

ATTITUDES OF ALGERIAN UNIVERSITY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS TOWARDS ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH ARABIC AND FRENCH

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Abstract: This study investigates the attitudes of Algerian university teachers and students towards English as a medium of instruction, juxtaposed with Arabic and French. The participant pool comprised 55 university teachers and 79 students from various Algerian universities. Using two distinct questionnaires, the findings unveiled a notable contrast between teachers and students regarding their preferences for the medium of instruction. While teachers exhibited a preference for Arabic and French over English, students leaned towards Arabic and English, with a less favourable view towards French.

Keywords: English as Medium of Instruction, Attitudes, Comparative Analysis, Language Policy

ATTITUDES DES ENSEIGNANTS ET DES ETUDIANTS UNIVERSITAIRES ALGERIENS ENVERS L'ANGLAIS COMME LANGUE D'ENSEIGNEMENT : UNE ANALYSE COMPARATIVE AVEC L'ARABE ET LE FRANÇAIS

Résumé : Cette étude examine les attitudes des enseignants et des étudiants universitaires algériens à l'égard de l'anglais comme langue d'enseignement, en les comparant à l'arabe et au français. L'échantillon de participants était composé de 55 enseignants universitaires et de 79 étudiants issus de différentes universités algériennes. En utilisant deux questionnaires distincts, les résultats ont révélé un contraste notable entre les préférences des enseignants et des étudiants en matière de langue d'enseignement. Alors que les enseignants ont montré une préférence pour l'arabe et le français par rapport à l'anglais, les étudiants ont penché vers l'arabe et l'anglais, avec une vision moins favorable du français.

Mots-clés : Anglais comme Langue d'Enseignement, Attitudes, Analyse Comparative, Politique Linguistique

Introduction

Algeria, a country rich in cultural heritage and linguistic diversity, stands at the crossroads of multiple linguistic influences, each leaving its mark on the nation's educational landscape. Since gaining independence from colonial rule, Algeria has embarked on a

journey of linguistic identity formation, grappling with the legacy of colonialism and the complexities of linguistic pluralism. At the heart of this discourse lies the question of medium of instruction (MI), a topic of paramount importance in shaping educational policies and practices. The historical backdrop of Algeria's linguistic diversity traces back to its colonial past, where French became entrenched as the language of administration, education, and prestige (Kouicem, 2019). The enduring dominance of French in post-independence Algeria has underscored the intricate interplay between language, power, and identity (Z. Djebbari & H. Djebbari, 2018). Despite efforts to promote Arabic as the national language and symbol of cultural revival, French has retained its stronghold in various spheres of Algerian society, including academia (Z. Djebbari & H. Djebbari, 2018). Throughout its post-independence history, Algeria has witnessed a series of reforms aimed at asserting linguistic sovereignty and reclaiming cultural authenticity (Z. Djebbari & H. Djebbari, 2018; Benrabah, 2007). These reforms, ranging from language planning initiatives to educational policy changes, have sought to redefine Algeria's linguistic landscape and foster a sense of linguistic nationalism. However, the implementation of these reforms has been met with challenges and complexities, often reflecting the divergent linguistic realities within Algerian society (Benrabah, 1999). Amidst these linguistic dynamics, the question of medium of instruction has emerged as a focal point of debate and deliberation. With the recent announcement by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research regarding the adoption of English as a primary medium of instruction in universities, the linguistic equilibrium of Algerian education faces a new paradigm shift. This decision, reflective of global trends towards English as a dominant language of academia and commerce, has sparked discussions among educators, students, and policymakers alike. This study, thus, seeks to explore the attitudes, perceptions, and apprehensions of Algerian teachers and students towards the proposed adoption of English Medium Instruction (EMI) compared to the traditional mediums of Arabic and French. By examining the multifaceted dimensions of linguistic diversity, historical legacies, and contemporary reforms, this research aims to provide insights into the complexities of language policy and educational practices in Algeria. Through an understanding of the stakeholders' viewpoints, policymakers can navigate the intricacies of language planning and education reform, fostering inclusive and equitable learning environments for all Algerian learners.

