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English language teaching in Algerian Higher Education: lecturers' perspectives and practices

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English Language Teaching in Algerian Higher Education: Lecturers' Perspectives and Practices

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Abstract

Title: English Language Teaching in Algerian Higher Education: Lecturers' Perspectives and Practices

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Abstract

The Algerian educational system has undergone numerous reforms since the 1970s. However, in the context of foreign language teaching, only one major reform has been adopted: the introduction of the communicative approach (CA) in 1999 which aimed to promote an interactive and learner-centered approach to teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) at the secondary level (Benmati 2008; Slimani 2016). However, due to difficulties in implementation, the CA was replaced by the Competency Based Approach (CBA) in 2003 (Benmoussat and Benmoussat 2018, p.63-64; Khelalfa and Kellil 2023, p.3). In the field of Algerian higher education, however, language policies (LP) for teaching English remain ambiguous, as no official document explicitly outlines a specific approach for English language instruction. Although there is no official policy for teaching EFL at the tertiary level, the LMD system, the latest general reform in Algerian higher education introduced in 2004, emphasises learner-centeredness as a guiding principle. Furthermore, according to Shohamy (2008, p.119), when policies are not explicitly stated they can often be inferred through examining existing practices. Within this context, this thesis aims to explore the preferred teaching practices of lecturers within the English departments of three Algerian universities, specifically focusing on those who have taught or are currently teaching language classes. It also examines Algerian lecturers' understanding of the CA and seeks to identify the main obstacles to effective language instruction in the chosen context. To achieve these objectives, data was collected over a period of 6 months using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and non-participant classroom observations. The findings show that while Algerian lecturers aim to balance a variety of methodologies, their preferred teaching practices align closely with the principles of

the CA. The findings also indicate that Algerian English lecturers primarily understand the CA through the lens of its strong version. Indeed, their interpretation of the CA emphasises fluency over accuracy and prioritizes meaning over form. In addition, several major challenges to ELT in the chosen context were identified, most of which have systemic roots. These challenges include large class sizes, time constraints, lack of resources, as well as students' low English proficiency and lack of motivation, and lecturers' lack of appropriate training. The presence of these barriers significantly impacts the effectiveness of communicative approaches and contributes to the disconnect between policy expectations and actual classroom practices.

Declaration

I affirm that the work provided is original and solely the product of my own efforts.



Kahina Guendez

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank all the people who contributed in some way to the work described in this thesis. First and foremost, I thank Allah for giving me the opportunity and guidance to accomplish this research. Additionally, this dissertation would not have been possible without the generous financial support from the Algerian government, which enabled me to focus fully on my research without financial burden. I am also profoundly grateful to my supervisors, Dr. Veronica O'Regan and Dr. Elaine Riordan Professor, for their sage advice, rigorous academic guidance, and the confidence they instilled in me. Acknowledgement is also due my retired supervisor Dr. David Atkinson for his efforts and feedback. My appreciation also goes to the faculty and staff in the department of English at the University of Algiers 2.

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Dedication

I dedicate my doctoral thesis to my family and friends, with a special expression of gratitude to my loving parents, Amar and Djazira, whose unwavering support has been invaluable. To my sisters Sara and Alissa, who have always stood by my side, and to my wonderful niece and nephew, Anaïs and Yanis. Both of you have been my best cheerleaders.

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List of Abbreviated Terms

MNE: Ministry of National Education

MHE: Ministry of Higher Education

LMD: License- Master- Doctorat

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

CA: Communicative Approach

CC: Communicative Competence

PCA: Principled Communicative Approach

EA: Eclectic Approach

CBA: Competency Based Approach

ALM: Audio-lingual Method

DM: Direct Method

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

LCI: Learner-Centered- Instruction

TI: Teacher Identity

PPP: Presentation Practice Production

LTC: Language Teacher Cognition

AT: Activity Theory

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

Definition of Terms

Below is a list accompanied by brief explanations of the key concepts and terms used in this thesis

Communicative language teaching: Is an approach that focuses on helping students learn a language with the goal of effective communication (Duff 2014, p.15).

Communicative Competence: The abilities that allow speakers to communicate effectively and spontaneously in various contexts (Savignon 1983, p.5).

Learner-Centered-Instruction: An approach that prioritizes students' needs by placing them at the center of the learning process (Jaiswal 2019, p.1074). In this approach the teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding and supporting the learners while allowing them to take an active role in their own learning. This approach emphasises autonomy, engagement, and critical thinking (Boyadzhieva 2016, p.36).

The Eclectic Approach: A teaching style that blends different techniques and strategies from various approaches and methods. It is adapted based on lesson objectives and students' individual needs (Iscan 2017, p.151).

Language Teacher Cognition: An inquiry that aims to understand teachers' thoughts and emotions within their personal, professional, social, cultural and historical contexts, and how these factors influence their journey of becoming, being, and growing as educators (Borg 2019, p.1166).

Sociocultural Theory: A theory that allows the examination of what teachers think, know, and do within broader historical and social contexts. It also helps in understanding the tensions that emerge from contradictions between their beliefs and actions (Cross 2010, p.438).

Espoused Theory: The beliefs that individuals claim to follow, while theory in use reflects their actual actions (Argyris *et al.* 1985 cited in Kerr 2009, p.4).

Activity Theory: A theory that acknowledges the social nature of the human mind and emphasises the inseparability of mind and activity (Engeström 2001, p.136).

Chapter 1: Introduction

The present study was conducted in Algeria, specifically within the departments of English at three different universities in the central region of the country. This study aims to explore Algerian English lecturers' understanding of the communicative approach (CA), their preferred teaching strategies, and the challenges they encounter in their teaching context. To provide context for this research, this chapter begins with an overview of Algeria's linguistic and educational context to familiarize the reader with the environment in which the participants work.

1.1 The Algerian Linguistic and Educational Context

Algeria, located in North Africa, is a culturally and linguistically diverse country with a population of approximately 47 million. Covering an area of over 2 million km², it is the largest country in Africa. The population is divided into two main linguistic groups: Algerian Arabic speakers and Tamazight (Berber) speakers. About 30% of the Algerian population consists of Berber native speakers (Chaker 2007). Algerians commonly speak a variety of Arabic known as Daridja, alongside Berber and French. Code-switching between Daridja, French, and or Berber is common among Algerians (Belmihoub 2017), which reflects the country's multicultural and multilingual character. This linguistic diversity has a significant impact on education, where language plays a crucial role in shaping instructional practices. Indeed, the medium of instruction in Algeria has been the subject of ongoing debate and reform (see Chapter 2). While Arabic is the primary language of education, Berber was officially recognized in 2002 and has since been gradually incorporated into the curriculum (Benrabah 2007;2014). Although, French, is not an official language, it remains widely used in scientific and technical subjects at various educational levels. Additionally, in recent years, English is gaining prominence in Algeria due to its global importance in academia, science and business. While French has traditionally dominated as the first foreign language, English is viewed as a means to strengthen Algeria's international connections and reduce the historical influence of the French culture (Jacob 2021). To better understand the role of language in education, it is essential to first

examine the structure of the Algerian educational system, which consists of four distinct levels (Maraf 2016), each contributing to the nation's academic and professional development (see Appendix E).

1.1.1 The school system

The school system is divided into three main stages: primary, middle, and secondary education, all of which are free. The first two stages, referred to as basic education, are compulsory, while secondary school education is optional (Ministry of National education 2022). Primary education lasts five years, followed by four years of middle school. At the end of this nine-year cycle, students take a national exam known as the Brevet d'Enseignement Moyen (BEM). Those who pass the BEM are eligible to advance to secondary school, where they first complete a one-year foundation course that introduces them to a variety of subject streams. The Ministry of National Education (MNE) offers three specialized streams for secondary education

a) Literary streams, which focus on Humanities and the Social Sciences,
b) Scientific streams, which include disciplines, such as Biology, Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry,
c) Technological streams, which emphasise Applied Technology.

These specialised programmes last three years and end with the Baccalaureate examination (BAC). Success in this examination is a prerequisite for pursuing higher education in Algeria. It is important to highlight that at the school level, English is taught as a foreign language starting from the third year of primary school to the final year of secondary school. Indeed, in September 2022, English was officially added to the primary school syllabus, beginning with third-grade students. This recent reform reflects Algeria's effort to reduce reliance on French, often referred to as "the language of the colonizer", and its commitment to strengthening English language education in response to globalization and the growing importance of English in academia and the job market (Independent September 2022; Orient XXI October 2022). As President Tebboune stated during a news conference in July 2022 "French is a spoil of war,

while English is the language of research and science. Hence, it must be taught and given more importance" (cited in Sennagh and Sibachir 2023, p.31).

1.1.2 Higher Education

Algeria's higher education system comprises 107 universities and other institutions distributed across the country, with 17 located in the central region, 22 in the east, and 11 in the west. Within this network, English is taught in a large number of English institutions, including numerous departments of English across different regions (MESRS 2024). In the central region alone, there are at least 12 universities offering English programmes (see Chapter 4, section 4.4). To better understand the organization and functioning of these institutions, it is important to outline the general structure of the Algerian higher education system. Indeed, the system follows a three-cycle structure (see Figure 1.1): License (3 years), Master (2 years), and Doctorate (3 years). This system, known as the LMD system, replaced the previous structure, which consisted of programmes lasting 3-4-5 or up to 7 years (Clark 2006; The national report of Algerian Higher Education 2019).

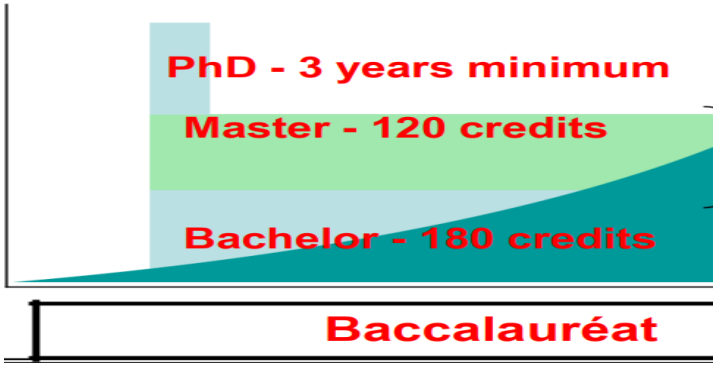


Figure 1.1 LMD Structure (The National Report of Algerian Higher Education 2019, p. 3)

Access to higher education in Algeria is granted to students who hold a "Baccalauréat" or an equivalent recognized foreign qualification. Once students pass the BAC examination, their placement in undergraduate programmes is determined by the MNE in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE). Placement is based on the students' BAC results. Students with higher scores are allowed to choose their preferred field of study, while those with lower scores are assigned to available programmes based on university capacity. Indeed,

according to the National Report of Algerian Higher Education (2019, p.4), university admission is regulated by an annual preregistration and orientation circular, which outlines the conditions of enrolment in faculties and programmes offered by higher education institutions. Admission is determined by four key factors:

a) The preference expressed by the "Baccalauréat" holder.
b) The specialization and results achieved in the BAC.
c) The capacity of universities to accommodate students, and
d) The geographical location of the BAC holder.

Additional criteria, such as core subject, are often required for admission to specific programmes. For instance, entry into English language teaching programmes within English departments is subject to specific standards, which differ across universities depending on the availability of seats and resources. In 2015, the minimum average required for admission into English language teaching bachelor programmes ranged from 12/20 to 14/20 or higher depending on the university (Bac-alg 2015).

Given the focus of this study on English, it is essential to emphasise that in Algeria, English is classified as a foreign language and is taught as a required subject across all levels of university in different fields (Sarnou *et al*. 2012). Recently, there has been growing consideration of adopting English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Algerian higher education, to strengthen the gradual shift away from French and the demands of globalization. Indeed, the MHE has outlined both short-term and long-term objectives that aim at implementing English as an official language of teaching and learning in universities over the long term (Touhamia and Bakar 2024). This initiative has received strong support from the Algerian president and the Minister of Higher Education (Missedi 2019; Allal 2020; Bouthelji 2022). However, opinions among Algerian politicians are divided. Some view the shift to EMI as a crucial step towards erasing the long-lasting effects of colonialism and creating new opportunities for academic professional advancement (Touhamia and Bakar 2024). However, others perceive it as a potential threat to the stability and effectiveness of the education system (Youcef 2021).

Having outlined the structure of the Algerian educational system, it is now important to examine the various reforms that have shaped its development over the years. These reforms aimed at modernizing and improving the educational system. By exploring these initiatives one can better understand the challenges and transformations that have influenced Algeria's educational system and the context in which this study is situated.

1.2 Educational Reforms in Algeria

The Algerina educational system has undergone several reforms that aimed at improving pedagogical approaches and expanding curriculum content, particularly at the primary and secondary levels. Additionally, higher education has witnessed major structural changes, most notably with the adoption of the LMD system (License- Master- Doctorate), which aligns Algerian universities with international academic standards. These reforms are generally initiated and coordinated by the relevant ministries: The Ministry of National Education (MNE) for school-level reforms and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research for higher education (MHESR). Once introduced, they are reviewed and monitored through national and institutional quality-assurance structures, including the Commission d'Implémentation de l'Assurance Qualité dans L'Enseignement supérieur (CIAQES) and the Cellules d'Assurance Qualité (CAQ) (MESRS 2022, pp. 8-10).

Several other national bodies contribute to the coordination, evaluation, and monitoring of educational policy, such as The Conférence Nationale des Universités (CNU), which oversees consultation and coordination across the higher-education network under the chairmanship of the Minister and the presidents of the three regional university conferences. In addition to that, the Conseil National de L'Education et de la Formation (CNEF) provides recommendations on curricular, teaching methods, and resources, while the Observatoire Nationale de L'Education et de la Formation (ONEF), created by Presidential Decree No.03-46 of 5 November 2003, carries evaluation, monitoring, and prospective analysis of the education system. Together, these structures illustrate the institutional framework through which educational reforms are conceived, coordinated, and periodically reviewed in Algeria. The following sections focus on the main reforms introduced at the school and tertiary levels. Understanding these reforms is

essential for contextualizing ELT policies and practices in Algeria.

1.2.1 Primary and Secondary Levels

At the primary and secondary levels, Algeria has undergone two major educational reforms. The first was the introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in 1999, which targeted foreign language instruction specifically. The second was the Competency-Based-Approach (CBA), implemented in 2003, which applied to all school subjects as part of a broader curriculum reform aimed at modernizing the entire education system. In 2003, Algeria like many other countries adopted the CBA to reform its educational system from primary to secondary levels (Si Mouhammed and Bouhail 2015; Gherzouli 2019). CBA emphasises problem-based and project-based learning, learner autonomy, and a shift from teacher-cantered to learner-cantered instruction (Richards and Rogers 2001). Indeed, this approach aims to develop creative autonomous learners capable of facing the challenges of globalization (Schneck 1978; Savage 1993 cited in Weddel 2006, p.2). The implementation of CBA altered the roles of both teachers and learners in the curriculum. Learners became active participants in their education, while teachers transitioned from knowledge transmitters to guides and facilitators (Si Mouhammed and Bouhail 2014). Despite its goal, CBA faced resistance from teachers, unions, and parents due to a lack of consultation and adequate preparation (Bedouani-Kernane 2013). In fact, the 2003 reform was criticised for its top-down implementation, insufficient training, and lack of collaboration with stakeholders, leading to mixed outcomes (White 2013; Baghoussi and El Ouchdi 2019).

When it comes to language teaching reforms specifically, it is worth noting that Algeria has only witnessed one major reform: the implementation CLT. While the broader educational reform targeted all subjects, CLT was specifically implemented for foreign language teaching. According to the Algerian official syllabuses of English, the main objective of CLT was to enable learners to achieve communication in various forms, aspects, and dimensions (Slimani 2016, p.36). Its goals were categorized into socio-cultural, humanistic, educational, and academic objectives (Slimani 2016 p.36). Despite these promising aims, CLT was eventually replaced by CBA, which was adopted across all subjects at the primary and secondary levels as

part of a broader effort to standardize teaching and assessment practices. This shift also reflected broader European trends in the early to mid-2000s that emphasised outcome-and competence-based curricula, such as the EU's Recommendation on Key Competence for Lifelong Learning (Säävälä 2008 p.394; Europaea 2018, p.149), along with parallel developments under the Copenhagen-Maastricht process, that promoted learning-outcomes and competence frameworks across most European education systems.

In Algeria the move to CBA, even for foreign language teaching, can be further explained by concerns regarding the feasibility of implementing CLT. Indeed, the CA was often viewed as impractical in large, under-resourced classrooms and difficult to sustain without adequate teacher preparation (Benmoussat and Benmoussat 2018 p.63). Consequently, CBA was considered a more pragmatic alternative, as it prioritized measurable performance and skill development over communicative competence or in-depth cultural knowledge (Khelalfa and Kellil 2023, p.3). According to Benmoussat and Benmoussat (2018, p.63-64), CLT was also criticized in Algeria for its "side effects", particularly the perceived mismatch between Western cultural norms and the Algerian context. Although Algeria was an early adopter of CLT, the necessary preparations, resources, and conditions for its effective implementation were lacking. As a result, English classrooms rarely achieved the level of contextualization and purposefulness that characterises successful CLT practice, mainly due to pedagogical constraints and a persistent gap between the intended and the implemented syllabus (Benmoussat and Benmoussat 2018).

Moreover, Benmoussat and Benmoussat (2018, p. 63) also claim that CLT has remained a controversial approach in Algerian educational institutions, as it challenges traditional conceptions of teaching and learning by prioritizing fluency over accuracy, which many teachers, especially experienced ones, believed contributed to the decline of English proficiency standards in Algeria. While these claims are noteworthy, they lack empirical support, which may raise questions about their validity. Overall, the challenges faced during the implementation of CLT in Algerian schools reflect broader systemic issues that have hindered

educational reforms in the country. Whether in comprehensive initiatives like CBA or subject-specific reforms like CLT, the Algerian education system has repeatedly encountered obstacles, such as teacher resistance, insufficient involvement from stakeholders, and inadequate resources (Gherzouli 2019). As noted in the wider literature on educational reforms these factors undermine the successful implementation of educational reforms (Cooper *et al.* 1998; Oloruntegbe 2011).

1.2.2 Tertiary Level

Since its independence, Algeria's higher education sector has undergone two major reforms, the most significant being the introduction of the LMD system (License-Master-Doctorat). In 2004, the country adopted this system as part of its efforts to modernize higher education and align it with global standards (The National Report of Higher Education in Algeria 2019). This LMD system replaced the classical system, which consisted of a 4-year License, a 2-year Magister, and a 3–4-year Doctorate. The shift was driven by the growing influence of globalization on education and Algeria's desire to align its higher education framework with international practices.

Operationally, the reform was coordinated by the MHE through national commissions established between 2003 and 2004 to pilot and oversee the transition. These commissions (comprising ministry officials, university rectors, and faculty representatives) were responsible for adapting the Bologna model to the Algerian context (MERS 2004; Bouhadiba 2015, pp.4-5). The process was largely top down; although some consultation occurred through regional university meetings, the overall design and timeline were directed by the Ministry, with limited local participation (MESRS 2022; Azzi 2012). International organizations, such as the European Union and UNESCO offered technical guidance and training workshops, reflecting the wider Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in higher education reform (UNESCO 2009; World Bank 2017). However, the system for implementing the reform was weak. Indeed, universities lacked digital infrastructure and administrative capacity to manage credits and modular curricula, and lecturers training was uneven (Bouzid *et al*. 2013, p109-111). This limited

institutional preparedness contributed to the scepticism and lack of faith that many higher education teachers later expressed toward the reform (Azzi 2012).

The LMD reform was designed to achieve several key objectives. Among these were enhancing the quality of higher education, promoting international recognition of Algerian diplomas, and increasing student mobility through global exchange programmes (Sarnou *et al.* 2012; Saad and Djefafla 2024, pp.232-233). To support these goals the reform introduced new pedagogical methods, such as continuous assessment throughout the semester, rather than relying solely on end-of-semester examinations. Furthermore, universities were encouraged to design their own pedagogical programs, which implies greater flexibility and reduced adherence to national programmes set by the MHE (Azzi 2012). Another significant feature of the LMD system is the redefinition of the roles of both teachers and students. The system promotes a learner-cantered approach, shifting the focus from passive knowledge absorption to active student participation in the learning process. This shift also redefined the role of teachers, who transitioned from being knowledge transmitters to facilitators and guides (Bouhadiba 2002; Azzi 2012; Sarnou *et al*. 2012; Ali Rabah 2020). It is worth adding that while the LMD does not prescribe specific methods for foreign language instruction, it emphasises the principles of learner-centeredness. Sarnou *et al*. (2012) argues that the system is based on the principles of the Communicative approach (CA). Maraf (2016) supports this claim by highlighting that within English departments, the focus of qualifying exams for teaching positions is based on the principles of the CA.

Despite its ambitious goals, the LMD system in Algeria has faced significant criticism that persists to this day. Many teachers argue that the reform was rushed, poorly evaluated, and implemented without adequate collaboration with key stakeholders, including teachers and students (Azzi 2012). Beyond these concerns, systemic challenges have further hindered the effectiveness of this reform. For example, a lack of human and material resources engendered several issues. Indeed, the successful implementation of the LMD system requires substantial funding, advanced infrastructure and modern communication technologies, all of which are

often limited in Algerian universities (Ali Rabah 2020). Other challenges include inadequate training for teachers to adopt learner-centered pedagogies, insufficient classroom capacity, and limited access to updated teaching resources (Ali Rabah 2020). According to Metlata (2016), the failure of the LMD in Algeria and other non-western countries stems from its implementation focusing on quantity over quality. Similarly, Ali Rabah (2020, p.994) notes that the LMD was implemented by imitation rather than thoughtful adaptation. These challenges have led to the coexistence of the classical and LMD systems, thereby complicating the teaching and learning process (Sarnou *et al.* 2012, p.182). This observation echoes Miliani (2012), who remarked that educational reforms in Algerian higher education have resulted in the coexistence of two distinct forms of education: traditional and western. This duality has impacted pedagogical approaches, raising important questions about the way English is taught within the chosen context; an issue that will be discussed in the next section.

Overall, while Algeria has undergone several educational reforms across all levels, it is essential to highlight that most pedagogical reforms, including the implementation of CLT in 1999 and CBA in 2003, were limited to the primary and secondary levels. Importantly, CLT was the only reform specifically designed for foreign language instruction, whereas CBA applied to all school subjects and was therefore not specific to language teaching. In contrast, higher education has not witnessed any explicit language teaching policy targeting foreign language instructions. Indeed, the reforms introduced at the tertiary level, such as the LMD system, have been primarily structural and administrative, focusing on curriculum organization and degree alignment with international standards rather than prescribing methodological approaches.

Given this policy gap, CLT remains a useful point of reference for examining ELT in Algerian higher education. It provides a well-established framework for exploring how communicative principles are understood and enacted by lecturers in contexts where no specific methodological guidelines exist. Moreover, the principles underpinning CLT, such as learner-centeredness, autonomy, and the development of communicative competence, align closely with the

pedagogical philosophy of the LMD system, which emphasises student engagement and active learning. This focus becomes particularly relevant in light of Algeria's current move towards adopting EMI (Touhamia and Bakar 2024, p.24), which further highlights the importance of communicative competence for both teachers and students.

1.3 Research Problem

The LMD system emphasises learner-cantered approaches, which grants universities greater pedagogical flexibility and enables teachers to choose the methods they consider the most effective (Azzi 2012). While this autonomy provides opportunities for innovation, it has also led to the lack of standardization in English language teaching practices within English departments, raising important questions about how English is taught in these institutions.

The absence of a unified, nationalized approach to teaching English in Algerian departments of English is particularly significant given their role in shaping future English teachers. Most students in these departments are teachers to be, which makes it essential to understand the pedagogical approaches adopted by lecturers. Despite this importance there is little research investigating how English is taught in these departments, particularly in terms of lecturers' perspectives and practices. Indeed, existing studies in Algerian higher education tend to focus on the challenges of implementing reforms, or teachers and students' views on the changes brought by the LMD reform (Azzi 2012; Sarnou *et al.* 2012; Ali Rabah and Raouti 2021; Dib 2021). However, these studies provide limited insight into how English is actually taught in Algerian classrooms, especially in the context of English departments, where the majority of the students are future EFL teachers. Additionally, the autonomy that the LMD offers, in theory, could serve as a window into teachers' views on effective teaching, as their chosen methods reflect their beliefs about what works best in an Algerian context. However, it remains unclear how this flexibility translates into their classroom practices. Therefore, exploring their views on their preferred way of teaching is necessary in order to know how English is taught to English graduates within English departments.

Given that the LMD system promotes learner-centered instruction, and that CLT represents one of the most established learner-cantered approches, it becomes essential to examine the extent to which lecturers' practices reflect these principles. Do Algerian lecturers adhere to learner-centered principles promoted by the LMD system through the lens of CLT, or do they rely on more traditional, teacher-centered methods? This gap in knowledge highlights the need to explore the perspectives and practices of English lecturers within English departments. Indeed, exploring lecturers' views on their preferred teaching practices and their actual classroom practices is essential for knowing how English is commonly taught at the tertiary level. As highlighted by Shohamy (2008, p.119), if not stated explicitly language teaching policies can be deduced implicitly through investigating stakeholders' views, practices, and the factors that may have an impact on them.

To address this gap in research on Algerian English lecturers' pedagogical practices, this research focuses on three universities located in the north of Algeria. These universities were selected for both their accessibility and their diversity in institutional size and profile, ensuring a more representative view of ELT in Algerian higher education. One of them is among the largest and most established universities in the central region (UniRank 2024), with almost 3000 students enrolled in its English department (Université d'Alger 2, Université en chiffre n.d. p.9) and 97 English lecturers (Université d'Alger 2017). In contrast, the second institution is medium-sized, employing around 40 English lecturers, while the third is smaller in scale with fewer available staff. These universities are also renowned for their cultural diversity which increases the likelihood of collecting rich, varied, and potentially controversial data. This diversity is expected to offer broader understanding of how English is taught in Algerian departments of English and the factors influencing their practices. It is worth adding that the choice of departments of English as the context of this research has a rationale. Indeed, these departments consist of experts in the field of ELT, who are likely to provide valuable insights into how English is taught at the university level. As is the case in other Algerian universities, lecturers in these departments are typically required to hold a PhD/ Magistere to teach English, which ensures a high level of academic and professional expertise in the field. While these lecturers may not represent all English teaching contexts across Algeria, their perspectives

remain particularly significant because they train future teachers and influence prevailing pedagogical practices. Their experiences thus offer a critical lens for examining broader trends and challenges in ELT at the tertiary level. With these considerations in mind, the research will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What is Algerian lecturers' understanding of Communicative Language Teaching?
2. What are Algerian lecturers' preferred strategies for teaching English in Algerian higher education?
3. What do Algerian English lecturers see as the main challenges for English language teaching in Algerian higher education?

In light of these considerations, this study focuses on exploring how English is taught within Algerian higher education by examining lecturers' beliefs and practices through the lens of CLT. Although CBA is the framework currently promoted at the secondary level, it encompasses all school subjects, and it is not specific to foreign language instruction. CLT, on the other hand, represents the only language teaching policy ever implemented in Algeria and remains the more relevant framework for investigating foreign language pedagogy. Moreover, CLT is a learner-centered approach, which aligns closely with the core pedagogical principle of the LMD system; learner-centeredness. However, this study does not focus on the LMD system, as it is a structural framework rather than a teaching approach, and has already been extensively researched. What remains unexplored, however, is how English is actually taught in university classrooms, an issue that has gained renewed importance as Algeria prepares to transition towards EMI. Therefore, understanding lecturers' conceptions of teaching and their classroom practices is crucial for assessing the current state of English language education and its readiness for this linguistic and pedagogical shift.

1.4 Research Aim and Significance

The primary aim of this research is to examine how English is taught in Algerian higher education, specifically within departments of English, where there is no standardized or nationally defined approach to language instruction currently exists. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the LMD system offers lecturers autonomy in choosing their teaching methods, which allows them to implement their preferred teaching strategies or adapt to the specific needs of their teaching context. With these considerations, this study seeks to explore Algerian lecturers' understanding of CLT, their preferred teaching strategies, and their actual classroom practices. This focus is particularly relevant since the LMD system is rooted in learner-centered instruction (LCI), and CLT as a learner-centered approach, was the only reform specifically introduced for foreign language teaching in Algeria at the primary and secondary level. Beyond exploring teaching strategies, this research also aims to identify the key challenges that impact ELT in Algerian universities. Indeed, while the LMD system encourages modern teaching approaches, various factors may hinder their implementation. By unpacking these barriers, the study aims to provide a clearer understanding of the realities of ELT in Algeria, and assess the extent to which CLT or alternative methodologies are employed in practice.

Moreover, this research provides valuable insights for policymakers, curriculum designers, and university administrators by offering an evidence-based analysis of teaching practices and their challenges. Identifying effective strategies and existing limitations can help inform decisions on teacher training programmes, curriculum development, and the allocation of resources to enhance English language education in Algeria. Furthermore, as Algeria is moving towards the introduction of EMI in higher education (Touhamia and Bakar 2024), these insights become even more important. Indeed, understanding how English is currently taught, the challenges lecturers face, and the extent to which learner-centered approaches are integrated into university classrooms can help guide a more informed and effective transition towards EMI. In a broader context, this study contributes to global discussions on language teaching methodologies by examining the implementation of modern approaches, such as CLT in a non-Western, multilingual environment. The findings can serve as a reference for other countries

facing similar linguistic, institutional, and pedagogical challenges, particularly those undergoing educational reforms within higher education. Overall, this study aims to shed light on how English is taught in Algerian universities, bridging the gap between policy and practice, and contributing to the development of more structured, research-informed language teaching practices in higher education.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is organized into seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the study, and outlines its background, objectives, research problems, research questions, and significance. It also provides an overview of the thesis structure. Chapter 2 contextualizes the research by examining the sociocultural and institutional context of Algeria, focusing specifically on language policies and language teaching policies. Chapter 3 presents a review of the literature on communicative language teaching (CLT), including its theoretical underpinning, principles, and criticisms. The chapter also explores the implementation of CLT in EFL contexts and synthesizes key studies on teachers' perspectives and practices. Chapter 4 describes the research methodology, detailing the mixed methods approach employed in the study. It explains the data collection tools, including questionnaires, interviews, and non-participant classroom observations, as well as the procedures used for data collection and analysis. The chapter then introduces the theoretical framework, which draws on Engeström's Activity Theory to provide a comprehensive and systematic approach to investigating Language Teacher Cognition and teaching practices, as well as factors influencing them. Engeström's activity system model is used as an analytical tool to identify and analyze contradictions and interdependencies within the teaching context. The chapter also elaborates on the analytical tools used in the study; Qualtrics for the analysis of quantitative data, and both manual and NVivo based thematic analysis for qualitative data. NVivo 11 was used to organize and cross-check qualitative data to ensure consistency and analytical rigor. Chapter 5 presents and discusses the findings related to Algerian lecturers' understanding of CLT and their teaching practices. It examines how lecturers conceptualize CLT and the extent to which their reported beliefs align with their teaching practices. The chapter also explores their preferred teaching strategies, which reflect

an eclectic approach emphasizing communicative activities. This discussion integrates insights from the data and relevant literature to provide a nuanced analysis of lecturers' practices and perspectives. Chapter 6 addresses the challenges of teaching English in Algerian higher education, including large class sizes, limited resources and issues related to teacher training. The term teacher training is used throughout the thesis to reflect the terminology adopted in Algerian higher education policy and institutional discourse, where 'formation des enseignants' is commonly translated in this way. The chapter also explores the underlying causes of these challenges and uses Engeström's activity theory model to analyze their correlation and roots. Finally, chapter 7 concludes the thesis by summarizing the key findings and discussing their implications for English language teaching in Algeria. It reflects on the limitations of the study and offers recommendations for future research and teaching improvement.

Chapter 2: Language Education Policies in Algeria

2.1 Introduction

The current chapter attempts to familiarize the reader with the language and language education policies that Algeria has witnessed throughout its history. The first section is a critical review of language policy development in Algeria. This section is further divided into three subsections which revolve around the major language education policies and reforms that have occurred in the country. The second section focuses on the latest events that have occurred in Algeria and their potential effect on language and language education policies.

2.2 The Historical Development of Language Education Policies in Algeria

Algeria is a multilingual, multicultural country where language, and more precisely language in education has been a highly sensitive and complex issue. Indeed, Berger (2002) has characterized the issue of language education in Algeria as "the most severe problem of Algeria in its present and troubled state" (p.8). In addition, Benrabah (2002, p.226) has stated that language education in Algeria is a problematic matter that has been complicated by politics. Such a situation has attracted the attention of several scholars towards the language education policies that Algeria has witnessed throughout its history (Miliani 2001; Grandguillaume 2002, 2004; Benrabah 2002, 2004, 2007, 2014; Belmihoub 2012). To better understand the educational issues in Algeria, it is crucial to understand and discuss the language policies that have been undertaken by the country's leaders. However, before looking at these policies, it is necessary to understand the concept of language policy. According to Shohamy (2008, p.119):

> Language policy (LP) refers to and is concerned with decisions made about languages and their uses in society; Language education policy (LEP) refers to such decisions in the specific contexts of schools and universities in relation to home languages, foreign, and second languages.

Shohamy (2008, p.119) further adds that LEP may involve:

> [...] decisions about which language(s) should be taught, when (at what age), for how long (number of years and hours of study), by whom (who is qualified to teach), for whom (who is entitled and/or obligated to learn), and how (which teaching methods, curriculum, materials, tests to be used).

It is worth adding that LP may be either stated explicitly within official documents, such as national laws and curricula, or deduced implicitly through investigating particular practices; in such cases, LP are "hidden from the public eye" (Shohamy 2008, p.119).

Having explained the terms LP and LEP, it is now necessary to look at the historical development of LP within Algeria with a particular emphasis on LEP. Literature about the linguistic situation in Algeria shows that the country has gone through a variety of LEPs which have been mainly influenced by a number of historical and socio-political events. According to Benrabah (2007), Algeria's LEP has gone through three phases. The first phase coincides with the colonial period (1830-1962). During this phase, the country's educational system was dominated by the French, who tried to assimilate the populace to the French culture through eradicating local languages (Arabic and Berber) and establishing the French language as the only national and official language of the country (Al-Khatib 2008, p.228). As regards the second phase, it coincides with the independence of the country and what is known as the nationalist transition era. This phase lasted from the late 1960s to the late 1990s. It is characterized by the implementation of a LP that aimed at Arabizing the Algerian educational sector at all levels. Indeed, during this phase, Arabic (classical Arabic) was established as the sole official language of the country, while local languages where marginalized, i.e., the Algerian variety of Arabic which is referred to as Darija, and Berber languages were not recognized. The third phase started in the early 2000s which corresponds to the Algerian transition to the free economic market. This phase witnessed the gradual decline of Arabization policies which had been found to be a major source of the failure of education in Algeria (Benrabah 2007, p. 226). These three phases will be further discussed in the following subsections.

2.2.1 Phase One: LEP During The Colonial Period (1830-1962)

The language issue that has affected and still affects Algeria has its roots in the French colonization of the country. Indeed, linguistically speaking Algeria has been troubled by the French so called integrationist and assimilationist rules that dominated the country for 132 years. Presumably, the imposition of these rules aimed at fulfilling the colonizer's *mission civilisatrice*, a process which aimed to assimilate Algerians into the French culture through altering their language and cultural practices (Djite 1992). This assimilation strategy was clearly reflected in and through education (Heggoy 1973, p.180). Among the local languages suppressed during this period was Berber (Tamazight), which despite being the indigenous language of North Africa, was excluded from formal education. The French authorities viewed Berber mainly through a political lens and occasionally exploited it to deepen divisions between Berber and Arabic-speaking communities (Hamdan and Kessar 2023). However, these limited attempts at differentiation, often referred to as the "Berber policy", were not accompanied by any real educational initiatives, and Berber remained absent from schooling throughout the colonial period.

While Berber was marginalized and politically instrumentalized, Arabic faced even harsher suppression within formal education. In fact, during the French colonization all Arabic and Koranic educational institutions were closed and replaced by French schools where French, which was established as the country's sole official language, was imposed as the unique medium of instruction. Furthermore, to reinforce this assimilation policy the French banned the use of classical Arabic (Mostari 2005, p.41). Ironically, instead of civilizing and educating Algerians, the French civilizing mission generated an illiterate population, as education in Algeria at that time was reserved almost exclusively for the children of the colonizer. Therefore, by 1870, less than 5% of Algerian children were attending school, which explains the high rate of illiteracy in Algeria during that period (Senouci n.d., p.16). Besides, the great majority of Algerian parents preferred that their children remain illiterate instead of sending them to French schools, which they viewed as attempting to eradicate Islam (Saad 1992, p.24), thereby contributing to increasing the rate of illiteracy in the country. However, when the

natives realized that the French colonization would last for a long time and that their children needed to be educated to obtain job opportunities, they started sending their children to school, which was a first step towards tolerance of the French educational system. It is worth highlighting that acceptance of the colonizer's school did not mean acceptance of the colonizer's language and culture. Indeed, while Algerian children were being sent to French schools, a number of Arabic-Islamic clandestine schools were being established by a group of Arabic educated teachers who sought to teach Algerian children Arabic and Islamic literacy and also inculcate nationalist and anti-colonialist ideologies (Djite 1992). Unlike Arabic, which benefited from clandestine schooling and religious instruction, Berber lacked institutional support or written teaching traditions during the colonial era. Indeed, Berber-speaking communities preserved their language primarily through oral transmission and local cultural practices. This exclusion further reinforced the sociolinguistic hierarchy established by French policy, in which French occupied the top status, Arabic survived underground, and Berber was rendered largely invisible within education (Hamadan and Kessar 2023).

This linguistic imbalance ultimately undermined the French policy of assimilation, as it strengthened Algeria's attachment to Islam and classical Arabic which emerged as a unifying symbol of resistance and was later labeled as the language of liberation (Djite 1992, p.16). This historical phase is crucial for understanding the deep-rooted influence of colonial language policies on Algeria's post-independence educational reforms. Indeed, the resistance to French linguistic assimilation and the revival of Arabic as a symbol of national identity set the foundation for subsequent LEP, particularly the Arabization movement: a linguistic policy that promotes Arabic and strengthens its position as the unique national official language of the country. While the Arabization policy will be further discussed in the next subsection, it is important to recognize that Algeria's LPs continues to evolve in response to historical influences. Indeed, in this context, the increasing emphasis on English in higher education can also be seen as part of a broader shift away from French towards English, as French remains associated with colonialism, as opposed to English, which is perceived as more globally neutral (Jacob 2020).

LEP in Higher Education during the Colonial Era

At the higher education level, the organization and delivery of education was tightly controlled and overwhelmingly French-medium. All decisions concerning higher and secondary education were made by the French Ministry of Public instruction in Paris and implemented locally through the Governor-General of Algeria, who exercised authority over colonial education policy (Heggoy 1973; Benrabah 2007). The university of Algiers, established in 1909, functioned as the principal institution of higher learning and operated directly under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public instruction (Lorcin 1995; Ruedy 2005). Its curricula, teacher training programmes, and scholarly production were designed to replicate those of French metropolitan universities, thereby reinforcing the assimilation ideology of the mission civilisatrice (Ager 1996; Benrabah 2013).

At the school level, governance was equally centralized. The Direction de l'Instruction Publique (DIP) within the colonial administration controlled the recruitment of teachers, curriculum design, and the distribution of educational resources (Grandguillaume 2004; Ruedy 2005). French was imposed as the sole medium of instruction, while the use of Arabic or Berber in classrooms was strictly prohibited, reflecting the broader goal of linguistic and cultural assimilation (Mostari 2005; Djite 1992). This centralized system also determined who could access higher education. As a result, access for indigenous Algerians in higher education was severely restricted by social and legal barriers, as admission policies overwhelmingly favored settlers and Europeans (Heggoy 1973; Locrin 1995). Curricula, teacher training, and examination standards were conducted entirely in French. Arabic and Berber were excluded from tertiary instruction and teacher training programmes, which reinforced the colonial linguistic hierarchy at the top of the education system. Any intellectual activity in Arabic persisted mainly though religious and cultural association outside the university, while Berber languages remained confined to oral transmission.

2.2.2 Phase Two: LEP During The Post-independent Period/ The Nationalist Era (1960s-1990s)

A few days before the independence of Algeria, the future leaders of the country decided to commit the new state to Arabization (Benrabah 2007). Arabization is a language policy which aimed at restoring the lost national identity and personality of Algerians through the restoration of Arabic as the national language. This policy was conceived as a unifying project but implicitly excluded Berber (Tamazight), which, despite being the mother tongue of many Algerians, was denied official recognition. The new state viewed linguistic plurality as a potential threat to cohesion and therefore marginalized Tamazight from all institutional domains, including education (Benali 2007; Hamdan & Kessar 2023). Furthermore, Algerian nationalists believed that adopting a policy that promotes monolingualism would unify Algerians (Benrabah 2004, p.59). Indeed, during the nationalist era, using more than one language within a community was viewed as being detrimental to national integration (Benrabah 2004). In other terms, multilingualism was considered as a source of inequality and exclusion among the members of a community. The educational field was the best means for decision-makers to apply Arabization. In fact, the first move towards Arabization in education began in October 1962, when Arabic was introduced as a subject of instruction in elementary schools with seven teaching hours per week. The process of Arabizing elementary schools was done gradually until its completion in 1974 (Gherzouli 2019a). Following that, Arabic-language teaching became mandatory in all programmes and at all levels, which led to the gradual decrease of the amount of time devoted to French-language teaching (Bennoune 2000). However, the efforts and ambitions of the new state were not sufficient to implement Arabization in the educational field because of a set of social and political factors, such as the alarming rate of illiteracy among the population, and the lack of qualified teachers and appropriate teaching materials (Benrabah 2004). Nonetheless, these obstacles did not discourage the country's decision makers from pursuing their Arabizing mission but rather motivated them to find ways to fulfil their mission. To compensate for a shortage of teachers, Algeria hired a number of Arabic-language instructors from Middle Eastern countries. This action did not really improve the situation, as the majority of the new recruits were not

qualified to teach Arabic. Moreover, the varieties of Arabic spoken by the new recruits were not understood by Algerians, especially the Tamazight-speaking population, who had limited exposure to non-Algerian dialects. For them, Classical Arabic and other regional varieties of Arabic were essentially foreign languages, as the form of Arabic most familiar to them was Al-Darija (see Chapter 1), the Algerian variety of Arabic, which incorporates elements from Berber, Turkish, French, and Arabic itself, and differs considerably from both Classical Arabic and the regional varieties spoken in the Middle East. In addition, the traditional pedagogy (rote learning, class recitation and physical punishment) adopted by many of these instructors was not found to be adequate (Grandguillaume 2004). Furthermore, it was claimed that certain recruits, especially the Egyptian ones, were more interested in "the ideological indoctrination of the students than in teaching'' (Saad 1992, p.60). Accordingly, it can be said that the measures taken by the government for facilitating the implementation of Arabization were not that successful.

Despite the perceived difficulties in adopting Arabization, the policy gained momentum during the leadership of Boumediene (1965-1978), the second president of Algeria. Boumediene who was mainly known for his anti-colonialist attitude, adopted a radical approach to Arabization. Indeed, under his governance Arabization was intensively implemented in all public domains, especially the administrative and educational ones. In 1973, a national commission of Arabization was established (Gherzouli 2019a). The latter proposed four procedures for implementing the policy. The first one consisted of a gradual Arabization of schools. It suggested as an initial step, the Arabization of the first year of primary school. The second suggested procedure involved the Arabization of subjects (all subjects were to be taught in Arabic, except foreign languages). Furthermore, the Arabization of specific geographic areas along with Arabizing certain subjects in a particular period of time were also among the procedures that were recommended for the implementation of the policy. It is worth noting that these four procedures were applied between 1967-1968 (Souriau 1976). By 1976, when a new schooling system called the Fundamental School (a fusion of primary and middle school grades) was established, all teaching except foreign languages was done in Arabic (Saad 1992).

However, one year after the implementation of this new system, the process of Arabization started to be gradually narrowed, mainly because of the perceived failure of students. In fact, the students suffered from a linguistic handicap as they were neither able to use nor to understand Classical Arabic. This major repercussion of Arabization led to the suspension of the fundamental school system and the re-establishment of bilingualism in primary schools (Benrabah 2007, p.231). Mustapha Lachref, the Minister of Education during the presidency of Boumediene, was behind this decision as he believed that the Arabization of the Algerian educational system was an ill-conceived policy that did not suit modern times. Therefore, he maintained that the government should favour French-Arabic bilingualism (Benrabah 2007; Le Roux 2017; Gherzouli 2019a). However, despite the re-establishment of bilingualism at the school level, Berber remained excluded from education and administration, which generated increasing frustration, particularly in Kabylie and the Aurès regions. This growing resentment culminated in the Berber Spring of 1980, when the banning of a lecture by Mouloud Mammeri triggered mass protest demanding cultural and linguistic recognition. The movement marked the first major challenge to state monolingualism and laid for ideological foundations for later policy shifts, including the creation of the High Commission of Amazighity in 1995 and the eventual constitutional recognition of Tamazight as a national language in 2001.

Lachref's oppositional approach to Arabization was not supported by many, thus, when he resigned after the death of Boumediene in 1978, Arabization was reaffirmed. Indeed, between 1979 and 1992, the process of Arabization increased. During this period, Arabic became the main language of instruction for all curriculum subjects in primary, middle and secondary levels. Consequently, French lost its function and became a subject of instruction (a foreign language) taught starting from year four at primary school. This decision did not satisfy the pro-Arabization advocates who wanted to further delay the teaching of French in the fundamental school (Benrabah 2007, p.233). Therefore, in an attempt to temper the latter's dissatisfaction, English instruction was introduced at primary school starting from year four at the same time as French. In so doing, decision makers thought that putting English and French instruction at the same level would reduce the importance and dominance of French. This plan was concretized in September 1993, when it was stipulated that children accessing grade four

would have to choose between English and French as the first compulsory foreign language (Bennoune 2000, p.303). This decision implied that French had, for the first time, an opponent which could oust it. Indeed, in terms of technology, modernism, and power, English is ahead of French. In addition to that, as opposed to French, English is not related to colonialism or neo-colonialism in Algeria (Jacob 2020), and it is not considered as a rival to local languages, which entails that Algerians' attitudes towards it may be more positive. However, putting English at the same level as French did not provide the expected results, as the majority of children ended up choosing French (Queffelec *et al*. 2002, p.38). This is probably because French was still considered in Algeria as a reflection of modernity and education (Mostari 2004, p.31).

LEP in Higher education during the nationalist era

The ubiquity of French in Algeria was mainly seen at tertiary level. Although Arabization was introduced in the humanities and social sciences fields, and even in some scientific and technical fields (Mostari 2004, p.30), French remained the medium of instruction in universities, particularly in scientific and technical fields (Benrabah 2007; Le Roux 2017). Moreover, even though Algeria opened more English departments and emphasised the importance of other languages, especially English, for promoting the country's economic expansion, the status of French did not diminish. This situation led to a more aggressive Arabization process, which persisted till 1999. During this period, educational governance was highly centralized under the Ministry of National Education (MNE), which oversaw all levels of schooling. However, as the state began organizing its institutions, decisions concerning universities and research institutes were gradually transferred to the Ministry of Higher Education, established in the early 1970s to coordinate tertiary education policy and align with the national development agenda (UniRank, n.d). Indeed, the MHE operated within the framework of state socialism and nation reconstruction, with its priorities determined by the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) and supervised through national commissions. One such body, the National Commission for Arabization (created in 1973), was tasked with overseeing the gradual Arabization of education and public administration (Mostari 2003).

However, in practice, this policy had limited impact on universities, where French continued to dominate academic and scientific disciplines. The limitations of Arabization became increasingly apparent over time, particularly as the global economy demanded multilingual competence and greater openness to international academic exchange.

In 1999 the linguistic and cultural diversity of Algeria was publicly acknowledged by the new leader of the country, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who believed that multilingualism was a cornerstone of nation-building (Le Roux 2017). This political shift was also influenced by long-standing activism of the Berber movement, which had continuously called for cultural and linguistic recognition since the Berber Spring of 1980. If fact, the movement represented the first major challenge to the state's monolingual policy and led the ideological foundations for later reforms, including the Creation of the High Commission for Amazighity in 1995 and the eventual constitutional recognition of Tamazight as a national language in 2001(Hamadan and Kessar 2023). The sustained pressure exerted by this movement contributed to reshaping Algeria's linguistic landscape and played a decisive role in the re-establishment of multilingualism under Bouteflika.

Furthermore, Bouteflika recognized the inter-connectedness between modernism and openness to international languages and cultures. He stated that "an uninhibited opening up to the other international languages … does not constitute perjury … This is the price we have to pay to modernize our identity' (Benrabah 2013, p.76–77). In another speech, he maintained that he was ready to speak in any language, even in Hebrew for the prosperity of Algeria (Ait Dahmane 2007, p.471). This speech shows the rejection by the new government of those outdated beliefs that link Arabic to Islam and to authenticity (Ait Dahmane 2007). Therefore, during the presidency of Bouteflika Arabization was suspended, Berber became a national language (article 3 of the Constitution), but not an official language, and French was reintroduced as the first foreign language in Algeria. This language policy led to the emergence of an education policy that supports multilingualism. Before moving to the following subsection which will look at the LP and LEP implemented in Algeria during the 2000s, it is important to note that this phase highlights how post-independence LPs shaped Algeria's linguistic and educational landscape. Indeed, the shifting status of French and early attempts to

introduce English continue to influence current debates on English in higher education, providing essential context for understanding lecturers' pedagogical choices.

2.2.3 Phase Three: LEP During Algeria's Transition to The Free economic Market

The Arabization policies prevalent since independence to the end of 1999, have failed in Algeria (Djite 1992; Benchehida 2001; Grandguillaume 2002 2004; Benrabah 2004; Mostari 2004). This is because these rather assimilationist policies have not considered the multilingual composition of the country (Benrabah 2004;2007; Gherzouli 2019a). Furthermore, it is claimed by many researchers that Arabization was established in Algeria to serve mainly for the benefit of the country's elites to maintain power (Miliani 2002; Benrabah 2004; Gherzouli 2019a). For example, Benrabah (2004) maintains that Arabization is more of a political than a linguistic policy that has been implemented by the ruling class for preserving its autocracy. He adds that while the majority of Algerian children were obliged to attend Arabized public schools, the children of the political elite attended bilingual schools. The consequences of the political trajectory of the Arabization policy are multiple, especially within the field of education. According to Belmihoub (2016), "Public education is the sector that most reflects the failure of this policy" (p.9). Likewise, Gherzouli (2019a) posits that Arabization has "seriously affected the education system's capacity to acquire the scientific and technical knowledge that matters for any improvement" (p.38). Bouteflika also addressed in one of his speeches the impact of Arabization on the field of education. He stated that :

> Le niveau a atteint un seuil intolérable, au point ou le diplôme algérien qui était reconnu par la Sorbonne, Harvard et Oxford jusqu'aux années 80, n'est plus accepté pas même par les universités maghrébines (Benrabah 2002, p.78)
>
> [The level has reached an intolerable threshold, to the point where the Algerian diploma, which was recognized by the Sorbonne, Harvard, and Oxford until the 1980s, is no longer accepted even by the Maghrebin universities] (the present author's own translation).

Another illustration of the negative impact that Arabization generated in the domain of education was advanced by Harroubia, the Minister of Higher Education in 2005. Harroubia declared that 80% of first year students fail their exams due to linguistic incompetence (Benrabah 2007, p.226). Indeed, students who have been exclusively taught through classical Arabic were not able to pass their exams because they were weak in French, which is the language of instruction at university level, especially in the scientific disciplines (Allal 2005, p.13; Maiz & Rouadjia 2005, P.13).

