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**Curricular Design for the Global Lawyer: Developing Legal English
Communicative Competence in Algerian Higher Education**

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Abstract :

The undeniable role of English as the *lingua franca* of international legal practice and the Lex Mercatoria places significant pressure on legal education in Algeria, a nation primarily anchored in the Civil Law tradition. This paper theoretically investigates the foundational mismatch between the highly specialized Legal English (LE) demanded by the global market and the generalist language instruction currently prevalent in Algerian Law Faculties. The current research argues for a necessary paradigm shift in curricular design, proposing a conceptual model that moves away from a passive “*language-about-law*” approach toward an active “*language-as-law*” pedagogy. It details the integration of four key professional competencies: grammatical, discursive, lexical-conceptual, and pragmatic. Ultimately, this paper aims to develop a rigorous, theory-driven framework for reforming Legal English teaching as there is an ongoing discourse by policymakers for the adoption and application of English at the level of Law faculties throughout higher education institutions, providing a blueprint for enhancing the global competitiveness of Algeria’s next generation of legal practitioners. Finally, the study identifies specific internationalization strategies—such as comparative law integration, joint-degree accreditation, and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)—aimed at operationalizing the “Global Lawyer” framework to enhance the global competitiveness and pedagogical modernization of Algerian legal education.

Keywords: Algerian Higher Education ; CLIL ; Communicative Competence ; Curriculum Design ; Global Lawyer ; Legal English

Introduction

Globalization and its multiple cross-border exchanges in virtually every area of human life have led to a growing demand in the legal arena for global lawyers – legal professionals capable of proficiently thinking and practicing law from a global, rather than local, perspective. Hence, the practice of law in the twenty-first century has transcended national borders, demanding a hybrid professional profile that integrates technical legal expertise with high-level *communicative competence* in English. As globalization and digitalization reshape the legal landscape, the role of the attorney or what is often referred to in the world of academia as “lawyer” has evolved from a domestic practitioner to a global lawyer capable of navigating diverse legal traditions, ethical frameworks, and technological environments (Gabunia, 2025).

In the context of this paper, Legal English is meant as the English language used within the legal profession, specifically developed to meet the needs of learners and professionals working in the domains of law. Consequently, Legal English is taught for law students and teachers working in legal higher education institutions. Legal English exhibits distinct characteristics, comprising specialized legal terminology, a unique lexicon that includes Latin derivatives, loanwords, and doublet/triplet constructions, as well as specific grammatical structures such as the passive voice and inversion, and a distinctive writing style characterized by complex and compound sentence formations (Veretina-Chiriac, 2012 as cited in Nhac & Dinh, 2025).

English is being used as a medium of instruction in law faculties and colleges around the world, even in countries that do not use English in their legal systems (Dundon, 2019). Concerning the Higher Education sector in Algeria, which operates under civil law tradition and has historically prioritised French as a second academic language, this transition to Anglophone legal traditions in English language requires an essential re-evaluation of curricular design. The implementation of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) within law faculties must move beyond the rote memorisation of legal terminology toward a holistic development of the global lawyer’s professional identity.

The current research argues for a necessary paradigm shift in curricular design, proposing a conceptual model that moves away from a passive “*language-about-law*” approach toward an active “*language-as-law*” pedagogy. Under this framework, linguistic competence is directly equated with the ability to perform authentic legal acts, such as drafting transactional clauses, interpreting statutes, and conducting professional negotiations. Thus, this new framework requires

global lawyers who understand their role and can work efficiently, and be competent in legal English within a multijurisdictional framework. For this reason, the challenges in designing adequate curricula to educate these new global lawyers, in each country in general and in Algeria in particular, have dominated a large part of the more recent literature on legal education through the adoption of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Higher Education Institutions. In this regard, English has become the lingua franca and the language of different sciences. Hence, English is the working language of virtually all modern international trade and arbitration governed by the Lex Mercatoria.

The current landscape of Algerian Higher Education is characterised by a significant shift toward the internationalisation of its academic programmes, especially through the adoption of the Licence-Master-Doctorate (LMD) framework (Haddouche, 2025). The pivot point to this reform is the recent ministerial promotion of the use of English as the primary language of science and research. In this respect, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (AMHESR) in September 2022 issued Correspondence No. 1433, signalling a strategic intent to generalise English Language Teaching across all different disciplines, with legal sciences being a primary target (Haddouche, 2025). This policy recognises that English serves as the *lingua franca* for international trade, human rights, and cross-border litigation.

