

Investing the Algerian Linguistic Diversity in Education: Exploring the Potentials of Teaching French via English as a Medium of Instruction in Higher Education

Investir la diversité linguistique algérienne dans l'éducation : explorer les potentiels de l'enseignement du français via l'anglais comme moyen d'enseignement dans l'enseignement supérieur

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Abstract:

This study turns around the proposition that English can be used as a source of motivation for learners of English to study French at university. It opted for mixed-method approach to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The findings of this study revealed that learners' attitudes towards French are rather positive. Moreover, most of the interviewed learners supported the use of English as a medium of instruction due to the motivation they develop towards it and the mutual interplay between French and English.

Keywords: French, English, motivation, attitudes, needs, English as medium of instruction.

Résumé :

Cette étude suggère que l'anglais peut être utilisé comme une source de motivation pour les apprenants d'anglais à étudier le français à l'université. Cette étude a opté pour l'approche de méthodes mixtes pour collecter des données quantitatives et qualitatives. Les résultats de cette étude ont révélé que les attitudes des apprenants envers le français sont plutôt positives. Quant à la proposition d'enseigner le français via l'anglais comme langue d'enseignement, la plupart des apprenants interrogés l'ont approuvée en raison de la motivation qu'ils développent envers l'anglais et l'influence mutuelle des langues concernées.

Mots-clés : français, anglais, motivation, attitudes, besoins, anglais comme langue d'enseignement.

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1. Introduction

The linguistic diversity in Algeria represents a rich ground for researches to be carried out, and most importantly, for continuous attempts to invest the co-existence of different languages and dialects in the field of education. Despite the advantageous linguistic situation, the rapport between French and English in Algeria cannot be described as harmonious. Moreover, it is easy for the observer to identify the difficulties and negative attitudes Algerian university learners develop towards French language. These negative attitudes may stem from various sources such as its colonial history and complexity in terms of grammar, syntax, etc. As to English, learners tend to develop positive attitudes which generate a motivation to learn it. In this paper, the researcher attempts to bridge the gap between these two languages and explore the potentials of teaching French via English as a medium of instruction in higher education (departments of English studies), claiming that learners' development of motivation towards the latter will enhance learning the former. This study puts forward the following research questions:

a) What are learners' of English attitudes towards learning French at university?

b) What are their attitudes towards learning French via English as a medium of instruction at university?

As an attempt to answer the afore-mentioned questions, the following hypotheses are put forward:

a) Learners of English tend to develop negative attitudes towards French at university

b) Learners of English show a readiness to study French via English as a medium of instruction at university.

2. Review of the literature

This part of the study introduces some definitions of linguistic diversity advanced by scholars and certain attempts to explain the nature of conflict discourses on French and English in Algeria.

2.1. Linguistic diversity

The review of the literature documents various definitions of linguistic diversity. Nettle (1999) defines it as: “*the total number of languages*” (1999: 3). He also identifies three main stratifications of the concept: language diversity which represents the total number of mutually unintelligible languages; phylogenetic diversity which identifies different lineages of languages; and structural diversity which suggests a range of permutations in linguistic structure. Despite the fact that many understandings of linguistic diversity were provided by scholars, it still generates confusion and disagreement. Nettle & Romaine (2000:27) state: “[I]t is difficult to say precisely how many languages there are in the world. In addition to languages, there are also varieties or dialects of languages, many of which are also at risk. We confine ourselves here, however, to the topic of language endangerment”.

2.2. Conflict Discourses on French and English in Algeria

Algerian linguistic landscape is plurilingual as this country has four main languages: literary Arabic, Algerian Arabic, Tamazight and French (Mohamed-Amine Chemami, 2011). However, this diversity is represented via “political discourses” of conflict, taking the example of French and English which are perceived as “ontological givens rather than socio-historical constructions” (Asselah-Rahal & Blanchet, 2007; Chachou, 2013; R. Colonna et al., 2013).

