

# Implementing teaching in English at the University of Algiers 3: Case study of the special section of Information and Communication Sciences Faculty (2024/2025)



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## Abstract

This study aims to shed light on the recent reforms that affected the Algerian education sector. It's about the adoption of the English language in teaching starting from the academic year 2022-2023 through the decision dated September 28th 2022. In application of this decision, the Faculty of Media and Communication at the University of Algiers3 has opened to new students the possibility of preparing a Bachelor's degree in Information and Communication Sciences in English. The second batch of 79 students enrolled in the academic year 2024/2025 was studied. A descriptive-analytical approach and a questionnaire were used as a tool for data collection. The study found that the reasons that prompted the students to pursue a Bachelor's degree in English were the opening of international job opportunities, and the possibility of working in foreign intercontinental companies. This experiment also allowed foreign students to practice their studies at the University of Algiers 3.

## Keywords

Algerian University;  
Information and  
Communication Sciences;  
Teaching in English;  
Bachelor's degree;  
Higher Education.

## الكلمات المفتاحية

جامعة جزائرية؛  
علوم الإعلام و الاتصال؛  
تدريس باللغة الانجليزية ؛  
شهادة ليسانس ؛  
تعليم عالي.

## التدريس باللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة الجزائر 3: دراسة حالة القسم الخاص بكلية علوم الإعلام والاتصال (2025/2024) ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على الإصلاحات الأخيرة التي طالت قطاع التعليم الجزائري. ويتعلق الأمر باعتماد اللغة الإنجليزية في التدريس ابتداءً من السنة الجامعية 2022-2023 من خلال القرار المؤرخ في 28 سبتمبر 2022، وتطبيقاً لهذا القرار فتحت كلية الإعلام والاتصال بجامعة الجزائر 3 أمام الطلبة الجدد إمكانية تحضير شهادة الليسانس في علوم الإعلام والاتصال باللغة الإنجليزية. تمت دراسة الدفعة الثانية المكونة من 79 طالباً وطالبة مسجلين في العام الدراسي 2025/2024. واستخدم المنهج الوصفي التحليلي والاستبيان كأداة لجمع البيانات. توصلت الدراسة إلى أن الأسباب التي دفعت الطلاب للحصول على ليسانس في الاعلام و الاتصال باللغة الإنجليزية هي فتح فرص عمل دولية، وإمكانية العمل في شركات أجنبية عابرة للقارات. كما سمحت هذه التجربة للطلاب الأجانب بمزاولة دراستهم في جامعة الجزائر 3.

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## - Introduction

French occupies an important place in Algeria's education system, due to the historical and cultural links between the two countries. It was introduced to Algeria during the French colonial period (1830-1962) and played a central role in administration, education and culture.

After independence in 1962, Algeria embarked on a process of Arabisation, aimed at replacing French with Arabic in a number of areas, including education<sup>1</sup>. However, French remained present and influential.

In universities, French is often the main language in scientific, technical and medical subjects. This is due to the lack of educational resources in Arabic in these fields and the need to align with international standards. To this end, many theses, academic publications and research papers are written in French.

Sixty years after independence, the French language is still firmly rooted, the government has just introduced English at primary school and then at university. Since 2019, Algeria has been implementing a reform aimed at introducing English into its education system<sup>2</sup>.

In a memo published on 1 July by the Algerian Minister of Higher Education, university heads were urged to prepare for the start of the 2023-2024 academic year by opting for English as the language of instruction<sup>3</sup>.

In response to this instruction, the Faculty of Information and Communication Sciences at Algiers<sup>3</sup> University began integrating English into its curriculum in a special section from the 2023-2024 academic year. The students enrolled are preparing an LMD degree in information and communication sciences in English. It's a new experience for the faculty, and one that could open up a wide range of prospects. In this article, we will attempt to answer the following central question:

### **What are the challenges involved in introducing English into information and communication science studies at university alger03?**

This question is broken down into the following sub-questions:

- What is the level of proficiency in English among students and teachers in the special section?
- What advantages does the introduction of English offer students of information and communication sciences?
- What are the main obstacles that students might face in studying in English (e.g. understanding concepts, academic writing)?