In light of the above introduction, this research addresses the following research questions: What are Algerian higher education teachers' attitudes towards using English as Medium of Instruction as compared to Arabic and French? What are Algerian university students' attitudes towards using English as Medium of Instruction as compared to Arabic and French? To investigate these questions, the following hypotheses are formulated: For Algerian Higher Education Teachers: There is no significant difference in attitudes towards using English as a Medium of Instruction compared to Arabic and French. There is a significant difference in attitudes towards using English as a Medium of Instruction compared to Arabic and French. For Algerian University Students: There is no significant difference in attitudes towards using English as a Medium of Instruction compared to Arabic and French. There is a significant difference in attitudes towards using English as a Medium of Instruction compared to Arabic and French. These hypotheses serve as guiding principles for exploring and analysing the attitudes of both teachers and students concerning the adoption of English as a Medium of Instruction within Algerian higher education institutions, particularly in comparison to Arabic and French.

1. English as a Medium of Instruction

Globalization has propelled the pervasive influence of the English language across various aspects of daily life, necessitating its acquisition. Consequently, English has transitioned from being solely a foreign language to becoming a primary medium of instruction. English as a medium of instruction (EMI) is defined by Macaro (2018, p. 15) as "the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the majority of the population's first language is not English". The adoption of EMI is increasingly widespread, particularly in higher education, as highlighted by Macaro (2018). Numerous countries, higher education institutions, and international schools have embraced EMI or introduced EMI programs to meet the demands of a globalized world. The adoption of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in educational settings presents numerous advantages and opportunities for both institutions and students. In EMI environments, students learning through a second language (L2) often demonstrate exceptional proficiency in receptive skills like reading and listening (Swain & Lapkin, 1982). However, they may not achieve native-level proficiency in productive skills and linguistic nuances. Despite this, EMI offers social and psychological benefits, as students learning through L2 tend to feel more confident when conversing with native speakers and develop positive attitudes toward the second language (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009; Merisuo-Storm, 2006).

Nevertheless, Macaro (2018) noted that while EMI has become prevalent in educational settings, there exists limited empirical evidence regarding its effectiveness. Although some studies suggest that EMI could enhance listening skills and have minimal adverse effects on content learning, much of the evidence relies on the perceptions of teachers and learners rather than rigorous assessments and group comparisons. Therefore, further research incorporating robust methodologies is necessary to comprehensively evaluate the efficacy of EMI. The benefits of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) remain a contentious subject, with various challenges (Bradford, 2016). Bradford (2016) highlights several obstacles that lecturers and students may face during the adaptation to EMI, including linguistic and cultural challenges. One significant hurdle is the difficulty that teachers and students encounter in comprehending the accented language used by native English speakers, as well as the content delivered in English (Bradford, 2016). The presence of accents, regional variations, and unfamiliar speech patterns can impede understanding during lectures, discussions, and while engaging with English instructional materials. Furthermore, cultural challenges may arise due to a disparity in expectations between students from different cultural backgrounds, such as international and domestic students (Bradford, 2016). International students often bring their unique cultural norms and expectations, which may contrast starkly with those of the host country. This divergence in cultural perspectives can lead to misinterpretations, ambiguity, and frustration among both students and educators. In summary, while EMI offers numerous potential benefits, it is crucial to acknowledge and address the linguistic and cultural barriers that may hinder its effectiveness. By recognizing these challenges and implementing appropriate support mechanisms, institutions can strive to create inclusive and supportive environments conducive to successful EMI implementation.

2. English in Algeria

Scholars have widely recognized Algeria for its linguistic diversity or plurilingualism (Kouicem, 2019; Benrabah, 1999; Z. Djebbari & H. Djebbari, 2018; Rezig, 2011). Rezig