However, the implementation of this policy within law faculties presents unique challenges that lie at the intersection of (applied) linguistics and jurisprudence. From a linguistic standpoint, Legal English is not merely a specialised lexicon but a different discourse characterised by complex lexico-grammatical structures, archaic terminology, and a high degree of formulaicity. From a legal standpoint, the acquisition of this language is inseparable from the understanding of various legal systems in the world, especially the divergence between the civil law tradition practised in Algeria and its former French coloniser and the common law tradition inherent in most Legal English materials in Anglo-Saxon countries such as United Kingdom, United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, and so forth.

A plethora of different research approaches and methods came to the fore in the world of education. For instance, the emergence of Communicative Approach in 1970s represents a major paradigm shift, moving the focus away from the mastery of linguistic structures and toward the development of "Communicative Competence." This concept, which was introduced by the linguist Dell Hymes, suggests that knowing only the rules of grammar is not sufficient if a speaker, in

our case lawyer, does not know how to use those rules appropriately in various social and cultural contexts. Hence, the primary goal of CLT is to enable learners to communicate effectively in real-world situations, prioritizing meaning and function over structural perfection.

Algeria's legal education system has historically been anchored in French, reflecting colonial legacy and linguistic policy. This Francophone tradition, while robust in its own right, presents challenges when interfacing with Anglophone legal systems that dominate international commerce and diplomacy. The recent push by the Ministry of Higher Education towards the adoption of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) represents a strategic pivot, yet this transition requires careful curriculum design to ensure Global Lawyer in Legal English with multi-competencies in Algeria.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to propose a theoretical and practical framework for Legal English curricular design that meets the needs of Algerian Law students in this globalised world. Specifically, this study aims to:

- Analyse the core competencies required of a global lawyer in the twenty-first century
- Illustrate the key principles needed for Legal English Curricular Design
- Propose the different strategies for the internationalization of legal education in Algeria that align with the “Global Lawyer” framework

Research Questions

To achieve these objectives, the following research questions guide:

- What are the required competencies of Algerian law students as they prepare for a career in the globalised legal environment?
- What are the principles needed for Legal English Curricular Design?
- What are the different strategies for the internationalization of legal education in Algeria that align it with the “Global Lawyer” framework

This paper is organised into four sections. The first discusses the different conceptualisations of Global Law (yer); and it presents the main features of the concept for Global Lawyer as well as the key components of communicative competence in this argument. The second section discusses the current state of legal English teaching, shifting from French as a Medium of Instruction (FMI) to English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Algeria. The third analyses the

internationalisation of study in the law curriculum. The fourth section concludes by suggesting a theoretical framework of “Global Lawyer” for legal English curricular design.

1. Conceptualisations of Global Law and Communicative Competence

1.1 What is a Global Law(yer)?

The nexus between law, or more broadly, normativity, and globalization has been a focal point of intensive scholarly investigation for the preceding three decades. This discourse has yielded significant conceptualizations, including Global Law and a recontextualized understanding of Transnational Law, alongside explorations into the Internationalization of Law. A number of scholars suggested different views for Global Law. For instance, Hikmat Nasser and Garcez Ghirardi, (2020) offer three principal conceptualizations regarding the discursive application of the term Global Law: i) as a unified corpus of regulations, interpreted either as an exhaustive, singular framework governing all of humanity, or as a more circumscribed collection of norms applicable to inherently global interactions; ii) as a framework acknowledging the plurality of legal systems and normative structures, and their interrelationships; and iii) and the perspective that observes the connectivity norms as being global.

There is an extensive body of research on the intricate relationship between law and globalization. Within the corpus of scholarly work, the concept of global law has received considerable attention among numerous researchers (Hikmat Nasser & Garcez Ghirardi, 2020). Thus, globalisation has become the new buzzword in legal education, but nobody really seems to know what ‘global law’ exactly entails and to what extent legal practice is waiting for global lawyers. What is needed here is a better understanding of the notion “Global Lawyer”.

