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**Investigating the Difficulties of Learning French and English Simultaneously in the  
Algerian Primary Schools**

**Case Study: Third Year Primary School Pupils at “Boufaroum Brothers” School in Jijel**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillments of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in  
Didactics of Foreign Languages

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “*Investigating the Difficulties of Learning French and English Simultaneously in the Algerian Primary Schools*” is my own work and all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by means of references. I also certify that I have not copied or plagiarized the work of other students or researchers partially or fully. In case any materials not documented, I shall be responsible for the consequences.

Signature

Date

## **Dedication**

*In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most*

*Merciful*

*with my dearest and warmest feelings,*

*I dedicate this work to my supporting father and my*

*sacrificing mother, who brought me here*

*A special dedication goes to my sisters and brother, who*

*have supported and encouraged me throughout my life.*

*I extend a very special dedication to my husband for his*

*love and support.*

*I would also like to thank my best friends for their*

*continuous love and encouragement, and express*

*gratitude to all friends and acquaintances who know me.*

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*been through during my journey at this university.*

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## **Abstract**

Learning multiple languages entails both challenges and benefits in various aspects of life. Therefore, juggling multiple language systems can be mentally demanding. The present study aims to investigate the difficulties of learning French and English simultaneously in the Algerian primary schools. It was assumed that learners encounter challenges related to pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, grammar, and motivation as a result of the effect of French on English. A mixed-method approach has been adopted, using a classroom observation and a questionnaire to collect data. The classroom observation was conducted with two classes of third-year primary school pupils at “Boufaroom Brothers” primary school; aiming to identify the difficulties learners encounter during the lessons. For the same aim, a questionnaire was distributed to eight teachers of English, and the same version was translated and submitted to eight teachers of French from different primary schools in Jijel to support the study and determine the impact of one language on the other. The obtained results indicated that third-year primary school pupils encounter difficulties related to pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition when learning French and English simultaneously, with no effect on learners' motivation; however, regarding grammar, the difficulties was not possible to be determined because of some limitations. Furthermore, the results obtained from the questionnaire indicated that both languages have an effect on each other.

**Key words:** Simultaneous learning, Difficulties, Impact.



## **List of Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols**

**CAH:** Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

**CEE:** Center for Educational Effectiveness

**CDST:** Complex Dynamic Systems Theory

**CPH:** Critical Period Hypothesis

**DST:** Dynamic Systems Theory

**LAD:** Language Acquisition Device

**LP:** Language Planning

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second Language

**L3:** Third Language

**Q:** Question

**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition

**SLL:** Second Language Learning

**UG:** Universal Grammar

**ZPD:** Zone of Proximal Development

**%:** Percentage





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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1. Background of the Study

Studying the impact of the mother tongue on second languages has been a long-standing interest for researchers. With multilingualism becoming a global norm, attention has shifted towards understanding the impact of foreign languages on each other. For instance, as cited by Huang, Steinkrauss, & Verspoor (2020), Schepens et al. (2016) found that bilingual learners had an advantage in learning a third language (L3), regardless of their first language (L1). However, when it comes to developing a second language (L2) and (L3) simultaneously, the impact can vary. According to the Dynamic System Theory proposed by De Bot and Larsen (2017), simultaneous learning of L2 and L3 may result in interactions between their systems or subsystems. Development in one subsystem can lead to development in other interconnected subsystems (Huang et al., 2020). On the other hand, previous studies have shown that motivations for L2 and L3 may differ and can impact each other, potentially slowing down the development of either language (Huang et al., 2020).

In a study by Rouhollah and Mahdiah (2013), simultaneous learning of French and English was promoted through improved teaching methods. The results, based on a final test, suggested that simultaneous learning not only did not hinder language development but also reinforced learning of both languages. Another study by Huang et al. (2020) investigated the impact of L3 on the ongoing development of L2. They compared L2 English writing proficiency scores of two groups of L1 Chinese learners over one academic year: one group learned only English (L2), while the other learned English and Russian simultaneously. The findings indicated that L2 and L3 learners did not develop their L2 to a lesser extent than the L2-only learners, but showed more variability in fluency over time.



Research on bilingualism primarily focuses on children learning a second language alongside their mother tongue or on adult learners. Limited studies specifically examined the difficulties of the simultaneous acquisition of two foreign languages at primary levels. Some studies explored various aspects of multilingualism, including vocabulary and grammar. For example, Kanj and El-Hassan (2021) conducted a study entitled "Measurement of expressive vocabulary in multilingual children using the dual-Focus approach method for test development." The aim of their study was to develop a picture-naming test for multilingual Lebanese school-age children that consider their unique linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Meanwhile, other studies focused on the cognitive domain and children's mental processes. One such study is entitled "Is the Simultaneous Acquisition of Two Languages in Early Childhood Equal to Acquiring each of the Two Languages Individually?" conducted by Döpke in 1996. This study aims to investigate whether children who are exposed to two languages simultaneously in early childhood acquire each language individually, similar to monolingual children, or if the grammatical systems of the two languages are acquired in relation to each other. The study explores the cognitive processes involved in simultaneous language acquisition and seeks to understand how bilingual children develop and differentiate their linguistic abilities in both languages. Moreover, such a project has never been realized in Algeria, as it is the first time the country has introduced English alongside French in its primary schools. To address these research gaps, this study aims to explore the challenges of learning two languages simultaneously among young learners in primary schools, particularly when they are exposed to both languages for the first time.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Studying multiple languages has become a worldwide phenomenon, as many countries, including Algeria, have embraced the inclusion of different languages in their education systems. When learners acquire a new language, they often face numerous difficulties, such as pronunciation challenges and interference of their mother tongue. Now, envision the heightened intricacy and demands entailed in simultaneously mastering two entirely distinct foreign languages.

In Algeria, primary school pupils are introduced to English and French simultaneously, marking a unique situation in the education landscape. As a result, learners may encounter different challenges in their learning process that could affect their overall language development. This effect may stem from the impact of French on English due to French's status and popularity among Algerians.

## **3. Research Questions/ Assumptions**

The focus of this study is to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the main challenges faced by young learners in Algerian primary schools when learning French and English simultaneously?
2. Which language impacts the other?

In order to answer the research questions, the following assumptions are put forward:

1. Learners in Algerian primary schools will encounter challenges related to pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, grammatical rules, and motivation when learning French and English simultaneously.

2. The French language affects English.

#### **4. Research Methodology**

In order to answer these research questions, the topic is elaborated on theoretical foundations associated with second language learning theories and concepts related to multilingualism, simultaneous learning, and children's cognitive processes.

By employing qualitative and quantitative modes of inquiry, it is attempted to illuminate the challenges of learning French and English simultaneously for Algerian primary school pupils. Data for this study will be collected through a non-participant observation for two randomly selected classes within a randomly selected primary school where the researcher should be at the back of the classrooms equipped with a checklist in an attempt to collect as much data as possible. The observation will take over 12 sessions. To enhance the validity of this research two semi-structured questionnaires will be directed to eight teachers of English and eight teachers of French from different primary schools who are supposed to answer a series of open-ended and close-ended questions concerning pupils' performance and progress in the language and the probable difficulties they face. After completing the data collection procedure, these data will be analyze and interpreted to finally draw a conclusion.

#### **5. Significance of the Study**

Multilingualism has emerged as a global phenomenon, leading to an increase in simultaneous language learning, particularly among young learners, as observed in the Algerian schools. Therefore, it is of great importance to investigate the challenges associated with simultaneous learning of two foreign languages, namely French and English, in primary schools. The findings will enable teachers and future researchers in the field to gain awareness

of these challenges, seek solutions, and utilize them to enhance the teaching and learning experience.

## **6. Organization of the Dissertation**

The research in hand is divided into two chapters. The first chapter represents the literature review of the research. It is divided into two sections: the first section discusses theories of second languages acquisition besides some important aspect related to multilingualism, simultaneous learning, and age. Meanwhile, the second section tackles the similarities and differences between the languages as well as their status in the country. The second chapter represents the fieldwork which is mainly devoted to the discussions and interpretations of the data collected through the classroom observation and the questionnaire devoted to teachers. Additionally, it discusses the main findings and provides answers to the research questions as well as to validate or refute the assumptions.

# **Chapter One: Literature Review**

## **SECTION ONE: SECOND LANGUAGES ACQUISITION THEORIES**

### Introduction

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## **Introduction**

In the contemporary globalized context, the prevalence of bilingualism and multilingualism has become increasingly pervasive. Therefore, understanding the mechanism of second language learning is important to facilitate language learning for individuals. Krashen Hypothesis, Universal Grammar Theory, and Complex Dynamical Systems Theory are just some of the theories and approaches covered in this section. Additionally, Critical period theory and the cognitive mechanisms involved in language learning will also be tackled in this section.

### **1.1.1. Bilingualism and Multilingualism**

In terms of the number of languages used by an individual, bilingualism and multilingualism are two related yet distinct concepts. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defined bilingualism as “the ability to speak two languages” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). In contrast, Aronin and Hufeisen (2009) defined a multilingual as a person who can use three or more languages, but with unequal proficiency or control over them (p. 15). Even though learning multiple languages simultaneously can be difficult, multilinguals encounter more complex difficulties than bilinguals do. De Groot (2011) contended that having several languages results in a more intricate interaction between those languages (p. 343). In other words, learning a third language or more will be more difficult than learning a second language because cross-linguistic effect and language transfer will occur between at least three languages rather than just the mother tongue and a second language.

### **1.1.2. Theories of Second Language Acquisition**

Second language acquisition or SLA is the process of learning other languages in addition to the mother tongue, It can be defined as a field which is concerned with how people acquire additional languages besides their native one (Hoque,2017,p.1). Due to the lack

of research on third or additional language acquisition, it is crucial to take into account the approaches and theories that drive this procedure. Additionally, it is necessary to examine the second language acquisition theories as many individuals may acquire two foreign languages simultaneously, as L2 and L3. De Angelis (2007) stated the following:

The term 'second' is usually taken to refer to a second language as well as to any other non-native language in the process of being acquired. From this broad interpretation of what a second language is, we can infer that a large number of scholars regard the process of acquiring a second language as sufficiently similar to that of acquiring additional languages, implicitly supporting the view that a distinction between types of acquisition is unnecessary (p. 5).

To put it differently, the term "second" in language acquisition typically encompasses both a second language and any other non-native language being learned. This inclusive interpretation suggests that many scholars perceive the process of acquiring a second language to be similar enough to acquiring subsequent languages. Consequently, this viewpoint implies that distinguishing between different types of language acquisition may not be necessary.

### **1.1.2.1. Krashen Hypothesis**

#### **1.1.2.1.1. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis**

Although the words "acquisition" and "learning" are sometimes used interchangeably, the field of SLA has distinguished between the two concepts. Language acquisition, which is a subconscious process similar to how children learn their first language, is the first method of learning a language. In most cases, language learners are unaware of this procedure, yet they do learn to use the language for different purposes. The acquired competence is also subconscious and manifests as a "feel" for correctness. The second way to develop competence in a second language is through language learning, which involves conscious knowledge of a second language, being aware of the rules and being able to talk about them.



Learning is essentially knowing about a language or having formal knowledge of it. It is often referred to as grammar or rules, and is explicit or conscious (Krashen, 1981, p. 10).

#### **1.1.2.1.2. The Natural Order Hypothesis**

The Natural Order Hypothesis is an important hypothesis in the study of language acquisition. Individuals who learn a particular language have a tendency to grasp certain grammatical structures at an early stage, while others are acquired at a later stage. (Krashen, 1981, p. 12). This shows that language learners not only acquire language, but they acquire language in a specific order. The Natural Order Hypothesis is a central concept in language learning because it emphasizes the fundamental process of language learning.

According to Brown's findings in 1973, English-speaking children who are learning the language as their first language have a tendency to acquire certain grammatical morphemes or function words at different stages. For instance, the progressive marker "-ing" (e.g., "He is playing baseball") and the plural marker "/s/" (e.g., "two dogs") are among the morphemes that are typically acquired earlier. On the other hand, the third person singular marker "/s/" (e.g., "He lives in New York") and the possessive "'s" (e.g., "John's hat") are usually acquired at a later stage. (as cited in Krashen, 1981, p. 12).

#### **1.1. 2.1.3.The Monitor Model**

According to the Monitor Hypothesis, The "Monitor" is a tool used to oversee and modify one's language output by consciously editing and making corrections. It is believed that language acquisition initiates a speaker's utterances and contributes to fluency. The role of the Monitor is to adjust the output of the acquired system before or after the utterance is spoken or written, but the actual initiation of the utterance comes solely from the acquired system. This hypothesis has significant implications for language instruction. Krashen argues that formal language instruction provides rules and feedback for the development of the

Monitor, but actual production is based on what is acquired through communication. The Monitor helps improve accuracy towards the norms of the target language. Krashen's stance is that conscious knowledge of rules does not aid acquisition, but rather allows learners to refine what has been acquired through communication. Therefore, the primary focus of language teaching should be on communication rather than rote rule-learning. (Hoque, 2017, p.6).

#### **1.1.2.1.4. The Input Hypothesis**

According to Krashen (1982), According to the input hypothesis, in order to progress from one stage of language acquisition (stage  $i$ ) to the next stage (stage  $i + 1$ ), it is necessary (although not sufficient) for the learner to comprehend input that contains the structures and elements of stage  $i + 1$ . Here, "understand" refers to the learner's focus on the meaning conveyed by the message rather than its grammatical form. It posited that second language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to input that is just beyond their current level of competence (p.21). This indicates that language learners should be exposed to language that is demanding enough to encourage them to learn new language forms, but not too challenging that they give up in frustration.

#### **1.1. 2.1.5. The Affective Filter Hypothesis**

The Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests that a second-language acquirer's ability to utilize comprehensible input is influenced by their emotional state (Krashen, 1985). If the "affective filter" is up, indicating that the learner is unmotivated, lacking confidence, or anxious about failure, the input will not reach the language acquisition device (LAD) and become acquired competence. On the other hand, if the filter is down, the input can reach the LAD and result in language acquisition. Therefore, it is important for acquirers to be open to the input and motivated to become part of the group that speaks the target language (Hoque, 2017, p.8).

