

**Towards the Professionalisation of Primary School French Teacher
Education in the Algerian Context**Mounir MILOUDI¹, Abdelmalek DJEDIAI^{2*}^{1, 2} Laboratory of Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis, University of El-Oued (Algeria)

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Abstract

In an Algerian socio-educational context, where the teaching of French continues to fuel educational debates, the training of teachers of this language also continues to generate recurring issues in line with the new changes and general challenges of Algerian society and political choices. This study addresses this question, the objective of which is to determine whether the various training models would best meet the expectations of learners and the supervisory authorities. To do this, we rely on a questionnaire survey involving a sample of teachers, representing graduates from various Algerian universities, and serving the different districts of the wilaya of El-Oued. The conclusion of this study demonstrates that the Algerian higher education system includes a variety of initial training programs, not just one. Their success depends on the extent to which these programs respond to and interact qualitatively with the multiple socio-educational needs resulting from various general changes in Algeria..

Key words: Algeria, Education, French, Primary school, Teacher.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that the primary mission of universities worldwide is to train future professionals across various communities by providing them with knowledge and practical skills, among which language proficiency has become an essential requirement. This necessity aligns with the dynamics of societies increasingly affected by globalization and the global circulation of individuals, services, and goods.

In this context, Algeria, both as a state and a society, is not an exception. In response, it has developed a vast higher education infrastructure, comprising over a hundred universities distributed across the country's fifty-eight provinces (wilayas). These institutions are currently responsible for training French language teachers across different educational levels. During the 2015/2016 academic year alone, these universities accommodated nearly one and a half million students (AUF, 2016, p.23).

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The rapid globalization experienced by the country, combined with its openness to the market economy, has imposed new quantitative and qualitative challenges on the Algerian university system, particularly concerning teacher education. Among these are the training of primary school French language teachers, who constitute the final product of forty-four French departments spread nationwide.

In this perspective, teacher training, especially in terms of quality, remains a central concern for the research conducted within these university institutions. The development of competencies among students preparing to become French teachers serves as a guiding principle for these research endeavors.

Our interest in the topic of training primary school French teachers stems from our professional experience in the field of education: thirteen years as a primary school French inspector, twelve years as a primary school French teacher, and eight years as an adjunct university lecturer prior to becoming a permanent faculty member in November 2021.

In light of these considerations, the present article reports on a sociodidactic study conducted in various French language districts within the Wilaya of El-Oued. This study seeks to examine the issue of initial teacher education for French teachers at the university level and its relationship to the socioprofessional work environment. It further aims to address the following central question: Between lived reality and professional demands, do the various training models sufficiently meet the expectations of both learners and supervisory authorities? To achieve the objectives of this study and address our research concerns, we have formulated the following hypothesis: University training enables a certain mastery of French in both written and oral forms; however, this mastery does not fully meet the profession's actual workplace requirements.

In attempting to answer this question, we employed a questionnaire-based survey targeting one hundred primary school French teachers working in various districts of El-Oued. These teachers are graduates from eighteen different Algerian universities.¹

Sociodidactic Considerations

To contextualize the professional environment of the surveyed teachers, it is essential to note that French language instruction in Algerian primary schools is primarily aimed at developing learners' communicative competencies in both oral (listening/speaking) and written (reading/writing) modalities. The ultimate goal is to enable students to engage in academic situations appropriate to their cognitive development. This objective is clearly articulated in the official curriculum:

Equip students with relevant, robust, and sustainable competencies that can be effectively mobilized in authentic communication and problem-solving situations, enabling them to pursue lifelong learning, participate actively in social, cultural, and economic life, and adapt to ongoing societal changes. (Official Journal, 2008, p.08)²

In framing our central research question, it is equally indispensable to clarify the concept of training itself. According to Dominique Beau, "to train" consists in guiding a group of individuals, primarily adults, referred to as the "*starting population*", from an initial situation (starting point) to a predetermined outcome (end point), through the implementation of a set of pedagogical tools and systems. Training also involves fostering participants' awareness of their own progress (Beau, 2015: 23). The pedagogical tools identified by Beau include:

- Teaching techniques employed by the instructor;
- Pedagogical resources provided to the instructor;
- Content delivered to the target audience (disciplinary and didactic knowledge);
- The instructor's pedagogical attitudes;
- The physical and social environment of both the trainee and trainer.