French is considered as the language of seduction in addition to its ability to express some taboos that are not communicated via Algerians’ first language (Benrabah, 2001). Miliani states that most of the courses in scientific fields at Algerian universities (99, 99%) are taught in French (Miliani, 2000: 20). Despite this fact, attitudes towards French have changed over the past decade. In the past years, it was the language young Algerian people sought to master to travel abroad for studies and settlement (Lacoste, 2006: 231). However, nowadays, English has become the language chosen for the previously mentioned aims. English is considered the second foreign language in Algeria and is in competition with French since the year 2000. Mohamed-Amine Chemami (2011) argues that the United States of America and Canada support the spread of English in

Algeria via affording textbooks and training teachers to use information communication technologies.

Reviewing discourses on French in the world, one may notice that these discourses are about conflicts and conquests. However, Moatassine (2004) argues that discourses of the superiority of English are nurtured by the discussions about universal languages that can lead the world at large, globalisation and neo-liberalism. He believes that these discourses about English are mainly pejorative due to their aims of supporting one mode of thinking and standardised values. These negative discourses portray French as ‘not anti-English, but simply resisting uniformity’ (Wright, 2006, p. 42). These views about both languages tend to be supported in academic discourses which ‘*generate particular understandings of language and particular ways of orienting towards language*’ (Pennycook, 2010, p. 103).

Most of the time, French is believed to be in competition with English. According to Benrabah (2007: 240), French language in Algeria goes through pressure given certain language policies. More than this, the former language is seen as threatened by the latter. It is believed that English is threatening the role of French as the “language of modernity and science”. This can be noticed in some African countries which substituted French for in English in education instructions and research publications. Djite (1991: 116, quoted in Chaudenson, 1993, p. 403) argues that by the 20th century, scholars have found that French-speaking countries and educated individuals opted for English for mobility reasons. Following this line of thought, French is believed to live language change as English is replacing it. The danger is articulated since French political pronouncements are pleading to ‘save our language while there is still time’ (Hélène Carrèred ’Encausse, quoted in Wright, 2006, p.49).

Abid-Houcine (2007, p. 150) argues that the contemporary Algerian sociolinguistic situation looks like “a battle field” where English is used by the advocates of classical Arabic to contain the spread of French. According to Benrabah (2013, p.91), “*the rivalry between French and English became fierce in the 1990s, in parallel with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the country*”. Chachou (2013) also argues that using English in that discursive way aims at resisting language planning inherited

from French colonialism. Dourari (2003, p.9) mentions that via introducing English through the prism of “language of science and modernity, this discourse aims at “protecting Standard Arabic”.

In a historical survey conducted by Benrabah (2013) about the linguistic policies in Algeria, he argues that despite the political discourse about the languages in Algeria, most of the time it is represented via the prism of clashes and rivalries; these languages experience mixity and hybridity. Most importantly, he suggests that English is not in opposition with Arabic and French (pp.97, 100,114, 123). Despite the attempts to promote English in Algeria, this language is not perceived as a *lingua Franca*, which is viewed as a means to improve one’s socio-economic status, following the belief that mastering English will be beneficial (Myers-Scotton, 1982, p.85).

3. The study

This practical part introduces the aim of this study, the adopted research methodology framework, outlining the used research instruments, the settings, and the participants of the study. It is followed by data analysis and discussion of the findings.

3.1. Research methodology

The main aim of this study is exploring the potentials of using English a medium of instruction in teaching French at university to students of English. It also seeks identifying learners’ attitudes towards French, their needs, and their awareness about the mutual influence of both languages. Given the intricate nature of language attitudes, mixed-methods approach was used to gather data of different types. To investigate learners’ attitudes towards French in higher education, a survey questionnaire was administered to 30 students of English (Master two Didactics and Applied linguistics). The questionnaire covers learners’ attitudes towards French and their needs. By the same token, an interview was conducted with the 15 participants of this study to explore learners’ attitudes towards learning French via English as a medium of instruction.

3.2. Data analysis and Interpretation

This part of the study analyses the gathered data from the questionnaire and the interview. It also presents the findings in three

sections. The first section, entitled “Learners’ attitudes towards French in higher education, explores learners’ of English attitudes towards learning French at university. The second section identifies learners’ of English needs, lacks and wants with regard to French. The third section, however, portrays their attitudes towards learning French via English as a medium of instruction.

