



Integrating social, cognitive, and ludic dimensions to enhance foreign language teaching and learning in Algerians Universities Classrooms

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Abstract

This study investigates the integration of social, cognitive, and ludic dimensions in enhancing foreign language teaching and learning in the Algerian university context. Recognizing the importance of interactive and learner-centered approaches, the research examines how these dimensions can address persistent challenges in foreign language education, including limited student engagement, reliance on traditional teaching methods, and insufficient use of innovative pedagogical strategies. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, involving surveys, classroom observations, and interviews with teachers and students from selected Algerian universities. Findings reveal that incorporating social interactions, cognitively engaging techniques, and ludic (playful) activities significantly improves students' motivation, language proficiency, and critical thinking skills. Teachers also report increased classroom dynamism and a shift toward collaborative learning environments. Despite challenges such as large class sizes and resource limitations, the research concludes with actionable recommendations for integrating these dimensions effectively into foreign language teaching practices. These findings highlight the

transformative potential of holistic teaching approaches in fostering meaningful and engaging learning experiences for Algerian university students.

Keywords: *social dimensions, cognitive engagement, ludic learning, foreign languages, Algerians universities.*

Intégration des dimensions sociales, cognitives et ludiques pour optimiser l'enseignement/apprentissage des langues étrangères dans les classes universitaires algériennes

Résumé

Cette étude examine l'intégration des dimensions sociales, cognitives et ludiques dans l'amélioration de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage des langues étrangères dans le contexte universitaire algérien. Reconnaisant l'importance des approches interactives et centrées sur l'apprenant, la recherche analyse comment ces dimensions peuvent répondre aux défis persistants de l'enseignement des langues étrangères, tels que le manque d'engagement des étudiants, la dépendance aux méthodes traditionnelles et l'insuffisance de stratégies pédagogiques innovantes. L'étude adopte une méthodologie mixte, combinant enquêtes, observations de classe et entretiens avec des enseignants et des étudiants issus de plusieurs universités algériennes. Les résultats révèlent que l'intégration des interactions sociales, des techniques stimulant l'engagement cognitif et des activités ludiques améliore significativement la motivation, la compétence langagière et les capacités de pensée critique des étudiants. Les enseignants signalent également une dynamique accrue en classe et une évolution vers des environnements d'apprentissage collaboratifs. Malgré des défis tels que l'effectif élevé des classes et le manque de ressources, la recherche propose des recommandations pratiques pour intégrer efficacement ces dimensions dans les pratiques d'enseignement des langues étrangères. Ces résultats mettent en évidence le potentiel transformateur d'approches pédagogiques holistiques dans la promotion d'expériences d'apprentissage plus significatives et engageantes pour les étudiants universitaires algériens.

Mots-clés : *dimensions sociales, engagement cognitif, apprentissage ludique, langues étrangères, universités algériennes.*



Introduction

The rapid evolution of methodologies in the teaching of foreign languages (FL) has highlighted the need for dynamic, interactive, and learner-centered approaches. Traditional methods, heavily focused on rote memorization and teacher-centered instruction, often fail to foster genuine learner engagement and sustainable language acquisition.

In Algerian universities, this problem is compounded by additional structural constraints: large class sizes, limited teaching resources, and a lack of innovative pedagogical strategies adapted to learners' needs. These conditions maintain a transmissive approach in which teachers dominate classroom interactions, leaving little space for learners' autonomy, collaboration, and active participation.

Globally, there has been a significant shift toward communicative and task-based approaches to language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Yet, in many Algerian higher education institutions, teaching still relies on outdated methods that prioritize grammatical accuracy over communicative competence (Bouyakoub, 2019). This mismatch hinders students' ability to use foreign languages in authentic contexts, leaving them underprepared for both academic and professional challenges (Bouguerne & Hadjila, 2020).

Moreover, international research has demonstrated the benefits of integrating social, cognitive, and ludic dimensions into language instruction (Prensky, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). However, very few studies have examined their application and effectiveness in Algerian universities.

The Algerian educational context presents unique challenges that must be taken into account:

- socio-cultural factors influencing classroom interaction,
- limited technological infrastructure,
- and insufficient professional development opportunities for teachers (Bensafa, 2021).

These issues reveal a significant research gap, since existing literature often overlooks the specific needs of Algerian learners and the realities of their classrooms. Addressing this gap is essential to developing effective teaching strategies that are both innovative and contextually appropriate.

The present study therefore explores how integrating social, cognitive, and ludic dimensions into the teaching of foreign languages can help overcome these challenges. By promoting social interaction, fostering cognitive engagement, and incorporating playful learning activities, educators can transform language classrooms into environments where students not only improve their linguistic proficiency but also develop critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration skills.

