

Cultural barriers facing the integration of English language in Algerian primary schools

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مخبر دراسة للمفردات العربية الفصحى المتداولة في لهجات الغرب الجزائري (الجزائر)

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Abstract:

This research study explores the attitudes and opinions of Algerian parents regarding the incorporation of English cultural elements in the curriculum of primary school. The fear is that Algerian Muslim culture and those of English-speaking countries might display significant differences. To investigate this concern, a survey was handed over to a sample of 105 (N=105) Algerian parents who all have their children enrolled in Algerian public primary schools. The findings reveal that parents generally agree on teaching about English culture, but only as far as that doesn't come into conflict with their own religious views, and that value-laden, as opposed to value-neutral, cultural elements are the least rejected by parents.

Keywords: English Culture; English as a Foreign Language; Primary School; World Values Survey.

INTRODUCTION

“A language is not just words. It's a culture, a tradition, a unification of a community, a whole history that creates what a community is. It's all embodied in a language.”

Noam Chomsky. "We Still Live Here: Âs Nutayuneân". Documentary, January 10, 2011

“English culture leads to deviation from the principles and teachings of our religion, which is why I don't desire it ”

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An Algerian parent in the study

The dominance of English language today cannot be overstated. In business, politics, international events, social media, sports, tourism, arts and in academia, English stands as the default language of choice; a *lingua franca*, favored by many as the primary language of communication. Against this almost unipolar linguistic hegemony, and after some back and forth (**Manseur & Negadi, 2019**), Algeria finally integrated the language in its primary schools. Following the president's announcement of the decision in June 2022, the curriculum was developed, textbooks printed, and English language graduates were recruited for teaching the language to third year primary school pupils across the country. As of 2023 (the time of this writing) the program is still in its infancy, issuing long-term evaluations or projecting any forecasts regarding its success or failure would be an immature exercise of prediction.

More relevant to this work, we pose the following question. what is the place of -loosely speaking – “English Culture” in the teaching of English language in Algerian primary schools. By “English culture” we denote the various customs, traditions, values and ways of life shared by all English-speaking countries. To be fair though, it is hard to speak of an “English Culture” in its own right. England and other English-speaking countries are part and parcel of the larger umbrella of the western world, and they have always acted as major contributors in shaping the values and attitudes prevalent in the west today. For example, renowned political scientist Samuel Huntington (1996), in his famous division of the world into major civilizations, did not distinguish between English speaking countries and the rest of the western world, placing the former as part of the larger, more encompassing label of Western Civilization. Due to the relative similarity in the lifestyle and value system between English speaking countries and the rest of the western world, the results that this study yields are not by all means restricted to English culture, but can also be generalized to other western countries.

That being said, the map shown below, nonetheless, displays English speaking countries as forming a cluster of their own. The reason being that English speaking countries were the natural inheritors of the traditions of England, their colonial forbearer. For historical, linguistic, and political reasons, there is much in common between England and its former English-speaking colonies. For example, the common law, as opposed to

the civil law, is the type of legal system shared by all English-speaking countries. This traces its roots back to the heritage of the British rule. What matters to us here, however, is that most western countries are clustered together, far away from Algeria and other Arab Muslim countries.

The map is generated by means of Exploratory Factor analysis (EFA) and is borrowed directly from the World Values Survey, the largest international survey of values in the world. It is also the largest program of its kind, devoted to the study of cultural values and their impact on societies across the globe. The program operates in more than 120 countries, including Algeria, and over multiple waves since the 1980s, it continues to issue its findings about cultural values and their social repercussions to this date. The World Values Survey (WVS) and their findings will serve as a theoretical basis for informing the choice of items in the questionnaire and for their analysis later on.

Now, regarding the inclusion of cultural elements in the program of English teaching in primary school, Haddad (2023) observed that there is a marked absence of the English culture in the third year textbook “my book of English” and instead, the overwhelming focus is on entrenching a sense of Algerian nationalistic pride and a national outlook within the pupils. For instance, the book features a Fennec, a foxlike animal living almost exclusively in the Algerian Sahara, as one of its main characters. This, somewhat, stands in contrast to the declaration of the textbook authors who stated in the epilogue that “[The book covers] various topics that allow the pupils to communicate with their friends in and outside their country in different occasions and celebrations”.

Although not a stand-alone, the textbook usually serves as the primary source of teaching material. However, even with this absence of English culture from the textbook, teachers can still have a freehand in including various elements of the target culture (i.e., music, art, cuisine etc.) into their lesson, sometimes just by talking about them as a warm up. Still, seeing this near-absence of English-speaking countries’ culture in the textbook invites the idea that curriculum designers deliberately aimed to ingrain a sense of national pride from a very young age within the pupils, all at the expense of the target culture which, if emphasized, could have resulted in a better and richer language learning experience (Myles, 2004).