In traditional view, a lawyer is considered to be “global” already if they have attained a degree from a foreign institution, most frequently from either the United States or England (Stürner, 2016). However, other Legal scholars consider “a *Global Lawyer*” as a specialized lawyer (e.g. competition lawyer), whose expertise in a specific legal area reaches across more than one legal system. In this regard, Atienza (2016) highlights that:

“A global lawyer is a lawyer who can offer legal services in one jurisdiction or more to clients from other jurisdictions and who can work with lawyers from other jurisdictions. This lawyer needs to understand his legal system in order to be able to explain it to a lawyer/client/judge from a different jurisdiction. For this reason, a global lawyer needs to speak fluent English in

order to communicate and, to have knowledge in another legal system different to his or to have knowledge in comparative Law” (Atienza, 2016, p. 260).

The global lawyer is characterised by his/her intelligence, agile mind and linguistic skills (Sibony, 2016). It is not our objective to establish a comprehensive map of all possible conceptualisations of “Global Law(yer)”. A global lawyer is not just a top-notch ‘*légiste*’; s/he is also capable of determining ‘*le juste et l’injuste*’ (i.e. what is fair and what is unfair) as the science of law (Chazal, 2001, p. 208). In this regard, Gopalan and Paris (2016) claim that a global lawyer should :

- have a better understanding of law in its diverse sources and forms such as statutes, contracts which are embedded in customs, extruded from transactions, and codes, or ‘experienced as conventions of discourse and routines of daily life’;
- possess an understanding of various legal traditions and cultures. Study abroad programmes, exposure to visiting lawyers, and comparative law would be essential in this regard;
- work in diverse business, cultural, and political environments. This needs knowledge about diversity, flexibility to adapt to diversity, and soft skills around communication and cultural sensitivity. In a related vein, it is incumbent upon the global lawyer to possess a comprehensive understanding of their professional and ethical obligations towards clients, fellow legal professionals, the judiciary, and the public at large, and
- be proficient in foreign languages. Promoting the study of language, particularly legal language, is likely to be beneficial to a global lawyer both in interpreting foreign law and in communicating with clients, lawyers, and tribunals.

The need for ‘global lawyers’ is strong in certain areas of business law such as tax, corporate law, employment law, competition law, and intellectual property. It is also present in the practice of immigration law, international criminal law and human rights. Lawyers who go global contribute to a better and comprehensive understanding of different legal systems and cultures.

The imperative for practitioners with a global legal perspective is pronounced within specific domains of business law, including but not limited to taxation, corporate governance, employment relations, competition regulation, intellectual property rights, and so forth. This demand extends to the fields of immigration law, international criminal law, and human rights advocacy (Sibony, 2016).

1.2 Key Components of Communicative Competence

Communicative Competence encompasses four important sub competencies: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence, all of which must be developed for a learner to become a proficient speaker. Grammatical competence includes the knowledge of phonology and syntax, while sociolinguistic competence refers to the ability to use language appropriately according to the social setting and the relationship between speakers. Discourse competence is the ability to combine sentences to form a cohesive text, and strategic competence includes using 'communication strategies' to overcome breakdowns in interaction, such as using gestures or paraphrasing when you forget a word.

Building on Hymes (1972), communicative competence in law involves not only grammatical accuracy but also the sociolinguistic ability to use "legalese" appropriately in authentic professional contexts. As the legal profession becomes increasingly transnational, Algerian lawyers must possess the linguistic and pragmatic tools to navigate Anglophone legal systems, participate in international arbitration, and contribute to global legal discourse.

2. The Current State of Legal English Teaching in Algeria: A Shift from French (FMI) to English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)

The prevailing approach to Legal English instruction in Algerian universities reflects traditional language teaching paradigms that prioritize translation tasks, testing students' ability to convert legal documents between Arabic, French, and English. This approach, whilst assessing linguistic knowledge, fails to measure pragmatic competence, strategic communication skills, or the ability to produce original legal discourse in English contexts. In this regard, Lamri (2019) argues that 'students consistently report comprehension difficulties when encountering authentic legal texts and express frustration with their inability to produce coherent legal arguments in English, despite years of formal instruction.'

