

A Comparative Analysis of the Educational Curricula of Teaching English in Algerian Universities: Evaluating Impact on Learners’ Outcomes

Une Analyse Comparative des Programmes d’Enseignement de l’Anglais dans les Universités Algériennes : Evaluation de leur Impact sur les Résultats des Apprenants

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Abstract

The paper explores the educational reforms implemented by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education on the curricula of teaching English in Algerian universities the last 20 years and examines their impact on learners’ outcomes. Since the introduction of the LMD system in 2004, two major reforms were made to the curricula of teaching English, the first in 2004 and the second in 2022. Though both curricula sought to align more closely with the demands of the job market, they revealed major differences in terms of content, teaching approach and impact on students’ learning outcomes. While the first reform focused on implementing a learner-centred approach in teaching and promoting openness to other cultures, the second gave more importance to English language teaching and digital literacy skills. The paper attempts to reveal the convergences and divergences between the two curricula and trace their implications on the performance of learners through comparing areas such as modules, components of the curriculum, teaching modes, methodology, and assessment. The paper uses a mixed-methods approach. A qualitative document analysis is used to reveal the nuances of the two curricular approaches. Then, a semi-structured interview to university teachers is used to evaluate the implications of these approaches on the learning outcomes. The findings reveal that the curriculum of 2004 emphasized intercultural competence while the recent curriculum of 2022 prioritized linguistic and methodological competences and digital skills. The

paper suggests curriculum adjustment and updates, and pedagogical training for teachers to better cope with the needs of the job market and the changes occurring at a global scale.

Keywords: Curriculum- Learning Outcomes- LMD Reform- Teaching English.

Resumé

Cet article examine les réformes pédagogiques mises en œuvre par le Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur sur les programmes d'enseignement de l'Anglais dans les universités Algériennes au cours des vingt dernières années et examine leur impact sur les résultats des apprenants. Depuis l'introduction du système LMD en 2004, deux réformes majeures ont été apportées aux programmes d'enseignement de l'Anglais, la première en 2004 et la seconde en 2022. Bien que les deux programmes aient cherché à mieux aligner les cursus académiques sur les exigences du marché du travail, des différences majeures ont été révélées en termes de contenu, d'approche pédagogique et d'impact sur les résultats d'apprentissage des étudiants. Alors que la première réforme s'est concentrée sur la mise en œuvre d'une approche pédagogique centrée sur l'apprenant, la seconde a accordé plus d'importance à l'enseignement de l'anglais et aux compétences en littératie numérique. L'article tente de révéler les convergences et les divergences entre les deux programmes et de retracer leurs implications sur la performance des apprenants en comparant des domaines tels que les modules, les composantes du programme, les modes d'enseignement, la méthodologie et l'évaluation. L'article utilise une approche mixte. Une méthode d'analyse documentaire qualitative est utilisée pour révéler les nuances des deux approches curriculaires. Un entretien semi-directif avec des enseignants universitaires permet ensuite d'évaluer les implications de ces approches sur les résultats d'apprentissage. Les résultats révèlent que le programme de 2004 mettait l'accent sur la compétence interculturelle, tandis que le programme de 2022 privilégie les compétences linguistiques et méthodologiques. L'article suggère des ajustements et des mises à jour des programmes d'études, ainsi qu'une formation pédagogique pour les enseignants afin de mieux répondre aux besoins du marché du travail et aux changements qui se produisent à l'échelle mondiale.

Mots clés : Programme d'études - Résultats d'apprentissage - Réforme LMD - Enseignement de l'Anglais.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

The growing importance of English as a global language stimulated efforts to teach and learn it all around the world. Within this endeavour, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education initiated changes on the curriculum in order to promote English

as a second language (ESL). Since the implementation of the License-Master-Doctorate (LMD) system in Algeria in 2004, two major reforms were introduced to the curriculum of teaching English at Algerian universities (Melouk, 2011). The 2004 reform was applied for eighteen years before the recent one was introduced in 2022. Yet, what has been glaring is the prominent difference between the two curricula in terms of content, teaching modes and assessment. Consequently, some university teachers started voicing concerns about the impact of curriculum change on students' performance and their learning outcomes.