Whether the culture of the target language should be given a high or a low weight is, ultimately, a subject of debate. One can argue, on the one hand, that instilling a foreign language culture at an early age breeds the values of tolerance, inclusion and plurality within the pupils, values made even more urgent by the increasing globalization of the world. On the other hand, language can be learned even if the learner is not particularly interested in the target culture. In fact, the primary reason for the worldwide frenzy behind learning English which we observe today is not the sheer fascination by the language of Shakespeare, or the lure of English culture. People learn English principally for the hope that it will advance their career and future prospects (**Graddol, 2006**). Maybe these are the pragmatic reasons that were envisioned by curriculum designers, and indeed, could also be the view held by parents themselves. Language is, first and foremost, a means of communication; a vehicle, gaining access to English cultural elements such as their literature, music and art is far from being the ultimate end behind learning for most learners. This is especially the case for English language with its status as the *Lingua Franca* of the world. Learning English is more of a necessity now than a pass-time pleasure. By comparison, learning other languages can be driven entirely by cultural motives (**Chan & Chi, 2011**). Think of South Korean culture; better known as k-bob culture. So impressed by K-pop songs and series, many teenage girls strive to learn the Korean language. An Algerian or a Mexican has little to gain from learning Korean, or Turkish, as far as advancing one's career is concerned.

In the middle of this debate, parents, our main concern, stand as major players in the success or failure of the nascent program of integrating English in Algerian primary schools. Given that the program of English language teaching is still in its infancy, it helps to answer what are their views regarding the inclusion of the target language culture in the curriculum. Are they welcoming and receptive, hostile or impartial? This is what the present research purports to answer.

Advantages and drawbacks of exposing children to a foreign culture

A major line of arguments in favor of emphasizing the teaching of the foreign culture centers around spreading the values of tolerance, pluralism, openness and humanism; all strongly aligned with the enlightenment values. Turney (2003) wrote, "[intercultural Education] sensitizes the learner to the idea that humans have naturally developed a range of

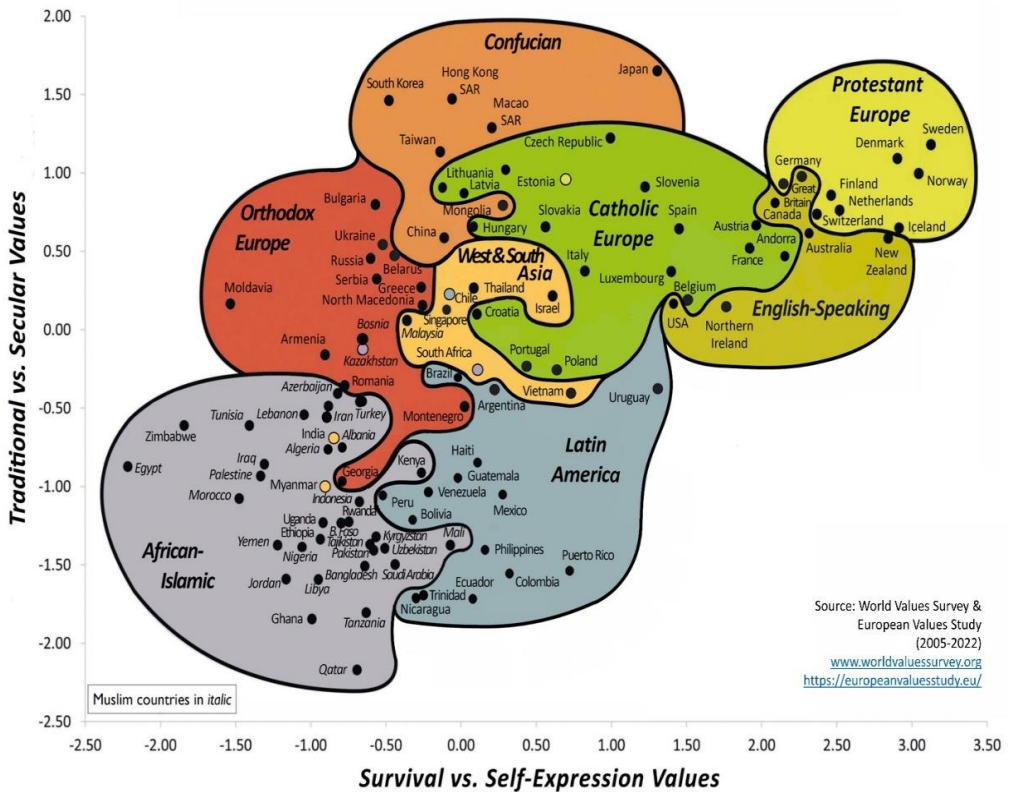
different ways of life, customs and worldviews, and that this breadth of human Life enriches all of us. It is education, which promotes equality and human rights, challenges unfair discrimination, and promotes the values upon which equality is built". Learning about the target culture also confers benefits as far as language use is concerned. Kamesh (1998), among others, discussed the importance of learning about the target culture alongside the target language. Intercultural awareness, she argues, aids in achieving communicative competence. The learner will be better equipped to understand and be mindful of the different nuances associated with language use. It also allows him/her to use the language in a manner that is aligned with the values and norms of the target community. This can shield the learner from unwarranted or offensive uses of the language, among numerous other benefits.