The objectives of this study are:

- To evaluate the experience of the Faculty of Information and Communication Sciences (FICS) Algiers<sup>3</sup> in offering students one section to prepare an information and communication science degree in English, and the acceptability of this transition by the stakeholders (students, teachers, decision-makers).
- Establish an express diagnosis of this new experience at the SIC Alger<sup>3</sup> faculty in order to detect its strengths and weaknesses which SWOT matrix

It should be noted that this switch to the use of English at FICS in 2019 has caused a great deal of disarray among teachers, who are not yet ready for this challenge.

Moreover, the initial reflections and analyses carried out on this subject do not rule out the possibility of a number of difficulties arising from the sudden nature of this decision.

Other obstacles have been identified, such as: the lack of teachers with a good command of the English language, lack of infrastructure, variability in language levels.

We conducted a survey of students in the special section enrolled in the first year of the common core of the 2024/2025 academic year at the Faculty of Information and Communication Sciences (FSIC) at Algiers<sup>3</sup> University.

The results obtained will enable us to draw up an initial assessment of the special section of the FICS, formulate strategies for further integrating English into the university system, and propose initiatives to improve the mastery of English in the academic environment.

The aim of this study is to:

- Assess the English language skills of students and teachers.
- Identify available resources (courses, teaching aids, digital libraries).
- Identify the reasons why students and teachers choose English as a language of learning.
- To study the perception of English as a language of learning, research and international communication.
- Identify whether English helps to improve scientific production and access to international publications.
- Identify the limitations and obstacles encountered (lack of training, lack of resources, etc.).
- Propose initiatives to improve English language skills

Our article is structured in two complementary parts which provide the essential elements for the evaluation of the exclusive use of English in the preparation of a bachelor's degree by a special section (N°6) in SIC at the University of Algiers 3.

The first part is devoted to the theoretical aspect, which sheds light on the coexistence of English and French at Algerian universities, and then on the transition from French to English, in particular the latest linguistic reform desired by the Ministry of Higher Education concerning the use of English as a language from the start of the 2023-2024 academic year. The second part focuses on our survey, in the field, which we undertook using an online questionnaire as a data collection tool. We also carried out an express diagnosis using the SWOT matrix, which enabled us to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of this new approach.

### **I-1 Foreign languages in Algerian universities: The transition from French to English**

Before independence, French was the official language of Algeria. However, after independence in 1962, it lost this status and became a foreign language.

Despite this, French retains a significant place in the Algerian education system. It is taught from the third year of primary school and is considered an essential language for access to culture and knowledge<sup>4</sup>.

At Algerian universities, Arabic is the main language reflecting the cultural importance and identity of Arabic in the country. However, French occupies a prominent place in higher education. It has become the language of instruction for the majority of courses.

French was mainly regarded as a foreign language studied for its own sake, often taught as a subject up to secondary level. However, with Arabisation, French evolved to become a tool for success in higher education, particularly in technical fields.

The first attempt to replace French with English dates back to 1993, when the Algerian government initiated a series of reforms aimed at introducing optional teaching of English at the expense of French in the primary school<sup>5</sup>.

In 2022, the Ministry took the decision to introduce English from the fourth year of primary school, in association with French, from the 2022/2023 school year.

With regard to higher education, instructions dated 21 July 2019<sup>6</sup>, addressed to all heads of Algerian universities, instructing them to use Arabic and English for all official administrative correspondence, thus excluding French from all official communication.

Another directive to university presidents to allow doctoral and master's doctoral and master's students to write and defend their dissertations in English.

Higher education in Algeria is currently undergoing a major change following the introduction of a new reform in 2023. This reform has led to a number of changes in the Algerian university system, including the introduction of English as a second foreign language from the 2023-2024 academic years.

A memo sent on 27 July 2023 by the President of the Central Regional Universities Conference to all head teachers asking 'qualified teachers with a good command of English' to start preparing models of courses to be given to students at the beginning of the new academic year<sup>7</sup>.