### **1.1.2.2. Universal Grammar Theory**

Universal Grammar (UG) is a theory in linguistics that was first introduced by Noam Chomsky in the 1950s. Mitchell & Myles (2004) claimed that “The Universal Grammar approach claims that all human beings inherit a universal set of principles and parameters that control the shape of human languages, and which make human languages similar to one another” (p.54). In other words, according to this theory, all humans are born with a set of principles and parameters that determine the structure of language, and these principles apply to all languages. Besides, these principles are thought to explain the similarities that exist between different human languages despite their distinct differences. Furthermore, it claims that all languages share certain basic grammatical features determined by universal grammatical principles. This innate knowledge of language allows children to learn their first language quickly and easily, and explains why all people, regardless of cultural background, are capable of learning a language. (As cited in Hoque, 2021), Chomsky proposed the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) hypothesis as a way to explain how children learn a language. According to this theory, the LAD model is capable of accounting for the process of acquiring any natural language (p.5).

When it comes to second language learning (SLL), both second language learners and children face challenges in constructing grammar from limited input. However, second language learners differ from children in that they already have proficiency in one language, which affects their approach. Second language learners also have greater cognitive abilities for problem-solving and abstract concept comprehension (Hoque, 2021, p.7).

### **1.1.3. Approaches and Research Areas in Multilingual Acquisition**

In the study of multilingual acquisition, there are various approaches and research areas that have been explored. Understanding these approaches and research areas can provide

insight into how individuals acquire and use multiple languages.

### **1.1.3.1. Complex Dynamic Systems Theory**

Complex Dynamic Theory (CDST) which originated in mathematics focuses on the study of complex systems such as the double pendulum. It has only two interacting variables but produces a complex trajectory. When applied to more complex systems like societies or human beings, DST becomes the science of complex systems, as these systems have numerous variables with degrees of freedom (De Bot et al, 2007, p.8).

In recent years, the theory of complex dynamic systems has been applied to the field of second language acquisition. This theory suggests that language is a nonlinear and highly individual process, consisting of interconnected subsystems that self-organize to create global dynamic patterns. In addition, Language production and perception involve subsystems for conceptualization, semantics, syntax, lexicon, phonology, and phonetics. Furthermore, traditional research has focused on individual factors in language development, but complex dynamic systems theory emphasizes the importance of considering the interactions between these subsystems. The nonlinear and chaotic nature of language development also suggests that it cannot be fully described from a static point of view (Lowie, 2012, pp. 1-5).

Multilingualism has become increasingly prevalent in today's society. As language is a complex system, dealing with more than one language involves dealing with a more complex system. Huang, Steinkrauss, & Verspoor (2020) noted that simultaneous learning of an L2 and L3 may result in interactions between the systems or subsystems of both languages during development. As they suggested "When the L2 and L3 are both developing, learning the L3 and L2 simultaneously may result in interactions between the L2 and L3 systems or subsystems" (p. 568).

### **1.1.3.2. Language Transfer**

Language transfer is an important area of study in second language acquisition and can have significant implications for language teaching and learning. According to Odlin (1989), the phenomenon of linguistic transfer occurs when the similarities and differences between the target language and any previously learned language, regardless of how proficiently it was acquired, influence the language learning process (p. 27). As pointed out by Talebi (2014, p.432), transfer of concepts in language learning is categorized as either positive or negative transfer, where negative transfer is identified as the language distraction that causes the greatest difficulty for learners. This idea is the basis for the hypothesis of contrastive analysis, which holds that differences in language structure cause difficulties and thus lead to interfering errors in second language learning. However, further research has shown that even similarities between languages can be problematic, whereas differences can actually facilitate SLA, as observed by Catford (1964, p. 432).

### **1.1.3.3. Language Interference**

Language interference is a very common phenomenon among language learners. It is defined as the inevitable negative transfer of elements from one language to another, resulting in distortions (Shelly, 1998, p.22). In other words, when someone speaks multiple languages, they may accidentally use elements from one language while speaking another, which can impact the clarity and accuracy of their speech. Previous knowledge about our mother tongue or any other foreign language will influence the language in process.

### **1.1. 3.4.The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis**

As cited in Lennon (2008), the main idea of contrastive analysis, as presented by Lado in his book *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957), was to systematically identify the difficulties in learning a foreign language by comparing it with the learner's native language and culture.

The similarities between the two languages and cultures were not expected to cause any difficulty, while differences were expected to cause learning difficulties, with greater differences resulting in greater difficulty. This analysis was believed to enable the tailoring of teaching materials to the needs of learners of a specific first language. However, in practice, contrastive analysis was limited to a surface comparison of languages, starting with sounds, then grammar, and only selectively addressing vocabulary. Lado's call to compare cultures was largely ignored (para.1).

#### **1.1.4. Simultaneous Language Learning**

Simultaneous language acquisition refers to the process of acquiring two or more languages at the same time, commonly referred to as simultaneous bilingualism, which predominantly occurs in early childhood. While limited attention has been given to simultaneous learning of two foreign languages in more advanced stages of development during childhood, research in the field has proposed several hypotheses to explain the cognitive mechanisms underlying simultaneous language learning.

##### **1.1.4.1. The Dual-System Hypothesis**

The Dual System Hypothesis suggests that bilingual children do not experience confusion because the process of learning two languages simultaneously is similar to monolingual first language development. When the two languages have similarities in morphology, phonology, syntax, or semantics, there is positive transfer, meaning that knowledge of one language supports the acquisition of the other language. This similarity between the languages helps bilinguals and multilinguals to understand and master both languages (Dewi, 2017, p. 142).

#### **1.1.4.2. The Unitary Language System Hypothesis**

According to the Cambridge University Press (2019), prior to the 1980s, the prevailing belief in research on children who were bilingual was that they initially form a single system for both languages in terms of vocabulary and grammar. This perspective is commonly known as the Unitary System Hypothesis. The theory suggests that young bilingual children initially develop a single linguistic system that combines both languages they are exposed to, rather than two separate linguistic systems for each language. This means that the child's vocabulary and grammar knowledge from both languages are stored together in a single system. According to this hypothesis, as the child continues to develop their language skills, the two systems may eventually become more differentiated and distinct from each other. However, this hypothesis has been challenged by more recent research which suggests that bilingual children may develop separate linguistic systems for each of their languages from the very beginning of language acquisition (pp. 70-71).

#### **1.1.5. Cognitive Processes**

Two well-known developmental psychologists who put out theories on how kids develop cognitively are Jean Piaget (1936) and Lev Vygotsky (1962). Their theories have had a big impact on how we think about language acquisition. The ideas of Piaget and Vygotsky have effects on how people acquire languages. Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the significance of social connection and support, while Piaget's theory emphasizes the need for children to actively engage with language and experiment with it in order to learn. By offering opportunities for inquiry, experimentation, and engagement, teachers and parents can build environments that assist children's language learning.

### **1.1.5.1. Piagets' Theory of Cognitive Development**

As cited by Huitt & Hummel (2003, para. 3-8), the process of cognitive development involves mental organizations called schemes that an individual uses to represent the world and take action. This adaptation is driven by a biological drive to achieve balance between schemes and the environment. There are two processes used by individuals in their attempt to adapt: assimilation and accommodation. Piaget identified four stages in cognitive development:

**a) The sensorimotor stage:** During this stage of development infants demonstrate intelligence through motor activity rather than the use of symbols. Their knowledge of the world is limited to physical interactions and experiences, but they develop object permanence at around seven months old. As they become more mobile, they gain new intellectual abilities and begin to develop symbolic language skills towards the end of this stage (ibid.).

**b) The pre-operational stage:** During the pre-operational stage, this has two sub-stages, toddlers and young children demonstrate intelligence through the use of symbols including the development of language skills, memory and imagination. However, their thinking is non-logical, non-reversible, and egocentric (ibid.).

**c) The concrete operational stage:** this stage occurs during elementary and early adolescence and is characterized by the development of seven types of conservation (number, length, liquid, mass, weight, area, and volume). Children at this stage demonstrate intelligence through the logical and systematic manipulation of symbols related to concrete objects. They develop operational thinking, which involves mental actions that are reversible, and their egocentric thought decreases (ibid.).

**d) The formal operational stage:** finally, during the formal operational stage, which occurs during adolescence and adulthood, intelligence is demonstrated through the logical use



of symbols related to abstract concepts. Although some individuals may initially exhibit a return to egocentric thought during this stage, many people do not develop formal operational thinking during adulthood (ibid.).

All in all, Piaget's theory (1936) is the foundation for constructivist learning and recommends that parents and teachers challenge a child's abilities but not present material that is too far beyond their level. Teachers should also use a wide variety of concrete experiences to help the child learn.

#### **1.1.5.2. Vygotskys' Sociocultural Theory**

According to Min (2006, p. 90), Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (1962) emphasized that a variety of social, cultural, institutional, and historical elements can have an impact on learning a second language. The classroom setting gives students the chance to interact outside of class with professors, peers, reading materials, listening exercises, computer programs, and native speakers. The backdrop and stimulus for language development are provided by social interactions, which are essential for learning a second language. Aspects of social interactions called input and output are linked together and help people learn new languages. However, social interactions alone are not sufficient to guarantee second language development; psychological processes mediate the relationship between social interactions and language development.

As reported by Vygotsky (1978), the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is the region between what learners can accomplish on their own and what they can accomplish with assistance, is where learning takes place. When learners' output is supported with the right input in which the input is suited to the learners' output, high-quality social interactions take place. To improve the quality of interactions, fresh input should be adjusted to the newly generated ZPD level as it continuously changes as learners' language skill develops (Min,

2006, pp. 90-91).

### **1.1.6. Critical Period Hypothesis**

In his book *Biological Foundations of Language*, Lenneberg (1967) introduced the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) for language learning, which asserted that the ability to acquire a language to a proficient level is restricted to a specific time period. Lenneberg suggested that acquiring a language beyond this period is more challenging, which reduces the likelihood of achieving native-like fluency. To put it differently, although adults can become fluent in a new language, they often retain a foreign accent, which is uncommon among young learners due to the role of the neuromuscular system in speech pronunciation (Siahaan, 2021, pp. 42-43).

The CPH is relevant to second language acquisition and suggests that younger learners have a better ability to master a second language than older learners. Although adults can also achieve high proficiency in a second language, they may retain a foreign accent due to the role of the neuromuscular system in speech pronunciation. However, some adults can reach near-native proficiency in a second language, which challenges the notion of CPH being a strict rule. Some argue that age is not the only important factor in second language acquisition, but other factors such as learning environment, effort, and time spent learning can also affect performance (Siahaan, 2021, p. 43).

### **1.1.7. Language Planning and Policy**

The modern study of language planning and policy can be traced back to the 1960s, when linguists such as Joshua Fishman(1960) and Charles Ferguson(1968) began to examine the role of language in society and how it is influenced by political, economic, and social factors. Since then, language planning and policy have become an important field of study, with scholars investigating how language policies are formulated, implemented and evaluated

in different contexts.

As reported by Kaplan and Baldauf (1997), “Language planning is a body of ideas, laws and regulations(language policy), change rules, beliefs, and practices intended to achieve a planned change (or to stop change from happening) in the language use in one or more communities” (p.3). To clarify, LP is a comprehensive approach to managing language change and ensuring that language practices align with the needs and goals of a community. It involves a range of actors, including policymakers, linguists, educators, and language users, and requires careful consideration of social, political, economic, and cultural factors that shape language use and attitudes.

According to the German linguists Heine and Kloss (1967, 1969), there are two main levels of language planning: status planning and corpus planning. However, a third dimension of language planning has been identified more recently, which acquisition planning (as cited in Nkopuruk, 2017, pp. 2-4). First of all, Status planning involves assigning new roles or functions to a language, such as its use as an official language or medium of instruction. This has an impact on the language's role within a specific society. Then, Corpus planning is focused on the internal structure of a language, including grammar and vocabulary. It involves making changes to the linguistic code, creating grammars and dictionaries, and developing writing systems for spoken languages, among other activities. Finally, acquisition planning is the process of promoting and spreading the learning of a language. Governments support cultural institutions like the British Council or the Goethe Institute to encourage the learning of English and German as a second language in other countries (ibid.).

Conversely, language policy is a mechanism that affects the structure, use, acquisition, or function of language. It can be official regulations, written documents, or unofficial and implicit mechanisms that regulate language use and interaction. Language policy is not just a

product but also a process, which involves various agents at different stages of policy creation, interpretation, appropriation, and implementation. Moreover, language policy involves policy texts and discourses across multiple contexts that are influenced by ideologies and unique discourses (Johnson, 2013, p. 9).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, second language acquisition is a complex process that involves a variety of factors, including cognitive development, language transfer, and the critical period hypothesis. The theories and approaches discussed in this section have provided insights into the different ways in which individuals acquire languages and can inform the development of language education programs. Ultimately, a better understanding of second language acquisition can help individuals to navigate the multilingual landscape of today's globalized world.

## **SECTION TWO: DIFFICULTIES OF LEARNING FRENCH AND ENGLISH SIMULTANEOUSLY AMONG YOUNG LEARNERS IN ALGERIA**

Introduction

1.1. Status of English in Algeria

1.2. Status of French in Algeria

1.3. Factors Influencing Learning Outcomes

1.3.1. Time Allotted for each Language

1.3.2. Motivation

1.4. Code-Mixing

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1.6. Linguistic contrasts and similarities between French and English

1.6.1. Alphabets

1.6.2. Phonological Differences

1.6.2.1. Vowel Sounds

1.6.2.2. Consonant Sounds

1.6.3. Lexicon

1.6.4. Grammar

Conclusion

## **Introduction**

This section attempts to focus on the status of English and French in Algeria and the importance of teachers' proficiency and classroom strategies. Also, some factors that influence learning outcomes besides code-mixing when learning French and English simultaneously are to be discussed. Finally, French and English are two widely spoken languages in the world. Despite being different in many ways, they share some structural similarities and differences that make them fascinating to compare. Therefore, some structural contrasts and similarities between French and English will be tackled

### **1.1. Status of English in Algeria**

English is the most widely used language among 4,000 to 5,000 living languages. Moreover, there are 300 million native English speakers across all continents and over 250 million people who speak English as a second language and rely on it for daily communication (Broughton et al., 2003, p. 1). Therefore, it is also adopted as a part of the Algerian educational system.

Algeria witnessed a shift in the language policies, the table below extracted from Marouf (2017, p. 24) show the status of English since independence:

Table 3: The Status of English in the Algerian Curriculum (Adapted from Benmati, 2006, as cited in Marouf, 2017, p. 24)

	-1962-	1962-1975	1975-1993	1993-2004
<b>English FL1</b>	Intermediate cycle(4years)+secondary cycle(3 years)			
<b>English FL2</b>		Intermediate cycle (2 years)+secondary cycle (3 years)	Intermediate cycle(2 years) + secondary cycle(3 years)	Intermediate cycle (2 years) + secondary cycle (3 years)
<b>Total</b>	7 years	5 years	5 years	5 years

In the initial years of Independence, English was taught as the primary foreign language. However, there was a shift in its placement from the first year to the third year of the Intermediate Cycle. By the completion of the Secondary Cycle, students would have undergone five years of English instruction (two years in the Intermediate Cycle and three years in the secondary cycle). This remained the norm until the implementation of the New Reform in 2004.