On the other hand, exposing children to more than one culture can create an identity confusion especially at a young age. As a result of that, children might feel displaced, confused and could have a hard time reconciling their own culture with a foreign one. Third Culture Kids TCK (Pollock et al ,2009) is the name given to those children who feel displaced as a result of having their own distinct culture at home and being exposed to another culture outside. These kids will find difficulty in defining a cohesive, integrated and an indivisible sense of self. It stands to reason, therefore, that children should first absorb their own culture before being later exposed to another. Moreover, an Algerian culture that draws its roots from Islam can stand in open conflict with western secular values and norms. Again, recall here the "clash of civilizations " thesis by Samuel Huntington (1996). The world's major civilizations are in a clash with one another because each have a distinct set of values, beliefs and historical forces that continue to shape their identities and their collective actions. Indeed, a recent poll by the Arab Barometer (2022) revealed that less than half of Algerians view the United States -the largest English-speaking country- favorably, with only 31 percent of them wanting to strengthen economic ties with it.

The World Values Survey (WVS) latest cultural map (2023), on its part, puts Algeria and other English-speaking countries on diagonally opposite ends.

Figure01. The World Cultural Map (2023) places Algeria (bottom left) as being relatively distant from other English-speaking countries.

The Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map 2023



Source : The World Cultural Map (2023)

According to Inglehart and Welzel (2005), whose work is central to the WVS, Algeria, together with other Arab sparking Muslim countries (bottom left), place greater emphasis on traditional values such as a respect for authority, segregation between the sexes, strong role of religion and maintaining traditional family arrangements. In addition, economic and physical survival define a great deal of the behaviors and beliefs in these conservative regions. In this sense, different forms of self-expression come second to securing the means of physical and economic well-being. With the sad memories of the civil war of the 1990s still fresh in their minds, it is not uncommon to hear an Algerian elderly saying to a discontent young Algerian that they should be thankful for the bliss of

“peace and security” they are enjoying. Conversely, English speaking Countries assume lesser role for religion, more equality between the genders, value freedom of thought, self-expression and display a willingness to challenge various forms of authority. It’s from here- at the level of values- that tension between Arab Muslim civilization and that of the west finds fuel, and also from here that much of parent’s fears for their children originate.

The Role of Parents

Not everyone agrees over the extent to which parents should have a say in deciding the content their children study, or the degree of authority they can exert over their children’s education. Parents, for better or for worse, generally want an education for their children which is aligned with their own values (**Banks, 2014**). Deviating from this norm may spur a backlash between parents and curriculum designers. This is far from being a rare encounter. For example, recently in Birmingham in the UK , more than 400 predominantly Muslim parents signed a petition to drop out lessons for the curriculum which they deemed as presenting sexually-inappropriate content to their young children (**Parveen , 2019**).

Parents, and the family writ large, play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes of their children towards the culture of the target language. If, for any reason, they seem to be hostile towards a given culture, that will inevitably be reflected in their children’s’ receptiveness not only to this culture, but also to the language associated with it. Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1963) provides insights into how this might work. The theory stresses the role of the so called “social models” in shaping the personality of the child, their social upbringing, beliefs, behaviors and, by extension, their attitudes towards other languages. Social models are highly regarded individuals in the child’s life, most notably, their parents, teacher, friends and other family members. These individuals occupy a central role in shaping the attitudes of the child as he/she strives to emulate their behavior and modes of thinking.

Alleghany et al. (2017) investigated the attitude of parents towards their children’s learning of English/American culture and found that parents expressed their concern that learning about American/English culture might lead to a loss of their children’s identity. The concern of parents is real, and school is not by far the only place where children get

exposed to other cultures. Video games, cartoons and movies are also platforms where cultural memes can spread.

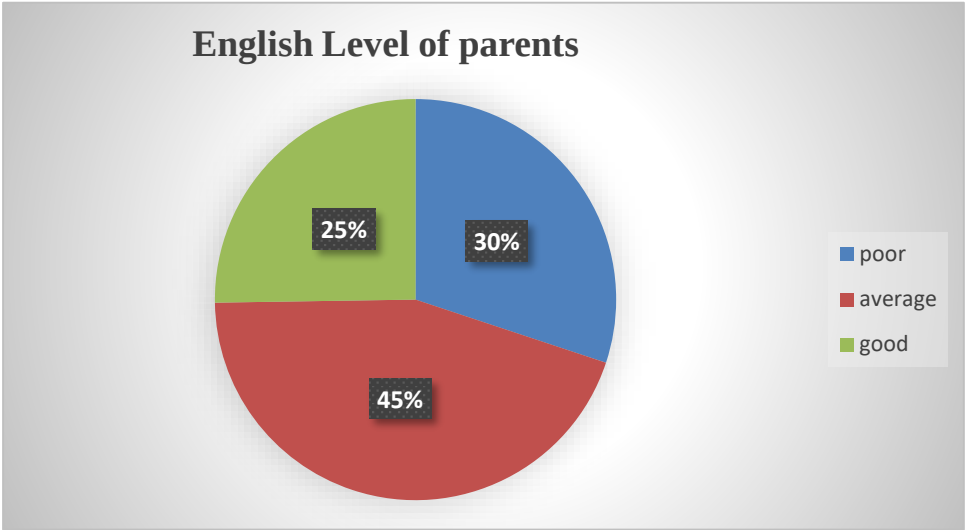
As a side note, much of culture education emerges significantly later in the course of learning a new language. A glance at the primary school curriculum reveals that most of what these young children are learning amounts to no more than naming colors, telling the time, counting to one hundred, recalling the days of the week and other basic vocabulary and expressions. All of which carry little cultural significance, to the point that you might say that it is unnecessary to raise this concern in the first place. Perhaps it is more relevant to invoke this cultural concern for students of English in university, rather than primary school pupils. But, for one, this study is exploratory. It aims to discover *if* parents are concerned or not. Second, and as the study by Alleghany (2017) in Saudi Arabia showed, parents do harbor some fear as far as English and American culture are concerned and this will also be one of the conclusions of the present study. Finally, culture and language are intricately intertwined, as the above quote by Chomsky best describes. Therefore, it is hard to isolate language from its cultural context under any circumstance.

