

**English Language Teaching and Conflicting Visions of
Change within Algerian Higher Education**

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Abstract

As universities attempt to 'internationalise', an emerging discourse is the implementation of English as 'the global academic language'. This thesis critically explores the politics of this ubiquitous educational transfer, and how it impacts English Language Teaching (ELT) in Algerian Higher Education (AHE). This research tethers ELT to policies, teachers' practices, and learners' experiences, unlike current debates on the status of ELT in higher education that tend to focus on the policy level. Through the nuanced perspectives gained from stakeholders, this thesis demonstrates the conflicting discourses around English teaching and learning.

Following a qualitative enquiry, the findings indicate that the politics of ELT in Algeria are multi-layered and framed by complex global, national, and micro forces. First, the vision of internationalising AHE appears to drive the promotion of English. Through institution discourse, English language policy is presented as a modern educational reform to tackle youth unemployment, upgrade educational standards, and boost Algerian university visibility and rank. My analysis shows that the advocacy of English interlocks with Algerian colonial history since English is presented as a decolonialised alternative to French linguistic imperialism. These findings add new dimensions to research studies on the growth of English within expanding circle countries.

Participants' accounts, however, describe disjointed classroom conditions vis-à-vis the intended reform. The lack of pedagogic training and the absence of a well-defined ELT curriculum were major concerns. Findings indicate local constraints that further endorsed the nativespeakerism ideology. The latter inhibited teachers' ability to relate English to their learners' experiences and explore the global ownership of English. Nonetheless, the ways learners interpreted their learning convey their agentive role to redefine the English classroom as a symbolic space for self-expression. These multiple perspectives and local insights offer a new angle to discern interactions between global educational tendencies, national forces, and micro classroom conditions within postcolonial societies.

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List of Abbreviations

AHE	Algerian Higher Education
CBA	Competency-Based Approach
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
ELT	English language teaching
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
EMI	English as a Medium of Instruction
LP	Language Policy
LI	Linguistic Imperialism
LMD	Licence (Bachelor's), Master's, Doctorate system
RP	Received Pronunciation
MHESR	Ministry of Higher education and scientific research
MOI	Medium of Instruction
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
TD	Travaux Dirigés (seminars)

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Reflexive opening

Throughout Algeria's history, language especially language in education has been a highly contested, sensitive, and complex issue that has been complicated by politics and enveloping ideologies.

(Benrabah, 2007: 226)

Benrabah's quote resonates with my own educational experience just before enrolling in Algerian Higher Education (AHE). I encountered ideologically loaded discourses about English and French in particular that have shaped my education trajectory. As any Algerian student with a baccalaureate degree, enrolling in university can be one of the most critical decisions that a person can make. What made this decision challenging for me is the wide choice of disciplines I was presented with as I majored in Modern languages (Arabic, French, English, and German). I was leaning more towards choosing German studies. However, few days before submitting my university application, my aunt who lives in Germany highly recommended that I should opt for English and avoid French or German. Her advice was "choose English, it is international". Although I did not comprehend what 'international' really meant, it held positive connotations for me, and I, thus, embarked on studying English at university. I also enrolled in a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) master's programme as I was driven to become a teacher of this 'international' language. By the end of my teacher training, I was granted a doctoral scholarship to study in the United Kingdom. This scholarship was part of the British-Algerian five years cooperation that started in 2014. It seemed to be the first of its kind as it was established to train Algerian future teachers of English through a "new multi-million-pound programme" as described by the British Council (2014: para.1). Being part of this scholarship triggered my interest to research the status of English in AHE. My curiosity further grew when I started noticing how the urge to strengthen English among Algerian students was also linked to the MHESR's vision of internationalising AHE. As such, in this thesis, I aim to explore how ideologies and discourses about English shape its changing status in Algeria.

For the first time in postcolonial Algeria, the Minister of higher education addressed university students in the English language instead of French in a press conference about measures to develop AHE and scientific research (Maghreb Voices, 2019). The Minister later used only Arabic and English in all his posts regarding educational changes on social media. These gestures struck a chord with the Algerian news since they were unusual and different from previous political elites who mainly used French to deliver their speeches. In November 2019, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) shared a national poll on its website asking university students and teachers for their opinions regarding the use of English as a medium of instruction. Soon after, the MHESR has passed policies under the initiative “Strengthening English Language teaching” among students and teachers. These include advocating the use of English alongside Arabic for any official administrative communication within university institutions. Subsequently, university websites have started switching from French to English in displaying their content. As such, the importance of English Language Teaching (ELT) has become a trending topic that infiltrates both public opinion and Algerian universities.

Similar language decisions and changes might carry more than a functional purpose, especially in a context, such as Algeria, where language policies are bound to trigger controversies. ELT has always been present in Algerian education. English has the status of a second foreign language after French. Nonetheless, with the recent push to promote its status in AHE, English is positioned by MHESR as the language of international education, academic research, and graduate employability. This orientation has created tension and polarised debates within the academic community. Some support English and see it as a prerequisite to the progress and development of AHE. Others are more critical of its spread and perceive it as part of the Western cultural and economic hegemony. Between naïve acceptance and cynical rejection, the real orientations, reasons, and impacts of English language policies and teaching practices remain unclear and need further research. Therefore, this thesis endeavours to discern these new emerging discourses regarding ELT through exploring their realities at the level of classroom practice, and from Algerian teachers’ and learners’ perspectives.

Critical research on the politics of the spread of English and its teaching within higher education has been growing in the recent two decades. Through a critical lens to research ELT, studies have aimed to unravel the

economic, cultural, and political forces that drive ELT (Phillipson, 2009; Piller 2016; Pennycook and Makoni, 2020). Further studies draw attention to covert political inequalities within ELT classrooms, such as the nativespeakerism ideology (Holliday, 2006; Lowe, 2020b). These perspectives have demonstrated that the spread of English does not always reflect the interests of those locally involved in its teaching and learning, but it has rather led to linguistic inequalities and replications of certain approaches to ELT.

A great deal of work has offered critical insights into the politics of ELT in countries from outer and expanding circles where English is taught as a second/foreign language or as a lingua franca (see Kachru, 1986; Kirkpatrick, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2011). Nevertheless, far less critical research is conducted on the functions and realities of English in different postcolonial contexts. As such, there is still an insufficient understanding of how ELT policies and practices are shaped by global, national forces, and local conditions in a multilingual context, such as Algeria, where English faces French, another language with colonial baggage.

In this view, this study attempts to advance critical debates through the exploration of historical, socio-political, and economic factors and how they shape ELT policies and practices. Algeria can, therefore, serve as a rich context because of its multilingual nature, long French colonial history, and the current undergoing political and educational reforms. Combining these national forces along with Algerian teachers' and students' perspectives provide different facets of what Pennycook (2016: 30) calls the "local embeddedness" of ELT.

1.2 Research aims

The research intends to understand how English is positioned within AHE. It seeks to critically delve into the politics, forces, and ideologies that underlie the current English language policies and teaching practices. As Algerian universities are experiencing a transitional phase, researching the status of English aims to make connections to broader visions of education. As such, this research investigates the major educational reform that aims to restructure AHE and make it compatible with international teaching and learning. Within this vision to 'internationalise', the study also explores how teachers and learners navigate discourses about English. Drawing on

insights from language policies and teaching practices, this thesis aims to contribute to both theoretical and pedagogical facets of ELT within the context of higher education.

1.3 Overview

In this thesis, I focus on the discourses around ELT at the policy and practice levels in the context of Algerian higher education. I explore these discourses from the perspectives of policymakers, teachers, and students. I also place these discourses in a field of interconnected global and local forces to understand their complex and dynamic nature.

In chapter 2, I define key concepts and I provides a brief conceptual discussion of how language policy, discourse, ideologies are understood within the discipline of applied linguistics. This discussion seeks to highlight from the onset how these notions are used throughout the thesis. The reason for not merging this chapter with chapter 4 is twofold. First, chapter 2 is different from chapter 4 in terms of focus. While the former conceptualises terminologies used in this research, the latter is more specific in reviewing the literature about the status of English in higher education and presenting different theoretical frameworks that attempt to research this topic. Secondly, I opted to position chapter 2 before presenting the Algerian linguistic landscape in chapter 3 because it clarifies important concepts for the reader before I discuss intricate language policies in Algerian education.

In chapter 3, I take a socio-historical approach to explain the Algerian research context and Algeria's intricate linguistic landscape. I diachronically review key language policies within Algerian education. I also discuss the long-standing tension between Arabic, French, and Berber languages, and I demonstrate the ideological nature behind the implemented language policies. Within this language conflict, I provide an overview of the appearance of English in AHE and the perceptions related to its roles and functions. This discussion of the research context serves as a point of departure for this thesis.

Chapter 4 provides different theoretical understandings regarding the status of ELT at the global level. I also review the literature regarding the politics of ELT within the context of higher education. Thus, important links are made between the status of English and current trends in international universities. Particularly, the structures of internationalisation, university visibility, and

rank are explored. I, finally, argue that connections between the global and local forces and how they shape ELT policies and practices are still underexplored in the current literature.

In chapter 5, I discuss the research methodology. I outline the research questions explaining how they evolved, and how they are better explored through qualitative enquiry. I define my philosophical assumptions within the interpretive constructivist paradigm. I, then, move to how this research was designed by describing ethical procedures, access to and sampling participants, and collection of data. In this chapter, a discussion is provided of the analytical tools that are used to examine the data. I delineate the three stages of data analysis where a combination of thematic, discourse, and frame analysis was deployed. These allowed the analysis to consider both macro and micro levels leading to a thorough exploration. I end this chapter with reflections on positionality and some limitations of the adopted methodology.

The data chapters 6, 7, and 8 present different understandings of English policy and teaching/learning practices from three vintage points. Chapter 6 focuses on findings related to the vision of internationalising Algerian universities and how it shaped discourses of English language policies within AHE. It also illustrates the impact of the historical factor and the current political unrest on debates about the status of English. In Chapter 7, I present teachers' perceptions of changes within AHE, their day-to-day experiences, and their ELT practices. This chapter demonstrates the conditions and realities of educational reform and ELT, and it further shows the institutional and pedagogic challenges that these teachers face. Chapter 8 centres around students' perceptions of English, their experiences of learning and using the language, and the challenges they encounter in the learning process. Students' perspectives add another dimension to the other data chapters. The rationale behind setting the three chapters into this particular order was to first examine top-down language policies and dominant discourses about ELT, and, then, juxtapose these with the micro classroom level drawing on teachers' and learners' perspectives.

In chapter 9, I move to interpreting and discussing the findings in light of different theoretical lenses. I relate these discussions to global educational transfer, cultural and pedagogic hegemony, and nativespeakerism. This chapter answers the research questions and argues for the complexity of ELT discourses in Algeria given the historical/political context, teachers'

practices, and learners' experiences of learning English. I conclude with a summary of the thesis' argument in chapter 10, and I outline the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical implications.

Chapter 2: English policy, discourses, and ideologies: conceptual preliminaries

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will define concepts related to the research themes and questions previously outlined. A critical discussion of the key concepts will be provided to highlight how these concepts are understood and used throughout the thesis. I will start with defining Language Policy (LP) as a field of research. Conceptualising language policies aims to lay the ground for chapter 3 where I explore the local forces behind language policies within Algerian Higher Education (AHE). This theorisation is also needed for chapter 4 where I address how the spread of English Language Teaching (ELT) interlocks with global forces driving higher education worldwide. This chapter will also focus on theorising the concepts of ideology, discourse, and power.

2.2 Language policy: definitions and research orientations

At the surface level, language policies might be portrayed as neutral and apolitical. The way policy discourses are shaped, focuses mainly on presenting functional purposes behind promoting specific languages over others. These choices are also legitimised as pivotal for countries' economic, social, and political progress. In this section, I will first provide an understanding of LP as a field of inquiry. A brief outline will provide the aspects that most concern LP researchers and the common theoretical and practical approaches they undertake to address these issues. To clarify the theoretical understanding in which this research situates, I will focus on the emergence of critical theory in examining language policy through reviewing research studies that consider the political and ideological nature of LP.

Many societies coming out of a colonial experience tend to start a process of rebuilding their nation-state. This challenging phase requires decisions about introducing reforms to different areas such as language. This endeavour is often referred to as language planning that results in policies regarding several domains such as education, administration, and media. Shohamy (2006: 45) perceives LP as a linguistic strategy by which authority holders make decisions about "organizing, managing and manipulating language behaviours". Spolsky (2012: 3) also defines LP as "an officially mandated set

of rules for language use and form within a nation-state". As such, this linguistic management does not simply entail choosing a language that serves people's interests and facilitates their everyday needs. These language choices, however, are often shaped by ideas about the nation-state, national identity, and politics. Brazil is another case where several indigenous languages are the norm in the everyday life, but only Portuguese is kept as the national official language. Similarly, in Indonesia, Bahasa Indonesia was privileged as the national language over several local languages before the Indonesian independence from the Dutch. Soon after, nationalist leaders endorsed the use of Bahasa Indonesia as a medium of instruction at different educational levels (Setyabudi, 2017).

Language policy has flourished as an area of research that is oriented towards both theory and practice. Although researchers' main concern is to unravel the way LP shapes societies, they remain focused on practical implications to bring justice to language education across the world. Ricento (2006) considers LP research as an area of intersection where theoretical exploration meets the will to find practical solutions regarding a wide range of issues around language planning and implementation. Ricento (2006: 11) maintains that "LP is not just an exercise in philosophical inquiry; it is interested in addressing social problems which often involve language, to one degree or another, and in proposing realistic remedies". Many research studies which focused on practical issues of LP have been influenced by Spolsky's model (2004). Spolsky (2004) first describes LP as comprising both visible and undeclared rules. What is capturing about Spolsky's conceptualisation is his division of language policies into three components that seem independent yet linked in the way they interact. The figure below presents these components.

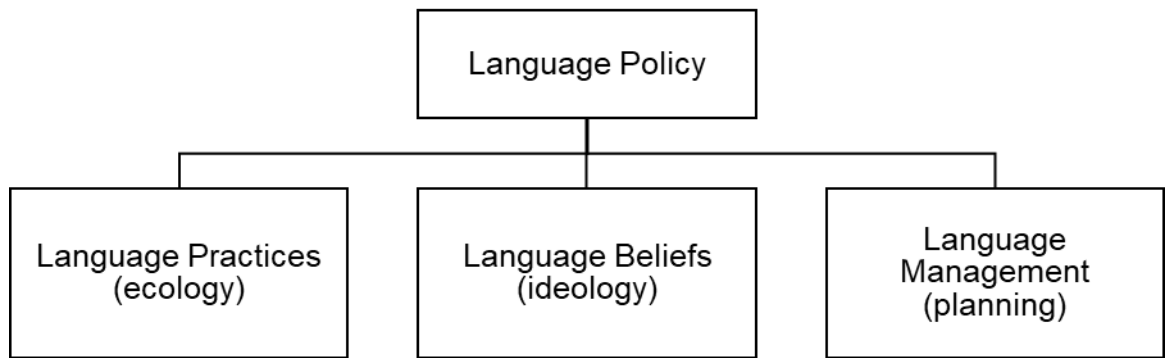


Table 1: A model of language policy Spolsky (2004)

The first component “language practices” refers to the actual languages or varieties which people prefer to use daily within a speech community. It is also called “the ‘real’ language policy of the community” (Spolsky, 2012: 5). This type of policy is practised by people naturally and not necessarily prescribed in official documents. Spolsky (2012) notes that language practices sometimes run opposite to written language policies.

Spolsky (2004) indicates an implicit component to language policy which relates to the underlying values and beliefs ascribed to language varieties by people of a given speech community. These beliefs form the basis of language ideologies. For example, within education, language policies often mirror the ideological position of people who have certain authority (Spolsky, 2004). As in the case of the Algerian education, the management falls back on the government which dictates that Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) should be used as a first and only language in educational institutions (primary and secondary education) despite the fact Darija and Berber languages are used by people in everyday life. As such, language practice and language management are different in this case. This is a result of ideologies that often shape language policy decisions (see section 3.2.2).

The third component which Spolsky (2004) outlines is language management. This refers to official actions that are often undertaken by authorities to issue rules and regulations about language practice. For example, to encourage the use of another language (sometimes beyond the classroom level to influence public behaviour), language management is imposed through documented official rules (as in the case of Arabisation policy explained in 3.2.2). This component is often the main subject of research for those interested in evaluating top-down language policies.

Spolsky is not the only one who worked on the different facets of LP, Ball (2007) and Bonacina-Pugh (2012) also conceptualise it similarly. However, they use different terminology to emphasise how LP is an umbrella term that involves: text, discourse, and practice. Particularly, Ball (2007) highlights an important point about policy research. He points out how the notion of policy is vaguely defined by researchers who very often lack theoretical and epistemological understandings of the term. He outlines two different conceptualisations: policy as a text and policy as a discourse. Ball (2007) explains that policy as a “text” represents the written or spoken decisions (about language planning for example) and they are driven by policy as a “discourse”. The latter relates more to a perceived policy that operates at the level of beliefs and ideologies. Ball (2007: 44) explains that “policy discourses produce frameworks of sense and obviousness with which policy is thought”. This hidden component shapes both policy texts and the language practices of a speech community. As such, policies happen at different levels: texts, processes, discourses, and practices. This conceptualisation is useful for this research as it shows the different façades of English language policy and practice as the data chapters will demonstrate (see 6.3 and 7.5).

Bonacina-Pugh (2012) expands on Ball’s work and proposes “practiced language policy”. She points out that people make different linguistic choices in contexts where more than one language can be used. Furthermore, Bonacina-Pugh (2012: 218) claims the peculiarity of “practiced language policy” lies in its focus on how language policies are constructed in real interactions which “provide implicit interactional rules of language choice that influence speakers’ language choice acts”. Thus, she argues that through exploring language practices, researchers unveil hidden policies. Bonacina-Pugh (2012) argues that LP research tends to focus more on the text and discourse levels and claims that language policy as a practice is underexplored. She points out the importance to examine language practices in specific contexts to be able to evaluate the impact of language policies as texts and discourses. Bonacina-Pugh’s (2012) theoretical insight on language policy is stimulating in the way it is driven by a practical approach. For instance, in another study (2020), she examined multilingualism in French classrooms by newly arrived immigrant children in France. Her findings suggest that language practices in classrooms

challenge the French monolingual language policy in both forms: text (written and oral documents) and discourse (values and beliefs).

Bonacina-Pugh's focus on practice brings a fresh perspective to the LP field of research. Nevertheless, Bonacina-Pugh's methodology seems to be narrowed only to conversational analysis within micro-classroom settings. The findings explain the "practiced language policy" based mainly on learners' language use within classroom settings. As such, the findings do not explain thoroughly how LP functions at the level of text, discourse, and practice and how these three interrelate. As such the component she suggests "practiced language policy" has some limitations at the level of methodology.

Similar to Bonacina-Pugh, who focuses on language policy as a practice from a linguistic angle, other researchers tend to concentrate on language policy as a "text" or, in Spolsky's words, on the "language management" part. Examining English as a Foreign Language (EFL) shows a profusion of studies researching the policy of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) within higher education context to assess its success (see 4.4).

As mentioned above, there has been a move in LP research to focus more on the ideological part which underlies specific language policies. This move allows "an understanding of how power is represented and reflected in various language policies at all levels of social structure and processes" (Ricento, 2006: 19). Furthermore, Shohamy (2006) also treats LP as a complex research area where many factors interlock. Her conceptualisation of LP was also greatly influenced by Spolsky's LP model which she further elaborates. Her main argument is that LP research should focus on mechanisms which she defines as "overt and covert devices that are used as the means for affecting, creating, and perpetuating de facto language policies" (2006: 54). She also describes these mechanisms as central to LP research since they reveal how ideologies become practices. Shohamy (2006: 54) argues that "real policy is executed through a variety of mechanisms that determine the de facto practices". There is a need, therefore, to examine the use of mechanisms and study their consequences and effects on de facto LP, as it is through these mechanisms that the de-facto language policy is created and manifested.

Despite the different approaches taken by researchers who are interested in LP, a common agreement is that language policy is a complex field of

competing discourses and ideologies. Exploring the ideological nature of LP is considered part of a critical turn which the field has undertaken at the beginning of the 1980s (Ricento, 2006). Particularly, socio-historical, political, and economic factors have been considered key to researching language policies. Abdelhay et al. (2020: 1) argue that “education is normally viewed as the cornerstone of political and social processes of integration. The result of this process is explicit or implicit language policy for a given institution”. According to Tollefson (2000), language policies within educational institutions aim to shape linguistic behaviour. In this view, ideologies about language framed in a policy also embody conceptions about functions, values, norms, expectations, preferences, predictions, and roles that guide linguistic practice (Abdelhay et al., 2020). According to Abdelhay et al. (2020: 3), language policy discourses have a “performative” function meaning that they reflect a symbolic representation of reality.

A critical understanding of language planning and policies require above all exploring the intricacy between language, discourse, ideology, and social practices. In this regard, Ricento (2006: 15) notes the increase in the number of research studies that examine language shift “not as an incidental and natural outcome of language contact but rather a manifestation of asymmetrical power relations based on social structures and ideologies that position groups and their languages hierarchically within a society”. Given this conceptual shift characterising language policy within a critical lens, the following section will elaborate on the key notions of ideology, discourse, and power relations.

2.3 Theorising ideology and discourse

Within a critical lens, it is argued that language policies, especially in multilingual contexts, are shaped by ideologies more than anything (Joseph, 2010; Piller, 2016). As language is considered one key aspect of what makes a nation-state (Wright, 2012), it is most likely that decisions about language education carry the ideological views of those who have the power to decide. The concept of ideology is contentious as it has acquired different connotations. Theories on ideology tend to prioritise a specific factor – religion, economy, culture – and put it at the centre of power relations. I will be comparing different understandings of ideology from both Global North and Global South theorists.

In this research, I view ideology as “frameworks of knowledge” (Pennycook, 2001: 82). These frameworks organise all types of relations (between individuals and ideas) within societies. I will discuss first Algerian philosopher Malek Bennabi’s views of ideologies since his conceptualisations are based on observations and studies of post-colonial contexts. Bennabi (1990) approaches these key concepts by drawing a comparison between Western understandings and adding an Islamic angle. His well-known work delves into the roots and conditions for societies to change, develop, and achieve progress in accordance with their values and principles. In most of his work, Bennabi (1990, 1998) places ethical values and principles ingrained in religion as driving factors that cannot be removed from the equation to build a developed society.

According to Bennabi (1990: 51), ideologies are a “framework of knowledge” existing in two forms within each society. Ideologies are “imprimées” internalised as a system, and “exprimées” i.e., expressed by individuals. The former is a schematic knowledge transferred to individuals through texts and talks, as Bennabi argues. The latter, however, refers to ways the internalised idea is portrayed in the human way of thinking and behaving. The expressed ideology, according to Bennabi, also refers to the individual agency and his ability to add, change and create ideas that can be transferred to following generations.

Bennabi (1990) explains how within a social milieu, ideologies’ strength and sustainability lie in the function they fulfil. He argues that ideologies serve to establish and maintain order on three fundamental levels: the material, the intellectual, and the psychological level. While the material order is mainly concerned with the ideas and beliefs that have effects and consequences on social activities and practices, the intellectual order relates to forms of thinking that are aligned with these new social activities (Bennabi, 1990: 52). Additionally, the psychological and moral order is more linked to the person and the way they experience these frameworks of knowledge. For Bennabi (1990), ideologies might survive if individuals treat ideologies as a holistic way of life shared by a given social group. However, ideologies fade away when an individual’s moral and ethical practices are not derived from their framework of knowledge that is fundamental to a given society. Consequently, he sees that certain ideologies prevail over others when they can penetrate the material, intellectual and moral order. In this situation, societies also start to borrow ideas they presume ‘modern’ from others since

their internalised framework of knowledge has less impact. Bennabi (1990) argues that this leads to the triumph of the material world and that reality starts to centre around the material object as such quantity is valued more than quality at different levels of society.

Negative connotations are often attributed to ideologies within a Marxist view due to the focus on social class struggle. Ideologies are, thus, conceptualised as “systems of misconceived ideas” (Van Dijk, 2013: 2). The Marxist view centred on ideas born out of relations of power where the bourgeoisie class ruled the material world and exploited the proletariat through direct and indirect means. It is to some extent valid that socioeconomic inequalities are partially rooted in this materialist exploitation, yet, other forms of inequalities exist outside economic ideologies.

Canagarajah and Said (2009) add that not all ideologies have a repressive distortive function. They argue that “ideologies can make inequalities appear natural and acceptable, they can also illuminate them to facilitate social change” (2009: 392). Another counterargument to Marxist views on ideology is offered by Bennabi (1990) who perceives ideologies as a framework of knowledge that can carry positive intentions when there is a balance in power relations as diffused across the three aspects which makes up the cultural society: the material, individuals, and ideas/ thought (intellect). However, ideologies can become oppressive and dominant when they are unreceptive to “expressed” ideologies and when they become dogmatic. Taking the difference between Islam and Islamism as an example, while Islam is a faith that people around the world adopt as a way of life and connection to the creator, often people in power politicise Islam to serve their different interests. Therefore, religious discourse is often used by policymakers to manipulate people by playing on their religious beliefs. I should refer to this point when elaborating on Arabisation language policy in Algeria and how it gained legitimacy through religious discourse (see 3.2.2). Consequently, this religious discourse was not taken for granted by the whole society, yet it ideologically polarised people into opponents and proponents of bilingualism within and outside the educational sphere.

Bennabi focuses on a system of ideologies that are internalised because he sees it as an essential element for social change. On the other hand, ideologies “exprimées” were less elaborated. Bennabi (1990; 1998) did not deconstruct how the individual as an active agent receives, reproduces, and resists/challenges dominant ideologies.

Other critical theorists also define ideologies as “ideas, values, and beliefs oriented to explaining a given political order, legitimizing existing hierarchies and power relations and preserving group identities” (Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002:187). The ideological system in their material existence often serves the interest of social and economic power. Holborow (2007: 52) states in this view that an ideology “is a set of ideas that emerges from specific social relations and supports the interests of a particular social class”. Moreover, for Fairclough (2002: 8), ideologies are “representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination, and exploitation”. Van Dijk (2013), particularly, takes a similar approach to Bennabi (1970) in the way he theorises ideologies. He takes a socio-cognitive approach and outlines three components: general ideology, variable ideological attitudes, and individual experiences. Van Dijk (2013: 2) first explains that ideologies are largely acquired, expressed, and reproduced by discourse. Yet, he also points out that these processes of acquisition and reproduction do not apply to the entire society but can exist within a particular social group while they can be challenged/resisted by other groups. Interestingly, Van Dijk (2013; 2008) asserts that ideologies as a form of values and norms can be used differently according to a group’s interests. Hence, it can be stated that it is not frameworks of knowledge and belief systems per se that are dogmatic but how these are exploited and used by people to fulfil cultural, economic, or political functions. In this exploitation of belief systems, relations of power are often asymmetrical.

Van Dijk’s theory of ideology differentiates between ideologies in their general, abstract sense, and ideological attitudes. While general ideologies have broader social, economic, and political functions, ideological attitudes “feature more specific beliefs about socially relevant issues in specific domains” (Van Dijk, 2013: 5). I focus here on the case of ideological attitude because of its relevance to the topic of English language teaching, and educational language policies. Within higher education, the English language is often positioned as a marker of “global academic excellence” (Piller, 2016: 180). This ideological attitude towards English is commonly portrayed in teaching and learning. For example, in teaching practices, English is often prioritised over other languages. Consequently, teachers and students often struggle as the pressure placed on them to use English in teaching and research creates a linguistic barrier to progress academically

(Piller and Cho, 2013). Additionally, at the level of language policies, monolingual ideology takes over and reinforces further linguistic injustice where the language right of local people are marginalised. Finally, this ideological attitude has also become normalised within the academic domain where only published work in English is valued whereas non-English academic papers might be marginalised (Piller, 2016). A point of emphasis is that ELT is not the core issue. English has become a crucial language, what is controversial, however, is the ideological constructs around English. These ideologies are often internalised by several policymakers who venture to invest in ELT under the promise that it will solve deep educational issues.

Another dimension added by Van Dijk (2013) is psychological cognition which for him represents the link between ideologies and personal cognition. The individual's past personal and collective experiences also play a role in building ideological attitudes, especially towards language. The last component captures the personal and social dimension of ideologies, as he calls it the mental models. Van Dijk (2013: 5) theorises that "all ideological practices of group members are based on specific mental models that feature a subjective representation of events or actions observed or participated in". According to him, these mental models are an amalgam of both ideologically based practices shared by members of a group, and the peculiar personal aspects that are exclusive to an individual's history and unique social experiences. It is this balanced approach between the social and personal nature of ideologies that makes his theory of ideology more relevant to the nature of the research. As a way of illustration, Holliday (2005) explains a robust ideology in the ELT industry where teachers are discriminated against, in that they are often positioned as 'non-native' speakers of English. He calls this ideology nativespeakerism that represents 'native speaker' teachers as 'experts' in ELT. This belief tends to perpetuate at different social and personal levels. For example, the ideology often prevails in ELT approaches and materials that are developed by 'native speakers'. These, then, become favoured in classrooms, as such, placing 'non-native' speakers as receivers, with less knowledge and skills to cultivate their own. Similarly, at the personal level, this belief can play out in learners' progress where they target the ideal 'native speaker' (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013). Their attempts to reach this target very often drive them to despair.

To further explore how language ideologies acquire legitimacy, the next section will examine how ideologies relate to discourse and power.

2.4 Language as a discourse

It is argued that ideologies portrayed at the social practice level tend to represent a particular aspect of reality as these ideologies are framed through specific discourses. As discourse is defined differently across disciplines, in this section, I conceptualise this notion within applied linguistics and social theory to clarify for readers how it is used throughout the thesis.

A language is a powerful tool that can be exploited to achieve legitimisation and naturalisation of ideologies. As specific discourses become accepted by a group, they give to the ideologies they represent “the status of natural truths and common sense” (Holborow, 2007: 53). To define what is meant by discourse, reference to Fairclough's work (1995, 2014) is crucial. Fairclough (2014) elaborates on De Saussure's early conception of language. De Saussure (1957) argued that language mirrors two separate dimensions: one is *langue* that represents the collective code, social system, and standards. The other is *parole* that relates to the individual language use and the product of people's linguistic choices. Fairclough (2014) critiques this dichotomy, particularly De Saussure's conception of *parole*. He argues that language use is both individual and social. He supports his claim by arguing that language is a “social practice” meaning that its use is subject to the social identities of its users, their socially defined purpose behind language use, and the social setting where language takes place. This connects with what I previously discussed regarding the personal and social nature of ideologies (Van Dijk, 2013). Given the inextricable link between ideologies and discourses, one can argue that *parole* is not purely specific to the individual, it is also determined by social norms and conventions. Therefore, Fairclough prefers to use the term discourse instead to emphasise the intricate relationship between language and society and how this relationship plays out in the process of language production and interpretation.

Fairclough's (2014) definition of discourse is multiplex as it represents three interrelated elements. It refers to the text as a micro product that he defines as a “product of the process of text production” (2014: 57). Additionally, discourse as a text is embedded in the macro process of social interaction

within a context. The wider cultural, social, and political contexts shape the ideologies which govern both the production and the interpretation of texts. Pennycook (1994) shares the same view when theorising how discourse is more than a linguistic phenomenon. Nevertheless, he adds that language as discourse is not merely a reflection of social practice, but it also produces unequal social relations. His view is important since he critically distinguishes between discourse and language explaining that “language use is an instance of discourse” and not the other way around (Pennycook, 1994: 115). Building on Foucault's work (1997, 1982), Pennycook (1994) draws attention to the importance of macro ideological forces (cultural, social, political) that drive discourses but not determine discourse. He also explains that it is not language that becomes a discourse and occurs in a vacuum but “different uses of language within one language imply particular understandings” (1994: 122). In other words, it is rather a question of meaning attached to instances of language when placed within systems of power and knowledge (Foucault, 1982: 100). These systems, therefore, frame language as a discourse resulting in a particular way of understanding. Pennycook also (1994) disagrees with Fairclough's view on power as controlled by one group and not by others. Following a Foucauldian approach, Pennycook (1994: 128) acknowledges that the formation of discourses is possibly embedded in “a multiplicity of social, cultural, political, economic, technical, or theoretical conditions”. As such, this conceptualisation demonstrates the different forces underpinning discourses. In this thesis, I follow this line of thought in that, I consider discourses regarding ELT within Algerian higher education driven by multiple factors. These could be explored when juxtaposing global, national, and local perspectives. It is further crucial to realise power relations behind discourses of English. The next section will delve into forms of power and how they relate to discourse.

2.5 Power in/behind discourse

One dominant conception of power in social and political debates is the one that often views its inherent existence in repressive actions. This is also termed hard power that depends on establishing control, norms, and rules through coercion. Within this view, the interests of political/social groups tend to run opposite of those who are dominated. An obvious case can be colonialism where military power predominates the colonised. Furthermore,

in the recent two decades, China and Japan have been described as powerful nations. The power which these countries possess is also seen as a hard form of power at the economic level (Nye, 2004). Nevertheless, taking a critical approach to examine the notion of power and how it operates in societies, these understandings seem more simplistic and do not denote its complexity. In this section, I will discuss Nye's (2004) and Foucault's (1982) attempts of theorising the complexity of power, how it is thought, and its effects on human beings.

A postmodern conceptualisation of power attempts to delve into its effects and how it operates less visibly at transnational levels. Nye (2004) argues that when nations address issues in relation to foreign policy, crime, terrorism, disease, they rely on both hard and soft power. He suggests "soft power" as a form to obtain consent and support from other people making them align their objectives to reach similar outcomes. Only countries that dominate the world of economy, politics, and technology can engage in soft power. For example, Nye's (2004) theory of soft power focuses on the United States (US) and how it implements this form of power to manage foreign policy affairs. He argues that for the US "the objective measure of potential soft power has to be attractive in the eyes of specific audiences. And that attraction must influence policy outcomes" (2004: 34). Notably, in the long term, the element of attraction is a key notion through which foreign policy goals are achieved.

A major source of American soft power is its popular culture which has a great reaching impact and attraction across the world (Nye, 2004). To some extent, Hollywood movies, songs, sports as entertainment industries might play a role to diffuse political ideas among younger people. For example, Kraidy (2008) investigated Arab TV channels displaying American popular culture such as Hollywood movies. He identified the significant impact on both children and youth in the way the content shapes their social and political views. He also notes that learners of English were particularly found attracted to the content which these channels broadcast. Ames and Burcon (2016) demonstrate in their study how similar channels usually reflect a distorted version of the Western lifestyle. Along the same line, Alsadoon (2019: 3) examines the 2010 "Arab Spring" and explains how the Arab youths were influenced by the American vision of democracy, freedom of the press, and freedom of expression. She argues that these values have reached the younger generation through Western popular culture.

Alsadoon's (2019) linguistic analysis of recent Arabic music and talk shows demonstrates similar themes found in American popular culture. Based on this resemblance, Alsadoon (2019) argues that this form of soft power is what triggered people to raise and ask for their civil rights.

Nye (2004) calls attention to how soft power fulfils the political agenda for nations' foreign policy, yet it is not always in the hands of the state, it rather takes more subtle forms and is encapsulated in the actions of different actors. He, therefore, emphasises cultural contacts, academic exchanges, and non-governmental organisations in maintaining American soft power. An example which Nye gives is linked to education, particularly the learning experiences of international students seem to play an active role in representing an image of success and great values about the US when returning to their countries. I discuss the link between soft power, ELT, and the role of cultural organisations in section 9.4.3.

Critiques of Nye's (2004) theory relate mainly to the way he overemphasises the attractiveness of the American culture and its impact on foreign policy. American popular culture might also be repellent to many other groups. One might even argue that it has lost its charm in recent years. As a way of illustration, within the Arab world, there is raise of other popular cultures, for example, Turkish and Korean popular culture among youth. Moreover, what is left unaddressed in Nye's theory is resistance on the part of those who soft power is targeting. For example, the theory overlooks how young adults are not mere receivers but have agency and clear goals when exposed to popular culture. In section 8.3, I provide learners' accounts of using popular culture as a resource to learn English.

The work of Foucault (1977-1982) has been influential in philosophical debates about power, but it has also been critiqued for the radical approach he takes in understanding human beings (Sayer, 2012). Although his work is contentious, his analysis of power relations and how they can be dissociated through investigating forms of resistance is particularly interesting.

A central idea to the concept of power is normalisation as an effect of its social and cultural facets as argued by Foucault (1982). Foucault (1982) challenges the monolithic understanding of power, its sources, and effects. As such, his view diverges from the Marxist understanding of power as an existing body exerted by those who dominate a society (economically and politically). Unlike the prevailing view of power as repressive, centralised,

and exerted through military and police forces, Foucault (1977) discusses how normalisation is a form of power that is invisible and dispersed throughout society. He further argues that its function has a powerful impact on human behaviours. Foucault's lecture series (1977-1978) on governmentality and biopower capture his central argument of how human beings are regulated into subjects. The human being's behaviours, actions, and choices are constructed and shaped in complex ways. These are not directly linked to the visible power of a state (a specific political structure of management) or the juridical power (law). Power rather passes through different institutions among which are schools, hospitals, religious institutions. Through power and knowledge, such institutions create "régime de savoir" where only privileged knowledge is allowed to circulate (Foucault, 1982: 781).

Foucault's theory does not limit the function of power to restraining and subtracting but also expands its ability to constitute, shape, and produce the individual. Hence, for Foucault (1977) the individual's reality cannot exist outside this complex power relations which he calls "discipline". This productive aspect of power/knowledge refers to the expertise in a particular field governed by specialists who hold prestige and authority within a social institution. Discourses produced by experts within domains such as medicine, economics, or politics do not exist in a vacuum, but they have power behind them. Kramsch (2020) also echoes this dimension arguing that language has symbolic power as it is used in a particular context. She further argues that the legitimacy of the language we use "will not come from our words alone, but from the institution we belong to, the rank or the reputation we have in our family, workplace or classroom, our gender or social class, or from our expertise in the topic at hand" (2020: 198). These capture the invisible forces that play a role in shaping language use. The dimension of power and knowledge system is placed at the heart of the discourses I examine in this research. I draw on this perspective when exploring how English is talked about at the policy and individual levels. I further examine different power relations in AHE where English is taught to see how they produce/reproduce or challenge what is normalised in ELT. As such, the concepts that I explored in this chapter will provide me with the lens to navigate different components relevant to this research. From presenting the research context, approaching the literature, to analysing and

discussing the data, I will constantly bring into play the concepts of language policy, ideology, discourse, and power.

2.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I provided an understanding of key concepts that will be used throughout the study. The theoretical complexity of these concepts requires a clarification at the outset of the thesis. The chapter started with a discussion of how language policies are conceptualised at the level of text, discourse, and practice. This understanding is adopted when analysing policies about ELT in data chapter 6. I further explored the concepts of ideology, discourse, and power. These key notions provide a conceptual framework to discuss perspectives and representations regarding English at the level of policy, teaching practices, and learning experiences. The concepts are also salient to identify dominant and counter-discourses when juxtaposing data from policymakers, teachers, and learners. I shall now move to explore the Algerian context and how language policies and practices have evolved from colonial time to contemporary Algeria.

Chapter 3: Algeria as a research context

3.1 Introduction

Before exploring the status of English in Algerian Higher Education (henceforth, AHE), an overview of the country's linguistic landscape is deemed useful. This will explain the complex realities of languages in Algeria through a historical lens. This chapter will also examine language policies and educational reforms from the colonial period to contemporary Algeria. It will present the existing tensions between Arabic, French, and Berber languages. This debate will lay the groundwork for an in-depth analysis of emerging themes from the research data. Finally, a brief discussion will address some factors behind the increasing demand for English in the AHE.

3.2 The Algerian linguistic landscape: a socio-historical perspective



Image 1: Multilingualism within a university campus in Kabylia (Credit: Wikimedia Commons)

Algeria, with a size of over 2 million square kilometres, is indeed a country reflecting diversity in many respects. The above image captures the Algerian linguistic landscape and how it is characterised by “diglossia”. Diglossia is a term suggested by Ferguson (1959) which first described the situation in Arabic-speaking countries where languages coexist with different functions (formal/vernacular). Within Algeria, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) has a high status, French is a second language learnt in school, while Algerian Arabic (Darija) and the Berber language (Tamazight) have a low status and

are rarely found in educational settings. Although these languages can be considered as a source of richness, in Algeria they have often triggered conflicts, notably in language education planning and policy. In this view, this section presents a socio-historical overview of the Algerian linguistic landscape to explain how each language carries a socio-political position that has diachronically evolved (Mostari, 2005).

Djité (2008) uses the example of South Africa and how speakers use different languages to carry out different daily communicative activities. This also applies to Algeria where multilingualism seems to be the norm. A person can speak Darija or/and Berber languages at home, they might switch to French when they are in a bank or a hospital or when they go to the pharmacy and might switch to Classical Arabic when they attend the daily prayers at the mosque. The same person is going to use the modern standard Arabic if they are teaching or learning in primary and secondary schools. Algerians tend to juggle between at least three languages or more depending on the context and the people with whom they communicate. Djité states that “there is, therefore, greater order in the apparent chaos of the African multilingual context than is generally realised” (2008: XV). To unpack the complexity of the Algerian linguistic landscape, I chose to provide a socio-historical account while also acknowledging the political dimension of discussing languages in Algeria. Simply listing the languages which Algerian people speak will not do justice to the ethnic diversity, and it will overlook controversial debates around the linguistic landscape and language policy in education.

3.2.1 Tamazight

The Berber languages are the mother tongue of Berber ethnic groups (Amazigh) who are the indigenous people of North Africa. As the Berbers were ruled by different invaders, their language is said to be affected by various civilisations with whom the inhabitants came in contact (Sayahi, 2014). There are different speculations around the origins of the Berber language. Salem (1980) contends that this origin can be traced back to the early rulings of the Phoenician and then the Roman empire in North Africa. The ancient form of Berber ‘Lybico-Berber’ is said to be derived from Phoenician origin since they were found to share a similar structure (Cited in Chami, 2009: 387). As the Berber languages spread across North Africa,

there are different forms spoken in each country. In Algeria for example, there are four ethnic groups each of which speaks a different Berber variety (Kabyle, Shawi, Mozabites, and Tuareg) While some are mutually intelligible, others differ in structure and vocabulary (Sayahi, 2014). Most of the Berber ethnic groups are multilingual. They speak Berber/Arabic and French, but older speakers who live in isolated villages can be monolingual. Berber languages are unified under the standardised form Tamazight. The status of Tamazight has for long been a subject of dispute where different opinions surround its official recognition as a national language. This point will be further elaborated in 3.5.

3.2.2 Modern Standard Arabic

Arabic appeared in Algeria from the 7th century following the Arab expansion to spread Islam (Mostari, 2005; Sayahi, 2014). The growing numbers of Arab settlers throughout the following centuries helped Arabic to flourish across North Africa. In addition, the fact that Arabic was a powerful language, with its written Quranic script, led Berbers who converted to Islam to learn this language. Although they also tried to keep and preserve their languages and cultures, nowadays Berber languages are only spoken by the minority 25-30% of the total population (Benrabah, 2014). I will elaborate on the status of Arabic in 3.3.2.

3.2.3 Darija

Over the following centuries, different Arab rulers (Kingdoms of Zirid, Hammadite, Fatimid, and Abbassid) firmly established a powerful political status of Arabic in North Africa and made it the official language in the region (Benrabah, 2014). Since Arabic was rapidly spreading among Berber ethnic groups, this created a rich language contact. Berber varieties have brought modifications to Arabic which have resulted in a new breed called “Darija” (the Algerian vernacular Arabic).

Despite being the everyday language spoken by the Algerian great majority (70-75%), Darija has always been marginalised and regarded inferior to MSA by Algerian policymakers. Belmioub (2015) argues that this neglect by authorities is mainly due to the lack of codification. Furthermore, Darija is such a dynamic language that slightly varies from one geographical place to

another in terms of lexis and phonology. This is mainly due to its constant interaction with Berber varieties as stated above and other colonial languages such as French, Spanish, Turkish, and other Mediterranean Romance languages (Adouane and Dobnik, 2017). Notably, French has tremendously impacted the Algerian vernacular Arabic due to the long colonial period that the country experienced. Adouane and Dobnik (2017: 2) note the massive presence of French words used by Algerian speakers in daily conversation, arguing that "Algerian Arabic is heavily influenced by French where code-switching and borrowing at different levels could be found". This captures the way French infiltrated the Darija used daily by the majority of Algerian.

3.2.4 The French language

In addition to the way French vocabulary intertwines with Darija, the French language is officially the second language. Algeria is considered as one of the unique countries which endured colonial integration through language and culture over a hundred and thirty-two years (1830-1962). This explains the survival of the French language amongst the Algerian people. After France defeated the Ottoman Empire who ruled Algeria for three centuries, French colonisers did not only aim to seize the Algerian territory but also tried to abolish all aspects related to the Algerian national identity. Maamri (2009) describes this approach as an assimilationist policy. In other words, a strategy which French government used to achieve "Frenchification" of Algerians who were regarded as barbaric and illiterate. As such, their so-called 'civilizing mission' sought to attain what they called French Algeria "l'Algérie Française" (Maamri, 2009: 79). The French coloniser was aware of how a language can be a powerful vehicle that unifies the Algerians and empower them to revolt. Thus, they believed that the imposition of the French language only can bring together both settlers and native Algerians. This unity did not imply equal rights among the two as much as it sought to establish conformity to French values and principles. The French law did not recognise the Algerians national identity. This denial of identity is echoed in Camus' (1942) famous novel *L'Étranger* (The Outsider): A French character who lives in Algiers murders an Arab. The entire story focuses on the French Meursault, his destiny, and what goes into his mind. However, the dead Arab has no role in the plot, not even a name as Camus only refers to him as the 'Arab'. This ethnic hatred characterising French colonisation is illustrated in

Fanon's work. Fanon (1965: 40) describes how all Algerians both intellectuals and peasants were only defined by their ethnic group "a doctor still remains an Arab. You can't get away from nature".

The Algerian colonial experience is a crucial period that determined the different structures of the society notably language policies and language attitudes. Therefore, discussion of current trends in language policies within AHE requires an understanding of the colonial period. The following section will touch on the aspects that have shaped the Algerian language and identity. Such discussion is grounded in the Algerian socio-political realities during three key periods: colonial, post-independence (the 70s-90s), and 2000s- 2019. These three periods mirror critical historical and socio-political events that have shaped the Algerian approach to language policies and the realities of its practices.

3.3 Language policies in Algeria

Given the multilingual landscape explained above, I now turn to language policies in Algeria and how they have always reflected an identity dimension. This close link between language and identity is crucial to elaborate on as the chapters of findings will later explain their relevance to the current changes within AHE. I will briefly provide an overview of the language policy during the colonial period before moving to other key policies issued after the independence. The two sub-sections aim to establish the link between how previous language policies have influenced and shaped the current status of language education in Algeria.

3.3.1 Frenchification: assimilationist policy

A recent report by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (2019) provides recent statistics which indicate the situation of the French language in the world. The report states that the number of French speakers in the world has reached 300 million of which 13 million and 804 thousand are Algerians. It also shows that 33% of Algerians speak French in their daily life (2019: 99). The persistence of the French language among Algerians is due to the colonial policies which France implemented during its occupation of Algeria. The French powerful administrative and educational institutions played a great tool in this persistence. These institutions as Fanon (1965:

37) describes were “committed to destroying the people’s originality”. As such, they have left a durable impact on the Algerian linguistic landscape.

The imposition of centralised language policy employed by France in its colonies has a historical background in its homeland. Spolsky (2018: 233) extensively traces this back to the period when French substituted Latin and imposed the Parisian version as the only standard form over the other language varieties. Spolsky (2018) argues that this linguistic approach which the French applied domestically was similar to the one used in the French colonies. Interestingly, he notes that the same approach was kept in several countries after independence. This section will explore this in the context of Algeria where the French language was and still holds a powerful position despite the Algerian nationalist leaders’ efforts to substitute it with Arabic and later with English.

A brief overview of French linguistic assimilation is needed to contextualise any discussion about the ideological nature of language policy within the Algerian education context. Education was a crucial sector for issuing language policies during the colonial period. Arabic, Darija, and Berber languages were strictly banned in the 1930s from schools. Meanwhile, French was imposed as the only national and official language taught to Algerian children from an early age (Murphy, 1977, cited in Benrabah, 2014). This approach was fundamental to the French colonial ideology to have “one language, one culture, one territory, one political conception (Ager, 1999: 19). The assimilation policy targeted monolingual education to achieve its ‘mission civilisatrice’. Ager (1999:18) describes the French educational system between 1880 and 1960 and states that “the same education was provided for (some) children in Africa as for those in Lille: the same textbooks were used...”. As such, the French targeted the educational system through which only the French language was taught to eradicate the local languages. As such, one of the strategies which assimilationist policy used was to spread negative perceptions among Algerian learners about their mother tongues. These were described as merely ‘dialects’ or ‘patois’ spoken by less civilized people. For example, the geographer Onésime Reclus (1886: 680) referred to Arabic and Berber as having “a passion for terrible guttural sounds which resemble vomiting” (cited in Benrabah, 2014: 44). Downgrading the local languages was a mind game to push Algerians to adopt French as a more eloquent language.

Such strict language policy left a durable impact on Algerians' linguistic profile and their attitudes towards French. Although these imposed policies succeeded to teach Algerian French, they seem to instigate a view about French as the language of oppression. This view is captured by the Algerian writer Gordon (1966: 113) who asserts that "French is a clear and beautiful language, [...] but it holds too many bitter memories for us" (Cited in Benrabah, 2013: 90). This perception explains the case of many Algerians who learn and speak French, but they often regard it as the language with a traumatic colonial history.

The unexpected effect of the assimilationist policy was the favouring of MSA which acquired rather positive connotations during the colonial period. The sense of unity and nationhood were notions equated to Arabic. To survive against the French eradication policies, Algerians clung to Islam and Arabic mastery (Maamri, 2009). These were also kept alive and reinforced through Quranic and religious schools where Arabic was secretly taught (Bellalem, 2012). However, the number of Berber speakers diminished because the Berber languages did not have a well-developed writing system, thus it was passed on orally to generations in a very limited way (Benrabah, 2013).

A language can indeed be a double-edged sword. As much as it can be a linguistic tool of imperialism (Phillipson, 2009), it can also serve as a means of subversion. Resistance to the colonial imposition took different forms. Learning Arabic secretly in Quranic schools was one way and appropriating French was another. Language appropriation was echoed in the work of several postcolonial writers in North Africa. Many writers referred to the ownership of French and their ability to mold and recreate its form in a way that "the French reader would become a stranger in his own language" (Yassine, 2017: 130). A good example of literary work is the Algerian postcolonial writer Assia Djebar and her different use of the French language in a way that is context-dependent and only Algerians can understand it. For Assia Djebar French was a means "to gain access to the historical writings of the French colonizer and to reappropriate these writings to expose their occultation of what she terms '[I]a violence initiale' (the initial violence)" (Yassine, 2017: 122). The use of Algerian vernacular Darija expression translated to French, and Darija structure in her work are forms of "cultural affirmation and resistance" (Yassine, 2017: 131).

Many Algerian writers perceived their mastery of French as a tool that can be used for decolonisation and resistance, "a war bounty" as the Algerian

writer Kateb Yacine describes it. Many of them wrote about their personal experiences using French. For example, Mohamed Dib argues that although the French language belongs to the French, the Algerians “have appropriated it and they cannot take it from us...we have added to it and gave it a new taste which they cannot recognise” (Dib, 1993: 30 my translation).

Despite this appropriation, there was a different attitude towards the French language within the Algerian educational setting. Particularly, developing an appropriate educational system and adopting a convenient approach to language policy was and is still one of the major issues facing independent Algeria. What made this a difficult task was the two conflicting ideologies which were proposed to shape the Algerian language and identity through education. Proponents of Arabic defended monolingual education as they wanted to turn the page and clean all the colonisers’ linguistic and cultural remnants. Nevertheless, their opponents called for bilingualism to keep both Arabic and French. The second group perceived French as a language embedded within the Algerian culture and daily life and was appropriated by Algerians. The following section explores this conflict under the Arabisation policy.

3.3.2 Arabisation: nationalist policy

Guilt-ridden Algerians wonder about the legitimacy of [Algeria’s multilingual] legacy. They ask themselves: Is it a feature of a thriving society or of an alienated one? Should they continue to use all their languages? Might they lose themselves, or rather, find themselves, in so doing? (Saadi-Mokrane, 2002: 57)

As previously mentioned, French was a prevailing language within the educational and administrative sector. Nationalist leaders strictly opposed this, arguing that a “linguistic purism” is needed (Benrabah, 2013: 50). As such, a call for Arabisation was made. This policy was not a sudden decision, but it was rooted in the spirit of nationalism that Arabic had gained during the colonial period.

Facing a multilingual reality, nationalist policymakers had to take decisions pertaining to the status of each language to define Algeria as an independent nation particularly in the late 1970s. The language planning in this period was meant to build the nation and restore the Algerian national

identity. Language decisions, thus, carried visions about national identity for Algeria to establish itself as an independent North African and Arab country. As Saadi-Mokrane's quote depicts, this process was full of doubts and uncertainty as the nature of language policies undertaken did not match the Algerian socio-linguistic reality. It is even argued that the problems facing Algerian education today can be narrowed to the mismanagement and the political nature of these early language decisions (Benrabah, 2013; Miliani, 2000). In this section, I will dissect the roots of Arabisation language policy which was implemented in the late 1970s. Discussion about the politics behind Arabisation policy will illustrate some contextual factors that often drive language decisions in Algerian education.

As discussed in chapter 2, language policies are always shaped by political ideologies. Algeria proves to be a more intricate case since ideologies shaping language planning after the independence were formed from a 'myth' that prevailed in the colonial period. In postcolonial Algeria, MSA received an official status soon after the country got its independence in 1962. Since then, the government has taken strict measures to build its nation-state. Under the motto "Islam is my religion, Arabic is my language and Algeria is my country", the government aimed to unite its people through reviving Arabic and Islam. As previously mentioned, French was a prevailing language within the educational and administrative sector. Nationalist leaders strictly opposed this, arguing that a "linguistic purism" is needed (Benrabah, 2013: 50). As such, a call for Arabisation was made. This policy was not a sudden decision, but it was rooted in the spirit of nationalism that Arabic had gained during the colonial period. Consequently, the mastery of the Arabic language was emphasised both within schools and outside (Maamri, 2009). Notably, several laws were passed to strengthen the use of Arabic among Algerians. For example, Arabisation was urged in administrative sectors. The constitutional Act No 91-05 was passed on the 5th of July 1998 which made the use of Arabic mandatory in all administrative spheres. The act also clearly stated that the use of any other language is considered against the law (Maamri, 2009). Similar laws prioritised Arabic-only policy and came at the expense of the other local languages. As a result, the marginalisation of the country's multilingualism created more division than unity.

The Arabisation policy is defined as the process of restoring the mastery of MSA among Algerians through monolingual education (Mostari, 2005).

Benrabah (2013) adds that Arabisation had both a linguistic and a cultural dimension. Starting from 1965, this policy was seen as a cornerstone to reconstruct the Algerian lost identity which was defined as Arab and Muslim (Miliani, 2000). The former minister of education Taleb Ibrahimi (1995) captures the link between the Arabic language and the national identity:

Arabization became a synonym for revitalization (ressourcement), a return to authenticity, a recuperation of the Arab identity that could not be realized without the restoration of the Arabic language...[it became] the fundamental condition for reconciling [Algeria] with itself" (cited in Bossut, 2016: 12)

The ideas expressed in the passage above are emblematic of how language and identity were central matters in the process of Algerian nation-building. Although Arabic was a key pillar of national sovereignty and the Islamic identity that Algeria was seeking to claim for itself, very few mastered it in the early post-colonial phase. Politicians and the Algerian presidents themselves have always used French when giving their speeches. The following speech of Algeria's first president Ahmed Ben Bella illustrates the point:

For I myself have difficulty expressing myself in this language. Many times it has happened, when our Arab brothers come to visit, that I must tell them that even though we do not know this language perfectly, it did not prevent us from feeling Arab at the bottom of our hearts. (cited in Bossut, 2016: 25)

In addition to the way Arabic is perceived as a key element to unify Algerians under one nation, Ben Bella's speech above also shows how restoring Arabic had also a political dimension as it is used to build diplomatic relations with the Middle East. In this view, Robert (2003: 01) claims in this regard that "the Arabization policy overlooked the country's linguistic diversity, denied any status to the languages spoken in Algeria and promoted Literary/Classical Arabic developed as the lingua franca of the Arab Middle East" (cited in Mohamed Benrabah, 2007a: 229). Furthermore, the policy also carried other implicit political agendas. Benrabah (2013) describes the Arabisation policy as a strategy to please the religious conservatives who kept pressurising the government to move to monolingual education. Their views were purely political and they used Islam in a manipulative way to legitimate their position and status.

These pressures shaped the first Algerian national constitution. The issued acts on the 28th of August 1963 clearly stated that “Islam is the religion of the state” (Article 4) and “Arabic is the national official language” (Article 5) (The Algerian Constitution, 1963: 4). Furthermore, Article 10 also referred to the priority which should be given to eliminating all colonial remnants. The rigidity of the government to take a strict positioning concerning Arabic regardless of the costs was reflected in the speech of the minister of education who declared “this [Arabisation] will not work, but we have to do it” (Grandguillaume, 1995: 18).

The intricacy of applying this policy was manifested in the language chosen by policymakers themselves. For example, politicians, ministers, and even presidents have been known since the independence to use French when addressing the Algerian people, occasionally Arabic is used but in short conversations. Except for the recent president who has demonstrated a careful consideration of his language use. In a press interview, the current Algerian president Abdel Madjid Taboun was asked by a journalist a question in French. The president started to reply in French then stopped and said “would you excuse me, I am just replying in the language she used to ask the question, don’t blame me and say the president is using too much French” (El Bilad TV, 2019). He started over again and translated the question into Algerian vernacular and replied in Algerian standard Arabic. This use reflects what Spolsky (2012: 5) calls “the ‘real’ language policy of the community” and also captures the politics around the use of French instead of Arabic in similar political situations.

The ideologies behind language policies have polarised the nation and have created an ongoing debate between those in favour of Arabic only and those who preferred maintaining bilingualism. More importantly, using one language denotes adherence to a certain group and implies the adoption of a certain ideology. Promoting Arabisation is equalled with being a ‘Wattani’ (nationalist) and faithful to Algeria, while bilingual users were called ‘Harka’ meaning traitors and French supporters. For example, Benghabrit a former minister of education (2014-2019) who was known for her promotion of bilingualism was accused of being the daughter of a Harki (Smail, 2018). Any suggestions that she put forward were seen as a threat to the status of Arabic.

Proponents of bilingualism critiqued the political agenda behind the Arabisation policy. They perceived the promotion of Arabic-only policy as

impractical and far from the Algerian socio-linguistic reality. They indicated that this policy was driven by an assimilationist ideology that sought to create a homogenous people where in reality the Algerian society is undeniably plural at the level of both cultures and languages. The image of what constitutes the Algerian identity was closely tied to one language deemed to be the façade of one nation. Such language ideology reflects a rather utopian vision that overlooks the country's multilingual nature, and it blindly denies the incontestable French linguistic impact. Moreover, the minorities' language rights were marginalised which further complicated the linguistic situation of the Algerian society. Despite evidence from social reality indicating the challenging nature of monolingualism, this policy was maintained in the educational sphere. The ensuing section will elaborate on the way Algerian education has always been a site of language struggle.

3.4 Language education in Algeria

The Algerian educational system has undergone fluctuations since its independence. In an attempt to improve the quality of education, Algerian decision-makers are continuously introducing several reforms related to the structure of the schooling system, teaching and learning pedagogies as well as language planning. The linguistic plurality has been a point of contention, particularly which language should be used as a medium of instruction in primary and secondary education. In addition, language in higher education has also been an area of concern especially in light of the internationalisation reform. I will start briefly with primary/secondary education before moving to higher education. Understanding language policies in both levels is crucial as they are considered complementary and are often shaped by a similar approach.

During the period between 1962 to 1970s, the school system was characterised by bilingual education. Scientific and technical subjects were taught in French whereas other social sciences were in Arabic (Bellalem, 2012). So far, this language planning that was adopted in both basic and higher education was viewed as effective since learners were very successful in science and they did not face any linguistic difficulties when enrolled in higher education where French is used as a medium of instruction (Benrabah, 2007). Yet, this raised concerns among the nationalist government. They claimed that bilingual education was viewed as a form of linguistic imperialism that threatens the status of Arabic and goes against the

national constitution laws previously mentioned. They also argued that bilingual education implicitly draws learners towards studying French and reduces their chances to master Arabic. Consequently, the 1979 reform marked the total Arabisation of the educational system where Arabic was assigned a crucial role, making it the language vehicle through which all the school subjects had to be taught. Meanwhile, French was introduced as a second language and a separate subject taught starting from grade 4. Later in 2001 during the presidency of Bouteflika, French was introduced at an earlier stage, in grade 2 (Benrabah, 2007).

The motives and applications of this language policy demonstrated several pitfalls. First, the educational programme aimed to “correct” the mother tongues children spoke, strengthen their mastery of Standard Arabic and defer the teaching of French (Miliani, 2000: 25). Unqualified teachers were brought from Egypt and Syria to promote ‘real’ Arabic and Islamic knowledge for Algerian learners. Yet, these teachers used vernacular Arabic as a medium of instruction that was strange for Algerian learners (Benrabah, 2013). Further contradictions are also found in the different types of education provided for the different social classes. While normal people were required to attend the Arabised public school, the children and family members of political leaders, ministers, and the president attended French schools (Messaoudi and Schemla, 1995).