In 1993, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Algeria introduced English besides French as a second foreign language in primary schools, and as a compulsory subject for eighth-grade students in Middle Schools (Benrabah, 2007, p. 193). At primary schools, parents were given the option to decide whether their children would study French or English as a foreign language (Malki, 2021, p. 9).

In 2022, The Algerian president, Abdu Almajid Taboun, issued an order to introduce the English language in the primary level of the country's educational system, which was

executed by the beginning of the academic year 2022-2023. The language is only introduced to third year classes and to be added to next levels by the coming years. Additionally, it was introduced to teaching attached with a book called “My Book of English”, which contains different units with varied content supported with colorful pictures.

## **1.2. Status of French in Algeria**

Though Arabic had been officially declared the language of the nation after independence, French remained a dominant language in Algeria as a consequence of its colonization history. Despite not being widely spoken or fully understood, French vocabulary is commonly integrated into the speech of many Algerians. The usage of French is particularly prominent among educated individuals, students, and the elite. It is extensively employed by government bodies, businesses, and educational institutions. Due to its elevated social status within Algerian society, some individuals opt to use French to garner respect and be associated with an educated class. Those occupying significant positions in business or politics often prefer French over Arabic. Many of these individuals, having been raised in a bilingual environment, effortlessly switch between Algerian Arabic and French. However, while some possess a high level of proficiency in Algerian Arabic blended with French expressions, they may still struggle to speak it fluently. (Sahraoui, 2020, p. 26-27).

The Algerian educational system is significantly influenced by the French language as it is included from early levels. According to Bouhadiba (2011), French language instruction is incorporated into the Algerian school curriculum starting from the 4th year of study (known as 4ème AF). The initial two stages of fundamental education are exclusively dedicated to the learning of formal Arabic, while the subsequent six years are devoted to the study of the French language. From the 4th year of French language study (4ème AF) onwards, French is taught throughout high school, culminating with the Baccalaureate examination. At the



university level, French is studied either within Language (FLE) programs or as part of specific disciplines such as Medicine, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Architecture, Computer Science, and more. However, social sciences subjects such as Literature, Law, History, and Geography are taught in Arabic (p.97).

### **1.3. Factors Influencing Learning Outcomes**

There are many factors that could affect the learning outcomes among FL learners especially when learning two languages simultaneously through formal instruction. Mainly, time allocation and motivation are the most important factors to mention regarding their strong impact on learners' development.

#### **1.3.1. Time Allotted for Each Language**

Time allocated for language learning in formal education has a significant impact on the learning outcomes. In language learning settings, there are many difficulties that confront learners in their progress as a result of inadequate instruction, insufficient attention in class, inadequate input or meaningful interaction, and limited opportunities for serious output. Based on research, learners require at least four hours of quality contact with a language per week to make progress; however, this may depend on the individual. Therefore, most EFL teachers agree on the learners' need of extra language instruction of that provided in classrooms. More importantly, to preserve a strong connection to the language and motivate learners for learning, learners need quality instruction that includes input, interaction, and opportunities for meaningful output. (Rost, 2006, pp. 2-3).

#### **1.3.2. Motivation**

Motivation is a key component in any activity; it plays a crucial in determining the success or failure of any task and therefore complex processes such as the learning of multiple foreign languages simultaneously. According to Dörnyei (as cited in Dincer, 2018), if students

do not have sufficient motivation for learning and accomplishing goals, any curriculum or teaching practice will be useless, as motivation is a necessity and has great importance in the area of L2 learning. In addition, as reported by Gilakjani, Leong, & Sabouri, (2012) motivated learners are ideal for teachers as they work hard, set goals, focus on tasks, overcome challenges, and do not need constant encouragement. They can even inspire others in the classroom, leading to collaborative learning. However, motivation levels vary and come from internal and external sources. Hence, if individuals are learning a second language solely due to external pressure, then their internal motivation is likely to be minimal, and they may have negative attitudes towards the learning process. Conversely, if learners have a positive outlook towards the language, the teacher, and the course, they are more likely to be attentive in class, take assessments seriously, and seek out additional opportunities to practice the language, thus exhibiting greater willingness to achieve (pp.9-13).

#### **1.4. Code-Mixing**

Multiple language learners often exhibit this widely observed phenomenon; code-mixing. As was shown in Thara and Poornachandran's (2018) findings, using or mixing two different codes within an utterance is known as code-mixing where the term 'code' refers to a language or dialect (p. 2382). Similarly, Muysken (2000) used the term to refer to situations where a single sentence shares both lexical and grammatical forms of two different languages (p. 1).

Mixed into a combination, a variety of features can be blended, ranging from phonology and morphology to lexicon, syntax, phrases and pragmatics (Genesee, 1989, p.162). In understanding code mixing, it is essential to note that it arises from several factors, according to the Modeling Hypothesis that mixed language input would lead to language mixing, and learners with lesser exposure to mixed input generate less code-mixing (Agness,

2006, p .9). Grosjean (1982) identified a reason for code-mixing, which is when individuals may blend two languages together out of necessity. This can occur when they cannot locate adequate terms or phrases in one language, or when the language being used has no corresponding translation available (Kim, 2006, p.47). Besides this, there are further explanations for code-switching. The unitary language system hypothesis suggests that children who are bilingual mix their languages because they possess an undifferentiated linguistic system that cannot differentiate between the two languages initially (e.g.,Volterra & Taeschner, 1978). This was noted by Comeau, Genesee, & Lapaquette (2003, p. 113).

### **1.5. Teacher's Proficiency and Classroom Strategies**

As reported by the Center for Educational Effectiveness [CEE] (2018), The Conference on College Composition and Communication (2014) statement on second language writing and writers emphasized the importance of recognizing the individual needs of multilingual students and avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching. Teachers can support these students by identifying students who may be struggling and stepping in or alerting advisors if necessary. Therefore, the conference ended up by providing some strategies to support multilingual students in the classroom:

- Take time to figure out who your students are.
- Recognize the unique perspectives, knowledge, experiences, and skills multilingual learners contribute to the classroom.
- Provide regular opportunities for students to interact with their peers and with you.
- Provide timely feedback on writing and other coursework.
- Be strategic in your feedback, and focus on more than just grammar.
- Build in opportunities for reflection and assessment.

- Provide numerous opportunities for students to ask questions.
- Intervene when you notice a student is struggling.

## **1.6. Linguistic Contrasts and Similarities between French and English**

French comes from the Romance language family, and English is a derivative of the Germanic language family. However, these Languages are linked by belonging to the Indo-European language family (Dodaj, 2019, p.47). To put it differently, the two languages are historically linked what makes them share many similarities and differences that can be explored in the following aspects:

### **1.6.1. Alphabets**

The Latin alphabet is the most used alphabet in the world; it is adopted by many languages, like French and English. It contains 26 letters. However, each language uses a modified version; for example, French uses a number of diacritical marks such as accented vowels (é, è, à, ê, ë, û) and cedillas (ç). Even though the same letters are involved, they have different pronunciations.

### **1.6.2. Phonological Differences**

English and French share the same phonological features, however; differ in others which may cause learners to produce errors. The tables below, extracted from Markey (1998), show the distinction between the vowels and consonants sounds of French and English (p. 4).

### 1.6.2.1. Vowel Sounds

Table 1.2.1: Vowel phoneme inventories for French and English (Markey, 1998, p. 4)

	<u>French Vowels:</u>	<u>English Vowels:</u>
Orals:	i, y, e, ø, œ, ε, a, ə, ɔ, o, u	i, ɪ, ε, æ, ə, ʌ, u, ʊ, ɔ, ɑ
Nasals:	ɛ̃, ɔ̃, ɑ̃, œ̃	
Diphthongs:	many diphthongs/ triphthongs involving j, w, ɥ	aɪ, ɔɪ, aʊ, eɪ, oʊ

The table above shows that French has a large vowel inventory than English. It contains more distinct sounds including diphthongs and triphthongs while English has only five diphthongs with rare triphthongs. Nevertheless, French has nasal vowels which are not present in English.

### 1.6.2.2. Consonant Sounds

Table 1.2.2: Consonant phoneme inventories for French and English (Markey, 1998, p.4)

<u>Manner of Articulation:</u>	<u>French Consonants:</u>	<u>English Consonants:</u>
Stops:	p, b, t, d, k, g	p, b, t, d, k, g
Nasals:	m, n, ŋ	m, n, ŋ
Fricatives:	f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, ʁ	f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h, (x)
Central Approximants:	j, w, ɥ	j, ɹ, w
Lateral Approximants:	l	l
Affricates:		tʃ, dʒ

The table serves to compare the manner of articulation of consonant sounds between French and English. It shows that both languages share several common consonant sounds, including stops, nasals, and lateral approximants. These are sounds that are produced in a similar manner. In addition to these shared consonants, the table highlights some differences

between French and English. Specifically, English has a greater number of fricatives compared to French. Fricatives are sounds produced by constricting the airflow, causing friction. English includes fricatives such as /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, and /h/, which are not found in the French consonant inventory. Furthermore, the table indicates that English possesses affricates which are not present in the French consonant inventory.

### **1.6.3. Lexicon**

Although French and English belong to different branches of the Indo-European family of languages. They share a remarkable number of cognates, which can be traced back to various sources. The majority of cognates stem from Latin and Greek origins, permeating the vocabularies of European languages, such as “education” and “théorie”; both meaning “education” and “theory” respectively. Nevertheless, a smaller number of cognates have ancient roots, going back to Proto-Indo-European, for example, “mere” meaning “mother” and “pied” meaning “foot”. However, the two languages have many false cognates that may cause confusion, e. g., main “hand” - main, blesser “to injure” – bless (Inkpen, Frunza, & Kondrak, 2005, p.1-2).

### **1.6.4. Grammar**

Regarding grammar, there are numerous similarities between the two languages. They utilize the same verb tenses, employ auxiliary verbs, have nouns, prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, and so on. On the other hand, there are many differences between French and English concerning grammar. According to Sturm (1965), in English, the direct object is typically placed after the verb in basic sentence patterns, as in "I see him." However, in French, the order is Subject-Direct Object-Verb, as in “Je le vois”. Therefore, students may mistakenly construct ungrammatical sentences such as “Je vois le” or “Je vois il”. Another teaching challenge arises with the placement of French adjectives after the noun. The English pattern

often interferes and leads students to form constructions like “la rouge.voiture” and “les interessants livres” (pp. 67-68).

Regarding morphology, when considering noun plurality in terms of spoken language, in English, one determines the number of a noun by listening for the final inflectional morpheme added to the base form, such as “the box” versus “the boxes”. However, in French, instead of listening for an inflectional suffix, the students must train themselves to listen to the form of the definite article that precedes the noun, as in “le garçon” versus “les garçons”. Additionally, English's inflectional morpheme for possession may influence students to use phrases like “le garçon's livre” instead of following the French syntactic structure of “le livre du garçon” (Ibid.).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is essential to consider the status of both languages in Algeria, as this can have a significant impact on language acquisition and use. Factors such as time allotted for each language, motivation, teacher proficiency, code-mixing and classroom strategies can play a crucial role in determining the success of language learners. Additionally, understanding the structural differences and similarities between French and English can help to recognize the difficulties of learning French and English simultaneously. By addressing these factors, a deeper understanding of the probable difficulties learners may encounter can be developed.

## **CHAPTER TWO: FIELDWORK**



## Introduction

### 2.1. Description of the Research Methodology

#### 2.1.1. Participants

#### 2.1.2. Data Collection Instruments

### 2.2. Research Data Analysis

#### 2.2.1. Questionnaire for Teachers of English

##### 2.2.1.1. Discussion and Interpretation of the Results

#### 2.2.2. Questionnaire for Teachers of French

##### 2.2.2.1. Discussion and Interpretation of the Results

#### 2.2.3. Classroom Observation

##### 2.2.3.1. Design and Description of Classroom Observation

##### 2.2.3.2. Analysis of Classroom Observation

##### 2.2.3.3. Discussion and Interpretation of the Classroom Observation

### 2.3. Overall Discussion of the Main Results

## Conclusion

## **Introduction**

The present chapter aims at investigating the difficulties of learning French and English simultaneously in the Algerian primary schools. Consequently, this chapter seeks to answer the following research questions: What are the main challenges faced by young learners in Algerian primary schools when learning French and English simultaneously? And which language impacts the other? In order to provide answers for these questions, three data collection tools were used: a questionnaire for teachers of English, a questionnaire for teachers of French, and a classroom observation checklist.

### **2.1. Description of the Research Methodology**

#### **2.1.1. Population and Sampling.**

The population for this study consists of third-year primary school pupils. For the purpose of this research, out of the 91 third-year pupils from "Boufaroum Brothers" primary school in Jijel, two classes consisting of 61 pupils were randomly selected and involved in the classroom observation. The study also involves a total of sixteen teachers, eight teaching English and eight teaching French to the third-year primary school pupils. These teachers were randomly chosen from different primary schools to participate and respond to the questionnaire.

#### **2.1.2. Data Collection Instruments**

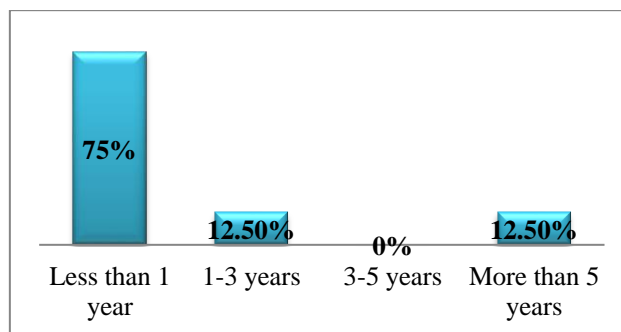
Based on the core research questions, a mixed-method approach was employed to collect and analyze data. Therefore, data were collected by means of a questionnaire addressed to eight teachers of English and eight teachers of French who teach third-year primary school pupils. This data collection instrument is considered very important because it is less expensive, permits anonymity, may result in more honest responses, does not require research assistants, and

eliminates bias (Chaleunvong, 2009). The questionnaires contain both closed-ended and open-ended questions aimed at identifying the difficulties of learning the two languages simultaneously. Providing further support to the study, a number of classroom observation sessions were conducted to observe learners' performance, responses, and motivation. According to Halim et al. (2018) the classroom observation is defined as “a method of evaluating and recording specific information about what is going on within a classroom” (p.163). It is considered an important tool in research and in improving the field of language teaching (as cited by Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2011, p. 449).

