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The Relationship between Skills Development, Language Proficiency, and Employability in Algeria: Insights from the British Council

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Abstract :

This study investigates the relationship between skills development, English language proficiency, and employability in Algeria, focusing on initiatives supported by the British Council. The objective is to assess how language and employability programmes influence the preparedness of Algerian students and young professionals for the labour market. A qualitative research design was adopted, using semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders. The data were analysed thematically using NVivo software to ensure systematic coding and interpretation. Findings indicate that English proficiency significantly enhances access to employment opportunities, while gaps persist in transversal skills such as communication and critical thinking. British Council initiatives are perceived as beneficial in improving both language competence and employability awareness, although structural and institutional constraints limit their broader impact. The study highlights the need for stronger alignment between educational provision and labour market demands in Algeria.

Keywords: skills development, language proficiency, employability, human capital development, British Council initiatives, Algeria.

JEL Classification Codes: I25, J24, J23, O15

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1. Introduction:

The importance of English language proficiency in today's global economy is widely acknowledged. It is the primary language of countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Additionally, English serves as a second language in numerous multilingual societies, including India, Singapore, and the Philippines. In Africa, it functions as an official language in Liberia, Nigeria, and South Africa; however, it is often spoken as a foreign language and acts as a common denominator among diverse nationalities during international travel and business interactions.

As Reilly (2012) notes, approximately 1.5 billion people worldwide speak English; about 375 million as their first language, another 375 million as a second language, and the remaining 750 million as a foreign language (Sharma & El Namaki, 2020, p. 65.).

This widespread use underscores English's role as a global lingua franca. In today's competitive labour market, strong communication skills in English are crucial; they significantly influence employment opportunities, earnings, and organisational productivity. Conversely, limited proficiency can impede access to better jobs, leading to earnings losses.

Within this global context, understanding the relationship between language skills and employability, particularly in developing countries like Algeria, is essential. Algeria faces a considerable challenge in bridging the gap between education and employment, especially among its youth. As the country's job market evolves rapidly, both technical skills and effective communication abilities have become increasingly vital. English proficiency has emerged as a key factor in accessing global opportunities and enhancing career prospects.

Building on the above, this study focuses on the following research question:

What are the key factors influencing the effectiveness of skills development initiatives and language proficiency programs in improving the employability of Algerian youth?

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What specific skills are deemed critical for employability in the Algerian job market according to industry stakeholders and educators?
2. How does the British Council support skills development and English language proficiency among students and young professionals in Algeria?
3. What factors contribute to the effectiveness of successful skills development and language training programs in the country?
4. What challenges are encountered in implementing skills development and language initiatives, and what strategies have been employed to overcome these challenges?
5. How do British Council programs impact the employability and job readiness of graduates?
6. In what ways does collaboration between the British Council and local educational institutions enhance skills development and language proficiency?

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between skills development, English language proficiency, and employability in Algeria, with a particular focus on initiatives led by the British Council. In addition to this overarching aim, the study pursues several specific objectives, which are outlined as follows:

- To identify the specific skills considered most critical for employability in the Algerian job market by industry stakeholders and educators.

- To evaluate the role of the British Council in supporting skills development and English language proficiency among students and young professionals in Algeria.
- To analyse the effectiveness of British Council-supported skills development and language training programmes, with attention to key factors that contribute to their success.
- To explore the main challenges encountered in the design and implementation of skills development and language initiatives, and the strategies used to address these challenges.
- To assess the impact of British Council programmes on graduates' employability and their readiness to enter the job market.
- To investigate how collaboration between the British Council and local educational institutions enhances skills development and English language proficiency.

2. Review of the Literature

The connection between skills development, language proficiency, and employability is a crucial area of study, especially in the context of Algeria's youth unemployment challenge. Effective educational frameworks need to provide not only relevant technical skills but also strong language abilities, particularly in English, to enhance job prospects. Existing literature emphasizes the importance of language proficiency in securing employment and highlights the positive impact of targeted skills development programs on graduates' employability.

2.1. Define skills development

Skills, knowledge, and abilities are related concepts, although each has its own distinct meaning. A skill can be understood as the practical use of acquired knowledge or expertise to successfully perform a particular task. It involves the ability to carry out learned actions with accuracy, efficiency, and consistency. Unlike abstract knowledge, skills are observable and can be evaluated through performance. For instance, playing a musical instrument represents a clear example of a skill. The development of such abilities typically relies on continuous practice and accumulated experience (Young & Redding, 2025).Skill development refers to the process through which individuals acquire and enhance the abilities required to perform specific tasks effectively. This process typically involves continuous learning, practical training, and sustained effort. Developing strong skills is essential not only for personal and professional growth but also for career advancement and effective collaboration within teams (Kumar, 2024, p. 135.). Skill development refers to the continuous process through which individuals acquire and enhance the abilities needed to perform tasks effectively in academic, professional, or vocational contexts. It involves learning, practice, and practical experience that help individuals improve their competencies and adapt to workplace demands. Through this process, individuals develop the confidence and capabilities necessary to participate productively in society and the labour market (Narasimhan, 2024).