In order to reduce the damage caused by Arabization within the educational sector, the Algerian stakeholders adopted a policy of educational reform. Indeed, by 1999 a series of objectives, such as revising school cycles, curricula and textbooks, the status of foreign languages, and promoting teacher training has been established by the Algerian authorities (Benrabah 2007). One year later, the massive task of reforming the school educational system began through the appointment of a national commission known by its French initials as the CNRSE (Commission Nationale de Réforme du Système Educatif). This commission's mission was to outline the principal axes of the reform. In March 2001, the CNRSE gave its reports which suggested: the reintroduction of French as the first mandatory foreign language in the second grade (Benrabah 2007), as well as the inclusion of English as a mandatory foreign language in the first year of middle school (Chaouche 2006). However, later in 2006 the introduction of French was deferred to grade 3 for unknown reasons (Lekehal & Benmati 2008). Another recommendation by the commission was that French should be used for teaching scientific subjects within secondary schools (Benrabah 2007, p. 227). Further suggestions related to the introduction of new curricula for all education levels, provision and evaluation of new teaching materials, and the introduction of new teaching methods that meet the curricula's objectives (Tawil 2006) were provided by the CNRSE. However, since the current research focuses on foreign languages, the researcher will highlight the reforms that target foreign languages. It is important to note that the aforementioned reforms that occurred within the educational sector, plus Algeria's urgent need to meet the requirement of a globalized era led to the incorporation of contemporary approaches and methods of teaching.

In addition to reforms concerning foreign languages, this period also reflected growing institutional support for Algeria's linguistic diversity. The High Commission of Amzighity (HCA), established in 1995, played a central role in promoting and standardizing Berber, while the National Pedagogical and Linguistic Centre for the teaching of Tamazight (CNPLET), created in 2003, developed teaching materials and organized teacher training. Following its recognition as a national language in 2001 and its elevation to official status in 2016, Tamazight began to be taught in primary, middle, and secondary schools, as well as in selected university departments. Although implementation remains uneven across regions, the inclusion of Berber in formal education reflects the broader reformist trend of this period, which sought to reconcile Arabization within Algeria's linguistic diversity.

Prior to the 2000s, the Algerian educational system relied on traditional approaches to teaching, which focus on rote learning and knowledge retention. Benrabah (2004), affirms that "Arabization has been accompanied by the adoption of traditional teaching methods, rigid "Pavlovian" pedagogical techniques that stress obedience, memorization and repetition" (p.67). Similarly, Amir (2006, p.4) posits that Arabization has led to rote learning and disregarded the development of learners' understanding and rational thinking abilities. Moreover, according to Grandguillaume (2006), the previous monolingual policy revived traditional Islamic education practices which was adopted during the Islamic conquest of north Africa in 711, and which emphasise memorization. However, it is necessary to highlight that the fact-acquisition model of teaching implemented in Algeria is also a legacy of French colonial times (Bemmoussat & Benyaakoub 2019, p.3). This system was characterized by rigid instructional traditions, hierarchical classroom relationships, and exam-oriented practices which have influenced ELT in Algeria. Moreover, the prestigious status of French in Algeria has further marginalized ELT for decades, as French continued to be viewed as the language of elite culture, education and socioeconomic advancement (Jacob 2020, p.1015).

Despite the dominance of these traditional methods, an attempt to modernize language teaching was made in 1999 at the school level with the introduction of CLT for foreign language instruction. However, this reform did not extend to higher education. Unlike previous approaches, CLT aimed to develop learners' ability to communicate effectively in real-life

situations and promoted learner-centered practices (see Chapter 1, section 1.2.1). However, despite is ambitious goals, CLT faced several implementation challenges. As Benmoussat and Benmoussat (2018, pp.63-64) explain, Algerian schools were not adequately prepared for such a reform. English classrooms seldom met the conditions required for CLT, mainly because of pedagogical constraints and a mismatch between the intended and implemented syllabus. In addition, teachers lacked the necessary training and resources to apply communicative principles effectively, and many resisted the new methods, viewing them as responsible for declining English standards. The situation was further complicated by the persistence of exam-driven practices, as the teach-to-the-test philosophy continued to dominate English teaching, focusing on structural accuracy and rote preparation for the Baccalaureate exam (Benmoussat and Benmoussat 2018 pp.63-64). Another major obstacle was the cultural incompatibility between the Western pedagogical values underlying CLT and Algeria's local educational culture (Benmoussat and Benmoussat 2018 pp.67). While such explanations are noteworthy, they remain largely theoretical and lack empirical support, raising questions about the extent to which these factors can explain the failure of CLT. Overall, these pedagogical, institutional, and cultural constraints illustrate why CLT, despite its reformist vision, could not achieve the expected outcomes and was eventually replaced.

To further modernize the overall educational system, Algeria introduced the CBA in 2003. Unlike CLT, which was exclusively applied to foreign language teaching, CBA was implemented across all disciplines at the school level. This approach aims at teaching the skills that are required to perform real-world tasks (Richards 2021). Consequently, a comprehensive curriculum evaluation was conducted across all subjects, including English, to align teaching with competency-based principles. According to Bensemmane (2005), the new curriculum aimed to develop "Learner Competencies which include communication skills (reading, writing, understanding, interpreting, speaking, interacting, negotiating, collaborating), and research skills (collecting, selecting, summarizing information)" (pp.136-137). To support this shift, new teaching syllabi, textbooks and materials were designed. Besides, teacher development programmes were initiated to allow teachers to adapt to the new curriculum (Le Soir d'Algérie 2007 cited in Bellalem 2008, p.19). However, it is worth noting that when

applied to foreign language teaching, CBA took a broader skill-based approach that focused on the development of general practical skills applicable across all disciplines rather than fostering students' communicative competence (Khelalfa and Kellil 2023, p.3).

Although the new educational reforms aimed at improving instruction, they were not met with great enthusiasm by teachers, students, and parents (Toualbi-Thaalibi 2006). For example, the curriculum reform of 2003, was strongly criticized and opposed by experts, teachers, unions, and parents (Bedouani-Kernane 2013). Objections to this reform took different forms, namely, strikes, demonstrations, and sit-ins. The teachers for instance, expressed their resistance to the new reform through organizing strikes (Le Soir d'Algérie; El Shourouk El Yaoumi 2006, p.19; El Khabar 2006 cited in Bellalem 2008, p.19). Similarly, students relied on strikes to voice their discontent with the new reform which they described as being unreasonable (Magharebia 2006 cited in Bellalem 2008, p19). It was claimed that the opposition to the new educational reforms is mainly due to the marginalization of educational stakeholders in general and teachers in particular in the process of planning educational reforms (Gherzouli 2019b, p.4). Indeed, the reform of 2003 was implemented without any consultation with teachers, students and parents (Gherzouli 2019b, p.4).

It is necessary to note that teachers' resistance to educational reforms may engender several repercussions, such as the mis-implementation of the imposed curriculum, and/ or a discrepancy between the curriculum and its implementation. Indeed, it has been claimed that resistance to change and stakeholders' roles in leading change are among the factors that lead to a mismatch between the curriculum and its implementation (Fullan 2011; Hall & Hord 2011). In fact, the successful implementation of a curriculum depends on the involvement of teachers in the process of designing and implementing the curricula (Cooper *et al.* 1998; Oloruntegbe 2011). Accordingly, teachers' resistance to a new educational reform which is the result of their marginalization may lead to the mis-implementation of the new reform, which in turn may lead to its failure. Another reason behind teachers' rejection of the new reform may be their views on it. For instance, Miliani (2001) argues that Algerian educational reforms "looked frequently, and continue to look, very much like political manoeuvres rather than educational enterprises" (p.18). Miliani (2001) further narrows down his view by asserting that the

Algerian authorities used the CBA for political purposes. In fact, he describes this approach as another 'fad' used by Algeria 'to turn upside down an education system that needs stability" (p.71). Holding and expressing such views may justify teachers' resistance to the new reform.

LEP in Higher Education during the Transition Era

The reforms introduced at tertiary level have been also subject to criticism and resistance. Prior to looking at criticisms of higher education reforms in Algeria, it is necessary to become familiar with these reforms. Algerian universities, like other educational settings, have undergone several waves of transformation as part of the state's broader modernization strategy during its transition to a market-oriented economy in the 1990s. These reforms were driven by the MHE, which sought to align university governance and curricula with international standards, train for life-long learning, protect the autonomy of higher education institutions, increase employability, and improve institutional efficiency (UNIMED 2021, p.34; Meziane and Mahi 2010, p.270; Bouzid *et al.* 2013, p.108).

The government's latest reform within third level education was the adoption of the three-cycle degree higher education framework known as the LMD (License, Master, Doctorate) in September 2004 (see Chapter 1, section 1.2.2). The main rationale behind this reform was the internationalization of higher education (UNIMED 2021; Mami 2010, p.54) and the need to keep pace with global scientific and technological advancement (Meziane and Mahi 2010; Reguig 2014). This reform also reflected Algeria's broader strategy of integration into the knowledge economy, as part of its post-structural adjustment policies and economic liberalization. Moreover, the introduction of the LMD system coincided with Algeria's association with the Bologna Process, which aimed at harmonizing higher education structures across Europe and beyond to promote academic mobility and mutual degree recognition (The European University Association 2004). By joining this framework, Algeria sought to enhance international cooperation, research mobility, and graduate competitiveness in a rapidly globalizing world (UNIMED 2021, p.34).

Institutionally, the Direction generale des enseignements est de la formation superieur (DGFS) was responsible for designing national higher education policy and coordinating pedagogical development across universities, while the Conference nationale des universites (CNU) ensured consultation and quality monitoring at the institutional level. To support the implementation and evaluation of the new system, quality assurance bodies, such as the CIAQES (see Chapter 1) and university level CAQ were established. Thes institutional measures provided the structural foundation necessary for the reform's pedagogical renewal. Building upon this framework, the incorporation of the LMD system brought several changes at different levels: architectural, organizational, and pedagogical. Pedagogically, the LMD system introduced new principles of assessment and learner autonomy. The text of the LMD regulation states that assessment of knowledge acquisition and skills is based either on a continuous and regular control or a final exam or a combination of the two, however, "priority should be given to continuous monitoring" (Koç *et al.* 2012, p.182). Likewise, teacher and student roles were redefined in accordance with learner-centered pedagogy, whereby teachers act as facilitators and learners take an active, self-regulated role in their learning. In addition to these changes, the LMD reform brought changes in terms of approaches to teaching. Indeed, Koç *et al.* (2012, p.181) claim that the LMD system is based on a communicative approach to teaching, aligned with learner-centeredness of modern instructional standards.

Although official sources claim that the LMD system has accomplished major achievements, especially in terms of improved infrastructure and number of graduates (Metatla 2016), several criticisms have been raised against it. Indeed, many researchers and teachers have stated that this reform does not suit the Algerian context (Megnounif 2009; Miliani 2010; Mami, 2013), which implies that this reform cannot develop harmoniously as highlighted by Miliani (2010, P.70). Besides, in 2016 the head of the Ministry of Higher Education and scientific research, Taher Hadjar, stated (as cited in Metatla 2016) that the introduction of the LMD reform was not preceded by a detailed assessment. Moreover, according to him the new reform also did not consider the reality of local specialties and did not involve students, faculty members and administrators (Al-Fanar Media 2020). However, despite this critique Hadjar maintained that the LMD system would not be cancelled (AL-Fanar Media 2020). He added that he was fully

aware of the weaknesses of the system, and that the government is completely committed to improving it regularly (University World News 2021). Another criticism about the implementation of the LMD framework was made by Koç *et al*. (2012) who claimed that the temporary co-habitation between the classical system (the pre-LMD system) which consists of two cycles only (Magister and Doctorates) and the LMD system is complex and confusing as it makes the organization of teachers and student evaluation more difficult. Furthermore, Abdelmalek Rahmani, who was the head of the National Council of Higher Education Professors in 2016, was against the co-existence of the two systems. He declared that the automatic equality between both systems was impossible (Al-Fenar media 2020). On the other hand, Noureddine Ghuali, the general-director of education and training at the MHE and scientific research in 2016, asserted that the decision to unify the systems is inevitable and necessary since it is the case in all countries all over the world (Al-Fanar Media 2020).

This section has shown that the Algerian educational system has been continually in a state of transformation to keep pace with a time of globalization. In fact, a series of reforms has been undertaken to improve and update Algerian educational institutions. However, despite the well-intended attempts of the government to improve and refine the sector of education, the suggested and implemented reforms did not always work well. Besides, recent events that occurred in Algeria, such as the popular movement Al Harak, resuscitated the language war, which entailed the consideration of a new language policy, which in turn implies the possible implementation of new reforms at the level of education. Indeed, Al Harak marked the end of Bouteflika's 20-year rule, bringing down a regime that had, instead of reducing, deepened French influence in the country. This growing influence became a source of public discontent, which led to mass protests demanding change. The fall of Bouteflika's regime resulted in several national and educational changes, including the introduction of English on public signs and official documents (Maraf and Osam 2023), as well as its implementation in primary schools (Independent September 20220; Orient XXI October 2022). These shifts, mark a broader transition towards English and may serve as a foundation for the potential introduction of EMI in higher education. In this context, this study provides valuable insights for policy makers and curriculum designers by examining how English is commonly taught and

identifying existing challenges in ELT. Indeed, these findings can help inform future language policies and anticipate potential obstacles in EMI implementation, allowing for strategic planning and effective solutions. The next section explores LP and LEP in the context of the new Algeria.

2.3 LEP in The New Algeria

February 22, 2019, marked the beginning of the Algerian popular movement "Al Harak", which aimed at creating a new Algeria. This pacifist movement rose against the previous corrupt totalitarian movement, which was led by Bouteflika and his supporters. The latter were rightly accused of having destroyed the country's development. The emergence of Al Harak plunged the country into a state of interrogation and reflection, which resulted in the revival of previous issues and the creation of new ones. For example, Al Harak revived the language war between French and Arabic and created a new one between French and English. Indeed, a great majority of Algerians maintained that the creation of a new Algeria, cannot happen if French is still ubiquitous in the country. In fact, French is generally viewed in Algeria as the language of the coloniser as well as the language promoted by the previous corrupt regime (Jacob 2020). Hence, eradicating the French language was considered as a precondition for enabling Algeria to change. To concretize this plan, Algerian nationalists recommended a shift away from French towards English, the language of science and technology, in all fields. This situation contributed to the recommendation of a new language education policy. In August 2020, Tayeb Bouzid, who was the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research at that time, proposed the promotion of English as an official language of teaching and administration at the country's universities. According to him the French language does not benefit Algerians in any way (Ghanmi 2019). Moreover, Bouzid asserts that introducing English (EMI) in Algerian higher education is essential for increasing the visibility of research in higher education institutions (Al-Fanar media 2019). The Algerian population welcomed this decision, according to the results of an online poll designed by the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE). In fact, 94.3% of the respondents of the poll voted in favour of the proposal of Bouzid (Al-Fanar media 2019). However, it is important to bear in mind that online polls are not as reliable as surveys

(Kennedy *et al.* 2020), thus, such results cannot be considered as representative.

It is worth noting that discourses of English replacing French are not new within the Algerian context (see section 2.2.1). Even if this idea has been presented as a revolutionary one, there have been several reports predicting the displacement of French by English in Algeria since the late 1970s (Benrabah 2013, p.95). Nonetheless, this has never happened simply because, whether it is admitted or not, the French language is a characteristic of the country, and an integral part of it (Miliani 2002, p.16). This fact along with many other reasons raised heated debates about Bouzid's suggestion. For example, Miliani (2002, p.22) posits that promoting the displacement of French by English for the purpose of coping with the demands of globalization, is just an alibi provided by policy makers for personal reasons, as the unique presence of English is not sufficient for introducing technology and developing a scientific mentality in Algeria. Besides, Chitour, the successor of Bouzid, declared that what matters is the content and the quality of university programmes, and not the language of instruction (Dzair Aily 2020). However, the MHE does not seem to take these criticisms seriously, as it has designed a special international PhD at the University of Limerick to promote the transition to English as a medium of instruction within Algerian universities and administration (University of Limerick website). Furthermore, this step will serve to upskill universities' staff, trainee teachers, and about 100 PhD students, which will in turn allow the suggested policy to be put in place. Accordingly, if the plans of the authorities work as expected, then the widespread use of the English language within Algeria in general, and within the field of education in particular may take place soon. Additionally, the recent introduction of English in primary schools, combined with the expected completion of this PhD programmes in August 2025, may further accelerate the shift toward English in Algerian higher education. In this context, examining LP and LEP is essential to this research, as these policies may help explain Algerian lecturers' teaching choices, which are often shaped by institutional guidelines and broader policy frameworks. Additionally, reviewing these policies is crucial for familiarizing the readers with the Algerian educational landscape, as this provides a foundation for understanding the establishment of different national policies. Having established the Algerian context through an overview of educational reforms (chapter 1) and LP and LEP (chapter 2), it is now necessary to explore

CLT, the only educational language teaching policy that was specific to foreign language instruction. This approach is widely recognized as a learner-centered approach, aligning with the core principles of the LMD system, the latest higher education reform introduced in Algeria.

Chapter 3: Communicative Language Teaching

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on CLT, its implementation in EFL contexts and teachers' perspectives on the approach. While the most dominant approach to ELT in Algerian higher education remains unclear, CLT is particularly relevant to this research as it aligns with the learner-centered principles promoted by the LMD system, the latest higher education reform (The National Report of Higher Education in Algeria 2019). Furthermore, CLT was previously implemented in Algerian middle and high schools (Benmati 2008; Slimani 2016), which makes it a valuable reference for examining how is English commonly taught within the LMD system. Hence understanding its principles, implementation challenges, and teachers' perspectives on CLT provides valuable insights into the current state of ELT in Algerian universities.

This chapter begins with an examination of the origins and the theoretical background of CLT. Following that, the chapter focuses on the concept of communicative competence (CC). This section presents various definitions and models of CC to clarify its role as a cornerstone of CLT. Building on this foundation, the chapter then defines the concept of CLT and summarizes its core principles. This is followed by a discussion of the main critiques of CLT. Additionally, this chapter traces the evolution of CLT over time and illustrates how the approach has been adapted and reinterpreted to suit different teaching contexts. The focus then shifts to the practical application of CLT in EFL contexts, with a particular attention to its adoption in Algeria. Furthermore, this chapter explores teachers' perspectives on CLT and common misconceptions that influence its implementation. It also explores the challenges associated with its adoption in EFL classrooms. The chapter concludes by identifying key gaps in existing literature, establishing foundation for the current research. Following this review, the theoretical framework guiding this study will be introduced.

3.2 The Origins of CLT

The field of foreign language teaching and learning has witnessed a fundamental change in recent decades. Indeed, traditionally, foreign language learning was viewed as a process of habit formation. Such a view draws upon behaviourism, a psychological theory of learning, that was advocated by Skinner in 1957 (Skinner 1957, p.2; Dulany 1959; Richards & Rogers 2014). This theory contends that learning is an observable behaviour that is automatically acquired through imitation and stimulus-response repetitions. Indeed, this reflects the view of structural behaviourism which focuses on the outward observable aspects of the language rather than the abstract, unobservable system of the language. Although mainly applicable to the acquisition of native languages, this theory influenced foreign language teaching as it formed, along with structuralism the basis of a popular method of teaching called the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), which suggests that language learning is a habitual behaviour acquired through oral practice (Kumaravadivelu 2006). However, these ideas about language learning started to be doubted by the late 1950s, when Chomsky challenged the behaviourist view that language acquisition is merely a matter of habit formation. In his review of *Skinner's Verbal Behaviour,* Chomsky (1959, p.42) argued that "language is not really something that is learned. Rather, it is something that develops in the child in a manner determined by intrinsic human capacities". He further claimed that human beings are biologically endowed with a language faculty responsible for language development (Chomsky 1965, p.3). Hence, linguistic behaviour is partly innate, not learned through a reinforced mimetic activity.

Chomsky's views led to the demise of behaviourism along with the ALM, and influenced several scholars, such as Krashen who developed the widely known and well accepted theory of second language acquisition, "the monitor theory", which had significant impact on areas of second language and foreign language teaching and research (Tollefson *et al*. 1993). However, while Chomsky's views about language and language learning influenced several fields, mainly linguistics, psycholinguistics, and SLA, the major paradigm shift that second language teaching has undergone sprang from research on sociolinguistics and the emergence of the notion of communicative competence (Hymes 1972). This shift is known as "the communicative

revolution" (Ellis and Shintani 2014; Hall 2016). It is important to note that the communicative revolution is also a result of the development of a functional-notional syllabus. The latter was designed by the British Council in 1972, as a result of the increasing language needs of a rapid influx of immigrants and guest workers in Europe (Halliday 1978 cited in Savignon 2007, p.209).

This perceived change of focus in language learning paved the way for what is referred to as communicative language teaching (CLT), an approach to language teaching which emphasises the communicative rather than the formal aspects of the language. According to Lowe (2003), there are two phases of CLT. The first one developed in the late 1970s, and put stress on language functions, such as requesting, complaining, and apologizing, whereas the second one emerged in the 1980s and was influenced by Krashen's work (1982;1985). Indeed, the latter claims that effective language learning is achieved through natural acquisition processes, not explicit instruction. According to Krashen (1982), a language cannot be learned but only acquired in favourable circumstances, i.e., when learners are provided with a comprehensible input that he labelled *i*+1 (Spada 2007). He argued that comprehensible input alone (input that is slightly beyond learners' current proficiency level) is sufficient and adequate for L2 leaning. However, Krashen (1982) revised his statement about the input hypothesis; he clarified that comprehensible input is important, but not sufficient for L2 learning. He further explained that input must fit the condition of *i*+1 and must be received with low anxiety by learners. Swain (1985; 1993; 1995; 1998; 2005) disagreed with Krashen's view and argued that output is equally important to comprehensible input in language development, as it directs learners to the features of the target language (TL) which may facilitate second language acquisition (Macdonough 2005; Toth 2006). This hypothesis has also influenced CLT which places a great emphasis on language production. Further, CLT has been also influenced by the Interaction Hypothesis (Long 1983;1996) which proposes that second language development is promoted when learners participate in negotiated interaction. Indeed, from a CLT perspective a second language is better acquired through interaction and communication (Richards 2006). Having discussed the origins of CLT, as well as its theoretical framework, it is now necessary to look more deeply at the key theoretical concept underpinning CLT, that is communicative

competence (CC).

3.3 Communicative Competence

Before dealing with the definition of 'communicative competence', it is worth understanding the meaning of communication and competence. The term communication is viewed by Savignon (1997) as "a continuous process of expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning" (p.14). In other words, communication is a system that implies exchanging, discussing, and understanding ideas. As regards the term 'competence', its definition differs from one author to another. It was first introduced in the field of Applied Linguistics by Chomsky who defined it as "the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language use (Chomsky 1965, p.4). He contrasted this with performance, which refers to "the actual use of language in concrete situations" (Chomsky 1965, p.4). In his model, competence represented an idealized knowledge of grammar, while performance referred to its practical execution in communication. Although influential, this view was criticized for being too narrowly focused on grammatical knowledge, without acknowledging the social and cultural dimensions of language use. According to Hymes (1972) linguistic competence alone could not explain why a speaker might be grammatically correct but socially inappropriate. He therefore proposed the concept of CC, which encompasses not only knowledge of grammar but also the ability to use language appropriately in context (Richards & Rodgers 2001; Spada 2007, p.779).

3.3.1 Definition of Communicative Competence

The term 'communicative competence' has a huge significance in L2 teaching and learning. It was coined by Hymes (1971) as a reaction against Chomsky's theory of linguistic competence, which in his view, fails to account for the whole socio-cultural dimension (Cazden 2011, p.364; Lillis & Currv 2006, pp.2-3). Thus, he suggested a theory that combines linguistic knowledge and knowledge of a set of sociolinguistic rules and codes. Hymes defines CC as the individuals' abilities to interact with other speakers through meaning negotiation in particular social contexts. He further explains CC through four lenses: possibility, feasibility, appropriateness, and occurrence. 'Possibility' refers to whether a locution is grammatically

possible. ‘Feasibility’ refers to “whether the speaker can use the locution due to psycholinguistic factors” (Tarvin 2015, p.4), such as memory limitations or the speaker’ inability to process complex sentences. As regards ‘appropriateness’, it refers to “whether the locution meets the cultural expectations for the desired interaction in that context” (Tarvin 2015, p.4), while ‘occurrence’ refers to whether the locution is made or not (Tarvin 2015, p.4).

It is worth noting that Hymes’ view of CC focuses on language as a social behaviour, rather than language learning (Savignon 2002). Consequently, its appropriateness as an instructional goal raised several questions (Paulston 1974 cited in Savignon 2006, p.637). However, after the work of Savignon (1972), who with Hymes, was among the first researchers to mention the term CC, it started to be used in language teaching contexts to refer to the ability to negotiate meaning, and to successfully combine a knowledge of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse rules in communicative interactions (Savignon 1972,1983,2018). In other words, according to Savignon, CC revolves around the abilities that allow native speakers to communicate with others effectively and spontaneously. To better describe CC, Savignon (1997,2018) characterizes it as follows: (a) It is dependent upon meaning negotiation between speakers. Indeed, meaning negotiation is necessary for clarity purposes (b) it is context specific because communication takes place in different situations and with people with different cultural backgrounds and social status (c) it applies to both written and spoken language, as communication takes place in both forms (d) it requires using appropriate registers and styles. In fact, how we talk depends on the social status of the hearer. Accordingly, it is crucial for speakers to know what they should say when interacting with others.

The theoretical perspectives discussed above provide a strong foundation for understanding CC, a concept that underpins CLT. Given that CLT is a learner-centered approach; an approach promoted by the LMD system, understanding CC is crucial for identifying how English is taught in Algerian universities. Indeed, if lecturers perceive CC as essential to ELT and help their students to develop it through incorporating communicative activities in their classes, then this suggests an inclination towards LCI. Conversely, if CC is not prioritized, it may indicate a reliance on more traditional, form focused methods. To further clarify the concept of CC and its role in language instruction, the following section examines key models that have shaped its

conceptualization.

3.3.2 Models of Communicative Competence

One of the most influential attempts to conceptualize CC was proposed by Canale and Swain (1980), who developed a model that initially included three components namely, grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Later Canale and Swain expanded this model by introducing discourse competence (Canale 1983) as a distinct component of CC. Within this model, linguistic competence, also referred to as grammatical competence, is concerned with mastery of the linguistic code i.e., the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of a language. As regards sociolinguistic competence, it is defined as the knowledge of sociocultural rules of use. Moreover, it is concerned with the learners' ability to handle, for example, settings, topics and communicative functions in different sociolinguistic contexts. In addition, it implies the use of appropriate grammatical forms for different communicative functions in different sociolinguistic contexts. Canale (1983) defines discourse competence as the speakers' ability to combine language to form meaning. This component also includes the ability to combine language and form meaning appropriately (Scarcella *et al*. 1990 cited in Wong 2010, p.28). Hence, discourse competence involves not only language, but also non-verbal behaviours. According to Canale & Swain (1980), strategic competence refers to compensatory strategies that are used by the speakers (learners) when necessary, to avoid communication breakdown.

Building on this foundation, Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995) expanded the model by introducing actional competence, which they defined as "the ability to produce all significant speech acts and speech act sets" (Celce-Murcia 2007, p.42). In their view, sociocultural competence, which is synonymous with sociolinguistic competence, should be part of CC. One particular aspect of this model is that it highlights the fact that the components of CC are interrelated, and that it is necessary to describe the nature of these interrelationships for a better understanding of the concept of CC (Celce-Murcia 2007). Despite the major contribution of this model, it has been criticized by Celce-Murcia (2007), who claimed that the model shows some gaps that need to be addressed. Hence, she proposed a revised version of

this model.

In the revised version of the 1995 models of CC, Celce-Murcia expanded the previous model through adding formulaic competence, which she defines as "those fixed and prefabricated chunks of language that speakers use heavily in everyday interactions" (Celce-Murcia 2007, p.47). Put simply, formulaic competence can be viewed as readymade fixed expressions (Moon 1998) that are commonly used by speakers. According to Hunston (2002 cited in Celce-Murcia 2007, p.48), this kind of competence is believed to be crucial for developing fluency. Furthermore, within this model, actional competence has been relabelled as interactional competence which consists of both actional competence (knowledge of how to use speech acts and speech act sets in the TL), and conversational competence (knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication rules, such as turn taking and haptic behaviour). Celce-Murcia posits that developing such a competence is extremely important, as it helps to impede communication breakdown. Due to its presumed significance, the notion of interactional competence has been extensively discussed during the last decades (Kramsch 1986, 2006; He & Young 1996; Young 2008). It was first introduced by Kramsch (1986) who asserts that developing an interactional awareness about interactional norms in different contexts is prominent for language learners. According to her, linguistic knowledge is not sufficient for learners to communicate effectively in today's world, as they are likely to encounter multilingual individuals who have grown up in different ethnic cultures. Hence, developing cultural knowledge is of utmost importance to make and convey meaning. As Tseng (2002) puts it, "success in language learning is conditional upon the acquisition of cultural knowledge: language learners acquire cultural background knowledge in order to communicate, and to increase their comprehension in the target language" (p.13)

It is noteworthy that the notion of culture, or more specifically the relation between language and culture has been discussed extensively in foreign language education. Indeed, language and culture are so close that they are viewed as synonymous (Scarcella & Oxford 1992), which suggests that language teaching entails teaching culture. Accordingly, it is claimed that integrating cultural content in foreign language teaching is essential for successful communication in EFL contexts (Willems 1996; Tanaka 1997; Kramsch 2006). This can be

achieved through providing learners with a "general knowledge about the literature and other arts that are integral to the target culture" (Celce-Murcia 2007, p.51). Furthermore, raising learners' awareness about status and power norms as well as religion(s) should be considered while teaching about the target culture (Kramsch 2006). In addition, comparing and contrasting the target and native culture, should be also taken into account in foreign language teaching as proposed by Kramsch (1993).

The models of CC discussed in this section are particularly relevant to this study, as they define the key competencies that lecturers may (consciously or unconsciously) prioritize in their teaching to enhance students' communication skills. Indeed, the extent to which lecturers focus on grammatical accuracy, discourse organization, sociolinguistic appropriateness or interactional skills provides insights into how CLT principles might be interpreted and applied in Algerian universities. Understanding these elements are essential for assessing whether lecturers' practices align with CLT principles or reflect a more traditional, form-focused instruction. Having explained the concept of CC, which is central to CLT, it is now necessary to look at the definitions and principles of CLT.

3.4 Understanding the Concept of CLT

What is meant by CLT? It is a question that has intrigued several researchers, scholars, teachers and even students in the field of ELT. Harmer (2003) contends that the term CLT is difficult to understand and consequently hard to define. He claims that CLT "has always meant a multitude of things to different people" (p.103). Likewise, Spada (2007) posits that the meaning of CLT "depends on whom you ask" (p.272). Additionally, Littlewood (2007) expresses a relatively similar view in his work on CLT through advancing that "CLT is interpreted in various ways" (p. 543). He further characterizes CLT as an undefinable concept. Hence, it can be said that there is no agreed definition of CLT. However, over the last few decades a number of researchers have tried to reduce the ambiguity of this term through the following definitions, or rather explanations.

According to Howatt (1984) there are two versions of CLT, namely, a strong version and a weak version. The former implies that language is acquired through communication. That is to say, learners learn the TL through using it rather than through structural systems. Such ideas draw upon Krashen's and Terrell's 'natural approach', which suggests that only natural acquisition processes can lead to successful language learning (Littlewood 2011). On the other hand, within the weak version of CLT, language learning occurs through the teaching of functions and form followed by practice. This version also stresses the necessity of providing learners with opportunities to use the TL for communicative purposes. Furthermore, it is this version of CLT that generally dominates the field of ELT (Hall 2011), probably because of its practicality and applicability to teaching. These ideas about CLT creates a certain amount of uncertainty about its meaning (Littlewood 2011). Indeed, due to such assumptions, discussions about CLT are often ambiguous, in the sense that it is difficult to know which version of CLT people have in mind while debating it (Littlewood 2011).

Several researchers after Howatt (1984) tried to explain the notion of CLT. A number of them agreed that CLT is an approach rather than a method, which aims at developing learners' communicative competence (Richards *et al*. 1992; Savignon 1997, 2018; Richards & Rodgers 2001, 2014; Brown 2001; Lightbown & Spada 2013). For example, Savignon (1997;2018) believed that CLT is an approach which believes that second/foreign language teaching and learning should be based on promoting learners' communicative competence involving the processes of expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning. Brown (2007) also views CLT as an approach which goes beyond the teaching of "rules, patterns, definitions, and other knowledge about language" to the teaching of genuine, spontaneous, and meaningful communication (p. 18). He further posits that CLT is a learner-centered approach which puts stress on authenticity, interaction, task-based activities, and real-life communication. Similarly, Lightbown and Spada (2013) define CLT as an approach to teaching which emphasises the communication of meanings in interaction rather than the practice of grammatical forms in isolation. Despite all these definitions, it seems that there persists widespread confusion and debate as far as the application of CLT is concerned (Wei 2018). According to Spada (2007), this uncertainty could be due to the fact that CLT lacks a clearly defined set of instructional

practices and procedures, which may lead some teachers to have a limited understanding of how to make their classes truly communicative. For instance, some teachers remain uncertain about the role of explicit grammar teaching in their language classes and whether CLT requires an exclusive focus on speaking skills (Spada 2007; Wong and Marlys 2012). However, more recent research suggests that the challenges in implementing CLT are primarily due to external factors, such as lack of teacher training, lack of resources, class size, students' motivation, and teachers' proficiency, rather than ambiguity in CLT's definition itself (Chang and Suparmi 2020; Alharibi 2022; Sourani *et al.* 2023; Nam 2023). Given the ongoing confusion surrounding CLT and its implementation, it is essential to examine the core principles that define this approach. The following section outlines these principles providing a clearer understanding of what CLT entails and how it is supposed to function in language classrooms.

3.4.1 Principles of CLT

There are numerous lists in the literature of the major characteristic principles of CLT (Littlewood 2011). For instance, Nunan (1991, p. 279; 2012) has identified five primary principles common to CLT. He asserts that CLT revolves around the following:

- An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
- The introduction of authentic texts in the learning situation.
- The provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language, but also on the learning management process itself.
- Enhancement of the learners' own personal experience as important elements contributing to classroom learning.
- Attempts to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

Later in 2001, Richards and Rodgers (p. 172) outlined the following principles of CLT, which they later reaffirmed in 2014:

- Learners learn a language through using it to communicate.
- Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.

- Fluency is an important dimension of communication.
- Communication involves the integration of different language skills.
- Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.

Following that, Brown (2007, p.43), proposed a series of detailed and comprehensive characteristic principles of CLT. According to him, within a communicative approach (CA):

- Classroom goals are focused on all the components of CC: grammatical, discourse, functional, sociolinguistic and strategic goals must therefore intertwine the organizational aspects of language with the pragmatic aspect.
- Language techniques are designed to engage learners in pragmatic, authentic and functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Organizational language forms are not the central focus, but rather aspects of language that enable the learner to accomplish particular purposes. Fluency and accuracy are complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times, fluency may take on greater importance than accuracy to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.
- Students in communicative classes ultimately must use the language productively and receptively in unrehearsed contexts outside the classroom. Classroom tasks must therefore equip students with the skills necessary for communication in such contexts.
- Students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process through an understanding of their own style of learning and through the development of appropriate strategies for autonomous learning.
- The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide, not an all-knowing best gatekeeper of knowledge. Students are therefore encouraged to construct meaning through genuine linguistic interaction with others.

In summary, CLT can be understood as a series of principles about "the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom" (Richards 2006, p.2). It should be considered as an 'umbrella' term used for describing learning sequences that seek to improve the students' ability to communicate (Harmer 2007; Eisenchlas 2010; Wei 2018).

Despite the provided definitions and principles of CLT in the literature, some scholars argue that the concept of CLT is still vague and unclear. Additionally, concerns about its effectiveness in innovating educational practices, raised several criticisms. Some of these will be presented and discussed in the next subsection.

3.5 Criticisms of CLT

Despite its widely acknowledged contribution to the field of foreign language teaching, CLT has been subject to several criticisms for approximately the last three decades. One of the most famous critiques was made by Swan (1985, p.2). In his view, like its predecessors, CLT simply replaced one orthodoxy with another. Yet, unlike traditional/structural ways of teaching, namely, methods such as the Grammar Translation, CLT represented a paradigm shift in language pedagogy. Indeed, while structural methods focused heavily on grammatical accuracy, repetition, and memorization, reflecting behaviourist and structuralist views of language learning (Richards and Rogers 2001), CLT placed CC, rather than structural mastery, at the center of teaching. Nevertheless, this achievement did not prevent Swan (1985) from making additional criticisms of CLT. He contends that the theoretical ideas underlying the communicative approach (CA) are confusing and overgeneralized, which can lead to practical inefficacy. He further notes that this "revolutionary" approach to teaching treats learners with a *tabula rasa* attitude: "the belief that learners do not possess or cannot transfer from their mother tongue normal communication skill" (Swan 1985, p.10). In fact, Swan (1985) explained that CLT does not recognize the role of the mother tongue in foreign language learning and neglects the teaching of grammatical items. Consequently, L2 learners are taught what they already know, such as communication skills and strategies, instead of what they really need to know, such as the lexical and grammatical items that will allow them to express themselves appropriately in the target language (TL). Just like Swan, Widdowson (2015) believes that CLT deprives learners of the grammatical directions that used to guide and control their progress. Pica (2000) expressed a similar view through arguing that the CLT focus on meaning instruction at the expense of form instruction deprives L2 learners from noticing "how L2 sounds, and structures relate to the meanings of messages they encode…" (Pica 2000, p.6).

However, Littlewood (1981) argues that CLT "pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language, combining these into a more fully communicative view" (cited in Aleixo 2003, p.10). Moreover, Thompson (1996) viewed these critiques about CLT as misconceptions.

Another critique of CLT is that it lacks communicativeness. Indeed, in one of his studies where he analysed transcripts from communicative classes, Nunan (1989) found that interaction was anything but communicative within CLT classes. Later in 2006, Kumaravadivelu argued that CLT may not be able to promote authentic communication, as several previous studies, including his own, failed to describe CLT classroom interaction as truly communicative. Furthermore, he has claimed that CLT does not fit various contexts. To support his view, Kumaravadivelu has reported the general dissatisfaction that emerged due to the low correlation between CLT fundamental notions and certain features of local contexts. A no less important critique about CLT was raised by Widdowson (1998), who claimed that CLT is inauthentic. He maintains that any real-world text (or so-called authentic material) that is reproduced in the classroom lacks authenticity because it has been taken from its natural context. Swan (1985) shared the same view, as he argued that authenticity cannot be achieved in CLT classes, simply because the classroom is not the real world. All these charges against CLT led some scholars, such as Bax (2003) to argue that this approach had reached its end and thus should be replaced. Nevertheless, for some other scholars CLT should be revisited or as stated by Holliday (1994) further developed instead of being abandoned, as there is not yet an approach that can replace it. Such views led to the emergence of a revised version of CLT, known as 'The Principled Communicative Approach" (PCA), which will be further discussed in the following subsection.

3.6 The Evolution of CLT (The Principled Communicative Approach)

The perceived limitations of CLT convinced several scholars that it failed to fulfil its promises to innovate foreign language learning, as it seems that adopting such an approach does not sufficiently prepare FL learners for eventual success in L2 learning (Pica 2000; Lightbown and Spada 2006; Celce-Murcia *et al*. 1990; Dörnyei 2009). Accordingly, Celce-Murcia, Thurrell and Dörnyei (1990) suggested a revised version of CLT which they named "The Principled Communicative Approach". According to them, strengthening the linguistic foundation of CLT through incorporating form-based instruction is necessary for developing an L2 communicative competence. They maintain that exposure to L2 input and communicative practice without any direct instruction may be insufficient for successful L2 learning. This was proved by the findings of several empirical studies revolving around immersion programmes, which revealed that immersion school students generally fail to attain a native-like level of proficiency (Dörnyei 2009), despite their involvement in an implicit kind of learning, i.e., unconscious/automatic acquisition of skills and knowledge. Additionally, research demonstrates that learners who receive formal/explicit instruction seem to learn the language more rapidly compared to those who do not (Ellis 1994). Consequently, views in favour of incorporating explicit instruction within CLT classes started to be increasingly promoted. Indeed, it is claimed that a collaboration between implicit and explicit instruction may maximise success in L2 learning (Dörnyei 2009). It is noteworthy that concretizing this suggestion is challenging and, thus, may take a considerable amount of time. However, some key guiding principles for the PCA can be formulated. Dörnyei (2009) offers the following principles to explain the PCA:

1. The personal significance principle confirms the importance of the student-centered, meaning-focused principles which gave rise to CLT in the first place.

2. The declarative input principle underlines the need for initial explicit input before learners are able to move to less controlled work.

3. The controlled practice principle highlights the necessity to promote the automatization of L2 skills.

4. The focus on the form principle means that even when engaging in authentic communication, teaching needs to pay attention to formal/ structural items as they occur.
5. The formulaic language principle implies paying attention to the fixed expressions, idiomatic phrases, and collocations, which play a prominent role in communication.
6. The language exposure principle indicates that learners should be offered large quantities of rich and varied input.
7. The focused interaction principle implies that learners should be given plenty of opportunities for genuine L2 communication.

It is important to add that opinions about the PCA vary widely; for some the PCA gave a fresh take on the CA (Gomes 2015), while for others this approach is just a rehabilitation of the presentation, practice, and production (PPP) method (Brenan 2015). Such disagreements entail a need for further research on CLT. In brief, the least that can be said about CLT (its revised version) is that it is a dynamic approach to teaching, which is in constant evolution (Littlewood 2011). This evolving nature of CLT, particularly the development of the PCA, is highly relevant to the present study. Given that the dominant approach to ELT in Algerian higher education remains unclear, exploring how CLT principles (both original and revised forms) may be interpreted and applied by Algerian lecturers can provide valuable insights. Indeed, if lecturers tend to integrate explicit instruction alongside communicative elements this may indicate an alignment with PCA principles rather than with traditional CLT (which in its strongest form focuses on meaning over form). Similarly, if lecturers perceive CLT as primarily focusing on fluency and meaning negotiation, this may suggest a more modern understanding of the approach. These considerations raise important questions about the practical application of CLT, particularly in EFL contexts, where educational, cultural, and institutional factors influence its implementation. The following section explores how CLT has been adopted and adapted in various EFL settings.

3.7 The Implementation of CLT in EFL Contexts

Since its introduction CLT has evolved as one of the most influential and dominant language teaching approach (Larsen-Freeman 2000; Wei 2018). Indeed, CLT is now considered as a prominent functional and practical framework for language education worldwide (Duff 2014; Han 2022). Due its popularity, CLT has extended beyond English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, where it has gained significant attention because of its emphasis on preparing learners to communicate and perform in real life situations. The spread of CLT in non-western countries, such as China, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Libya has attracted the attention of a number of researchers and practitioners in the field of ELT, which has resulted in a number of research studies that revealed that the application of CLT within an EFL context involves several challenges and may not be as successful as in an ESL context (Valdes & Jhones 1991; Ellis 1994 1996; Shamin 1996; Wang 2010; Faroq 2016; Wei 2018). This issue is primarily due to the environment in which the learning of the TL occurs. Indeed, in countries where English in not the primary form of communication among citizens, EFL learners have very limited exposure to the TL and cannot usually practice and test their English (Deckert 1987; Ellis 1996). Furthermore, within an EFL context CLT may be considered as culturally inappropriate (Simpson 2008; Zhang *et al*. 2013), because the process-oriented nature of CLT does not fit with the traditionally content-focused approaches that are generally used in EFL countries (Ellis 1996 cited in Zhang *et al*. 2013, p.2). Since this research focuses on identifying the most dominant approach to ELT in Algerian higher education, it is necessary to review the implementation of CLT in Algeria (the only LEP officially introduced in Algeria, see Chapter 1, section 1.2.2) in order to understand its influence in this context.

3.7.1 The Implementation of CLT in Algeria

Prior to discussing the implementation of CLT in Algeria, some general background about ELT in this context is necessary. Over the last decades, ELT in Algeria has undergone several changes due to the perceived failure of the previous traditional teaching methods in developing learners' communication skills (Benzeroug 2019). Algeria has given English an exceptional status in its educational system. Being the language of globalisation, Algeria views English as a means to reinforce international political and economic relations, as well as a channel for gaining international visibility in terms of scientific research (chapter 2). In fact, Algeria has promoted English through a special type of acquisition planning that begins from the first year of middle school and aims at forming competent users of English. Furthermore, the adoption of an English Western programme known as the LMD system in 2004 by the Algerian government is considered as a move towards the ongoing globalisation process, which in turn entails the promotion of ELT in Algeria (Mami 2013). Indeed, such a reform within the Algerian educational system may be viewed as a shift away from the French classical Napoleonic system and an attempt to install a base for studying English at tertiary level (The National Report of Higher Education in Algeria 2019). Although English holds significant importance in Algeria, it is considered a foreign language and is taught after French at all educational levels. In fact, in Algeria, EFL is a compulsory subject primary school, in middle school, secondary school, and higher education (see Chapter 1).

Unlike in higher education, ELT at the secondary level in Algeria has undergone a major shift in teaching methodology. Prior to the 1980s, English was taught through the ALM which aimed at developing learners' linguistic competence through rote learning and repetition drills. However, this method failed to produce competent English users in real life contexts (Benzeroug 2019), and was soon replaced by a communicative approach to teaching which aims at developing learners' communicative competence and meets the requirements of globalization. Consequently, in 1999, Algeria officially adopted CLT in middle and secondary schools (Benmati 2008; Slimani 2016), becoming the only foreign language teaching reform introduced in the country. Indeed, the official syllabi of English at the secondary level explicitly

shifted to achieving communication in its various forms, aspects, and dimensions (Benmati 2008; Slimani 2016). Furthermore, the Algerian Government directives and official texts (June 1999), highlight that the syllabi of the English language (at secondary level) seek to provide the Algerian learners with "the language necessary to communicate efficiently in a normal social and /or working situation both in speaking and in writing" (Slimani 2016).

However, despite its theoretical adoption, CLT faced several challenges in Algerian schools (Benmoussat and Benmoussat 2018) (chapter 1, section 1.2.1). As a result, CLT was eventually replaced by a competency-based approach (CBA), a derivative of CLT that prioritized practicality over CC and deep knowledge of the target culture (Khelalfa and Kellil 2023, p.3). According to Benadla (2013), this shift led to a loss of CLT's communicative focus, which turned learners into passive participants who merely engaged in classroom activities without developing real-life communication skills. This, in turn, led back to the issue that CLT was meant to address; incompetent EFL language users.

Despite the Algerian Ministry of Education emphasis on integrating linguistic, communicative, and sociocultural objectives into ELT (Belmihoub 2018), it seems that traditional teaching practices are still ubiquitous in Algerian EFL classrooms. Indeed, Benmoussat & Benmoussat (2018), claim that CLT principles are still scarce in Algerian EFL classrooms. According to them this may be due to a lack of preparation, inadequate classroom conditions, and misalignment between the intended and implemented syllabus (Benmoussat and Benmoussat 2018) (chapter 1, section1.2.1). They further propose that the CA has always been controversial in Algeria as it challenges conceptions of effective teaching and learning. In fact, according to them, several teachers, especially the more experienced ones, still maintain that communicative-based teaching is behind the decline of English standards in Algeria (Benmoussat and Benmoussat 2018). Such beliefs or perspective on CLT along with a set of situational and contextual factors have been found in previous studies to impede its implementation in EFL contexts (Ellis 1996; Li 1998; Karavas-Doukas 1996; Gorsuch 2001, Hiep 2007, Chang 2010; Heng 2014; Chang and Suparmi 2020; Alharibi 2022; Sourani *et al.* 2023; Nam 2023). These findings also point to the fact that teachers' understanding of CLT is not always aligned with its core principles. As a result, a number of misconceptions about CLT

have emerged, which continue to shape how the approach is interpreted and practiced. The following section discusses these misconceptions in more detail.

3.8 Misconceptions of CLT

Confusion around the term CLT has led to the development of several myths about it (Spada 2007; Han 2022). Some of these will be discussed in this section:

1. **CLT Means an Exclusive Focus on Meaning**

The most widespread misconception about CLT is that it is an approach to L2 instruction that focuses on meaning at the expense of form. Such a characterization of CLT is not in line with the view of most applied linguists, especially, the British ones who emphasise the necessity of a formal language component within CLT. Indeed, CLT is not an approach that excludes form but rather an approach that includes communication. Similarly, Littlewood (1981) maintains that CLT takes into consideration the functional and structural aspects of the language. However, such a misconception is not surprising as there are several researchers (applied linguists & SLA researchers) who claim that grammar is too complex to be taught, it is rather acquired unconsciously through exposure (Krashen 1982 & Prahbu 1987; Han 2022).

2. **CLT means no explicit feedback on learner error**

Another misconception of CLT is that it should not include corrective feedback. This is probably because several teachers believe that errors are parts of the learning process. They are evidence of progress that allows the learners to test hypotheses about the TL. It is true that some researchers, such as Truscott (1996, p.327), promote a total rejection of any kind of grammar correction. However, CLT does not ban feedback. It rather encourages the use of implicit corrective feedback that does not interfere with communication, such as recasts, a type of corrections, that is commonly used in CLT classes (Spada 2007, p.276-278; Han 2022). It has been suggested that such a type of feedback allows learners to notice the difference between their interlanguage and the TL (Doughty and Varela 1998 cited in Spada 2007, p.277). However, research has shown that recasts are not viewed as feedback on form by L2 learners, they are rather seen as feedback on the content of their utterance (Havranek 1999; Lyster 1998).

Therefore, it has been claimed that recasts would be more effective if they are accompanied with explicit feedback (Doughty and Varela 1998 cited in Spada 2007, p.277), which have been found to lead to higher accuracy levels and development (Ammar and Spada 2006; Lyster 2004).

3. CLT means learner-cantered teaching

The concept of learner-centeredness in CLT implies giving learners more control and autonomy for their language learning. To achieve this, group-work has been introduced as a major activity in CLT classes. In fact, several studies revealed that group-work allows learners to produce more speech and a greater variety of speech functions and forms, than they do in a teacher-centered interaction (Long and porter 1985 cited in Spada 2007, p.278). However, it has been observed that for group-work to be successful, it has to be accompanied with other teacher-fronted activities (Long and Porter 1985 cited in Spada 2007, p.278), as doing so may increase both fluency and accuracy. Although such a remark has been made, several L2 teachers still believe that CLT is characterized by an almost exclusive focus on group-work.

4. CLT means listening and speaking practice

It is assumed that CLT promotes the teaching of listening and speaking at the expense of reading and writing, even if many theorists asserted from the beginning of CLT that one of the basic principles of CLT is that linguistic skills and communicative skills should not be treated in isolation (Savignon 1997, 2018; Han 2022). Furthermore, one fundamental part of CLT principles and practices is that L2 learners should keep in mind the appropriate contextual and social factors that contribute to their comprehension (listening and reading) and production (speaking and writing).

5. CLT means avoidance of the learner's L1

Avoidance of the use of the L1 is not specific to CLT. There are several methods that reject the use of the mother tongue in L2 classrooms. Indeed, it was claimed that the L1 has a negative influence on L2 development (Lado 1957 cited in Spada 2007, p.280; Han 2022). Furthermore, it is assumed that learners need as much exposure to the target language as possible to be able

to use it appropriately. Despite these claims, there are several researchers that posit that the L1 can have a positive influence on L2 development. In fact, Vygotsky (1978) supports the use of the mother tongue in L2 learning. He suggests that the L1 provides crucial scaffolding support for L2 learners. Likewise, Swain and Lapkin (2002) report that the use of L1 allows learners to avoid communication breakdown and achieve their linguistic goals. Additionally, Turnbull (2001) highlights a number of pedagogic benefits of L1 use in the classroom (saving time, providing clearer and more concise explanations). Nonetheless, even if there is evidence that L1 use should not be completely banned in L2 instruction, educators must be careful about how much L1 use is productive (Spada 2009). Moreover, decisions about the extent to which L1 use is encouraged in L2 classrooms depend on the linguistic context. For instance, in foreign language settings where learners' exposure to the TL is limited as is the case in this study, it is preferable to minimize L1 use. The next subsection will discuss other factors/challenges that may interfere in the adoption of CLT in EFL contexts.