Methodology and participants

The study takes on a descriptive/explanatory approach. A survey was handed over to 105 (N=105) parents drawn -by means of convenience - from different regions of Algeria. Of these participants, 61(58%) were females. The survey aims at exploring their views regarding the inclusion of foreign cultural elements in the curriculum of English for third, fourth and fifth years of primary school. All parents in the study had one or more of their children studying in primary school. The vast majority of the parents questioned (83%) reported that they have had some college education, few (9.5%) had a high-school-level education and the rest (6.7%) reported having either a middle school level or limited education.

Participants were also asked to rate their own level of English.

Figure02. the level of English competency among parents.



Twenty-five (25 %) reported having a good level of English, and (45 %) said their level is about average. However, these ratios seem inflated. People generally tend to overvalue their skills when asked to rate themselves; a cognitive bias known as the Illusory Superiority (**Pinker,2011**), often misleading researchers. In fact, The EF Index of English proficiency (2022) puts Algeria in the Low Proficiency category. Parents don't make up a segment of the population that is especially good in English.

The questionnaire is handed over in Arabic to make sure the content is understood. The first part explores the attitudes of parents towards culture and its integration in primary schools while the second targets the realm of values specifically. Informed by the WVS, the second part aims to assess the attitudes of parents towards certain cultural aspects which are relatively highly valued in the west, but less valued in conservative societies such as Algeria. These aspects are only proxies. While not the target themselves, the aim behind their inclusion is to uncover the hidden values of Algerian parents and to gauge their attitudes. The following are the full results of this research accompanied with discussions.

Results and discussion

Part one

The first two questions ask which year should children start being exposed to English language and English culture, respectively. The two are put together to ease comparison.

Table 01. Parents views on the year their children should start learning English language and English culture (numbers indicate frequency)

	since kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	later
Language	24	11	7	31	15	5	10
culture	6	11	2	9	9	11	56

Two humps characterize the distribution of the desire of parents as to the time their children should start learning English. a good number of them (24) think that English should be taught very early on in kindergarten and, in agreement with the current state, another large portion (31) think that introducing English language should be delayed until the third year of primary school. By contrast, it's clear that parents desire the delay of including cultural elements until after the primary school stage (which lasts for five years in Algeria). An overwhelming majority of participants (56) think that talking about culture should be left until after the end of the primary school stage. Many parents think that their children should first soak their own culture before later being exposed to another.

The next 3 question all ask parents for their opinions about the inclusion of English culture from different angles. Only the results are displayed initially, and then, with the help of qualitative data, we'll attempt to explain them. The first of the three questions ask parents to what extent they accept that the teacher tackles English culture in the classroom. answers are spread along a Likert scale of five points. With a mean of ($X=3.058$) and a relatively large standard deviation of ($SD=1.433$), these values indicate mixed views.

Table 02. Views of parents on whether the teacher should introduce cultural elements in the classroom.

Question	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
How far do you agree that the teacher tackles English culture in the classroom?	22 (21.4%)	18 (17.5%)	13 (12.6%)	32 (31.1%)	18 (17.5%)	3.058	1.433

Answers are characteristically mixed. Some parents (22) express an outright rejection of introducing cultural elements in the classroom while a comparable number (18) welcomed the idea. Most responses, however, settle on teaching culture only to an extent (32).

Parents, again, had mixed views when asked if learning about English culture is important in the first place. On a scale of importance that ranges from 1 “not at all important”, to 4 “extremely important”, the mean value stood at 2.317 ($M=2.317$) and the standard deviation ($SD=1.145$). These numbers show that parents are in disagreement over the value of culture teaching. However, with a mean less than 2.5, parents’ answers were more tilted towards devaluing the role of culture.

Table 03. parents’ opinions regarding the importance of English culture in the classroom.

Question	not at all important	a little important	important	very important	Mean	Standard Deviation
to what extent do you think that learning English culture is important for your child?	34 (32%)	26 (25%)	21 (20.1%)	23 (22.1%)	2.317	1.145

The next question asks if parents are worried that their children may start to imitate and copy the habits and norms of English-speaking people.

Table 04.parents’ feelings towards the inclusion of the foreign culture into the curriculum.