The paper thus, examines the curricula of 2004 and 2022 and evaluates their respective impact on students' learning outcomes, focusing on the areas of academic achievement, cultural awareness, and linguistic competence. Through a comparison of these curricula, the paper aims to provide insights into how different frameworks of educational policy can influence the success of students in a diverse and interconnected world. In the light of the findings, suggestions for a more comprehensive curriculum that bridges the gaps in the contemporary ones are made, with a view to promote their effective implementation.

2. Background of the Study:

Introducing the LMD system was the initial phase of reform initiated by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education. Bouchikhi and Zine (2017) state that since independence, higher education in Algeria went through four main stages. The first stage was a continuation of the colonial educational system which prevailed until 1971. In this stage, higher education was reserved to the colonial elite.

In 1971, the first reform was introduced to correspond to the needs of the

national economy. The Algerian government encouraged access to higher education for all citizens to promote equity and contribute to economic growth (Neddar, 2008). The reform was based on compulsory free education to ensure the match between the industrialization scheme and the policies in higher education. The third stage started in 1999. It was defined by Act No. 99-05 which emphasized the consolidation of the educational system under the Higher Education Guidance Act. Finally, the last and most significant reform was the implementation of the LMD system in 2004/2005. Higher education was accordingly divided into three stages; a Bachelor, a Master's degree, and a PhD.

The main objective of the LMD reform is openness to the world of globalization in response to the changing demands of the 21st century (Othmane and Bouyakoub, 2020). The system relies on semestrialization rather than years of training, educational units rather than modules, and credit capitalization which take into account the learners' validated modules in case of failure to obtain the required number of credits per semester. The LMD system also transferred the teacher's role. It is based on the principle that the teacher is not just a knowledge provider but rather a guide and a tutor. Rezig (2014) states that this new role of the teacher has undoubtedly paved the way for a learner-centered approach.

With the endeavour of enhancing the contribution of higher education to the country's economic development in an increasingly globalized and interdependent world, the teaching of foreign languages assumed an increasing importance. In the aftermath of independence, French was the medium of instruction in higher education institutions (Djekoun, 2010). Yet, it started losing its importance due to the policy of Arabization (1962-1999). The educational reform policy introduced by the Algerian government in 2003 further decreased the position of French in

Algerian universities. With the global spread of English, it became the lingua franca of the 21st century. Thus, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education took serious measures to reinforce its use as a medium of instruction (EMI) and scientific research.

The LMD reform in 2004 promoted the position of English as a first foreign language instead of French (Idri, 2005). English was often presented as a solution to the country's educational crises. Miliani (2000) states that "in a situation where the French language has lost much of its ground in the sociocultural and educational environments of the country; the introduction of English is being heralded as the magic solution to all possible ills-including economic, technological and education ones". According to Mami (2013), enhancing the position of English in Algerian higher education was the most significant accomplishment of the LMD reform. Yet, years after its implementation, the LMD system was subject to a reconceptualization that led to the amendment of some of its key principles (Assassi, 2019). The final step of reform within the system was the introduction of the new curriculum of 2022.

3. Literature Review:

The influence of curriculum change on learners' outcomes is over-emphasized in the literature. This literature review thus addresses two areas of relevance to the context of this study.

2-1- The curricula of Teaching English under the LMD System: Convergences and Divergences.

Generally speaking, the training course in Algerian higher education that aims at obtaining the bachelor's degree includes three (03) stages. Semesters 01 and 02 are

the phase of impregnation and adaptation to university life and discovery of the different offers of training. Teaching in this phase is common to all specialties. Semesters 03 and 04 are then the phase of deepening, consolidation of knowledge and progressive orientation towards a specialty. In this phase, 80% of the courses are common among all specialties of the same field and the other 20% is specific, depending on the chosen specialty. The last phase of specialization takes place in semesters 05 and 06. It allows the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the chosen specialty. In this phase, 20% of the courses are common among all specialties of the same field and the other 80% is specific, depending on the chosen specialty.

2-2- The Impact of Curricula on Learners' Outcomes:

As the curriculum of teaching English under the LMD reform was subject to amendment, it is significant in the context of this study to understand how curriculum change can impact students' performance. Homrich-Knieling (2023), Andrietti and Su (2016), and Choudhary (2023) agree that there are four key elements to be considered when evaluating learners' outcomes; contextualization of knowledge, practice and technique, critical thinking, and research and communication.