(2011) particularly acknowledged the complexity and diversity of the linguistic system in Algeria, which encompasses a multitude of languages used in both academic and non-academic contexts. Belmihoub (2018) noted that the Algerian population is predominantly divided into two main linguistic groups: speakers of Algerian Arabic and speakers of Berber languages. Among the Berber languages are various varieties including Chaoui, Kabyles, Mozabites, and Tuareg. Algerian Arabic, also known as Derja, is prevalent in social interactions and often involves a form of code-switching between Arabic and French (Belmihoub, 2018). Furthermore, Modern Standard Arabic is primarily utilized in schools and for administrative purposes. The linguistic diversity in Algeria is deeply intertwined with its historical context. Benrabah (1999) traces the settlement of numerous civilizations in Algeria, beginning with the Numidians, also known as the Berbers, who spoke a Libyco-Berber language. Subsequently, the Islamic conquests of North Africa facilitated the spread of Classical Arabic. During the period of French colonialism from 1830 to 1962, vigorous efforts were made to impose French and undermine Arabic. Following independence, various policies and reforms were implemented in an effort to organize Algeria's linguistic landscape. Under the leadership of President Ahmed Ben Bella (1916-2012), the Algerian government introduced the policy of Arabization, which mandated the use of Arabic in schools and government institutions. Consequently, Arabic was established as the national and official language alongside French, which remained the primary foreign language in Algeria. The primary objective of Arabization was to decolonize the country and reclaim national identity (Z. Djebbari & H. Djebbari, 2018). This policy was in effect from independence until the 1990s (Benrabah, 1999). Despite its significance, Arabization faced numerous criticisms, including the shortage of qualified Arabic teachers in Algeria. Consequently, the Algerian government resorted to recruiting a significant number of teachers from various Arab countries, many of whom were inadequately qualified to teach Arabic (Benrabah, 2007). English in Algeria was historically regarded as a secondary foreign language. It was not until 1993 that the Algerian government made a significant decision regarding the role of English in education. Rezig (2011) reported that English was introduced to primary schools for the first time in an effort to improve foreign language instruction from an early age. Primary school students were given the option to select either French or English as a compulsory foreign language. However, this initiative was piloted only in select Algerian primary schools during that year and was ultimately discontinued. The cessation of the program was attributed to the preference of the majority of parents for French over English (Rezig, 2011). Despite its limited popularity in Algerian contexts, English emerged as the new lingua franca due to globalization. Its prominence increased significantly because of its crucial role in advancing science and technology, as well as its pivotal contribution to the implementation of internationalization policies.

In 2003, educational reforms in Algeria introduced measures to promote the teaching of English within the country's education system (Z. Djebbari & H. Djebbari, 2018). According to Z. Djebbari and H. Djebbari (2018) these reforms included the adoption of new teaching methodologies, notably the competency-based approach (CBA). This educational strategy aims to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to identify and address complex challenges within their respective fields. A competency, within this framework, embodies a dynamic process of understanding how to take effective action. It involves the integration and application of various abilities and skills to navigate diverse problem-solving scenarios or unfamiliar situations. Importantly, competencies extend beyond the traditional school curriculum, remaining relevant throughout various life

experiences. As a result, English has been taught for four years in middle school and three years in high school, accompanied by the development of new English textbooks (Z. Djebbari & H. Djebbari, 2018). In middle school, these textbooks are crafted to facilitate the acquisition of fundamental English language skills, aiding learners in mastering the language effectively. Additionally, the new reforms emphasize collaborative group work, granting learners opportunities to freely employ the language and collectively tackle language-related challenges. In high school, textbooks are designed to help learners grasp grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, language functions, and forms, as well as phonology, through various stimulating activities aimed at developing learners' competencies. The overarching aim of this reform is to foster language interaction between teachers and students (Z. Djebbari & H. Djebbari, 2018). Starting from 2022, President Tebboune declared that English would be taught in primary schools, beginning from the 3rd year and continuing until the 5th and final year of primary education. The English textbooks are designed to assist pupils in learning the basics of English, including alphabets, colours, names of objects, and basic interactions. These textbooks are enriched with colourful pictures to captivate the interest of pupils. The primary aim of these textbooks is to acquaint pupils with English writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills.

