

Reconsidering Semantic Awareness in Algerian EFL Classrooms: A Theoretical Exploration of Meaning Construction and Pedagogy

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Abstract:

The current theoretical study explores the contribution of semantic awareness towards meaning construction in Algerian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Despite frequent developments in Algerian EFL instruction, the learners are likely to face frequent difficulties in processing advanced words, dealing with pragmatic inferences, and understanding context-dependent meanings. Drawing on foundational semantic theories that range from perceptual abstraction and syntax-semantics interfaces to relevance-based and sociocultural models, this study examines how meaning is processed, constructed, and stored during second language acquisition. It examines the semantic concerns particular to Algerian learners, including morphological bottlenecks, input exposure constraints, and cultural mismatches, and explores how these can be addressed through theoretically driven yet contextually sensitive pedagogic practice. A focus is made on merging semantic theory with intercultural competence and on determining non-tech- and native speaker model-dependent instructional strategies. By descriptive-analytical review, the article connects global semantic studies with localised educational contexts, presenting pedagogical implications for teacher training and curriculum design in Algeria's multilingual EFL context.

Keywords: Semantic Awareness, Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural Competence, EFL Pedagogy, Algerian Education

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1.Introduction:

Second language (L2) learning acquisition and meaning-building are an essential element of communicative competence and mental development. As language learners accommodate a new linguistic code, the interpretive capacity to read polysemous words, make inferences about implicated meaning, and negotiate cultural nuance takes center stage in their proficiency. In the context of Algerian English as Foreign Language (EFL) learning, these semantic challenges are intensified by multilingual forces, pedagogic constraints, and lack of ample access to natural language input. Although vocabulary acquisition dominates syllabi, the intrinsic semantic processes that underpin context-dependent communication are not adequately explored in theory and practice.

The theoretical area of L2 semantic development is richly textured by a variety of positions. Strick's (1980) development model postulates that language learners move from perception-based meanings to abstract, culture-derived interpretations, a phenomenon particularly relevant in multicultural and multilingual societies like Algeria. Slabakova (2008, 2010) supplements valuable facts by introducing the Bottleneck Hypothesis and syntax-semantics interface theory, which demonstrate how L1-L2 morphological and interpretative mismatches are to blame for hindering comprehension. Foster-Cohen's (2004) application of Relevance Theory reconfigures semantic learning as effort- and context-dependent as well as inferential in nature, suggesting that L2 learners are not unlike native speakers but only different in the quality, not the amount, of their exposure and input. These formal and cognitive approaches are supplemented by sociocultural theorists like Iskold (2003), who emphasize the co-construction of meaning through social interaction and cultural mediation.

Empirical data underpins these theoretical comments with classroom practice evidence from Algeria. Al-Jamal and Zennou (2018), using Byram's (1993) model of cultural competence, found that teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Algeria include cultural themes but lack mechanisms for relating them to semantic depth. Bouali (2020) demonstrates that metaphor-driven teaching highly enhances learners' interpretative capacity, congruent with Gibbs' cognitive metaphor theory. Concurrently, Chaouche (2017) encourages intercultural communicative competence to be included, yet her study reflects that there remains a discrepancy present between language and culture in teaching EFL. McGee's (2012) study of semantic prosody reveals varying degrees of consciousness in non-native speakers, leading semantic teaching to be explicated. Finally, Mouna (2024) and Laïla (2014) introduce the influence of multilingualism and context-embedded usage of vocabulary in the creation of learners' semantic perspectives—features highly relevant to the Algerian classroom.

Together, these theoretical and empirical contributions enforce a pedagogical reorientation on Algerian EFL instruction, a one that introduces to the forefront semantic consciousness as the primary goal of learning. This article discusses how semantic theory-based knowledge is relevant to pedagogy suited for the socio-educational situation of Algeria. It addresses four core questions: (1) What are the semantic theories relevant to second language acquisition and second language instruction? (2) How do the theories assist in instructing learners to produce

meaning more effectively in Algerian EFL classrooms? (3) What are the challenges Algerian EFL learners face in regards to semantic vagueness, inference, and contextual meaning? and (4) How can semantic consciousness be integrated into Algerian language teaching practices with minimal technology or native immersion reliance?

Using a descriptive-analytical methodology, the study marries global semantic research and situates them in the Algerian context. Through this perspective, it attempts to provide theoretical support for pedagogical innovations that will enhance lexicon instruction, foster pragmatic competence, and cultivate intercultural sensitivity among Algerian EFL learners.