Question	worried a lot	A little worried	not at all worried	mean	standard deviation
to what extent are you worried that your child will start to copy the habits of English speaking people?	31 (30.1%)	47 (45.6%)	25 (24.3%)	1.941	0.735

Most parents (47) said that they are a little worried that their children will start to copy English speaking people in their ways of life. around a quarter (25) expressed that they are concerned a lot and the rest (31) of respondents said that they are not at all concerned.

As we saw , answers were notably mixed for the last three questions . At this point, and for the sake of explanation, it helps to take a glance at the qualitative data gathered by asking parents: what are the consequential benefits/harm that the teaching of English culture will bring?

Religion features prominently in the answers of respondents. “Learning English language and English culture is a beautiful thing” one parent said “. but going so deep as to imitate blindly in a way that clashes with our religion is the kind of thing we don’t want “. Similarly, another parent put it this way “I see no point in learning about English culture, but it’s okay to learn something about it, making sure that the particularities of our society and religion are preserved”. Deviation from the teachings of Islam, therefore, is a major reason for parent’s aversion of English culture. Ethical “dissolution”, the weakening of family bonds and a concern for the well fare of society are similarly expressed as reasons for not wanting English culture in the curriculum.

Surprisingly though, some parents expressed reasons for learning culture that align very well with the arguments on teaching culture that we can find in in the existing academic literature. “Learning about English culture eases our dealings with them and also helps to maintain

relationships with them” was the answer of one respondent. Another parent explained “[English culture] facilitates the ability to perceive the cultural context around which English language centers in its daily use, enabling real time appropriate communication with different speakers “. “Learning about English culture allows my son less chance for dealing wrongly with the people who speak this language” was the answer given by another parent. Some parents understood that culture can be important especially when there is contact between speakers of different languages, as it works to overcome inappropriate uses of the language. Hence, cultural awareness helps set communication in the appropriate path.

Next, parents were given a list of the largest four English-speaking countries, namely, Canada, England, Australia and the United States, and were asked to rank (from 1 to 4) which of these countries culture’s they don’t want their children be exposed to. This question aims to explore which of the four countries is the least favorite and which is the most favorite in the view of parents. This may bring insight into why would parents shy away from the teaching of cultural elements to their children, and if that has any relationship with a specific country. The Borda counting method is used to analyze the results of this question and the next, which both involve ranking preferences. Borda counting, in this context, works by giving different weights to each country according to its place in the rank. The higher the rank, the larger the weight. If some respondent ranks a given country first, that rank is multiplied by 4, if second it gets a lower weight of 3 and so forth. Then, the values for each respondent are summed up and the winning country is the one that totals the highest score.

The results were as follows:

Table 05. ranking of cultural preferences by country. (Note that some respondents failed to deliver the entire ranking, but their preferences are counted nonetheless)

Country /ranking frequency	Ranked first	Ranked second	Ranked third	Ranked fourth	Sum of the scores	Final rank
The United States of America	29	18	16	23	225	3 rd
England	47	27	8	6	291	1 st
Australia	8	12	21	38	148	4 th
Canada	26	23	27	10	237	2 nd

England comes first. Algerian parents prefer that their children to be exposed to English culture above all. It should be noted that the English associated with England is the de facto version of English adopted in the Algerian curricula, which in part explains why Algerian parents opted for it. Canada comes second and the United States close behind. America is not viewed favorably. The country projects its power over the whole world. It plays the leading role as a “global policeman” and an enforcer of order, often interfering in the domestic affairs of other countries. This could possibly explain parents’ relative disdain of the US. Not only its sheer power, American culture also enjoys a very strong influence throughout the globe. So much so that the term Globalization is often equated with Americanism. Little is known about Australia due its geographical distance from Algeria and the weak political and historical ties between the two countries. For example, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), there are only about 2300 Algerian-born immigrant in the whole country.

In the next question, respondents were asked to state which reasons they want their children to learn English for. As stated before, some people may decide to learn a given language out of a fascination by the culture associated with it. Similarly, this question assesses if parents want their children to learn English out of an admiration of English culture, for practical reasons (English being the language of communication –

enhancing the chance that their children will land on a good job in the future), or is it because they only find the language necessary.

Table 06. parents' ranked reasons for why they want their children to learn English.