3.9 Perceived Challenges in Implementing CLT in EFL Contexts

Even if CLT has been adopted in several EFL contexts, numerous studies reveal that there are many challenges that teachers encounter when implementing it (Li 1998, Orafi & Borg 2009; Chang and Suparmi 2020; Alharibi 2022; Sourani *et al.* 2023; Nam 2023). Indeed, some researchers maintain that adopting a method that has evolved in one part of the world, may generate a set of challenges in another (Kramsch and Sullivan 1996). Li (1998) grouped the problems that may hinder the implementation of CLT in EFL contexts under four categories: (a) teachers-related challenges (b) students-related challenges (c) educational system constraints, and (d) methodological issues within CLT itself. Butler (2011) presented a similar classification, except that he relabelled the categories presented by Li (1998). However, neither Li nor Butler explicitly included cultural factors in their classifications, despite the fact that many researchers have highlighted their impact on the implementation of CLT (Ellis 1994; Kramsch 2006). Indeed, culture shapes expectations about classroom behaviour, teacher-student relationships, and the role of language learning in society. As Hu (2002, pp.95-101) and Littlewood (2007, pp.244-246) note, these cultural dimensions cut across other categories but

exert distinct influence on how CLT is interpreted and enacted (see section 5.2.6). For this reason, cultural challenges are treated here as a separate category.

a. Challenges caused by teachers.

It goes without saying that teachers play a crucial role in the success or failure of the implementation of CLT in EFL contexts. However, some studies revealed that several major constraints which prevent the successful implementation of CLT in EFL classrooms are related to the teachers themselves (Chang and Goswami 2011; Hiep 2007; Kustati, 2013; Li 1998; Liao 2000; Yu 2001; Chang and Suparmi 2020; Alharibi 2022). Indeed, Li (1998) discovered that a number of major constraints which prevent the successful implementation of CLT in EFL classrooms are caused by teachers' (a) lack of proficiency in spoken English (b) lack of knowledge and skills (c) lack of training in CLT (d) misconceptions about CLT and (e) lack of time to prepare or develop communicative material. Furthermore, other researchers, such as Anderson (1993) and Liao (2000) also found that teachers' lack of proficiency in English is among the major problems that hinder the implementation of CLT. In addition, Chang & Goswami (2011) reported that teachers' lack of training, and knowledge and skills in implementing CLT are among the major problems that prevent teachers from applying CLT in their classroom. Similarly, Hiep (2007) stated that teachers' limited knowledge of CLT, and lack of skills are major obstacles to CLT implementation. Moreover, while investigating the implementation of CLT in 15 East Asian countries, Ho (2002) reported that teachers' poor English proficiency and lack of training make the success of implementing CLT in such countries impossible.

b. Challenges caused by students

Literature on CLT implementation in EFL contexts show that students' low English proficiency, resistance to participation in class, unfamiliarity with CLT, and lack of motivation, are the most common students-related obstacles that may impede the application of CLT. For example, Li (1998) has found out that the three major factors that hinder the adoption of CLT in the south Korean context are students' resistance to classroom participation, their poor motivation, and their low English proficiency. He explains that since students are used to

traditional ways of teaching in which they act as passive participants, they generally avoid participating in communicative activities, which may discourage teachers from incorporating CLT in their classes. He further adds that students' low English proficiency prevents the practice of communicative activities, which may hamper teachers' efforts to introduce CLT in their classes. Likewise, Chang and Goswami (2011) have discovered that Taiwanese learners' limited command of English as well as their resistance to participating in class are two key factors that impede the implementation of CLT in such a context. Additionally, Lee (2014) carried out research in South Korea, where he found out that students' lack of motivation and proficiency remain an issue in implementing CLT in South Korea. Several other studies have shown the same findings, i.e., learners' low English proficiency, their lack of motivation, and their resistance to engaging in communicative activities prevent the implementation of CLT in EFL contexts (Hiep 2007; Heng 2014; Chang 2011; Chang and Suparmi 2020; Alharibi 2022).

c. Challenges caused by the educational system.

Grammar-based instruction, large classes, time constraints, lack of resources and teaching materials, lack of support, and the influence of traditional practices have been found in several research studies to inhibit the adoption of CLT in EFL contexts. Indeed, almost all the studies that revolve around the obstacles to CLT implementation indicate that large class sizes may be a major issue in the application of CLT (Li 1998; Yu 2001; Chang & Goswami 2011; Hiep 2007; Alharibi 2022). Indeed, large classes make it difficult for teachers to introduce communicative activities, maintain students' discipline, organize pair/group work, and ensure that all students are engaged in the activities. Other studies on issues around CLT implementation reveal that traditional form-oriented examinations force teachers to teach in an exam-oriented way, i.e., focusing mainly on teaching the skills that would be assessed (grammar, vocabulary). Doing so may have a dramatic impact on the integration of CLT in EFL settings (Li 1998; Hiep 2007; Chang 201; Alharibi 2022). In addition to these challenges, lack of instructional materials and administrative support have been reported to be barriers to CLT implementation along with the influence that traditional practices persist in having on teachers (Li 1998; Liao 2000; Alharibi 2022).

d. Challenges caused by CLT itself.

Several studies have shown that CLT itself creates a major obstacle for teachers to apply CLT in their classrooms (Li 1998; Memari 2013). Indeed, CLT does not provide an adequate account of EFL teaching as highlighted by Li (1998). In other words, CLT does not clearly indicate a teaching method, which makes it difficult to be implemented (Bojanić 2020). In addition to that, it seems that CLT does not offer effective assessment tools, which makes it difficult for teachers to assess their students' CC in sound and meaningful ways (Li 1998). Furthermore, some studies on CLT adoption in EFL countries, showed that teachers find it discouraging and disconcerting to design their own assessment tools, as they already have a lot to do (Ozevik 2010; Meamri 2013). In addition to that, CLT is time and energy consuming. In fact, such an approach requires a considerable amount of preparation time for the teachers to design communicative activities because of their limited availability (Wong 2012). Therefore, the demanding nature of CLT is considered to be a major constraint in applying it in EFL classrooms.

e. Cultural challenges

In addition to the above-mentioned contextual factors, cultural differences between western and non-western countries also influence the implementation of CLT in EFL contexts. Indeed, CLT evolved in an ESL context and, therefore, some of its major principles, such as focus on fluency, communicative activities, and learners-centeredness may not align with the teaching beliefs and perspectives of several EFL countries (Wei 2018). Indeed, CLT may even be in conflict with the learning culture of numerous EFL countries. For example, in contexts such as China, Vietnam, Libya, and even Algeria, teachers are generally viewed as sources of knowledge, whereas students are viewed as passive receivers of knowledge who rely heavily on their teachers (Miliani 2010). It should be acknowledged, however, that teacher-centered traditions were once widespread in Western educational systems as well, where lectures, rote-memorization, and the authority of the teacher predominated (Alexander 2000; p.23; Richards and Rogers 2001, p.72-75). The difference is that in many Western contexts, reforms in the latter half of the 20th century gradually shifted official policy and classroom practice towards

more learner-centered, communicative approaches (Shah 2020, p.45), even if these shifts remain uneven. In addition, better facilities, such as class size, language laboratories, and access to authentic materials have further supported the implementation of CLT. By contrast, in less developed contexts, or where higher education is free and resources overstretched, limited facilities often reinforce teacher-centered practices and restrict the adoption of CLT.

This combination of structural and cultural constraints makes the implementation of CLT particularly difficult in many EFL settings. Hu (2002), for instance, points out that in the Chinese context, the traditional culture of learning has a major impeding impact on CLT implementation. He argues that the Chinese culture of learning is not in line with CLT principles. For example, the nature of learning in such a context is imitative rather than interactive. Furthermore, teaching is based on rote learning and drilling rather than meaning discussion. Therefore, teachers and students may be understandably reluctant to adopt CLT. Likewise, Kirkgoz (2008) maintains that cultural factors are among the major factors that affect the adoption of CLT in Turkey. He explains that teachers' beliefs and practices about effective teaching deviate from the principles of CLT. In addition to teaching styles, culturally sensitive content can also create resistance to CLT implementation. For instance, (Hassan 2014) found that concepts such as "gay marriage" and "homosexuality", which are socially and culturally sensitive in Middle Eastern contexts and even Algeria, pose significant challenges for EFL learners (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.6). This perceived discrepancy between CLT principles and the teaching culture of EFL contexts has also been observed in other EFL contexts such as Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Libya, South Korea, Japan, Malesia, Thailand, Taiwan. Such issues have raised questions about the universal applicability of CLT (Ellis 1996).

The discussion above shows that even if CLT has been welcomed in EFL contexts, its implementation is far from being consistently successful, which implies that further research studies about how CLT can be adapted or adjusted to EFL contexts are needed. In what follows, a review of research on teachers' perspectives and practices of CLT in EFL contexts will be provided.

3.10 Empirical Studies of Teachers' Perspectives and Practices of CLT in EFL Contexts

The term perspective refers to the interpretative lens through which individuals perceive and make sense of reality (Baker 2024, pp. 5–6). It encompasses cognition, beliefs, emotions, values, culture, and personal experiences, all of which shape how individuals frame issues and make judgements (Baker 2024, pp. 5–6). O'Connor (n.d.) further explains that perspectives influence decision-making, problem-solving, and goal setting, ultimately guiding individuals' actions and interactions. In the field of education, perspective play an important role in shaping teachers' professional beliefs and instructional choices (Borg 2006; Farrell & Bennis 2013). Indeed, research on teachers' perspectives has consistently shown that their understanding of teaching methodologies impacts their teaching practices (Li 1998; Sato & Kleinsasser 1999; Thompson 1996; Ho & Wong 2004; Karim 2004; Farouq 2015; Wei 2018). Building on this the following section reviews empirical studies on teachers' perspectives and practices of CLT, with a particular focus on higher education, as the current study is situated at the tertiary level.

University-Level Studies Internationally

A number of empirical studies have explored teachers' perspectives and practices of CLT in higher education. In Bangladesh, Karim (2004) surveyed 36 university teachers and found they had a solid understanding of CLT, avoiding common misconceptions such as the exclusion of grammar. Their practices generally reflected CLT, with activities like group work, simulations, and listening comprehension tasks. Minor discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and practices were observed in this study, but these did not prevent teachers from implementing CLT in their classrooms.

In India, Walia (2012) investigated 20 college teachers using questionnaires and reported limited use of CLT mainly due to time pressures, large classes, lack of facilities, and student reluctance. Nonetheless, teachers valued CLT and recommended blending it with traditional approaches. A similar pattern was observed in Laos, where Vongxey (2012) interviewed 10 university English teachers. Although the teachers expressed general support for CLT, their understanding of the approach was often partial, and implementation was constrained by

insufficient training, limited proficiency, student passivity, and lack of institutional support. In Pakistan, Choudhry *et al*. (2022) surveyed 24 teachers and 300 students at two universities in Lahore. Both groups stressed the importance of communicative competence, but teachers admitted relying on lecture-based methods, while students criticised outdated curricula, exam-based assessment, and the lack of oral practice.

In the Arab world, similar challenges have been reported. Albahri (2021), in a mixed- method study involving 140 students and 35 teachers at a Saudi university, found that while both groups expressed positive attitudes toward CLT's emphasis on interaction and authenticity, classroom practices were hindered by exam-driven curricula, resource-shortages, large classes, and entrenched hierarchies. Likewise, Faroq (2015), who combined questionnaires and classroom observation with 100 EFL/EAP teachers at another Saudi university, found that teachers were eager to adopt CLT but remained pessimistic about its full implementation due to systemic constraints, such as class size, time pressures, and students' low proficiency. Interestingly, male and female teachers differed in their perceptions of grammar: females viewed CLT as including grammar teaching, while males associated it primarily with meaning negotiation. Siddiqui and Asif (2018) further reported mixed perceptions among 35 female teachers in Saudi Arabia, based on questionnaires and interviews. Indeed, while many teachers acknowledged the value of CLT, most argued for eclecticism to cope with the challenges of teaching large, mixed-ability classes. Their emphasis on eclecticism may reflect the difficulty of applying CLT in its "strong" version in EFL contexts, where students often require both communicative competence and explicit language instruction. Eclecticism therefore emerges as a pragmatic response that allows teachers to integrate elements of CLT while addressing structural challenges in EFL contexts (see Chapter 5, section 5.3). Overall, university-level studies across Asia and the Arab world show that while teachers and students generally support CLT in principle, its classroom application is restricted by systemic, institutional, and cultural constraints.

Algerian Context

While the international literature on teachers' perceptions and practices of CLT is substantial (Aleixo 2003; Batawi 2006; Abdulkader 2013; Ahmed 2013; Nikian 2014; Vasiliki 2017; Tootkaboni 2018; Alquahtani 2020), studies in the Algerian context remain scarce. At the university level, only a few studies have explicitly examined CLT. One notable contribution is Mouada's (2019) quasi-experimental study at Mohamed Kheider University (Biskra), which investigated the effectiveness of CLT in enhancing B2-level EGSP learners' communicative competence. Using communicative tasks with an experimental group, supplemented by focus group discussions, the study reported significant gains in learners' oral skills and positive attitudes toward CLT's motivational and interactive focus.

At the school level, research has mainly focused on the communicative orientation of textbooks. Zeghdoud *et al*. (2019) conducted a content analysis of the Algerian secondary textbook At *the Crossroads* using Brown's (2001) CLT principles. Their findings showed while the book incorporated communicative features, such as authenticity and fluency activities, it paid little attention to skills integration, functional language use, or autonomous learning. Similarly, Ainouz and Fedaoui (2023) examined listening and speaking activities in the Algerian primary textbook *My Book of English* and found that 59% of tasks reflected CLT principles, particularly in promoting interaction. Nonetheless, they also noted shortcomings in authenticity and task engagement.

Other Algerian studies at the tertiary level have mentioned CLT but focused on related issues rather than on the approach itself. At Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Chioukh (2021) conducted research on cooperative learning, a method closely aligned with CLT principles (Austin and Lammers 2017, p.238). Her study showed that cooperative learning improved students' fluency and accuracy. At the university of Biskra, Laala (2021) investigated teachers' views on grammar teaching in language classes through questionnaires and interviews. While some teachers supported integrating grammar into communicative tasks, many still favoured traditional, form-focused instruction, which demonstrates the tensions

between communicative and structural approaches. In a more conceptual critique of Algerian ELT, Benmoussat and Benmoussat (2018), highlighted how the dominance of exam-oriented instruction has limited the practical adoption of CLT, despite its formal promotion in policy. These studies often appear in the literature when searching for CLT in Algerian higher education, as they reference the approach, but their primary focus lies elsewhere. Despite these contributions, little appears in the literature about Algerian university lecturers' own perceptions of CLT within English departments and how these shape, or fail to shape, their classroom practices. Therefore, addressing this gap is the primary concern of the present study.

3.11 Literature Gap

As highlighted in the previous section, although CLT has attracted scholarly interest in Algeria, the focus of existing research has been uneven and often indirect. At the school level, for example, studies of middle and secondary textbooks (Fedoul 2009; Zeghdoud *et al.* 2019; Ainouz and Fedaoui 2023) show that while CLT principles are present, they are applied inconsistently, with particular weaknesses in skills integration, authenticity, and functional language use. At the tertiary level, some work has examined classroom applications with learners. Mouada (2019), for instance, demonstrated the potential of CLT to enhance CC among university students, while other researchers have investigated related pedagogical issues such as cooperative learning (Chioukh 2021) or grammar teaching (Laala 2021). Broader critique, such as Benmoussat and Benmoussat's (2018) analysis of exam-oriented practices, have further highlighted systemic obstacles to communicative pedagogy. Taken together, these studies confirm that CLT has been discussed in the Algerian literature, but largely through the lenses of textbooks, student outcomes, or related approaches. What remains unexplored is the role of university lecturers themselves; their perspectives on CLT, their preferred teaching strategies, and the challenges they encounter in implementing CLT.

It is noteworthy that investigating teachers' practices, perspectives on CLT, and challenges impeding effective ELT is not in itself unique to this study, as similar studies have been conducted in various contexts. However, what makes this study distinctive is its focus on Algerian higher education, particularly within the English departments of 3 universities.

Further, in many other countries the dominant ELT approach is explicitly outlined in official educational policies and curricula (Faroq 2015; Asif 2018; Almohideb 2019; Al-Jehani 2023). In contrast, Algeria lacks a formally stated ELT framework at the tertiary level (see Chapter 1, section 1.2.2). The only guiding principle is the LMD system's emphasis on learner-centered teaching, which aligns with a core principle of CLT. This absence of a prescribed framework creates space for CLT to be promoted more explicitly in English language classrooms. Moreover, university lecturers in Algeria have greater autonomy than their counterparts in primary and secondary education, since they are not bound to prescribed textbooks or standardized assessment. This autonomy may allow for more flexible approaches to ELT. Additionally, English lecturers at university are generally well-qualified, as most of them are PhD holders, which suggests a strong theoretical knowledge in language teaching methodologies. Moreover, students majoring in English are likely to have a relatively higher level of proficiency and motivation compared to EFL students in general educational settings. All these contextual characteristics may limit the previously perceived obstacles to CLT implementation in EFL literature (Chang and Suparmi 2020; Alharibi 2022; Sourani *et al.* 2023; Nam 2023). Hence, this study aims to generate original findings that reflects the specific realities of Algerian higher education.

Before concluding this section, it is important to clarify that while this study draws on CLT as an analytical lens, it does not assume that Algerian university lecturers are or should be using this approach. Rather, the aim is to understand how English is currently being taught in language classes within departments of English, particularly at a time when Algeria is moving towards EMI. Since CLT is the only explicit foreign language teaching policy that has ever been introduced in Algeria, albeit at the secondary school level, it provides a relevant benchmark for exploring the extent to which communicative principles inform current practices in higher education. Moreover, in contrast to many other contexts, Algerian higher education lacks a clearly articulated framework for ELT. Indeed, the only guiding principle under the LMD system is a general emphasis on learner-centeredness, without specific reference to foreign language pedagogy. Given ongoing concerns about English students' relatively low proficiency levels, investigating whether and how communicative principles are enacted at the

tertiary level can offer valuable insights into how teacher preparation and pedagogical support might be strengthened to foster CC.

3.12 Summary

This chapter reviewed the conceptual and empirical literature relevant to CLT and teachers' perspectives in EFL contexts. It began by tracing the origins of CLT and its grounding in the notion of communicative competence, outlining key definitions and models that have informed its development. The discussion then turned to the principles of CLT, the criticism it has attracted, and its evolution into what has been termed the principled communicative approach. Attention then shifted to the implementation of CLT in EFL contexts, including the Algerian setting, where policy support for communicative teaching at the school level has often clashed with classroom realities. Within this body of work, teachers' perspectives emerged as a crucial construct, as their interpretations of CLT strongly shape how, and to what extent, it is enacted in practice. The review also highlighted widespread misconceptions about CLT, alongside the numerous challenges that hinder its implementation, such as large class sizes, exam-driven curricular, limited resources, and students' low proficiency levels. These barriers, combined with teachers' varied understandings of CLT, contribute to inconsistencies between reported beliefs and actual classroom practices.

The chapter further reviewed empirical studies of teachers' perspectives and practices internationally and in Algeria. These studies reveal broad support for CLT in principle but demonstrate that systemic, institutional, and cultural constraints often restrict its application. In the Algeria context specifically, most research has focused on school-level materials or related pedagogical issues, with only a handful of studies directly addressing lecturers' views of CLT at the university level. Taken together, the reviewed literature highlights both the relevance and limitations of CLT in EFL contexts and points to a clear gap in Algerian higher education, where little is known about university lecturers' perspectives on CLT and how these shape their teaching practices. Therefore, addressing this gap is the focus of the present study. The next chapter outlines the methodological choices made to investigate these issues systematically.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed description of the research design adopted in the current study. It outlines the underlying philosophical and methodological framework that guided the research process and offers a clear understanding of how the study was conducted. The chapter begins with a presentation of the research paradigm that informs the study. Following this, the chapter discusses the suitability of the chosen research methodology, which combines both qualitative and quantitative methods. This mixed-methods approach was considered necessary for answering the research questions and allowing a deeper understanding of Algerian EFL lecturers' perspectives, teaching practices and challenges within English departments. The subsequent sections describe the research setting and participants. The setting section provides information about the institutional and educational environment where the study took place, while the participants section offers an overview of the participants, including their selection criteria and relevant background information.

Ethical considerations are also addressed in this chapter to ensure that the study aligns with the principles of research ethics, such as informed consent and confidentiality. The chapter then provides a detailed description of the research tools employed in this study, along with a rationale for their selection. This explanation clarifies how each tool contributes to the achievement of the research aims. This is followed by a discussion of the data collection process, which includes the steps, procedures, and methods used to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. After outlining the data collection procedures, the chapter presents the contextual and analytical frameworks that inform the interpretation of the findings. The subsequent section provides a description of the data analysis procedures, which outlines how the data was examined. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary that highlights the key aspects of the research design and methodology, providing a concise overview for the reader.

4.2 Research Paradigm

The term paradigm was popularized by Kuhn (1970) in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, where he used it to describe a framework of thought. In educational research, the concept of a paradigm refers to a researcher's worldview (Mackenzie & Knipe 2006) i.e., their beliefs about the world they live in. Indeed, a research paradigm represents the abstract beliefs and principles that shape the perceptions, interpretations, and actions of a researcher. It serves as a lens through which researchers view the world (Kuyini 2017). This implies that a research paradigm guides and dictates research actions or investigations. As Kuyini (2017, p.26) states, paradigms influence "every decision made in the research process, including choice of methodology and methods" (Kuyini 2017, p.26). Similarly, Cohen *et al*. (2018) posits that paradigms play a significant role in educational research as they "can clarify and organize the thinking about the research" (p.27). It is worth noting that a paradigm includes four components: epistemology, ontology, methodology, and axiology (Lincoln and Guba 1985, p.109). These components encompass the basic beliefs, norms, and assumptions that distinguish one paradigm from another. Understanding these elements is, therefore, crucial for determining the foundational ideas and beliefs that shape a study.

Epistemology can be defined as "a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know" (Crotty 2003, p.3). It is concerned with the origins and nature of knowing, the construction of knowledge, and the assumptions that are created around the nature of knowledge (Goodson 2004). In the context of research, epistemology emphasises the nature of human knowledge and comprehension, which can enable researchers to expand and widen their understanding in a specific research area (Kuyini 2017, p.26). Ontology, in contrast, is a branch of philosophy that examines how individuals interpret what represents a fact or reality (Solomon *et al*. 2018). It is essential in a paradigm as it shapes the researcher's perspectives on a research problem, and informs how it may be approached, explored, and resolved. Methodology is another key paradigm component, which Crotty (2003, p.30) defines as "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods". Accordingly, the methodology of a paradigm can be considered an umbrella term

used to refer to the research design, methods, and procedures that are followed in an investigation (Keeves 1997 cited in Kuyini 2017, p.28). Finally, axiology is concerned with the ethical issues that need to be considered when conducting research. It addresses concepts of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in research and ensures that ethical issues are carefully considered throughout the study (Kuyini 2017).

Having discussed the four key components that underpin the basic assumptions or beliefs of a paradigm, it is now necessary to explore some of the most commonly used paradigms in educational research. The dominant paradigm that guided early psychological and educational research was positivism, which is generally associated with other terms, such as post positivism and empirical science. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), positivism can be defined as "an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural science to the study of social reality and beyond" (p. 3). In simpler terms, positivism assumes that the social world can be studied as the natural world. This kind of paradigm is essentially concerned with explaining human behaviour, which contrasts with interpretivism, another prominent research paradigm which focuses on understanding human behaviour. Indeed, interpretivism implies understanding the world as it is, on the basis of individual subjective experiences. Dainty (2007) points out that these two paradigms have been at the core of a lasting debate. Indeed, positivism is often associated with quantitative research while interpretivism is linked with qualitative research (Dainty 2007). However, these views have been challenged by Guba and Lincoln (1994), who affirm that both qualitative and quantitative methods can be effectively used within any research paradigm.

Moreover, it has been argued that these two different methods should be viewed as complementary to each other rather than substitutes (Amaratunga & Baldry 2001). This perspective has given rise to a pragmatic paradigm, which is based on the idea that researchers should employ the methodological and/or philosophical approach that best suits the research problem in hand. Consequently, adopting a pragmatic approach when conducting research may be more appropriate and efficient, particularly in studies related to the field of teaching and learning, where reliance on a single methodology or research tool may produce confusing or vague data. Dörnyei (2007) supports the use of a pragmatic approach, noting that it enables

researchers to make more informed methodological decisions. Based on this discussion, the current study adopts a pragmatic research paradigm and employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods to ensure the production of better-quality data (Cohen *et a.l* 2018). Additionally, several researchers recommend the application of a triangulated approach in research studies, which integrates multiple methods to enhance both reliability and validity (Gilabert 2005; Jasso-Aguilar 2005; Kim 2006; Kinzley 2006). Following these recommendations, the next section provides a detailed account of the research methodology adopted in this study.

4.3 Research Methodology

To address the research questions of the present the researcher opted for a mixed methods research design (MMR). According to Cohen *et al.* (2018), MMR holds a "major place in research" (p.31), as it "constitutes an approach, a methodology and a view of design and methods" (p.31). In simpler terms, MMR integrates both qualitative and quantitative data within a single research study. Moreover, Christensen (2004) explains that MMR involves a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and goes beyond the traditional division between these two paradigms. Hence, by adopting this approach the researcher can draw upon the strengths of both approaches and diminish the limitations associated with a mono-methodological approach. This idea is reinforced by Johnson and Turner (2003), who maintain that the basic principle of MMR is the process of blending and incorporating strategies, methods, and approaches through understanding their interrelated strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses. Accordingly, employing MMR provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative research. Furthermore, doing so may also provide a more significant and comprehensive understanding of the research problem at hand. As highlighted by Cohen *et al*. (2018), "a better understanding of research problems and questions" can be achieved by combining qualitative and quantitative approaches rather than relying on either one alone (p.32).

Additionally, MMR enables triangulation, which is viewed as an "important way to strengthen a study design" (Patton 2002, p. 187). In fact, triangulation may help researchers to identify aspects of a phenomenon more accurately through approaching it from different viewpoints using different methods and techniques. Despite its popularity and acceptance, MMR has faced criticism from some researchers, such as Bryman (2008), who argues that it is often insufficiently justified. However, this criticism can be challenged, given the multiple purposes for mixing methods identified in the literature, including triangulation, complementarity, development, expansion, and initiation (Green *et al.*1989). Given the study's focus on exploring lecturers' preferred teaching strategies in Algerian higher education, their understanding of CLT, and the challenges they encounter in ELT, MMR was deemed the most suitable approach for the current study, as it allows the researcher to meet a number of goals, such as addressing multiple research objectives simultaneously, collecting sufficient data, and providing reliable findings. To fully understand the relevance of these methodological choices, it is important to consider the context in which the study was conducted. Therefore, the following section provides an overview of the research setting and its relevance to this study.

4.4 Research Setting

The research setting refers to the specific environment where a study is conducted, including its physical, social, cultural or institutional dimensions (Creswell 2018). Defining and describing the research setting is essential for understanding participants' behaviours and responses, which are often shaped by their surroundings (Flick 2018). Additionally, a clear description of the setting provides essential context for interpreting the data and evaluating the applicability of the findings in other contexts (Maxwell 2013). In Algeria, the higher education system consists of 107 universities and other institutions spread across the country, with 17 located in the central region, 22 in the east, and 11 in the west (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research 2024). Within this network English is taught in a large number of institutions, including 12 English departments in the central region alone. The present study was conducted in three universities situated in the northern central part of the country, selected for both accessibility and diversity of institutional size. The three institutions represent a range of sizes and profiles

within the national landscape. One of them is among the largest and most established universities in the central region (UniRank 2024), with almost 3000 students enrolled in its English department (Université d'Alger 2, Université en chiffre n.d. p.9) and 97 English lecturers (Université d'Alger 2017). By contrast, a second institution is medium-sized employing around 40 English lecturers, while the third is smaller in scale, with fewer available staff. Although precise national statistics on the total number of English lecturers remain unavailable, the inclusion of institutions of varying sizes ensures that the sample reflects both metropolitan and smaller regional contexts, thereby enhancing the representativeness of the study.

The choice of the research setting is based on several considerations. First, the researcher's familiarity with the chosen context may facilitate logistical aspects of the study. Indeed, her existing knowledge of these institutions was expected to simplify obtaining institutional consent, gaining classroom access, finding suitable places to carry out the interviews, and securing teachers' participation. Chavez (2008), highlights that having insider experience, or an emic orientation can be a significant advantage in research, as it enables the researcher to build rapport with participants, access sensitive or implicit knowledge, and interpret data with a deeper contextual understanding. However, this perspective can also lead to potential biases, as familiarity with the sitting may influence objectivity. Second, upon completion of this research, the researcher intends to return to teach in this context, thus, carrying out research there may provide her with valuable insights into the teaching and learning of English in Algeria, which may help her to refine her teaching practices and contribute effectively to the field. Finally, while the researcher could have chosen only one university as a study setting, such as her previous university, for convenience, she expanded the scope to include two additional universities for greater generalizability. This also ensures that the findings are not limited to a single institution, which enhances their relevance and applicability to similar contexts. The following section outlines the sampling procedures and participant selection criteria.

4.5 Sampling Procedure and Participants

In research, the term sample refers to a subset or proportion of a larger group known as the population; it is a smaller, representative version of the population from which it is drawn (Fink 2003, p.1). In other words, a sample is a specific group of individuals selected by the researcher to represent a larger population, which is the group that the researcher wants to study and draw conclusions about. In most cases, it is unpractical, time-consuming, and costly to research a whole population. Dörnyei (2003, p.71) emphasises that "investigating the whole population is not necessary and would in fact be a waste of resources". He further explains that selecting an appropriate sample can help the researchers to save considerable time, cost, and effort. Moreover, it is claimed that identifying a suitable sample (one that is representative of the entire population), can result in more accurate findings (Dörnyei & Tatsuya 2009, p.60). In this regard, sampling selection is considered as an essential element of research (Cohen 2018, p. 202).

It is worth noting that selecting a suitable sample requires the use of pre-defined selection methods, which are commonly referred to as sampling procedures. There are two basic types of sampling procedures, namely, probability and non-probability sampling. The former includes everyone in the chosen population and involves random selection, which implies that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected (Cohen 2018, p.214). Accordingly, there is no room for bias in probability sampling, which entails the possibility of creating a sample that is truly representative of the population. This means that generalizability in terms of results can be achieved in this type of sampling (Merriam 2009, p.77). In contrast, non-probability sampling involves non-random selection, which implies that each member of the chosen population does not have an equal chance of being included in the sample population (Cohen 2018). In fact, in non-probability sampling individuals are selected based on convenience or other criteria, which introduces a high risk of bias and limits the ability to generalize results with confidence (Merriam 2009). However, despite its limitations, non-probability sampling can be effective when the research objective is not to answer frequency questions but to gain insights about complex issues (Honigman 1982 cited in Merriam 2009,

p.61). Besides, even though this method of sampling may lack representativeness, it is often easier and more cost-effective (Cohen 2018, p.217), compared to probability sampling which is considered as a "painstaking and costly process" (Dörnyei 2003, p.71).

Selecting a suitable sampling strategy necessitates the consideration of several factors. As Cohen *et al*. assert:

> The selection of a sampling strategy must be governed by the criterion of suitability. The choice of which strategy to adopt must be mindful of the purposes of the research, the timescales and constraints on the research, the research design, the methods of data collection and the methodology of the research.
>
> (Cohen *et al*. 2011, p. 163)

The consideration of the above-mentioned factors has led the researcher of the present study to opt for a mix of non-probability sampling strategies: purposeful sampling, convenience sampling, and snowball sampling. These methods have been selected because the current study aims at investigating a complex issue (Algerian lecturers' perspectives and teaching practices), rather than simply answering frequency-based questions.

Given the size of the Algerian higher education system, which comprises 107 universities nationwide (see section 4.4), and multiple English departments in each region, the population of Algerian English lecturers can be considered both large and geographically dispersed. Since each department typically employs several dozen teachers, the overall number of lecturers across the country is likely to run into the hundreds, although no official figures are available. For this reason, it was neither practical nor feasible to include all members, or even a large sample, in the present study. This challenge was compounded by the wide geographical spread of universities across Algeria (the largest country in Africa), which combined with the reliance on a face-to-face data collection mode, made it impossible to expand the research setting further.

Consequently, participants were selected on the basis of specific criteria, including geographical proximity, accessibility, availability, educational level and current teaching position (e.g., regular or substitute teachers). This approach enabled the researcher to select a relatively homogenous sample that is as representative of the population as possible. In relation to participant profile, the study focused on Algerian English lecturers who have taught or are currently teaching English language classes in departments of English. This choice was deliberate, as lecturers in these departments are typically expected to have high educational qualifications and proficiency in English. Such characteristics may reduce factors that have been found in previous research to affect English language teaching (Chang and Suparmi 2020; Alharibi 2022; Sourani *et al.* 2023; Nam 2023). This ensured that the data collected would be both informative and relevant to the research questions. Moreover, substitute or part time lecturers are excluded from this study, as they are more susceptible to withdraw their participation at any time, which could compromise the reliability of the research.

Having determined the selection criteria and participant profile, it was then necessary to determine its size. In research, sample size is a term used to refer to the number of individuals included in a research study. Although this term is quite easy to understand, determining how large a sample should be is rather an ambiguous matter. Indeed, there are no universal rules for determining the ideal size of a sample (Dörnyei 2003), because the number of individuals that should be included in a research project depends on several factors, such as the research purpose, questions, design, and the kind(s) of sample being used (Merriam 2009; Cohen 2018). However, there are some guidelines in the literature that can help researchers to make the appropriate choice. For example, it is claimed that in quantitative research (using probability sampling) a sample should include at least 30 people if the researcher plans to use statistical analysis on their data (Dörnyei 2003, p.72; Dörnyei and Tagushi 2009; Cohen 2018). Nevertheless, Hatch and Lazaraton (1991 cited in Dörnyei 2003, p.74) maintain that this is not an absolute rule. Creswell (1994, p.120) recommends the use of a sample size formula for calculating the right sample size within quantitative research. Besides, researchers can also use online sample size calculators for calculating the sample size that suits their research. As regards qualitative research (using non-probability sampling), it is claimed that within this type

of research there is no correct number of participants. Indeed, Lincoln and Guba (1985 cited in Merriam 2009, p.64) suggest that in qualitative research, researchers should continue to develop their sample until a point of saturation or redundancy i.e., when the newly collected data does not generate any significant new insights about the issue being examined. However, doing so can be time consuming. An alternative to this recommendation is specifying a minimum sample size that will be adjusted during the research (Paton 2002, p. 246).

As far as mixed methods research is concerned, all the previously mentioned guidelines apply to it. Consequently, the researcher of this study, which followed a mixed methods approach, drew upon these principles to determine the sample size. Given the complexity of MMR the researcher concluded that it was not feasible to define a precise sample size. Instead, a minimum sample size was suggested, which was modified during the research due to the withdrawal of several participants. Specifically, the researcher set a minimum of 60 participants for the survey, and at least 10 respondents for the interviews, depending on how many survey participants agreed to be interviewed. Likewise, the number of classroom observations depended on the number of participants who would allow the researcher to observe their classes. According to Cohen *et al*. (2018, p. 555) "there is no hard and fast rule" regarding the amount of observation required in a study. The ideal would be doing observation until reaching theoretical saturation (Adler and Adler 1994, p. 380), where no new insights or data emerge. Having defined the sample type and tentative sizes for the current study, the next step is to provide a more detailed description of the research participants.

Ideally, the researcher would have studied the entire population. However, due to time constraints and participants' availability, this was neither feasible nor practical. Consequently, a sample was selected from the targeted population (see the previous section). The targeted population for this study consisted of Algerian English lecturers who had taught or were teaching language classes, such as reading and writing, and listening and speaking in 3 different universities in the central region of the country. A total of 46 participants were included in the study, with 33 females, 14 males, and 3 participants who did not disclose their gender. This diversity is worth highlighting, as it shows that the research sample was not gender-segregated, which is often considered a limitation in research conducted within certain Arab countries

(Almohideb 2019; Alqahtani 2020; Al-Jehani 2023). In addition, the participants were fairly evenly distributed across the three universities, with 19 drawn from the largest institution and 16 and 11 from the two smaller ones.

Regarding their qualifications, participants were asked a closed question that listed specific options (Ma/Magistere in Applied Linguistics, Ma/Magistere in Literature and Civilization, PhD in Applied Linguistics, PhD in Literature and Civilization), with the possibility of selecting "Other" if their degree did not fit these categories. Most of the participants held advanced degrees in Literature and Civilization or Applied Linguistics (see Figure 4.1). This distribution of specializations among the participants may influence their perspectives and practices, especially their understanding and interpretation of key concepts.

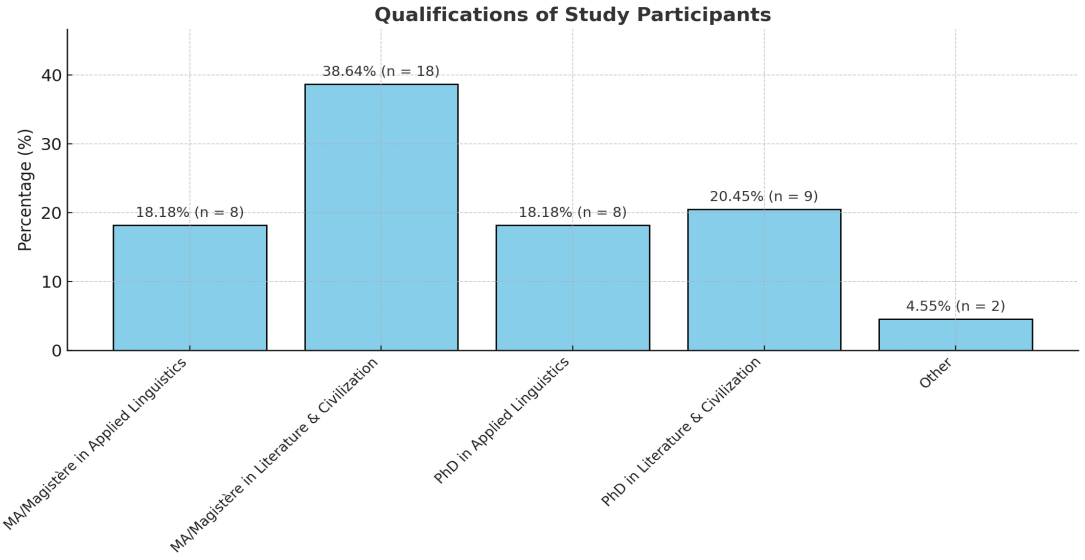


Figure 4.1 Participants' academic background and areas of specialization

As shown in Figure 4.1, an important number of lecturers, 39% hold an MA or Magistere in Literature and Civilization, followed by 20% with a Ph.D in the same field. This suggests that the majority of the participants are not specialized in Applied Linguistics, which may affect their understanding and interpretation of certain concepts, such as CLT, an approach deeply rooted in Applied Linguistics. Indeed, participants with a pedagogical background in Literature and Civilization may have limited exposure to concepts and principles specific to the field of

Applied Linguistics. Nonetheless, the high level of education and qualifications among the participants ensures they are competent educators with advanced English proficiency. This focus on well-qualified participants may eliminate one of the obstacles that has been identified in previous research to impact effective English language teaching (Chang and Suparmi 2020; Alharibi 2022; Sourani *et al.* 2023; Nam 2023). Moreover, this careful selection enhances the credibility of the findings. Having established the sampling procedures and participant selection, it is now necessary to address the ethical considerations that guided this research.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

The term ethics can be broadly defined as "the moral principles, guiding conducts, which are held by a group or even a profession" (Willington 2015, Para.1). In the context of research, ethics is understood as "a matter of sensitivity to the rights of others." (Cohen *et al*. 2017, P.51). They are an integral part of the research process, which implies that they should be considered and followed when conducting research. Indeed, researchers need to adhere to ethical principles to protect the rights and dignity of their research participants. Literature on ethics in research provides a set of agreed upon ethical guidelines that the researcher needs to pay attention to before and while carrying out research; these include voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, the right to withdraw, and transparent communication of results (Bryman 2016; Cohen *et al*. 2017). Failure to comply with one of these ethical guidelines can result in serious consequences, such as the rejection of the research. The researcher of the current study has carefully adhered to these principles throughout the research process. Ethical approval was first obtained from the AHSS Research Ethics Committee in 2021 (see Appendix A) to ensure that the research aligned with established ethical standards. Following this, institutional consent was sought from the universities where the study was conducted.

Consent was also obtained from English lecturers, who were provided with detailed explanations of the study's aims and nature, to ensure that they fully understand what their participation entailed (Creswell and Creswell 2018). To further protect participants' rights, they were informed of their ability to withdraw from the study without consequences up to 14 days

after data collection (see Appendix A). Confidentiality was further ensured by securely storing all collected data and limiting access to it. Digital data, such as interview recordings were password-protected, while physical copies were kept in a locked cabinet accessible only to the researcher. To enhance the validity and reliability of the collected data, the researcher recorded all interviews (with participants' consent) offered the participants the opportunity to review and check their interview transcripts before data analysis. This ensured that the data accurately reflected their answers. This practice aligns with the principles of transparency and participant verification which strengthens the accuracy of the data and reinforces participants' trust in the research process (Cohen et.al 2017). By adhering to these ethical principles, the researcher ensured that the study met the standards set by ethical guidelines in social science research. With these considerations in place the next step was to select and implement appropriate data collection tools to gather reliable and meaningful insights. The following section provides an overview of these tools and their role in the study.

4.7 Data Collection Tools

To minimize research bias and enhance the reliability of the findings, the researcher relied on methodological triangulation, which is widely recognized as a strategy to improve the validity and credibility of the research outcomes (Patton 2002; Cohen *et al*. 2018). This strategy involves using multiple research tools to study a phenomenon from different perspectives. In this study the researcher relied on self-completed questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and non-participant observation. The rationale for selecting these instruments and their specific characteristics are discussed in detail below.

Questionnaire

Questionnaires are tools for collecting data about specific issues. They are among the most popular instruments in social science research studies (Burton 2000). There is an abundance of advantages that make a questionnaire a very practical and attractive tool for researchers. Besides being cost and time effective, questionnaires are very flexible and versatile, which implies that they can be used successfully with different people in different situations for researching different topics (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2010, p.6). This self-report instrument is also

lauded for eliciting different kinds of data about the respondents, such as their knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and demographic characteristics (Borg 2009; Dörnyei and Taguchi 2010). As with all research tools, questionnaires do have some limitations, such as missing data and non-response (Dale 2006; Cohen *et al.* 2017). However, prudent planning and careful piloting can help researchers to counter many of the weaknesses of this tool. Given all these arguments, using a questionnaire in this study is deemed appropriate, as it helped the researcher to gain some overall insights into the views of a wide sample of the target population on different areas in a relatively short period of time (3-4 months). Another key reason for using a questionnaire in this study is that the data collected from this tool can help to refine complementary tools (interviews and classroom observation) and shed light on the data they generate. The connection between the research questions and the questionnaire is discussed in the following paragraph.

To design a sound questionnaire, the researcher of the present study relied on the work of Dörnyei (2003), Gilham (2008), Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010), and Cohen (2017). She opted for a self-completed written questionnaire which includes mainly closed questions. This choice has clear advantages, as closed questions are quick to complete and easy to code and analyse (Cohen 2018). Yet, they do not allow room for further discussion or interpretation, which may frustrate the respondents. Besides, by providing possible responses, this type of question can lead to biased data. For these reasons, the researcher judged it necessary to include some open-ended questions. Cohen (2018, p. 475) maintains that this type of question allows respondents to provide exhaustive and rich responses.

The researcher framed the questionnaire to include four sections (see Appendix B), each corresponding to the key aspects of the study: (1) lecturers' preferred classroom practices in Algerian higher education (2) lecturers' understanding of CLT (3) the main challenges for ELT in the chosen context and (4) teachers' demographic information (to provide contextual background). These parts derive from the overall aim of the questionnaire, i.e., taking a general look at the views that Algerian English lecturers hold on English language teaching within English departments; their views on the potential use of CLT in the chosen context; and gaining an overall insight into the obstacles they consider as impeding effective ELT in Algerian

universities.

The first section of the questionnaire included four questions designed to gain insights into the participants' preferred teaching techniques. The first was a 6-point Likert scale item which asked "*How often do you use the following activities in your English language classes?" (1=Always, 2= Often, 3= sometimes, 4= Rarely, 5= Almost Never, 6= Never).* This question aimed to determine the frequency with which teachers employed a range of classroom activities such as role play, oral presentation, and problem-solving activities. This type of rating scale is very popular in educational research (Borg 2009, p.169), as it is simple to design and easy to read and complete by participants (Bertram 2007, p.7). Besides, as opposed to dichotomous questions (yes/no), Likert scales offer varieties of options which in turn may increase the probability of obtaining unbiased responses. However, because Likert scales do not allow respondents to elaborate on their choices (Nemoto and Beglar 2014, p.8), two open-ended questions were added to this section to give participants the opportunity to express their opinions more openly. Indeed, the second question asked: "*If you use any other activities that do not appear in the table above, please mention them here".* Its purpose was to allow respondents to add techniques not captured by the fixed list. In addition, the third question asked: "*In your opinion, how is English commonly taught within English departments in Algerian universities?",* aimed to elicit teachers' perspectives of the dominant pedagogical practices in their institutional context. This section concluded with a multiple-choice question: "*Do you think that your teaching practices are driven by (a) your own initiatives, (b) the university's policy, or (c) a mix of self- and policy-driven focus?".* This question was designed to identify the factors influencing teachers' practices.

The second section of the questionnaire included two questions designed to identify the challenges teachers face in ELT. The first was a 6-point Likert-scale item which asked: *"To what extent are the following challenges common within Algerian universities (in English departments)?"* (*1= Extremely common, 2= Very common, 3= Common, 4= Somewhat common, 5= Not sure, 6= Uncommon*). This question aimed to measure the extent to which these obstacles were perceived as widespread within Algerian higher education. In addition, an open-ended question was included to give respondents the opportunity to highlight additional

challenges that might not have been captured by the predetermined categories: *"If you have noticed any other obstacles to teaching English as a foreign language that do not appear in the list above, please mention them."*

The third section of the questionnaire included three questions that focused on teachers' views on CLT. The first was a 6-point Likert-scale item which asked: "*To what extent do you agree with the following statements?"* (*1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3= Partly agree, 4 = Not sure, 5= Disagree, 6= Strongly disagree*). This question aimed to capture teachers' overall understanding and evaluation of the principles of CLT. A further open-ended item was included: *"In your opinion, what are the three aspects of teaching that CLT emphasises the most?".* This question intended to encourage teachers to reflect on the perceived strengths or priorities of CLT. Finally, the section concluded with another open-ended item: *"In your opinion, what are the three aspects of teaching that CLT advises against?".* The purpose of this question was to elicit participants' views on the limitations or restrictions implied by the CLT approach. Taken together, the three questions in this section were designed to explore teachers' views and familiarity with CLT.

The last section of the questionnaire included 4 questions designed to gather background information about the participants. The scope of this section was deliberately limited to factors directly relevant to the study, namely, gender, educational qualifications, and professional status, as well as questions about teacher training and institutional strategies. This choice ensured that the background information collected was concise yet sufficient to situate

participants within the target population. The first question asked participants to indicate their gender. This was important for showing that the study was not gender-segregated, a factor often noted as a limitation in similar research conducted in Muslim contexts. The second question focused on teacher's qualifications and current position. Participants were asked to select their highest qualifications from the following options*: MA/Magistère in Applied Linguistics, MA/Magistère in Literature and Civilization, PhD in Applied Linguistics, PhD in Literature and Civilization, or Other (please specify)*. They were also asked to indicate their current teaching status (full-time, part-time, or substitute). The purpose of this question was to identify

the participants' academic background and employment conditions, which could shape their perspectives on ELT.

The third question was a close-ended question: "*Have you received any training in English language teaching".* Its aim was to establish whether participants had received formal preparation for their role. Finally, the section concluded with a question about institutional policies: "*Is there any policy or implicit strategy on teaching English within your department or institution?".* Participants who answered "*yes*" were invited to provide an example of commonly used teaching strategies in their departments. This question aimed to capture the extent to which participants were aware of explicit or implicit strategies guiding ELT within the chosen context. This section was followed by a note inviting respondents to participate in follow-up research. This note enabled the researcher to identify potential interview and observation participants.

Another important detail to mention in this section is the language of the questionnaire. Indeed, questionnaire data are meaningless if the language of the questionnaire is not understood by respondents. For this reason, questions should be worded carefully in a survey, i.e., they should be simple and straightforward so that everybody can understand them (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2010). In this regard, the researcher avoided jargon and used simple, clear language and syntax to construct comprehensible questions. It is worth mentioning that the researcher decided to formulate the survey questions in English even though she shares the same mother tongue(s) of the respondents.

This decision was made because Algerians' mother tongue consists of a mixture of languages and does not have a written version. In fact, formulating questions in Algerian Arabic (Al Daridja) requires transcription which may confuse the respondents. Besides, 'Al Daridja' is never used in formal educational settings. It is rather standard Arabic that is used. It is true that the vast majority of Algerians master standard Arabic; however, it is also true that many Algerian teachers, especially the most experienced ones went to a French school where French was the sole medium of instruction. This implies that they may face some difficulties when reading and writing in standard Arabic. Another reason for not formulating questions in Arabic

is that translation is time consuming. Moreover, questionnaire translation may create ambiguity and reduce the quality of data. Furthermore, the researcher's decision about the questionnaire's language was highly influenced by the fact that the respondents are English lecturers who have studied the topic being discussed in English. The precise details of the questionnaire piloting and administration procedure are discussed further in section 4.8. While the questionnaire was used to provide broad insights into lecturers' preferred teaching strategies, their understanding of CLT, and the challenges they face, it was essential to complement this tool with semi-structured interviews to obtain more in-depth data, as outlined in the following section.

Interviews

Richards (2003) maintains that interviews are an effective way of obtaining in-depth data about teachers' feelings, beliefs, and attitudes. Similarly, Prang (2000) posits that interviews can be considered as an effective method for gathering qualitative data from a number of participants and enhancing the interpretation of qualitative results. Additionally, interviews offer greater flexibility and tend to have a higher response rate compared to other tools (Cohen *et al.* 2011). Given these advantages, interviews were selected in this study to gain in-depth and detailed information about Algerian lecturers' views on ELT in the chosen context, their understanding of CLT, and the challenges they perceive as obstacles to effective language teaching. It is important to mention that the type of interview that was applied in this research is semi-structured interviews, as they are viewed as a suitable method for providing reliable and comparable qualitative data. Furthermore, the information provided from semi-structured interviews provides not just answers, but the reasons for the answers (Cohen *et al*. 2017). Additionally, semi-structured interviews are useful for generating informative insights, as they mainly rely on open-ended questions (Anderson and Burns 1989 cited in Borg 2009, p. 204). Open-ended questions allow the researcher to probe further, and to provide clarifications for participants if needed (Cohen *et al.* 2018, p.513), which may result in minimizing vague and irrelevant responses. Moreover, this type of questions promotes cooperation and helps to build rapport (Cohen *et al.* 2018). These characteristics make interviews particularly useful in the field of social sciences, especially, in the study of language teacher cognition (Borg 2009, p.9).

To develop an effective interview, the researcher translated the research aims into a set of questions which sought to orient the interviewees to talk about the issues under study. The questions were grouped into descriptive and thematic items to provide both contextual background and insights into the main research objectives. Only 2 probes are included in the interview (e.g., *are you provided with the facilities you mentioned in your EFL classes? If CLT is not commonly used why do you think it is the case?*), as too many probes may generate biases (Fowler 2009, p.139). Indeed, Wellington (2015) posits that the overuse of probes or prompts may engender bias and resentment.