2. Theoretical Foundations of Semantic Development in L2 Acquisition

Semantic development in second language (L2) learning has been informed by a variety of theoretical perspectives, each with its own specific take on how learners process, construct, and internalize meaning. From cognitive theories of processing to sociocultural theories, researchers have made efforts to disentangle the intricate interplay between linguistic form, meaning, and learner agency. This section elaborates on salient theoretical models that have informed our understanding of L2 learning semantics, including perceptual-to-abstract developmental processes, syntax-semantics interfaces, Relevance Theory, and the role of formal instruction and cognitive capacity. Drawing on such foundation texts by Strick (1980), Slabakova (2008, 2010), Foster-Cohen (2004), and Krashen, the ensuing discussion then critically responds to such positions and their consequences for Algerian EFL students and pedagogy. Through tracing the ancestry of influential ideas, this section is a basis for integrating semantic theory into classroom practice, specifically within multilingual and multicultural contexts like Algeria.

One of the earliest theoretical hypotheses concerning semantic acquisition in L2 contexts was made by Strick (1980), who speculated that learners progress from perceptually-based to culturally abstract semantic form. Initially, L2 learners rely on meanings based on their domestic perceptual experiences, which are usually their own cultural schemas. The greater their exposure and engagement with the target language culture, the greater the learners' reliance on more abstract and culturally apposite semantic interpretations. This trajectory of growth not only attests to lexical development but also to more significant cognitive accommodation to second language conceptual structures. Such a trajectory lies at the root of investigation into the way students in culturally disparate settings, i.e., Algeria, construct meaning across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Where perceptual abstraction is crucial, the relationship between syntax and semantics introduces another level of complexity to L2 development. Slabakova (2010) emphasizes the reality that second language learners encounter interpretive mismatches in the transition between L1 and L2 syntactic patterns, particularly in situations where "simple syntax" hides "complex semantics," or vice versa. Algeria.

Students need to adapt to varying structural and semantic requirements between languages in these mismatches. These issues serve to underscore the importance of pedagogic procedures taking account of both syntactic patterns and their inferred meaning. In the Algerian classroom, where students often struggle to cope with Arabic-French-English interlingual contacts, understanding and production of such an interface become central to adequate understanding and production.

Building on her 2010 model further, Slabakova (2008) offers the Bottleneck Hypothesis, where she contends that inflectional morphology—rather than syntax or semantics in and of themselves—constitutes the biggest bottleneck in L2 acquisition. According to her study, even though L2 learners can acquire phrasal semantics and syntactic structure relatively effortlessly, they struggle over morphological elements that are important for meaning construction. Highly lexical experienced bilinguals with high working memory may even have native-like semantic processing but morphology remains a persistent problem. This is pointedly applicable to the Algerian EFL contexts where morphological practice is generally secondary to memorization of vocabulary, withholding students from employing skills for working with semantically dense expressions.

Relevance Theory, created by Foster-Cohen (2004), provides a pragmatic-cognitive explanation of semantic processing within L2 learners. The theory assumes that all language speakers—native or not—build meaning in an optimizing process of cognitive activity and communicational relevance. Contrary to assuming that L2 learners are inherently distinct, Relevance Theory argues that their difficulties are the result of limited linguistic input and contextual exposure rather than a different cognitive architecture. For Algerian learners, this perspective supports pedagogical models prioritizing inference-making and context interpretation over the memorization of discrete meanings.

Krashen's influential but contested Input Hypothesis theorizes that comprehensible input, delivered in low-anxiety conditions, is the most important factor in L2 acquisition. While this model has inspired communicative pedagogical practice, it has been subject to criticism for neglecting active learner involvement, corrective feedback, and formal instruction (Iskold, 2003). More generally, the Affective Filter Hypothesis of Krashen's theory assumes that emotional state has a powerful influence on learning performance. This has been opposed by sociocognitive theorists who advocate more interactive and feedback-giving environments. For Algerian EFL instructors, this debate serves to emphasize the importance of reconciling input-providing pedagogy with scaffolded output and meaning negotiation options.