### **I-2 Measures taken to launch English at Algerian university**

In order to achieve the objective of raising the profile of Algerian universities and placing them higher in the international rankings, Algeria has decided to commit to the widespread use of English in higher education and scientific research. For this purpose, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has invited the rectors and directors of other higher education establishments to prepare the ground for the adoption of English as the language of instruction from the start of the academic year (2023/2024)<sup>8</sup>.

To achieve this objective, the ministry of higher education, in collaboration with the academic establishments, has taken a series of measures necessary for the success of this challenge, as follows:

- 1- The Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has launched an English-language distance learning program for new baccalaureate holders. The program began on 25 July and ended on 25 September<sup>9</sup>, using a digital portal dedicated to supporting students.
- 2- Launch, in 2023, of the digital platform dedicated to distance learning of the English language for the benefit of more than 30,000 university teachers<sup>10</sup>. This training initiative is based on the MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) concept, an online teaching format that gives a large number of teachers access to high-quality training resources.
- 3- Registration of teachers and students in intensive language centers to learn English
- 4- Contracting with accredited private language schools (as Insight School) and enrolling teachers to learn English

For Algeria, the adoption of English is intended to promote the internationalisation of universities. The reform will involve training students and teachers in English.

### **I-3 Creation of a special session for a Communication and information sciences (CIS) degree in English at the University of Algiers3**

In accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Ministry of Higher Education, the CIS Faculty created the first special section in the 2023/2024 academic year, enabling students, both Algerian and foreign, to study for a degree in CIS in English from the first year of their degree at the Faculty.

This special English section at the Faculty of Information and Communication Sciences at Algiers 3 University is designed for students who want to improve their English language skills while studying disciplines related to information, communication and the media.

#### **Main characteristics of the special section:**

1. Language of instruction: The majority of courses are taught in English, enabling students to master the technical and academic vocabulary in the fields of communication and the media.

2. Program<sup>11</sup> :

- Information society.
- Introduction to media and communication sciences,
- Sociology of media and communication
- Computer science
- Political thought
- Research methodology in the human sciences
- Introduction to Ancient civilizations History

3. Objectives:

- To train professionals able to work in multilingual and multicultural environments.
- Develop written and oral communication skills in English.
- Prepare students for careers in the media, diplomacy, public relations and research.
- Allow to foreign students to prepare their degree in Algerian university

4. Entry requirements:

- A good level of English is generally required (validated by a test). Only students with at least level A and B in English will be admitted.
- Students must have an interest in communication and information disciplines.

## **II Methods and Materials:**

To answer our central question and the secondary questions, we opted for the quantitative method, based on the questionnaire.

For our case study, we chose the special section enrolled in the first year of the common core for the 2024/2025 academic year at the Faculty of Information and Communication Sciences (FSIC), University of Algiers3.

This method will allow us to describe the current state of use of English by this special section of the SIC faculty, with the possibility of generalizing the results obtained to similar cases in other institutions.

A case study can be defined as follows:

“an intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalize across a larger set of units. Case studies rely on the same sort of covariational evidence utilized in non-case study research. Thus, the case study method is correctly understood as a particular way of defining cases, not a way of analyzing cases or a way of modeling causal relations”<sup>12</sup>. It's a research methodology that's very popular in the social sciences.

It is used to study complex new phenomena in real-life situations or to extend knowledge of phenomena that have already been investigated. Case studies provide a detailed, in-depth analysis of a limited number of subjects”<sup>13</sup>.

For the purposes of our study, we carry out mass scanning, as our study population is not very large. It consists of selecting all members of the research population. They are 79 students enrolled in the first year for the 2024/2025 academic year<sup>14</sup>.

This will enable us to gather relevant information in relation to our objectives extract the various strengths and weaknesses of this first experience, to do this we will use the SWOT matrix. Then, the results will be represented in graphs.