3.2.1. Section one: Learners’ attitudes towards French in higher education

Language attitudes are very important in learning a given language. They are tightly linked to motivation that fuels every learning process. To gauge learners’ attitudes towards French, different questions were administered to them, for instance liking studying French, teaching it at the university, encouraging its use in daily life and workplace, teaching it to Algerians who do not speak it, and learners’ willingness to assist in French language learning programmes. The table below elucidates the findings of this section:

Table 1.Learners’ attitudes towards French

| Items /percentage | Yes | No |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Liking French | 52,94 % | 47,05% |
| Teaching French at the university | 70,58% | 23.52% |
| Using it in everyday life | 17.64 % | 82.35% |
| Using it in workplaces | 23.52 % | 76.47% |
| Teaching it to Algerians who do not speak it | 64.70% | 35.29% |
| Assisting French Programmes | 47.05% | 52.94% |

3.2.1.1. Learning French at University

The participants of this study were asked to identify their attitudes towards studying French at the university. Analysing the data, it was found that a high percentage of answers reflected negative attitudes towards learning this language in higher education. A slightly superior percentage, however, identified a willingness to engage in French learning practices.

When dealing with the first category's attitudes towards this language, it was found that learners did not affiliate between French and the colonizer, a pretext common among many Algerian people. Some learners think that French is a difficult language to learn, as stated in the ensuing comment: *"I find it hard to learn and to be honest it is a boring language"*. Another comment illustrates the idea as follows: *"It is difficult and complicated rules"*. Others seem not to like the language itself as explained in the comment: *"I don't like this language somehow and I never tried."* In a similar way, another learner adds: *"I don't like how it sounds"*. The rest of the answers attributed learners' negative attitudes to some ineffective teaching methods of the target language. A learner elaborates the point saying: *"Because in my experience it was always taught in a rigid and uninteresting manner"*. Another learner adds: *"The methods used when teaching it are too boring (theory only)"*.

The learners who expressed positive attitudes towards studying French at the University provided different motives. Most of them think that French is a very useful language in Algeria and as such it must be learnt. A learner says: *"It is a very common language and we are using it everywhere"*. Another comment suggests: *"I am interested in foreign languages that are used in my country"*. Other answers pointed at learners' interest in learning other languages, including French, as indicates the ensuing comment: *"I am passionate about learning languages"*. Other learners averred they like studying French as illustrated in the comment: *"I like talking in French language and use it in my daily life."* Others think that French allows them more opportunities. A learner explains: *"It is a new culture to uncover and provides opportunities"*.

3.2.1.2. Teaching French at University

To deeply gauge learners' attitudes towards learning French, they were asked to air their opinions about whether or not French should be taught at universities. Analysing the findings of this inquiry, it was found that the minority of learners do not approve teaching French at university. This group of learners does not regard this language as international, as states a learner: *"It is not that world widely used"*. The same argument is averred by another learner: *"It is not that important, not an international*

language.” Some other learners justified their views claiming that “*not everyone has a good level at French.*” The majority of the learners were for teaching French at the university. Some learners see this language as the language of Algerian administrative sectors. A learner argues: “*It is prioritized in Algerian administration and it may open new doors to learn abroad.*” Other learners believe it to be important in their future careers, as stated in the following comment: “*The students really need it in their life and their career in the future*”. French, some learners suggest, is an international language and as such it should be taught at university. A learner elaborates: “*We are in a francophone country and also it is an international language*”. This language enables them to carry their studies abroad, suggests the ensuing comment: “*It increases our opportunities to study elsewhere*”. Some of the answers supported the teaching of French in higher education given learners’ need to develop and improve it, the significance of learning other languages, and others think of French as an official language in Algeria.

