. at the beginning of primary school, and in certain countries, it also starts in pre-primary education. Recently, Cyprus and Poland implemented a provision that makes language-learning compulsory for all pre-primary-school pupils (Baidak, Balcon & Motiejunaite, 2017, p. 5).

Figure 1: Starting age of the first foreign language as a compulsory subject, 2015/16

< 6 years old

6 or 7 years old

8 or 9 years old

≥ 10 years old

No foreign language as compulsory subject

Country specific notes: See the full report (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017, p. 30).

Source: Eurydice.
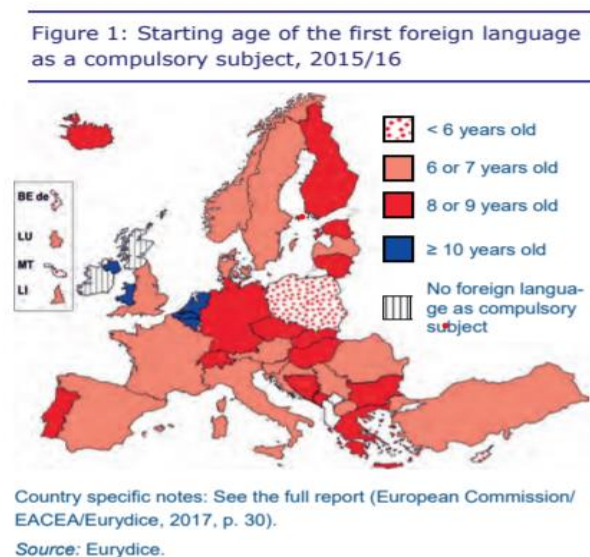
Figure 2.1. Starting age of the first foreign language
as a compulsory subject, 2015/16

(Retrieved from Baidak, Balcon & Motiejunaite, 2017, p. 5)

Figure 2.1 represents the starting age of the first foreign language, which is English in Norway, Sweden, Slovakia, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Netherlands, and Germany, as a compulsory subject (see Figure 2.2). Countries like Poland and Cyprus begin to teach the first

foreign language before the age of six, i.e., pre-primary education. The countries in orange represent the starting age of 6 or 7 years old, i.e., at the start of primary schooling. The countries in red start later at the ages of 8 or 9, i.e., from the 3rd or 4th grade, and the countries in blue start even later after the age of 10, which is most likely the start of secondary schooling.
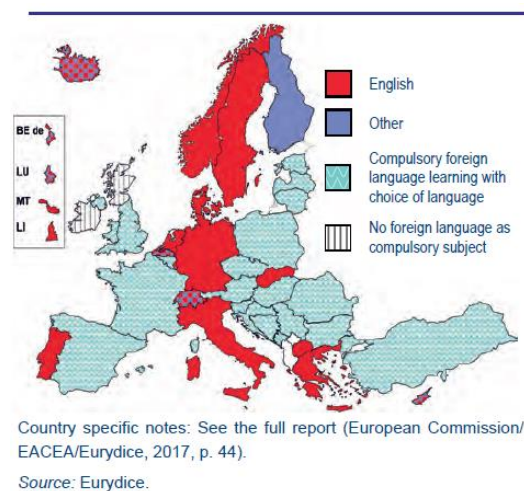
Figure 2.2. Mandatory Foreign Languages during
Compulsory Education, 2015/16

(Retrieved from Baidak, Balcon & Motiejunaite, 2017, p. 9)

Figure 2.2 represents the countries in which English is the first foreign language taught in primary schools (Countries in red). Countries in green give the learners the options of foreign language learning. Many countries in green give the option of English, Spanish, or French as first foreign language.

Various studies have proven the importance and benefit of early foreign language education, which was the reason behind teaching English and other foreign languages at the primary level. Here are some selected benefits of early English language learning which

played a major role for many countries to decide about an implementation of EFL in their educational systems.

2.2.1. The younger the better

This is a support of the critical period hypothesis. The critical period hypothesis is a theory that suggests that young children learn a language better and faster. It considers that language acquisition ability is biologically linked to age. It is believed that individuals who start learning a foreign language very early in their life generally acquire a higher level of skill than those who begin at a later age. In this regard, Bialystok and Hakuta (1999) stated that:

> It is tempting to believe that children are better second language learners than adults because their brains are specially organized to learn language, whereas those of adults are not. This is the explanation of the critical period hypothesis. The evidence for it comes from several sources. Informal observation irrefutably shows children to be more successful than adults in mastering a second language. Empirical studies confirm this pattern by demonstrating performance differences between children and adult learners on various tasks and measures (p. 176).

Age is known as one of the key issues in L2 learning that plays a significant role in determining language learner's progress. In second language or foreign language learning, several researchers have been investigating the impact of age on different aspects of language learning. Gawi (2012) explored the impact of age on learning EFL among Saudi private primary school learners in contrast to public middle school learners in Dawadmi City. The

analyses included a comparison of the performance of young students (elementary school level-4) with the performance of older students (intermediate level-3). The results have shown that age does have an impact on EFL learning and contributes to better results, confirming the hypothesis of the earlier, the better. This study shows that learning the language at an early age is recognized as a significant element in improving English language learners ' abilities (pp. 129-130). The following table is retrieved from Gawi (2012, p. 132).

Table 2.1

The results of "Independent Samples Test" for the differences between Saudi students who start learning English at ages 5/6, as compared with those who start learning English at the ages 12/13

Skills	Age groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-test	Sig.
GRAMMAR	5-6 years	100	7.12	2.869	4.451	**0.000
	12-13 years	30	5.22	3.280		
VOCABULARY	5-6 years	100	5.63	2.819	8.775	**0.000
	12-13 years	30	3.58	1.612		
CONVERSATION	5-6 years	100	3.35	1.281	8.531	**0.000
	12-13 years	30	2.15	1.250		
READING	5-6 years	100	5.20	2.046	-4.664	**0.000
	12-13 years	30	7.51	2.891		
WRITING	5-6 years	100	3.53	0.810	3.524	**0.000
	12-13 years	30	2.47	1.106		
TOTAL	5-6 years	100	25.84	7.588	3.928	**0.000
	12-13 years	30	21.92	6.185		

**significant differences at 0.01 level or less.

The results on the table demonstrate that Saudi learners who started learning English in private schools at the ages 5/6 scored a higher average in grammar, vocabulary, conversation, and writing than the learners who start learning English in public middle schools at the ages 12/13. The only test where older learners scored better was the reading test. These results also confirm the CPH hypothesis

2.2.2. Enhancement of cognitive skills

Learning a foreign language or bilingualism requires specific coping styles and contributes the developing of the four core skills, (Reading, writing, listening, and speaking). This, in effect, allows the child to potentially progress in many cognitive aspects as well. Through learning a language, the child's general reading and thinking abilities develop. The child can also develop his/her cognitive skills, such as creativity, reasoning and problem solving. A whole range of other cognitive skills is enhanced through the process of foreign language learning, including attention, multi-tasking, memory, critical thinking, and mind flexibility. Learning a foreign language also leads to an improvement in social cognition and empathy.

Most of people face an age-related decline in brain function such as attention and memory, and the acceleration of this process sometimes leads to the appearance of Alzheimer's disease or a form of dementia. Some recent studies have shown that learning a foreign language can slow the inevitable cognitive decline or may reduce the onset of dementia. (Landry, 1973; Mahu, 2012; Javan and Ghonsooly, 2017; Woll and Wei, 2019).

2.2.3. Later performance

Learning anything at a younger age makes us better at it then at a later age because we develop and evolve. Hence, when children learn English at the primary level, then, they reach secondary level; English therein would no longer be foreign to them because they have already acquired the basis and have considerable background knowledge. Cahyati & Madya, (2018) stated that in order to get a comprehensive awareness of the second language, children need to start early, and if they start a bit late, it would be challenging them to grasp the language quickly. A pupil, for instance, takes a long time to grasp the grammatical constructs as he or she also does not have a specific competence relevant to such structures (p. 396). This problem would be avoided if children learn English prior to secondary school. Children should be given enough time to study English at the primary school to improve their grammar

and fluency in pronunciation. The time given to study English and the exposure to foreign languages is highly important. If they have enough exposure in English, they can gain improved fluency and face less difficulty in later educational stages.

Curtain (1990) believes that the early start of foreign language learning improves the language skills in later stages of education. Curtain claimed that:

> It can be argued, therefore, that children who begin foreign language study in elementary school, and who continue such study for a number of years, have a better chance of developing a high level of foreign language proficiency than do students whose foreign language instruction begins in the post elementary school years (p. 2).

2.2.4. English language as a language of publication

Learning EFL at a young age and mastering the language in later stages proves its efficiency in the academic life. The internet can be used as an illustration. Most websites have information that is in English. Not just on the internet, but even many scientific and literary books use English. Being fluent in English would be beneficial to discover and navigate information on these websites and books. The availability of books in English is enormous, and any student may likely find a reliable source for his/her research in English, and there lays the importance of speaking the language. According to figures reported by Hamel (2007), international communication has shifted from multilingualism and the use of several languages to a clear dominance of English, especially in scientific research. Publications in the social sciences and humanities reached 82.5% and just around 90% of publications in the natural sciences are in English by the mid-1990s. As a result, other foreign languages, including French, German, Russian, Spanish and Japanese, are losing their interest as

languages of research. Many commentators believe that publishing in English has become