Development provide a competitive edge to a company by addressing performance shortcomings, increasing employee retention, reducing accidents, minimizing waste , and fulfilling future workforce requirements. Human Resource Management (Singh, 2024, p. 47.).

2.2. From hard skills to soft skills: A comprehensive approach to skill development

Employers today seek a balance between hard and soft skills in new employees. While hard skills such as technical expertise and knowledge of recruitment or training are important for job performance, they are no longer sufficient on their own. Increasingly, soft skills like communication, teamwork, adaptability, and professionalism are considered essential. They play a key role in effective interaction, emotional intelligence, and long-term career development. Soft skills also support collaboration and help individuals adapt to workplace challenges. For this reason, their development should begin during the educational stage to better prepare students for the labour market and ensure continuous professional growth. (Sharma A. , 2024, p. 305.) Higher education today is facing two interconnected challenges. The first is a noticeable gap in skills

development, especially when it comes to soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and honesty. Although employers consistently highlight the importance of these skills, many academic programs still struggle to develop them effectively. The second challenge concerns assessment practices. With the rise of advanced tools like large language models, including ChatGPT, traditional forms of evaluation have become less reliable, as students can generate well-structured answers without necessarily demonstrating real understanding. These challenges are not separate; rather, they can be addressed together. One possible approach is to develop a more personalized and communication-focused learning environment that integrates soft skills into the core of academic programs, including those that are highly technical. Such an approach can also help redesign assessment methods by shifting toward feedback-based systems that better reflect students' actual abilities. A key issue underlying this situation is the absence of a clear and structured framework for soft skills. Unlike technical skills, which are well-defined and measurable, soft skills remain difficult to categorize and assess. This makes it harder for educators to teach and evaluate them effectively. At the same time, the progress made in designing tools for assessing technical skills such as coding or data processing could provide useful insights for developing similar approaches to soft skills in the future (Moldoveanu, 2024, p. 129.).

2.3. Language proficiency

Language proficiency generally refers to a person's ability to use a language effectively across different skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It reflects how well an individual can understand and communicate in various situations, and it is often measured through levels ranging from beginner to advanced or through standardized tests.

Language can also be viewed as a natural ability that develops over time. While learning involves cognitive understanding, the real value of language appears in its practical use. According to Brown (2000), language skills are commonly divided into two main categories: productive (or active) skills, which include speaking and writing, and receptive (or passive) skills, which involve listening and reading. Together, these four skills form the basis of language proficiency. For this reason, effective teaching requires a balanced focus on all four skills. When educators integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing in their teaching strategies, they create better opportunities for students to improve their language abilities. When these elements are well aligned, the learning process becomes more engaging and meaningful, helping students reach their full potential (Farid, Winter 2023, pp. 254-255.).

2.4. Skills development through language proficiency

The development of language skills is intrinsically connected to broader skills development initiatives. Studies show that proficiency in English not only aids in job attainment but also contributes to continuous professional development. The English language provides the linguistic infrastructure necessary for globalization. Proficiency in English is considered critical for human capital development. It is often argued that proficiency in English increases individuals' employability due to the growing demand for the language in the context of rising global trade and commerce (Ali, Hamid, & Hardy , 2023, p. 1163.).

The existing literature underscores the importance of integrating English language learning and communication skills training within higher education curricula. Graduates equipped with proficient English language skills and strong communication abilities are better positioned to meet employer expectations and succeed in the competitive job market (Ting, Marzuki, Chuah, Misieng, & Jerome, 2017, pp. 315-316.).

Research argues that there is a strong correlation between English proficiency and economic and social development. Proficiency in English is viewed as a form of human capital that can be marketed to enhance employability. This connection has prompted international agencies to invest in ELT to alleviate poverty and support broader development goals based on human capital theory,

which posits that investment in skills, including communication skills in English, can effectively combat poverty (Ali, Hamid, & Hardy , 2023, pp. 1164-1165).

There is a clear demand for embedding key employability skills into educational offerings. Communication skills and the ability to work collaboratively are crucial components of employability and should be emphasized in language skill development within higher education curricula (Alharahsheh, 2020, p. 53.).

