



# Reflections on the Linguistic Landscape and the Prospects of English Language Teaching in Algeria

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**Abstract:** The paper is bi-pillared: first is an allowance for the Algerian sociolinguistic panorama; then follows an account for the status of English in the Algerian sphere of schooling. Education, history, geography and ethnicity are the four quintessential factors underlying the Algerian involved linguistic situation. As a meeting ground for a multiplicity of tongues, Algeria is by and large regarded as an intricate plurilingual country. Indeed, plurilingualism, in the Algerian context, is organized in essence around three linguistic spheres consisting of Arabic (with its two varieties), Tamazight and foreign languages. The other pillar upon which rests the present paper concerns the status and image of English as a foreign language in didactic subjects, i.e. teaching/learning English in Algeria, and more specifically in its consideration of added value. The effort lies in tracking down whether this state could have taken a place of choice (privileged) as a whole with reference to its teaching/learning within the contextualized linguistic chessboard. The idea of the didactic dimension of English clarifies its weight and sheds light on academic conceptions installed in Algeria.

**Keywords:** Language Conflict, Algerian Linguistic Landscape, Algerian Educational Reform, English Language Teaching in Algeria, Languages and Interculturality

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## 1. Introduction

Algeria is a country with a very special linguistic situation. From independence, in 1962 and for years afterwards, this country was “constitutionally” monolingual, with classical/standard Arabic as the official language. But this did not prevent the social presence of other languages. The latter have long struggled for their survival. They have remained present in the Algerian cultural heritage. These include Algerian Arabic (which some tend to call it dialectal, Darija, or Elammiyya), Tamazight (which became, following a long struggle, the national language from 2002) with all its variants, and French (French is, from a political standpoint, the first foreign language; from a linguistic viewpoint, it is a second language that fulfills co-official tasks).

It comes into sight that preference for English is rising remarkably despite efforts to preserve French its prestigious

status and prevalent rank as the second language; actually, in the face of today’s more Anglicized globe, it is important to be inclined towards teaching and learning English more than any time before. French (which has considerably lost its importance since independence) and English constitute the first foreign languages in Algeria: they are used in higher technical and scientific education.

However, there is this one worthy of note question, which serves right into the point: in the midst of the current compelling needs for foreign languages in the context of today’s exponential increase of globalization influence, what linguistic-didactic status, weight, value, interest and prestige does English occupy from the teaching/learning process point of view in Algeria?

## 2. The Algerian Sociolinguistic Scene

Obvious as it is, and according to Pillar (2016), depending

on the actions undertaken in special concern with its attendance, plurilingualism<sup>1</sup>, which characterizes every society the world over today, can make for a constructively compiled add-up or represent a destructively worrisome burden. Algeria is legitimately considered as a multilingual and multicultural country.

For Djaout, "Algeria is a trilingual country. It has the chance to open three windows on the world instead of one, to feed on three cultures instead of one. But this chance was confiscated from the outset" (1993). (« L'Algérie est un pays trilingue. Elle a la chance d'ouvrir sur le monde trois fenêtres au lieu d'une, de pouvoir s'alimenter à trois cultures au lieu d'une seule. Mais cette chance a été dès le départ confisquée »). Again, according to Sebaa (2002), "Algeria is characterized, as we know, by a situation of social quadrilinguism: conventional Arabic, French, Algerian Arabic, and Tamazight." (« L'Algérie se caractérise, comme on le sait, par une situation de quadrilinguisme sociale: arabe conventionnel/ français / arabe algérien / tamazight. »).

The Algerian sociolinguistic situation, accordingly, comprises a four-dimensional configuration:

Tamazight (vernacular): Also famous as the Berber language (though the natives prefer Tamazight over Berber), it has been attributed the status of 'National language' since April 2002. The Tamazight-speaking population (Amazigh or Imazighen) stands for about 35% of the Algerian population in its entirety. Tamazight consists essentially, besides an array of yet other varieties, of Chaoui (concentrated mainly in Khenchela, Batna, Oum Bouaghi, and Tebassa; with yet lesser attendance in other regions like Soug Ahrass, Setif, Annaba, and Biskra), Kabyle (spoken predominantly in Tizi Ouzou, Béjaïa, and Bouira), Mozabite (of prevalent appearance in Ghardaïa) and Tuareg (nomadically scattered across the Sahara, or desert, but concentrated primarily in the highlands of Tassili and Ahaggar).