In a more pragmatically oriented framework, training simultaneously conveys essential values, as emphasized by R. Sainsalieu, who identifies four key outcomes that reflect the sociolinguistic and sociodidactic dimensions of teacher education (Citeau, 2002, p.15):

- a) Socialization effect: The training environment fosters opportunities for interpersonal exchange and expression, facilitating the redefinition of professional relationships within the educational community (teachers, educational staff, administrative personnel, healthcare professionals, guidance counselors, etc.).
- b) Integration effect: The acquisition of new knowledge supports teachers' integration into diverse social contexts, including schools, homes, libraries, community centers, and beyond.
- c) System-opening effect: Training bridges the internal academic world with the external socio-professional environment, promoting an openness to real-world dynamics.
- d) Stimulation of imagination: Training encourages innovation by challenging established practices and expanding the reference frameworks through which individuals interpret and engage with their professional context.

Furthermore, in relation to the typology of knowledge, Altet (2003, p.34) provides a comprehensive framework distinguishing between:

- Theoretical knowledge, of a declarative nature, among which we may distinguish:
 - o *Knowledge to be taught*: disciplinary knowledge, scientifically validated content, didactic knowledge intended for student acquisition;
 - o *Knowledge for teaching*: pedagogical knowledge (classroom management, interactive learning), didactic knowledge across disciplines, and professional cultural knowledge.
- Practical knowledge, procedural and experiential knowledge:
 - o *Knowledge about practice*: procedural know-how, codified expertise;
 - o *Knowledge of practice*: experiential knowledge acquired through professional praxis, aligned with Sternberg's conditional knowledge (knowing when and where), and often tacit expertise that distinguishes novices from experts.

As Soyer (2003, p.04) rightly observes, teacher training must ultimately serve professional purposes. It represents a strategic, forward-looking process of goal-oriented preparation, where training serves as a means rather than an end:

Training is never an end in itself; it is always a means to achieve objectives more or less directly connected to an individual's professional life. Training objectives are transitive. Training functions as a transitional space—a sometimes obligatory passage—enabling individuals to reach a higher goal they

have set for themselves. The individual develops a project consisting of various steps to accomplish before reaching the ultimate goal. (Soyer, 2003, p.04)

In this perspective, Dabène (1994, p.193) identifies five core dimensions essential to the professional training of French as a Foreign Language (FFL) teachers:

- Disciplinary training, focusing on mastery of the French language and its linguistic subfields;
- Training about the discipline, addressing the history of language teaching, language policies, and the sociocultural role of languages;
- Didactic training, centered on the specific pedagogical approaches required for each subject area;
- Professional training, dealing with classroom management, educational technologies, project-based pedagogy, reflective practices, and assessment modalities;
- Interdisciplinary training, emphasizing the consideration of learners' mother tongues and the transposition of knowledge across disciplines.

E. Annoot (2012, p.72) further emphasizes the decisive role of institutional and programmatic conditions in students' academic success: «The conditions under which students pursue their studies profoundly influence their academic performance. Institutional and program-specific factors are fundamental in determining the degree to which students engage with and feel motivated by their studies. » (Annoot, 2012, p.72)

Thus, comprehensive and multidimensional preparation of future teachers becomes a *sine qua non*. Yet, one may question whether universities currently offer training that sufficiently integrates these parameters. In this regard, Le Boterf (1990: 33) advocates for a functional analysis of training needs as identified gaps rather than abstract "needs": « Training needs do not exist per se; they constitute 'gaps' that must be identified and analyzed in relation to specific professional situations. » (Le Boterf, 1990: 33)

To address such gaps effectively, Le Boterf recommends a written formalization of training needs prior to program implementation (Massot & al., 2001, p.43). Simultaneously, as Porcher (1995: 25) stresses, a thorough analysis of trainees' expectations remains crucial for constructing pedagogically meaningful and contextually appropriate learning objectives: « Needs analysis allows one to fully understand the target audience, enabling the design of learning objectives that are appropriately aligned with their situation. » (Porcher, 1995: 25)

At the heart of these reflections lies a fundamental pedagogical question: Does university-based teacher education adequately account for the heterogeneous expectations of its student population? As Raynal et al. (2006: 44) explain, individual expectations play a critical role in meaning-making processes, rooted in personal experiences, cultural background, environment, and subjective worldviews.