Academics today are increasingly expected to prepare students for a labour market where English proficiency is no longer optional but essential. This reality has led universities to design more specialized courses and curricula that emphasize language skills alongside academic knowledge. In developing countries such as Pakistan, and similarly in Algeria, English plays a key role in social mobility, often serving as a gateway to better job opportunities and higher-status positions. As a result, proficiency in English is closely linked to employability. It allows individuals to access global networks, engage with modern technologies, travel more easily, and continue developing their knowledge. In sectors such as tourism and hospitality, for example, English is particularly important for effective communication and service delivery, which has led to calls for more tailored teaching materials that reflect real workplace needs. Similarly, research in areas like the hotel industry and human resource management confirms that English language skills are essential for a smooth transition into the workforce. Despite this, many graduates still face difficulties due to weak communication skills in English, which can limit their employment prospects, especially in the private sector. The motivation to learn English is often driven by both personal and professional goals. Many learners see it as a way to integrate into the global community and present themselves more confidently, which creates both internal and external incentives to improve their language proficiency (Abbas , Khan Rana, Bashir , & Bhatti , 2021, p. 1072.).

2. 5. Language Proficiency and Employability

Globalization has played a major role in the widespread use of English, positioning it as the dominant language worldwide. Today, English functions as a global lingua franca, used for communication across different countries and cultures. It is also adopted as an official language in many nations and serves as the primary medium of instruction in higher education. Within English studies, several concepts have been developed to describe this global role. These include English as a Lingua Franca (Jenkins, 2007), as well as English as an International Language and World Englishes (Sharifian , 2009). Together, these perspectives highlight the expanding influence of English in a globalized world, particularly in areas such as education, communication, and employment opportunities (Abbas , Khan Rana, Bashir , & Bhatti , 2021, p. 1071). A recurring theme in the literature on language and employability is the importance of English. Many studies show that English proficiency plays a key role in improving employment opportunities in both local and international labour markets. In some contexts, English is not only seen as a global language but also as a resource that can support national development. Several studies from different countries support this view. Gribble et al. (2015) highlight the importance of English for international business students in Australia. Gokuladas (2011) shows that English proficiency is an important factor in the employability of engineering graduates in India. Thang and Wongsurawat (2016) reach a similar conclusion for IT graduates in Vietnam. In Malaysia, Pillai et al. (2012) note that improving English skills remains necessary, even though many graduates appear generally prepared for the job market. In addition to improving access to jobs, English also helps develop communication skills that are essential in modern workplaces. Overall, proficiency in English, and in foreign languages more generally, increases graduates' chances of finding employment not only in local labour markets but also in wider regional and international contexts (Tran , Ngo, Nguyen, & Le, 2022, p. 72.).

Research findings show that generic employability skills, often communicated through English, are highly valued by employers. A study conducted in Malaysia further indicates that English language proficiency is an important factor during the recruitment process. Employers not only assess candidates' language abilities when hiring but also provide in-house training to enhance

these skills, highlighting the practical and multifaceted value of English in the workplace (Wiseman , 2024, pp. 05-06.). Several studies highlight the important role of English proficiency in improving employment prospects and supporting skills development. English is increasingly seen as a practical skill that helps individuals deal with problem-solving and critical thinking in fast-changing work environments. In developing countries, including Algeria, this trend is becoming more visible. Although English is widely recognized as important, proficiency levels differ, and this often affects access to better job opportunities and income levels. Research suggests that limited English skills can restrict individuals' chances of obtaining well-paid positions, which may contribute to ongoing economic inequalities (Sharma & El Namaki, 2020). A key factor contributing to graduate unemployment in Malaysia is the perceived lack of English proficiency and communication skills. It is important, however, to distinguish between these two, as employers do not always value them equally. Evidence suggests that candidates with moderate English proficiency may still be considered employable if they demonstrate strong communication abilities. Nevertheless, for positions that require frequent interaction in English, such as customer service or marketing, a higher level of language proficiency becomes essential. In today's globalized business environment, English functions as a common language of communication. As a result, employers often assess candidates' language abilities during recruitment processes, particularly in interviews. Even when individuals possess strong knowledge or technical skills, limited English proficiency can hinder their ability to express ideas effectively, which may negatively affect their career progression. This reinforces the view that improving English proficiency remains an important factor in enhancing employability (Ting, Marzuki, Chuah, Misieng, & Jerome, 2017, pp. 315-316). Thus, understanding how skills development influences language proficiency and employability in Algeria is vital for designing effective policies and educational programs.

2. 6. Language Proficiency and Employability in the Algerian Context

Algerian youth are increasingly expected to adapt to the changing demands of the global job market, where language proficiency has become an important requirement. There is a clear mismatch between the skills graduates possess and what employers actually need. To remain competitive, it is no longer enough to rely only on technical knowledge; workers are also expected to have strong soft skills and a good command of foreign languages, particularly English and French, which are essential for communication in international contexts. At the same time, current educational systems, especially at the university level, do not always connect language learning with real job market needs or entrepreneurial skills. This gap makes it more difficult for graduates to find suitable employment, even though large numbers of young people enter the labour market each year. As a result, unemployment among Algerian youth remains closely linked to this disconnect between education and employment requirements. Addressing this issue requires giving more attention to language development alongside soft skills. Strong communication abilities, both in local and foreign languages, can improve employability, support better workplace interaction, and create access to a wider range of career opportunities. More broadly, improving language skills should be part of a wider effort to better align education with labour market expectations (Bouallaga & Grine, 2022, p. 1306.).