unavoidable (pp. 57-58).
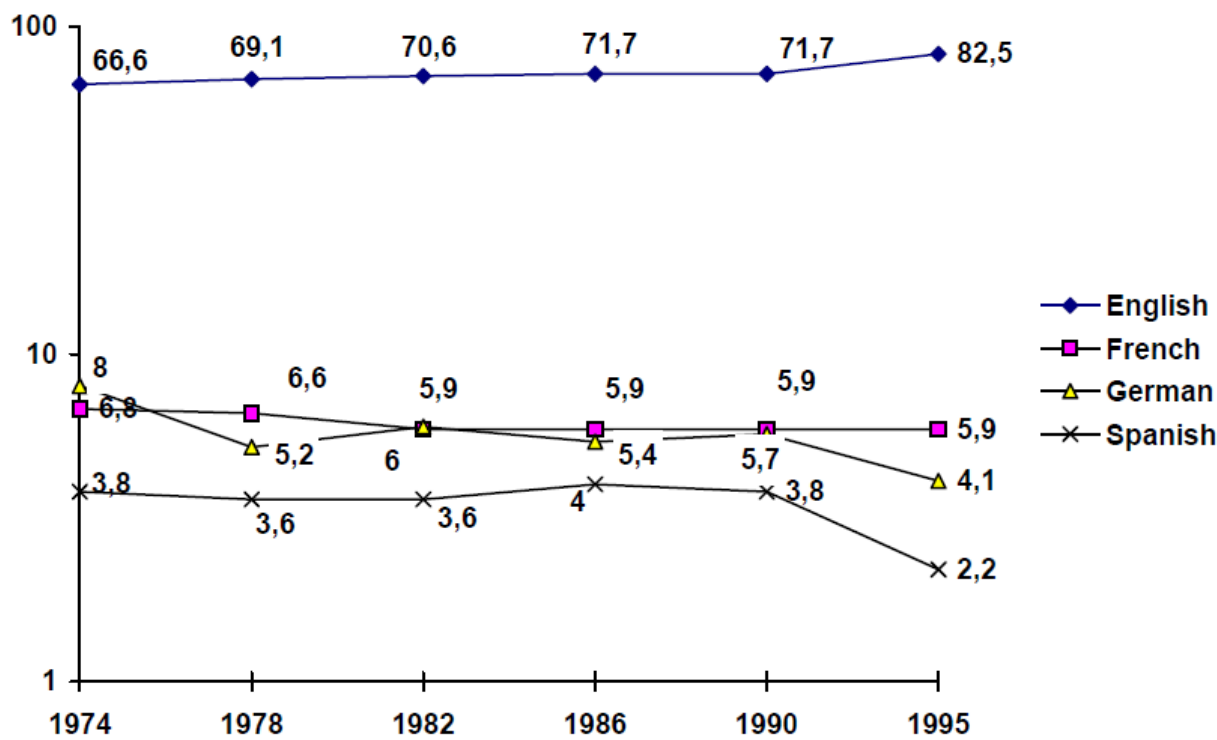
Figure 2.3. Share of languages in social sciences and humanities publications worldwide 1997–1995 (per cent of total publications, ordinate compressed; Hamel, 2007, from Ammon, 1998: 167;
Ammon 2006: 4).

(Retrieved from Hamel, 2007, p. 58)

The figure above shows the percentage of total academic publications in English,

French, German, and Spanish, with English being the dominant since 1974, with a percentage

of 82.5% of publications in English in 1995. Publications in French fall behind with only

5.9% of publications, publications in German with 4.1% and publications in Spanish at last,

with only 2.2%, all in 1995. This confirms that English as a language of academic and

scientific publication is the dominant language, which serves a good reason to give it more

attention and importance in primary school language learning. English is one of the most

popular languages, as already mentioned. English is primarily the language that is used in

publishing and book writing. Looking at these numbers, we discover that the expanding numbers of individuals who are willing to learn English is not surprising, since it facilitates the process of searching for information and data, and in a way it helps accomplishing superior work execution and expands efficiency, which eventually leads to the development of individual's career.

2.2.5. An Asset for Professional Career

If you only speak your native language, the opportunities available to you may be limited, especially if your language is not widely used in business and science. If you speak another language, for example, English, then you are able to search for jobs outside your country, which increases the size of the job market available to you. Thanks to their language skills, employees who are fluent in English get better opportunities in workplaces, and they are more likely to be promoted in their work. In addition to other incentives, for example if your company needs to send delegates abroad, to meet some English-speaking clients, of course priority is be given to employees who have strong English skills.

Mahu (2012) declares that learning EFL at a young age can open doors in future careers. If people are employed at businesses or other organizations where English is the communication tool, knowing English can help them understand instructions. The likelihood is the career prospects can open up to you that would not have had if you did not understand English, so what is guaranteed is that you are going to get a ton of opportunities. Moreover, at the very least, you definitely become more noticeable against a competitor of a monolingual background (p. 375).

2.3. ELT in Primary Schools: The Challenges

Verily, introducing a new foreign language program into the educational system is not an easy task. It requires strict measures and accurate calculations in order to come up with the

required outcome. Yet, this implementation can pose a number of obstacles and challenges to the respective governments. Given the examples below of some Latin-American countries, introducing an English language program to the Algerian primary school may encounter many of the same obstacles and maybe other unknown challenges. These challenges are the focus of this study, studying and analysing them can give us a clearer picture on what to expect, and how to prepare for a similar implementation on the Algerian context carefully.

2.3.1. Qualified Teachers and Teacher Training Quality

The lack of qualified teachers is the most critical challenge. A qualified teacher must meet certain criteria. In Mexico for example, the ministry of education set some criteria for the qualifications of English teachers. They should either possess a minimal profile of a certified B1 level, or the more preferred ideal profile of a B2 or higher level in English, and a Bachelor degree in English teaching field of study. This means that graduates or teachers are ought to take in an English language proficiency test such as TOEFL or IELTS. (Ramírez-Romero and Sayer, 2016, p. 14). Most English graduates, who have a degree in the English language, tend to have a good level of English, varying from B1 and B2 levels. However, these minimal and ideal levels do not necessarily mean that the graduates are qualified enough to teach children a foreign language, as many lack the pedagogical skills of children ELT.

Well-trained Middle school or high school teachers do possess high language proficiency, good pedagogical skills, and are aware of the methods of ELT. However, as in the case of Slovakia, where many lower secondary level teachers also teach at primary schools, they are not aware of the age difference between children and teenagers, and they tend to overgeneralize their teaching techniques that work with older leaners but do not specifically work with younger learners. Straková, (2015, p. 2439) reported that:

...they lack the understanding of the age specificity of primary learners... these teachers have a tendency to overlook the difference between the acquisition and the learning process and expect that young learners will demonstrate the same skills as older learners.

Banfi (2015) addresses that the perfect professional background standards of a qualified teacher are mainly a teacher who has a good command of English, who have had a general training in primary education, and in some cases, a teacher who has a university education in the field of language teaching (Lessons to Learn, para. 13).

The teacher is essence of teaching and the backbone of any school or educational institution. The teacher plays a major role in the process of transferring knowledge and information to learners. It is possible that the teacher is the secret of the learner's love for English learning, or it may be a reason for learners to hate English and school as a whole. The teacher does not become a good teacher and expert in education from the moment he enters this profession, as it requires a number of years to become an expert in this field. Therefore, it is necessary to select a prepared, qualified, and trained teacher, who is able to know how to develop rules and plans for teaching children effectively, and how to manage his classroom. There is no good education without a good teacher, even with underdeveloped curriculum; he can make a good difference to his learners, while a bad teacher with an advanced curriculum can do nothing to improve teaching quality and outcome.

2.3.2. Developing a Solid Curriculum Framework

Before discussing the procedures of developing a solid curriculum framework, we must first define what a framework is. In short, a framework sets the underlying principles, parameters, qualities, and management for curriculum policy. Designing a curriculum framework is not an easy task, it requires the framework to coordinate, monitor and govern

the content of the curriculum, describing the subjects and syllabuses, textbooks and other learning materials. The framework also tackles range of issues, which could have a direct influence on curriculum design, including how the curriculum addresses the country's needs, the teaching strategies, teacher selection and training, evaluation and assessments, and class sizes. Curriculum development is the production of a content that can enhance the learning experience. It is to design adequate procedures, which can improve teacher education. To achieve all of these, all of the education authorities may face challenges and problems. It is important to note that the design of a curriculum framework is primarily a process of addressing and overcoming these challenges. (International Bureau of Education, 2017, p. 7)

2.3.3. Textbook Quality

The textbook is obviously very important. It is considered the main instructional tool for young learners. It plays a crucial role in every child-learning journey. For this, the quality of the textbook really matters. Elizabeth Castro Juarez, an independent ELT consultant, attempted to evaluate the quality of textbooks used in The National Plan for English for Basic Education in Mexico. Juarez (2013) stated that "Usually in relatively small institutions like mine, teachers and languages coordinators select the books they use, using as criteria some elements that are relevant to their needs and objectives" (p. 18). Therefore, the selection of textbook quality requires certain elements relevant to children needs and objectives, to be used as criteria for textbook quality creation. Juarez (2013) noted that a rigorous pedagogical evaluation of textbooks quality and features is highly needed, supporting her idea with the fact that those textbooks are directed to children and should follow the established curriculum (p. 18).

Two textbooks were used in such program. According to the result of Juarez' study, both textbooks were not created according to major principles and primary rules related to

children education, even though they were seen as suitable and proper for children (Juarez, 2013, p. 19). The physical characteristics of the textbooks seemed acceptable at first. They are colourful, attractive, and they contain images and drawings that facilitate the instructions and activities. However, they included images that encouraged stereotypes, sexism, and gender biases (Juarez, 2013, p. 5)

Figure 2.4. Elements showing gender bias in *textbook two*

(Retrieved from Juarez, 2013, p. 6)

Textbook two contain whole pages where only boys or men are used as illustrations. Moreover, some pictures portraying jobs and occupations seem to prefer men. Only two out of eight images portray occupations and jobs featuring women (See figure 2.4).

Concerning the language, children were found to be introduced to a massive number of tasks that involve them to illustrate their reading skills, even though they were not cognitively able to do so at that age.
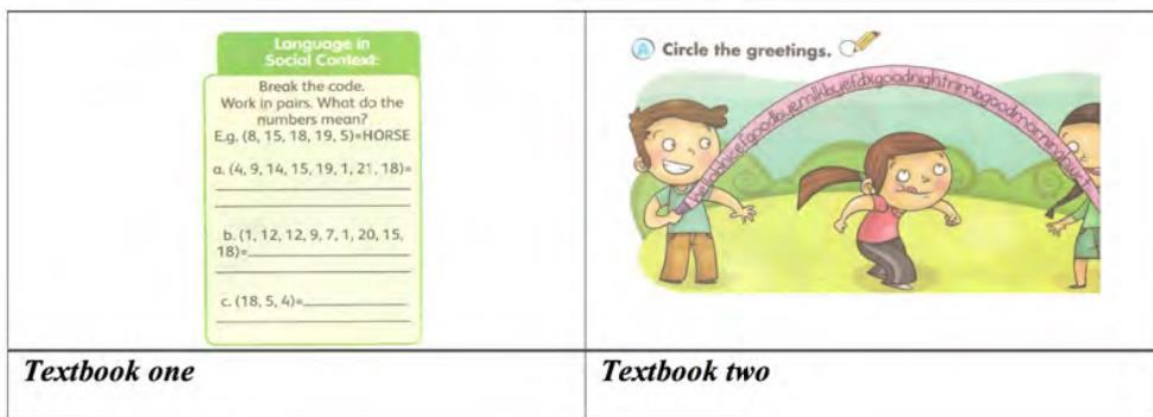
Figure 2.5. Complex activities

(Retrieved from Juarez, 2013, p. 12)

Reorganizing sentence structures and comprehending grammar rules are complex tasks to be performed by 6- or 7-years old children. Textbook one activity is unclear; it does not contain clear instructions on how to solve it. In textbook two, the words clustered together with no spacing seem to be confusing for children to break down into meaningful words and read them. Such activity failed to stimulate effective communication in practical situations (greetings).