Moreover, the effectiveness of any training program is ultimately measured by the extent of professional change it facilitates in its graduates, particularly during the initial stages of their careers: « Training is deemed successful if it results in concrete changes in professional practice within weeks or months following completion. » (Roegiers, 2007, p.10)

From a sociodidactic standpoint, multiple actors contribute to learners' cognitive, affective, cultural, and relational development (Rispaïl, 2017, p.11). As Tagliante (200, p.14) observes, while the teacher plays a central role, responsibility for educational outcomes is shared with other institutional actors.³ Training should, therefore, cultivate learner autonomy and reduce overreliance on the teacher: « *Students are taught to become autonomous learners, to learn how to learn, rather than depending entirely on their teachers.* » (Tagliante, 2001, p.14)

Consequently, the French language teacher holds significant influence over students' academic success, personal development, future educational trajectories, parental satisfaction, and institutional expectations. The quality of their teaching practice is thus paramount. However, a critical question remains: To what extent does university-based training prepare teachers for these real-world professional demands?

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATE OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN ALGERIA

After more than 28 years of independence, the proportion of primary school teachers in Algeria holding a high school diploma did not exceed 15%⁴ of the total teaching population (Benghabrit-Remaoun, 1998, p.05). Primary French language teachers were not an exception to this situation. The majority of this teaching body comprised individuals who had previously dropped out of the national educational system. This chronic deficiency in qualifications for a significant portion of teachers resulted in widespread shortcomings at multiple levels.

In an effort to elevate the qualifications of its teaching workforce, Algeria progressively shifted toward a near-universal academic model of teacher education, referred to as *universitarization* (Lebeaume, 2009: 40). Official policy documents⁵ underscore the importance of university-level initial teacher education for all teaching corps. According to these texts, initial teacher preparation is entrusted to institutions of higher education, making Algerian universities responsible for preparing teachers across all educational levels.

This objective was reaffirmed by government authorities who, at the turn of the 21st century, expressed a firm commitment to reforming the national teacher training system. Beginning with the 1999/2000 academic year, teacher training was formally entrusted to the *Écoles Normales Supérieures* (ENS), with differentiated program lengths: 3 years for primary school teachers, 4 years for middle school teachers, and 5 years for secondary school teachers. However, in practice, these institutions have been unable to meet the growing demands of the national education system. Graduates from the ENS remain insufficient in number to address the acute shortages on the ground; in our sample, for instance, only three out of one hundred teachers held degrees from an ENS.

Consequently, the majority of teachers recruited by the Ministry of National Education hold a four-year university degree (*Licence*) in French language and literature or translation, conferred

by respective university departments. It is essential to analyze the profiles of these various degree holders in greater detail.

INITIAL TRAINING PATHWAYS FOR PRIMARY FRENCH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

All newly recruited teachers are university graduates. Regardless of their teaching level, French language teachers typically hold either a *Licence* in French or in translation, obtained under the former system or the newer *LMD* (Licence-Master-Doctorate) system.

Graduates from the ENS represent the only cohort that has benefited from pedagogically-oriented training directly addressing classroom realities. Yet, this group remains numerically marginal and insufficient to meet national needs⁶. The heterogeneity in academic pathways has consequently resulted in a highly diversified pool of teacher qualifications.

Typical degree titles obtained by French language teachers include:

- Language Sciences and Didactics
- Applied Language Studies
- General French Studies
- Preschool Education Management
- Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Civilizations
- Information and Communication Sciences
- Literature and Interdisciplinary Approaches, among others.