In Algeria, improving the alignment between education and labour market needs remains a key challenge. Studies show that there is a persistent mismatch between the skills acquired by graduates and those required by employers, which contributes significantly to unemployment and limits economic productivity (Kouider El Ouahed, Daoud, & Pepple, 2025, p. 140). This issue is particularly important in a context where youth unemployment remains high, reaching around 30% in recent years (European Training Foundation, 2022, p. 1.). Addressing this gap requires strengthening both technical and soft skills, including language proficiency, to better prepare graduates for evolving job market demands.

3. Methods and Materials

This study employed a qualitative research design to examine the relationship between skills development, language proficiency, and employability within the context of British Council programmes in Algeria. A qualitative approach was adopted to explore participants' experiences and perceptions of how language learning and professional skills training contribute to employability outcomes.

The study involved four participants selected through purposive sampling to ensure direct relevance to the research objectives. The sample consisted of a Sales Customer Service Manager, a Customer Service Staff member, and two teachers. All participants had direct experience with English language instruction and professional skills development within the British Council context, enabling them to provide informed insights into the relationship between skills acquisition, language proficiency, and employability.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted during August 2025. The interview guide was organised into four main themes: skills development, language proficiency, employability, and collaboration and impact. The questions were designed to explore participants' experiences across these areas.

The data were analysed using thematic analysis supported by NVivo15 software. An iterative coding process resulted in the identification of four overarching themes:

1. Skills Development;
2. Language Proficiency;
3. Employability;
4. Collaboration and Impact.

4. Results and discussion

This section outlines the findings emerging from the qualitative analysis of four semi-structured interviews. To develop a well-rounded interpretation of the data, multiple qualitative analysis approaches were applied using NVivo software. The following discussion presents the key insights drawn from this process.

4.1. Lexical approach

To obtain an initial overview of the dominant lexical patterns in the interviews, a lexical frequency analysis was conducted using Nvivo. The resulting word cloud provides a visual representation (figure 1) of the most frequently lexical words.

Fig.1. word cloud



Source: Nvivo software outputs.

The most frequently used terms reflected by their size within the corpus include *language, English, skills, programs, employability, students, training,* and *proficiency*.

The prominence of terms such as *English, skills, employability, and proficiency* suggests a strong instrumental orientation toward language learning, emphasizing its role in professional development and labour market integration. The recurrence of *training, programs,* and *institutions* further indicates an institutional framing of language acquisition. Additionally, references to *British* and *communication* point to both linguistic and cultural dimensions embedded within participants' discourse.

4.2. Linguistic approach

To examine the degree of similarity across the interviews, an intersource comparison was conducted in Nvivo. Using Pearson correlation coefficients, we assessed how closely each pair of interviews resembled one another in terms of word similarity. Coefficients closer to 1 indicate stronger similarity, whereas lower values indicate greater divergence. The resulting inter-interviews correlation coefficients are presented in Table 1.

Table1. Pearson correlation coefficients between interviews

Source A	Source B	Pearson correlation coefficient
Interview 3	Interview 2	0.906218
Interview 2	Interview 1	0.893747
Interview 3	Interview 1	0.892727
Interview 4	Interview 2	0.812886
Interview 4	Interview 3	0.809746
Interview 4	Interview 1	0.798221

Source: By authors based on Nvivo software outputs

The interviews demonstrated consistently high positive correlations, with coefficients ranging from r = 0.798 to r = 0.906 (Table 1), indicating strong word similarity across sources. The highest correlation was observed between Interview 3 and Interview 2 (r = 0.906), suggesting that these two interviews shared the most comparable distribution of coded themes. By contrast, the lowest correlation occurred between Interview 4 and Interview 1 (r = 0.798), indicating relatively greater (though still limited) variation in thematic emphasis between those interviews.

Taken together, the uniformly high correlations suggest substantial convergence in the coded content across participants which are consistent with a coherent thematic structure in the dataset and may indicate that the major themes were expressed in broadly similar ways across interviews.