The forms and structures which characterised primary, secondary, and higher education (1970-2002) were subconsciously built on the colonial legacy. This was evident in the implemented approach to language education which sought to shape Algerian learners into agents of “linguicism” (Benrabah, 2013: 66). Taleb Ibrahim (1981: 101), a former minister of education, also expresses a crucial idea related to the language/identity formation, stating the “national education is, in some respects, like business firm which needs to plan its production according to its future perspectives mapped out not only for few years but for almost a generation” (cited in Benrabah, 2013: 61-62). Education started to be perceived as a tool that shapes individual thinking and skills which conform to the state’s political agenda, rather than considering the educational settings as a place for critical thinking and knowledge. I will elaborate on this point in section 3.6 to delve into the 2002-2019 educational reform and how neoliberal thinking becomes more evident in the approach to language and teaching within higher education.

Language planning has been problematic within higher education in particular. After the Arabisation policy was fully applied to social sciences, economics, and communication curriculum, by 2000, 46% of the AHE was Arabised. Meanwhile, scientific disciplines have not changed and still use French as a medium of instruction (Cherrad-Benchefra and Derradji, 2004: 166). Grandguillaume (2004) argues that the coexistence of Arabic and French in higher education is not a matter of deliberate choice or preference but rather a necessity. He claims that French was kept due to the inadequacy of Arabic to convey scientific and technological terminology. As such, Arabic was “unable to meet the requirements to effectively teach in these fields of study” (2004: 13-14), particularly in terms of lack of teaching materials and teacher training.

The cracks in language planning within higher education become visible in students’ learning performance. First, serious linguistic difficulties seem to face some students who struggle to cope with the linguistic change, especially for those who have received both primary and secondary education in Arabic only. Students encounter another medium of instruction when they enrol in scientific disciplines. The lack of linguistic preparation leads many of them to fail exams (Maamri, 2009; Allal, 2016). For example, the MHESR stated clearly at the end of the academic year (2004/2005) that 80% of first-year students who were enrolled in scientific streams failed exams as a result of their lack of French linguistic proficiency (Gherzouli, 2019: 41).

The adversities facing students are attributed to the total Arabisation of primary and secondary education (Benrabah, 2013; Miliani, 2000). This points to the lack of coherence in language policies between the different educational levels. Up to the present, ongoing debates still pervade language policies in AHE. Different opinions are held about whether to keep the primary and secondary schooling system monolingual or to implement French as a medium of instruction for scientific subjects to equip students with the French jargon needed for higher education studies.

The second issue relates to the professional opportunities available in the Algerian job market. Students from Arabised disciplines appear to struggle to find a job that suits their degree. Nonetheless, according to Benrabah (2013), this issue is not found among those graduating from French departments and scientific disciplines. Hence, this lack of equal job opportunities first sparked protests among Arabised graduates who pushed

against the “French Favouritism” (Allouche, 2016). Socio-economically, these Arabised graduates seem to be disadvantaged compared to the French-speaking elites with a university degree. Consequently, this language planning has created further social stratifications based on an individual’s linguistic qualifications. Benrabah (2013: 66) explains this division between “the core group consisted of French-speaking elites and urban dwellers, and the periphery comprised ‘frustrated’ Arabised graduates from poor rural backgrounds or recently urbanized families”. In addition, access to good quality education through private tutoring is only limited to students from certain classes usually coming from urban cities and well-educated elites (Ghounane, 2018). These students tend to master French compared to those from poor family backgrounds and rural areas (Jacob, 2020).

Languages in a Bourdieusian view allow access to a “cultural capital” which relates to “knowledge, skills, and other cultural acquisitions” (Bourdieu, 1991: 14). In the case of Algeria, Arabic and French have uneven cultural capital, especially within the Algerian job market. French is still to a great extent occupying the commerce, economy, and technology (Le Roux, 2017). The reliance on French in these domains, which characterise economic development, gives the language an edge in the Algerian job market. Subsequently, for the urban elites French “remains a reflection of modernity and education” (Mostari, 2005: 3).

In a quantitative study conducted by Laala and Khaldi (2014), they found that new graduates seldom use Arabic in the Algerian job market. Yet, they highlight that the increase of multinational oil and gas companies shows a decline in demand for Arabic and a surge in the use of French and English. Given the existing differences in the languages of the Algerian job market, a point of contention that still occupies current debates is the extent to which language planning within higher education further endorses this unequal provision of opportunities.

So far the above discussion only examined the status of French and Arabic within education. The status of other local languages such as Berber will be presented in the next section. This will explain how the implemented strict policies did not appear to recognise the Algerian multilingual nature and how policy debates have been mainly concerned with the tension between Arabic and French.

3.5 The Berber languages: the struggle for recognition



Image 2: The use of Arabic is crossed out in a Kabylie area (taken from a Facebook group)

In North Africa, the Berber languages are endangered according to the UNESCO Atlas (El Watan, 2018). This is due to the marginalisation of ethnic minority groups and their language rights. These groups were expected to accept the Arabisation policy. This section will present the struggle of their language in Algerian society. Additionally, an overview of its contested status in education will be provided to show how the French colonisers and nationalist leaders stigmatised the language rights of the ethnic minorities and followed an assimilationist approach to language education. Tabory and Tabory (1987: 64)

note that “[t]he Algerian situation is complex, as it is at a crossroad of tensions between French, the colonial language, and Arabic, the new national language; Classical Arabic versus colloquial Algerian Arabic; and the various Berber dialects versus Arabic”. The tension between the languages is even more problematic within education. Particularly, the status of Darija (vernacular Arabic) and Berber languages are considered taboo subjects to raise. Despite the undeniable nature of the country’s multicultural reality, former president Bouteflika strictly opposed recognising the linguistic rights of the Berber ethnic groups. Ambivalence has always characterised its learning and teaching from primary to higher education (Maamri, 2009).

Pennycook (2007: 108) notes that “the use of one language or another depends very much on the local configuration of culture, language, and politics.” Similarly, decisions around which language is a priority are often

shaped by ideologies rather than clear pedagogical goals. Privileging Arabic over the other local languages through the Arabisation policy had mainly cultural and political dimensions. This policy grew stronger under the hope to decolonise all social domains and break from the colonial legacies.

Simultaneously, it sought to unify people under one language. As such, the different languages were seen as a threat to the nation's stability. While Darija was considered corrupt and deviant from standard Arabic, Berber languages were marginalised. The biggest challenge faced the pupils who newly join primary schools was the compulsion to only communicate and learn to write in Standard Arabic. The school was and still is a place to 'correct' the languages learners bring from outside schools (Miliari, 2000). This neglect pushed one of the Berber ethnic groups the "Kabyle" to protest and ask for the Berber language to be used as a medium of instruction in education. The immensity of the protests which took place in March/April 1980 was called the "Berber Spring" (Benrabah, 2005). The protesters resisted the injustice of the educational system towards the minority learners who could speak their mother tongue but could not write it. The riots were seen as a threat and they were met with police brutality as they represented a counter-discourse that challenged the monolithic nationalistic ideology.

Despite the long struggle for recognising the national status of the Berber language, this was not acknowledged by the Algerian government until recently. In 2002, Bouteflika amended the constitution to include Berber as a national language. He stated, "when we speak about Tamazight, we mean the identity of the entire Algerian people" and "The national character of Tamazight cannot be questioned, whether the issue relates to Tamazight as a language or to Tamazight as a culture" (BBC NEWS, 2002). Following this official declaration, in 2003, 16 middle schools situated in Berber speaking regions started teaching Tamazight as a subject (Benrabah, 2007) along with French and English. Moreover, news and other programmes on television started to be displayed in the language. Later in 2010 two university departments started teaching Berber languages and cultures (Chaif, 2015). Notably, the year 2016 marked a crucial point in the history of the Berber language. An amendment in the Algerian constitution passed a new act which clearly stated that "the Tamazight is a second national and official language. The state will work to promote the development of all its linguistic varieties used throughout the whole national territory" (General

Secretariat of the Government, 2016: 3). As a result, learners from all backgrounds have been allowed to learn it.

Within the period between 2002- 2019, establishing socioeconomic prosperity has become a decisive target for the Algerian government. The political, as well as the economic instability, have left the Algerian government no other alternative but to work on promoting more international investments (Belmihoub, 2015). Particularly, the end of the Algerian civil war or what is referred to as 'the black decade' (1990-2000) in addition to the global fall of oil prices in 2014 had negative consequences on all aspects of the Algerian society. These major upheavals severely affected the quality of teaching and learning. In an attempt to remedy this deterioration, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) introduced a series of reforms related to the structure of the schooling system, teaching, and learning pedagogies as well as language planning. Under the newly established commission for the reform of the educational system (2002), Algerian universities have entered a stage in which international and modern approaches are promoted.

Under this new perspective, language planning started to slightly change in the time of former president Bouteflika (1999-2019). Bouteflika's approach is characterised by diplomacy and openness to multilingualism and internationalisation. As such, the assimilationist ideology driving Arabisation started to be challenged. On many occasions, Bouteflika highlighted the cultural and linguistic richness of Algeria while also using French, Darija, and Arabic in his public speeches. His position regarding the Algerian linguistic situation is made clear from the outset. For example, in 1999 he declared "for Algeria, I will speak French, Spanish and English, and, if necessary, Hebrew". His speech also points to the need to pave the way to internationalisation when he said "let it be known that an uninhibited opening up to the other international languages ... does not constitute perjury ... This is the price we have to pay to modernise our identity" (cited in Daoudi, 2018: 270).

In quest of prosperity, the ministry of education started taking measures to elevate Algerian learners' English skills. The following section will raise discussions regarding the rapid growth of English in Algeria in the last two decades. Additionally, it will attempt to explain how the growth of English among the local languages is perceived differently when taking into account the economic factor and the educational reform. More importantly, it will cast

some doubts on the way English is perceived by Algerian language policymakers as a 'gatekeeping mechanism' privileged over the other local languages in educational and professional settings.

3.6 The growing status of English in Algerian education

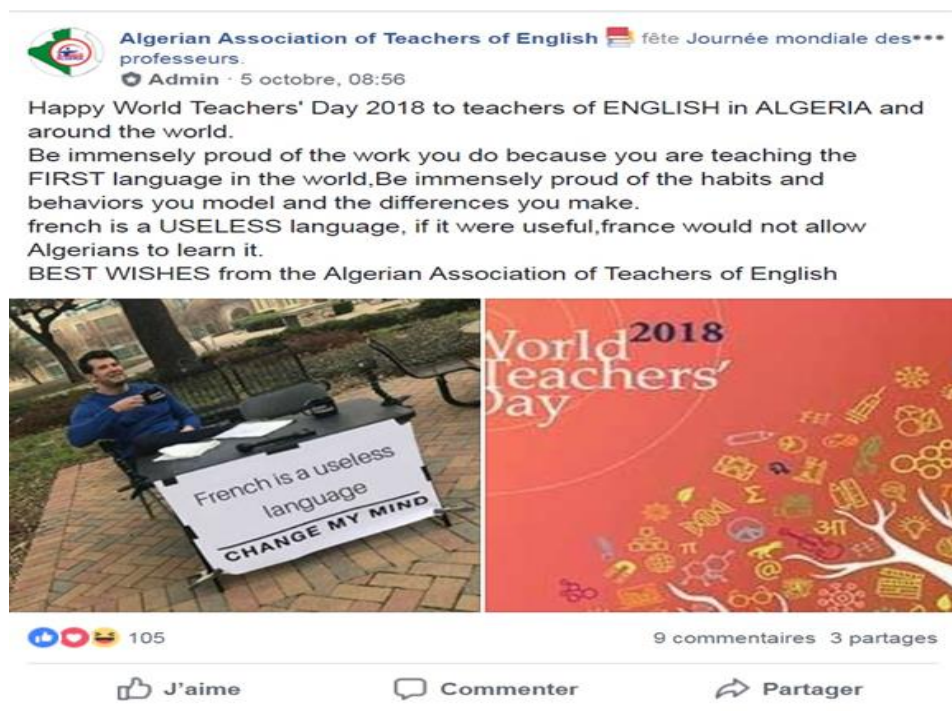


Image 3: Algerian teachers association of English Facebook group' post on teachers' day (captured 5th October 2018)

The interest in English Language Teaching (ELT) within Algerian education is not a new trend. This has emerged in the early 1990s. The reason behind this expansion can be primarily attributed to the urge to reform the educational system, the economic changes, and support from international organisations. This section will explore the growing importance given to ELT given the changes brought to education and language policy from the period (2002-2019). Particularly, how these changes have impacted the status of English and its teaching in the Algerian higher education context.

English was introduced as a compulsory foreign language since the early reform of 1969. English was declared as a first foreign language that should be taught in earlier stages. This initiative was predominantly driven by a nationalist ideology. As explained previously (see 3.2.2) Algerian language planners were determined to reinforce the status of Arabic as the only official national language. Concurrently, they saw the implementation of a second

language that is more powerful than French on an international level as the right way for cutting loose from French linguistic dominance in Algeria. Hence, English was seen as an excellent substitute. Gordon (1966:113), an Algerian writer predicted that “in ten to fifteen years [...], Arabic will have replaced French completely and English will be on its way to replacing French as a second language” (Cited in Benrabah, 2013: 90).

After the end of the Algerian civil war, which drastically affected the country’s social, political, and educational spheres, the government policy soon projected its intention to undertake measures to elevate the quality of education. The economic factor seems to play an important role in fostering the status of English in Algeria. During the 1990s, the country started expanding its economic markets especially in oil and petroleum exports which led to establishing international economic relationships notably with the UK and the USA (Bellalem, 2012). This international communication has compelled language planners to undertake measures and to collaborate with the British Council and the US Embassy to ensure effective teaching is provided for learners within public educational spheres as well as outside (Belmihoub, 2018).

In quest of improving the status of ELT, in the 1990s teachers of English started receiving extended training courses. Furthermore, English textbooks and learning materials began to be designed by Algerians for the first time (Bellalem, 2012). In 1993, the Ministry of Education even attempted to introduce English in primary education (grade 4) as a second language claiming that learning English at an early stage will boost its learning process. As a consequence, Algerian learners were asked to choose either to study English or French. Nevertheless, this reform failed since the great majority preferred French because they were familiar with it (Benrabah, 2007). This action came as a surprise to teachers and learners’ parents as it was perceived as a hasty plan that had no pedagogical agenda but it merely aimed at superseding the French language (Benrabah, 2014). The linguistic situation was already intricate and adding another language into Algerian learners’ language profile at such an early stage might further complicate the learning process. Shortly afterward, this English language policy was cancelled, and English was instead implemented as a mandatory foreign language taught from grade 6 to grade 12 (throughout secondary education).

The year 2003 was a key point in the evolution of English language education at the secondary and tertiary levels. Reforms started taking place

as a result of an agreement between the Algerian educational authorities and international agencies. In October 2003, a contract was signed between the British Council and the Algerian commission in an attempt to improve the situation of the educational sector in general and ELT in particular.

Subsequently, teachers and middle school inspectors were trained in the British Council to build a professional network and to bring effective teaching methodologies into classrooms.

Other initiatives were also taken by the Algerian Ministry of Education to ensure good teaching quality is provided for learners. For example, in collaboration with the British Council, a teachers' training programme was launched in 2013. Over only two years, nearly 3000 English teachers received professional training on how to manage their English classrooms and how to effectively adapt their pedagogy into the new curriculum objectives (British Council, 2013). These training courses are still taking place each year in which the number of those joining increases continuously.

As far as higher education is concerned, students' enrolment in English courses increased especially in 2010. Benrabah (2013: 124) contends that during the academic year 2010–2011, the English departments in Algerian universities started attracting a great number of students and teachers. Interestingly, this coincides with the efforts of the MHESR to internationalise its universities. In addition, language planners have introduced English as a compulsory subject to all disciplines taught in higher education. Students learn academic English related to their major. Others students undertake English for a specific purpose (mainly business English) to secure jobs in international companies. Because of the noticeably increasing demand for English, it is argued that a new type of competition is sparked between French and English. In an Algerian newspaper *EI-Watan* (2010) an article starts with a critical headline "English is pushing aside French in Algerian universities". The news article describes the crucial importance given to English in higher education particularly in domains of science and technology as a way to give recognition to the Algerian university degree on international levels.

Under the reform of 2003 that aims to internationalise higher education, the idea of English to promote international mobility has become more relevant. The Bologna system which is a European project was adopted in Algerian universities to foster cooperation between European and African universities, facilitate students' mobility and develop the quality of education. Idri (2005:1)

asserts that “this reform is intended to let the Algerian educational system and research go hand in hand with the international ones”. In other words, this change was seen by MHESR as a huge leap towards internationalising the Algerian higher education system which will offer universal recognition to the Algerian university degree. International mobility has become a key aspect of the reform which also presents English as the most preeminent compared to the other local languages. As a result, Algerian school inspectors and teachers started receiving training programmes in Norwich institute for language and education as part of their professional development. Lounis Tamrabit, head of the Algerian inspector delegation to the UK, outlines the aim behind this initiative arguing the following:

English language teaching has become the avant guard in terms of implementing this new approach and the outputs of teachers and inspectors of English in Algeria are being closely watched by educators of other subjects to help define the way forward. Therefore, we have a great responsibility to take what we are learning in the UK and use it to lead the way (Cited in British Council, 13 March 2013).

This shows the concerted efforts taken by the policymakers to improve the quality of ELT and the competency of Algerian teachers. These investments carry a vision that English will serve to develop the educational sector and help Algerian universities to open to the international. The following section will elaborate on how the role and functions of English are perceived and framed through discourses of social and economic changes.

3.7 Debates about the role of English in Algeria

The dominant discourses associated with the importance of ELT worldwide describe English as a language that guarantees global success for its learners and is a tool to achieve economic prosperity and access an international wider market (Canagarajah and Said, 2009). While the ubiquity of English has been criticised as being driven by political and economic ideologies (Phillipson, 2009; Piller and Cho, 2013), in Algeria, however, its growth is described as a panacea that might bring peace and resolve the linguistic conflict between Arabic, Berber and French through the promotion of ‘linguistic ecology’ (Belmihoub, 2015).

English has widely flourished in Algeria due to the promotion it receives from the British Council, which is a known organisation orchestrating ELT around

the world (Pennycook, 2016). Algeria is a case in point in which the British Council and the American Embassy have played a major role in supporting English. Due to the growth of Algerian international business and economic affairs with the UK and the USA, the language courses and cultural activities sponsored by the British Council and the American Embassy have increased significantly (Belmihoub, 2018). Starting from the early 1980s these organisations were both offering various programmes and training to endow Algerian learners' and teachers' English language skills. As it is stated by the British Council these “programmes are part of a concerted effort to drive up standards of the teaching and learning of English in Algerian state schools so that young people gain the skills and voice to become global citizens” (British Council, 13 March 2013). The way English is linked to the concept of ‘global citizenship’ is particularly capturing. Although it seems to convey a positive sense of enabling learners to develop skills, it is rather vague of what is meant by a global citizen.

By the same token, English is also perceived by Algerian language practitioners as more than simply a first foreign language. Belmihoub (2018: 4) argues that it has “the potential to help raise the quality of education in Algeria and promote social progress since English was recognised as the language of science and technology”. He adds that English keeps attracting many Algerian learners even outside the public educational spheres. For instance, recent free summer English teaching programmes were initiated in 2013 by the US Embassy in partnership with the Berlitz Centre. These summer programmes are now running every year in several private language schools in different regions such as Algiers, Batna, and Oran which offer free intensive courses and extra curriculum activities.

English has also gained ground within official administrative domains that have established foreign relationships. By way of illustration, it was introduced in the Ministry of Defence and the Institute of Petroleum Studies where staff members were taught English as a way to facilitate international communication (Belmihoub, 2018). Additionally, in multinational companies such as the gas and oil industries (Sonatrach, Anadarcho, and Schlumberger) and other business corporations, the use of English is considered prominent. Thus, English language courses for professional purposes especially to employees have emerged lately as the norm for progressing in one’s business workplace. As a case in point, Samsung Home Appliances the South Korean company made it obligatory for its

Algerian staff members to undergo an English training course to enhance their communicative skills as it was deemed indispensable for workers to perform their tasks (Belmihoub, 2018).

Beyond the educational and professional aspirations, English can also be viewed as a source of inequality. On the one hand, it is undeniable that the mastery of English might facilitate several opportunities that Algerians may want to explore, as it might also be useful in international communication where it is used as a lingua franca which can impact positively the national economy. Nonetheless, Pennycook (2016: 26) highlights the politics and power behind the massive spread of ELT arguing that as much as English is seen as the language of opportunities, it also creates "social, political, and economic inequalities", especially in countries where the quality of education is low but English skills are becoming a requirement in professional and academic contexts.

Despite the constant efforts made by the Algerian Ministry of Education to fine-tune the ELT situation, the status of English in Algeria is still limited. Exposure to English is also restricted to public schools. Teachers argue that the lack of materials, support and training programmes for teachers are the primary causes for students' linguistic incompetency (Bouhadiba, 2006). In addition, the teaching and training programmes organised by the British Council and the US Embassy or even local private schools are mainly held in big cities (such as Algiers, Oran) where only the elite and the middle-class learners can benefit from these opportunities. Hence, for less privileged individuals from a rural and poor background, English competency remains challenging and out of reach.

However, beyond pedagogic considerations, there are microsocial, historical, and political factors that fuelled the rigorous endeavours to foster ELT in Algeria. Pennycook (2016) contends that the pervasiveness of English should not only be viewed within the Algerian linguistic conflict, especially after the implementation of the Arabisation policy, but the infusion of English language in the Algerian society also has the potential to "bring the benefits of helping Algerians to see both that there are alternatives to French and that other language, such as Berber, have much to offer alongside Arabic" (Pennycook, 2016: 30). English, thus, might have the potential to bring linguistic peace as well as political and economic stability (Belmihoub, 2015).

Kramersch and Hua (2016: 40) state that ELT can “trigger renewed pride in local cultures”. This idea is echoed in Belmihoub’s work (2015) who draws on Friedrich’s framework of sociolinguistic peace. He suggests that, through the growth of English in Algeria, a multilingual perspective will be fostered. Consequently, learners’ perspectives and linguistic choices are broadened which will lessen the negative attitudes they hold towards French, Berber, Darija, and MSA. Based on a study he conducted, he asserts that the majority of Algerian students disparage Berber and Darija and assume that they are merely dialects compared to MSA which is idealised. Additionally, Berber-speaking communities assume the opposite. French on the other hand is despised because of its colonial past. Belmihoub (2015) believes that these negative attitudes are the result of the Arabisation policy. He suggests, therefore, that English language learning will create “bonds between Algeria’s civil society and the world’s civil society” (2015: 45) as it will promote the Algerian learners’ multilingual attitude. Nevertheless, within and outside classroom levels, the experiences of Algerian learners and teachers vis-à-vis English remain unexplored. Therefore, one cannot assume that the potential of English to solve local issues without a close examination of the way its taught, learnt, and used in practice.

3.8 Chapter summary

This chapter provided a historical and political perspective on the Algerian language situation. It started with an overview of the language policies characterising the colonial and the early postcolonial period. These policies were driven by an assimilationist approach and did not respond to the Algerian multilingual nature and the minority groups’ language rights. Furthermore, the chapter explained the changes in language policy within the educational domain and covered the spread of English in which different socio-economic factors were discussed. The increasing interest in English was also explored in relation to the reform aiming to internationalise Algerian universities. Yet, the role and functions of English for Algerian higher education are still not clear. The dominant discourses explored in this chapter position English as the language of mobility, the quality marker of education, and a promoter of multilingual attitudes. Considering these different views, a review of the theoretical frameworks is provided in the next chapter to critically understand the discourses around the role and functions of English in different contexts.

Chapter 4: The politics of English language teaching: Theoretical frameworks and review of literature

4.1 Introduction

English has been labelled ‘the global language’ (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 1997), but this label embodies meanings and is driven by several forces. In this chapter, a critical review will provide an insight into how studies approached the spread of English, how they explored underlying macro forces, and their implications on English policy and teaching practices. While highlighting the salient contributions of research studies to English Language Teaching (ELT), I will also point to their limitations which this thesis will attempt to explore. I will first discuss how the spread of English was examined in relation to its colonial history. As such, I will review several case studies which investigated postcolonial contexts to highlight the role of English in the reproduction of colonial discourses. I will explain how their perspectives focus on linguistic human rights as they argue that English-only policies promote linguistic and social inequality. I will then examine ideologies such as globalisation and internationalisation and how they infiltrate English language policies and teaching practices within higher education. Finally, I will further review studies that tend to focus on the “local embeddedness” of English and what it means in a specific context (Pennycook, 2016). Although historical and political factors are crucial, I will argue that ELT is also better explored through the lens of local relations of power which manifest in teachers’ day-to-day practices and learners’ experiences.

4.2 English as the global language

The English language has gradually gained solid ground in higher education across several non-English speaking countries (Dearden and Macaro, 2016; Kirkpatrick, 2017; Macaro et al., 2018). The trend of promoting ELT in higher educational contexts is often attributed to the globalisation phenomenon (Phillipson, 2009; Pennycook, 2016; Holborow, 2007). Vidovich (2007) highlights how it has become almost impossible to comprehend educational policies and practices without linking them to globalisation processes. Likewise, Rizvi and Lingard (2010: x) add that “national and local policies are now linked to globalized educational policy discourses, pressures from international organizations and global policy networks, and globalization

more generally". In this respect, similar forces seem to drive English language policies in higher education institutions as they venture into adopting international reforms.

Nevertheless, reference to globalization needs to be made with caution. Globalisation is a term that has grown to acquire different connotations. As current changes in the world are often discussed in the realm of globalisation, this has added ambiguity to the notion leading to a widespread misconception of globalisation as a recent phenomenon (Dale and Roberson, 2002). To not deviate from the argument of this section, I will briefly refer to Robertson's (2003) historical perspective on how globalisation can be divided into three major waves. According to Robertson, globalisation can be traced back to the earlier 1492 discoveries started by the Spanish and Portuguese for trade purposes. This then developed into a second stage characterised by colonialism. The final stage started after the end of World War 2 (1945). This phase is often described by the increase of international corporations and competitions that sought to westernise all domains. Kumaravadivelu (2009) asserts that westernisation is a masked policy that seeks to maintain power over previous colonies without colonising land in a traditional sense. As such, it is presented to developing countries as modernisation. I will later refer to Phillipson's (1992, 2009) theory of linguistic imperialism that makes the connection between colonial history, discourses of modernism, and English language teaching.

As globalisation intersects with different factors, different interpretations are often equated with its definition. Scholte (2008) points out how internationalisation, neoliberalism, universalisation, and westernisation are sometimes used to define what globalisation is. Whilst recognising the intricate connection between these concepts, Scholte (2008:1478) refers to the growth of "supraterritorial connections between people". In other words, he stresses how globalisation processes work to shrink time, space, and erase borders through the media, information, and communication technologies. It is at this level that the language element becomes relevant. Maintaining global connections between people entails speaking a common language. With no second thoughts, one would automatically think of English as the ultimate lingua franca. To examine the relationship between globalisation and the changing status of ELT in the context of higher education, research studies tend to focus on how English has spread globally, and it is used to facilitate "a global system of transactions" in

different domains including “trade, finance, politics, education, art, culture, and war” (Stelma and Fay, 2019: 10).

Crystal (2003) considers the popularity of English as the ‘world’ language. For example, in his book ‘English as a global language’, Crystal discusses the rise of English to attain global status while recognising that this globality does not always mean that the language is spoken by all people everywhere as often assumed. He argues that certain conditions need to be fulfilled for a language to reach a global status. Statistically, English is spoken fluently by a quarter of the world’s population. However, Crystal (2003) maintains that the number is not always a factor determining the globality of a language as much as who the speakers of the language are. Crystal (2003: 7) states that “without a strong power-base, of whatever kind, no language can make progress as an international medium of communication. Language has no independent existence, living in some sort of mystical space apart from the people who speak it”. This indicates the impact of global forces that have pushed for English to currently hold an important status in the world. Meanwhile, other local forces have also played a role in attracting English, shaping its use, and developing other norms. The following section will present theoretical debates from different frameworks that closely explore the use of English in its different local contexts around the world.

4.3 The status of English in the world: theoretical debates

The status of English in the world today has been subject to critical examinations. Within this critical orientation, research studies endeavour to challenge the colonial history and the centredness of English. The following subsections will present and discuss three main theoretical frameworks which critically examine the use of English around the world and the realities of its teaching and learning. I will start with World Englishes as a theory that accounts for the existing varieties of English. I then move to English as a Lingua Franca. This theory focuses on understanding English communication amongst speakers of different first languages. The third subsection will discuss linguistic imperialism, and how the realities of English in some contexts have engendered structural and cultural inequalities.

4.3.1 World Englishes

The ever-increasing number of English speakers is undeniable. Yet, some researchers went beyond this reality to shed light on the implications of this

spread on the English language itself as used by speakers across the globe. Crystal (2006: 424) explains the spread of English using Kachru's (1992) "concentric circles" to divide its speakers into three categories. He reports that "inner circle" countries i.e., where English is the first language (for example, UK, USA) present only 320–380 million. "outer circle" refers to previous British colonies where English is considered a second official language. English speakers in this circle reach 300–500 million. The largest group (500– 1000 million) falls into the "expanding circle", i.e., where English holds the status of a foreign language. This data also shows that the number of English speakers in outer and expanding circles far outweighs those in inner circle countries. Crystal (2006: 425) argues in this regard that "one in four of the world's population are now capable of communicating to a useful level in English". However, he also points out that this statistic needs to be put into perspective in that the other three-quarters of the world do not speak English.

Reference to the above statistical data is crucial to question the ownership of the English language. The continuous proliferation of English in countries from the outer and expanding circles has led its speakers to appropriate English and create forms of English suitable for their local needs. These forms were first referred to as new "Englishes" (Kachru, 1986). Later studies on World Englishes and the norms developed by their speakers demonstrated how different these norms are from those of inner circle countries. This has further problematised dominant beliefs about the English language teaching methods as only provided by its 'native speakers' from inner circle countries (Canagarajah, 1999).

The spread of English as examined through Kachru's concentric circles attempts to describe the discernible differences which World Englishes manifest in actual language use. Although these descriptions raise awareness about the complexity of English use around the world, Kachru's model has also some weaknesses. Using Kachru's circles to account for different categories of English speakers raises issues. First, the concentric circles are mainly representative of geographical areas with limited consideration of important social factors and the complexities within each circle (Canagarajah and Said, 2009; Pennycook, 2016). For example, Martin (2014) studies the case of the Philippines as an outer circle country in Kachru's model. However, Martin (2014: 50) highlights how the social positions which Filipinos occupy reveal how there are "circles within circles".

He concedes that scholars and well-educated Filipinos represent the inner circle. This elite group has different attitudes about Philippine English. While some Filipinos are proponents of this variety others follow American English. The second group of Filipinos have regular jobs and work under institutional confines. This group falls within the outer circle since they have an awareness of the legitimacy of Philippine English, but their social position does not allow them to promote it. The expanding circle comprises the remaining Filipinos for whom both the standard and Philippine English are out of their reach. This group is the most disadvantaged one as it faces challenges because the English language is a prerequisite to access education and the workplace. Similar cases can be found in Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong where different factors beyond the geographical frontiers determine which circle people are attributed to.

As international mobility is growing, it has become difficult to define English 'native speakers' as those who acquired English as a first language and can only be geographically located within inner circle countries. Tan (2014) reports on recent statistics about English as a mother tongue in Singapore. He points out that over 30% of the population across different groups (Chinese, Malay, and Indian) acquire English as a primary language at home. In other instances, children might be British born but they acquire other languages spoken at home. English is therefore learnt as a second language in later stages. Thus, the reality is more complex and cannot be neatly categorised as the demarcation of English as a first, second, and foreign language has become blurry. Despite the pitfalls in Kachru's concentric circles, given the lack of a better alternative, I will still use the model to refer to geographical locations in terms of norms provider (inner circle), norms developer (outer circle), and norms dependent (expanding circle).

Despite the undeniable reality of English varieties, negative attitudes towards World Englishes still prevail notably among language policymakers across the world. Crystal (2006) speculates about the future of English stating that attitudes about new English varieties will be similar to those regarding dialects of English versus standard English (as in the UK where only standard English is prioritised). He adds that the use of new Englishes might be normalised if they are used officially in press and political speeches. This might empower new Englishes to be viewed as equal to standard English. Although Crystal does not appear to take a critical stance

on the global spread of English, his views infer that the political power behind standard English makes it the privileged variety at national and international levels. Moreover, both Kachru (1992) and Crystal (2006) perceive the recognition of new varieties of English as dependent on institutional power and subject to codification, whereby any other varieties lacking this institutionalisation will be marginalised. This point has been addressed by the proponents of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF).

The role of English in the world and how it can serve local users is often narrowed in terms of its instrumental purpose and English is sometimes framed as a means to progress, development, and modernism. Crystal (2003: viii) tackles the functions of English while maintaining that having a common language such as English “presents us with unprecedented possibilities for mutual understanding, and thus enables us to find fresh opportunities for international cooperation”. I partially agree with Crystal, in that the practicality of English cannot be denied. However, what is problematic about Crystal’s statement is the often-assumed neutral facet about English just because it has acquired a global character. In other words, taking a critical stance, one might even treat ‘fresh opportunities’ as a discourse representing English as an ideal candidate to be a global language. Pennycook (2016) also critiques some of Crystal’s views and argues that they often represent the status of English around the world as ‘neutral and natural’. Meanwhile, Pennycook (2016) demonstrates how it is not the case since evidence from the ELT classroom contexts shows the opposite. In other words, when we examine how only standard forms of English, often the Received Pronunciation (RP) or American English, are taught at different levels of education, how teaching materials and textbooks reflect British and American socio-cultural aspects, and how teaching methodologies reflect ‘native speakers’ approaches, it becomes evident that the status of English in the world can never be considered neutral or natural. Furthermore, Kumaravadivelu (2009:13) explains how discourses that tend to describe the role of English in the world will continue to circulate since they serve “the communicational needs as well as the propaganda purposes of both globalization and empire”. Particularly, in postcolonial multilingual contexts, the status of English and its importance as dictated at the policy level have to be questioned. Notably, discourses about English have to be set against the realities of English as experienced by its users. This idea is salient to the overarching thesis argument, and it will be presented

throughout the data chapters and extensively discussed in section 9.4.4. The subsequent section will delve into another theoretical framework that also tackled the role, functions, and realities of English in international communication.

4.3.2 English as a Lingua Franca

Although the number of English speakers around the world is increasing, similar statistical representations often overlook the changing nature of language in the context of international communication. This argument is the crux of the English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) theoretical framework (Kirkpatrick, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2011; Saraceni, 2015). In this subsection, I will review the main claims of the ELF framework and how it questions the 'native speaker' model.

As communication between speakers from outer and expanding circles has become the norm, the nature of this communication through English has been one area of study for ELF researchers. Seidlhofer (2011: 33), who is a pioneer in ELF, problematizes the way English as a global language is represented as "a stable entity, [and] an established preserve of its native speakers". Her work tries to address the "conceptual gap" in researching the global status of English and understanding its usage among speakers of different first languages. She critiques studies that tend to deny how English is appropriated and adapted in ELF contexts. As such, the ELF framework has brought the questions of standard English and 'native speakers' into critical debates arguing that these notions are social constructs. It also seeks to move beyond the divide between English as a first, second, and foreign language and show the dynamic versions of English instead. In a similar view, Kirkpatrick (2006) problematizes this ideology and claims that it overemphasizes standard English and the British and American norms which are presented as superior to the other varieties of English that have developed in outer and expanding circles. He argues that these 'native speaker' norms are less relevant in communication between ELF speakers. Using samples from ELF communication, the framework challenges the belief that "unless there is a norm that controls the way people speak, things fall apart" (Seidlhofer, 2011: 84). In an attempt to refute such a belief, ELF research shows how people accommodate their speech to achieve mutual understanding. Consequently, ELF proponents noted the way English

versions have their own norms which are context-dependent and co-created by users to reach meaningful conversation (Bhatia, 2019).

One of ELF's tenets relates to the idea of language ownership by whoever speaks it. Drawing on the work of Widdowson (1993), the active role which speakers of English play in language use highlights their agency over the ELF context of use. ELF users are not defined as simply receivers of norms regardless of which concentric circles they belong. Seidlhofer (2011: 85) argues that "what needs to be emphasized is that agency with respect to the development of the language in its global use, its spread and change, resides in 'nonnative' speakers just as much as with native speakers in principle, and in practice". Nevertheless, it remains unclear how the speakers' agency is being defined and used within the ELF model. It seems that debates about ELF tend to position all ELF speakers within equal power relations where they have complete agency when communicating. Nevertheless, as I previously mentioned, other factors beyond the physical context also impact English varieties, their speakers, and hence English communication even when it takes place between speakers with different "linguacultures" (Risager, 2019).

Linguistic agency can be defined as the ability to use one's linguistic resources in an adaptive way to reach different communicative purposes. Decisions about the best way to communicate meaning depend on contexts lived and encountered by language users. Consequently, It might be idealistic to categorise language as either falling under the ELF framework or adhering to standard language ideology, as there is an endless spectrum in which people use language differently. O'Regan (2014: 548) also underscores how other macro forces such as "access to social, cultural, linguistic and economic capital is likely to be decisive in determining where users are located on the cline". Similarly, in high stake written form, people might resort to a more standard code of writing as it is only through the linguistic features that meaning can be conveyed. Conversely, spoken and less formal communication involve speakers using different paralinguistic elements to support mutual intelligibility.

Although the ELF framework can be considered as a critical step in dismantling the way English operates at a global level, analytical and theoretical concerns continue to limit this framework. As all theoretical frameworks have strengths and flaws, ELF has been critiqued for its positionality and conceptualisation of key notions. O'Regan (2014: 547)

argues that ELF “seems wedded to a politics of knowledge in which ideology, discourse and power are separated out and neatly located within a rationalist, positivist and objectivist epistemology”. This is reflected in ELF researchers’ overemphasis on the ‘native’-‘nonnative’ speaker dichotomy without an in-depth discussion of other structural and cultural inequalities which might underpin English communication. Within the ELF model, it appears that the notion of ‘native speaker’ is challenged to draw attention to the way the globality of English makes it owned by whoever speaks it. As much as the idea of ownership aims to empower different speakers of English regardless of which concentric circle they belong, it is still problematic for several reasons. The ELF model discusses the ownership of English from a structuralist perspective. The fundamental ideas linked to ownership objectify a language as something people can own rather than a resource that they draw on to achieve something.

The lack of critically highlighting how speakers of English are placed in unequal power relations is another limitation of the ELF framework. In this respect, O’Regan (2014) argues against the ELF framework’s lack of consistency in constructing an argument particularly in relation to structural inequality placed by global capitalism. The latter is key to tackle since it has always played a role in prioritising specific language forms, models, and methods of teaching English. Moreover, Pennycook (2016: 28) also points to the absence of examining English vis- à-vis questions of “power, inequality, class, ideology or access”. As such, ELF research often superficially covers these important structures underlying language use, teaching practices, and English language policy.

Theoretical discussions on ELF seem to place a great deal of emphasis merely on the plurality and inclusivity of English varieties while they tend to overlook the role of these varieties vis-à-vis other local languages. Taking a linguistic global justice perspective, Piller (2016) also discusses the discourses around the global spread of English within ELF framework. She argues that “as appealing as the notion of a global lingua franca and ‘English for everyone’ may be, in reality, discourses and practices related to the global spread of English have become a key mechanism to entrench global inequalities” (2016: 165). She also emphasises the point that research dealing with English in all its forms has to consider the interaction between English, local languages, and forms of knowledge and whether these interactions echo an ecological perspective.

Despite acknowledging the English language colonial past and the dominance of inner circle countries over its norms, both World Englishes and ELF frameworks have been contested. Within the two frameworks, English varieties are freed from any form of socio-political control. Moreover, the inner circle countries such UK and USA are seen as exercising less power over the current status of English and its future development. This stance has been critiqued since it promotes the idea that the English language has taken on a life of its own and is separated from any political questions. In the next subsection, I will discuss some of these global and political forces as raised within the theory of linguistic imperialism.

4.3.3 Linguistic Imperialism: Putting theory into perspective

Linguistic imperialism is one of the earliest theories that aimed to deconstruct the spread of dominant languages across the world through a colonial lens. The theory examines power relations reproduced in a postcolonial era based on language. In this section, I will discuss its main ideas that I consider are relevant to the study. Additionally, I will point out its limitations in addressing the complexity of researching power relations shaping languages within a specific context. I will also argue for a need to conduct a multilevel analysis of different (macro-micro) forces shaping language issues that might strengthen the theory.

Linguistic imperialism as a theoretical framework draws on the notion of hegemony as defined in political theory. Notably, the work of Gramsci (1971) and his conceptualisation of hegemony become evident in the way linguistic imperialism operates in postcolonial contexts. To give a brief background, Gramsci (1971) believes that a colonial regime controls through dominance (military force) and cultural hegemony (a covert form of control). In other words, at the surface level, cultural hegemony may seem to serve the civil society, yet this invisible hegemony achieves consent through moral and intellectual persuasion. As such, it forms people's beliefs and ideas especially through tools easily accessible to them. The relation between media and hegemony was further elaborated by Herman and Chomsky (1994) in their work on "manufacturing consent: the political economy of the mass media". This notion was borrowed from Walter Lippmann's (1946) "public opinion". Within a framework of cultural hegemony, both scholars worked on deconstructing how consent is obtained all the time by different

media sources as if it is a process of manufacturing to shape the individual's perceptions. Furthermore, for Gramsci (1971: 24), the educational system is also a major tool through which hegemonic consent is exerted. He argues that schools can also be politicised and thus become a place for shaping the intellect and ways of thinking aligned with the vision of decision-makers.

Following the above theorisation, Gramsci's insights have influenced research studies that attempt to find how language can also be used to establish hegemony. This argument is captured in Phillipson's (1992, 2009) theory of Linguistic Imperialism (LI). Central to Phillipson's theory is to discern Western hegemonic ideologies embedded in the spread of big languages and how this might reinforce social injustice. Portuguese, French, English, and Spanish are examples of these dominant languages which were historically transferred to the colonised by the colonial power. This transfer did not aim to simply teach the linguistic system but rather achieve more control over the people in the long run. For example, the assimilationist ideology used by France discouraged the use of local languages in education and administration while only the French language dominated the colonies. The traces of this linguistic imposition are still evident in several postcolonial contexts (see 3.2.1). The case of Mozambique could serve as a good example here. Soon after its independence, Portuguese was chosen to be the official language in Mozambique. This linguistic choice was seen as a reinforcement of the colonial discourse representing "the rhetorical opposition between "good" European languages and "bad" African ones" (Blommaert, 1999: 28).

As stated above, LI relates to dominant languages which were imposed by colonial forces. However, the theoretical framework has been frequently used as a lens to study the spread of English across the world. Several studies focus on English because it has acquired a prominent economic and political power in different countries around the world. As such, through LI, they aim to contest the neutrality of English and the idea that ELT is free of any ideological and political dimensions (Canagarajah, 1999; Mühlhäusler, 1996; Papapavlou, 2001). Phillipson (2009), for example, defines English linguistic hegemony within his theory of linguistic imperialism. His main focus is on how statements which describe English as a 'universal language', a 'lingua franca', and as 'a world language' appear to be common sense at the surface level but they conceal ideologies that legitimise "hierarchical linguistic order" (2009: 29). Phillipson (2009: 36-37) argues that these views

are “Eurocentric and triumphalist”, presenting English as a panacea and the use of the term ‘global’ passes as unproblematic and simplistic.

Phillipson’s LI is described as a critical humanist theory that questions the relationship that English has among local languages (Stelma and Fay, 2019). His main argument is that the globality and international status of English can be understood critically through the European colonial project. Historically, English was positioned superior among other local languages which created certain discourses and representations about the language. These colonial discourses have been internalised and often reproduced in postcolonial contexts (Pennycook, 1994).

Phillipson (2009) argues that English carries an imperialistic role not only because of its colonial past, but because its increasing spread seeks political, economic, and cultural hegemony and serves the agendas of those in power. Consequently, he calls for a critical consideration of statements that describe English as a ‘universal language’, a ‘lingua franca’, and as ‘language of science’. Phillipson (2009: 29) treats these statements as discourses that have ideological functions seeking to “underpin and legitimate hierarchical linguistic order”.

Researchers who explore English through LI highlight the inequalities as a result of its spread within local contexts. For example, Canagarajah (2007) argues that one way of understanding the relationship between globalisation and English is to have a broader view of the role of the language in economic, technological, and cultural contexts. He contends that the interest of the consumerist culture promotes cultural and ideological hegemony. This also has global and international influences by which English plays a crucial role which can present a threat to local communities. A similar view is echoed by Phillipson (2009: 30) who describes how English is used as a tool in the creation of a “global homogeneous culture” facilitating the “flow of products, ideas and discourses” and seeking Western dominance. Furthermore, Ferguson (2013) underscores the inequality of opportunities in local contexts. He describes how the absence of English skills for many people continues to be a barrier to professional progress. Along the same line, Wiley (2000) explains that linguistic hegemony is asserted when the language of a dominant group and their prescribed norms become unquestionably accepted as the standard for success. Consequently, the dominant group covertly succeeds to “convince those who fail to meet those standards to view their failure as being the result of the inadequacy of their

own language” (Wiley, 2000: 113) or even the limited capacity of learners and teachers. It could be inferred from the work of these researchers that LI tackles different aspects of inequality and focuses on the asymmetrical power relations between English and other local languages within specific contexts.

The main pillars of the LI theory were classified into three constructs: linguisticism, the native speaker fallacy, and monolingualism. I will tackle these three under separate subheadings and I will present their relevance to this research.

4.3.3.1 Linguicism

Phillipson (2009: 23) defines linguisticism as “ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, regulate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language”. This definition describes linguisticism as a discriminatory act on the grounds of language which can be identified in different social practices. Phillipson (2009) explains that social institutions play a great role in reinforcing linguisticism. This is evident in issued language policies and resources mobilised to privilege one language in education, workplace, media, and science. Consequently, this leads to sustaining the status of a given language in a specific society at the expense of other local languages. It should be noted that linguisticism is not restricted to the imposition of colonial languages but can also be a result of local languages in competition. While one is privileged for political agenda the others are repressed and seen as a threat. The Arabisation policy imposed in both Morocco and Algeria after their independence can be seen as a form of linguisticism. Although its mastery was limited to a small elite group, standard Arabic was chosen as the only form accepted in schools and administrations. This policy had had far-reaching repercussions on education in these two countries as the language rights of Berber ethnic groups and Arabs speaking Darija in both countries are not fully recognised (Strengholt, 2008). Saadi-Mokrane (2002) uses the powerful term “Linguicide” to refer to the acute situation of languages in these contexts. She defines this term as “a strategy elaborated to subjugate and reshape the identity of the country and its inhabitants by separating them from their points of reference” (2002: 44). According to Saadi-Mokrane

(2002), this linguistic strategy is underpinned by nationalism as a political ideology seeking to ascribe one identity to a pluricultural society. Phillipson (2009: 41), however, perceives linguisticism as driven by external forces and argues that language policies are set by “the transnational corporations which are imposing a late capitalist world order that relegates peripheral countries, economies and languages to a subordinate position”.

Phillipson's above quote is partially reasonable. Linguicism might be a result of foreign interference both directly in colonial form and indirectly through global economic ideologies, but these macro factors might not be the only forces determining language policies and linguistic hierarchy. Other ideological forces emanate transnationally and can be pulled or pushed by local people. For example, in Tunisia, these transnational forces play out within its linguistic ecology. Despite sharing a similar colonial history with Algeria and Morocco, Tunisia took a different approach to language planning after its independence. The Tunisian vernacular was never considered as a source of shame or less equal to Arabic and French. Similarly, bilingual education was encouraged. This might be due to the vision of the government which sought to establish a secular country. Strengholt (2008: 21) describes how the first president of Tunisia, Burqiba (1957-1987), was “highly reserved towards the Arab World and its Pan-Arabism”. This was reflected in the issued multilingual language policies under his presidency. These policies allowed each language to flourish in its domain of use (Daoud, 2011). Furthermore, the avoidance of promoting one language at the expense of others is also noted in the Tunisian language policy. This is to say that there are multiple factors to take into account when examining linguisticism and examining the cultural politics which control languages is one way to understand language policies and practices.

Phillipson (2009) also discusses how linguisticism takes various discursive forms moulded to target specific groups. For English learners, English is portrayed as a tool that opens infinite opportunities, whereas for countries it is depicted as a global commodity with economic value and cultural force. As such, governments become enthusiastic to invest in ELT in quest of this economic and cultural participation in this ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1991). The relationship which English often has among local languages is characterised by English occupying a higher position. Consequently, this creates issues in which linguistic diversity is abandoned and the language rights of minorities are overlooked. However, one might also find various

reasons why countries choose to invest in English. Again, things must be put into perspective to clarify some blind spots of LI. Linguicism as an extreme case of rejection of local languages cannot be generalised to all countries which have adopted English. In several countries such as Singapore, India and Nigeria, English has been used strategically. Singapore for example, adopted English for its functional purpose to develop its economy. English is used as a language of education whereas the local languages (Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil) are also upheld and taught as second languages (Low and Pakir, 2018). Moreover, within several contexts, the interplay of English with local languages has led to the emergence of new Englishes. Nigerian Pidgin and Jamaican English are examples of how English norms are appropriated and owned by their speakers (see 4.3.1). Similarly, the roles of English in different contexts reflect its users' agency. Mazrui (2004: 114) illustrates this agency in many African-speaking countries arguing that English is used in transformative ways by African writers who can "reconfigure the linguistic media inherited from the colonial era [...] demonstrating the potential and capacity of these languages to create counter-discourses".

The above juxtaposition of the two arguments representing the forces behind language policy also demonstrates how countries with colonial history tend to struggle more in managing the language issues after independence. Notably, if multiple ethnicities are speaking different languages, then language policy within these countries is a challenging task. Given this complexity, English seems to gain ground especially in contexts where there is a linguistic conflict. Analysing postcolonial countries' choice to keep or switch to English is highly intricate. I partially agree with Phillipson's overarching argument that the prevalence of a colonial language might reproduce linguistic inequalities within multilingual societies. Furthermore, privileging English, French or Portuguese over local languages could continue to serve the interest of colonial power. However, I am also cautious of the danger to fall into either this or that. Pointing to colonial force (overt and covert) as the only reason pushing this choice might only be one side of the story. Particularly in the case of the English language, since in addition to its colonial past, English is also pulled in these postcolonial countries because of other structures, ideologies, and micro contextual factors. I shall now present the second component of LI.

4.3.3.2 Monolingual approach

Moving to the second pillar of the LI theory, Phillipson argues that one of the fallacies in language education is the monolingual approach. According to him, LI also works through the promotion of teaching English only on the pretext that it leads to optimal results. Learning other languages at the same time, especially in earlier stages (primary education), is portrayed as an impediment to the learning progress. Although this model is groundless, it is still observed in many countries. For example, Canagarajah and Said (2011) describe how different American states still apply 'English only' policy and any other language is banned in classrooms. Another case could be found in South Korea where Piller and Cho (2013) illustrate the spread of 'English Fever'. This trend shows how parents favour signing up their children in preschools that use only English to introduce them to the language from the beginning. These examples illustrate the ideologies shaping ELT which go beyond just learning a language. English becomes equated with success in educational journey and life in general. These representations are ideological constructs that often conceal political and economic interest.

Ricento (2006) explains that assimilationist ideology could underpin English language education only. Based on the claim that equal opportunities will be granted to English learners, he demonstrates how an assimilationist approach stands against any language policy (such as bilingual education) that gives importance to native languages which in turn results in serious social inequalities. Tollefson (2000: 9) argues that because disadvantaged youth lack "access to high-quality English language education, the spread of English presents a formidable obstacle to education, employment, and other activities requiring English proficiency". A similar point is echoed by Bruthiaux (2002: 291) who comments on the argument made for 'equal opportunities which English language education guarantees'. The author maintains that poor people in developing countries feel "little or no effect of the global spread of English because they are barely touched by the globalization that underpins it", Furthermore, Bruthiaux (2002: 275) argues that English in such contexts will "ultimately benefit mostly the relatively well-off at the expense of the poorest". Notably, for those whose lives centre around the informal economy, English language education will not benefit them in any way.

A key trend in higher education nowadays is pushing for English language education within developing countries. As the data in chapters 6 and 7

illustrates, there is an increased prevalence of English in Algerian society in general and universities in particular. Given the main themes discussed in this section, the following questions are worth asking when conducting the data analysis: to what extent can the spread of English in Algerian society and higher education be considered as a form of linguistic imperialism? Alternatively, can it simply be a pragmatic choice to keep abreast of international trends in education? I shall return to discuss these questions in chapter 8. But for now, I will present the third component of LI theory in the following subsection.

4.3.3.3 The native speaker fallacy

In addition to debates about linguisticism and monolingualism, LI also critiques the widespread belief which represents ‘native speakers’ of English as the most competent to teach the language. This belief has been taken for granted notably in the ELT profession and classrooms. In this subsection, I will define this ideology and review its key components. Furthermore, I will explore the way that these components shape ELT both in policy and practice. Establishing this theoretical discussion is relevant to the overarching aim of the thesis which seeks to explore the connections between ideology, discourses, and the realities of the ELT classroom.

Phillipson’s (1992) work on the social and cultural inequalities around the spread of English also raised concerns about dominant beliefs around ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ speakers. These beliefs make speakers of English as a first language competent teachers simply because they are born and raised within inner circle countries. As such, they are assumed to hold English linguistic and sociocultural knowledge. Based on this belief, discrimination against ‘non-native’ speakers arises in the teaching profession. Holliday (2005) further examines similar assumptions under the term “nativespeakerism”. He defines the latter as “an established belief that ‘native speaker’ teachers represent a ‘Western culture’ from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology” (2005: 22). Holliday (2005) also explores how the field of ELT has been dominated by the English-speaking West both in terms of research and teaching profession. The power and knowledge that the “Centre” dominates have spurred the native speaker fallacy.

The notion of nativespeakerism has been problematised among researchers as a social construct that underpins several aspects of the ELT classroom (Holliday, 2005; Kramsch and Hua, 2016; Lowe, 2020b). Holliday (2005) argues that this ideology gives power and privilege to methodologies, approaches, and language varieties from Britain, Australasia, and North America (BANA). The BANA are often represented as the 'best' providers of ELT materials. Consequently, these beliefs are transferred into criteria of "proper standards of English, to proper models of English, and to proper norms of English" (Lowe, 2020b: 23). Thus, materials and methodologies originating from the English-speaking West become markers of 'authentic' practices and resources that should be used in ELT classrooms. This further brings along discussions of standard English ideology within which particular varieties are favoured in foreign language classrooms and are often assumed to be mastered by all 'native speakers' of English. This in turn endorses a monolithic perception of language.

Based on the above discussion, it can be argued that the dominant beliefs characterising nativespeakerism have been internalised into a teaching model that prevails in several ELT classrooms across outer and expanding circle countries. Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) critique the 'native speaker' teaching model arguing that it limits both teachers' and learners' agency and contribution to the teaching/learning experience. This limitation lies in the way the ELT classroom's main concern becomes revolved around targeting 'native speaker's' competency. Holliday (2016a: 268) also argues that nativespeakerism prevents learners and teachers from exploiting the potential of other resources and materials outside the confines of the countries from the inner circle. Exploring methodologies that are most relevant to learners has the "richness to provide them with the linguistic and cultural experience to contribute positively to English language learning". Llurda (2016: 53) also argues that the native speaker ideology "accounts for the socially accepted superiority of the 'native speaker' over the rest of the world's speakers of English and assigns the former innumerable qualities and values that give them the aura of being the 'ideal language teacher'". Consequently, these prevailing beliefs in ELT often provide a narrow approach that does not reflect the realities of language teaching and learning. Another deficiency of this model is the overemphasis on national conceptions which endorse essentialist views about 'culture' and the English language. Consequently, this model overshadows the differences within the

same nation and conceals the similarities across national boundaries (Risager, 2006).

Researchers have endeavoured to counter the 'native speaker' model and to suggest different alternatives. For example, indigenisation of ELT materials is an approach suggested to avoid falling into the trap of nativespeakerism. To define what is meant by ELT materials, I use Gray's (2016: 95) definition of materials as anything "brought into classrooms by teachers" to support language learning. Gray (2016) also argues that appropriate materials used in ELT classrooms have to respond to students' needs, interests, and realities. In view of materials' appropriateness, Mazrui (2004) argues that decolonisation for language teaching is a process involving several elements. Among these elements, he outlined domestication and indigenisation which "could also involve exposing African students to other indigenous forms of knowledge which continue to be articulated primarily in African languages" (2004: 60). He adds "English in Africa, then, needs to be Africanized in this broad sense that encompasses inscription of new meanings, while African languages need to be elaborated to make them more compatible with the present state of knowledge".

The indigenisation approach has been applied differently and has often led to polarisation. Gray (2002; 2016) describes the guidelines for content writers which they have to adhere to avoid any offense to the receivers of the ELT materials. He refers to inappropriacy as a guideline under which references to topics (related to politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, isms, and pork) have to be strictly avoided in textbooks. Under the PARSNIP rule for publishers, the content materials had to refer to social and cultural elements specific to the target users only. Along the same line, Borjian (2013) describes English textbooks that started to be used in post-revolution Iran. These textbooks exclusively used Muslim characters who engaged in Islamic-related practices. The author (2013) argues that this orientation projects the Iranian anti-Western and anti-imperialist movements. Contrary to the indigenous model that shaped ELT in state-owned schools, private schools and ELT institutions follow an Anglo-American model to teaching English. Learning English in these private schools appears to attract more Iranian students who are eager to learn English through other resources and to discover other ways of life that are on trend (Borjian, 2013). This approach appears to lead the ELT content textbooks used in state-owned schools to

be devoid of any social and cultural topics that might interest younger learners. I will elaborate on this point in the data chapter (see 7.5.2).

To avoid a narrow conception of 'culture' and how it relates to ELT, other researchers suggest a critical intercultural approach to ELT (Kramsch and Hua, 2016; Dasli and Diaz, 2016; Piller, 2017). Following this approach, the notion of 'culture' is put under scrutiny. Kramsch and Hua (2016) stress the importance for teachers to take a discourse perspective when approaching culture and intercultural communication within the language classroom. They consider 'culture' as a verb rather than a set of fixed ascribed cultural identities related to a particular group or a nation. Furthermore, a discourse perspective views English "as a social semiotic system that mediates global form and local thought" (2016: 48). Since the global use of English unavoidably undergoes inflections brought by speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, this entails critical considerations to meaning in ELT. Kramsch and Hua (2016: 43) contend that meaning-making needs to go beyond teaching learners sociolinguistics and pragmatics made by "monolingual white middle-class speakers of British and American English". Instead, there is a need to raise learners' awareness of the nuances of words expressed by people with different social affiliations and identities (gender, age, profession... etc.). Teaching culture as a discourse approach emphasises the vital importance of raising political and historical awareness and reflexivity to "help learners understand the power dynamic behind intercultural exchanges" (Kramsch and Hua, 2016: 47). This perspective is crucial to understand the data relevant to learners in chapter 8.

This section provided an understanding of the main tenets which construct the theory of LI. Through critiquing and challenging the native speaker fallacy, LI theory attempts to clarify that its preoccupation is not to oppose teaching and learning English per se. It is rather concerned with the ideological backdrop of English language policy, and its teaching and learning. The three subsections also presented which parts of the theory can serve the research context. Yet, the absence of considering the micro context where English sprouts and how power and politics play out at this level remain an underdeveloped thread. In this view, I will now turn to further elaborate this framework using a critical contextual perspective to explore English language policy and teaching practices.

4.4 The power and politics of English language teaching

Linguistic imperialism is critiqued by researchers who take a contextual approach. Notably, Phillipson's (2009) views on power relations behind language spread seem to mainly focus on colonialism and hegemonic strategies driven by global forces. Consequently, power in his theory appears to be operating hierarchically, usually envisaged in terms of a dominant group controlling the spread of English, its use, teaching practices and methodologies. As such, this framework sometimes fails to recognise the different dimensions of power relations. The following subsections will present a more contextualised approach to how the power and politics behind ELT operate in complex ways and how they shape ELT policy and practices.

Despite the critical perspective characterising the framework of linguistic imperialism, the theory has several limitations. One of these limitations is its overreliance on top-down forces to reveal how they operate through English. Stelma and Fay (2019) point to this limitation and how it does not offer a clear insight into the social complex reality. They argued that "critical perspective that is singularly focused on challenging power and hegemony fails to recognize the stratified intentional dynamics of human ecologies" (2019: 4). The stratified nature of social settings such as the language classroom entails an approach that accounts for structural, institutional, and micro contextual forces that shape English language teaching and learning.

Within a top-down approach, power tends to be conceptualised in a traditional sense, as such research work often refers to forms of control over the spread of English exercised by a group of people manipulating the world. Canagarajah (1999) partly agrees with Phillipson's view that hegemonic linguistic imperialism has to be resisted. Nevertheless, he disagrees with the argument that the best way to achieve this resistance is through a complete rejection of 'big' languages such as English. He argues that this approach does not "make periphery subjects linguistically competent for the culturally hybrid post-modern world they confront" (1999: 197). Moreover, Phillipson's position was described as a postmodernist fallacy by Holborow (1999). Through examining Phillipson's theory, Holborow (1999) indicates the lack of agency and the prevailing assumption that through English learning, people will be assimilated into an Anglo-American life. Holborow (1999) further argues that Phillipson's theory fails to address local relations of power and how "local rulers and international capitalism or how economic exploitation

arises from social relations within, as well as beyond, 'periphery' countries" (1999; 78). This argument is also echoed by Pennycook (2016: 26) who maintains that the spread of ELT "is pushed by many forces that saw an interest in its promotion and pulled by many who also perceived value in acquiring it". Taking a Foucauldian approach to power, this denotes that forces behind ELT operate in complex ways, not just vertically or horizontally (Foucault, 1977). In this view, the mechanisms of how the politics around the English language work are examined through power, discourse, and ideology. These are explored in relation to status, policies, use, teaching, and learning and how they shape the realities of ELT.