In an informal domain, Algerian Arabic (also known as colloquial/ dialectal/ vehicular, al-*ammiyya*, or *ad-daridja*), the language of the smashing majority of Algerians, is the primary tool of communication in use nationwide. From a sociolinguistic point of view, this daily language (Algerian Arabic) has an association with other languages including French and Tamazight; it contains words and structures grammatically drawn from Tamazight and French.

French is considered as the first foreign language of the country, but this language has a certain co-officiality, in virtue of its relatively widespread presence in the Algerian society (this is so, exceptionally speaking, up in the state's northern coastal line of cities; with a considerably far much less occurrence in smaller towns, in especially decreasing order as we head north-south vertically across the country all the way down towards the districts located in the deep

desert); for example, university education for the medical, technical and scientific branches is largely provided in French.

### 3. Specificity of French

Historically speaking, despite the various colonial campaigns that targeted Arabic, the French colonialists failed to satisfy their striving for wiping out the language from its context of existence during their occupation of Algeria. Again, the 132 years of the French intense colonization and its heinous crimes of oppression policy, seeking hard to strip people of their linguistic identity and cultural affiliations (Benrabah, 2014), have left their mark on the subsequent generations of Algerians, notably through education, even if the Algerian elite was almost non-existent during the colonial era. The linguistic boom occurred after independence (1962), with the introduction of compulsory schooling for all. The latter has played a major role in the teaching of languages, including French, though the main aim was first to help learners acquire some level of literacy. At that time, in its vulnerable state with no characteristic solid infrastructural basis a newly independent entity it was, Algeria was still functioning in French: education, administration, economic sector, etc. Due to the development and spread of education as well as the geographical proximity favoring the displacement of Algerians towards France (a destination identified as the first country visited by Algerians, whether for study, family visits or tourism), the French language occurred to gain more grounds on the Algerian linguistic scene. Be that as it may, along the years above the second millennium, French witnessed a drastic deterioration in favor of an increasing desire to learning English among Algerians. In this vein, Hamzaoui (2017) notes that "... today's younger generations show positive attitudes towards English for its association with progress and modernity as well as its consideration as an important means of communication with the external world." (p. 06)

Even if today, with the imperatives of an Arabization policy, French is taught only as a foreign language, it remains comparatively paradoxically very present in the school system, especially university; at present, except in the human sciences which are Arabized, university education tends to be francized (and apparently would, though not just yet, be of progressively anglicized orientations): medical sciences and engineering sciences are still francized, as well as practically all technical and scientific branches at the post-graduation level.

### 4. The Contextual Sociolinguistic Realities of Languages in Algeria

The languages in question differ from the viewpoint of history, of their structures, of their degree of use and of their sociolinguistic functions. In terms of classification, they belong to distinct linguistic families: Arabic is a Semitic

<sup>1</sup> Plurilingualism and multilingualism are contentious concepts in terms of their ascribed definition(s) among researchers. Some take them as synonymous terms, while others tend to attribute them slightly different significations. However, generally, these two notions refer to a simultaneous presence of more than a couple of languages. For all it is worth in our paper, however, we prefer taking them as interchangeable labels.

language, Tamazight is a Chamito-Semitic (Afro-Asiatic) language, French is a Romance (Indo-European) language, and English is a Germanic (Indo-European) language.

These languages vary in their degree of use and in the number of their respective users. Arabic is mainly represented under two varieties, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Algerian Arabic. Modern Standard Arabic is merely a modern simplified form of Classical Arabic (the language of the Holy Quran), is the official language of the country as stipulated by the constitution since 1963. Besides being the language of education in all schools and universities except science faculties, it is of widely common employment in formal contexts and media and such. In everyday practice, the Algerian dialectal Arabic, spoken by the majority of the population and being the mother tongue of the largest part of Algerians remains the most widespread and commonly shared tongue serving as a means of communication among Algerian speakers. In effect, this dialect, of Algerian creation, is described as "a patch-work language, neither Arabic nor Berber nor French - to become that of a large group of young Algerians" K. Taleb-Ibrahimi (1998: 228) (« une langue patch-work, ni arabe, ni berbère ni français-devenir celle d'une large frange de jeunes algériens » K. Taleb-Ibrahimi (1998, p. 228). As such, conveying a rich and varied culture, Algerian Arabic is a language mix, composed of a diversity of languages and dialects, namely Arabic, Tamazight, and French. In this regard, "the language spoken at home and in the street remains a mixture of Algerian dialects and French words" (Maameri, 2009, p. 10)

These languages likewise have distinct functions: dialectal Arabic and Tamazight are native vernacular languages, with Tamazight being also a national language; standard Arabic is the official language; French and English are foreign languages, French, in addition to being a school subject, is a working tool in technical and scientific education, English is no more than a school subject in public education. English, the use of which is still rather restrained to education being of course a subject-in preference to a medium- of instruction, is the second foreign language. Moreover, in the language practices of the speakers, these languages are related to diglossia.