## **II-1 Previous studies**

### **1/The English language representations at the university Case of science students<sup>15</sup>.**

The representations of a language are the images that we can extract from it. Through our present work, which falls under the domain of sociolinguistics, we tried to analyze the representations and attitudes of students from different Algerian universities, regarding the government's decision about the substitution of French language with English in Algerian universities. The goal of our research is to extract the student's representations about this reform. Currently, we used a questionnaire in order to highlight the status of the two languages according to our students.

### **2/ Teaching / learning specialised English in the Department of Information and Communication Science at Algiers 3 University<sup>16</sup>.**

The aim of this paper is to show the important role played by the language of specialisation in higher education in Algeria and in the Department of Information and Communication Sciences.

This study, which focuses on the specific situation of learning English for journalism, summarises the main results of the study.

First of all, the lack of qualified teaching staff, their heterogeneous linguistic and teaching skills and a lack of supervision are all sources of instability for a subject which requires a great deal of continuity. The short timetable, the infrequency of sessions and the lack of assessment are also a key factor in the poor performance of this type of teaching. But it is above all the absence of a real program that lies at the heart of the problem.

### **3/ Towards a Predominance of English: The Evolution of its Implementation in the Algerian University Context<sup>17</sup>.**

This study has shown that despite efforts to promote English at the expense of French at French in the university environment, the latter remains rooted in historical and cultural and cultural contingencies. As a result, it is clear that French retains its pre-eminence in higher education, while English is gradually taking root on the other side.

This situation leads us to assert that the two languages are trying to find a balance in a context marked by the coexistence of the two languages.

## **III- Results and discussion :**

The special section of the ICS faculty has 79 students enrolled in the first year of the common core during the 2024 / 2025 academic year. Our questionnaire is being sent by e-mail to the whole section, via the link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdxNHHMQiq1eyLiL6IDPzGkAK8oF4>

We received 45 responses, which corresponds to 57% of our study population.

### **III-1 Interpretation the results of the exploratory study at the FSIC-University of Algiers3:**

After collecting the data, we used the software Excel which enabled us to organize the responses in tabular form and then present them in schematic format.

Our survey aims to answer the central question about the challenges faced in introducing English into information and communication science studies at the University of Algiers 03.

The first challenge met by this new experiment at the University of Algiers3 is the language.

Our respondents' level of proficiency varies between B1, B1+ and B2. We recorded 62% at B1 level, 26.66% at B1+ level, and finally 11% at B2 level as the best level in English of English B2. On the other hand, it's the first condition set by the faculty administration for students wishing to join the special class and prepare a degree in ICS in English. So the language factor is decisive in meeting the challenge set by the authorities. As well, this study revealed other reasons why students chose this special section.

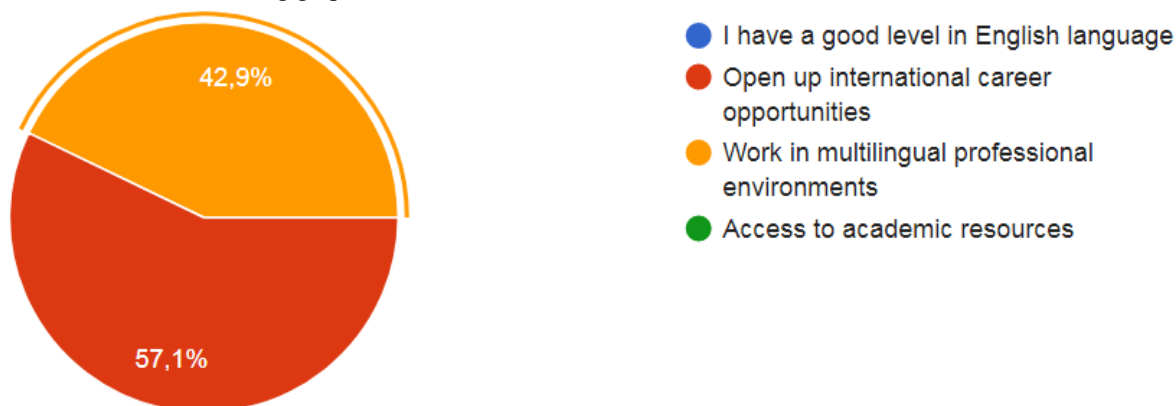
#### **1- Reasons to study information and communication science in English at university Algries3**

Arabic is the main language of instruction at the ICS faculty of the University of Algiers 3. However, this linguistic landscape is beginning to change with the latest reform by the authorities, which includes English in higher education. The special section within the ICS faculty allows students with a B1 and B2 level to prepare a degree in SIC in English. The following graph shows the main reasons for this choice.