One way of exploring the politics of language is through the examination of how language is shaped in such policy decisions. As in the case of language education policies issued by policymakers, the way that official documents are linguistically constructed might convey different facets of power.

Language policy documents tend to dictate what should and should not be done. Similarly, they reflect ideological positionings and socio-economic visions behind implemented educational policies (Piller and Cho, 2013). Power dimension as reflected in policy texts, in that it shapes how a topic is represented and talked about across stratified institutions (for example higher education) and among stakeholders occupying unequal positions (such as policymakers, teachers, learners, and the public opinion). Woolard (1998) notes that discourses about a language are not just beliefs about the language itself but rather representations that unravel socio-political and economic aspirations. She states that "ideologies of language ... envision and enact ties of language to identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology" (cited in Seargeant and Erling, 2011: 251).

Macro-social contexts are also important to unravel the power behind discourses regarding English. Notably, people's conceptions about certain languages or dialects and the social status conferred to them also reflect a political dimension. This is encapsulated in the famous saying by Weinreich that "a language is a dialect with an army and a navy" (cited in Sebba, 1997: 3). A relevant example to illustrate this quote is examining the pre-eminence of English as "the language of political and cultural power" (Fairclough, 2014: 84). Arguably, English would never have achieved its current status without the support of economic, political, and cultural factors. Fairclough (2014: 84) explains the role of early capitalism as an economic force that first endorsed a standard form of English to prevail. English, which draws on multiple

influences and languages, was standardised and favoured over other languages such as Gaelic and Welsh as it represented the language of merchants, a rising social class after feudalism had ended. Standard English with its Received Pronunciation (RP) form gained more strength over French and Latin as it became later associated with literary work and good quality of education. Consequently, these factors have defined power relations around English and other languages. Similarly, they have produced a normalising power behind discourses that represent standard English as the most 'correct', 'proper' and 'unified' form that deserves to acquire an official status at national and international levels. Such representation accentuates the idea that languages are neutral, fixed, unvarying, and "strictly rule governed" (Abdelhay et al., 2016: 9), whereas other forms of World Englishes are represented as erroneous.

The political dimension of language is also encapsulated in accents as they indicate aspects of speakers' identity (social class, ethnicity, region). At these levels, stigmatisation and social stereotyping often happen. Lippi-Green (1994: 166) explains how accents' discrimination is often "associated with racial, ethnic, or cultural minorities". In several contexts including England, regional accents have been stigmatised in educational settings because they are viewed as deviants from the standardised form even though the use of this form in real life is very limited (Seidlhofer, 2011).

Several critical researchers endeavoured to explore other facets of power in ELT. Pennycook (1994; 2001) focuses on the status of English and examines how its spread and teaching are deeply embedded within discourses of global development, modernism, and employability. The dominant beliefs about English, according to Pennycook, are inherent in a "colonial celebratory position" (2001: 56). The colonial legacy has played a significant role in shaping people's perceptions about the importance of English. The predominant conceptions about English were born out of privileging colonial languages. Furthermore, within countries from outer and expanding circles, some discourses represent English language teaching and learning as the only way to access higher education, scientific knowledge, and employability. These claims are normalised within local contexts. Consequently, educational institutions across different geographical regions such as Malaysia, South Korea, Turkey, Germany, Oman, and Columbia adopt English as the language of education not

because they have been coerced to but rather this transition seems a prerequisite (Macaro et al., 2018)

In addition to the colonial discourses, Pennycook (2016) gives examples of travel, popular culture, and technology as discreet structures through which power works to advance the status of ELT in the world. In the same view, Canagarajah and Said (2009) recognise the role of soft power in promoting the spread of discourses around ELT. Particularly, they emphasise the symbolic power which English has gained from cultural institutions, mass media, cinema, music, and educational relations across borders. Consequently, they argue that these transnational institutions play a substantial role in promoting a sense that English is inevitable to attain success, academic knowledge, and employability. Thus, for several countries opting for Standard English as a medium of education, it often becomes a pragmatic choice to benefit from the functions which English can offer.

To understand the status of English within higher education, there is a need to examine several forces which continue to direct and dictate global educational visions. Notably, the interplay between a country's economic, political, and socio-historical situation also indirectly shapes decisions to promote English mainly within higher education which is considered a salient institution in several societies longing for development. In this view, the following section will explore dimensions of power in relation to the domain of higher education. It will also examine the underlying structures such as internationalisation and university rank, what these mean to local policymakers, and how they play a role in the promotion of English language policies and practices.

4.5 English language teaching within higher education

This section will review studies that take a critical approach to research ELT. The focus will be on research that identifies power relations and politics behind English at the level of policy, teaching practices, and learning experiences. With an emphasis on the higher education context, the sub-sections will present the macro-micro forces that drive ELT. Furthermore, the review of key studies will be framed by the theories formerly discussed in section 4.3. Finally, I present the methodological, theoretical and pedagogical limitations of reviewed studies to highlight the importance of my

research and how it attempts to fill in the gaps within the literature on ELT policy and practice in higher education.

4.5.1 Internationalisation as a trend in education

English language policy has gained momentum as more countries have endeavoured to internationalise their higher education institutions (Doiz et al., 2011). As such, the link between the promotion of English and internationalisation within higher education cannot be overlooked. The adoption of English as a medium of instruction for programmes or specific modules is often seen as a prerequisite for the process of internationalisation to take place in non-English speaking countries. This widespread trend is also called “Englishisation” which is covertly fostered under internationalisation process. Piller (2016: 179) uses the term “Englishisation” to refer to the English phenomenon which has recently prevailed in universities. In this regard, the structures of internationalisation endorse English teaching in higher education based on the premise that its use reflects academic excellence, attracts international students, and boosts institutions’ international rank.

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) is viewed and used differently worldwide which often leads to confusion (Macaro et al., 2018; Piller, 2016). For example, Piller (2016: 179) highlights that in the context of higher education “the lines between English as a language teaching subject and English as a medium of instruction are not necessarily clear-cut”. Due to the ubiquity of EMI in the higher education context, it is noticeable that the status of ELT tends to gradually extend from a taught subject to a tool through which different academic activities are conducted. Furthermore, Macaro et al. (2018: 37) define EMI as “the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the population is not English”. This definition highlights that EMI policy is introduced in a context where English holds a status of a second/foreign language and is prioritised to be an educational tool over other local languages. As previously explained (see section 3.5), EMI in the case of Algerian higher education (AHE) is even more complex and blurry. The EMI policy does not completely impact the entire teaching/learning, but English has also a significant effect on academic research practices, and it has recently been used as a medium for

administrative communication within Algerian university institutions. Additionally, there are also courses and modules which are taught in English. However, the status of English is promoted under the Ministry's decisions initiated in 2019 to adopt English as a medium of instruction in the long run.

I argued in chapter 3.6 that the rapidly changing status of English could be interpreted within the socio-historical, current political climate, and the global educational trend transferred to AHE. The latter is a key factor behind the growing shift to introduce EMI programmes within universities. Pennycook (2016: 30) explains how educational concerns about “knowledge, pedagogy and the curriculum” within a specific local context also shape decisions about English language teaching.

Global educational systems seem to flow under the structures of internationalisation. However, internationalisation of higher education is also a complex area to define. The term is even often equated with globalisation as the two intersect with the spread of English in higher education. Therefore, there is a need to establish an understanding of the difference between the two. Altbach and Knight (2007: 290) draw a comparison between globalisation and internationalisation explaining how each has impacted higher education:

Globalization and internationalization are related but not the same thing. Globalization is the context of economic and academic trends that are part of the reality of the 21st century. Internationalization includes the policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions and even individuals to cope with the global academic environment.

The internationalisation policies and practices which continue to affect higher education could be seen as a coping mechanism to respond to global economic trends. One of these policies is the introduction of EMI in programmes and degrees dedicated to international students. Furthermore, Scholte (2008) argues that internationalisation is considered part of globalisation and not its equivalent. Globalisation, as discussed in section 4.2, is not a recent phenomenon. Nevertheless, internationalisation as an official system for higher education institutions could be traced to the Bologna declaration of 1999. Kehm (2010) examines internationalisation within the Bologna framework. He highlights that the core aim of the

declaration was “the establishment of a European Higher Education Area by the year 2010 by means of the “harmonization” of the disparate systems of higher education in the region” (2010: 42). Kehm (2010) also notes that this ‘harmonisation’ of structure, teaching, and learning within higher education reflects double standards. One of its purposes is to attract students across European nations for the sake of creating an atmosphere of ‘cooperation and mutual trust’. Yet, harmonisation has also had a global impact on higher education outside Europe. With more non-European countries joining this framework and agreeing to adhere to its principles, different structures of competitiveness have also accompanied this move at the level of language use, academic publications, and ranking.

Within the competitive dimension of internationalising higher education, Altbach and Knight (2007: 292) identify the financial profit as the underlying motivation behind internationalisation of universities that rely less on public funding. Wakeling and Jefferies (2013) argue that due to the insufficient governmental funds to cover the continuous massive increase in university enrolment, higher education institutions have to switch to private financing. Consequently, they explain that tuition fees surged for all students regardless of their nationalities. They note the case of UK universities where tuition fees paid by UK students differ across Scotland, England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Many researchers acknowledge the expensive fees for students (Altbach and Knight, 2007), while Beine et al. (2018) underline the discrepancy between home and international students’ fees. Although the content taught to home and international students is the same, international students have to pay much more expensive fees. As such, attracting more international students plays a key role in this profit-making. One key aspect which characterises universities that are internationally attractive to students is the availability of English learning courses.

Internationalisation of higher education has also reached North African countries such as Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia which share almost the same colonial history (Former French colonies). These countries instigated higher education reform within the same period and entered into a contract to promote mobility and collaboration (Alemu, 2019). More importantly, the internationalisation process in these contexts where most institutions are non-profit might have different aims from the European higher education context. In this regard, Altbach and Knight (2007: 292) highlight that in contexts where universities are state-owned, internationalisation usually

aims to “enhance research and knowledge capacity and to increase cultural understanding”. Consequently, replicating foreign educational systems in African contexts tends to be driven by visions of change in the quality of teaching and learning.

Such initiatives raise questions about the real implications of borrowing foreign educational systems. Notably, the benefits of internationalisation in terms of profit and knowledge economy for African universities remain questionable. In a report conducted by the World Bank on higher education in Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries that have adopted internationalisation, it was noticed that the number of students migrating to different European countries far outweighs the number of international students enrolling in MENA universities (Jaramillo et al., 2011). This demonstrates who profits from the international mobility programmes promoted between European and African universities. Another frequently discussed issue is the risk of lost talent. If MENA students consider staying abroad because of the wider opportunities offered to them, then MENA regions would lose the ‘human capital’ and the contribution of these highly skilled people to their home countries (Jaramillo et al., 2011: 16). This issue of brain drain is not recent, but rather dates back before internationalisation. Yet, a recent study shows that brain drain has surged after internationalisation of higher education (Alemu, 2019). In view of the above discussion, the link between internationalisation and the English language will be further explored in the following section.

4.5.2 Internationalisation and English language teaching

The correlation between Englishisation and internationalisation was explored in Dearden and Macaro’s (2016) comparative study of Austrian, Italian, and Polish higher education. The researchers assert that a primary objective behind introducing EMI policy in these three contexts is to recruit foreign students and acquire an international status. By interviewing 25 university teachers from the three countries, they point out that internationalisation and globalisation were used interchangeably by teachers whenever they reflected on the role of English for university students. While the discourse of ‘going international’ was prevalent among teachers, they held different conceptions of what this process entails. Dearden and Macaro (2016: 476) identify that “for some universities, international may contain a notion of

students studying an international, outward-looking curriculum. For others it means setting up partnerships, sending students abroad, and attracting students from overseas". As such, it seemed that English is perceived as a tool to facilitate academic knowledge and mobility for university teachers and students.

Countries are increasingly investing in higher education institutions through adopting English language policy in particular. The process of adopting internationalisation is context-based in which each university seems to have its own agendas. However, inwardly, one common motive behind these investments appears to be driven by the aspiration of socio-economic change and growth (Borjian, 2013). These versions of growth and change seem to be mapped out by borrowed ideas that often fail to meet local realities. In this respect, Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe (2006) discuss internationalisation in the Mongolian context in terms of 'educational convergence' whereby introducing reforms in higher education aimed to change the economic shift from socialism to globalised capitalism.

Concurrently, the adoption of foreign educational policies was not feasible in the Mongolian context and was found to exacerbate social stratification, especially between urban and rural areas. Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe (2006) use the term educational convergence to refer to any reform implemented at a local national level to adjust according to international standards of education. This educational convergence works at different ideological levels and often uses EMI policy as a supporting tool to gain economic and cultural hegemony.

There seems to be a close link between promoting English in higher education and economic visions held by policymakers. Piller (2016: 171) notes that investment in English language teaching is deeply rooted in "discourses and practices of development". This aspiration for development permeates economic, social, and educational levels. However, the road to development in many Middle Eastern and North African countries is still shaped by an external version of development which disregards the real needs of universities within local contexts. English-speaking countries in particular are considered as models and reference points given their economic development and technological progress. In a similar view, Piller and Cho (2013: 31) explain that the reality of educational convergence for many countries is "simply the transfer of the US model of academic capitalism to another national context". This suggests that

'internationalisation' and 'Englishisation' of higher education are mainly structural models that are often more economically driven than pedagogically sound.

The equation of English to modernity and internationalisation is also common in several countries undergoing socioeconomic changes. By way of illustration, Karmani (2005) also studies the spread of English within the Arabian Gulf region and modernisation during the oil boom economy that the region experienced. He notes that the rise in oil price triggered a series of effects where "almost every aspect of everyday life in the Arabian Gulf region underwent a phenomenal transformation" (2005: 89). The social and the economic changes were seen as a testimony of modernisation which is defined as a new vision to view oneself and the world we live in. Altawallbeh (2018) defines modernisation as a sociological and historical wave that could be discernible in the changes brought about to social and economic fields in 'traditional' societies. Within this orientation, Syed (2003: 338) points out that policymaking in the Gulf region "intrinsically linked development and modernization with English". Similarly, Le Ha and Barnawi (2015) explain how the Arabian Gulf governments invest billions of dollars to internationalise higher education. In this process of convergence, they "adopted an English medium instruction policy, imported English medium educational and training products and services, franchised international programmes, offered generous financial support and incentives to overseas institutions to establish branch campuses locally" (2015: 4). These efforts however were counterproductive and have led universities to be driven by profits rather than educational enrichment (Le Ha and Barnawi, 2015).

The intersection between the political and economic changes in many Gulf countries also altered the educational curriculum where ELT has gained solid ground. Karmani (2005) notes that a new educational curriculum in Qatar designed by U.S. educated researchers grants more English hours at the expense of Arabic and Islamic studies. These two subjects in particular were meticulously scrutinised by US curriculum designers under the pretext that their content might induce political and radical ideologies. Meanwhile, educational reform puts a higher premium on teaching English, the language which is supposedly neutral and free from any political agendas (Karmani, 2005). Hence, this modernisation vision has also brought along secular education which raised concerns among Arab conservative parties who

perceived this as reinforcing ‘American interference’ and threatening a country’s cultural identity (Karmani, 2005).

To accompany the socio-economic changes in which the English language has become pivotal, many gulf countries have established massive investments to prepare students for the workplace. Syed (2003) observes that the absence of qualified teachers of English in Gulf countries has opened recruitment opportunities for ‘native’ teachers. This was also accompanied by borrowing educational models and materials from English-speaking countries. Syed (2003) also notes that despite the Gulf countries’ concerted efforts to develop students’ English language competence, students’ proficiency level remains very low, and all these endeavours proved unsuccessful. Syed (2003: 339) argues that this is due to the lack of “socio-culturally appropriate materials and pedagogy designed for the specific needs of students in this region”. I agree with this view, in that locally produced materials could have great potential as they can be familiar to students, therefore making learning more memorable. However, not all locally produced materials necessarily assure to meet students’ different needs, wants, and lacks. A thorough assessment of these three can lead to accurate insights into which materials might be most appropriate. It could be a combination of both local and foreign materials from countries within inner, outer, and expanding circles. Furthermore, the issue might also lie within the content materials themselves and not where they are produced. As previously argued (see 4.3.3.3), teaching materials often promote cultural superficial descriptions of typical Western ‘culture’ which engenders stereotypical thinking and lacks pedagogic aims (Gray, 2016).

In addition to the discourse of modernity and economic progress which are attributed to English policies, the following section will delve into the discourse of English for academic excellence.

4.5.3 English as the medium of ‘academic excellence’

There are different and complex reasons underlying the promotion of English in higher education institutions around the world. This complexity is due to the way English language policy often interlinks with various global and local factors. As a way of illustration, Stelma and Fay (2019: 12) note three main aims behind the widespread preference to endorse English in non-English speaking higher education: “(a) offering access to prestige knowledge; (b)

attracting international students; and (c) developing students' competence in (preferably a prestige variety of) the English language". In several universities, a common belief behind adopting EMI programmes is linked to this idea that mastering English gives accessibility to 'prestige knowledge'. This idea will be further explored in this subsection.

There are several cases where African countries shifted the language of instruction in higher education from French to English because of the held belief that English is the marker of excellent quality knowledge. For example, Belhiah and Abdelatif (2016) capture this aim behind fostering the status of English language teaching within Moroccan higher education. Their study about doctoral students' attitudes regarding EMI reveals that the majority of these students choose English over any other language in both learning and research. The authors (2016) explain that the students' rationale behind this preference is rooted in the ability to read indexed journal articles in English and reference them in their dissertations. Belhiah and Abdelatif (2016: 221) also found that students see English as a key factor to "improve the quality of scientific research and their overall educational experience". A similar perception is rooted in the belief that English will add value and credibility to their research which other local languages cannot do. This also demonstrates the link between English and the idea of access to 'prestige knowledge' which prevails over different academic practices (teaching, learning, and research). Furthermore, it explains one of the most common normative assumptions about English as "the neutral medium of academic excellence" (Piller and Cho, 2013: 31). This widespread belief also privileges the use of indexed journals published in English where 'best quality' knowledge can be found. By this means, doctoral students and teachers may rely on these English journals in the quest to demonstrate the validity of their research.

The instrumental function of English in the contemporary academic community cannot be overlooked. Opting for English to access international journals might grant students and teachers the opportunity to read widely and broaden their perspectives about what is happening across the globe. English can also serve as a lingua franca for academic researchers to get their work to reach a broader audience. However, what is problematic is the normative assumptions around English as being the language of 'global academic excellence'. This expression in itself conveys a sense of privilege exclusive to knowledge in English and raises the following question: can we

assess research publications or teaching of academics conducted in other languages as less excellent? Similar discourses may appear normal, but they reinforce unequal power relations. 'Centre' knowledge and research published in English is often equated with 'quality' and 'academic excellence' compared to knowledge produced in 'periphery' or 'Third World' which has become "devalued" (Piller, 2016: 180). Consequently, academic publications which are written in different languages other than English struggle to be published in prestigious indexed journals. Hence, students and teachers might feel reluctant to reference less prestigious publications written in different languages in fear of devaluation of their dissertations and papers. Along the same line, Fay (2020) tackles the complexity of "intercultural knowledge-work" in which English is the dominant language. He notes the experiences of doctoral students undertaking multilingual research and how they refrain from demonstrating the languages at play in their data. This is often due to the absence of UK universities guidelines to support early researchers and give them the confidence to embrace multilingualism in their work (Fay, 2020).

The use of different languages in research and academic publications seems to be significantly declining in the recent three decades. For instance, Liu (2017) conducted a comparative study using three journal citation indexes for Science, Social Sciences, and Arts and Humanities. He notes the equal presence of French and German languages alongside English in the three examined journals especially between 1970-1980. However, he also identifies a significant decrease in the use of these languages after 1980 notably in the disciplines of natural and social sciences. He attributes this decline to economic, geopolitical, and scientific factors. Similarly, Albarillo (2014) analyses JSTOR and Scopus bibliographic data for social sciences papers from 1996 to 2012. He highlighted that 90% of these publications were written in English. However, he points out the increase of non-English peer-reviewed content on Scopus. Binswanger (2014: 55) adds that most of the "world production of scientific articles comes from the U.S. (25 %), followed by Britain with 6.9 %".

The continuous increase in the use of English as a language for academic publications for various disciplines could be seen as one outcome of internationalisation. However, the above two researchers do not show the extent to which English is directly pushed by these journals or whether the researchers actively choose to publish in English or have been compelled by

their institutions to do so. Meanwhile, Paasi (2005: 771) points out that international academic publications are dominated by “US/UK-based journals that are indexed by one US-based firm” where knowledge production complies with ‘centre’ conventions, structure, and policies. Consequently, as ‘periphery’ researchers endeavour to publish in order to progress in their career, they not only have to write in English, but they also need to compromise their research interests so that their topics appeal to what is trendy and relevant to the ‘Centre’. As such, Paasi (2005: 772) claims that this is leading to homogenisation of knowledge production and argues that “this tendency is a structural problem in which the English language is the medium, not the cause”. Along the same line, Piller (2016: 180) highlights that as English is dominating international academic publications (and prestigious indexed journals), this indicates that other languages are deprived of the opportunity “to develop their own registers necessary to formulate and express scientific knowledge”. Piller (2016: 185), therefore, concludes that “academic ‘internationalization’ in effect means the imposition of English-mediated centralized regimes of knowledge”. This critical outcome further threatens local languages and knowledge and leads to inequality at the epistemic level.

Hyland (2016) on the other hand, critically evaluates the claims of linguistic injustice in international academic research. He argues that the English language is just a communicative tool for researchers to present their content. As such, he opposes the idea that international academics struggle to publish because they are ‘non-native’ speakers of English and claims that this perception hides the challenges faced by novice English ‘native’ speakers’ academics to publish their works. Hyland (2016: 59) contends that “framing publication problems as a crude Native vs non-Native polarization functions to demoralize EAL [English as an Additional Language] writers and ignores the very real writing problems experienced by many L1 English scholars”. Therefore, his argument focuses on how the nature of academic publication is getting more challenging and competitive as many variables impact this enterprise. In this regard, Binswanger (2013) contends that academic publications are one key output that could be measured when evaluating institutions’ and researchers’ contributions. As such, the competitiveness in all disciplines is fierce since there are also hierarchies that govern the quality of academic publications. Binswanger (2013: 54) highlights that journals tend to be classified into “awe-inspiring top-journals

(A-journals)” which are the most demanding and known for rejecting manuscripts as they seek out high-quality standards. Additionally, compared to first-class ones, there are the “less highly respected B- and C-journals”. Interestingly, Binswanger (2013) asserts that the pursuit of manuscripts’ quality is not always related to the content, nor the sophisticated English language used as much as it is about the adherence of form and frameworks which are mostly assessed by peer reviewers. This explanation reveals that the structure of publications is also intricate. Competition is not only evident in the number of articles published but other points of consideration such as which journals academics publish their research papers. These structures show how academic excellence can never be pinned down to merely mastering the English language.

As stated above, academic research publications are measures of institutions’ output. This criterion is salient for university rank on an international level. The following section will explore this measure and how it relates to English language teaching.

4.5.4 English and the structure of university ranking

In the scope of international higher education, research publications are significant because they represent a key criterion in ranking university institutions (Binswanger, 2013). Examining closely how university ranking works, Piller and Cho (2013) underline that the English language also sits within these structures. The authors’ argument captures the spread of English within higher education institutions across the political and economic spectrum. They show how universities in quest of internationalisation and competition require the adoption of English language policy. English is a facilitating tool to promote institutions internationally, the teaching they offer, and their academic research productivity.

In addition to research output, the structures of competition also depend on the number of international students recruited by universities. EMI is represented as a facilitating tool for this to be achieved. In this regard, Piller and Cho (2013) state that very often the need to attract international students is used as a justification for adopting EMI. This change is also presented as a leading step towards academic excellence. In other words, only when an institution fulfils the principles of the internationalisation model, one of which is EMI, then it reflects ‘global academic excellence’. Yet, these

representations are superficial and simplistic as argued by Marginson and Van der Wende (2007: 55):

University rankings simplify the complex world of higher education in two areas of great public and private interest: institutional performance, and institutional status. They emphasise vertical differences between institutions and between nations; that is, differences of power and authority. They obscure horizontal differences, in the form of differences of purpose and type.

At the surface level, the spread of English within higher education seems to be a consequence of macro factors such as globalisation and internationalisation which tend to be key inevitable themes raised when English is discussed. However, the unequal power relations are concealed. Moreover, the prestigious advantages that universities positioned in English-speaking countries have, also allow discourses of English as a global language to circulate (Stelma and Fay, 2019). Universities in the UK and USA are always regarded as an academic reference point not only based on their teaching standards but also because English is the language of academic and social life in these 'centre' contexts. These are key elements that attract international students from non-English speaking countries. Consequently, the status of English-speaking countries is one of the factors leading to unequal power relationships in the broader academic community.

In light of the studies and theories reviewed in this chapter, attention should be drawn to the absence of multiple perspectives. There is a lack of comprehensive scrutiny of how global and local forces interact and shape the status of ELT policy and practice. There is a great tendency among research studies to focus either on English policies or teaching practices. Hence, the intersection between these two dimensions in a local context is still underexplored. More importantly, the reviewed studies rarely provide ethnographic accounts which describe the voices of users, teachers, and learners of English, and how they resist and challenge discourses about English. Therefore, this research will critically examine these perspectives, forces, and discourses about ELT as embedded within the Algerian local context. Furthermore, this allows for a close consideration of the realities of English from the perspective of Algerian teachers and learners within higher education to demonstrate how they navigate global and national discourses. These views will inform the scholarship about what English policy and its

teaching mean given the Algerian socio-political context and local visions of change and progress.

It should also be noted that there are a plethora of studies that investigate the politics of English policy and practice in countries located in outer and expanding circle countries. Nevertheless, fewer studies are undertaken in postcolonial contexts where English faces another ex-colonial language such as French in Algeria. Given these missing pieces, the current research adds historical, political, economic, and micro classroom perspectives. These will forward the theoretical understanding of how these different facets shape the politics of ELT both in policy and practice. The research will demonstrate how discourses about ELT are not exclusively used in top-down policies and planning but are reproduced/challenged across a stratified social context. This involves perspectives from teachers' practices and learners' experiences.

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter presented current theories in relation to the status of English and its teaching across different contexts. It also compared different perspectives on the spread of English and its current status within higher education. In addition, the reviewed literature demonstrated the intersection between internationalisation as a global force and dominant discourses about English language teaching in university contexts. While the reviewed studies informed understanding about the different structures which endorse discourses of English in higher education, there are still gaps in the literature. Particularly, the multiple perspectives of teachers and students, local forces, and histories, in addition to the realities of non-English postcolonial contexts remain underexplored. This research aims to delve into this complexity for a comprehensive understanding of the macro and micro politics of ELT. I now proceed to the next chapter which will present the methodology that this research follows.

Chapter 5: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the overall methodology adopted for this research. I will start by outlining the theoretical principles that characterise this study under the umbrella of qualitative research. I will move to discuss the epistemological and the ontological perspectives informing the research paradigmatic orientation. I will then explain the research design and relate how I gained access, sampled participants, and collected the data. I will then move to the analytical framework to explain the different stages involved. Finally, statements about positionality and some methodological limitations will be presented.

5.2 The qualitative nature of research

This research operates within a qualitative approach. It aims primarily to explore the extent to which historical, structural forces, and ideological discourses might act as influential factors on the ELT classroom reality within Algerian higher education in general and the English Language Teaching (ELT) objectives in particular. Particularly, it will focus more on how the implementation of the new structural reform (Bologna system) might have further reinforced some ideological discourses (English for academic excellence and employability). The research also seeks to explore the teachers' and learners' agency, how they reinforce, counter or negotiate these top-down forces and discourses. In light of these objectives, the research questions were formulated to guide the research. Nevertheless, I have to acknowledge that the research questions which I formulated in the initial research proposal have changed. The focus of these initial questions was on the 'native-speakerism' ideology and the ways it may still dominate the Algerian ELT classroom within higher education. I was also interested in interculturality and how it can be suggested as a more critical approach that transcends the traditional 'native'-'nonnative' speaker dichotomy in teaching and learning. However, these research interests started taking more shape when I began the data collection. Notably, the examination of policy documents, teachers' interview data, and initial fieldwork observations suggested that other ideologies and forces shape the ELT classroom.

Consequently, the constant interaction with the data has further led the following research questions to emerge:

- What are the forces and discourses shaping English language teaching within Algerian higher education?
- How do teachers and students navigate these discourses?
- What do the teaching practices tell us about the reality of English within Algerian higher education?

The form of the above research questions and the nature of the concepts under investigation require a qualitative investigation. Exploring details of teachers' working lives and students' English learning experiences are best attained through qualitative research. Furthermore, the complexity of researching how English policies and practices are underpinned by forces, discourses, and ideologies requires consideration of several factors which come into play when exploring the reality of English language classrooms. To be able to account for this complexity, adopting a qualitative approach allows a close examination of the research topic where the researcher is at the heart of the research setting exploring what is happening and listening to individual's perspectives. To some extent, this aligns with the characteristics of critical ethnographic research. The critical aspect aims to uncover ideologies and hidden beliefs that often reproduce unequal power relations (Kumaravadivelu, 1999). Lowe (2020a: 2) perceives the importance of critical ethnography to research ELT and contends that a similar approach seeks to unravel and problematise "hidden power relations which govern the way the language teaching industry is organised and structured". Similarly, Kumaravadivelu (1999: 476) contends that the use of critical ethnography in ELT allows to "penetrate hidden meanings and underlying connections" of both discourses and counter-discourses shaping classroom realities.

Ethnography is a broad research area used differently in several disciplines. Consequently, it is challenging to provide one overarching definition. As a tradition, it has a long history associated with social anthropology (Wolcott, 2008). Ethnographic research aims to explore "what people do (behaviors), what they say (language), the potential tension between what they do and ought to do, and what they make and use, such as artefacts" (Spradley, 1980, cited in Creswell and Poth, 2016: 96).

Despite the differences in defining what ethnography entails across disciplines, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) outline the central aspects

characterising ethnographic research on a practical level. They note immersion within the social world related to the research phenomenon being studied and how “the research takes place in the field” (2007: 3) without any conditions or controlled experiments by the researcher. Relating this to my research, the fieldwork lasted four months (including 3 weeks of piloting) within two Algerian universities and involved teachers, students within their “natural environment” i.e. classrooms, corridors, library, and staff rooms. This provided an “emic perspective” about the macro and micro factors influencing ELT within the researched context.

The richness of ethnography often lies in the use of an eclectic approach to data collection methods. This study relied on a wide range of data: notes from classroom observation, interviews, focus group discussion, and different documents collected in the form of English curriculum, syllabi, materials, and official policy documents. Secondary data was also used from political speeches by the Algerian Minister of Higher Education (MHE) about the Algerian policies behind the promotion of English in Algerian universities. These different sources allowed me to study the phenomenon from different vantage points. Deliberately using different qualitative methods to adequately address the research questions is referred to as “bricolage” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). As researchers recognise the constraints of one single method, they resort to bricolage as an approach which “makes use of the tools available to complete a task” (Kincheloe, 2001: 680). Kincheloe (2001: 690) further adds that bricolage in qualitative research “opens new interpretive windows that lead to more rigorous modes of analysis and interpretation”.

Geertz (1973) asserts that ethnographic fieldwork needs to be followed with a thorough written product that accounts for the process by providing a “thick description” of the setting and the participants being studied. This aspect inspired the thesis writing, first in setting the scene and explaining the Algerian context (see chapter 3) to explain the multilingual landscape and how it has been a site for political decisions. Secondly, the thick description also influenced the data chapters to explain and contextualise the findings. Finally, the discussion chapter also followed a thick description where the key findings were located in the wider society to give a clear insight on how English is positioned, taught, and used. As such, thick explanations have accompanied the different stages of writing about the research context, data analysis, and discussion. Having outlined the tradition guiding this research,

it is crucial to highlight the philosophical beliefs underpinning the research choices.

5.3 The research paradigm

After identifying the qualitative principles adopted for this study, this section aims to clarify my own beliefs which underpin the choice of these principles. Any piece of research is guided by a particular paradigm, from the very beginning of having a research idea, defining research questions, to deciding how to investigate the phenomenon, paradigms orient the overall research.

A paradigm is often difficult to fully grasp by novice researchers because of its philosophical nature. My understanding of research paradigms draws upon definitions in the field of applied linguistics. Holliday (2016b) for example opposes the often assumed similarity between paradigm and methodology. He argues that paradigm is the larger framework that determines researchers' choices of specific research traditions and methods. Similarly, Richards (2003: 32) offers a useful definition of paradigm as a "[...] body of principles, ideas and practices that will inform approaches to research". Hua (2015) gives more details explaining how similar phenomena can be differently studied by researchers working under distinct paradigms. These shape researchers' beliefs about how a research problem is investigated and how answers can best be obtained.

The role paradigms play in defining the research direction requires a clarification of the researcher's philosophical assumptions and how these fit into a specific paradigmatic orientation. In this regard, the research draws on the interpretive constructivism paradigm which views any social action as "an interaction between structures and products, [...], both mediated by politics and ideology, and the way that individuals construct meaning as they build their lives" (Holliday, 2015: 25). Data gathered was treated in relation to the social context. In other words, understanding the interaction between macro and micro factors and the way they construct English policies and teaching practices was crucial to make sense of data. To clarify what I mean by the interpretive constructivism paradigm, I refer to Denzin and Lincoln's (2018) explanation of the three philosophical assumptions of a research paradigm which relate to epistemology, ontology, and methodology.

5.4 The epistemological and ontological positions

My own beliefs and assumptions about reality and knowledge reflect an interpretive approach. This aims to explore the multiple and context-bound realities. Pennycook (2016: 30) views English both at policy and practice levels as “locally embedded”. The local context might construct a different reality as experienced by other teachers and learners of English from outer and expanding circles. Similarly, interpretive researchers embrace a relative view of knowledge. In collecting data from teacher and student participants about their perceptions and experiences of English, one cannot neglect the interpretive aspect which humans rely on to make sense of their social world.

The interpretive lens is suitable for this type of inquiry since it paves the way for what Bryman (2016: 28) refers to as the three levels of interpretation to understand human knowledge. While the first level involves showing participants’ perspectives and how they interpret the studied phenomenon (as data chapters demonstrate), the next level requires the researcher to interpret the highlighted interpretations with the guidance of a specific theoretical frame. Finally, the researcher’s interpretations need to be discussed with reference to concepts, theories, and literature (this is shown in chapter 9). In my research, I used these stages as guidelines. I added an extra dimension to the theoretical interpretations of participants’ perspectives. I tried to link their constructed views, in relation to the historical, social, economic, and political context. This idea will be further discussed under the data analysis section (see 5.6) where frame analysis will be elaborated.

As ontological stance is concerned with how researchers perceive reality: Do they see a single truth in reality that their research will discover? Or that their findings are but one possible answer out of the multiple existing explanations. This research is positioned within constructivism which is based on the belief that social meanings are constantly constructed by social actors through interaction (Bryman, 2016). The interactions which took place between me as a researcher, the research participants, and the data were co-constructed. That is to say, I also became an active social actor influencing the way data were collected, processed, and analysed. For instance, deciding what specific questions were worth asking and what data is relevant to include were determined by my choices and what I wanted to

know. Furthermore, the research questions and objectives were not set in stone but rather modified as the research was progressing. Consequently, the accounts provided in this study were constructions, which means that the aim of analysing the data was not to simply report what the participants expressed but to show how their views and experiences regarding English were constructed as discourses and counter-discourses. These were shaped by macro and micro forces operating in complex ways. Likewise, statements from teachers, students, and official policy documents about the importance of English to Algerian universities were treated as discourses driven by global and local forces (see 6.2, 6.3, 6.4). This will be further elaborated in the analytical framework section (see 5.6).

5.5 The research design

Rigorous qualitative research requires a good design. Under the following sub-sections, the different elements of research design will be explained. I will start with defining and clarifying the choice behind researching English within Algerian Higher Education (AHE) as a case study. The subsequent sub-sections will then relate how accessibility to the research context was secured, the way the participants were sampled and approached, and finally how the data was collected. I will also provide more details about the way semi-structured interviews were used and how transcription was undertaken.

5.5.1 Algerian higher education as a case study

Case study research has been widely used across various disciplines. Consequently, it is defined differently by qualitative researchers. Some simply see it as a methodology to study an issue or a problem 'bounded' by specific time and place, or a strategy of inquiry leading to specific outcomes (Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2014). Nevertheless, Stake (1995) argues that case study research is more of an approach or a process where researchers study a particular case such as teachers, a language classroom, or an innovative programme as a way to gain insight on broader concerns.

Despite the existing difference in conceptualising its nature, I chose the most defining characteristic that guided me to construct an understanding of what forms case studies. First, case studies tend to be driven by "exploratory" endeavours. This entails that there is a high possibility for new areas to be revealed through the new perspectives and unique experiences that are

gained from participants. Thus, Duff (2008: 44) maintains that a case study has an 'innovative potential' that can carry significant contributions to theory building. Above all, through case studies, researchers often seek to optimise their understanding of what they are researching given the "real-life context" they examine (Duff, 2008). Consequently, it becomes crucial for researchers to bind their study within a social context (Stake, 2005,1995; Duff, 2008).

Stake (1995, 2005) also argues that a case study is a process rather than a targeted physical context or an individual. He leans more toward the view of a case as an 'integrated system' in which people are part of it. As a result, boundaries are not always clearly evident for researchers and it is their mission to explore them by remaining open to the multidimensional influences between the actual situational context of the case and the wider society in which it is located.

As the overall aim of this research is to explore the different forces framing ELT policy and practices within AHE, the overarching case is, therefore, the ELT status within AHE. To achieve this aim, it is crucial to discern dominant discourses on how the case under investigation is constructed from different vantage points. While the macro level is concerned with the policies and how they link English to the Algerian university system, the micro-level explores the perspectives of teachers and students. Thus, the case study spread through different participants who occupy different roles in a stratified system of education.

5.5.2 Ethical procedures

In every step of the study design, data collection and analysis, I was mindful of the research ethical issues. After attending a workshop organised for doctoral researchers about ethical procedures, I completed the University Ethical Review application, along with the information sheet and consent form. I was then granted the ethical approval to conduct the research (see appendix A). I made sure to adhere to the ethical standards particularly concerning the right to withdraw from the study, anonymity, and confidentiality.

To ensure that participants have sufficient knowledge about the nature of the research and what is their role, the study information sheet was provided. For some participants, this was sent via email, while for others I handed the sheet for them to take home and read. In both cases, I explained the sheet

in a meeting and answered any questions raised about the study. Similarly, the consent form was provided before to allow teachers and students time to consider their participation in the study. I made sure to collect back signed consent forms before starting the interviews and classroom observations. Although the students' participants volunteered to participate in the study, some of them seemed hesitant at first about providing their signature, I explained that their signature shows their consent to participate in this study only and that they have the right to withdraw later. I also explained that their identity will be protected from being recognised and the data is treated with confidentiality. Once these were clarified, the participants were comfortable in giving me their written consent.

Anonymising participants' identity is an intricate ethical issue that most researchers perceive as a dilemma. Researchers are often uncertain about whether to hide participants' identity with pseudonyms, which may denote that they are merely positioned as 'subjects' to be studied, or grant participants the right to contribute as active participants in the research which may carry the risk of exposing them (Hanks, 2013). To avoid the latter, I decided to use pseudonyms in presenting the data and kept their original names within the raw transcribed data. These were stored in locked word documents. I found assuring anonymity gave participants more confidence to voice their views freely. I also kept the institutions where I conducted the interviews and classroom observations anonymous to not recognise the Dean, curriculum designers, and teachers. Anonymity was also considered in the pictures presented in chapter 6 in which the faces of students were blurred. For confidentiality, the information which participants provided was kept private. For example, when the participants mentioned names of teachers and institutions these were replaced by (name of institution) or (name of teacher) to maintain anonymity.

5.5.3 Access to the research setting

The actual fieldwork occurred approximately over 12 weeks; it started on February the 3rd 2019 and lasted until the 23rd of April 2019. Before this, I also conducted a pilot study within the same institution for 3 weeks which started on the 1st of April 2018 and ended on the 23rd of April 2018. During this first visit, I received consent from the Dean of foreign languages. In a brief meeting with him, he seemed very surprised that my research

investigated the Algerian context. As the Dean that I received the government scholarship for a doctoral degree, he expected that my research would focus on the UK educational system. I reflect on this conversation in section 6.5 in which I explore the beliefs about English-speaking countries as the source of knowledge and expertise in English teaching and education.

During the pilot study, I also conducted classroom observations and interviews to collect preliminary data and mainly to build and expand my network. I kept in contact with most of the people I met during this short stay. Although I did not interview them again, they introduced me to other participants who were relevant to the research.

For the second visit, I only had to meet with the head of the English department to explain the data collection procedures and what is required from participants in the study. After she had my identity checked with the dean, I had to raise some ethical concerns such as informed consent and voluntary participation, and I reassured anonymity and confidentiality. The head of the department, then, gave me the teachers' shifts schedule and explained how it might be difficult to find the teachers within the institutions. She explained that the lack of sufficient teaching rooms makes teachers move to any available room. As such, the shift schedule is not always accurate, I had to look from one room to another to find my targeted participants. Once I found the participants, we exchanged phone numbers to avoid confusion.

5.5.4 Sampling the research participants

I was aware that the careful selection of participants is a prerequisite step for the quality of data gathered. For this research, purposive sampling was adopted as a strategy to recruit both teachers and students. The purposive sampling technique is widely used by qualitative researchers as Creswell and Poth (2018: 158) assert that this sampling type "can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study". Etikan et al. (2016) define purposive sampling as a technique by which a participant is selected deliberately given the relevant qualities which they possess. They also add that purposive sampling "is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants" (2016: 2). Notably, the nature of research questions highlights

which participants are most apt to give insightful data. In addition, snowball sampling was also used occasionally to approach the targeted participants.

Based on the research questions, two sampling categories were selected. In the first category, I recruited 14 current university teachers of the English language who were familiar with the implemented reform in the Algerian university. Out of the total number of the selected participants, half of them experienced teaching English before and after the educational reform. As such, they were familiar with the changing status of English. I chose to interview both teachers who were recently recruited in addition to others with more than 10 years of teaching experience. I took this criterion into account as the teaching experience was a variable that influences teachers' perceptions of the ELT situation. Findings in section 7.5 explain this link between teachers' experience and how it impacts their teaching practices. Although the teacher participants were based in the English department, they were also teaching English for a specific purpose in different departments across the university faculties (science and technology, medicine, and mathematics).

After introducing myself to the selected teachers, we agreed on scheduling interview meetings at their convenience. I also provided them with both information sheets and consent forms so as they can read them on their own time. Furthermore, I asked the permission of three teachers to attend their teaching sessions for observation. The profile of teachers who participated in the study is detailed in the table below. The (F) and (M) stand for the participants' gender (female or male), and the names are pseudonyms. Moreover, a column for the teachers' expertise is added to clarify their educational background. However, these teachers are also allocated to teach different subjects that are not always linked to their expertise (this is explored in 7.4.1).

Teachers	Years of teaching	Expertise	Teachers	Years of teaching	Expertise
Linda (F)	7 years	Phonetics	Samar (F)	15 Years	American Civilisation
Ahmed (M)	8 years	English for Specific Purpose	Mustapha (M)	39 years	Literature and Curriculum Development
Manel (F)	6 years	English for Specific Purpose	Amira (M)	19 years	Phonetics
Ines (F)	7 years	English for Specific Purpose	Kawter (F)	23 years	American Civilisation
Yacin (M)	Newly recruited	Oral Communication	Sarah (F)	15 years	British Civilisation
Marwa (F)	10 years	British Civilisation	Halima (F)	10 years	Literature and TEFL
Malek (F)	Newly recruited	Written and Oral expression	Fadela (F)	10 years	American Civilisation
Lila (F)	Newly recruited	Intercultural Communicative competence	Warda (F)	5 years	Intercultural Communicative competence

Table 2: Teacher participants

The second sampling category relates to students, I selected a sample of 20 learners. However, due to some circumstances (as will be explained in the subsequent section), 15 students were interviewed in groups. The sample was a mixture of students from different cohorts for a bachelor's degree programme in the English language. Choosing a sample of learners from different learning levels was important to get their different perspectives. Year 1 and 2 learners were recruited the same day I conducted classroom observations. I was first introduced to these learners by their teachers at the beginning of the sessions and I had their consent to attend the lesson as an observer. Learners were informed that their participation is voluntary and that it will not affect their grades. Those who were willing to participate in focus group interviews provided me with their contact details and I contacted them to schedule a group meeting. Year 3 learners were sampled through the snowball technique. The previous cohort introduced me to year 3 learners who were interested in participating. We then agreed to meet for a focus group discussion. The table below explains the number of learners from each cohort.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
5 participants	7 participants	3 participants

Table 3: The number of student participants

5.5.5 Data collection timeline

The first step in the data collection was to select specific teaching subjects from the ELT curriculum to attend for classroom observations. Due to the time limitation, I did not observe all curriculum subjects. I focused instead on the following subjects: phonetics, oral communication, culture, and language. These subjects were mainly seen as relevant to the study for several reasons. First, they are listed within the curriculum under the fundamental unit, as they are supposed to develop learners' competencies and skills for language use. These subjects were also important to closely examine the way they are taught in practice and what English forms and materials are emphasised. Therefore, the observations of these particular teaching subjects were relevant to explore the way teachers approach objectives and guidelines dictated by the institution and how they are

perceived by students. I also wanted to know to what extent dominant language ideologies such as the nativespeakerism and the standard language ideology prevail in teaching these subjects.

I designed an observation guide within which the aspects that I wanted to observe were listed. In the first two weeks, I started with two classroom observation sessions with first and second-year learners. While doing so, I kept a record of my observations in a form of field notes. These were then summarised after each session. This first step furthered my understanding of teachers' approach with relation to the classroom physical context (resources, space, and number of students). My observation notes were also used to further elaborate the interview protocols for both teachers and students in which observation-based questions were raised in interviews.

In the following weeks, I proceeded with individual interviews with 3 teachers whom I previously observed teaching. Moreover, I met with first-year learners for focus group interviews. The preliminary data (observation field notes and interviews) yielded initial core issues related to the institution's management, teachers' beliefs, and learners' expectations in particular. These also helped to further fine-tune the protocol for the remaining interviews.

By the end of February, however, unforeseen political events occurred in relation to the Algerian presidential election which resulted in disruption of the data collection. Many of the scheduled interviews with teachers and students were cancelled as all university students were protesting starting from Thursday the 7th of March 2019. The following week, teachers joined them to support the national protest led by these young people. I used to meet occasionally with some students who used to bring written signs and the Algerian flag on campus to protest and complain about how things were deteriorating. During this political turmoil, the Ministry of Higher Education decided to bring forward the spring holiday to the 14th of March instead of the end of March to close its universities and public university accommodations to prevent students from gathering and protesting on campus.

Although the fieldwork coincided with the country's political instability, it did not negatively affect the quality of the data gathered. The time used to reflect on the collected data resulted in several strategic decisions taken. As the national protest lasted more than anticipated, during this period, I was

listening to the recordings and organising the documents (syllabus and materials that the participants chose to share). I also seized this time to contact potential participants from the second institution to schedule interview meetings. After the teaching was to a certain degree resumed, on the 7th of April 2019, I visited the second institution where I met the head of the department and two other teachers. Although the interviews were brief, they added some clarity to the previously collected data. Lastly, I returned to the first institution where I was invited for another classroom observation by Sara, a teacher I had previously interviewed and who mentioned that she developed her syllabus for teaching oral communication. Furthermore, to compensate for the interviews that were cancelled, the last two weeks were dedicated to a focus group interview with third-year learners and for other follow-up interviews with teachers. The table below explains how the data collection was organised despite the complicated circumstances.

Months	Tasks	Participants
February (3rd – 28th, 2019)	- Classroom Observations (2 sessions) -Collection of materials	Year 1 and year 2 phonetics class
	-Interviews	Four teachers, three of which I attended their classroom
	-Focus groups	Year 1 and 2
March (2nd – 7th, 2019)	-Interviews	Teachers
March (7th - 7th of April)	-Unexpected strike in addition to interrupted teaching -Follow-up interviews via Phone and Facebook	Teachers

April (8th - 23rd, 2019)	-Visit a second university institution -Interviews	-Head of the English department -Two teachers
	-Classroom observations (1 session) -Collection of materials	Year 1 Oral communication classroom
	-Focus groups -Follow-up interviews	-Year 3 -Teachers

Table 4: Timeline for data collection

5.5.6 Semi-structured interviews

One of the reasons why semi-structured interviews are considerably preferred by qualitative researchers is the open-ended nature of questions. This allows for more details and the emergence of the unexpected. Dörnyei (2011: 140) maintains that a successful interview needs to fulfil two criteria “(a) it flows naturally, and (b) it is rich in details”. These two are central to keep in mind when conducting interviews.

To meet the first criteria of natural flow, the questions that the participants were asked did not follow a rigid structure. Though a protocol was developed before the fieldwork, the participants were not asked the same questions because each interviewee had a unique narrative. I had to keep the general themes as a guide and explore flexibly the sub-themes raised by each teacher through prompts and probes to further explore participants' views that were deemed relevant. This format sometimes paved the way for off-topic discussions, which I perceive important to build trust mainly for first-time interviews. I sometimes felt that I was positioned as an authoritative figure especially with first-year and second-year learners since I was introduced by their teachers. To avoid the feeling that I was imposing a structure of interrogation and constraining the discussion, I sometimes allowed participants to go off on a tangent without interruptions. Secondly, I noticed that once the natural flow of conversation is achieved, it became less difficult to ask participants for more details. I had to use different probing techniques such as focused, explanatory, drawing out, or reflecting probe

(Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). These techniques were helpful to encourage participants to elaborate their views. I have to admit that some participants were less articulate and perceptive than others. In such situations, I was leading these participants with suggestions and ideas to think about. This probing technique in particular is advocated by Holliday (2014) who contends that leading participants is not always a sign of dominating the interview, but it can often spark participants' thoughts and can result in greater detailed discussions.

Similar to other data collection methods, semi-structured interviews can also have several limitations. As researchers are deeply engrained in the interview process, the data gathered is not objective, but it has been co-constructed by both interviewers and their interviewees. In this regard, Creswell and Creswell (2018: 188) argue that researchers' presence could pose a risk of 'bias responses'. To minimise such risk, I tried to keep my interference with participants' answers to a minimum. As such, I only intervened when I felt that the conversation is going dry or when participants were less articulate as explained above. Secondly, not interrupting participants when they go off topic generated a huge amount of data which made the transcription process difficult. I had to listen to the lengthy recordings several times before deciding which parts to transcribe. This brings me to the final point, the entire interview experience is time-consuming. Starting from recruiting, scheduling meetings, undertaking interviews and follow up, to transcription, the overall process took a considerable amount of time before finally obtaining raw data for analysis.

The questions used in the interview protocol were general and were formulated to gather teachers' perspectives about teaching English under the reform of the university system, the teaching challenges they face, and the aspects they consider crucial to English teaching. Similar questions were used with learners in addition to why they are learning English, how they see it relevant to their lives, and how they use English outside the classroom context. The interviews with teachers covered the duration between 30 minutes to one hour and only two teachers refused to be recorded, whereas focus group interviews lasted more than an hour. I also made sure to keep the interviewees' contact details which were useful to further email them some questions which emerged from the data analysis.

Regarding the language used for the interviews, they were not held in only one language, but participants were code-switching between English,

French, and the Algerian dialect. I had to prepare the questions in both French and English and I made sure to translate the questions on the spot into the Algerian dialect when I felt that some questions were not clear enough. The choice of which language to use was determined by participants' preference. In informal conversations, both teachers and students tended to naturally use Darija. Yet, official communication, such as asking for access or exchanging phone messages to agree on interview times, was only conducted in French. Similarly, before the interview, teachers tended to use trans-languaging switching from French, English, and Darija. However, once I started the recording, they switched to English with occasional use of Darija and French words. This might signal the standard language ideology governing their language choices. For learners, however, I made it clear that they are free to use any language. Most of the talk was held in both Algerian dialects and English, except for some students who preferred to only speak in English as they saw the focus group as an opportunity to practice the language. I was deliberately code-switching to hint to the students that they can use any language they prefer. This helped to establish a comfortable atmosphere where the interviewees did not concentrate much on how to say something or which language to use as much as on explaining their point of view.

5.5.7 Transcription and languages

During the fieldwork, I started transcribing part of the interviews while listening to participants' recordings. I agree with Braun and Clarke's (2013) view that the produced transcript can never be an exact copy of the recorded interview experience. This might be due to the difficulty of reporting paralinguistic features such as gestures, facial expressions, and participants' tone which often transmit other layers of meaning. To write high-quality transcripts, Braun and Clarke (2013) point out the significance of choosing a style for transforming the recorded data into written data. For example, vernacular language used by the participants combined with English, incorrect grammatical and pronunciation mistakes were kept to show the authenticity of their answers. Furthermore, I used Braun and Clarke's (2013) transcription notation system to aid readability of certain paralinguistic features (laughter, long pauses, strong emphasis, non-semantic sounds).

Translating transcripts from the French language and Darija to English was another challenge. I sometimes struggled to find the exact equivalents to some expressions and figurative language used by the participants such as

Algerian colloquial expressions. This is illustrated in the following examples from both teachers' and students' data: "[...] Like we say *Kol ter yalgha bal ghah* [...]" (Halima/Interview 2/February 2019). This can be literally translated into every bird sings his own version of a song. Or when Sofiane a learner of English stated: "He is a *habba klila!*" (Classroom observation/April 2018). This expression can be translated into "a rare pearl". Arguably, the translation does not capture the socio-cultural meaning that the participants wanted to convey. In similar cases, I kept the expressions in their original language, and I elaborated on their intended meaning when commenting on excerpts.

Excerpts from the transcribed interviews are quoted throughout the data chapters. These are labelled as (the participants' pseudonym, the number of the interview, the date of the interview). However, these are presented in in English only. This was not an easy choice as I was aware that this would cloak the participants' multilingual profile. Yet, this choice was most efficient as participants' responses were not entirely in one local language but rather a combination of languages, and English was often present. Thus, I translated the other languages and presented excerpts in English as the word limit of this thesis does not allow for multiple languages to be presented. Some passages were left in the Darija to serve as examples and support the argument. As for the Ministers of Higher education speeches and the policy documents, they were mainly in MSA and French. I also translated and reported them in English only. As such, I attached the sources and the official documents in appendices B, C for readers to refer to.

5.6 An account of the data analysis stages

Although I considered semi-structured interviews as the core data because of their rich nature, I also used different data sources. My intention behind using these various sources was to treat the status of English from different angles. This was also one aspect of the thick description that I previously discussed (in 5.2). Different data sources were initially analysed through thematic analysis to attempt an understanding of the mountains of data I had collected. Thematic analysis (TA) is widely used by qualitative researchers who opt for an inductive approach to examine patterns and develop themes from textual data (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018). In doing so, the analysis encompassed the MHESR's visions and decisions about English, teachers'

practices, and learners' experiences. The table below illustrates the types of data used in the analysis. In addition, I provide notes that offer details about how data was collected and analysed.

Type of data	Notes on data
Official documents	These include the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) policy documents that are uploaded on its website, the ELT curriculum documents available on the university website, and the teaching materials shared by teachers. I read these documents several times in the original language (French, Arabic and English, see appendix B and C) to code and identify major themes (see table 5). These helped to develop teachers' interview topics.
Fieldnotes	In a journal, notes were taken about classroom observations and the institutional context (see appendix D). It also included personal reflections after each interview and focus group. Other classroom observation data from the pilot study were considered. This included classroom talks in which some of the students' presentations in oral expression classrooms were recorded. Fieldnotes helped in contextualising the collected data when I started the process of coding.
Teachers' Interviews	Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 teachers in higher education. During the data analysis, further questions emerged, therefore follow-up interviews through emails were conducted with teachers. These interviews were analysed through thematic and discourse analysis (see sample analysis in table 7).
Students' Focus groups	3 focus groups with 15 students in total were carried out. Thematic and discourse analysis was used to explore this data.

Online data	These were speeches of Algerian Ministers of Higher Education and their announcements regarding English policies. These speeches were transcribed and translated to serve as secondary data. News media and articles were used to further understand the emerging themes from policies and interview data.
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Table 4: Data sources

Thematic analysis (TA) uses a coding system to develop themes which are then interpreted within a theory or a conceptual framework. To start an initial analysis of data, Braun and Clarke's (2006) steps of TA were first used to organise, categorise and get familiar with the data. These allowed me to focus on specific chunks of data that are relevant to the research questions and to trace common themes across different data sources. A coding system was used to develop categories. These also helped to start developing themes which were constantly reviewed and modified. The following stages elaborate on the approach taken in this study to rigorously analyse data.

- **Stage 1: Getting familiar with the data**

Data familiarisation started during the fieldwork when I was listening to recordings and reading the gathered documents and materials. This allowed me to familiarise myself with data. After finishing the data collection phase and transcribing all the interviews, I delved into reading transcripts to focus on specific chunks of data that are relevant to the research questions.

- **Stage 2: Coding**

For the initial stage of coding, I chose complete coding of the data where I highlighted intriguing extracts and passages. This was done both manually and on NVivo (see appendix G). Keeping in sight the capturing feature of a code, I started with data-driven codes, also called semantic codes (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Instead of framing the coded data within specific theories, this type of coding reflects explicitly the participants' words and ways of conceptualising. As such, semantic coding allows a researcher to stay closer to the data as much as possible. I believe this is a sound initial step to remain faithful to participants' accounts and avoid precipitating into certain theoretical framing which could be far from reflecting the actual data. The

image below gives examples of coding different data sets (from interviews, political speeches, and policy documents).

Data reference	Data	Initial codes
(Halima/Follow-up interview 2/ October 2019)	"English, as a foreign language, still has the status of a foreign language. Among teachers of sciences, English is the language of research since they are often obliged to publish articles in English or present their works in international conferences in English too. However, the official status of English in higher education is still that of the second foreign language, and French is still dominant. For many disciplines, in many faculties of sciences and technologies, the teaching of almost all units is still in French."	-English for academic publications -English is a foreign language in Algerian -French is more dominant than English
(The Minister of Higher Education speech on the Algerian Radio, 22 July 2019)	"Regarding strengthening the teaching of English [...] the whole world is encouraging a globalised higher education so as the university degree would have visibility and would be recognised in the professional world especially with big and foreign companies. The Algerian student has ambitions of working abroad and joining international companies. I want to give to the Algerian students all the opportunities and to give them a place in this new world."	-Visibility of AHE -Students' employability -International opportunities
(MHESR's official document, 2019: 03)	"There is a need to start preparing from the present time. The need for training a great number of teachers to ensure a good teaching quality in all disciplines. This is a prerequisite condition for the English language to gain solid ground within Algerian universities. As students make a transition from secondary school to higher education, they need to come prepared and well equipped with the English language from primary education. Fulfilling these conditions is a prerequisite for our future development."	-Measures to improve ELT in AHE -English for developing AHE

Table 5: Initial coding

- **Stage 3: Developing themes from codes**

The codes were reviewed and modified several times as I started developing themes. Braun and Clarke (2006: 10) define a theme as “something important in relation to the overall research question”. I developed themes from the coded data. As codes capture intriguing passages from data that I viewed as potentially relevant to the research, these were traced across different data sources. Codes were grouped into similar categories. For example, I could see that some codes relate to English curriculum content and objectives while others were associated with teachers' role vis-à-vis this curriculum. A similar process was applied to categorise codes to develop a broader theme. Yet, this step is deeper than the proceeding one as I had to go back to the coded data and decide whether these codes fit within the same category. The categories were simply named based on the general idea unifying similar codes (see table 5.2). This, therefore, means that categories have a descriptive and classifying function of data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Categorising codes paves the way for a more abstraction process as Mojtaba et al. argue that “category development helps with the provision of details for analytical theme development” (2019: 102). In this regard, developing themes is also challenging as it requires a move to a higher level of abstraction. In other words, more theoretical framing and interpretations are involved at this stage. The following table shows how categorisation was undertaken:

Codes	Categories	Themes
-Vague curriculum objectives -Overloaded curriculum -Curriculum developed by the ministry and the institution - Difficult content for learners -Inconsistent teaching content -No teachers' autonomy -No time for practice	-Teachers' views of the ELT teaching content -Issues with the ELT curriculum	-Raised issues about the ELT curriculum in AHE
-Focus on British Received pronunciation -British and American reading materials -Literature reflects society -Learning to accept the differences -Personal growth -Intercultural awareness	-The focus of the ELT curriculum -Types of ELT materials -Objectives of the teaching content	-Preference for native speakers' materials from inner-circle countries
-English is everywhere -Mobility -Master the language of science and technology -Becoming a writer -Using English as a lingua franca	-Students' motivation behind learning English -Students' long-term objectives	-Students' perceptions of learning English

Table 6: From codes to themes

- **Stage 4: Interpreting**

The interpretation stage was a challenging one as I had to choose the most relevant themes that emerged from the data and make sense of them in terms of theories. I had to oscillate between theory and data to understand the themes. I found TA restrictive as it did not give me guidance for a higher and a more advanced interpretive level. TA was useful to build initial themes out of the textual data, but it did not fully assist me to draw deep connections between ideologies, discourses, and wider social issues. Given the nature of my research questions, I combined TA with critical discourse analysis (CDA). This was used to understand to what extent coded statements about English languages teaching policies and practices reflect ideological

discourses or are simply neutral personal opinions. This mediation is what Gee (1996) calls as the analysis of Discourses with a capital D. According to him, these reflect “ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities’ (1996: 127). Jones (2012: 47) argues that the analysis of the ideological dimension of discourses, i.e., Discourses with a capital D, seeks to explore “how people use language to advance certain versions of reality and certain relationships of power, and also how our beliefs, values and social institutions are constructed through and supported by discourse”.