3. English at the University

Likewise, the Algerian higher educational system has undergone a number of reforms since independence in 1962. The latest is the application of the LMD system. The LMD system comprises three main steps. The first step is the Licence or Bachelor's degree where students complete three years of undergraduate studies. Then the Master's degree is completed in two years. After that, doctoral studies that may last from four to six years depending on the progress of the candidate. According to Miliani (2010), the LMD system is an Anglo-Saxon program that has demonstrated its success and has been more or less adopted by the majority of European countries. In 2003, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research declared that the aim from adopting the LMD system is first and foremost the commitment to upholding teaching standards of the highest caliber, aligned with societal needs and ensuring broader access to higher education (Z. Djebbari & H. Djebbari, 2018). Moreover, fostering alignment with socio-economic progress entails fostering open-mindedness towards global advancements, especially in science and technology. This commitment further extends to promoting international collaboration and embracing diversity, thus enhancing the university's engagement with the evolving global landscape (Z. Djebbari & H. Djebbari, 2018). English has emerged as a dominant language at the university level, permeating various faculties as both a core subject in English departments and through English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction in other academic domains. The Ministry of Higher Education initially proposed the transition from French to English as the language for research and instruction in universities in 2019. However, this shift was not implemented until 2023, when the Ministry formally promoted the use of English across all university faculties and departments, replacing French as the predominant language of instruction. In September, the Ministry of Higher Education initiated a program to promote English as the medium of instruction. Recognizing that many teachers were accustomed to using French, the Ministry launched training initiatives to equip them with English proficiency. University teachers are mandated to participate in online English training courses or attend workshops organized by various university institutions such as Intensive Language Teaching Centers or through partnerships with American Corners in collaboration with the U.S. embassy. Despite

the Ministry's efforts to support teachers and students in improving their English skills, the swift transition to English instruction has evoked both excitement and frustration among students and teachers alike.

4. Methodology

4.1. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential impact on both university teachers and students, particularly in light of the transition from Arabic and French to English as the primary medium of instruction. This shift has the potential to profoundly affect the comprehension of subject matter within these domains. Moreover, teachers may face challenges in adapting to this change, as presenting lessons in a new language could impact their performance in the classroom. Similarly, students may also encounter difficulties as they navigate learning materials and coursework in English. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that both teachers and students may experience frustration and apprehension due to these new regulations. The emotional and psychological implications of such a transition cannot be overlooked, as individuals grapple with the adjustment to a new language of instruction. By exploring the perspectives of both teachers and students, this study aims to shed light on the challenges and concerns associated with this significant pedagogical shift. Ultimately, the findings of this study have the potential to inform educational policy and practices, as well as support the development of strategies to facilitate a smoother transition for all stakeholders involved.

4.3. Population

This study aimed to examine the perspectives of university teachers and students regarding the new regulations set forth by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. These regulations stipulate that beginning in September 2023, all university classes will be conducted in English. Notably, Participants excluded from the study included those from departments unaffected by these regulations, such as Arabic and French, as well as departments already using English as the primary medium of instruction, including Translation and English. The participants in the study were teachers (N=55), comprising 19 males and 36 females. These teachers were affiliated with 33 different universities and came from various domains, including natural science, computer science, social sciences, technological sciences, pharmacy, economics, sports, arts, etc. The majority of the teachers (51) had Arabic as their native language, while only 4 teachers spoke Amazight as their native language. Regarding teaching experience, there were significant diversity. For instance, most respondents had less than 10 years of teaching experience (20 teachers with less than 5 years and 12 with between 5 and 10 years). Additionally, 10 teachers had more than 30 years of teaching experience. The remaining respondents fell within the range of 11 to 30 years of teaching experience. Regarding their medium of instruction, teachers used Arabic and French almost equally in their classes, both when explaining lessons orally or in their handouts. Only 4 teachers used English. Additionally, the participants' opinions were equally divided on the matter of receiving English training. 30 teachers responded that they received training in English, ranging from two months to two years, while 25 teachers answered that they did not receive any English training. In terms of their English proficiency, the majority of teachers were unsatisfied with their speaking skills, but they felt satisfied with their listening, reading, and writing abilities.