The first part of the interview included 6 descriptive questions aimed at contextualizing the data. Participants were asked: 1) *How many hours do you teach per week?* 2) *What is the average size of the language classes you are teaching/used to teach? 3) What are the characteristics of a typical English class in your teaching context?* 4) *Do you rely on specific resources to teach English?* 5) *In your opinion what are the facilities needed to teach an L2 in an EFL context?* 6) *Who makes the final decisions in terms of the syllabus of the language courses you are handling? Do you have some discretion in terms of the content?* These initial questions provided contextual background regarding workload, class size, resources, and syllabus design, while also pointing to structural challenges such as time constraints, large classes, and limited facilities.

The second part of the interview focused on teachers' views on ELT and their preferred practices. It included the following questions: *7) While teaching English what skills or subskills do you place more emphasis on? 8) What do you think is the main aim of teaching English as a foreign language? 9) Could you please tell me what is your approach to foreign language teaching and why? 10) In your view what are the best methods for L2 teaching? Why?* These questions sought to explore teachers' pedagogical orientations, their priorities in terms of skills development, and their broader understanding of the purpose of ELT. They also sought to determine whether there was a dominant or agreed-upon way of teaching English in Algerian universities, and whether such an approach operated explicitly through institutional policies or implicitly through common practices.

The third part of the interview addressed teachers' familiarity with and views on CLT. The questions were asked as follows: *11) (If not elicited by the preceding question) are you familiar with communicative language teaching/ the communicative approach (CA)?12) What do you think are the key features of CLT? 13) To what extent do you think that using CLT principles is important for language instruction? Why? 14) To what extent do you think that CLT principles are used in practice in an Algerian third level context (emphasise English departments).* These questions were intended to explore teachers' understanding of CLT, their evaluation of its importance, and the extent to which they believed it was implemented in their institutional context. Taken together, the interview questions were designed to provide a detailed picture of participants' teaching experiences, their approach to ELT, their familiarity with CLT, and the challenges they face in implementing communicative principles within Algerian higher education.

Beyond the thematic focus of the questions, careful consideration was paid to the wording and language of interaction to ensure clarity and reliability of responses. In fact, the questions were worded in plain and simple language to minimize misunderstanding, and English was chosen as the main language of interaction since it is the language of the interviewees' profession and academic training. However, participants were given the option to use another language if they preferred. In addition, and as noted earlier, translation could generate inconsistencies which may lead to differences in meaning, which in turn may affect the quality of the collected data. However, it is important to highlight that interviewees were given the option to choose the language they prefer to be interviewed in. Further details about the choice of the language of interaction in the interview are provided below.

The language chosen for research interviewing can have a significant impact on the quality of the interview data (Cortazzi *et a*l. 2011). As highlighted by Ohta and Prior:

> Language choice and language ideologies, far from being peripheral concerns or merely topical elements, can have critical implications for how an L2 research interview progresses and how data get generated.

cited in Roulston 2019, p. 144

Indeed, it is argued that the language in which an interview is conducted can affect interviewees' responses to a certain extent (Lee 2001, p.3), and have significant consequences for the quality of the collected data (Cortazzi *et al*. 2011, p. 506). In this regard, the choice of the interview language should not be done arbitrarily. Some researchers (Coratzzi *et al.* 2011) suggest that the language of interaction in interviews should be chosen by the interviewees, as they know better than anyone else which language allows them to express themselves clearly. It is generally assumed that it is easier to express oneself in one's native language, especially when discussing complex issues (Belz 2002). Further, Coratzzi *et al*. (2011), state that conducting interviews in participants' first language leads to more expressive communication and generates more accurate information. Similarly, Liu (2008) and Zhang (2008) posit that interviewees often welcome the use of their mother tongue. However, a number of studies have shown that some participants prefer to express themselves in their second language (Shen 2001; Skyrme 2007; Miller 2010) mainly because it is the language of their profession, or the language in which they have studied the topic being discussed. Hence, it is of utmost importance to give respondents the possibility to choose the language in which they want to express themselves. With these considerations in mind, the participants of the current study were allowed to choose the language they preferred to be interviewed in. The precise details of the interview piloting and conduction are discussed further in section 4.8. While the questionnaire and interviews were used to provide insights into lecturers reported teaching practices, their understanding of CLT, and the challenges they face in their teaching context, classroom observation was used to obtain accurate firsthand information about the aforementioned aspects.

Classroom observation

To explore participants' classroom practices, it is necessary to conduct classroom observation. As Koziol and Burns (1986) suggest, self-reported data are often inaccurate or incomplete due to participants' biases or misinterpretation of their actions. Classroom observation, therefore, serves as a more reliable method to obtain accurate and explicit information about how people behave (Briggs and Coleman 2007; Cohen *et al*. 2011). In fact, classroom observation is believed to be an accurate systematic tool, which enables the researchers to understand and capture what is actually happening in the classroom, which in turn may bring less predictable and thus bring more reliable information to light (Briggs and Coleman 2007; Cohen *et al*. 2011). It is because of such characteristics that classroom observation was chosen as a major research tool within this study (see Appendix 6). In addition to that, the researcher of the current study believes the data collected from the interviews and questionnaires would need to be enhanced by data collected through classroom observation to increase the overall reliability and validity of the findings through triangulation.

The rationale for using classroom observation in this study is grounded in the need to gain an in-depth understanding of Algerian English lecturers' teaching practices, their alignment with CLT principles, and the challenges they encounter. As highlighted earlier, unlike self-reported data, which may be influenced by subjectivity, classroom observation offers firsthand data, which allows researchers to analyze teaching practices in their natural context (Cohen *et al* 2018)**.** This method is suitable for achieving the study's aim of exploring the participants' teaching practices and the extent to which they align with their views on CLT principles. The observation grid employed in this study was carefully designed by the researcher who relied on relevant literature on teaching practices, common obstacles in EFL contexts, and CLT principles (Gorsuch 2001; Karim 2004; Ahmad and Rao 2013; Rahman 2013; Hamid 2016; Vasilik 2017). The grid is divided into three main sections (see Appendix D). The first section focuses on general teaching practices, such as teaching materials, instructional activities, and interaction patterns used. This section captures key elements of everyday classroom practices that inform broader pedagogical strategies. It is noteworthy that teaching challenges are also featured in this section. The second section examines features of CLT, including the promotion

of interaction, emphasis on the four basic skills, and the use of authentic materials. This focus allowed the researcher to determine the extent to which lecturers incorporate communicative strategies into their teaching. The final section allows for general comments to ensure flexibility in capturing unexpected observations that may not fit into predefined categories. Additionally, the observation grid includes a table to report essential contextual information, such as the number of the students present during each observation, the lesson's length, the name of the university, the room number, and the time and date of the observation. The researcher included these elements to ensure that the collected data is well-documented and effectively contextualized, which enabled a richer interpretation of the data. For instance, student numbers is an important detail for understanding classroom dynamics and the potential impact of class size on teaching practices, a factor often cited as a significant challenge in EFL contexts. The precise details of the observation piloting and conduction are discussed further in the next section. Having discussed the research tools and their design it is now necessary to examine the data collection process in detail.

4.8 Data Collection

To ensure a structured and effective data collection process, this study followed two key stages: piloting and main data collection. The piloting phase aimed at refining the research instruments and ensuring their clarity and reliability before their implementation. This implied testing the questionnaire and interview questions with a small group of participants to identify potential ambiguities and make necessary adjustments. While the classroom observation grid was not piloted, its design was informed by previous research to ensure its validity (Alkhayyat 2009; Almohanna (2010); Akkas and Coker 2016; ANguyen 2016; Hussein 2018; Almohideb 2019; Adem and Berkessa 2022). During this stage the questionnaires were distributed via email (see section 4.8.1). Following the piloting stage, the main data collection was conducted in two phases. The first phase took place from April to June 2022, while the second phase occurred from October to December 2022. Both phases incorporated the use of questionnaires and interviews, while classroom observations were included in the second phase, as time constraints prevented their inclusion earlier. It is worth adding that in both phases the data collection

process began with the distribution of the questionnaire (personal mode of administration), as this tool also served as a recruitment tool, that helped to identify participants willing to participate in follow-up interviews and classroom observations. The following sub-sections provide a detailed description of the piloting process, and the procedures followed during data collection.

4.8.1 Pilot Study

In this section, the researcher provides a detailed account of the pilot study conducted prior to the main research, and highlights the amendments made based on the pilot's findings for the main study to improve the general design of the main study. This ensures that the instruments used were well designed to effectively address the research aims. Additionally, the section outlines the data collection procedures employed for each research instrument, including questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. These procedures are described in detail to show how the researcher gathered the data to ensure its reliability and validity, while also addressing potential challenges encountered during the data collection process.

A pilot study is a small version of a full-scale study (Teijlingen and Hundley 2002, introduction, para.1), which is designed to test diverse aspects of the methods planned for a larger investigation (Lowe 2019, p.117). The central aim of a pilot study is to increase the likelihood of success in the main study (Teijlingen and Hundley 2002, introduction, para. 1), through providing researchers with adequate knowledge about the methods proposed. Indeed, a well-designed pilot study may allow researchers to develop and assess research protocols, data collection tools, sample recruitment procedures, and many other research techniques (Teijlingen and Hundley 2002, para.1), which in turn may prevent the occurrence of serious problems that may result in the failure of the main research project. In the words of Teijlingen and Hundley:

> [...] conducting a pilot study might give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated.
>
> (2002, para.1)

Along the same lines of thought, De Vaus (1993, p.54) urges researchers to conduct a pilot study, and warns them about the risks of proceeding without one. However, it is worth mentioning that even if pilot studies are of great value, they do have some limitations. According to Teijlingen and Hundley (2002, para.1), a pilot study can lead to "inaccurate predictions and assumptions on the basis of pilot data", and it is also time consuming without guaranteeing the success of a large-scale study (ibid). Nonetheless, these shortcomings can be overcome through careful planning and execution. It is thus very clear that conducting a pilot study is an essential step before launching a large-scale study. Having discussed the meaning and value of piloting, it is now necessary to tackle the pilot study of the current research.

The pilot study design

The researcher of the present study designed a pilot study to try out the research protocols, instruments (questionnaire, interview, classroom observation), and procedures that she intended to use. Doing so allowed her to anticipate the strengths and weaknesses behind the planned study. The researcher launched the pilot study at the end of January 2022, approximately two months before the beginning of the data collection process. The first step of the piloting process consisted of contacting potential participants via email. These were selected on the basis of their similarity with the participants of the main study. Their degree level, the nature of modules they are currently teaching, and their teaching location were the participation criteria taken into account. The selection also considered the participants' availability. The researcher managed to find and contact 23 respondents (9 lecturers and 14 PhD students, all of whom had had either taught or were teaching English language classes in the chosen context). Out of 23 participants, 20 volunteered to take part in the pilot study. The recruitment phase was followed by the questionnaire distribution phase. Within this phase all participants received an information sheet which describes the research aims and what is required from them; a consent form which provides detailed information about the research and outlines what consent to participate will involve; and a semi-structured self-completed questionnaire. It is worth noting that all respondents received the above-mentioned documents via email (within the same week) and were asked to complete the questionnaire within a period that did not exceed a week. Out of 20 participants, 2 completed the questionnaire within the requested period. Therefore, the

remaining participants were sent a follow-up email accompanied by a further copy of the questionnaire to remind them of the importance of the study and the value of their participation. The reminder email also highlighted the necessity of completing the questionnaire within the requested period, as the researcher was restricted by time. Among the remaining participants, 16 replied to the researcher after a period that exceeded 10 days.

As soon as the questionnaires were collected, the researcher started contacting the participants who agreed to participate in the interview. Out of 16 participants, 11 volunteered to do an interview. Nonetheless, 3 of them did not mention their contact address and were thus not contacted by the researcher. The remaining 8 respondents were contacted by the researcher via email. However, only three participants could do the interview within the period suggested by the researcher (the first/ second week of February). Indeed, the participants stated that they were very busy with their research and other academic obligations. Yet, they promised to get back to the researcher in their free time. The interviews were conducted online (via teams and zoom) and lasted between 20- 65 minutes. The interviewees allowed the researcher to audio but not video record their interviews. That is why the researcher relied on her phone (iPhone 7) to record the interviews and her laptop as a backup. The interviews were conducted in English though the researcher did offer the participants the possibility to use their mother tongue(s) if preferred. The following subsection deals with the results of the pilot study.

The pilot study results

Conducting a pilot study drew the researcher's attention towards a set of problems within the research tools. Indeed, pre-testing the questionnaire allowed the researcher to examine the clarity and answerability of each question and to check the time taken to complete the questionnaire (Cohen 2018, p. 496). The piloting of the questionnaire revealed that the fourth question in section one, "*In your opinion what are the main aspects that best describe the ongoing reality of EFL teaching in most Algerian universities?*", should be rephrased. Indeed, this question was not answered by 4 participants. Besides, 5 participants contacted the researcher via email and asked her to explain/rephrase the question for them as they did not understand what they were expected to answer. The researcher rephrased this question as

follows, "*In your opinion, how is English commonly taught within English departments, in Algerian universities?*". According to De Vaus (2013, p.116), non-response can be due to many reasons, such as lack of clarity, intrusiveness, and the question's degree of difficulty. For these reasons question 4 was rephrased as mentioned above. Furthermore, within the same section, 2 participants asked the researcher to give them an example of problem-solving activities (mentioned in the Likert scale) to check if their understanding of this kind of activity was in line with the researcher's definition of problem-solving activities. To answer the respondents' request, the researcher gave the following examples of problem-solving activities: *brainstorming and crossword puzzle*. These two examples were later added in the questionnaire. The researcher also deemed it necessary to add an example of information gap activities to avoid similar issues in the main study. She used the following example: *completing texts/stories* to allow the respondents to better understand this type of activity.

Furthermore, 5 participants provided answers to the open-ended question in section 2, "*If you have noticed any other obstacles to teaching English as a foreign language that do not appear in the list above, please mention them here"*, that were similar to the ones provided in the Likert scale; *"low self-esteem", "lack of motivation", "lack of confidence", "lack of teaching materials", "students use of L1"*and *"ambiguous educational system"* (question 1). Even though the wording differs in some cases, the meaning remains the same. The researcher thought that this issue may be due to a lack of focus and thus decided that these answers will not be taken into account. This implies that it was not necessary to amend this section as all the teaching activities that were provided in the Likert scale were clear. Furthermore, in the third section of the questionnaire, Question 3 "*In your opinion, what are the three aspects of teaching that CLT advises against?",* was not answered by four participants. This is probably because this question is more challenging than the previous ones, as it requires a certain amount of theoretical knowledge about CLT. The last section of the questionnaire seemed clear, as it was fully answered by the respondents. However, the researcher thought that it was important to add the following open-ended question "*If you have ticked yes, can you please give an example of the most commonly used teaching strategies in your department?",* after Question 4 "*Is there any policy or implicit strategy on teaching English within your department/*

institution?". Indeed, doing so provided the researcher with insights on the most frequently adopted language teaching strategies in Algerian universities.

As far as the interview questions are concerned, they seemed to be clear as the interviewees did not show any sign of confusion, even if they stated before the beginning of the recording that their limited teaching experience may not allow them to provide insightful information about English language teaching in Algerian universities. However, the researcher noticed that the order of question 13 - "*Who makes the final decisions in terms of the syllabus of the language courses you are handling? Do you have some discretion in terms of the content?"* - should be changed to keep the conversation flowing. In fact, this question should be placed at the beginning instead of the end of the interview, as it focuses on the factual aspects of the respondents' teaching circumstances/environment. Hence, question 13, which was initially placed before the last question was moved to the beginning of the interview (before question 6: "*While teaching English what skills or subskills do you place more emphasis on?")*. Moreover, out of 3 interviewees, 2 gave similar answers to question 7 - *"Could you please tell me what is your approach to foreign language teaching and why?"* - and Q.8 - *"What do you think is the main aim of teaching English as a foreign language?".* This may be due to the difficulty of question 7, as respondents may have misunderstood it. It might also be due to the fact that one's belief about the aim of teaching English overlaps with his/her approach to foreign language teaching. To address this issue, the researcher reversed the order of these questions to see if her understanding of this issue is correct. Moreover, the researcher thought that it is more logical to ask easy questions before challenging questions (question 8 is relatively straightforward and easy compared to question 7). It is worth adding that because the researcher did only three interviews for the pilot study there might have been additional issues that needed to be addressed. It was, therefore, essential to do more interviews to appropriately refine the interview questions. For these reasons, the researcher conducted two additional interviews after introducing the above-mentioned changes. The researcher felt that the interviews went well and that the introduced amendments were effective, as the respondents gave clearer answers to questions 8 - *"What do you think is the main aim of teaching English as a foreign language?"* and 9 (because the order of question 13 was changed, the order of

questions 7 & 8 changed systematically to 8 & 9). The answers of the first respondent to these questions demonstrated that she understood the difference between her view on the main aim of teaching English (*to increase job opportunities inside and outside Algeria*) and her approach to foreign language teaching (*using a variety of methods and approaches to help students to use English properly*). Similarly, the second respondent provided accurate answers to questions 8 & 9. She mentioned that the aim of teaching English is developing students' communication skills, and that her approach to teaching English is a grammar-based approach. This respondent further mentioned that she is aware that her approach to foreign language teaching does not really allow students to be able to communicate effectively in English but felt that this approach works best in her teaching context.

4.8.2 Data collection procedures

Data collection is a key step in conducting research, as it enables researchers to answer research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes. Within this section, the researcher will provide a detailed account of how the main study was conducted.

Before commencing the data collection, the researcher had to gain access to the field of interest (sites, teachers). Therefore, the researcher contacted the head of the English departments of the chosen universities and clearly informed them early in her planning about her research aims and requested their permission to obtain access to the sample of the study. After a relatively long period (six months), the researcher obtained approval from one of the pre-selected English departments and could begin her data collection. The data collection process of the present study began in April 2022. That is approximately a month after the beginning of the second semester of the academic year in Algerian public universities. As mentioned in the previous sections, the researcher decided to collect data from the English departments of three Algerian universities which were chosen on the basis of geographic proximity (see section 4.4). However, it is worth mentioning that these universities are located in three different *wilayas* (counties). The estimated distance between the home of the researcher and these establishments varies between 15 and 51 Km, which affected the course of data collection in terms of time. Besides, distance also hindered the researcher from being available at the convenience of the

participants. Due to the relatively short duration of the second semester compared to the first one, the researcher divided the data collection process into two subsequent phases. The first phase lasted from April to June 2022 and consisted of distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews. Classroom observations were not feasible during this phase due to overlapping tests and exams, as well as disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which altered regular class schedules. The second phase which took place in the first semester (from early October to mid-December) of the following academic year, followed a similar approach in terms of data collection procedures. During this phase, the researcher continued distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews, while also initiating classroom observations. These phases are explained in further detail in the following sections.

Phase 1

As mentioned earlier, this phase (illustrated in Table 4.1) consisted of two stages: questionnaire distribution and conducting interviews.

Phase 1 (April-June)		
Questionnaire	Interview	Observation
-Used to gather different kinds of data about the participants (demographic characteristics, participants' preferred strategies of teaching, views on CLT, and challenges to ELT -Used to recruit potential interviewees, and seek permission for classroom observation	-Adopted to gain in-depth and detailed information about the participants' preferred strategies of teaching -Used to gain information about the participants' views on CLT -Used to gather valuable insights about the most common teaching challenges in the chosen context.	Not used in this phase due to issues related to: a) Timing: the first phase of the data collection process coincided with tests, exams, and grading periods. b) Covid 19: students did not have regular classes; they had classes each two or three weeks.

Table 4.1 Data collection procedure phase 1 (April- June)

Questionnaire distribution

Before the beginning of this stage, the researcher deemed it necessary to arrange a meeting with the potential gatekeepers (head of English departments of each university) and *les directeures/rices des études* (programme managers) to obtain information about the selected sample in terms of teaching position and schedule. Doing so allowed the researcher to easily find and reach the targeted population and to determine its approximate size (196 lecturers). Upon completion of this step, the researcher started the distribution of questionnaires along with information letters and consent forms (see Appendix A) to the designated sample in the third week of April 2022. However, it is worth mentioning that the administration of questionnaires in the chosen universities was not done simultaneously, as the researcher opted for a personal mode of administration; a one-to-one administration mode which implies delivering the survey by hand to the chosen person and collecting it when completed (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2009, p.67). The researcher opted for this form of administration because it allowed her to establish a rapport with the participants and promoted cooperation (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2009, pp.67-68), which in turn increased the chances for the questionnaires to be returned (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2009, pp.67-68).

A potential pitfall of self-administered questionnaires is that they might be time-consuming and costly, especially when dealing with dispersed samples (Cohen *et al.* 2017, p.502), as is the case with this research. In fact, the researcher found it very challenging to manage her time and reach all the potential participants. Therefore, she sought the help of the gatekeepers who asked their assistants to hand out a few questionnaires (around 10 questionnaires in each of the three chosen departments) to the lecturers that met the selection criteria. Of course, the researcher briefed these latter and provided them with clear written instructions about what they were expected to do in terms of the deadline for questionnaire completion (10 days as advised by Gilham 2008) and the targeted population. This alternative approach did not generate encouraging results and was therefore dropped. Indeed, the gatekeepers' assistants could recruit 13 participants only, and out of these participants, only 6 completed the questionnaires. In this regard, to save time the researcher tried another administration technique along with one-to-one administration. This technique consisted of distributing questionnaires electronically via email.

Nonetheless, this alternative was also not successful because the gatekeepers were unable to provide the researcher with a list of lecturers' emails due to ethical matters. The researcher tried this technique because it was suggested by some participants. However, even though 15 participants preferred this mode of administration only a few of them (6) completed the questionnaire.

The combination of the above-mentioned techniques of administration allowed the researcher to distribute 62 questionnaires, which implies that 62 lecturers from the three pre-selected English departments agreed to participate in the current research. However, out of these participants, only 25 completed and returned the questionnaires to the researcher. That is approximately 40% of the participants and 12% of the whole population. Late and non-respondents were sent follow-ups and polite reminders (via emails and or via the gatekeepers) which indicated the value of the respondents' participation 15 days after the distribution of the questionnaires (as suggested by Gillham 2008). A second reminder was sent to them after 10 days as the researcher did not get any response. According to Gillham (2008), reminders in survey research can increase the response rate by 30%. However, in this case, the response rate did not change. According to Cohen *et al.* (2017), low response rate may be due to several reasons, among them the timing of the survey. Indeed, the administration of questionnaires in this research coincided with test, examination, and grading periods. Another reason for the low rate of responses in the present research may be the withdrawal of 11 participants because of their misinterpretation of the consent form which they viewed as a kind of commitment, as reported by one of the gatekeepers. This incident reveals that there might be difference in terms of ethical procedures between Algeria and Ireland. To deal with this matter (response rate) the researcher decided to extend the time frame for data collection. Doing so implies distributing more questionnaires in the upcoming academic year as mentioned earlier. It is noteworthy that this first stage provided the researcher with a starting point and some indications of teachers' views on English language teaching in Algerian English departments and insights into their teaching approaches.

Conducting interviews

After the collection of questionnaires, the researcher started doing interviews with those who completed the questionnaires to obtain more in-depth information on Algerian teachers' views on English language teaching in English departments. Indeed, interviews allow researchers to understand why potential respondents frame their ideas in a given way (Hochschild 2009). Besides, this research tool can also be used to "cast further explanatory insight into survey data" (Cohen *et al*. 2017, p. 506). This second stage of the data collection process started in the first week of June 2022. Although 12 participants out of 28 participants agreed to be interviewed, only 7 of them replied to the researcher's invitation email. However, the researcher was only able to conduct three interviews because of time constraints and the interviewees' schedules. The interviews were conducted in the staff room of each department according to the interviewees' availability and convenience. Furthermore, all the participants were interviewed individually to ensure that they felt comfortable. The researcher began the interviews with a few reminders about her identity, her research focus, and information related to ethical matters (e.g., confidentiality, right of withdrawal). Following that, the respondents were asked background questions about their experience, teaching hours per week, and taught subjects. The researcher did this to create a connection with the participants to help them feel more comfortable and confident during the interview. It is worth reiterating that the researcher relied on a set of pre-defined questions to do the interviews (see Appendix C)

Another important point to mention is that all the interviews were in English: the language of the participants' profession and the language in which they have studied the topic being discussed (see section 4.7). However, it is important to mention that the interviewees were informed that they could rely on their mother tongue(s) to answer any question. Two interviews were audio-recorded with a cell phone (iPhone 7) and then transferred to a laptop. The remaining interview was not recorded as the interviewee did not want to be recorded despite the researcher's assurances of confidentiality. Therefore, the researcher relied on notetaking to report the respondent's answers. The interviews ranged from 52-60 minutes each. A possible reason for the length of the interviews was that the researcher asked the participants to clarify and or expand on their answers to make sure that the collected data are valid and reliable. Indeed, the researcher used some probing questions, such as "could you expand on that?",

"Why do you think that….?" "You mentioned in the questionnaire……. Can you clarify that?". This was done in order to elicit extra information and enhance the richness of the interviewees' answers (Patton 2015). At the end of the interviews, the researcher thanked the interviewees and reminded them that they can ask for a copy of their interview transcript for verification and follow up clarification. Moreover, the researcher asked each interviewee for feedback to improve the quality of her questions and her questioning skills. It is worth mentioning that after each interview the researcher listened to the audio recording and read her notes to refine the clarity of questions while ensuring consistency across all interviews.

Phase 2

As mentioned earlier in this section (see section 4.8.2), this phase followed the same research procedures as the previous one. However, during this phase (October-December) the researcher was not hindered by the timing nor Covid-19 restrictions, which allowed for the inclusion of classroom observations and the collection of more authentic data. To further increase the participation rate, the researcher initially planned to expand the study by including two additional universities, increasing the total number of institutions to 5. However, this expansion was not successful due to a lack of response from the gatekeepers, which led the researcher to proceed with the original plan of collecting data from 3 universities. In this phase the same research tools were employed (questionnaires and interviews) with the addition of classroom observation to enrich the data. This phase is summarized in the table below.

Phase 2 (October-December)		
Questionnaire	Interview	Observation
-Used to gather different kinds of data about the participants (demographic characteristics, participants' preferred strategies of teaching, views on CLT, and challenges to ELT -Used to recruit potential interviewees, and seek permission for classroom observation	-Adopted to gain in-depth and detailed information about the participants' preferred strategies of teaching -Used to gain information about the participants' views on CLT -Used to gather valuable insights about the most common teaching challenges in the chosen context	-Used to obtain authentic/live data about how language classes are taught in Algerian English departments. -Used to obtain accurate and explicit information about the participants' classroom practices

Table 4.2 Data collection procedure phase 2 (October- December)

Questionnaire distribution

The researcher started distributing questionnaires along with information letters and consent forms to the designated sample in the second week of October; two weeks after the beginning of the first semester of the academic year (2022/3). As in the previous phase (the researcher relied on a personal mode of administration, as this seemed to be the most effective way of distribution. The researcher had also tried an electronic mode of administration in this phase because a few participants (8) asked for an electronic copy of the questionnaire. Within this phase, the researcher distributed 40 questionnaires. However, out of 40 participants, only 21 completed and returned the questionnaire to the researcher. That is approximately 52% of the participants and 10% of the whole population. Late and or non-respondents were sent follow-ups and polite reminders via emails and via the gatekeepers. To increase the response rate the researcher asked one of her participants to share her questionnaire with her colleagues. The latter did so. However, none of her colleagues volunteered to participate in the present study.

Conducting interviews

Before the beginning of the second phase of data collection, the researcher contacted the participants who had previously agreed to participate in interviews during the first phase. Of the 4 participants initially contacted, 3 replied to the researcher's request and agreed to schedule an interview. It is important to remind the reader that in the first phase, although 12 participants had volunteered, only 7 responded to the researcher's invitation email, and due to time constraints, only 3 interviews were conducted. In the second phase, 11 out of 19 agreed to do an interview. However, only 4 of them replied to the researcher's invitation email. As a result, a total of 7 interviews were conducted in this phase. Three interviews were done face-to-face in the staff room, while the remaining ones were conducted online via MS Teams/ WhatsApp depending on the participants' preferences. All the interviews were audio-recorded using both a cell phone and a laptop. It is important to note that the researcher followed the same interview procedures as in the first phase. Additionally, during this phase, the researcher also interviewed the Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at one of the participating universities to gain further clarification about the syllabus of English language classes, ethical procedures in Algeria, and English language teaching strategies in the chosen context. The researcher contacted the Dean via email and scheduled a short interview, which was not audio-recorded because the Dean asked the researcher to take notes instead.

Classroom observation procedure

Since self-reporting can be inaccurate, as suggested by Koziol and Burns (1986), conducting classroom observations is a useful method for obtaining accurate insights into actual teaching practices and behaviours (Briggs and Coleman 2007; Cohen *et al*. 2011). According to Drew *et al.* (2008), there are two types of observation: participant and non-participant. In this study, the researcher relied on non-participant observation, which means that classes were observed without direct interaction with the participants (Cohen *et al.* 2017) (see section 4.7). Moreover, the observation focused on language classes with 18 out of 46 initially agreeing to be observed. However, out of 18 participants, only 14 responded to the researcher's confirmation email. After obtaining permission from the participants, the researcher attended the lessons that the

latter allowed her to observe. Due to time constraints and participants' preferences, each class was observed only once. Furthermore, each class lasted 2 hours and consisted of more than 30 students.

Additionally, the researcher relied on an observation grid and field notes to record the participants' classroom behaviour and to acquire data related to their teaching environment. It is important to mention that the researcher did not record any class, as this suggestion was rejected by both the teachers and the students. Indeed, Algerians, especially females, tend to feel uncomfortable with video-recording due to cultural and sometimes religious reasons. Some Ulama/scholars (Bin Baaz 2009, Fawzan 2023, Abu zayad, Afeeefee) claim that videotaping is a form of photography, which is deemed unlawful in Islamic law (Bin Baaz *et al 2009*. cited in McKenny 2017, p.4). Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that "Those who will be most severely punished by Allaah on the Day of Resurrection will be the image-makers" (Reported by al-Bukhaari, see al-Fath, pp 10/382). Similarly, Ibn 'Abbaas reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that "Every image-maker will be in the Fire, and for every image that he made a soul will be created for him, which will be punished in the Fire" (Reported by Muslim, 3/1871). A possible alternative to videorecording might be audio recording. Hence, the researcher suggested this alternative, which was also rejected by the participants. In fact, some Muslims believe that women's voice is *Awrah* (nakedness), because some extremist thinkers issued a fatwa (a religious order) before World War 2, that considered female voice as *awrah* (Sharqawi 2021). However, according to Kutty (2022, n.p) "there is no basis either in scripture or jurisprudence – for the view that women's voice is *awrah* in Islam". Therefore, the cultural context in which this study is set has had an impact on classroom observations. On another matter, it is important to mention that the researcher asked for the participants' permission to introduce herself to the students and explain the reason for her attendance to avoid any unnatural actions.

Data collection summary

Overall, within this study the researcher distributed 102 questionnaires to lecturers of English, from which 46 completed questionnaires were collected. These provided valuable quantitative data on participants' perspectives, practices, and encountered teaching challenges. To complement this, 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted, which offered deeper insights into lecturers' perspectives, preferred teaching practices, and encountered challenges. In addition to questionnaires and interviews, 14 English language classes were observed to examine lecturers' actual classroom practices (see Table 4.3). All 10 interviewees also took part in classroom observation; however, 4 additional teachers were observed without being interviewed. This was largely due to differences in participants' availability and willingness to engage in both stages. As a result, the interview and observation samples overlapped only partially, which nevertheless enhanced the study by combining both reported and observed perspectives on teaching. The following section outlines the theoretical and analytical framework that guided the interpretation of the collected data.

Data collection method	Total distributed/conducted	Total collected/completed	Purpose
Questionnaires	102	46	valuable quantitative data on participants' practices, understanding of CLT & teaching challenges
Interviews	10	10	Gain deeper insights into participants' preferred teaching strategies, perspectives on CLT & teaching challenges
Classroom observation	14	14	Examine participants' actual classroom practices

Table 4.3 Data collection summary

4.9 Conceptual and Analytical Framework

Having explained how the data were collected, the following section outlines the conceptual and analytical frameworks that guided the interpretation of the data. These frameworks Language Teacher Cognition (LTC) and Activity Theory (AT), provided both conceptual clarity and analytical depth, ensuring a coherent approach to the subsequent analysis.

4.9.1 Language Teacher Cognition as Conceptual Framework

Origins and Definitions

LTC has developed into a significant area of applied linguistics research, following the recognition of the crucial role of teachers' mental lives in shaping pedagogical decision-making (Freeman 2002; Borg 2006, 2012, 2019). Earlier views, which reduced teaching to observable behaviours in line with behaviourist traditions, were criticized for ignoring the unobservable but decisive dimensions of teachers' thinking (Putnam & Borko 2000; Tsui 2011). From the 1990s onwards, scholars such as Borg (1999, 2003, 2006, 2012, 2019) highlighted that what teachers know, believe, and think profoundly influences their classroom practices. Consequently, LTC has been defined as the "unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching—what teachers know, believe, and think" (Borg 2003, p. 81), and later redefined as "complex, practically oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs that language teachers draw on in their work" (Borg 2006, p.272). More recently, Borg (2019, p.1166) has proposed a broader definition of LTC as an "inquiry which seeks, with reference to their personal, professional, social, cultural and historical contexts, to understand teachers' minds and emotions and the role these play in the process of becoming, being and developing as a teacher."

Key Constructs

Much of the research into LTC has focused on a set of core constructs, most prominently teacher beliefs, teacher knowledge, and teacher identity (Borg 2003; Basar 2020; Çetin 2023). These constructs, while sometimes treated separately, are closely interrelated and together form

the foundation of how teachers think about and enact their work (Borg 2006, 2019; Miller 2009; Barcelos 2015; Yazan 2018). In this study, teacher beliefs and teacher knowledge are prioritised because they are consistently emphasised in the LTC literature as central constructs. This decision was not based on a formal count of term frequency, but rather on how these constructs recur in reviews and empirical studies as the primary dimensions through which LTC has been examined (Borg 2006, 2012, 2019; Woods 1996; Hoy *et al*. 2006; Woods & Çakir 2011). Teacher identity is also acknowledged due to its close relationship with cognition in recent research (Miller 2009; Barcelos 2015; Yazan 2018), but it is treated here as a complementary rather than central construct.

Teacher Beliefs

Beliefs are understood as propositions that individuals hold to be true, tacitly or explicitly, with strong evaluative and affective dimensions that guide action and are resistant to change (Murphy & Mason 2006, p.306; Borg 2011, pp.370–371; Phipps & Borg 2009, p.381). Within LTC, beliefs have been widely investigated because of their close relationship with decision-making, classroom practices, and teachers' openness or resistance to pedagogical innovation. Research consistently shows that beliefs are deeply rooted, often formed during teachers' own experiences as learners, and therefore difficult to modify even through formal training (Pajares 1992; Borg 2006). This stability, combined with their evaluative dimension, explains why beliefs play such a powerful role in shaping teachers' perspectives on approaches such as CLT.

Teacher Knowledge

Teacher knowledge, by contrast, refers to what teachers know that affects their thinking and planning for action (Woods 1996, p.69). It encompasses not only content knowledge but also pedagogical and practical knowledge that teachers draw upon in their daily work (Lim 2016). However, the distinction between knowledge and belief is often blurred, since knowledge is influenced by what teachers believe to be true, and beliefs may be justified by reference to personal knowledge (Hoy *et al.* 2006; Woods & Çakir 2011). This interrelationship explains why these constructs are frequently treated as overlapping dimensions of cognition in LTC

research and why many scholars prefer to examine them jointly rather than in isolation (Borg 2006, 2019).

Teacher Identity

In addition to beliefs and knowledge, teacher identity has been increasingly recognized as inseparable from cognition. Scholars argue that identity construction involves teachers' conceptions of themselves, their roles, and their place within the educational community, all of which are closely tied to what they know and believe about teaching and learning (Frijda *et al*. 2000; Miller 2009; Barcelos 2015; Morton & Gray 2017; Yazan 2018; Yazan & Lindhal 2020). Teacher identity is often described in similar terms to beliefs and cognition; as multiple, dynamic, and sometimes contradictory, which reinforces the argument that these constructs cannot be treated in isolation. Some researchers even maintain that identity is best regarded as a kind of belief about self and therefore falls under the broader field of teacher cognition (Borg 2019, p.1166). While identity is not a central focus of the present study, acknowledging its relationship with beliefs and knowledge is important, as it highlights the holistic nature of teachers' perspectives.

Definition of LTC in this Study

The literature highlights that a variety of terms, such as beliefs, knowledge, perceptions, and philosophies, have been used to capture the unseen aspects of teachers' work (Lee 1996; Karavas-Doukas 1996; Gorsuch 2001; Nassaji 2012; Borg 2006, 2019). This diversity has often resulted in terminological inconsistency and conceptual fuzziness. To provide clarity, the present study defines LTC as the lens through which teachers perceive and make sense of their professional reality. It represents what teachers believe and understand about teaching and learning, and how these beliefs and understandings shape their practices.

In order to capture this holistic and dynamic dimension of teachers' mental lives, LTC is conceptualised here through the more inclusive and neutral term 'perspectives'. As Baker (2024, pp. 5–6) notes, perspectives encompass cognition, beliefs, emotions, values, culture, and personal experiences, all of which frame how individuals interpret issues and make judgments.

Similarly, O'Conner (n.d.) explains that perspectives influence decision-making, problem-solving, and goal setting, thereby guiding individuals' actions and interactions. In this study, perspectives therefore provide a holistic and context-sensitive way of describing teachers' orientations to ELT, and they serve as the operative category underpinned by the broader conceptual framework of LTC.

4.9.2 Activity Theory as Analytical Framework

Rationale for Adopting AT

Having clarified what is meant by perspectives conceptually through LTC, the study then required an analytical framework capable of explaining why discrepancies arise between what teachers express and what they practise, and of locating the sources of the challenges they encounter. For this purpose, Activity Theory (AT), and more specifically Engeström's second-generation activity system model, was adopted. AT originated from Vygotsky's (1920) sociocultural psychology and was further developed by Leontiev and Engeström (1987, 2001). It conceptualizes human action as mediated and socially situated, emphasizing the inseparability of mind and activity (Engeström 2001, p.135; Cong-Lem 2022, p.1095). Unlike approaches that treat cognition as an individual phenomenon, AT foregrounds the contextual and collective dimensions of activity, demonstrating how actions are shaped by historical, cultural, and institutional conditions (Cong-Lem 2022, p.1095). Engeström's model moves beyond individual behaviour by situating the subject's actions within a system comprising tools, rules, community, and division of labour (Engeström 2001, p.135) (see Figure 4.2). Each of these elements interacts with the others, and contradictions among them provide powerful insights into why teachers' stated beliefs or intentions may not align with their actual classroom practices. This systemic perspective makes AT particularly useful for investigating teaching practices, as it highlights how institutional, cultural, and material conditions shape or constrain what teachers can do and how they enact their pedagogical knowledge and beliefs.

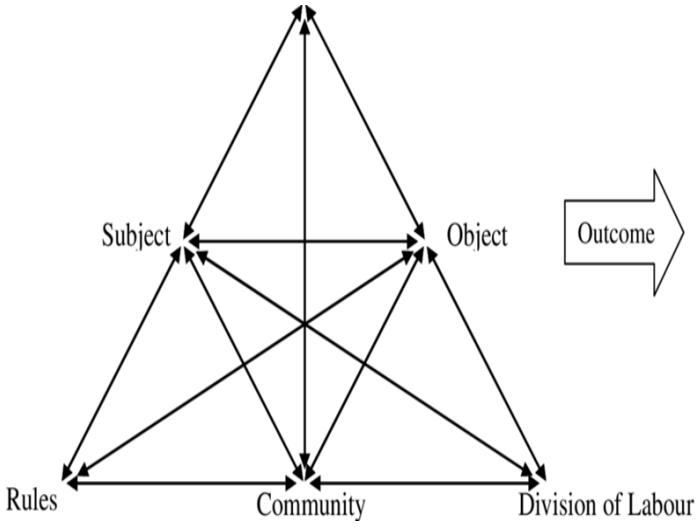


Figure 4.2 Engeström's activity system model (Engeström 1987, p.78).

Application in the Study

In this study, AT was operationalized as the main analytical framework to interpret classroom observation data alongside lecturers' reported perspectives. It provided a structured means to explain the discrepancies between teachers' perspectives and practices, showing how these often stemmed from contradictions within the activity system. For example, outdated or limited resources, and institutional expectations functioned as rules and tools that mediated and constrained teachers' ability to enact CLT principles in practice. Similarly, the division of labour and community components of the activity system highlighted how colleagues, students, and policymakers influenced pedagogical choices, sometimes reinforcing traditional practices at the expense of more communicative ones. By framing the analysis in this way, the study was able to demonstrate that the challenges lecturers reported were not simply the result of individual deficiencies but rather the product of broader systemic conditions (see Chapter 6). AT therefore made it possible to identify the institutional and structural roots of these challenges, as well as to explain why gaps persisted between teachers' conceptualizations of CLT and the classroom realities they navigated on a daily basis.

Applying Activity Theory to LTC Research

The adoption of AT in this study is consistent with prior research that has sought to connect teacher cognition, classroom practice, and the broader systemic factors that shape them. In the Korean context, Kim (2011) employed Engeström's activity system model to investigate how a teacher's understanding of CLT was enacted in practice. Her analysis identified the teacher as subject, with objects including student motivation, exam preparation, and textbook coverage. However, tools such as instructional materials and the use of Korean as the medium of instruction, combined with rules such as examination pressures and the expectation of teacher-centredness, created tensions that limited the teacher's ability to implement CLT fully. Kim concluded that these contradictions explained the misalignment between the teacher's cognitions and her actual classroom practice. Similarly, Anh (2011) examined pre-service teachers' conceptions and practices in Korea using Engeström's model. By analyzing interviews, classroom observations, journals, and lesson plans, Anh revealed that teachers' espoused conceptions of communicative teaching often conflicted with their enacted practices. The primary reason for this discrepancy was the imposition of instructional materials and exam-oriented curricula, which acted as systemic constraints on teachers' agency.

In another context, Lim (2016) used AT to explore Cambodian EFL teachers' cognitions and vocabulary instruction. Drawing on interviews, classroom observations, and reflective accounts, Lim demonstrated that teachers' practices were not only linked to their beliefs and knowledge but also mediated by contextual factors such as their own learning histories, institutional expectations, and visions of future teaching. Lim's findings highlighted that contradictions within the activity system particularly between rules, tools, and objects, significantly shaped how cognition was realized in practice.

Together, these studies stress the analytical power of AT to uncover the roots of discrepancies between what teachers know or believe and what they actually do in the classroom. They also confirm that challenges in implementing communicative approaches are rarely attributable to individual teachers alone but are instead tied to broader institutional, cultural, and policy-driven constraints. These insights directly inform the analytical use of AT in the Algerian context,

where lecturers' perspectives on ELT and their actual practices are shaped by similar systemic pressures, including, limited resources, time constraints, students' proficiency. By drawing on AT, the present study aligns with these precedents while extending the application of Engeström's model to a new educational setting, thereby offering a systematic explanation of the challenges and discrepancies observed.

4.9.3 Integration of LTC and AT in the Study

In applying this dual lens, the data analysis proceeded in two stages. First, interview and questionnaire data were examined using LTC constructs in order to capture teachers' perspectives as a combination of beliefs, knowledge, and identities. Second, classroom observations and narrative accounts of challenges were interpreted through AT, which helped to trace contradictions, situate cognition in context, and reveal the systemic factors underlying the challenges lecturers face. This methodological use of LTC and AT ensured that the research questions were addressed coherently: LTC clarified the nature of teachers' perspectives while AT explained the discrepancies between perspectives and practices and identified the systemic sources of challenges. Taken together, LTC and AT functioned not as parallel but as complementary frameworks, each addressing different but interrelated dimensions of the study. LTC established what was meant by lecturers' perspectives and delimited the constructs under investigation, while AT provided the analytical means to interpret how these perspectives interacted with classroom realities, institutional structures, and systemic constraints. In particular, AT was employed to explain the discrepancies observed between teachers stated beliefs and their actual classroom practices. The integration of the two frameworks thus allowed this study to provide both conceptual clarity and explanatory depth in investigating Algerian lecturers' perspectives on ELT and their practices. The following section (4.10) explains the specific methods of data analysis employed.

4.10 Methods of Data Analysis

As previously mentioned earlier in this chapter, the current study adopts a mixed methods research (MMR) approach, which combines both qualitative and quantitative data to address

the research questions. Hence, the data analysis process involved distinct methods for qualitative and quantitative data analysis (DA). However, this does not imply that the two types of data were treated separately. Indeed, the MMR approach emphasises the integration and connection of qualitative and quantitative data to provide a holistic understanding of the research problem (Cohen *et al.* 2018, p. 45). For an accurate analysis, it is essential to select data analysis tools and techniques that suit the nature of the data. This selection depends largely on the type of data as discussed below.

Quantitative DA

Quantitative data analysis is a widely used research method that can be applied to both large-scale and small-scale studies (Cohen *et al*. 2018). It involves examining numerical data to identify patterns and draw conclusions (Cohen *et al.* 2018). This process often includes both descriptive and inferential statistics (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2009) which help researchers to summarize data and make generalizations about the population being studied (Bymen 2012). In this study, the researcher used Qualtrics XM, a widely recognized tool for both data collection and analysis. Indeed, Qualtrics XM offers a set of features, such as customizable evaluation instruments, improved data collection efficiencies, and enhanced quantitative data analysis capacity (Cushman *et al.* 2021). Additionally, it simplifies the analysis and visualization of the data, even for researchers without advanced statistical training (Cushman *et al.* 2021). According to Bauer *et al.* (2022), Qualtrics allows researchers to create graphs, charts, and tables to represent findings clearly, which is helpful for identifying patterns and relationships in data. Despite these advantages, Qualtrics does have some limitations, such as lacking the depth required for more complex analysis and requiring a reliable internet connection which may pose challenges in some settings (Sullivan 2023). Nevertheless, its flexibility, ease of use, and ability to support diverse needs make it a suitable tool for quantitative data analysis.

The researcher, who relied on self-completed written questionnaires, transferred all the data manually to Qualtrics and used this tool to analyze data obtained from closed questions. It is important to highlight that to ensure accuracy, the transferred data was checked and rechecked. Using Qualtrics facilitated the data cleaning process which involved correcting errors,

inaccuracies, and repetitions. These procedures were conducted without biasing the results, as highlighted by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009). This step is crucial for preparing the data, as mistakes in the dataset can distort the results significantly (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2009). It is worth noting that the researcher initially attempted to rely on an online form of questionnaire administration but faced significant challenges. Despite months of follow-up emails, the response rate from teachers was insufficient, as detailed in the data collection procedure section. Consequently, the researcher opted for a one-to-one procedure, which according to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009, pp.67-68) promotes cooperation and increases the likelihood of the questionnaires being answered.

Analyzing data from open-ended survey questions, however, is less straightforward compared to closed questions because of the absence of pre-coded response options (Dörnyei and Taguchi 2009). In this study, responses obtained from open-ended questions were analyzed thematically by examining the content of each participant's answer, identifying broader categories, and numerically coding these categories. The coded data were then entered into the data file and treated as quantitative data (numerical values), to ensure consistency and enable further analysis (Brown 2001; Dörnyei 2007; Dörnyei and Taguchi 2009).

Qualitative DA

Qualitative DA places emphasis on in-depth, subjective, and context-specific data (Cohen *et al.* 2018). It is a complex process that involves a set of tasks, such as sorting out, describing, understanding, explaining, and categorizing data (Cohen *et al*. 2017, p.643). Moreover, this type of DA does not offer a simple and clear method or rule for turning data into findings (Patton 2002, p.432). Indeed, according to Cohen *et al* "there is no one single or correct way to analyse and present qualitative data" (2018, p.634), as this varies depending on the aim of the research. Because the current research aims at exploring lecturers' cognition (see section 3.1), the researcher opted for an inductive thematic approach (ITA) to analyse her data. In fact, the major aim of this approach is to describe and understand people's feelings, thoughts, and behaviours within a particular context (Guest *et al*. 2012, p. 13). Moreover, this approach is compatible with a mixed methods approach. Another reason for opting for this approach is its

flexibility. According to Braun and Clarke (2012), thematic analysis (ITA) is a flexible method that enables the researcher to focus on the collected data in various ways. They also argue in another article that ITA is relatively straightforward even for novice researchers (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 24), as it does not require detailed theoretical and technical knowledge; instead, TA requires "reading through textual data and identifying and coding emergent themes within the data" (Nel 2020, p.1). In other words, this approach is a process guided by the data (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 83). However, Berg (2001) argued that being aware of existing theories or previous studies is also important in qualitative research, as this helps the researcher to better understand the data.

Although ITA can offer trustworthy and insightful findings (Braun and Clarke 2006), it does have limitations. Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012) identified the potential pitfalls of TA in their previous work. These are summarised below:

1. Failure to analyse the data; providing data extracts with little or no analysis.
2. Using data collection questions as themes.
3. Lack of coherence and consistency of the themes.
4. Mismatch between the data and the analytical claims
5. Mismatch between theory and analytical claims or between research questions and the form of thematic analysis used.

(Braun and Clarke 2006, pp. 25-26; 2012, pp.69-70)

The above-mentioned pitfalls can be avoided through following Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines, which are divided into the following phases: data familiarization, initial codes generation, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and labelling themes, and producing the report. Similarly, Creswell (2012) offers six steps to analyzing qualitative data which consist of organizing and preparing the data, reading through the data, coding the data, categorizing the themes, describing the themes, and interpreting the data. Henceforth, the analysis of the qualitative data in this study was in line with the aforementioned guidelines. Before starting these steps of ITA, the researcher first listened to and manually transcribed the audio-recorded data. The researcher opted for a manual transcription to familiarize herself

deeply with the data and make sure that they were transcribed appropriately. Details on transcription and DA are provided in the next chapter.

Because of the considerable amount of qualitative data gathered in this research, the data management software NVivo version 11 was used as a data management tool. Indeed, NVivo is a widely used qualitative data analysis (QDA) software package that offers several advantages which can significantly improve the quality and organization of data (Hilal and Albari 2013, p.182). As Batzeley and Jackson (2013, p.3) explain, NVivo enables researchers to manage and track large datasets, organize and retrieve ideas rapidly, query data systematically, visualize relationships, and report findings in transparent manners. In this study NVivo provided supplementary support for organizing transcripts, storing codes, and grouping them into broader categories. The software also enabled the researcher to revisit and compare codes systematically, which helped refine the labelling of categories and improve overall consistency. Although the primary thematic analysis was conducted manually, NVivo functioned as a reliability check; while no independent second coder was involved, the programme effectively approximated a form of secondary rating by confirming the consistency of coding and suggesting refinements that strengthened the clarity of the coding framework. In this way NVivo contributed to enhancing both the reliability and transparency of the analysis.

4.11 Summary

This chapter has discussed the research design, methodology, and tools used to investigate Algerian lecturers' teaching practices, perspectives on CLT, and the challenges they encounter. To ensure adherence to ethical research standards, the study addressed key ethical considerations, including informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. A mixed methods research (MMR) design was adopted to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches and ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research questions. Three research tools were employed: self-completed written questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and non-participant classroom observations. The chapter also outlined the data collection procedures, which were preceded by a pilot study. The data collection occurred in two phases. The first phase, from April 2022 to June 2022, focused on distributing questionnaires and conducting

interviews. Classroom observation was not feasible during this phase due to overlapping tests and exams and the impact of the pandemic, which disrupted regular class schedules. The second phase, from October 2022 to December 2022, involved continuing questionnaire distribution and interviews while initiating classroom observations.