3.2.1.3. Encouraging the use of French in everyday life

The same learners were asked whether or not French should be encouraged to be used in everyday life. The answers were grouped in three categories: learners who were for the proposition, those who were against it, and those who argued that using languages depends on the persons themselves. It was noticed that, compared to teaching French at university which was welcomed by most of the learners, encouraging its daily use was not approved by most of the learners. These learners’ motives differed. Some of them argued that using French in the daily life was not a necessity, as suggests the following comment: “*It is not an obligation to use French in everyday life*”. Another learner adds: “*It is not necessary to communicate in French to show that you know how to speak it*”. Equally, a considerable number of answers pointed at the necessity of using English instead of French, providing the argument that the former is an international language. A learner claims: “*Most people forget about English language which is an international language*”. Another one says: “*English instead because it is the language of science and it is worldwide used!*” The rapport between

language and identity was among the motives why learners declined the proposition. Some of the learners think that doing so will endanger the existence of local identities and cultures. A learner expressed their worries as follows: *“The overuse of this language has a big part in losing our identities and values!”* Another one adds: *“No, we are Arabs”*.

The second group of learners who were for the proposition represented the minority. They believe that French is already used in daily life, as suggests the following comment: *“We Algerian citizens talk in French more than our language”*. Others pointed at the use of this language in different settings. A learner adds: *“Nowadays all places that people go to use French as first language”*. For the mastery of any language, some learners argue, it must be used in daily life. A learner comments: *“In order to know the language you should communicate in real life”*. The third group believes that using a particular language in daily life refers to the speaker and their linguistic choices. A learner elaborates: *“Each one has his own choice of using the language they want”*. Another learner adds: *“Each one chooses which language he prefers”*.

3.2.1.4. French in workplaces

Encouraging the use of French in workplaces was the next statement provided to the learners to gauge their attitudes towards this language. Here, too, most of the answers did not support the proposition. Some learners prefer the use of English given the fact it is an international language. A learner suggests: *“We should encourage a language that we use in the international level”*. In a similar way, another learner comments: *“The lingua franca nowadays is English”*. Other learners prefer using their first language, Arabic. A learner says: *“Arabic is the first language. However, if it is a French department, it should be used”*. A learner prefers using other languages as he claims: *“It is not our first language and we can use another language”*. Some learners criticised the use of French in workplaces stating: *“Here in Algeria most of workplaces use only French unfortunately”*. Therefore, some learners think, *“It is not obligatory to be used in workplaces, it is optional.”* A category of answers alluded to the difficulties Algerian people find in using the language. A learner clarifies: *“We still struggle with that language; we find it embarrassing when we do not*

understand others.” For the learners who welcomed the use of French in workplaces, some of their motives pointed at the use of this language in administrations’ documents. A learner says: *“Almost all paper works are in French”*. Other learners underscored the use of French in workplaces. A learner adds: *“In Algeria we deal with French more than English in workplace”*.

3.2.1.5. Teaching French to those Algerians who do not speak it

Carrying the same vista of learners’ attitudes towards French, they were asked to object positively, negatively, or neutrally to the statement that proposes teaching French to those Algerians who do not speak it. Analysing the findings, it was found that most of the learners positively reacted to the proposition. Some of these learners regard this language as international. One learner suggests: *“It is an international language and people can speak it everywhere”*. Other learners believe that Algerian individuals who do not master/speak it would face many obstacles in their daily and social activities. A learner illustrates saying: *“We can’t deny that (70%) many Algerians use it so at least they should know it to avoid being embarrassed”*. Another learner adds: *“Person who can’t talk or even understand it, he will find that language as an obstacle in his life”*. Some of learners’ answers focused on the advantages this language offers for those who have the intention to carry on their studies abroad. A learner adds: *“It is so important for those who want to study or travel abroad. Others pointed at the significance of knowing other languages. A learner elaborates: “Enriching the language baggage is a plus for them”. Using French in Algerian administrations was among the arguments put forward by the learners. A learner says: “French is used in almost all the Algerian administrations”*.

Those learners who negatively objected to the statement argue that French is not a necessity for the Algerian people. One argument carries the following opinion: *“It is not obligatory to all to know French language”*. Another comment suggests: *“It is not used everywhere (Algerian administration)”*. The minority of learners suggest that teaching French to the Algerians who do not know it remains the choice of these people. A learner elaborates: *“It depends on them; they like it or not”*.