According to national education law, the ENS curriculum represents the model of initial teacher education. In contrast, general university programs emphasize theoretical knowledge without adequately addressing the pedagogical competencies required of practicing language teachers. Most university programs do not offer any classroom-based practicum, despite the fact that such field experience is considered a cornerstone of effective teacher preparation globally. While university studies may enable a degree of linguistic proficiency, graduates often struggle to translate these competencies into classroom practice, as post-university opportunities for practical application are limited.

The modular university system in Algeria typically involves semester-based or annual courses, primarily consisting of lectures and occasional tutorials or practical sessions. Opportunities for practical classroom pedagogy are extremely limited, particularly concerning oral language teaching. As a result, the professional readiness of university graduates remains ambiguous.

National regulations governing first-cycle higher education (Licence level) outline dual objectives: to prepare students for further study or for direct entry into the workforce⁷. However, these goals, especially the second, professional insertion, are not sufficiently addressed in practice. As Miloudi et al. (2016, p.68) have argued, unless future legislative frameworks integrate coursework that is directly relevant to the professional teaching context, teacher performance will continue to suffer.

Effective preparation of future primary school French teachers thus requires collaborative input from multiple expert domains, including subject specialists, sociolinguists, didacticians,

sociodidacticians, and educational psychologists. Yet, this integrative approach remains difficult to implement, given the chronic shortage of qualified university faculty. Moreover, many university instructors themselves encounter pedagogical challenges due to their limited engagement with real-world teaching contexts across the primary, secondary, and higher education sectors. As Benziane and Senouci (2007, p.61) observed: « *University training has not specifically prepared them to become trainers of trainers.*»

Christine Tagliante (2001, p. 07) also emphasizes the critical role of personal attributes in effective teaching, alongside theoretical knowledge acquired during initial training:

Mastery of theoretical concepts acquired during initial training is essential. However, the teacher's personal qualities are equally important. These qualities shape interactions with learners, listening and responsiveness, formative abilities, and availability. The quality of teaching and, to a large extent, student outcomes are closely tied to the teacher's personality. Nevertheless, professional behaviors, while influenced by such attributes, are not fully developed during initial training but rather through daily classroom practice.

HOLDERS OF THE CLASSICAL LICENCE IN FRENCH

The classical four-year *Licence* program offers minimal pedagogical or classroom practice components. Pedagogy and didactics comprise only 6.25% of the entire curriculum. There is no requirement for in-school practicum throughout the program, despite the fact that the vast majority of students are destined for careers in French language instruction. The curriculum largely disregards the practical aspects of teaching, even though most graduates ultimately enter the teaching profession.

HOLDERS OF THE CLASSICAL LICENCE IN TRANSLATION

Similarly, graduates of the four-year translation program receive no formal preparation in classroom management, pedagogy, or didactics. Their academic trajectory does not equip them with the necessary competencies for French language instruction. Moreover, even basic linguistic proficiency in French remains underdeveloped due to a curriculum that fails to prioritize active language use.

HOLDERS OF THE LMD LICENCE IN FRENCH

Under Executive Decree No. 04-371 of November 21, 2004, the LMD system offers a three-year *Licence* organized into six semesters, incorporating transferable and capitalizable teaching units.⁸ However, the curriculum emphasizes general knowledge without addressing the specific pedagogical skills required for French language instruction. Consequently, graduates possess limited classroom experience and minimal exposure to real teaching practices.

GRADUATES OF THE ÉCOLE NORMALE SUPÉRIEURE (ENS)

According to Ministerial Decree No. 742 (October 1, 2013), the ENS remains the only institution offering a fully pedagogically oriented curriculum for primary French teachers. While theoretical instruction in educational sciences forms a core component of this program, the practicum remains insufficient: a brief 15-day placement in the final year includes a period of classroom observation followed by limited, supervised teaching practice.

GRADUATES OF THE INSTITUT DE FORMATION DES PROFESSEURS DU PRIMAIRE (IFPM)⁹

Prospective IFPM students are selected via competitive examination from among recent high school graduates. The IFPM offers a three-year initial training program similar in structure to the ENS.