This diversified and complex sociolinguistic situation characterizing the Algerian context is perceived as a richness of the Algerian linguistic landscape. In practice, this richness fructifies and nourishes plurilingualism. The status conferred on these different languages, the social uses that are made of them and their sociolinguistic functions concur in assigning them unequal social and symbolic values. If this is the sociolinguistic reality, to what extent then is it conceived and managed by the policy of Algerian language teaching? Despite this complex sociolinguistic situation, Algeria has adopted the policy of unilingualism which advocates a single language on the political, legal, social and economic levels, while progressively eliminating French and disqualifying popular languages. In their own right notwithstanding, the Algerian dialects symbolize and testify to a resistance to the uniformism that the powers that be advocate towards them.

## 5. A Conflictual Linguistic Background

Algeria is an environment of a heterogeneous background structure from a variety of perspectives. This heterogeneity is more of richness than itchiness. The linguistic legacy in Algeria is consolidated by a profound cultural and religious heritage, where the masses of the people have become polarized. In addition to religion and race, language is also part of the factors of ethnic identity (Abu, 1995), it is one of the elements of the culture conveyed.

Towards the mid-sixties (and even afterwards) in the newly reborn post French-colonial Algeria, there transpired the dilemmic issue of realizing the characteristic linguistic and cultural identity of the state and its population; the country was in a quandary, should it opt for the national language, i.e. Arabic, or should it preserve the language of the former colonizer (French)? This state of indecision and oscillation tore the nation between those in support of Arabic and those adhering to French. The supporters of the former side of the equation considered that the return to the Arabic language is a national and religious objective; thus, for years, the country has experienced a great movement of Arabization in all fields, educational and administrative strictly speaking. The partisans of the latter part of the equation, adherents of foreign culture, nonetheless, relied on the relevant arguments of historical and academic weight.

It would be wrong, nevertheless, to hold any such claims as that those who have endeavored to track down their national language in pursuit of their ancestral linguistic and cultural identity aim at radically excluding foreign languages from the scene. International relations and economic and scientific development requisitely call for knowledge of at least another tongue besides the natively acquired and spoken language. A typically cognate case where favorability for foreign languages learning is observably manifest is indeed the one in hand: Algeria; in this space of the world, the calls for learning foreign languages find an auspiciously positive echo. Foreign languages for that matter turn out to be predictably inevitable school subjects in all educational systems.

## 6. The Reform of the Algerian Educational System

In this regard and from a variety of other respects, on the trails of human, cultural and scientific ends, the country's socio-economic and scientific needs, safe in the knowledge that they occur to be in pursuit of assuring secure and sound as well as sustainable development, are giving rise to new demands and requirements for foreign languages learning. The linguistic asset is now sure enough perceived as a requisite tool for an indispensable modernization. A reform of the country's entire education system was on the call; and, therefore, the latter was subsequently launched in 2003.

The history of educational reforms in Algeria includes a series of attempts to eliminate the French language for Arabic (Law No. 05-91 dated 16 January 1991) or to replace it with

English. This initiative has tackled a range of aspects and has enabled the implementation of new programs, the edition of new textbooks, and has especially introduced a new teaching methodology based on the competency-based approach. It was conceived in 2002 and implemented from the school year 2003/2004, in order to break with the old method called the "objective approach".

As a matter of fact, the recent years to their credit witness an unprecedented willingly steadfast readiness and eagerness among Algerians for a favorable change with regard to foreign languages teaching/learning. English is no longer the only second foreign language accepted in the Algerian school system; actually, besides French, German, Italian and Spanish are currently entering secondary school classrooms (German, Spanish and Italian are option languages; while English and French are compulsory school subjects for all streams).

It is to this very end indeed that the middle and secondary phases program of English has been revised in aspiration to fulfill the new drawn educational and linguistic objectives, which themselves enjoy coherence with the new socio-economic and cultural situation of the country. However, this combination between vocational training and the learning of English is not very well directed in orientation, it suffers several underlying inadequacies and pitfalls. The fact of the matter is that it always encounters subjective and objective obstacles, due either to the linguistic tradition of the learners or to the method used.