Curriculum is a foundational component of university training. Homrich-Knieling (2023) defines curriculum as not simply what is taught. He states that "curriculum is about learning more broadly, which includes student engagement, instructional strategies, cultural responsiveness, classroom community, and so much more". For Homrich-Knieling, curriculum can play a vital role in providing foreign language students with insights into perspectives and experiences of the cultures and civilizations of the target foreign language. Representation thus enhances cultural responsiveness. It accordingly contributes to achieve one of the

major objectives of the LMD system, which is openness to the globalized world.

Andrietti and Su (2016) confirm this conception. They affirm that “different curricula represent horizontal differentiation in learning modes and objectives, thus a curriculum change has distributional effects across students”. Choudhary (2023) also stresses that the dynamics surrounding curriculum change affect students’ experiences and their academic performance at different levels. She defines curriculum reform as “the deliberate adjustments made to the current framework of education in order to address new issues, encourage creativity, and meet the demands of a changing global society”. Adiwumi (2019) and Cardno (2018) state that these reforms can take different forms, such as incorporating new technologies, incorporating diverse viewpoints, and modifying the content and teaching methodologies. For Choudhary, the real test of these reforms’ effectiveness is the way they impact the learning outcomes of the students.

3- Research Methodology and Design:

3-1- Approach:

The study employs a concurrent mixed-method research design. To evaluate the impact of curriculum change on learners’ outcomes, the study uses document analysis to compare the educational curricula for teaching English in the period between 2004- 2022. This is considered as the most suitable data collection tool (Karim, and Xyton Zoker, 2022) because documents are the legislative basis for educational reform. Accordingly, “researchers can use document analysis methodology to get a deeper understanding of the nature of documents related to the perceived policy problems and the espoused intentions to resolve them”

(Kutsyuruba, 2017).

Qualitative data was also collected to measure the influence of this change on the performance of learners. Therefore, a semi-structured interview was conducted with university teachers to have insights on their evaluation of the results of curriculum change. This method has been selected because it provides a stronger understanding of the problem or question (Maraf, 2024). It also provides descriptive (i.e., document analysis) and numeric (i.e., interview) data that aim to answer the research questions.

3-2- Participants:

The participants were 20 university teachers affiliated to 08 universities. They were selected for a semi-structured interview. The initial criteria for selection were that they should be teachers of English in English departments in Algerian universities and that they have no less than four years teaching experience (to ensure that they taught using both the recent and the previous curriculum (i.e. before and after the reform). Teachers of English in other departments (not English departments) were discarded as they might lack the necessary knowledge of the curricula under study.

The twenty interviewed teachers (08 males and 12 females) were aged between 33 and 51. To guarantee the breadth of the study and generalizability of the findings, the participants were selected from 08 Algerian universities located in the north, south, east and west of the country. This aimed at ensuring the geographical representation of teachers from different regions in Algeria.

The teachers were selected using snow-ball sampling. Four teachers were contacted for the purpose of this study, and they were asked to recommend other teachers from their university of affiliation. To avoid the sampling bias that might be caused by snow-ball sampling (Kutsyuruba, 2017), the teachers who were

contacted first were asked not to reveal any information about the matter and objectives of the study beforehand. This aimed at making sure that the participants only share the required initial characteristics (being a teacher of English in an Algerian university and having the required work experience) but not similar views on language teaching policies.

After having the participants' consent, the interviews were conducted using video conferencing and audio-calls' applications (Zoom and WhatsApp) due to the geographical distance of most universities of affiliation. The participants' identities were kept anonymous. They were referred to in the data using hyphenated numbers.

3-3- Ethical Considerations:

The identity of all participants was kept anonymous to comply with research ethics. The approval to conduct the study was obtained from the University of Djilali Bounaama, Khemis Miliana. Besides, digital consent forms were signed by the participants before they took part in the study. They approved the publication of the data they provided.