As for text types, it was noted that the poems and stories children were exposed to did not give enough importance to cultural valuing and entertainment. For the cultural aspects, they were not given importance as culture was implemented in a shallow manner by limiting it to clothing and folklore. It also did not highlight cultures of other countries (Juarez, 2013, p. 19). Juarez stated that the textbooks publishers struggled to develop the content as it should be, taking into account important aspects of teaching English to children. She also stated that this was a challenging task for the Ministry of Education, and suggested that:

...designing materials, and particularly textbooks, should not be based on what we think might be true or what we want to believe about children. Instead, this

practice should be informed by what we know from theory and literature about how children develop and learn foreign languages. (Juárez, 2013, p. 19)

In conclusion, designing good quality textbooks is a complex process; it has to take into consideration many aspects of children education, children psychology, and culture. Textbooks are important and can either improve or hinder the learning quality. They can also influence children's attitudes and ways of seeing things. Moreover, it is not for a single entity to design a textbook that suits children. Therefore, the responsibility of designing these textbooks falls under the shoulders of teachers, textbook designers, inspectors, children psychologists, and whomever might add a positive contribution.

2.3.4. Parents Attitudes

The expansion of English use around the world and the dominant status of this peculiar language in many aspects of life has led many parents, teachers, as well as researchers to pose a few questions about the appropriate age for their children to start learning the language. They, as well, wonder about the impact of learning English on learning their mother tongue, on learning other school subjects, and on their level and achievements in subsequent school levels. Parents' attitudes about this matter are highly important, as they can affect their children's attitudes about learning English, positively or negatively.

Griva and Chouvarda (2012) stated that the views of parents and teachers are particularly significant as they lead to debates about the status of foreign languages, influence any decision about language policy, and decide on a new course for bilingual education (p .2). Parents' attitudes towards ELT in primary school may be subject to many factors: ideology, history, age, level of education, the number of spoken foreign languages, and experiences with foreign languages (Bago, 2018, p. 15).

Bago investigates parents ' attitudes towards early foreign language learning in Croatia. The study aims to measure the link between the age, the level of education, the number of foreign languages parents speak, and the experience of studying a foreign language at school. These factors were to determine their attitudes towards early foreign language learning. The first hypothesis "parental attitudes would be positive", was validated in the research. It confirmed that parents had positive attitudes towards early foreign language learning. They also preferred English to be taught from first grade in elementary school rather than to be delayed to secondary school, and they completely agreed with the earlier the better theory.

Parents also claimed that early EFL learning increases the enthusiasm of the child for learning a foreign language. Further, they consider that learning a foreign language creates a positive approach towards other cultures in the child, and that early education of foreign language allows the child develop his / her native language. Moreover, learning English at an early age would enhance later foreign language learning. For them, learning at a younger age is enjoyable for the child, which can help developing the cognitive abilities. Parents have also shared the idea that their attitudes can influence children's attitudes towards early foreign language learning. They did not consider it a heavy load or burden for the child, or that it may hinder their performance in other school subjects. Overall, the findings showed that Croatian parents have a positive attitude towards early foreign language learning (Bago, 2018, pp. 36-37).

In Greece, Griva and Chouvarda (2012) conducted research with a goal to present parents' attitudes and views about their children's EFL learning. This study was motivated by the worldwide expansion of English and its growing status in Europe. The study consisted of 50 participants, who were parents (30 women, 20 men) of first- and second-year children of

primary school. Only three parents did not speak any foreign languages, whereas the remaining 24 and 23 parents speak one or two foreign languages respectively (p. 2).

The study found that the majority of parents recognize the importance of English as a lingua franca in many aspects of life such as trade and technology, and as a tool of communication in everyday life. They linked learning English with high academic achievements and job availabilities. Generally, parents believed in "the earlier, the better' had a positive attitude towards the Greek Ministry of Education resolution to implement English learning from the start of primary schools. They suggested that children should learn English or any FL in a playful way, using games and technologies. On the opposition side, some parents showed a negative attitude towards this matter. They claimed that 5- or 6-year old children are not mature enough to learn a second language. For them, children need time, and need to focus on their mother tongue before learning a foreign language. Other parents were aware of the English dominance over other languages that led them, mainly European languages, to vanish and disappear from the spotlights. (Griva & Chouvarda, 2012, p. 6).

Regarding those parents' attitudes, with the majority being positive about their children learning EFL in two different contexts (Croatia and Greece), parents' attitudes are one major challenge of EFL implementation in primary schools in some countries, it can be likewise, one of the challenges to be investigated on the Algerian context. To investigate all possible challenges that may be encountered when implementing EFL in primary schools is the main focus of this new study which has not been investigated before.

2.3.5. Francophonie

In the article titled *English in a multilingual Algeria*, published by Baruch College, City University of New York in 2017, author Kamal Belmihoub tackles many aspects of the sociolinguistic status in Algeria, one of which is Francophonie, a strong ideological presence

still in Algeria due to its historical background. One of the purposes of this entity is "to present French as a victim of linguistic genocide caused by the expansion of English." As such, it promotes bilingual courses in Africa to counter the spread of English. Ignoring the reoccurring conflicted beliefs of its proponents, it still calls for French literature and art to be taught in order to maintain French and its varieties in an extended community of speakers worldwide. Though French is still the default language for many functions in the Algerian society, it stands that English is on the rise as the lingua franca of modern science and technology, one that is particularly popular amongst Algerians social media users and entrepreneurs (Belmihoub, 2017, pp. 18-19).

Conclusion

Teaching English for young children has proven its efficiency and importance. Acknowledging this importance and benefit has pushed many countries around the world to implement teaching foreign languages, particularly English, in the primary schools. Most of them had similar motives and goals for such implementation, and many have encountered demanding challenges, which hindered the desired outcomes. The ultimate goal of this implementation must be assessed carefully. It is necessary to remember that the introduction of the English curriculum in primary schools is mainly a method of resolving and overcoming the previously mentioned challenges. All of this is to offer learners the greatest available learning experiences.

CHAPTER THREE

Field Work

Introduction

The previous two chapters went through the theoretical side of the study where previous researches were collected from different sources. The third chapter is, therefore, the practical side of the research. It seeks to reveal the views and attitudes of introducing English as a subject matter to be studied in the Algerian primary schools. Thereafter, analyses and interpretations of the findings from the questionnaire are presented to answer the research questions. Furthermore, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are also dealt with in this chapter.

3.1. The Questionnaire

3.1.1. Research Method

The current research follows a qualitative exploratory method. This method has been opted for because it "has traditionally been seen as an effective way of exploring new, uncharted areas" (Dornyei, 2007, p. 39). It is agreed that little things are known about the phenomenon of introducing English to the Algerian primary school. Thus, a qualitative exploratory study provides a detailed analysis of data gathered from a small size sample because "it does not rely on previous literature or prior empirical findings" (p.39).

3.1.2. Population of the Study

Before the covid-19 pandemic, the population of the study was middle school/high school teachers and inspectors, in addition to university teachers of English as being experts in the domain of teaching EFL. However, with the obligatory quarantine, and the inability to contact the teachers or meet them face to face, the study population had to be changed. The questionnaire now targets only teachers of English at the department of Letters and English Language at the University of 8 Mai 1945 Guelma. The number of participants is (26) teachers and only (15) have answered the questionnaire. The sample chosen is mostly females

(73.3%) and (26.7%) of males. Their ages range from 30 to 62 years old. Moreover, only (11.5%) of the participants hold a language proficiency certificate (IELTS and TOEFL). Such population is selected because teachers at the university have the needed experience and knowledge within their teaching professions, which make their answers wise enough, objective, and thorough for this research. Their answers are based on their experiences and with their need to ensure a word of caution in this given sensible topic.

3.1.3. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix A) consists of nineteen (19) questions, which are classified according to the needs of the current study. The questionnaire is a combination of different types of questions such as dichotomous questions (Question 05), multiple-choice questions (Question 02, 08, 10, 14, 17, and 18), and open-ended questions (Question 01, 02, 03, 04, 06, 07, 09, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 19). It is composed of three main sections. Section one (Q1 to Q4) deals with general information about the participants which are: age, gender, years of holding the teaching profession, and the possession of any language proficiency certificate such as TOEFL or IELTS.

Section Two (Q5 to Q12) targets the challenges that are expected to appear if the government implements EFL in primary schools. This section features eight questions. It seeks to explore whether teaching English at the primary school will cause any difficulties for the government, and if well-trained middle school or high school teachers are suitable to teach at the primary level. Moreover, it contains teachers' opinions about the intrinsic motivation that helps for self-improvement of those teachers. In addition, it deals with what may hinder the learning outcomes if some criteria were not taken into consideration. The section also seeks to explore the possible difficulties that may arise for the primary school teachers of English in Algeria. Furthermore, probable solutions and requirements are mentioned in order

to introduce efficient learning procedures. The last question of this section tackles how the textbook quality can improve or hinder the learning quality and outcome.

Section Three (Q13 to Q19) is about opinions, methods, and strategies. It deals with teachers' opinions about the linguistic status of Algeria, the status of English in the country, and some required/suggested English teaching methods and strategies that are seen best fit for primary school children, and ends with an open question for further suggestions or comments. It also collects the attitudes of participants towards early EFL learning in Algeria, and their position for this possible implementation. The aim of this questionnaire is twofold; on one hand, explores the types of teaching methods and requirements of introducing EFL to the Algerian primary school. On the other hand, describes the possible challenges facing education policy makers and teachers if English is implemented in the Algerian primary school program.