3.2.1.6. Learners' willingness to assist in French language learning programmes

The learners were invited to air their opinions about whether or not they are willing to assist in French language learning programmes. Most of the learners negatively reacted to the statement. Some of them prefer the programmes to target English and not French. A learner says: *"They should be in English; it is the most used language in the world."* Other learners think that their level at this language does not qualify them to attend these programmes. A learner suggests: *"I am not competent enough to do so"*. Others think that French is difficult to learn. Some learners expressed negative attitudes towards the language itself as says this learner: *"I do not like it and didn't have the intention to learn it"*.

Those learners who positively objected to the statement argued that they would like to assist these programmes given the fact their needs are met. A learner says: *"If it interests me, of course, and if it suits my needs"*. Another learner adds: *"You will learn something new from these programmes and it is useful"*. Other learners required these programmes to be updated, as indicates the following comment: *"I love learning new languages, but only if the programme is updated, fun I am in no way interested in traditional language instruction"*. Some learners welcome studying other languages. A learner adds: *"It is always good thing to learn an extra language"*.

3.2.2. Section two: Learners' French language needs

This section explores learners' lacks, needs and wants in relation to French language. It also sheds light on the contents of the syllabi of French and identifies certain lacks in the provided French lectures.

3.2.2.1. The contents of French syllabi

Exploring learners' French language needs, they were asked to provide information about the contents of the subject of French at the University (Department of English studies). The table below describes the contents of French syllabi:

Table 2. The contents of the subject of French

| Language areas | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------|
| Grammar | 37, 93% |
| Reading comprehension. | 20, 68% |
| Didactics | 13, 04% |
| Tenses | 13, 04% |
| Written expression | 6.89% |
| Communication | 3, 44% |
| Vocabulary | 3, 44% |
| Syntax | 6.89% |
| Diverse topics | 3, 44% |
| Basics of French | 3, 44% |

Analysing the findings, it was that most of the lectures on French are about grammar. A learner expressed their dissatisfaction saying: “*very low level mostly grammar lessons.*” Other learners argue that the lectures were mainly about reading comprehension. Other answers described the contents as being about didactics and tenses. A learner adds: “*The lectures were about didactics*”. Other learners argue that French course was about written expression, while others mentioned communication. A learner says: “*Most of it was about communication*”. Other answers identified vocabulary, syntax, diverse topics and basics of French. A learner says: “*They were about the basics of French*”.

3.2.2.1.1. Lacks in French Syllabi (I need a table)

Building on the provided feedbacks by the learners about the contents of French lectures, they were invited to identify the uncovered needs. The table below introduces the findings:

Table 3. Lacks in French syllabus

| Lacks in French Syllabi | Percentages |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Learners' needs | 15 .78% |
| Communicative needs | 15 .78% |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Motivation | 15,78% |
| Speaking skills | 15,78% |
| Listening skills | 5, 26% |
| Practice | 10, 52% |
| French basics | 10.52% |
| French culture | 10, 52% |
| Pronunciation | 5, 26% |
| The use of French in real situations | 5, 26% |

Analysing the findings, it was found that the learners of the subject of French (15 .78%) believe that the contents of the targeted subject need to take into account learners' needs. A learner elaborates: *"These lectures need to focus more on students' needs"*. Another one adds: *"They did not cover what students need"*. Other answers pointed at some gaps in covering learners' communicative needs (15 .78%), as one learner avers: *"The lectures miss communication and the enhancement of fluency in general"*. Another learner adds: *"The methods of communication need to be enhanced"*. Other lacks, some learners believe, stem from motivation issues (15, 78%), as indicated in the ensuing comment: *"They need to be more interesting and motivating"*. These lectures seem to neglect others kills, namely the speaking (15, 78%) and listening skills (5, 26%). A leaner says: *"Speaking skills were not taken into consideration"*. The lack of practice, too, was identified by some learners (10, 52%). A learner argues: *"These lectures miss the practice and need to be more motivating"*. Given the fact many learners have some difficulties in learning, they argued that the lectures did not take into account the basics of French (10.52%), as illustrated in the following argument: *"They miss the basics of French language, things that we really need"*. French culture, too, was not covered in these lectures (10, 52%), indicates the following comment: *"They don't cover the cultural aspect of the language"*. The rest of the answers pointed at uncovering of the following language areas, pronunciation (5, 26%), and the use of French in real situations (5, 26%). A learner says: *"These lectures did not cover the correct use of pronunciation and learning how to use it"*.