In addition, the chapter presented the theoretical and analytical framework that guided the interpretation of the collected data. Drawing on LTC and AT, this framework provided the conceptual basis for analyzing teachers' perspectives, reported practices, and classroom behaviours. It was particularly useful in explaining the discrepancies between lecturers' stated beliefs and their observed practices, and in identifying the systemic roots of the teaching challenges encountered in Algerian higher education. Finally, the chapter described the methods of data analysis. Indeed, quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed statistically using Qualtrics XM, which facilitated efficient data processing and visualization, while qualitative data (interviews & observation) from interviews and open-ended questions were subjected to manual thematic analysis, through which recurring patterns and themes were identified. The software NVivo 11 was used as a data management tool to support this process by organizing transcripts, storing codes, and grouping them into broader categories. The following chapter presents the results and analysis of the data collected.

Chapter 5: Lecturers' Perspectives and Practices

5.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this study is to explore Algerian EFL lecturers preferred teaching strategies, their actual classroom practices within the context of English departments in Algerian higher education, and their understanding of CLT. Additionally, the study seeks to identify the various challenges that educators encounter when teaching EFL within this context. To achieve these goals the researcher employed a mixed methods research design, as outlined in chapter 4 (section 4.2). A questionnaire was used to provide a broad understanding of the topic. To complement and enrich the questionnaire data, the study also employed semi structured interviews and non-participant classroom observations. These qualitative methods allowed for an in-depth exploration of lecturers' views on teaching EFL, as well as their classroom practices and challenges they face in implementing best practice. This information provides rich insights that quantitative methods alone cannot capture (Cohen 2017). A total of 46 participants from 3 universities completed the questionnaire providing a substantial amount of quantitative data. From this group, 10 lecturers participated in the interviews, allowing for more detailed accounts, and 14 participants allowed the researcher to observe their language classes, offering valuable first-hand data. It is important to note that this chapter draws on (AT) to analyse and explain any discrepancies between lecturers' cognition and their teaching practices (see Chapter 4, section 4.9). This framework offers a structured approach for understanding the complex relationship between lecturers' perspectives, their instructional practices, and the mediating factors, such as available resources, classroom size, and institutional rules that shape their decisions.

This chapter provides a thorough analysis and discussion of the major themes identified in the data relating to lecturers' views on CLT, as well as their teaching strategies and practices. Two key themes emerged from the triangulation of the collected data: first, common views surrounding CLT, and second the prevalence of eclecticism in relation to lecturers' teaching strategies and practices. The first theme includes 6 sub-themes, each of which is discussed in detail within this chapter. The second theme, eclecticism, includes 1 sub-theme (CLT), which is

the focus of a separate sub-section in this chapter. Each theme discussed in this chapter begins with an analysis of the questionnaire data. This is complemented by further insights drawn from the interviews, classroom observation, and relevant literature. This chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings and a discussion of their significance in the Algerian context. This comprehensive approach gives a detailed understanding of the complexities involved in teaching English in this specific educational context.

5.2 Lecturers' General Understanding of Communicative Language Teaching

This section offers a detailed analysis of the major themes that emerged from the data related to teachers' perceptions of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The data was collected through three survey questions: (1) "in your opinion, what are the three aspects of teaching that CLT emphasises the most" (2) "in your opinion, what are the three aspects of teaching that CLT advises against" and (3) a Likert-scale question asking participants to indicate their degree of agreement with 15 common perceptions about CLT. Notably, the questionnaire results were supported by the qualitative data, providing consistent and enriched views on CLT. The data analysis reveals diverse views on CLT, focusing on communicative competence, which also incorporates learner-centeredness as a core component, a focus on fluency over accuracy, cultural awareness, contextualization, restricting the use of the L1, limiting grammar instruction, and minimal focus on error correction. Each theme will be explored individually within this section. The discussion starts with an analysis of questionnaire data and is further supported by insights from interviews, classroom observations, and relevant academic literature. By doing so this section provides a comprehensive understanding of how Algerian lecturers view CLT.

5.2.1 Developing Learners' Communicative Competence

As highlighted in chapter three, there is not an agreed-upon definition of CLT. Littlewood (2007, p.543) describes CLT as an undefinable concept that can be interpreted in different ways. Similarly, Spada (2007, p.227, Wei 2018) notes that the meaning of CLT can change depending on whom you ask. This variability in meaning proves that CLT is not a fixed method, it is rather an approach shaped by the needs and aims of its users. Despite this ambiguity there is widespread agreement among practitioners that CLT is an approach that aims to develop student communicative competence (CC) (Richards *et al*.1992; Savignon 1997; Richards and Rodgers 2001, 2014; Brown 2001; Eisenchlas 2010; Lightbown and Spada 2013; Wei 2018). CC refers to the abilities that allow speakers to communicate effectively and spontaneously in various contexts (Savignon 1983; Richards and Schmidt 2014). According to Hymes (1971), CC prioritizes the ability to effectively convey and understand a message, over rigid grammatical accuracy. This focus on functional communication is what brings together diverse interpretations of CLT, establishing CC as one of its core principles.

These perspectives reflect the research findings from this study. When participants were asked "*in your opinion what are the three aspects that CLT emphasises the most*", they provided a wide range of answers, as shown in Table 5.1. However, the majority (19 out of 36 participants) highlighted CC as a key component of CLT. This is further reinforced by the findings from the Likert scale, where 23% of participants strongly agreed, and an additional 34% agreed with the statement that CLT primarily aims to develop student CC.

Categories	Number of answers	Extracts from the participants' answers
Communicative competence (including learner-centeredness)	19 (plus10 additional references to learner-centeredness, 6 of which were mentioned explicitly)	"Focusses on the communicative side of the language, rather than its structure" "Focuses on the communicative faculties of the learner" "Enhance the communicative skills (writing & speaking), target a good language practice (reaching a native like proficiency)," "Interaction between the learner and users of the language- Negotiation of meaning and having the ability to communicate the message" "In CLT, students are the ones driving the lesson forward; they engage with the content and practice speaking with each other rather than passively listening to a lecture" "It's about shifting from teacher-led instruction to having students participate in discussions, group work, and peer collaboration" 6 mentioned it explicitly
Fluency over accuracy	8 (Participants showed divergent views, with the majority maintaining that fluency should be given priority, as the main goal of language learning is communication.)	"I think they're both equally important. However, I do start off with fluency" "They should, we should focus on fluency not on accuracy. So, communication is the ultimate objective." "So I believe that they are both very important, I wouldn't say equally as important because I'm not like I am by no means an expert, but based on my own humble opinion only they are both very, very important and should be considered or should be regarded both at the same time in different tasks again, according or depending on the objective of the task of lesson."
Restricting the use of the L1	7	"In CLT, the use of L1 should be kept to a

		minimum. The goal is to get students to use English as much as possible to improve their communicative ability." "We avoid translating into L1 to ensure students stay immersed in the language they are learning” “Intolerance of the use of the L1”
Minimal focus on error correction	6	“We don’t focus too much on correcting mistakes in real-time” “Too much correction can make students anxious, so we encourage them to focus on communication first”
Contextualization and authentic learning	6 (4 mentioned context; 2 mentioned authentic learning)	“Culture and context authenticity”. “Contextualized teaching” “Culture, context, authenticity” “CLT focuses on context and communication”
Integration of core and communicative skills	6 (3 participants mentioned that CLT places emphasis on the 4 basic skills, whereas 3 participants mentioned that CLT places emphasis on communicative skills; reading and writing)	“The 4 language skills are given equal importance” “Communication (oral & written) in the target language” “Enhance the communicative skills (writing & speaking” “The focus on the 4 language skills”
Cultural awareness	5	“It’s important to teach students how to use the language appropriately in different cultural contexts.” “Emphasis on the importance of culture in learning a foreign language” “Understanding cultural norms helps students communicate more naturally and effectively,

		especially in international settings”

Table 5.1 Questionnaire analysis: Aspects of teaching that CLT emphasises the most

Remaining on the issue of CC, the interviews findings align with the questionnaire data, but with some differences in terminology. While most of the questionnaire data explicitly referred to CC as the central principle of CLT, the interview responses conveyed the same principle but did not always use the term explicitly. Instead, participants expressed related ideas and offered additional perspectives on CLT as shown in Table 5.2.

Teacher code	Quotations
T1	“So according to me, I think it's obviously as the name or the title indicates about communication. So communicative competence being the key aspects or the key element that teachers should focus on.” “Developing student CC is extremely important…we are talking about a language and by definition, a language is a code of communication. So, without that, the language is almost useless. Then we have the other major reason, which is when we teach people English in general, we teach them the language to use it.”
T3	“Focuses on scaffolding. I'm actually quite into that. And that's how I teach actually. So, I think that it's like swimming, you throw somebody in the water, and they learn slowly, progressively by doing and I am very task based, oriented in teaching. And I feel that it has. It's given me some great results
T6	“This approach mainly relies on how to have the ability to communicate correctly. Accurately and fluently in the target language, in this case, English. It relies mainly on the oral skills of the students”
T7	“It's a method which is really, really focused on the communicative aspects of the English language cycle, really learning English with the purpose of communication”.
T10	“That's something that we studied in our third year. Communicative language teaching is similar to the oral-oral approach. So, it sees communication as the ultimate goal, if I may say so.”

Table 5.2 Interview analysis: Teachers’ theoretical understanding of CLT.

Quotations in table 5.2 illustrate the participants' varied understanding of CLT, with a strong emphasis on CC. Indeed, T1 explicitly mentions CC as a key component of CLT, as she described communication as the central aim of language learning. This view aligns with the main ideas behind CLT, where the main goal is to enable learners to use the language for real-life communication (Hymes 1973; Savignon 1983; Littlewood 2007). Similarly, T6 and T7 highlight the communicative aspect of CLT, with T6 emphasizing the importance of fluency and accuracy in oral skills. This corresponds with CLT literature, specifically, with Howatt's (1984 cited in Spada 2007, p.272) weak version of CLT, where communicative competence involves both accuracy (correct language use) and fluency (the ability to express ideas) (Richards 2006). T7's focus on communication as the main goal highlights a core idea of CLT: helping one to use the target language naturally in real conversations, rather than just mastering grammar rules

T3, however, introduces an additional perspective by linking CLT to scaffolding and task-based teaching. Scaffolding plays an important role in CLT, as it implies offering students guidance in their language learning instead of spoon-feeding them. Moreover, task-based learning aligns with more modern interpretations of CLT, where learners build communicative skills progressively through tasks, and develop language in real-life scenarios (Ellis 2003). T3's belief of learning through gradual immersion "like swimming" supports CLT's task-based orientation which implies learning by doing.

T10's connection between CLT and an "oral approach" further suggests that the participant believes that spoken communication is central to the communicative approach. This aligns with the broader principles of CLT, which prioritizes interaction as the means and end of language learning (Richards and Rodgers 2001). Overall, these quotations emphasise the importance participants place on CC within CLT, while also highlighting a range of teaching methods, such as scaffolding and task-based learning.

Building from the insights mentioned in the previous section, the classroom observations offered evidence of the implementation of a variety of communicative activities ranging from listening activities, pair work and group work, oral presentation, and simulation and role-plays. These real-life tasks foster students' language use in authentic contexts, which is the primary aim of the concept of CC. For example, 3 participants incorporated role plays or simulations into their lessons; one of them had students simulate a scenario where employees expressed concerns to their boss about workplace conditions and the company dress code. Another participant used an information gap activity in her class that took the form of an interview on the topic of internet addiction. Moreover, 3 teachers integrated oral presentation activities into their lessons. Viewing and listening activities were also integrated through exposing students to authentic conversations through loudspeakers and providing them with visual materials. For instance, one participant used images of Gaudi's architectural work, which she distributed to groups of six students for discussion. Another teacher asked students to watch a YouTube video on their own devices as there was no projector and then asked them to discuss what they had seen in groups. It is important to note that each activity was conducted in groups or pairs and followed by a discussion (except for oral presentations, which were done individually). This emphasis on collaboration and discussion aligns with the core principle of CC, as it encourages the effective use of language in social and interactive settings. Indeed, learners working together can help each other to better understand and solve tasks (Henson 2003; Vygotsky 1978). Furthermore, these activities place students at the heart of the learning process, a fundamental aspect of learner-centered instruction, which will be explored in the next sub-section.

5.2.1.1 Learner-centeredness

A closely related aspect of lecturers' understanding of CLT is its learner-centered orientation. In the context of this study, learner-centeredness was often discussed as a means of developing CC, since communication requires learners to take active roles in meaning-making, collaboration, and self-directed learning (Nunan 2012, pp.17-19). Learner-centerdness also emerged as a key theme from the collected data. Indeed, 10 out of 36 participants mentioned learner-centeredness as a key aspect of CLT, including 6 who mentioned it explicitly. One teacher commented, "In CLT, students are the ones driving the lesson forward; they engage with the content and practice speaking with each other rather than passively listening to a lecture." Another added, "It's about shifting from teacher-led instruction to having students participate in discussions, group work, and peer collaboration.". Additionally, Likert-scale responses further support this finding, as 16% of participants strongly agreed and 47% agreed that CLT is a learner-centered approach to teaching. These findings align with literature on CLT, which characterises it as a learner-centered approach (Richard and Rogers 2001; Spada 2007; Nunan 2013). According to Nunan (2012), learner-centered approaches in CLT allow students to take responsibility for their own learning, through active participation and autonomy. Breen and Candlin (2001) argue that CLT promotes learner autonomy by placing students in real-life communicative scenarios, enabling them to learn through interaction. Richards and Rodgers (2001) emphasise that CLT transforms the role of the teacher into a facilitator who creates opportunities for students to engage in meaningful communication.

As far as the interview data is concerned, only two participants identified learner-centeredness as a key feature of CLT. One participant (T2) stated

> Well, I see that a key feature is getting your students involved in the classroom. And, if we try it, it starts actually from planning a lesson. So, my teaching technique, the activities that I will suggest to my students should promote students' participation…. So, I don't have to give them everything about the lesson. So, they will be doing say half of the task, but they will be preparing for the lesson, just like the teacher, well, since we give them the syllabus beforehand, so, our purpose our students should have

some information about the next lesson, they should prepare for it, they should participate in building up the content.

Another participant added (T5) “student centered teaching. So, we should give for example, in class, we should involve the students in the learning, we should give them floor as much as possible. The teacher should be a monitor and not a distributor of knowledge”. Both quotations reflect a focus on student participation and engagement, which are key components of learner-centered instruction (Weimer 2013). However, T2 also mentioned autonomy, encouraging students to prepare the lesson ahead, which is an essential component of learner-centeredness, as it promotes responsibility and self-directed learning (Little 1995). T5's emphasis on providing students with the “floor” supports the idea of active learning and encourages students to take control of their own learning (Prince 2004). In fact, according to Spada (2007) a key principle of CLT is that learners should be granted greater responsibility and autonomy in their language learning. The discrepancy between the interview and questionnaire data regarding learner-centeredness can be due to the difference in participant-numbers and the nature of the questions. The questionnaire involved more participants and specifically asked them to identify three features of CLT, while the interviews invited participants to discuss the main features of CLT more broadly. Further, many interviewees mentioned CC as the key feature of CLT and may not have felt the need to mention learner-centeredness explicitly. This could reflect a perception among participants that other features, such as CC, are more central to CLT. This aligns with research that suggests that practitioners often prioritize communication in CLT over learners’ autonomy (Richards and Rodgers 2001, Littlewood 2014).

The classroom observations revealed that most of the participants relied on a set of communicative activities that foster autonomy (oral presentations), promote engagement (group/pair work, discussions, role plays), and encourage the development of critical thinking skills (information gap activities). Indeed, the use of oral presentations implies research which encourages autonomy and critical thinking. Similarly, information gap activities promote the development of critical thinking skills. In addition, group discussions and role plays encourage communication and engagement in the classroom. Indeed, in group work interactions, learners are believed to produce not only more speech, but also a wider range of speech functions and

linguistic forms compared to teacher-centered interaction (Long *et al*. *1976* cited in Spada 2007 p.278). This belief explains why CLT has been characterized by almost an exclusive focus on group interactions. However, according to Long and Poter (1985) and Han (2022) this is a common misconception about CLT, because for group work interactions to be successful they need to be combined with some teacher-centered activities. This view contrasts with the strong version of CLT, which prioritizes meaning over form, and is linked with the common belief that CLT focuses more on fluency than accuracy; an assumption that will be discussed in the next sub-section.

5.2.3 Fluency over Accuracy

Teachers' belief that CLT focuses on fluency at the expense of accuracy stems from CLT's focus on real-life communication. According to Spada (2007, p.271), several ESL and EFL teachers believe that CLT is a meaning-based, learner-centered approach that prioritizes fluency over accuracy, i.e., message production and meaning over grammatical structures. This reflects the broader view that CLT values the ability to communicate effectively, even if grammatical accuracy is lacking. This corresponds to Howatt's strong version of CLT which is more commonly adopted by ESL teachers, as noted by Spada (2007, p.272). This belief might be also supported by the way in which CLT activities are designed. Indeed, simulation and role plays, group/ pair work discussions, problem solving tasks, are typical activities in CLT, that focus on getting the message across instead of grammatical perfection (Nunan 1991). Indeed, these activities encourage students to express themselves spontaneously without the fear of making mistakes.

This common belief also emerged as a theme in the current research. In fact, 8 out of 37 participants, reported that CLT focuses on fluency over accuracy. One teacher commented, "CLT encourages students to speak freely, even if they make mistakes, because fluency is the ultimate goal." Another noted, "Mistakes are seen as part of the learning process, and students are encouraged to express their ideas without focusing too much on correctness." However, the Likert-scale data showed different perspectives, with 23% of the participants strongly agreeing, and 37% agreeing with the statement 'CLT pays attention to fluency as well as accuracy'.

Similarly, 23% strongly agreed, and 25% agreed that 'CLT promotes a balanced usage of meaning-based and form-focused activities. These findings align with literature on CLT that highlights the importance of both fluency and accuracy in language learning (Richards and Rogers 2001, Spada 2007, Harmer 2007, Brown 2007). For example, Spada (2007), advocates for a balance between fluency and accuracy in CLT, highlighting that classrooms with no or little focus on language forms often result in students who cannot express themselves properly (on the basis of observational research in CLT classrooms). This discrepancy in participants' responses indicates that while some participants support the strong version of CLT, which emphasises fluency, others lean towards its weak version, which promotes a balance between fluency and accuracy. This discrepancy is also common in literature on CLT, particularly among EFL and ESL instructors. The former tends to support the weak version of CLT, whereas the latter are more likely to support its strong version (Spada 2007).

The interview data also shows divergent perspectives, similar to the various perspectives found in the questionnaire responses as shown in Table 5.3.

Teacher code	Quotations
T1	"I feel like I feel like a lot of people focus on fluency. By people I mean, both students and teachers, and this is based on some anecdotal evidence, I'm just telling you like, based on what I've noticed, or witnessed, so yeah, they focus a lot on fluency and disregard accuracy and vice versa. Some people are too strict, and they don't really care how fluent students are. They only focus on the mistakes, or the lack of mistakes students make. So I believe that they are both very important, I wouldn't say equally as important because I'm not like I am by no means an expert, but based on my own humble opinion only they are both very, very important and should be considered or should be regarded both at the same time in different tasks again, according or depending on the objective of the task of lesson".
T2	"When they express themselves, I try first to make sure that I got their message…I never correct grammar structures…I think that myself I'm not a grammar teacher. So, if the idea is not expressed in an appropriate way, so, I would just try to direct the student towards the right expression of the idea".

T3	“I think they're both equally important. However, I do start off with fluency. I just started off with fluency. I like to have people feel confident in using the language. And the more confident they are, the better they accept to be corrected, and to look at their mistakes and things like that. If you go on looking at the mistakes too much by being accurate all the time, you get easily tired, and you are rejected. But if you start fluently, I mean, you focus on that, it makes the error correction easier to handle”
T5	“They should, we should focus on fluency not on accuracy. So, communication is the ultimat objective” .
T6	“This approach mainly relies on how to have the ability to communicate correctly. accurately and fluently in the target language, in this case, English”
T9	“I need academic English I'm going to give you a topic. Yes, I need a good English of course and I need the way you talk on this topic in academic English, as an adult, as a university student. Because sometimes they talk like people who are not educated, the way they the way they attack each other. So, I don't care about fluency. I just care about good English academic English; I don't care about the accent”

Table 5.3 Interview analysis: Teachers’ perspectives on fluency and accuracy

These quotations illustrate a range of views on the theme of fluency and accuracy in CLT. T1 and T3 advocate for a balanced approach, though T3 emphasises starting with fluency to build student confidence before focusing on corrections. T2 leans towards fluency, as she avoids correcting grammar unless the message is unclear. Similarly, T5 stresses that fluency and communication are the main objectives in language learning, thus, prioritizing fluency. On the other hand, T9 places a stronger focus on accuracy, as she believes that in academic contexts, precision and clear language matter more than fluency. T6 favours an approach that values both fluency and accuracy, as she highlights the importance of clear and fluent communication in the target language. These different perspectives highlight the complexity of CLT, where some prioritize spontaneous communication, while others emphasise accuracy depending on the lesson's goals.

As for the classroom observations, the researcher focused on how frequently participants corrected their students' mistakes during discussions, to determine if they prioritized fluency over accuracy. Error correction emerged as a distinct yet overlapping theme with fluency and accuracy. Therefore, the classroom observation data regarding these aspects will be reported in the following sub-section on error correction, as the two themes are closely intertwined.

5.2.4 Minimal Error Correction

Following the diverse views on fluency and accuracy, another related theme emerged from the data, namely 'Minimal error correction'. This view stems from the idea that explicit correction can inhibit fluency and discourage students from speaking, instead mistakes should be viewed as a natural part of the learning process (Lightbown and Spada 2021). These perspectives are in line with the questionnaire data, as 6 participants reported that CLT discourages error correction. One teacher mentioned, "We don't focus too much on correcting mistakes in real-time. The goal is to let students speak freely, and we correct errors only when necessary". Another participant explained, "Too much correction can make students anxious, so we encourage them to focus on communication first". The Likert-scale data provides some support for this finding, as 16% of the participant strongly agreed and 25% agreed, and 30% partly agreed with the statement, "Within CLT the explicit correction of errors is discouraged. Therefore, errors are often tolerated". However, these results also indicate a level of uncertainty, as an important number of participants only partly agreed rather than fully endorsing the statement. This suggests that while some lecturers associate CLT with a reduced emphasis on error correction, other may have a more nuanced or unclear understanding of its stance on feedback. This ambiguity is relevant when considering research that challenges the views that CLT discourages completely error correction. According to Lightbown and Spada (2001), there is growing evidence that more explicit feedback is needed in CLT classrooms. Indeed, the belief that there is no need to correct learners' mistakes, as they will automatically disappear through practice, is seen as extreme (Spada 2007; Han 2022); it is rather a myth than a reality. In fact, CLT does not reject error correction, but promotes the use of both implicit and explicit error correction, depending on the situation.

As for the interview data, participants revealed various views. Some participants reported that they rely on both implicit and explicit feedback, whereas others rely only on implicit feedback to avoid communication breakdowns, as shown in Table 5.4.

Teacher code	Quotations
T1	"I use a lot of MIT (Multiple Intelligence theory). Like, it's a mixed approach, basically and it depends on the group I'm with, it depends on the individuals themselves, I could say, well, I've got one method, which is giving the feedback immediately, but sort of indirectly, like, you know, that's what everybody does, like every teacher does, repeating the sentence again correctly, so that the students hear that, but doesn't really feel like they are being corrected. I also use the direct one, when it's something that's been repeated a lot, or something that a lot of students are making, like a mistake that's been committed a lot. So, I feel the need to emphasize it." "And I also use the method of letting them talk and then writing down my feedback or my remarks and then giving them in the end…, this depends on the task we have the task in hand, because obviously, the objective differs. And when the focus of the lesson is not the mistake itself, or is not the language per se, I do not really give too much attention to the mistakes, especially if we're focusing on maybe cultural aspects with cultural dimensions of the language, I try not to focus too much on those mistakes, because I am sometimes worried that it's going to probably to distract them from the topic or the lesson, or the main focus of the lesson, basically. So, I use a mixed approach, and I also sometimes ask them, whether they need to hear their feedback out loud or not."
T2	" I never correct grammar structures…. So, if the idea is not expressed in an appropriate way, so, I would just try to direct the student towards the right expression of the idea."
T3	"We go back to feedback. So, it's only, usually it's in the exams, papers back session. That's where the mistakes are dealt with."
T5	"Sometimes I let them pass, sometimes I stop students and correct them. Because I studied didactics, I am aware of the harm that overcorrection can do to the students. I don't correct people when they are speaking, II just take note of the, the of the of the mistake, and try to correct it in another context. Maybe I repeat it in

	another sentence implicitly”
T6	“. I don't correct it by the way I elicits correction”
T9	“We don’t have time to correct mistakes, I give them activities where they have to correct mistakes”
T10	“I try not to correct them directly. So, in an implicit way, if they make a mistake, and I'm aware of that, I try to, to, to use that mistake in a correct way and in my speech, so taking into consideration their psychological state, so I don't want to, to be too direct with them. Unless it's, it's something written.”

Table 5.4 Interview analysis: Teachers’ perspectives on error correction

The quotations above show a range of strategies for error correction, with many teachers preferring a balanced or indirect approach. T1 describes using a mixed method, sometimes giving indirect feedback by restating errors correctly and reserving direct correction for repeated mistakes. This technique, known as ‘recast’ in ELT, is widely used to help students notice their mistakes. However, research has shown that L2 students often interpret recasts as feedback on content rather than form (Spada 2007), which can limit their effectiveness in improving grammatical proficiency. T2 and T5 avoid direct correction during speaking activities, instead they guide students toward the correct expression or address mistakes later. T6 and T10 use implicit correction to avoid harming student confidence. T9 mentioned using self-correction activities due to time constraints. Overall, these responses show a preference for minimizing direct correction, often to support student confidence and fluency. Hence, the interview and questionnaire findings are in line.

The classroom observations further illustrate the variety of error correction approaches used by the participants. In 6 classes, teachers used both implicit and explicit correction depending on the type of mistakes. Pronunciation mistakes were corrected immediately and explicitly, as in one case, when talking about Gaudi’s work a student pronounced the word ‘architecture’ as it is pronounced in French, the teacher immediately corrected the student and had them repeat the

word. However, mistakes related to content and grammar were corrected implicitly through recast. For example, when a student said, “I have a sweet teeth”, the teacher subtly corrected them by responding “yes, you have a sweet tooth”. Another teacher gave her students direct feedback on their body language, and intonation during presentations, but only after they had finished. Within the same classes two teachers relied on group correction. It is worth mentioning that errors were neglected in three classes, as the teachers focused on the meaning and did not correct any mistakes or provide any feedback. This is probably because students’ mistakes did not affect the meaning of their messages. It is worth noting that, when it came to the use of the L1 in the classroom, most teachers explicitly told their students to use English, which will be explored further in the next sub-section.

5.2.5 Avoidance of The Learner’s L1

Restricting the use of students’ L1 in the classroom is another theme that emerged from the data. The reason behind this belief could be that students need maximum practice and exposure to the target language in order to acquire it effectively (Spada 2007, Krashen 1985). Indeed, 7 participants mentioned that the restriction or elimination of the student’s L1 in the classroom as an important aspect of CLT. One teacher noted “In CLT, the use of L1 should be kept to a minimum. The goal is to get students to use English as much as possible to improve their communicative ability”. Another participant added, "We avoid translating into L1 to ensure students stay immersed in the language they are learning”. This aligns with Ellis' (2005) argument that reducing L1 use helps students think in the target language, enhances fluency and promotes faster acquisition. The Likert-scale data further support this finding, as 14% of the participants strongly agreed and 35% agreed that CLT discourages L1 use, though 26% of the participants reported that they are unsure whether CLT prohibits L1 use in the classroom. This uncertainty could stem from the diverse interpretations and implementations of CLT. Indeed, some participants may not have received clear guidance on this aspect of CLT. As noted earlier some participants mentioned that they are not familiar with CLT principles due to their specialization in literature and civilization. Additionally, there is also uncertainty in research concerning this matter. In fact, some researchers advocate for strict L1 avoidance, as they

believe that L1 and L2 should be kept separate as they exist in different cognitive compartments. In contrast, others argue that L1 and L2 overlap and thus they should not be kept separate (Romaine 1988, Harris and Gleason 2003; Wu 2008; Maataouk and Payant 2022). Cook (2001) suggests that a limited, strategic use of L1 can improve students understanding especially during difficult communicative tasks.

The interview data also showed a range of views on the use of student' L1 in language classrooms. Some participants held extreme views such as "zero tolerance", while others were more flexible, not minding its occasional use. A few teachers advocated for a more balanced approach, allowing a moderate use of L1 alongside the target language as shown in the quotations in Table 5.5. These varied perspectives reflect the broader debate on L1 use in CLT.

Teacher code	Quotations
T1	"If we use the word tolerate, I do not mind the use of Arabic. But looking at the situation, they themselves do not even use it so that they don't opt for it. But I imagine if they were to use it, I wouldn't really mind it as long as they try. As long as they try to say it again, using English with my help or with their classmates help, which is something that we've done in the past"
T2	"Rely on their mother tongue? Well, I don't think there are some students who would rely on their mother tongues, maybe for first year students…. we may have some students who would like to express themselves in Arabic, but they don't do it, they don't talk"
T3	"I prefer to leave the L1 one use for content modules when I teach content modules…my experience shows that when we use L1, we block the acquisition of vocab. I don't recommend it for skills acquisition"
T4	"So I firmly believe that especially with the these[sic] our generations to be honest. With social media and the reading material available online… So, I did not tolerate the use of mother tongue. So, you enter my classroom, or my movie theatre, It's strictly English even with each other. when they speak with one another, I don't I don't want to hear a word in our mother tongues"

T5	"I can't blame the students if ever they use their L1 because I myself keep switching to French because I believe I don't know I as a student, I learned English via French , and I from time to time I switch to even Arabic but most of the time to French to explain things but I don't overuse French, but when I see students staring at me so I guess that they didn't understand. I use another language Arabic or French"
T9	"To be honest, I have one golden rule no other language but English No, Kabyle, Arabic no French I've been doing this for many years. Now. It is a bit challenging for the students, but they like it. I do not accept any language except English. This is Extreme, but this is how I work"
T10	"So, if they want to express... We are talking here about, let's say, their oral performance of their writing. Yes. So, if they want to express themselves and they fail to find a word or an expression or they don't know the equivalent in English, so I allow them to use their mother tongue, which means our mother tongue, which is one of the Algerian dialects."

Table 5.5 Interview analysis: Teachers' perspectives on the use of the L1 in EFL classes

The quotations above illustrate a range of views on the use of L1 in the classroom, from flexibility to strict avoidance. T1 is open to the occasional use of the L1, as long as students try to express themselves in English afterward. T2, who acknowledges that some first-year students may rely on L1 even if that rarely happens, seemed to be unbothered by its use in her classroom. Similarly, T5 who admits switching to French or Arabic when necessary but tries not to overdo it, does not perceive L1 use as a problem. In contrast, T3 believes that L1 hinders vocabulary development and should be avoided in the language classroom. T4 and T6 take a stricter stance, as they explicitly ban L1, even between students, while T10 allows it when students struggle with English equivalents. Overall, teachers' views range from permissive to rigid, depending on their belief about how L1 affects language acquisition.

Extreme perspectives on L1 use were reflected in the classroom observations. All observed teachers primarily used English and asked their students to do the same. However, there were a few exceptions: one teacher used Arabic expressions like "let's go" to encourage participation,

and another translated some idiomatic expressions into Arabic, French, and Berber (not for clarification, but to show that idiomatic expressions can be universal). Despite these occasional uses of L1, students consistently relied on English when communicating with the teacher and each other. Any attempts to use their mother tongue were not accepted. For instance, when one student explained a word in Arabic, the teacher promptly responded, “I know the word in Arabic, now say it in English." This showed a clear commitment to maximizing English use in the classroom.

5.2.6 Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness is another theme that emerged from the data analysis. Naik *et al.* (2023), define culture as an integrated system of human behaviour that encompasses thoughts, communications, languages, practices, and beliefs. This suggests that language is part of culture. Scarcella and Oxford (1992), go even further, as they assert that language and culture are so closely linked that they are often viewed as synonymous. This relationship between language and culture led Celce-Murcia (2007) to incorporate a socio-cultural component into the concept of communicative competence, a key component of CLT. She argues that linguistic knowledge alone is insufficient in today’s world, where language learners are likely to encounter multilingual individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Hence, developing cultural knowledge is essential to make and convey meaning. Similarly, Tseng (2002) posits that:

> [...] success in language learning is conditional upon the acquisition of cultural knowledge: language learners acquire cultural background knowledge in order to communicate, and to increase their comprehension in the target language” (p.13)

These perspectives are increasingly integrated in CLT practices, which is reflected in the data obtained in the present study. The Likert-scale data further supports this finding, as 23% of the participants strongly agreed, and 30% agreed with the statement “CLT entails teaching the

target language and the target culture simultaneously". Additionally, qualitative response from the open-ended section of the questionnaire further reinforce this point, as 5 out of 36 participants mentioned that teaching culture is an essential aspect of teaching in CLT. One participant explained, "It's not just about words and grammar; students need to understand the cultural context to communicate effectively." Another noted that "Understanding cultural norms helps students communicate more naturally and effectively, especially in international settings".

These findings align with the views of Oxford (1996), Kramsch (2006;2014) and Nuguyen (2017), who argue that integrating cultural content into language teaching is essential for effective communication in EFL contexts. Additional studies have shown that teachers often view cultural knowledge as a foundational element of CLT. For instance, McKay (2003) found that teachers who prioritize cultural learning see improvements in students' ability to engage in authentic communication, as they can better interpret cultural references and respond appropriately. Overall, one can tell that cultural awareness is viewed as an essential aspect of CLT by both participants in this study and existing literature, which shows the critical role that culture plays in enabling learners to communicative effectively and appropriately in the TL.

The interview data are also in line with the above-mentioned findings. Indeed, 4 out of 10 interviewees mentioned that culture and language learning are interrelated, highlighting the importance of integrating cultural content into their teaching practices (see Table 5.6).

Teacher code	Quotations
T1	"I am actually a firm believer that language and culture are so intricately interwoven, as a lot of researchers have said, so we could not separate the two. So, I do teach my students about cultural dominance and all aspects of the language. Again, like I said, for example, speech figures, figures of speech, including idiomatic expressions, and lots of other things that that's cannot be explained outside of the language they are using because again, they're very closely interrelated language and culture. So yeah, I wouldn't say I designed for lessons exclusively for culture, but every time we have a listening task, a video of sorts or even speaking, I try to include some cultural facts or try to analyze the cultural

	aspects of the language in comparison to our own especially this is one of my favourites, because it shows you how maybe how much intercultural awareness they have or they could have potentially
T3	"I believe in language and culture being intricately connected and we are very much into that cultural side…."
T7	"I do not believe that language can be learned only in terms of communication without any background concerning the culture, the civilization and literature, or even the structural aspect of the mind. Because nowadays, people really focus more on just the spoken English, they believe that they speak good English, mainly because they can say a few sentences and be understood, especially teenagers, nowadays, in Algeria,"
T8	"English is not only a language, it's also accompanied by a culture it is born and spoken within a context. So, for me, it's important to include this aspect"
T9	"I think the biggest obstacle to English teaching here in Algeria is a lack of cultural knowledge, because sometimes when I teach my students about other countries they tell me, for instance, we are Muslims we don't do that. for instance, I'm going to tell you organ donation. What do you think about organ donation? We'll have to discuss it sometimes. They bring up religion all the time…. And they are not really practicing religion. They take what suits them. I remember when I told them and this it is impossible to study English without studying the culture of others. I will like, force you or ask you to follow them. Me too. I'm not following that. Me too. I'm proud of my culture. Yes, I'm proud of my culture, I'm Muslim, and so on. But it doesn't mean that we should bring up religion whenever we discuss everything…This is a big problem with students. So, the problem is with culture. We cannot learn a foreign language without going into culture."

Table 5.6 Interview analysis: Teachers' perspectives on the integration of culture in language classes

The quotations above illustrate participants' strong beliefs about the inseparability of language and culture, yet they also highlight complexities and challenges in addressing cultural content within their teaching context. T1 emphasises that language cannot be effectively taught without cultural context, especially when it comes to idiomatic expressions, which often lack direct

translations and are deeply related to cultural norms. While T1 does not create lessons exclusively focused on culture, she incorporates cultural elements through listening and speaking tasks, as she thinks that cultural understanding enriches students' grasp of the language's nuances. This approach aligns with research promoting the integration of culture into language instruction to develop intercultural competence (Byram and Savvides 2013).

T3 and T8 echo this perspective, as they view culture as an essential part of language. They believe that language reflects the context in which it is used and failing to address its cultural aspects limits learners' ability to communicate effectively. This perspective supports scholars like Scarcella and Oxford (1992), who argue that culture is not just an addition to language learning but a critical component of it. However, T9 highlights the fact that a lack of cultural knowledge is a barrier to English language learning in Algeria, when cultural and religious beliefs are in conflict with aspects of the target language culture. This clash suggests that integrating cultural content is not always easy and requires sensitivity. For example, T9 mentioned resistance from students when discussing topics like organ donation, as students mention religious beliefs, even if they may not adhere to them. This resistance can be traced back to the cultural deterioration caused by the "Black Decade"; a civil war that took place in Algeria in the 1990s, a period marked by extreme violence, political instability, and societal upheaval which led to significant cultural and educational disruption. This period implied a shift towards more conservative and extreme attitudes. This finding aligns with Hassan (2014), who found in her study that concepts, such as "gay marriage" and "homosexuality," which are socially and culturally sensitive or unacceptable in Middle Eastern contexts, present significant challenges for EFL learners. This highlights a deeper issue; while cultural awareness in language learning needs to be approached in ways that are sensitive to students' beliefs and cultural identities, it cannot be entirely limited to them (Byram, 1997 p. 34; Corbett 2003). Indeed, if learners are only exposed to content that fully aligns with their own cultural norms, they are deprived of opportunities to engage with the diverse perspectives and practices that underpin authentic language use. Hence, the challenge for the teacher lies in finding a balance between acknowledging learner's sociocultural contexts while gradually introducing them to aspects of the target culture that may initially appear unfamiliar or even uncomfortable, as part

of developing intercultural communicative competence (Byram and Stevens 2001, p.7).

While the interview and questionnaire findings are in line, the classroom observations tell a different story. Only one teacher out of 14, integrated cultural content into her lesson, yet it was not focused on the target language culture. Indeed, the lesson revolved around exploring unusual cultural practices from around the world. The teacher distributed images showing people engaged in various traditions and asked students to guess their ethnicity. This was followed by a discussion on practices within their own culture that might be seen as unusual to outsiders. This activity was highly engaging, as students had a lot to share about their different cultures. However, no references were made to the target language culture. This suggests a gap between the teachers' stated beliefs about cultural awareness in CLT and its application in the observed lessons. This discrepancy between participants' expressed beliefs about the importance of cultural awareness in CLT and their actual classroom practices can be explained by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Argyris' concept of espoused theory versus theory-in-use. Argyris and Schon (1985 cited in Kerr 2009, p.4) differentiate between what people say they believe (espoused theory) and what they actually do (theory-in-use). Teachers may espouse a belief in the importance of cultural awareness in language teaching, which is reflected in the interviews and questionnaire data. However, when it comes to practical application, their practices may differ. This could be due to limitations, such as time constraints, or a lack of confidence in discussing cultural nuances of the TL. In the observed example, cultural content was included, but it revolved around global cultures and students' own backgrounds rather than the target language culture, possibly because the teacher might think that they are already familiar with the TL culture. Similarly, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory suggests that learning occurs in a social and cultural context, where interaction and mediated learning (scaffolding) are essential for development. Teachers might express a strong belief in the importance of integrating cultural content, as it aligns with their understanding of CLT's goals for promoting meaningful and contextualized language use. However, without support or a community that provides resources, models, or a curriculum designed for integrating cultural content, they may find it difficult to apply this concept in their classrooms. Another possible explanation for the observed discrepancy, is that the teachers may not have

included cultural content in their lessons, because it was irrelevant to their lesson objectives. They might have included it in other lessons. Building on the focus on cultural awareness, the data further reveal the importance of contextualizing language learning, a theme that will be explored in the following section.

5.2.7 Contextualization and Authentic Learning

Contextualization is a core principle in CLT, as it promotes teaching the TL in ways that reflects its use in real-life situations. According to Korkmaz and Korkmaz (2013), effective language learning implies using the language within meaningful contexts that mirror real-life situations. Similarly, Scrivener and Coghlan (2011) highlights the importance of teaching linguistic items in context, instead of in isolation. Doing so helps students to better grasp any given structures. This aligns with CLT's emphasis on CC, where language learning involves, authentic exchanges rather than rigid grammar instruction. In the current study, teachers echoed the importance of contextualization, with 6 participants emphasizing contextualization as an important aspect of teaching in CLT. However, their responses were less detailed compared to other themes, as all of them simply referred to 'context' without any elaboration. This aligns with the interview data, where only 2 out of 10 interviewees mentioned contextualization. For example, T1 mentioned that "mastering the skills that are needed for real life and for their workplace in the future", while T2 reported that she "always encourage my students to role play situations so as to, to feel themselves as if they're in a real-life situation". The limited emphasis on contextualization in the data could be due to its natural overlap with the concept of CC, a core element of CLT that inherently involves using language in real-life contexts. In other words, the overlap between these concepts may have led participants to view contextualization as part of the broader goal of developing CC, rather than as an independent focus, thus explaining its limited explicit mention in the data. This overlap is supported by scholars such as Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013), who argue that practicing language in context is essential for effective communication, making it difficult to separate contextualization from CC in CLT.

As far as classroom observations are concerned, as highlighted when discussing the theme of

CC (see section 5.3.1), some participants relied on a set of activities that aimed at helping students to develop real-life communication skills. Observed activities included role-plays, such as initiating conversations with strangers, making complaints to a boss, or returning a package, all of which encouraged students to practise language in practical, real-world scenarios. Additionally, teachers incorporated authentic materials, such as audio recordings on topics like internet addiction and conversations illustrating adverb use, as well as stories and texts from books and websites. These practices underscore participants' emphasis on contextualized and authentic language learning, that helps students to connect classroom language with real-world applications and fosters their communicative competence in meaningful ways.

5.2.8 Integration of Core and Communicative Skills

In CLT, an emphasis on developing language skills aligns with its focus on real-world communication. In this study some participants highlighted the importance of focusing on the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, within CLT. Specifically, 3 out of 36 participants identified these four skills as essential components of the approach, viewing a balanced skill set as foundational for CC. This perspective aligns with language learning research, which suggests that integrating the four skills promotes a more comprehensive language acquisition process, enabling students to handle diverse communicative tasks effectively (Richards 2006). In contrast, another 3 participants indicated that CLT should focus primarily on communicative skills, particularly speaking and writing. These skills are considered essential for interaction, as they reflect a learner's ability to convey and interpret messages actively, which is central to CLT's goal of fostering meaningful communication (Hymes 1972). Proponents of CLT, such as Littlewood (1981), suggest that while all skills are necessary, speaking and writing are particularly relevant for interactive competence, as they directly engage students in the social use of language. This focus on communicative output in CLT aligns with its goal of preparing learners for real-life exchanges where fluent and accurate expression is essential (Richards and Rodgers 2001; Savignon 2018). Similarly, Duff (2014) asserts that CLT involves focusing on teaching and learning both oral and written communication skills.

It is worth mentioning that 2 other participants mentioned that CLT prioritizes listening and speaking over reading and writing. This reflects a common misconception about CLT, which, while emphasizing communicative abilities, does not exclude any of the four skills from its approach (Richards and Rodgers2001, 2014). Brown (2007) and Spada (2007) emphasise that while CLT often prioritizes listening and speaking due to their role in active interaction, reading and writing remain essential components for comprehensive communicative competence. This misconception may arise because listening and speaking are often viewed as more practical in real-world conversations, but CLT advocates for an integrated approach to language skills (Larsen-Freeman 2000; Han 2022). This varied emphasis in participant responses suggests different interpretations of CLT's objectives. While some teachers view balanced skill development as crucial, others focus on skills that foster direct communicative ability. These diverse perspectives may stem from the fact that CLT is not a fixed construct with one rigid definition as highlighted in the literature review chapter (see section 3.4). Indeed, CLT is a flexible and adaptable approach that allows teachers to interpret it and apply it according to their own understanding and classroom contexts, which while offering autonomy to teachers, can lead to variation and confusion (Harmer 2003; Nunan 2004).

The interview data align with the questionnaire findings. When participants were asked about the skills they focus on in their language classes, responses varied, with some teachers focusing on the four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), while others prioritized oral skills. However, all participants noted that their focus shifts depending on the specific goals of each lesson. For instance, they explained that in listening and speaking lessons, emphasis is naturally placed on oral skills, whereas in reading and writing classes, the focus moves toward literacy skills. For example, one teacher emphasised that in a speaking class, activities revolve around developing students' communicative skills, while in a writing class, the focus is on structuring sentences and understanding grammar (see Table 5.7).

Teacher code	Quotations
T1	"The main skills are listening. And speaking, I put a lot of focus on listening

	because I feel like it's disregarded by a lot of teachers and students. And I like to link that to phonetics and phonology. And I like to focus whenever we have a video or an audio recording, I like to focus on aspects of connected speech, the secrets, the tricks, why we do we don't understand what the person is saying, even though if it's shown to us because clearly understand that like if it's shown to us like in written form, as in subtitles, for example. So, I always like to link these two, especially because phonetics is I guess, subjects that I'm really interested in. So, I focus on listening, in terms of that"
T2	"I found myself giving or putting more emphasis on speaking rather than listening"
T3	"I believe in the integrative teaching skills, reading brings writing, listening, brings speaking, and the more you practice"
T7	"I focus on all of them, but depending on our sessions"
T8	"As I said before, we are focused on acquiring the English language in terms of skills. For speaking it is communication skills. For the reading it is skills of as I said, scanning, the ability to scan to scan. So, know what you are looking for in the conversation ability to recognize different types of English to understand different dialects different. For example, making the difference between formal and informal making a difference between American and British and Australian and although they are not, they're not major objectives"
T9	"I focus on grammar…. How to construct a paragraph…., I don't focus on speaking, as I said most students are fluent, but they don't have critical thinking skills, they don't know how to organize their ideas, so academic skills are more important"
T10	"The major sub-skill that they have to focus on, is developing this notion of critical thinking. Maybe critical writing because they have to interpret what they see in the text, in the short story or the novel into writing. So, they have to know how to write critically."

Table 5.7 Interview analysis: Teachers' perspectives on the incorporation of the four basic skills in language classes.

The quotations above illustrate diverse perspectives among participants regarding skill focus in language teaching. T10 and T9 emphasise the importance of developing critical thinking skills, with T10 focusing on "critical writing" to help students analyse texts and express their interpretations effectively. Similarly, T9 stresses academic skills, noting that many students lack organizational and critical thinking abilities, making these skills a priority over speaking. Meanwhile, T8 discusses the need for students to develop both communication skills in speaking and reading skills, such as scanning and understanding different accents, although she mentioned that dialect awareness is a secondary goal.

On the other hand, T3 promotes an integrative approach, where skills support one another, such as reading reinforcing writing and listening reinforcing speaking, highlighting the interconnected nature of language skills. T2 and T1 focus more specifically on listening and speaking skills. T2 finds speaking naturally emphasised, while T1 prioritizes listening, especially linking it to phonetics and phonology to improve students' understanding of connected speech and pronunciation. Overall, these views reflect a balance between fostering foundational language skills and integrating higher-order skills, like critical thinking. The emphasis varies depending on the teaching objectives, with some prioritizing critical academic skills, others communicative competence, and others opting for an integrated approach.

Overall, this section indicates that Algerian lecturers perceive CLT as a learner-centered approach that aims to develop students' communicative competence and places emphasis on meaning over form. This perspective aligns with the strong version of CLT (see Chapter 3, section 3.4), which advocates minimal focus on explicit grammar instruction and error correction while promoting immersive communicative language use. The findings also reveal that most participants believe CLT prohibits the use of the L1 in the classroom, while some expressed uncertainty regarding the role of error correction within a CLT approach. This uncertainty may indicate gaps in understanding or a need for further professional development in CLT principles (see Chapter 6, section 6.7). Participants also showed awareness of CLT's emphasis on integrating cultural knowledge with language instruction. This awareness may partly explain why they reported eclecticism as the most commonly used teaching approach

rather than CLT itself (see section 5.3), as certain aspects of the target language's culture may not align with Algerian cultural norms. Therefore, it is possible that lecturers interpret CLT mainly through the lens of its strong version, which could make them unaware of their implicit use of communicative strategies in the classroom. This finding echoes Almohideb's (2019) study in Saudi Arabia, where participants were similarly claimed not to use CLT, even though their teaching practices demonstrated otherwise This suggests that lecturers' understanding of CLT might shape their perspectives and reported practices.

From and AT perspective, this discrepancy can be understood through the mediating role of teachers' cognition, which acts as a conceptual tool shaping their views and reported approaches. As illustrated in Figure 5.3, lecturers' strong version understanding of CLT interacts with contextual rules and the community of learners. Cultural factors and students' beliefs influence how teachers interpret and present CLT, leading many to report an eclectic approach as a more contextually appropriate label, even though their classroom practices reflect communicative principles. Thus, cognition mediates between belief and action, explaining the observed gap between teachers' reported and enacted practices.

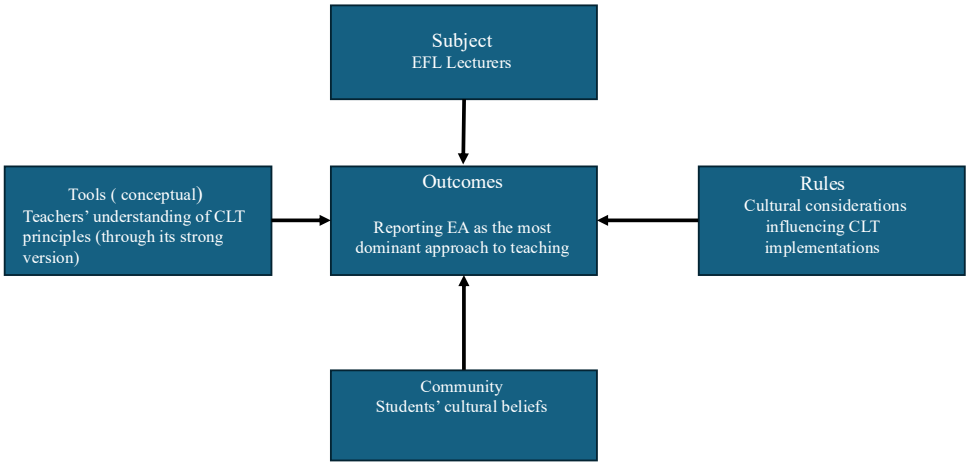


Figure 5.1 Activity Theory mapping of teachers' Cognition of CLT

5.3 Strategies and Practices

5.3.1 Eclecticism

The theme of eclecticism emerged from the data as a key feature of English language teaching practices in the chosen educational environment. Eclecticism involves combining various teaching methods and strategies to meet diverse learner needs. Indeed, according to Brown (2002, pp.10-11), the eclectic approach (EA) allows teachers to choose materials and methods that work best in their classroom, without relying on a single teaching method. Hence, eclecticism does not depend on one method or strategy, which can reflect the lack of a unified strategy (Wali 2009, p.40). The findings from this study show that a consistent teaching strategy is mostly absent. Based on questionnaire data, we see that 86% of the respondents (37 out of 43, spread across all the institutions) indicated that there is neither a formal policy nor a clearly identifiable implicit strategy on teaching English within English departments (see Table 5.8). This number of negative responses suggests a significant absence of standardized approaches or guidelines to English language instruction within the chosen context. This lack of unified policy may give lecturers more flexibility in their teaching practices. Indeed, without prescribed methods teachers are likely to adopt diverse techniques based on their personal preferences, experiences, and perceptions of student needs (Brandmiller *et al*. 2018). Doing so allows teachers to adapt their teaching to better suit the learning styles and needs of their students (Van Geel *et al*. 2019; Smale-Jacobse *et al*. 2019).