4.3. Thematic analysis

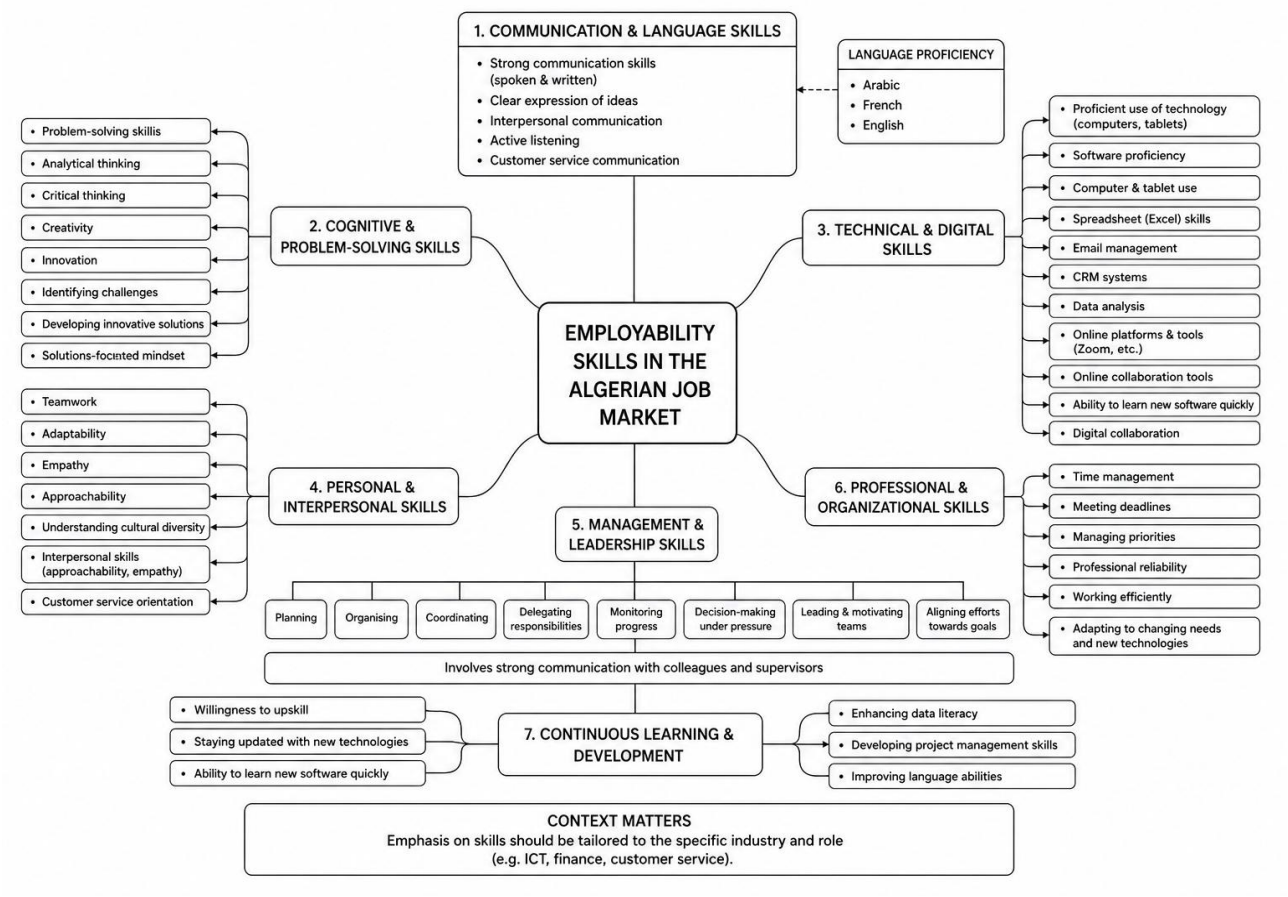
The thematic analysis identifies four interrelated themes: skills development, language proficiency, employability, and collaboration and impact. The following analysis synthesizes the thematic patterns which resumes the main ways that participants think the British Council has helped improve workforce preparedness in Algeria, by highlighting areas of convergence and divergence between participants.

Theme 1. Skills development

In the Algerian job market, several key skills are crucial for employability. Across participants, there is clear convergence around key soft skills. Communication, for instance, is consistently emphasised, with Participant 1 referring to the importance of “clear expression of ideas”, while Participant 2 highlights communication “in Arabic, French, and English”. Similarly, problem-solving appears as a central competence, described by Participant 1 as the ability to “identify challenges and develop innovative solutions”, and by Participant 2 as the capacity to “effectively address customer issues”. Adaptability and interpersonal skills are also recurrent, with Participant 2 mentioning “adjusting to new technologies and changing needs” and emphasising qualities such as “empathy” and “approachability”. At the same time, several participants stress the growing importance of digital literacy. Participant 3, for example, refers to “software applications, data analysis, and online collaboration tools”, while Participant 4 highlights the “proficient use of technology” and the ability to “learn new software quickly”, reflecting the evolving demands of a technology-driven work environment. In addition, Participant 4 expands the framework by emphasising management and leadership skills such as planning, coordinating, and decision-making under pressure. The inclusion of continuous learning (expressed through ideas such as “willingness to up skill” and “staying updated with new technologies”) further underlines the dynamic nature of employability.