The year 2023 marked a pivotal moment for Algerian Higher Education with the official adoption of English Medium Instruction (EMI). This strategic shift sees English replacing French as the primary language of instruction across universities. The core objective of this policy is to significantly boost the global employability of Algerian graduates and foster stronger international collaboration. However, this transition also presents a delicate challenge: advancing English proficiency while diligently preserving Algeria's rich linguistic heritage and unique cultural identity. Thus, we are living in a new era

of legal English in the Faculties of Law in Algeria. Additionally, the skills required on legal professionals for the next decade are influenced by technological advancements, globalization, and growing social complexity (Gabunia, 2025) as well as the continuous emergence of different artificial intelligence tools in shaping the future of Legal English instruction. Lawyers must now be proficient in data literacy, which involves analyzing large datasets to predict legal trends and provide evidence-based arguments. Proficiency in technology tools is no longer optional; it is essential for streamlining legal processes through e-discovery and digital research platforms. According to Gabunia (2025), “The 21st-century lawyer must be able to identify *learning needs*, *set goals*, and *use available resources* to remain up to date.”

3. The Internationalisation of Study in the Law Curriculum

Knowledge of international laws is considered to be of paramount importance in legal English in Algeria. With the different correspondences made by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education to Rectors of Higher Education Institutions, all faculties of law started the adoption of English in different introductory courses such as Legal English, International Community, law of Political Economy, International Humanitarian Law, Anti-corruption Law, and International Criminal Law courses. Moreover, Legal English Terminology Module is included in all the semesters of the three years of Undergraduate level and also within the three semesters at the Master level. Teaching the latter module in English is mandatory in Bachelor and Master. Students are encouraged to make their viva-voce in English language to obtain the Master degree.

As stated earlier, law students have to study English as a Foreign Language instead of the French Language as a way to cope with the globalisation characterised by the use of English as the lingua franca in different domains and the law is not an exception. Hence, the legal curriculum requires students to take a terminology course in English. The major goal of the abovementioned courses to be taught in English is to introduce students to a global approach to law. Thus, proficiency in Legal English has become a prerequisite for mobility in programs such as Erasmus, cross-border litigation, and participation in global legal scientific events such as conferences, forums, and seminars. Algerian legal professionals who attempt to compete in this globalised market place must master the specialized discourse of international law, contract negotiation, and arbitration.

However, there is no legal curriculum in English entirely focused on teaching for global practice. Therefore, the Ministry of Higher Education launches an

initiative at different law faculties for the teaching of master's programmes in English for students specialized in international law whether Public or Private for the purpose of attracting international students. For that purpose, there is an opening of platform titled Study in Algeria (<https://studyinalgeria.dz/>) on the basis of Presidential Decree No. 25-83 dated on February 20, 2025. Law is part of the fields of training where accepted students who do not master for instance English as the language of instruction undergo an intensive training period at the Intensive Language Teaching Centers (CEIL) to improve their level of language.

Student exchange programs with international law faculties are common, notably facilitated by the Erasmus student exchange initiative. Some of the excellent law students undertake an international exchange during their master's studies, typically for one semester in their final year of legal education. In response to the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education's (MESRS) 2022 policy shift (Correspondence No. 1433) prioritizing English as the language of research, this paper proposes a theoretical framework for developing legal English communicative competence within the LMD system which will be discussed in the next section.

4. Proposed Legal English Curricular Design: Towards a Competent Global Legal Lawyer

A comprehensive Legal English curriculum necessitates adherence to the principles of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), whereby all pedagogical decisions, encompassing both content selection and methodological implementation, are informed by the learner's reasons for learning. This paradigm mandates a systematic methodology designed to ameliorate the discrepancy between the learner's extant communicative proficiency and the exigencies of the professional context.

➤ *The Role of Needs Analysis (NA)*

Needs analysis (NA for short) is the backbone of ESP course design. It includes the systematic collection and analysis of all information necessary to define a defensible curriculum. It is regarded one of the key requirements for an ESP curriculum (Nhac & Dinh, 2025). In the context of Algerian law faculties, NA must consider multiple stakeholders, including students, teachers, governing bodies, and prospective employers. The framework proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987 1) identifies three components of "target needs": necessities, lacks, and wants.