### 2.2.1. Questionnaire for teachers of English

#### Section One: General Information

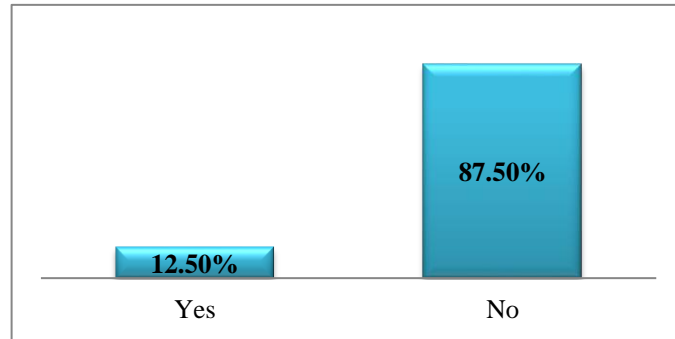
##### Q1.How long have you been teaching English?



**Figure 01: Duration of English Teaching**

As shown in figure 01, the majority of teachers of English (75%) have been teaching English for less than a year, 12, 5% from one to three years, and the remaining 12,5% for more than five years.

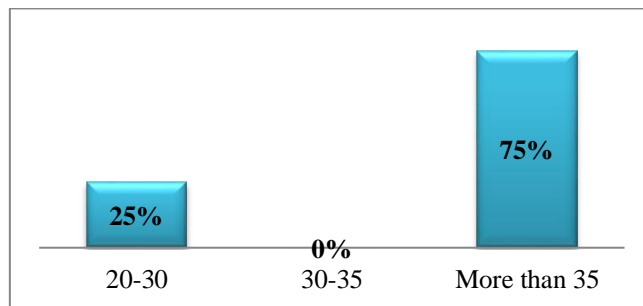
**Q2. Have you ever experience teaching young learners studying French and English simultaneously?**



***Figure02: Teachers of English with Experience in Teaching Simultaneous French and English learners***

As illustrated above, 85.5% of teachers have not experienced teaching learners studying both languages simultaneously, while only 12.5% have.

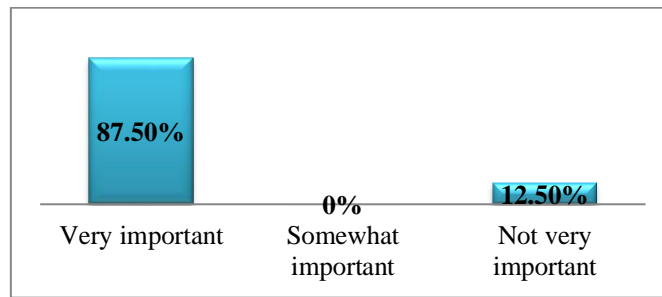
**Q3. What is the average number of Learners in your classes?**



***Figure 03: Number of Learners in Classes***

The results indicate that the majority of classes (75%) have more than 35 pupils, while only 25% of classes have an average number of 20 to 30 pupils per classroom.

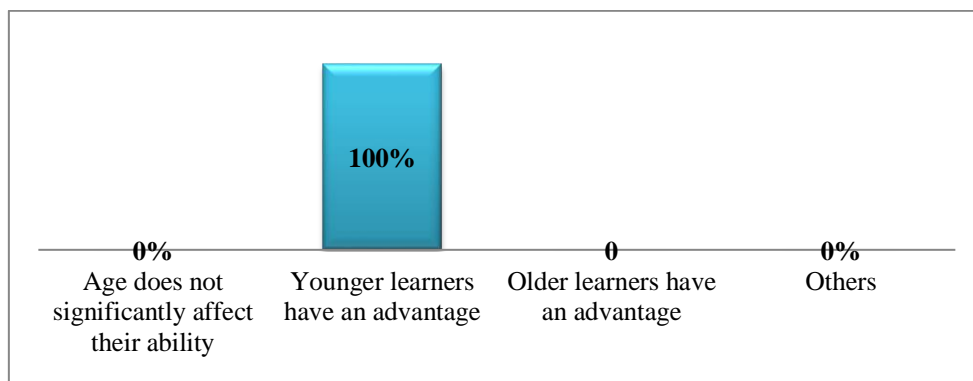
**Q4. How important do you think it is for learners to learn multiple languages?**



**Figure 04: The Importance of Learning Multiple Languages**

The chart shows that 87.5% of English teachers consider learning multiple languages simultaneously to be very important. They assume that bilingual education increases creativity among learners, enables them to communicate and develop global relationships. Additionally, they believe it is easier for learners at that age. On the other hand, the remaining 12.5% consider it not very important and clarify that not all learners are able to learn multiple languages.

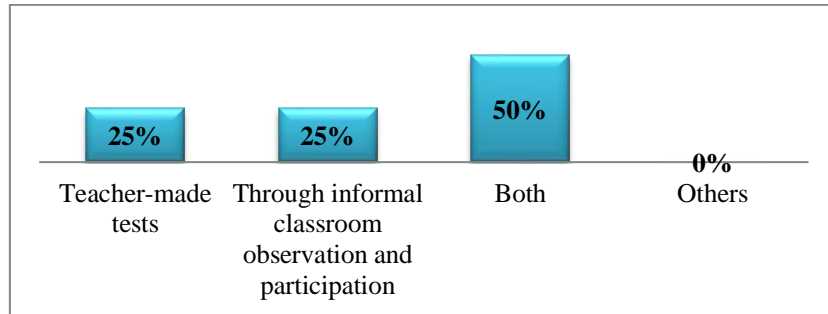
**Q5. How does the age of the learners affect their ability to learn two languages simultaneously?**



**Figure 05: The Effect of Age on Simultaneous Learning of Two Languages**

As illustrated in the figure above, none of the teachers of English agree that age does not have a significant effect on learners' ability or that older learners have an advantage; therefore, 100% of them declared that younger learners have an advantage.

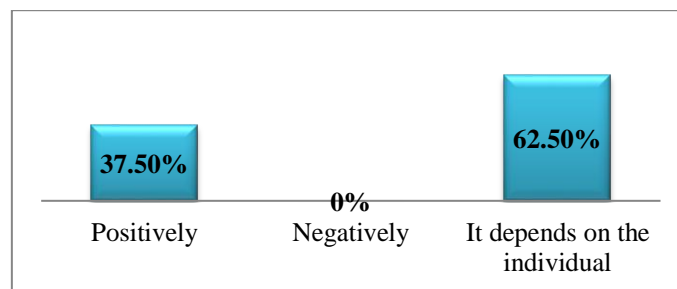
**Q6. How do you assess the progress of learners in English, and what metrics do you use to determine success?**



***Figure 06: The Metrics Used by Teachers to Assess Learners Progress in English***

From the results above, it is observed that half of teachers (50%) utilize a combination of both methods for assessing learners' progress, 25% rely on teacher-made tests as their primary assessment method, and 25% on informal classroom observation and participation.

**Q7. How do you think learning French and English simultaneously impacts a learner's overall language development?**

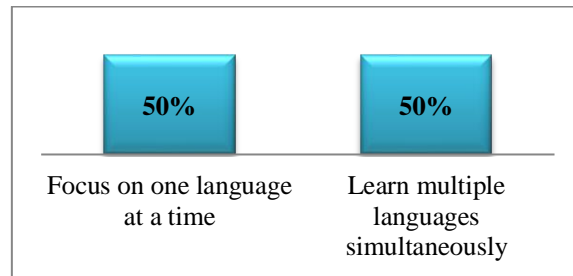


***Figure 07: Views on the Impact of Simultaneous Language Learning on Overall Language Development***

As shown in the previous figure, 37.5% of the teachers asserted that learning French and English simultaneously affects the learners' overall language development in a positive way. They explained that the similarities between French and English help pupils acquire the languages rapidly and develop a larger vocabulary. On the other hand, 62.5% noted that the impact depends on the

individual, justifying their answer based on the learners' inherited abilities, background, and conditions. However, none of them mentioned that it has a negative effect.

**Q8. Do you think it is better for learners to?**

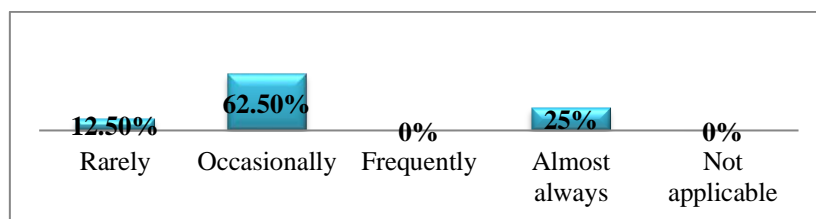


**Figure 08: Preferences for Language Learning**

As illustrated above, half of the teachers think that learners should focus on one language at a time in order to master it and to avoid the confusion resulted from the similarities between both languages, while the other half believe that it is better for them to learn multiple languages simultaneously.

Teachers justified their answers by clarifying that learning multiple languages allows learners to be more culturally aware, experience cultural differences in the world, and exploit the cognitive benefits of their age. Additionally, they highlighted that learning two closely related languages like French and English is a great opportunity.

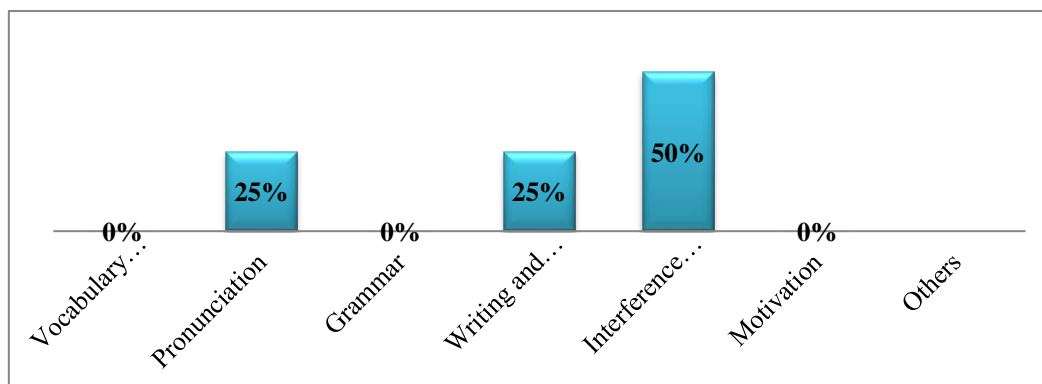
**Q9. How often do you see learners struggling with the simultaneous learning of French and English?**



**Figure 09: Frequency of Learners' Struggles with Simultaneous Learning of French and English**

The results reported by teachers of English denoted that 62,5% of learners occasionally struggle with simultaneous learning of French and English, 25% struggle almost always, and 12,5% are rarely struggling.

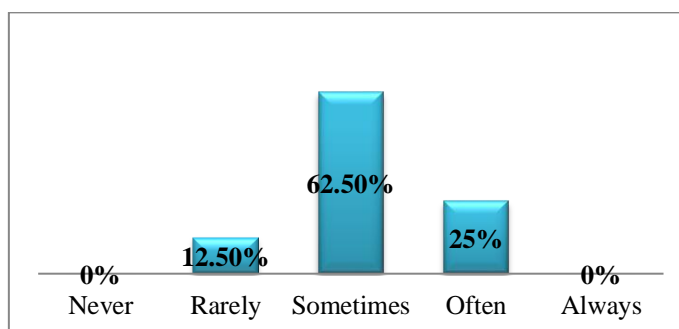
**Q10. What are the most common difficulties that your learners encounter when learning two languages simultaneously?**



**Figure 10: Common Difficulties Encountered by Learners**

From the figure, it is evident that the most common difficulties learners encounter when learning two languages simultaneously are about interference between the two languages, accounting for 50%. This is followed by 25% for pronunciation and 25% for writing and spelling issues.

**Q11. Do learners tend to mix the pronunciation of some French vowels in English?**



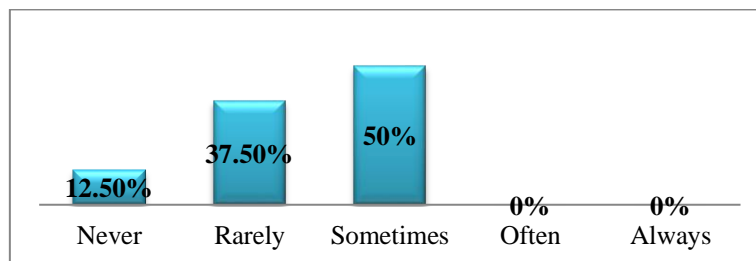
**Figure 11: Mixing of French Vowels Pronunciation in English by Learners**

As reported by teachers of English and illustrated in the chart above, 62,5% of learners



sometimes mix French vowels pronunciation in English, 25% sometimes encounter this issue, and 12,5% rarely do. The most common mispronounced vowels reported by teachers are “a”, “e”, “o”, “u”, “i”.

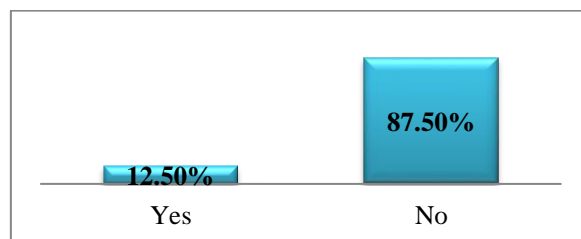
**Q12. Do Pupils tend to use words of French in English?**



*Figure 12: Usage of French Words in English by Pupils*

The obtained results illustrate that 50% of learners sometimes tend to use some French words in English, 37,5% rarely do, and 12.5% never do so.