3-4- Validity and Reliability:

The interviews of teachers were 25 to 30 minutes. The interviews were conducted in English as all interviewees were teachers of English. Answers were provided in English too. Thus, there was no need for translating the interview questions or answers. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Then, they were analyzed by reference to the themes of the study and its research interests.

4- Findings:

4-1- Document Analysis Findings:

To examine the perceived impact of curricular reform on the teaching of English in Algerian universities, the content of each curriculum was analyzed. The systematic procedure of reviewing and evaluating these documents aimed to achieve a better understanding of their similarities, differences and the prospective changes they aim to initiate. This was followed by selecting, appraising, and synthesizing data contained within them.

Pictures from (01-06) represent tables listing course structures of the syllabi of 2004 and 2022 for the following semesters: S1, S3, and S5. Semesters S2, S4 and S6 are not represented because they have similar contents with semesters S1, S3, and S5 respectively. The pictures also demonstrate the division of educational units for each semester and the credits and coefficients of each subject. Besides, they provide weekly class hours (lecture, practicals), the total hours for the semester, and the evaluation modes.

Crédits et coefficients revus										
Annexe : Programme des enseignements du socle commun de Licence (L1) Socle commun domaine : Lettres et Langues Etrangères										
Semestre 1										
Unités d'enseignements	Matières	Crédits	Coefficients	Volume horaire hebdomadaire			VBS (15 semaines)	Autre*	Mode d'évaluation	
	Intitulés			Cours	TD	TP			Contrôle Continu	Examen
UE Fondamentale Code : UEF 1.1 Crédits : 8 Coefficients : 4	Compréhension et expression écrite 1 ¹	4	2		3h00		45h00	55h00	50%	50%
	Compréhension et expression orale 1 ²	4	2		3h00		45h00	55h00	50%	50%
UE Fondamentale Code : UEF 1.1 Crédits : 8 Coefficients : 4	Grammaire de la langue d'étude 1	4	2		3h00		45h00	55h00	50%	50%
	Phonétique corrective et articulatoire 1	2	1		1h30		22h30	27h30	50%	50%
	Initiation à la linguistique 1 (concepts)	2	1		1h30		22h30	27h30	50%	50%
UE Fondamentale Code : UEF 1.1 Crédits : 4 Coefficients : 2	Initiation aux textes littéraires	2	1		1h30		22h30	27h30	50%	50%
	Culture (s)/ Civilisation(s) de la Langue 1	2	1		1h30		22h30	27h30	50%	50%
UE Méthodologique Code : UEM 1.1 Crédits : 6 Coefficients : 3	Techniques du travail universitaire 1	4	2		3h00		45h00	55h00	50%	50%
	Etude de textes 1	2	1		1h 30		22h30	27h30	50%	50%
UE Découverte Code : UED 1.1 Crédits : 2 Coefficients : 1	Sciences sociales et humaines 1.	2	1	1h30			22h30	2h30		100%
UE Transversale Code : UET 1.1 Crédits : 2 Coefficients : 1	Langue(s) étrangère(s) 1	2	1		1h30		22h30	2h30	50%	50%
Total semestre 1		30	15	1h30	21h00		337h30	362h30		

¹ Dans Les matières « Compréhension et expression écrite », « Compréhension et expression orale » et durant tous les semestres, le portfolio est demandé. Il est évalué par l'enseignant de la matière dans la note de TD.

² Dans Les matières « Compréhension et expression écrite », « Compréhension orale » et durant tous les semestres, le portfolio est demandé. Il est évalué par l'enseignant de la matière dans la note de TD.

*Travail complémentaire en consultation scientifique.

Figure 1. 2004 Curriculum (S1)

Annexe de l'arrêté n° 1146 du 13 DEC. 2022

Fixant le programme des enseignements en vue de l'obtention du diplôme de Licence dans les spécialités des filières du domaine « Lettres et Langues Etrangères »