Necessities: What the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target legal situation (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Lacks: The gap between the learner's current proficiency and the required target competence (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Wants: The learner's own perception of their needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

➤ ***Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and EMI***

Concerning law students, the successful implementation of content and language is a holistic approach. CLIL and similar pedagogical approaches have shown overlapping objectives within different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, increasing its overall adoption in various disciplines such as Law , medicine, biology and so forth. In this regard, Algeria has followed the new trend of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), which aims to produce proficient learners and teachers. However, the success of EMI depends on the availability of qualified practitioners.

To ensure sustainable reform aligned with the 2030 Higher Education Strategy, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS) should adopt a tripartite framework for EMI enhancement :

- Establishment of University-Level Resource Centers: Centrally located centers must be created to provide standardized guidance, curricula, and material adaptation frameworks;
- Implementation of Teaching Partnerships: Strategic integration through co-teaching models between Law faculty and ESP specialists can mitigate pedagogical challenges.
- Standardizing syllabus design through systematic Needs Analysis.

Emerging pedagogical approaches like CLT, CLIL and EMI offer promising alternatives to traditional Legal English instruction, integrating language learning with substantive legal content to build both disciplinary knowledge and communicative competence simultaneously. For instance, CLIL embeds language instruction within authentic legal contexts, teaching law through English rather than teaching English about law. Therefore, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education's support for Integrated Content and Language in Higher Education (ICLHE) signals policy commitment to transformative curriculum reform aligned with international standards in this globalised world.

The proposed curriculum for the Algerian “*Global Lawyer*” must be multidimensional, adopting the Communicative Competence as its driving force with its four main sub-competencies : *grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence*. The development

of all these sub-competencies is imperative for a law student to achieve proficiency in communication with others.

The development of communicative competence in Legal English signifies more than a marginal augmentation of the existing curriculum; it constitutes a foundational recalibration of Algerian legal pedagogy, aimed at fostering global integration and enhancing professional competitiveness. In an era characterized by the increasing transnationality of legal practice, Algerian legal professionals are compelled to possess the requisite linguistic and pragmatic proficiencies to effectively engage with Anglophone legal frameworks, participate in international arbitration proceedings, and contribute meaningfully to global legal discourse. This study proposes a tripartite framework for the design of curricula for the globally competent lawyer in Algeria.

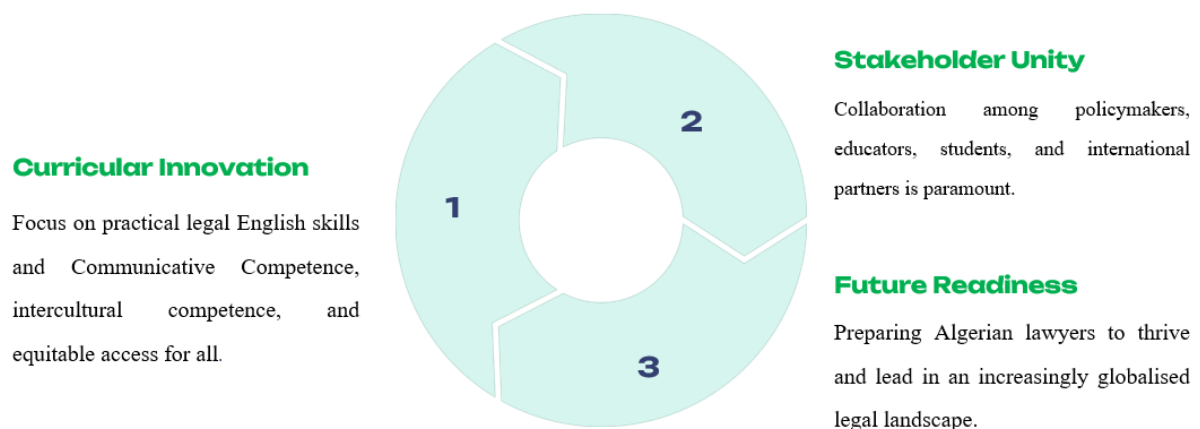


Figure 1 A Tripartite Framework Curricula Design for Competent Global Lawyer in Algeria

A robust curricular framework for English for Academic Legal Purposes (EALP) is crucial for having “*Competent Global Lawyer*”. This framework integrates linguistic, pedagogical, and legal education principles to cultivate proficient global lawyers.