Fig.2. Employability skills in the Algerian job market

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Source: by authors based on participants' answers.

This figure highlights the multidimensional nature of employability in the Algerian job market. It shows that employability is not limited to a single type of skill, but rather emerges from the interaction between communication, cognitive, technical, interpersonal, and organisational competencies.

After exploring participants' general perceptions of the most important skills in the Algerian job market, the analysis turns to how the organisation supports skills development in Algeria. The evaluation highlights how the British Council supports skills development and English proficiency among young people in Algeria through a range of initiatives. Participant 1 emphasises the role of language and communication programmes, noting that they help learners "express themselves confidently in various contexts", which contributes to both personal and professional development. Participant 2 highlights broader opportunities such as training courses and scholarships, including the chance to "study in the UK", as well as workshops that build leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills. Participant 3 focuses on institutional collaboration and curriculum development, explaining efforts to "align curricula with industry needs" and strengthen practical skills for employability. Finally, Participant 4 stresses teacher development, particularly training programmes that improve pedagogy and promote inclusive education, ensuring that "no student is left behind". In general, these initiatives collectively enhance language competence and employability, positioning the British Council as a key contributor to youth development in Algeria.

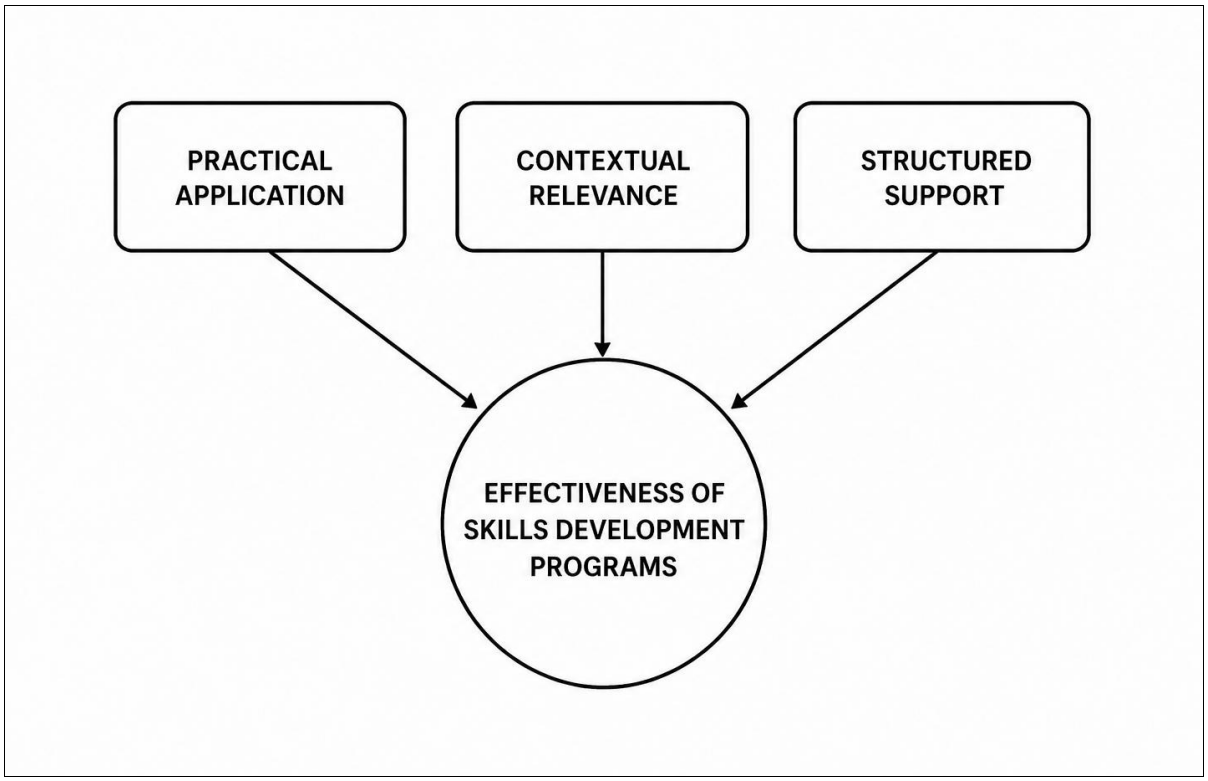
Talking about the effectiveness of programmes provided by the British Council, participants broadly agree that their success lies in shared features that enhance employability and practical skills. There is clear consensus on the value of experiential learning, particularly in British Council language courses, which prioritise real-world communication over purely theoretical instruction.

Similarly, the Summer School intensive programme is praised for its immersive approach, with participants noting that it "pushes learners to actively use the language rather than passively understand it", thereby fostering rapid skill development and confidence through sustained interaction and collaboration.