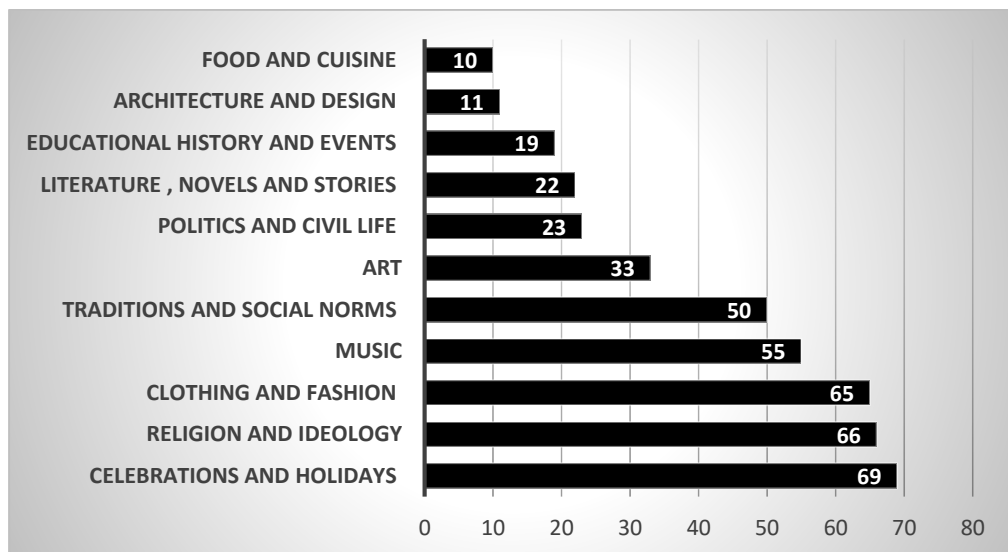
Reasons why children should learn English	First rank	Second rank	Third rank	Fourth rank	Sum of scores	Final rank
Because English is the language of science, technology and communication	75	19	2	7	368	1 st
Because it helps my child secure a job in the future	30	35	21	7	274	2 nd
Because I am a fan of English culture	11	9	25	36	157	4 th
I don't like English but it has now become a necessity.,	19	14	25	28	196	3 rd

Using the same Borda counting method as before, the most stated reason for why their children should learn English are pragmatic in nature. Parents want their children to learn English because they know that it will advance their children's careers and prospects. The love of culture comes last. English is seen primarily as a tool for advancing their children's careers. Parents understand the prominent role that English plays today and know that they should invest in their children's learning of it. In fact, so important is English language today that a state as radical and *anti*-English-and-American culture as ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) included the language as an "additional" subject to be taught in its primary schools. Its importance to them trumped any fear that English values or

norms can spread alongside the language , although teachers were carefully instructed to never include any reference to the “culture of infidels” (Arvisais & Guidère, 2020). Other subjects that were also labeled “additional ”included Math , Science and Computing.

Lastly, parents were asked to cross out which cultural aspects they don’t want their children to learn about in their English language classes.

Figure 03. parents crossing out the cultural aspects they disfavor (numbers indicate frequency).



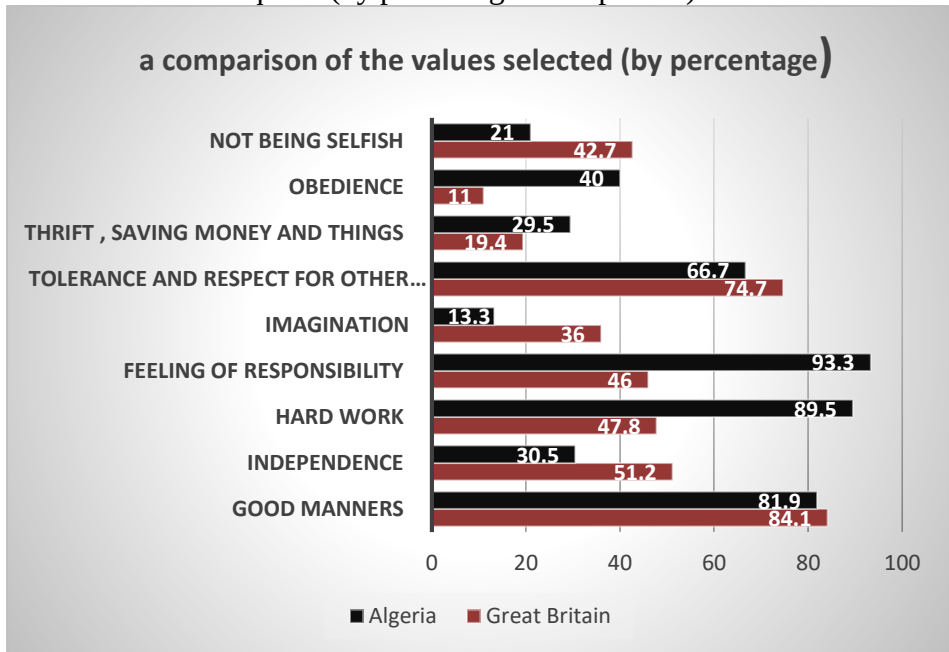
Food and cuisine, historical events and architecture are the least crossed out. These aspects are relatively value-free; therefore, parents have little to fear when their children learn about them. By contrast, the most crossed out aspects are the most value-laden. Religion and ideologies are shunned by sixty-six parents, that is (65%) of them. And even more shunned are celebrations and occasions, which happen to be linked to religion as well, since, many holidays are inspired by religion (Christmas, Halloween.). Clothing and fashion were also disfavored. In Islamic clothing, modesty in dress for females is strongly demanded. Few parents would be happy to see a picture of an immodest woman in their children’s textbook. Music is not regarded favorably, with 55 parents not wanting their children to learn about it. Strangely, art and literature are relatively well received. Politics and civil life are also well received. What should

be kept in mind in interpreting this graph is that there is always a strong role of religion, namely Islam, in determining how well would parents receive any of the different cultural element that exist in the west.