Fairclough’s (1995) CDA model (text description, processes of production and interpretation, and explaining social conditions) was useful to connect discourses with the wider society. At this level of analysis, I constantly attempted to relate the identified codes, categories and themes to the broader social context. I kept in mind that CDA does not only examine how people use language to fulfil a particular function, but it explores the implicit reasons behind people's choices and decisions (Fairclough, 2014). This has pushed the analysis to move from simply identifying the discourses dominating English policies, teaching practices, and language learning to understand the underlying historical, social, economic, and political forces. The following image captures how discourse dimension was added to the analysis.

Data	Codes	Categories	Themes	Discourses
English is the language most taught [...] in the world and 95% of international scientific publications are written in English. On the internet, 80% of existing and sharing data is in English. In all sectors and mainly in economics, English has become a real 'LINGUA FRANCA', which requires its reinforcement and the necessity to consolidate our language skills through promoting its learning [...]. (MHESR' policy document, 2019: 01)	-English for academic publication -English for international communication	-The status of English in the world -The reasons behind strengthening English in higher education	The importance/benefit of English for the Algerian higher education	-Scientific discourse
"No doubt [...] this has been perceived a long time ago. English is an international language and the best journals write in English. For more degrees in higher education, students need much reading, many contacts, and travels. For this to be possible and facilitated, English is the solution" (Marwa/ Follow-up interview 10/ October 2019)	- International academic journals -English for academic purposes	-The academic role of English	The importance/benefit of English for the Algerian higher education	-English for global academic excellence

Table 7: Critical discourse analysis

Following Fairclough's (2014) model, I drew on the coded data to make sense of their meaning in relation to three contexts. The first level relates to the social situation which is the actual English classroom context. The second layer of analysis moved to make connections to the social institution (the university setting) a slightly broader context that also has an impact on the examined discourses. At this stage, I drew a comparison between different data sets to explore how discourses about English were sometimes aligned across different data sources, whereas in other times discourses clashed between teachers-institution, teacher-teacher/students. This highlighted how power relations between these stakeholders operate at different levels. Finally, the third level explored the meanings of these discourses within the social structure as a whole and how global/national forces underpin the way English is talked about, taught, and used in Algeria. These discourses are presented in chapter 6 (discourses of English as shaped by macro global and national forces) and chapter 7 (emergent discourses from teachers of English). These are grounded in the classroom teaching context and in teachers' beliefs about how English should be taught (reproducing/challenging nativespeakerism). In addition, chapter 8 explores discourses of English from students' experiences of learning and using the language both within classrooms and outside. These themes are summarised in the diagram below.

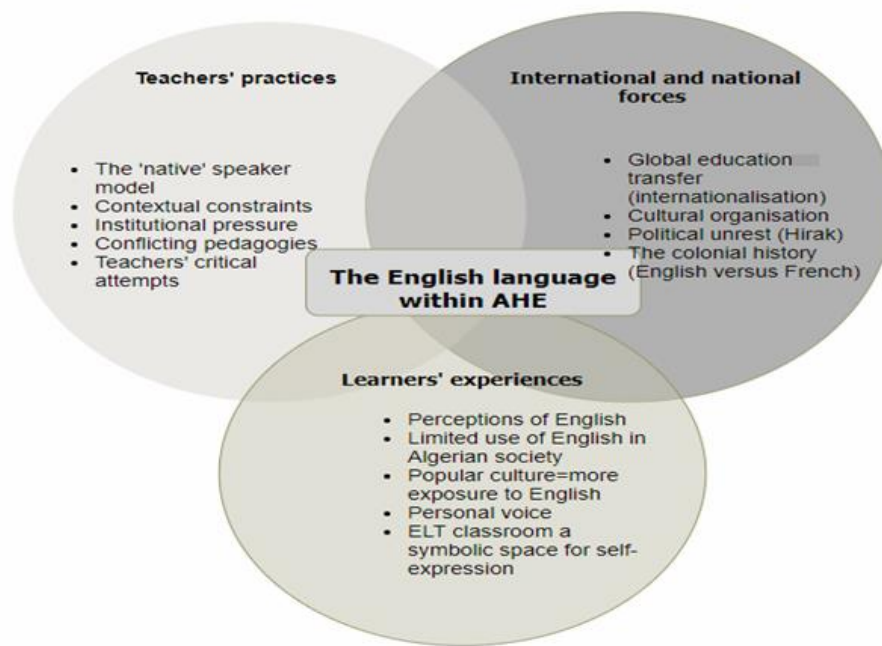


Image 4: A visual representation of key themes

- **Stage 5: Theorising**

Theorising and making connections with ideologies in the field of ELT happened at the same time I was analysing discourses. This was an ongoing process that required a constant drawing on theories and literature to frame the analysis for data discussion. Snow and Benford (2000) point out that ideologies cannot be directly highlighted in the data, but they are rather inferred. Lowe (2020b: 7) elaborates on this in his study to dismantle the different forms of the native-speaker ideology underlying ELT within Japanese higher education. He contends that identifying common frames within data as discourses gives the researcher a better approach to infer dominant ideologies which underlie recurrent discourses. Hence, the discourses identified across the data were also interpreted in light of dominant ideologies within the field of ELT. Data chapters (6,7, and 8) highlight key theorisations which are then elaborated in chapter 9. These theories relate to educational transfer, native speakerism, and politics of ELT.

5.7 Positionality

I carefully designed the research procedures with the intention to be rigorous in reading, analysing, and discussing the data. However, it should be noted that validity and objective truth in qualitative research are contested because not all interpretations in qualitative research are always “in line with the way things are” (Richards, 2003: 285). In addition to being a researcher, I am also a human whose way of thinking and seeing the world is influenced by several factors such as my personal experiences, my social and educational backgrounds. These prior experiences interfere in any research (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). As I explained in the reflexive opening (see 1.1), my educational background impacted the choice of this topic. In this section I expand on how it also affected the research process in general and data analysis in particular.

I was born in Algeria where I grew up and spent my entire life there. While being a student and a trainee teacher, I cherished the ethnic and linguistic diversity at the heart of Algerian universities. Meeting other students from different parts of Algeria who spoke different Berber varieties or other students from Mali and Cameroon enriched my learning experience. We used to juggle between different languages and French was often our lingua franca that allowed us to translate from Darija, Berber, Bambara or Arabic. These sweet memories drive me to work on preserving this multiplicity and argue against monolithic views about language teaching. This intention might have oriented me to collect and analyse specific data.

I was socialised and educated within the same system this study explores. In a way, I am an insider to the researched context. As such, this might have both advantages and disadvantages. The familiarity with the Algerian context in terms of its history, which I learnt since early primary school classes, its socio-economic situation, and the complexity of the Algerian political system allowed me to approach the research with prior knowledge. This helped me to build on this background for a better understanding. This was crucial when analysing the data. For example, when my participants compared current language policy to the one introduced in the 1990s when English failed to replace French in primary school after two years of its application, I was aware of the political instability during this period and how it affected educational policies. Thus, when analysing the data, this prior knowledge directed me to consider how language policies are often induced

by political and historical factors. However, this familiarity has also its downside. For example, the analysis could miss details that for me were natural and normal whereas another researcher could instantly notice these details and considered them important to examine. To minimise this, I was constantly sharing sections of data analysis with my supervisors and in conference presentations. The obtained feedback often helped me to rethink the analysis and reconsider other elements in the data.

As I previously discussed in chapter 1, my educational background also shaped this research and the choices I made. I studied English for my bachelor's degree, and I have a master's degree in applied linguistics from an Algerian university. During my teacher training I taught English within an Algerian institution. As such, this journey shaped the way I perceive English language teaching and learning. Perhaps this made my participants position me as an insider especially after introducing myself to them as someone with a similar background and interest. Equally, I was sometimes seen as an outsider when I presented my University of Leeds students ID to request access to Algerian institutions. Similarly, asking participants to sign consent form might made them view me as an outsider. Moreover, my educational experience sometimes interfered in initial data analysis, especially in coding interview data. Expressed views from my participants with similar backgrounds resonated with my own. For examples, issues about the lack of infrastructure and teaching resources within AHE reminded me of my own learning/teaching experience. This could have influenced the initial data analysis where I had to decide which chunks of data are most relevant.

As researchers get immersed in research design, data collection and analysis, the interference of their subjectivity when interpreting data is inevitable but can be managed reflexively (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). I included reflexive thinking through fieldnotes (see appendix E) that outlined my thoughts while visiting the institutions and after interviews and observation sessions took place. I also noted what triggered me and how I felt during this process, and how I found my participants reactions. I referred to these notes when I started coding and developing themes to remind myself of my early interpretations which could be underpinned by my personal experiences. Furthermore, I sometimes used my fieldnotes along with data excerpts and analysis in the data chapters. For instance, in section 7.5.3, I presented materials from an oral communication session where I analysed how the teacher and students engaged with the activity. I, then

reflected on the teacher's feedback to students as it was a reminiscence of my own experience of learning English.

5.8 Methodological limitations

As all research cannot be devoid of methodological limitations, this study was limited by some factors that are beyond control. First, the fieldwork coincided with the Algerian critical protests (February 2019) which delayed the data collection. I initially intended to conduct a series of interviews with the participants and to attend more classroom observation sessions. However, as teaching was interrupted by the protests, the participants and I faced difficulties finding a convenient time. Thus, I had to conduct only a one-time face-to-face interview and email the participants further questions. The national protests also impacted the availability of students. Secondly, the interviewed students shared a similar educational background as they were all enrolled in the English programme at the university level. Because of time constraints, it was more convenient to recruit this group of students when I attended classroom observations. As such, for future research, it might be more comprehensive to include students from different disciplines as this can yield diverse perspectives about the role and functions of English. Finally, one research project will not do justice to the complexity of researching English policy and teaching practices in a context such as Algeria. As such, future research can consider these methodological limitations to add further insights.

5.9 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I explained the overall qualitative nature of the research in which some principles of critical ethnography used in this research were discussed. I then moved to research design where I related accessibility to the research setting, the way participants were sampled and recruited, and how data were collected. I outlined the three-level analysis framework I used throughout the different data examination stages. I ended by sharing my reflections and raising methodological limitations for future research. The next chapters present the data analysis categorised into three themes. Chapter 6 explores the discourses about English at the macro level of policy and reform, while chapter 7 and 8 discuss teachers' daily realities and students' experiences of learning and using English.

Chapter 6: International and national forces shaping English within Algerian higher education

6.1 Introduction

The chapter presents data related to the discourses shaping English at the macro policy level. It will present the way these discourses impact English teaching and learning within Algerian Higher Education (AHE). The themes draw on a variety of secondary data sources: the minister's speeches and official documents issued by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR). In addition, teachers' interview data and ethnographic observations are used to juxtapose different discourses about the status of English and the reality of educational reforms. The themes of this chapter explore how discourses of English Language Teaching (ELT) are driven by multiple forces. While sections 6.2 and 6.3 will delve into internationalisation of higher education as a global force behind ELT, sections 6.4 and 6.5 will focus on national and contextual forces to link the promotion of English to socio-historical and political factors.

6.2 New visions for Algerian higher education

This section will start by highlighting what internationalising AHE in the early official reform documents refers to. I will then move to shed light on the newly adopted vision of teaching/learning and the overall orientation of higher education. Particularly, statements regarding the need for competency and autonomous approaches to teaching and learning will be scrutinised. I will start with how these competencies are described in the MHESR's documents and how they are seen as a part of bigger reform to innovate Algerian universities. This is an important point of departure to explain how global education discourses are transferred and linked to English language teaching policy and practice.

The AHE reform started with the adoption of the European Credits Transfer (ECT) or the LMD system (as often labelled in Algeria) referring to its structure: Licence (Bachelor), Master's, and Doctorate levels. This system has brought both structural and pedagogic changes to Algerian universities. An official document, describing the new teaching and learning approach, was issued by the MHESR and was adopted by the AHE (see appendix B). Under a section entitled 'teaching and evaluating differently', the report notes

that teaching within AHE needs to be re-evaluated. In addition, it stresses the idea of innovation that is seen as feasible through the implementation of ‘employability skills’, ‘competency-based teaching’, and ‘learners’ autonomy’.

The official report (see appendix B) issued by the MHESR highlights the importance of the reform in internationalising Algerian universities. The ‘international’ aspect is portrayed as a character of current successful teaching and learning in higher education. These beliefs are also well encapsulated in the following national report (see appendix B) which indicates the intention behind the MHESR’s educational transfer:

Like all other countries, Algeria has faced the challenge of university system, which helped to set up the LMD system (Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctorate degree). This reform has led to a major overhaul of curricula and new pedagogical practices. Maximizing opportunities and opening up to international was the main reason for choosing the LMD. (MERIC, 2019: 3)

As the above excerpt explains, curriculum and pedagogic ‘overhaul’ accompanied the educational transfer. Yet, these pedagogic changes were not clear in the report. In another document by the MHESR, some hints on the new teaching principles were briefly shared. However, these changes lack clear explanations for those the report was intended to (curriculum designers, heads of departments, and teachers). The below passage describes teaching in the following words:

The characteristics of a good training path are: Clarity and legibility, the possibilities of transfer (Licence, Master, Doctorate), induction to employability, and realizability. (MHESR, 2011: 50)

The jargon used to define teaching within AHE seems to convey that teachers have to prepare students for the workplace. This passage highlights the need for teachers to think in terms of competencies and skills relevant to the job market when designing their teaching courses, modules, and lessons. Other passages also explain how teachers’ practices should reflect similar points:

The new reforms introduced summarise teachers’ work in three points: Manage time and teach within the framework of semesters. Work to develop the students’ autonomy. Provide the best conditions for success by taking students as responsible actors for their training (MHESR, 2011: 57)

Furthermore, for the assessment section, the document suggests:

[...] it is necessary to evaluate in terms of knowledge and know-how, but also and mainly in terms of competencies and to promote values of autonomy and responsibility. (MHESR, 2011: 58)

The above statements accentuate autonomous learning as an approach that teachers have to adopt as part of the reform. The guidelines also focus on the importance of assessing students differently by stressing knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Although it does not elaborate on which specific skills teachers have to focus on, the concept of 'competencies' is left open possibly for teachers to decide according to the discipline or the field they are teaching. Throughout the document, it was evident that practical skills are stressed within the reform framework. A competency-based approach to teaching is one of the key principles referred to in the document. This approach is supposed to align with the international standard of higher education. Furthermore, developing learners' autonomy and responsibility are also emphasised in several passages within the MHESR guidelines. However, it is only in this ensuing paragraph that the MHESR indicates what is meant by "autonomous responsible learning":

Teachers are not supposed to give everything to learners; remember that within this reform, teaching relies heavily on the student's personal work. Lectures are not the only technique to use. (MHESR, 2011: 57)

Two aspects could be highlighted from the passage. First, it outlines teachers' role as facilitators who are expected to provide guidelines for learners, while learners are defined as trainees who ought to actively engage in the learning process. Second, the form of teaching is also redefined in terms of lectures and tutorials where students are allowed to develop the notion of 'know-how'. The emphasis on competency and autonomy as teaching and learning objectives were found to be the core of the reform. These notions are also represented as global standards of higher education.

Understanding the nuances of the AHE reform required requesting teachers to reflect upon the changes brought to English teaching. A common agreement among the interviewed teachers was the mismatch between the objectives of the reform and the conditions where teaching and learning take

place. Mustapha, a teacher and a curriculum developer contests the MHESR reform stating that:

The system is a huge failure. The standards have decreased immensely [...] The LMD system is a huge mistake. The system is made for the postmodern societies Algeria is a pre-modern society [...] first thing is the number flow, too many students! the system of massification does not fit. I studied master's degree in the UK we were 8 students, we have now groups of 78 and 100 master students (Mustapha/Interview 9/ March 2019)

Mustapha's objections to the changes brought by the ministry are based on the lack of appropriate consideration of the economic conditions. He refers to how internationalisation as an educational system is applicable in developed societies where universities have a certain financial freedom. However, Algerian universities are fully funded by the government which offers access to Algerian students free of any tuitions fees. Mustapha's comment on the overflow of learners explains the reason why he thinks the educational standards have rather decreased in Algeria. Likewise, Fadela, an experienced teacher of civilisation and English, also stresses a similar point when asked about her views of the educational system:

I will be honest with you. I don't like the system mostly in relation to learners' level. Three years of license degree to study the English language is insufficient for students to acquire all the competencies (Fadela/Interview 4/February 2019)

Fadela expresses resentment about the structure of the educational system because it does not fully prepare learners to develop knowledge about the language and the content within a limited timeframe. Other teachers such as Samar linked the reform to global educational trends:

Souad: Do you see that the Algerian universities needed this reform/ system?

Samar: I think they were in need of this system since it was spread in other countries but I don't think the Algerian system is really following the rules of the LMD system. In many of its aspects, it's still the classical system which is being followed with another name, the name has changed but I don't think we are working within the LMD (Samar/Interview 3/ February 2019)

One emerging thread from Mustapha and Samar is the perception they shared on the reform. They both see it as a foreign system that has been imported to Algerian universities. While Mustapha highlights its repercussions in terms of the massive increase in the number of students and graduates, Samar refers to its symbolic nature. The educational reform is seen as a set of textual policies and discourses that appear to be “spread in other countries”. In other words, educational reform is reproducing global educational trends that have little impact on English teaching and learning practices. Furthermore, the teachers constantly referred to the new educational system as ‘LMD’ which might suggest that they see the changes in terms of its structure and number of years/semesters for the Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctorate levels with no actual impact on their practices.

Unlike the other teachers, Halima, who has expertise in teaching English as a foreign language, shares her experience of receiving training about the new educational system and her expectations of new notions such as autonomy:

[...] as teachers we were expecting the experts to explain it to us when we had our training. But they were giving us just what is available on the internet. Like what’s students’ mobility and autonomy of learners, what’s learners’ centred approach [...] Okay! but how to apply these? how do we change our ways of teaching from traditional to a modern way? (Halima/Interview 2/ February 2019)

Interestingly, Halima points out how the notions which the reform emphasises, are presented for teachers as ‘modern’ and new compared to their own ‘traditional’ approach. Yet, she also highlights the absence of guidance about how to apply these ‘modern’ methods at the teaching practice level. In the absence of this training, Miliani (2012: 218) argues that the result is a clash of pedagogies where teachers are supposed to align their “folk pedagogies” to the “Western educational model”. The difference between the two is blurry because the ‘Western model’ is discursively represented as modern whereas teachers’ practices are often described as traditional. This comparison conceals the constraints shaping local teaching conditions. Furthermore, Halima’s account shows how these Western notions of educations are celebrated at the text level but their application and relevance to Algerian classrooms are vaguely explained.

The inadequate understanding of the MHESR's objectives was also raised by other teachers. When Yacine, a teacher of English communication, was asked about the extent to which he thinks the new objectives brought by the reform are implemented, he replied:

It depends on the teachers. But from what I have seen they are not really met. You know the classrooms are not learner-centred they try to foster autonomy but in a very demotivating way. Like you want to be autonomous, read a book and rehearse it to me! that's not what we want. Many students are coming and complaining about the way they are treated and the way they are not being educated properly. It's not just about autonomy but what you mean by 'autonomy', is it just for the student to read the material or to know it, master it, and present it in a way or to apply it in a certain context that's what we want
(Yacine/Interview 5/ February 2019)

Yacine's reflections on the notion of autonomy at the practice level uncover the confusion among teachers. Yacine notes that teachers' approaches to applying the new reform's objectives are different. The extract also features both teachers' and learners' struggles particularly with understanding the notion of autonomy. From his perspective, teachers are using the wrong approach to promote their learners' autonomy. Amira, a teacher of English phonetics, had a different view about autonomy:

Souad: To what extent do you see these notions of learners-centred approach and autonomous learning applicable to the Algerian context?

Amira: It is applicable, but it depends on learners. I was a student within the old system, some students were autonomous other were not. We did not use to rely on teachers [...]. So it is not because of the system [...] it is either you are autonomous or you are not. Some students have specific strategies to learn others don't. You don't develop to be an autonomous learner because of a given system. This notion of autonomy has always existed [...] (Amira/Interview 8/April 2019)

Unlike Yacine, Amira's stance on the idea of autonomous learning relates to students' being held accountable for their learning. Amira highlights that autonomous learning is an inward attitude that students develop regardless of any outward contextual factors. She equates autonomy to self-reliant

learning and the change at the level of beliefs about teachers as the only source of knowledge. It is interesting how she points out that autonomous learning is not new and it was always an essential learning characteristic of higher education. Amira's perspective is valid to a certain extent, learning a language is subject to personal progress and depends on the efforts invested by students outside the classroom context. Meanwhile, in terms of Algerian ELT classrooms, I argue that other factors determine the degree of autonomy as students' data (in 8.5) will show.

Several issues with the Algerian educational reform emerged from teachers' data, however, the notion of autonomy surfaced as most confusing among the participants. The data presented in this section demonstrates the lack of clarity of the educational reform and teachers' uncertainty about the real impact of these changes. The interview extracts above cast some light on the disparity between the MHESR's reform and the actual impact it has on teachers' practices. Under the name 'internationalisation', teachers describe the symbolic nature of the new educational system and the notions it brings along. Statements about autonomous learning, learners-centred approach, and employability skills seem to represent global educational trends. Drawing on teachers' insights, I argue that these notions are used rhetorically at the policy level. Moreover, data from teachers (see 7.2) and students (see 8.5) will elaborate on the point about their struggles as a result of the global educational system incompatibility for Algerian universities.

The insights gained from both the MHESR's documents and teachers' interview data describe the orientation of AHE. As the educational system brings international views of higher education, other changes were also brought to the status of English. The data in the following section will show a close link between the international standards of higher education and the orientation towards promoting ELT within Algerian universities.

6.3 Discourses of English within Algerian higher education

The importance of English has gained ground within AHE between 2002-2019. Within a complex political context (as will be explained in section 6.2.4), explicit intentions were made about adopting English as a medium of instruction. The data in this section will present the broader objective of the Algerian educational reform as a driving force behind the changes in the Algerian language policy. This section will also demonstrate new emerging

discourses about the status of ELT. Particularly, how English is also envisaged as a gateway for employability, a tool for international academic communication, a means to improve Algerian university rank and visibility, and a necessity for students' and teachers' mobility. These discourses will be explored in turn under subsections.

6.3.1 English for all

Data from policy documents shows the increasing efforts of the MHESR to push for English in Algerian universities. The MHESR issued an official report (see appendix C) to redefine the status of English and outlined some measures to strengthen its usage and mastery by Algerian teachers and students. The data in this section elaborates on these changes and examines the discourses around ELT. The latter seems to be representations which the MHESR draws on to promote ELT within Algerian universities. This sub-section also discusses the politics behind the changes regarding the status of English.

The MHESR issued several language policies regarding strengthening ELT to aim for internationalisation. Since 2019, the MHESR has advocated the use of English in teaching and has favoured its use alongside Arabic for any official administrative communication (see appendix C). In November 2019, it also shared a national poll on its website which was the first of its kind (see appendix B). This poll asked Algerian students and teachers for their opinions regarding enhancing ELT in Algerian universities. The AHE has never launched a similar survey before to introduce changes to the language of teaching and learning. Previous debates regarding the dominance of French within universities have only occupied public opinions. However, this survey was officially initiated by the MHESR and was intended for teachers and students. The following image portrays the survey results.



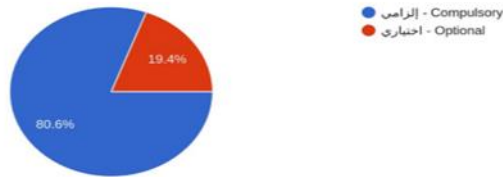
نتائج الاستبيان: تعزيز اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعات الجزائرية
-Survey Insights¹- Enhance English in Algerian Universities

1. هل تعتقد أن اللغة الإنجليزية يجب أن تدرس في 1.
2,884 responses



Image 5: Question 1, at what level the English language should be taught within AHE?

2. هل تعتقد أنه ينبغي أن يكون 2.
2,884 responses



¹ Insights representing a survey conducted by the Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research - November 2019

Image 6: Question 2, should English be optional or compulsory within AHE?

The results of the poll, which the minister shared on different social media platforms, show more than 93,6% of responses favouring the MHESR's proposal of adopting English as a medium of instruction within all university levels (Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate levels). The above samples from the survey show the types of questions which Algerian students and university teaching staff were given and the responses they yield. What is capturing is the survey's title "Enhance English in Algerian universities" and the question forms displayed above: Should English be introduced to Licence/Master/Doctorate or all levels, and the second question: Do you

think the teaching of English should be optional or compulsory?. These questions convey the intention of changing the current language policy used in AHE and not merely enhancing the teaching of English. The survey, therefore, reflects a new way of viewing language planning within AHE. Moreover, the number of the responses is also worth commenting on, 2884 responses do not reflect the total number of students and teachers. According to recent statistics, the number of students in the academic year 2019 reached 2 million students (Boutheldji, 2018).

Following the result of the poll, the MHESR appointed a commission to study the situation of ELT in AHE and suggested measures to reinforce its position. The ministerial commission issued an official report based on observations from case studies undertaken in 26 Algerian universities. I examined the report (see appendix C) of the MHESR with two aims in mind. First, to explore the motives behind this new language planning and their policy effects, and secondly to identify how the objectives behind promoting ELT are defined within the report.

In the report's introduction, the need for English within AHE is defined as:

Observing what is happening around the world in relation to language use, we find that the English language takes the lead as it is considered 'the key' which encourages intercommunication in various sectors and activities. In higher education and scientific research, there is an agreement that it is the most shared and used language which allows publishing and the highest visibility at the global level. (MHESR, 2019: 01)

Within the same report, under a section entitled "why introducing the English language within universities? Why now?", several reasons are mentioned which tie English to its international status:

English is the language most taught [...] in the world and 95% of international scientific publications are written in English. On the internet, 80% of existing and sharing data is in English. In all sectors and mainly in economics, English has become a real 'LINGUA FRANCA', which requires its reinforcement and the necessity to consolidate our language skills through promoting its learning [...]. (MHESR, 2019: 01)

The MHESR's report was issued to endorse English language policy arguing for the functionality of ELT and its increasing role in the world. The excerpt

implies that the global status, which English has gained, necessitates its teaching and learning within AHE. The first two statements foster the idea that the pre-eminence of English and its current status as the main “lingua franca” are what make its teaching a necessity. It is noted that “lingua franca” is emphasised as it is written in upper case and scare quotes, yet it is not clearly explained in terms of what it means and how it is important for Algerian students and teachers. Furthermore, the “reinforcement” of English is found confusing since it conveys that English will be more promoted through investment in teaching approaches and the materials used to help students become more proficient in the language. Yet, other passages in the report indicate a language policy change and the orientation to potentially adopt English as a medium of instruction in the long run. Despite accessing the report written in both Arabic and English, I found it vaguely written and does not communicate exactly the status of English vis-à-vis the other languages. Furthermore, under the headline “English for all” the report states:

For a strategic realisation of this goal, there is a need to start preparing from the present time. The need for training a great number of teachers to ensure a good teaching quality in all disciplines. This is a prerequisite condition for the English language to gain solid ground within Algerian universities. As students make a transition from secondary school to higher education, they need to come prepared and well equipped with the English language from primary education. Fulfilling these conditions is a prerequisite for our future development. (MHESR, 2019: 03)

The use of the statement “English for all” has multiple meanings. On the one hand, it carries a sense of inclusivity. English for teachers, staff, and students in different learning stages. Yet, the plan for making English accessible for all is not clear. The phrase “English for all” appears to be used in an empty way. Although, the above passage tackles some aspects related to the plan of “English for all”, these are framed as conditions to facilitate its teaching and learning. These requirements are teachers’ training, English within other educational levels prior to university, and preparing students. I would like to focus on preparing students to cope with English since new rules were also outlined. These rules regulated access to university and particularly to master and doctorate levels. For example, for those who pass

the Baccalaureate¹ exam with any grade, they still have to get a mark of 12/20 or more in English to be accepted at university. Similarly, for master's courses enrolment, 11/20 and more is a requirement. For the Doctorate level, the conditions for thesis submission and viva exam are a summary presentation of candidates' thesis in English and a provision of a B2 English certificate according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). It is noted that this plan seems to outline conditions rather than support for students to develop their English language skills.

It could also be argued that the structures of competition have accompanied the promotion of English teaching. The testing and assessment systems that AHE has started implementing, in the name of increasing the standard of education, could be seen as a form of adopting a competitive attitude to students' performance. Thus, some students end up behind and deprived at the academic, professional, and social levels just because they had low performance in English.

The data also illustrates that the changes in English language policy and conditions put in place are made relevant to the Algerian "future development". This denotes how the MHESR considers the English language policy part of a bigger plan of the Algerian development. I will return to this point with more data showing the way English is promoted as the language of 'global academic excellence' (see 6.3.3) and the facilitator of 'international mobility' (see 6.5).

The MHESR's changes of the status of English are based on the argument that promoting ELT will benefit local teachers and administrative staff as they engage in academic-related activities such as publishing papers in international journals. In so doing, the MHESR claims that these academic practices in English would have a far-reaching effect on the visibility of its universities more than if conducted in any other local language (Arabic, French, or Berber). It seems that the discourse of English "allows publishing and high visibility" is used to legitimise English language policy. The following section elaborates on this theme.

¹ Baccalaureate exam is an assessment at the end of secondary education that determines students' access to higher education. The average mark to pass the exam is 10 out of 20.

6.3.2 English for better opportunities

The data shows several reasons behind the endorsement of ELT within AHE. At the policy level, these reasons are framed as opportunities for Algerian students and universities to partake in the “new world”. In a formal interview with Algerian radio (see appendix B), the Minister of AHE addresses a third reason for promoting ELT:

Regarding strengthening the teaching of English [...] the whole world is encouraging a globalised higher education so as the university degree would have visibility and would be recognised in the professional world especially with big and foreign companies. The Algerian student has ambitions of working abroad and joining international companies. I want to give to the Algerian students all the opportunities and to give them a place in this new world (The Algeria Radio, 22 July 2019)

The excerpt above conveys the way the MHESR links investment in ELT with a broader vision of change. The Minister draws on several discourses about higher education and English to present his argument. He points to a global educational transfer and links this transfer to ELT. Given the interplay between ELT and global education, strengthening English is also correlated with “ambitions of working abroad” and access to opportunities. This could suggest that his speech carries a rhetoric strategy by tackling a key issue of graduate unemployment. The Minister seems to use common sense highlighting that as English is the international language, its mastery will open several opportunities at the international level. As such, Algerian students will face less difficulty in terms of employability. In addition, the discursive representation of English as a means to accomplish “students’ ambitions” is used here to rationalise the new English language policy. The Minister also presents the MHESR’s plan of “strengthening” ELT as a keystone to achieving, first, visibility of AHE and, second, recognition of the Algerian degree. He maintains that these two are major components required in the international job market. These types of discourses regarding education and international employability indicate an educational transfer approach in which universities implement foreign models to solve local issues (Steiner Khamsi, 2016). This theme is examined in the discussion chapter (see 9.2.1).

Although English is indeed useful for students at the university level, other fundamental issues within AHE - such as lack of infrastructure - need to be considered. Local issues might not be simply solved by introducing English. To further understand how the functionality of English is perceived within the MHESR's report, the following passage is examined:

The Algerian higher education sector is facing several challenges [...] these are mainly: To improve the employability of Algerian graduates in time of internationalisation of the labour market. To [sustain] relations with the world and to join the world space of higher education and research [...] to facilitate mobility of Algerian students and their inclusion in international research. (MHESR, 2019: 1)

The above passage highlights the main actions that AHE considers to embark on the internationalisation process. Particularly, the creation of employability opportunities and the increase of students' mobility is considered key motives driving ELT reform. Given these aspirations, investing in ELT is perceived as a prerequisite step that will pave the way for the realisation of internationalisation process. It is prominent from the above passage that internationalisation is defined in terms of students' mobility in which English is also considered key. Students' mobility is often one criterion described when addressing internationalisation of higher education (Dearden and Macaro, 2016). Subsequently, internationalisation seems to be a major global force advocating for English in higher education.

Other statements from the minister's speech reveal a clear orientation of the newly adopted approach to teaching and learning of English within universities:

[...] This new world does not have any mercy but requires competencies. If one does not have the required competencies and skills, they would be a burden on society, this country, and people in general. We don't want that, and our youth don't want to be a burden on society (The Algeria Radio, 22 July 2019)

The mastery of English is represented by the Minister as a prevailing skill in the 21st-century universities and societies that students have to develop. If students do not speak English, they are defined as a 'burden'. Furthermore, the constant referral to the 'new world' and 'foreign companies' in the two excerpts above carries a strong sense of a neoliberal ideology. Neoliberalism is a belief that "the market captures a basic truth about human

nature and social organisation, it redefines the relationship between the individual and the society with social behaviour being guided by [...] supply and demand” (Holborow, 2015: 34). Neoliberalism is also based on the belief that success is defined by the extent to which people conform to the rules of the market’s culture. These rules have penetrated different social levels including higher education and language policies. Neoliberalism is evident in the Minister’s statements such as “this new world does not have any mercy”, “burden on the society” in which both the world and the society are represented as a person. Personification is one strategy used to rationalise the way the job market is ruling people’s lives and relate to people's common sense (Holborow, 2015). The personification of the market communicates a sense of power in which policymakers, teachers, and students appear to have no other choice but to adhere to the rules of the market.

I wanted to examine at the practice level how English creates opportunities for Algerian students. Within Algerian universities, data shows that English has already being used to promote opportunities. The image below was taken from a university website in which a programme is advertised for science and technology students.



Image 7: English as a medium of international academic communication

The above image is an example of how English serves to build a bridge between different universities. In the shared post, English serves as a communicative tool between an Algerian and a Japanese university. An opportunity has arisen for students to work on international projects. This programme is between Japan and developing countries to work on global issues. Joining this international programme might not be possible if English

is not mastered by students. Although these students have studied in French, it is made clear that the form has to be submitted in English only. In addition to the form, students might have also to use English to communicate their cases and ideas to their Japanese colleagues in English.

The announcement above done through the university, also shows how English has officially started to be promoted. The use of English in the university website reflects the choices of which languages are important. Although the logo of the university celebrates the multilingual nature of AHE, only English is used to promote this programme. Another observation to note in the university logo, is the substitution of the French language with English, while French is still used for teaching and learning. This could suggest the strategic use of English as a façade for Algerian universities to serve international academic communication.

To examine how the promotion of English is framed using the discourse of English for employability, I also considered teachers' perspectives.

Mustapha shares his views on this:

Souad: To what extent do you think the English language will prepare learners to successfully secure a professional career?

Mustapha: I don't think they are prepared for anything outside teaching. Just teaching but outside they are lost (Mustapha/Interview 9, March 2019)

Likewise, other teachers of English in AHE replied similarly to this question. Fadela, for example, states:

They don't have wide choices, especially with a licence degree. Even with a master's degree, they have only teaching as an option (Fadela/Interview 4, February 2019)

Ahmed's view was also in line with Fadela:

Oh god! to be honest with you the only job they can have is teaching. That's the first job they will have not the only job almost one hundred percent of the students think about being teachers that's the only way or that's the only, job you can get. I know about some students who are working but not using English they have different types of jobs. They can be a tourist guide, what else [...] many of them went to the Sahara desert and they are now working as interpreters but most of

the time many of them are teaching English. It is still limited to teaching (Ahmed/Interview 11/April 2019)

Although at the macro level English is framed as the language of employability, the teachers' perspectives reflect a different story. While Mustapha and Fadela indicate the job limitations for graduates and that teaching could be the only option, Ahmed points out that some students are working and not using English. This account shows how English is not the only pathway to employability. Marwa another teacher of English also adds:

Souad: What are the other possibilities except teaching?

Marwa: Except teaching they can work in... you know it is the age of technology, it is the age of globalisation so they can work in enterprises and associations factories they can work abroad in airports as they need the English language (Marwa/Interview 10/April 2019)

Marwa seems to draw on the role of English beyond the Algerian context. This might be due to the limitations of career prospects of English within Algeria as expressed above by teachers. Meanwhile, Linda a teacher of English phonetics provides an insight into how English and employability are perceived by students:

They [students] have an instrumental motivation they just want to have a job and get paid. Some students say that they love English and it is a magical language and they want to learn it only for communication because they dream to go to England and the USA (Linda/interview1/February 2019)

Linda captures students' views on the functionality of English that is embodied in employability and mobility. Employability remains vague and defined above as the ability to "have a job and get paid" that might not necessarily involve the use of English, whereas mobility is more linked to the imaginative mobility which is attributed to English. This theme has also emerged from students' data which will be further explored in chapter 8 (see 8.2.2).

There seems to be a discrepancy between statements about employability and the reality of the Algerian job market. There is a massive increase in the number of students enrolled in the English programme. At the same time, the Algerian socio-economic reality and job opportunities appear to be

limited for English language graduates. Teaching English seems to be the main career waiting for these graduates probably because it is the safest and most secure career route as it is provided by the government. Teaching is often described as one of the most “secure jobs“ of the state as Omrane (2016: 7-8) explains that “a job in the public service allows many advantages that are different from the private sector, and offers social rights and, in particular, sustainable employment”. Again, teaching in a state school is not necessarily straightforward. Graduates with a bachelor’s degree or even a master’s degree in English, as noted above by Fadela, is not a factor working to their advantage. The teaching job market is also fiercely competitive because of the vast number of applicants who have to sit for a national written and oral contest before they can be recruited (Erling, 2015). This point will be further developed (see 8.2.2) in which students' perspectives are explored. The following section examines the discourse of English as the language of research and academic excellence.

6.3.3 English for academic research

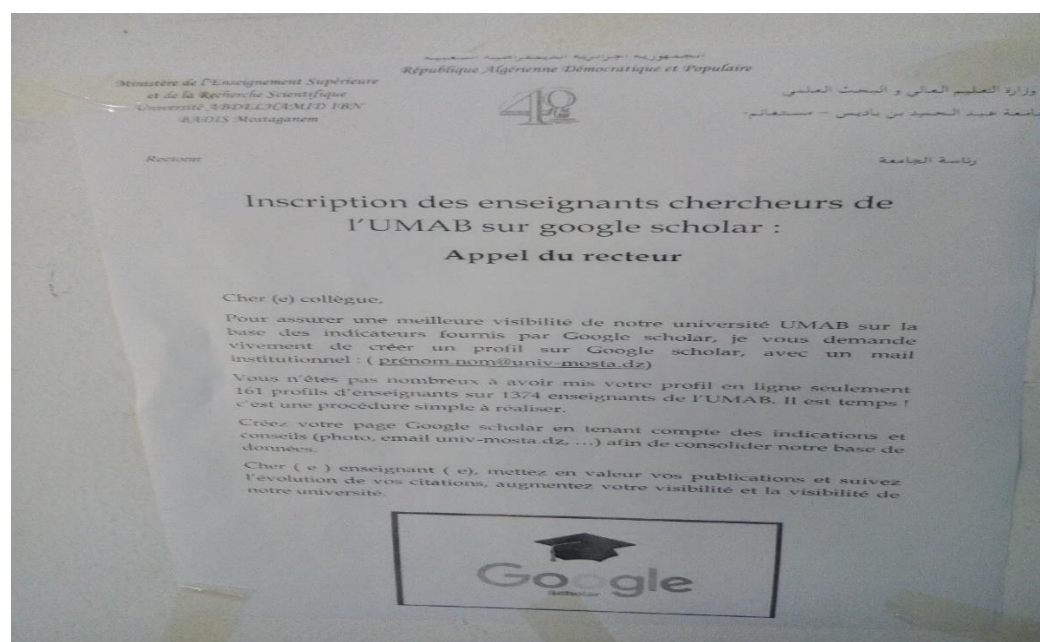


Image 8: A call from the university vice-chancellor to promote the university visibility (Fieldwork February/2019)

During the research fieldwork, the above picture caught my attention when I first visited the department of English. This was during the first few weeks of February, before the initiation of the policy that necessitates official documents need to be written in only English and Arabic (see appendix C).

At this point, the administrative language was French as shown in the picture. This call shows how teachers are being reproached for not having a profile on Google Scholar. It is mentioned that only 161 teachers out of 1374 in this university have a profile as such making it hard for the institution's visibility. Consequently, teacher-researchers are asked to create an account on Google Scholar using the university email with a picture, make their publications visible, and monitor the citations to actively contribute to the university visibility.

After the English language policy which aims at "strengthening the status of English", the minister of higher education (see appendix B) made an explicit statement about the connection between English, research publications, and Algerian university rank, arguing that:

Regarding the strengthening of the teaching of English, most Algerian academics publish articles in world journals in English, when they go for international conferences they speak in English, so they can give a lecture in English. Speaking about university rank, it is done based on the extent to which some of the taught modules in particular domains are delivered in the English language (The Algerian Radio, 22 July 2019)

The Minister Chittour who replaced Mr. Bouzid adopts a similar vision towards higher education in general and English in particular. Yet, he advocates a progressive move to adopt English and a well-thought approach. In an interview with the Algerian Radio (see appendix B), he states:

Academics in our countries contribute to the production of technical and scientific knowledge, they also contribute to scientific inventions but they do not publish their work in well-known scientific journals. There is a need to help them create scientific associations and journals to allow them to publish their work [...] And the prompt orientation towards adopting English is a must (The Algerian Radio, 10th March 2020)

English in the above excerpts is positioned within a range of interrelated discourses. Understanding the true role that English plays at the international level and within Algerian universities requires unpacking these discourses. First, it seems that the use of English is depicted as prevailing and common among Algerian academics. The Minister in the first excerpt

argues that Algerian researchers master the language which makes it easier for them to use as means of instruction and research. Second, promoting English is also made relevant to university rank. The Minister, therefore, contends that the absence of English in teaching and endorsing university courses online is preventing AHE to progress in international university ranks. The presence of English in teaching and research is equated with academic quality and seen as essential to move higher in ranking systems. In the second excerpt, reference to promoting research publications and the orientation toward the use of English is made clear. These statements frame English for academic research as a required step. This is crystallised in the intention of improving the rank of Algerian universities. The use of English in academic journals has prevailed in several countries not only in Algeria. Notably, the number of publications in journal articles written in English has skyrocketed to more than 75% in social sciences and humanities and more than 90% in natural sciences (Hamel, 2007). Consequently, this has further reinforced English to ground itself within the academic life to index university visibility and rank.

The importance given to research and visibility for Algerian universities seems to relate to the status of English and the role it plays in promoting these objectives. Data from teachers' interviews demonstrates the increasing push by university institutions to use English for academic research, yet its actual implementation is still limited. Halima, a teacher in an AHE, shares her perceptions about the current ELT situation:

English, as a foreign language, still has the status of a foreign language. Among teachers of sciences, English is the language of research since they are often obliged to publish articles in English or present their works in international conferences in English too. However, the official status of English in higher education is still that of the second foreign language (Halima/ Follow-up interview 2/ October 2019)

Halima makes a clear distinction between English as used within the university and what it represents for teachers' academic research. For teaching and learning, English remains the second foreign language after French. However, Halima explains how teachers "are obliged" to use it in scientific publications. This is problematic from teachers' perspectives because English is still a foreign language which they do not feel that they have a good linguistic command over as much as they do in Arabic and

French. Despite this linguistic difficulty facing teachers, using English for different academic practices has become a need within AHE as a response to the current global educational forces and particularly the trend of English for academic research publications. I will return to elaborate on this theme in chapter 9.

The discourse of English as the language of academic publications has become dominant among teachers. Marwa, a teacher of civilisation, states her opinion regarding the reason why she thinks English is now being regarded as important for AHE:

No doubt, it is very important and this has been perceived a long time ago. English is an international language and the best journals write in English. For more degrees in higher education, students need much reading, many contacts, and travels. For this to be possible and facilitated, English is the solution (Marwa/ Follow-up interview 10/ October 2019)

Marwa also points to the current language dominating well-known journals. She hints at the necessity to use English for Algerian teachers to get their work published in these journals. Marwa describes adopting English as “the solution” to academic progress since she sees it as a requirement for publications, access to knowledge, and teachers’ and students’ mobility.

These perceptions construct a representation of English as the language of “global academic excellence” which interlinks with other factors such as global university rank (Piller, 2016: 180). As most of the top-ranked universities are situated in English-speaking countries (mainly UK, USA, Australia) this promotes the fallacy among policymakers that English is the marker of academic excellence. Piller (2016) examines closely the structure of ranking and its different benchmarks: publication and research, reputations, learning environment, internationalisation. She argues that excluding the learning environment criterion, the rest of the criteria “serve to promote English in covert ways despite the fact that each criterion is ostensibly language-neutral” (2016: 181). She further explains how the criterion of internationalisation “puts pressure on non-English-speaking universities to switch to English as a medium of instruction in order to improve their standing in the rankings” (2016: 182). Furthermore, achieving internationalisation on the one hand and competing at the global level on the other requires the adoption of English language policy. English is a tool to

showcase institutions internationally, the teaching they offer, and their research productivity.

Data analysis of top-down discourses shows how global criteria of visibility and university ranking system also play a significant role in increasing the percentage of publications in English. The first criterion, which the university rankings' website outlines, is citation impact (Blommaert et al., 2005). This is measured by the number of publications that do not merely serve knowledge dissemination on a global level but are also cited by scholars worldwide.

Certainly, this is acceptable when the purpose is to share knowledge and recognise the influence that researchers are making across the globe.

Research impact is not a new idea. However, the imposition of English as the only language for publications and research is recent. Starting from the middle of the 20th century, English has gradually been privileged. As it has attained an international status, reaching a wider academic audience is seemingly made possible only through English. Looking back in time, one might ask how come the ground-breaking work of researchers such as Einstein, Galileo, Descartes, and several others reached a wide audience despite the fact they used to publish in their first language or Latin (Huttner-Koros, 2015).

Seeking this academic excellence through English publications in the name of rank might engender a risk of losing the value of knowledge produced in Arabic, French, and Berber. This argument might raise the following debates. First, it is claimed that the use of English might create a bridge between local/global knowledge allowing researchers to disseminate their findings and insight at the international level (Curry and Lillis, 2018). Second, one cannot ignore the challenging nature of publishing in a language that is foreign for teachers who spend most of their careers learning, teaching, and researching in local languages. This could be a real barrier for many teachers who might be disadvantaged from academic opportunities because they lack English language proficiency. In this view, Fay (2020) discusses how English might play a role in endorsing epistemic injustice. He argues that very often English "privileges certain voices, certain ways of thinking, and certain ways of doing over others" (2020: 17). The favouring of one language to convey Western thinking is what characterises "epistemicide". Within this orientation, learning from other perspectives and other contexts such as Global South are disregarded, and only Western and Eurocentric knowledge becomes valuable. A particular structure of thinking is

reproduced through language that often tends to conceal other forms of knowledge and social realities. Issues around language use in research and knowledge production are important threads discussed in 9.2.

6.3.4 English replaces French

The discourses of English within AHE have to be understood within the Algerian socio-historical context and particularly how they stand against the status of the French language. The data elucidates the complex relationship between English and French which has also been translated into official language policies. Exploring the MHESR's reform raises the following question: to what extent could strengthening ELT be a strategic policy to remove the French language?

Within the Minister's speech previously presented (see section 6.3.3), other references might indicate how promoting ELT is also viewed in opposition to French. When the Minister was asked about how he thinks English would benefit the AHE, he made this comparison:

At the present moment, we upload the programmes on universities' websites in two languages. Arabic, there are 200/300 million people who can read it, and in French which no one speaks. So if we want to attract international students, these programmes need to be translated into English (The Algerian Radio, 22 July 2019)

The minister's interview excerpt illustrates the shift from endorsing the importance of teaching in English to downplaying the usefulness of French for Algerian students. He draws a comparison between the importance of English over French for AHE based on an external factor which is the number of speakers of English on a global scale. Positioning French as ineffective compared to English could also indicate that there are other motives behind this language policy. In other words, while this reform may seem to be about strategic planning leading to 'internationalise' AHE, it could also be a political decision to end the French language.

Other reasons provided by MHESR to justify the need to endorse English in Algerian universities are echoed in the Minister's speech in which he particularly addressed the following:

We always treat issues in relation to reality. The reality is that all parents are teaching their children foreign languages and mainly the

English language and this is an existing reality that we should not ignore [...] (The Algerian Radio, 22 July 2019)

It seems that the Minister employs a strategy of rationality (Reyes, 2011) to support the ministry's English language policy. He premised his view on two arguments: his first statement aims to demonstrate that the government's decision attempts primarily to listen to public opinion. According to him, this decision is primarily a response to the Algerian social reality which conveys that "all parents" seem to favour seeing ELT within the educational sphere. What is problematic about the argument is that the context in which ELT reform is being implemented is not primary education where parents are stakeholders. His decision instead concerns AHE where teachers' and students' voices and choices must be prioritised.

The Minister's statements are aligned with the British Council, which has been collaborating with the Algerian educational sectors to promote English teaching and learning. The British Council published a research report about English skills in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions. This report classifies Algeria in the 3rd position in the world with the highest percentage of youth unemployment. The British Council explains this high ratio in the following passage:

French colonial history has left a significant legacy in the North Africa region, with French remaining strongly positioned as the second language of choice for the majority of learners. The persisting importance of the French language worldwide, and its history in the region, have significantly limited the motivation of local graduates to pursue studies of an additional lingua franca. (British Council, 2016: 08)

The British Council's evaluation of the Algerian economic reality is partial and inconclusive for several reasons. This evaluation draws attention to the French linguistic imperialism to denigrate its importance among Algerian learners by ascribing its persistence to unemployment within postcolonial countries. French is indeed still firmly established within the Algeria educational milieu. This has its roots in the previous French educational system which lasted more than a century (see section 3.2.1). As such, omitting French from the educational system in postcolonial Algeria has been previously seen as impractical by language teachers as it has become so enmeshed in the Algerian society and labour market. English or any other

language might not be best placed to solve the issue of unemployment. Similarly, the lack of graduates' motivation to study English is not only due to French. Both English and French are mandatory languages within Algerian education from middle school onward. Yet, learners' English proficiency level is noticed to be significantly low given the lack of appropriate teaching methods, resources, and teacher training (Bouazid and Le Roux, 2014). Finally, the high percentage of unemployment in Algeria is mainly due to economic and political instabilities which the country has witnessed since the early 1990s. Namely, the disastrous results of the 10 years of civil violence, the rigid government's employment policies, and the financial crisis are also other variables that affect this high ratio (Kangni, 2007). As such, the above statement made by the British Council needs to be examined in relation to the local context. Furthermore, the British Council might have a vested interest in framing the issue of employment as a result of the Algerian language situation. Section 6.5 will elaborate on the growing projects between the British Council and AHE to explore how this collaboration is shaping English language policy.

Teachers' interviews echoed conflicting views of the top-down ELT policies. Interestingly, the aforementioned statements made by the Minister were also echoed by some teachers. For example, Marwa notes:

I think I started to feel that everyone knows English and is interested in. Even sometimes I am watching something that has no relation with the English language. Parents speaking about their children, they say 'I prefer my children to study English now is more important than French. English is the language of this century it is international wherever you go it helps you. Even illiterate parents if you ask them 'do you want your children to study French or English in university they would say 'English not French English will help them wherever they go' this is what they always say (Marwa/Interview 10/ April 2019)

The above excerpt indicates a prevalent opinion among Algerians. English is gaining popularity as a second foreign language among Algerian people because of its functionality on international levels. What could not be ignored is how people seem proud that they have now the opportunity to learn a language that is "more important than French". This parallel is always drawn whenever a discussion about the status of English is raised. Mustapha also reflects on this:

Souad: With the increase of English in Algeria, how do you think this will benefit its learners?

Mustapha: The first thing that will happen, it the decrease of the French language, the looser is the French language, and France as ex-colonial, it is clear, it is obvious (Mustapha/Interview 9/ March 2019)

Examining closely the orientation of the English language policy and its long-term vision also points to the emerging discourse of “English to replace French”. The international character attributed to English and its status as a marker of ‘global academic excellence’, as previously discussed, could only be one side of the story. Data also suggests that the role of English in suppressing French has been also part of the agenda of Algerian policymakers. This has started with the removal of French from any administrative communication and replacing it with English (see policy document appendix C). The MHESR has, then, gradually introduced measures to reinforce ELT instead. These measures are presented in section 6.5.

In a follow-up interview with Marwa, I asked her to explain the reasons why she thinks the idea of strengthening English at AHE has been implemented at this particular time. She comments:

It is a time of change. It has come now and not earlier because the country is at a transitional stage. New governance is characterised by major reforms and new policies. The implementation of English is worth a national agreement both for the varied ways in which the young people can pursue their studies or prepare for the after degree life and for the international limitations resulting from the French language as a medium of instruction and administration (Marwa/ Follow-up interview 10/October 2019/ October 2019)

Marwa’s view seems to frame English language policies in terms of their functionality for students. Yet, she also draws a parallel to French. The academic and professional potentials which English seems to unlock represent its biggest asset, unlike French which is regarded as an obstacle for AHE development on international levels. This correlates to the implications of the global discourse “English as the international language” which seems to be taken at face value. However, a crucial point, which Marwa hints at, relates to the procedures and the broader changes as also a

national force behind English language policies. The new Algerian government which was formed after the presidential election (12 December 2019) coincides with this new trend of “strengthening” ELT. The changes to all sectors that happened for the first time since the beginning of 2019 need to be understood within critical socio-political events. The next section will present data concerning the Algerian protests and how they shaped the discourses around English and French within AHE.

6.4 English and the voice of ‘Hirak’

Contesting the persistent use of French in education has become prevalent especially when the MHESR explicates the reasons behind the ELT policies. The English versus French debate as represented in the Minister’s statements (see section 6.3.4) received a massive reaction among teachers, students, and public opinion. The Minister was holding a temporary position during the provisional government. As such, his views need to be put into perspective and might also be considered as a political position within the critical transition that Algeria has experienced. The data demonstrates a close link between the changes inflating English in AHE and concomitant political events in Algeria. English policy has been described by both the Minister and the Algerian news as a “public demand”. Meaning that the people are asking for English to be promoted. The popularity of English was triggered in the Algerian protests 2019 where the persistence of French political hegemony was raised as one of the key issues to end. Given this political unrest, I will first describe the context of the massive Algerian protests, the aims of the protesters, how English gained a presence in such context, and how it was later used symbolically by language policymakers to denote that a vision of change and development is adopted. These critical events have led to a transitional stage where macro official statements need to be contextualised.

The Algeria protests which started on the 22nd of February 2019 - the third week of the research fieldwork - were called ‘Hirak’. This term is an Arabic word meaning movement for social change. The protests were largely led by Algerian youth for more than 9 months. This has initially started with the previous president Bouteflika breaching constitutional law when deciding to run for a fifth mandate (Guemar et al., 2019). Consequently, this triggered Algerians to protest against unemployment and the different forms of corruption. The Hirak had initially positive impacts and indeed Bouteflika

withdrew from the elections. In addition, several political figures who were involved in cases of corruption were referred to court and jailed.

Subsequently, a transitional government was formed. This has promised that radical political reforms would take place and more democratic elections would be arranged. The Hirak continued even after this transition to demand changing the entire governmental system and end any opaque economic and political relations with the French former coloniser.

The discourse of English to replace French became a trend to cover among national and international news such as University World News, Le Monde, El Hiwar. The Algerian newspaper Al-Ain linked the promotion of English over French to the Algerian political protests arguing that English “has always been chosen by the Algerian people, however, it was rejected because of the government elites, but today the political will has been liberated” thanks to the Hirak (Bournan, 2020: para. 26). These statements refer to the politics behind language planning and further point to how the persistence of the French language in AHE was endorsed by the former government because of their political allegiance to France. However, these statements have to be examined carefully. The natural positioning of English within the Algerian linguistic landscape and the choices people make in context have to be considered to understand the full picture.

The languages used in the Hirak were particularly significant, in particular, the protests in which university students arranged. Tuesdays were the days only devoted to students’ protests. On-campus and outside, students wearing the Algerian flags and holding signs where they strategically used the languages at their dispositions to convey their concerns, needs, and demands. The use of Darija, Arabic, Berber varieties, French, and English reflect how multilingualism is the norm outside the educational setting and cannot be suppressed even with a strict monolingual policy. The below images show how English had a remarkable presence in projecting students’ voices. I took some of the pictures while others were shared on social media and mainly Facebook groups for university students.



Image 9: Students’ protests on Tuesdays over the first three months of Hirak (March 2019)

Both the content and the languages are worth examining as they encapsulate the reality of the AHE reform. The reform preoccupations with international educational standards and trends might not be responsive to the local issues and struggles which are facing Algerian youth in general and students in particular. The above placards do not do justice to what students were demanding but the main aims of the protesters could be summarised in three key causes which led them to join the Hirak. The first placard echoes the deterioration of the living standards and the economic recession although Algeria is one of the richest countries in the world in gas and oil reserves. This has affected the quality of higher education because of the limited investment in Algerian universities (see section 7.3). In picture [2] a student from the University of Science and Technology Houari Boumediene (USTHB) - one of the oldest and best universities in Algeria - highlights the level of corruption that penetrated all sectors and institutions including universities. It is admirable how the student sees himself as an agent of change since he along with the other students has the awareness and skills to stand against corruption. Furthermore, the richness of the third picture lies in the powerful message “Laissez-nous construire notre future! Laissez-nous rêver” [Let us construct our future! Let us dream]. This sign communicates how students are longing for a better future which for the time being seems blurry for them because of a system of government that lacks transparency.

As previously stated, the signs were written creatively. Students fully leveraged their linguistic resources through code-switching, borrowing, and multilingual usage to communicate their needs. The following images show some examples of these linguistic practices.



Image 10: Code-switching and borrowing linguistic practices in Hirak (March/April 2019)

Picture 4 “we want BoutefEXIT” similar to “Brexite” is one example of the creative use of language which succinctly summarises one key goal of the Hirak. BoutefEXIT refers to removing Bouteflika from the 5th presidential election. Similarly, “Catchir me if you can” in picture 5 was one of the common phrases repeated as a reaction to the attempt to bribe supporters of Bouteflika presidential campaign. To increase the attendance in the campaign, free sandwiches filled with ‘Catchir’ (a cheap Algerian salami) were handed out. “Catchir me if you can” was used to oppose bribery that took place to prevent people from joining the protest. This multilingual use in such a critical period portrays how Algerian students can mobilise their rich linguistic resources to convey their needs. Edwards (2009: 30) stresses this point arguing that “all ordinary speakers have a range of possibilities in their linguistic repertoire from which they pick and choose according to their sense of the occasion. This is code-switching [...] the situation drives the language to a large extent”. Comparably, English is being used strategically by the Algerian youth to have their voices heard. These simplistic yet heavy-loaded phrases reflect their intentions behind the use of English in particular. There seems to be a high level of awareness about the utility of English and

how it can serve as a communicative tool to broadcast and request the protesters' rights.

In light of the students' use of English and Algerian youth-led protests, the MHESR has implemented quick fixes to lower the tension and the turmoil among the academic community. Data from teachers' interviews supports this argument. Halima explains how strengthening ELT within AHE gained momentum during the Hirak:

What the Ministry of Higher Education suggests to substitute French with English can be understood in two ways. Either it is due to the necessity that global economics and global education impose on developing countries like Algeria, or it might be a way to absorb the anger of the people mainly those who are against France and its Algerian allies from the former regime (Halima/Follow-up interview/October 2019)

Halima's perspective supports the view that ELT within AHE cannot be detached from the country's political climate. For Halima, the promotion of English at the expense of the French language serves more than an instrumental purpose. As part of the Hirak's demands was the removal of all traces of French hegemony and ending the interference of French lobbies within the Algerian domestic affairs. As much as English language policy could be a response to the global force of internationalisation (as discussed in 6.2), yet there is also a political facet to this promotion. In other words, the new ELT policy could also be a political strategy to preoccupy protestors, to convey a sense that the government is responsive to their claims and that changes are taking place. Within the public demand for a radical change, a sense of hope for a better future had to be recovered. This might be achieved through advocating English, as it positively denotes a bright future, modernity, and progress. Consequently, the policy of "strengthening ELT" implies an end to French linguistic imperialism and a radical shift in the history of Algeria.

Data from other teachers shows their awareness of the true status that French and English occupy regardless of the top-down policies. Mustapha, for instance, maintains:

French is part of our national identity. Whether we like it or not. Even if we speak Algerian Arabic it is heavily loaded with French [...] professionally French may disappear but socially it will always be

there. It may disappear from education but it will always be there [...] for English to develop greatly the way French developed we need a couple of generations

Mustapha also compares the push for English to a similar language policy which the Algerian ministry of education introduced in the mid-90s:

[...] although in the 90s, parents accepted for their children to do English instead of French in its third year it was lost. When the pupil goes back home and tells their parents “mother this is my French lesson” they help them. French is on TV, in the street, newspaper, French is everywhere. In the case of English, learners are isolated when they go back home, it is not socially backed up (Mustapha/Interview 9/ March 2019)

Mustapha expresses a different perspective acknowledging the deeply rooted nature of the French language in Algerian society which makes it one marker of Algerian national identity. He maintains that even if English might be officially integrated within AHE, in reality, French will remain among Algerians. He points to the absence of English from Algerian society compared to French. This factor is important for a language to spread within society. The lack of exposure to English outside classrooms is also an emergent theme among students. This will be discussed in section 8.6.

The perspective on the way French interlinks with the Algerian socio-linguistic reality is also shared by Halima:

French is enmeshed with Algerian Arabic and Algerian culture. Remember the phenomenon of codeswitching and the diaglossic situation in Algeria. Therefore it is far-reaching that the status of French would witness a change in the next few years, even decades (Halima/Follow-up interview/October 2019).

The excerpts presented above highlight teachers’ scepticism about the intended changes brought by MHESR to ELT. They hint at the political nature driving English language policy. Mustapha and Halima explain how such change is far from being achieved at practical levels. Unlike English, French is “socially backed up” as noted by Mustapha which makes it intertwined with Algerian vernacular (Darija), Tamazight, and society alike. These interconnections might present a real challenge for the applications of English language policies.