Semestre 1

Unités d'enseignement	Intitulé des matières	Crédits	Coefficients	Volume horaire hebdomadaire			VHS (15 semaines)	Autre*	Mode d'évaluation	
				Cours	TD	TP			CC*	Examen
U E Fondamentale Code : UEF 1.1.1 Crédits : 8 Coefficients : 4	Compréhension et expression écrites 1	4	2	-	3h00	-	45h00	55h00	40%	60%
	Compréhension et expression orales 1	4	2	-	3h00	-	45h00	55h00	40%	60%
U E Fondamentale Code : UEF 1.1.2 Crédits : 8 Coefficients : 4	Grammaire de la langue d'étude 1	4	2	-	3h00	-	45h00	55h00	40%	60%
	Linguistique et phonétique 1	4	2	-	3h00	-	45h00	55h00	40%	60%
U E Fondamentale Code : UEF 1.1.3 Crédits : 2 Coefficients : 1	Etude de textes littéraires de la langue d'étude 1	2	1	-	1h30	-	22h30	27h30	40%	60%
U E Méthodologique Code : UEM 1.1 Crédits : 9 Coefficients : 5	Techniques du travail universitaire 1	4	2	-	3h00	-	45h00	55h00	40%	60%
	Lecture et étude de textes 1	4	2	-	3h00	-	45h00	55h00	100%	-
	TIC et e-Learning 1	1	1	-	1h00	-	15h00	10h00	100%	-
U E Découverte Code : UED 1.1 Crédits : 2 Coefficients : 2	Civilisations de la langue d'étude 1	2	2	1h30	1h30	-	45h00	5h00	40%	60%
U E Transversale Code : UET 1.1 Crédits : 1 Coefficients : 1	Langue(s) étrangère(s) I	1	1	-	1h30	-	22h30	2h30	100%	-
Total Semestre 1		30	17	1h30	23h30	-	375h00	375h00		

Autre* = Travail complémentaire en consultation semestrielle ; CC* = Contrôle continu.

Figure 2. 2022 Curriculum (S1)

4-1-1- Course Structure and Content:

In terms of structure, both courses are divided into five categories: Fundamental Units (UEF), Methodological Units (UEM), Discovery Units (UED), and Transversal Units (UET). Yet, in terms of subjects, in the curriculum of 2022, the focus is on basic language skills such as written and oral comprehension, grammar, phonetics, and introduction to linguistics while the 2004 curriculum emphasized cultural and civilization studies. Practical courses like university work techniques and textual studies are also emphasized in the new curriculum. Civilization is part of the fundamental unit in the 2004 curriculum while Social sciences and foreign languages are part of the discovery and transversal units. In the 2022 curriculum, Civilization is included in the discovery unit. It is also noticeable that ICTs and e-learning substitutes Social sciences in the new curriculum.

Furthermore, Entrepreneurship is introduced in the transversal unit in S5, while discovery units focus on translation and foreign languages. The 2022 curriculum reveals that some subjects overlap in content like academic writing, research methodology and textual studies. The 2022 curriculum is credited for the inclusion of courses like ICTs and e-learning (S1 and S2) and Digital literacy (S 3 and S4) that were not explicitly mentioned in the 2004 curriculum.

This content comparison reveals that the 2022 curriculum focuses on foundational skills while the 2004 curriculum emphasized specialization and practical application. In addition, the recent curriculum prioritizes basic language acquisition, grammar, and introductory cultural studies while the previous one gave more importance to literary analysis, linguistic theories, didactics, and research skills. Thus, the focus in the 2022 curriculum is on learning the language and acquiring the necessary research skills while the 2004 one focused on promoting cultural awareness and openness to the literature and civilizations of English-speaking countries.

4-1-2- Credit Distribution:

Credits and coefficients vary across categories. The total number of credits in each semester for both courses is 30. Yet, the credits are distributed differently. The courses of the six semesters in each curriculum include similar structure with Fundamental Units, Methodological Units, Discovery Units, and Transversal Units. The pictures reveal that some minor changes were made in how credits are allocated. For instance, the highest credits in the 2004 curriculum were attributed to the subjects of Grammar, Oral Expression, Academic Writing and Techniques of University Work. Yet, in the 2022 curriculum, two other subjects were added to the list of subjects with the highest credits; Textual Studies and Linguistics and Phonetics. Besides, the 2022 curriculum reveals that the credits of two fundamental subjects were lowered; Literature and civilization had a credit of 02 instead of 04.

This reflects updates to course emphasis. Accordingly, while the total credits remain the same, the newer curriculum reflects a slight redistribution of credits. This indicates refined focus areas.