Part two

The question that follows is taken directly from the world values survey (**Haerpfer et al,2022**). It provides a list of qualities that children can learn at home and asks which of them does the respondent think is most important. The respondent is supposed to pick up only five of those qualities. In the present survey, parents are also asked which of the same qualities they want their children to learn in “school”, not “home “.Moreover, and to put things into perspective, the results for Great Britain are also displayed. The rationale behind the inclusion of a question like this is to let the reader (and teachers) have an idea which qualities are more valued by Algerian parents so as to be mindful of them and show if they may converge with the qualities valued in English speaking countries. As a quick reminder, note that in the original survey by the world values survey, the number of respondents drawn from Great Britain is very large (2609), comparing to only (105) in the present study. The sample must be larger for the law of large numbers to take effect. Second, our sample is restrictive to parents, comparing to a sample representing the whole population in the WVS. However, the theoretical framework offered in the WVS helps provide a strong justification for the results observed and may even help make predictions beforehand.

Figure 04. the qualities chosen by respondents as the most important for their children to acquire .(by percentage of responses)



The five most chosen qualities by Algerian parents -to be stressed in schools- are, by order of importance: The Feelings of responsibility, Hard work, good manners, tolerance for others and obedience. Hard work and responsibility are chosen by the majority of Algerian parents who took part in the study. Before proceeding to explain this and the results of the next question, remember that we are relying on the WVS theoretical framework. In traditional societies, Algeria being one, there is an emphasis on hard work and responsibility. When basic resources are scarce; there is little food, shelter, and energy sources, a tendency to emphasize hard work emerge as a as a way to secure those basic needs. Also, when conditions of living are tough and there are little resources, the child is expected to learn to be responsible from an early age. By contrast, in progressive affluent societies, the ones which take physical and economic survival for granted, and where resources have always been plentiful, people can afford to cultivate and emphasize other qualities in their children, such as developing their curiosity, imagination, independence, talent, creativity as well as different forms of self-expression. Note here that for the qualities of Independence and imagination, Algerians did not prioritize them as

much as the British did, and that the British valued hard work and responsibility significantly less than did Algerian parents. Also linked to survival values is thrift. As resources get scarcer and scarcer, thrift becomes more and more valuable. Society becomes very sensitive to extravagant acts and start valuing thrift and the saving of money and things, for the rainy days ahead.

Further, traditional societies are more favorable to maintaining the status quo. They typically don't encourage their children to defy societal norms, become independent free-thinkers or defect from the herd. Enforcing good manners is a way to ensure that social arrangements are maintained. We can see this with the high ratings of good manners this quality receives. The same thing can be said about obedience. Deference and respect for authority are important values for conservative society. This includes the obedience of women towards their husbands, the child towards his/her parents, student to their teachers, subjects towards their rulers, and common people towards the teachings of their clergymen. Therefore, Obedience, as a quality, is something valuable in the eyes of Algerian parents.

Finally, conservative societies are more "groupish". They can easily jump to categorizing people into "us" and "them". They are much less welcoming to tourists and immigrants, thinking that they pose a threat to the fabric of society. In the WVS framework, economic survival helps explain this. As resources get scarcer, people tend to believe that outsiders are there to take off some of their own share. Outsiders will end up disdained as a result. As resources become more plentiful, however, people become less hostile to tourists and outsiders.

The scale

The final question takes the form of a 3 points scale. Participants are asked to state their opinions on various topics, had these topics been present in the English curriculum that targets their children. The items of the scale seem wide and diverse, but they are only tapping on two important underlying cross-cultural constructs. Namely, secular-rational values versus traditional ones and survival values versus self-expression values. The alpha of the scale stood at 0.709, indicating a reliable scale (Hulin et al ,2001). According to the WVS framework, each one of the items in the scale should be rated higher in rich industrial societies,

including English speaking countries. Conversely, they are to be rated lower in Arab Muslim societies. Participants can either choose “I refuse” with a score of 1, “I have no problem “score: 03, and “I encourage “with 5 points score.

How far do you agree that the curriculum of English language in primary school contains the following:

Table 08. Results of the scale

Items	“I refuse this”	“I have no problem”	“I encourage this”	Sum	Mean	Standard deviation
civil life and political activism	42.9%	41%	16.2%	259	2.466	1.448
having tourists and foreigners in the country	3.8%	65.7%	30.5%	371	3.533	1.047
trust in international institutions and organizations	30.5%	55.2%	14.3%	281	2.676	1.304
women having the same rights and opportunities as men.	30.8%	44.2%	25%	300	2.884	1.496
Tolerance between all people regardless of their backgrounds	6.7%	61.5%	31.7%	364	3.500	1.140
introducing the values of capitalism and the free market	42.9%	38.1%	19%	265	2.523	1.507
democracy and shared decision making	6.7%	51.4%	41.9%	389	3.704	1.208

Cultural barriers facing the integration of English language in Algerian primary schools

independence and freedom of children	37.5%	32.7%	29.8%	296	2.846	1.641
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Residents of the more affluent societies tend to be more politically active and have more trust in their government and its various institutions. Naturally enough, they would encourage their children to be more of a politically engaged citizens. When Algerian parents were asked if the curriculum of English should somehow encourage political activism, we can notice a strong rejection of the idea. Forty-five (45%) of the 105 parents expressed their rejection and only 16% of the respondents would encourage political and civic activism in the curriculum. This is one area of cross-cultural differences that teachers should be mindful about.