3.1.4. Administration of Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to the informants on June 11, 2020 at the Department of English, 8 Mai 1945 University-Guelma. Questionnaire copies were sent via E-mails to the (26) participants using the platform of Google Form (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSezY__vTFbx-_A7gK3BpfuoFoenENJuVwImOxDV4Y9XzxUcTQ/viewform). The teachers were informed that their responses will greatly influence the analysis of our study and will provide a greater help in analyzing our findings.

3.1.5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

3.1.5.1. Analysis of Results and Findings from the Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

Question One: Are you?

Figure 3.2

Gender of participants
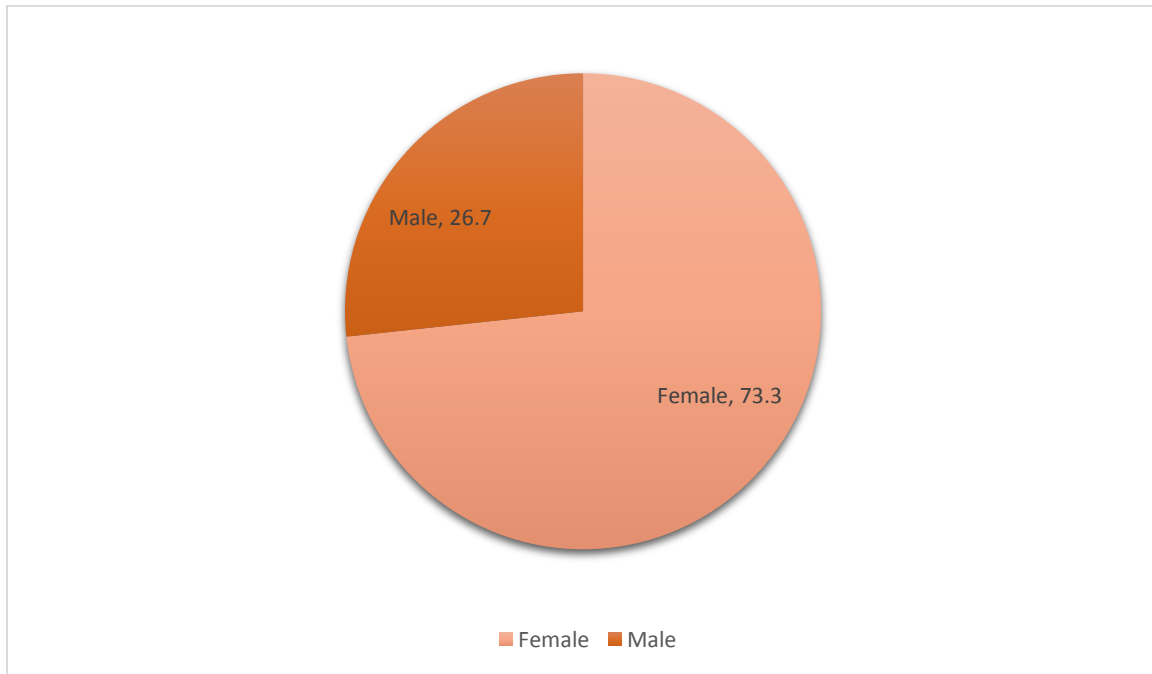
In Figure 3.2, the participants' teaching experience in English varied from 6 years up to 35 years.

Question Three: how long have you been teaching English?

Figure 3.3

Teachers' Teaching Experience in English
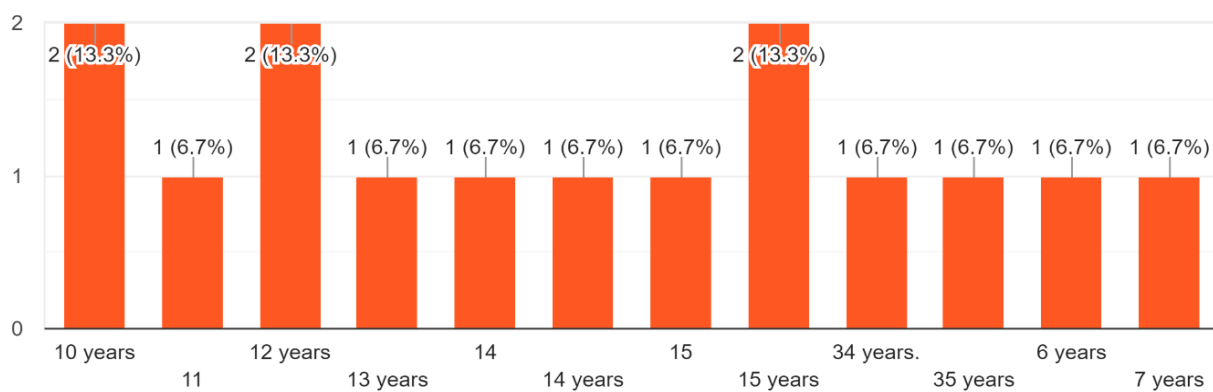
Section 2: Challenges

In this section the data collected from the dichotomous , multiple –choice, and open-ended questions help in determining the possible difficulties faced when introducing English to the Algerian primary school.

Question Five: Do you think that teaching English at the primary school will cause any difficulties for the government?

Figure 3.5

Possibility of difficulties
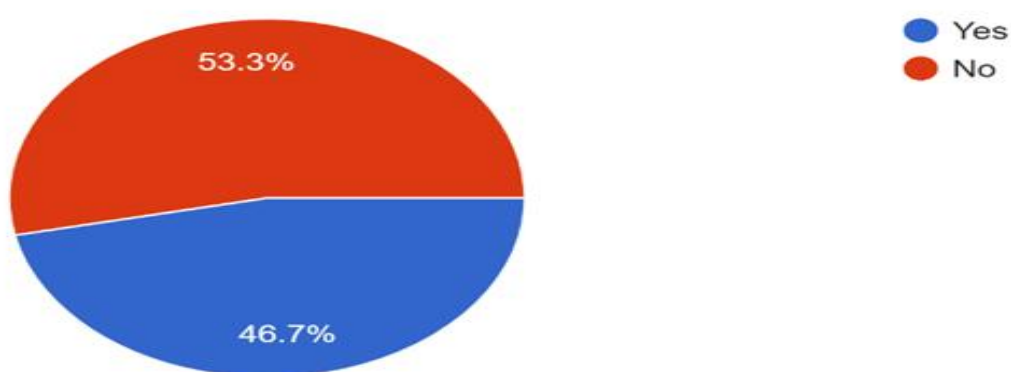
Figure 3.5 shows that (46.7%) of teachers believe that implementing English in primary school will cause difficulties for the government, whereas (53.3%) of them believe the opposite is true. It is surprising, there was not a big gap between those who believed in the possibility of difficulties and those who believed otherwise. When asked to justify their answers, teachers who believed in the possibility of difficulties stated that "any project or plan faces challenges, and since the primary school is a sensitive sector, it is normal to expect challenges when bringing such radical change to the educational system". However, those

who believed that there would be no challenges at all stated that "English has been taught for many years in middle school and never caused an issue". Therefore, it would not cause issues for the government to implement it in primary schools as long as it is well studied and planned for, and that it would employ many jobless graduates, which is more of a benefit than a challenge.

Question Six: Do you believe that well-trained middle school or high school teachers are suitable to teach at the primary level?

Figure 3.6

Participants' Beliefs about Middle School Teachers and their Ability to Teach Primary School Pupils.
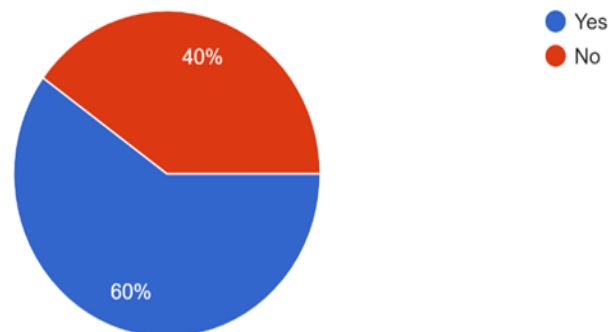
Figure 3.6 demonstrates whether teachers believe that well-trained middle school or high school teachers (only trained to teach in middle school/high school) are suitable to teach EFL at the primary level. As it is presented on the preceding page (60%) of teachers answered 'Yes', some stated that middle school and high school teachers acquired the necessary competencies and qualifications of teaching EFL. Therefore, they can teach at primary schools. Another participant stated that the age range between middle school pupils

and primary school pupils is close in a way that teachers can handle both and understand the mindset of both. (40%) of the teachers answered with 'No', stating that primary school pupils are very different from those of middle school. Syllabi addressed to primary school learners would not be similar to syllabi prepared for middle or secondary school learners. Children require a lot of attention and competences. Therefore, teachers need to be more trained to teach children of that young age.

Question Seven: What difficulties may arise for the primary school language teachers?

Figure 3.7

Percentages of the difficulties of primary school English language teaching in Algeria
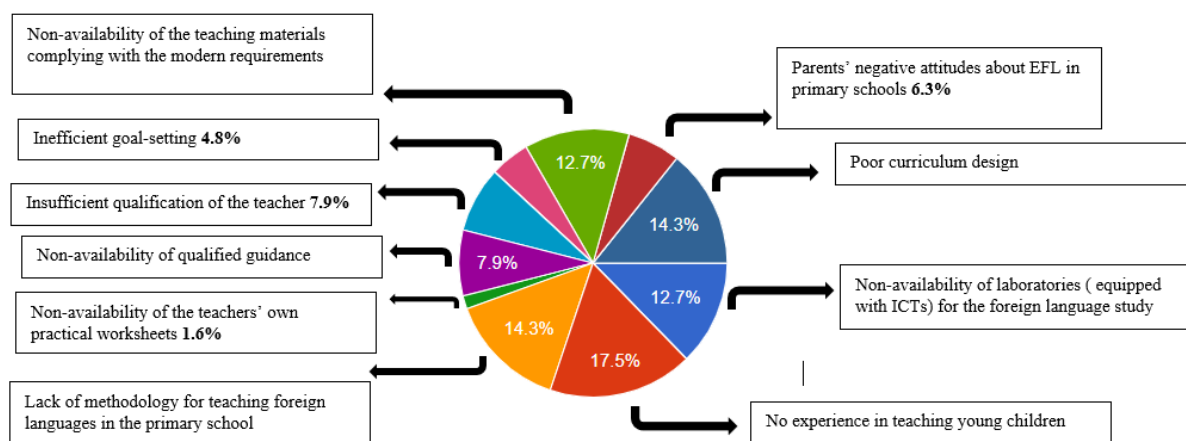
Figure 3.7 demonstrates the difficulties that may arise for primary school English language teaching in Algeria. The major concerns for this implementation are teachers experience and qualification, the curriculum design, and the lack of methodologies. Teachers may face problems such as no experience in teaching young children (73.3%), poor curriculum design and the lack of methodology of teaching foreign languages in primary schools (60%), which may be a misleading factor for the teaching process. In addition, the non-availability of the teaching materials complying with the modern requirements and non-

availability of laboratories (equipped with ICTs) for the foreign language study (53.3%) may cause an issue when trying to learn a foreign language especially for the listening and speaking tasks. The non-availability of qualified guidance and insufficient teacher quality (33.3%), parents' negative attitudes towards English teaching in primary schools (26.7%), inefficient goal-setting (20%), and non-availability of the teachers' own practical worksheets (6.7%) can break the path for well-going process to implement English in primary schools. When asked to provide additional challenges or difficulties, the answers were mainly about forming teachers and designing courses, pupils' readability, and logistics. The process of planning, implementing and controlling the English language in Algeria will require a lot of funds, time and collective efforts. Major difficulties turn around the status of the English language itself within the Algerian society, absence of appropriate learning environments and lack of qualified teachers, overtired pupils from the so many other courses, and overcrowded classrooms.