To counterbalance cognitive and formal methods, sociocultural theories locate L2 acquisition within social interaction and cultural mediation. Iskold (2003) indicates the way that proficiency is not merely linguistic competence, but competence in understanding social meaning in context. Semantic knowledge, on this account, is co-constructed through dialogic practice and situated activity. In multicultural classrooms like the ones found in Algeria, whose students arrive with a range of linguistic backgrounds, sociocultural models justify the

incorporation of students' prior repertoires and promote meaning-making as a socially contextualized phenomenon.

Building on the notion of student development, Smith and Ellis describe how interlanguage and construction theory inform us about semantic acquisition. Students actively build linguistic input to support their internal developing systems, with repeated outcomes being approximations of target language semantics (Smith & Ellis, 1994). They are dynamic and nonlinear procedures, which reflect active experimentation and hypothesis-testing on the part of the student. This is consistent with tendencies among Algerian EFL students to construct meaning from hybrid structures based on Arabic, French, and English input.

Kaboody (2023) highlights the core role of lexical semantics in L2 word construction, noting that acquiring word meanings is not memorization but rather recognizing relationships, nuances of meaning, and discourse roles. Under instruction shaped by lexical semantics, such as semantic mapping and contextualized production, learners are able to form a richer sense of meaning and word interrelation. In Algerian environments, where vocabulary teaching is decontextualized, such approaches offer a path to completing learners' semantic networks.

Recent studies also show the importance of discourse and corpus-informed theories to account for how learners acquire and use meanings. Slabakova (2008) writes that real-time processing and authentic input allow learners to equip themselves with semantic use patterns, especially with difficult forms like verb-particle constructions. These findings justify incorporating naturalistic and data-driven practice into EFL instruction—a practice still underutilized in Algerian classrooms oozing textbook-dominated curricula.

Despite the breadth of theories addressed, there is a common thread regarding the necessity for a more holistic, responsive approach to teaching meaning in L2 situations. Proposals by Strick, Slabakova, and Foster-Cohen all taken together serve to underscore the necessity for semantic instruction grounded in cognitive and cultural realities. Since Algerian EFL learners are not able to deal with multilingual environments and lack adequate exposure to English use, theoretical insight needs to be taken to localized pedagogical practice. This alignment forms the basis for discussion in what follows regarding vocabulary instruction, pragmatic competence, and intercultural awareness in Algerian EFL classrooms.

Theoretical explorations of semantic development in L2 acquisition reveal an intricate entanglement between cognitive processing, syntactic structure, social environment, and culture orientation. From perceptual grounding to abstract semantic consciousness, L2 learners go through a complex developmental path influenced by many factors. While theories like Relevance Theory, the Bottleneck Hypothesis, and interlanguage development act as explanatory theories, pedagogic usefulness comes from their potential to frame instruction that is both linguistically challenging and culturally embedded. In Algerian EFL classrooms, in which students face specific semantic and morphological challenges, working from these theoretical assumptions can maximize both vocabulary depth and overall communicative competence. The next section will examine how these considerations are

interpreted in terms of pedagogical vocabulary instruction and meaning-making in EFL contexts.

3. Semantic Theory and Vocabulary Instruction in EFL Contexts

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy, vocabulary acquisition remains a core concern, especially in contexts where the learners' exposure to natural uses of language is limited. Semantic theory, investigating how meaning is constructed, organized, and interpreted in language, is a rich conceptual context for informing vocabulary acquisition. This section explores the application of semantic theory in EFL classroom with specific emphasis on its pedagogic implications, particularly on vocabulary acquisition. With an integrated discussion of empirical and theoretical researches, this section lists how semantic field theory, semantic mapping, and other sense-oriented approaches enhance vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and memorization. The presentation is organized thematically around three main strands: (1) instructional principles and strategies grounded in semantic theory, (2) empirical support for the effectiveness of these approaches, and (3) specific results of research within or on the borders of Algerian and Arabic-speaking EFL environments. The aim is to combine extant knowledge in an effort to frame instructional shortfalls and contextual matters so as to provide a theoretical and empirical background to the current study.

Semantic theory per se provides a critical context where language instructors can approach meaning-making in teaching EFL. Hussain and Sajid (2015) state that semantics encourages a more advanced treatment of how language carries meaning on lexical, sentential, and discourse levels. Despite the failure of their paper to provide empirical evidence, it endeavors to provide a theoretical rationale for the integration of semantic principles into the curriculum of EFL. From this theoretical background, Alsayed (2020) emphasizes the semantic centrality of language learning, confirming that control of semantic relations has an essential role to play in vocabulary capability and ability to communicate among learners. These approaches converge in their endorsement of instruction based on meaning as key to effective EFL instruction.