Another one adds: *“how to use it in real life situations because we are fed up with same boring topics”*.

3.2.2.2. French use and learners' needs

This part of the questionnaire inquired about what learners need French for, offering them the possibility to choose between daily life needs, academic usages, both of them, and other needs. The table below provides the findings:

Table 4. Learners' uses of French

| Needs | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------|
| Academic purposes | 18.75% |
| Daily life | 18.75% |
| Both | 50% |
| Do not need it | 12.50% |

Analysing the findings, it was found that most of the learners need French for both daily life and academic usages. A learner says: *“We need it for daily life and academic usages”*. A learner adds: *“Both, I like French documentaries in order to speak with my parents”*. Other learners see the use of this language limited to academic usages, as indicated in the ensuing comment: *“I need French for academic usages.”* Equally, some learners use French in their daily life, as suggested in a learner's comment: *“I need French to communicate with people in the society and interact with them”*. However, the rest of the learners negatively objected to the statement, denying the use of this language for both purposes. A learner illustrates: *“Even in daily life I prefer to use English more than French”*. Another one adds: *“I don't need it at all.”*

3.2.2.3. Learners' Wants in French

Following the same line of learners' needs in French language, they were invited to air their views about their wants in relation to this language. The table below describes the findings:

Table 5. Learners' French Language Wants

| Learners' wants | Percentages |
|--|--------------------|
| Communication in French | 42, 10% |
| Learners' needs | 10, 52% |
| Academic and administrative usages of French | 5, 26% |
| Grammar | 5, 26% |
| Pronunciation | 5, 26% |
| Vocabulary | 5, 26% |
| Serious language shortcomings | 5, 26% |
| Workshops | 5, 26% |
| Updated lectures | 5, 26% |

Most of the learners pointed at the need for communication in French. A learner explains: *"The lectures should focus on pronunciation and how to communicate"*. Another learner adds: *"It should target and focus not only on the written side but also on the speaking skill. They need to speak and learn new vocabulary"*. Other learners focused on meeting learners' needs in French lectures. A learner says: *"I need lectures that target students' needs for first"*. Some learners identify academic and administrative usages of French. Other needs relate to grammar, as indicated in the ensuing comment: *"I want lectures about the verbs we use, adjectives, how to ask questions and answer"*. Other students pointed at the need to deal with pronunciation and vocabulary. Some learners believe that the contents of these lectures should meet the needs of those who do not have a good level at French, as indicated in the following comment: *"Mainly those who are weak at it"*. Other learners think these contents should introduce different contents and must be introduced in workshops. A learner adds; *"Workshops to apply language use in situations"*. Other learners suggest that these lectures should be updated as illustrated in the ensuing comment: *The lectures must target updated, relevant content instruction in new approaches that engage learners*. While some other learners (10, 56%) do

not welcome the idea of learning French at university, as suggested in this comment: *“After studying English I do not study French no more.”*

3.2.3. Section Three: Learners’ attitudes towards learning French via English as a medium of instruction

This section explores learners’ attitudes towards learning French at university via English as a medium of instruction. It analyses the data collected from a semi-structured interview administered to 15 learners of English (Master Two, Didactics and Applied Linguistics). The interview comprises three main sections which gradually target the main concern of this research instrument. The first section of the interview concerns learners’ awareness about the similarities and the differences between the two languages as well as their mutual influence. The second section investigates the different languages used by teachers of French in the classroom. The last one focuses on learners’ views about learning French via English as a medium of instruction at university.