PREPARATORY PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING DURING THE PROBATIONARY INTERNSHIP

The official regulations cited above stipulate that newly recruited teachers through external competitive examinations must undergo an additional preparatory pedagogical training before assuming their duties within educational institutions. Beginning with the 2014/2015 academic year, the Ministry of National Education introduced further integration and support mechanisms to address deficiencies observed in the prior training models.

In accordance with the interministerial decree of August 24, 2015, which defines the organizational modalities, duration, and curricular content of the preparatory pedagogical training during the probationary internship, primary, middle, and secondary school teachers are required to complete this training in order to be appointed to the respective positions of Primary School Teacher, Middle School Teacher, and Secondary School Teacher.

This initial post-university training is delivered in an alternating format during full or half-day sessions scheduled on Saturdays, Tuesday afternoons, and during the winter and spring school holidays. The training includes both theoretical lectures and practical workshops designed to facilitate the teacher's professional integration into classroom practice.

Ministerial correspondence No. 295/0.0.5/2015 dated October 25, 2015, and updated on December 23, 2020 (No. 1428/MEN/2020), provides further clarification. The official duration of this training is seven weeks, comprising a total of 190 hours¹⁰. The training typically takes place in national training institutes for education sector employees and in public educational institutions designated by the regional education authorities (JO, 2015, p. 23).

The supervision, administration, and monitoring of this training are ensured by educational inspectors and pedagogical trainers specialized in each educational cycle.

The training curriculum for primary school teachers (the target group of this study) encompasses a series of officially mandated modules issued by the Ministry of National Education, including:

- Educational Sciences and Psychology (20 hours)
- School Mediation (10 hours)
- Classroom Management Techniques (10 hours)

- Pedagogical Engineering (10 hours)
- Didactics of the Specialized Subject and Teaching Methodologies (40 hours)
- Educational Assessment and Remediation (25 hours)
- Algerian Educational System and Teaching Curricula (20 hours)
- Ethics and Professional Conduct (10 hours)
- School Legislation (20 hours)
- Information and Communication Technologies (25 hours)

At the conclusion of the preparatory pedagogical training, trainee teachers are required to submit a final report addressing a topic directly related to the training modules. This report constitutes an additional opportunity for the consolidation and demonstration of acquired competencies.

The assessment of teachers' knowledge is conducted through a continuous pedagogical evaluation process, which includes periodic assessments of both theoretical and practical components. Upon completion of the training, a final written examination is administered covering the officially prescribed program content. Successful candidates receive a certificate of completion issued by the training institution's director. This preparatory training is a prerequisite for eligibility to sit for the tenure examination required for permanent appointment as a primary school French teacher.

INTEGRATION AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Hierarchical supervision remains the most traditional form of professional coaching. However, as Dennerly (2000, p.84) suggests, it may not always be the most straightforward to implement nor necessarily the most effective to prioritize. Since the 2014/2015 academic year, the Ministry of National Education has implemented various integration and support measures to compensate for identified gaps in university-based training.

Within this framework, probationary French language teachers are required to conduct approximately fifteen classroom observation sessions alongside an experienced tenured teacher, preferably holding the status of pedagogical trainer, following an officially prescribed template. The mentoring teacher is designated following a favorable evaluation by the regional primary school French inspector. These fifteen sessions serve as crucial experiential learning opportunities, allowing probationary teachers to confront authentic classroom challenges while developing their professional competencies.¹¹

Throughout this mentoring period, trainee teachers are introduced to essential professional documentation and procedures, including but not limited to: official curriculum documents, teaching guides, pedagogical files, grading registers, annual teaching plans, correspondence logs, term report cards, school projects, class projects, and various pedagogical resources used to design teaching and learning situations (Miloudi & al., 2016, p.71).

IN-SERVICE TRAINING (CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

In-service training represents a critical pillar in the ongoing qualitative enhancement of the educational system. It aims to support teachers throughout their professional careers and to adapt their skills to the evolving demands of their professional responsibilities. According to official recommendations, all teaching personnel are subject to continuous professional development throughout their careers.

This training serves multiple objectives (MEN, 2000, p.03):

- Address deficiencies stemming from initial training gaps and recruitment modalities through refresher and remedial sessions;
- Update teachers' academic and professional knowledge to align with ongoing developments in the field;
- Prepare teachers for systemic educational reforms and curricular innovations;
- Enhance the professional status of teaching through the acquisition of innovative knowledge and competencies.