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	13.95%	6
2	No	86.05%	37
	Total	100%	43

Table 5.8 Questionnaire Analysis: Teachers' responses to the implementation of teaching policies and implicit strategies

Additionally, when asked to elaborate, participants who acknowledged the existence of a policy and implicit strategies to teaching English (14% across all institutions), referred to a variety of approaches that are characteristic of eclecticism rather than a standard policy. This suggests a possible discrepancy between lecturers' awareness of a policy and its actual existence. It implies that while a policy might be in place, its implementation or communication to lecturers may not always be consistent. This discrepancy can be explained through Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Engeström's AT. Indeed, according to Vygotsky (1987), teaching practices are influenced by the tools and resources accessible within the educational setting, including policies and institutional guidelines. When these tools are not effectively shared or supported, instructors may opt for methods that they believe are effective based on their personal preferences, experiences and available resources.

Moreover, Table 5.9. presents the results of the thematic analysis of the participants' responses to the open-ended question "*How is English taught in Algerian higher education, within departments of English*". The findings indicate that eclecticism is the most commonly reported approach to teaching. Additionally, two participants mentioned CLT. This suggests that while eclecticism is predominant, communicative strategies also play an important role in this context.

Approaches	Number of answers	Comments
Eclecticism	4	Participants indicated explicitly that eclecticism in the most common approach to teaching in the chosen context
Communication and interaction approaches (Communicative approach)	2	One participant mentioned the promotion of communication and interaction among students, and the promotion of learner-centeredness. Another one mentioned the integration of the four basic language skills which is a core principle of CLT (see chapter 1, section 3.4.1)

Table 5.9 Questionnaire Analysis: Most common way of teaching by EFL lecturers

This finding aligns with broader literature on English language teaching in Algeria. Indeed, Belmekki (2022) along with Khelafa and Khelil (2023) assert that in the Algerian context, lecturers have adopted eclectic practices to address the challenges posed by the LMD (License-Master-Doctorate) system, which requires a more flexible and student-centered approach to teaching (Bouhadiba 2021). According to Ellis (2008), by integrating a variety of methods, lecturers can better engage students and enhance learning outcomes, aligning with global trends which is the primary goal of the integration of the LMD system in Algeria (Ali-Rabah and Routi 2021).

Qualitative data from the interviews support the results from the questionnaire. Notably, 6 out of the 10 interview participants indicated their reliance on an EA illustrated in Table 5.10.

Teacher code	Quotations
T1	But for me, personally, I use an eclectic method, I like to take what I think works from each method from each approach…Because the methods that were discovered in the past, were obviously very useful back then. But now with all the technological advancements that we are witnessing, it's probably not ideal to stick to base methods. So, we need to come up with new ones and try to adjust according to the new generations.
T4	I tend to be eclectic. I derive from different approaches and methods to teach English, whether in an English department at university or during my six years in private schools.
T5	Yes, I don't think that there is the best method of teaching, we should depend on what we teach. We have to be eclectic.
T8	I think there's no best method, I think the most efficient way is to combine several methods, because each one has its strong points, take aways, and each one has its flaws. So, the best way to really help the students is to combine the best of, of [sic] each method. This is what I would try to do. I mean, I don't know if I ever succeeded, my students would have to tell you that. But for me, following one method or two methods and saying that's what I would be working with would not be that efficient.

Table 5.10 Interview analysis: Teachers' preferred teaching strategies

In the above quotations, T1 emphasised the importance of combining traditional and modern methods to adapt to the evolving educational environments, particularly with technological advancements. Similarly, T5 and T8 highlighted that no single teaching method is universally

best, advocating for an eclectic approach tailored to the content and context, with flexibility viewed as essential for effective teaching. T4 on the other hand highlighted her consistent use of the eclectic approach in various teaching environments, reflecting a belief in its effectiveness for meeting diverse student needs and adapting to different educational contexts.

The classroom observation data reflects both alignment and discrepancy with the questionnaire and interview data. Indeed, the actual classroom observation of the participants indicated both eclecticism and communicative strategies. Indeed, some participants employed methods traditionally associated with the Grammar Translation Method. For example, two teachers used reading comprehension activities where students answered questions in the target language based on their understanding of the text. Four other participants used fill-in-the-blank activities where students were given a set of sentences with words missing and had to fill in the blanks with new vocabulary items (adverbs). Additionally, two teachers engaged students in text composition tasks: one asked students to write about a memorable event, while another asked them to complete a fictional story using narrative tenses. Moreover, one teacher used translation to teach idiomatic expressions; she provided her students with equivalents of phrases like "Kill two birds with one stone" in Arabic, French, and Berber. These particular techniques are based on the Grammar Translation Method GTM (Larsen-Freeman, 2006, pp. 19-20). Another participant employed pronunciation drills, a technique rooted in the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) (Brooks 1964 cited in Richard and Rogers 2001, p.60). In this example, the students had to mimic the pronunciation of the examples provided by the teacher. Listening comprehension activities, which also have roots in the ALM, and oral presentations were widely used. However, a key observation was that these activities were often followed by discussions and debates among students. This indicates that while some strategies originated from more traditional methodologies, they were adapted to serve a communicative purpose. Moreover, the remaining participants (the majority) incorporated communicative activities such as, role-plays, and group or pair work, reflecting the use of CLT principles in their teaching practices (see Chapter 3, section 3.4.1). The emphasis on student interaction, meaning negotiation, and real-life language use suggest that, despite employing a range of methodologies, lecturers were ultimately committed to fostering a communicative learning

environment.

It is worth noting that research in the field of ELT supports the flexibility and adaptability of the eclectic approach allowing teachers to adapt methods to meet the specific needs of students, making it a practical choice in various teaching environments (Kumar 2013). This is particularly relevant in contexts like Algeria, where resources may be limited or where teachers must address a wide range of learner needs and backgrounds. Many teaching methods and approaches were initially designed for ESL contexts, as discussed in the literature review chapter, which contributes to the challenges of applying them effectively in EFL contexts.

The findings of this study align with many previous studies in other contexts, highlighting the widespread use of the EA in EFL contexts. For instance, Hakim (2019) explored the effect of the EA on teaching communication skills in a Saudi Arabian university. Hakim found that the experimental group, which was taught using the eclectic method, showed better performance compared to the control group, which followed a more traditional method. Similarly, Al-Jarrah *et al*. (2019) explored the implementation of the EA for teaching EFL to 61 male Arab students using an experimental design that includes both quantitative and qualitative data. Their study found that the EA exposed students to a variety of teaching techniques and helped them to break the monotony of traditional methods. Furthermore, this approach enabled the integration of modern teaching aids, such as audio-visual tools and computers, as extensions of the classroom. Dabon *et al*. (2019) also assessed the effectiveness of the EA in enhancing English-speaking skills among Thai students. The results of her study demonstrated a significant improvement in students' English-speaking skills, with their proficiency advancing from basic to intermediate levels. Moreover, specific areas of language learning and teaching have been examined using the EA. Asif and Khan (2022) surveyed English teachers instructing undergraduate students in Pakistan to investigate the role of the eclectic approach in teaching English for communication and social interaction. Their findings indicated that, compared to other techniques, the eclectic approach is highly effective in teaching communicative functions such as presentations, dialogues, and role-plays. Additionally, this approach was found to significantly motivate students, both in learning language rules and in applying them for real communication.

In addition, Ali (2022) focused on improving oral fluency in adult participants, with an emphasis on phonological awareness through relying on an eclectic approach-based programme. The findings of this study showed that the eclectic approach had a positive impact on developing oral fluency, increasing phonological awareness, and improving grammatical accuracy, complexity, and lexical diversity among the learners. Additionally, Dozie *et al*. (2023) conducted experiments with first-year university students in Nigeria to identify effective teaching strategies for enhancing writing proficiency in Nigerian ESL learners. Her findings suggest that eclectic teaching techniques are crucial for enhancing writing proficiency among students.

The findings in this section reveal both alignment and discrepancies across different data sources. In the questionnaire, 86% of the participants reported the EA as the dominant approach to ELT in the chosen context, a claim that was largely supported by interview data. However, classroom observations provided a more nuanced picture, showing that while eclecticism was evident, many teachers drew heavily on CLT principles in their classroom practices. Notably, there was a clear inclination towards developing students' communicative competence, as many observed activities, such as group/pair work, role plays, listening tasks, and oral presentations were used to promote meaningful communication. This finding aligns with the questionnaire findings where participants, when asked about their preferred teaching strategies, primarily reported strategies associated with CLT (see next section). This discrepancy may be due to lecturers' interpretation of CLT (see section 5.3) as well as contextual challenges (see Chapter 6). The next section explores this further.

5.3.2 Communicative Activities

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach that focuses on helping students learn a language with the goal of effective communication (Duff 2014, p.28). Due to its practical relevance in today's globalized world, CLT is often seen as the most effective approach for ELT (Han 2022). CLT aims to develop students' communicative competence by engaging them in meaningful, real-world tasks (see Chapter 1, section 3.4). It integrates reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills through a range of communicative activities. These activities include group work, pair activities (Richards and Rodgers 2014; Velarde *et al*. 2022), role-plays (Savignon 1993; Velarde *et al*. 2022), information gap activities (Owen *et al.* 2019; Gao 2015) and problem-solving tasks (Ur 1996; Velarde *et al.* 2022) to boost fluency and confidence in using the target language. Based on the data gathered from the questionnaire, we see most participants reporting that they use many of these activities always or frequently. When participants were asked about their preferred teaching practices, specifically, "*How often do you use the following activities in your English language classes?"* (Appendix D), the majority selected activities from the 6-point Likert scale that fall under the category of communicative activities.

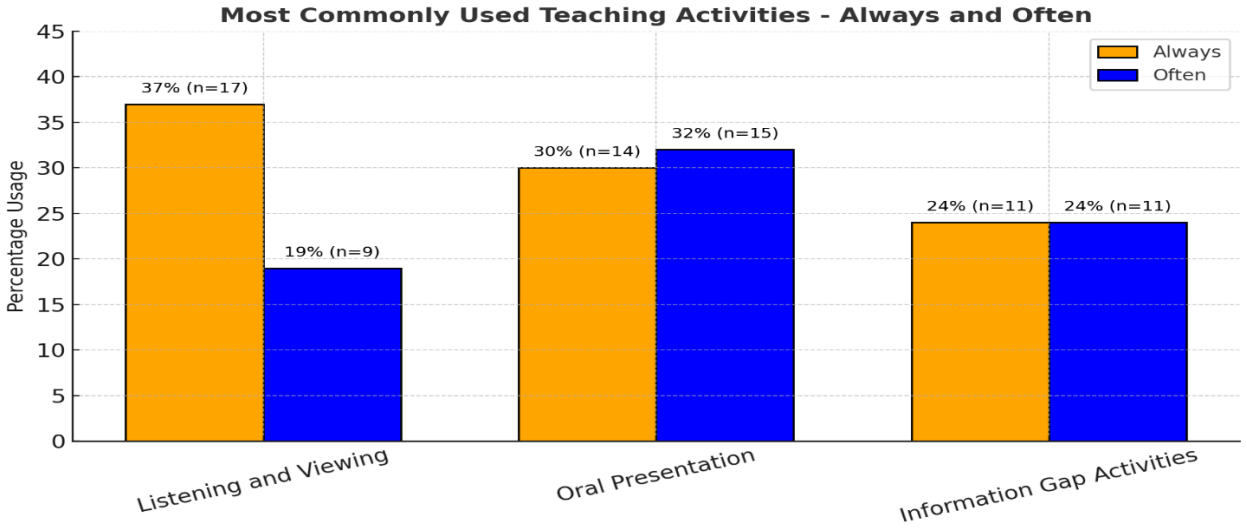


Figure 5.2 Questionnaire analysis: Teachers' most commonly used activities in their English language classes

As illustrated in Figure 5.1, 37% of participants consistently use listening and viewing activities in their classes, while 19% use them frequently. These activities primarily focus on enhancing receptive language skills, such as understanding spoken language and visual information (Ivone and Renandya 2019). Integrating these activities can also help students expand their vocabulary by exposing them to words in context, which enhances their understanding of various situations (Cohen 2008). For example, Ivone and Renadaya (2019), explored research supporting the implementation of these activities in Indonesia and highlighted their benefits for language learning in different contexts. They argued that these activities not only enhance students' listening skills but also their overall language development. Furthermore, these activities introduce students to authentic language, familiarizing them with idiomatic expressions and various accents, which enhances cultural awareness (Kamaeva *et al*. 2022). This finding suggests that a majority of participants prefer activities that boost cultural understanding and provide authentic language exposure. The characteristics of these activities correlate with the principles of CLT, such as promoting authenticity and cultural understanding (Spada 2008).

These findings partially correspond with the interview data. Some participants indicated that they incorporate both listening and viewing activities, while others indicated that they do not use visual activities due to the lack of projectors, labs, and internet access, as shown in Table 5.11.

Teacher code	Quotations
T3	"We definitely need smaller groups. And a lot of media, I'm doing my research on that. And the data show that students are extremely eager to have, and would love to have more media related activities".
T4	"I use speakers. So, and also sometimes they may well, for as a teacher's aide, I may bring a map and stick it on the board to explain a notion sometimes for the free listening phase. I also use authentic videos that feature native speakers. So, they will be listening and watching the scenes and dialogue. Sometimes it's a dialogue actually, it's not people talking about a specific topic. So, because I find my students at ease whenever they, they watch so they are more focused, they stay more focused, and they're more likely to answer the questions". "I remember I as a student, we studied this thing in labs. Okay. But now, students do not have labs, because I don't know. Maybe they are more numerous now ".
T6	"We don't use data show (projectors) ".

T8	"We could rely on only a few years back for example, we had laboratories with consoles the console with headphones, we could really use our own material, CDs recorded tapes, and so on as well to expose this to native speakers through. "Even, the acoustics are not good enough to practice listening, we do not hear each other properly, classrooms are very large and when they are full of students, it's really difficult to have proper communication in classrooms like these. So, the facilities I mean, just for example and a classroom soundproof classroom so no Easy English we would not be able to hear outside and we'll be able to really listen and hear each other in this the basic and then of course, it would be good to have access to rooms for projecting with overhead projectors and projecting movies documentaries or different".
T9	"We have the resource, the book "Picture" as a resource, the first element or a limited resource, and we have videos, audio visual, YouTube. I worked with [sic] that the last year, not yet for this year….. I tried with videos of Mr. Barack Obama. Okay, His English is I think, clearer than the old ones".
T10	"At times I have to use the data show if I opt for teaching them, how to write a critical paragraph…we have the data show, and I am writing and everyone is contributing to the paragraph. And each time there is a contribution, I have to comment on that, whether it's good, it needs perfection or it's already perfect or good, acceptable".

Table 5.11 Interview analysis: Teachers' use of listening and viewing materials.

The findings from the quotations reveal that teachers frequently use multimedia resources, such as videos, audio recordings, and visual aids, to enhance student engagement and comprehension in English language learning. However, the discrepancy in the availability and use of these resources can be attributed to the fact that the data were collected from different universities, each offering varying levels of facilities. While some institutions provide advanced tools like language laboratories and consoles, others rely on more limited resources, leading to differences in teaching practices and the materials available to support student learning. For example, T4 reported using loudspeakers, maps, and authentic videos featuring native speakers to maintain students focus and improve their ability to answer questions. This suggests that T4 has access to a range of teaching aids that support interactive and visually engaging lessons.

On the other hand, T8 mentioned that a few years ago, their university provided laboratories with consoles and headphones, allowing teachers to use CDs and recorded tapes to expose students to native speakers. However, the phrasing suggests that these resources may no longer

be available, indicating a potential decline in facilities over time, or the impossibility of using these facilities because of the increasing number of students. In fact, with Algeria's rapidly increasing population and over 1.5 million students enrolling in tertiary education each year (Statista research department 2024), the government struggles to keep pace with the demand for educational resources, especially that education remains free and accessible to all. T3 highlighted this issue by stating:

> We have an ever-growing population…, and that's a good thing. But the means don't follow up. The means of education don't follow up and the public services or the public administration is is is [sic] just has had their hands tied for this particular issue. Even at the school level in primary high school, middle school level. It's the same problem for many pupils

Similarly, T9 discussed using limited resources such as books, videos, and YouTube content, including speeches by Barack Obama, to help students understand clearer English. This indicates that while T9 is making effective use of available materials, the resources at their disposal may be more restricted compared to other institutions. These examples highlight that the discrepancy in teaching practices and the use of multimedia resources is influenced by the varying levels of facilities available at different universities. These examples reveal a mixed experience among teachers regarding their use of listening and viewing activities in their classes, mainly due to inconsistent access to teaching tools across different universities. This discrepancy affects the consistency of instructional practices. It is important to note that the participants who reported not using projectors are all from the same university, which houses the largest English department in Algeria, accommodating the highest number of English students. This university is located in the capital and hence attracts many students from various regions of the country, as many students believe that institutions in the capital offer better learning opportunities. However, this belief is no longer accurate, as the university struggles to provide adequate access to resources due to the overwhelming number of students. As one participant pointed out:

> Everybody wants to go to the capital city, particularly in Algiers. You will find some universities well off, better off than the capital city, because they have a smaller population. Algiers is a particularly challenging place because everybody wants to be here. So, there's an imbalance that's really wide now, the public administration knows, we know the staff knows the students know, there's no, there's no way out financially.

This shows a growing imbalance, where demand for education in the capital exceeds the available resources, adding significant pressure on the university's facilities and staff. While student places are allocated at entry according to overall departmental availability, rising enrollment over the past decades (Metatla 2016; Statistica Research Department 2024) has far outpaced the existing infrastructure, especially language laboratories. Indeed, most universities and laboratories were built many years ago, when student numbers were considerably lower. Today, however, class sizes frequently exceed 60 students, making it impossible to use these facilities effectively. This illustrates how institutional constraints can shape teaching practices from logistical perspectives.

Hence, the discrepancy mentioned earlier may also be attributed to large class sizes. In fact, 67% of participants identified class size as the most significant challenge, while 45% highlighted a shortage of teaching materials (see Chapter 6). This gap likely reflects participants' efforts to meet educational standards despite these obstacles. For instance, in the observed classes, teachers mainly relied on listening activities, with 13 out of 14 participants using their own loudspeakers. They chose to use personal speakers because large class sizes made it impossible to utilize language labs, which can only accommodate around 20 students. Indeed, with class sizes often exceeding 60 students, the use of labs becomes unfeasible, as highlighted by T10 who stated:

> I think that's... A decent lab is very important. It's crucial to language teaching. And the problem is we have labs. Not the ones being used or employed in language teaching. Okay. We have loudspeakers and mics. But it's the problem of classroom size. If you have a lab with 20 seats, or assigned

> to 20 students, and you have a class of 60 students, if you want to teach listening and speaking, for instance, listening and speaking in a proper way, you will have to divide the session into three weeks. That's why we have labs at the level of universities, different universities, but they are not used.

Another possible explanation for this discrepancy is the shortage of teaching materials. Indeed, T2 mentioned how this limitation impacts her teaching practices, noting that she often has to bring her own resources. She explained that "sometimes if we are teaching listening, if there are three or four teachers teaching listening at the same time, I have to take my own speakers. We don't have enough materials."

To compensate for the lack of viewing activities two participants relied on alternative visual aids, such as printed pictures. To cite an instance, one participant used images of Gaudi's architectural work. She distributed the images to the students who then discussed them in groups of six. Another teacher asked students to watch a YouTube video on their own devices as she did not have a projector in class. However, some students were unable to participate in this activity as they did not have internet access on their phones. Therefore, the teacher lent them her iPad and asked them to pass it around after watching the video. The student then discussed what they had watched. The teacher told the researcher that exposing students to authentic conversations was essential, which is why she used this method. Additionally, another participant created a Facebook group where she posted videos for students to watch at home and later discuss in class.

Figure 5.2, also indicates that a significant number of participants (30%) consistently incorporate oral presentations in their classes, with an additional 32% using this activity frequently. Oral presentations are a valuable tool in language classes, allowing students to practice and enhance their communication skills. They prepare students for real-life scenarios where they must present information, articulate thoughts, and engage in conversations in the target language (King 2002). Furthermore, incorporating oral presentations can promote active participation, engagement, and interaction among students, aligning with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Spada 2007). These activities help cultivate

linguistic proficiency and essential skills for effective communication and cultural competence (Richards, 2006). For example, Farabi *et.al,* (2017), who explored the role of oral presentations in enhancing language development and critical thinking within Iranian higher education, found that oral presentations significantly motivate learners and improve communication skills, contributing to better language aptitudes. Likewise, Riadil (2020) observed that oral presentations in Tidar University's English department enhance students' linguistic competence and vocabulary acquisition.

Also, during the observation, the researcher observed that three teachers incorporated oral presentation activities into their lessons. Presenters were required to face their classmates and deliver their work without relying on notes. Teachers asked the participants questions and encouraged the audience to do the same to promote engagement, while also providing feedback after each presentation. Each session ended with a debate or discussion, which students seemed to enjoy. The presentation topics focused on technology, unusual traditions, notable monuments, and lasted between 3 to 5 minutes. The topic of unusual traditions, in particular, triggered students' interest due to their diverse cultural backgrounds, including Algerois, Kabyle, Chaoui, and others, making the discussions especially engaging.

Additionally, 24% (see Figure 5.2) of participants indicated that they consistently use information gap activities in their classes, with a similar percentage reporting frequent use. Information gap is an interactive task where two students possess different pieces of information, unknown to each other, and must communicate effectively to complete the activity (Levihn and Hedenquist 1986, p .100; Rahimi 2016). That is to say, information gap activities are activities in which one student has information, and another one has to obtain it (Rueb *et al*. 2016). These activities are substantially interactive, requiring students to engage with one another, thus fostering collaboration and communication. This social aspect enhances language learning by enabling students to learn from peers and practise the target language in a supportive environment (Littlewood 1983). Furthermore, the interactive nature of these activities creates a dynamic and participatory learning atmosphere, which can boost student motivation and engagement (Richards 2005). This aligns with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasises the importance of social interaction in cognitive development. By engaging

in peer interactions, students learn from one another, enhancing their understanding and language skills in a supportive environment (Vygotsky 1978 cited in Boblett 2012, pp. 3-5).

These findings do not entirely align with the classroom observations. Only one participant used an information gap activity in her class, which took the form of an interview. Interviews are particularly effective for information gap activities, as they imply exchanging missing information. The teachers asked her students to individually prepare interview questions about the topic of internet addiction and then had them pair up and take turns interviewing each other, making notes about their partners' responses. Then, they were asked to rotate to another group, asking them the same question. The teacher modelled this with some students first to show her students how they should do this activity.

Additionally, only one participant, T1, mentioned incorporating information gap activities into her teaching during the interviews. She explained her approach as follows:

> There is this, this technique that I've been taught by a teacher of mine…, which is I bring a video or short video short movie, and then I have half of the classroom, watch the first half of the video, and then the other half watch the last half of the video, right? Then I divide the class into two groups and the two groups do not know what happens in the other parts that they did not watch and then I have them interact for however much they need. They interact; they ask each other questions. And by the end, I'm going to ask each group about the half that they did not watch. So, all the information they give me is going to be from what their classmates told them. So, it's an information gap activity, so that they have to give give [sic] each other information.

This activity fosters interaction and negotiation of meaning, which are both essential components of CLT. By requiring students to collaborate and share information to complete the task, the technique aligns with CLT principles that emphasise meaningful communication and student-cantered learning.

As noted, there is a discrepancy between teachers' reported practices and their actual classroom practices and this could be due to various factors, such as institutional constraints, resource limitations, and prior teaching experience (Borg 2003). While participants might recognize the importance of integrating information gap activities, these were rarely observed in practice. This absence can be related to the shortage of appropriate resources, teachers' established routines, or their perceptions of what is feasible in their specific teaching context. It should also be noted that this finding is based on a limited number of classroom observations: 14 in total, of which 10 involved teachers who also participated in the interviews. Therefore, further research would be needed to confirm whether the same pattern occurs more widely. According to Vygotsky (1987), teachers' actions are shaped by the tools and resources available to them; when these are insufficient, it can lead to a discrepancy between their beliefs and practices. Another potential explanation for this inconsistency might be social desirability bias (Cohen *et al.* 2018), which implies that participants may have responded in ways they believed to be more socially or professionally acceptable rather than reflecting their actual practices or beliefs. Another possible reason behind this discrepancy may be a common misunderstanding between information gap activities and role plays in the field of ELT, as they both promote interaction. Information gap activities are specifically designed to encourage students to exchange information to complete a task, while role plays involve acting out specific situations, which may not create a real need for information exchange (Harmer 2001). Such confusion can lead teachers to believe that they are using information gap activities, when they are, in fact, using role plays (Ellis 2013). It is noteworthy that only one participant mentioned information gap activities in the interview while two mentioned using role plays and three actively used them (role plays) in their language classes.

While the previous discussion focused on the activities that participants reported using most frequently, the questionnaire data also revealed a number of moderately used strategies. Although these are employed less consistently, they still represent an important part of teachers' communicative practices and offer further insight into how communicative principles are implemented in the classroom. To present these findings clearly, the following part distinguishes between collaborative configurations (pair and group work), and teaching

activities (problem-solving and simulations/role-plays). The results are reported across three broad frequency categories: Frequent use (Always+Often), Occasional use (Sometimes), and Rarely/Never (Rarely, Almost Never and Never combined). The results related to these moderately used strategies are illustrated in Figures 5.2a and 5.2b and are discussed in detail below.

Questionnaire data (Figure 5.2a), shows that both pair work and group are widely used by the participants. When focusing on the "Frequent" category (Always+Often), 37% of respondents reported using pair work frequently, compared to 48% for group work. However, occasional use (Sometimes) was reported by 46% for pair work and 28% for group work, while group work also attracted a higher proportion of Rarely/Never responses (24% vs 17% for pair work). This suggests that pair work is a steadier and more broadly adopted classroom configuration, whereas group work is used more intensively by some teachers but avoided by others. The overall pattern indicates that teachers value collaborative configurations, as these provide authentic opportunities for learners to practice English and develop communicative competence in line with CLT principles. This interaction enables students to express ideas and negotiate meaning in a supportive environment, while also catering for different learning objectives: pair work for personalised interaction, ideal for practicing language skills and peer tutoring, whereas group work exposes students to diverse perspectives and helps boost their confidence (Harmer 2001). The preference for pair work may also reflect practical considerations, since managing and monitoring smaller groups is easier than supervising larger one (Brown 2007), particularly within the given context.

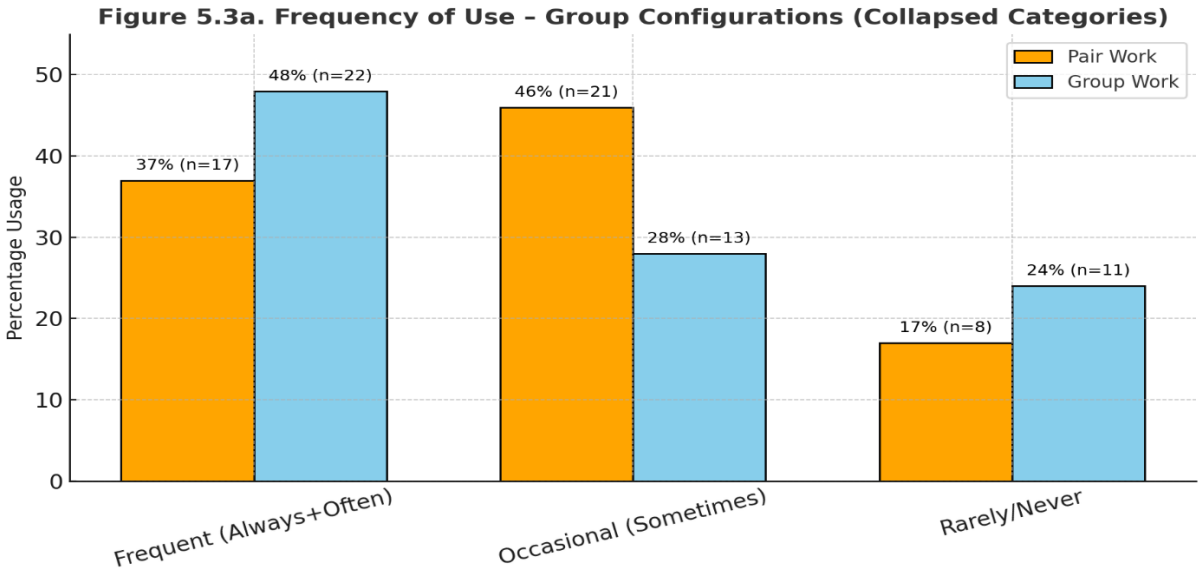


Figure 5.3a Questionnaire analysis: Teachers' moderately used collaborative configurations (pair work and group work)

These findings align with the interview data. Indeed, 4 out of 10 interviewees mentioned relying on pair work and/or group work in their classes, as shown in table 5.12.

Teacher code	Quotations
T1	"I do like pair work a lot because it encourages them to share ideas and to be more confident whenever I asked them to speak up or to maybe answer a question because they do have backup. They feel like they are supported since they're working in pairs. I also use group work a lot, especially when I have a listening task".
T2	"I encourage them to work collaboratively, I mean, work in groups or I also invite them to work in pairs. So, always suggest a situation and then from that situation, they will guess the topic for example, I give them a small passage, or they listen to a short conversation, and then they will be discovering the topic of the lesson, so it's up to them to discover the topic"
T3	"Large class size is not a problem in class, because we use a lot the technique of group work, peer correction group correction group corrected on the board. So, we do have techniques for large classes"

T10	"So, we opt for something I call, I don't know Well, I call, or I coined as a group writing. So, we have the data show, and I am writing, and everyone is contributing to the paragraph".

Table 5.12 Interview analysis: Teachers' use of group work and pair work in their language classes

These quotations illustrate show that teachers view pair and group work as essential strategies for fostering collaboration and boosting student confidence. For instance, T1 believes that pair work helps students feel more confident when speaking, while T2 emphasises the importance of collaborative work to encourage students to discover lesson topics on their own. T3 notes that group work can reduce the challenges posed by large class sizes, and T10 introduces the concept of "group writing," where students contribute to constructing a paragraph. These findings reveal explicitly the views of some participants that pair and group work not only facilitate active participation but also promote peer support and collaborative learning, especially in large classrooms.

The observation data revealed that 6 out of 14 (42%) participants relied on pair work and group work with group work being slightly more common than pair work. This finding contrasts with the results from the questionnaire, which suggests a discrepancy between lecturers' responses and their actual classroom practices. One possible explanation is that group work may be viewed as more practical than pair work, especially when it comes to managing larger groups or addressing diverse learning needs. This discrepancy can be further understood through Argyris's (1974) concept of espoused theory and theory-in-use. According to Argyris *et al.* (1974 cited in Kerr 2009, p.4), espoused theory refers to the beliefs that individuals claim to follow, while theory in use reflects their actual actions. In this context, the questionnaire responses might represent the espoused theory; what lecturers claim to prefer or intend to do in their teaching practices, whereas the observation data reflects the theory in use, what they actually do in their classroom. The gap between these two may stem from practical constraints, such as time, resource availability, or the demands of class management which often requires

adaptation to stated preferences. Additionally, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1987) offers further insights by showing that teaching practices are influenced by the tools and resources available within the educational setting. When adequate tools or materials are not available, lecturers may rely on strategies they consider effective based on their experiences, personal preferences, and available resources.

In relation to problem-solving activities, questionnaire data (Figure 5.3b) indicates that their use is moderate, with 35% of participants reporting frequent use (Always+ Often), 31% reporting occasional use (Sometimes), and a combined 3% placing them in the Rarely/Never categories. This distribution suggests that while many teachers value the role of problem-solving tasks in developing students' critical thinking and analytical skills, others make limited use of them. The inconsistent application of these activities may be linked to the substantial preparation they require, the complex nature of the tasks, and difference in resources across the participating universities. Variation may also stem from teachers' individual cognitions; indeed, participants who are less comfortable with learner-centered approaches, dynamic environments or who have had negative experiences with such activities may use them less frequently.

These findings contrast with the qualitative data, as none of the participants mentioned using problem-solving activities in interviews or actually used them in their classes on the day they were observed. This discrepancy may be due to institutional challenges, such as limited resources, large class sizes, or logistical constraints. While teachers might understand the importance of problem-solving activities and express an intention to use them, practical barriers often prevent their implementation. According to Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory teaching practices are influenced by the tools and resources available, which implies that when these are insufficient, teachers may be unable to align their beliefs with their practices (Vygotsky 1987; Borg 2003). Another factor relate to teachers' cognition; teachers' beliefs, experiences, and prior training play a central role in determining whether intended practices are realised in the classroom. Hence, both contextual and cognitive factors contribute to the inconsistent use of activities like problem-solving in the observed classrooms

Simulation and role play activities also emerged as moderately used among participants (see Figure 5.3b). Questionnaire data indicates that 24% of teachers reported using them frequently (Often), 30% occasionally (Sometimes), and a combined 45% rarely or never. These results suggest that while many teachers recognize their value, their implementation is uneven across the sample. Indeed, simulation and role-play are widely regarded as effective for making classroom learning more relevant to real-life scenarios, offering students hands-on opportunities to practice language in authentic contexts (Shearer and Davidhizar 2003). Teacher interviews reinforced this point: as T8 explained, “I use role plays or used to create situations in which they would use English when travelling for example, it depends really on the group on the topic,” while T2 noted, “My purpose is to involve my students as much as they can… I always encourage my students to role play situations so as to feel themselves as if they're in a real-life situation”. These activities not only promote engagement but also help learners develop cultural awareness and adaptability, which are crucial for interacting with people from diverse backgrounds.

Despite these clear benefits, the limited presence of these in higher-frequency categories highlights potential challenges in implementation. These challenges often stem from logistical issues, as highlighted by T8, who explained, “we need scenes where students would be able to perform their role plays because I encourage them to, but the classrooms are not very well adapted”. Such constraints, including inadequate classroom setups and resource limitations, make it difficult to effectively implement these activities. These challenges, combined with the need for extensive preparation and resource availability mirror those already encountered with problem-solving activities. Consequently, although simulation and role play offer considerable pedagogical value, practical limitations within the context often prevent their consistent application.

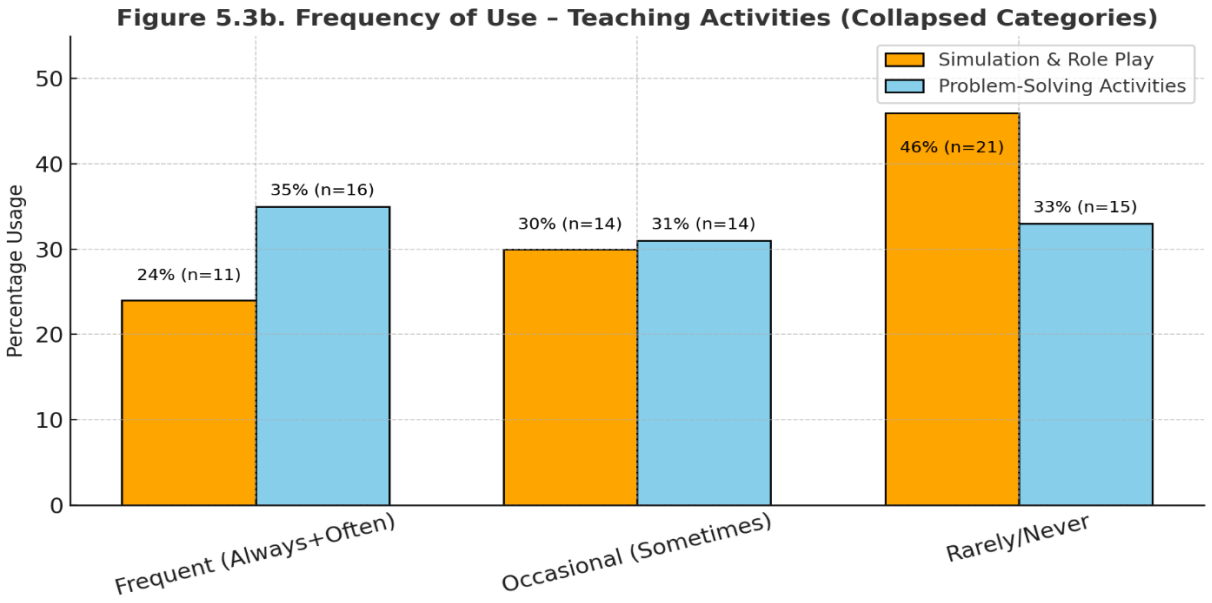


Figure 5.3b Questionnaire analysis: Teacher's Moderately used activities (problem-solving and role-play)

Classroom observations partially align with the questionnaire's findings regarding role-plays and simulations, as 3 out of the 14 (21%) observed participants implemented role-plays or simulations in their classes. For example, one participant asked students to role-play a scenario where employees would complain to their boss about the working conditions and the company dress code. Another participant had students simulate a situation in which they called customer service to complain about receiving the wrong package. A third participant asked students to initiate a conversation with a stranger in a library or on a bus. In all cases, students were divided into groups and performed in front of the class. However, the researcher observed that the absence of appropriate scenes or facilities made it difficult for students to perform their roles. Some students also complained about the limited time provided for their role-play, although one teacher suggested that this was a way to promote spontaneity and natural performances. All the participants provided feedback after each performance and forbade their students from relying on notes or rote learning.

The above findings demonstrate that participants incorporate a wide range of communicative activities in their classrooms, including listening activities followed by discussions, oral

presentations, group work, pair work, and role plays. These activities indicate a strong focus on developing students' communication skills. However, despite this emphasis on communicative engagement, the findings in the previous section also reveal that teachers continue to rely on elements of traditional methods**,** such as pronunciation drills and gap-filling exercises from the GTM**,** as well as listening comprehension exercises rooted in the ALM (see section 5.2.1). This combination of techniques suggests that while lecturers aim to prioritize communicative competence, they still incorporate structured, form-focused activities to reinforce linguistic accuracy and comprehension. Rather than strictly adhering to one approach, they blend aspects of both traditional and communicative methods**,** demonstrating an attempt to balance fluency and accuracy in language learning. This pedagogical flexibility aligns with Larsen-Freeman's (2000) concept of an EA, which involves selecting and integrating techniques that best address students' specific learning needs. In this context, participants varied instructional strategies reflect an effort to maintain a student-centered learning environment while ensuring that key language structures and skills are effectively reinforced.

Overall, this section reveals that Algerian lecturers advocate for an EA to teaching, with an emphasis on communicative activities. This finding indicates that while lecturers aim to balance a variety of methodologies, their preferred teaching practices, although eclectic, are aligned with CLT principles. Indeed, their teaching practices seemed to be strongly rooted in CLT principles. In other words, teachers appeared to teach in a communicative way, even if they did not explicitly identify CLT as their main approach. As discussed in the previous section (5.2), lecturers' perspectives on CLT already suggested a tension between what they believed to be theoretically desirable and practically achievable. A key factor reinforcing this tension lies in the material tools available in their teaching contexts. Lecturers acknowledged the importance that CLT places on authentic materials, but they also noted the persistent difficulty of accessing such resources. Limited technology, poorly equipped classrooms, and the scarcity of locally appropriate authentic content constrained the full implementation of CLT. Consequently, many teachers labelled their methodology as eclectic, as this term better reflected the adaptive resource-dependent nature of the teaching. In this sense, material

limitations, rather than pedagogical intention shaped how teachers perceived and described their teaching, leading them to present eclecticism as the dominant way of teaching even if their practices aligned strongly with communicative principles.

To illustrate these interrelated dynamics more clearly, Figure 5.5 below maps the role of material tools within the activity system. The figure highlights how limited access to physical and technological resources mediates teachers' instructional choices and practices. It also demonstrates the interconnection between material and conceptual tool, as teachers' understanding of CLT through its strong version interacts with resource constraints to shape their reported and enacted practices. Together, these factors show how multiple components of the activity system collectively contribute to the discrepancy between teachers' perspectives, reported methodologies, and classroom practices.

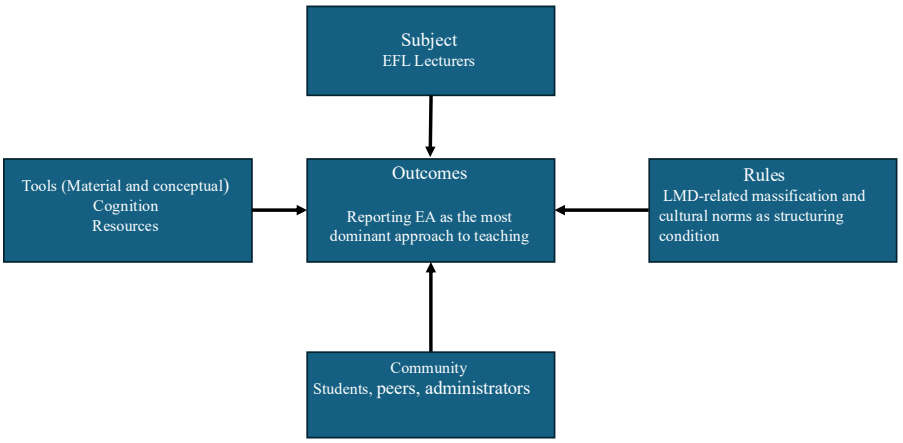


Figure 5.4 Activity Theory mapping of material tools and teaching practices

5.4 Applying Activity Theory to Understanding Algerian Lecturers' Teaching Perspectives and Practices of ELT

The findings in this chapter reveal a nuanced relationship between lecturers' reported approaches, their observed classroom practices, and their understanding of CLT. Although eclecticism is widely identified as the prevailing approach in Algerian higher education (departments of English), both self-reports and observations indicate a strong orientation toward communicative strategies: pair and group work, role-plays, oral presentations, and discussion-based activities (see section 5.3). Taken together, these patterns suggest that, despite adopting a flexible methodological stance, many lecturers continue to prioritize the development of communicative competence.

To interpret these findings, AT offers a productive lens (see Chapter 4, section 4.9). In AT terms, the teaching of English in this context can be conceptualised as an activity system whose components include: the subject (English lecturers), the object (promoting students' communicative competence), the mediating tools (both material resources and conceptual/ teaching approaches), the rules (structuring arrangements shaping what is feasible), the community (students, colleagues, administrators), the division of labour (distribution of responsibilities and workload), and the outcome (the enacted classroom practice). Importantly, AT directs attention to the tensions and contradictions within and between these components, which often lead to adopt practical solutions, in this case, and eclectic blend of practices.

Tools (materials and conceptual) as mediators of practice

In the present context, tools encompass both material artefacts (projectors, language labs, speakers, ICT access, room layout) and conceptual artefacts (pedagogical frameworks, such as CLT, ALM, GTM techniques, the EA). These conceptual tools represent the methodological choices teachers draw upon in planning and delivering lessons. However, the way these frameworks are understood and enacted is mediated by lecturers' cognition; their personal beliefs and understandings of how language should be taught and learned. Indeed, the findings revealed that many lecturers interpreted CLT through its strong version (see section 5.2), which

emphasises fluency, authentic language use, and minimal grammar instruction. This interpretation might have led them to view CLT as ideal but impractical within their teaching contexts. As a result, lecturers reported relying on the EA, which they perceive as a more flexible and realistic option that still allows for communicative activities, even if their teaching practices were inclined to CLT. Thus, teachers' conceptual understanding of CLT acted as a mediating tool that shaped how they position themselves methodologically; acknowledging CLT's value but framing their actual practice as eclectic.

At the same time, material limitations, such as non-functional or undersized labs, limited projection or audio equipment, uneven ICT access, and rooms ill-suited to small configurations, further constrain the implementation of highly interactive tasks. Faced with these constraints, many lecturers might believe that a fully communicative approach would be unrealistic in their context. Consequently, they described their teaching as eclectic, even though their classroom practices largely reflected communicative principles. In this sense, the tools (both conceptual and material) shaped teachers' perspectives on their own pedagogy, leading them to report reliance on the EA. In AT terms, the discrepancy between reported and observed practices emerged from the mediating effects of these tools, which influenced how lecturers interpreted and labelled their teaching rather than the teaching itself.

Rules: LMD-related massification and cultural norms as structuring condition

In this setting, rules do not entail an imposed or centrally prescribed syllabus. Indeed, a large majority (86%) reported no formal policy or uniform implicit strategy at department level. Instead, the LMD reform's massification effects (very large cohorts), and related logistics (timetabling, room allocation, laboratory capacity) act as rule-like pressure that shape what is practically feasible. For example: laboratories designed for small groups cannot accommodate classes that frequently exceed 60 students. As a result, teachers often bring personal audio equipment, avoid room changes that would consume instructional time, and prefer formats for large groups, such as whole-class or large-group management. Although these conditions are not formal curriculum requirements, they still shape how teachers choose methods, pace lessons, and design tasks by setting limits on what can realistically be done with a 90- or 120-

minute class (see section 5.2 and Chapter 6).

Beyond these structural constraints, cultural expectations also functioned as informal but powerful rules. Some lecturers (see section 5.2.6) acknowledged that certain aspects of the target culture or western-oriented authentic materials were perceived as inappropriate within the local context. Consequently, teachers adapted or avoided such materials to align with prevailing social norms and student expectations. In this sense, both institutional structures and cultural values constituted rule-like forces that collectively shaped pedagogical choices, influencing not only how lessons were organised but also the content teachers select for classroom use.

Community and division of labour

The community (students, peers, and administrators) and the division of labour revealed a clear imbalance in responsibilities. In practice the majority of the workload falls on the teacher, who not only manages large classes and assessment duties but also compensates for the lack of institutional and material support. Because teaching materials and technological resources are often unavailable, lecturers frequently bring their own equipment or revert to traditional methods that require minimal resources. Moreover, as formal training opportunities are limited, many lecturers seek professional development informally, through collaboration with colleagues, participation in workshops, or external language centres (see Chapter 6). At the same time students' related factors, such as low motivation, limited English proficiency, and restricted access to learning resources further shaped how lessons unfolded. In addition to these constraints, students' beliefs and cultural values also influenced their engagement and response to the use of authentic materials. A lecturer reported that certain topics, particularly those reflecting Western cultural norms, were met with resistance or discomfort among some students. As a result, sometimes teachers have to adapt their classroom content and interaction patterns to align with students' expectations and sensitivities.

5.5 Summary

This chapter explored Algerian lecturers' preferred teaching strategies, their actual classroom practices, and their understanding of CLT. The analysis of the data revealed that Algerian lecturers' advocate for an eclectic approach to teaching. However, while they identify eclecticism as the most dominant approach in Algerian higher education, their classroom practices and preferred teaching strategies show a clear inclination towards communicative principles. Indeed, most lectures emphasised learner-cantered activities, role plays, group work, and discussions and debates, which align with key CLT principles (see Chapter 3, section 3.4.1).

Despite this alignment, lecturers did not explicitly name CLT as a dominant approach. One possible explanation, drawn from the AT framework, is that their teaching context mediates their instructional choices. The lack of teaching materials and classroom constraints (see Chapter 6) limits their ability to fully implement CLT, obliging them to integrate traditional methods, such as GTM and ALM, into their teaching. This explains why lecturers perceive eclecticism as the most dominant approach, as it allows them to adapt to contextual constraints.

Moreover, the lecturer cognition view helps clarify why lecturers do not identify CLT as the dominant approach, despite their strong communicative orientations. Many participants appeared to understand CLT through the lens of its strong version, which makes them feel that CLT does not align with their teaching environment. This view also reveals that lecturers may not be aware of their use of communicative activities in their classes.

Chapter 6: Challenges to English Language Teaching in Algerian Higher Education

6.1 Introduction

Teachers' practices and perspectives are not isolated entities; they are situated within a physical setting where a range of external factors or constraints influence their implementation (Mansour 2013 p. 348; Flint *et al.* 2024, p.158). These factors can stem from institutional, sociocultural, or systematic challenges, which can shape how teachers approach their work in the classroom. To gain a deeper understanding of ELT in Algerian higher education, this research also examined the challenges faced by Algerian teachers in their classrooms. This chapter provides a detailed analysis of 6 key themes that emerged through the triangulation of the collected data: large class size, time constraints, shortage of teaching materials, students' low English proficiency, students' lack of motivation, and the lack of teacher training. As with the previous chapter, each theme is explored by first presenting the questionnaire data, followed by relevant findings from the interviews, classroom observations, and supporting literature. The chapter concludes with a summary of the results. To provide an overview of how these challenges were perceived, Figure 6.1 presents the questionnaire findings. Figure 6.1 illustrates the portion of teachers who identified each factor as a major obstacle to effective ELT in Algerian higher education. This overview highlights large class size and time constraints as the most frequently reported challenges, while also showing insufficient teaching materials, low English proficiency and lack of student motivation were also of considerable concern.

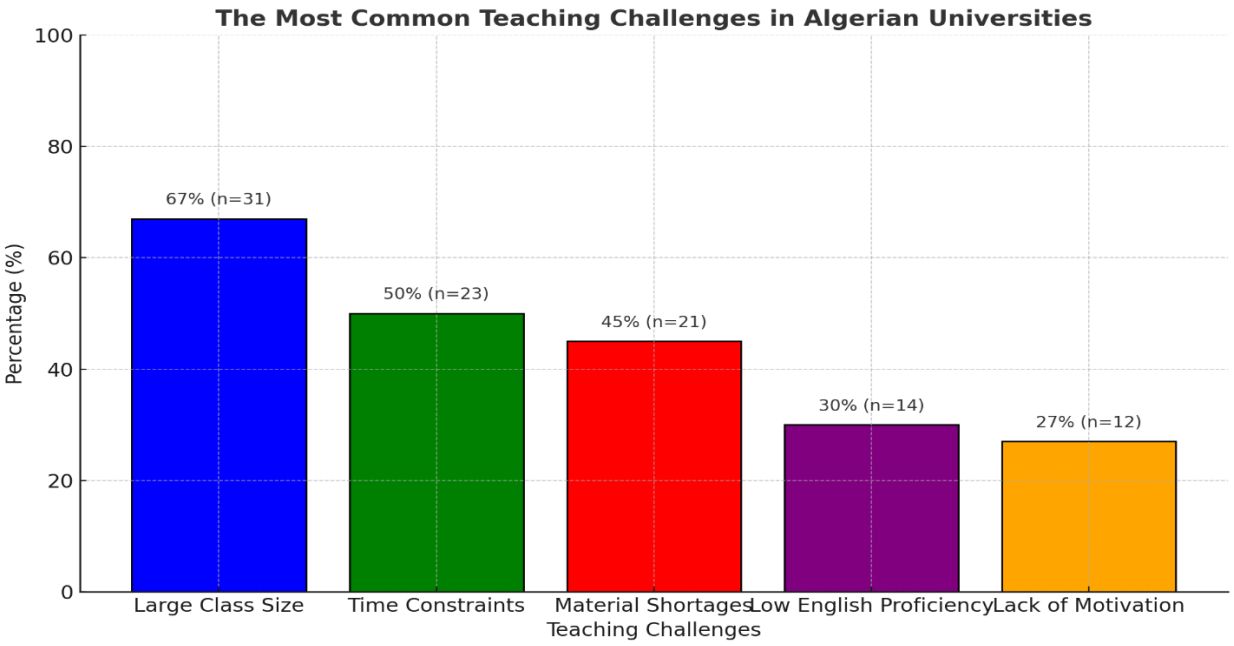


Figure 6.1 Questionnaire analysis: Teaching challenges

It is important to note that this study employs Engeström' activity theory as a theoretical framework to further explore the roots of the reported challenges. Activity Theory, which originates from Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychology, conceptualizes human activity as a dynamic system that consists of interrelated components. These include the subject (teachers), object (language teaching goals), tools (teaching materials and methods), community (institutional and social context), rules (institutional policies), and division of labour (roles and responsibilities within the system) (Engeström 1987, 2001). By using the Activity Theory Model, this study traces the roots of the reported challenges which were found to be systemic and identifies contradictions within the system which contribute to the difficulties faced in ELT in the chosen context. For example, contradictions between tools and objectives, such as the lack of appropriate teaching materials, hindering effective language instruction, were identified and analysed. This approach provides a holistic perspective on the origins of the reported challenges, and their broader implications for Algerian higher education.