The Teacher Support Programme is also regarded as highly effective, though for different reasons. Participants highlight its role in strengthening educators' capacities through tailored content, practical teaching strategies, and ongoing mentorship. As some emphasise, "continuous support and follow-up" distinguish it from short-term training, ensuring longer-lasting impact on teaching practices and, consequently, student outcomes. Across all programmes, engaging, learner-centred methods and problem-solving activities are consistently identified as key strengths.

While participants differ slightly in emphasis (some valuing the intensity of immersive programmes and others the sustainability of teacher-focused initiatives) there is strong agreement that practical application, contextual relevance, and structured support (Fig.3) are central to effectiveness. These combined factors are seen to enhance language proficiency, motivation, and ultimately graduates' readiness for the labour market.

Fig.3. Factors Contributing to the effectiveness of skills development programs at the British Council in Algeria



Source: by authors based on participants' answers

The last question focused on what challenges in implementing skills development initiatives. Participants collectively identify a range of structural, motivational, and pedagogical challenges in implementing skills development initiatives, while also outlining practical strategies to address them. Participant 1 highlights institutional constraints, particularly high student enrolment, noting that "managing the large number of students" required relocating to a larger facility and exploring digital solutions to "reach more students effectively while maintaining quality". In contrast, Participant 2 emphasises issues of relevance and engagement, pointing to difficulties in aligning programmes with "the specific language needs of our diverse customer base" and motivating

learners who may perceive training as low priority; these challenges are addressed through targeted marketing and continuous improvement based on participant feedback. Similarly, Participant 3 focuses on learner-related barriers such as "frequent absences", fatigue, and low motivation, which are mitigated through personalised support, active listening, and efforts to make learning "more enjoyable and fun". Participant 4, meanwhile, underscores deeper cultural and institutional resistance, including reluctance to adopt student-centred methods and a preference for rote learning; these are tackled through gradual implementation, ongoing training, and demonstrating the practical value of interactive approaches. While the participants differ in emphasis (from logistical and organisational issues to behavioural and cultural obstacles) there is clear convergence around the importance of adaptive strategies, including the integration of technology, continuous feedback, personalised engagement, and sustained professional development, all of which are critical to enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of skills development initiatives.

Theme 2. Language proficiency

English language proficiency is unanimously described as central to employability in Algeria. Across interviews, it is framed as either critical or increasingly critical, particularly in sectors such as business, technology, tourism, and education. Participant 1 described English as "a key selection criterion" in recruitment processes, emphasizing its role in career advancement and international communication. Similarly, Participant 2 linked English proficiency to globalization, noting that many companies prioritize candidates who can interact with foreign clients and partners.

Beyond employability access, English is also associated with mobility and confidence. Participant 4 characterized English as "the language of opportunity", suggesting a broader transformation in which linguistic capital enhances integration into global networks. In this perspective, English sometimes operates alongside (or in some sectors increasingly replaces) French as a professional language.

Assessment practices further illustrate the connection between language and employability. Participant 3 described the use of pre- and post-training evaluations, IELTS tracking, and mock interviews to measure impact. This participant emphasized combining "quantitative measures (such as CEFR proficiency gains) with qualitative indicators like employer feedback". Such evaluation mechanisms indicate an explicit effort to link language training outcomes with labour-market readiness.

Barriers to language acquisition were also acknowledged. Participants referred to limited exposure outside the classroom, economic constraints, and traditional grammar-focused teaching methods. In response, programs emphasize interactive, speaking-focused environments and conversation clubs designed to build practical fluency and confidence.

Theme 3. Employability

Employability is constructed as the outcome of language proficiency combined with soft skills, digital competence, and sector alignment. However, the scale at which impact is conceptualized varies across participants.

Participant 1 illustrated employability through a personal trajectory, explaining progression from language learner to managerial position within the organisation: "I began my career here eight years ago and worked my way up". This narrative frames employability as transformative and individually empowering. By contrast, Participant 2 emphasized structured alignment between programs and industry needs, particularly through English for Specific Purposes courses tailored to sectors such as business and technology. Employability, in this account, is embedded in curriculum design.

Participant 3 focused on workplace-oriented English courses, including English for Business, describing cases in which participants secured administrative and coordination roles after completing training. The emphasis is on communication competence, professional terminology, and readiness for workplace interaction.

A broader structural perspective emerges in Participant 4's account. Employability is linked not only to institutional programming but also to national economic dynamics, including foreign investment and labour-market reform. Participant 4 argued that employability outcomes could be strengthened through tighter collaboration between education and industry, as well as through measurable indicators such as "employment rates, salary progression, and employer satisfaction". This framing situates employability within systemic modernization rather than solely individual advancement.