MODALITIES OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Two primary modalities characterize in-service training for French language teachers, both designed to enhance professional adaptability and foster long-term autonomy.

PEDAGOGICAL HALF-DAYS AND FULL-DAY WORKSHOPS

According to ministerial directive No. 352 dated November 30, 2010, pedagogical half-days for primary school teachers are scheduled on Tuesday afternoons (a designated non-teaching period) or Saturdays to avoid disrupting regular classroom instruction. These sessions focus on improving and refining classroom practice. They typically begin with theoretical presentations addressing content and methodologies, designed to foster the acquisition of targeted competencies.

The workshops include practical sessions involving the detailed analysis of illustrated teaching-learning situations (demonstration lessons), with explicit links to the preceding theoretical content. Each workshop concludes with a synthesis session articulating actionable pedagogical recommendations intended for future application. These sessions are organized regularly according to training plans developed through systematic needs analyses.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS

Professional development seminars are organized on a contingent basis, responding to current advancements and emerging methodologies in the didactics of French as a Foreign Language (FLE). These may take the form of multi-day sessions conducted at regular intervals or more intensive short-term seminars.

According to Xavier Roegiers, the integrative design of these training sessions rests upon:

- Active teacher involvement in defining training priorities through systematic needs analysis and input from supervisory personnel;
- Competency-based training frameworks;

- Problem-based learning initiated through authentic cases or complex professional situations;
- The development of complex pedagogical products during or following training, serving as evidence of the competencies acquired.

KEY ACTORS IN IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The primary school French inspector plays a central role in in-service training but does not act in isolation. As both a training engineer and a trainer of trainers, the inspector must possess robust initial and ongoing professional training, practical expertise, and significant field experience. Through continuous pedagogical situation analysis, the inspector is responsible for adapting training initiatives to the specific needs of their educational district and aligning them with broader educational development objectives. The inspector is expected to diagnose professional deficiencies among teachers and implement targeted remedial strategies accordingly.¹²

SELF-DIRECTED TRAINING

Given the intellectual nature of their professional tasks, primary school French language teachers often engage in self-directed learning through informal channels such as browsing the internet, reading online editions of French-language newspapers, participating in discussions on social media platforms, listening to French radio broadcasts, and watching foreign-language television programs. These numerous activities contribute to a form of self-education that remains largely unrecognized by formal institutional frameworks. This self-directed learning, or autodidacticism, contributes to the continuous development of teachers' instructional capacities within the teaching-learning process.

This implicit modality of teacher training operates independently of institutional oversight and is driven exclusively by the teachers' personal initiative. It manifests in two subcategories:

INDIVIDUAL SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Online courses, distance education programs, digital learning platforms, and peer discussions provide flexible opportunities for teachers to engage in self-directed professional development. This individualized approach supports the continuous refinement of their pedagogical competencies.

COLLECTIVE SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

This modality resembles a peer tutoring system (teacher-to-teacher interactions) conducted outside of any formal institutional supervision, often within associations, unions, or professional societies. Participation in extracurricular or professional gatherings enables the exchange of pedagogical practices, dissemination of effective teaching strategies, and overall enhancement of teaching skills through collegial interaction. This collaborative approach fosters not only linguistic and educational exchanges but also contributes to building a dynamic community of practice among French language educators.

An ideal model of such training would address critical competencies required for the effective professional profile of primary school French language teachers. These include curriculum

design and assessment, contextualized analysis and implementation of learning situations, and management of heterogeneous classroom environments. Moreover, this training paradigm should emphasize the teacher's professional responsibility, adherence to ethical standards, and the dynamic relationship between educational institutions and their broader social, cultural, and economic contexts.

While these modes of self-directed learning may occur informally at home or in real-time on institutional premises, they have been complemented in recent years by alternative modalities necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Algerian legislation has adapted accordingly. Executive Decree No. 22-208 of June 5, 2022, which regulates study and training regimes for higher education degrees, formally recognizes distance education delivered online using information and communication technologies, both synchronously and asynchronously. This distance learning model may be supplemented by periodic in-person sessions. Furthermore, hybrid training, combining face-to-face instruction with remote learning, has also been formally promoted.

EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The following empirical considerations operationalize the theoretical framework of this study:

RESEARCH PROTOCOL

The study was conducted within the professional environment of primary school French language teachers across various schools in the Wilaya of El-Oued. The data collection period spanned the first trimester of the 2020/2021 academic year during professional training sessions organized by regional language inspectors. The dataset comprises 100 completed questionnaires retrieved from 135 administered forms.

RESEARCH POPULATION

To facilitate data analysis, a comprehensive analytical grid was applied to each questionnaire item. The survey instrument addressed multiple dimensions: initial training experiences at university entry; sociolinguistic and sociodidactic aspects of training; objectives of initial teacher education; connections between academic training and professional realities; self-directed learning culture; French language usage; didactic training; interdisciplinarity; classroom management; project-based pedagogy; analysis of professional practices; school-based internships; working conditions for future teachers; and involvement of stakeholders in the training process.

KEY FINDINGS AND PERSPECTIVES

The empirical findings reveal that many universities fail to establish negotiated training pathways that address both the initial circumstances and anticipated professional needs of trainee teachers. The synthesized results suggest that while university training may support some degree of academic achievement, it does not fully prepare teachers for the complex realities of professional

practice. An overwhelming majority (92%) of surveyed teachers believe that their initial training does not equip them to address real-world classroom challenges effectively.

The data also indicate that university education tends to prioritize academic research over pedagogical preparation, offering only minimal exposure to essential teaching competencies. As a result, there is an urgent need to establish a comprehensive pedagogical exit profile that ensures teacher readiness for professional practice.

The disconnect between university training and workplace demands is widely recognized by both surveyed teachers (85% affirming this gap) and educational theorists. This disjunction raises concerns about the capacity of initial teacher education programs to provide meaningful, transferable skills applicable to professional contexts. Roegiers (2001, p.14) emphasizes the importance of ensuring that acquired academic knowledge is rapidly and effectively mobilized within professional environments: « It has long been recognized in adult education that training outcomes must be transferable to work situations, given the practical demands of professional application. »

Feiman-Nemser, analyzing teacher education in the United States, also highlights the absence of an integrated system that connects various phases of teacher education into a coherent continuum (Shwille, 2007, p.30). A similar lack of articulation is observed within Algeria's teacher training structures. Shwille (2007: *ibid.*) further critiques conventional initial training programs for their fragmented nature: «The traditional initial training program consists of a sequence of disconnected theoretical courses and field experiences. Most induction programs lack a formal curriculum, and mentoring is highly individualized. Professional development consists of discrete, disconnected activities.»

The Algerian Ministry of National Education (MEN, 2014: 03) echoes this concern, acknowledging that university curricula often fail to meet the practical requirements of teaching across various educational levels.

A review of common curricula reveals a conspicuous absence of integrative pathways linking theoretical preparation with practical application. Additionally, surveyed teachers report that their limited exposure to native French-speaking environments negatively affects their linguistic proficiency, underscoring the need for international teaching internships. As Coste et al. (1997: 28) state: « During teacher training, stays abroad play a decisive role in reshaping perceptions, a dimension that must be integrated into the very design of training programs. » Similarly, Zarate (1993: 9) notes: « Few educational systems formally recognize the role of immersion stays in the country whose language is being taught as part of initial teacher education. »

French language proficiency is also shaped by the quality of discourse between instructors and trainees, both formally and informally. University educators play a pivotal role in orchestrating these exchanges, as Priou (2011: 17) emphasizes: «The instructor ensures the framework: objectives, time management, and quality of exchanges. They orchestrate dialogue, reformulate,

synthesize, problematize, reference typologies and theoretical frameworks, introduce new content when necessary, and guide the group toward actionable strategies. »

The findings further reveal that many teachers lack a culture of self-directed learning, which can be attributed to university assessment practices emphasizing knowledge reproduction over critical thinking and problem-solving. Consequently, these assessment practices may have long-term negative effects on both teacher and student performance.