Semantic field theory, developed by Guo (2010), offers a systematic method of vocabulary teaching through investigations of paradigmatic (e.g., synonymy, hyponymy) and syntagmatic (e.g., collocational) relations. This can assist learners in building cognitive lexicons on the basis of sense relations rather than lists of discrete words. Gao and Xu (2013) expand on this idea, advocating for instruction of semantic fields that explicitly addresses multiple semantic relations, including antonymy and synonymy, to enable systematic vocabulary learning. Taken collectively, these studies demonstrate the cognitive advantages of vocabulary instruction via conceptual clustering and relational knowledge over memorization. Semantic mapping is a pre-eminent approach to instruction within the broader semantic paradigm. Abdelrahman and Mohammed (2013) empirically demonstrate the worth of this method by reporting EFL learners exposed to semantic mapping consistently performed better than control groups on vocabulary use and retention. Graphical organization of lexical networks

not only aids memory but also increases metalinguistic consciousness in learners. Alsayed (2020) confirms this discovery through illustrating how semantic analysis—often implemented via mapping—can lead to qualitative enhancement in language capability. The overlap between the results of these studies indicates semantic mapping as a cost-effective, evidence-based technique for learning vocabulary.

In field-specific EFL contexts, such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), semantic methods have been tailored to help with domain-specific vocabulary learning. Nga and Nga (2025) explore this in the medical English context, applying semantic theory to facilitate students' mastery of technical terms. Their findings indicate that referential and relational semantic strategies, when combined with technology, promote long-term retention and use of specialized vocabulary. Positioned somewhat outside of the Algerian context, their study identifies the universal application of semantic theory across EFL subfields, offering pedagogical models replicable or adaptable to other specialized environments.

Similarly, Mansouri's (1985) earlier work in Iraqi secondary schools reflects the enduring relevance of semantic field theory in EFL instruction. His experimental study revealed that learners exposed to semantic field-based vocabulary instruction showed improved reading comprehension. Despite the study's temporal distance and regional specificity, it offers a foundational precedent for semantic approaches in Arabic-speaking educational settings. Together, these papers contribute cumulatively to the growing body of evidence testifying to the semantic field theory as being dynamic and adaptive across time, context, and types of learners.

In the Algerian EFL environment, Mekahli (2024) contributes contextually by examining Algerian learners' difficulties with collocation translation from Arabic to English. Although the focus is on translation rather than instruction per se, findings validate persistent gaps in students' semantic competence with respect to collocational meaning. The low success rates in the translation of adjective-noun collocations (11.85% English to Arabic; 27.03% Arabic to English) indicate that explicit teaching of such forms through the use of semantic strategies is needed. The incorporation of semantic mapping and field theory in curricula would mitigate such gaps, offering systemic channels for learners to internalize patterns of collocation and achieve communicative accuracy.

Semantics has promised to bridge such gaps for a long time but is still hampered by implementation problems. Nguyen and Dang (2025) mention constraints like limited class hours, poor teacher training, and students' over-reliance on rote learning. Such barriers can retard the successful integration of semantic strategies, particularly in resource-constrained

Remediating these barriers must be underpinned by institutional support, professional development, and curriculum restructuring that places meaning-based teaching at the forefront. Additionally, the evidence illustrates that semantic teaching has to be scaffolded with technology scaffolds and multimodal materials to facilitate increased participation and retaining.

This section has outlined theoretical considerations and empirical research exemplifying the usefulness and efficacy of semantic theory in EFL vocabulary learning. The literature sets the precedent that semantic techniques, primarily semantic field theory and mapping, support vocabulary acquisition, contextual comprehension, and memorability. General and specific contexts provide evidence of the flexibility of these methods across various learner groups, including Arabic-speaking learners of English as a foreign language. Potential barriers like limitations on learning time and entrenched memorization habits address the need for context-informed implementation strategies.

In Algerian EFL contexts, in particular, the infusion of semantic instruction offers a potential solution to coping with long-standing issues in vocabulary, including those related to collocations and depth of concept. The current review is a theoretical and empirical foundation for what is to follow, which will explain the methodology employed in the current study to explore the implementation of semantic strategies in Algerian EFL classrooms.