3.2.3.1. Similarities between French and English

The first question of the semi-structured interview researched learners’ awareness about the similarities between French and English. Analysing the data, it was found that most of the learners (40%) see that the commonest feature between both languages stems from the fact they are foreign languages. A learner says: *“Both are foreign languages”*. Other learners (15%) see that these two languages as important languages, as indicated in the ensuing comment: *“Both are foreign languages, have the same level of importance”*. The same idea is expressed differently by another learner who suggests: *“Both of them are foreign languages; both of them are needed in most workplaces”*. A good percentage of answers (30%) pointed at the shared vocabulary between these two languages. A learner says: *“Most vocabulary is written the same and means the same”*. The use of Latin alphabets is among the common points identified by some learners (15%).

3.2.3.1. Differences between French and English

The second question of the semi-structured interview researched learners' cognizance of the differences between both languages. Most of them (42, 30 %) focused on the difference in pronunciation. Some learners find French pronunciation more difficult than the English one. A learner says: *"French is a bit hard in pronunciation."* Others (11, 53%) see French as more difficult than English. A learner says: *"French is more difficult than English"*. Another one adds: *"French is more difficult than English in learning"*. Grammar, some learners believe (19, 23%), is different across these two languages. Other learners (11, 53 %) alluded to the rules these languages use. A learner says: *"Each one has its own rules."* Some learners (7, 69%) focused on the status of each language in the world, as suggests this statement: *"English is worldwide used"*. The rest of the learners mentioned metaphors (3, 84%) and expressions (3, 84%) to be different across these two languages.

3.2.3.2. Mutual Influence of both languages

The rapport between French and English, in Algeria, is not always a harmonious one, especially when it comes to some learners' attitudes towards French. We believe that developing learners' awareness about the effects of both languages on one another would mitigate these attitudes. To explore these potentials, the learners were interviewed about the nature of the effect of both languages on one another in the process of learning.

Starting with the first side of this linguistic influence, the learners were asked to identify the effect of French on learning English at University. Analysing the findings, it was found that most of the learners think that this type of influence is negative (56, 25%). Some of the learners highlighted the difference in pronunciation that may hinder learning English, as indicated in the following comment: *"Because the pronunciation can be hard under the influence of French language"*. Others, however, pointed at the possibility of mixing between both languages when using English. A learner adds: *"Some students mix French language with English languages"*. Confusing these languages creates serious problems, as stated in the following comment: *"When you learn French you forget English rules"*.

Howbeit, the learners who positively objected to the statement (43, 75%) provided various reasons why French language helps them enhance

their English language learning. They believe that both languages share some common words and vocabularies which enable them to boost their targeted learning. A learner says: *“Having a rich vocabulary in French can be beneficial for learning English”*. Another one adds: *“Because it provides to some extent a base to start from”*. Others see some commonality in grammar, as stated in this comment: *“Because there are grammar rules which are the same”*. A learner refers to their classmate to illustrate this positive learning rapport stating: *“My friend who talks in French and by that language he could learn English easily”*.

Now, to see the influence from the other side, the learners were asked about their opinions in relation to whether or not English may help them learn French. In this case, the majority of the learners (76, 92%) positively objected to the statement. They argued that these two languages share may similarities, as indicated in this comment: *“They have some similarities. These common points relate to words. A learner says: “Because some words are the same and even some grammar rules.” Another learner argues: “Some words are similar; you can guess the meaning”*. Others pointed at borrowing that creates these commonalities. A learner adds: *“Because of the borrowed words”*.

The learners were asked to mention some French words and expressions they use when speaking English. The majority of their answers (56, 25%) mentioned *“Déjà vu”*. Other learners (12, 50%) identified *“rendez-vous”* and (18, 75%) of them referred to the word *“genre”*. Other answers mentioned *“coup d’état”* (6, 25%) and *“picnic”* (6, 25%). To explore the other side of the influence, the learners were asked to identify English words and expressions they use when speaking French. Analyzing the findings, it was found that most of the learner (43, 75%) use the English term *‘cool’* in their use of French. Others (37, 5%) seem to use *“smartphone”* in their daily conversations. Some other answers identified the use of the English expression: *“to be continued”* and the words *“nice”* (6, 25%) and *“ok”* (6, 25%).