The programs of English, the foreign language in all the cycles combined, thus, ensure the continuity from one cycle to another. Stemming from the same problem and basing on the same theoretical principles, this program advocates the competency-based approach.

## 7. Learning Considerations

The intervention of languages didactics is supposed to manage the diverse language pathways and repertoires of individuals, while encouraging the development of their plurilingual competence. The implementation of such a didactic approach combines multiple methodologies, pluralistic approaches (Candelier, 2008) and curricular restructuring, articulating the various language varieties and disciplines in a global language curriculum (Coste *et al.*, 2007).

The process of globalization, of which there is reason to believe that it is it that, more than anything else, fundamentally alters the question of foreign languages teaching, is accelerating. The challenges of teaching foreign languages should be considered in the reforms because foreign languages continue to occupy an important place in Algeria.

Foreign languages are irrevocably defined as a necessity if a synchronized evolution in a world in perpetual metamorphosis is desired. It is undeniable that the English language, the most commonly used tongue on an international scale, is in vogue. In this context, the training of

English language learners remains a topical issue in dealing with the various changes with an intercultural perspective.

## 8. Interculturality and English Language Teaching: Intercultural Standpoint

Beyond the priorities assigned to the different strands targeted by the reform of the education system, initiated by Algeria, it is perhaps appropriate to rethink this intercultural aspect first, among many others that are corollary to it. For what we are interested in in our paper, what place can the English-related culture take in a configuration with multiple components like Algeria? And, essentially, what consequences might it yield for the training of teachers of English?

As a matter of fact, French scientists or researchers, just like their counterparts almost all over the world, are obliged to use English to be aware of new ideas or to communicate. Even the French Academy of Sciences is increasing to publish its reports in English. In this fashion, French is in comparison to English 'an outdated language'; maybe even in its original context of existence, let alone in other spots of the world, like Algeria, where it is taken as a foreign language.

Relying on well-founded observations, both pragmatically and theoretically, the majority of Algerian university students are more inclined to learn English. Such academic value of English is indeed progressively more enticing for students as a preference in the prioritized order of the wishes expressed, through filling out a website university entrance form as per several constraints in terms of orientation and criteria of guidance.

## 9. Orientation and Criteria of Guidance<sup>2</sup>

The variable "grades" obtained by the subjects in the test of English in the national secondary school graduation diploma (i.e. Baccalaureate/ Baccalaureate exam) is decisive as to its orientation. The orientation towards higher education and training is classified according to the following three parameters of orientation and registration:

1. The 10 wishes expressed by the secondary school leaving certificate holders,
2. The series is the baccalaureate exam results: general average of the baccalaureate, mention, and grades of essential subjects,
3. Capacity of reception of higher education and training institutions.

In order to participate in the ranking, certain fields of training, streams and common core academic curriculums

<sup>2</sup> According to Circular n° 01 of 26 Chaâbane 1437H Corresponding to 02 June 2008 Relating to the Pre-registration and Orientation of the Baccalaureate Holders for the Academic Year 2016-2017 (Circulaire n° 01 du 26 Chaâbane 1437H Correspondant au 02 Juin 2016 Relative à la Préinscription et à l'orientation des Titulaires du Baccalauréat au Titre de l'année Universitaire 2016-2017).

require a minimum overall average of the baccalaureate. This average does not automatically entitle students to a definitive registration. This is done either on the basis of the general average obtained at the national final secondary school examination (baccalaureate) or in recourse to the arithmetic mean between the general average of the baccalaureate results and the marks obtained in certain subjects. In addition to the above conditions, access to certain streams/fields is subject, as the case may be, to a competition, an aptitude test, an interview with a jury, or an age requirement.

The pre-registration, orientation and appeal of new national secondary school graduation diploma holders are exclusively fulfilled via Internet. To carry out these operations, three online sites are available to new graduates. The national computerized treatment will take care of all the wishes files of new national secondary school leaving certificate holders, entered and transmitted electronically. In consideration of the above-mentioned three pre-registration and orientation parameters in unison, this process, or treatment, generally ends in satisfying either of the candidate's ten choices arranged in descending order of priority.