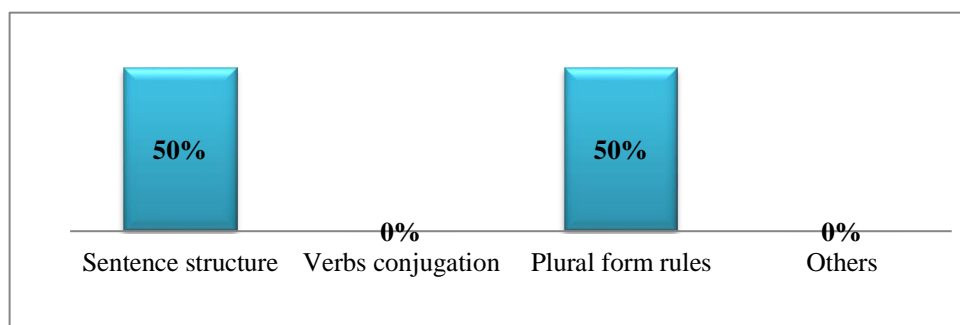
**Q13. Do learners tend to mix the grammar rules of both languages?**



*Figure 13: Mixing of Grammar Rules*

From the figure above, it is evident that the majority of learners (87, 5%) do not mix the grammar rules of both French and English when learning them simultaneously, while only 12, 5% do so.

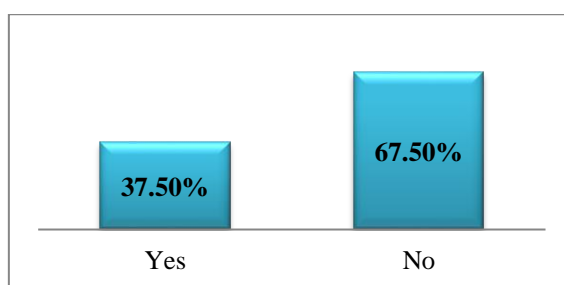
**If yes, what are the most common rules they tend to mix?**



***Figure 14: Commonly Mixed Grammar Rules***

As illustrated in the results, among the 12, 5% of learners who tend to mix the grammar rules of both languages, 50% of them tend to mix the plural form rules, while the other 50% tend to mix rules about sentence structures and not verb conjugation.

**Q14. Do studying French and English simultaneously affect learners' motivation?**

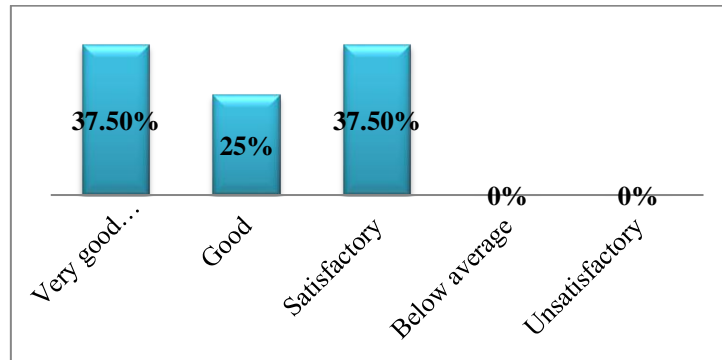


***Figure15: Impact of Simultaneous Study of French and English on Learners' Motivation***

Regarding the effect of learning French and English simultaneously on learners' motivation, only 37.5% of teachers asserted that it has an effect. Some of them stated that learners are more motivated in one language than the other, while others stated that it has a positive effect on learners' motivation.

On the other hand, the remaining 62.5% asserted that the situation has no effect on learners' motivation. They clarified that learners are always motivated, especially in classes of English

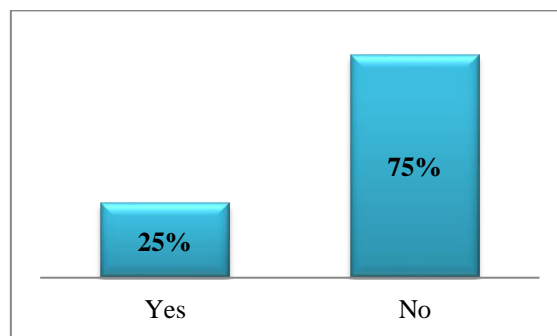
**Q15. As a teacher, how do you rate learners' improvement over time?**



***Figure 16: Teachers' Assessment of Learners' Improvement over Time***

As shown in the results above, all the teachers of English assessed their learners' improvement as satisfactory (37,5%), very good (37,5), and good (25%).

**Q16. Is time allocated to teach English sufficient to address the issue of interference between the two languages?**



***Figure 17: Adequacy of Time Allocated to Teaching English in Eliminating Interference Between Languages***

Regarding the adequacy of time allocated to teaching English in eliminating interference between the two languages, 75% of teachers asserted its insufficiency, while 25% stated that it is sufficient.

**Q17. What techniques do you use as a teacher to overcome the learners' difficulties of learning French and English simultaneously?**

Teachers of English reported in their responses that they use techniques like repetition, self-correction, peer-correction, translation, drills, games, songs, audio-visual aids, and the use of the Total Physical Response method (TPR).

**2.2.1.1. Discussion and Interpretation of the Results**

For investigating the difficulties of learning French and English simultaneously and ensure the mutual effect of both languages on each other, a questionnaire was devoted to eight teachers of English specifically teaching third year primary school pupils.

The questionnaire likely consists of questions that aim to gather insights and feedback from these teachers regarding the challenges faced by students when learning French and English at the same time. The intention is to understand the impact of learning both languages simultaneously, as well as to obtain valuable information that can be used to enhance teaching methods or address any specific difficulties that may arise in this context.

The first section of the teachers' of English questionnaire was devoted to general information aiming to gather information about how many years they have been teaching English, if they have ever experienced teaching learners studying French and English simultaneously, and the average number of learners in their classes. The majority of teachers involved were having less than one year of experience, and the majority with no experience in teaching learners studying both languages at the same time which may reveals the lack of strategies to deal with the situation. Nevertheless, the number of learners in their classes is mainly above the 35 learner per classroom which suggests the difficulty of conveying a comprehensible input.

The second section was devoted to teachers' views on teaching French and English

simultaneously. Question 4 (Q4) focused on their opinions regarding the importance of learning multiple languages, and the majority of them affirmed its significance. They claimed that it is easier for learners to acquire languages at that age. Furthermore, bilingual and multilingual education increases creativity and analytical skills among learners and enables them to develop global relationships; however, others claim that not all learners are able to do that which signifies the individual differences and their importance. Question 5 (Q5) inquired about the effect of age on learners' ability. The teachers' responses affirmed the critical period hypothesis, as all of them confirmed that young learners have an advantage. The following question (Q6) investigated the metrics of assessment used by teachers and the results revealed that half of them tend to use a combination of teacher-made tests and informal classroom observation and participation. This suggests that these teachers recognize the value of utilizing multiple approaches to gather a comprehensive understanding of students' performance and development. On the other hand, other teachers use only one approach which leads to the neglect of many important points in learners' progress because one approach is incapable to cover everything. By utilizing a combination of assessment methods, teachers can gain a more holistic view of student's progress and make decisions to support their learning needs.

The next question (Q7) aimed to evaluate learners' overall language development, and the results indicated that 37.5% of teachers expressed the belief that learning both languages simultaneously has a positive effect. This suggests that a positive effect may arise from the relationship between the two languages, as learners can take advantage of similarities and transferable skills between French and English. On the other hand, 62.5% of teachers believe that the impact depends on the individual learner, assuming that factors such as the learners' intellectual and social state, as well as the efforts made at home, play a crucial role. Additionally, some teachers reported that the interference between both languages can be

considered as an obstacle for some learners. These perspectives recognize that each student has unique characteristics, abilities, and learning styles. Teachers who acknowledge these individual differences emphasize the importance of personalized instruction and adapting teaching strategies to meet each student's needs and preferences.

In the last question in this section (Q8), teachers' views were contradictory. Some of them claim that learners should focus on learning one language at a time, claiming that it is better for learners to devote their abilities to master one language, especially since French and English share many similarities which can cause confusion. This shows that similarities are not always an advantage. On the contrary, others claim that learners have the capacity and that it is very easy for them to learn multiple languages simultaneously, so it is better to exploit it, adding that the shared vocabulary and alphabet make progress easier and faster.

The third section is devoted to investigating the difficulties learners in the third year of primary school may encounter. In the first question (Q9), some teachers of English reported that their learners occasionally, almost always and some rarely struggle with the simultaneous learning of French and English. The most common difficulties they encounter (Q10) are mainly related to interference between languages; writing, spelling, and pronunciation. Among the issues of pronunciation that learners face are the pronunciations of vowels (Q11). As reported by teachers, the vowel "i" is the most mispronounced one, along with "a," "o," "u," "e", "y" besides the consonant "r". These results suggest that the similarities between the two languages cannot always be an advantage, as having the same alphabet has caused confusion in pronunciation for learners. However, not all learners encounter the issue at the same level, which emphasizes the importance of recognizing individual differences.

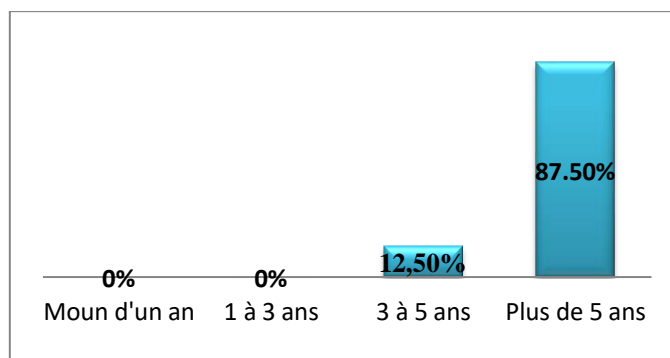
In the next question (Q12), it was asserted that learners sometimes use some French words in English, which confirms the existence of interference between both languages.

However, this is not the case for mixing grammatical rules between them (Q13), as the majority of learners do not face this issue. Only a small proportion of learners experience difficulties with rules related to plural forms and sentence structure. This can be explained by the fact that English learners are dealing with the basics of the language and have not had extensive grammar lessons, which are planned for the end of the academic year, unlike French where grammar is introduced earlier.

In question fourteen, the majority of teachers reported that learning French and English simultaneously does not affect learners' motivation. They claim that learners find English easier and prefer it over French. The results of Q15 can support this, as all teachers reported a very good and satisfactory improvement in their learners over time. In the next question (Q16), the majority of teachers expressed concerns about the insufficiency of time allocated to teaching English to avoid interference with French. The last question inquired about techniques teachers use to overcome these difficulties, such as drills, repetition, the use of TPR to explain words, employing different teaching methods, incorporating audios, songs, and real conversations to help learners differentiate between the two languages.

### 2.2.2. Questionnaire for Teachers of French

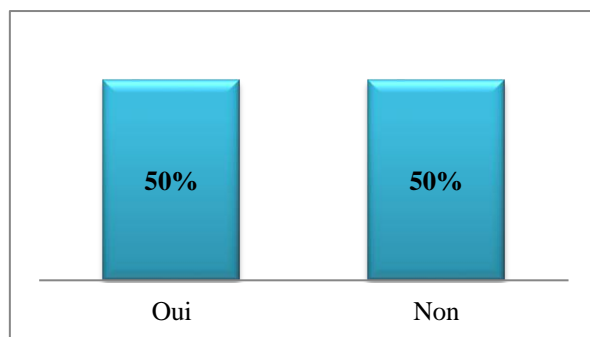
#### Q1. Depuis combien de temps enseignez-vous le Français?



*Figure18: Duration of French Teaching*

As shown in the figure above, all the teachers have a teaching experience of more than 3 years, the majority of them (87,5%) have more than five years of teaching French, while the rest (12,5%) have a teaching experience of three to five years.

**Q2. Avez-vous déjà enseigné à des jeunes apprenants étudiant le français et l'anglais simultanément?**

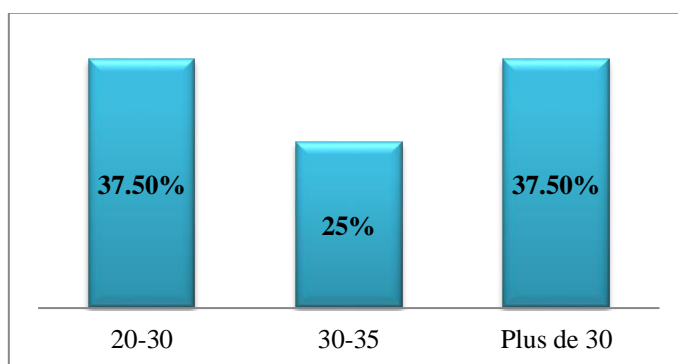


*Figure 19: Teachers of French with Experience in Simultaneous French and English*

*Teaching*

The results obtained denote that 50% of teachers have experienced teaching French and English simultaneously while the other half did not.

**Q3. Quel est le nombre moyen d'apprenants dans vos classes?**



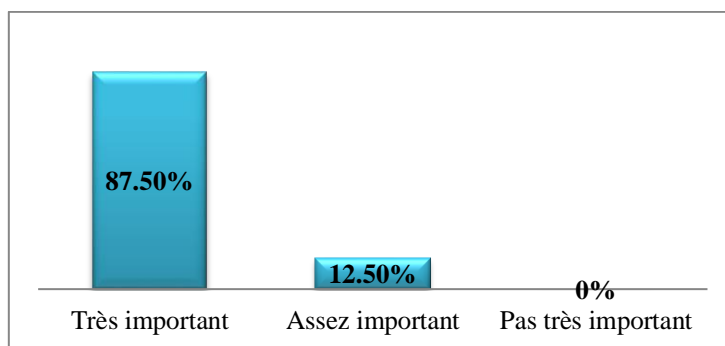
*Figure 20: Number of Learners in Classes*

The results indicate that 37.5% of teachers teach an average number of 20 to 30 learners in the classroom, 25% teach an average number of 30 to 35 learners in class, while the



remaining 37.5% teach more than 30 learners per classroom.

**Q4. Selon vous, à quel point est-il important que les apprenants apprennent plusieurs langues?**

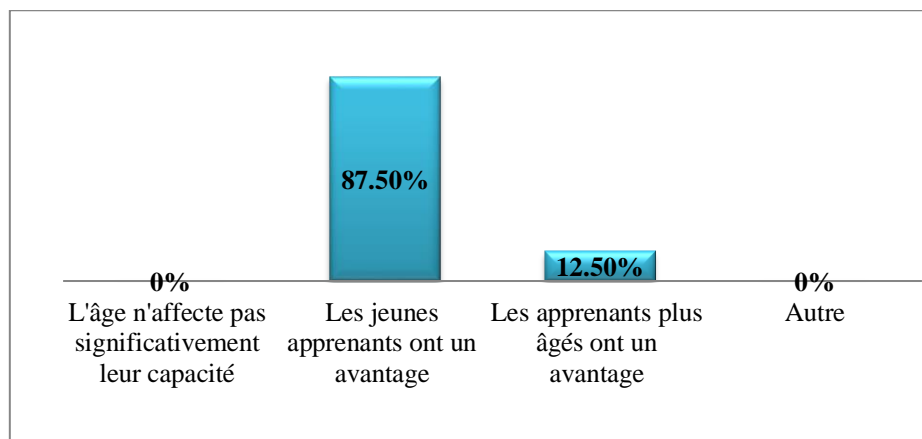


*Figure 21: The Importance of Learning Multiple Languages*

The chart shows that 87.5% of French teachers consider learning multiple languages simultaneously to be very important.