Question Eight: What would you suggest as possible solutions to the difficulties above/ you have mentioned?

To suggest solution from the aforementioned or selected challenges, the informants have suggested an in-depth study before the implementation, which may take some time, money and efforts, because it needs cooperation between teachers, course designers, administrators, educators, psychologists. In addition to that, designing the appropriate curriculum and syllabus by analyzing both American and British curricula and see, which one suits the needs of Algerian pupils the most then start from there. All non-English speaking countries depend on one of the two curricula except in Algeria. Moreover, collaborating with language and foreign language specialists to use media as a means to prepare the population for such important change. As well as to raise the society's awareness about the importance of learning foreign languages in general and English in specific, to value all the existing foreign

languages, and to impose teaching both English and French in primary schools, so that the children can take advantage from learning foreign languages. When it comes to the for teachers training it should be free and conducted by English Natives, for example, who can provide essential concepts about teaching English as a foreign language. The more there is interaction with Native teachers, the more the trainee gets comfortable with the language. Without forgetting to mention the necessity to integrate technology and make a good learning atmosphere. For example, a less crowded classroom, well-designed textbooks, and equipped laboratories.

Question Nine: What do you believe teachers require in order to improve the educational process in the primary school to conduct efficient English lessons?

Figure 3.8

Requirements for Efficient Learning
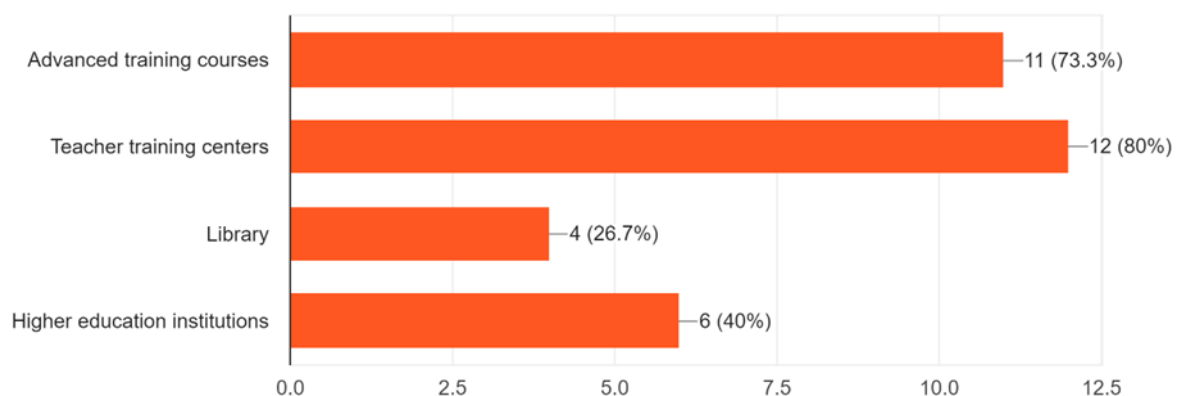
As shown in Figure 3.8, when the participants were asked about what teachers require in order to introduce an efficient educational process in primary schools and conduct efficient English lessons, (80%) selected teacher-training centers, (73.3%) selected advanced training courses, (40%) selected higher education institutions, and (26.7%) selected libraries. From these selections, it is clear that training centers and advanced

training courses are highly required for efficient teaching and learning. Another participant added pre- and in-service primary school teacher training programs as an extra requirement, which indicated that training is an essential factor in the process of the inclusion of English.

Question Ten: Do you think that teachers have low levels of intrinsic motivation for self-improvement: training mostly takes place because of the school administration order, and not by the teachers' own initiative?

Figure 3.9

Teachers Intrinsic Motivation for Self-improvement
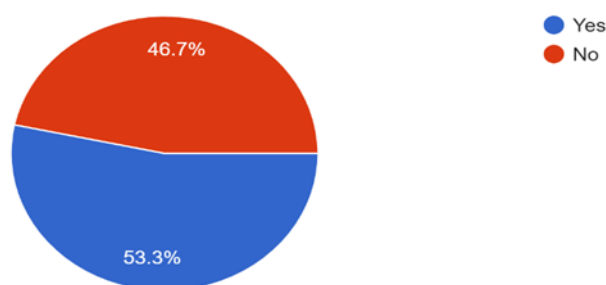
In Figure 3.9, the participants were asked whether they think that the teachers have low levels of intrinsic motivation for self-improvement: training mostly takes place because of the school administration order, and not by the teachers' own initiative, (53.3%) answered 'Yes', while (46.7%) answered 'No'. Teachers may show lack of motivation, just because the required conditions are not available or afforded. Now teachers do not feel motivated about any training because of the general atmosphere. What should be changed first is the mentality; to be convinced that teachers are appreciated and what they are doing is equally important and will automatically lead to a more efficient training. The major reason is perhaps the teaching environment, for instance the kind of relationship between the teacher and the administration, the teacher and parents, and the teacher and the pupils. Yet, whatever the circumstances,

teachers have no escape but be convinced that due to their career formation and community expectations, they should be realistic. Training is considered the nerve of how to teach EFL to pupils, in particular.

Question Eleven: Will this hinder the teaching/learning quality?

Figure 3.10

Teaching/Learning quality Obstruction
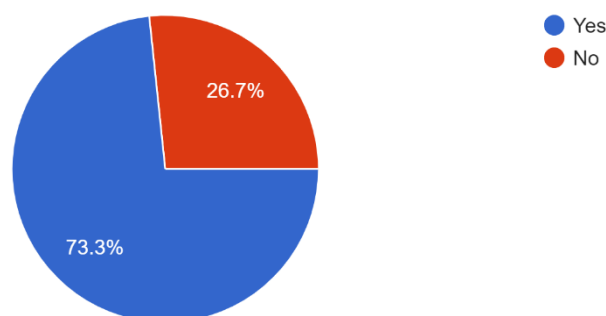
When asked if this lack of intrinsic motivation for self-improvement will hinder the learning outcome, the majority of informants (73.3%) agreed while (26.7%) disagreed. Low motivation equals a bad learning environment, and as a result, inefficient learning.

Question Twelve: How do you think that the textbook quality (language, instructional methods, illustrations…etc.) can either improve or hinder the learning outcome for young children?

The last question for this section was an open question on how the participants think that the textbook quality (language, instructional methods, illustrations…etc.) can either improve or hinder the learning outcome for young children. All the answers had few things in common: Books need to have plenty of illustration, animations, colors, repetition, elaborations, and simple language. They must be age adapted, level adapted, have a good

quality content, and carefully designed to suit children, all to ensure a successful learning outcomes.

46.6% agreed on the importance of the quality of the textbooks in learning English. As a justification for that "if the textbook is of a good quality, then, it will surely improve the learning process and vice versa". Another declaration of the important role of these textbooks was that the textbook is very crucial in language learning. It must be carefully well designed because it is directed to young children. The more this is taken into consideration, the better is the outcome. From one hand, the textbook can play a major role in attracting the young children to learn this new language (through the illustrations, pictures, colors ...). From another hand, the textbook is the main source that will be taken home with the children, so it must be designed in a way that the child looks forward to use the textbook, reads it, and interacts with it. Therefore, the textbook should fit the pupils' level of thinking, age, and knowledge as agreed by many teachers.

Moreover, at the level of pedagogy, one of the answers was the textbook is a very important pedagogical tool. It should be designed with a lot of care and professionalism. The 4quality of the textbook is crucial in the success of the teaching/learning processes. Each age has its characteristics and it should be demonstrated through the book. For example, their book should contain many pictures, illustrations, drawings. It is also known that children like colors. This is why essential information must be highlighted using flashy colors which can attract the learners' attention. Therefore, the textbook is the heart of the whole process, without a good one, both the teacher and the learner are lost.

Another teacher said, "Depending heavily on textbooks will never help learners to understand the language properly, as I always say, the knowledge given inside the classroom will not stay inside the classroom, but rather it will be taken to the external world where learners prove whether they failed or succeeded in this learning process". This elaborates the

idea that the textbook quality depends on the quality of the content; if it is adapted to age, level, set up goals, and real world it will improve learning. If not, logically it will hinder the learning process as highlighted by two other teachers.

When it comes to the instructors responsible for delivering the content of the textbook, many informants highlighted the importance of having qualified teachers, which is considered as a difficult task to manage. One said, "When the lessons and academic content of textbooks are conceived by expert educators, who are familiar with what works in the classroom and then tested to see the level of accomplishment under one curriculum to another, and if used by highly qualified teachers; they can help pupils learn well". It is now obvious and it is understood that despite its limitations, using the textbook in teaching English greatly contributes to enhancing pupils' learning. It is simply one of the most effective instructional materials. One clear structure, which is (lessons +exercises +assignments) helps to organize English teaching; first explaining the lesson, then do exercises inside the classroom and correct them, and finally giving homework to be done at home.