To be enrolled in a bachelor's degree of English, the bachelor's degree should meet the following criterion:

The mean of the total sum of the baccalaureate general average plus the grade obtained in the module of English at the baccalaureate, which should not be less than 11, divided by two should be equal to or greater than 11 out of twenty (the general average + the grade of the test of English / 2  $\geq$  11).

## 10. Orientation and Economic Determinants

A fortiori, there lie behind students' inclinations of opting for some university training in a certain field more than few decisively effectual influences and factors, the sum of which in the main owes much of a deal to economically-grounded drives. Undergraduates, as such, set their sights on the streams that guarantee provision of a certain job prospectively.

The influx of new baccalaureate holders into teaching is as well generally explained by the opportunities to get a job. The internal factors are those relating to the opportunities offered by the education sector especially, and following a policy of openness to learning foreign languages in a perspective of openness to the world. Politico-educational choices opt for the compulsory mastery of at least two foreign languages by learners, namely French and English. Thus, English becomes the second foreign language, after French, taught from the middle schools first year. Of somewhat notoriously counterproductive effect from at least one perspective, the lack of qualified human resources in the aftermath of the new reforms proves of considerably much weight and immediate action occurs of the essence. A recruitment effort had to be made by donors to meet the

needs of English language teachers the system came to dreadfully suffer. Recourse to contractual teachers remains the only alternative out for the authorities while the latter raise their sights for new teachers to graduate from the universities.

## 11. Skills of Student Teachers

The university curriculum, distributed over three years for the bachelor of art, and two further (i.e. five, overall) years for the master of art, must offer students the knowledge they need to better command spoken as well as written English. Convinced that any progress in the study of a living language begins with an awareness of the elements of the underlying system, the designers of the university curriculum have given great importance to the rules governing the English language, be it grammar, phonetics, phonemics or spelling. Actually, the study of the various aspects of spoken language: tonic stress, rhythm, short forms, intonation, etc. should bring to the students, who will examine it consciously, a real and definitive appropriation of the major difficulties of English speech. Through a series of modules that allow for the appropriate preparation of language proficiency acquisition for the teaching profession, a syllabus and a rich model are developed: American literature and civilization, English literature and civilization, grammar, linguistics, oral expression, written expression, phonetics, etc.

## 12. Descriptions and Analyzes of the Initial and Second Cycles (Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree) Training Model

To teach English (as a second foreign language) in Algeria, prospective teachers must obtain a baccalaureate and have a minimum of three years of university training to become a middle school teacher, and have five years overall of university instruction to be able to teach in secondary schools. The curriculum comprises modules of civilizations, literatures, linguistics, didactics, oral and written expression, among well many others. Part of it is designed to deepen, refine and perfect the basic knowledge, namely syntactic, lexical and phonological.

### 12.1. Presentation of the Model of the Teaching Modules

Worth mentioning from the outset, in what is to proceed subsequently, attention will be due only to what has relevance to our main concern which lies in hunting down considerations and reflections of pertinently direct relation to English teaching/learning. In this way, the account and discussion to follow would make comprehensive allowance for teaching modules of English coupled with their hourly schedule distribution and the like. In a word, unless it is absolutely necessary, we will eschew any mention of details, broad or slight, as regards the module of French (which is a

subject in the curriculum all the five years through, from bachelor's degree first year to Master's degree last year) for it occurs beside the point in this very regard and in this particular section. But for reasons of consistency, we would like here to quickly point out that the weekly volume for French, a compulsory module for all students during the five years, is 1h30 in lectures; its annual (28-weekly) volume is 42 hours ( $1h30 \times 28 = 42h$ ), which makes a total of 126 hours ( $42 \text{ h} \times 3 = 126 \text{ h}$ ) for the three Bachelor's Degree years, and a sum of 63 hours for the further three semesters of Master courses; all in all, 189 hours are reserved for the module of French all throughout the five years of the first and second cycle of higher education.

### 12.2. Model of Teaching Modules per Year/Semester

The model of the modules for the preparation of Bachelor's and Master's Degrees of teaching in the initial and second trainings of student teachers of English is constructed in the subsequent fashion; again, just for the record, French as a teaching module, though in the scene all along, is here excluded from the count:

On the face of the page is the initial cycle of higher education studies. The structure of the curriculum for the three Bachelor's Degree years is designed as follows:

With respect to the first year, the number of teaching modules is 9 with a weekly volume of 21 hours, 18 hours in tutorials (supervised works) and 3 hours in lectures; so the curriculum of the first year is covered in 588 hours (evenly divided between the two semesters, with the same nine modules persisting for both). The total coefficient of the modules is 15.