They justified their answer by highlighting the learners' capacities at that age and the benefits that come with language learning, such as gaining new perspectives on different cultures, developing a deeper understanding of the world, and the opportunities it presents. Additionally, some teachers emphasized the importance of English as a global language, which makes it necessary to include it in the educational program alongside French. Conversely, the remaining 12.5% considered it somewhat important without providing further justification. It is worth noting that none of the teachers deem it unimportant.

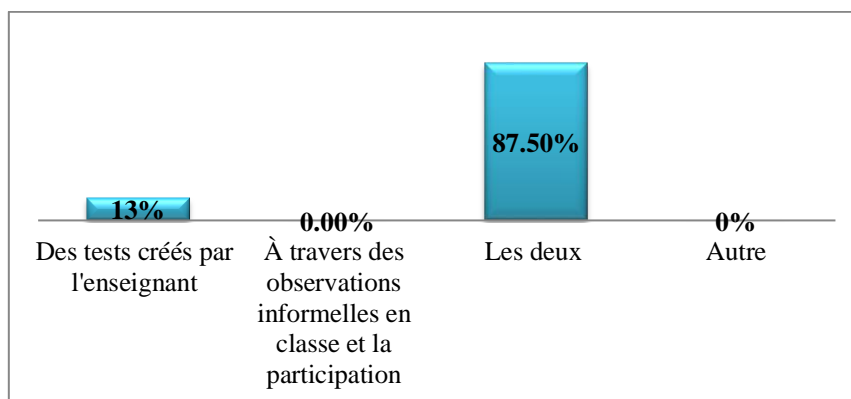
**Q5. Comment l'âge des apprenants affecte-t-il leur capacité à apprendre deux langues simultanément?**



**Figure 22: The Effect of Age on Simultaneous Learning of Two Languages**

As illustrated in the figure above, none of the teachers of French agree that age does not have a significant effect on learners' ability. Therefore, 87, 5% of them declared that younger learners have an advantage, while the remaining 12,5% stated that older learners have an advantage. Noting that, none of the teachers provided any justification.

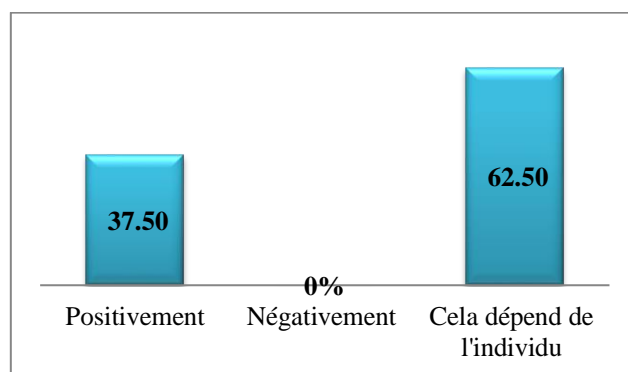
**Q6. Comment évaluez-vous la progression des apprenants en français, et quels sont les critères que vous utilisez pour déterminer le succès?**



**Figure 23: The Metrics Used by Teachers to Assess Learners Progress in French**

From the results above, it is observed that the majority of teachers (87.5%) utilize a combination of both methods for assessing learners' progress. The remaining 13% of teachers rely on teacher-made tests as their primary assessment method. However, no teachers rely solely on informal classroom observation and participation.

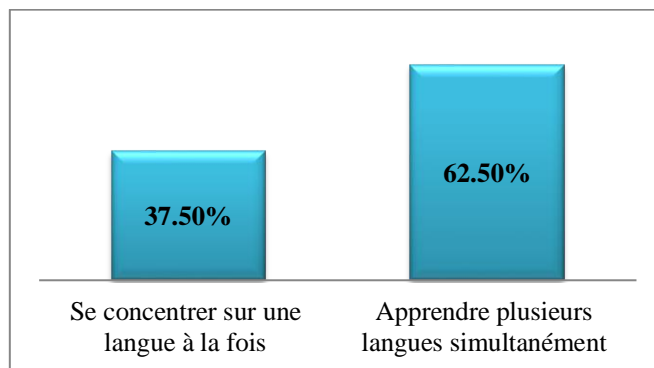
**Q7. Comment pensez-vous que l'apprentissage simultané du français et de l'anglais impacte le développement linguistique général d'un apprenant?**



***Figure 24: Views on the Impact of Simultaneous Language Learning on Overall Language Development***

As shown in the figure, 37.5% of the teachers asserted that learning French and English simultaneously positively affects learners' overall language development. They clarified that learners at that age have the capacity and cognitive ability to do so. On the other hand, 62.5% noted that the effect depends on the individual, justifying that learners' social, physical, and mental state, as well as their efforts and preparations, play a crucial role. Meanwhile, none of the teachers noted a negative effect.

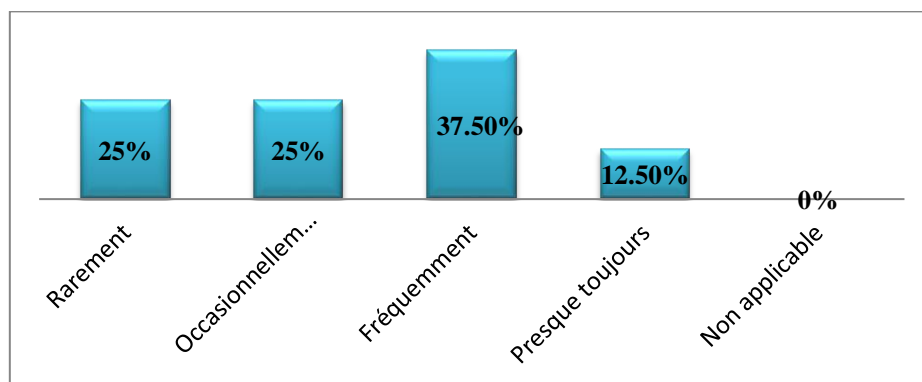
**Q8. Pensez-vous qu'il est préférable pour les apprenants de :**



*Figure 25: Preferences for Language Learning Approach*

As illustrated above, 37.5% of teachers believe that learners should focus on one language at a time. Some teachers justified this by explaining that learners will have more time to dedicate to mastering a single language. Others claimed that learners tend to mix up the two languages and have limited vocabulary when learning multiple languages simultaneously. On the other hand, the majority (62.5%) believed that it is beneficial for learners to learn multiple languages simultaneously. They justified this by stating that learners find it easy to manage and benefit from both languages.

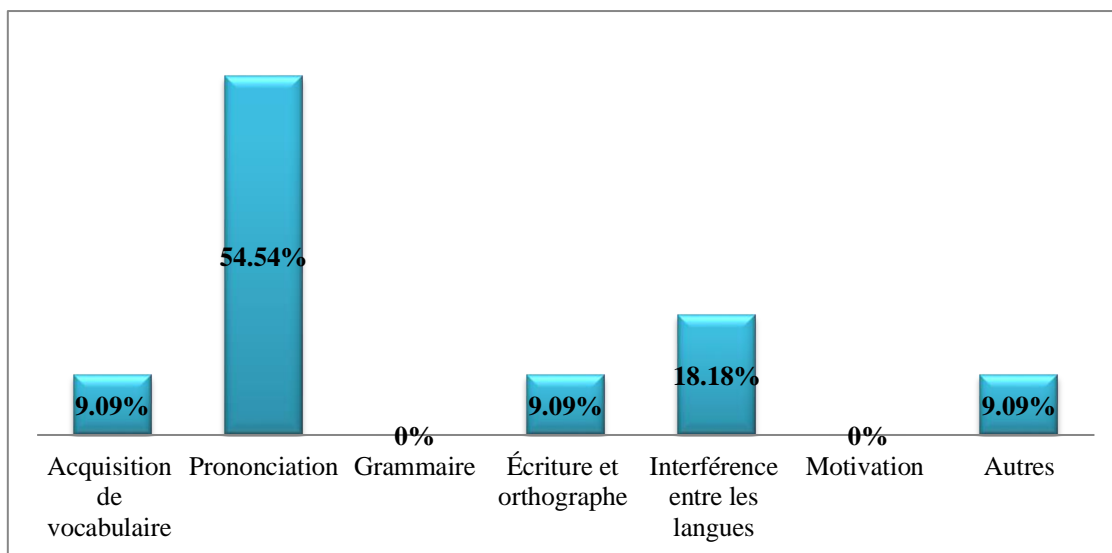
**Q9. À quelle fréquence voyez-vous des apprenants avoir des difficultés avec l'apprentissage simultané du français et de l'anglais?**



*Figure 26: Frequency of Learners' Struggles with Simultaneous Learning of French and English*

The results reported by teachers of French denote that 25% of learners rarely or occasionally struggle with simultaneous learning of French and English, 37,5% are frequently struggle, and 12,5% are almost always struggle.

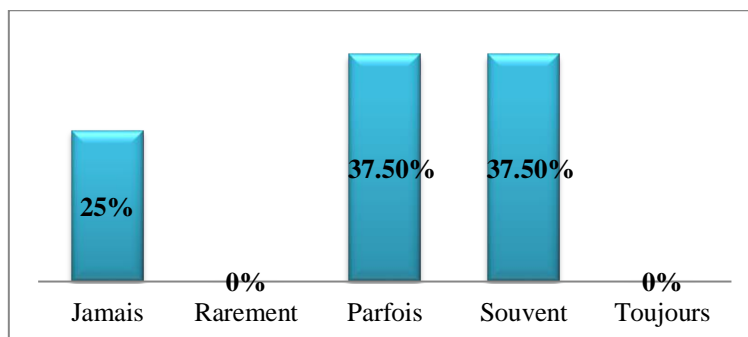
**Q10. Quelles sont les difficultés les plus courantes que vos apprenants rencontrent lorsqu'ils apprennent deux langues simultanément?**



*Figure 27: Common Difficulties Encountered by Learners*

From the chart, it is evident that the most common difficulties learners encounter when learning two languages simultaneously is in pronunciation, accounting for 54.54%. This is followed by interference between languages at 18.18%. Additionally, vocabulary acquisition, writing and spelling, and other difficulties each account for 9.09% of the challenges faced by learners.

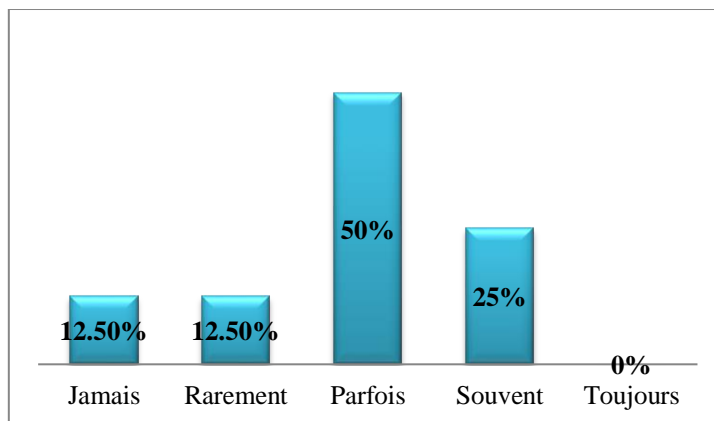
**Q11. Les apprenants ont-ils tendance à mélanger la prononciation de certaines voyelles anglaise en français?**



*Figure 28: Mixing of English Vowels Pronunciation in French by Learners*

As reported by teachers of French and illustrated in the chart above, 37.5% of learners sometimes and often mix French vowels pronunciation with English like “a”, “o”, “u”, “ou”, “i”, and “y”, while the remaining 25% never encounter this issue.

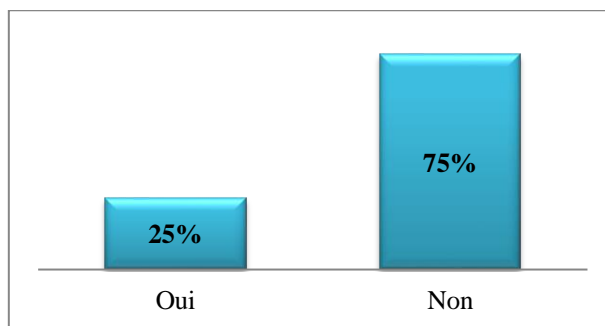
**Q12. Les élèves ont-ils tendance à utiliser des mots anglais en français?**



*Figure29: Usage of English Words in French by Pupils*

The obtained results illustrate that 50% of learners sometimes tend to use some English words in French, 25% often do, and 12.5% either never or rarely do so.

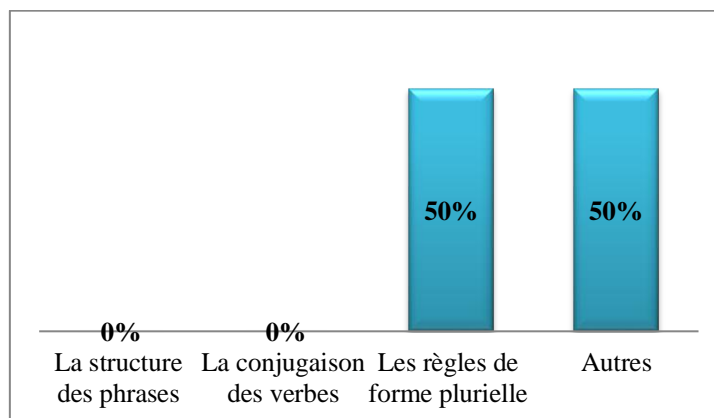
**Q13. Les apprenants ont-ils tendance à mélanger les règles grammaticales des deux langues?**



*Figure 30: Mixing of Grammar Rules*

From the figure above, it is evident that the majority of learners (75%) do not mix the grammar rules of both French and English when learning them simultaneously, while only 25% do so.