The intentions behind English language policy are framed in relation to substituting French especially within the political events and the transitional stage which Algeria is undergoing. This indicates a decolonial project. Yet, this orientation is mainly tackled at the policy level, substituting one colonial language with another. The ‘decolonial’ project does not seem to be well-thought through at the practice level. The following section aims to trace subtle forms of hegemony that underlie English at the level of practice. Examinations of recent international projects between the Algerian MHESR, American Embassy, and British Council illustrate how framing English as the language that will decolonise AHE is contested.

6.5 Cultural organisations promoting English

The data shows that interest in strengthening ELT within universities has been endorsed by international projects. Organisations such as the British Council and the American Corner are playing a crucial role to facilitate the MHESR’s English policies. This section will closely examine the activities held by these organisations to explore how these projects inform English policy within AHE and what are the underlying ideologies they seek to endorse. This critical examination aims to evaluate the discourse of English as the language that will end French linguistic imperialism. Through the lens of soft power, this section will raise concerns regarding the growing interference of these cultural organisations and how this might indicate covert forms of hegemony.

The previous sections have delved into the global educational trends which pushed the discourse of English for global academic excellence and employability. Furthermore, cultural organisations represent key agents pushing for English. As AHE has started taking measures to improve ELT, the MHESR seems to rely on external institutions in its mission to “strengthen the English language”. In the ministry report (see appendix C), a section provides the following suggestions from an appointed commission by the MHESR to improve ELT within universities:

Encourage the ‘American Corner’ establishment in several universities across the country and also strengthen cooperation with the British Council through collaboration programs and conventions with academic institutions [...] Redeploy cooperation with English-speaking countries. (MHESR, 2019: 03)

The bullet points were measures for the MHESR to implement at the level of Algerian universities and to engage with institutions such as the British Council and the American Corner. These cultural organisations represent English-speaking countries, as such, they are perceived as the ‘experts’ in English teaching which their help must be sought. Following the official commission’s suggestions about ELT, an increase in exchanges and projects with the UK and the US is noticed. To illustrate the point, three main examples are presented below regarding the collaborations between universities and these two cultural organisations.

Within the policy document (see appendix C), the role of the American Corner was highlighted to improve the ELT situation within Algerian universities. The American Corner, which is directed by the US Embassy, has recently expanded its spaces within different universities. Under the logo “new space, new opportunities”, the American Corner targets university students to assist them in their education journey in general and English learning in particular. The opening of more spaces was overseen by the Minister of Higher education. The image below is an example of officialising the role of the American corner within Oran University (one of the four biggest universities in Algeria).

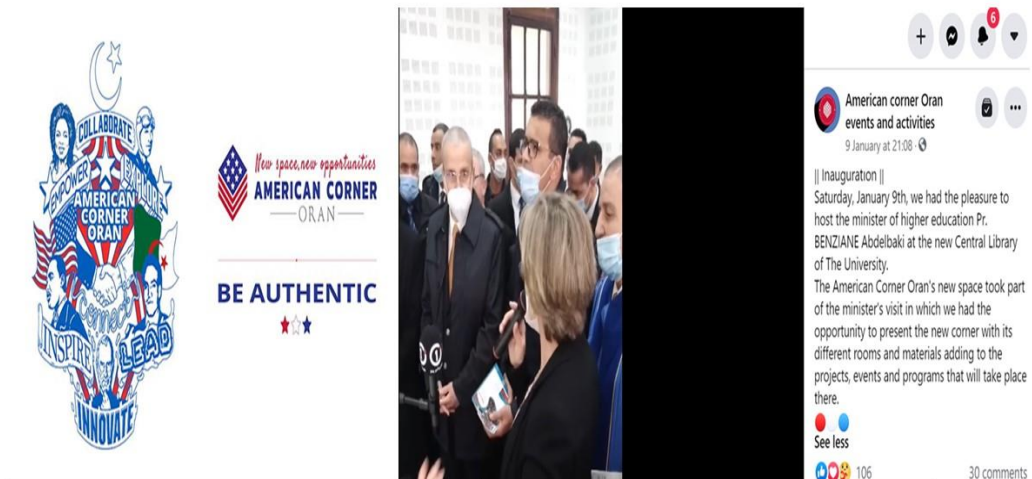


Image 11: The American corner within Oran University (9 January 2021)

The image celebrated an opening of a new space at the heart of Oran University. This image was shared on the American corner Oran Facebook page and other social media platforms to reach Algerian students and youth. The contract (see appendix B) bidding the American Embassy with Oran

University highlighted how the university offers physical spaces free of any charge within its campus in exchange the American Corner should:

Provide [...] resources for inclusion in the Corner's collection on topics related to bilateral interests, including but not limited to: economics, management, business, American studies, literature, English teaching, [...] chosen to reflect the Embassy's and the University's target user groups. [...] Conduct U.S. speaker programs, cultural events, educational exchange programs, and past program alumni activities at the Corner, and provide coordination and information concerning similar Embassy-sponsored activities. (University of Oran, 2019: 3)

The nature of the activities and programmes offered by the American Corner conveys that the focus is not only on English language learning per se. It also offers cultural activities which are described as an “authentic” experience to “connect visitors to American culture and values” (US Embassy Website, 2021). These sponsored activities also promote exchange projects where students visit the US to learn more about educational and professional opportunities they can apply for.

The mobility of students and teachers represents an important asset for these cultural institutions. The following announcement exemplifies the advertising of international exchange programmes for teachers and students on the MHESR's webpage:

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
République Algérienne Démocratique Et Populaire

Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur
et de la Recherche Scientifique

Direction de la Coopération et des
Échanges Interuniversitaires

Sous-Direction de la Coopération Bilatérale

N°  D.C.E.I.U/S.D.C.B/2021

وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

مديرية التعاون والتبادل ما بين الجامعات

المديرية الفرعية للتعاون الثنائي

Alger, le 04 MARS 2021

À Monsieur le Président
de la Conférence Régionale des Universités Centre

Objet : Programme International d'échange du gouvernement américain

Dans le cadre de la stratégie s'inscrivant dans l'ouverture de l'Université algérienne sur l'International développée par le Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique, j'ai l'honneur de vous informer que Monsieur Adam SIEGELEM, Attaché Culturel de l'Ambassade des États-Unis en Algérie, présentera en visioconférence les différents programmes internationaux d'échanges du gouvernement américain, offerts directement aux étudiants et enseignants intéressés.

Image 12: International exchange programme of the American government (March 2021)

The introduction of the announcement “within the strategic framework to open the Algerian university to the international [...]” captivates the connections between international exchange projects, internationalisation of AHE, and the orientation to ELT. The statement denotes how international mobility is one key aspect within the vision to ‘internationalise’ Algerian universities. Although the announcement describes the nature of this mobility as bilateral cooperation and exchanges, in reality, these can be characterised by asymmetrical power dynamics. The US programmes are perceived as a source of knowledge and expertise in the ELT domain and education in general. As such, students and teachers are constantly encouraged to seek access to this knowledge. International exchange programmes might indeed be a great learning opportunity, however, what is problematic is the beliefs that lie behind this promotion. The MHESR tends to invest a considerable amount of money under the belief that the best education, teaching methodologies, and learning experience are only located within English-speaking countries.

As I explained in the methodology chapter (see 5.4.2). I had to meet with the dean of foreign languages to gain access to the research setting. The short conversation with the dean reflects the belief in the exclusivity of knowledge

to the UK and the USA. I explained to him that my fieldwork will take place in the institution and that I am here to collect data. The dean was very surprised that my research concentrated on the Algerian context and said to me “we send you there to learn the best from them, why are you here?” implying that there is nothing in the university to research (Fieldnote 6/04/2018). The beliefs about mobility and English will be elaborated from teachers’ perspectives (see 7.4) and from the view of students’ (see 8.2).

It should also be noted that similar exchange programmes and cultural activities are not unique to the British and American cultural organisations. Other institutions such as the Spanish Cervantes and Institut Français provide similar services and argue to provide an ‘authentic’ language learning experience. While this might be considered benign, the reproduced unequal power relations in terms of knowledge and their economic interests cannot be disregarded. The discussion chapter (see 9.4.3) will further explore this theme.

In addition to the American Embassy, the MHESR seems to rely on the British Embassy to improve ELT within Algerian universities (Maghreb, 2020). The images below show some of these collaborations.



Image 13: The ministerial meeting with the British Embassy to improve English language teaching (September 2020)

The Algerian news has also covered the MHESR’s measures regarding English language policy. Al-Ain news for example provided more details about the way the “strengthening English language teaching” within AHE is

being supervised by collaborations with the British Embassy. Bournan (2020: para. 6) explains that the ministry has provided more details about their concerted actions “to make the Algerian university the driving force for economic growth through the ‘teaching of English for all’, agreements have been made to facilitate mobility for Algerian researchers to London and Belfast to share expertise and experiences and to develop teaching and guarantee its quality”. Discourses about English and the mobility of teachers are shaped by the belief that these British collaborations represent ideal opportunities for gaining ‘expertise’ and ensuring ‘quality’. Such beliefs reflect what Holliday (2005) calls the nativespeakerism ideology. In a similar view, Blommaert (2010: 30) critically explores this ideology explaining how “the norms and customs of the ‘centre’ (i.e., usually the middle class) are taken to be the only valid ones and the only ones guaranteeing upward social mobility and success”. This way of thinking not only translates to language education but also to wider areas of education where English plays a great role. Teaching approaches and educational models are only perceived effective when produced by ‘native speakers’, as such, this belief hinders teachers’ ability to create their own teaching models that suit best their learners. I elaborate on this idea with data from teachers’ classrooms (see 7.5).

Under the new government and the new president Taboun, the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has approved the opening of the British School. The above image [2] depicts the signing of the contract to open the British School for the first time in Algiers. The Algerian news Al-Ain explains how the Algerian government has issued “strict measures to support and facilitate the opening of the British School” (Bournan, 2020: para. 3). Supervised by the British Embassy, the British School offers teaching of English and other subjects designed by the Cambridge international school curriculum. This school is open for elementary and middle school to provide a learning space for Algerians from an early age. The Algerian government welcomed this initiative under the belief that the more learners are exposed to English at an early age the better they master it. The belief that “the earlier English is taught the better the results” is outlined as one of five tenets of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 2009: 218) (see 4.3.3).

Similar cultural organisations are found attractive by students because they provide more exposure to learn and practice the language outside the classroom context. Since the use of English is very limited within the

Algerian society, these cultural organisations have become a common destination for students who are seeking exposure, accessibility to more resources, and obtaining the necessary qualifications which show their language skills. In a study conducted by Jacob (2020) on the reality of English among Algerian youth, she observed Algerian learners who were attracted to private language schools such as the British Council. She found out that the great majority of learners who joined the school were all proficient in French and they mainly came from privileged economic backgrounds as the English courses' fees are high.

Although the learning support cannot be ignored, these cultural organisations are also considered part of the ELT industry which seeks to expand its market opportunities. Furthermore, there are economic, cultural, and political interests underlying the dominant linguistic and educational discourses. These represent such organisations as 'experts' and ideal destinations to improve English language teaching and learning. In this vein, Phillipson (2009: 12) also describes the underlying fallacy of "maximum exposure" a common descriptor of learning English within the British Council and the American Embassy. He argues that English represents a major "commodity and cultural force" (2009: 5) for these organisations, yet the business side is often concealed and rarely talked about. This theme will be further discussed in section (9.4.3) within the theoretical frameworks of soft power (Nye, 2004) and nativespeakerism (Holliday, 2006; Lowe, 2020b).

6.6 Chapter summary

The data presented in this chapter demonstrated the various forces driving the discourses around English in AHE. The overall objective of the chapter was to examine ELT policies from different vantage points. First, the data explained the educational reform and the language policy introduced to AHE. Perspectives and accounts from official documents, the minister's speech, and teachers' interviews were examined and juxtaposed for an in-depth understanding. The data analysis illustrated how a series of changes are fuelled by global educational transfer, mainly the orientation towards internationalising higher education. This endorsed the gradual promotion of English as the language of 'global academic excellence'. As such, strengthening the status of English is defined by policymakers as a reform that allows reaching better academic and research impacts. Moreover, data indicated the growing preoccupation of the MHESR with Algerian

universities' rank and visibility. These global criteria are tied to increasing the teaching of English within Algerian universities. Other data identifies national forces that are deeply rooted in the Algerian historical and political context. Particularly, within the Algerian protests, English is promoted by policymakers to convey a sense of radical changes brought by a 'new system'. Therefore, a discourse of 'English to replace French' appears again at the policy level. Finally, the chapter demonstrated the increasing interference of cultural organisations in this transition stage. These seem to be positioned as the 'experts' of ELT.

The next chapter will focus on teachers' day-to-day practices to explore their experiences of teaching English within a reformed higher education institution.

Chapter 7: Teachers' practices and challenges

7.1 Introduction

As explained in 6.2, the educational reform that aims to bring international standards to Algerian Higher Education (AHE) has also promoted English Language Teaching (ELT). This chapter will elaborate on the types of pressure placed on teachers as a result of the global educational transfer. It will explore their views on the reform, and it will delve into English teaching practices at the classroom level. As such, the English curriculum, teaching materials, and teachers' pedagogies will be examined. This analysis seeks to juxtapose ELT at the policy level, discussed in chapter 6, with day-to-day teaching practices. This juxtaposition demonstrates language ideologies underpinning English classrooms. Notably, data suggests the dominance of the 'native speaker' model and the standard language ideology over teachers' practices. Finally, data will show how some teachers resist these ideologies and attempt to take a critical approach to ELT. These competing pedagogies convey the complexity of ELT within AHE.

7.2 Teachers' perceptions of English teaching

Educational reforms often mirror concurrent socio-economic changes that governments envisage for countries, and AHE is no exception. The educational reforms started simultaneously with a series of economic changes initiated with the new government's vision. Borrowing foreign education visions, as pointed out by the interviewed teachers, sometimes create tensions and conflicts at the bottom level when they are not fine-tuned with conditions in which teaching and learning take place. Teachers were constantly drawing attention to issues underlying the AHE system and the new philosophy that the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) is trying to adopt.

The first emerging theme relates to the role of university and English within the Algerian socio-economic context. The teachers expressed their discontent with the top-down reform and policies, highlighting the problematic correlation between the wider socio-economic context and the overall objectives prescribed for them. Yacine, for instance, explains:

The system is really good but it lacks so many things. The LMD system is all about application and to be pragmatic and to be practical but the problem is that there is no link. We teach here but it's only theoretical. There is no link between the educational institution and the economic institution within which this savoir-faire should be applied [...]
(Yacine/Interview 5/March 2019)

Likewise, Fadela states:

There should be a collaboration with the university, the companies and the professional world. To prepare learners with specific profiles which means when students graduate they will find their place where they fit in. This is what the system is supposed to be. It should prepare students based on the needs of the workplace, which is not the case
(Fadela/Interview 4/March 2019)

Both Yacine and Fadela acknowledge the potential of the international system that has been imported to Algerian universities. Yacine also recognises the principles it brings, but he questions its applicability within the Algerian economic milieu, arguing against its adequacy. The gap between the reform and the economic context, as he maintains, makes it challenging for teachers to meet the global educational changes brought by the system. For example, employability skills, as a trend in international higher education institutions have become an important aspect of teaching. This is difficult for Algerian teachers to bring into classroom practice because they lack the knowledge of workplace needs. Yacine notes the gap between learning outcomes and socio-economic conditions. He believes that this disconnection is one of the reasons why the MHESR's reforms might not be successful. In the following excerpt, he further elaborates on teaching at university:

Teaching at university is very teacher-centred [...] you can go to any class attend any lecture and you see the teacher teaching and learners just receiving information [...] they are trying to teach their students something they themselves do not know how to apply, just theory
(Yacine/Interview 5/February 2019)

Yacine describes how teaching at university is theory-based and lacks a practical aspect. He attributes this to the absence of collaboration between university institutions and the external social context. Yacine's statements are particularly significant, as they oppose what has been stated in both the

MHESR and the ELT curriculum regarding employability (see section 6.2, 6.3.2). Yacine does not blame teachers who seem to follow a “teacher-centred” approach, but he refers to the challenges facing teachers to implement the reform. Teachers seem to struggle to identify what exact competencies learners need to develop in English. As such, they encounter difficulty to relate their ELT learning objectives to the socio-economic context. Yacine accentuates the importance of linking teaching with the wider society explaining:

If you see the way this system is applied in France or in many parts of the world all of it is training [...] like theory and practice and sometimes even within the week they have two days theory three days practice, we don't have that (Yacine/Interview 5/February 2019)

Yacine seems to compare how the reform operates in France to show how the educational system works efficiently when applied in a compatible context. He argues that this imported system and its principles are more fitted for the European context because of the collaboration and the shared vision between HE institutions and their socio-economic context. This is not to make any generalisations about the European contexts, as this is beyond the scope of the present research. Nonetheless, some teachers seemed to be aware of the importance of matching educational systems with socio-economic contexts within which they operate.

Another point is the fact that many European universities that are part of the internationalisation system are mainly funded by external private sectors (see 4.5). These play a substantial role in developing resources, teacher training, and curriculum. However, Algerian universities have no autonomy, as they are solely sponsored by the government that provides free education to all students. Furthermore, creating a partnership between AHE and other private institutions is still unusual. Although there have been many proposals for the MHESR to endorse the privatisation of universities and to allow private sectors to invest in AHE, such a process is still under study (Zaghlami, 2018).

Unlike Yacine and Fadela, whose critiques are focused on the inadequacy between the educational system and the Algerian socio-economic context, other teachers' concerns target the lack of appropriate training and infrastructure. These have been a real constraint for teachers to engage

proactively with ELT classrooms. Samar, who has been teaching at university for more than ten years, states:

Souad: How do you see your teaching approach within the new reform?

Samar: (*Laughing*) in Algeria I don't think we are really following this system [...]

Souad: Why?

Samar: Because of the lack of means maybe. Even us teachers, we didn't receive any training or how the new system is different from the old one. The first and second year when it was introduced, I found it quite difficult to cope with, because I was used to the old one [...]

(Samar/Interview 3/ February 2019)

Samar asserts her position towards the system. She does not show scepticism regarding the suitability of the reform within the Algerian socio-economic context as the previous teachers did, but she draws attention to the issue of unfamiliarity with the new teaching guidelines and objectives without adequate teacher training. Later in the interview, Samar added:

For example, the technical devices and the financial needs which go with the system, rooms and libraries for instance are not adapted, we are not well equipped for the LMD system (Samar/Interview 3/ February 2019)

What is crucial about Samar's statement is the fact that the reform's focus seems to be on structural changes, with little attention being paid to the substance – i.e., teaching and learning per se. In other words, the European system has been adopted in AHE in terms of semesters, modules, and credits structure. Nevertheless, the materials, staff training, and the infrastructure needed to sustain the new educational approach appear to be overlooked. Other teachers echo the same concern about how the lack of appropriate teacher training has resulted in confusion among teachers regarding English teaching objectives. Fadela, for example, declares:

Mostly no training has been given to teachers about how to implement these objectives. When we were first recruited we received a kind of workshop but we were not given concrete objectives of teaching within the LMD. They didn't give us anything. If a student comes and asks me about it, I won't be able to explain, which is shameful [...]

(Fadela/Interview 4/ March 2019)

Fadela shares her uncertainty about the educational system in general. She describes the objectives as “not concrete” to apply in her teaching practices. Her statements convey how insufficient pre-service teacher training is. Consequently, the absence of appropriate guidance in the way new learning outcomes should be delivered has also led to a lack of understanding of the reform for Fadela and other teachers. Limited teacher training was a recurrent concern that teachers raised. Yacine adds an important point concerning teacher training:

[Teachers] have not received any training. They lack a lot of things and because you are too free in university it is very problematic. There are those who do efforts and so on, but most of them because they are not being audited, they are not being controlled by another entity I'm not saying they should be, but it needs to be taken into consideration this aspect is very important, because sometimes you enter the classroom the teaching is happening but the learning is not (Yacine/Interview 5/ February 2019)

Teachers at university seem to be left with no appropriate guidance from the institution regarding teaching English. Yacine contests the total independence given to teachers. Teachers are considered experts in teaching English and are, thus, expected to cope with any changes. However, what Yacine seems to convey is the absence of measures assuring quality in teaching, particularly, in-service teacher training. This, according to him, has led to a disparity between the MHESR's expectations on the one hand, and the teaching/learning reality on the other.

A similar view was also recounted by Halima while describing the lack of consistency in teaching and assessment:

Souad: Do you meet with the other teachers to discuss the teaching content?

Halima: NO! (*high tone*) we don't have norms of assessment at the university level. It is really the chaos. Sometimes we want to suggest ways of assessment but there are many teachers who are against following the map. Like we say *Kol ter yalgha bal ghah*" (Halima/Interview 2/February 2019)

Halima described how new teachers often find themselves in discord with older and more experienced teachers. She explained that because some teachers are used to specific ways of teaching and assessing, accepting

change becomes difficult for them. As such, she found herself unable to negotiate any alternative ways of doing things. The expression she draws on can be translated into “every bird has its own version of a song”. This refers to the lack of effective communication. The power relations between new and old teachers are an example of the invisible mechanisms that affect top-down reforms. Halima elaborates more on assessment which I shall return to (in 7.4).

From teachers’ perspectives, the initiatives taken by the MHESR were incomplete as they merely invested in the university’s structural system. Other key pillars that should accompany reforms to guarantee their success seem to be neglected. In line with teachers’ views, I argue that the role of teacher training that should be provided by the MHESR is needed to support the effective implementation of educational changes.

In addition to the absence of teacher training, the lack of appropriate infrastructure surfaced as a key issue that made it challenging for teachers to comply with the changes brought to AHE. The next section will elaborate on classroom infrastructure and how it affected ELT.

7.3 Inside teachers’ classrooms

Data mirroring teachers’ daily teaching practices demonstrates insights into the dynamics of ELT classrooms. Interestingly, they described how specific contextual factors shape their decisions about the content and approach of English teaching. Notably, teaching within a poorly resourced environment pushed teachers to take flexible actions to overcome the daily challenges they face. The following interview data provides examples from ELT classrooms to illustrate how the AHE’s reform and language policies seem to focus on form and neglect essential elements for good quality education.

Fadela elaborates on the lack of equipment within the department as a major issue arguing:

As usual, there are problems [...] we don’t have the means to provide copies for all the students, so I provide the students with the text and I ask them to do photocopies [...] (Fadela/interview 4/March 2019)

Fadela explains how the university cannot provide copies of the teaching materials for such a huge number of students. To ensure the materials reach

her students, she has to appoint a student to collect money from their classmates and make photocopies for them. This hints at some of the challenges that teachers and students face.

On a side note, the university does not have an active online platform where teachers can provide their students with learning resources. Consequently, some teachers occasionally use Facebook to disseminate the materials to their learners, as is the case of Mustapha who explains:

I make sure before I choose a novel a play or a poem I have a pdf copy for students which I upload in the Facebook group. I usually create a Facebook page for each class and I upload links and documents and pdf's so as we have resources (Mustapha/Interview 9/March 2019)

This extract shows how teachers try to find alternatives to support the learning process depending on their context. The university library has limited books and the department cannot provide learning resources for students. As such, Mustapha highlights how his choices of reading materials depend primarily on what is available online so as his students can access them. Hence, the only option is to opt for online easily accessed materials. Halima, on the other hand, mentioned sharing the materials she finds online via Bluetooth in her ELT classroom since not all her students have internet access to download the materials from Facebook. These teachers' accounts convey how flexibility is needed as a coping mechanism to overcome the lack of learning facilities.

Teachers' data regarding the poorly resourced classrooms is cognate with data from my observation fieldnotes:

1st observation session: English phonetics tutorial. 1:05 pm the teacher has already started the lesson about phonetic transcription and word stress for second-year learners. Meanwhile, students are still fetching chairs and tables from other classrooms, as there were not enough for the whole class. I was lucky I reserved myself a chair next to a student since we both arrived early. After 10 minutes or so, the teacher started writing the activity on the board when she realised that the marker went dry. She stopped and went looking for one in the neighbouring classes. I am contemplating the classroom: ancient wooden tables full of students' drawings and writings, all arranged in lines to face the board. 1:20 pm, the teacher is back with markers to

start the word transcription and stress activities. The classroom has now 30 students. One by one, they go to the board to write the answer. The transcription activities finished at 3:45. (Fieldnotes 17/02/2019)

When asked about the reason for not displaying the transcription activity using a projector, and have learners listen to them, instead of her pronouncing them, Manel, the teacher whose phonetics session I describe above, replied in a demotivated tone:

I have audiovisual materials [...] but there are two portable projectors that are often taken by other teachers and not all the classrooms are equipped with projectors. I am obliged to teach with what's available (Manel/Interview 6/ March 2019)

Likewise, Amira, another teacher of phonetics and oral expression classes conveys the same frustration about the lack of equipment to support her teaching:

I just gave up. I just want to cover the most important points. But I offer them to photocopy the book Peter Roach, go to specific websites to download a copy of the book for those who want to. That's the maximum I can do (Amira/ Interview 8/ April 2019)

The data presented above portrays how the absence of supporting materials, libraries, and infrastructure has made teaching harder. Teachers are often obliged to choose supporting materials that are easily accessible. The data present different scenarios that show how teachers are not “well equipped”, as Samar notes. It is unreasonable to set high expectations upon teachers to promote autonomy and learner-centred classrooms. As mentioned above, teachers sometimes find themselves compelled to focus on the main aspect of the teaching content. Although teachers' perspectives call the MHESR to invest more in the infrastructure, their views also feature how they often adapt their teaching as a response to the challenges and conditions within which teaching takes place.

7.4 Contextual challenges

According to teachers, the nature of teaching at the university level has become challenging given the high expectations and requirements that often result in pressure on teaching practices. This section will explore teachers' views on institutional management and the types of pressure placed on them. It is divided into two sub-sections, each tackling the institution's pressure and bureaucracy.

7.4.1 Teaching under institution's pressure

There are key issues that resulted from the lack of collaboration between institutions and teachers. The data shows that teachers within AHE struggle to teach English and different subjects as a result of management within the institution where teaching takes place. This has led to pressure according to teachers.

Manel's interview excerpt is an illustration of one aspect of the institutional pressure:

For two years I was just teaching tutorials in small classes. I was then given to teach lectures but it was not my speciality but I had to accept because, if I refuse to teach lectures I'll be seen as a person who is afraid and who prefers to hide in their classroom rather than to face a huge number of students. So I was obliged to take it [...] in addition I'm given many other modules to teach and we are supposed to supervise learners with their dissertations [...] I was telling my colleagues, the department needs to help us (Manel/Interview 6/March 2019)

Manel, an experienced teacher of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), felt compelled to teach modules such as linguistics and phonetics when she was recruited at university, although she had no expertise in both. Furthermore, Manel also signalled her unhappiness with the workload and having several academic responsibilities. On top of this, she revealed the lack of sufficient support from the institution. All of these engendered a dissatisfying feeling towards her profession. She struggles to find a balance between teaching different modules, supervising, and finding time for her career development. When asked about her thoughts regarding how the department could help her, she elaborated on the politics within the educational institution:

When you find yourself teaching things that are not related to your discipline and others are always teaching their speciality [...] there is inequality. Though we all have a good relationship some teachers teach more modules than others. In addition to teaching we also have to supervise, this year I am supervising five master students and it requires time. Though I try to deliver the message, at the same time, I am not totally satisfied because I know if it was my own speciality, I will be beneficial more for learners and my own career
(Manel/Interview 6/March 2019)

The excerpt describes the power given to the institution to allocate teachers to deliver different subjects. Teachers were given subjects that were not always relevant to their expertise. Manel sees injustice in the way teachers are treated. While some teach their speciality, others are required to give lectures in English without having expert knowledge in the subject. One reason behind this is teacher shortages. The other reason relates to the huge amount of exam corrections given the massive number of students. As such, teachers avoid teaching lectures so as they do not have to correct the massive number of exam papers. This was pointed out by Sarah:

[...] I cannot teach the students for the whole three years consecutively there is no continuity given the huge number of each cohort. Teachers become tired of the subject by correcting each time six, seven hundred exam copies. So teachers prefer to teach a year and give the subject to another teacher the following year so as they can rest. So we have this problem of the huge number of students
(Sarah/interview 7/April 2019)

Data suggests that three challenges hinder teachers within AHE. These include the massive number of students, exam marking, and time constraints for professional development. The number of students surfaced as an issue across teachers' data. This is an important factor in teaching and learning as teachers like Manel struggle to manage. According to teachers, it is not the lack of linguistic ability that is hindering their teaching as much as it is the subject areas that require time for preparation and exam marking. This may also give insights into the lack of attention directed to the teaching quality on the part of the institution. Furthermore, one worry for these teachers who had to lecture was finding the time to publish research and progress academically. Sarah's account also hints at the lack of continuity, in that the ELT content taught in each year lacks coherence. She further explains in the

interview that sometimes there is redundancy in what is learnt. This point clarifies Halima's view, previously made in section 7.2, about the lack of discussing the ELT content.

Teachers mentioned the pressure placed on them by the institution because of teacher shortages. Amira, for example, explains how she was obliged to give lectures in research methodology although she never taught this module before. She highlights below an important point about the importance given to tests:

I had to give few lectures just for the sake of having an exam after and provide the institution with the marks. I was confronted with the terrible choice, what to do, what to introduce, what to test. It was my first time teaching this module. it is only an hour and a half per week. I explained what are questionnaires and give them topics and asked them to do a questionnaire on that topic and then I tested them. The mark was counted as an exam mark and a mark of a tutorial. So this is among the absurdity that I faced. I needed to be very creative and flexible [...] (Amira/ Interview 8/April 2019)

The emphasis on exams highlights the way teaching and learning have become driven by learners' performance and the end product rather than the learning experience and process. The institutional pressure placed on teachers does not only push them to teach subjects in which they lack expertise, but also compels them to concentrate on testing and marking students' performances. Amira shares her views about teachers facing similar situations:

[...] So what I think, there is more emphasis on the quantity rather than the quality. We are all the time on the run correcting and having to submit the marks to the institutions within the deadline fixed for teachers. We work under pressure (Amira/ Interview 8/April 2019)

The working environment seems to play a key role in teachers' practices. Amira describes how teaching at the university level revolves around exams and submitting marks to the department. This pressure seems to allude to the fact that exam marking and meeting deadlines become prioritised at the expense of the quality of teaching and learning. She elaborates more on the emphasis of assessment:

There is chaos. I will define it as chaos. As I told you we are supposed to work by semester. In the first semester, we always start

late and we are supposed to finish by January and cover the curriculum and cover the assessment [...] sometimes it is a lecture and the institution asks the teacher to provide a mark for the continuous assessment of each student which is absurd I will put it in this word (Amira/ Interview 8/ April 2019)

The above passage reflects the perplexing nature of the ELT curriculum structure and the department expectations. “Chaos” is a powerful word that Amira uses to describe the discrepancy between the forms of teaching and assessment. Teachers are required to provide a formative and summative assessment for the massive number of students. These two types of assessment are for the teaching content also delivered in a form of a lecture. Amira further explains in the interview that the source of this “chaos” was the lack of teaching rooms to accommodate a large number of students. Instead of teaching subjects in small seminar groups and appropriately assess students, these subjects are taught in a lecture theatre where all students are grouped. This issue is also raised by students in section 8.5.1 where they elaborate on how it is limiting their learning process.

Assessing learners' English skills emerged as a source of concern for teachers. Fadela, whose view is reminiscent of Amira's, refers to the unfair forms of assessment dictated by the institution. While speaking about the research methodology module she was teaching, she points out:

[...] We don't do any practice and the assessment is another story. In reality it's taught as a lecture but they have to be assessed as well on practice so I did the theoretical part for the first semester, and I asked them to do presentations for the second semester [...] I will try to allow everyone to present, the rest who won't present will have a test. you see it's not done the right way (Fadela/Interview 4/March 2019)

Fadela explains her struggle to find ways to accommodate the curriculum and her teaching to include some practical elements for assessment as required by the institution. When I examined the ELT curriculum, it states that the module of research methodology has to be delivered in a form of both lectures and seminars for students to grasp the theory and practice. However, due to the lack of sufficient rooms that would cater to the huge number of students, it is only delivered as lectures. Nevertheless, teachers still have to conduct formative and summative assessments. They expressed a feeling of frustration as they were left with no choice but to

rapidly cover their syllabus within a very limited time to test their students. This has often prevented their learners from developing an in-depth understanding of what they have been studying. Amira explains how she is expected to deliver substantial content in one semester:

[...] [Students] barely know generalities about phonetics and they are expected to learn phonology which is quite abstract. So I had the choice to stop at the very basic phonology. So in the curriculum, it is stated that they have studied phonology but actually we didn't do any phonology we just started some basic notions [...] it does not make any sense, I feel frustrated (Amira/ Interview 8/April 2019)

In similar situations, teachers are left with no choice but to demonstrate a high level of flexibility as explained above in my participants' own words. Amira's experience also adds to Fadela's views. Their experiences highlight the challenging nature of navigating different factors in teaching; assessment pressure and learners' needs, and proficiency levels are factors that need to be taken into consideration. In the midst of all of this, some teachers chose to look for alternatives to cope with these limitations through being flexible.

In addition to issues regarding students' number, lack of teaching rooms, assessment, and teaching subjects with no prior expertise, the following section delves into the bureaucracy within the institutions. The latter gives insight into power relations between teachers at the university level.

7.4.2 Bureaucracy and teachers' hope

A common discourse regarding the importance of English is how the language can facilitate 'mobility' for its users. This discourse has to be critically evaluated to see to what extent it applies to the realities of teachers and students. Although I did not initially intend to explore this aspect, the theme of mobility kept emerging from both teachers' and students' data. The findings from teachers' interviews indicate how mobility and opportunities that English is supposed to unlock have to be closely examined within a micro context. Teachers referred to the bureaucracy that covertly tends to govern teachers' academic mobility and progress.

Fadela and Halima recounted their experiences regarding teachers' mobility, and further revealed other academic inequalities concerning rank and promotions. Attaining these seems to be closely linked to teaching and

publishing in English. Fadela, for example, expresses her disappointment as she was prevented from teaching her speciality, despite her expertise in cultures and civilisation:

Well, university is just similar to any other areas in the society where specific groups always control everything [...] Rank doesn't mean anything here! I am an assistant professor and I have a doctorate title, but I was not given the chance to teach my speciality. I had to revolt and claim for it. I officially received all the expert reports that prove I'm apt to teach [...] (Fadela/Interview 4/March 2019)

This excerpt reflects the power relations between the institution management and teachers. There is a sense of unequal relationships that determine how the university works. Academic titles seem to have no power. However, those with more experience in the institution compete to receive scholarships and funds. During my fieldwork, I came across a note – attached below – that invites teachers and doctoral students from the department of English to apply for scholarships, training abroad, and study programmes.

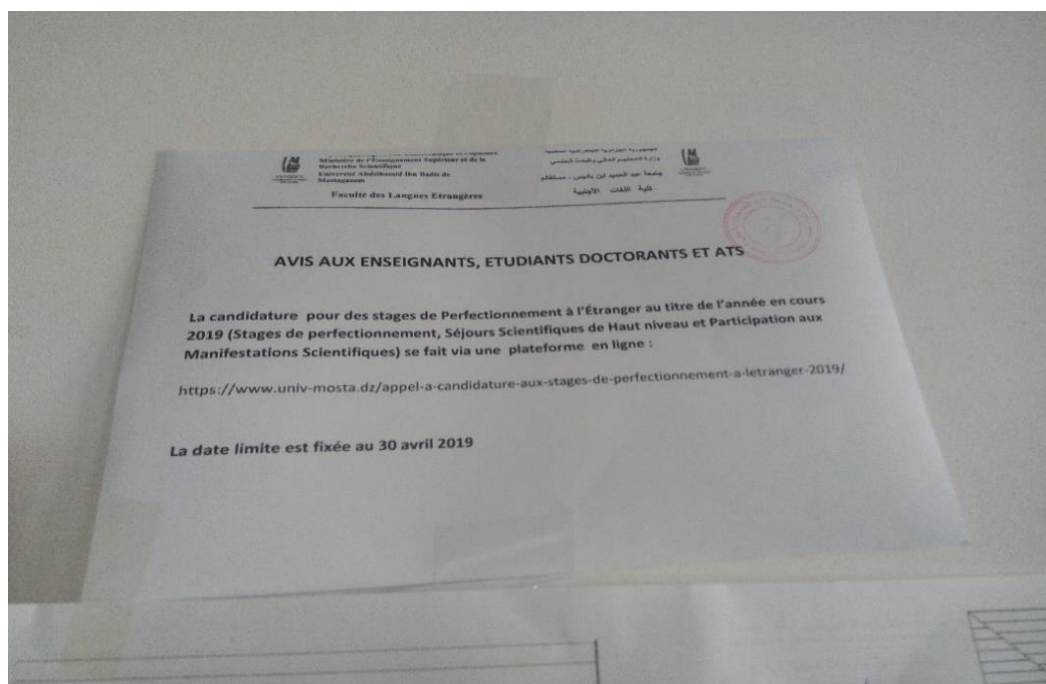


Image 14: Note for teachers' and doctoral students' scholarships (Fieldwork April 2019)

My participants' accounts suggest that not everyone who applies for a scholarship, or is eligible for it, has an equal chance of obtaining it. Fadela, for instance, was excluded from a scholarship to go to the United States

despite her eligibility. She explained that teachers are supposed to be offered the possibility to go for training abroad depending on the number of articles published, teaching hours, syllabus design, and the university's budget. She also mentions that up to six teachers from the department of English are selected if they have the most points in the outlined criteria. She recounts that she was classified among the top six and she was eligible for training:

I was among the teachers who were eligible for the training abroad this year but eventually, they took me out of the list on the pretext of the insufficient budget. So I decided to go with my own money. My dream has always been to go to the US (Fadela/Interview 4/March2019)

The theme of unequal selection of teachers for opportunities abroad is also echoed in Halima's extract. She described it as the "dark side of the Algerian university", and elaborated:

Some teachers are money slaves that's the reality, they show only at the end of the year to ask for scientific leave abroad. We are classified according to the scientific production and publications, and almost 90% of teachers show up and manifest just to ask for their financial rights. One more secret, to be honest, for the doctors, associate professors and assistant professors, we have a scientific leave, it depends where you are invited, but you have to bring a certificate that you taught abroad, you contributed in a workshop or a conference. But they have friends abroad who can provide them with a fake certificate. There are of course teachers who are the best idol of university teachers, but other, unfortunately, reflect the dark side of the Algerian university. They reflect mediocrity at a level which is disgusting (Halima/Interview 2/February 2019)

Halima's perspective on teachers' mobility implies a sense of inequality for selecting eligible teachers. She mentions how the criterion of scientific publications is insufficient to earn the right for training abroad because of its competitive nature. This competition seems to be blurred with unethical procedures upon which teachers are granted scholarships. Halima, like Fadela, points out that those who have resources and connections enjoy these privileges, in that their social capital makes them more privileged than others, regardless of their eligibility.

Data from other teachers is reminiscent of those mentioned above. Teachers reinforced the idea of inequality vis-a-vis the selection of teachers for training abroad. Marwa, for instance, told me about the politics and complexity of teachers' mobility. She explained that she made connections with university teachers in the United Kingdom, and they invited her as a research visitor. She further recounted that she had to decline the invitation because she was not granted funding and that she lacked the financial means to cover her travel expenses (Fieldnote 20/04/2019). Likewise, Malek a new vocational teacher, who was conducting her doctoral research and teaching at the same time, shared the procedures for mobility. Although Malek has met the criteria - publications and contribution to conferences - she was not selected. She states that the selection was unfair as those who were granted mobility were "the sons and daughters of those working in the university". With great frustration, Malek mentions the background of those who were chosen:

We had we us the daughter of the vice-chancellor and another one her mother was a professor, and another one a doctor, so these three they are going and the rest were told to apply for next year
(Malek/Follow-up interview/May 2019)

For these teachers, the discourse of mobility for academic research appears to be blurry and governed by unspoken rules, giving entitlement to specific people to receive grants for training abroad. It seems that teachers within higher education navigate several challenges. The stories mentioned above yield insights into the reality of the discourse 'English as the language of academic development'. For these teachers, mastering English, teaching, and publishing in English might not be a straight path to academic mobility. The inequality within the university has led to bureaucracy holding them back and having them trapped in a vicious circle of teaching for testing.

Manel, Fadela, and Amira all felt lost in the maze of teaching for testing. This was prevalent among many teachers, as data shows in section 7.3. Certainly, both the lack of expertise in the domain and the pressure of assessment are likely to have an impact on teaching practices.

The institutional pressure exerted on teachers and the lack of support and collaboration that should be offered to them created a sentiment of detachment among teachers. Fadela elaborates:

We don't have this collaboration and team spirit. So it is really deceiving. I do my work in this institution and I leave as soon as I finish. If I do something additional is for my students and not for the institution and when my students are happy and satisfied it is my reward, I don't wait for something in return from the institution [...] (Fadela/interview 4/March 2019)

Fadela's excerpt indicates a feeling of alienation from the institution. As mentioned above, teachers were displeased with the unhealthy competition that has prevailed among many of them. Moreover, they problematised the institution's main concern with the end product (assessment) and its lack of assisting them in the teaching/learning process. Fadela's views are similar to many teachers whose main concern was students' needs. She refers to a serious shift in the culture of the university that has become centred around teaching for testing. Her perspective also adds to Sarah' views (in 7.4.1) about the lack of coherence in the teaching content that could be due to the absence of collaboration among teachers.

English plays a key role in the process of selection for promotion and obtaining scholarships. Nonetheless, what seems to be evident in the data discussed above is the fact that there is a lack of transparency in the way selection is made. As such, while few teachers obtain scholarships and funding, many are disqualified despite their eligibility – Fadela's and Malek's case. Furthermore, some are not given opportunities to teach the modules that they feel belong to their fields of expertise, and that would allow them to be successful and would increase their chances of being promoted. Teachers noted the clear division within the university with no collaboration or solidarity. Some rule and decide how academic roles are distributed from teaching hours to teaching content, and others need to accept whatever they are given and compromise their teaching expertise.

The data also postulates that the core problem of the ELT situation within AHE does not only involve issues with the structural and management side, but also extends to a clash of interests. Halima makes a powerful claim about the "mentality" within AHE in the following excerpt:

[...] Everyone likes to do things in their own way. You feel it's personal when it should be professional. Everyone is the boss, and everyone is the all-knower [...] what do we have to change is the mentalities, positive change in the system is a result of a change in mentalities. We keep on criticising things. Let's change what you have to give the society and the university and tell me then the system is blocking us (Halima/Interview 2/February 2019)

Halima calls for a new way of thinking at the institution and the classroom levels for a real change to take place. Her excerpt depicts the rivalry among teachers within the institution, which according to her are obstructive to implementing an innovative educational reform. As such, Halima seems to convey the impression that, for her, educational policies and reforms are not supposed to be followed slavishly, they are just top/down initiatives that need further development and constant revision by those who are most concerned. In other words, real innovation should take a bottom-up approach, starting from a change in the way academic staff, teachers, and students view English and understand how its teaching and learning serve AHE. Hayes (2019) notes in this respect that higher education "policy discourse is not only about written words. It also concerns the surrounding social and economic context in which policy texts for universities are developed and consumed, and indeed how this discourse is experienced by students and staff" (2019: 72). The lack of collaboration among teachers and the competitive environment characterising the educational institution suggest that less focus is being paid to the teaching curriculum which may lead to a counterproductivity of educational policies and reforms. The ensuing section will elaborate on ELT discourses at the level of practice and pedagogy to examine how teachers approach teaching English, what are the aspects the ELT curriculum emphasise, and to what extent there is a change at the pedagogic level.

7.5 English teaching practices

The themes discussed in this chapter present discourses of English at the teaching practice level. The aim is to explore the extent to which there is a change in teaching English and what types of new models are implemented along with the reform. This section is also relevant to the decolonial intentions that emerged as one of the motives behind the MHESR's promotion of English (in 6.3.4, 6.4). It is, therefore, important to explore the practice aspect of ELT at the classroom level. This will inform the ideologies inherent in English teaching objectives, materials, methodologies, and pedagogies. While sub-section 7.5.1 will examine the aspects which the ELT curriculum centres around, sub-section 7.5.2, will present the types of materials used in the ELT classrooms. I will then move to 7.5.3 to delve into the standard language ideology that seems to dominate the ELT classroom.

7.5.1 English curriculum: issues and constraints

This sub-section explores ELT in practice through delving into the ELT curriculum and teachers' perspectives of its role. Teachers' interviews convey a lack of clarity regarding the function of the ELT curriculum. As mentioned in 6.3, the aim of the MHESR behind strengthening the status of English is to improve research, teaching, and learning. In this regard, teachers were interviewed about their views on the ELT curriculum and how it shapes their teaching practices. Teachers' perspectives echo uncertainty about the structure and objectives of the ELT curriculum.

Statements about ELT within the curriculum (see appendix B) often define learning English in terms of gaining the prerequisite skills for the “globalisation era” and the job market. For example, it is stated that learning English will allow students to:

[...] know-how to engage in conversation in the foreign language, to discover the other culture [...] to integrate into the professional world in the era of globalization where the English language is required.
(MHESR, 2015: 7)

The way globalisation and professional skills are linked to the mastery of English reflects the top-down vision of higher education as previously explored in chapter 6. These outlined learning objectives are supposed to shape the curriculum structure and content. Although the ELT curriculum I

examined was stamped by the department of English, nowhere were there specific names of those who took part in its development. It was designed for ELT programmes at the university level and included some sample lesson plans for the four skills. An examination of the ELT curriculum reveals how it only covers general aspects – subjects, number of hours, modules' coefficients. As such, it is only sensible to interview teachers to have a better understanding of its practice.

Teachers' accounts reflect some uncertainty regarding the ELT curriculum content, structure, and overall function. Whenever teachers were asked about their views on the ELT curriculum, sceptical responses were voiced. Fadela and Samar, for example, were among the teachers who first asserted:

No idea about it. I have never read it [...] it's in relation with the Ministry of Higher Education [...] it can be said it mainly serves the institution (Fadela/ Interview 4/March 2019)

Likewise, Samar added:

Most of the time and I am sorry to say it, it's just filled in for the sake of filling it [...] it's very very vague just some notions of what to teach and sometimes we don't agree about certain notions (Samar/Interview 3/February 2019)

Fadela admits her unfamiliarity with the curriculum content, although it is made available on the university website. This alludes to the fact that curriculum instructions play a minimal role in her teaching practice. Similarly, Fadela sees the curriculum as a document that mainly serves an administrative role. Samar agrees with this point while indicating the ambiguity of its content. Samar's statement also highlights the source of the ELT curriculum. It seems that the MHESR suggests a format that has to be elaborated by teachers at the department level, i.e., the English department. Samar reveals that those in charge of the curriculum feel compelled to fill it in for administrative purposes. However, teachers do not see any actual application to their teaching. Samar also notes that she has some opposition about its content. This includes, for example, how some subjects are compulsory but do not match learners' English proficiency.

When interviewing Manel about the source of the curriculum and who is involved in its design, she seemed doubtful about who is in charge:

I think it is the ministry that design it [...] you mean the document? we get informed by the department if there is a change. It depends on teachers if they ask about the document to read it (Manel/Interview 6/March 2019)

Manel's statements also carry uncertainties about the source and functions of the ELT curriculum. They further show how teachers are not consulted in its development process. The document is only kept with the institution which notifies teachers if it is altered. It also seems that certain people dominate decisions of what should go into the curriculum, which might explain the ambiguity that emerged among teachers.

Similarly, Mustapha, who is a teacher and one of the previous curriculum developers at the English department, also gives indications about the minor role which the ELT curriculum plays. When asked to elaborate on the employability skills mentioned in the curriculum, he briefly replies:

Mustapha: No no it's just in the document

Souad: What role does the document serve?

Mustapha: It is administrative only

Souad: Who designed it?

Mustapha: Which one?

Souad: the one for the license degree [Bachelor's degree]

Mustapha: I cannot remember. It is basically administrative (Mustapha/ Interview 9/March 2019)

Although Mustapha's answers were kept short, they fall in line with Samar and Fadela's views. As stated above, the ELT curriculum seems to be perceived as an administrative formality. It has a structural function in terms of describing the set of English linguistic skills and teaching hours. However, it has little influence on teachers' classroom practices in terms of teaching content.

Other teachers expressed different opinions regarding the curriculum.

Marwa, for instance, seems to hold a more positive view:

Things are organised. We receive curriculum every year which means that these are revised yearly. For example, a subject has a TD and lecture next year it might come simply as a lecture. Or a TD this year is once a week the next year it may come twice a week. You see [...]

Students have more subjects [...] pedagogically speaking they have a rich programme very detailed. Even the hours of learning are more (Marwa/ Interview 10/April 2019)

Marwa elaborates on the changes taking place at the structural level of the ELT curriculum in terms of the number of subjects taught in English, the number of hours, and the form of delivering the content (lecture or TD i.e., seminar). Yet, Marwa did not give details on the content itself. Amira also defines the curriculum in terms of its structure and shares the changes in the content comparing its structure and content with the old system:

[the curriculum] is very very different in the content and the teaching hours. within the old system, in the first 3 years the focus was more on the basic skills such as written, oral, listening, and grammar [...] but imagine now 1st-year students coming right from secondary school where they studied very general English and they have limited vocabulary and right from the start they have to study very difficult modules [...] modules such as epistemology commonwealth modules. For me as a teacher, they shouldn't be introduced in the first year and in the first semester. At the beginning, they need to become better at English and improve it. Something is wrong with the curriculum and with the content itself (Amira/Interview 8/April 2019)

Similar to Samar, Amira disagrees with the curriculum and contests its structure. She points to the disparity between the learners' English proficiency level and the subjects they are taught. Amira stresses the importance of developing learners' basic linguistic skills before introducing them to more complex content. To learn more about the nature of the content that learners are taught when starting university, I examined the ELT curriculum that teachers are supposed to follow. The latest version of the curriculum was designed in 2015/2016 and is shared on the university webpage (the English department). The table below explains the structure of ELT within the department of the English language. It is still relevant to consider since teachers within this department are also allocated to teach in other departments across the university (science, technology, medicine, art, and humanities). Similarly, students from different disciplines enrol in this course to improve their English language skills and have better chances to apply for postgraduate studies. As this version of the ELT curriculum is written in French, I will describe its structure below.

Semestre 1 :

	VHS	V.H hebdomadaire				Coeff	Crédits	Mode d'évaluation	
	15 sem	C	TD	TP	Autres			Continu	Examen
UE fondamentales									
Marière1 : compréhension et expression écrite 1	67h30		4h30		45h00	4	6	X	X
Marière2 : compréhension et expression orale 1	45h00		3h		45h00	2	4	X	X
UE fondamentales									
Marière1 : Grammaire de la langue d'étude 1	45h00		3h		45h00	2	4	X	X
Marière2 : phonétique correctrice et articulatoire 1	22h30		1h30		45h00	1	2	X	X
Marière3 : initiation à la linguistique1 (concepts)	22h30		1h30		45h00	1	2	X	X
UE fondamentales									
Marière1 :initiation aux textes littéraires	22h30		1h30		45h00	1	2	x	X
Marière3 :cultures / civilisations de la langue	22h30		1h30		45h00	1	2	X	X
UE méthodologie									
UEM1(O/P)									
Matière 1 : Techniques du travail universitaire	45h00		3h		45h00	1	4	X	
UE découverte									
UED1(O/P)									
Matière 1 : Sciences humaines et sociales	22h 30	1h30			45h00	1	2		X
UE transversales									
UET1(O/P)									
Matière1 : Langues Etrangères	22h30		1h30		45h00	1	2	X	X
Total Semestre 1	337h30	1h30	21h		450h00	15	30		

Image 15: A sample of how semester 1 in the ELT curriculum is organised

As the table shows, the way English is taught is based on modules and credits organisational system. The modules are classified under four units studied in each semester (16 weeks) with 30 credits to obtain when the modules are validated. The English units are classified into:

- The fundamental unit: Credit (22 points). The fundamental modules cover content to study and practice English through developing learners' linguistic skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). It is also mentioned that learners will be introduced to the 'cultures' and 'civilisations' of the language (I elaborate on these aspects in 7.5.2).
- The discovery units: With 2 points credit, the modules within this unit are more general. They cover language as the object of study. Learners explore the origin of languages, how they are structured, and how they function. Thus, they are taught different disciplines such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, cognitive psycholinguistics, discourse analysis. These modules are also delivered in English.
- The methodology unit: This unit requires obtaining 4 points of credits and covers techniques and procedures to conduct research projects. It aims to develop learners' research skills needed for projects they have to deliver at the end of their bachelor's or master's degree.

- The transversal unit: It includes one taught module with 2 credits. It covers learning French for a specific purpose. In the subsequent semesters, learning IT skills is added and it is delivered either in French or English.

It is noticeable that some modules change throughout semesters but those which are part of the fundamental and methodology units remain the same. This is cognate with Marwa's point, in that some subjects are revisited and changed throughout semesters. Other teachers explain that the additional modules prepare students when they enrol in masters' and doctoral programmes.

Amira, however, expresses a different view. She seems to disapprove of some aspects of the curriculum. According to her, the mismatch between the curriculum content, the way subjects are structured, and learners' needs indicate that the curriculum document is not carefully revisited:

They just put our names in the document. I did not provide them with anything. Actually when I started teaching as I told you a long time ago I found that the syllabus was the one I studied when I was a learner. It is the same as the one we keep teaching our students. Actually the same syllabus in phonetics that my teacher used to teach me in 1995/1996 and even before that, I accessed the syllabus other teachers in different universities were using and it is also the same and it has not changed, it is always the same (Amira/Interview 8/April 2019).

Amira, noticeably, uses curriculum and syllabus interchangeably. However, it seems that she is generally referring to the teaching objectives and content guidelines that teachers are required to follow. She speaks about her experience of teaching English phonetics with content that has not been updated since 1995. As explored in 6.2, statements about the educational reform outline new objectives and learning outcomes. Teaching and learning are defined in terms of skills and competencies that are relevant to employability. However, these policies are not seen at the teaching practice level. For example, at the level of the ELT curriculum, updating the teaching content and objectives are marginalised. Furthermore, Amira's last statements indicate that the curriculum could be taken as insurance that the institution has an official document at hand. But on pedagogic levels, it appears to have little impact.

It seems that the ambiguous and outdated ELT curriculum has implications for teaching practices. Ahmed, a teacher of English, highlights this point when speaking about the lack of a conventional curriculum:

Because we don't have a special curriculum which is imposed from the Ministry, and each university..., for example, if you go to (name of an Algerian university) you will find teachers following their own. Sadly, there is no common consensus between us all teachers, what to teach, and which elements to highlight (Ahmed/Interview 11/ April 2019)

The lack of a clear and up-to-date curriculum left teachers perplexed over what to teach. At the same time, teachers seem to face challenges to agree on the essential learning objectives to focus on. Other teachers assert that if the ELT curriculum is well developed and common in all universities, teaching and learning will serve a common goal. An examination of the ELT curriculum's learning objectives demonstrates how it centres primarily on developing students' linguistic skills and knowledge related to English 'culture and civilisation'. The majority of teachers contested its vague and outdated nature. This has pushed them to approach teaching and learning according to what they consider relevant. The data analysed in this section suggests a disjoint between the MHESR intended reform, which calls for innovation, and teachers' practices. This gap appears to be a source of confusion about what the ELT curriculum should cover and how its content can serve learners. The next section will further elaborate on the materials that ELT teachers use in the absence of clear curriculum guidelines.

7.5.2 The cultural dimension of teaching materials

The problematic nature of the ELT curriculum, which was previously presented, conveyed a sense of ambiguity about its role among teachers. The theme in this sub-section provides an insight into how this ambiguity has further impacted teachers' practices and their selection of specific teaching materials. It became evident from classroom observations and teachers' interviews that British and American literary texts are perceived as rich cultural resources that serve to develop students' reading skills, and to promote their intercultural understanding. These teaching materials from inner circle countries were used in pronunciation, oral expressions, and reading classes. To further understand the objectives and the importance of

the British and American literary text, I interviewed Mustapha who is an ELT curriculum developer:

For BA students, literature is not that important. The modules which are important are written expression, grammar, conversation [...] It is introduced for these learners so as when they move to the master's degree, they will have some knowledge, pre-acquired knowledge (Mustapha/Interview9/March 2019)

Mustapha emphasises the importance of language skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners at the bachelor level while the literary texts are perceived as useful for their knowledge content. This is seen as crucial for students who want to pursue their postgraduate studies, they would have already been familiar with some key literary works. He also disclosed the way the materials are mainly chosen by subject leaders:

[...] Unfortunately, the programme promoted at the licence/master level is promoted by literature teachers, they insert and include their own preferences and not what the students would like to learn (Mustapha/Interview9/March 2019)

It also seems that a group of teachers decide the layout of the English curriculum or “programme”, as Mustapha states. It seems that teachers’ beliefs about how English should be taught are reflected in the selection of the teaching materials. Teachers who have expertise in the subject of literature include English literary texts to support learners’ reading. Although the aim is the linguistic form, reading text materials are also selected for their content. This seems to draw heavily on English literary canon as Samar mentions below:

[...] As they are EFL learners they need to learn about England and the US as countries. At the same time, they need to develop linguistic skills, and of course be aware of certain customs and traditions and even religion is being introduced through literature. I, for instance, introduce Christianity through the *Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne to second-year students. I give them an idea about Puritanism to allow them to understand the meaning of the story of *The Scarlet Letter*. This is very important (Samar/Interview 3/February 2019)

Samar seems to combine both the linguistic skills and the ‘cultural’ aspect as an approach to teaching literary materials. According to her, these texts are

not merely selected for their linguistic forms, but also for their content. Drawing on Anglo-American materials is a common teaching practice in English classrooms. This has received a long-standing debate over their efficacy. Fadela also voices her perspective about the materials used in teaching the subject “cultures and civilisations of the language”:

Souad: In what way, do you think the subject ‘British and American civilisation’ is important for learners?

Fadela: It is important because [...] it is the culture of the language, for me it is this point. EFL learners are expected to choose between either American or British [...] (Fadela/Interview 4/February 2019)

The choice of English teaching materials from inner circle countries is not only due to their ubiquity. It seems that the British and American models of teaching English are adopted and are considered the only options for learners to master. I also asked Samar about learners’ attitudes and whether they are motivated to engage with the selected text materials, she comments:

Samar: [...] It is very rare where students accept to take the challenge and read something different from what they are used to [...] At times they draw some sort of comparisons, but I always tell them once you are here in the amphy [lecture-theatre] and open the book of the Scarlet Letter forget who you are, and just be embarked in the story (Samar/Interview 3/February 2019)

Souad: Do students read these novels?

Samar: No they don't. They just expect from the teacher to give them everything. And this is the great difficulty while teaching, not having an audience [...] I mean it is up to the teacher to captivate them (Samar/Interview 3/February 2019)

Samar’s excerpt hints at the learning attitudes that the texts often trigger, and how students react to the themes of the selected texts. Samar explains that students are not attracted to the materials because of the cultural differences with which some students find it challenging to engage. This point will be elaborated (see 8.5.2) with data from students sharing their perspectives about these materials.

Sarah also shares a similar perspective to Samar about the objectives behind the literary texts. She explains that these texts are selected not only

for their linguistic forms, but also for their content which she sees as important to raise students' intercultural awareness and openness towards other ways of thinking:

It widens the students' horizons that is they'll know much more than they expect. They will have such a reflective inquisitive mind to know more that is, they will not become judgmental they will not judge easily, pre-judgemental instances might disappear thanks to literature (Sarah/Interview7/April 2019)

This cultural dimension attached to the British and American materials was a recurrent theme among teachers. Mustapha also explains the importance of these reading texts to spur openness towards Western cultures:

In teaching literature, we have three approaches, one is a language and culture model, the other one is the personal growth model [...] Basically, in my lectures essentially, it is the personal growth. That's trying to learn about how the Americans ... how they even love each other, as a couple, as a family... This is their culture and their society. You don't need to imitate them, or believe in them, just understand that they live differently and accept that difference (Mustapha/Interview9/March 2019)

The objectives behind choosing 'native speakers' literary texts as reading materials seem to target more than the English language skills. Mustapha and Sarah explain that through these texts, they aim to present cross-cultural differences and help their students to become tolerant and open to these differences. Mustapha's explanation indicates a discourse of Western culture as a symbol of openness and modernity that can only be promoted using British and American materials. This thinking places learners as deficient and lacking attitudes such as open-mindedness. As such, teaching materials from inner circle countries become models for personal growth.

Gray (2016: 99) argues that critically examining ELT materials requires exploring "the political and ideological systems within which they are located". Data in this sub-section shows that the nature of the ELT materials' content is problematic. These appear to prioritise only British and American learning resources. These were regarded as fundamental for learners to develop 'intercultural awareness', and to learn about the 'cultures' of the English language. These pedagogic practices raise concern given the reality of English in today's world and the complexity of conceptualising 'culture'. I

will discuss how such discourses are also inherent in the nativespeakerism ideology in section 9.4.2.

7.5.3 The standard language ideology

In the absence of a well-defined ELT curriculum and objectives, the data further suggests that the British Received Pronunciation (RP) and American standard variety are considered the norm and the only varieties to which learners should be exposed. These choices are deeply rooted in the 'native speaker' model which favours standard varieties of English as the only 'correct' and sophisticated form to learn. In this sub-section, teachers' perspectives about how pronunciation and phonetics should be taught are provided as examples to demonstrate how models and ideologies from inner circle countries also pierce through teachers' practices.