In respect of the second year, likewise, the number of modules is 9 with an hourly volume of 21 hours per week, 19h30 hours in tutorials and 1h30 hours in lectures; therefore, the second year curriculum is covered in an annual volume of 588 hours. The total coefficient is 15.

As regards the third year, end of cycle, the number of modules is 10 with a total schedule of 19h30 hours a week, 9 hours in tutorials and 10h30 hours in lectures. So the overall third year curriculum is covered in an hourly volume of 546 hours. The total coefficient is 20.

Overleaf, indeed, is the second cycle of university studies. The Master Degree is brought to fruition through three successive semesters of lectures, accompanied by a compulsory dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master realized along and submitted towards the end of the last (fourth) semester. The first couple of semesters together (i.e. first year) make up Master 1, while the last two (i.e. second year) stand for the completion of Master 2. While the last semester (fourth) is reserved for dissertation accomplishment, the structure of the three Master's degree semesters program is planned as follows:

Overall, apart from the Master's degree dissertation accomplished throughout the fourth semester and the practical training that comes into play either in middle or higher schools of choice –spanning a fortnight to a month,

the number of modules in Master's Degree is 15. Master 1 comprises 10 modules (same modules and schedule valid for both semesters) with a weekly volume of 21 hours, and Master 2 (i.e. third semester) covers 4 modules with a 9-hour weekly schedule; thus, the Master curriculum is covered in an hourly volume of 840 hours (588 hours for both the first and second semester plus 252 hours for semester three), with a total coefficient of 16 for Master 1 and 14 for Master 2 (third semester). The courses are instructed in lecture theaters or lecture halls (i.e. lectures completely take over tutorials).

### 12.3. Analysis of the Training Curriculum

By studying the Bachelor's Degree of English, spanning three years of study at a rate of 28 weeks per year, we note that the latter comprises 28 modules and is covered in an overall hourly volume of 1722 hours. And by completing the Master's Degree of English, lasting for three more semesters, besides the fourth semester dedicated for dissertations, after the Bachelor's Degree (i.e. five years in totality inclusive of the Bachelor's Degree three years) at a rate of 14 weeks per semester, students further study 15 other modules covered in a sum of 840 hours.

As to the Bachelor's Degree, courses are taught in lectures and tutorials as follows:

In the first year of the bachelor's degree, the curriculum comprises 9 modules divided into lectures and tutorials. Lectures benefit from an overall weekly schedule of 3 hours, that is, an hourly volume of 84 hours per year. Then again, the tutorials are divided into a weekly schedule of 18 hours, that is to say an annual volume of 504 hours. This leads to the forgone conclusion that the first year syllabus consequent hourly volume is for the most part reserved for the tutorials (504 /588 hours). Noteworthy, of the 9 teaching modules of the first-year English-language curriculum, 7 focus on the basic knowledge of the language with a weekly volume of 16h30 per 21 hours. The coefficient of these units is 12 out of 15. It may very likely be the case, it sure enough we believe is, that the design of the curriculum thus is basically meant, first, to guarantee a smooth transition from the secondary education cycle into the higher education phase (university), then, to adequately correct, remedy and tame the deficiencies, with the purpose of consolidating, deepening and securing the achievements. However, in terms of competences, such a curriculum targets both linguistic (linguistics, grammar and phonetics) and pragmatic (oral and written expression) skills. The linguistic component is induced by the nature of the tasks and communication situations, it relates to the knowledge and know-how of lexicon, syntax and phonology; while the pragmatic component is of special concern to the action-oriented approach and to the choice of discursive strategy for the fulfillment of a particular goal (establishing and systematizing, organizing and adapting, as well as constructing and structuring discourse), it draws the speaker-situation interconnectivity.

In the second year, the 9 modules are distributed over a weekly volume of 21 hours. This schedule is exclusively

reserved for tutorials (19h30 hours a week; thus, 546 hours yearly) with a very faint attendance of lectures (1h30 hours per week; hence, 42 hours annually). Yearly, the 9 modules are carried out in an overall schedule of 588 hours. Similarly, the second year curriculum focuses on disciplinary knowledge: grammar, translation, oral and written expression, phonetics and linguistics and such. In addition to the reinforcement of linguistic and pragmatic skills, the second year curriculum covets sociolinguistic and cultural competences by introducing culture and civilization (an alternation between the British and American civilizations) and literary texts (an alternation between the British and American literatures). Of the 9 modules, 6 relate to the knowledge of the English language spread over a weekly schedule of 16h30/ 21 hours, with a coefficient of 11 out of 15. It is obvious that the curriculum designers aim at mastery of the language.