The majority of respondents (57,1%) chose to join this section because it opens up prospects for an international career. This means working for English-language media, international news agencies and non-governmental organisations that are looking for journalists capable of covering global issues. Studying in English exposes students to a variety of journalistic methodologies and perspectives, which is a valuable asset when working abroad or covering global stories.

What's more, for 42,9% of those surveyed, this licence offers the chance to work in multilingual professional environments, which enables them to build up an international professional network. Studying in English opens the door to internships with international media companies such as the BBC, CNN, Reuters and Al Jazeera, also the opportunity to use and access a wide variety of academic resources.

As shown in the following graphic

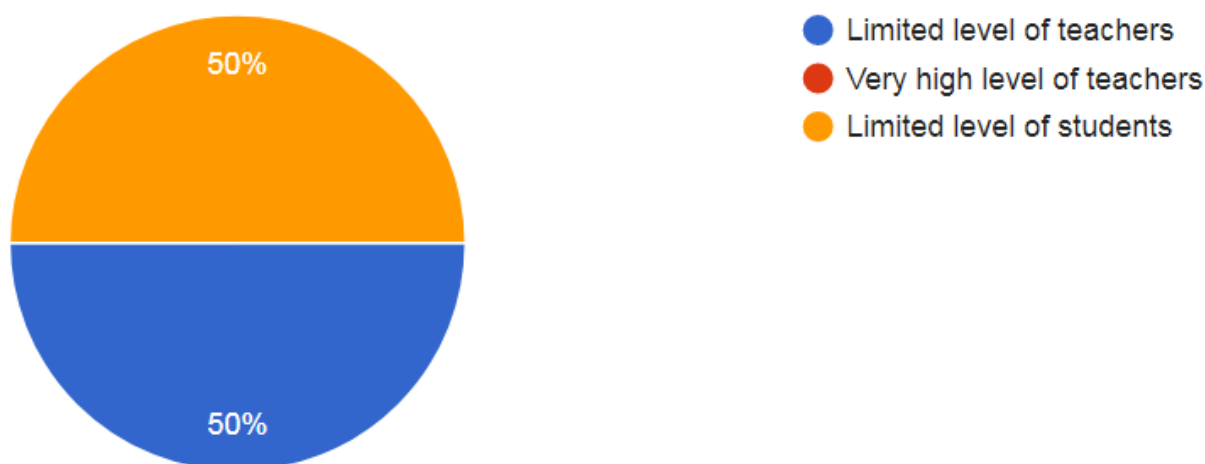


**Figure 1: Reasons to studding Information and communication sciences in English at University Algiers3**

## 2- Course comprehension

71.1% of respondents understand the lessons given in English by FISC teachers. On the other hand, 28.6% occasionally found it difficult to understand the lessons.

However, the students who found the difficulties to understand the lessons, they attribute the reason to this main factor: Insufficient level of English for both teacher and student, as shown in the following graphic



**Figure 2: Main reasons of misunderstanding the lessons**

On the other hand, we can infer other reasons why some students may find it difficult to understand English lessons:

1. Insufficient level of English: Students may not have a sufficient command of the language to follow complex courses. Academic vocabulary, technical terms and teachers' accents can cause problems.
2. Lack of practice: Students who are not used to listening, reading or expressing themselves in English in an academic context may feel overwhelmed.
3. Accents and pronunciation: The accents of teachers can make understanding more difficult, especially if the student is not used to them.
4. Stress or lack of confidence: Students may feel extra pressure taking classes in a foreign language, which can affect their concentration and comprehension.
5. Lack of appropriate resources: If course materials (slides, books, videos) are unclear or unsuitable for non-native learners, this makes it even more difficult to assimilate the content.