4-1-3- Evaluation Modes:

Both curricula rely on continuous assessment and exams as the main modes of evaluation. However, the importance given to each of the two modes varies. For the curriculum of 2004, evaluation is split into 50% for continuous assessment and 50% for exams in most courses, except Human and Social Sciences course which is evaluated 100% through exams. As to the curriculum of 2022, evaluation is often weighted 40% continuous assessment and 60% exams, with some courses assessed entirely through continuous assessment like textual studies and ICTs. Thus, evaluation is balanced for the 2004 curriculum while it leans slightly toward exams (60%) in most courses, with more focus on independent research and projects for the 2022 curriculum.

4-2- Interview Findings:

The interview revealed data related to two main headings: the similarities and differences between the curriculum of 2004 and that of 2022, and the attitudes and perceptions of teachers regarding their application. The study results can be categorized based on the key themes raised in the interviews:

4-2-1- Areas of curriculum change:

Teachers reported an increased focus on methodological subjects and practical skills in the 2022 curriculum. Teacher-01 said: "I noticed the heavy load of technology-related subjects in the recent English program. I believe this would create a skill gap in our students. They are students of English after all; not students of computer sciences".

Sixteen teachers agreed that cultural subjects like literature and civilization are given less importance in the recent curriculum. They revealed nuanced perspectives about this change. Teacher-14 states: "I miss teaching literature in depth. It helped

my students understand the world better than just focusing on methodology and technology skills." Teacher-03 expressed concerns about the lack of cultural depth and critical thinking caused by neglecting subjects like literature and civilization. "I am afraid students will not be able to understand the contemporary cultural issues related to life in a globalized world".

As to the introduction of entrepreneurship in third year curriculum, the great majority of participants said that they appreciated it, finding the subject relevant to real-world applications and career preparation. Teachers however expressed concerns about the availability of experienced teachers who have the required knowledge and experience in the field of entrepreneurship to take the subject in charge. Seventeen teachers said that it is high time the Ministry of Higher Education provided trainings for teachers to enable them to teach entrepreneurship in a way that helps learners become better future entrepreneurs.

4-2-2- Evaluation and assessment:

Nine teachers stated that the focus on structured evaluation through exams provided clearer performance metrics and motivated students to prepare systematically. Teacher-06 said that "exams offer a more standardized measure of performance. This encourages learners to prepare more for their exams, tests their true understanding, and fosters a sense of accountability". Seven teachers disagreed with this perception, stating that the focus on continuous assessment rather than exams helped students engage better in their courses.

Teacher-18 mentioned that "students felt more enthusiastic preparing oral presentations and participating in class discussion. The project-based assessment was a relief from the burden of exams and the anxiety they caused. Leaning towards exams in evaluation takes the Algerian university back to an out-dated assessment system". Four other teachers however said that they cannot decide yet on whether project-based assessment was fruitful or not. They said that a clear-cut evaluation of

the change in the modes of assessment needs more time to be made, claiming that it is too early to try to predict the long term consequences of this policy.

4-2-3- Teaching Modes:

Twelve participants stated that students did not express any difficulty adapting to the online teaching mode, while six teachers mentioned that they noticed that some of their students struggled with the online teaching tools, especially those with limited digital literacy prior to the change. Teacher -09 said “my students felt happy with the new focus on online learning. They believed that this aligns with the international trend in teaching and learning and creates more learning opportunities for them. In addition, they liked the fact that they do not need to attend regularly for all subjects, this saved them more time and efforts”.

Teacher-03 however, expressed a different perception saying: “Students from traditional or underprivileged backgrounds struggled to adapt to the intensive use of ICTs in learning. They expressed concerns about the need to learn about ICTs and to focus on their subject matter simultaneously. This may affect their performance and slow their progress”. Two other teachers noted that this focus on ICTs will be out-dated quickly and called for continuous curriculum updates.

4-2-4- Impact on learners’ performance:

The participants reported that the 2022 curriculum had a negative impact on the performance of literature and civilization enthusiasts. They mentioned that this category of students feels disengaged because of the reduced focus on cultural subjects, which they found more intellectually stimulating than technical and methodological subjects. Fourteen participants expressed serious concerns about the future of the field of cultural studies, which constitutes a significant axe of foreign language studies in Algeria. Teacher-05 exclaimed: “I wonder why the emphasis on the aesthetic and humanistic dimension was drastically reduced. I am afraid this would have negative long-term consequences on the students’ post-graduation options and career choices”.