3.2.3.3. Teachers’ of French language choices

Using other languages to teach French can be motivating, especially when the teacher uses the languages that learners develop positive attitudes towards. English is a case in point, since most of the learners of this language tend to like studying it for different reasons. Given the significance of other languages in learning French, the learners were interviewed about the other languages and dialects their teachers of French use to explain the lessons. Analysing the findings, it was found that most of the teachers of French use French only (59, 25%). Other students (40, 74%), however, mentioned that their teachers, sometimes, use Arabic (Algerian dialect). In here, it can be argued that English and motivation are not invested by the teachers of French. Another question administered to the learners was about whether or not their teachers allow other languages in the classroom, to this question, all the learners negatively responded.

3.2.3.4. Learning French via English as EMI

This study suggests teaching French at university via English as a medium of instruction. The learners were interviewed about their attitudes and opinions about the proposition. Analyzing the findings, it was found that most of them (56.25%) are for the content of the statement. Some of them think it would be effective for those whose level in French is weak. A learner says: *“This is good for the ones who do not know French very well. But not effective for the ones who want to study just French”*. Other learners argue that this method will make learning French easy. A learner says: *“It is easier for explaining things”*. Another learner alluded to enhancing understanding, as indicated in the ensuing statement: *“It helps understand much better”*. This method allows, a learner says: *“to become familiar with the language”*. Other answers focused on the motivation this method creates in French classes, as suggested in the ensuing comment *“It is enjoyable and interesting”*.

For those who negatively objected to the statement (43, 75%), they believe this method to be ineffective for those students who seek to study French only. A learner comments: *“For those who to study French only”*. Others were against using other languages in learning French. A learner elaborates: *“Difficult to learn a language using another one!”* Another learner adds: *“They need to study everything in French.”* Others see no

match given the differences between the two languages. A learner says: “*A large difference between the languages*”. Some learners think that in this way: “*You cannot learn the language correctly!*” Others think that this method does not suit those who are average at French. A learner says: “*Difficult for those who are average at French*”. Some learners think it is a confusing way.

3.3. Discussion

Analysing the findings of the different sections of this study, one may find out that learners’ of English attitudes towards French do not match some negative discourses about this language, mainly those discourses which refer to this language as a colonial language. This picture has been elucidated in the first part of the study which showcases a mixture of learners’ positive and negative attitudes towards French. On the one hand, they tend to develop positive attitudes towards studying French at university given the importance of French in Algeria. Howbeit, some negative attitudes were identified in relation to using French in daily life and workplace, due learner’ worries about the loss of national identity. That being said, the findings of the first part of the study disconfirm the first hypothesis which states that learners of English develop negative attitudes towards French at university.

As shown in the second part of the study, the learners believe that French does not help them much in learning English. However, they were able to identify common words and vocabularies between both languages which enable learning English. The majority of the learners consider these languages to be in opposition since they have different rules. As to the mutual influence of both languages, the learners believe they share many similarities. This bilingual interplay seems to be established via language transfer of some words and expressions from and to both languages such as “*Déjà vu*” and cool.

The exploration the potentials of teaching French to the learners at university via English as a medium of instruction revealed their readiness to embrace this linguistic experience. Given this finding, the second hypothesis of the study, which states that learners of English develop positive attitudes towards learning French via EMI, is confirmed. However, investigating the linguistic diversity in French classes, it was found that teachers of French use French only to explain the lesson, and sometimes they refer to Algerian dialect. These mono-linguistic practices of teaching French to learners of English seem to miss the motivation that the inclusion of the English language would bring to French language classes.

4. Conclusion

It turns out that linguistic diversity in Algeria is not fully invested due to various reasons. These reasons may be linked to some negative attitudes learners' affiliate with French which, according to them, lacks the international privileges English language enjoys. In addition to this, discourse on linguistic diversity in Algeria is featured with conflict connotations that affect learners' linguistic choices. Nevertheless, teaching languages at universities may bridge this gap and acts as counter-discourse, in case those languages, which learners develop motivation toward, are being invested in teaching other languages. English as a medium of instruction illustrates an attempt to reconcile between French and English; two languages which share many similarities and afford miscellaneous opportunities to English language learners.

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