### 3- The obstacles encountered during this learning process

This survey revealed that there are some major obstacles to this experience:

In fact, according to 40% of our respondents, language is the major obstacle. It can affect the student and the teacher at the same time.

Indeed, students who do not have a solid grounding in English may have difficulty understanding concepts, instructions or class discussions. They may also be reluctant to ask questions or express themselves for fear of making mistakes. Students often feel intimidated by the idea of taking a course in a foreign language, which can reduce their active participation.

Teachers may lack the skills or methods to teach in English, especially if they are not fluent in the language. However, 26% of respondents said that the lack of resources in the faculty library in English was also an obstacle to teaching in English.

Furthermore, 33% said that a lack of learning (or an insufficient level of basic skills) was a major obstacle to learning English. Students do not master the fundamentals of the English language, such as grammar and basic vocabulary, which limits their ability to understand and express themselves in lectures. Academic concepts can also be complex to understand in a foreign language if the basics are not acquired, which can lead to a lack of interest in learning.

Despite these obstacles, the respondents proposed the following solutions to ensure the success of this new experience at the faculty:

- Use materials adapted to the level of the learners
- Train teachers in language-based teaching
- Reinforce the linguistic foundations before teaching in English
- Encourage independent learning, using free digital resources (online learning platforms, or YouTube channels dedicated to English) and Virtual Libraries, which provide access to digital books, articles and simplified dictionaries.

### III-2 Express diagnostic using the SWOT matrix of CIS teaching in English at university Alger3

As part of this study, and with reference to the responses from our study population, we carried out an express diagnostic of the introduction of information and communication science degree in English at the University of Algiers3. We opted for the SWOT matrix, which enables us to extract the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of this new experiment.

The SWOT matrix is a strategic analysis tool that can be used to establish both an internal and an external diagnosis of a company, a product or a project<sup>18</sup>. Its purpose is to identify the areas to be developed in the marketing strategy and to take stock of the target market. It is based on the four pillars:

- Strengths ;
- Weaknesses;
- Opportunities;
- Threats.

The introduction of a degree in information and communication sciences in English can be assessed through a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats).

We have used the questionnaire survey to identify the four elements of this matrix, and we will thus be able to make an express diagnosis of this new experience at university alger3. We will summarise the results as follows:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><b>- Level of proficiency</b> Students enrolled in the special section have a good command of English. Their level is between A,B1 and B2</p> <p><b>- International outlook:</b> Students are better prepared for international careers thanks to their command of English, the dominant language in the fields of information and communication sciences.</p> <p><b>- Access to global knowledge:</b> The majority of academic resources (articles, books, case studies) available on the net are published in English. This licence facilitates their use.</p> <p><b>- Enhanced language skills:</b> Students develop a practical command of English, which is a competitive advantage on the job market.</p> <p><b>- Increased attractiveness:</b></p>	<p><b>- Insufficient level of English:</b> Local students may not have the necessary level to follow courses in English, which may limit their understanding and success.</p> <p><b>- Lack of English resources in the faculty library:</b> The library does not have enough resources in English( books, theses and dissertations,...) teachers also lack appropriate teaching aids or skills to deliver courses in English.</p> <p><b>Teacher training:</b> Teachers need to be trained to teach in English, which requires time and financial resources.</p> <p><b>- Limited adaptation:</b></p>

<p>This degree has attracted international students, from Togo and Senegal, for example.</p>	<p>Students with language difficulties risk being disadvantaged, which could widen inequalities.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p><b>- Growing demand for English language skills:</b> With globalisation, employers are looking for graduates with a command of English, particularly in fields such as media, communication and technology.</p> <p><b>- Developing international partnerships:</b> Opportunity to collaborate with English-speaking universities on exchange programs, joint degrees or research projects.</p> <p><b>- Improved professional integration:</b> Graduates will be more likely to work in multinational companies or international organisations.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p> <p><b>- Cultural or institutional resistance:</b> Some teachers find the introduction of English an extra workload.</p> <p><b>- Risk of exclusion:</b> Some students have poor access to English courses, so they cannot join this section.</p> <p><b>- High cost of implementation:</b> The recruitment of qualified teachers, training and the acquisition of teaching resources in English require significant financial investment.</p>