Students' responses and fieldnotes sparked my interest to explore why speaking English has to adhere to the RP norms. I, therefore, wanted to explore teachers' beliefs about teaching RP English. Interviewing Amira, who has been teaching English and pronunciation for twenty years, about the RP form revealed the language ideology underlying this choice:

[...] It is not the thing it is relevant, but it is easier for us to teach. It is like we have a reference. In most of the Algerian universities, they teach the RP. It goes without saying, everybody teaches RP. As teachers we need to have a reference. Although it is canonical, even RP is changing, but still, as we need to have a foundation from where to start

The RP English is viewed as a common and starting point for all English learners. I further prompted Amira about the changes brought to teaching English:

Souad: As English is used as a lingua franca, do you think this could bring changes in the way pronunciation is taught?

Amira: For me, I will still stick to the RP English. I don't think we need to bring any changes to the way English is taught. For me, for example, when I teach phonetics, I want students not to reach mutual intelligibility but to target native-like pronunciation, and this is not going to change for me. I want them to target a native-like pronunciation

Souad: Do you think learners can reach native-like pronunciation?

Amira: It is possible, but not 100 % native-like, but just approximate the native-like pronunciation, do an effort at least and it makes a difference. It is quite important for me, I think it will not change for me, even though English is spoken mostly by non-native speakers, I will keep teaching it the same way (Amira/Interview 8/ April 2019)

The prevalence of the RP variety in English classrooms is not always due to the lack of teachers' awareness about the global ownership of English (as discussed in 4.2, 4.3). In the case of Amira, choosing this variety is inherent in the belief that it helps students to target a native-like pronunciation and gives them a sense of progress in their learning. This objective is made evident in her selection of the materials she uses, as she previously mentions she uses Peter Roach and suggests specific websites for her learners to develop their pronunciation (see 7.3). Amira seemed dedicated to one model of teaching. In the excerpt below, she expands on this choice:

[...] I learnt so many languages, for example Spanish and I always target a native-like pronunciation and I think we should be immersed within the culture and learn its language as it is spoken by the natives and respect that. For me it is very important to stick to the standards and to the way the languages are used by the native speakers. I don't think we have the right to change anything [...] As far as I am concerned, no we don't have the right to change. Even if it is with other languages not just English. I think we should learn the language as it is, that makes the charm (Amira/Interview8/April 2019)

The teaching preference of the standard variety appears to be embedded in some teachers' learning experiences. For her, what makes languages attractive is the immersion within the 'culture' of the language and learning it according to the way it is spoken by its 'natives'. Other teachers expressed different perspectives on the use of the RP inside the classroom. Linda, for example, explains:

Souad: What is the main English variety that you concentrate on?

Linda: It is the British RP

When prompted further, Linda asserted:

Well maybe because it is something I've done long time ago and when I asked, they said the ministry imposes this variety to use RP in

teaching and description, however our usual contact and speech I don't really impose RP on them. They can speak whatever they want Canadian, Australian English as they wish. but when they are examined, they are required to write in RP, because teachers have agreed to accept only one variety. That's why when we teach, we only use British and not American English. but in speech they are free (Linda/interview1/February 2019)

Similar to Amira, Linda also suggests that her familiarity with RP English makes her more comfortable to adhere to its rules and seek materials to teaching it. Linda notes the difference between the formal teaching objectives that encourage teaching RP and assessing students accordingly, and the reality of classroom talk. She acknowledges the importance of letting students choose to speak any variety they like. However, the assessment only focuses on RP English and, thus, students are required to learn it. Linda expands on the reason why this variety is chosen:

RP sounds very official and more accurate. I don't know much about American English, but I have few ideas about it [...] and this is what learners think. They prefer British English they found it refined, sweet to the ear. Yet, they find difficulties in pronouncing it (Linda/interview1/February 2019)

Linda points out the standard nature of this variety and how its rules and structures seem 'official' and 'accurate' compared to other varieties. Retelling her students' perspectives, Linda describes how RP is perceived as beautiful in theory but challenging in practice. Other teachers also explain how the idea of a 'correct' pronunciation has a psychological impact on their teaching. Manel explains below how she was intimidated at first when she compared her pronunciation with the RP English she had to teach:

[...] In my case, when I used to be a learner, I was good at pronunciation [...] I had teachers who were emphasising pronunciation, but when I started to be engaged with teaching and my superior studies, I feel my pronunciation had changed, and when I started teaching at the level of the university, I started again to work on my pronunciation to ameliorate it [...] I always check in the dictionary if my pronunciation is correct or wrong, this has created a psychological effect on me at the beginning. But then I said no, I am

still a researcher, and I am still a learner and I am not a native speaker I cannot be always right (Manel/Interview 6/March 2019)

The difficulty of adhering to the RP English rules of pronunciation is not limited to learners. Teachers also feel under pressure, as they have to make sure that they are respecting its rules when teaching. As Manel's assertion shows, her concern over making mistakes led to a feeling of insecurity vis-a-vis her pronunciation, as well as to viewing her English as deficient. This is evident in her attempts to convince herself that she is not a 'native speaker' and that, therefore, she is allowed to make mistakes.

In addition to pronunciation classes, the standard language ideology was evident in oral communication classes. During fieldwork, I attended Sarah's session. I noted the level of anxiety these students experienced whenever they were asked to speak up. At first, I was aware that my presence as an observer added a certain pressure and made both the teacher and the students more self-conscious. However, as I was observing the task at hand, how the classroom was set up, and how the teacher-students interactions yield into a specific dynamic, it became clear that other factors played a role in escalating this uncomfortable feeling.

The following example from classroom observations (fieldwork/16/04/2019) is presented to illustrate how mechanisms of the standard language ideology prevail at classroom levels. Furthermore, these examples show how materials from inner circle countries tend to focus on specific varieties which are presented to learners as the only norms to be mastered. The image below, taken from a book entitled *Everyday Conversations: Learning American English*, presents a dialogue that the teacher used in her class.

The teacher started her lesson by providing the students with copies of the two sheets, which I present below, to introduce new informal expressions. The teacher read and highlighted the expressions, then asked the students to keep the idea of the dialogue (coincidences), use the new expressions learnt, and try to adapt the content (for example use their names instead of Meg and Julia). I noticed that the students were less enthusiastic to get into the activity, but they were trying to prepare something to say in case the teacher asks them to speak.

Dialogue 1-8: Coincidences

- MEG:** Well, hello there, Julia! Long time no see!
- JULIA:** Meg! Hi! **What** a coincidence! I haven't seen you in ages! What are you doing here?
- MEG:** I just got a new job in the city, so I'm shopping for some clothes. Hey, what do you think of this shirt?
- JULIA:** Hmm ... well, you know how much I love blue. See? I've got the same shirt!
- MEG:** You always did have good taste! **What** a small world.

Image 16: Oral communication activity (Classroom observation 16th April 2019)



LANGUAGE NOTES

- **Well, hello there ...** Notice the emphasis on "hello," which shows that Meg did not expect to see Julia.
- **Long time, no see!** This is a common expression used to say hello to someone you haven't seen in a long time.
- **What a ...!** This exclamation shows a great degree of surprise, joy, disappointment, etc. (What a surprise to see you here! What a joy to have you with us! What a shame that you have to leave so soon! What a wonderful idea that is!)
- **You always did have good taste!** Notice the stress on "did," which Meg uses to emphasize the fact that Julia DOES have good taste! Meg says it in a joking way because Julia likes the same thing that she does.
- **What a small world** is a common expression used to describe a chance meeting or other such coincidence.

Image 17: Simulation dialogue for first-year students (Classroom observation 16th April 2019)

After some time, the teacher was asking students to perform the dialogue. Meanwhile, students were shy, it was clear that they were not engaged but they just wanted to get the task done. In the midst of this, the teacher's feedback was what most captured my attention. Although the session's objective was to introduce informal English, Sarah focused more on respecting the intonation and the correct pronunciation of specific words. An

example of this includes the difference in pronouncing 'coincidences' in British RP and American English. I could see that most students were fluent enough, but similar comments appeared to make them insecure and hesitant to speak. While some stuttered before pronouncing 'coincidences', some pronounced it in French, and others spoke in a low voice so their mistakes would go unnoticed by the teacher. This has taken me back to my own learning experience; a particular incident that I still remember vividly. During an English class that took place in a lecture room due to the huge number of students, I was answering one of the questions the teacher had asked. That teacher interrupted me to correct my pronunciation of the word 'communicate', which I had pronounced in French. This made me forget my idea and stutter in front of the whole class, and I felt intimidated and ashamed. This experience affected my willingness to speak during classes; I would think twice before pronouncing that or other words (fieldnote16/04/2019). Corrective explicit feedback when provided constructively might be useful for learners' writing skills (Evan et., 2011). Yet, it might have the opposite effect in oral expression when learners' fluency requires building confidence within language classrooms.

Furthermore, the relevance of the materials' content raises concerns. The book tackles themes such as shopping for clothes, ordering meals, and describing the weather. These topics and their structure do not evoke any critical discussions, nor do they engage learners to ask questions and problematise the content. Furthermore, the themes do not seem to reflect learners' social reality. The detachment of the materials to learners' lived experiences can be a source of the passive mode to which learners resorted. Learners seemed to receive and emulate the content. In this regard, Freire (1996) accentuates the importance of generative themes which allow learners to reflect, discuss content that concerns them, and, thus, empower them to bring a change into their social worlds.

The learners did not seem to understand the purpose of the activity or that of spending an entire session emulating people who want to go shopping. This is reminiscent of Cherchalli's (1988) participant who contends "I have no idea why we're doing this kind of exercise! I know that teachers always have some idea in mind, but I don't know which one" (Cherchalli, 1988, cited in Allwright and Hanks, 2009: 273). The lack of understanding of the materials' relevance to students' lived experiences, and the emphasis on correct

pronunciation tend to affect the learning atmosphere and make the classroom rigid and lifeless.

In an interview with Sarah, she further elaborates on the importance of accuracy, and how it is linked to the standard variety used in ELT classrooms:

I think the first objective is to communicate effectively whether with a native speaker or a non-native speaker, that is you take into consideration this aspect of communicating effectively using the English language correctly and properly and try to use it accurately, right word right place. It is not that it is directed to natives, no, any English speaker this communication would work
(Sarah/Interview7/April 2019)

Effective communication is perceived in terms of the correct use of the language. Accuracy seems to be emphasised in Sarah's teaching to help her students develop their speaking skills. I further prompted Sarah to expand on how accuracy might be linked to the 'native' way of speaking:

[...] Even if it is fashionable to sound like native speakers. Less importance is given now to the matter of pronunciation and whether to follow the RP or the American, I think it is a matter of choice here. Some love to speak the British way others prefer the American way it's highly personal here, but what I say to my student in the oral communication session try to speak English correctly, properly and accurately even though their speech is not fluent. Fluency is not a prerequisite it is not pre-conditioned to be good speakers they need to speak properly, correctly and accurately, meaning to know which word goes to which context [...] (Sarah/Interview7/April 2019)

Sarah expresses her perspectives on what is essential for learners to communicate effectively in English. While she accords less importance to pronunciation models based on RP or American English, she accentuates accuracy over fluency as she thinks the former is a starting point for students.

Examples of teachers' practices in this section reflect the standard language ideology that shapes the ELT classroom. Seidlhofer (2011: 75) defines standard language ideology as "the belief that imposed language uniformity as good for society and that the standard variety is the only legitimate one". As such, ideologies often become naturalised and internalised at the

“subconscious level”. Therefore, Seidlhofer (2011) explains how people treat a standard variety as the ‘real’ language and other varieties as faulty and deviant. The ideology is also based on the belief that “unless there is a norm that controls the way people speak, things fall apart” (Seidlhofer, 2011: 75). Yet, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) research shows how people accommodate their speech to mutually understand each other and that rules are negotiated. Similarly, Trudgill (1999: 117) points out that “there seems to be considerable confusion in the English-speaking world, even amongst linguists, about what Standard English is”. As such, definitions of standard English are often ideological constructs. This is reflected in the varieties that are considered as part of standard English, and others that are excluded. Quirk (1990: 6) only considers American, British, and Australian varieties, and treats other varieties – such as the Indian and the Nigerian – as “performance varieties” that could be compared to French English or Russian English (cited in Seidlhofer, 2011: 80). Similar beliefs are reproduced in ELT practices, as data demonstrates above that only RP English and sometimes American standard variety are considered appropriate for learners to target.

Additionally, ‘native’-like models of pronunciation appear central for teachers because of their clear established rules and assessment norms. The data shows that these norms serve teachers as a reference. In the same vein, Kirkpatrick (2006: 72) adds that the plethora of materials at teachers’ disposal makes this variety “the easy or safe option” to follow. Despite the good intention that might underlie teachers’ beliefs, this language ideology that only favours ‘native speaker’s’ specific varieties, materials, and teaching methodologies, has its drawbacks and is subject to criticism. These beliefs are deeply rooted in the ideology nativespeakerism that represents English teaching methodologies and approaches from inner circle countries as superior (Holliday, 2016). The ‘native speaker’ model raises questions regarding the ownership of English, for it only relies on British and American English as reference points to contextualise English teaching/learning. Subsequently, it often fails to highlight for learners the incongruent realities of how English is spoken, taught, and learnt in local and global contexts. I argue that the prevalence of these beliefs shaping teaching practices is also a result of the absence of clear objectives behind ELT and how English can serve Algerian learners. This theme will be thoroughly discussed in 9.4.

7.6 Attempts for criticality

Although the teachers argued for the importance of using materials and the 'native speaker' model to teach English, they expressed uncertainty about the reasons behind their selection. Data demonstrates the politics behind the choices of materials that belong to 'native speakers'. Notably, it seems that this preference is also rooted in the unclarity of the curriculum and the asymmetrical power relations between teachers. Thus, this section provides examples of teachers' scepticism, resistance, and critical actions. It also aims to demonstrate how ELT materials reflect the political nature of English classrooms, and how learners' lived experiences can better serve as rich learning materials.

Data from teachers' interviews suggests that the reasons behind the prevalence of the nativespeakerism ideology in ELT classrooms are multi-layered. Pedagogic constraints are one of the reasons that teachers highlighted. Sarah, for example, notes the unclear objectives behind the teaching of literary texts outlined in the ELT curriculum:

For the subject named in the curriculum as 'initiation to literary texts,' it is not clear which texts we opt for. Can I bring a Chinese literary text written in English? [...] We teacher could only opt for British literature as well as American [...] they didn't even outline the objectives behind teaching this subject, so we had to design these objectives and goals [...] (Sarah/ Interview 7/April 2019)

The lack of clarity in the choice of certain subjects in English presents a challenge to Sarah, particularly, the search for suitable teaching materials with no explicit objectives to target. She explains above how she has to take the lead in developing objectives and opting for materials according to her preference. She further explains in the interview that she is more acquainted with the British and American literary texts and, therefore, the selection of reading materials is usually based on her choices.

In addition to the pedagogic constraints, structural forces within the teaching institution determine what should be taught. Halima was equally disconcerted with the reading subject 'initiation to literary texts', and, thus, opted for a different approach to teaching:

Some teachers are against new things. With the licence [Bachelor] cohort of 2012-2013, I introduced a new thing 'Arab Anglophone

literature', and one of the old teachers just criticised me. He didn't like the fact that I am introducing this area. The only argument he gave at that time is that these students need first to read a lot of books in British/American literature and then they could have the chance afterward to read other non-native works [...] (Halima/Interview 2/February 2019)

The excerpt above shows the asymmetrical power relations between module leaders and teachers. This particularly happens when teachers, like in Halima's case, introduce new areas that do not appeal to others. Halima further explains the reasons why she introduced the "Arab Anglophone literature":

I personally think, with the globalisation phenomenon, we shouldn't introduce the EFL students only to natives. Okay, we can do it in the first year and second year, but not in the third year they should be introduced to a variety of texts (Halima/Interview 2/February 2019)

Halima first presents an argument against the nature of the texts and materials delivered to EFL students which only represent British and American English and 'cultures'. Therefore, she suggests a more diverse approach that exposes learners to various materials beyond the English-speaking countries. Halima further describes her teaching approach in these words:

With my students, I introduced Kachru's theory, the other Englishes. I explained why I am introducing this type of literature to them to relate the cultural background to these texts [...] my students liked these texts more than Shakespeare and Virginia Woolf. Unfortunately, I'm no longer teaching these modules because no one is calling me to be a lecturer in the programme (Halima/Interview 2/February 2019)

Halima's initiative stems from her intention to expand the context of ELT and explore the breadth of English materials from outer and expanding circle countries. She also mentioned using the writings of Arab-African authors like Ahdaf Soueif, Leila Aboulela, and Soraya Antonius. She contended that as these authors write in English and are from Arab backgrounds, they tackle issues that can be more relevant to students. As such, Halima wants to exploit the texts to spark students' interest. It is also evident that Halima intends to raise her students' awareness about the global ownership of English and its changing nature given its international status. Furthermore,

Halima's objective behind introducing different reading texts was to explain to her students that they do not need to target 'native speakers' and that there is a variety of materials available to them. However, as she notes, changes brought by teachers, which are not in accordance with the usual model, evoke some concerns and rejections among teachers occupying a higher position such as curriculum planners and more experienced teachers.

Similarly, Fadela echoes a similar experience that describes the micro-politics of the ELT classrooms. She expands upon the intricacy of navigating the problematic curriculum and expresses how bringing changes to its content is challenging:

[...] So one has to impose themselves to get their rights. Honestly, I had to struggle this year because I designed my own curriculum and it was examined by the experts (names) and I wanted to apply it to see the fruits of what I've worked for. I wanted to bring something new and change as I noticed that the content of the modules is basic and doesn't prepare learners to analyse but just give them facts and statistics (Fadela/Interview 4/March 2019)

Another dimension of power relations within the teaching institution is reflected in the above excerpt. Fadela wanted to improve the ELT curriculum by adding an aspect of critically. Yet, her efforts were underappreciated by other teachers who occupy a higher position within the institution. Her struggle to bring a change to the ELT shows the micro-politics shaping the teaching curriculum. Although teachers are encouraged to bring innovation to the academic environment, there is an implicit power structure within the micro setting itself that governs teachers' practices. Freire (1996) critiques one aspect of this structure that underlies teaching and learning and calls it the "banking model of education". This model is based on transferring knowledge to learners without engaging them to critically examine, discuss and reflect on the content. Fadela reflects on this model and explains her efforts to change it, but the resistance she faced was from other teachers in the institution who do not agree with this change.

The above examples describing teachers taking critical actions run counter to the nativespeakerism ideology which appeared to dominate the Algerian ELT classrooms (in 7.5.2, 7.5.3). Similar studies have presented how this belief is countered in classroom practices. Lowe's (2020b) study of the ELT programme in the Japanese context shows how nativespeakerism ideology

is challenged and resisted. He notes the emergence of dominant and counter-dominant discourses within unequal power relations between 'native' white Westerns and 'non-native' teachers. He argues that these discourses shape the realities of ELT practices and provide alternatives from the master 'nativespeaker' frame. However, in the Algerian context, these unequal power relations are noted between Algerian teachers based on seniority, rank, and beliefs about teaching. Teachers who have been teaching in the institution for a long time are found to reject the changes brought by new teachers. Such accounts demonstrate the multi-layered nature endorsing the 'native speaker' teaching model.

While some teachers attempt to challenge the rigid structure, which sets in stone the way English should be taught, others might feel compelled to follow the normative teaching models to avoid conflicts. Other teachers take a middle ground by being more flexible. For example, Amira states how her learners' proficiency level is of great importance:

It is not about following the curriculum. What I usually do with my students most of the time I start with the basics. I consider the students' level and I also consider what I can do to cover the curriculum [...] I have to make choices. I say that I prefer that my students know few things and know them well rather than learning too many things and end up knowing nothing [...] if they master for example the basic concepts [...] that's more than enough for me, I mean I did a great job [...] I say to myself, I cannot expect too much from students and not to overload them and overwhelm them (Amira/ Interview 8/April 2019)

Although Amira previously stated that targeting 'native speaker's' competence is important for her, she later reflects on the need to be realistic and consider the learners' level. Teachers often have to prioritise what is important for their learners. This shows that their perspectives about which teaching models are most appropriate differ according to the classroom conditions and learners. In other words, teachers have to adapt to the teaching situation and show flexibility to assist their learners. Making sensible choices according to the teaching context was a recurrent theme among teachers. Ahmed shares his reflection on his teaching journey:

I was bad at didactics, I don't know about all the theories and stuff, to be honest with you. And then every time someone asks me "do you

follow a certain kind of approach or a theory” I say “what approach what theory” what we learn at university is different from the situation. In practice, you won’t say “ah that class I’ve got forty students I am gonna use this theory” never ever. So there is one thing I believe in is to be eclectic. But I know nothing about theories it’s my own experience. It’s just from the look when I look at my students. There were times when I would prepare the lesson and go to my class and then all of a sudden, I find that this exercise does not match with the level of most of the students, so I had to come up with another exercise in one minute [...] we’ve never been taught this but through experience you have to be (Ahmed/interview 11/April 2019)

In the above extract, Ahmed dismantles the difference between theory and real practice. He questions the effectiveness of the dominant theoretical approaches to teaching English that are often passed on to teachers. For him, the ELT normative models do not often match the students’ learning conditions and needs. Ahmed accentuates the need for eclectic teaching and flexibility in ELT classrooms. As such, he seems to favour the use of different teaching methodologies that are most convenient for his learners. Within this eclectic orientation, teachers do not have to restrict themselves to prevailing approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) or Competency-Based Approach (CBA). They rather explore their classrooms’ conditions and design their lessons accordingly. Yacine, a teacher of oral expression, gives a concrete example about putting the learners at the centre of their learning process in the following:

[...] my materials need to be relevant to my students, like to ignite that fire in them, and after that is how to work with the material I’ve chosen. I always try to make it learner-centred and to be all about the learner. I will give you an example [...] one of my criteria is to be very original and creative to captivate the student. One of my students chose to talk about handball but the way he did was very creative, explained the rule of the game while playing with his classmates [...] what matters to me is that they know that is more than coming and speaking and going, like we come today free topic you talk and that’s it. I need my students to know what they should be expected to do [...] something really important to me is I want them to have fun [...] (Yacine/Interview 5/March 2019)

Yacine defines his role as a facilitator whose job is to assist his learners. His beliefs about language education also deviate from the traditional view of the teacher as the provider of knowledge. The example he shares about one of his learners who chose to talk about handball, Yacine demonstrates how his teaching method depends on giving learners the space to express their voices and develop skills that allow them to discuss what is most important to them. As such, the learning process is more enjoyable and imbued with “subjective meanings” (Kramsch, 2009: 43). Yacine also highlights the importance for language learners to know what they are doing from the start to engage them in their learning. Allwright explains this point arguing that “if people understand better what they are doing, then they will get more enjoyment out of it. And if people get more enjoyment out of understanding lessons, then they will probably get more from the whole experience as well” (Allwright’s letter cited in Allwright and Hanks, 2009: 273). Making the most of the learning experience also depends on trust and a sense of security, as Yacine adds:

[...] We even had some students bringing some cake because they wanted to share and you cannot know how much I know about them. When you have students open up to you and share it with the class not only with you, you create an environment like a community and you humanise the environment. My students need to become at ease to perform better, some of them they know their classmate but when they speak, they are shaken and lose their voice, it's really important for me to have that kind of atmosphere (Yacine/Interview 5/March 2019)

Setting a conducive learning atmosphere depends on several factors. Yacine mentions the role of the psychological factor to build mutual trust between teachers and learners. He compares his classroom to a community that needs confidence and understanding. His aim was “to humanise the environment” to bring back life to the language classroom for better learning to take place. This seems to echo aspects of relational pedagogy which focuses on “the psychological and emotional dimensions of a language learner’s subjectivity” (Kramsch, 2020: 12). Holliday’s (2016) perspective on appropriate methodologies in ELT and how to allow learners to contribute to their learning is also relevant to Yacine’s teaching practice. Holliday (2016: 268) argues that learners’ contributions “will also undoubtedly change teachers’ classroom and other practice as their students, rather than BANA

[Britain, Australasia, North American] ideals, become their main resource". Consequently, one can argue that moving away from the 'native speaker' model of teaching requires teachers to delve into their learners' needs and what interests them. Exploring these might carry the potential to change the ELT classroom. Discussion about this key theme will be provided in 9.4.2.

7.7 Chapter summary

This chapter explored teachers' perspectives of the top-down policies/reforms and the way they impact their teaching practices. Building on data from teachers' interviews, different challenges facing teachers on the ground were demonstrated. These challenges revolve around the lack of teacher training and appropriate infrastructure which are supposed to accompany the changes brought by the MHESR. In addition, ELT practices were explored where the discourses and ideologies dominating the ELT classroom were identified. While the ideology of nativespeakerism seems to underlie some of the teaching materials, this has to be understood within the micro-institutional limits shaping the ELT classroom within AHE. In this chapter, I presented the pedagogic constraints and power relations within the teaching institution. Teachers were working with a rigid ELT curriculum structure with ill-defined content and objectives. Additionally, they found it challenging to navigate these given the institutional pressure to which they were subjected. Some teachers illustrated their resistance towards dominant teaching models. These were thought to be centric to 'native speaker' materials and to solely revolve around fact and statistic representation of information. Nevertheless, their endeavours encountered structural constraints. Although teachers' perspectives on ELT policy and practice are crucial, teachers are not the only stakeholder: students are also part of the equation. I will now proceed to chapter 8 that focuses on students' perceptions and experiences of English language learning within AHE.

Chapter 8: Students' experiences of learning and using English

8.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss data drawn from focus groups, and primarily related to students' perceptions and their learning experiences of English within Algerian Higher Education (AHE). Occasionally, classroom observation data and extracts from teachers' interviews are also used when necessary to support the argument. The themes presented will first examine the significance of English and the way students ascribe its learning to their personal goals and their perceptions of job prospects. I will also explore the way these students experience learning and using English. Drawing on teachers' and students' different accounts, data will delve into classroom realities to understand students' struggles with the English Language Teaching (ELT) content, materials, and approaches. These major themes are interrelated with the broader picture of English language policy and practice within AHE. The significance of this chapter is to advance the readers' understanding of the English situation within AHE from students' perspectives. In the hope of providing more clarity, these major themes are discussed within the AHE teaching/ learning context and the underlying socioeconomic reality to show the complexity of the overall educational experience facing students.

8.2 Students' perceptions about learning English

This research examined students' views about English language learning in an attempt to find out the relationship between their perceptions and the global and local forces explored in chapter 6. By so doing, this section aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the role that discourses of English have played in influencing students' decisions to learn English. As a result of prompting students to speak about their stories behind choosing to study English, they remarkably described English in terms of their wants and needs. That is, some asserted needing English to achieve different goals, and others explained simply wanting to learn English. Nonetheless, data shows that the impact of global forces, and particularly Anglo-American popular culture, lay behind these wants and needs. This section is divided

into two subsections, each discussing the personal and professional significance of English.

8.2.1 The personal significance of English

The participants came from various disciplines, yet they chose English for different reasons. Students stated that they were studying different scientific disciplines and they deliberately dropped the course they were doing and enrolled in the English as a foreign language (EFL) programme instead. Others chose English as soon as they got their scientific Baccalaureate exam despite the other options available to them. Another group used to study foreign languages and they opted for English to develop specific skills they saw relevant to their interests. The following cases are examples from these three groups to illustrate how they come from different educational backgrounds and how they have different interests behind studying English.

Focus group 1 started the discussion by sharing their perceptions about choosing to study English and what they like the most about the language:

Souad: Why did you choose to study English?

Zaineb: I was a student of architecture for two years and it wasn't very pleasant. I didn't like it very much and I really wanted to study English and to go for the 'superior school' for teachers of English but the average was not that high. When I changed to English, I finally for three years found my favourite subject which is British and American civilisation

Alia: I chose English because it's the language of science and technology and it's the dominant in many cultures it helps to communicate with people around the world not only native speakers

Karima: [...] When you go to any other country you can speak and talk to its people

Afaf: I chose English because it was my dream since I was a child, and I am so satisfied I am studying what I always wanted (FG1/March 2019)

For these students, the importance of studying English lies in their need to develop their linguistic skills to attain their different wants. Zaineb and Afaf articulate their love for English and how they were intrinsically drawn to

study the language. They express their choice of English in relation to their desire and how they felt about it when they started studying the language. Noticeably, their opinions are, however, framed differently from Leila and Karima who refer to the function of English and its international role. Lila and Karima see an extra value added to English. Standard Arabic, Darija, Berber, and French were seen as important, but they are not as much used as English on a global scale. The two learners define the functionality of English in relation to science, technology, and communication. These are presented as the main reason to study the language.

Along the same lines, the intrinsic motivation behind studying English was also echoed among students from focus group 3:

Souad: Why did you choose to study English? What does English mean to you?

Fatima: For me I chose English from my heart

Souad: So you love it?

Fatima: I wanted to study English in the superior school but my average was not enough. For that reason I chose English. I think studying English will be very useful for me, and when you study something that you like you will be capable of difficulties. I am very serious and I do everything the teachers ask us to do with motivation

Reem: I had a scientific baccalaureate and I loved English because it opens the door to know about cultures around the world since it is the international language

Aysha: When I tell someone that I was in the scientific stream, it will be surprising when I say to someone that I chose English rather than anything in scientific field. I chose English because I was good at it and I love it (FG3/April 2019)

The above students' excerpt combined both the emotional and aspirational aspects of language learning. The reason why Fatima chose English was her love for the language and her belief in its usefulness. Aysha and Reem were both studying in the scientific stream but they proudly chose English because of their intrinsic motivation. The importance of English lies behind their motivation as they emphasised its international status and the way it is used as a lingua franca for communication.

The case of Fatima was similar to Zaineb from focus group 1. They were both targeting “l'école supérieur” for English language teaching but they were not accepted because of their grades. To provide some context, this school is a public institution similar to a university. However, it is more oriented towards teaching and training students to become English language teachers at secondary schools. There are six English superior schools across the country. In addition, graduates from these institutions are offered a permanent teaching position as soon as they finish their course. Therefore, these schools only accept applications of those who show an outstanding performance in the Baccalaureate exam. Zaineb and Fatima were not discouraged by the rejection of their application. They were, however, determined to learn English, therefore they enrolled in the EFL programme. Zaineb's case was remarkable as she was studying architecture and then joined the English programme. From Zaineb's high pitch and facial expressions, a high level of motivation and excitement could be noticed when she was sharing her story in the focus group. Both Zaineb and Fatima do not seem to have a clear objective behind enrolling in the EFL programme in terms of future career consideration, as they gave unclear answers about the functionality of English at the professional level (this will be presented in 8.1.2). Other students from focus group 2 shared different stories.

Souad: Why did you choose to study English?

Salma: I was limited, we choose the university degree based on exam average, either English or I repeat the bac exam

Omar: I used to study technical mathematics, but I didn't have many options to choose from when I got my BAC exam, so I chose English because I like it and because it's an international language

Kawtar: For me I like all the languages but I chose English because it's international

Khalida: I put French in the first position but they didn't give me my choice. I was given English even though I got a good grade in French (FG2/February 2019)

Compared with groups 1 and 3, the students above showed less intrinsic motivation about studying English. Given the decisive role that the Baccalaureate exam grades play in determining their choice of disciplines, Salma and Omar had to enrol in the English course because of the “limited”

choices. They explain how they felt pressured: either they study English or they take the exam again. Noticeably, Kawtar and Omar were drawing on the international status of English to convey that they are studying a language that can pave the way for international opportunities. Others had different choices, but they were directed by the university to study English. Khalida was one of these students, she openly states that she does not like English and that she chose to enrol in a French course. This might explain the massive increase in students studying English as previously mentioned by teachers (see 7.2). This surge is not only due to students' interest in the language, but the institution is also trying to direct students toward this course to strengthen their English language skills.

As a consequence, what was remarkable about the students was how diverse their educational backgrounds were. Out of the 17 research participants, three groups could be identified. First, some participants stated that they were studying different scientific disciplines and they deliberately dropped the course to enrol in the EFL programme instead. Others chose English as soon as they obtained their scientific Baccalaureate exam despite the other choices that were available to them. The third group used to study foreign languages and they opted for English to develop specific skills they saw relevant to their interests. This might also reflect the diverse needs behind studying English.

A recurrent thread across students' focus groups is the noticeable use of the statement 'English is the international language' to explain the importance of studying English. In the previous data excerpts, students seem to reproduce this statement. They kept referring to 'English is the international language' because they were constantly exposed to this discourse. It is only in the below excerpt that Youcef elaborates on this use:

Souad: Why did you choose to study English?

Abed: [...] at the starting point, English was not my first choice, so I came here in my first year and especially my first semester, it was so difficult

Youcef: [...] nowadays you have to know English. It is the international language. Even if you are studying medicine, mathematics or economics, you will come eventually to study English because without it, it's impossible to progress and advance in the

world. So nowadays I can say I don't regret choosing English if I have to choose again, I would choose English (Pilot FG/ April 2018)

For Youcef, the international status of English makes it a must-learn language. Youcef perceives English as a prerequisite for progress and development in any domain. These perceptions about English are not groundless, but they also convey ideologies about the language. For students, English is equated with success in their studies. Without which their academic degree is not valued. As such, mastering English seems to add quality to university studies. Sergeant and Erling (2011) study perceptions about English and their relation to development in Bangladesh. They noticed that the way English is defined in education by teachers, students, and policymakers does not simply aim to improve English. However, their perceptions of the importance of English are usually tied to a broader discourse of English as a global language with its different associations such as “English as the language of international commerce, of science, of technological advancement, and of human rights” (2011: 251). As such, the English language often carries different connotations that are shaped by global visions of progress and development. The next section will give a better insight into how the students find studying English relevant to their academic studies and future careers.

8.2.2 The professional significance of English

Focus group interviews conveyed both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects linked to students' motivation to learn English. Since the students' intrinsic motivation was covered in section 8.2.1, this section aims to understand other factors which shape students' decisions. Consequently, student participants were probed to speak about their plans and how these might involve English. The data shows that the students have different views about how English can make them more employable and mobile. Their perspectives also represent English as an additional asset to their multilingual profile.

There are different forces driving students' motivations to learn English. These motivations are often influenced by dominant discourses about 'English as the language of progress and modernity'. However, the discourse of 'English as the language of opportunities' (see 6.3.2) seems to hold different connotations for students. While some seemed pessimistic

about English career prospects in Algeria, others perceived the transferability of the skills and assets they learn through English into job opportunities. Nevertheless, it was difficult to exactly understand the professional significance of English from students' focus groups. The students from focus group 3 were in their final semester, only a few months away from graduation. Nonetheless, they showed a lack of clarity regarding how English will help them to find a job. This is illustrated below:

Souad: Did you think about your career when you chose what to study at university?

Aysha: I didn't think about my career at all, I just wanted to study that's all

Fatima: Yes, me too

Souad: How do you think studying English will be useful for you when you graduate?

Aysha: Believe it or not all my family ended up as teachers so it's gonna be maybe the same fate. But for me English is more than a future career [...] I'm hoping to be a writer actually

Reem: What will you do with an English degree in Algeria for god's sake!

Souad: What about you?

Fatima: Continue for master's degree (FG3/April 2019)

While Aysha's choice of the EFL programme was not influenced by finding a job, Reem was aware of the unpromising reality of English within the Algerian job market. Fatima, on the other hand, seems to avoid thinking about job prospects as she wants to enrol for a master's degree. This was also common among other students' focus groups, as it will be shown below. It was unexpected to know that Aysha was the only one in the group who does not attach learning English to a short-term objective. Aysha was more leaning towards creative writing. She later related her passion for literature which further drew her toward studying English.

As opposed to how global discourses represent English as the language of career opportunities, the students' future career plans were not entirely tied to English. English as an additional language is useful when added to their linguistic profiles. All students from focus group 3 expressed their intentions

to pursue postgraduate studies in English given the variety of disciplines offered (sociology, applied linguistics, TESOL, literature, gender studies, cultural studies). The three students above were also determined to meet the criteria that would allow them to do a masters' degree.

Data from focus group 2 also demonstrates uncertainty among the students about the professional significance of English. While some jobs were mentioned as the only options available to them, other students could only think broadly about the function of English as a means of communication:

Souad: How do you see your future career as a graduate of English?

(silence)

Kawtar: I want to be an interpreter

Salma: I think at least a teacher of English at high school, because I think it's the only choice we have

(silence)

Souad: What are you learning this language for?

Haroon: To communicate

Omar: When you go to another country you can speak and talk to them [...] not only native speakers but with all the world

(FG2/February 2019)

Students in this group were hesitant about this question. The silence prevailed for some time until it was broken by Kawtar and Selma. The rest of the students remained silent. I was not sure about the reasons for this silence. Although, I probed the students to elaborate on their objectives and goals behind studying English. their responses were kept short. Taking into consideration Bourdieu's (1986) framework of forms of capital (economic, cultural, social, and symbolic), it could be argued that Haroon and Omar do not attribute economic capital to English given the reality of the current Algerian job market. However, they perceive the significance of English in relation to its social capital. For these students, English is valued for its use for communication and the wider social connections which become possible through the mastery of this language.

Data from focus groups 1 and 2 are reminiscent of Ayesha's case. That is, the students mentioned their passion for writing and its relation to learning

English. Haroon, for example, from focus group 2 further elaborated on how English is relevant to him:

I think learning about metaphors and techniques of writing is useful, as for me I like to write in English, and I studied these techniques way before I studied them in class. So, I was kind of happy when we started learning about metaphors and those stuff because you'll learn about them in a more of academic way. So, I think from this perspective it's useful for those who like to write
(Haroon/FG2/February 2019)

Since Haroon is keen on writing, he then taught himself English writing techniques before enrolling in the EFL programme. His desire to further develop this skill at university, and becoming a good writer represents his driving motivation. This explains his previous silence when asked about job prospects. Interestingly, a similar wish also surfaced among students from focus group 1:

Souad: What will you use English for when you graduate?

Afaf: For me, I'll start teaching English and when I have enough money I will be a writer

Soumia: For me, I'm more artistic I like artistic stuff, so I think English will help me to communicate with other artists. Other than art, I like writing a lot and I do write

Zaineb: Yeah, we are in a country where you cannot achieve your plans easily, so you need to have backup plans, not just one [...] If you love it, yeah, It [English] helps us to go far like abroad
(FG1/March 2019)

When speaking about the importance of the curriculum, Zaineb further asserted:

[The teaching content] is useful if you want to be a writer so if you are a writer and you don't know anything about Shakespeare and other writers, it's (not good?)

It was surprising to hear that the students were thinking of other alternatives or "backup plans" as Zaineb said. Their above perspectives reflect the limitations of the jobs offered to graduates. What stands out more is that despite the economic constraints regarding jobs available for English graduates, they seem to be hopeful about the skills and knowledge they are

gaining from studying English. These attitudes towards English are in line with Bourdieu's (1986) embodied capital. That is, people perceive the value of language ingrained in the knowledge and skills that they acquire. This is particularly evident in Afaf's statement about teaching temporarily which shows how she favours the embodied cultural capital over the economic capital. As such, she is using English as a means to become a writer. Soumia joins her to emphasise how she regards English as an instrumental tool to network. As I kept in contact with students after the fieldwork, Soumia later sent me three poems she wrote asking for my feedback. While she was speaking about the reasons for which she wrote the pieces, I could sense her enthusiasm to develop her English writing skill to express her talent.

Given the discourse of English for employability that emerged from policy analysis (6.3.2), I assumed that students have high expectations about English and the potential jobs it can open for them. Although in section 8.2.1 the majority of students showed great enthusiasm about studying English, it seems to fade away when they were asked about how English can help them find a job. Remarkably, this apparent lack of enthusiasm was also accompanied by the necessity to consider other alternative careers beyond what is available in the Algerian job market. This hints at the current conditions of employability in Algeria. I will shortly elaborate on employability in Algeria to contextualise the data.

The students perceived learning English as an added value to their skills and as a social and embodied capital that can help them in future social mobility when they "go far abroad". Zaineb's phrase suggests the limitations of job opportunities in Algeria. It also refers to her aspirations to achieve her goals using English as a medium. Thus, it is evident that students' perceptions of English are not entirely shaped by the economic capital which is often attributed to English. In section 6.3, data showed how the importance of English within higher education is discursively framed by policymakers as the path to employability and academic success. However, students' views do not seem to align with these discourses. Their perspectives about the professional significance of English were in line with Manel, one of the teachers, who elaborated:

Souad: In what way will studying the English language benefit learners in Algeria on a professional level?

Manel: Teaching is the only career. Except teaching general English, learners can teach ESP [English for Specific Purposes] in different contexts, English is used in the world of aviation, the marine domain, maybe in the domain of tourism and hotels. But it is always limited to teaching, other professions are limited. [...] If you ask the students about teaching as a career, they don't want to be teachers [...] The Algerian context does not really offer them good opportunities [...]

Souad: To what extent does ELT prepare learners for these professional contexts you mentioned?

Manel: Well they have to study other fields as well and do other training. Last year I had students who had a degree in management and they were studying English to help them in their domain. Studying English alone in this department is only for teaching. There are students who love the language and master it, but in the Algerian context, the living conditions are not helpful for these graduates to fulfil their dreams and ambitions (Manel/Interview 6/March 2019)

Although Manel's statement about the lack of good opportunities could be argued to be a generalisation, it is clear from the data that jobs are scarce in many cases. Nonetheless, Manel's excerpts challenge the discourse of English as 'the language of employability'. That is, she argues that the mastery of English alone is insufficient as it is just a skill among many others that students have to cultivate. Moreover, references to the current challenges in the Algerian job market, as pointed out by Manel, is particularly important to understand why English cannot be a straightforward path to job opportunities in Algeria.

Teaching, as a profession, prevailed across the data collected from both teachers and students, such as Manel and others (see 6.3.2). This could be attributed to two main reasons. First, the status of English as a foreign language is still in its developmental stage in terms of job prospects. The local languages, nevertheless, prevail in the formal and informal labour market, particularly French within the well-paid industrial and energy sectors (Daoudi, 2018). Secondly, unemployment is a major issue facing Algeria caused by the increase in youth graduates and the limited creation of new workplaces. Consequently, many graduates turn to teaching in state owned institutions as these are more stable and secure (Omrane, 2016).

At a broader level, the Algerian socio-economic reality informs us more about how the policy of 'strengthening English for employability' could be seen as a buzzword. Compared with the austerity of finding a job, change in language policy alone cannot serve as a quick remedy to fix unemployment or create new job prospects. According to the Algerian National Office of Statistics (ANOS), the unemployment rate of Algerian graduates reached 27% in May 2019. Although graduates have a linguistic profile that is relevant to the demand of the workplace, according to 2015 employment statistics, 43% of university graduates usually spend more than two years searching for a job (ANOS, 2015: 7).

Reporting to the national journal of *El Watan*, the Algerian sociologist Boudierba argued that the unemployment rate is estimated to increase due to the austerity measures taken by the government since 2015, which caused a lack of investment in diversifying the job market. He also adds that "the national economy has been moved towards trade and services that revolve around imports" (Mechti, 2019). What is more problematic is the overreliance on non-renewable energy sources. As the Algerian economy entered recession during the global crisis in 2008, recruitment in these dominant labour markets worsened and affected other domains, causing graduate unemployment to surge. This explains the reason why finding suitable jobs for all students, including those proficient in English, is becoming more challenging.

Data shows that both students and teachers were aware of the prevailing unemployment in Algeria. Students mentioned teaching as one career path, but not all of them were keen on it as a long-term occupation. As mentioned in 6.3.2, teaching English in state schools is very competitive. First, limited teaching positions are made available compared to the number of applicants. Secondly, there are strict criteria set by the Ministry of Education. For example, only those with master's degrees can apply to sit for the written and the oral contests (Slimani, 2018). In 2019, 74,000 contestants competed during the national teaching contest for solely 40,000 vacancies in all subjects at the level of primary and secondary schools (Choubane, 2019).

In the hope of escaping the scourge of unemployability, many BA graduates enrol in master's degree and doctoral studies. The majority of students in the focus groups see the pursuit of postgraduate studies as the inevitable next step to maximise their skills and competencies. Nevertheless, unemployment has become a common problem for all graduates even with a

doctoral degree. Bouheddah (2020) sheds light on the latest statistics where more than 12,000 graduates with doctoral and master's degrees still cannot find a job. This issue was recently raised in the parliament noting that the majority of doctoral graduates suffer from unemployment and feel compelled to take temporary teaching positions with low salaries, causing them to diverge from scientific research (Bouheddah, 2020). Similarly, Madoui (2015: 36) explains this struggle and how "young graduates experience unemployment as a kind of social disqualification, humiliation or social disdain". This projects some of the challenges facing the great majority of graduates in Algeria.

The two sub-sections above reported on the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation underlying students' interest in learning English. Students' accounts demonstrated their perceptions about the usefulness of English. Their views show how learning English is tethered to their passion and aspirations. As such, discrepancies were noted when setting the socio-economic reality as tinted by students and teachers against the ELT discourses discussed previously in 6.3. The language policy to strengthen English in addition to the reform which also touched the AHE system indicates how the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research's (MHESR) efforts have been deployed to remedy graduates' unemployment. However, these endeavours fail to bring about an improvement due to the lack of coherence between students' and teachers' needs and the initiatives taken. This adds more weight to the present research and to the need to know more about teachers' and students' perceptions (further discussion will be provided in chapter 9).

The next section highlights learners' exposure to English, and how this shapes their language learning experiences.

8.3 Popular culture and learning English

The attractiveness of popular culture to English language learners was another salient theme. The data conveys how students' interest to learn English has developed from their constant exposure to British and American popular cultures. This constitutes a major learning resource that students draw on to develop their speaking skills, pronunciation, and socio-cultural knowledge about English-speaking countries. This section explores how the exposure to British and American popular cultures shapes the participants'

beliefs about learning English. The presented data in this section suggests that the limited classroom learning experience and the lack of English within the Algerian society underpin this interest in British and American popular cultures.

As focus group discussions progressed, it became apparent that there is a hidden connection between the students' choice of learning English and their passion for British and American movies, songs, and literature. Across the three focus groups, British and American popular culture emerged as a key factor that first influenced their desire to learn English. Notably, movies and songs represent significant learning resources that students find most attractive to develop their linguistic skills. When students from focus group 1 were asked about how they learn English, they stated:

Farah: Listening to music and watching movies

Zaineb: I started watching movies based on historical stories since I was in secondary school. When I studied the history of English I was already familiar with all of it because I've seen it in movies and series it was not that difficult for me [...] I watch British movies based on what we say period drama [...] they are amazing to develop knowledge about history and speaking skills about the main British English, I mean the real one

Souad: What about the others what do you think?

Afaf: Movies and series help like she said of course we all started knowing English from movies. For me what helps is, I read books. But sometimes when I'm tired you can't read. So I just put my audio books on. It helps with your listening and with catching the accent and new words. And that stuff helped me a lot (FG1/March 2019)

Popular culture surfaced in these extracts as a vital medium nurturing the students' motivation to learn English. The data hints at the role which popular culture plays to support students in their learning journey. Pennycook (2007) links popular culture, and more particularly Hip-Hop culture, to English and language education pointing to how it cultivates linguistic creativity. For the students, popular culture was an important means to expose them to English. This links to other research studies which argue that popular culture can be a fun and useful learning resource. For example, Alim et al. (2009) argue that popular culture, such as Hip-Hop, is characterised by linguistic creativity and diversity that can add a fresh

perspective to language education. However, exclusive exposure to a specific type of English resources is also contested. Noticeably, Zaineb perceived British English as the 'real' English and showed interest in learning it. Similarly, Afaf adds that listening to audiobooks helps her "catch the accent". She further elaborates on how she prefers the American accent, and that she tends to use American slang with her friends (see 8.5). Afaf was the student who previously described that studying English is a childhood dream that came true (see 8.2.1). This exposure to movies and music in English might be the starting point that shaped her dream.

Students from the pilot focus group focused on both the language and the content of popular culture. This is echoed in Youcef's statement:

Souad: What are the difficulties you faced when you started learning English?

Abed: We started with French. We used to read in the French language and in our first-year secondary school, we were learning English. So now when I read a French book I confuse the meaning with English even when I write emails in French language I confuse some words with English. Before, I used to confuse English with French, but now it is French to English that is difficult

Souad: What about you do you also face this difficulty?

Youcef: I can say that since I started learning English my critical thinking developed because I try to think in English. Because if you are learning in English you have to think in that language. Because I am reading in English, I watch movies, this helped me to see another view about the world (Pilot FG/ April 2018)

Abed's reflections about moving between the many languages he speaks highlight some of the challenges multilingual speakers face. When learners embark on learning a third or fourth language, they are not empty recipients learning a new system isolated from their existing linguistic baggage. The foreign language learning experience is a complex process that involves constant interactions with learners' languages and identities in meaning-making. This experience, as Kramsch (2009: 5) argues, "always implies a reconsideration of the familiar". Youcef's experience also indicates how he is now engaged in exploring different ways of thinking that he never experienced in the other languages he masters. Youcef's exposure to movies did not only offer him a linguistic experience, but it also helped him to

develop other skills. An element of curiosity could be sensed from the choice of his words “seeing another view of the world”. Although he does not elaborate on this view of the world, his statements show how he is experiencing the world while learning English via popular culture resources. For Youcef, learning another language meant expanding his world. This is reminiscent of Wittgenstein's famous saying “the limits of my language mean the limits of my world” (1922: 23).

The above claims made by the students are in line with Warda, one of the teachers. Warda comments on learners' exposure to English outside the classroom context and links this to the advancement of technology and the internet:

[...] When it comes to practicing English, nowadays our EFL learners have English in every place. If they watch television it is there, if they go to the internet it is there, it is everywhere. If they travel abroad, they need it, as it is the lingua franca and it is used in different places in the world [...] Everything is available on the internet nowadays. I can have a video, a story, a text, this facilitates our task and job, right. In the past out of the classroom, our students did not have any place where to speak English, no place, but now they can discuss with anyone, even natives! So, I think learning is getting easier
(Warda/Pilot study/April 2018)

Halima also added to this respect when she gave her views about the reasons why English appeals to some Algerian students:

In fact, due to the propagation of the use of multimedia and the internet, and being too immersed in social media where English is at the top of foreign languages being used, it is obvious and understandable that our students consider English as an important language with which they would be able to chat with foreigners, understand Hollywood movies and comprehend lyrics of the best songs (Halima/Follow-up interview 2/ October 2019)

Likewise, Fadela also comments on how students are inspired by the American lifestyle and how this impacts their approach to learning English:

[...] learners are expected to choose between either American or British English in terms of speaking, accent, written. I say to my learners, choose one type. Learners are sometimes interested in working on how to develop an American accent because they found

the American way of life interesting (Fadela/Interview 4/February 2019)

Social media, popular music, and movies are among the many factors that play a major role in countries where English is used as a foreign language. The wide dissemination of the American youth popular culture in Algeria continues to impact youth's perceptions about the Western lifestyle. In the Arab world, the earliest Arab channels such as MBC4 and MBC2 have been broadcasting different types of subtitled series, and Hollywood movies are made available to these students. Several studies have been conducted on the impact of these channels on university students and English language learning (see 2.5). Ankit (2014) conducted a quantitative study with 200 students in one United Arab Emirates University. He investigated their main motives behind watching foreign programmes on MBC4 and MBC2. The findings assert that learning English was the main target among these students. Moreover, Kraidy (2008) argues that these channels have a significant impact on both children and youth in the way they shape their social and political views. As such, learners are also attracted to the content itself which usually reflects a distorted version of the Western lifestyle (Ames and Burcon, 2016).

This early exposure to British and American movies and TV channels might have developed students' attachment and positive attitudes towards English. This is commonly explored in the field of sociolinguistics. For example, Kramsch and Gerhards (2012: 76) claim that "the visceral reaction of like or dislike to other people or to other languages comes from age-old or childhood memories that are still active in what you associate with these different languages [...] It's linked to childhood memories, to adolescent dreams, fantasies, aspirations, etc". They add that the more positive people's perceptions about a community are, the more positive their language is viewed, and vice versa. Hence, in light of the above discussion which touched on the role of pop culture in shaping students' perceptions, it becomes clear that the personal significance of English to these learners also conveys certain ideologies about English-speaking countries. Certain beliefs have been gradually formed since childhood and they are underpinned by both the ELT teaching content and teachers' approaches.

The theme of soft power was evident in the analysis of the international projects between the MHESR, the British Council, and the American Embassy. Soft power (as discussed in 2.5) operating through these relations

reproduces unequal power relations. Particularly, the Western educational systems, pedagogies, methodologies, and materials from English-speaking countries seem to be favoured. This is internalised in language policies (see 6.5) and in the English teaching curriculum (7.5). Nye (2004) explains that popular culture is a major source of American soft power, which has a great reaching impact and attraction across the world. Nye (2004: 46-47) argues that, on many levels, American popular culture “contains subliminal images and messages about individualism, consumer choice, and other values that have important political effects”. This section adds another dimension to this theme in that the students seem to be implicated in the webs of soft power. This theme will be thoroughly discussed in 9.4.3.

I further traced the spread of British and American popular culture among students. In addition to social media and TV channels, data sheds light on the way they are reinforced by teachers who view them as “rich” resources to learners. Yacine, a teacher of oral communication, maintains:

I advise my students to watch series. American ones, they are popular and they are very accessible. Imagine in one season you can watch like 20 hours it's amazing (Yacine/interview 6/February 2019)

He also suggested specific online channels to his students arguing that they can improve their fluency:

[...] I advise [watching] Netflix because it works a lot on developing both fluency and accuracy [...] Netflix has added another feature which is, if you want to learn a new language you can read the subtitles in English and if you are really a poor performer you can see the double subtitles [...] I believe the more you listen to native speakers or read it helps tremendously. It helped me and it did for my whole family. They speak English really well. You feel that, because they have been exposed to that rich, you know, repertoire (Yacine/interview 6/ February 2019)

Yacine focuses more on the linguistic aspect and how his learners' fluency could be enhanced through American series. Despite the diversified origins of movies and series on a platform such as Netflix, Yacine seems to favour those produced in America and displayed in American English. His beliefs about the importance of exposing learners to ‘native speakers’ materials are clearly expressed in the above excerpt. The subtle force within American popular culture can form teachers' beliefs about a particular variety of

language as the only variety that helps students to improve their fluency and accuracy. Consequently, these beliefs about language teaching also impact language learning by directing learners to specific English materials and resources. In this regard, Lowe (2020b: 62) argues that “this promotion of Western-produced and mediated methods of language teaching is central to ‘native speaker’ framing in ELT, as it casts the teaching approaches of the West, and of its ‘native speaker’ representatives as normal” and “rich” as Yacine asserts. The ideology of nativespeakerism seems to prevail at the learning level. What makes English and American movies, series, and music attractive is the fact that they are the product of ‘natives’ and they communicate a ‘native’-like version of English. This theme is further discussed in 9.4. The next section will present data relevant to the students’ underlying beliefs about the standard variety.

8.4 Students’ perceptions of the ‘native speaker’ model

As discussed above, exposure to American and British popular cultures influences students’ perceptions to learn English. This section explores students’ views about English varieties. Through learners’ accounts, I will delve into understanding the underlying beliefs behind Algerian students’ preference to learn and be exposed to specific varieties.

The students’ data indicates that learners hold different understandings of what forms their English linguistic competence. While for some students’ proficiency in English means approximating a ‘native-like’ way of speaking (either British or American), others prefer to communicate fluently and develop a personal voice in the language. Notably, the idea of speaking like ‘natives’ also carries different connotations for students. The following excerpt from the pilot study focus group demonstrates how these students have different learning goals:

Souad: What is your ultimate objective when learning English?

Abed: Me! (*laugh*) I want to speak English like a native speaker

Souad: Why is that?

Abed: Because when I see English people pronouncing and speaking English, it amazes me. It is beautiful. When I speak English in front of people, I want them to like my English...

Youcef: Yes, that was the starting point, but now I think not all people can reach native speakers. For me now, mastering the language is enough (FG/pilot study/April 2018)

Omar and Youcef emphasise speaking as a major target for them to improve. While Omar is attracted towards a 'native-like' way of speaking, and sees it as charming, Youcef highlights how he initially had a similar target but then realised that this was beyond his reach. As such, he decided to focus on developing English communication skills. It is worth noting that both students were fluent in English and that they preferred to be interviewed in English. From the above extract, two competing beliefs can be identified about learners' perception of speaking English. The first belief links English directly to the way it is used by 'native speakers'. Liddicoat and Scarino (2013: 29) explain that this fallacy is "outdated and inappropriate, given the large-scale variations in linguistic norms and linguistic competence among 'native speakers' of the same language". Yet, there is still a held belief that approximating the 'native speaker's competence develops learners' skills. Kramsch (2009) explains that this target might undermine learners' motivation as their learning progress is always compared to an ideal 'native speaker'. This is evident in Abed's aspirations for the 'native speakers' pronunciation. Although he was fluent in English, this target made him dislike his pronunciation.

The counter-belief "not all can reach native speakers", as Youcef argues, shows his awareness of the unrealistic goal he has put for himself first. The learners' perceptions articulated above express different learning visions to which language learners aspire. Liddicoat and Scarino (2013: 56) argue that throughout the learning journey, the language learner has multiple identities: "learner, language user, and individual". The first identity is only restricted to the way learners engage in learning inside the classroom. Such a view positions them as "deficient in relation to his/her polar other the native speaker" (2013: 52). This identity seems to be adopted by learners who constantly evaluate their linguistic competencies in relation to the 'native speaker'. In doing so, their main aim becomes subtracted to target a 'native-like' competence. Furthermore, teachers might also think that their learners hold a single identity which is that of a learner. Consequently, language teaching is reduced to merely transferring knowledge that presumably helps learners to reach this target.

Since the British Received Pronunciation (RP) emerged as the standard form chosen in the ELT curriculum and among many teachers (see 7.5.2), this theme was also mentioned in students' accounts. Data suggests different opinions voiced by students about this variety. While some argue for its importance in relation to their academic studies, others highlight its limited use in real life. I asked students about what they learnt from the phonetics sessions, they stated:

Fatima: We improved our pronunciation, to know the phonetic transcription [...]

Aysha: to know where to stress the words... You'll never be able to reach the natives unless you lived with them maybe perhaps ... All I need to know is I have to speak proper English in order for others to understand me

Reem: (*unclear*)

Fatima: For me vocabulary is essential, just to be understood (FG3/April 2019)

The above statements stand in opposition to the dominant discourse (see 7.5.2) that frames learners as seekers of approximating the 'native speakers' competence to prove their learning progress. The students seem to distinguish between formal English learnt in phonetics sessions and its status in real life. Similar to Youcef, Aysha and Fatima maintain that their main goal is to communicate effectively. Instead of targeting a 'native-like' competence and seeking to master the RP English, mutual intelligibility seems to be a reasonable objective for them.

Students from focus group 3 were further asked to elaborate on their opinions about the standard form of English they have been learning:

Souad: What are your opinions about the British RP?

Fatima: It's more academic

Reem: It only helps students (*unclear sound*)

Aysha: I believe only 3% in the UK who speaks the RP including the royal family (FG3/April 2019)

Fatima, Reem, and Aysha are in their third year of the EFL programme and it seems they have a high degree of awareness about the actual use of standard English. They perceived its importance in terms of academic

requirements. The students seem to refer to the way the RP English has an institutionalised status which makes it important to be learnt. Although students might not use it in oral communication, their writing and phonetics assessments focus on its mastery.

The importance of the RP English in terms of its academic role was also echoed in students' focus group 2:

Souad: What do you think of the British RP?

Khalida: it is the academic variety

Haroon: I don't think so

Souad: Why?

Haroon: Because on a worldwide scale it's the US way of speaking that's more famous [...] the world is ruled by the Americans so we need to learn the rulers' way to speak (FG2/ February 2019)

What makes the British RP English important for these students is also its institutionalised status and its acquired academic character as pointed out by Khalida. However, Haroon evaluates its importance in relation to its actual impact compared to American English. In his view, American English is more relevant given the economic and political power which the United States holds. This drives Haroon to target American English. Although Haroon does not specify which variety of American English he is aiming for, it seems that the common English variety in popular culture of movies and American TV shows is what appears to attract students the most. Since Haroon points out to American English as another variety that is appealing to learners, I asked the learners about other varieties of English from outer and expanding circles:

Souad: What about the other varieties of English, like Indian English or Nigerian?

Khalida: Like the Indians? but they have an accent

Omar: Because they have a problem in their own native language they cannot speak particular sounds, they don't sound like natives

Kawtar: The accent is important maybe if we listen and speak Indian English we might sound like them

Omar: Meaning also change from the pronunciation, so it is important (FG2/ February 2019)

Concerns about accent surfaced when the students were asked about their opinions on other English varieties. Although they previously maintained that approximating 'native speaker's' competence is unrealistic, they seem to value correct pronunciation. British and American standard English varieties represent this idea of 'correct' pronunciation. This attitude might be due to the great emphasis on RP phonetics sessions since the start of the EFL programme. The outlined objectives for this subject are to understand and produce RP English (see 7.5.1). The students' inclination towards 'native speakers' pronunciation is thought to be a great source of motivation when learning English as Amira mentions:

Amira: I used to use [...] CD by Daniel Jones. Learners listen and repeat and do the exercise. It was very effective and learners were very, very motivated because they were listening to native speakers and know that they are doing a great job. They were satisfied and confident that they could understand native speakers. As if they want to evaluate themselves to the international, not to the local

Souad: Do you mean local Algerian teachers?