Section Three: Opinions, Methods, and Strategies

Question Thirteen: Do you consider Algeria as?

Figure 3.11

Linguistic Situation of Algeria
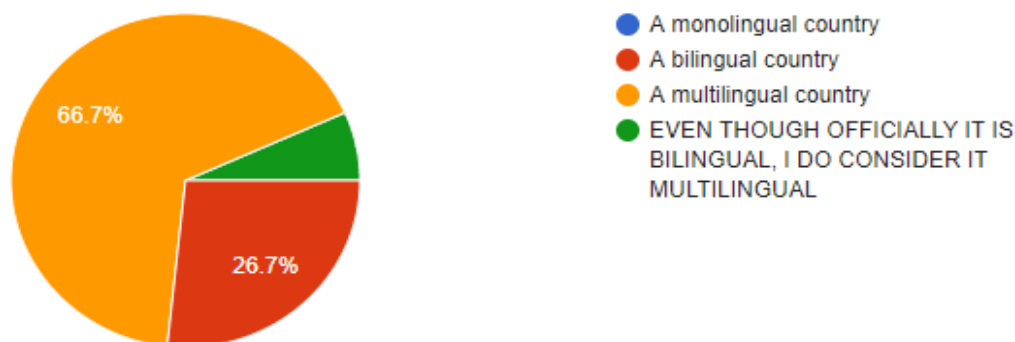
As displayed in Figure 3.11 above, (66.7%) of the respondents consider Algeria as a multilingual country, while (26.7%) consider Algeria as a bilingual country. One participant said, "Even though Algeria is officially bilingual, I do considerate it multilingual", which takes the remaining (6.6%) of the answer.

Question Fourteen: How do you consider the English language in terms of its spread and use in Algeria?

"Good" and "limited use" are the two answers (7.7%) provided by two of the participants. Probably limited use can be explained in relation to internet, social media, professional opportunities, and political changes. Four answers (15.4%) were referring to the same idea, which is that English is becoming more widely spread especially among young people and adults. They choose to learn and improve their level in English by taking different courses. The use of English is becoming wider. English can be heard and seen in social media and many Algerians now rely on English to express their ideas and communicate with others around the world. However, the English language is a Foreign Language in Algeria; therefore, it is not used in everyday life. Still, one can notice that the new generation is more and more

interested in learning and knowing this language. Moreover, there is good progress thanks to the younger generations that have completely lost interest in speaking or learning French as their second language. This loss of interest in French may be due to various reasons which may include the widespread of English use in digital media and video games, and the awareness of the importance of English in many areas of life such as education, business, and tourism,

The present standing of the English language in Algeria is promising. It may soon become the second foreign language if Algerian decision-makers continue their language policy, which is overtly oriented towards making English the language of science and technology. Another respondent added, "We are simply forced to learn and teach this language as it is the lingua franca. I believe including English in the Algerian primary-school curricula is important. This is to initiate our kids at an early age how to adapt progressively themselves in this complex world of technology and science. It is to try to keep pace and not lag behind".

Other answers denoted that the English language has quite spread in some regions. Yet, French still rules the mindset. Moreover, According to language policy, English is a third foreign language L3 and not a second language. It seems that many Algerians are interested in English for rational reasons saying that it is the language of technologies and it is the most spoken over, for some, and due to negative attitudes towards French because of the French colonization, for others. No one can deny that the importance of learning English is recognized by most of the Algerians. Year after year, it gains more users and learners.

Question Fifteen: Why, in your opinion, do many people consider the English language as an important language today?

Most answers agreed that the English language is an important language today because it is the worlds' lingua franca. Moreover, because the challenge of globalization and the spread of the English language as a lingua franca of the 21st century affected all local languages around the globe, and the situation in Algeria is no exception. In addition, its importance is due to the technological development, science, business, economy, and politics. Thus, the English language connects people and introduces them to all what intrigue their curiosity. It also provides them with job opportunities.

Question sixteen: Please select the extent to which you agree on the following statements.

Statement A: Promoting the English language teaching in Algeria is important.

Figure 3.12a

The importance of English language teaching
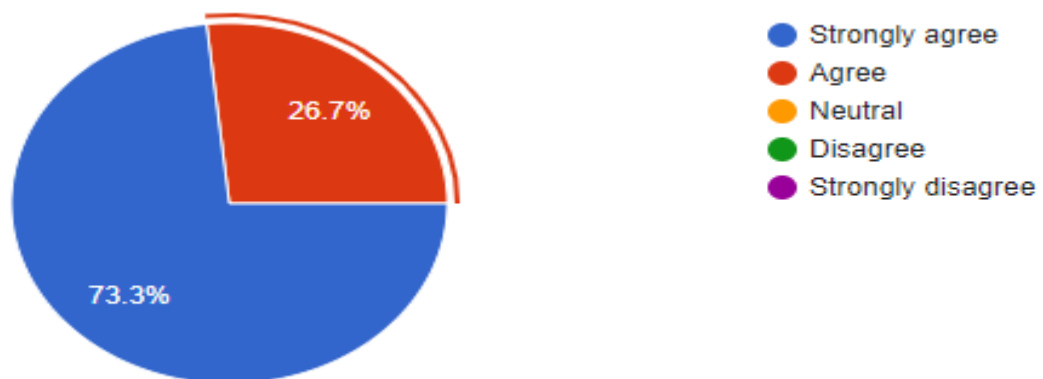
Statement B: It is better to start teaching English at the primary school than at the middle school.

Figure 3.12b

Level of teaching English
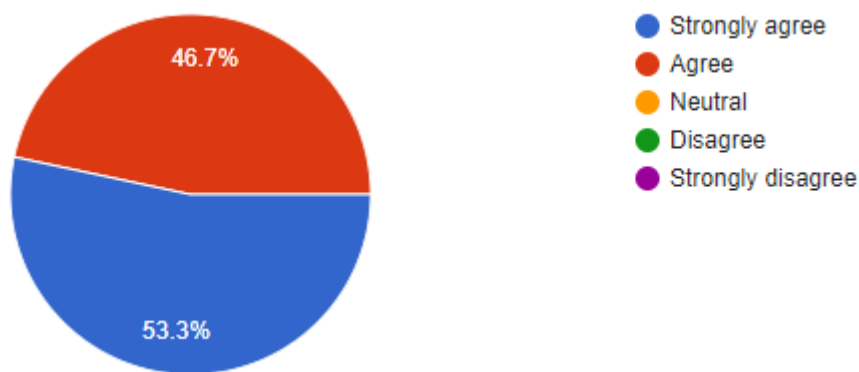
Statement C: Teaching both English and French at the primary school may burden the child's cognitive abilities.

Figure 3.12c

The burden on the child's cognitive abilities.
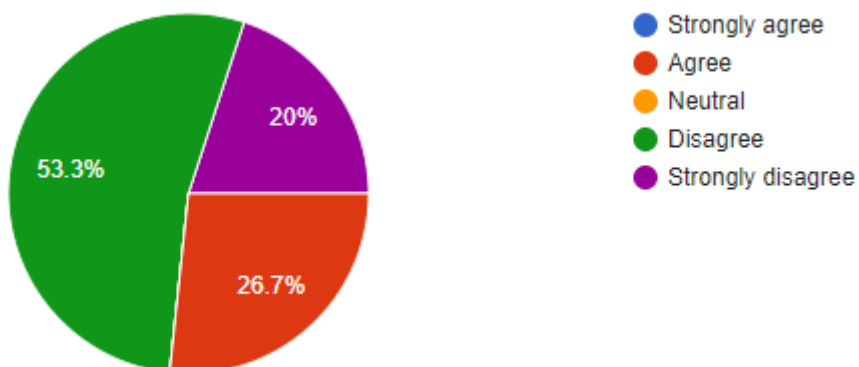
Statement D: Early foreign language learning positively affects the child's cognitive abilities.

Figure 3.12d

The positive effect of English on child's cognitive abilities.
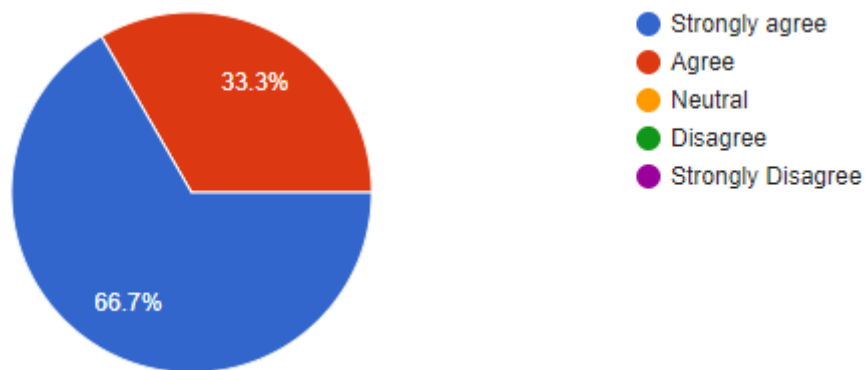
Statement E: Learning English is more important than learning French.

Figure 3.12e

French vs. English
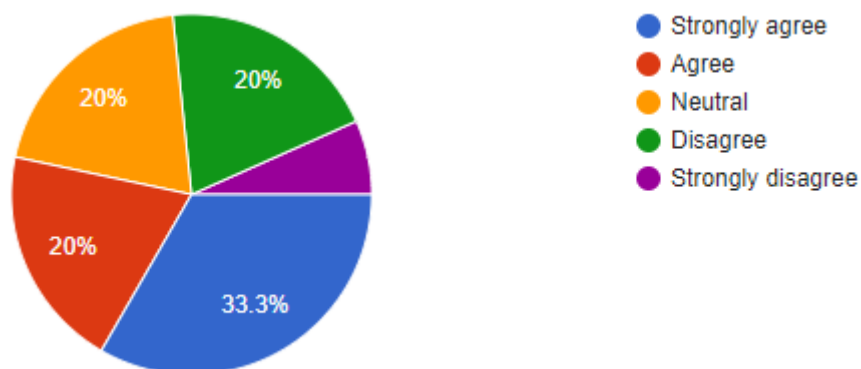
Statement F: Teaching and learning English should start at 1st grade of primary school.