4. Difficulties in Algerian EFL Learners' Semantic and Pragmatic Competence

Even though semantic theory presents good strategies in enhancing vocabulary instruction, as described in the previous section, Algerian EFL learners are still confronted with main difficulties in both semantic and pragmatic competence. These issues do not only manifest in lexical translation and collocational usage but also in overall academic composition and communicative competence. This section critically examines these challenges through an empirical study analysis of Algerian EFL contexts. This section is organized into two thematic subsections: the first examines the semantic difficulties Algerian learners experience, particularly those of collocational accuracy and academic expression; the second examines pragmatic difficulties in speech act realization and sociocultural transfer. Through integration of the findings, the section aims to highlight current gaps in teaching and the need for further context-sensitive pedagogical interventions.

Semantic competence in EFL learning is most vulnerable to learner's first language interference, especially in translation settings. Mekahli (2024) provides compelling proof of the challenges faced by Algerian EFL learners in translating collocations with extremely low accuracy rates—11.85% for English to Arabic and 27.03% for Arabic to English. These are especially common in "Adjective + Noun" collocations, where learners use literal translation or synonym substitution, producing unnatural or awkwardly phrased sentences. This phenomenon indicates the inadequacy of traditional vocabulary instruction and the necessity of integrating formal semantic methods, i.e., awareness of collocation and semantic mapping, into the curriculum.

Aside from vocabulary translation, Algerian students have difficulty with academic writing, an aspect that is dependent on semantic accuracy and sense at the level of discourse. Hamzaoui (2021) discovers persistent challenges for Algerian EFL students in suggesting research topics, selecting pertinent topics, and reporting findings. Inability by students to identify formal and informal registers or paraphrase properly is symptomatic of a general

problem of semantic vagueness and context-sensitive meaning-construction. Inadequate teacher motivation and poor teaching resources further widen these issues, initiating a motivational and linguistic stalemate that dilutes academic success.

Writing a thesis, as a culminating academic endeavor, is even more complex in terms of semantic and cognitive demands. Boufeldja and Bouhania (2020) argue that Algerian Master level EFL students perceive thesis writing as an "overwhelming academic task," where socio-cultural issues—such as a lack of mentoring, academic advising, and research preparedness—typically take precedence over linguistic issues. However, students' inability to build nuanced arguments or abstractly also present embedded semantic deficits, particularly the building of useful scholastic stories. These findings contradict an intervention in pedagogy directed towards academic language and cultural domains. Furthermore, low self-efficacy and outdated pedagogical practices hinder semantic fluency among students.

Bouazid and Le Roux (2014) attribute low student achievement in English literature classes to inappropriate pedagogy and low language proficiency. Weakness in semantic and inferential comprehension also follows inability to decode literary fiction, make thematic inferences, or interpret cultural allusions. Without such specific instructional intervention that enables more demanding lexical-semantic processing and critical reading, Algerian learners perform poorly in managing the cognitive demands of high-level EFL acquisition.

Pragmatic competence, or the capacity to employ language use in appropriate social and cultural contexts, is yet another issue of concern for Algerian EFL learners. Dendenne (2014) finds both pragmalinguistic (form-based) and sociopragmatic (context-based) transfer in production by learners of interlanguage requests. His study reveals that students tend to transfer Arabic politeness norms to English, such as employing straightforward or super-polite ones ("My shoulders are falling") that sound unnatural or inappropriate in English situations. Such transfer causes pragmatic infelicities, misunderstandings, and lowered communicative effectiveness, particularly in intercultural communication.

Interestingly enough, Dendenne's (2014) study also seems to suggest that high proficiency does not uniformly translate into higher pragmatic performance. Both high- and low-proficient learners showed similar trends towards pragmatic transfer, suggesting that pragmatic competence does not come with linguistic proficiency. This result defies common practices in instruction and underscores pragmatics teaching where speech act theory, politeness systems, and discourse cultural norms are foregrounded.

Algerian students do not face difficulties in requests only but extend to other areas of interpersonal communication. Mohammed (2017) notes that EFL literature teachers in Algeria face great challenges in persuading students to engage with texts that require sensitivity to indirect speech, figurative language, and implied meaning—all of which demand high pragmatic sensitivity. Without scaffolding instruction that bridges the gap between literal language knowledge and inferential reasoning, students remain powerless to interpret subtleties in tone, context, or intention of the speaker.