Amira: Yes, the local teachers and the local context in which English is used, non-native speakers. Whenever they could do exercises by native speakers or understanding native speakers and do the exercises, they feel more self-confident (Amira/Interview8/April 2019)

Amira's excerpt explains her learners' motivation towards phonetics materials that draw on 'native speakers'. Amira highlights how this motivation is based on students' beliefs that understanding RP used by 'native speakers' indicates an improvement in their linguistic skills, which can give them a sense of self-assurance that they are progressing. These connections made by students are not groundless. They are rather deeply rooted in most of the testing systems and frameworks that systematically describe linguistic progress based on specific criteria, one of which is to understand 'native speakers'. Taking the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as an example, this model outlines language ability stages and even provides a grid for learners' self-assessment. This grid provides descriptors for learners to be able to track their progress. For instance, to define each stage, a B2 level indicates for learners the following description "I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite

possible". Similarly, the characteristic for C2 proficiency states "I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent" (CEFR, 2001: 27). The CEFR is a model used on an international level for all languages, and it is institutionalised in several countries including Algeria. The recent language policy of "strengthening the English language" within Algerian universities explicitly underlines its role in ELT practices. The language policy document (see appendix C) states that "the majority of teachers of English within English departments are still not aware of the CEFR. Consequently, there is a lack of clear objectives and detailed curricula for teaching English" (MHESR, 2020: 2). As such, the MHESR emphasises its importance in teaching and learning.

Following this line of thought, it can be argued that what is labelled as 'native speaker' materials and the standard forms of English are institutionalised, and this justifies their privilege. In other words, there are hidden forces pulling students to stick to these models. The students' data shows nuances with regards to the objectives behind English learning inside and outside English classrooms. Some students were aware of their rich linguistic profile. They identified intelligibility and effective communicating as their key goals. However, within the classroom confines, they stated that they have to adhere to the 'native speaker' model as a learning target. This seems to be driven by institutional forces such as exams, tests, and the prescribed standards for academic progress. The data further indicates that students' perceptions are also shaped by institutional discourses which frame 'native speaker' models as a prerequisite to improve language skills. Additionally, the exams and tests that students have to take could be said to further propagate this thinking. As such, students have to accept the norms to be able to pass to the next academic stages.

Beliefs about the 'native speaker' model held by the majority of students also appear to be shaped by the teaching methodologies and the limited choices of ELT materials presented for them within ELT classrooms. As previously presented in (7.5.2), the ELT curriculum over-relies on Anglo-American materials that are often considered as the norm. Examples of new teachers attempting to diversify the curriculum and include more materials from outer and expanding circle countries are rejected. Thus, students might have built an idea that 'native speakers' materials are exclusively accepted within the classroom context.

Students' struggles with the selected materials and the standard form of English will be presented in the following section.

8.5 Passivity as a form of resistance

Drawing on accounts from students and teachers, the sub-sections aim to explore students' learning experiences within the micro ELT classroom. Data in the previous section pointed to a dominant discourse that represents learning English through the 'native speaker' model as essential to learners' motivation and progress. These sub-sections demonstrate how this discourse plays out in the classroom. While teachers argued that students' passivity is hindering the English learning process, students' accounts asserted that both the form of English and the teaching materials are the main source for this passivity. Students maintained that they could not see the importance of the learning materials on a practical level, and even described them as "old and boring".

8.5.1 Struggles with the standard form

In this sub-section, I juxtapose teachers' and students' data to gain an understanding of how students experience learning the standard form of English. I will start with teachers' data that describes students' reluctance to engage actively in the classroom. I will then provide students' accounts to identify issues from their perspectives.

A sense of dissatisfaction with students' learning attitudes stands out from teachers' interviews. Teachers often described their students as "passive", "traditional" and that they lack the motivation to engage with tasks outside the classroom. These descriptions were particularly recurrent in phonetics sessions, literature, and culture of the language where British-American materials were predominant. When I asked Linda, a teacher of English, about how her learners find phonetics sessions, she recounted:

Most of them hate phonetics [...] I always asked them to pronounce the words [...] they don't, they feel reluctant to pronounce because they are scared of being embarrassed (Linda/Interview 1/February 2019)

The excerpt above communicates how students feel about learning British RP. For some, failure to pronounce words in their 'correct' form is a source

of shame. This psychological effect might have impacted their learning attitudes as Linda further elaborates:

With the phonetic class, I already explained word stress in two sessions and the third one was for practice. I gave them some exceptions and I told them to google the rest they never did, not last year not this year... When I ask them whether they did it, they just give me the fisheye [...] Last time, I told them frankly I give you 100% just revise don't be such passive [...] I give you something and give me your feedback, don't just take everything passively, try at least have a critical mind, question everything even me I might do mistakes I'm a human especially in phonetics sometimes when I came across words that I don't usually pronounce, sometimes I make mistakes in transcription [...] (Linda/Interview 1/ February 2019)

The excerpt hints at the lack of motivation among students to learn more about “word stress” outside the classroom. The phonetics sessions seem to focus on transferring rules that students seem to receive “passively”. Although Linda appears to challenge this mode of learning by inviting her learners to do further research, they seem to be resistant and hardly engaged. Some teachers attribute this passive learning attitude to a lack of students’ awareness about their learning role. Warda, for example, links this to the educational system, arguing that the students are still “not aware” that they should take accountability for their learning. She states:

[...] Normally students should continue studying outside the classroom to finish this lapse of time, but they do not do that. They are passive, and the LMD system requires students to be active, they are still passive like in the old method. They need to change (Warda/Interview pilot study/ April 2018)

Warda refers to the objectives of the Licence, Master, Doctorate (LMD) educational system. As presented in section 6.2, this system calls students to be autonomous and active. Warda hints at the failure of students to adapt to the system’s objectives because they still keep passive learning attitudes that they internalised from the previous system. Although autonomous and active learning approaches are key to the learning process, these notions need to be examined within the Algerian context. The lack of appropriate infrastructure and a suitable learning environment are also factors that might underlie students' passivity. This point was partially covered in section (7.3)

where teachers indicated the lack of equipment. Data from the students also point to the lack of learning resources outside the classroom, lack of technology, and library spaces. When students were asked about the difficulties they face in learning English at the university level, they commented on some of the constraints that led to this passivity:

Karima: The language. Everything is taught in English. I can understand but I cannot speak

Souad: I see

Haroon: Confusion about the system [...] there is another issue the modules which are supposed to be taught as a tutorial we are supposed to do them in classrooms, but we are taking these modules in an amphy. We don't even hear what the teacher is saying

Omar: There is a big problem of rooms. For example, research methodology should be taught in seminar rooms. We cannot study it in the amphy. Or at least we should be divided into two groups. There is a huge number in the lecture and we cannot understand anything

Karima: Even the teachers are not able to remember those who participated and attended in an amphy of 200 students so they take the exam mark and give it as a mark for tutorials as well

Omar: And also the way of teaching, can you imagine in an amphy theatre of 200 students and teachers are dictating for us to write down (FGY2/February 2019)

While Karima feels her lack of English speaking skills inhibits her from participating actively in the classroom, Omar and Haroon point to a bigger problem. The students' massive numbers led to a lack of teaching rooms. The students explain how the subjects that are supposed to be delivered in small groups are delivered in lecture forms because of the lack of rooms. As most learning takes place in large venues that assemble all students, this has made it hard for them to even hear the teacher. Not only this, but Omar also expresses his frustrations with the way teachers seem to pass on information. This narrative mode of teaching, as Freire (1993) refers to, engenders a passive mode of receiving information. As such, the educational experience "becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (1993: 53). What seems to foster this mode is the conditions placed on both teachers and

learners. The challenging context shapes the students' learning approach and could also play a role in the passive learning attitude that teachers previously referred to.

Although this theme is not entirely linked to the argument of the thesis, it is crucial to highlight since it gives more information about the ELT context. The physical context emerged as a crucial factor shaping attitudes to English teaching. However, in order not to diverge from the main focus of the research, it is only sensible to highlight its significance for future research without presenting the data analysis at length. Notably, data points to the crucial need for Algerian policymakers to first invest in the infrastructure and learning resources as they play a key role in students' motivation. It appears that the MHESR's approach to reform is top-down in which students are expected to change automatically and cope with an imported system. However, successful reforms are not necessarily those replicated from foreign contexts where they proved effective. Educational systems are context-dependent (Perry and Tor, 2008) and, thus, have to fit the needs of the socio-economic context and be tailored according to students' and teachers' experiences.

Teachers' accounts further describe how learners' passive attitudes were reflected in their performance. Linda described her students' performance in the phonetics exam:

It was catastrophic. At the day of the exam consultation, I told them that I felt that I'm correcting someone else's papers not my students. I was shocked. They said that they did not expect these forms of questions. It [exam] was very practical [...] (Linda/Interview 1/February 2019)

The students' passive learning attitudes and their poor performance in the phonetic exam are an indication of their struggle with the British RP. Although Linda asserts that the exam questions covered the content previously learnt in phonetics sessions, her students still struggled to pass the exam. I also asked students about their perceptions of learning the British RP phonetics. For example, students from focus group 1 do not seem to understand its relevance to learning English:

Salma: For me it's just to know how the articulators work how they become in touch with each other's, organ of speech, so sometimes we just understand but we don't really know

Sali: I feel I am studying medicine and not English. It feels like we are learning how to speak again

Zaineb: For me I don't care I love everything since I am learning everything in English, because I love English everything I learn is for me interesting

Souad: What about the others?

Lila: At the beginning, I said I came to study English why are we learning these things, the teacher is explaining, the others are not following, there is no atmosphere for learning. Everything seems uninteresting. I just write what the teacher is saying, without questioning anything

Farah: We don't work on practicing sounds as far as on writing rules and theories (FG1/March 2019)

The excerpts seem to convey that the students' uncertainty about the importance of learning RP English has led them to be passive learners in the classroom. The students explain the theoretical nature of studying RP phonetics. They feel that the lesson mainly takes a shape of transferring information that they have to write and memorise later. A lack of perception of the relevance of studying RP phonetics is also echoed above. Sali compares RP phonetics to a medical lesson since they were learning about the organs of speech from a scientific perspective. Similarly, Lila explains how she questioned the purpose behind studying RP phonetics at such length while she was expecting to learn more about aspects relevant to English. Furthermore, her statement points out how she was not the only student in the class who lost interest in the lesson. Her classmates also seem to be disengaged. This has made her passively take information without asking questions. Students do not seem to grasp the rules of the standard form and do not appear to find these rules relatable to their real-life use of English. Subsequently, this suggests a disparity between what is learnt in phonetics and what students perceive as practical to develop their speaking skills. Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) elaborate on the close relationship between language learning and language use. They argue that they can be considered as two faces of the same coin. This relation is relevant to the excerpt above. As students find it difficult to use RP English when practicing speaking and even when pronouncing isolated words, this might have engendered passivity in learning.

Despite this disengagement in the classroom, students further elaborated on how they were putting efforts to understand phonetics classes:

Souad: Do you engage in learning phonetics outside the classroom?

Sali: I watch videos about vowels and so on

Lila: For example the Daniel Jones diagram we studied it, but we didn't understand it, so we all went to YouTube to understand it (FG1/March 2019)

Although Lila previously mentioned that she just writes what the teacher says, she mentions here how she and her classmates used other sources to understand the lesson. This indicates that passive learning inside the classroom is not a permanent mode that defines learners. The passivity often implies students' dissatisfaction with the teaching content, learning atmosphere, and lack of clearly identifying the purpose of what is being taught. Learners' passivity and silence can be a form of resistance inside the classroom to communicate to teachers their discontent. Outside the classroom context, learners still attempt to actively process the received information.

In addition to students' struggles with the form of English, the nature of the reading materials also emerged as another source of students' passivity. The next section will present data from students' focus groups that illustrate the underlying reasons for students' disengagement with the teaching materials.

8.5.2 Struggles with British and American learning materials

The lack of diversifying the materials within ELT classrooms was tackled in 7.5 and 7.6. The teachers explained the importance of teaching materials from inner circle countries to promote a sense of intercultural understanding among their students, and spur openness towards other 'cultures' (see 7.5.2). Nevertheless, accounts from students demonstrate how these materials were found challenging both in terms of language difficulty and irrelevance to students' interests. These materials were not only critiqued by students for their difficulty but were also seen as another reason for their passive learning.

Although Linda previously expressed her frustration about her students' passivity in phonetics sessions, she recognised the difficulty of the reading materials:

Souad: What do you think of the materials taught to students?

Linda: Learners are oblivious of what they are learning especially British and American civilisation. In the exams, they are asked to write essays, not even direct questions or write a short paragraph and they are not familiar with how an essay is structured [...] Students are having difficulties in attaining these [...] I think the syllabus is loaded (Linda/Interview 1/February 2019)

The passage further describes the difficulty of the teaching content and how students often struggle to relate to its learning points. Linda also refers to the way teaching materials are structured in a way that sets unrealistic expectations for students. Notably, the way students are assessed poses a problem. Linda explains how students are supposed to write essays on complex literary texts. This expectation does not match the learners' English proficiency level. This point was further explored in students' focus group discussions. The students outline their reasons why they found the reading materials disengaging:

Khalida: I think civilisation and literature are good we are given a general idea about the American and British even though we are not reading the novels but at least we have a general idea

Souad: Did you read the books?

Kawtar: No

Omar: Not at all

Karima: They choose very long old books

Khalida: Very boring, I don't like the books we are studying

Souad: What do you think about the language of the reading texts?

Omar: The language of the book is very difficult for us. The teacher only explains the content and give us a general idea

Haroon: When we are studying these texts the only thing we learn about is the story, we don't learn about the techniques of writing, or for example, the writer uses imagery or things like that... (FG2/February 2019)

The excerpt features students' perceptions of the British and American reading materials. Khalida, and Haroon argue that the reading texts only present general knowledge. This knowledge is always centred around life, 'culture' and the history of Britain and America. As such, students feel that they are learning more about the stories of the novels that the curriculum prescribes rather than the language itself. Haroon, who previously expressed his passion for creative writing (see 8.2.1), thinks that his learning needs are not met. Furthermore, the students acknowledge that they are not interested in reading the imposed texts because of their linguistic complexity, which seems to outweigh their language level. The reason why these reading texts are chosen in the first place is supposed to be suitable for learners' levels and should help them to gradually elevate their understanding. However, data suggests that the choice of novels is promoted by the type of content which presents the 'culture' of the language. I will discuss the problematic nature of this essentialist thinking in 9.4.

Similarly, first-year students expressed the same idea regarding the complexity of the language:

Souad: In what way do you think studying literary texts helps your proficiency level?

Afaf: Yes, vocabulary, but there are some words which are very old and we cannot use them...

Zaineb: Yeah like the Shakespearian and Paradise Lost, vocabulary was very hard for us to understand them and use them like the word 'you' sometimes is used 'thou'

Fareh: I do agree, we are beginners. Because in high school we use to do only grammar and when we went to university we first faced the history of English, it was like a shock. It's something new (FG1/March 2019)

The reading texts presented for first-year learners were critiqued because of the language that was described as "old" and "hard to understand". Notably, the same descriptors were used above by students from focus group 2. Fareh relates how she found these materials shocking because of their difficulty. Not only the language aspect of these materials does not match learners' level, but also the structure and the form of some reading texts are from old English, making it even harder for students to understand. In section 7.5.2, a dominant discourse presented 'native speakers' materials as

rich resources that are used to improve students' linguistic skills and intercultural awareness. However, the above students counter this discourse and demonstrate how these materials have a difficult language structure and irrelevant themes. Furthermore, some students from focus group 2 state below the short-term objectives behind the learning materials:

Souad: So you are supposed to read it and discuss it in the classroom?

Karima: No! she [teacher] just opens a particular page and starts reading

Khalida: The teacher just gives us a general idea and asks us to make a summary...

Omar: Even the symbols we haven't talked about them...

Haroon: It is helpful for the exam just to have a mark to pass the module

Omar: I think some modules are needed while others are taught just to help us get the average mark to pass to the next year (FG 2/February 2019)

The students explain the absence of learning about the linguistic aspects from the English materials. Similar to Haroon in the previous excerpt, Omar refers to how studying symbolism was absent when reading these texts, and that the focus was general. Interestingly, both Haroon and Omar perceive the importance of the learning materials only for exam purposes. This could also justify the passive learning attitude that teachers pointed out to in 8.5.1. As students are unable to see the long-term objectives behind the learning materials, they resort to passive reception of information that serves them to pass tests (Pelley, 2014). This perception could be linked to previous data from teachers' interviews (see 7.4). Some teachers noted that the overloaded English curriculum and the institution pressurising them to provide exam marks convey a sense that teaching revolves around testing. This might have led students to learn the content that helps them pass the test. This juxtaposition of teacher and students' perspectives about materials from inner circle countries raises questions about their pedagogic values in terms of long-term learning. I will return to discuss this point in 9.4.

As students appeared demotivated to engage with the British and American reading texts, I asked them about the types of materials they prefer to have in the ELT curriculum:

Haroon: I think trending books would be great, better than the old books. Our culture does not support those kinds of books and also my attention won't be pulled to these kinds of novels, but if the teachers or the system I don't know, brought to us stories that are trending and themes that our generation likes we would be more interested in studying the book and read it

Karima: The teacher must choose the right books, like the kind of books that are modern and we are able to read. They choose classics such as *The Scarlet Letter*. Basically, all the people are not going to read it because the vocabulary is a bit difficult. We cannot read it. Me personally, I read 2 or 3 pages (FG 2/February 2019)

The above statements present a counter-argument to what teachers previously asserted (see 7.5.2), regarding the framing of materials from inner circle countries as promoters of openness and intercultural awareness. The cultural dimension of the materials does not seem to be the main reason for students' disengagement. Students expressed how open they are to read different foreign texts as long as they are new. The chosen texts are found to be old both in terms of the difficulty of language and the content. The selected texts further seem to be irrelevant to their interests and what they find trendy. As such, students could not see an added value to their language competence and presumed that these subjects are mainly added to the ELT curriculum to allow them to get the needed credits to pass their exams.

Learners' perspectives about the texts brought by teachers into the classroom indicate a focus on the materials as a product rather than the process by which learners become more proficient in interacting with texts.

This teaching routine is described by Badger and MacDonald as rooted in the simplistic conceptualisation of texts as 'authentic'. As a result, they explain how reading and listening sessions often place more emphasis on "making what happens in the classroom as authentic as possible and not enough on helping learners to develop their skills so that they can read and listen independently" (2010: 581). They argued, however, that authenticity lies in the dynamic interaction between materials and the learning process

taking place within the classroom as learners proactively engage in making sense of the content. The above students' accounts call for the need to revisit the curriculum objectives and the content, and tailor them to meet students' needs and interests. This will make the learning experience relevant to their lives.

The next section delves into examining how students make use of English outside the confines of classroom walls, and how this might allow them to pierce through the complexity of structural forces shaping ELT classrooms. In doing so, it is important to locate the way they use English in their social lives.

8.6 Students' use of English

The British and American standard varieties previously emerged as dominant at the teaching practice level. Most of the teachers treated these varieties as pre-established norms and only models for learners to develop their linguistic skills. In this section, the students' data shows how they use English differently from the standard forms taught in classrooms. The section will also present data that demonstrates the limited exposure and use of English outside the classroom context. Students' accounts, thus, challenge the dominant discourse of 'English is spoken everywhere'.

Students from focus group 3 share how they use English in their daily lives with friends and family, but in a limited way. This constrained exposure within the Algerian society has often pushed some learners to turn to the virtual world to practice their English. Students' accounts paint a realistic picture of English use in the Algerian context:

Aysha: I practice English with my family, with my sister actually when we don't want anyone to understand us we start talking in English. This is the privilege

Souad: What about the others, how do you use English outside the classroom?

Reem: I use English with my friends in social media. Not all my family understands English

Fatima: I use it at home with my sister and my brother to give them more information [...] (FG3/ April 2019)

The extracts above provide insights into the Algerian linguistic landscape where English is only spoken by the educated and younger generation. Aysha previously stated that all of her family members are teachers, but only her sister can understand English as she belongs to a younger generation. Similarly, Fatima uses English when revising and doing homework with her siblings. Aysha's and Fatima's statements indicate the uncommon use of English among ordinary people and all segments of Algerian society. The majority of people use Darija, Berber, Arabic and French, and are exposed more to French than English through news media. Hetman (2018), for example, researched the dominance of Arabic and French on contemporary Algerian online news media in different domains. Her findings show how Business websites written in French attract more visitors, whereas for the daily subject areas, most of these visitors tend to read both in French and Arabic. English, nonetheless, is neither used in the online news media nor on Algerian print media. However, the younger generation is to some extent proficient in English because it is a mandatory subject in schools (see 3.6).

Speaking English might give students an edge over those who do not speak it. The "privilege" that Aysha refers to could be associated with the feeling of being special since speakers of English in Algeria could be seen as part of a small elite group. From this perspective, a social value is ascribed to English, which could explain the way it was previously described by students as having a symbolic value (see 8.2.1). However, speaking English might also carry a sense of strangeness for learners as not all Algerians understand it. Later in the discussion with the same focus group, Fatima remembered another challenge she faces in using English:

Souad: What about the learning resources?

Aysha: Sometimes we don't find books, neither at the library nor online

Fatima: speaking about the environment, sometimes when I speak to my friend in English other friends understand only French they say why she is speaking in English, so sometimes the environment is not helpful (FG3/April 2019)

Fatima, who previously mentioned that she only practices English with her sibling, elaborates on how she is limited by the social context as she cannot use English with all of her friends. She even felt like the odd one out when using English. As her friends understand French, this represents the main

challenge for her to practice English outside the classroom. Similar views about the restricted use of English were also voiced among students from focus group 2:

Souad: How do you engage in learning English outside the classroom?

Kawtar: Yeah with friends and social media

Salma: I sometimes talk to myself in the mirror

Karima: Sing for example sing from your mind

Khalida: Only in the classroom, and very rarely

Souad: Why is that?

Khalida: It maybe because I don't like English. Because I use French daily with my mother and so on, but English no

Omar: Since in the Algerian society the majority talk French and our language itself contains French words, but English language you can only use it with certain persons, some friends and classmates

Kawtar: I tried communicating with Americans... (FG2/February 2019)

The students' data describes the use of English in Algeria. These learners might only have social media platforms to practice English outside classrooms. Through the internet, some students try to connect with English speakers, as in the case of Kawtar with Americans. Khalida and Omar describe the Algerian linguistic landscape where French as a second language still occupies a great part of their daily communication. Khalida's statement in particular depicts how French is more natural for her to use with her family than English. The students' perspectives about the limitation of using English outside the classroom context further reinforce teachers' statements presented in section 6.4. Teachers previously argued that a major obstacle preventing widespread use of English amongst Algerians is its lack of popularity in Algerian society. This infrequent use means that students are less exposed to the language. This also informs the data presented in 8.3 when students attempt to compensate for the absence of English in their social environment through exposure to the British and American popular cultures. These represent a window of learning experiences and entertaining sources that reflect their generation and youth culture.

In an interview with Ahmed who has a long teaching experience in the English language, both at university and in private schools, he describes how students are struggling with English as they cannot relate it to their social lives. Its absence from the Algerian context makes it hard for them to develop their linguistic skills.

[...] to create some kind of scholarship during the summer holidays to have them go there just to spend a week or two, just to know about the culture [...] we learn that from experience but if you keep them here, they cannot. You can explain it and make it really like something they can see, but if they don't feel it, they will not understand, English must be felt and lived. And in Algeria, we are trying really hard to make it easy for our students to love English but it's not [...]

(Ahmed/interview 11/April 2019)

Ahmed, raising the issue of exposure to English in Algeria as the main challenge facing students, demonstrates the realities of English in the Algerian context. Ahmed's statements about the need to immerse learners in English-speaking countries to know their 'cultures' are controversial.

Although immersion might provide students with the opportunity to speak English, learning about the 'culture' is rather a tricky concept as what makes the British or the American 'culture' is blurry or often reduced to a set of fixed traits. Nonetheless, the excerpt also hints at the infrequent use of English outside Algerian classroom walls, and how this makes it hard for teachers to relate to their students' lives and experiences and help them develop their language skills.

Given the limited opportunities to practice English within Algerian society, students from focus group 1 presented examples of using English in situations that can be considered as lingua franca communication:

Souad: How do you engage and use English outside the classroom?

Farah: English is the only language that I feel comfortable when I speak and express my opinions and I love it

Afaf: I have a lot of foreign friends from Turkey and Morocco. The Moroccans master the English language more than we do and they value it a lot, it's like us where the majority of Algerians prefer French. they speak it perfectly even though they are like us, the French is the second language and English is foreign, but they speak is very well

Salma: Social media helps a lot when texting and talking to friends we use English a lot (FG1/March 2019)

Communicating with speakers of English from expanding circles seems to be growing among these students. This gives further insight into the various contexts outside English-speaking countries in which students are using English. Particularly, Afaf's statement takes us to Morocco where she was impressed by the extent to which her Moroccan friends appeared to master English. This gave her the virtual exposure and practice she needed. It is also worth mentioning that these first-year students were also very fluent in English and they chose to conduct the focus group in English. For them, this was a good opportunity to speak in English while sitting on the campus café. While maintaining the general conversation going in English, they were often switching to Darija and French. This translanguaging appeared natural for these language learners who engaged almost subconsciously in a creative weaving of different languages.

As I noticed during the focus group discussion that English was used differently from the formal variety studied in their ELT classrooms, I asked:

Souad: Do you think when you start speaking in English you create your own variety of English?

(Students laughing)

Salma: No! it changes especially in writing we use abbreviations, the vocabulary from Algerian to English

Afaf: No, we use it informally, the British English is too formal and long but when we speak to friends we kind of shorten it and use slang words mainly American slang

Zaineb: I'm against Algerian English, I like the formal one.

Afaf: Of course we are against it

Salma: Do we have Algerian English? (FG1/March 2019)

All students seemed confused about Algerian English when mentioned by Zaineb. The students seemed aware that their multilingual background impacts their English language use both in terms of pronunciation, borrowing words from French such as TD (Travaux Dirigés, école supérieure), and in translating colloquial Darija into English (I chose English from my heart). Yet,

a level of fear could be detected as they continued explaining how they viewed the English that is influenced by their languages.

Salma: I'm not against it as long as it does not affect your studies, and it stops someone from...

Afaf: Yeah it doesn't help in real life

Farah: It is like what is happening to the French language in Algeria a different variety

(general noise)

Farah: It's all about the meaning [...] I know a lot of people who have very not decent accent but they talk English better than many of us [...] actually in my case I can speak in American and British but that doesn't mean that I know English properly. it's all about the meaning if you know a language it doesn't matter your accent once you get the language... (FG1/March 2019)

The fear of failure because of not using standard English is highlighted in the above extract. Salma emphasises how they are examined on the standard variety of English. In academic writing, students are required to follow and one variety: either American or British (see Fadela 8.3). "Algerian English" is a deviation from the expectations placed on them. Farah perceives Algerian English in terms of change in pronunciation and accent and argues that speaking English is about communicating meaning. Farah also conveys the fluidity of languages and the way they can be blended in use.

Algerian English has recently started receiving the attention of researchers in the area of World Englishes. Ghilamallah (2021), for example, investigates the way Algerians speak English. Her participants were fluent students of English. Through linguistic speech analysis, she mainly identifies pronunciation differences where most participants relied on the French pronunciation of specific letters and Arabic in the formation of sentence structure. As this area has not been thoroughly researched yet, one cannot claim the existence of Algerian English as a separate variety. This would, however, be a topic worth exploring for future research. Nevertheless, it is noted that there is a deeply rooted belief among multilingual learners that combining languages and forms of speaking is still considered as a 'contamination' between languages that should be avoided especially within English classrooms (Wei, 2018: 14).

The emerging discourses from students' use of English indicate the complexity of beliefs underlying their perceptions about learning English. The dominant discourse was that a 'native speaker' model of learning is important for developing the linguistic skills needed to perform academically. This discourse seems to be endorsed by the British and American materials they have been exposed to both inside the classroom and outside. Other students presented a different discourse admitting that targeting 'native speaker's' competence is unrealistic. Notably, the use of English outside the classroom context, for example through social media, seems to liberate students from language norms and structures.

The next section will delve into another dimension of language use whereby learners make use of their lived experiences. This has the potential of shifting the focus from what is a 'correct' use of English to what is most relevant to learners' lives.

8.7 Expressing lived experiences through English

This section will address how learners speak about their experiences through English. Data will present examples of these experiences and how they can enrich ELT classrooms. This section aims to demonstrate how allowing learners to develop a "personal voice" (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013: 52) in the language can create a resourceful learning atmosphere where learners are engaged in what interests them the most.

Learners' lived experiences have the potential to transform the language classroom when learners use these as resources to express themselves in the language. To demonstrate this, data from observation of oral communication classrooms are presented below (Fieldwork 10/04/2018). The teacher took a different approach to develop her students' speaking skills. Lila asked her students to prepare presentations about social issues they want to discuss together in the class. The presentations tackled different topics that were related to what they experienced outside the classroom context. I will present examples of classroom talks to demonstrate how active learning is triggered when learners explore topics that interest them.

Sami prepared a presentation about medical errors and legal policies to ensure patient safety in hospitals. The choice of this topic was motivated by his personal experience. Sami started sharing pictures that he took from the

emergency hospital. The pictures showed uncleaned medical tools left outside, empty receptions with no staff, and dirty patients' rooms. After showing these pictures, Sami explained how he had a tragic experience in the hospital that led to a medical error. Sami's wife had to do operations which further complicated her health situation. What I found surprising was the sense of trust characterising the classroom. I noticed that Sami was confident in speaking about such a sensitive topic and he seemed driven by the will to find solutions for change through sharing his personal experience. The teacher further prompted students to discuss the reasons behind poor management in health care. Students' engagement was heightened, and everyone seemed to share their views, raising ethical issues, responsibility, and absence of strict regulations. The topic made the language classroom vibrant because everyone could relate to the topic. Some students openly presented similar experiences of patient neglect and attempted to delve into understanding the causes. For example, Hadjer related the case of her brother who is now handicapped because of a medical error. Maria added that her nephew was admitted to the hospital but received a good care service because her family knows the hospital manager. She argued that nepotism is a major issue in hospitals that affect service delivery. The discussion lasted for forty minutes and everyone was immersed in dissecting the problem and giving solutions (classroom talk 1/ April/ 2018).

What helped the classroom discussion was the nature of the theme debated. Freire (1993) refers to similar themes as generative, in that they allow teachers and students to explore and dialogue topics that are relevant to students' lives. The intention behind collective dialogues is to challenge social issues and bring positive change to the world. Freire (1993) argues that the role of dialogue is growth and a positive change to the person, group, and society. This notion of transformative change seemed to be key in the students' presentations.

Abir is another student who chose to reflect on the role of women in Algerian society, and how they are misrepresented. Abir researched the five most influential women who had an impact on Algerian society and the Arab world. She explored the challenges they endured and how they succeeded. After Abir's presentation, the teacher asked the following question: Do you think women in the Arab world have their rights? In our society how are women living?. This triggered the students to engage in a critical debate. They were sharing their views on the unfair representation of women in

Algerian society. The topic yielded an opportunity where both male and female students were articulating and defending their views. The teacher joined the debate and was further prompting the students to challenge “cultural, gender and other status-related power relationships and stratifications” within society (Rugut and Osman, 2013: 25). A snippet from the recorded presentation is presented below:

Sami: You should speak about sharing responsibility, not just defending your position...

Sofiane: Your idea is to work in collaboration with men or replace them?

Abir: Of course, to work together, but they don't want to, there is a belief that jobs are being taken away by women. There were interviews in the channel of Al Nahar and this is what they were saying. This is what's happening in society. Give me a verse from the Quran that says women have to be housewives and not work. The prophet used to sew his own clothes and clean the house [...]

Sami: This is not the case, I'm a human and social, and I don't do this. I help my wife and everything

Linda: Can you speak on behalf of all Algerian men!

Sofiane: He is a *habba klila*! [*a rare pearl*]

Class: (*Laughing*) (classroom talk 2/ April/ 2018)

Although students occasionally seemed to struggle with vocabulary, this did not prevent them from conveying meaning. At times, the teacher interfered to help them to find their words. At others, however, students managed to rephrase their sentences and communicated effectively. The learners were listening, defending their points, and relating to each other's opinions. This further gave them the self-confidence to develop a “personal voice” in English. Translanguaging was also evident in the debate, as shown in the above excerpt “*habba klila*”. To provide some context, this is a common phrase that is used among the younger generation to refer to the perfect bride or groom. The students were sharing their views on the topic within a safe atmosphere which has helped them to use English flexibly.

The teaching method that Lila used in her oral expression classroom seemed different from the other teachers (see 7.5.3). As this method had a

noticeable impact on learners' engagement and motivation, I interviewed Lila about her intentions behind this teaching technique:

I do not have any problem with raising taboo or political issues in my session because I want to make my students aware of everything that's happening, and to create a notion of sensitivity towards things. I don't want my students just to speak English but to have a touch, a fingerprint, and learn how to express their voice on such critical topics...related to current issues [...] I prefer creating debates and engaging students more than just reading from the projector. I also use the fishbowl technique where I ask learners to present their topics in a middle and the others make a circle and give the presenter feedback and discuss their opinions and even criticism, of course in a constructive way (Lila/ Pilot study Interview 2/April 2018)

Lila appears to emphasise learners' voice and participation in the learning process. She explains the importance of tackling current social topics in the language classroom to raise her learners' critical awareness. Later in the interview, Lila adds that her teaching also focuses on "giving learners the chance to reflect on their learning". This teaching approach mirrors critical pedagogy where the learner occupies the centre of education. Together with the teacher, learners can change the asymmetrical power relations within the classroom (Freire, 1996). Teachers and learners can engage together in a process of dialogue which can lead to praxis – action, reflection, and intervention – as argued by Freire (1996). Furthermore, Lila notes how learners need more than the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). She refers to "awareness" and "sensitivity towards things" as other key skills that learners need to cultivate. This dimension connects language learning to political engagement as argued by Kramsch (2020: 14) who emphasises the role of language teachers in exploring "the workings of *le politique* in the daily verbal and non-verbal transactions that their students will conduct in everyday life as soon as they leave their classroom". As such, the language classroom reflects learners' social concerns and lives and becomes a space where they can mediate their existence through the language learnt.

Lila links language learning to reflection in her teaching approach to allow learners to identify their learning needs and work on developing them. This reflective aspect is discussed under the Exploratory Practice (EP) framework (Allwright and Hanks 2009). Allwright and Hanks (2009) conceptualise EP as

a learning process whereby learners puzzle about issues concerning language learning and the linguistic difficulties they face. Hanks (2020) further argues that reflective learning reveals learners' potential to think, articulate research questions, and collect data to understand any issue related to their learning. I would add that this puzzling can also expand and cover social issues that concern learners. As such, through EP, advanced learners puzzle through the language and develop a voice as they will learn how to use a language in researching and speaking about something relevant to their lives. The themes of reflective learning and exploratory practice will be further discussed in 9.3.3.

8.8 Chapter summary

This chapter focused on students' perceptions of English and their experiences of learning within the classroom context. Students demonstrated an intrinsic motivation behind learning the language and an awareness of the limitations of its job prospects within the Algerian context. Thus, for some students, English was a means to achieve their passion. Secondly, students' exposure to English within and outside the classroom context seems to be driven by a 'native speaker' model. Although this model was seen by teachers as a rich source to motivate learners and improve their linguistic and 'intercultural' skills, in reality, learners showed passive learning attitudes towards it. The students problematised the outdated learning materials which they could not see their significance to their actual use of English. They called for new and trendy English learning materials to which they can relate more. The incongruent nature of the learning content with their learning needs revealed itself when students elaborated on their use of English outside the classroom context. As such, these claims presented a counter-discourse to the nativespeakerism ideology that underlies the selection of materials. Consequently, students' accounts push the argument made against privileging materials from inner-circle countries. Just because the selected materials are the product of 'native speakers', this does not necessarily mean they are appropriate for all learners. The learning materials have to be closely tailored to meet students' needs and interests. Finally, the chapter explored learners' lived experiences and how they can be rich learning resources for ELT classrooms. To elaborate more on the key themes that emerged from the data, I shall now turn to the discussion chapter.

Chapter 9: Discussion of findings

9.1 Introduction

The chapter is divided into three subsections each of which discusses emergent findings from language policymakers, teachers, and students. To answer the research questions, I will interpret and discuss the salient findings emerging from chapters 6, 7, and 8. These previous data chapters presented discourses of English at the level of language policy, teaching classrooms, and learning experience. I will explore the way these multiple discourses are often framed, reproduced, and challenged by the different stakeholders. The discussion will also illustrate conflicting views about the status of English teaching and learning. Additionally, I will provide examples of macro and micro forces, dominant ideologies, and conflicting visions of change and how these factors shape the reality of English language policy, teaching, and learning.

9.2 English and discourses of change within Algerian higher education

One is struck by a sense of entanglement when closely examining the issue of language policies within Algerian Higher Education (AHE). Language policies are shaped by different ideologies, which are representations of what each language envisions and what it symbolises. Taking a holistic approach, the findings suggest that the current change in the status of English Language Teaching (ELT) within AHE is propelled by a combination of global and national forces. Findings in section 6.2 indicate that internationalisation of higher education is a global force driving the vision of change for AHE. English is regarded as a steppingstone to achieve this goal given its status as ‘the international’ language. In the meantime, other findings (see 6.4) show how the impact of national macro forces, particularly the Algerian colonial history has shaped debates about English versus French. The tension between the two languages emerged again in a time of political unrest. Findings hint at how the discourse of English versus French was framed as a strategy to end the French cultural hegemony and a tool to decolonise Algerian education from the French linguistic imperialism. These two key themes will be elaborated under separate subsections. The

discussion will also attempt to answer the first research question: what are the forces and discourses shaping ELT within Algerian higher education?

9.2.1 English and visions of change for the future

In Algeria, any educational policy transferred to higher education is within the hands of the state. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) is a major actor appointed by the Algerian government to take official decisions and instigate reforms. Hence, decisions regarding ELT are supposed to fall within the bigger picture, envisioned by the Algerian government. “Strengthening” the status of English within AHE is considered a key element within the AHE’s vision for change and development. The findings (see 6.2) captured how this vision is motivated by reaching international standards of education. Within this orientation, investing in ELT is perceived as a passport to reach this target destination. This was evident in dominant discourses (see 6.3) that framed the policy of “strengthening English language teaching” as a medium for disseminating academic research and visibility of AHE. The findings also indicate that discourses at the policy level are driven by a transfer approach. This approach is applied to different levels of reform in higher education. In this thesis, I focus on how the transfer approach relates to ELT as one aspect of the broader vision.

Perry and Tor (2008: 510) argue that education transfer does not simply entail a direct process of borrowing and lending, but it also refers to the indirect mechanism, covert, and implicit dissemination of “ideas, concepts, and discourses (soft transfer)”. They also emphasise the complexity of these mechanisms underlying educational transfer, arguing that the reasons behind educational reforms can be placed “along a continuum of power in terms of the interaction between local and external forces” (2008: 519). Examples of transfer mechanisms were evident at the level of policymaking (see 6.3). First, the language planning for English to replace French as the medium of instruction, and its adoption as an official language for academic administrative communication intended to replicate the way English is used in other countries. The use of statements such as English as ‘the international language’ and its exponential ‘spread’ in higher education in several countries, were references used to explain the inevitability of the switch to English for Algerian universities. As such, statements about English as ‘the international language’ carry a sense of added value and

benefits which English is supposed to bring. The findings (6.3.4) suggest that the challenges within Algerian universities were attributed to inadequate language planning, therefore, adopting English is seen by the MHESR as a solution to develop this sector. English is represented as the magical remedy to Algerian universities' deficiencies. Similar thinking also applies to the reasons behind borrowing the European educational system (see 6.2). This is perceived as a necessity in order to transcend the old system and to align the quality of teaching and learning with international standards of education. These references to international guidelines are represented therefore as footsteps leading to local success.

The connection between English and educational reform is crystalised in the discourse of English as 'the global academic language'. Piller (2016: 181) explores how English has acquired an international character and has become the boundary marker for socioeconomic progress and a natural "medium of academic excellence". Similarly, English in higher education has become key to a broader vision of developing the Algerian educational sector which has been experiencing issues during the past decades.

Findings (in 6.3.3) also demonstrate how the transfer of the educational system and English language policies to Algeria are also motivated by the structures of internationalisation. This was apparent in the strive for visibility and a better university ranking. The increasing presence of English within AHE is perceived as a stamp that marks an international outlook. Therefore, a sense of economic capital might be attached to English, the language that can potentially be a new means for economic development, especially when it comes to attracting international students. Benrabah (2004; 2007; 2013) conducts a comprehensive analysis of language policies from colonialism to contemporary Algeria. He identifies two main aims declared by Algerian policymakers whenever a specific language policy is issued in education. First, language policies are seen as an attempt to solve the linguistic conflict arising from the multilingual nature of Algeria. Secondly, opting for a language policy is considered a part of a wider plan "to contribute to the overall development of the country" (Benrabah, 2013: 14). In the quest for development and nation-building, linguistic pluralism has always been regarded as an obstacle to achieving these aims by Algerian policymakers. The findings (in 6.3.2) illustrate this vision for development indicating that while the French language restricts Algerian to French-speaking countries

(mainly to France), promoting English will help to make connections with the world.

Examining the way educational transfer has evolved reveals a desperate economic reality that preceded the reform taking place in AHE. Kerzabi (2016) gives a detailed account of the acute economic crisis which hit Algeria in 1988. Consequently, a shift is noticed in the economic system, from socialist to market-based, which led to radical reforms of all areas, including higher education, starting from 2000. This transformation was also accompanied by the massive and constant decline in oil prices especially in 2013 and 2016. As oil and gas are the major exports and revenues for Algeria, this crisis has severely impacted the Algerian Dinar which lost much of its value and increased foreign debt. As a result of the economic upheaval, “an abrupt and total opening of foreign trade has occurred without regulation and tariff and non-tariff measures to protect national production” (Benziane, 2004: 107). In light of this socio-economic situation, Algerian universities were often described by policymakers as a failure since the educational system was not keeping pace with the economic changes happening at the national and international levels (Metatla, 2016). Benziane (2004: 102) also describes Algerian graduates’ struggle to find employment and contends that “the skills of many who are products of this system are now obsolete, contributing to Algeria's crisis”. This conveys the perceived need for a bridge between the educational and economic sectors that the new reforms are supposed to make.

Kerzabi (2016) explains how in the middle of the economic crisis, Algeria was left with no other option but to seek external financial help from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. However, these institutions are regarded as transnational regimes which offer conditional assistance. Borjian (2013: 34) points out that the “World Bank is not only in the business of disbursing loans but also of lending ideas, norms and education models” that are often represented as ‘solutions’. In her study of ELT in the Iranian context, she traces how the World Bank indirectly plays a role in enforcing certain language policies through “the imposition of a package of conditions on the loan-receiving countries, in return for its loans” (2013: 35). In Algeria, the ‘loan conditionalities’ were “the formulation and implementation of reforms that will hasten the transition to a market-oriented economy” (Akacem, 2004: 116) which in turn paved the way for educational transfer to take place. In doing so, the transfers of ideas, models, and

English language policies were inevitable to keep pace with the economic changes on the national and international level and to bring about solutions to domestic issues.

Transferring a global educational system to solve a local economic crisis is not unique to Algeria; South Korea also experienced similar economic struggles. Piller and Cho (2013), for example, explain the economic instability that hit South Korea in the late 1990s which resulted in a series of changes promoting hyper-competition at different levels including higher education. During the South Korean economic crisis, English language policy was used as a quantifiable index of globalisation to legitimise the implemented changes. Piller and Cho (2013: 25) argue that “neoliberal free-market fundamentalism actually serves as a covert language policy mechanism”. As such, they maintain that understanding English language teaching and transfer policies require researchers to explore possible connections “to the socio-economic order” (2013: 24). Similarly, Borjian (2013) explains the politics behind language education transfer in Iran. She contends that in post-revolution Iran, ELT constitutes a great part of the socio-economic changes brought by a new government. Within a reformist orientation, borrowing teaching models from English-speaking countries was also facilitated by several organisations such as the British Council. Borjian (2013: 134), thus, outlines numerous concerns among which is the “economic gain” that often drives the promoters of global educational transfer.

Within global educational transfer, the line between international, Anglo-American, and Western European educational systems is blurry. As such, educational reforms are often discussed in terms of reflecting global characteristics and international standards which are naturally flowing into local contexts to elevate the quality of education. However, the findings show that regardless of the geographical source of this transfer, it is rooted in the belief in Western idealisation. The latter is an ideological construct that is grounded in some characteristics that describe a specific society. Hall (1992) outlines the essentialist nature of these traits that are often attributed to what constitutes the West. Hall (1992: 186) points out that these traits are only concerned with how a society “is developed, industrialized, urbanized, capitalist, secular, and modern”. These representations are also closely linked to English. My findings indicate that English language policy transfer is driven by the notion of Western superiority, notably of English-speaking

countries which are regarded as models of success and academic excellence. Examples of this were evident in the 'cooperation' established through American and British Embassies. Their 'expertise' was perceived as a necessity to improve ELT in particular, and Algerian higher education in general (see 6.5). Through the training, language schools, workshops, and exchange programmes offered to Algerian teachers and students, the MHESR treated these as the roadmap for developing and modernising AHE. I will later discuss the implications of these partnerships at the epistemological level (see 9.4.3 and 9.4.4).

Reforms promoted by an unclear pedagogic agenda often carry ramifications when they are introduced to a specific context. Micro-level examination (see 7.3) describes the incompatible nature of the educational reform to the Algerian socio-economic reality. The MEHSR's top-down approach has exacerbated the educational experience, as its objectives and visions do not reflect the conditions in which teaching and learning take place. The reform emphasises the notions of autonomy, learner-centred approach, and employability (see 6.2). However, students' accounts (in 8.5) show the inapplicability of these notions given the absence of resources, accessibility to libraries, and lack of teaching rooms. These contextual challenges made it hard for them to live up to the reform's expectations.

The teachers (in 7.3 and 7.4) also pointed to similar problems while highlighting the way Algerian teachers are often marginalised when educational changes are implemented. The teachers viewed the top-down nature of the changes as foreign and engrossed in the structure of teaching while discarded the local context's needs. Consequently, this results in symbolic policies which are often adopted for political and economic objectives. Findings from teachers (in 7.2) demonstrate that when educational policies are not meticulously studied and well-funded, they lead to unclear goals and objectives. The absence of commitment and lack of funding devoted to specific reforms and policies indicate the symbolic nature of these policies. Rizvi and Lingard (2010: 9) add that symbolic reforms "tend to have vague, ambiguous and abstract goals statements and lack well thought-through implementation strategies". This ambiguity and vagueness are often the results of the educational transfer approach when adopted without adequately localising educational systems and filtering its principles.

Seargeant and Erling (2011) study the case of English in Bangladesh and identify how the ideology of 'English as a language for international

development' is also visible in language policies. They contend that the implemented policies in Bangladesh language education mainly "draw upon this discourse than have real-world consequences for social practice, as these initial beliefs about the language are transferred into large-scale educational projects" (2011: 250). Similarly, Borjian (2013) explains the politics behind language education transfer in Iran. She contends that ELT constitutes a great part of the changes which started taking place after the revolution as a step to modernise education. Borjian (2013) points to the importance of the historical perspective to understand the context in which English is endorsed.

In light of this, I now turn to the role of national forces in shaping the discourses of English. Within the 'Hirak', the recent political movement against corruption, the discourse of English to replace French has emerged. The next section will discuss how English is set against French the dominant language of Algerian universities.

9.2.2 English as a change from the colonial past

The context of higher education is of great importance to the Algerian future vision of development. Yet, this social institution has been a site for political monopoly. The research findings (6.3.4, 6.4) point out the significance of the Algerian historical context and the current political unrest as national forces underpinning discourses of English within higher education. These forces have fuelled the policy of "strengthening English in Algerian universities" which was issued by the MHESR. In this section, I discuss the discourses around this language policy and how they are framed as a step to substitute the French language and end France's neo-colonial involvement with Algeria's domestic affairs. As such, this section will explore how English has been framed as the rival to French within AHE. I argue that the way English is positioned cannot only be interpreted vis-à-vis the substitution of French the language with colonial baggage. The status of English also sits closely in the current, unstable political situation and the vision for fundamental changes which people want to happen.

Change in educational language policies within postcolonial context often stems from the intention to transcend colonial influences. As the French colonial legacy was ingrained in Algerian people through the French language and French educational system, substituting French with English is

presented at the policy level as a closure from the colonial legacy. The African sociolinguist Djité (1992: 21) points to this close link stating that “nowhere else in Africa has the language issue been so central in the fight against colonialism [as in Algeria]”. Furthermore, Le Roux (2017: 113) highlights the socio-historical nature of language policies within Algerian education. She argues that these decisions are understood when exploring the intersection between French colonisation, Algerianisation, and Arabisation. These have always evoked debates about which language deserves to be promoted.

Findings (in 6.3.4) demonstrate that language policies in Algeria are not simply a matter of a neutral selection of a language that best responds to social demands and achieves functional purposes. The longing to restore Algerian national identity after the colonial experience is central to English language policies. As higher education represents a key social institution in Algeria, language decisions might evoke more profound beliefs about the making of this imagined identity. As English is reputed to be ‘the global and international language’, it is treated as a neutral and functional language for Algerian universities that also has the potential to end French linguistic and cultural imperialism. Thus, a dominant discourse of English at the policy level seems to reflect intentions to decolonise Algerian higher education from traces of French neo-colonialism. This was inferred in the MHESR efforts to substitute French with English as the language of administration, education, and research (see 6.3.4). However, taking the political context in which this discourse has emerged suggests that other national forces are driving the status of English within AHE.

Findings from teachers (see 6.4) echo the politics of ELT with reference to the Algerian protests (the ‘Hirak’ movement) against the presidential elections (February 2019). Given this political context, the discourse of ‘English is more useful than French for Algerian universities’ surfaced across different data from policymakers (see 6.3.4, 6.4). However, the teachers showed awareness of the politics behind the decisions to strengthen the status of English. They explained how this discourse aims to mollify the youth and win trust for the despised government. For example, Halima’s and Mustapha’s accounts (see 6.4) refer to the link between English and the political situation in Algeria suggesting that the English language policies might serve as a “[...] a way to absorb the anger of the people” who were protesting. Marwa (see 6.4) also points out that replacing English with

French can be seen within broader governmental changes. Under the motto “*Al Djazzair Al Jadida*” (new Algeria), the transition stage started in April 2019 and voiced some ‘promising’ reforms to implement in all sectors that aim to project an image of development and progress. Yet, these reforms were merely symbolic and did not tackle the core issues raised by the people. The protesters demanded a change in the bureaucratic system, the Algerian constitution, and to arrange for transparent elections with new candidates who are not part of the old system (Dris, 2019). These key democratic needs are still not met.

The choice of English as a ‘neutral’ language for higher education does not reflect the Algerian complex linguistic reality. The teachers’ accounts run counter to the dominant discourse framing English as more useful than French. Mustapha and Halima (6.3.4) in addition to students (see Omar and Khalida in 8.6) explained how the use of English outside the classroom is very limited compared to French. Both teacher and student participants maintained that French is deeply engrained within the local languages through the linguistic phenomena of codeswitching and borrowing, and within the daily life of people through newspapers, media, and literature. This makes the status of the French language firmly grounded within both the linguistic scenery and the Algerian identity.

It should be noted that the intention to promote English at the expense of the French language has always existed since the Algerian independence (1962). The findings (in 6.3.4) refer to the Arabisation policy to point out the way ELT policy in Algeria has always sparked friction between French and English. Mustapha (in 6.3.4) compares the English policy to the previous efforts of the ministry to replace French with English in primary education (see 2.2.2). He maintains that similar language policies always fail because they are fuelled by nationalist ideology while they lack pedagogical implications. The agendas previously revolved around privileging Arabic as a standard language deemed to be the marker of national identity, and support it with English as the foreign language. Benrabah (2013: 98) accentuates a similar concern where he maintains that the way English is politicised in Algeria can be seen as a strategy that benefits the advocates of Arabisation policy. He argues that “the contest between English and French in Algeria relies on top-down language planning activities occurring in a social vacuum [...] it ignores extra-linguistic factors that are likely to affect language spread or decline”. Miliani (2000: 14) concludes that at the surface level “the

teaching of English has been introduced to help plaster the cracks in the educational system” however, deeply, it is done to remove French. English policy in primary school failed (it was dropped after two years of implementation) as the nationalist ideology lost its power in the early 2000s. Yet, the findings suggest that the key aim of replacing the French language persists. This does not seem to restore the Arabic language but rather to focus more on strengthening English.

While English continues to be a colonial language in several African countries (Nigeria, Gambia, Tanzania...etc), in North African countries, English is envisaged differently. Noticeably, English is represented as a neutral language free from any colonial baggage (Errihani, 2017; Boukadi and Troudi, 2017). This idea seems to be mediated through the discourses which promote it as the language of international universities and the language that is more useful than French for academic research and mobility (see 6.3.3). Although both French and English are equally colonial languages, in Algeria, English is only seen as ‘the international language’ and ‘the lingua Franca’, both statements appear to be used rhetorically at the policy level as findings from sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2 show.

In similar findings, Jacob (2020) examines dominant views held by most Algerians about French and English as colonial languages. The difference between the languages was seen in the long-lasting damages and economic crisis in which French colonialism resulted. Jacob (2020: 1020) reports that when her participants compared the case of previous British colonies “there was a consensus that British colonisation had been less disruptive and therefore former colonies were in a ‘better place’ or ‘doing well’ compared to former French colonies”. These held beliefs seem to underlie the neutral perception often attributed to English compared to French. Similarly, Benrabah (2009: 253) argues that among the Algerian youth “English has adapted to new postcolonial contexts by liberating itself from its national origin and imperial past, while French has not”, This belief makes English appear in Algeria as a restorative tool that will repair colonial damages. However, these representations are more embedded in policies than in practice. In her study, Jacob (2020) notes that Algerian children and teenagers who expressed a great interest in English and who often invest a great deal of money to learn it in private schools were all fluent in French. The choices made by youth and their parents show how at the practice level, English is only learnt alongside French and not to substitute it. Evidence

from the data also demonstrates how learners perceive English as another medium for self-expression. The student participants such as Haroon, Soumia, Zaineb, and Aysha (8.2.2) all describe their passions for creative writing and art and how learning English can serve them to reach their goals. None of these learners perceived English as a substitute for French or any other languages they speak. This multilingual awareness also emerged in findings from section 6.4. The presence of English in the Algerian protests was strongly an add-on to the existing languages (Darija, Berber, Arabic, and French) highlighting the true multilingual background of the protesters. The choice of English might be more pragmatic as protesters perceived its usefulness as a tool that will help them voice their concerns to the world and explain the events in their words through English.

The answer to the first research question, “what are the forces and discourses shaping English language teaching within Algerian higher education?”, is based on the above discussion of findings. I argue that the promotion of English at the policy level is “political from top to bottom” (Joseph, 2010: 17). The politics of English within AHA is driven by the complex interaction of global and national forces. I argue that multiple discourses of English interlock to serve global educational transfer. On the one hand, the French language colonial baggage is discursively mobilised by policymakers to legitimise changes in language policy. Thus, this seems to reflect a vision of fundamental change taking place in AHE in particular and ‘new Algeria’ in general. On the other hand, other discourses link English to internationalising education, excellent academic research, economic development, and youth employability. These discourses add further legitimacy and empower any changes brought to the status of English and its teaching. As previously argued, understanding the reality of ELT beyond the policy level requires attention to how English is used at the micro classroom level, the subsequent section will centre around learners and their experience of learning and using English.

9.3 Learners navigating macro forces

Language learning is defined as a multifaceted process in which the learner engages in different roles that are not always neatly delineated in a visible classroom context. Allwright and Hanks (2009: 1) note that “learners are interesting, at least as interesting as teachers”, yet the focus of research studies has always been on language teachers. Furthermore, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013: 51) point to how the language learner is often positioned as “a learner” who is expected to systematically develop prescribed skills to be able to communicate effectively. They, however, acknowledge other roles, for example, a learner is also a user of language in the search for personal expression and “opportunities to develop a personal voice in the target language” (2013: 53). Kramsch (2009) also recognises the learner as a human and a person with a rich linguistic repertoire, experiences, and multiple identities. These roles are essential to understand learners as they engage in and with the language learning process. This section aims to delve into the realities of English from the perspective of the student participants as language learners, users, and human individuals to explore how English is linked to their daily lives.

9.3.1 Realities of English use

Pennycook (2016: 34) argues that understanding the politics of English should not only examine its underlying global forces but also explore how “English is always contingent on local relations of power and desire”. This often highlights the different understandings of English that are often “caught up in many forms of hope”. The findings (in 8.2) feature students’ motivation behind learning English at the university level. Their perspectives demonstrate how English carries a personal significance more than a professional one. In this section, I juxtapose the students’ accounts about using English to the top-down policies previously discussed to further elucidate the reality of English in Algerian society in general and among Algerian students in particular.

As discussed in the previous section, the students did not assert that they learnt English to supplant French. Conversely, they often referred to their use of French in their daily lives (see Khalida and Omar in 8.2.1). Learners’ accounts stand in opposition to the way English is positioned against the French language at the policy level. English for these students meant

another foreign language they want to learn for intrinsic motivations that transcend the dominant discourses of English. Although the students (in 8.2) sometimes expressed their motivations with reference to the discourse of English as ‘the international language’, they often related this discourse to mobility. Notably, some of them believe that travelling abroad and exploring the world can be facilitated through mastering English (as in the case of Zaineb and Reem in 8.2.1). Furthermore, a different form of mobility was articulated by the students (in 8.2.1). Haroon, Soumia, and Zaineb for example (in 8.2.2) viewed English as a self-investment that will allow them to pursue their passions. Similar accounts indicate how English represents a bridge for learners to attain different “forms of hope” (Pennycook, 2016: 34) and goals, and not as a sword to sever the French language.

The discourse of English to promote academic mobility was also prevalent at the macro policy level (see 6.5). Yet, the findings (in 7.4.2) show who are the real beneficiaries from this academic mobility. Teachers (like Halima, Malek, and Fadela) complained about the existing inequality and lack of transparency when teachers of English are selected for scholarship and training abroad. They point out how this selection is not only based on the number of publications in English, but it is rather a blurry process where specific groups get selected, while those who fulfil the criteria are often removed from the list. This suggests that English might indeed promote academic mobility but only in favour of a privileged group who rely on powerful networks. It seems that subtle power relations at the micro institution level indirectly impact the reality of English in higher education. The data indicates that teachers’ seniority characterises the nature of bureaucracy taking place in the institution. As such, further research is needed to explore other factors underpinning these power relations and how they shape ELT.

In the findings (8.6), more discrepancies surfaced between the macro discourses of English (driven by global/national forces) and the realities of English outside the classroom context. Both students and teachers pointed to the absence of English in Algerian society. While some students (like Fatima and Aysha) only use English inside their homes with their siblings, others rely on virtual social media as the only space to practice the language. The students also highlight how their use of Darija and French is more common, while others (like Omar and Fatima) felt awkward among

their friends when speaking in English. These students articulated how it is still considered abnormal to use English in Algerian society.

Teachers like Ahmed (in 8.6) and Mustapha (in 6.4) also problematised the absence of exposure to English outside the classroom. They argued that this negatively impacts learners' motivation and progress. While Mustapha (in 6.4) describes that "English learners are isolated when they go back home" and that English is not socially backed-up" as French, Ahmed (in 8.6) contends that "English has to be felt and lived" for an effective learning process. This limited use of English in Algeria has ramifications on the success of policies brought by the MHESR. As discussed in 2.2, policies tend to have little impact at the practice level when they do not reflect the "real language policy of the community" (Spolsky, 2012: 5). Furthermore, the absence of English use is not only limited among the youth, as Fatima and Omar indicate (in 8.6), but English is also rarely used among other social groups, and the older generation whom the majority were only educated in Arabic and French. As such, this makes English a foreign language that is spoken by the minority of educated and elite groups, mainly from younger generations and in specific formal contexts such as educational institutions and multinational companies. Consequently, the realities of English outside the macro discourses point to the difficulty of seeing a real implication for the English language policies, which seek to replace French and make English a natural language in Algerian universities and society.

I now turn to discuss the realities of the discourse of employability drawing on students' perspectives.

9.3.2 Realities of employability

Employability was another discourse framing the promotion of English. The MHESR's statements (see 6.3) about the importance of English were mapped out as plans to improve graduates' employability. The findings (in 6.2 and 6.3) show that ELT-related education transfers were discursively constructed in terms of skills and competencies for graduates who will soon join the workplace. Therefore, data from official documents and political speeches further suggests how the MHESR uses English language policy as strategic discourses to address youth unemployment. The language policy reform, 'strengthening the English language', is also legitimised by the intention to invest in Algerian university students. In this subsection, I

examine the discourse of employability in relation to students' and teachers' accounts.

The findings from learners as presented in section 8.2.2 illustrate their awareness of the current job market and the difficulty of finding a job when graduating. "What will you do with an English degree in Algeria for god's sake!", a striking statement voiced by Reem (in 8.2.2). A sense of frustration surfaced from the findings as the students recognised the job limitations they are going to face once they finish the English programme. Moreover, they voiced their concerns about teaching as the only available career path. As other domains are still dominated by Arabic and French, the demand for English skills is still not widespread in the Algerian labour market. Equally, the findings from teachers (in 6.3.2) further support this concern about employability for students of English. While Mustapha (in 6.3.2) fears for his students being "lost" after graduation, Ahmed, with a long experience in teaching English, illustrates how his English students are now working but not using English. Meanwhile, Manel and Fadela point out the necessity for students to gain other language skills and degrees in addition to English to maximise their chances of finding a job.

Graduate unemployment in Algeria is a serious problem that has its roots in the economic instability and lack of transparency in recruiting candidates. This has also been aggravated after the introduction of the new educational system (Noui, 2020). As the system encouraged open and free entry to all students after having baccalaureate exams, this resulted in a massive number of graduates holding different degrees that do not necessarily secure for them a job. Noui's study (2020) of the implication of the university system on graduates' employability indicates that the obtained degree has lost its value in Algeria. As such, his findings highlight how students often enrol in masters' and doctoral studies as they hope to safeguard themselves from unemployment. This has also emerged from the findings (in 8.2.2), students' answers to what will they do after they graduate indicate their plans to remain in university for postgraduate studies. This might be seen as a temporary solution to the risks of facing unemployment.