The study also included 79 students, consisting of 46 males and 33 females. The majority of these students were affiliated with the University of Constantine 2, specifically

the Faculty of Computer Science, totalling 71 students. The remaining students were affiliated with 5 other universities and 5 other domains, including natural sciences, medicine, economics, technological sciences, and science of matter. Among the students, there were undergraduates, postgraduates, and doctoral candidates, with 24 undergraduates, 44 master's students, and 11 PhD students. The age range of the participants was predominantly between 20 and 30 years old, comprising 74 students. Only two participants were under 20 years old, and three participants were between 41 and 50 years old. The majority of the participants were native Arabic speakers, accounting for 77 participants, while only two participants spoke Amazigh as their native language. Regarding their English proficiency, 55 students reported that they did not receive any training in English, while 24 students received English training ranging from three months to two years. Despite this, the majority of the students expressed satisfaction with their English proficiency across all skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

4.4. Data Gathering Tools and Procedure

To address the research questions outlined above, two distinct questionnaires (see Appendix A) were meticulously developed: one tailored for teachers and another for students. These questionnaires were crafted with the explicit objective of gathering crucial insights into the preferred language for instructional purposes among Algerian teachers and students. Each questionnaire was thoughtfully structured into two distinct sections to effectively capture the requisite data. The initial section was dedicated to gathering comprehensive information pertaining to the participants' personal background. Central to the second section of the questionnaire was an inquiry into the preferred language that Algerian teachers and students wish to see employed as the primary medium of instruction. This critical aspect was meticulously explored through a series of targeted questions aimed at elucidating participant perspectives on the use of Arabic, French, or English in the educational context.

Both questionnaires were in a form of a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree) (see Appendix A). The items included both positively worded and reverse worded questions. Reverse worded items were incorporated to mitigate acquiescence bias, a tendency for respondents to agree with items regardless of content (Zhang, Noor, & Savalei, 2016). The questionnaires were crafted in both Arabic and English to facilitate participation among diverse language groups (see Appendix A). As a result, four questionnaire versions were created: two for teachers (one in Arabic, one in English) and two for students (one in Arabic, one in English). Distribution of the questionnaires occurred online through email and various Facebook pages and groups targeting university faculty, researchers, and students. Both the teachers' and the students' questionnaires comprised 29 questions divided into two sections and a comment space. Section one focused on teachers' background information, encompassing 14 questions related to their field of study, institution, level of English proficiency, etc. Section two addressed the research questions outlined in this paper, consisting of 15 questions regarding participants' preferred means of instruction. These questions were categorized into English, Arabic, and French, with each category comprising five questions (See Table 1 and Table 2 below). It's noteworthy that some of these questions were reverse-worded items. Mean scores were calculated for each category. Additionally, the questionnaires provided a comment space to allow participants to freely express their thoughts.

After constructing the questionnaires, the researcher conducted a thorough review to identify and rectify any discrepancies. Subsequently, the questionnaires, which comprised

two versions, underwent evaluation by a panel of three researchers. This panel included two PhD holders in English and one in computer science, ensuring diverse expertise and comprehensive scrutiny for questionnaire quality. As previously noted, the questionnaires were distributed online, allowing for efficient dissemination among a wide population within a short timeframe and minimizing costs. Following this, a pilot test was conducted to validate the questionnaires' effectiveness (Cohen, Manion, Morrisson, 2007). To assess the validity of the questionnaires, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis. Validity pertains to the extent to which an instrument accurately assesses the intended constructs or variables (Field, 2009; Cohen, Manion & Morrisson, 2007). According to Lee Chan and Idris (2017), the validity of the questionnaire can be determined by exploratory factor analysis. This approach allowed us to delve deeper into the underlying structure of the data. In this process, we first calculated the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure to evaluate the sample's adequacy for factor analysis (Field, 2009). Additionally, we conducted Bartlett's test of sphericity to determine whether the correlations among variables were significant, indicating the suitability of the data for factor analysis (Field, 2009). All statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS. For the teachers' questionnaire, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of 0.78, surpassing the threshold of 0.7, indicates that the sample from which the data were collected was sufficient for analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded a statistically significant result ($p = .000$), indicating that the correlations among variables are significant. These findings suggest that the dataset is suitable for factor analysis. The variables in the questionnaire exhibit satisfactory common variance and meaningful correlations with each other, implying the presence of an underlying structure that warrants exploration through factor analysis. Therefore, it is appropriate to proceed with conducting factor analysis to discern and investigate the latent factors or dimensions within the dataset. To ensure the accuracy of item groupings within each construct, an exploratory factor analysis was performed. This analysis aimed to identify independent factors and evaluate the items that loaded onto these factors. Factor loadings exceeding 0.3 were considered, and any scales yielding factor loadings below this threshold were excluded.