6.2 Class Size

A considerable body of literature identifies large class size as a significant issue in ELT, particularly within EFL contexts (Zhang 2002; Yu 2004; Hattie 2005; Pedder 2006; Hiep 2007; Bahanshal 2013; Nguyen 2014; Aoumeur 2017; Chang and Suparmi 2020; Alharibi 2022; Sourani *et al.* 2023; Nam 2023). These studies consistently highlight that managing large classes can hinder effective teaching and learning processes by limiting students' attention, reducing opportunities for interaction, and complicating classroom management. In line with these findings, the current study shows that 67% of the participants identified large classes as the most common challenge to effective ELT within Algerian higher education (see Figure 6.1). This result was drawn from the questionnaire, using a Likert-scale question which includes a range of statements representing common teaching challenges encountered in EFL contexts. These items were adapted from issues recurrently identified in the literature on EFL teaching challenges (Li 1998; Zhang 2002; Yu 2001; Hiep 2007; Bahanshal 2013; Aoumeur 2017; Dos Santos 2020).

The issue of large class size in Algerian higher education is closely linked to the dramatic increase in the number of students enrolling in universities. Indeed, since 2004 success rates in the baccalaureate exams (necessary for university admission, see Chapter 1) have risen significantly. In 2012, the success rate in the baccalaureate examination reached 62.45%, the highest record since Algeria's independence in 1962. This increase in the number of baccalaureate holders has naturally led to a rise in university enrolments. To cope with this issue, many institutions had to increase class sizes, which in turn led to a shortage of teachers. Moreover, the issue of class size is made worse by the flexibility of university admission criteria. Indeed, in Algeria any holder of a baccalaureate or equivalent foreign certificate can enrol in university free of charge (The National Report of Algerian Higher Education 2019). Although, admission is based on students' preferences, grades in relevant subjects, and the number of available places (see Chapter 1, section 1.1.2), in practice, these criteria are not applied consistently across universities (Aoumer 2017). This issue was also raised by two participants in response to the open-ended question following the Likert-scale question: "If you

have noticed any other obstacles to teaching English as a foreign language that do not appear in the list above, please mention them here*"*. Indeed, one participant stated, *"*Many students in our department don't have the qualifications required to study English*"*. Another added *"*The major challenge is the quality of the students admitted into the departments of English in Algeria. If it were for me, I would administer a threshold test*"*. These responses reflect disagreement with the current admission policies and suggest a need for implementing criteria to ensure that students are adequately prepared to study English.

Similarly, some of the interview data emphasised the lack of a pre-selection process as a central cause of overcrowded classrooms (see section 6.5). For example, T4 explained, "There is no pre-selection; some students who were not specialized in the field of foreign language in high school get accepted within departments of English." T2 echoed this concern stating, "There must be a selection for accepting students, a selection based on the level of the students to reduce the number of students". These views highlight concerns about the lack of university entry criteria, which allows students with varying levels to enrol, resulting in overcrowding and related challenges.

The questionnaire findings are further supported by some insights from the interview data, which revealed diverse perspectives on the impact of large class size in Algerian higher education (see Table 6.1).

Teacher code	Quottions
T2	“The first problem is large classes we cannot reach the communicative purpose here. We cannot listen to all students; we cannot pay attention and correct everyone's mistakes, and we cannot listen to every student's concern”. “Classroom size makes it really tiring sometimes due to the lack of equipment, I have sometimes to shout so as everyone can hear me well, so I'm having troubles with my vocal cords”
T3	“Classroom size is not a problem, because we use a lot the technique of group work, peer correction group correction group corrected on the board. So, we do have techniques for large classes”. “Unfortunately for the feedback, it's more complicated”.
T5	“of course, large classes are a problem because we keep just lecturing. we hope to teach in different ways do some personalized work with our students, but unfortunately, we cannot cope with this huge number of students”
T7	“Class size is not a problem for me students are kind of gentle. I face no problems with them”
T8	“Large class is one of the major problems when you have large size groups, you cannot really give enough time for each student to really practice their English as they should” “You cannot teach, or you cannot give feedback, to 50 60 70 students in one class, this is number one, if you can resolve this issue, then it becomes quite easy even if we don’t have materials, if the class is small, you can have the students, speak, write”
T9	“Class size is not a problem as most students do not attend, they just come during exams”

Table 6.1 Interview analysis: Teachers’ perspectives on large class size as a challenge to ELT in English departments

3 out of 10 interviewees emphasised the negative consequences of large classes, particularly in limiting opportunities for individualized attention and effective feedback. For instance, T2 explained that large classes hinder achieving communicative objectives (see Chapter 3) and addressing students' individual needs and concerns. She also noted that this issue caused some physical challenges, such as vocal fatigue due to the need to shout in large, poorly equipped classrooms. Similarly, T5 expressed frustration about being restricted to lecturing rather than using interactive teaching methods, a challenge echoed in the findings of Li (1998), Yu (2001) Hiep (2007), Chang and Goswami (2011), and Dos Santos (2020), who noted that large classes often limit teachers' ability to implement communicative activities (see Chapter 5, section 5.1). Additionally, T8 pointed out the challenge of ensuring that every student has adequate practice or receives timely feedback in large groups of 50 or 70 students. These findings are consistent with Al Jarfs' (2006) study, which found that large classes prevent teachers from focusing on each student individually or giving everyone the opportunity to speak and participate. Likewise, Aoumeur's (2017) research on the impact of class size in Algerian higher education revealed that teachers think that large classes reduce opportunities to build rapport with students, diminish the quality of interactions, and significantly complicate the evaluation process.

However, not all participants viewed large classes as problematic. T3 and T7, for example, share more positive experiences. Indeed, T3 mentioned that techniques like group work and peer correction can help teachers to manage large groups effectively, although she acknowledged some limitations caused by large classes, such as the complexity of providing detailed feedback. Similarly, T7 stated that class size was not an issue as his students were cooperative and well-behaved. T9 provided a different perspective; she noted that class size was not a concern in her case, since many of her students did not attend classes regularly, except during exams, which resulted in a smaller class size. These findings align with Procter and Murshid (2009, p.79), who argue that large class is no longer a valid excuse for ineffective teaching. However, from a CLT perspective large class sizes can still pose a challenge, as CLT implies interaction, effective communication, and student-centered learning, which can be difficult to fully achieve in a large class due to issues like limited student-teacher interaction, difficulties in providing individual feedback, and classroom management constraints, as

highlighted earlier in this section. However, as some participants mentioned (see Table 6.1), techniques such as group work, and peer correction can help reduce some of these issues.

It is worth mentioning that the diverse perspectives regarding large classes among the interviewees could be attributed to the subjective nature of the concept of a "large class". As Kerr (2011) explains, the definition of a large class varies depending on the discipline being taught, the level and nature of the class, and the perceptions of both teachers and students. In other words, what one teacher considers as a manageable class size maybe overwhelming for another, depending on their teaching methods, classroom environment, or resources availability. Additionally, according to Mulryan-Kyne (2010), it is difficult to determine what is a large class, particularly in higher education, where teaching methods and student numbers can differ significantly across contexts.

Classroom observations revealed that 12 out of the 14 observed classes were overcrowded to the point that some students were unable to find seats even when the classrooms were physically large enough. This affected the flow of the class, as both teachers and students had to find a solution to accommodate everyone. Additionally, the researcher who was seated at the back of the classroom, often struggled to hear the teachers, follow audio material, or even see what was written on the board, which must have been the case for some students too. Although the classrooms were spacious, poor infrastructure and inadequate teaching materials made the situation worse, as back seats were positioned too far from the board and the teachers' desk. For instance, some of the teachers who used loudspeakers had to carry them around to ensure everyone could hear the audio materials. Overcrowding also limited opportunities for students to present their work or share their thoughts. To overcome this problem some teachers asked their students to submit written copies of their presentations, as they could not dedicate extra sessions to the same topic. Other teachers opted for group presentations to manage this issue. However, most students were not happy with this and commented that most of the time in group presentations only some students worked hard while others received credits without doing much work.

Noise was another significant challenge in these overcrowded classrooms. Indeed, identifying and managing disruptive students is far more challenging in a large class, as noted by Lazear (2003) and Blatchford (2020). The researcher observed that noise often slowed the pace of teaching and prevented teachers from achieving their teaching objectives. In fact, instead of focusing on teaching, teachers had to spend considerable time managing discipline. This aligns with Peddar's (2006 p. 224) observation that larger classes require more time for non-academic activities, such as managing student behaviour, which affects the pace, depth and coverage of the curriculum. To reduce noise, some teachers asked disruptive students to leave the classroom or deducted marks from their tests. However, these actions sometimes led to arguments with the students, causing further disruption and wasting considerable time. The researcher also noticed that some teachers appeared overwhelmed and irritated by these challenges, which further impacted the classroom environment and overall teaching effectiveness. As illustrated here, large classes create several issues that significantly reduce the time available for teaching and learning; a critical issue in ELT that will be explored in the next section.

6.3 Time Constraints

Class size and time constraints are closely interconnected, with large class sizes directly contributing to limited teaching time (Peddar 2006; Blatchford 2020). As highlighted earlier, overcrowded classrooms often result in time limitations that impede effective teaching and learning (Blatchford 2020). In this study, 54% of the participants identified time constraints as an extremely common challenge in Algerian higher education, and 23% identified it as a very common one, as indicated by responses to the Likert-scale question related to teaching challenges in Algerian higher education (see Figure 6.1). The issue of time constraints in Algerian higher education was made worse by the Covid 19 pandemic. Indeed, to adhere to social distancing protocols many universities adopted alternating class schedules i.e., dividing classes into smaller groups. However, this solution created another challenge: a shortage of available classrooms to accommodate the divided groups. To address this, the duration of language classes which normally last 3 hours was reduced to two hours, with each group attending in person sessions every two weeks. This adjustment further limited teaching time, making it more challenging for teachers to cover the curriculum effectively.

In the current study, 5 out of 10 interviewees highlighted how reduced teaching hours, caused by class size and Covid 19 adjustments, have significantly impacted effective instruction (see Table 6.2).

Teacher code	Quotations
T3	“The conditions are getting harder, we have to teach more students, in less time, because there's so many students and we lack staff. When I was a student in 1987, my first year, we had six hours. Then, when I started teaching, it was reduced to four hours and a half. And today, it's only two hours a week”
T5	“Teaching time is reduced. as a teacher, I would really like to give to to let students communicate or to apply the CLT , but I also, am always afraid that knowledge lacks so I want just to make sure that they have the, the knowledge I want to give them because I have just one hour just imagine I let them I let them take the responsibility”
T7	“So, we need more time, much time that at least to cover all the needs of our students in terms of theory, and practice”
T8	“This is one of the major problems when you have large size groups, you cannot really give enough time for each student to really practice their English as they should”. “In the in the context of COVID, things have changed. But we usually, I usually teach three hours of listening and speaking, for second year students…. But for the COVID context, I have been teaching the same amount of our hours, but I have been seeing my students every, every other week now, once every three weeks.”
T9	“But now we don't have enough time to correct, give feedback and teach, too many students, and now post COVID it’s worse because we see students 2 hours, per, three weeks, so we cannot. Teaching time has been reduced and don't have time to give floor to our students to participate”

Table 6.2 Interview analysis: Teachers’ perspectives on time constraints as a challenge to ELT in English departments

For example, T3 mentioned how teaching hours have been significantly reduced over the years, and how this impacts both the quantity and quality of teaching. Similarly, T5 explained that reduced teaching time forces her to prioritize content delivery over more interactive communicative approaches, which in turn limits students’ engagement. This illustrates the difficult decisions that teachers have to make, such as sacrificing active learning to meet time constraints. T7 stressed the need for more time to address students’ theoretical and practical

knowledge. He also expressed concerns about his inability to adequately cover all aspects of the curriculum. This concern was echoed by T8 who reported that large class sizes worsened time constraints, as it makes it difficult to give students adequate time to practise their language skills. Both T8 and T9 highlighted how alternating class schedules and reduced teaching hours limited interaction with students. They explained that the infrequent contact with their students (each two or three weeks) has significantly reduced opportunities to give feedback, correct mistakes, and encourage participation; T9 further noted that this reduction in face-to-face contact leaves little room for meaningful language practice. These perspectives demonstrate how time constraints became a major barrier to effective teaching in Algerian higher education, especially during and after the pandemic.

In addition to reducing teaching hours, the Covid 19 pandemic introduced new instructional demands that further impacted teachers' time. Indeed, the sudden shift to online and blended teaching methods significantly impacted the teaching and learning process, as it required educators to dedicate additional time to adapt their practices to new technologies, without adequate sufficient training (Lassassi *et al*. 2020). Before the pandemic, e-learning in Algeria was almost non-existent, as universities relied almost entirely on face-to-face instruction (Ameur *et al*. 2024, p.56). The abrupt move in 2020 to online platforms such as Moodle and videoconferencing therefore exposed serious gaps in infrastructure and training. This issue was highlighted by two participants in response to the open-ended question following the Likert-scale question: "*If you have noticed any other obstacles to teaching English as a foreign language that do not appear in the list above, please mention them here".*

One participant noted:

> Within the Covid 19 pandemic, blended learning has been imposed in Algeria. This is problematic for teachers with low proficiency and low motivation to use technological equipment and software to prepare and deliver or post lessons. More particularly, online summative assessment poses a variety of challenges: technical, ethical, and pedagogic.

Another one added:

> The obstacle that is facing us as teachers and our learners these last three years is blended learning and teaching which is a new method that was imposed on us due to covid 19 pandemic. We have never been trained for such instructional methodology and above all we do not have the necessary conditions to successfully dive into it.

These perspectives reflect the broader challenges faced by the participants during the pandemic, particularly the additional time required to manage these new instructional demands. In addition to that, the lack of live real-time explanations for lessons further reduced teaching time. Materials were often shared with students via the university platform "Moodle", without live explanations, which made it significantly harder for students to understand the lessons (Kerras and Salhi 2021). Consequently, teachers had to re-explain lessons during face-to-face sessions, which further consumed valuable time. Live explanations were often hindered by technical issues, including poor internet quality, unreliable Wi-Fi, and problems with the online platforms themselves (Guemide and Maouche 2021). These disruptions worsened existing time constraints.

One observed incident during a classroom observation illustrated how blended instruction disrupted teaching time. In this case, students failed to review and bring the required materials (a video for class discussion, listening worksheets, and gap filling activities) that the teacher had shared on the university platform over the weekend. Some students explained that they could not access the platform due to technical issues, while others claimed that they lacked internet access. These challenges are consistent with findings by Kerras and Salhi (2021) who emphasised that many Algerian students face difficulties connecting to online classes due to unreliable internet and Wi-Fi connections. Similarly, Bashitialshaaer *et al.* (2021, p13) found that both students and teachers frequently cited inadequate internet quality as a critical barrier to effective online education. Returning to the observed classroom, the teacher complained about the situation and mentioned that students had enough time to prepare the materials. Additionally, the teacher was not able to print additional copies on the spot due to a paper shortage at the institution. To solve this problem, she asked the class representative to go to a

nearby printing shop (located five minutes from the department) to print copies of the required materials for the unprepared students. This disruption delayed the lesson progress, as the teacher had to wait for the representative to return and then verbally describe the video to the students. It is worth noting that students blaming internet issues for their unpreparedness, is very recurrent within blended classes. However, this excuse can be questioned. According to Guessar (2020), even if connectivity issues may exist in some parts of Algeria, especially in the south, many students frequently use social media applications, which imply that they have internet access. These findings show how time constraints force teachers to adapt their practices in ways that often compromise the quality of teaching. Importantly, such infrastructural problems, particularly, poor internet access and outdated equipment, have persisted even after Covid-19, despite increased government investment in ICT and the promotion of digital transformation across universities (Boudia and Bengueddach 2023, p.3348; Abdaoui and El Aggoune 2024, p.5). In addition to time constraints, the availability and adequacy of teaching resources also play an important role in shaping teaching practices as discussed in the next section.

6.4 Teaching Resources and Materials

A shortage of teaching resources and poor infrastructure is a persistent challenge in Algerian educational institutions. According to a 2018 UNHCR report, many Algerian schools and universities struggle with poor educational facilities including, old buildings, broken furniture, and a widespread lack of essential teaching materials. Similarly, Allard and McKay (n.d.), stated that Algerian universities are characterized by overcrowded classrooms, insufficient and outdated equipment, and a lack of up-to-date educational and scientific resources. The findings of the current study are consistent with these observations. Indeed, questionnaire data revealed that 45% of the participants strongly agreed, and 36% agreed that a teaching resources shortage is one of the most common challenges in Algerian higher education (see Figure 6.1). This challenge was also echoed in the interview data, as the interviewees repeatedly emphasised the lack of functional and up-to-date teaching resources, such as language laboratories, technological tools, and basic classroom facilities (see Table 6.3).

Teacher code	Quotations
T1	And now back to technical difficulties. We have software, as I said, software is very outdated, very old, you can't really be creative about using new methods or new techniques. You can't even install your own software and use it, you can't even have a conversation or have your students in in a conversation with people from a different place or with people online, or do anything, also, sometimes we couldn't even play our videos. It depends on the lab, the one I'm working with or the two. I'm working with this year were perfectly fine, but I mustn't forget that for for some other teachers, the labs are broken and lots of things go wrong. And this obviously hinders their progress and hinders the whole process of the lesson basically.
T2	We need a listening laboratory in order for students to have headphones to listen very well. Because being in a classroom, sometimes we have a problem with the windows broken, the door cannot be closed, because there's a problem there is noise outside. So, the first thing that is urgent is to have a listening lab. Also, like a video projector,
T3	…. We definitely need smaller groups. And a lot of media
T4	I think they need more labs, laboratories, because they need to enhance their listening skill. The lack of, of data show, sometimes you find that as well, but it does not work. So, where's the solution here? Amphitheatres have the data show, but it does not work …there isn't a screen where I can project a lesson
T5	There are many problems, many problems with facilities. So, we lack everything all we have in class is the board. We have nothing here. No facilities. I remember as a student, we studied this thing in labs. But now, students do not have labs, because I don't know. Maybe more numerous. In the classical system. We were divided into sections. And we benefited from courses given in labs, we were exposed to native speech. And it was enjoyable. We learned much and we acquired pronunciation. It helped us in many ways.

T7	Lack of updated tools (technology), About data shows and speakers, these are available, but other tools have not upgraded we need the specific tools, labs, these labs are important for that. If not, it is boring.
T8	Well, as I said, we would really appreciate the presence of laboratories or maybe even classrooms that would allow for small scenes where students would be able to perform their role plays because I encourage them to, but the classrooms are not very well adapted. Even, the acoustic is not good enough to practice listening, we do not hear each other properly, classrooms are very large and when they are full of students, it's really difficult to have proper communication in classrooms like these… a classroom sound proof, where we would not be able to hear outside and we'll be able to really listen and hear each other… it would be good to have access to rooms for projecting with overhead projectors and projecting movies documentaries …so the presence of the technological side is important.
T10	... A decent lab is very important. It's crucial to language teaching. And the problem is we have labs. Not the ones being used or employed in language teaching. We have loudspeakers and mics. No, no, decent labs. But it's the problem of classroom size. If you have a lab with 20 seats, or assigned to 20 students, and you have a class of 60 students, if you want to teach listening and speaking, for instance, listening and speaking in a proper way, you will have to divide the session into three weeks. That's why we have labs at the level of universities, different universities, but they are not used.

Table 6.3 Interview analysis: Teachers' perspectives on shortage of teaching materials as a challenge to ELT in English departments

As shown in the table above, several participants mentioned the importance of functional language laboratories for enhancing students' listening and speaking skills. T1 described how outdated software and broken equipment in labs prevent teachers from integrating modern methods and technologies into their teaching practices. She further explained that basic tasks, such as playing videos or online interactions, are often impossible due to these limitations. Similarly, T4 underlined the need for better equipped laboratories. She also pointed out that even amphitheatres often lack screens or functional projectors, which makes the lesson delivery

more challenging. T5 also reported the absence of labs that were once central to language teaching. She recalled how, as a student, she benefited from labs, which improved her pronunciation and comprehension skills. However, she noted that these labs are no longer used in her institution due to the increasing number of students. Likewise, T10 mentioned that some universities have language labs which are rarely used due to the huge number of students. He explained that a lab designed for 20 students cannot accommodate classes of 60. The only way to manage this is to divide sessions over multiple weeks, which result in further limiting teaching time. This illustrates how class size worsens the problem of limited teaching materials and logistical challenges.

T2 and T8 further emphasised the need for specialised facilities. T2 also mentioned the urgent need for listening labs with proper acoustics and headphones to prevent noise disturbances caused by broken windows and doors that cannot be closed. T8 further explained that poorly adapted classrooms make interactive activities, such as role plays and listening practices almost impossible, suggesting the need for soundproof classrooms and updated technological tools like projectors. T5 noted that many classrooms are equipped with nothing more than a board, which she considers as inadequate for modern language teaching. Similarly, T8 mentioned that even classrooms designed for basic instruction fail to meet the demands of interactive and communicative activities. This lack of proper infrastructure contributes to the widespread belief among most participants that implementing CLT in Algerian higher education would be extremely challenging. Lack of basic technology shortage was another issue raised by the participants. For example, T7 acknowledged the availability of some tools, such as projectors and loudspeakers, but highlighted that these are often outdated and insufficient for effective teaching. This concern is supported by Hammou (2018), who stressed that incorporating new technologies in Algerian universities is essential for enhancing students' access, learning experiences, and outcomes. Both T5 and T8 pointed to the lack of basic facilities within Algerian higher education.

Classroom observations further support the findings from the interviews and questionnaires. All observed classrooms were equipped with a board, a teacher's desk, and students' benches with

attached desks. However, the infrastructure of the classrooms varied across institutions. In two universities the classrooms were very spacious, but the board was positioned too far from the back benches, which made it difficult for the researcher and the students who were sitting at the back, to read what was written on the board, or hear audio materials clearly. In contrast, classrooms in the third institution had an adequate size. None of the observed classrooms had broken windows or broken doors which contradicts T2 statement in the interview (see Table 6.3). Another notable observation was the lack of technological tools. None of the classrooms were equipped with projectors or a loudspeaker. This finding is consistent with the study of Brabar and Hammouda (2024), conducted at the universities of Blida and Tizi Ouzeou, which showed the absence of essential resources, such as projectors, computers, and even sockets to plug in equipment in many classrooms. Likewise, Dou (2021) reported the scarcity of technological tools, including projectors and audio-visual aids in Algerian higher education. He further noted that this shortage often forces teachers to rely on personal devices or traditional methods. In this study the researcher observed similar practices, where teachers used their own loudspeakers, or printed materials, as mentioned in chapter 5 (section 5.2).

Additionally, to address the lack of technological resources, some teachers asked students to use their own devices to watch videos online, using their own internet data since no internet access was available in the classrooms. Although Wi-Fi was available in each department, students were not granted access, probably because the administration and some lecturers believed it might distract students from their academic tasks. The researcher who studied in one of the observed institutions recalled that students were given limited access to the internet during specific courses, such as corpus classes, and ICT, where it was necessary to use certain software. However, the quality of the internet was very poor. Indeed, according to Bellatrach and Allouti (2020), poor internet connection is the most important technical challenge facing the consolidation of E-learning, despite the provision of the basic methods of information and communication technology to universities.

Overall, these findings demonstrate how insufficient teaching resources and basic infrastructure affects teachers' ability to deliver high quality language instruction. Indeed, the lack of functional language labs, outdated technology, and poor classroom conditions restrict opportunity for interactive, practical and communicative approaches to language learning (Li 1998; Liao 2000). These challenges not only affect students' language acquisition but also place significant stress on teachers, who have to cope with these challenges with limited support. It is important to highlight that one of the main reasons behind the inadequacy of teaching resources in Algeria is student 'massification', which stems from the implementation of the LMD system., also known as the massification reform. This system was implemented to accommodate the country's large young population and to increase the number of university graduates (Metatla 2016). Since its adoption the number of students has tripled (see Figure 6.2). However, this massification occurred at the expanse of quality instruction. As highlighted by Ajibola (2010), a larger student population creates greater demands for resources, which often overwhelm existing capacities.

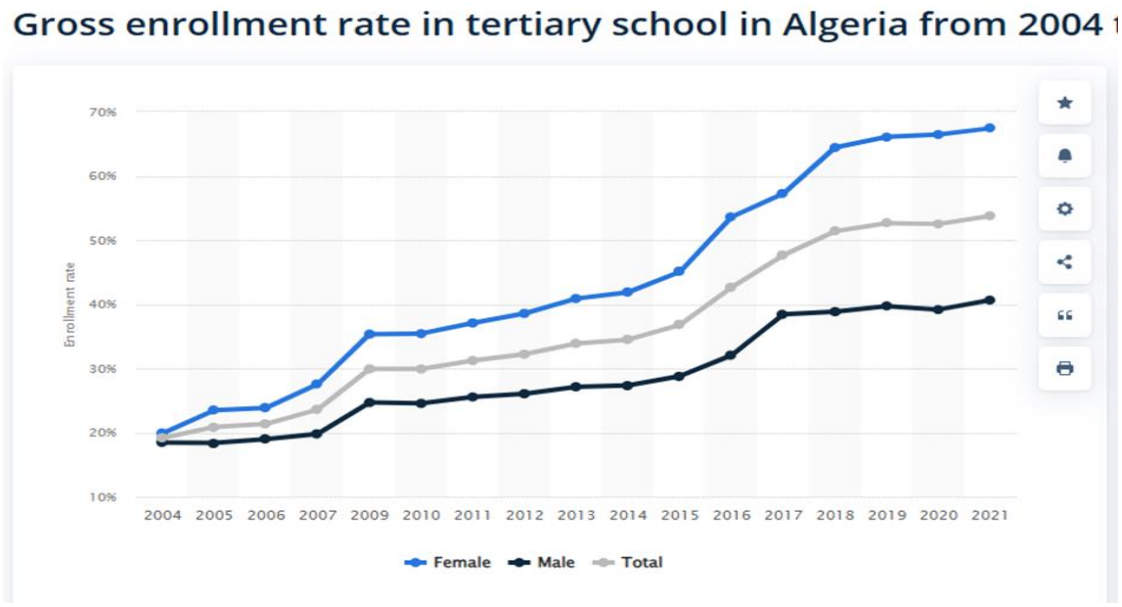


Figure 6.2 Enrolment rate in tertiary schools in Algeria from 2004- 2021- (Statista Research Department, Jun 30, 2024)

Funding is another factor that contributes to the issue of inadequate teaching resources in Algerian higher education. Approximately, 80% of the funding for higher education in Algeria comes from the government, which makes the state the main source of all revenue. This is a problem, as Algeria does not implement a cost recovery system that could reduce funding pressure and improve teaching and learning conditions (Bensalem and Gaidi 2020). To address this issue Bensalem and Gaidi (2020), suggest increasing the involvement of the private sector in financing higher education. However, Algeria remains resistant to the privatization of tertiary education (Noui 2020), unlike other Arab countries. In addition to a lack of adequate teaching materials, another critical challenge affecting ELT in Algerian higher education is students' proficiency levels. Indeed, limited access to quality resources restricts the implementation of communicative activities, which are essential for language development (see Chapter 5, section 5.2). The following section explores how students' proficiency levels further influence the effectiveness of ELT in Algerian higher education.

6.5 English Proficiency Levels

Students' low English proficiency is another significant theme that emerged from the data analysis. Mehdaoui and Benabed (2023) claim that a considerable number of EFL students fail their final exams because they enrol in English departments with very limited English vocabulary or low English proficiency. This view is supported by the current study's survey findings, where 30% of the participants strongly agreed and 39% agreed, that students' low English proficiency is one of the most common challenges in Algerian higher education (See Figure 6.1). This issue was further emphasised by responses to the open-ended question that followed the Likert-scale question: "*If you have noticed any other obstacles to teaching English as a foreign language that do not appear in the list above, please mention them here".* Indeed, one participant noted, *"*Many students in our department don't have the qualifications required to study English". Another added "The major challenge is the quality of the students admitted into the departments of English in Algeria. If it were for me, I would administer a threshold test". These perspectives demonstrate that students tend to have inadequate levels of English language proficiency to enrol in English departments.

The interview data provides additional information about students' proficiency levels (see Table 6.4).

Teacher code	Quotations
T1	I would say intermediate level. Obviously, classes are heterogenous everywhere, but mostly intermediate especially because I teach third year students. So, they do have some knowledge, and they have had time to develop their skills.
T2	They have a C1 level, and the other speaker, so it's a mixture of advanced and upper intermediate
T3	Intermediate beginners. They have many fossilized mistakes. They lack a lot of the basics. We have a double issue with them, they are introduced into the academics And the learning of academics at the same time, they have to tackle their own language acquisition process
T4	I have only two students who I can say they are advanced, the others. Intermediate
T5	Most of them are medium, very few, very few good enough. But there are those who are not fit to do foreign languages, they are very far behind others.
T6	In one class, you can find a variety of levels, which is quite sometimes I think, difficult to really manage. especially I imagine to design tests and exams as your classes are heterogeneous. some of them are really strong, you can say they are upper intermediate product. Others are really, really, really, really weak.
T7	Different from one to another? Okay. We have best students in some classes and other classes we have no, we should take care
T8	Different levels. Often, they lack the required level to be at university
T10	I don't know, I think intermediate is too much as a tag, yes. So, pre-intermediate

Table 6.4 Interview analysis: Students' English proficiency level

Most participants mentioned that their classes consist of students with different levels of proficiency, ranging from pre-intermediate to advanced. For instance, T1 described the majority of her students as intermediate, particularly because she teaches third-year students who have had time to develop their skills. However, she highlighted heterogeneity in all classes. Similarly, T2 noted a mixture of upper-intermediate and advanced students and emphasised the variability within higher performing groups. Other teachers pointed to the prevalence of weaker students, such as T3 who described most of her students as intermediate, noting that many struggle with fossilized mistakes and lack basic language skills. She also highlighted the "double challenge" that these students face: acquiring the language and adapting to academic study simultaneously. T4 echoed this view, as she revealed that only a small number of her students could be classified as advanced, with the majority having an intermediate level. Likewise, T5 described her students as mostly at a medium level, with a few who are proficient and others who are behind and not ready to major in English. T10 even suggested that labelling most students as intermediate might be 'too much'. He suggested that pre-intermediate might be a more accurate description for many.

The issue of heterogeneity was particularly highlighted by T6, who mentioned that managing a class with students ranging from strong upper-intermediate learners to very weak pre-intermediate learners is challenging, especially when designing tests/exams. Similarly, T7 pointed to the diversity of students' levels. He stated that while some classes have strong levels, others include students who need additional support. Likewise, T8 observed that many students lack the required level of English proficiency to succeed at university level. This variation is in contrast with global standards. Many universities around the world require an IELTS score of 6.5 to 7, which is equivalent to CEFR levels B2 or C1, to enter English programmes. In contrast, teachers in this study indicate that many students in English departments are below these levels, which creates additional challenges for teachers who find themselves teaching basic English in addition to other content subjects. The researcher of this study could not accurately measure the English proficiency level of the students or determine whether the class was heterogenous or not. However, she observed that all the students who participated or had an opportunity to express themselves were fluent and confident in their use

of English. Additionally, many students were observed using English not only in the English department but also in other settings, such as shops and car parks. These observations align with T9's remarks: "They are really fluent, but when I give a topic to discuss academically in limited time, they cannot". She further explained:

> I thought some of them like they lived in the US and all but the problem as I said even if they are fluent, they have good English better than mine, sometimes. But I don't care. I need academic English…I need a good English of course. And I need the way you talk on this topic in an academic way as an adult as a university student. Because sometimes they talk like people who are not educated the way they the way they attack each other. So, I don't care about fluency. I just care about good English academic English; I don't care about the accent I care about the way they tackle any given subject academically.

This teacher explains that there is a difference between everyday English and academic English. She highlights that fluency is not the primary goal in departments of English, but rather the ability to express ideas appropriately in an academic context. These observations suggest that some teachers do not evaluate students' proficiency level only based on fluency; rather, they place greater emphasis on their ability to express themselves academically and use formal English effectively, which is crucial for success in higher education. As T9 mentioned, "I am not against speaking fluently, but the most important thing is academically. That's why the majority fail, because they think that being fluent is sufficient."

It is worth mentioning that one of the main reasons behind students' low English proficiency in Algerian universities is the absence of an English proficiency test as a prerequisite to enroll in English programmes, as highlighted earlier in this chapter (see section 6.1). Indeed, any student, even those from non-language streams, such as mathematics, science and economies, can enroll in English languages courses without showing prior proficiency (Benmoussat 2003; Lakehal 2008; Rezig 2011; Kheladi 2017; Mehdaoui and Benabed 2023). This issue was also raised by some interviewees, for example, T4 stated, "There is no pre-selection; some students

who were not specialized in the field of foreign language in high school get accepted within departments of English." This flexibility might be due to fact that English is taught as a subject across all streams, which might give all students a basic understanding of the language. Additionally, even students from language streams are not exclusively specialized in English; they study three other languages beside English, which implies that their exposure to English is not really different from non-language students. Therefore, there seems to be no valid justification for restricting students from non-language streams from majoring in English. However, the failure of many can be explained by the lack of pre-selection or proficiency tests, as highlighted by T2, who argued that "There must be a selection for accepting students, a selection based on the level of the students". Consequently, many students enter English programmes with very limited English proficiency (Mehdaoui and Benabed 2023). This issue is worsened by large classes, which not only make it difficult for lecturers to provide effective instruction (see section 6.2) but also increase stress and limit their ability to engage students (Vakili *et al.* 2024). As a result, students may struggle to participate, which may lead to lower academic achievements (Vakili *et al.* 2024). These factors, along with inadequate pre-selection mechanisms, show how various challenges in Algerian higher education, such as proficiency levels, class size, and access to resources, are interconnected.

Another reason behind students' low English proficiency is that many students are placed in English departments against their will (Lakehal 2008). Rezig (2011), who designed an English proficiency test to measure the level of 153 first year students, found that 52% of those who failed, expressed negative attitudes towards learning English, because it was not their first choice. Indeed, these students were assigned to English programmes based on their baccalaureate average, rather than personal choice or aptitude. Students' low English proficiency often impacts their participation in class, as they fear making mistakes. This often obliges teachers to rely on lecturing and other traditional methods which, often leads to students' lack of motivation (Mehdaoui and Benabed 2023), a theme that will be explored in the next section.

6.6 Student Motivation

Motivation plays a pivotal role in the success of L2 learners and their ability to achieve high levels of proficiency (Li and Zhang 2020). In fact, Hakim *et al. (*2022), stated that motivation is a crucial determinant in the achievement of language proficiency. Furthermore, several studies have shown a strong correlation between motivation and language proficiency; higher levels of motivation lead to greater success, while low motivation often results in poor outcomes (McKenzie and Schweitzer, 2001; Sankaran and Bui, 2001; Fini and Yousefzadeh, 2011; Richardson *et al*. 2012; Azizoğlu et al. 2015). Consequently, lack of motivation can lead to detrimental consequences for learners' progress and performance (Yang *et al.* 2023). This is consistent with the findings of the current study, which identifies students' lack of motivation as a major challenge within English departments. Indeed, 27% of the participants strongly agreed, and 39% agreed, that students' lack of motivation is a major challenge within the chosen context. Similar views emerged in some of the interview data, where two participants explicitly mentioned this challenge. For example, T1 alluded to this as follows:

> I'm gonna start with a classic, which is motivation, students are not motivated. We do have another one, which is psychological barriers, students have this sort of filter, and they don't open up, they're very afraid of making mistakes or being judged.

Similarly, T2 noted:

> There is one major problem regarding motivation, Students often say that they are socially anxious, and they are shy, and they are reluctant to speak because they're afraid of making mistakes. They're not really motivated during the lesson, and you can't do anything about that. I mean, it's an internal factor. It's very difficult to trigger motivation.

Although motivation was mentioned in the interviews, it was not as frequently mentioned compared to other challenges. This may be because many participants perceived other issues, such as classroom size or lack of teaching resources, as more pressing or impactful in their teaching context. Additionally, the design of the interview question might have influenced the responses. Unlike the structured questionnaire question on challenges (Likert-scale), which categorized challenges based on their source (teacher, students, educational setting), the interview consisted of an open-ended question that asked the participants to discuss the most common teaching challenges in general. The rationale behind this was to elicit more authentic and spontaneous responses and avoid the limitations and biases that can arise from predefined categories. As Cresswell (2014) explains, open-ended questions offer rich and nuanced data that might not emerge from structured questions.

While this study does not examine motivation as an independent variable, the researcher measured it based on students' participation and engagement in class. It is important to note that other means, beyond the scope of this study, could also have been examined, such as students' attitudes towards learning English. The classroom observation data revealed that most students were passive in class, even those who seemed interested in the lesson. Many students mentioned that their lack of participation was due to anxiety, stress or shyness. To address this, some teachers tried to encourage participation through giving hints, modelling responses, providing encouragement, and praising students. However, these efforts were not always effective, as some students still refused to participate even when the teachers called their names. Out of the 14 observed classes, students were very active in only four. In these classes teachers relied on presentations followed by debates or role plays, and maintained a friendly approach, which could have fostered a more engaging learning environment. In contrast, in the majority of classes where students resisted participating, teachers adopted a more authoritarian approach which implied having complete control over the classroom, without actively involving the students. In these cases, students remained silent most of the time and only spoke when the teacher called their names. This teacher-centered approach may have been a response to discipline related problems, as the researcher observed that maintaining order was a significant challenge in most of the observed classes. For instance, some students talked over

the teacher or used their phones during the lesson. On the other hand, in the more interactive classes, where teachers were indulgent and maintained a lower level of control, it was difficult to manage students' behaviour and keep them on task.

These classroom observation findings align with the questionnaire data, which further highlight students' resistance to participating in class as a common challenge in the chosen context. Indeed, 23% of the participants strongly agreed, and 45% agreed that students' reluctance to participate was a significant obstacle. This consistency between the classroom observation and questionnaire findings emphasises the prevalence of this issue. However, the interview data on this issue were less prominent and offered a range of perspectives. Most teachers described their students as passive, due to factors related to the dominance of rote learning in the chosen context which discourages active participation. As one teacher explained, "they're rather passive, because they were used to the rote learning technique from primary school". Another teacher suggested that students' passivity might stem from her own teaching methods, "Majority are passive, but I don't know sometimes I say that to myself that maybe I'm not giving them a chance to be active". In contrast, two participants reported that their classrooms often included a mix of both motivated and passive students. One participant shared a more optimistic view, stating that her students were mostly active and eager to learn, even if she mentioned having had many passive students in the past: "mostly active, but I've seen very, very passive groups in the past". These varied perspectives showcase the complexity of the concept of motivation. Therefore, exploring the reasons behind students' lack of motivation provides a clearer understanding of the data and helps contextualize this challenge more effectively.

Students' lack of motivation can stem from several factors (Gao and Liu 2022), many of which are related to the students themselves. Falout and Falout (2005), argue that students tend to believe that their lack of motivation is caused by their perceived inability to learn the language effectively. This belief can reduce their confidence, leading them to fear making mistakes when using English. This fear, in turn, can generate high levels of anxiety, which further impacts their motivation to engage in language learning (Xaypanya *et al*. 2017). As a result, students

may avoid using the target language or participating in class, as they fear being laughed at by their classmates if they make mistakes (Benabed 2020; Gao and Liu 2022). This aligns with T1's observation, who reported that "students say that they are socially anxious, and they are shy, they are reluctant to speak because they're afraid of making mistake". She further explained:

> We do have another one, which is psychological barriers, students have this sort of filter, and they don't open up, they're very afraid of making mistakes or being judged. Although I'd like to say that it's getting way better compared to the past now that English is taking over. But it is still there, you can still see that some students are always very nervous when they are in class, and they don't want to speak up. They don't want to raise their hands. And they don't want you to ask them a question. Less they make a mistake and be made fun of.

Similarly, T2 highlighted the emotional challenges faced by students, stating, "Some students, you know, have some problems, anxiety problems, and such, some might be shy". These observations suggest that psychological factors, such as shyness, anxiety, and fear of judgment, impact students' motivation and willingness to participate in class (Horwitz *et al*. 1986; Jones 2004 p.33; Dervić, Bećirović 2019). Such barriers demonstrate the importance of creating a supportive and safe environment for students.

While psychological and emotional factors among students contribute to their lack of motivation, teacher-related factors often play an equally, if not more, important role in shaping students' motivation. Indeed, He (1991 p.52) argued that teachers play a key role in maintaining students' motivation. Similarly, Benabed (2019), stated that it is the teachers' responsibility to foster students' motivation, as teachers can influence it in different ways. For instance, Unal and Yanpar Yelken (2016), found that teachers' negative attitudes and unfriendliness may hinder student-teacher interactions and relationships, which in turn may lead to demotivating students. Additionally, teachers' methods play an important role. Indeed, traditional methods that exclude technology can result in boredom which contributes to

demotivation (Song and Kim 2017). This is consistent with the findings of the current study, where technology was rarely incorporated, and some teachers admitted not relying on modern teaching approaches. Furthermore, research has shown that students often perceive teachers as the major source of their demotivation, as they fail to explain things clearly and scold students when they make mistakes. In contrast, teachers believe that students' lack of motivation is mainly the result of their lack of interest, and their resistance to accepting help from others (Chambers 1993 cited in Gao and Liu 2022, p.4).

Another key factor that influences students' motivation in foreign language learning is the learning and social environments (Harmer 1991; Gao and Liu 2022). The learning environment includes school facilities (Song and Kim 2017) and classroom conditions (Zhang *et al.* 2020). For example, Sakai and Kikuchi' (2009) study identified the lack of teaching equipment, such as media resources for playing videos and audios, and limited access to the internet as demotivating factors. Similarly, Unal and Yanpar Yelken (2016) found that the lack of technology in the classroom often obliges teachers to rely on traditional methods, which can lead to boredom and reduced student engagement. These findings align with the current findings, where students' lack of motivation could have been influenced by the severe shortage of teaching resources, as highlighted earlier in this chapter. Additionally, classroom conditions such as class size can further impact motivation, as overcrowded classrooms and inadequate space can limit interaction, restrict movement, and create a less engaging learning environment. This highlights the interconnected nature if the challenges affecting ELT in Algerian higher education.

Besides the learning environment, the social environment can play a crucial role in shaping students' motivation and learning outcomes (Gao and Liu 2022). Indeed, unsupportive families and negative influences from significant others, such as parents, classmates and even teachers can have detrimental effects on students' confidence and motivation (Gao and Liu 2022). As Benabed (2019) mentioned, teachers, in particular, are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe and encouraging environment. Additionally, in Algeria, the societal perception of the field of social sciences worsens this issue. Compared to scientific disciplines, the field of social

sciences is often belittled, as it tends to require lower university entry scores and is perceived as less demanding. As highlighted by Milini (2011, p.68), in Algeria, "At school level, sciences have always the favour of the authorities who downgrade systematically social sciences and languages". Consequently, language students may feel inferior to their peers in other fields, which can negatively affect their motivation. The researcher herself experienced such societal attitudes. She recalls discouraging comments by her family and friends when she chose to study English, such as "what are you going to do with an English degree , "the only thing you will achieve with an English degree is watching Hollywood movies without subtitles" or "it cannot be that challenging, it is just a language, that we have been studying for years now", and "what a waste of potential" . Such remarks are often directed towards English majors in Algeria, which can be deeply demotivating, particularly as students are often looking for social approval (Benabed 2019). These social pressures highlight the need to address both learning and social environments to increase motivation among language learners.

6.7 Teacher Training

Ghedjghoudj (2002) refers to teacher training as "the core dilemma" of the Algerian educational system. The term "core dilemma" suggests that teacher training plays a central role in determining the success or failure of education. Therefore, untrained or inadequately prepared teachers may affect the quality of teaching and students' learning experience. The findings of the current study reflect the significance of this issue, as teachers' lack of training emerged as a key theme. Indeed, 19% of the participants identified the lack of training in foreign language teaching as an extremely common challenge to ELT in Algerian higher education, while another 19% considered it very common, and 24% viewed it as a common issue within the chosen context. This issue was further emphasised by responses to the open-ended question that followed the Likert-scale question: "*If you have noticed any other obstacles to teaching English as a foreign language that do not appear in the list above, please mention them here"*. One participant mentioned "a major problem is lack of training of the updated methods of teaching". These data suggest that a considerable number of lecturers consider inadequate training as a major obstacle to effective language teaching in Algerian higher

education. According to Littlewood (2007), teachers who lack training might not be able to apply teaching methods effectively, which can impact the overall quality of teaching. Furthermore, insufficient training could explain why some Algerian lecturers' use communicative strategies in their language classes without realizing they are doing so (see Chapter 5, section 5.3). Indeed, teacher training and professional development play an important role in enhancing teachers' knowledge and refining their teaching skills (Tsui 2003; Almohideb 2019).

Surprisingly, while the Likert-scale findings indicated that several participants considered the lack of training in English language teaching as a common challenge, responses to an open-ended question in the demographic factors section, revealed different views. When asked "*have you received any training in English language teaching",* 55% of the participants reported that they received training, while 45% stated that they did not. This discrepancy is clarified by the interview findings, where participants explained that the training they received was mainly practical, which many considered as insufficient or inadequate for meeting the practical demands of teaching (see Table 6.5).

Teacher code	Quotations
T1	Teachers' lack of training or lack of preparation, which is a very serious issue. Teachers are just some people that are that I know, know nothing about teaching, especially speaking classes, I'm going to talk about this, because they know nothing about teaching, speaking or being an instructor in a speaking class, and they just do what whatever comes to mind, they're trying to do what they can, but with lack of training, lack of preparation, it's very, it can be very damaging in the long run, As far as theoretical knowledge is concerned, we have received some, we have received some throughout the five years of studies that we had. But for practical for practicality, it's basically non-existent. And if we if you don't try, if you don't make mistakes, you will not learn, which is obviously natural. However, it could be avoided, if we, if we receive some sorts of training before, before being accepted into teaching in the Department of English, that's the type of training I'm talking about, which is being able to receive the knowledge that helps you implement the theoretical information you received as a student into your practical

	way into your teaching practices.
T2	We don't receive formal training. we for example, as when I started teaching, a few years ago, I was just asking, seeking advice, asking for advice from teachers., so I was doing it myself. And sometimes teachers are not available to answer your questions.
T3	So, the way teaching is taught in our country is that we are thrown into the arena, to live teaching, be taught to the theories, and then apply what we feel. So, we rely a lot on practice. And anyway, from what I've learned, theoretically, the teaching of a person when the person teaches, it is composed of half of our personal experience or past experience. And what we liked in our teachers, and half from the theory that we may take,
T4	No, I did not receive training but I had to ask myself, I went to my previous teacher, and I asked them every time I find them in the teachers' lounge. I converse with them. Some are interested in these kinds of conversation others are not
T6	We did have training when I was when I was first hired, that was back in 2018. But it was not really training as to how to teach English. It was training related to for example, to our right to strike how to I mean, it was it was more about legal education, the legal side of our jobs, but I do have training in English. Independent that I did myself
T8	There's no formal training, apart from seeking information, as I said, provided by the ministry, I guess, in the follow-up seminars. We've received training in the sense that we had we were taught different modules, for example, didactic didactics, Psych, pedagogy, principles of English learning, and teaching methodology. New teachers are not monitored in any way, we have an ongoing training that they take for the first year of their, of their teaching. But it's really it comes in the form of a few seminars
T9	I didn't have any training, except last year, or the training in the US Embassy. On ways of assessment. And I have another one that they will disclose how to give a great course. So, independent training

T10	we have been introduced to the realm of teaching and learning and so on and so forth. And we had some, let's say, some workshops. But let's say explicit training called training, no. Every permanent teacher, a teacher recently hired at the university will receive a training for a period of one year. So, I think they have a weekly meeting or weekly sessions in which they are trained or introduced theoretically and do some practice as well. And they have to receive this training in order to be confirmed as permanent teachers.

Table 6.5 Interview analysis: Training in English language teaching

As shown in table 6.5, many participants emphasised the absence of practical training, which they viewed as a major problem. For example, T1 mentioned the detrimental impact of this gap, as she stated that some teachers "know nothing about teaching, especially speaking classes", and often improvise which can "be very damaging in the long run". T1 further mentioned that while theoretical training is provided during their studies, practical training is "*basically non-existent*", which makes it difficult for teachers to translate theoretical knowledge into practice. Further, T2 and T4 reported that they did not receive formal training and that they sought advice from their colleagues to compensate for their lack of training. Indeed, T2 mentioned that when she was a novice teacher, she did not receive any structured guidance and resorted to seeking advice from experienced teachers. Likewise, T4 explained that she frequently consulted her former teachers for help, even if not all of them wanted to provide help. These observations reveal that the absence of formal training places additional pressure on novice teachers who have to find answers to their questions through trial and informal monitoring.

Moreover, some participants reported attending training programmes which they often viewed as irrelevant or insufficient. For instance, T6 stated that the training he received when he was hired focused on administrative topics, such as teachers' duties and rights, rather than pedagogical strategies. He further explained that any meaningful training related to teaching was acquired independently. Likewise, T9 mentioned that apart from independent workshops organized by external institutions, such as the U.S embassy, she had not received any formal

training. These observations suggest a lack of institutional support for professional development, as both T6 and T9 explained that they had to seek out meaningful and practical training related to teaching English on their own. Additionally, T8 explained that ongoing training for new teachers typically consists of some seminars and lacks depth. Although T8 mentioned studying didactics and pedagogy at university, she mentioned the lack of monitoring for new teachers. T10 provided a slightly different view, as he explained that newly hired permanent teachers have to attend weekly training sessions for one year. However, he acknowledged that these training sessions were mainly theoretical. This variation in responses reveals an inconsistency in teacher training provisions and suggests that while some training exists, it does not necessarily translate into practical support. The absence of structures and practical training may explain why some lecturers report not having received any training, despite attending theoretical sessions.

T3 summarizes the overall state of teacher training for university lecturers in Algeria. She explained that lecturers are left to "learn by doing"; teachers are provided with theoretical knowledge but are expected to rely heavily on their personal experiences, observation of their previous teachers, and trial and error to develop their teaching skills. This approach shows the absence of practical training and mentorship, which obliges teachers to bridge the gap between theory and practice on their own. These findings align with wider research on teacher training in Algeria. Indeed, several studies highlight that universities do not provide structured pre-service training for future lecturers. For instance, Boudersa (2016 p.5) argues that Algerian universities rarely involve students in formal teaching preparation or professional development programmes, largely because such programmes are non-existent. Similarly, Kadri and Benmouhoub (2019, Discussion, para.3) note that where limited training opportunities are offered, they usually consist of short periods of teaching practice included as part of a degree. However, these are typically oriented towards middle school or secondary school contexts rather than higher education. They emphasise general English for young learners, are not organized as formal courses, and often require students themselves to organize class observations, which make them inconsistent and insufficient. More recent accounts reinforce this critique. Ben Osmane (2021, p.20) observes that what is considered as "pre-service

training" in Algerian English departments often takes the form of occasional seminars or workshops led by inspectors. Such activities do not provide structured opportunities for real classroom teaching. Instead, they are mostly limited to presentations and discussions, with very little chance for guided pedagogical training (Ben Osmane 2021, p.53).