A vast majority (95%) of respondents report insufficient training in key pedagogical areas such as didactics, interdisciplinarity, classroom management, project-based learning, active learning strategies, professional practice analysis, strategic planning, school-based internships, and observation of pedagogical and technological teaching situations. This deficiency hampers professional adaptation and diminishes teaching effectiveness.

The issue of working conditions for future French language teachers at the primary level remains inadequately addressed within university training, revealing a structural disconnect between higher education and the broader educational system. Coordinated collaboration between universities and education ministries is imperative to align teacher education with real-world demands.

Moreover, respondents emphasize the insufficient involvement of various academic experts (disciplinary specialists, sociolinguists, psychologists, sociodidacticians, and didacticians) in university-based teacher education. Expanding interdisciplinary collaboration through pedagogical workshops, scientific conferences, and joint curricular development could significantly enhance teacher preparation.

CONCLUSION

The observed heterogeneity in university qualifications leading to primary French teaching positions underscores the urgent need for the Algerian educational policy to move from diverse initial training models toward a unified, standardized framework, ideally involving the mandatory establishment of a National Reference Framework for Professional Competencies for primary teachers. This policy shift should enforce the creation of dedicated university tracks (such as specialized Master's programs) with strict admission criteria and mandate a robust, legally structured practicum component, overseen by national education authorities to ensure practical relevance and quality. Universities, as central platforms for professional development, must consequently reform their training practices, transitioning from theory-heavy instruction to a model of reflective and practical didactic action that utilizes simulated professional scenarios and emphasizes the specificities of FLE Didactics, all while co-constructing curricula with experienced field inspectors and teachers to guarantee the relevance and applicability of the training content and foster a sustainable culture of professional growth.

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Notes

¹ The respondents are graduates of the University of El-Oued (48), University of Batna (03), University of Béjaïa (03), University of Biskra (06), University of Tébessa (03), University of Tlemcen (01), University of Tiaret (01), University of Tizi-Ouzou (02), University of Algiers 2 (04), University of Sétif (03), University of Saïda (02), University of Skikda (02), University of Sidi Bel-Abbes (01), University of Annaba (04), University of Guelma (03), University of Constantine (02), University of Ouargla (09), University of Mascara (01), University of Souk Ahras (02).

² Throughout the article, quotations from French sources are translated into English by the author.

³ The social actors include teachers, educational staff, supervisory personnel, administrative staff, medico-social staff, counselors, psychologists, students, parents, local government representatives, etc. See M. Rispail, *Educational Actors, Sociodidactic Alphabet*.

⁴ According to the statistics from the Ministry of National Education (retrospective 1962/2000), in the 1999/2000 academic year, of the 170,478 primary school teachers, only 15% were high school graduates.

⁵ Law No. 08-04 of January 23, 2008, published in the Official Journal of the Algerian Republic, No. 04 on January 27, 2008.

⁶ Between 2011 and 2015, the Ministry of National Education recruited 10,869 French teachers across all levels; the majority were university graduates rather than graduates from the National School of Education (ENS).

⁷ The specialties are numerous; for example, French for Information and Communication (University of Saïda), French for Specific Purposes, and French for Preschool Education (University of Sidi Bel Abbes).

⁸ University training is governed by the Law on Higher Education Orientation No. 08-06 of February 23, 2008, which modifies and complements Law No. 99-05 of April 4, 1999.

⁹ Institute for Teacher Training and Improvement.

¹⁰ The ministerial correspondence No. 10/0.0.5/2015 of June 16, 2015, contains 180 hours of training, while the ministerial order No. 37/SSM/2011 of December 15, 2012, includes 140 hours.

¹¹ General Inspection of Pedagogy, Correspondence No. 240/11/IGP/2014 (undated).

¹² See the doctoral thesis by Mounir MILOUDI entitled *The Linguistic Practices of French Teachers in Primary Schools Graduates of the University of El-Oued*, defended on October 20, 2019, at the University of Boumerdès, supervised by Prof. Mourad BEKTACHE, pp.83-104.