Table 1: Exploratory Factor Analysis (Teachers' Questionnaire)

	Factor		
	Arabic	French	English
Q17	.818		
Q20	.736		
Q22	.674		
Q27	.858		
Q24	-.493		
Q19		.940	
Q16		.933	
Q21		.929	
Q26		.843	
Q28		.784	
Q15			.836
Q18			.908
Q23			.862
Q25			.783
Q29			.811

Note. Extraction method: Principal component analysis; Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization; Convergence of rotation in 5 iterations.

Table 1 reveals the outcomes of the factor analysis, which unveiled three distinct factors, each comprising five questions. Notably, there exists a positive relationship among the various questions within each category, as evidenced by their high factor loadings. However, within the Arabic category, an exception arises, wherein Question 24 demonstrates a negative relationship with the other questions in the category, boasting a factor loading exceeding 0.3. This adverse correlation can be attributed to the question's reverse-worded nature. Consequently, the factor analysis underscores the interconnectedness of questions within each of the three categories. The students' questionnaire data showed a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of 0.82, exceeding the accepted threshold of 0.7, indicating ample adequacy for analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated a statistically significant result ($p = .000$), suggesting substantial correlations among variables. These outcomes, thus, imply that the dataset is suitable for factor analysis. Similar to the teachers' questionnaire, an exploratory factor analysis was performed. This analysis aimed to identify independent factors and evaluate the items that loaded onto these factors. Factor loadings exceeding 0.3 were considered, and any scales yielding factor loadings below this threshold were excluded.

Table 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis (Students' Questionnaire)

	Factor		
	Arabic	French	English
Q17	.879		
Q20	.837		
Q23	.598		
Q26	.866		
Q29	.787		
Q16		.887	
Q19		.883	
Q22		-.610	
Q25		.832	
Q27		.815	
Q15			.906
Q18			.840
Q21			-.539
Q24			.875
Q28			.904

Note. Extraction method: Principal component analysis; Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization; Convergence of rotation in 5 iterations.

Table 2 presents the results of the factor analysis, revealing three distinct factors, each comprising five questions. Notably, a positive relationship is observed among the questions within each category, evident from their high factor loadings. However, exceptions are found within the French and English categories, where Question 22 and Question 21 respectively exhibit a negative relationship with the other questions in their categories, with factor loadings exceeding 0.3. This negative correlation can be attributed to the reverse-worded nature of the questions. Thus, the factor analysis underscores the interconnectedness

of questions within each category. To evaluate the reliability of the questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha was computed. Cronbach's alpha serves as a measure of internal consistency among questionnaire items, indicating their degree of interrelatedness (Cortina, 1993; Field, 2009; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Typically, an acceptable alpha value falls within the range of .7 to .8 (Field, 2009). However, Cortina (1993) cautioned against straightforward interpretation, as the number of items in the questionnaire can influence alpha. A greater number of items might inflate alpha, while fewer items could lower it, even if the items are correlated. Additionally, the presence of reversed-worded items may also impact the value of Cronbach's alpha (Cortina, 1993). Therefore, prior to calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, reverse-worded items were inverted in coding, as suggested (Field, 2009). This adjustment is crucial because negative items inherently introduce a negative relationship with other items in the questionnaire, which can influence the alpha value (Field, 2009). For a five-point Likert scale, the coding of reverse-worded items would be as follows: strongly disagree=5, disagree=4, neither agree nor disagree=3, agree=2, strongly agree=1. Table 3 below displays the layout of the teachers' questionnaire.

Table 3: Teachers' Questionnaire Categories

Categories	Positive Items	Negative Items
Arabic	Q17, Q20, Q22, Q27	Q24
French	Q16, Q19, Q21, Q26, Q28	
English	Q15, Q18, Q23, Q25, Q29	

The analysis of reliability using Cronbach's alpha was conducted separately for the categories of Arabic, French, and English. The results indicated a moderate level of reliability for the Arabic, with $\alpha = .51$. Conversely, the reliability was found to be high for both French ($\alpha = .94$) and English ($\alpha = .90$). SPSS output highlighted that the inclusion of the negative question, specifically question 24, notably impacted the Cronbach's alpha value within the Arabic category.