With the exception of Turkey and Malaysia , 18 of the top 20 touristic destination of the world are non-Muslim countries (Poirot,2023). Muslim countries are not a top destination for tourists. Algeria, on its part, ranks 111th worldwide according to the World Travel and Tourism Council institution. The attitudes about tourism and the existence of foreigners show that the majority don't mind the existence of tourists. However, they don't particularly welcome them as well, only 30 % of respondents actively want to see a curriculum of English that somehow encourage outsiders and tourists to come to Algeria. Trust in international organizations and institutions such as the United Nations and the UNISCO tend to be higher in English speaking countries. However, only 14 % of the Algerian parents questioned advocate for their introduction and trusting them in the curriculum of English.

The lines separating the genders and their roles in society are less blurred in conservative societies. By and large, Women are expected to look after the household and men to work outside. In the view of these societies, this does a better job in ensuring the stability of the household and maintaining the traditional family arrangements. That's why when asked if the curriculum of English is to depict men and women on an equal footing, only 14% of the respondents said that they encourage the idea, with 30 % refusing the idea immediately. In a strange twist, only few of the Respondents (6.7 %) refused to let the curriculum be tolerant of peoples of other races, religions and ethnicities. yet, to be sure, they were

also not so welcoming, with (31%) encouraging the open tolerance of people from other backgrounds in the curriculum of their children. Most (61.5%) took a moderate stance.

In rich industrial societies, people have a more positive attitude towards capitalism. Markets operating freely away from the reach of government, less regulation and free trade are perceived more positively in rich industrial societies comparing to the attitudes prevalent in Arab Muslim societies, like Algeria. Correspondingly, (42.9%) objected that the principles of capitalism or free trade is taught in the English curriculum of primary school. Of course, it is inconceivable that the curriculum of English can contain capitalist ideologies or even that children understand them in the first place, but as we noted above, the whole point is to gauge parent's values. At heart, capitalism is an expression of freedom, as Melton Friedman, the godfather of Neoliberalism so passionately preached in his widely read book *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962). Therefore, objection to this economic world view shows that parents don't want their children to be affected by the free outlook that people in the west have, and therefore, that the teacher of English don't praise all of these forms of unrestrained freedom. The same thing can be said regarding all items of the questionnaire. These items speak of an underlying value system. The attempt is to unearth this system and discover why and what parents don't want their children to learn from the value system of English-speaking countries. Speaking of freedom, while children of English speaking countries enjoy more personal freedom and independence, only 29.8% of Algerian parents encourage preaching this value in the English curriculum.

Finally, introducing democratic ideals, and democratic ways of solving problems was the most positively perceived element in the scale. Democracy is constitutionalized in Algeria. The meaning of the word democracy not only pertains to the mode of governance, but also to the act of sharing opinions and outlooks, inclusion of all, and letting the party concerned have a say in decision making. English speaking countries also happen to be, more or less, solid democracies.

Conclusion

we can summarize the key findings of this study as follows:

1. Parents generally desire the delay of including any cultural elements until after their children are mature enough. This is not their view regarding the language, however. As we saw., many actually wish if English language is being taught earlier or even starting from Kindergarten.
2. The views of parents regarding the extent to which their children should learn about the target culture are not uniform. As far as Algerian parents are concerned, it is possible to find views from the very two polar extremes. Most answers, however, agree on learning about the target culture in a limited way, at least as far as these cultural elements don't conflict with their religious views.
3. The culture of England is the most desirable to introduce from the point of view of parents and as it turned out, the culture of the US, although reverberating far and wide in the globe, is not viewed particularly well.
4. An admiration of English culture is far from being the reason behind wanting their children to learn English. Parents, for the most part., want their children to learn English mostly for pragmatic reasons.
5. Value-neutral cultural aspects such as architecture, cuisine and historical events are the least objectionable by parents. By contrast, value-laden elements such as religion and ideologies are the most objectionable, as far as introducing cultural elements goes.
6. The qualities that parents desire their children to be educated about include obedience, hard work, good manners and a strong sense of responsibility. Of course, these qualities are universally desired. But English-speaking people might prioritize other qualities such as imagination and creativity over them. In the realm of values, it is ultimately about how much weight you put on each foot, a point that teachers should be mindful about.

With respect to the scale, the goal of this study is not to issue normative statements. However, If the teacher, curriculum designer, textbook author, inspector or any stakeholder wanted to align themselves with the attitudes of Algerian parents, they would avoid including any

conversation, textbook picture, cultural artifact, or any cultural element that would:

A) encourage children to be completely independent and autonomous decision makers and thinkers.

B) call for absolute tolerance to strangers and foreigners, therefore encouraging instead a sense of nationalism and an in-group outlook.

C) call for unrestrained freedom of all forms

D) depict males and females as absolute equals.

Culture, as we have seen, can be a very complex issue. It gets more problematic with the introduction of the thornier questions of values. The successful learning of English by Algerian pupils depends on entertaining every possible challenge facing its integration in the educational system, prominent among these challenges is , of course , the question of culture.

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