Chami (2024) provides a broader sociocultural understanding of these pragmatic challenges, requesting intercultural competence to be integrated into EFL pedagogy. He argues that both "big C" culture (literature, history) and "small c" culture (norms of everyday life, values) must be addressed in language curricula to enable learners' pragmatic awareness. His research points to curricular gaps in materials and teacher preparation, and this suggests that pragmatic competence must be addressed not only in relation to classroom interaction but as part of systematic curricular reform.

The section has examined the challenging semantic and pragmatic problems for Algerian English as a foreign language learners based on an eclectic body of empirical research. The findings report persistent issues in collocational accuracy, academic writing, and discourse-level sense, as well as pragmatic shortcomings in interlanguage requests and intercultural communication. These challenges are found across proficiency levels and education levels, setting out the limitations of current pedagogic practices. Hence, there is a clear demand for pedagogic innovation that integrates semantic theory, intercultural pragmatics, and context-sensitive teaching approaches. In addressing the language learning's sociocultural and linguistic sides, the interventions to come will better equip Algerian EFL learners for the complexity of English use. This gives way to the next section, which will describe the methodological design of the current study and explain how it seeks to fill the gap discovered in semantic and pragmatic teaching.

5. Combination of Semantic Awareness with Algerian Classroom Cultural Competence

Based on the above discussion of the challenges of Algerian EFL learners, the present section explores the pedagogical imperative orienting semantic awareness and cultural competence in the Algerian classroom. While semantic instruction enhances the lexical richness and specificity, cultural competence equips learners with the pragmatic as well as the sociocultural know-how for communication. Scholarship describes current practices in Algeria as compartmentalizing language and culture into separate domains, hence limiting the development of general communicative competence (Chaouche, 2017).

This section synthesizes empirical research findings that determine the strengths and limitations of current teaching approaches and builds an integrated, culture-based model of instruction. The discussion is framed in terms of two thematic imperatives: (1) presenting cultural content to foster semantic and metaphorical awareness, and (2) using non-technological, multilingual, and contextual strategies to advance learners' semantic-cognitive and intercultural competencies.

In the Algerian context, efforts to cultivate cultural competence in EFL classrooms are becoming more solidly rooted, but unevenly. Al-Jamal and Zennou (2018) conducted an in-class observation study in eight Algerian secondary schools, applying Byram's (1993) intercultural approach to analyze instructional practices. Algerian teachers incorporate cultural topics into language classes according to their findings, giving students the chance to reflect on target culture norms. They also found a deficiency of interaction with learners' own

cultural contexts (L1 culture) and an opportunity lost to engage comparative thinking—a necessary prerequisite for semantic deepening and cultural relativism.

Cultural content integration into teaching literature and poetry has proved exceptionally effective in enhancing learners' metaphoric competence, a reliable marker of sophisticated semantic processing. Bouali (2020), applying an integrated pre/posttest design to an empirical study, found that a metaphor-centered pedagogy produced a significantly positive influence on Algerian students' ability to comprehend, interpret, and evaluate figurative language. The approach, based on Gibbs' cognitive theory of metaphor, triggered students' semantic networks and directed them to exceed literal understanding. Notably, Bouali's study avoided heavy reliance on technology, instead leveraging classroom interaction and discussion to nurture semantic fluency—an important consideration for resource-limited Algerian settings.

Despite these advances, semantic awareness often remains an implicit goal rather than an explicit instructional target. McGee (2012) underscores this issue in his investigation of semantic prosody awareness—learners' sensitivity to the attitudinal or evaluative connotations of lexical items. The study indicated that many of the non-native learners, Arab EFL users among them, had not had sufficient exposure to such subtleties. McGee recommends explicit instruction of semantic prosody, and even university students and teachers can benefit from focused exposure to word patterns. His findings, although not limited to Algeria, are relevant considering the semantic-pragmatic problems faced in earlier sections, adding strength to the argument for more advanced vocabulary teaching in Algerian EFL contexts.

Similarly, Abdelrahman and Mohammed (2013) demonstrate the pedagogical power of semantic mapping, which organizes vocabulary into conceptual or thematic clusters. Their quasi-experimental study showed that students taught through semantic mapping significantly outperformed those taught using traditional methods. While their research was conducted outside Algeria, the strategy aligns with Bouali's integrated approach and could be adapted to incorporate culturally relevant themes, thereby promoting both semantic and intercultural competence in Algerian classrooms.