**Table 1: SWOT matrix of teaching in English at ICSF**

**Discussion of matrix’s SWOT results:**

Learning English opens up more opportunities around the world, particularly for study. It also helps to build skills and develop metalinguistic reflexes in learners, encouraging certain forms of autonomy in learning, while enabling the English language to play a supporting role in the development of multilingualism<sup>19</sup>.

As far as Algeria is concerned, the reform of the Algerian university to introduce teaching in English is a topical issue that is giving rise to a great deal of debate and study.

Our express assessment of a CIS degree in English at Algiers 3 University revealed a number of strengths and weaknesses in this first experience.

On one hand, preparing for a degree in information and communication sciences in English offers many advantages and opens up new prospects at the special section of university alger3. Courses are taught in English, enabling students to master the technical and academic vocabulary in the fields of communication and the media. In this way, the Algerian university will be able to train professionals capable of working in multilingual and multicultural environments, develop written and oral communication skills in English, and prepare students for careers in the media, diplomacy, public relations and research.

At the same time, there are a number of hurdles to overcome. The special section has 79 students divided into four groups. This is a small number compared to the normal sections. Because of their levels, some of the students enrolled sometimes find it difficult to understand the lessons. Some teachers are also not entirely comfortable teaching complex subjects in English, which can have an impact on the quality of the courses. On the other hand, there is a shortage of textbooks and materials in English, as the university library is better equipped in French and Arabic. It is difficult to find recent academic works, and books in English.

**IV- Conclusion:**

To answer the central question in this study on the main challenges involved in introducing English into information and communication science studies at university alger03, this study showed that teaching in English would give Algerian students easier access to international research and publications. On the other hand, reducing dependence on French in higher education in Algeria, which is largely French-speaking. The reform aims to diversify the languages of instruction. English is also the language of science, technology and business on a global scale. This will strengthen international competitiveness and make it easier for students to take part in exchange program and pursue studies abroad.

To overcome the obstacles hindering the success of this experiment at Algiers3 University, strategic planning is vital:

- Setting up preparatory courses in English for students before the start of their degree.
- Organising specific training so that teachers can teach effectively in English, and also for students.
- Work with English-speaking universities to secure teaching resources, exchange programmes and teacher training.
- Communicate the benefits of this programme and ensure that students from all backgrounds have access to the opportunities it offers.
- Acquiring books and journals in the field in English



Finally, this reform is a necessary step towards modernising the education system. With proper preparation and strategic implementation, this licence could be a major asset for the University of Algiers3, its students and their professional future.

**- Appendices:**

**Questionnaire on teaching in English at the SIC faculty, University Algiers3**

This questionnaire is intended for students enrolled in the first year of the 2024/2025 special section.

Q1- You are :

- 1- Male
- 2- Female

Q2- What is your level of English

- 1- A
- 2- B1
- 3- B2
- 4- Other.....

Q3- Why did you choose to study for your degree in information and communication science in English?

- 1- I have a good level in English language
- 2- Open up international career opportunities
- 3- Work in multilingual professional environments
- 4- Access to academic resources
- 5- Other.....

Q4- Do you understand the lessons presented by the teachers?

- 1- Yes
- 2- No
- 3- Sometimes

Q5- If it's not, explain why?

- 1- Limited of level's teacher
- 2- Very high level's teacher
- 3- Limited of level's students
- 4- Other.....

Q6- What are the obstacles encountered during this learning process?

- 1- Language barrier
- 2- Lack of sources of information (books, theses, etc.) in English
- 3- Lack of training
- 4- Other.....

Q7- What would you suggest to improve English language teaching at the SIC Faculty?

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