Table 4: Students' Questionnaire

Categories	Positive Items	Negative Items
Arabic	Q17, Q20, Q23, Q26, Q29	
French	Q16, Q19, Q25, Q27	Q22
English	Q15, Q18, Q24, Q28	Q21

Similarly to the teachers' questionnaire, the analysis of reliability using Cronbach's alpha was conducted separately for the categories of Arabic, French, and English. The findings revealed a high level of reliability for Arabic, with $\alpha = .86$. In contrast, the reliability was found to be moderate for both French ($\alpha = .57$) and English ($\alpha = .59$). SPSS output revealed that the inclusion of the negative questions, particularly question 22 for the French category and question 21 for the English category, impacted the Cronbach's alpha value within their respective categories. Despite Cronbach's alpha revealing moderate values for categories containing negatively worded items, we opted to retain all the questions based on the results of factor analysis. It's worth noting that the interpretation of Cronbach's alpha values should be approached cautiously, as indicated by previous studies (Cortina, 1993; Grau, 2015).

5. Results

As previously mentioned, the questionnaires used a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," to assess both teachers' and students' attitudes toward English as a medium of instruction at the university level. The questionnaires were structured into three categories: English, Arabic, and French as mediums of instruction. Participant scores were computed using means. According to H. N. J. Boone & D. A. Boone (2012), Likert-scale data can be treated as interval data when aggregating scores from four or more Likert scale items. While parametric tests like t-tests and ANOVA are typically suitable for Likert-scale data when assumptions of homogeneity of variance and normality of distribution are met (Bonett & Wright, 2014; Harpe, 2015; Sullivan & Artino, 2013), the data from the questionnaires did not adhere to these assumptions. Therefore, the non-parametric Friedman test was employed as an alternative to compare participants' attitudes toward English, Arabic, and French as mediums of instruction. Table 5 below displays descriptive statistics of both the teachers' and students' questionnaires.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics

Group	Categories	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Teachers	Arabic	55	3.27	.87	1.6	4.8
	French	55	3.09	1.36	1	5
	English	55	2.44	1.06	1	5
Students	Arabic	79	3.49	.93	1	5
	French	79	2.66	.76	1.4	5
	English	79	3.74	.63	1.2	5

The Friedman test results indicated a significant difference among the preferences for Arabic, French, and English as mediums of instruction among university teachers, $\chi^2(2) = .017$, $p = .05$. A Bonferroni correction was applied, leading to all effects being reported at a .0167 level of significance. Notably, there was no significant difference between the preferences for French and Arabic, with teachers showing equal preference for both, $T = 685$, $r = -.67$. However, teachers demonstrated a significant preference for Arabic over English, $T = 344.5$, $r = -.32$, as well as for French over English, $T = 337.5$, $r = -.27$. In analysing the students' questionnaire, the Friedman test highlighted a notable difference in preferences for Arabic, French, and English as mediums of instruction among university students, $\chi^2(2) = .000$, $p = .05$. Applying a Bonferroni correction, all effects were reported at a .0167 level of significance. It's worth noting that students exhibited a significant preference for Arabic over French, $T = 538$, $r = -.38$, and for English over French, $T = 2771.5$, $r = -.48$. However, there was no significant difference between the preferences for English and Arabic, indicating students' equal preference for both mediums, $T = 1697.5$, $r = -.17$.