In the midst of employment limitations and challenges, other students (in 8.2) expressed a more optimistic view about English as an asset that will support them after graduation. These students attach value to learning English. The students perceived the usefulness of English in developing their passions for writing and art and how it can also be a tool to

communicate their passions transnationally. For them, English is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Whenever they were asked about their career plans when they finish the English programme, they highlighted their desire to fulfil one's passion and use English as a tool to communicate across borders through writing and art. Similar perspectives challenged the current socio-economic situation. Zaineb's statement (see 8.2.2) "we are in a country where you cannot achieve your plans easily, so you need to have backup plans, not just one" might convey students' agency, their independent thinking, and how they can take ownership of their learning to suits best their aspirations and long-term goals. In light of this awareness shared by the students, I will proceed to the next section in which their experiences of learning and using English are discussed.

9.3.3 The English language classroom as a symbolic space

A salient element of the thesis is how learners navigate dominant discourses. In this subsection, the discussion of findings will clarify how this navigation and resistance of discourses of English is possible when learners are put at the heart of the learning process, when their experience becomes a resource for English language learning, and when the English classroom becomes a space for self-expression. Within this orientation English learning and using are merged to enable them to develop a "personal voice" in the language.

Learners' perceptions are important as they usually play a crucial part in determining their decisions and actions about learning a language. However, these perceptions are often neglected in language teaching research and practice. This is due to the narrowed understanding of a learner as "an empty receptacle for the rules of usage" (Kramsch, 2009: 28). This view positions a learner as someone seeking to develop knowledge and skills in a controlled manner. Their learning journey is conceptualised as smoothly elevating from one level to another. Within this conceptualisation, the nature of teaching and learning usually centres around contents that are used "as tools to assimilate, create, or produce new knowledge and understanding" (Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013: 51). Such an approach automatically emphasises external aspects to the learners. The internal linguistic mechanisms are however marginalised.

Comparison of classroom observations in sections 7.5.3 and 8.7 provide an insight into the interaction between learners' engagement and the type of content they engage with. While the example in 7.5.3 depicts passive learning and lifeless content, examples from 8.7 show how learners' engagement is apparent when they are allowed to voice their concerns, ideas, and bring their lived experiences to the classroom context. The findings portray how learners are keen on developing more than linguistic skills. The nature of topics and the debates heighten their engagement when they delve into understanding social issues and how to bring changes to their social reality that awaits them outside classrooms. Learners (in 8.7) seem to view the English classroom as a space that is not isolated from the Algerian society but rather connected to their lives. As such, it becomes an empowering space for self-expression where their multilingual identities are mediated through English (languaging), other linguistic codes (translanguaging), and other paralinguistic means. As learners create the vibrant reality of the classroom, a profound dimension arises. Learners contribute to learning resources generating as such what I call a "symbolic space".

The English language classroom as a "symbolic space" involves the learners' contributions, teachers' guidance, and a critical view of English as a target language of study. The word symbolic is taken from Kramersch's extensive work on multilingual learners (2009), on multilingual teachers (Kramersch and Zhang, 2017), and her work on the power of language as a discourse (2020). Inspired by a Bourdieusian view, Kramersch (2009) takes a postmodern approach to conceptualise language use as a symbolic system that carries a symbolic power. She argues that "language use is symbolic [1] because it mediates our existence through symbolic forms that are conventional... and [2] because symbolic forms construct subjective realities such as perceptions, emotions" (2009: 7). As findings from 8.2 demonstrate, learners' perceptions and emotions are central elements driving learning and using English. Furthermore, examples from learners (in 8.6) describing their use of English outside classroom contexts through social media illustrate how English is an expressive tool used in different forms of mediation. These include communicating with foreign friends – as in the case of Kawtar, Afaf, and Salma –, and sharing artistic work, and creative writing – as in the case of Soumia, Afaf, Haroon, and Aysha in 8.2.2.

Equally, the English language sits within complex global, economic, social, and historical power relations that shape its teaching, learning, and using. This dimension of language has to be raised in the classroom context. In her latest work, Kramersch (2020) echoes this dimension arguing for the need to introduce learners not only to grammar and social rules to communicate in the target language but also to raise their consciousness of the symbolic power inherent in the language they are dealing with. She posits that the language learning environment has great potential when learners are allowed to reflect and learn about the multiple dimensions of language styles, registers, topics, and discourse strategies. She adds that as learners have become part of different modes of communication (social and virtual), they need to learn about the symbolic power of language and how “they can harness it to represent themselves and the reality that surrounds them, to act upon it, and to create future possible worlds” (2020: 201). Drawing on the data (in 8.7), I contend learners’ ability and even their thirst (as in the case of Haroon in 8.5.2) to learn about these dimensions of language that are more illuminating than the materials which passively transfer to them static knowledge about British and American standard varieties, ‘cultures’, and ‘civilisations’.

The ideas of learners investigating English and their learning are also relevant to “exploratory practice” suggested by Allwright and Hanks (2009) and later Hanks (2020). Within this framework, learners are perceived as active participants and “co-researchers” (Hanks, 2020: 1) who can “puzzle”, investigate, theorise, and articulate issues they face in language learning. Based on the findings in 8.7, I expand on these roles and argue that these issues are not merely related to linguistic difficulties, but learners can even go one step further to explore social concerns which occupy the minds of advanced learners. Lila, the teacher of oral expression (in 8.6), demonstrates how she likes “raising taboo or political issues” to make her students “aware of everything that’s happening”. She emphasises how assisting “learners to express their voice on such critical topics” can add other dimensions to the language classroom such as “awareness” and a “notion of sensitivity towards things”. Through languaging, English can also serve as “a vehicle through which thinking is articulated and transformed into an artifactual form” (Swain, 2006: 97). As such, learners use the language creatively and while doing so they “may reach a new or deeper

understanding” (Swain, 2006: 97) about the language itself and the topics that concern them. This process helps to develop learners’ language use.

The above discussion provides insight into the second research question that aims to explore how students navigate discourses of English. The findings, which relate to the use of English by Algerian learners and its relevance to their lives, counter the macro discourse of English for employability. Students seem to have a great level of awareness and agency as they view English as a means for critical expression and not an instrumental tool to find a job. Furthermore, it can be argued that learners can make conscious decisions about how and why they want to invest in English learning. These decisions are often closely relevant to their passions and intrinsic motivations, and they are not always a reproduction of the global/national discourses. The personal significance of English to these learners also drives them to cultivate a “personal voice” in English. As such, learners become great contributors with the possibility of redefining English language classrooms as a symbolic space for bringing social change through language learning.

9.4 Realities of English language teaching

The discussion in section 9.2 demonstrated how politics takes over the domains of both language and education. As such, policy reforms become tainted with symbolic ideas in the name of educational development and repair of the colonial damage. In this section, I will discuss how the examination of English teaching practices projects its linguistic imperialist dimension. Perceptions about who is the expert in English teaching, which forms of English are appropriate, what materials are considered in the classroom, in addition to the constant interference of cultural organisations might be indices of covert forms of Anglo-American hegemony over ELT.

9.4.1 The ‘native speaker’ model in ELT classrooms

Pennycook (1994: 146) argues that “the teaching practices themselves represent particular visions of the world and thus make the English language classroom a site of cultural politics”. In this sub-section, I will discuss findings relevant to English teaching practices that emerged from chapter 7 and how they convey ideological dimensions. I will start with the findings linked to the

form of English and then move to the teaching materials to explore discourses about ELT at the practice level and their underlying ideologies.

Although teachers often refer to how English has become ‘the international language’, the curriculum structure, materials, and teaching practices portray the importance of the standard British variety and the British and American reading materials. These were automatically selected by curriculum developers and some teachers. The ‘native speaker’ model was evident in phonetics and oral communication classes which centred around British and American varieties. The teachers’ perspectives (in 7.5.2) about English speaking skills and pronunciation are key examples of how the diffusion of pedagogic ideologies is noticeable in ELT classrooms. For instance, most teachers (in 7.5.2) offered different explanations behind the choice of the British Received Pronunciation (RP) as a variety to teach. While Amira maintains that RP is a reference point, a “foundation from where to start”, Linda and Manel describe it in theoretical terms to convey that understanding RP leads learners to improve their pronunciation. In addition, Sarah (in 7.5.2) refers to the need for learners to speak correctly and properly before they develop fluency.

Some teachers further explained that this selection is rooted in both familiarity and the availability of teaching materials. The findings (7.5.2) show that this preference is a result of the lack of training that encourages teachers to develop suitable, more diverse, and up-to-date ELT content. Amira (7.5.1) mentions that the phonetics syllabus is the same she learnt as a student 20 years ago. Other teachers (in 7.5.2) highlighted the lack of knowledge of other English varieties which makes it difficult for them to teach with confidence in their classroom. As such, phonetics and oral communication classes were restricted to one form which they feel they have sufficient resources to draw on. Subsequently, this choice is also endorsed by the availability of materials. The teachers (in 7.5.2) shared how books and dictionaries from Cambridge publications such as Peter Roach and Daniel Jones are the kinds of materials available in the university library. These types of materials play a salient role in shaping perceptions about which form is the most relevant for English language teaching and learning.

Teachers’ beliefs about the importance of standard English and how it represents the only ‘correct’ variety might be rooted in the ‘native speaker’ model. Although debates about the status of standard English are often theorised separately within “the standard language ideology”, in the context

of English as a foreign language, I view the root of standard English ideology as also part of the 'native speaker' model. The standard language ideology is based on certain criteria that define language as a 'correct' and 'fixed' codified system. Language varieties that do not adhere to these criteria are automatically treated as deviant, deficient, and even obstructive to learners' progress in social and professional contexts (Snell, 2013). This ideology prevails in language education including schools in English-speaking countries where standard English is favoured in the curriculum, whereas other language varieties and regional dialects are underrated and even mocked (Gates and Ilbury, 2019; Cushing, 2020). A similar ideology is often readily adopted in teaching English as a second/foreign language in which standard English is exclusively taught to learners, as it is implied that 'native' speaker teachers are 'experts' in English language teaching methodologies use standard English in their classrooms. Yet, the political nature and economic gains behind maintaining the standard English as the norm in classrooms is further concealed under the 'native speaker' model and becomes a choice that "goes without saying" as Amira refers to it (in 7.5.2).

The prevalence of English standard varieties, despite their contested use, in reality, is not unique to Algerian classrooms, it is still noticeable in ELT cases from expanding circle countries. Monfared and Khatib (2018) show how ELT in Iran is mainly oriented toward American English compared to cases of English teaching from outer circle countries. For example, in India, other varieties such as Indian English have started to be recognised and encouraged. This also can be argued as each context view differently the varieties of English. Belibi (2013) highlights the persistence of standard language ideologies in Cameroon English classrooms despite the existence of several varieties of Cameroon English. Teachers were found to opt for either British or American English within English classrooms. Belibi (2013) argues that this is rooted in the low acceptability of other varieties to receive a legitimate status notably in the national teachers' training. As such, teachers struggle to follow a non-standard pedagogy as they think they lack knowledge background and teaching materials in Cameroon English.

In addition to teachers' training, there are deeper explanations behind favouring the standard variety of English vis-à-vis other forms. The standard language ideology can also be ingrained in the participants' previous learning experiences. Idealising the RP English could be traced and linked to the early education where Algerian teachers learnt the standard Arabic and

French as correct varieties from primary schools whereas other languages such as Darija and Berber were completely marginalised in the school curriculum (see 3.4). This linguistic hierarchical structure might have shaped the standard language ideology and have perpetuated in English teaching and learning. On this ground, specific teaching materials are selected because they represent the 'correct' form of English.

Interestingly, one is immediately faced with contradictions when examining the classroom reality and the different varieties of English spoken by both students and teachers. For example, students (in 8.4, 8.6) seem to favour the idea of speaking different varieties of American English and slang because of their interest in American popular culture. This gave a motive for many students to master English. Haroon, for example (in 8.4), maintains that "the world is ruled by the Americans, so we need to learn the rulers' way to speak" to point the way he wants to learn American English as it represents the language of the powerful. Between mere attraction and actual language use, different forms of English and translanguaging were apparent during both classroom observation sessions and in interviews. These realities of English use challenge the idealised RP English form and further demonstrate its controversial nature.

I shall now proceed to discuss findings related to British and American English teaching materials and the cultural/intercultural dimension they are assumed to bring.

9.4.2 Cultural and intercultural dimensions

The findings discussed above presented the 'native speaker' model underlying the privileged standard language taught to learners. The tenets of this model are found to circulate across materials, teaching approaches, and learning resources. In this subsection, I will discuss how under the nativespeakerism ideology, the selection of reading texts is believed to portray the 'culture' of the language. As such, a common idea constructs materials from inner circle countries as resources to develop learners' intercultural awareness.

The findings related to the selection of British and American materials as resources in ELT classrooms project conflicting pedagogies. On the one hand, not all teachers agreed on the choices of the reading texts which focused mainly on British and American writers. Some teachers (in 7.5.2)

such as Halima and Ahmed were aware of the lack of concrete and realistic objectives behind the exclusive use of 'native speaker' literary texts to teach English. On the other hand, curriculum developers insisted on the importance of introducing students to the literary Western canon that represented the 'real' English, and they strictly opposed any other types of materials that are not British or American. For example, Halima recounts (in 7.6) how her suggestions to include different materials from outer and expanding circles were opposed and rejected because these materials were not considered to be the products of 'native speakers' from inner circle countries.

The preoccupation with ELT materials from inner circle countries, mainly Britain and North America, is not only peculiar to Algerian classrooms. This is still prevalent in several classrooms across countries in outer and expanding circles. This is inherent in the 'native speaker' fallacy as Phillipson's (1992) early theory of linguistic imperialism explains (see 4.2.3). Phillipson (2009: 40) claims that English language norms imposed by 'native speakers' of English seek an "inequitable hierarchy" that positions 'native speakers' as the 'suppliers of raw materials' whereas 'non-native' speakers become the receivers of these materials. This often endorses a belief among 'non-native' teachers that they "have no right to change anything" as Amira stated (in 7.5.3). Holliday (2006) also examines the beliefs that forms the "nativespeakerism" ideology which governs the ELT field. According to Holliday (2006), this ideology centres around the belief that 'native speaker' teachers are the experts in 'Western culture' and, thus, have the best resources and experience to teach English and develop innovative approaches for ELT classrooms. Holliday (2006: 385) further argues that this ideology can underlie "many different areas of professional life, from employment policy to the presentation of language". Notably, the persistence of these representations raises questions of power and privilege in relation to race, ethnicity, gender, and geographical origin (Holliday, 2016a). This belief is often deeply rooted in teaching practices where the 'native speaker' proficiency becomes a target in the language classroom (Park, 2012). Furthermore, Lowe (2020b) shows the connection between teachers' beliefs about the 'native speaker' model and the hegemony over the field of ELT. The latter is often dominated by a specific forms of knowledge, materials, technology and education that are assumed superior because they emanate from specific inner circle countries. Lowe (2020b: 70) examines the deep

impacts of nativespeakerism on different ELT practices arguing that it has become “a perceptual filter used to view the ELT industry through the lens of the Western ‘native speaker’ and the educational technology and values such a speaker is thought to embody”. This shows how intricate is this ideology as it has infiltrated different aspects of ELT.

Beyond the contrast of ‘native’ ‘non-native’, the issue of ELT materials also projects economic profits which serve the ELT industry. Gray (2016) argues against the business side of ELT in the global market and how this has become a massive industry for “materials production, dissemination and consumption”. He problematises ELT materials that hold monolithic representations about language and social world. The prevailing ELT materials on the market often represent specific forms as ‘authentic’ languages and content. In addition, they mainly centre around topics and themes relevant to inner circle countries for marketing purposes. Gray (2016: 97) points out that these types of materials “position teachers as mere deliverers of the content they contain rather than as decision-makers who select, reject and modify content on the basis of specific local requirements”. Subsequently, it is argued that these types of materials further hinder teachers’ ability to develop resources that suit their learners’ needs and interests.

There was another belief prevalent among some teachers that English materials develop learners’ ‘intercultural’ awareness. For example, Mustapha, Samar, and Sara (in 7.5.2) maintained that these materials serve to add an aspect of “personal growth”, openness, tolerance, and positive attitudes towards the American and British ‘cultures’. Some teachers also believed that bringing materials about British-American ways of life motivate learners more than any other materials. However, the absence of variation in the reading materials concerned many students (in 8.5.2). The findings (in 8.5) show learners’ discontent with the materials. The students showed their resistance by refusing to read and engage with the selected texts. These materials were seen as irrelevant to their interests and proficiency level and preferred more diverse and up-to-date materials. Yet, the students’ reactions were also misunderstood by teachers. Some of the teachers interpreted the students’ lack of engagement with the materials in terms of learners’ cultural deficiency and closed-minded attitude.

The findings (in 7.5.2) offer an insight into the teaching approach for presenting these materials. Examples show how learners were asked to

“forget who they are” and “accept that difference” which the cultural materials presented. For instance, Samar (in 7.5.2) suggested to her learners when she was teaching *The Scarlet Letter* to just read and be immersed in the story. Samar pointed out how her learners were always comparing the story to their cultural background. This further demotivated the learners to read the texts as voiced by the learners (in 8.5.2). These accounts suggest the importance to build on these types of comparisons to create a space where learners are encouraged to critically examine and question the content. This lack of critical engagement with the content conveyed for learners a sense that they are learning just to be tested. Consequently, this might make the learning experience static and the potential of learning from similar rich situations can be missed. Agar (2006: 2) defines these situations as “rich points” that refer to “those surprises, those departures from an outsider’s expectations that signal a difference between LC1 [languaculture 1] and LC2 [languaculture 2] and give direction to subsequent learning”. If learners are taught how to explain and talk about these situations in terms of context and not ‘culture’, then the learning experience would indeed lead to an intercultural dimension.

As Liddicoat (2016: 26) concedes, intercultural language teaching and learning “is not simply a new way of doing teaching and learning but a new way of understanding what teaching and learning is”. It is certainly not achieved through passively passing information to learners about the British and American ‘cultures’. Intercultural language pedagogy, which calls for critical cultural awareness, marks the beginning of this new understanding. This is oriented towards criticality that rises against the traditional simplistic view of one language belongs to one culture and one culture equals one nation. The critical pedagogy is positioned within a political and socio-historical theoretical frame in which it seeks to develop learners to be critical along the entire process of language learning.

What also seems to be lacking based on findings in 7.5 is the contextualisation of the objectives and learning resources. Canagarajah (2007: 90) argues that ELT practices need to include the objective of developing learners’ “ability to use English in a socially situated and contextually informed manner, sensitive to the ecological resources of language”. The contextualisation of English does not refer to only using local resources but rather relating teaching and learning to the social world of learners. Other findings (in 7.5.1) suggest reasons behind this lack of

contextualisation, particularly within the ELT curriculum. The findings show the consensus among teachers on the top-down imposed nature of the curriculum and the total absence of teachers' voice in any decision that relates to its structure, objectives, and content. Consequently, teachers perceived the ELT curriculum as an administrative document merely concerned with forms of assessment and examination rather than a pedagogical tool that needs constant revision to improve English teaching and learning processes. Finally, the institutional pressure placed on teachers in terms of teaching hours, meeting deadlines for assessment, and marking a huge number of students makes it challenging for teachers to find the time and opportunity to try new pedagogic practices that contextualise English language learning. As such, resorting to ready-made materials might be a convenient matter given these contextual constraints.

A salient theme that emerged from data chapter 6 shows the increasing reliance on cultural organisations such as British Council and American Embassy as 'experts' for teaching English. The subsequent section will discuss this theme and how it is viewed as problematic to ELT in Algerian higher education.

9.4.3 Soft power and ELT

The findings (in 6.5) portrayed the role of cultural organisations such as the British Council and the American Embassy in shaping the beliefs about English teaching practices. The MHESR's statements indicate the strategies and measures taken to improve ELT in higher education with the assistance of the American Corner and the British Council. The increasing collaborations with these institutions were framed as plans to involve the suppliers of the 'best' English teaching methodologies and approaches to support teachers and students at the heart of universities campuses. This subsection will discuss the types of unequal power relations which these cultural organisations generate.

The increase of ELT projects led by cultural organisations within Algeria is not a new phenomenon. The American Corner, for example, played a substantial role in endorsing ELT after the Algerian dark period (1991-2002). Bouhadiba (2015: 6) concedes that the American Corner provided "access to research facilities like books, journals, magazines, and online reference sources" during the post-Algerian civil war. Similarly, Belmihoub (2018: 7)

argues that “the US Embassy and British Council support of various English education programs, contribute to the rise in the number of users since the end of the civil war of the 1990s”. Belmihoub (2018) argues that the language courses and cultural activities sponsored by the British Council and the American Embassy have increased significantly in recent years. He also attributes this increase in collaborations between the Algerian educational sector and these cultural organisations due to the expanding nature of the Algerian market and the growing economic relations with the UK and the USA. Nonetheless, the cost of the offered services can only be afforded by a segment of society (Jacob, 2020). As such, it can be argued that their services also seek economic benefits.

The findings (in 6.5) also illustrate the partnership between the American Corner and the MHESR. Examples of free spaces for the American Corner to further advertise its projects demonstrate the way Algerian universities are facilitating procedures for these cultural organisations to expand their activities. These types of transactions have also lucrative goals. Phillipson (2009) expands on the economic profits underlying the projects led by non-governmental institutions such as the British Council. He argues that through learning programmes, testing, and teacher training, these organisations maintain their power over the ELT industry across the globe.

Although these cultural institutions help to renew Algerian students’ motivation to learn English and have opened their spaces to support English learners, their increasing interference in higher education might infer pedagogic hegemony. The findings (in 6.5) suggest that these collaborations have indirectly pushed policy decisions regarding strengthening English as the language of research, administration, and instruction. Furthermore, their role is evident in reinforcing the discourse of English as the language of opportunities to unlock graduates’ job prospects. The propagation of these discourses, in turn, accords soft power to these institutions. As discussed in 2.5, Nye (2004) points out that attraction is a key tool of persuasion in soft power. In Algeria through the circulation of these discourses, these foreign institutions have succeeded to attract students, teachers, and even collaborate with educational policymakers in a very short period.

The world’s preeminent national cultures such as Britain, France, and Spain all share a powerful colonial history which they established through military force (hard power). However, they maintain their power in postcolonial contexts and across the globe through international and non-governmental

organisations. The American Embassy and the British Council are considered examples of these organisations that play a crucial role in spreading and maintaining the status of the English language around the world (Phillipson, 2009; Pennycook, 2016). A similar approach is also used by Institut Français and the Confucius Institute. These organisations are sponsored by their respective governments across countries to present the language and national culture in an attractive way. Although soft power plays an important role in the way these institutions represent languages and national cultures, their viability depends on their government. The latter often holds economic, political, and symbolic power (as in the case of the UK and the USA) that all pave the way for the element of attraction to take place.

Part of the attractiveness of the cultural organisations is the idea of ownership over the English language. This is also noticeable in the way these institutions favour Anglo-American forms of knowledge and expertise in ELT and education. Consequently, similar projects reproduce unequal power relations at different levels of language policy and teaching practices. Through the different projects they promote, such as the American Corner, English is represented as only owned by inner circle countries. This positioning conveys a sense of deficiency and inadequacy of local teaching approaches and learning experiences, whereas those of English-speaking countries are defined as most 'authentic'. Joseph (2010: 9) explains that "the matter of who has 'authority' over English is a political linguistic issue par excellence, centring as it does on the question of who English belongs to, and what exactly are the 'boundaries' of a language". The static conception of English as propagated through these organisations goes against the multiplicity and diverse nature of using English in real life especially by multilingual speakers in multilingual contexts.

9.4.4 Pedagogic and epistemic concerns

At the surface level, language and educational projects supervised by external organisations are stirred by the quest for new pedagogic practices which mirror potential progress. What is at stake, nevertheless, is the way these collaborations covertly promote hegemony at the economic, educational, and cultural levels. Metatla (2016) argues that while MHESR's reforms and plans aim to bring positive changes to teaching and learning, in reality, these plans have often "tied the fate of the Algerian higher education sector to European intellectual and economic development, reinforcing the neoliberal assault on higher education and on society at large" (para. 25).

This constant reliance on foreign projects to develop ELT and higher education has also repercussions for pedagogies and epistemologies. These two key concerns will be raised in this section.

Metatla (2016) argues that borrowed vision of change “at best, affords further dependency upon European hegemony. At worst, it inhibits the potential to explore and construct alternative visions for the ultimate intellectual and cultural liberation of postcolonial societies” (para. 15). This intellectual and economic hegemony was discussed in the early work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1990: 5) who examined processes that legitimise pedagogic practices as ubiquitous standards for educational success. The authors, therefore, argue that ‘pedagogic actions’ promoted through such processes carry ‘symbolic violence’ since they are a result of “the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power”. In other words, dominant groups set their rules, principles, and visions which define teaching and learning accordingly. Concurrently, these principles are presented in dominated societies as ‘objective, neutral and legitimate’ and even prerequisite for effective education. However, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990: 6) contend that educational “reproduction” primarily seeks to secure hegemony in covert ways.

The link between hegemony and the English language becomes clear when exploring the implications of privileging English in research (see 6.3.3) and in the sole dependency on Anglo-American models and teaching materials (as discussed in 9.4.1). The implications of this dependency are not exclusive to English language policy and teaching practices but can also extend to knowledge production and leading to epistemic privilege. Fay (2020:1) closely explores issues around hegemony, English, multilingual and “intercultural knowledge-work”. Elaborating on Fricker’s work (2007), Fay (2020: 13) articulates how “epistemic ethnocentrism” also reflects Anglocentrism. That is to say, as English has become the dominant language in research, researchers from English-speaking countries tend to take the lead in international scientific publications. Meanwhile, non-English speaking researchers might be disadvantaged as they have to express their findings in a foreign language. Similarly, other researchers who are used to publish their work in English find difficulties in formulating and discussing their work in their native language because of the lack of terminology and register (Piller, 2016). The implication of having one language for scientific publication often leads to epistemic injustice. The imposition of English as

the new language of academic research on Algerian academics and the possibility of epistemic injustice is beyond the scope of this research. However, it is worth raising this concern for future research as it is a critical area that is still underexplored.

The themes discussed in section 9.4 allow me to answer the third research question, “what does the teaching practices tell us about the reality of English within Algerian higher education?”. The discussion of the first research question demonstrated how discourses of English at the policy level were sometimes framed as a decolonisation project. Paradoxically, English teaching practices, as discussed in section 9.4, reflect English colonial baggage as they centre around the ‘native speaker’ model. I demonstrated in 9.4.1, how curriculum and teaching materials are limited to British and American models that represent the norm in ELT classrooms. Furthermore, critical examination of English teaching objectives, materials, and projects run by cultural organisations illustrated how ELT in AHE cannot be ‘neutral’. Even when some teachers attempt to counter the ‘native speaker’ model and bring critical changes to the ELT curriculum, these changes were often rejected by other senior teachers. The conflicting pedagogies within ELT classrooms offer insight into the realities of English at the policy level. These realities suggest that English language policies are simply structural changes by which English is represented as an ideal candidate that can substitute French. Decolonising the Algerian higher education could be just rhetoric if it is not construed as a process of “decoloniality”. This has to be viewed as “an epistemic and a political project seeking liberation and freedom” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013: 4). In this respect, there is a need for a critical lens to filter, select and expand understanding about the status of English in the world and its significance for Algerian higher education and students in particular. Similarly, policymakers, teachers, and learners need to constantly work on “challenging colonial ideologies that emphasize the superiority of, and privilege ascribed to, Western/Northern thoughts and approaches” (Pennycook and Makoni, 2020: 86) which often underpin a language such as English.

9.5 Chapter summary

This chapter provided interpretations of key findings related to the politics of English language teaching from three vantage points, policymakers, teachers, and learners. The discussion demonstrated the conflicting visions of change that shape the realities of English language teaching within Algerian higher education. Actors such as policymakers, teachers, and students are driven by different views about the status of English and the roles of its teaching/learning. Consequently, I explained that the MHESR's vision was informed by a global educational transfer and the hope that English will 'internationalise' and 'decolonise' AHE. As for teachers' practices, English was dominated by the 'native speaker' model which dictated the form and types of teaching materials. Learners, however, demonstrated their agentive role and how they viewed the English classroom as a symbolic space for expression where they can cultivate a voice in the language. In addition to the discussion of these findings, the research questions were also addressed. The next chapter will conclude the thesis and provide theoretical, pedagogical, and methodological implications.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Power and politics are ubiquitous in language and language education, but resistance and change are always possible.

(Pennycook, 2016: 34)

10.1 Summary of insights

This thesis aimed to provide critical analysis of the power and politics of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Algerian Higher Education (AHE). In contrast with the existing frameworks that focus on globalisation and internationalisation as forces that drive the spread of English in higher education, my research findings provide insight into the local factors that shape English policies, teaching, and learning. The thesis demonstrates how complex forces at the global and national levels, in addition to micro classroom conditions, drive ELT discourses and practices.

The promotion of English at the policy level seems to intertwine with the broader orientation of AHE. The educational transfer, instigated under the Bologna system, aims to internationalise Algerian universities. Within this orientation, the promotion of English is seen as a marker of academic excellence, a facilitator of graduate employability, and a booster of universities' visibility and rank. Thus, these discourses shape English as a necessary means to attain internationalisation. Yet, findings from teachers highlight the day-to-day challenges and conditions in which teaching and learning take place. The participants raised concerns about the lack of infrastructure, resources, appropriate training, and a vague ELT curriculum. These constraints have led to mere symbolic policies that hardly carry any positive impact on teaching and learning.

The thesis also argues that strengthening English seems to be positioned as an alternative to French linguistic imperialism. This was evident in the way the promotion of English was set against French. English was, thus, framed as the language with the potential to substitute French as a medium of instruction in Algerian universities. I argue that these positionings have to be understood within the context of political unrest marked by the Algerian protests, which started in February 2019 around the time of the fieldwork.

The politics of English were also crystalised in teaching practices. The pedagogic choices related to the forms of English to teach, the materials to

use, and who are the 'expert' in the teaching of English, were all manifestations of how English is not a 'neutral' language. The examination of English teaching practices provides more insights into its ideological dimension. Notably, the ideology of nativespeakerism appears to underlie ELT within AHE. The thesis also offers examples that reflect the political nature of English, covering the involvement of cultural organisations such as the British Council and the American Embassy as 'experts', decisions about reading materials from British and American literature, and the choice of British RP. These examples sit closely within a dominant belief that English is owned by inner circle countries. The research argues that such beliefs reproduce unequal power relations at the level of teaching methodologies, in that only specific forms of knowledge and teaching materials from Britain and America become models for best teaching approaches and materials.

Students' perspectives, however, were not in line with the above discourses of English identified at the policy and practice levels. Students described the limited use of English in Algerian society, and that their exposure was only limited to formal classroom contexts, social media, and popular culture. While some students perceived the lack of popularity of English as a prestigious asset that makes them stand out, others found it strange to use it outside the classrooms where the majority do not understand it. Although students had different objectives behind learning English, they did not see this language as a means to move away from French. However, they perceived English as an added value that might be useful to achieve their personal aspirations. These long-term goals that the students shared challenged the prevalent discourse of English for employability. Students were aware of the acute situation of the job market in Algeria in general, and the reality of job prospects in relation to English in particular. Yet, they had their visions of how learning English can be used to pursue their passions. Similar perspectives are echoed in Pennycook's (2016: 34) argument, in that English is also "caught up in many forms of hope, [and] longing". These forms often tell us about the micro functional meanings attributed to English from learners who invest their time, efforts, and money. Consequently, this thesis supports the view that language learning unlocks different ways for learners to realise their "full human potential" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 177). As such, the English classroom becomes what I call a symbolic space for self-expression and not merely a site loaded with political and ideological contentions.

10.2 Theoretical, pedagogic, and methodological contributions

The theoretical implications of this thesis address the politics of ELT, which is an important growing research area in sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and language education. The discourses and realities of ELT, which were examined in chapters 6,7, and 8, inform the status of English in a context where another ex-colonial language exists. Algeria served as an excellent context since the promotion of English is part of the broader reform that is envisioned for AHE. Furthermore, the Algerian complex multilingual landscape – where Arabic, French, Berber, and Darija all carry socio-historical and political forces – offers a unique lens to study the status of English. Moreover, Algerian teachers' and learners' perspectives, voices, and experiences provide a greater understanding of English at the micro classroom level. These add a new dimension to the current scholarship that focuses on the growth of English in expanding circle countries. As such, the findings inform theoretical lenses – such as linguistic imperialism and English as a lingua franca – of the inextricable link between socio-historical factors, linguistic landscape, and micro classroom contexts.

As for pedagogic implications, the findings pertaining to ELT practices demonstrate how the politics and power relations of ELT are not only integral to language policies, but also perpetuate in both policies and teaching practices. The cumulation of micro factors within the context where English is taught has led to the prevalence of specific ideologies such as the nativespeakerism. This was evident in the way the vague ELT curriculum and power relations between teachers have resulted in a lack of critical filtering and selection of the English language varieties, teaching materials, and methodologies. However, students' suggestions about what types of materials interest them, in addition to some teachers' accounts of implementing different teaching methodologies in their ELT classrooms are salient pedagogic contributions. These multi-layered insights gained from participants, who are at the forefront, suggest ways of navigating and challenging power and politics in language education. The findings, thus, inform critical language pedagogy and raise the need to expand our understanding of the roles of ELT in a specific context.

This research is also relevant to policymakers, curriculum designers, and any other educational institutions such as universities in postcolonial and

multilingual contexts. The findings provide lucid examples of how English is: constructed at the level of policy; experienced at the level of teaching practices; used by learners. Thus, this case study can be valuable to researchers who endeavour to explore English in different contexts.

As this research is a qualitative enquiry, and was inspired by critical ethnography, it has several methodological implications. Research exploring ELT at university levels tends to often use quantitative methods, which mainly focus on surveys and questionnaires. While this may help to shed light on teachers' and students' attitudes towards English, the methodological and analytical tools do not allow to explore the complexity of discourses and underlying ideologies shaping ELT policies and practices.

Starting from a position of interconnectedness, this thesis emphasises considering different vantage points – policymakers, students, and teachers – by deploying various data sources including the ELT curriculum, policy documents, classroom observations, students' and teachers' interviews. These help to attain a more detailed and in-depth analysis. These multidimensional perspectives constitute the uniqueness of this study in that they provide a comprehensive understanding and a juxtaposition of policies, teaching practices, and learning experiences.

Understanding the nuances of ELT in AHE was attained through critical ethnography. This helped to thoroughly explore the interaction between discourses at the macro-level language policies, micro-level teaching practices, and individual perspectives. What also makes this thesis distinctive is the different analytical tools utilised. Analysing data is not a straightforward task. It requires tailoring different tools depending on the nature of research objectives and questions. The thesis shows the potential that thematic analysis has in initially paving the way for researchers to gain insights at the macro level. It also highlights the need for other data analysis tools to yield a more in-depth understanding. As such, critical discourse analysis and frame analysis were combined and used with existing theoretical frameworks to allow a rigorous examination of other different factors shaping the data. This multi-level analysis can be useful for other qualitative research studies that delve into issues of politics and ideologies.

10.3 Suggestions for future research

The study argues that there is a lack of clarity pertaining to the role of English within universities in a postcolonial country such as Algeria. Hence, further research is needed to examine ELT at both language policy and practice levels to identify disparities and suggest alternatives for policymakers, curriculum developers, and teachers. More research needs to show how the implementation of ELT can serve the interests of teachers and learners. Furthermore, language education research needs to focus more on learners' perspectives, as they are the crux of the educational experience. As such, insights gained from learners as co-researchers can further inform how the ELT curriculum can be more purposeful and tailored according to their wants and needs.

More research into ELT classroom pedagogy is crucial to offer practical measures and assist teachers and curriculum developers. In doing so, pedagogic research has to expand stakeholders' understanding of the status of English in the world and how English has moved beyond inner circle countries. Furthermore, research needs to call for open critical discussions within classrooms, teachers' training, and academic conferences about rethinking the ELT curriculum, approaches, and materials. These discussions need to consider developing ELT resources and materials that portray the real-life use and functions of English in postcolonial and multilingual contexts.

10.4 Personal reflections

As I am writing these concluding thoughts, I recall a sentence that I heard during a workshop for postgraduate researchers: "the outcome of your PhD is not only your thesis, but also you". The PhD journey reshaped me as a researcher and as a person. My four years working on this thesis helped me to unlearn old assumptions about English, language learning, and teaching. I previously had more simplistic perceptions about these areas. Being a learner of English myself, ironically, I have never reflected upon my own experience of learning English at the time, and I viewed it as a linear process that depended on the retention of content. 2012 was my first year of studying English at university, and it was the year where the Olympics were held in London. I remember I became fascinated with watching the ceremony, the games and the broadcast of life in London. During this period, Algerian

shops also started selling gifts, souvenirs decorated with London's iconic symbols and the British flag. Everyone seemed to be drawn to buying things that capture the city of the smoke, including me. For my birthday, my best friend offered me a rug that had a red double-decker bus and the London eye that I kept in my room. Similar attractive cultural products have further motivated me to develop my English in the hope that one day I would visit London. I, thus, easily fell into the trap of equating one language with one 'culture' - English with England more particularly. Nevertheless, the PhD journey has endowed me with the scope to learn new ways of thinking in accordance with the global ownership of English. It has deepened my knowledge about ideologies dominating ELT such as nativespeakerism. I also became more attentive to its underlying multilayers. More importantly, this research has opened my eyes and has bestowed me with the responsibility to better fulfil my role as a teacher-researcher. Knowing more about the politics of English, I know I need to refocus my teaching towards learners and relate to their lived experiences. I have to offer learners the space to reflect on their needs and perceptions about language learning. Additionally, I have to assist them to explore for themselves from where their perceptions emanate and how these can help them progress in their learning journey.

The fieldwork was also a unique experience through which I gained new insights from participants' stories. Examining different façades of ELT in the Algerian context made me grasp that this ideology perpetuates from nucleus structures underlying both language and education. Teachers' accounts taught me that the conditions in which teaching and learning take place inextricably shape their practices. Different contextual constraints - such as the lack of infrastructure, the absence of collaboration between teachers, working within a stratified institution where change is perceived as intimidating for some teachers - have further reinforced the nativespeakerism ideology. As such, teachers and learners were left with no time and space for reflection and interventions. Nonetheless, some attempts of resistance were happening covertly (such as Haroon and Karima in 8.5.2), subconsciously (as learners in 8.6 demonstrated), or overtly by bringing experiences, stories, and what teachers and students perceived relevant to tackle current social issues (for example Halima, Fadela and Lila). Learners also taught me that their passions made them approach English with a vision. They allowed them to navigate global discourses of English, and

enabled them to be optimistic to learn English despite day-to-day challenges.

These realities, as painted by my participants, made me realise that no matter how intricate it is to completely dismantle nativespeakerism – or any other ideologies reinforcing a model of Us and Them –, a change in the way of thinking is a first step to do so. I have become more conscious of the need to raise awareness and challenge all ideologies that seek to uphold domination and inequality through language. While it may be too hopeful to expect that this research will solve all raised concerns regarding the status of ELT in AHE, my aspiration is that it will contribute to heighten the awareness of curriculum developers, teachers, and learners about the need for a more critical approach to English language teaching and learning.

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Appendix A

Ethics committee approval

The Secretariat
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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Souad Boumechaal
Linguistics and Phonetics, SLCS
University of Leeds
Leeds, LS2 9JT

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures Research Ethics Committee
University of Leeds

14 January 2019

Dear Souad



Title of study Interculturality in teaching and learning English in the Algerian tertiary level: An ethnographic study
Ethics reference PVAR 17-083 amendment January 2019



I am pleased to inform you that your amendment to the research application listed above has been reviewed by the Chair of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures Research Ethics Committee and following receipt of your response to the Committee's initial comments, I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
PVAR 17-083 Amendment January 2019 Amendment_form.doc	1	08/01/19
PVAR 17-083 Amendment January 2019 Ethical Review Form (Souad Boumechaal) (4).doc	1	08/01/19
PVAR 17-083 Amendment January 2019 Themes of the interview and observation protocol.docx	1	08/01/19
PVAR 17-083 Amendment January 2019 Low-Risk-Fieldwork-form (2).doc	1	08/01/19
PVAR 17-083 Ethical Review Form (Souad Boumechaal).doc	3	22/03/18
PVAR 17-083 Sample email for participants.docx	1	27/02/18
PVAR 17-083 Participant Information Sheet.doc	3	22/03/18
PVAR 17-083 Participant consent form.doc	2	27/02/18
PVAR 17-083 Low-Risk-Fieldwork-form.doc	1	27/02/18

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any further amendments to the original research as submitted at date of this approval as all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAmendment>.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited. There is a checklist listing examples of documents to be kept which is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAudits>.

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions for improvement. Please email any comments to ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Senior Research Ethics Administrator, the Secretariat
On behalf of Prof Robert Jones, Chair, [AHC FREC](#)
CC: Student's supervisor(s)

Appendix B

Official documents

- Ministère de L'enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique. Juin 2011. Guide Pratique de Mise en Œuvre et de Suivi du LMD. https://www.univ-alger.dz/images/pdf/guide_pratique_systeme_LMD_en_francais.pdf
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Appendix C

Official reports:



A language policy document from the MHESR prescribing the use of Arabic and English only in official administrative communication within universities.

<https://www.elbilad.net/article/detail?id=98388>

FINAL REPORT

I. Introduction :

The observation of what happens in the world, in terms of linguistic uses, puts the English language as the sesame that promotes more communication in various sectors of activity. In the academic and scientific research sector, all observers dedicate it as one of the most shared languages, the most used and the one that allows the best diffusion and the highest visibility in the world.

II. Why English at university? Why now?

English is the language most taught as 'foreign language' or 'second language' in the world and 95% of international scientific publications are written in English. On social media, 80% of existing and shared data is in English. In all sectors of activity and economic issues, English has become a real 'LINGUA FRANCA', which focuses the reinforcement of the need to consolidate our language skills while promoting learning in English.

Several challenges must be addressed by the Algerian higher education sector, which already suffers from a significant deficit in English language teachers (colleges, high schools and universities). These are mainly:

- 1) To improve the employability of Algerian diplomats at the time of the internationalization of the labour market,
- 2) To break down relations with the world and to join the world space in higher education and research,
- 3) To Provide quality, competitive and attractive training directly related to the world of business and the sector of research and innovation,
- 4) To gain mastery of the tools of globalization,
- 5) To make Algerian academic and scientific activity visible in all specialties,
- 6) To facilitate the mobility of Algerian students and their insertion in international research groups,
- 7) To encourage mobility to Algeria by providing training that meet the international standards.
- 8) To integrate new technologies into higher education, opening the door to many teaching and learning opportunities.

III. General observation of pilot university institutions :

The results that emerge from the analysis of questionnaires and discussions that took place at 26 universities allowed the following observation:

1. The teaching of English is present but not at all levels. It appears as a transversal skill that is most often conducted in an amphitheatre, focused on the translation theme / version for the acquisition of jargon.
2. At the level of the faculties visited, the language, when it is taught, is taught without well-defined objectives, and without clear pedagogy at the rate of one hour and thirty minutes per week.

Find the complete report by the MHESR summarising a plan to strengthen the status of English language teaching within Algerian universities.
https://1biblothequedroit.blogspot.com/2019/12/blog-post_17.html

Appendix D

Question prompts for teachers:

- How do you perceive the current status given to English language teaching in higher education?
- What kind of changes do you think the reform has brought to English language teaching?
- How would you describe the current English language teaching curriculum?
- Would you elaborate on the main objectives behind teaching phonetics to EFL students?
- What kinds of ELT materials, resources do you usually use?
- Which kinds of materials are engaging for learners?

Follow-up question prompts for teachers:

- Why do you think English is now being regarded as important for Algerian students in higher education?
- What do you think about the suggestion of the Algerian minister of AHE regarding the implementation of English as a means of instruction in Algerian universities instead of French?
- According to you, why has the idea of replacing French with English at AHE come at this particular time?

Question prompts for students:

- What made you choose to study the English language?
- How do you think learning English will be useful for you?
- Describe your experience as a learner of English?
- When you first started university, what was the most difficult part of your studies? What is the most enjoyable aspect of studying English so far?
- Apart from the classroom, where else do you use English? Do you create opportunities for using English?
- What do you think of phonetics classes?
- How do you find the learning materials?

Appendix E

Fieldwork notes and reflections

15.04.2019

9st. What is the GVC - aims - when - who is for - what is good for it -
 Why - is included - Who are these teachers and what do they think about it - Who design the content and what is syllabus - What are the materials used to develop the aims

what?
 why?
 how?

Theoretical framework

- Cosmopolitan appropriate methodology.
- Culture & politics of ELT
- Hidden curriculum.

Discourse & ideologies about ELT within an internationalisation

① What are they
 - Competing discourses

- * Native-speaker (CV - history...)
- * Learner-centred
- * English & employability

what are the key aspects that needs to be developed in ELT how & how?

② Why - Factors driven

These discourses

- * Teachers beliefs & background.
- * Institutional norms & system (policy implemented).
- * ~~③~~

③ How they are materialised

- * Methodologies of teaching.
- * Resources for learning.
- * Variety preferred & text used (phonetics - literature manuals)
- * less obvious social implications of these materials

Sample of fieldwork reflection notes (15/04/2019).

06.04.2019

Canvas = Curriculum

- These curriculum were developed in light of the NIS reform which adopted the same learning objectives & goals (innovation-learner centred approach - developing complex a socio-constructivist approach which scaffolded learners to build skills. You can analyse the content of canvas in relation to policy documents)
- Teachers' views varied from those who were for the changes 'newly recruited teachers' & those who were against this reform & kept following their own methods - transfer knowledge - teacher centred methodology -
- Absence of clear guidelines and appropriate training (see Franz, 157).
- * Teachers' innovation are pushed to the margins / innovation is teaching for teachers.

06.04.2019

"Reflections about interviews"

little feedback JS

- Lack of organisation - human resource management
- Lack of agreement between teachers' beliefs -
- NS is still dominant because it is the easiest moving thing that does not need further research - it is a ready-made model. Any innovation about ~~course~~ requires more work from the part of teachers & they are unfamiliar with it they refuse it.
- The institution is split into two those who calling for change & innovation & trying to apply the NIS standards & others who are teachers with 10-20 years of experience think that things should remain the same - old way of teaching.
- In here comes issue of power
- Teachers are caught in the middle

Some teachers focus on transmission = Bahmani Others - Construction = Dalal.

Sample of fieldwork reflection notes (06/04/2019).

Appendix F

Sample interview transcript, its translation and initial interpretation

Transcript in original language (French, Darija, English)	Translation when needed	Initial code	Emerging theme
<p>Souad: Comment vous trouvez l'enseignement à l'université, how do you find teaching English at the level of university? Fadela: [...] C'est complètement différent par rapport aux écoles privées où on vise les quatre compétences, writing, speaking, reading and listening... Mais là, chaque enseignant fait son travail différent des autres. C'est toujours les quatre compétences mais sont visées différemment. Par exemple, on n'a pas de compréhension en lecture. C'est ce que j'essaie de faire dans mon module de culture et civilisation américaine. J'ai le pré-lecture, lecture, et lecture post. Je donne la lecture aux étudiants avant qu'ils viennent au cours et nous discutons pendant le cours, après. Je leur demande d'écrire des essais sur le sujet pour améliorer leurs compétences culturelles ... Comme d'habitude, il y a des problèmes avec cela surtout</p>	<p>Fadela: Teaching English at university is different as the learning objectives are perceived differently by teachers. We are supposed to aim for the four skills but in the curriculum for example there is no reading skills that's why I try to integrate it in my modules of American civilisation. I apply pre-reading, reading and post reading. I give students reading to do before they come to the lecture, and we discuss during the lecture after that I ask them to write short essays about what we discussed to improve their cultural competences. As usual there are problems with that especially we don't have the means to provide copies for all the students, so I provide the students with the resources and I ask them to do photocopies</p>	<p>-Teachers approach ELT differently. -Teaching the cultural competence. -Lack of infrastructure. -Teachers being flexible.</p>	<p>Factors shaping English language teaching classroom</p>

nous n'avons pas les moyens de fournir des copies pour tous les étudiants, donc je donne les étudiants le matériel et je leur demande de faire des photocopies			
<p>Souad: Alright, as you started teaching in this university within the new system, comment vous voyez le system adopte? How do you see the LMD system?</p> <p>Fadela: Par rapport à la pédagogie, je serai honnête avec vous. Je n'aime pas le système, principalement par rapport au niveau des apprenants, trois ans de licence pour étudier la langue Anglaise est insuffisante pour que les étudiants acquièrent toutes les compétences. J'ai fait un programme pour la culture et civilisation américaine qui devrait être enseigné aux apprenants pour une année académique. On m'a dit que je dois juste l'enseigner en un semestre seulement. C'est suffisant pour l'étudiant d'apprendre la culture de cette langue et d'être bien équipé pour choisir cette spécialité plus tard pour le master. Fhamtini...</p>	<p>I will be honest with you, I don't like the system, mostly in relation to learners' level. three years of licence degree to study English language is insufficient for students to acquire all the competencies. I designed a syllabus for American civilisation that should be taught to learners for one academic year. I was told that I just need to teach it in one semester only. It's insufficient for student to learn about the culture of this language and to be well equipped to choose this speciality later for the master's degree. Do you understand...</p>	<p>-Teacher's perception about the educational reform -Issues with the design of ELT curriculum and syllabus</p>	<p>Raised issues with the Algerian educational reform and ELT objectives</p>
<p>Souad: Why is it for one semester only?</p> <p>Fadela: Je pense que parce qu'il y a un manque de salles d'enseignement, c'est ça le problème, au lieu d'enseigner deux modules pour deux semestres, "la culture et civilisation américaine" est enseignée pour le semestre un, et la civilisation britannique est enseignée dans</p>	<p>I think because there is a lack of teaching rooms. This is the problem instead of teaching two modules for two semesters American civilisation is taught for semester one and British civilisation is taught in semester two. This is unfair I will tell you why. There are teachers who are specialists in American</p>	<p>-Lack of infrastructure -Issues with Allocating English teaching subjects.</p>	<p>Challenges facing teachers of English in Algerian higher education</p>

<p>le semestre deux. C'est injuste je vais vous dire pourquoi. Il y a des enseignants qui sont des spécialistes de la civilisation américaine mais on ne leur a pas donné la chance d'enseigner le module parce que ce sont les mêmes enseignants qui reçoivent les modules. Cette année, je n'ai pas été donné pour enseigner ce module, je devais leur dire que jusqu'à ce que quand je dois attendre pour enseigner ma spécialité, ce sont toujours les mêmes enseignants qui prennent en charge les mêmes modules. Okey ils sont excellents, c'est normal parce qu'ils l'ont enseigné pendant des années mais d'autres ne sont pas donnés cette chance.</p>	<p>civilisation but they haven't been given the chance to teach the module because simply the same teachers are given the modules. This year I was not given to teach this module I had to tell them that until when I have to wait to teach my speciality it is always the same teachers who take over the same modules. Okey they are excellent it's normal because they have been teaching it for years, but others are not given this chance.</p>		
<p>On what basis these teachers are given specific subjects? Fadela: Ah l'université est comme tout autre domaine dans la société algérienne où petits groupes contrôlent toujours tout. Il faut donc s'imposer pour obtenir leurs droits. Honnêtement, j'ai galéré cette année parce que j'ai conçu mon propre programme pour la civilisation et il a été examiné par des experts (leur noms) Je voulais apporter quelque chose de nouveau et de changement, j'ai remarqué que le contenu des modules ne prépare pas les apprenants à analyser, mais leur donne simplement des infos</p>	<p>Well university is just similar to any other areas in the Algerian society where specific groups always control everything. So, one has to impose themselves to get their rights. Honestly, I had to struggle this year because I designed my own curriculum for civilisation and it was examined by experts (names) and I want it to apply it to see the fruit of what I have worked for, I wanted to bring something new and change as I noticed that the content of the modules is basic and does not prepare learners to</p>	<p>-Inequality in allocating English teaching subjects. -Basic English curriculum -Teachers attempt to change the English curriculum</p>	<p>Challenges facing teachers of English in Algerian higher education</p>

<p>et statistiques. Talaba yat3almou ghi les dates machi l'analyse.</p>	<p>analyse but just give them facts and statistics. Students only learn dates and not how to analyse.</p>		
<p>You mentioned that there are always teachers who are privileged to teach specific modules, is it because of their rank, title? Fadela: Ca veut rien direRank doesn't mean anything here I am assistant professor and I have a doctorate title but I was not given the chance to teach my speciality. It fallait se révolter and dire jusqu'à quand. Manakdabch alik. J'ai eu le rapport des experts. Koun maya3tounich, kanonyan andi dalil bali je suis apte à enseigner....</p>	<p>[...] I had to revolt and claim for it. I officially received all the expert reports that prove I'm apt to teach.</p>	<p>-Power relations between teacher/institution</p>	<p>Challenges facing teachers of English in Algerian higher education</p>
<p>Souad: Hderna ala les objectives taa l reforme, do you think had les objectives sont adoptés par les enseignants? Fadela:Cela dépend, chaque enseignant a sa propre méthode et approche d'enseignement [...] problème maatawnach formation, walou kifach tabki had les objectifs. Lorsque nous avons été recrutés, attawna une sorte de formation, mais ala le system LMD maatawna walou. Koun un etudiant yji ysaksini nkolo mana3rafch, tbahdila. Fhamtini. Lazem hna les enseignants ydiroulna formation khassa à la langue anglaise parce que ce n'est pas la même que les autres langues. It faut personnaliser les formations tout</p>	<p>Souad: We talked about some objectives brought by the reform; do you think these objectives are applied by teachers? It depends, each teacher has his own method and approach to teaching [...] The problem is no training has been given to teachers about how to implement these objectives. When we were first recruited, we received a kind of workshop, but we were not given concrete objectives of teaching within the LMD. They didn't give us anything. If a student comes and asks me about t I won't be able to explain which is shameful. So, we really need a</p>	<p>- Unclear English teaching objectives - Lack of customised teacher training</p>	

dependdu profil du département. Département d'Anglais est différent d'autre départements	training specific to English language because it's not the same as the other languages, they need to customise the training depending on the profile of the department. English department is different from other departments		
Soud: In addition to the lack of training what other factors impact the applicability of the new objectives? Fadela: Normalement ykoun kayan collaboration entre l'université et les sociétés. Gal had houwa l profil li rani baghieh, wajdouli had le profil. C'est à dire, l'étudiant ki yakhroj yalka blasstou. Ce qui n'est pas le cas. Hada houwa hadef li kan taa le system, il prépare les étudiants en fonction du besoin du society	There should be a collaboration with the university and the companies the professional world to prepare learners with specific profile, which means, when students graduate, they will find the workplace where they fit in. This is what the system is supposed to be. It should prepare students based on the needs of the workplace, which is not the case	-Teacher's view of the reform and education system -University system does not reflect the socio-economic needs	
Soud: If we speak about learners of English, what are the job options available to them when they graduate? Fadela: Maybe translation, maybe working in private societies. Ils n'ont pas un grand choix, surtout avec la licence. Master, et encore, ils ont que l'enseignant.	[...] They don't have wide choices especially with a licence degree. With a master's degree and they have only teaching as an option.	-Limited job opportunities -Teaching as the main career for graduates	English and employability
Soud: Quels aspects vous prenez en consideration qu and vous planifiez le programme? Quels sont les	Soud: what aspects do you take into consideration when you design the syllabus for American civilisation? What	-Developing learners' critical	Focus on teaching materials

<p>aspects que vous voulez developper dans vos etudiants?</p> <p>Fadela: L'aspect critique et la pensée critique parce qu'ils n'ont pas. La deuxième chose c'est de faire la relation entre l'histoire et l'Amérique contemporaine. Haka il peuvent choisir des thèmes pour faire de la recherche après. Je dis toujours à mes étudiants. I am not giving you statistics and dates for the sake of it but to explain and make the relationship between concepts.</p>	<p>are the key aspects that you want to develop in your learners?</p> <p>The aspect of critical thinking because students lack this skill. and their ability to see the relationship between the history and contemporary America. This will allow them to choose interesting topics if they opt to conduct research in American civilisation. I always tell my students that I am not giving you statistics and dates for the sake of it but to explain and make the relationship between concepts.</p>	<p>thinking through culture and civilisation content -Types of ELT materials</p>	<p>from Britain and America.</p>
<p>Souad: Est ce que vous pensez que le contenu civilisation Américaine/Britannique est important pour l'apprenant d'Anglais ?</p> <p>Fadela: C'est important parce que [longue pause] c'est la culture de la langue, pour moi c'est ce point que les apprenants d'Anglais sont censés choisir entre American or British English in speaking, accent, écrit. Toujours ngolhom vous devrez choisir un type, faut pas mélanger.</p> <p>Les apprenants sont parfois intéressés de développer leur accent Américain parce qu'ils trouvent le mode de vie Américain intéressant. The American way. I tell them to stick to one accent and not to mix between accents.</p>	<p>Souad: In what way, do you think the content on British/American civilisation is important for the EFL learner?</p> <p>It is important because [long pause] it is the culture of the language, for me it is this point learners of English are expected to choose between either American or British English in terms of speaking, accent, written. I say to my learners choose one type. Learners are sometimes interested in working on how to develop an American accent because they found the American way of life interesting.</p>	<p>-American and British materials represent the culture of the English language -The choice between American or British English -Learners preferring American English</p>	<p>The cultural dimension of English teaching materials Beliefs about standard language</p>

<p>Souad: Do you think the British and American culture and civilisation is introduced to the English curriculum to develop learners' intercultural awareness?</p> <p>No, I don't think so, most teachers concentrate on teaching history not culture, sometimes they refer to culture, but their syllabus is based on history mainly... wars and the emergence of the American nation and its constitution, they rarely refer to the culture, but I am trying to work on that this year with licence degree students.</p> <p>Souad: Are students interested in learning about the American civilisation?</p> <p>Yeah, they sometimes compare between the American and the Algerian culture. I tell them that this is an interesting topic to research and the highest level of thinking when trying to compare between different cultures</p>		Teaching culture or history	
<p>Souad: How do you design your syllabus for English culture and civilisation?</p> <p>Each teacher used to design their own syllabus according to their own understanding and preferences, but this year I contacted another teacher (name) who is teaching first and second year, to know what she taught in these two years so as I don't repeat the same thing before I design my syllabus. She gave me a well detailed document of what student have learnt and based on this document; I have designed my syllabus.</p>		-Teachers designing their own syllabus	

<p>Souad: Donc kayan collaboration entre les enseignants? Fadela: Entre moi et (name of teacher), pas tous les enseignants, je ne veux pas généraliser. Khatrat kayan khatrat makanch, il n'y a pas de collaboration, chaque enseignant veut imposer son approche et ses croyances sur ce qui enseigne. Certains enseignants ici ne veulent pas partager, on n'a pas hadek l'esprit de collaboration et team work. C'est vraiment rare que les enseignants collaborent [...] par exemple tarslihom email mayjawbokch, vous leur demandez de remplir un questionnaire, Wahad yjawbak w achra la. Je suis vraiment déçue, je fais mon travail dans cette institution et je pars dès que je termine. Si je fais quelque chose de plus, c'est pour mes étudiants et non pour l'établissement, ki nchouf mes étudiants contents et satisfaits, c'est ma récompense, je n'attends pas haja de retour mal département.</p>	<p>Souad: So there is a collaboration between teachers? Fadela: With me and (name of teacher), not all teachers, I don't want to generalise. Sometimes, there is no collaboration, each teacher wants to impose his approach and his beliefs about what teach. Some teachers here don't want to share and don't have this collaboration and team spirit. It is rare where teachers collaborate [...] for example you send an email, they don't reply, you ask them to fill in a questionnaire, only one does it and the rest refuse. So, it is really deceiving, I do my work in this institution and I leave as soon as I finish. If I do something additional, is for my students and not for the institution, and when my students are happy and satisfied, it is my reward, I don't wait something in return from the institution</p>	<p>-The absence of teachers' collaboration</p>	
<p>Souad: Are learners engaged with the content of English? Fadela: Ça dépend, kayan li ykoun interesser w kayan ykola k it's boring. Généralement ceux qui assistent sont intéressés ou ils ne v</p>	<p>Fadela: Well, it depends on learners themselves. Some are really interested others say they find it boring and does not interest me. Generally, those who attend they are either interested or they don't want to miss the</p>		

<p>eulent pas manquer la leçon parce qu'ils veulent avoir une bonne note à l'examen</p>	<p>lesson because they want to have a good mark in the exam.</p>		
<p>Souad: According to you what are the needed criteria for the success of English language teaching? Fadela: I think the curriculum has to include other modules such as listening. I have to integrate it in the speaking sessions. Parfois je dois ramener mes outils, speakers et tous, parfois ce n'est pas pratique [...] la deuxième chose est qu'avant que les apprenants soient acceptés pour le diplôme d'anglais, ils doivent être sélectionnés avec placement test bach yaarafou s'ils répondent aux exigences taa had la discipline ou pas. Kayan des etudiants naksamlak bi Allah rahom ydayouu wakthom batal, même yadou diplôme de licence maradi ydirou biha walou, même kayan en Master qui n'ont aucun niveau de competence. Donc il faut instorer une certaine selection</p>	<p>Fadela: [...] sometimes I need to bring my own materials, loudspeakers and sometimes it's not convenient [...] the second thing is that before learners are accepted for the English degree, they have to be selected with a placement test to know if they meet the requirement of this discipline or not. There are some students that repeat the years and waste their time for no reason even when they get their licence degree it won't serve them anything. There are master students who don't have any English proficiency level. So, I think it's important to select students.</p>	<p>-Lack of equipment -The need for establishing criteria for access to higher education.</p>	<p>Challenges facing teachers of English in Algerian higher education</p>

Appendix G

Project map: visualisation of codes from teachers' and students' interview data (NVivo)