Figure 3.12f

Level of teaching English at 1ˢᵗ grade of primary school.
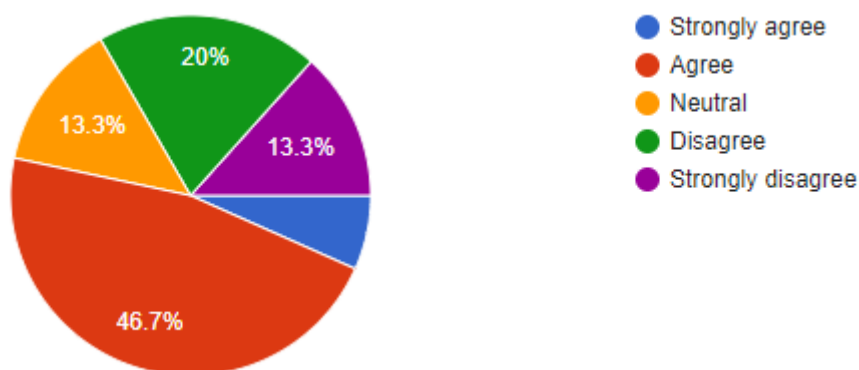
The promotion of teaching English in Algeria and teaching English in primary school is important. However, teaching both English and French at the primary school may burden the child's cognitive abilities. This case necessitates that only one language should be taught. English is preferable because of its global status and benefits. Moreover, learning English is more important than learning French because English has much more benefits than French. As figure 3.6f denotes, 46% of teachers agree on teaching English at first grade, 6.7% of them strongly agree, 13.3% are neutral about this matter, 20% of them disagree with this very early English learning, and 13.3% strongly disagree with it. The earlier it is, the better, although it may seem that children at 1st grade are too young for a foreign language, it is important to note that many children nowadays are exposed to TV in which English or French cartoons and songs are played, and they can pick up words easily. The learning starts with simple tasks that fit to the child's cognitive abilities, and it develops throughout primary school years.

Question Seventeen: Which of the following methods you think are the most suitable in use for teaching EFL to children?

Figure 3.13

Methods of teaching English.
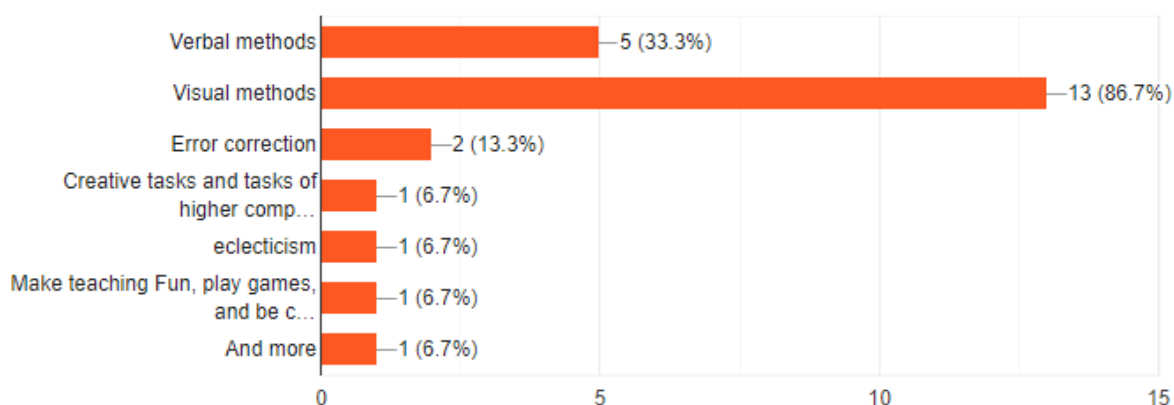
Figure 3.13 presents the teachers' choices for the methods that fit to use in teaching EFL in primary school. Firstly, (86.7%) opt for the visual methods and they justified that by saying that children at a younger age are drawn to pictures, colorful texts, and games, because children have to see things rather than speaking about them. Moreover, many research studies found that the use of mimes, gestures, videos, and visuals are the most effective activities, methods, or techniques to teach young children as justified by another respondent. Additionally, at their ages, pupils are more suitable to motor visual activities rather than logical ones. Secondly, (33.3%) of the respondents opt for the verbal method since visual methods are effective in the learning process (Philominraj, Jeyabalan, and Vidal-Silva, 2017, p. 54). Thirdly, (13.3%) have chosen the error correction method, because it is a much needed

element when it comes to teaching children a foreign language since they are highly dependent human beings who still need to be taught and guided through addressing their errors without over correcting them. However, another participant mentioned that error correction and creative tasks must be at more advanced stages and not at younger age only.

Finally, some other answers highlight the fact that two methods (visual and verbal) should be present as the basics for any kind of learning to take place. This is because once the child becomes acquainted with them; the other methods that are more complex and need longer period are then inculcated. Another participant said that all methods should be used at once and varying methods for the different learning styles and strategies of the learners must be taken into consideration, but because of the children age, they are more responsive to visuals. Moreover, once the child is exposed to learning by all of his/her senses, his/ her mind does the job of learning. Thus, one respondent justifies his/her choice by saying "We cannot say which method is the best because each one has its limitations. That is why; it is preferable to opt for eclecticism and to leave the teacher free to choose what suits his/her classroom needs.

Question Eighteen: Which of the following strategies you think is the most important for effective English language teaching to young children?

Figure 3.14

Strategies of teaching English
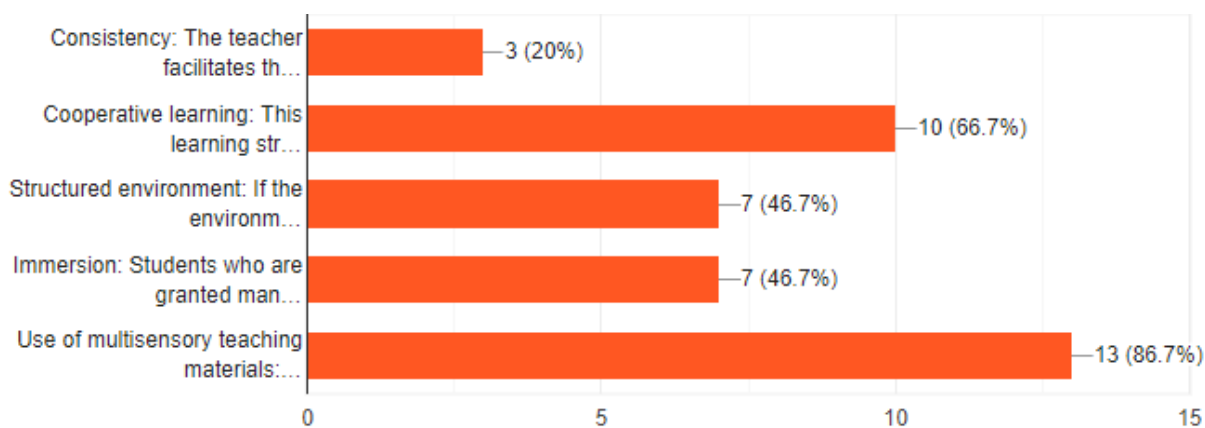
Figure 3.14 shows that (86.7%) of teachers have chosen the strategy of the use of multisensory materials while teaching English, (66.7%) for the cooperative learning, (20%) for the consistency, (46.7%) for both structured environment and immersion. This perhaps indicates that young children learn more through senses and group works. Children's attention is triggered by pictures, colours, and sounds, and attention is a key factor in a good learning. Children are also drawn to play together and work as teams, and this collaboration improves learning through learning from one another in a natural way.

Question Nineteen: Would you please add any comments about the issue of teaching English at the Algerian primary schools?

Only 10 teachers (from 15) have added further suggestions. The teachers' suggestions can be summed up as follows:

- Promoting the English language in Algeria is an amazing project for Algerian learners I hope that decision makers will take the necessary time and employ the necessary efforts to answer the new linguistic demand within the Algerian society.

- It is high time (if not late) we started thinking seriously about how to implement the English language in Algerian schools. Taking into consideration the different factors, which will promote and improve its teaching.

- English has become an international language, and as such, it is imperative to focus on a new language policy that makes the teaching of English at Algerian primary schools a high priority.

- Because it is the right time. I know it is complex and challenging especially at the sociopolitical level. I hope your contribution will positively help Algerian experts to refer to once your work is online to put into practice this ambitious national English-teaching project.

- The Algerian government tried including English in the Primary Schools decades ago, but we were given no feedback about the experience and why it was stopped! Was it stopped for pedagogical reasons? Political reasons? Material reasons? Anyway, the Algerians are more excited about it now. It is a post-colonial issue more than a raise in their awareness about the importance of English.

From these suggestions, it seems that teachers are supportive towards the idea of introducing English to the Algerian primary schools despite that fact that there are many challenges and requirements to be studied and decided about.

3.1.5.2. Summary of Results and Findings from the questionnaire

For the sake of answering the research questions, a questionnaire of three sections has been answered by a group of experienced teachers at the University of Guelma. Section one is devoted to general information about the participants. Section two indicates that introducing English to the primary schools might cause many challenges at the level of both the government and school itself since it is a sensitive sector. Unless the implementation of English is well planned by experts and scholars, it would not cause any serious issues since English is already taught at other levels (middle school). Moreover, this process would benefit jobless graduated people and it would provide several jobs for them. Furthermore, the possibility of hiring middle school teachers to teach in primary school may be valid but not

that practical. On one hand, it would be a better decision to train jobless graduates and hire them. On the other hand, the age difference between a primary school pupil (aged 7) denotes a lower cognitive capacity from that of a pupil in a middle school (aged 12 or 13). This age gap means that much younger children need different teaching techniques and materials, and middle school teachers were trained to teach older children.

The major difficulties for this implementation are teachers' experience and qualification, the curriculum design, and lack of methodologies. For the requirements of introducing an efficient educational process in primary schools and conduct efficient English lessons, teachers' training centers and advanced training courses are the options highly chosen by the participants. This indicates that the most important feature while introducing English to primary schools is having well trained and highly qualified teachers in order for this implementation to work successfully.

Furthermore, the element that most teachers cannot show or do not have regardless of their teaching proficiency is motivation. Because teachers are showing low intrinsic motivation for training, the administration decides whether the training will take place or not, which shows that most teachers may not be motivated to do a training due to several causes, which may be personal or professional. Therefore, the teaching quality will be affected negatively, because teachers are not, from one hand, motivated and, from a second hand, they do not possess a sufficient training.