In the third year of the bachelor's degree, the weekly volume of the 10 modules is 19h30 hours. This schedule is divided into 10h30 hours of lectures and 9 hours of tutorials. Annually, the 10 modules are realized in a total time of 546 hours. While in the first and second year curricula, six units deal with disciplinary knowledge (linguistic and pragmatic skills): phonetics, grammar, written and oral and linguistic comprehension, with the remaining four modules being devoted to cultural competences by introducing culture and civilization (a combination between the British and American civilizations), literary texts (a combination between the British and American literatures), methodology as well as human and social sciences module; the third year curriculum consists of 10 modules, divided into a 19h30-hour weekly schedule. This third year curriculum schedule is relatively balanced between tutorials (9 hours/week) and lectures (10h30 hours/week). Modules targeting disciplinary knowledge have a weekly schedule of only 7h30/19h30 hours and an overall coefficient of 10 out of 20. Thus, the curriculum in the third year rather shifts sides from disciplinary-knowledge-concentrated dimensions of the English language to the cultural, civilizational, and literary aspects of it (interculturality), as well as the introduction of the cognitive psychology and didactics modules (taking psychological, pedagogical and didactical factors into account in the educational process).

Thus, after having completed an overall hourly volume of 1722 hours in three years, bachelors in English will ultimately be able to get hold of national Bachelor's degree (diploma) provided that they obtain a general average equal or superior to 10 out of 20. It should be noted that the tutorials are accorded high importance as they consume almost the entire schedule (1344/1722 hours), that is to say 78% of the curriculum. In fact, the majority of the work is integrated into the tutorials from a perspective of socializing practice; what Lahire (1997) refers to as "silent socialization of students" by the rhythms of academic work and the timetable. The modules are organized according to a system which, during the first two years, seems to give a great importance to the command of the English language orally

and in writing, both in reception and in production. Thus, it is apparent that the modules, which target the acquisition of language proficiency, benefit from an hourly volume of 924 hours, or 78% of all the teaching. In addition, the modules that target the acquisition of a good mastery of Anglo-Saxon culture are carried out in a 168-hour schedule, 14%.

In the Master's degree, the courses are exclusively taught in lectures. The syllabus of Master 1 has 10 modules. These are distributed in a 21-hours-weekly schedule of lectures, with no tutorials. In Master 2, only the third semester is devoted to courses attendance; the last semester is the time period throughout which students pursue their obligation of realizing a dissertation, with no classes taken. Worthy of note, of all the units covered throughout the Master's degree cycle, there strikingly is no room left for disciplinary knowledge modules (even that of translation is a great deal about aspects transcending mere disciplinary knowledge frames). The curriculum completely switches to so-called Anglo-Saxon cultural and literary aspects, sociolinguistic dimensions and language teaching methodologies. Put another way, the Master's degree curriculum focuses on socio-pragmatic competence (via British and American civilizations and literatures along with intercultural communication), and on the introduction of didactics, educational psychology and methodology of language teaching modules. What is more, the trainee teachers enroll in a traineeship of varying hour periods per week over couple of few weeks as soon as they start taking courses in the TEFL module. Students attending whole 840 hours in the three semesters of Master, added to the dissertation, in pursuit of accomplishing a Master's degree, finally obtain their diploma so long as their general average equals 10 out of 20 at the very least.

#### ***12.4. Deliberations on the Training Curriculum in Both Cycles (Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree)***

We note that the bachelor's degree curriculum of English is divided into two distinct parts. The first two years focus much more on knowledge of the language "disciplinary knowledge": grammar, written and oral expression, phonetics, linguistics and suchlike. All these modules total a weekly schedule of 12 hours/21 hours in the first year, and 19.30 hours/21 hours in the second year.

All the modules mentioned previously, apart from TEFL<sup>3</sup> and psycho-pedagogy, contribute to the acquisition of communicative competence which comprises three linguistic components and which is divided into several competencies: lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, and discursive or pragmatic. Lexical, syntactic, morphological and phonological aspects are at least easier to acquire than those related to the culture of the target language, knowing that the mother tongue (Arabic) and the target language (English) are not isomorphic.