Besides, the participants stated that the increasing emphasis on exams created stress for many students and led to performance anxiety. Teacher-01 said that students no longer give the same importance to project works and oral presentations as they used to do. "They know that it is the final examination's mark that makes all the difference in their average. So, they prefer to focus more on preparing for exams".

5- Discussion:

The findings of the comparative document analysis revealed that both curricula share a similar focus on the basic language skills such as oral and written expression and reading comprehension. However, the recent curriculum introduces new subjects such as ICTs, e-learning and digital literacy. This reflects the increasing importance of digitalization and the shift towards integrating technology in education. Entrepreneurship is also introduced in semesters 05 and 06. This aligns with the governments' efforts to promote start-ups in Algerian universities and encourage the recently graduated students to start their own business projects and contribute the country's economic growth. The 2022 curriculum also reduced the importance of subjects related to cultural studies such as literature and civilization. This might go against the foundational principles of the LMD system which emphasize intercultural communication and openness to the global world.

The semi-structured interview findings revealed the existence of a controversy over the usefulness of the reform and its long-term implications. Most of the study participants agreed that the shift away from cultural subjects resulted in a perceived loss of critical thinking, cultural curiosity and intellectual depth. This, in its turn affected the students' holistic understanding of English.

The study found out that satisfaction with curriculum content is still hard to reach. While some teachers appreciated the practical and methodological orientation of the 2022 curriculum, which they believed was more aligned with the needs and trends of job market; others are still reluctant towards it. They claim that

it emphasizes mechanical problem-solving over creativity. Most participants agreed that the introduction of new subjects such as ICTs and Entrepreneurial subjects promoted the development of soft skills such as problem-solving and self-reliance. Yet, they expressed concerns over the overall orientation towards emphasizing the practical and methodological skills more than the cultural and intellectual components of language study. Teachers voiced concerns about the initial performance of the students with limited prior exposure to digital tools. They claimed that balancing the theoretical and practical sides was necessary to give more chances to the students who were more accustomed to traditional literature-focused programs.

The study results show that some teachers asserted that the exam-based approach resulted in limited opportunities for creativity and students' engagement. They preferred project-based or open-ended assessment as this makes students more motivated and engaged in the coursework. Yet, no agreement between participants could be reached over this as some other teachers still believe that exam-oriented evaluation is more accountable.

The findings also revealed that curriculum change might have a positive impact on students' job readiness, though some participants have noted challenges in traditional academic or cultural professions and post-graduation options. The inclusion of e-learning and ICT subjects was viewed as a timely response to technological advancements in education and a motivating factor for the spread of online learning. Most participants believed that this transition did not suit all students. Those who had prior exposure to the subject or received institutional support adapted better to the change. Others faced transition difficulties and adaptation challenges due to the lack of institutional support.

6- CONCLUSION

The paper examined the educational reforms implemented by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education on the curricula of teaching English in the last 20 years and

evaluated their impact on learners' outcomes. Using a mixed-method approach that relied on document analysis and a semi-structured interview, the paper revealed the convergences and divergences between the two curricula and their implications on the performance of learners through comparing areas such as modules, components of the curriculum, teaching modes, methodology, and assessment.

The paper concluded that through the reforms in the curricula of teaching English in Algerian universities, Ministry of Higher Education in Algeria has sought to align academic curricula more closely with the demands of the job market. Thus, the recent curriculum of 2022 emphasized practical training and digital literacy skills at the expense of cultural subjects. This allowed students to gain a broader skill set while negatively affecting their cultural awareness. To reap the fruits of incorporating practical and digital skills into the curriculum without neglecting cultural understanding and critical thinking skills, efforts should be made to adopt a curriculum that creates a balance between the former and the latter. Teacher training programs can also offer more opportunities for both teachers and learners to cope with the shift. Efforts should also be made to upgrade the digital infrastructure of universities to support these changes and make online learning accessible for all students.

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