In teaching primary school learners, the textbook quality is a crucial element. Educators have to take care of this element and having textbook for young learners must contain the elements that they prefer and enjoy; for example, colors, drawings, and easy language. If the textbook has only writings, children may feel bored easily, because they are highly attracted by colors and shapes.

Section three is about the opinions, methods, and strategies that are needed in introducing English to primary schools. For almost everyone, Algeria is considered as a multilingual country, which makes it more open to learning new languages because of the familiarity of this process. As for the status of English in Algeria, it is used in the internet, social media, professional opportunities, and political changes and it is spread among young learners mostly. Moreover, many people consider English as an important language nowadays mostly because it is the world's Lingua Franca. Therefore, the promotion of teaching English in Algeria and teaching English in primary school are important. However, teaching both English and French at the primary school may burden the child's cognitive abilities. The findings reveal that only one language should be taught. In this case, English is preferable because of its status worldwide and its wide range of benefits. Moreover, learning English is more important than learning French because English is a universal language. Therefore, teaching and learning English should start at 1st grade of primary school because young learners are more apt to learn new languages at that age according to Piaget's cognitive theory (1936). While doing so, verbal, visual, and error correction methods are the essential methods for this stage, because the child is always tempted by what he/she sees and relates it to a verbal element. Error correction methods will prevent the child from making further mistakes while learning the language in the future. In addition to those methods, two strategies are also crucial in the process of teaching English to young learners. The use of multisensory teaching materials and corporative learning that indicates that young children learn more through senses and group works.

Limitations of the study

The present investigation faced a number of contextual and methodological constraints, which prevented it from realizing the expected results. First, the unavailability of resources (articles, books, etc.) that tackle the issues of EFL in Algeria's primary school

makes a little bit hard to provide sufficient information. Second, the ongoing global pandemic Covid-19, which makes it difficult to distribute the questionnaire to the teachers and make the wanted interviews, it has also resulted in a shutdown of educational institutions and libraries. The study has been done remotely. Third, the process of teachers' questionnaire is not as expected. It was difficult to collect the needed number of answers, as a decent number of teachers did not answer the provided questionnaire, which may be due to technical issues or other factors. Finally, some participants have provided very short answers to questions that have supposed to be answered in long paragraphs. In addition to all that, the process of interviewing teachers and inspectors has been cancelled due to the ongoing pandemic of covid-19. Moreover, an in-depth study must be conducted about the English language use and spread among Algerians.

Conclusion

The process of introducing the English language to the Algerian primary schools is surely a hard task to do. Therefore, harder efforts must be built in order to fulfill the needed goals. Effectively, many procedures are expected and several moves are taken. The challenges are big and the requirements are possible to manage. However, the path is long to reach the favored results. The government together with the educators should cooperate to achieve handful purposes and to open new ways for the Algerian schools to take. Teachers have to go through a high level training because they are teaching a sensitive category of learners, who learn nothing by themselves.

General conclusion

The present investigation endeavors to investigate the challenges and the requirements of introducing the English language to the Algerian primary schools. To this end, the research undergoes two main phases: The theoretical phase, which attempts to provide a solid conceptual and notional background. This latter provides the basic ground for the study. The practical phase aims at collecting teachers' views and opinions about the topic to be analyzed in order to answer the research questions.

In theory, chapter one covers the linguistic profile of Algeria, while chapter two deals with the challenges, benefits, and programs used in early English language teaching. The former comprises three big titles under which subtitles tackle different aspects of the linguistic profile of Algeria such as the Arabic language, Tamazight, and the French language in addition to the status of English language in Algeria. The latter, similarly, contains three big titles in which subtitles deal with the different challenges that may face the government, experts, and teachers if English is implemented in the primary schools. Along with the challenges, benefits of different programs are cited in order to see whether the inclusion of English has worked around the world or not.

In practice, chapter three is the work field of the study. It deals with the analysis of the teachers' questionnaire. It thereby enriches the empirical dimension of this research. The obtained results affirm that introducing English to the primary sector has many challenges when it comes to teacher training or dealing with young children. In addition, this process is possible because young children are able to learn new language and it is apparent with learning French. Despite of the different limitations, the implementation of English to primary school can be achieved if followed by hard work and determination

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Appendix A

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire is part of a study that aims at exploring the main challenges and requirements of introducing English as a second language (ESL) to the Algerian primary schools. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions. Please tick / √ / the appropriate box(es) or make full statements if necessary. Please note that your responses are dealt with confidentially and used only for research purposes. Thank you for your cooperation and for the time devoted to answer this questionnaire.

<div style="text-align:right">

Mr. Mohammed Amin ABBASSI

Ms. Halima HAKIME

Department of letters and English Language

University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma

</div>

Section one: General Information

1. Age:

2. Gender: M [   ]   F [   ]

3. How long have you been teaching English?

[   ]   Years

4. Beside your university degree in English, do you hold any language proficiency certificate such as TOEFL or IELTS? If yes, please mention it

....

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Section Two: Challenges

5. Do you think that teaching English at the primary school will cause any difficulties for the government?

Yes	
No	

- Justify your answer, please.

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…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Do you believe that well trained middle school or high school teachers are suitable to teach at the primary level?

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- Justify your answer, please.

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7. What difficulties may arise for the primary school language teachers? (You can choose more than one option)

Non-availability of laboratories (equipped with ICTs) for the foreign language study	
No experience in teaching young learners	
Lack of methodology for teaching foreign languages in the primary school	
Non-availability of the teachers' own practical worksheets	
Non-availability of qualified guidance	
Insufficient qualification of the teacher	
Inefficient goal-setting	
Non-availability of the teaching materials complying with the modern requirements	

-if other(s), please specify.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

8. What would you suggest as possible solutions to the difficulties you have mentioned?

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9. What do you believe teachers require in order to improve the educational process in

the primary school to conduct efficient English lessons?

Advanced training courses	
Teacher training centers	
Library	
Higher education institutions	

-if other(s), please specify.

……

……

10. Do you think that the teachers have low levels of intrinsic motivation for self-

improvement: training mostly takes place because of the school administration order,

and not by the teachers' own initiative?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

-if yes, justify your answer.

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……

……

11. Will this hinder the teaching/learning quality?

……

-if yes, justify your answer.

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……

12. How do you think that the course-book quality (language, instructional methods, illustrations…etc.) can either improve or hinder the learning outcome for young learners?

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……

Section Three: Opinions, Methods, and Strategies

Please answer the following questions based on your knowledge and experience.

13. Do you consider Algeria as?

-A monolingual country   - a bilingual country   - a multilingual country

14. How do you consider the English language in terms of its spread and use in Algeria?

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15. Why, in your opinion, many people consider the English language as an important

language today?

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

16. Please select the extent to which you agree on the following statements

N		Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
01	Promoting the English language teaching in Algeria is important.					
02	It is better to start teaching English at the primary school than at the middle school.					
03	Teaching both English and French at the primary school may burden the child's thinking abilities					
04	Early foreign language learning positively affects the child's cognitive abilities					
05	Learning English is more important than learning French					
07	Teaching and learning English should start at 1st grade of primary school					

17. Which of the following methods you think are the most suitable in use for teaching EFL to children?

Verbal methods	
Visual methods	
Error correction	
Creative tasks and tasks of higher complexity	

- Justify your answer, please.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

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

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18. Which of the following strategies you think is the most important for effective English

language teaching to young children? (You can choose more than one option)

Strategy	Definition	
Consistency	The teacher facilitates the understanding of the lessons by being transparent; stating the goals and the objectives for learners, following the regular lesson plans, and control one's emotions as a teacher.	
Cooperative learning	This learning strategy is useful for English teachers who incorporate literature into their classroom. Cooperative learning requires children to discuss a piece of short story in small groups. By allowing the children to engage in meaningful small	

	discussion, they begin to learn to communicate using the target language.	
Structured environment	If the environment focuses the child's attention to the content of the lessons, then learning is facilitated. The environment is encouraging to learning and the lessons become more comprehensible.	
Immersion	Students who are granted many and constant opportunities to engage with native speakers have the chance to apply what they have learned. Children learning about new words and phrases can not only use them in actual situations, but they are also given the chance to observe actual usage of language in daily life	
Use of multisensory teaching materials	The efficacy of using visual aids and various means of technology in teaching children language lessons	

Section Four: Further Suggestions

19. Would you please add any comments about the issue of teaching English at the

    Algerian primary schools?

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YOUR COOPERATION IS HIGHLY APPRECIATED

ملخص

تكشف هذه الدراسة جوانب إدخال اللغة الإنجليزية إلى المدرسة الابتدائية الجزائرية وتركز على المتطلبات وأساليب التدريس والتحديات المحتملة التي تواجه صانعي السياسات وخبراء التعليم عند تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في المدرسة الابتدائية الجزائرية. إن منهج البحث المعتمد في هذه الدراسة هو منهج استكشافي لاكتشاف تحديات ومتطلبات تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الابتدائية الجزائرية. تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيان تمّ توزيعه عبر الإنترنت أجاب عليه خمسة عشر (15) مدرسًا جامعيًا للغة الإنجليزية في جامعة 08 ماي 1945ـقالمة. تسمح النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها بتقييم أهمية تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الابتدائية. يتفق المعلمون على تشجيع تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في الجزائر وخاصة في المدارس الابتدائية. يكشف البحث أيضًا أن تطبيق اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الابتدائية قد يواجه العديد من التحديات على المستويين الحكومي والمدرسي، خبرة المعلمين وتدريبهم، وتصميم المناهج الدراسية والافتقار إلى المنهجيات. أما بالنسبة للمناهج، يظهر أن المناهج المرئية، المناهج اللفظية، ومناهج تصحيح الخطأ هي الأنسب لتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية في هذه المرحلة المبكرة حيث غالبًا ما ينجذب الطفل لما يراه. علاوة على ذلك، فقد ثبت أن استخدام المواد التعليمية متعددة الحواس والتعلم التعاوني يساعد الأطفال على التعلم بشكل أفضل من خلال الحواس والأعمال الجماعية.

تؤكد النتائج الناشئة أن إدخال اللغة الإنجليزية إلى المدارس الابتدائية الجزائرية ينطوي على العديد من التحديات ويحتاج إلى العديد من المتطلبات، ومع ذلك، فهو ممكن.

الكلمات آلمفتاحية: تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية، المدرسة الابتدائية، الأطفال، التحديات، المتطلبات، المناهج.