The vision of Algerian lawyers as full participants in global legal practice requires sustained commitment to *curricular transformation*, *pedagogical innovation*, and *institutional readiness*. Through strategic investment in Legal English communicative competence, Algerian Higher Education Institutions represented by the Faculties of Law can prepare graduates who transcend linguistic boundaries and contribute meaningfully to international legal discourse. Hence, realising this vision requires coordinated efforts and actions on the grounds from policymakers, institutional leaders, faculty members, and students

themselves. The path forward involves balancing respect for linguistic heritage with pragmatic recognition of global communication demands, integrating traditional strengths with innovative methodologies, and positioning Algerian legal education as a bridge between Francophone and Anglophone legal system traditions. Curriculum for law students needs to be built on the idea of learning locally and thinking globally.

Conclusion

The transition toward English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Algerian law faculties, catalyzed by Ministerial Correspondence No. 1433, represents more than a mere shift in language policy; it is a strategic attempt to modernize the university's role in a globalized knowledge economy (Haddouche, 2025). This study concludes that developing a competent "Global Lawyer" requires a shift from the traditional, terminological focus of "hollow" ESP courses to a holistic model of communicative competence.

Internationalisation of the curriculum should be a top priority in Algerian Higher Education. In order to access "Big Law Families" in the world: Common Law Family in the Anglo-Saxon countries and Latin Germanic Legal Family, the contemporary legal profession necessitates that aspiring jurists cultivate a repertoire of global lawyer attributes. This highly competitive marketplace increasingly mandates that practitioners possess foreign legal knowledge or experience. Commercial law firms are articulating a demand for legal professionals with enhanced global training, advocating for the incorporation of international curricula within law schools, and seeking law graduates equipped with a broader range of competencies (Atienza, 2016).

Globalization in the field of legal education refers to the provision of an educational framework that equips law students with multi-competencies applicable across diverse national jurisdictions and over time. To enhance the internationalization of legal education in Algeria and align it with the "Global Lawyer" framework, we can suggest the following strategies:

- *Integrative Comparative Law Studies:* Teaching Comparative Law (Anglo-Saxon legal family Verses Latin Germanic legal family) as a way to train global lawyers;
- *Instruction in Diverse Legal Jurisdiction:* Offering specialized modules on alternative legal systems as a way to train global lawyers (e.g., Common Law or the Anglo-American tradition) to equip students with the "habits of mind" required for cross-border practice.

- *Developing Dual and Joint Degree Programs*: Forging partnerships with leading international law schools to offer dual-accredited degrees, allowing students to study in both local and international environments.
- *Implementing a Tripartite Support Framework*: Establishing university-level EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction) resource centers, creating discipline-specific teaching partnerships between law professors and ESP practitioners, and using diagnostic tools to assess student readiness for international legal discourse.
- *Integrating Clinical Legal Education (CLE)*: Developing simulation-based courses and in-house law clinics where students assume professional roles in hypothetical or real-world cases, fostering "problem-solving" skills and professional empathy in a global context.
- *Adopting Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)*: Using "Global Law Classrooms" through synchronous virtual exchanges (e.g., Zoom seminars) that allow Algerian students to collaborate with peers from diverse legal traditions on salient global topics like cybersecurity, climate change, and human rights.
- *Fostering Digital and AI Literacy*: pairing traditional legal writing with instruction on legal research analytics and the ethical use of artificial intelligence in practice to ensure graduates are competitive in an increasingly automated global legal market,
- *Implementing "Internationalization at Home" Initiatives*: Launching "Study Buddy" programs and intercultural workshops to integrate international students into local faculties and promote a multicultural academic environment.
- *Mandating Interdisciplinary Co-teaching*: Moving away from isolated language instruction by adopting a co-teaching model where ESP specialists and law subject-matter experts collaborate on lesson delivery,
- *Expanding Participation in Global Competitions*: Providing institutional support for students to participate in international moot court competitions (e.g., the Jessup) and international placement exchanges to develop oral advocacy and cross-cultural negotiation skills,
- *Localizing Global Standards ("Glocalization")*: Designing discipline-specific English for Academic Purposes (EAP) materials that contextualize international legal norms within Algeria's unique cultural and civil law milieu.

These proposals focus on the systemic and pedagogical transformation required to produce a global lawyer capable of functioning across borders.

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