Theme 4. Collaboration and impact

Collaboration is presented as a foundational mechanism for scaling skills development and language initiatives. All participants referenced partnerships with ministries, universities, and teacher training institutes, though emphasis differs.

Participant 1 highlighted the quantitative scale of teacher training initiatives, referring to thousands of teachers and dozens of inspectors trained. The focus here is on institutional reach and measurable output. Participant 2 emphasized the importance of internationally recognized certifications such as IELTS and Cambridge qualifications, framing collaboration as a means of enhancing graduate credibility within the labour market.

Participant 3 provided detailed descriptions of implementation processes, including inspector training sessions and regional rollouts, illustrating how collaboration translates into sustained professional development structures. Meanwhile, Participant 4 emphasized outcome-based evaluation, referring to job placement rates and employer satisfaction as indicators of impact. Collaboration, in this perspective, functions as a pipeline linking education to employment through internships, mentorship programs, and industry-facing training.

Collectively, collaboration operates across three dimensions: institutional reform (teacher training and curriculum alignment), credential legitimacy (international certification), and employment integration (structured pathways into the workforce).

5. Conclusion

The analysis highlights that skills development, language proficiency, employability, and collaboration impact are closely interconnected and collectively shape an individual's readiness for the labour market. It is evident that while foundational knowledge is often present, there remains a noticeable gap between theoretical understanding and practical application, particularly in real-world problem-solving and adaptable skill use. Language proficiency emerges as a crucial enabling factor, influencing not only communication but also participation, confidence, and access to opportunities in both academic and professional settings. Employability is shown to depend on a balanced combination of technical skills, transferable competencies, and personal attributes such as initiative and resilience, rather than qualifications alone. In addition, collaboration plays a significant role in enhancing learning outcomes, although its effectiveness varies depending on communication quality and group dynamics. Overall, the findings suggest that professional readiness is multidimensional and depends on the continuous development and integration of these four areas.

Based on the findings, several targeted recommendations can be made for the British Council to enhance skills development, language proficiency, employability, and collaborative impact within educational and professional contexts.

- ✓ The British Council should expand and strengthen integrated language development programmes that go beyond general proficiency, focusing on communicative competence in academic and workplace settings. These programmes should prioritise practical usage, including presentations, negotiations, and professional writing, to better prepare learners for real-world demands;
- ✓ It is recommended that the British Council develop structured partnerships with educational institutions and employers to align language and employability training with current labour market needs. This would help reduce the gap between academic preparation and workplace expectations, ensuring that learners acquire relevant, transferable skills;
- ✓ The organisation should promote experiential learning initiatives, such as internships, workshops, and project-based activities, which allow individuals to apply both technical and soft skills in authentic environments. Such exposure would support the transition from education to employment by strengthening adaptability and problem-solving abilities;
- ✓ Greater emphasis should be placed on enhancing collaborative learning frameworks within British Council programmes. This includes designing activities that foster effective teamwork, intercultural communication, and shared responsibility, while also providing guidance on managing group dynamics and conflict resolution;
- ✓ The British Council should implement continuous evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of its training and development initiatives. Feedback from learners and employers should be systematically collected and used to refine programme design, ensuring ongoing relevance and impact.

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7. Appendices:

Appendix1. Interview guide

Introduction

Good morning,

We are associate teachers at National Higher School of Management, conducting a research study entitled "*The Relationship between Skills Development, Language Proficiency, and Employability in Algeria: Insights from the British Council*". Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this interview and for giving us your time. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and all the information you provide will be treated as confidential and used only for academic purposes.

1. Skills Development

1. What specific skills do you believe are most important for employability in the Algerian job market?
2. How does the British Council support skills development among students and young professionals in Algeria?

3. Can you provide examples of skills development programs that have been particularly successful? What makes these programs effective?
4. What challenges do you encounter in implementing skills development initiatives, and how are these addressed?

2. Language Proficiency

1. In your opinion, how critical is English language proficiency for employability in Algeria?
2. What programs does the British Council offer to improve English proficiency among students?
3. How do you assess the effectiveness of language training programs on students' employability?
4. What barriers to language learning exist for students in Algeria, and how does the British Council work to overcome these obstacles?

3. Employability

1. What role does the British Council play in enhancing the employability of graduates within the framework of your initiatives?
2. Can you share success stories of individuals who have improved their employability through British Council programs?
3. What recommendations would you make to improve employability outcomes for young people in Algeria?

4. Collaboration and Impact

1. How does the British Council collaborate with local educational institutions to enhance skills development and language proficiency?
2. What impact have these collaborations had on students' employability and readiness for the job market?
3. Can you describe any specific projects or initiatives where collaboration has led to significant improvements in skills development or employability?
4. Looking forward, how do you foresee the British Council enhancing its role in supporting employability through skills and language development in Algeria?