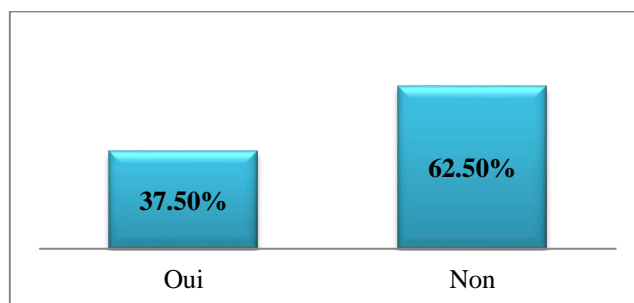
- **Si oui, quelles sont les règles les plus courantes qu'ils ont tendance à mélanger?**



*Figure 31: Commonly Mixed Grammar Rules*

As illustrated in the results, among the 25% of learners who tend to mix the grammar rules of both languages, 50% of them tend to mix the plural form rules, while the other 50% tend to mix other rules, excluding sentence structures and verb conjugation.

**Q14. Est-ce que l'apprentissage simultané du français et de l'anglais affecte la motivation des apprenants?**



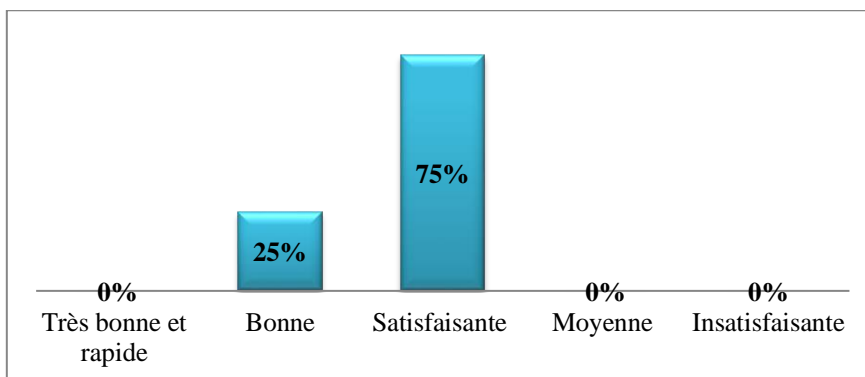
*Figure 32: Impact of Simultaneous Study of French and English on Learners'*

*Motivation*

Regarding the effect of learning French and English simultaneously on learners' motivation, only 37.5% of teachers assert that it has a positive effect. They explained that it creates a sense of competition among learners and enriches their memories, allowing them to actively engage with the languages. On the other hand, the remaining 62.5% of teachers asserted that the simultaneous learning of French and English has no effect on learners' motivation. They clarified that the engaging pedagogical activities and the learners' inherent love for the English language keep them motivated regardless of the simultaneous learning aspect.



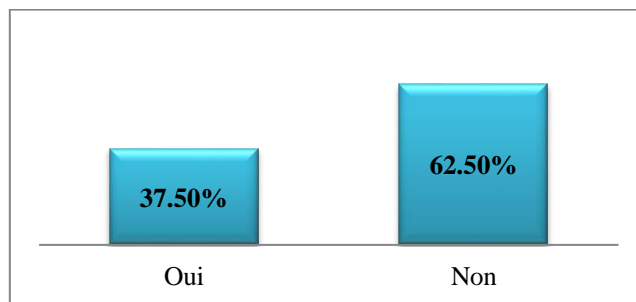
**Q15. En tant qu'enseignant, comment évaluez-vous l'amélioration des apprenants au fil du temps?**



***Figure 33: Teacher's Assessment of Learners' Improvement over Time***

As shown in the results above, all the teachers assessed their learners' improvement as satisfactory (75%) and the remaining teachers (25%) assessed their learners' improvement as good.

**Q16. Le temps alloué pour enseigner le français, est-il suffisant pour résoudre le problème d'interférence entre les deux langues ?**



***Figure 34: Adequacy of Time Allocated to Teaching French in Eliminating Interference Between Languages***

Regarding the adequacy of time allocated to teaching French in eliminating interference between the two languages, 62.5% of teachers asserted its insufficiency, while 37.5% stated that it is sufficient.

**Q17. What techniques do you use as a teacher to overcome the learners' difficulties of learning French and English simultaneously?**

Teachers of French reported that they use different techniques such as varying the types of exercises compared to those used in English, employing different teaching methods, incorporating audios, songs, and real conversations to help learners differentiate between the two languages, and most importantly, providing support to the learners.

**2.2.2.1. Discussion and Interpretation of the Results**

A translated version of the questionnaire was addressed to eight teachers of French specifically teaching third year primary school pupils. In addition, these teachers were selected because they have more years of experience in teaching pupils than teachers of English who are mainly newly appointed as English is a new subject in the Algerian Primary schools. Besides, they used to teach them French before the inclusion of English which enables them to observe the significant changes and difficulties pupils may encounter.

The first section of the teachers' of French questionnaire was devoted to general information aiming to gather information about how many years they have been teaching French, if they have ever experience teaching learners studying French and English simultaneously, and the average number of learners in their classes. All the teachers involved were having more than 3 years, the majority more than 5 years of teaching the language, and half of them have experienced teaching learners studying both languages at the same time. Nevertheless, the number of learners is not that small to ensure a comprehensible input for all of them.

The second section was devoted to teachers' views on teaching French and English simultaneously. Question 4 (Q4) focused on their opinions regarding the importance of learning multiple languages, and all of them affirmed its significance. They claimed that

learners at that age have a great capacity that enables them to acquire different languages. Moreover, they highlighted that languages assist learners in their lives, as different languages bring different cultures. This exposure allows learners to develop new perspectives, think broadly, and better understand the world around them. However, another teacher argued that the importance of learning multiple languages stems from the importance of the languages being learned. Question 5 (Q5) inquired about the effect of age on learners' ability. The teachers' responses affirmed the critical period hypothesis, as they confirmed that young learners have an advantage. However, it is worth noting that only one teacher asserted that older learners have an advantage which shows that learning two foreign languages besides the mother tongue cannot be seen as an easy task for third year primary school pupils. The following question (Q6) investigated the metrics of assessment used by teachers and the results revealed that the vast majority tends to use a combination of teachers-made tests and informal classroom observation and participation. This suggests that these teachers recognize the value of utilizing multiple approaches to gather a comprehensive understanding of students' performance and development. By utilizing a combination of assessment methods, teachers can gain a more holistic view of students' progress and make decisions to support their learning needs. The next question (Q7) aimed to evaluate learners' overall language development, and the results indicated that 37.5% of teachers expressed the belief that learning both languages simultaneously has a positive effect. This suggests that the positive effect may arise from the relationship between the two languages, as learners can take advantage of similarities and transferable skills between French and English. On the other hand, 62.5% of teachers believe that the impact depends on the individual learner, assuming that factors such as the learners' intellectual and social state, as well as the efforts made at home, play a crucial role. Additionally, some teachers reported that the interference between

both languages can be considered as an obstacle for some learners. These perspectives recognize that each student has unique characteristics, abilities, and learning styles. Teachers who acknowledge these individual differences emphasize the importance of personalized instruction and adapting teaching strategies to meet each student's needs and preferences. In the last question in this section (Q8), teachers' views were contradictory. Some of them claim that learners should focus on learning one language at a time, claiming that learners will have more time to develop it and because of problems of interference and limited vocabulary learners faced. On the contrary, others claim that learners have the capacity and that it is very easy for them to learn multiple languages simultaneously.

The third section is devoted to investigating the difficulties learners in the third year of primary school may encounter. In the first question (Q9), some teachers of French reported that their learners frequently, almost always struggle with the simultaneous learning of French and English. The most common difficulties they encounter (Q10) are mainly related to pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, writing, spelling, and interference between both languages. Among the issues of pronunciation that learners face are the pronunciations of vowels (Q11). As reported by teachers, the vowel "a" is the most mispronounced one, along with "i," "o," "u," "ou", and "y." These results suggest that the similarities between the two languages cannot always be an advantage, as having the same alphabet has caused confusion in pronunciation for learners. However, not all learners encounter the issue at the same level, which emphasizes the importance of recognizing individual differences.

In the next question (Q12), it was asserted that learners are used to using some English words in French, which confirms the existence of interference between both languages. However, this is not the case for mixing grammatical rules between them (Q13), as the majority of learners do not face this issue. Only a small proportion of learners experience

difficulties with rules related to plural forms and simpler ones. This can be explained by the fact that English learners are dealing with the basics of the language and have not had extensive grammar lessons, which are planned for the end of the academic year, unlike French where grammar is introduced earlier.

In question fourteen, the majority of teachers reported that learning French and English simultaneously does not affect learners' motivation. They claim that learners find English easier and prefer it over French, while others believe that the acquisition of multiple languages assimilates their cognitive processes. The results of Q15 can support this, as all teachers reported good and satisfactory improvement in their learners over time.

In the next question (Q16), the majority of teachers expressed concerns about the insufficiency of time allocated to teaching French to avoid interference with English, even though it is double of the time allocated to English. The last question inquired about techniques teachers use to overcome these difficulties, such as varying the types of exercises compared to those used in English, employing different teaching methods, incorporating audios, songs, and real conversations to help learners differentiate between the two languages, and most importantly, providing support to the learners. All of these techniques have proven their effectiveness in the field of teaching and contribute to overcoming the challenges of learning French and English simultaneously.

### **2.2.3. Classroom Observation**

#### **2.2.3.1. Design and Description of Classroom Observation**

Among the data gathering methods chosen for this dissertation was the classroom observation. The purpose of the observation was to identify the probable difficulties learners may encounter when learning French and English simultaneously. Twelve observation sessions were held from April 9<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> within two third-year primary school classes of

English at "Boufaroum Brothers" school in Jijel. Each observation session lasted for 45 minutes; however, in the month of Ramadan the sessions were reduced to 35 minutes. The classes consisted of 30 learners with rare absences. The sessions covered various topics and activities aimed at introducing new vocabulary and sounds, as well as engaging in dialogues, and listening and repeating activities most of the time. Furthermore, during the sessions, teachers primarily focused on speaking and pronunciation rather than writing.

To conduct this observation, I have developed a checklist based on various aspects of the literature review, including motivation, the input hypothesis, as well as the probable difficulties related to grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

#### **2.2.3.2. Analysis of Classroom Observation**

The observation statements were divided into five categories: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, motivation, and comprehensible input.

##### **a) Pronunciation**

During the observation sessions, learners were mostly mispronouncing vowel sounds such as 'e', 'i', 'o', 'u', 'y', and "ui", and especially 'a'. They were pronouncing these vowels in a French way, as exemplified by words like "snake", "juice", "plate", and "orange". Additionally, the majority of learners were not recognizing silent letters in words like "knot" and "knife" and tended to pronounce them. However, they occasionally mispronounced the 'r' sound, but never mispronounced the pronoun 'I' as an 'i'.

##### **b) Vocabulary**

Concerning vocabulary, it appears that many learners often mixed up French and English words such as 'miss' and 'maîtresse', 'yes' and 'oui', 'avril' and 'april', etc. As for false cognates, I did not observe any cases during the observation that allowed me to confirm or

refute this possibility.

### **c) Grammar**

Regarding grammar, there was nothing to be observed since learners at this level were not supposed to have any grammar lessons until the end of the third trimester when they are expected to tackle primary rules such as sentence structures. However, teachers sometimes explained some plural form rules during the lessons. In contrast, French classes included grammar lessons earlier in the year.

### **d) Motivation**

Motivation is a key component in learning, and it is worth examining when learners are confronted with two foreign languages simultaneously. During the observations, interactions with teachers, interactions between learners, and participation were highly noticeable. Learners were actively participating and interacting in class when they were asked to repeat, while at other times they were not, especially when they were supposed to provide answers or read but not to repeat, and this varied among individuals. Nevertheless, teachers were using different tools and effective strategies to encourage learners, such as complements, games, songs, flashcards, and reward cards.

### **e) Comprehensible Input**

Teachers play a main role in motivating learners and helping them overcome the difficulties they encounter when learning French and English simultaneously. Most of the time, teachers were checking for comprehension and correcting learners' mistakes, either by asking them directly, or by conducting a collective revision. However, learners often hesitated when faced with something new since they were mostly only asked to repeat. For example, when learners are asked to read a new English word that they have not heard before, they mainly hesitate and frequently read it

in a French way.

### **2.2.3.3. Discussion and Interpretation of the Classroom Observation**

To support the results of the questionnaire administered to teachers of English, a classroom observation was conducted in a third-year primary school English class at "Boufaroum Brothers" school in Jijel. The observation utilized a checklist divided into five parts: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, motivation, and comprehensible input.

Regarding pronunciation, it was observed that learners mispronounce some vowels in a French way, as well as pronounce some silent letters. This signifies the effect of the similarities between the two languages, as they share the same alphabet with different pronunciations, and also highlights the influence of French as an inherited language within Algerian dialects. Regarding vocabulary, it was observed that learners mix up vocabulary from the two languages, particularly frequently used words in the classroom, such as "yes" and "oui." This indicates that simultaneous learning of two foreign languages may lead to challenges, like unintentional code-switching. Concerning grammar, I was not allowed to attend additional sessions, which prevented me from covering the last lessons that include certain aspects of grammar. Regarding motivation, since the majority of lessons focused on listening, repeating, and speaking skills, learners were actively motivated. In terms of comprehensible input, teachers utilized purposeful teaching methods and techniques, demonstrating the success of the pedagogical composition of the teachers of English. However, the learners' hesitation when asked to read new words reveals their confusion due to the similarities between the two languages.



### **2.3. Overall Discussion of the Main Results**

The present study investigated the difficulties that third year primary school pupils encounter when learning French and English simultaneously. It also aimed to discover which language affect the other. So the research was set to answer the following questions:

- What are the main challenges faced by young learners in Algerian primary schools when learning French and English simultaneously?
- Which language impacts the other?

As revealed in the results of the questionnaire dedicated to teachers of English and the classroom observations, third-year primary school pupils encounter some difficulties related to pronunciation, especially with the vowel "a" and others (i, o, u, y), as they mispronounce them in a French way. Furthermore, they tend to mix up vocabulary between the two languages. However, regarding grammatical rules, there were no significant indicators to support or refute this assumption. Regarding motivation, the findings indicated that pupils' motivation was not affected; on the contrary, they were highly motivated.

Based on the findings of the questionnaire administered to teachers of French and English, it was revealed that there is a mutual effect between the two languages. Furthermore, the background of the French language in the country does not make any difference, which highlights the significance and influence of the English language on a global scale.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter was devoted to the practical part, which includes the analysis of three data instruments: questionnaires for teachers of English and French, a classroom observation checklist, and the discussion and interpretation of the results. Additionally, it presents a discussion of the main findings. The results obtained suggest that third-year primary school pupils encounter difficulties related to pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition when learning French and English simultaneously. Furthermore, it is evident that both languages have an effect on each other.