On the other side of the table, in the third year, the curriculum focuses on the literary and civilizational aspects

<sup>3</sup> Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

of the language. This being said, the aim is to teach cultural competence to future teachers, by exposing them to social and sociolinguistic norms; that is to say, knowledge and appropriation of social rules and standards of interaction between individuals and institutions, knowledge of cultural history and relationships between social objects. The question that arises is "does it suffice to acquire this sociolinguistic competence only by exposing the student teachers to the literary and civilizational aspects of the target language/culture? This said, sociolinguistic competence, defined in (Leech 1983)'s terms as "the sociological interface of pragmatics" (p.10) and which is a fundamental component of communication competence, remains hard to penetrate for teachers and difficult to teach for the trainee teachers. It cannot, as Ellis (1992) has it, be acquired and developed sufficiently in the school context. As a result, the trainee teachers, according to Dewaele (1996, 2001, 2002), are likely to remain 'mono-stylistic' in the target language (English).

In fact, this sociolinguistic competence does not seem to be perfectly acquirable for the student teachers in several respects: lack of authenticity (interaction only in vitro in situations close to "authentic"); non-integration, rather non-effective use of ICTs in teaching; lack of immersion training (lack of in vivo interaction); and the like. However, in tutorials, teachers, to improve teaching of sociolinguistic and pragmatic norms, should use authentic material such as video documents (documentaries, debates, videos, etc.), means of communication via the Internet (Computer mediated discourse) via chat sites (synchronous speech), e-mails (asynchronous speech), and videoconferences that remain an important source of linguistic bath for learners whose chances of interacting with target-language natives are rare or almost nonexistent. The exploitation of this authentic material would allow them to link morpho-lexical and semantic information in explicit memory to conceptual representations in implicit memory, and to adapt their schemas and scripts in the target language in order to produce a socio-linguistically appropriate discourse. It is in this way that teachers could raise awareness of student teachers to the sociolinguistic rules. By making them aware of and exposed to the different oral and written registers, this consciousness would allow them to better exploit the didactic materials contained in textbooks or that they themselves choose in their teaching.

In the absence of such cultural competence in the teaching of the English language, teachers focus on the language taught and tame it by neglecting this cultural component, in particular the 'cultural behavioral component' in Galisson (1994)'s own terms. To compensate for the obvious dissymmetry between the teacher agent and the language object, teachers prefer to make use of the manual strictly in accordance with the methodology proposed by its designers. In addition, the module relating to the didactics of the discipline (theoretical aspects only), namely TEFL, is introduced only in the Master's degree with a weekly schedule of 1h30 hours. The approach taken in the TEFL module is that which gives trainee teachers the various

successive theories in the history of foreign languages teaching/learning. Is it possible, in the light of what is being undertaken during the TEFL sessions, to make future teachers aware of the parameters involved in the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language? Does this theoretical content allow learners to acquire the required skills and desired competences in the field? It is to mention as well that lectures score a full rate of 100% of the courses provided during the Master's degree.

Doubtless, it is interesting to call attention to the fact that English at the university level, unlike middle and secondary schools where it represents merely a subject of instruction for learners, is taken as a medium of instruction where students immerse into anglicised classes and syllabi. According to the forgoing detailed account for the structure of the university curriculum, what is essential appears to be reduced into a 'perfect' knowledge of the linguistic forms and rules that govern the English language.

### 13. Conclusion

As things stand, four languages characterize the Algerian linguistic landscape: Arabic, which is subdivided into two varieties, standard Arabic (the national and the sole official language of the country) and dialectal (Algerian) Arabic; Tamazight (an indigenous language that has been recognized and promulgated as national since a decade and a half, and has thus been taught in public schools as an optional subject ever since) which is made up of several geolects; and French, the ex-colonizer's language. However, these are not the only languages present in the scene. The Algerian linguistic panorama consists of quite an array of languages varying in their degree and commonness of use; these are: English, German, Spanish, Italian, Turkish, Russian, and Chinese. French has significantly been losing reputation paving the way for a gradual taking over of English. On its own right, education is now turning a soft cheek towards English; even the domains which have long been dominated by French are of prospective changes to making a turn of events in favor of English as a language of science and technology. Students in the technical, scientific and medical fields (which are instructed in French) occur more inclined towards using references of an English language production. One auspicious case in point indeed is the noteworthy fact that the module of French that was taught independently in virtually every stream and specialism in higher education has along the recent years progressively been substituted for a unit of English, mainly ESP<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> English for Specific Purposes.

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