6. Discussion

The results of our study revealed that university teachers hold positive attitudes towards both Arabic and French as mediums of instruction, while they express skepticism regarding the use of English in this role. Conversely, students indicated a preference for Arabic and English as means of instruction, displaying negative attitudes towards French. The preference for Arabic among both teachers and students can be attributed to its status as the native language of all participants in the study. Numerous studies have highlighted

the importance of the first language (L1) in the learning process (Antón & Dicamilla, 1999; Centeno-Cortes & Jimenez Jimenez, 2004; Gánem-Gutiérrez, 2009; Gánem-Gutiérrez & Roehr, 2011; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Swain, Lapkin, & Deters, 2013). From a Vygotskian perspective, L1 has been recognized as instrumental in helping learners focus their attention, organize and structure their reasoning, and navigate challenging tasks (Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Gánem-Gutiérrez & Roehr, 2011). Additionally, it is logical for teachers and learners to default to their L1 as the medium of instruction (MI). Hence, the preference of both teachers and students for Arabic as the MI is understandable. The preference of teachers for French equally to Arabic may stem from their familiarity with French, as many of these educators were educated in universities where French was commonly used as a second language. Consequently, their past learning experiences may shape their attitudes toward French. Additionally, their successful academic journeys, culminating in obtaining PhD degrees, may further reinforce positive associations with French as a language of instruction. As suggested by Schulz (2001), pre-existing beliefs can significantly influence the teaching and learning process. The cautious stance toward English could also stem from past governmental initiatives, notably the Arabization policy enacted post-independence to challenge the linguistic and cultural hegemony of French and reaffirm the Algerian identity. Although the intentions behind this policy were commendable and vital, its swift implementation and the dearth of sufficient human and material resources ultimately led to its undoing (Kouicem, 2019). Consequently, the setbacks experienced with prior reforms have left teachers disillusioned and fostered skepticism regarding the efficacy of these new initiatives.

On the other hand, students' preference for English over French may be attributed to globalization, as previously mentioned. These young individuals are greatly influenced by the world around them and the widespread use of English. They are constantly exposed to English in various forms such as movies, music, and literature. Additionally, similar to their teachers, students may be influenced by their past learning experiences, particularly as products of the Algerian government's 2003 reforms promoting English in schools. Many of these students have studied English for at least seven years before entering university. Furthermore, while both teachers and students expressed contentment with their proficiency in English, it's worth noting that no standardized test was utilized to assess their language level, rendering these assessments subjective (Macaro, 2018). Given that many teachers were previously educated using French as the primary medium of instruction, there may be lingering doubts about the efficacy of English for teaching content courses. Conversely, students, who may feel confident in their English language skills, might eagerly embrace English as the medium of instruction. However, mastering English as a second language (L2) may not necessarily equate to proficiency in English-medium instruction (EMI). Consequently, these students could potentially regret their choice of English as the medium of instruction if they struggle to comprehend content courses delivered in English. Thus, careful consideration should be given to the potential challenges associated with transitioning to English-medium instruction. Drawing from the detailed discussion outlined above, we reject the null hypothesis (H0) for higher education teachers. The results indicated a significant difference in attitudes towards the use of English compared to Arabic and French. Specifically, teachers displayed positive attitudes towards Arabic and French as mediums of instruction, while expressing skepticism towards the use of English in this role. Conversely, our study supports the null hypothesis (H0) for university students. The results revealed no significant difference in attitudes towards using English compared to Arabic and

French. However, it is important to note that students displayed a preference for Arabic and English as means of instruction, while expressing negative attitudes towards French. These findings suggest that while teachers may have reservations about English as a medium of instruction, Students seem to demonstrate a greater level of acceptance towards it, particularly when compared to French.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the discrepancy in preferences between teachers and students regarding the adoption of French or English as mediums of instruction necessitates careful attention from language policy makers in Algeria. Additionally, the importance of Arabic as a medium of instruction should not be overlooked, given its equal significance alongside other languages. Proposed educational reforms must undergo thorough planning and validation before implementation to mitigate potential challenges. The aforementioned explanations provide preliminary insights into understanding teachers' and students' perspectives on English-medium instruction (EMI). However, further empirical studies are needed to assess the effectiveness of EMI and its impact on teachers' and learners' comprehension of content courses. Ultimately, we hope the findings from this study can guide language policy makers in Algeria in making informed decisions for the future.

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Appendix A : Questionnaires

Teachers' questionnaire :

Arabic version : <https://forms.gle/g92hpgEQk17u6SWu7>

English version: <https://forms.gle/mZPjxZNBbH6sNqUE9>

Students' questionnaire :

Arabic version : <https://forms.gle/yJSedzUzXrVbaeFX8>

English version: <https://forms.gle/5pinbTFt422H1Uzw7>