## **General Conclusion**

The present study aimed to investigate the difficulties encountered by learners when learning French and English simultaneously. This study comprises two chapters: the literature review and the fieldwork.

The literature review was divided into two sections. The first section presented theories of second language acquisition related to the topic, scrutinizing the Krashen Hypothesis, Universal Grammar Theory, and Complex Dynamical Systems Theory. It also examined the critical period theory and the cognitive mechanisms involved in language learning. The second section focused on crucial factors to understanding the difficulties learners may encounter, such as the structural differences and similarities between French and English, time allocation for each language, motivation, teacher proficiency, code-mixing, and classroom strategies. Additionally, considering the status of both languages in Algeria was essential, as it can significantly impact language acquisition and use.

Similarly, the second chapter exclusively focused on the fieldwork of the research. Data was collected through a classroom observation took place with third-year primary school level and a questionnaire was administered to teachers of English and a translated version to teachers of French of the same level. The gathered data was subsequently analyzed and interpreted. The results obtained suggest that third-year primary school pupils face difficulties in pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition when learning French and English simultaneously, without any negative effect on their motivation. Furthermore, it is evident that both languages have an impact on each other.

## **Limitations of the Study**

While conducting this research I encountered some obstacles which are:

- Insufficient resources and unavailability of relevant electronic books for free.
- The classroom observation necessitates researchers to attend multiple sessions. However, obtaining permission was challenging, and it was limited to a specific period of time. Consequently, the observation period was insufficient to capture certain aspects that had not occurred during the limited sessions such as grammar.

## **Recommendations of the Study**

Based on the results of this study, we can recommend the following:

- As the study revealed the presence of interference between both languages, it is suggested to vary the types of pronunciation and vocabulary activities in each language, ensuring they are different from one another.
- Since the two languages are taught in two sessions per week, it is recommended that schedule makers allocate a sufficient time gap between the sessions.
- Given that learners tend to mispronounce vowels and silent letters, teachers are encouraged to provide explicit instruction on the differences between the two languages.
- As the study highlighted the importance of considering individual differences, teachers are advised to offer additional guidance and support to these individuals. Similarly, parents are recommended to provide extra support to their children at home.

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## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Teachers of English**

**Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Teachers of French**

**Appendix 3: Classroom Observation Checklist**

## **Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Teachers of English**

**University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia.**

**Jijel Department of English**

**Questionnaire for Teachers**

**Dear Teachers,**

You are kindly invited to take part in this research by filling in the questionnaire below. The present questionnaire aims at identifying the difficulties that third year primary school pupils face while studying French and English simultaneously. Please note that the information you provide here will remain confidential and used only to achieve the aims of the present research. All that is required from you is to respond sincerely to each item. Please, tick (✓) in the appropriate box/boxes, and make full statement when necessary. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

**Academic year 2022 – 2023**

### **Section One: General Information**

**1: How long have you been teaching English?**

a) Less than 1 year

b) 1-3 years

c) 3-5 years

d) More than 5 years

**2: Have you ever experience teaching young learners studying French and English simultaneously?**

a - Yes

b – No

**3: What is the average number of Learners in your classes?**

a) 20 -30

b) 30 – 35

c) More than 30

**Section Two: Teaching French and English Simultaneously**

**4: How important do you think it is for learners to learn multiple languages?**

a) Very important

b) Somewhat important

c) Not very important

Why: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5: How does the age of the learners affect their ability to learn two languages**

**simultaneously?**

a) Age does not significantly affect their ability

b) Younger learners have an advantage

c) Older learners have an advantage

d) Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**6: How do you assess the progress of learners in English, and what metrics do you use to**

**determine success?**

a) Teacher-made tests

b) Through informal classroom observations and participation

c) Both

d) Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**7: How do you think learning French and English simultaneously impacts a learner's overall language development?**

a) Positively

b) Negatively

c) It depends on the individual

Justify:

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**8: Do you think it is better for learners to:**

a) Focus on one language at a time

b) Learn multiple languages simultaneously

Justify:

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**Section Three: Difficulties Encountered by Third Year Primary School Pupils Studying French and English Simultaneously**

**9: How often do you see learners struggling with the simultaneous learning of French and English?**

a) Rarely

b) Occasionally

c) Frequently

d) Almost always

e) Not applicable

**10: What are the most common difficulties that your learners encounter when learning two languages simultaneously?**

a) Vocabulary acquisition

- b) Pronunciation
- c) Grammar
- d) Writing and spelling
- e) Interference between languages
- f) Motivation
- g) Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**11: Do learners tend to mix the pronunciation of some French vowels in English?**

- a) Never
- b) Rarely
- c) Sometimes
- d) Often
- e) Always

- If yes, what are the most common vowels that they tend to mispronounce?

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**12: Do Pupils tend to use words of French in English?**

- a) Never
- b) Rarely
- c) Sometimes
- d) Often
- e) Always

**13: Do learners tend to mix the grammar rules of both languages?**

- a - Yes
- b - No

- If yes, what are the most common rules they tend to mix?



- a) Sentence structure
- b) Verbs conjugation
- c) Plural form rules
- d) Others

**14: Do studying French and English simultaneously affect learners' motivation?**

- a – Yes                       b – No

Please explain:

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**15: As a teacher, how do you rate learners' improvement over time?**

- a) Very good and fast
- b) Good
- c) Satisfactory
- d) Blow average
- e) Unsatisfactory

**16: Is time allocated to teach English sufficient to address the issue of interference between the two languages?**

- a – Yes                       b – No

**17: What techniques do you use as a teacher to overcome the learners' difficulties of learning French and English simultaneously?**

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## Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Teachers of French

**Université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia.**

**Département d'anglais de Jijel.**

**Questionnaire pour les enseignants.**

**Chers enseignants,**

Vous êtes cordialement invités à participer à cette recherche en remplissant le questionnaire ci-dessous. Le présent questionnaire vise à identifier les difficultés auxquelles sont confrontés les élèves de troisième année de l'école primaire lorsqu'ils étudient le français et l'anglais simultanément. Veuillez noter que les informations que vous fournissez ici resteront confidentielles et seront utilisées uniquement pour atteindre les objectifs de la présente recherche. Tout ce qui est requis de votre part est de répondre sincèrement à chaque élément. Veuillez cocher (✓) dans les cases appropriées et faire une déclaration complète si nécessaire. Nous vous remercions par avance de votre coopération.

**Année académique 2022-2023**

### **Section Un : Informations Générales**

**1 : Depuis combien de temps enseignez-vous le Français?**

a) Moins d'un an

b) 1 à 3 ans

c) 3 à 5 ans

d) Plus de 5 ans

**2 : Avez-vous déjà enseigné à de jeunes apprenants étudiant le français et l'anglais simultanément?**

a – Oui

b – Non

**3 : Quel est le nombre moyen d'apprenants dans vos classes?**

a) 20 -30

b) 30 – 35

c) Plus de 30

**Section Deux : Enseignement du français et de l'anglais simultanément**

**4 : Selon vous, à quel point est-il important que les apprenants apprennent plusieurs langues?**

a) Très important

b) Assez important

c) Pas très important

Pourquoi :

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**5 : Comment l'âge des apprenants affecte-t-il leur capacité à apprendre deux langues simultanément?**

a) L'âge n'affecte pas significativement leur capacité

b) Les jeunes apprenants ont un avantage

c) Les apprenants plus âgés ont un avantage

d) Autre (veuillez préciser) :

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**6 : Comment évaluez-vous la progression des apprenants en français, et quels sont les critères que vous utilisez pour déterminer le succès?**

a) Des tests créés par l'enseignant

b) À travers des observations informelles en classe et la participation

c) Les deux

d) Autre (veuillez préciser) : \_\_\_\_\_

**7 : Comment pensez-vous que l'apprentissage simultané du français et de l'anglais impacte le développement linguistique général d'un apprenant?**

a) Positivement

b) Négativement

c) Cela dépend de l'individu

Justifie :

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**8 : Pensez-vous qu'il est préférable pour les apprenants de :**

a) Se concentrer sur une langue à la fois

b) Apprendre plusieurs langues simultanément

Justification :

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**Section Trois : Difficultés rencontrées par les élèves de troisième année du primaire étudiant simultanément le français et l'anglais**

**9 : À quelle fréquence voyez-vous des apprenants avoir des difficultés avec l'apprentissage simultané du français et de l'anglais?**

a) Rarement

b) Occasionnellement

c) Fréquemment

d) Presque toujours

e) Non applicable

**10 : Quelles sont les difficultés les plus courantes que vos apprenants rencontrent lorsqu'ils apprennent deux langues simultanément?**

a) Acquisition de vocabulaire

b) Prononciation

c) Grammaire

d) Écriture et orthographe

e) Interférence entre les langues

f) Motivation

g) Autres (veuillez préciser) : \_\_\_\_\_

**11 : Les apprenants ont-ils tendance à mélanger la prononciation de certaines voyelles anglaise en français?**

a) Jamais

b) Rarement

c) Parfois

d) Souvent

e) Toujours

Si oui, quelles sont les voyelles les plus courantes qu'ils ont tendance à mal prononcer ?

---

**12 : Les élèves ont-ils tendance à utiliser des mots anglais en français?**

a) Jamais

b) Rarement

c) Parfois

d) Souvent

e) Toujours

**13 : Les apprenants ont-ils tendance à mélanger les règles grammaticales des deux langues?**

a) Oui                       b) Non

• Si oui, quelles sont les règles les plus courantes qu'ils ont tendance à mélanger ?

• a) La structure des phrases

• b) La conjugaison des verbes

• c) Les règles de forme plurielle

• d) Autres

**14 : Est-ce que l'apprentissage simultané du français et de l'anglais affecte la motivation des apprenants?**

a) Oui                       b) Non

Veillez expliquer :

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**15 : En tant qu'enseignant, comment évaluez-vous l'amélioration des apprenants au fil du temps?**

a) Très bonne et rapide

b) Bonne

c) Satisfaisante

d) Moyenne

e) Insatisfaisante

**16: Le temps alloué pour enseigner le français, est-il suffisant pour résoudre le problème d'interférence entre les deux langues ?**

a - Oui

b - Non

**17: Quelles techniques utilisez-vous en tant qu'enseignant pour surmonter les difficultés des apprenants à apprendre le français et l'anglais simultanément?**

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### Appendix 3: Classroom Observation Checklist

#### Checklist

<b>The observation statements of the probable difficulties the learners may encounter</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<b>Pronunciation</b>			
1-Learners mix up in pronouncing the “r” sound.			
2-Learners mispronounce the pronoun “I”.			
3-Learners mispronounce the sounds “e”, “u”, “a”, and “o”, “i”.			
4-Learners pronounce silent letters.			
<b>Vocabulary</b>			
1-Learners mix up vocabulary.			
2-Learners does not recognize false cognate.			
<b>Grammar</b>			
1-Learners mix up plural form rules between the two languages.			
2-Learners mix up the language structures between the two languages.			
3-Learners mix up the verb tenses and conjugation rules.			
<b>Motivation</b>			
1-Learners interact with each other.			



2-Learners interact with their teacher.			
3-Learners are actively participating.			
<b>Comprehensible Input</b>			
1-Teacher checks for comprehension.			
2-Learners are somehow hesitating.			

## Résumé

L'apprentissage de langues multiples comporte à la fois des défis et des avantages, ce qui rend l'équilibre entre les différents systèmes linguistiques complexe. Cette étude vise à explorer les difficultés de l'apprentissage simultané du français et de l'anglais dans les écoles primaires algériennes. Les apprenants sont confrontés à des défis liés à la prononciation, à l'acquisition de vocabulaire, à la grammaire et à la motivation en raison de l'influence du français sur l'anglais. Pour atteindre cet objectif, une approche mixte combinant l'observation en classe et un questionnaire a été utilisée pour collecter des données. L'observation a été réalisée dans des classes de troisième année de l'école primaire "Frères Boufroum" afin d'identifier les difficultés rencontrées par les apprenants lors de leurs leçons. De plus, le questionnaire a été distribué à huit enseignants d'anglais, et sa version traduite a été présentée à huit enseignants de français provenant d'écoles primaires différentes pour renforcer les résultats et déterminer l'impact d'une langue sur l'autre. Les résultats obtenus indiquent que les élèves de troisième année des écoles primaires rencontrent des difficultés de prononciation et d'acquisition de vocabulaire lorsqu'ils apprennent simultanément le français et l'anglais, sans que cela n'affecte leur motivation. Cependant, il n'a pas été possible d'observer les difficultés liées à la grammaire en raison de certaines contraintes. De plus, les résultats extraits du questionnaire suggèrent que les deux langues ont un impact l'une sur l'autre.

Mots-clés : Apprentissage simultané, Difficultés, Impact.

## ملخص

تعلم اللغات المتعددة ينطوي على تحديات وفوائد في آن واحد، وبالتالي فإن توازن الأنظمة اللغوية المختلفة ليس بالأمر السهل. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف صعوبات تعلم اللغتين الفرنسية والإنجليزية بشكل متزامن في المدارس الابتدائية الجزائرية. يعاني المتعلمون من تحديات تتعلق بالنطق واكتساب المفردات وقواعد النحو والدوافع نتيجة تأثير اللغة الفرنسية على الإنجليزية. لتحقيق هذا الهدف، تم استخدام نهج مختلط يتضمن الملاحظة في الفصل واستبيان لجمع البيانات. تمت الملاحظة في صفوف السنة الثالثة في مدرسة "الأخوة بوفروم" الابتدائية لتحديد الصعوبات التي يواجهها المتعلمون أثناء دروسهم. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم توزيع الاستبيان على ثمانية معلمين للغة الإنجليزية وتم ترجمة الاستبيان وتقديمه لثمانية معلمين للغة الفرنسية في مدارس ابتدائية مختلفة لدعم النتائج وتحديد تأثير اللغة الواحدة على الأخرى. أظهرت النتائج أن طلاب السنة الثالثة في المدارس الابتدائية يواجهون صعوبات في النطق واكتساب المفردات عندما يتعلمون اللغتين الفرنسية والإنجليزية بشكل متزامن، دون أن يؤثر ذلك على دوافعهم؛ ومع ذلك، لم يكن من الممكن ملاحظة الصعوبات المتعلقة بقواعد النحو بسبب القيود. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، تشير النتائج المستخلصة من الاستبيان إلى أن اللغتين تؤثران على بعضهما البعض.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تعلم متزامن، صعوبات، تأثير.