Taken together, these studies indicate that university teacher preparation in Algeria remains largely unstructured and inconsistent. In practice, the only formal requirement to become a lecturer in an English department is possession of a PhD or, previously, a Magister degree (Clark 2006, University section, para.5). There is no compulsory practical training programme and continuing professional development initiatives remain irregular and optional. This institutional reality reinforces both the concerns raised by participants and the gaps identified in the literature, as lecturers often depend on personal effort, informal mentoring, or occasional workshops to develop their teaching expertise. Together, these findings show a clear picture of the reality of university teachers' training in Algeria, revealing an urgent need for practical training, a central principle of the LMD system, as it emphasises the vocational development of academic training (Hanifi 2018). Indeed, the LMD system aims to bridge the gap between university-acquired knowledge and job-market requirements, thereby enhancing the vocational relevance of academic training (Hanifi 2018).

6.8 Analyzing The Root Causes of ELT Challenges in Algerian Higher Education Through Engeström's Activity System Model

Engeström's activity system model (1987) provides a clear and structured framework for analysing the findings presented in this section by examining their relationships within the chosen context and identifying their primary sources. As discussed in the theoretical framework section (chapter 3, section 3.13) this model, which is based on Vygotsky's cultural historical activity theory (Engeström 2001), focuses on the relationships between the components of an activity system (see Figure 6.3). These components include subjects (e.g., teachers, students), tools (e.g., teaching materials, methodologies), rules (e.g., institutional policies), community (e.g., the educational context), division of labour (roles and responsibilities within the system), and the object or goal (e.g., effective English teaching).

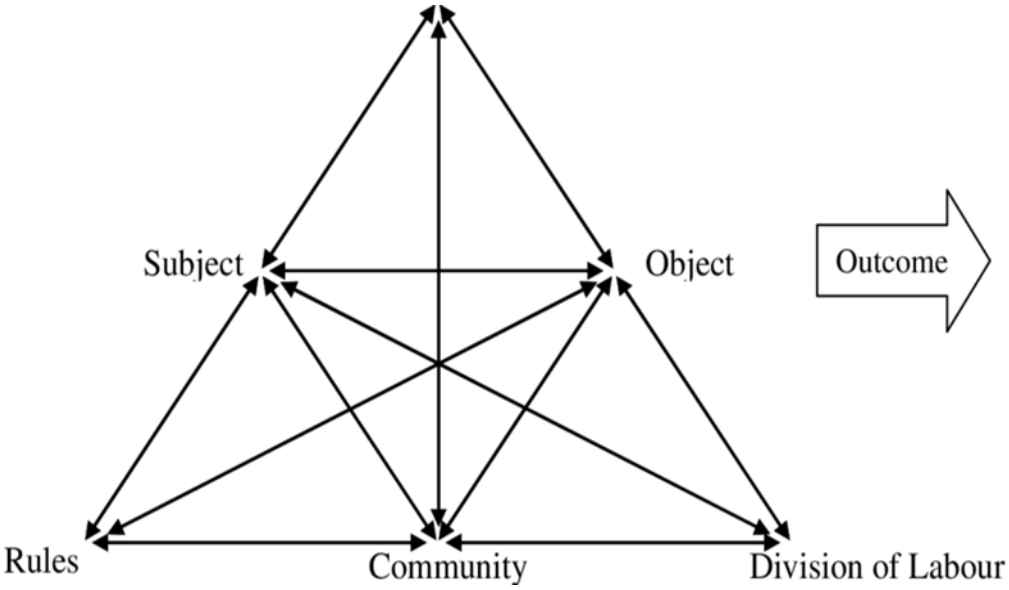


Figure 6.3 Engeström's activity system model (Engeström 1987, p. 78).

In Engeström's model, subjects refer to the individuals engaged in the activity, in this case teachers and students. In this study, teachers reported that they face many challenges due to inadequate facilities, shortage of teaching resources, time constraints, and insufficient training. All these challenges prevent teachers from teaching effectively or applying modern ways of teaching. In addition to that, students' low English proficiency and lack of motivation further complicate the teaching and learning process. The tools in an activity system refer to the physical means, classroom materials (Engeström 2001) used to achieve the object of the activity, in this case learning English. As highlighted by the participants, in the context of Algerian higher education, the shortage of physical resources significantly affects both teaching and learning. Indeed, participants consistently highlighted the lack of functional laboratories, projectors, and other audio-visual aids, which forced them to rely on personal devices to compensate for institutional deficiencies. Moreover, the classroom infrastructure was described to be often inadequate, with overcrowded spaces and poor acoustics which makes the matter worse. As highlighted by Sakai and Kikuchi (2009), the absence of adequate teaching tools and infrastructure not only not only affects teaching but also demotivates students, which results in a less engaging learning environment. Rules are norms that regulate actions and interactions (Johnson 2009), in this case formal and informal regulations that control the activity of

teaching. The introduction of the LMD system, which aimed to modernize higher education (Hanifi 2018), created several challenges because it was not properly evaluated by the (MHE), which did not take into account contextual realities, and did not consult and discuss the reform with the stakeholders of teaching and learning (Metatla 2016). Furthermore, teachers were not properly trained to implement this reform (Miliani 2010), which led to discrepancies between the principles of the LMD and their implementation, resulting in the failure of the reform. Additionally, this reform promoted massification which led to an overwhelming increase in students' enrolment which has strained institutions and forced teachers to handle large classes with limited tools.

According to Engstrom (2001) community refers to groups' members sharing the same objective (colleagues, students, social context). In Algeria, societal attitudes towards English majors often negatively impacts motivation. As highlighted by the researcher, language streams are viewed as less prestigious compared to scientific fields, which can affect the engagement of students and forces the teachers to become the main source of knowledge, which creates a teacher-centered learning environment. Moreover, within universities, the lack of collaborative support for teachers makes the matter worse. As participants mentioned, they do not receive appropriate training and thus have to seek advice from former teachers who are not always cooperative, which places additional pressure on teachers. This issue indicates that the professional community lacks systematic support, which proves that the division of labour (how tasks are distributed among members of the community), is not equitably balanced. Indeed, the educational system seems to put a disproportionate burden on teachers: acquiring training independently, managing large classes, teaching with inappropriate resources, and addressing students' diverse needs. This imbalance not only affects teachers' performance, but also reduces the quality of teaching, which results in preventing the realization of effective language learning i.e., the goal (object). Overall, by applying Engeström's Activity Model one can clearly see the interplay of the challenges identified within this research, and their systematic source: large classes, lack of teaching resources and physical infrastructure, time constraints, insufficient training, and policy and practice gaps.

6.9 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings on Algerian lecturers' perspectives regarding the most common teaching challenges in Algerian higher education. The findings indicate that the majority of the participants identified large class-sizes, time constraints, insufficient teaching resources, low student English proficiency and motivation, and inadequate teacher training as significant obstacles to effective ELT in this context. Furthermore, the findings reveal that these challenges have systemic roots, that stem from broader institutional constraints, such as limited funding, lack of educational planning, and insufficient professional development opportunities. Additionally, the top-down nature of decision making in Algerian higher education (see Chapter 1, section 1.2.2) often leads to policies that fail to address the practical realities of language teaching. Data from questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations were triangulated to provide a comprehensive understanding of these issues, supported by relevant literature. Notably, the questionnaire data were supported by the qualitative data, offering consistent and enriched views. To further investigate these issues, Engeström's Activity Theory was employed as a theoretical framework. The findings presented in this chapter provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and institutions that seek to address these persistent challenges and improve the quality of ELT in Algeria. Given these complexities, it is essential to reflect on the border implications of these findings. The following chapter presents the study's conclusion by summarizing the main findings, discussing pedagogical implications, recognizing the study's limitations, and providing recommendations for future research.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the key findings and provides a summary of their main contributions. It begins with a review of the study's objectives, methodology and major findings. It then explores the pedagogical implications of the findings and offers insights into how the findings can inform ELT in Algerian higher education. Additionally, the chapter provides recommendations for lecturers, curriculum designers, and policymakers to enhance teaching practices and overcome the challenges identified in this study. It also proposes areas for future research through emphasizing the need for further investigation to expand on the study's findings. Given the evolving nature of ELT in Algeria, future studies could build on these findings to refine pedagogical approaches and improve teacher training programmes. The chapter concludes with a review of the limitations of this study, reflecting methodological and contextual constraints that might have influenced the results. Recognizing these limitations allows for a more nuanced interpretation of the findings and provides guidance for future research.

7.2 Study Summary

Over the past few decades, Algeria initiated several educational reforms. In 1999, the communicative approach (CA) was introduced to foster a more interactive and learner-centered approach to teaching foreign languages at the secondary level (Benmati 2008; Slimani 2016). However, challenges in its implementation led to its replacement by the Competency Based Approach (CBA) in 2006 (Benmoussat and Benmoussat 2018, p.63-64; Khelalfa and Kellil 2023, p.3). In higher education, language teaching policies remain ambiguous, as no official documents specify a standardized approach for foreign language instruction. Nevertheless, the LMD system, the most recent reform in Algerian higher education, emphasises learner-centeredness as a core principle. According to Shohamy (2008, p.119), language teaching policies often operate as implicit mechanisms that influence educational practices even in the

absence of explicit directives. She further emphasises that when not explicitly stated, language teaching policies can be often deduced implicitly through exploring teacher's practices. Given this lack of clarity, this study aimed to explore the preferred teaching practices of lecturers within English departments across three Algerian universities, with a focus on those who have taught or are currently teaching language classes. Additionally, the study also investigated whether these practices align with CLT principles and sought to identify the main obstacles to effective ELT in the chosen context. Accordingly, the research questions were:

1. What is Algerian lecturers' understanding of Communicative Language Teaching?
2. What are Algerian lecturers' preferred strategies for teaching English in Algerian higher education?
3. What do Algerian English lecturers see as the main challenges for English language teaching in Algerian higher education?

To address these research questions, a mixed-methods approach was employed, using questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. A total of 46 participants completed the questionnaire, 10 participated in the interviews, and 14 language classes were observed. The study was grounded in Sociocultural Theory and Activity Theory, which provided a theoretical framework for analysing lecturers' perspectives, their classroom practices, and the challenges that affect ELT in Algerian universities.

1.What is Algerian lecturers' understanding of Communicative Language Teaching?

The findings revealed that the participants perceive CLT as a learner-centered approach which prioritizes fluency over accuracy and emphasises meaning over form (see Chapter 5 section 5.3.3). According to their understanding, CLT discourages the explicit teaching of structure and form and places a stronger focus on speaking at the expense of other skills. Additionally, participants view pair and group work as fundamental components of CLT implementation and consider it an approach that is incompatible with the use of the L1. These views align closely with the strong version of CLT, which prioritizes fluency over accuracy and focuses on meaning rather than form (Howatt 1984, Nunan 2012). As a result, many lecturers may not be

aware of their implicit use of CLT strategies, as they interpret it solely through its strong version. This understanding may explain why many Algerian lecturers reported relying on a more balanced approach that involves aspects of different methodologies. Given the challenges of implementing the CA in the Algerian context, such as large class sizes, lack of modern teaching materials, and a lack of institutional support, many lecturers may view CLT implementation in Algerian higher education as impractical. This finding is consistent with Almohideb's (2019) study in Saudi Arabia, where participants were also unaware of their reliance on CLT strategies. Indeed, Almohideb observed that although lecturers claimed not to use CLT, their teaching practices aligned with CLT principles. This suggests that lecturers' understanding of CLT might influence how they describe their own teaching practices.

2.What are Algerian lecturers' preferred strategies for teaching English in Algerian higher education?

The findings of this study indicated that Algerian English lecturers identify a variety of communicative activities as their preferred strategies for teaching English within English departments in Algerian higher education. Indeed, listening and viewing activities, oral presentations, information gap activities, group and pair work, problem solving activities, and role plays, are among the most frequently cited strategies. These activities reflect a strong focus on developing students' communication skills and promoting interaction in the classroom. According to the questionnaire data, the majority of the participants consistently use listening and viewing activities in their teaching. However, interview findings suggest that some lecturers (4 out of 10- 40%) struggle to implement viewing activities due to the absence of language laboratories and projectors in their institution. The discrepancy in the availability and use of these resources can be attributed to the fact that the data were collected from different universities, each offering varying levels of facilities. While some institutions provide advanced tools like language laboratories, others rely on more limited resources.

Similarly, oral presentations were reported to be widely used, with a significant number of participants incorporating them into their teaching. Information gap activities, which are known to be communicative activities (Gao 2015), also emerged as a preferred strategy, with a

considerable number of lecturers reporting frequent use. Pair work and group work were also highly favoured by participants. This suggests that lecturers' focus on peer interaction and collaborative learning in their language classes, which are core principles of CLT (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Interview data further supported these findings, as several participants explicitly mentioned the use of pair work in their responses. Furthermore, problem-solving activities, also known as communicative activities (Ur 1996; Velarde et al. 2022), were reported to be moderately used, indicating that lecturers recognize their role in developing students' critical thinking and analytical skills. Likewise, simulation and role-plays, also appeared as commonly used strategies, with many lecturers reporting their regular implementation. These activities have an interactive, and student-centered focus (Savignon 1993; Aliakbari and Jamalvandi 2010; Velarde et al. 2022), therefore, their presence in the findings aligns with the broader emphasis on communication-focused teaching strategies.

While the data clearly shows a strong preference for communicative activities, an interesting discrepancy emerged in the findings. When participants were explicitly asked about the most dominant teaching approach to teaching English within departments of English in Algerian universities, 86% reported eclecticism as the dominant approach in the chosen context. While this response contrasts with their stated preferences for CLT-oriented strategies, it aligns more closely with their actual classroom practices.

Indeed, while the questionnaire findings emphasise lecturers' strong preference for communicative activities, classroom observation findings revealed a more complex picture. Indeed, classroom observations indicated that lecturers' actual teaching practices do not fully align with their stated preferences. Specifically, most teachers frequently incorporated listening activities (79%), oral presentations, group and pair work (79%), and to a lesser extent, role plays (21%). However, problem solving activities, which lecturers claimed to use, were entirely absent, and only one out of 14 participants (7%) used information gap activities. It is worth mentioning that listening activities and oral presentations were often followed by discussions and debates, which allowed students to engage in meaningful interaction. However, despite this focus on communication, classroom observations also revealed that teachers also incorporate

elements of traditional methods. Indeed, pronunciation drills and gap-filling exercises from the GTM were observed, alongside listening comprehension exercises rooted in the ALM. This suggests that while lecturers prioritize communicative competence, they still rely on structured, form-focused activities to reinforce linguistic accuracy and comprehension. Rather than strictly adhering to one approach, lecturers blend communicative and traditional methods, which demonstrate an attempt to balance fluency and accuracy in language learning. This pedagogical flexibility aligns with Larsen-Freeman's (2000) concept of an EA, which involves selecting and integrating techniques that best address students' specific learning needs. In this context, participants' varied instructional strategies reflect an effort to maintain a student-centered learning environment while ensuring that key language structures and skills are effectively reinforced.

Overall, while the questionnaire data suggested a strong preference for CLT-oriented strategies, classroom observation findings revealed a more balanced approach, with an emphasis on developing students' communication competence. This suggests that although lecturers strive to integrate a variety of methodologies, their teaching practices remain largely influenced by CLT principles.

3.What do Algerian English lecturers see as the challenges for English language teaching in Algerian higher education?

The study identified several obstacles that hinder effective ELT and the implementation of CLT in Algerian higher education in English departments. A total of 67% participants identified large class sizes as a primary challenge. Classroom observations confirmed this, with 86% (12 out of 14) of the observed classes containing between 23 to 58 students. This overcrowding led to insufficient seating and limited opportunities for students participation, as it was impossible to engage all students within a single session. These conditions impede individualized attention and active engagement, as highlighted by Al Jarfs' (2006) and Aoumeur's (2017), who found that large class sizes hinder teacher-student interaction and complicate the evaluation process. Moreover, overcrowded classrooms often result in time limitations (Peddar 2006; Blatchford 2020), another prevalent issue within the chosen context, identified by 54% of the participants.

The findings revealed that this issue was worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic which necessitated alternating class schedules to maintain social distancing, which resulted in reduced class durations and less frequent in-person sessions. This adjustment further limited teaching time, making it more challenging for teachers to cover the curriculum effectively. Another obstacle to effective ELT in the chosen context was resource shortages, as a total of 81% of participants (45% strongly agreeing, 36% agreeing) reported a lack of essential teaching resources, such as projectors, speakers, computers, and language laboratories. This finding was echoed by 80% (8 out of 10) of the participants in the interviews. This scarcity often forced lecturers to rely on their personal devices or traditional methods. This finding is supported by Brabar and Hammouda (2024), and Dou (2021) who observed similar deficiencies in Algerian universities. It is worth mentioning that large class sizes create greater demands for resources, which often overwhelm existing capacities (Ajibola 2010). This interrelation suggests that large class sizes may be the main cause of other challenges, as smaller classes could reduce issues related to resources and time constraints.

Student low English proficiency also emerged as a significant obstacle to effective ELT in the chosen context. In fact, 69% of the participants (30% strongly agreeing, 39 agreeing) identified students' low English proficiency as a common challenge, with 90% echoing this concern in interviews. Reasons behind this issue may include the absence of English proficiency tests for enrolment in English programmes, which allows students from non-language streams to join without prior proficiency (Benmoussat 2003; Lekhal 2008; Rezig 2011; Kheladi 2017; Mehdaoui and Benabed 2023). Another potential reason could be that some students are placed in English departments against their preferences (Lekhal 2008). Furthermore, 66% of the participants (27% strongly agreeing, 39% agreeing) noted a lack of student motivation, which can be the result of the learning and social environments (Harmer 1991; Gao and Liu 2022), including school facilities (Song and Kim 2017), classroom conditions (Zhang *et al.* 2020), unsupportive families and negative influences from significant others (Gao and Liu 2022). The reliance on traditional methods that exclude technology can also lead to boredom which contributes to demotivation (Song and Kim 2017). This aligns with the current study's findings, where technology was rarely incorporated, and some teachers admitted not using modern

teaching approaches. Teachers' lack of training was another obstacle to ELT in the chosen context, identified by a total of 62% of participants (19% considering it extremely common, 19% very common, and 24% common). Indeed, interview data revealed that 80% of the participants felt obliged to develop teaching skills independently, due to a lack of practical training and mentorship. Participants reported receiving theoretical training through seminars and some workshops on how to use Moodle. However, none mentioned having received practical training that they considered adequate preparation.

It is worth noting that the majority of the identified obstacles: large classes, time constraints, lack of resources, teacher training, have systemic roots and are closely interconnected, as demonstrated in chapter 6 (section 6.6) through the application of Engeström's Activity Theory model. This framework shows how these challenges are not isolated but rather stem from broader structural issues within Algerian higher education (Figure 7.1)

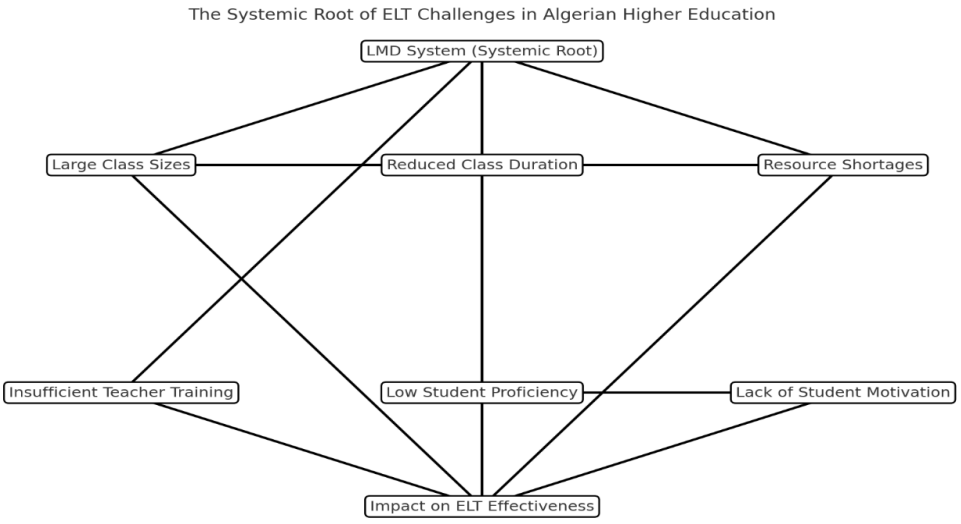


Figure 7.1 The systemic roots of ELT challenges in Algerian higher education: The case of three departments of English

For instance, the issue of large class size is a direct consequence of the massification that followed the implementation of the LMD system. The increased student intake led to a reduction in language class durations, initially by one hour, a situation further worsened during

Covid-19 pandemic due to alternating schedules and restricted classroom availability. The overcrowding of classrooms also placed greater demands on facilities and teaching resources, which were already limited (Ajibola 2010). Similarly, the inadequacy of teacher training can be traced back to the MHE's failure to integrate sufficient practical training into the LMD reform. While theoretical instruction was provided, practical training was neglected, which obliged teachers to develop their pedagogical skills independently. Furthermore, students' low English proficiency can be also rooted in the educational structure. Indeed, the absence of an English proficiency test for admission into English programmes, and the fact that students are not placed according to their preferences result in many enrolling in English programmes against their will, leading to disengagement and a lack of motivation. Given these persistent challenges, it is necessary to explore pedagogical effects and propose recommendations that can help reduce these barriers. The following section outlines strategies that aim at enhancing ELT in English departments within Algerian universities by addressing institutional shortcomings, improving teacher training, and promoting more effective language teaching methodologies.

7.3 Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

The current study identified several recommendations for effective ELT within language classes in departments of English. As noted in the previous chapters, several problems affect ELT within the chosen context. To address these problems, it is essential to consider pedagogical insights that can inform teaching practices, curriculum design, and institutional policies. The following recommendations aim to enhance ELT by improving classroom conditions, teaching methodologies, teacher training, and student engagement.

1. The need for collaboration among key stakeholders in ELT in Algeria

As discussed in the introduction chapter, in Algeria, educational reforms are often implemented without sufficient consultation with experts, teachers, and university administrators (Shohamy 2004; Azzi 2012). For instance, the LMD reform was introduced without adequately preparing teachers, which led to significant difficulties in its implementation, such as insufficient training and a mismatch between theoretical frameworks and classroom realties (Azzi 2012). The same process of top-down decision-making was observed with past language teaching reforms at the secondary level, such as the replacement of CLT. Additionally, the findings of this study demonstrate that many of the challenges faced in ELT, including insufficient teacher training, lack of resources, large class sizes, and the ambiguity of English language policies, stem from top-down decision-making processes that do not involve those directly affected by educational reforms. Therefore, to improve ELT and ensure the successful implementation of pedagogical reforms, it is essential that the MHE prioritizes collaboration and consultation with key stakeholders before implementing any adjustments to ELT. According to Pansiri (2014), introducing any major educational change, such as the implementation of CLT in Algerian higher education, requires a collaborative and interactive process that engage all key parties. This collaboration helps stakeholders to understand and mange change, adjust their strategies to align with new policies, and reduce resistance to reforms by ensuring that all involved parties are part of the decision-making process (Almohideb 2019, p.180)

2. Addressing large class sizes and time constraints

One of the major challenges identified in this study is large class sizes, which limits students' participation, creates difficulties in classroom management, and discourages the use of communicative approaches, as overcrowded classes tend to be one of the most significant obstacles to the successful implementation of CLT in EFL contexts (Al-Jehani 2023). To reduce this challenge, universities should reduce class sizes where possible, especially for language courses that require more interactive engagement. However, this may not always be feasible due to massification. As an alternative, dividing large groups into smaller sections for practical language sessions can help create a more interactive environment. Doing so may also help to optimize instructional time, another significant barrier to effective ELT in the chosen context. Additionally, adopting communicative activities that allow students to engage in meaningful activities within limited time frames may also help with this issue. The flipped classroom model, where students engage with lecture materials before class and use classroom time for discussion and practice, offers another effective strategy (Song and Kim 2017). By giving more responsibility to the learners outside the classroom, this strategy allows teachers to focus on active engagement and skill development in class, making ELT more effective despite time and space constraints.

3. Enhancing teaching resources

A major challenge in ELT within Algerian higher education is the shortage of teaching resources, which limits the use of communicative methodologies. As discussed earlier, many classrooms within the chosen context lack essential tools, such as projectors, audio-visual aids, and internet access, which often forces lecturers to rely on outdated methods. One potential solution is increasing the involvement of the private sector in financing higher education as suggested by Bensalem and Gaidi (2020). Indeed, public-private partnerships could reduce pressure on higher education through increasing investment in educational resources and ensuring that classrooms are properly equipped. In fact, private institutions, such as language schools, often have more flexibility in integrating technology and modern pedagogical approaches compared to public ones. This solution can also help with the reduction of class

sizes through distributing student enrollment more effectively, which in turn may allow lecturers to adopt more interactive teaching methods and better manage teaching time.

4.Supporting teacher training and professional development

In this study, teacher training emerged as a critical issue in Algerian higher education. Indeed, the lack of practical training obliges teachers to develop their teaching strategies through trial and error, which may negatively impact ELT. To bridge this gap, universities should integrate mandatory teaching practicums or internships into postgraduate programmes, as is the case in Western countries. Doing so would provide future teachers with hands-on experience under expert supervision and better prepare them for the realities of classroom instruction. In addition to initial training, continuous professional development programmes that include workshops on modern ELT methodologies, technology integration, and classroom management should be made accessible to all lecturers. These programmes would help lecturers stay updated with evolving teaching practices. Furthermore, encouraging mentorship programmes where experienced teachers support novice teachers can help new lecturers refine their strategies and adapt more effectively. Additionally, collaboration between EFL and ESL teachers could strengthen professional development by allowing the exchange of diverse instructional techniques. According to Burns and Richards (2009), cross-context collaboration leads to innovation in teaching and deeper insights into learner needs.

7.4 Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights into ELT in Algerian higher education, specifically in departments of English, several limitations must be acknowledged. These constraints which primarily emerged during the data collection and analysis phases, influenced the study's timeline, participants' engagement, and overall research process. One of the most significant limitations was the two-month delay in the data collection process due to Covid-19 restrictions. Initially, data collection was planned for January 2022, but lockdown measures prevented travel to Algeria. This delay disrupted the research timeline and reduced the flexibility to make adjustments based on preliminary findings. The use of self-completed written questionnaires was another limitation to the study, which was largely due to administrative delays. Indeed, the researcher had to wait for a long period to obtain approval from gatekeepers before distributing the questionnaires in person. While this method ensured direct engagement with the participants, it significantly prolonged the data collection process and limited the possibility of reaching a broader sample through an online questionnaire. Another limitation was the small sample size, which influenced the depth and scope of the study's findings and analysis. Indeed. Only 49 lecturers completed the questionnaires, while 10 took part in the interviews and 14 allowed the researcher to observe their language classes. It is important to note that the initial aim was to gather data from a larger sample, however, Covid-19 made this unfeasible. Additionally, the study was limited to three universities, which further constrained the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Despite these limitations, the study's small sample allowed the researcher to gain rich insights into the ELT in the chosen context.

7.5 Future Research

This study provided valuable insights into Algerian lecturers' perspectives and teaching practices in Algerian higher education, particularly within departments of English. However, given the complexity of language teaching and the challenges identified in this research, several areas require further investigation. Indeed, one of the key areas for future research is the need for a larger and more diverse sample of English lecturers across several universities. Expanding the sample size would provide a more accurate and representative understanding of ELT practices in Algerian higher education, which would in turn allow for stronger generalizations about the teaching methods used in different institutions. A broader sample could also provide greater insights into regional variations and institutional differences that may influence pedagogical choices. Additionally, future research should focus on teachers' academic specializations and how these impact their understanding and application of teaching methodologies. This study included lecturers from various backgrounds within English departments, but a study focusing exclusively on lecturers specialized in Applied Linguistics could offer more targeted insights into how their training influences classroom practices. Furthermore, a comparative study between lecturers specialized in Applied Linguistics and those specialized in Literature and Civilization could help highlight differences in pedagogical beliefs, instructional strategies, and their perspectives on CLT. Despite the potential importance of academic specialization in shaping teaching practices, this area remains largely under-researched in the Algerian context. There are currently no studies that have specifically examined how disciplinary backgrounds influence lecturers' perspectives and implementation of specific teaching methods. Hence, investigating this gap would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of ELT in English departments within Algerian universities.

Beyond disciplinary differences, future studies should explore the impact of teachers' training and professional development on classroom practices. One of the findings in this study is that many lecturers lack formal training in CLT, despite the LMD system's focus on LCI. Further research could assess the effectiveness of existing teacher training programmes and investigate ways to enhance pre-service and in-service training to better prepare lecturers for implementing

modern language teaching approaches. Another unexplored area is students' perspectives on ELT in the chosen context. While this study primarily focused on lecturers' perspectives and practices, investigating students' experiences, challenges, and expectations could provide a more comprehensive view on ELT in Algerian higher education. Indeed, future research could explore students' attitudes towards different teaching methodologies, their learning difficulties, and their suggestions for improving ELT. Finally, future research is needed to examine the systematic barriers that hinder the implementation of CLT in Algerian universities. This study found that large class sizes, time constraints, shortage of teaching resources, and lack of training are among the main challenges facing lecturers. As discussed earlier in this thesis most of these issues have systemic roots and addressing them requires institutional support and policy reform. Hence, future research could explore policy-driven solutions, such as alternative classroom strategies, the integration of technology in ELT, and institutional mechanisms for better resource allocation to create a more communicative and engaging learning environment.

Despite the need for future research, this study has provided a robust insight into the perspectives and practices of Algerian higher education lecturers on ELT. The findings can serve as a valuable resource for institutions and policy makers to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of this context and to enhance ELT practices in Algerian higher education. Indeed, by building on these insights, future efforts can contribute to the development of more effective and contextually appropriate language teaching strategies, ultimately improving the overall quality of English language education in Algeria.

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Appendix A Information Letter, Consent Form, Research Privacy Notice and Recruitment Email

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

INFORMATION LETTER

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Kahina Guendez, and I am a PhD student in the School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics at the University of Limerick, Ireland. As part of my studies, I am carrying out a research project entitled "English language teaching in Algerian higher education: Lecturers' perspectives and practices".

You are invited to participate in this research study, which aims to explore the perspectives and practices of Algerian English lecturers working within the English departments of three universities located in the north of Algeria. The study will use self-completed questionnaires, optional individual interviews, and classroom observations to investigate lecturers' views on English language teaching in this context, their teaching practices, and their alignment with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles. Additionally, the research seeks to identify the main challenges faced in teaching English within the selected universities.

If you agree to take part in the research, you will receive a questionnaire. Completing the questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes and you will not receive further questionnaires. The researcher will get in contact via email with

participants who express their consent at the end of the questionnaire for a follow- up interview and if possible, a classroom observation. The interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes and will take place at a location in the university that is convenient for you (or via skype or phone). Classroom observation can be arranged by email correspondence for a time that suits you during the second semester 2022. Further email exchanges will be kept to a minimum as agreed with each individual participant and you will not be asked for further interviews or classroom observations.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary and involves no known benefits or risks for you. Moreover, you will have the right not to answer questions or to withdraw from the research at any time, up to a period of 14 days after the data collection is completed.

The data collected throughout this study may be used for publications and presentations. All information you supply will be treated in the strictest confidentiality. Your name will not appear in any published documents stemming from this research study. All data will be saved and stored securely in accordance with the requirements of the University of Limerick 's Research Ethics Committee.

Your participation would be greatly appreciated, as it would enhance my research significantly and contribute to informing the field of English language teaching in Algeria

If you have any queries, or would like more information about the project, please contact me at my email address: Kahina.Guendez@ul.com

If you have further queries, and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact: Dr. Veronica O'Regan at: Veronica.O'Regan@ul.ie and Dr. Elaine Riordan at: Elaine.Riordan@ul.ie

This research study has received Ethics approval from the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (*REF 2021-11-25 AHSS*). If you have any concerns about this study or your participation and wish to contact an independent authority, you may contact:

Chairperson Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee AHSS Faculty Office

University of Limerick Tel: +353 61 202286

Email: FAHSSEthics@ul.ie



Best Wishes

Kahina Guendez

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Ethical Consent Form

I, the undersigned, declare that I am willing to take part in research for the project entitled ". "Investigating Perceptions of Communicative Language Teaching in Algerian Higher Education".

- I declare that I have been fully briefed on the nature of this study and my role in it and have been given the opportunity to ask questions before agreeing to participate.
- The nature of my participation has been explained to me, and I have full knowledge of how the information collected will be used.
- I am aware that my participation in this study will be audio recorded, and I agree to this. However, should I feel uncomfortable at any time, I can request that the recording software be switched off.
- I am aware that such information may also be used in future academic presentations and publications about this study.
- I fully understand that there is no obligation for me to participate in this study.
- I fully understand that I am free to withdraw my participation without having to explain or give a reason, up to a period of two weeks after the data collection is completed.
- I acknowledge that the researcher does guarantee that they will not use my name or any other information that would identify me in any outputs of the research.
- I declare that I have read and fully understand the contents of the Research Privacy Notice.

_____ _____

Signature of participant Date

_____ _____

Signature of Investigator Date

Consent to Contact about Similar Future Research	**Yes**	**No**
I explicitly consent to the University, contacting me as part of current or similar future research and holding my contact details on its database for the purpose of contacting me	☐	☐

RESEARCH PRIVACY NOTICE

Introduction

This Research Privacy Notice governs the use and storage of your personal data by the University of Limerick. The processing of this data is carried out in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) / Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 ("Data Protection Law") and in accordance with this Research Privacy Notice.

Any personal data which you provide to the University as part of this research project will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, in accordance with Irish and European Data Protection Law. This Notice sets out details of the information that we collect, how we process it and who we share it with. It also explains your rights under data protection law in relation to our processing of your data.

1. Title and Purpose of the research project

1.1 This research project, entitled "English language teaching in Algerian higher education: Lecturers' perspectives and practices focuses on exploring the cognitive dimensions that Algerian English lecturers draw upon in their language classes. The study aims to gain insights into lecturers' opinions on their preferred teaching strategies and practices within English language classrooms. Additionally, it investigates how these teaching practices align with their views on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The successful completion of this research is expected to contribute significantly to the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Algeria. Firstly, it will provide in-depth insights into teachers' knowledge and understanding of foreign language teaching, which could help identify areas of focus for pre-service teacher training programmes. This, in turn, may facilitate the effective implementation of specific teaching approaches in the classroom. Secondly, the research aims to offer valuable information about the factors that influence and constrain teachers' practices in Algerian classrooms and similar EFL contexts. Understanding these factors will enable stakeholders to address challenges and enhance teaching outcomes. Finally, the findings of this study may serve as a useful resource for programmes coordinators and decision-makers in Algerian educational institutions. By consulting these insights, they can better reconcile theory and practice, leading to more informed decisions and improved alignment between educational policies and classroom realities.

2. Research Ethics Committee

2.1 Ethical approval was granted by the University of Limerick Research Ethics Committee on [03-12-2021]. The research ethics approval number is [REF 2021-11-25].

3. Identity of the Data Controller(s)

3.1 The Data Controller is:

- University of Limerick, Plassey, Limerick.

4. Identity and Contact Details of the Data Protection Officer of the Data Controller(s)/

4.1 You can contact the University of Limerick's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@ul.ie or by writing to Data Protection Officer, Room A1-073, University of Limerick, Limerick.

5. The Identity of the Principal Investigator

5.1 The Principal Investigator for this Research Project is Kahina Guendez, a PhD student in Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics at the faculty of Art, Humanities and Social Sciences.

6. How we will use your personal data

6.1 The University must process your personal data in order to undertake research relating to this project/study. The data will be collected directly from the participants. Indeed, the participants will be asked to complete a written questionnaire, do an interview, and allow the researcher to observe their teaching practices.

6.2 The personal data collected and used in this research will include: Professional data (educational degree and professional status), knowing this information is necessary to determine if you possess a set of predetermined participation criteria.

6.3 You provide us with your personal data to enable us to undertake the research project. Participation in this research project is voluntary, and participants may withdraw without giving any reason. Should you wish to withdraw, you may do so by contacting the Principal Investigator at: Kahina.Guendez@ul.ie or in writing to University of Limerick, Plassey, Limerick

7. Lawful Basis for University Processing Personal Data

7.1 Data Protection Law requires that the University must have a valid legal reason to process and use your personal data. This is often called a 'lawful basis'. GDPR requires us to be explicit with you about the lawful basis upon which we rely in order to process information about you.

7.2 The University is carrying out this research in the public interest and for scientific, historical or statistical purposes. In doing so, we are relying on Article 6(1)(e) of the GDPR. Where we are processing special category or sensitive personal data, we are relying on Article 9(2)(j) of GDPR. As required under Data Protection Law, we have appropriate safeguards in place in order to protect your personal data; these are set out in the next section.

8. Protecting Your Personal Data

8.1 We have the following measures in place to help ensure we keep your personal data safe:

- *All researchers at the University must adhere to university policies and procedures that tell our staff and students how to collect and use your information safely.*
- *Training is made available to all researchers to ensure our staff and students understand the importance of data protection and how to protect your personal data.*
- *The University has security arrangements and technical measures in place that ensure your information is stored safely and securely.*
- *All research projects involving personal data are reviewed and approved by a research ethics committee in line with university policies and procedures.*
- *Where a research project may involve a high risk, we first carry out a data protection impact assessment to assess risks and ensure adequate safeguards are in place.*
- *Where your personal data is processed for health research, we will always obtain your explicit consent in advance (in line with the Health Research Regulations 2018).*

8.2 Personal data collected for this research project will be pseudonymized within two weeks after collection.

9. Sharing Your Personal Data with Third Parties

9.1 The University will not disclose your personal data to third parties. [Anonymous data may be shared with third parties. In this situation, you will not be identifiable from any data we share with the third party.]

10. How Long Will We Keep Your Data

10.1 All Personal Data collected for this research project will be retained for 7 years following completion of the research project.

11. Your Rights

11.1 Depending on the lawful basis which we rely on to process your Personal Data, you may have the right to request that we:

- *provide you with information as to whether we process your data and details relating to our processing, and with a copy of your personal data;*
- *rectify any inaccurate data we might have about your without undue delay;*
- *complete any incomplete information about you;*
- *under certain circumstances, erase your Personal Data without undue delay;*
- *under certain circumstances, be restricted from processing your data;*
- *under certain circumstances, furnish you with the Personal Data which you provided us within a structured, commonly used and machine readable format;*

11.2 Requests for any of the above should be addressed by email to the Principal Investigator at Kahina.Guendez@ul.ie AND the Data Protection Officer at

dataprotection@ul.ie. Your request will be processed within 30 days of receipt. Please note, however, it may not be possible to facilitate all requests, for example, where the University is required by law to collect and process certain personal data including that personal information that is required of any research participant.

11.3 It is your responsibility to let the Principal Investigator know if your contact details change.

12. Queries, Contacts, Right of Complaint

12.1 Further information on Data Protection at the University of Limerick may be viewed at www.ul.ie/dataprotection. You can contact the Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@ul.ie or by writing to Data Protection Officer, Room A1-073, University of Limerick, Limerick.

12.2 You have a right to lodge a complaint with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (Supervisory Authority). While we recommend that you raise any concerns or queries with us first at the following email address Kahina.Guendez@ul.ie, you may contact that Office at info@dataprotection.ie or by writing to the Data Protection Commission, 21 Fitzwilliam Square South, Dublin 2, D02 RD28.

Recruitment Email

Dear Professor

My name is Kahina Guendez, and I am a PhD student in the School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics at the University of Limerick, Ireland. I am conducting a research study that explores how is English commonly taught within the department OF English of three Algerian universities, which is funded by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. In your capacity as head of department, I would like to request permission to distribute an information letter and questionnaires (see attached) to academic staff in your department as part of the study.

I would greatly appreciate your support, as it would enhance my research significantly and contribute to informing the field of English language teaching in Algeria. If you need further information or clarification, please let me know.

Kind Regards,

Kahina Guendez

Appendix B Questionnaire



Questionnaire

English language teaching in Algerian higher education: Lecturers' perspectives and practices.

This questionnaire aims to explore your preferred teaching strategies, your understanding of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and the challenges that may hinder effective English language teaching. within Algerian higher education. All data will be treated with strict confidentiality, no personal data will be disclosed. This questionnaire includes 4 parts and should take approximately about 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is highly appreciated.

Section I: Teachers' classroom practices

1. How often do you use the following activities in your English language classes? (Please put a tick √)

1=Always 2= Often 3=Sometimes 4=Rarely 5=Almost Never 6= Never

Classroom activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Pair work						
2. Group work						
3. Sentence drilling and sentence repetition						
4. Simulation and role play						
5. Pronunciation drills						
6. Reading and reciting dialogues						
7. Games						
8. Listening and viewing activities (listening to audiotapes or						

watching videotapes and answering questions)						
9. Translation exercises						
10. Functional activities (requesting, asking for directions)						
11. Problem solving activities (brainstorming, crossword puzzle)						
12. Information gap activities (completing texts/stories)						
13. Dictation						
14. Oral presentation						

2. If you use any other activities that do not appear in the table above, please mention them here:

-

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-

-

3. Do you think that your teaching practices are driven by (please put a tick):

1. Your own initiatives ☐
2. The university's policy ☐
3. A mix of self and policy driven focus ☐

4. In your opinion, how is English commonly taught within English departments, in Algerian universities?

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Section II: Challenges in teaching English

1. The following are some challenges in teaching English as a foreign language. In your view, to what extent are these challenges common within Algerian universities (in English departments)? (Please put a tick √)

1=Extremely common 2= Very common 3 = Common 4= Somewhat common

5=Not sure 6= Uncommon

Challenges related to teachers	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Limited English proficiency						
2. Limited knowledge of the target culture						
3. Lack of training in foreign language teaching						
4. Misconceptions about approaches and methods of foreign language teaching						
5. Heavy workload						
Challenges related to students	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Low English proficiency						
2. Resistance to participating in class						
3. Lack of motivation						
4. Attitudes towards English						
Challenges related to the educational system	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Shortage of teaching materials						
2. Grammar-based assessment procedures						
3. Large class size						
4. Time constraints						
5. Syllabus constraints						

Challenges related to cultural norms	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Discrepancy between modern instruction (learner-centered teaching) and the traditional view of teaching and learning in EFL contexts						
Challenges related to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) itself	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
1. CLT does not offer a clear way of foreign language teaching.						
2. Assessment is particularly problematic in CLT						

2. If you have noticed any other obstacles to teaching English as a foreign language that do not appear in the list above, please mention them here:

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Section III: Teachers' views on CLT

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Please put a tick √)

1= Strongly agree 2= Agree 3= Partly agree 4= Not sure 5= Disagree 6=Strongly disagree

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. CLT is an approach to foreign language teaching that embraces a variety of teaching methods. In this regard, CLT implies an eclectic way of teaching.						
2. Within CLT the explicit correction of errors is discouraged. Therefore, errors are often tolerated.						

3. CLT promotes equal emphasis on the four basic skills (listening & speaking, reading & writing)						
4. CLT aims at developing students' communicative competence. Therefore, meaning is prioritized over form in communicative classes.						
5. CLT pays attention to fluency as well as accuracy.						
6. CLT entails teaching the target language and the target culture simultaneously.						
7. CLT encourages an entire focus on group work and/or pair work and therefore discourages individual work.						
8. CLT discourages grammar instruction because grammatical knowledge is unconsciously acquired through exposure to the target language.						
9. CLT is concerned with the functional (e.g., apologizing) as well as the structural aspects (e.g., syntax) of language.						
10. CLT promotes a balanced usage of meaning based and form focused activities.						
11. CLT is a learner-centered approach to teaching. Yet, it does not exclude controlled instruction.						
12. CLT does not tolerate the use of the learners' L1.						
13. CLT is impractical as it does not offer a clear cut and uniform teaching method.						
14. CLT pedagogy is not compatible with EFL contexts (non-English speaking countries)						

15. CLT neglects the context in which teaching takes place.						

2. In your opinion, what are the three aspects of teaching that CLT emphasizes the most?

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3. In your opinion, what are the three aspects of teaching that CLT advises against?

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Section IV: Background information

Please complete the following section as fully as possible

1.Gender: _____

2. Level of qualification in teaching English (please put a tick √)

(1) MA/Magistère in Applied Linguistics ☐

(2) MA/Magistère in Literature & Civilization ☐

(3) PhD in Applied Linguistics ☐

(4) PhD in literature and civilisation ☐

(5) other (please specify): _____

(6) Current teaching position (Full time/part time/ substitute teacher): _____

3. Have you received any training in English language teaching?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Is there any policy or implicit strategy on teaching English within your department/ institution?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If you have ticked yes, can you please give an example of the most commonly used teaching strategies in your department?

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This PhD project has another stage of research, which is an audio-recorded semi-structured interview that aims to explore respondents' views on EFL instruction and CLT. If you would like to participate, please tick 'yes' in the box below. The interview may last 30-60 minutes and will take place at a time and location which suit you.

Yes ☐ No ☐

If you have ticked 'yes', please provide your contact email address. Your details will not be shared with anyone else.

_____

This PhD project also plans to include a classroom observation aiming to explore respondents' current classroom practices. If it would be possible to attend one of your English language classes (listening & speaking, reading & writing classes), please tick the box below.

☐

If you have ticked the box above, please provide your contact email address. Your details will not be shared with anyone else.

_____

Thank you very much for your collaboration

Appendix C Interview



Interview

English language teaching in Algerian higher education: Lecturers' perspectives and practices.

Interview questions

(Greetings)

1. How many hours do you teach per week?

2. What is the average size of the language classes you are teaching/used to teach?

3. What are the characteristics of a typical English class in your teaching context?

4. Do you rely on specific resources to teach English?

5. In your opinion what are the facilities needed to teach an L2 in an EFL context?

Probe: are you provided with the facilities you mentioned in your EFL classes?

6. Who makes the final decisions in terms of the syllabus of the language courses you are handling? Do you have some discretion in terms of the content?

7. While teaching English what skills or subskills do you place more emphasis on?

8. What do you think is the main aim of teaching English as a foreign language?

9. Could you please tell me what is your approach to foreign language teaching and why?

10. In your view what are the best methods/approaches for L2 teaching in Algeria? Why?

11. (If not elicited by the preceding question) are you familiar with communicative language teaching / the communicative approach (CA)?

12. What do you think are the key features of CLT?

13. To what extent do you think that using CLT principles is important for language instruction? Why?

14. To what extent do you think that CLT principles are used in practice in an Algerian third level context (emphasize English departments)

Probe: If it is not commonly used, why do you think this is the case?

Appendix D Classroom Observation Grid

University:	Day:	Time:
Room:	Level:	Subject:
Lesson's length:	Number of SS:	Observer:

Classroom Observation Grid

Part 1

Focus	Comments
Teaching materials a) Handouts □ b) Visuals □ c) Audio tapes □ d) Video tapes □ e) Other:	
Teaching tasks/activities a) Pair work □ b) Group work □ c) Drills □ d) Games □ e) Role play □ f) Silent reading □ g) Translation □	

h) Dictation □ i) Oral presentation □ j) Reading out loud □ k) Debates □ l) Information gap activities □ m) Information gathering activities (surveys, interviews) □ n) Task completion activities □ o) Functional activities □ p) Reading comprehension activities □ q) Paragraph/ essay writing □ r) Other:	
Medium of instruction a) L1 □ b) L2 □ c) Both □	
Error treatment a) Neglected □ b) Self-corrected □ c) Peer-correction □ d) Teacher correction □ e) Other:	
Structure of Interaction a) Teacher/ class □ b) Teacher/student □ c) Student/class □ d) S/S (pair work, group work) □	

Teaching approach: a) Teacher-centered □ b) Learner-centered □ c) A mixt of a & b □	
Teaching challenges: a) Classroom size □ b) Limited teaching resources □ c) Limited teaching hours □ d) Students' resistance to participate □ e) Students' limited language proficiency □ f) Other:	
Teaching & learning atmosphere	
Classroom management:	

Part 2

Features of CLT	Comments
Focus on meaning □	
Consideration of the functional & structural aspects of the language□	
Use of authentic materials □ ➢ Advertisements ➢ Catalogues ➢ Travel brochures ➢ Movies ➢ Radio & TV shows ➢ Manuels, menus, maps ➢ Greeting cards ➢ Newspapers ➢ Magazines	
Focus on fluency & accuracy □	
Focus on the 4 basic skills □	
Contextualization □	
Promotion of interaction (group work & pair work) □	

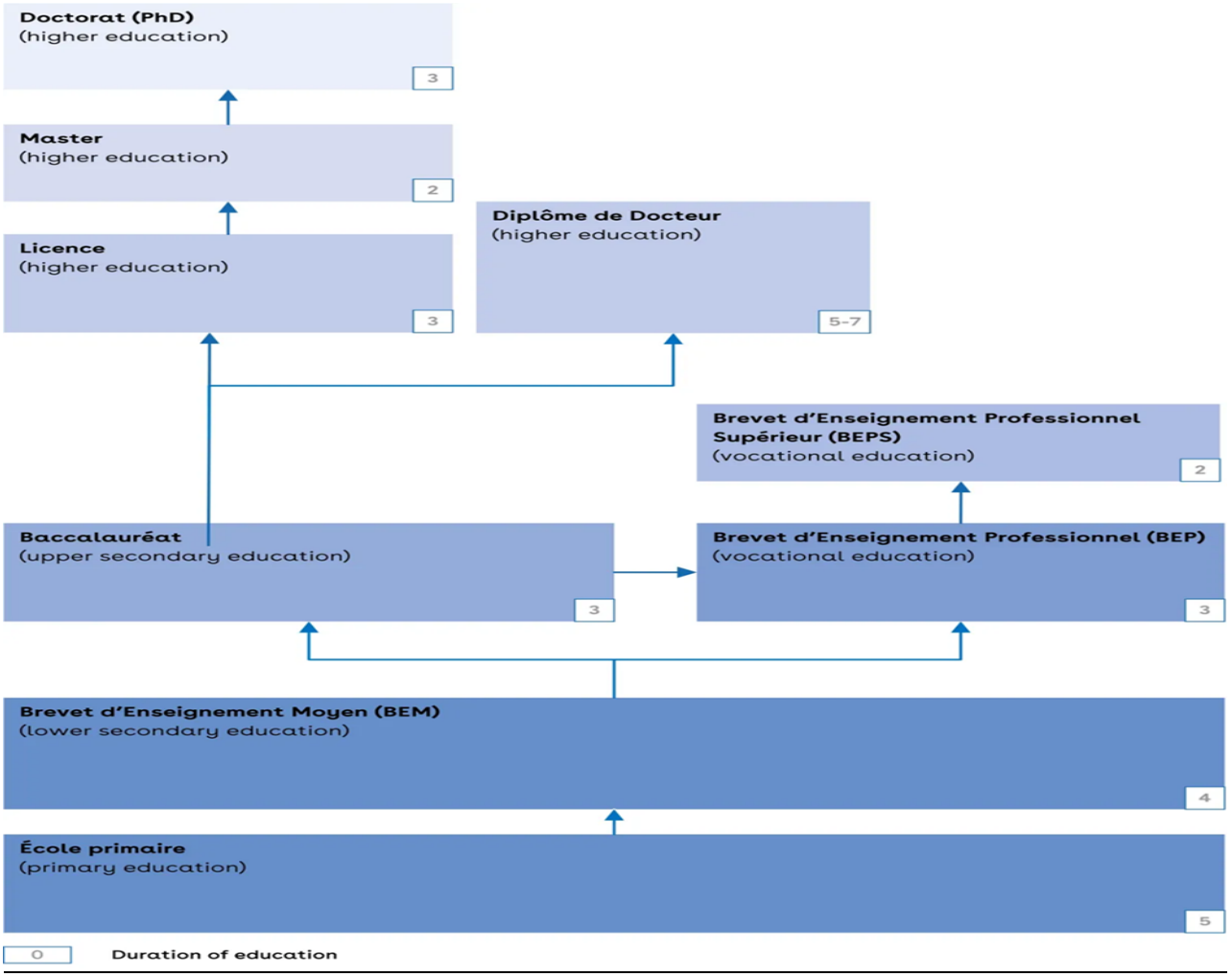
The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide □	
Active participation of the students in the classroom □	
Use of implicit corrective feedback □	
Avoidance of students' L1/minimal use of the SS' L1 □	

Part 3

General comments

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Appendix E The structure of the Algerian educational system



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