Since Algerian society is multilingual, semantic-cultural integration in practice must pay attention to dynamic coexistence of English, French, Arabic, and Berber within students' language repertoire. Mouna (2024) places specific emphasis on the role that language awareness activities play towards learners' awareness of their own multilingual identity.

Using reflective tools such as interviews and drawing exercises, her study revealed that Algerian students learn more effectively when they are being implicitly made aware of their language choices and challenged to take more of a metacognitive approach to learning the language. Significantly, her method was not technology-based as its facilitators, so it is extremely appropriate to low-resource learning environments.

Looking back on this need for cultural anchoring, Laïla (2014) elucidates on how French loanwords take on new meanings in localized Algerian usage. In her research through observation and interviews in Relizane, she found that youth students prefer to redefine borrowed French terms based on their culture and situational norms. These findings imply a high pedagogical value: by learning real linguistic usages, teachers can make pupils more semantically and culturally aware, even in the absence of native-speaker models or costly machinery.

The lack of connection between language and culture in much Algerian education is also challenged by Chaouche (2017), who argues for the integration of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) into routine teaching. Even though the paper does not provide methodological information, it refers to theoretical literature in dispute that ICC fosters not only competent communication but also empathy and cross-cultural sensitivity. This is totally supportive of Byram's (1997) model, which highlights the point that language learning must comprise attitudes, knowledge, and skills through which learners can communicate across cultures. Hybrid with semantic awareness—through metaphor, collocation, and context meaning—this model supports the education of globally competent Algerian EFL speakers.

Lastly, Halima (2016) cautions against the over-reliance on information and communication technologies (ICT) in Algerian classrooms. While ICT has many benefits, Halima remarks that technology infusion does not usually consider local constraints and even worsens educational inequalities. multilingual identity. Instead, she advocates for a balanced approach that blends communicative and structural methods, which aligns with Bouali's (2020) and Mouna's (2024) non-technological yet innovative practices. This reinforces the argument that pedagogical success in Algeria does not depend on imported tools or native exposure, but on culturally sensitive, semantically informed, and pedagogically sound approaches.

This concluding section has pointed to the central priority of coupling semantic sensitivity with cultural awareness in Algerian EFL instruction. Evidence from research implies that teaching metaphors, semantic mapping, and intercultural material can be a critical factor in learners' lexical depth, interpretative competence, and communicative resonance. At the same time, research cautions against untethering language from culture or over-reliance upon technological devices unsuitable for the Algerian classroom.

Instead, the most sustainable interventions are those that embrace multilingual realities, contextual specificities, and cognitive needs of Algerian learners. Not only does this integrated approach react to semantic and pragmatic voids in the previous sections but also establishes the basis for more inclusive, reflective, and sustainable language teaching practices in Algeria. Subsequent research should continue to seek out localized pedagogical paradigms that tap both linguistic theory and local cultural closeness, with an eye to long-term communicative competence development in diverse EFL contexts.

6. Conclusion

This study has critiqued the theoretical and pedagogical dimensions of semantic awareness in Algerian EFL classrooms critically, with emphasis placed on the intricate intersections of meaning construction, cultural competence, and teaching design. Having grounded itself in ground theories, such as perceptual abstraction models, syntax-semantics interfaces, Relevance Theory, and interlanguage development, the article has identified the multi-dimensionality of second language semantic learning. It has confirmed that meaning is not simply transmitted but built collaboratively by lexical, morphological, cultural, and pragmatic means.

Within the Algerian EFL learning context, specific semantic obstacles confront students, including difficulties with morphological processing, limited exposure to rich context input, and culture-bound and figurative language interpretation problems. These issues require a shift in pedagogical focus: away from rote and grammar drill and towards methods that emphasize semantic richness, metaphorical thinking, and intercultural communication. Empirical research also suggests that such learning is possible without resorting to the availability of high-end technology hardware or virtual space—so long as pedagogy is theory-informed and attuned to the sociolinguistic environment of students.

Last but not least, this article advocates for a contextually sensitive, theory-based model of semantic instruction—one that locates making meaning at the center of language acquisition. By combining semantic sensitivity with broader cultural attitudes, Algerian EFL instruction can better equip learners to operate in linguistic uncertainty, cultivate nuanced communication, and increasingly become autonomous, reflective users of the English language.

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