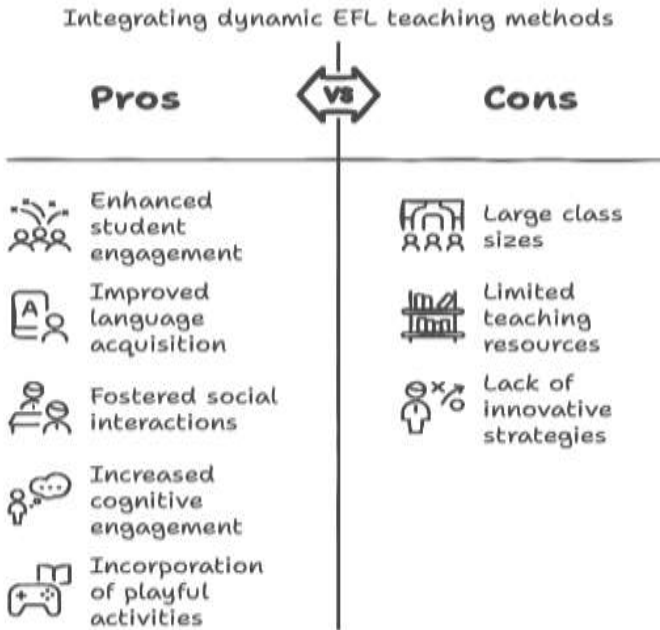


Figure 1: Comparison of Traditional vs. Student-Centered Approaches

This figure contrasts traditional teaching methods in the Algerian context, which are characterized by passive learning, teacher dominance, and low student engagement, with student-centered approaches that integrate social, cognitive, and ludic dimensions. The comparison visually demonstrates how the latter fosters improved student motivation, critical thinking, and language proficiency by emphasizing collaboration, active problem-solving, and playful learning environments.

1. Literature Review

The literature on foreign language education offers a rich foundation for understanding how different pedagogical dimensions intersect to shape effective teaching and learning practices. Previous research has consistently highlighted that language learning cannot be reduced to the simple transmission of grammatical rules or vocabulary lists; rather, it is a multifaceted process involving interaction, mental engagement, and affective factors. In order to situate this study within the broader scholarly context, the review is organized around three key dimensions—social, cognitive, and ludic; that together provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing and improving foreign language pedagogy in Algerian universities.

1.1. The Social Dimension in Language Learning

Social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of acquiring a foreign language. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory asserts that learning is inherently social, taking place through dialogue, collaboration, and interaction within the learner's zone of proximal development. In language classrooms, activities such as pair work, group discussions, peer feedback, and cooperative projects offer students opportunities to negotiate meaning, clarify misunderstandings, and co-construct knowledge.

These activities not only strengthen students' linguistic competence but also contribute to the development of interpersonal skills, including active listening, empathy, and teamwork. For example, collaborative discussions allow learners to practice turn-taking, manage misunderstandings, and adapt their language to different interlocutors. Such experiences mirror real-world communication and enhance



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learners' confidence in their ability to use the target language in authentic contexts. Figure 2 illustrates the benefits of social interaction in FL learning, demonstrating that learners who frequently engage in collaborative activities report higher levels of confidence, fluency, and social skills.

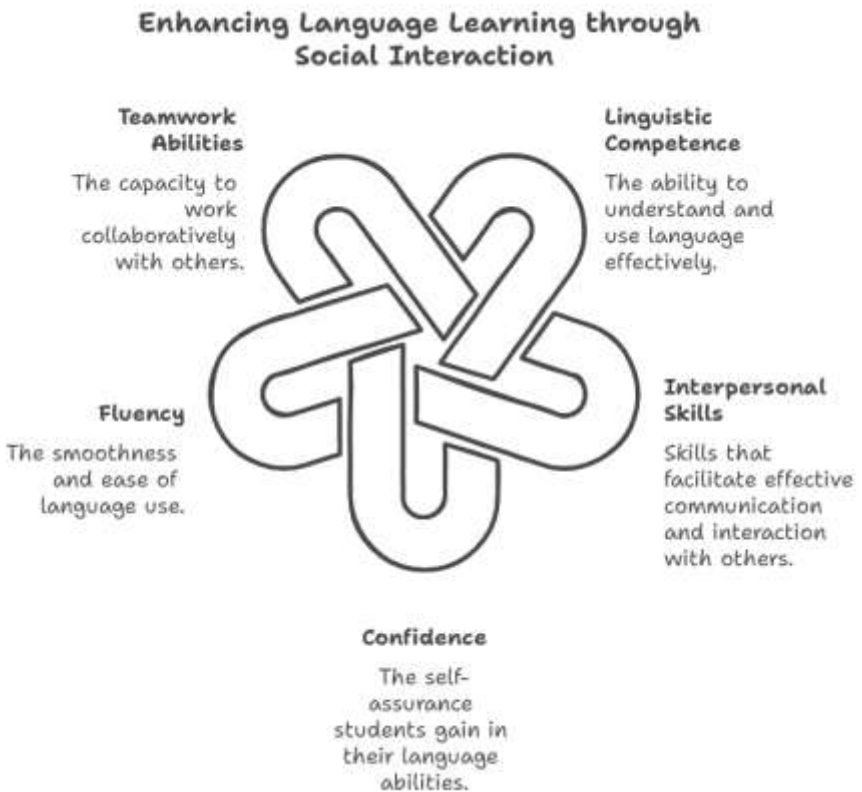


Figure 2: Benefits of Social Interaction in FL Learning

This figure illustrates the impact of social interaction activities on students' language learning experiences. It shows the proportion of students who reported improvements in confidence, fluency, and teamwork skills after participating in collaborative tasks such as group discussions and peer reviews. The data underscores the role of social engagement in creating supportive and interactive classroom environments that promote both linguistic competence and interpersonal development.

1.2. Cognitive Engagement in Language Learning

Cognitive engagement refers to the learner's active processing of language input and the mental effort devoted to understanding, analyzing, and applying knowledge. Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives highlights the importance of higher-order thinking skills, including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which enable learners to move beyond surface memorization.

In FL classrooms, cognitive engagement can be stimulated through a range of activities:

- problem-solving tasks that require learners to apply linguistic knowledge in new contexts;
- critical thinking exercises that encourage learners to evaluate texts or arguments;
- reflective writing assignments that push learners to articulate their thoughts and monitor their own progress.

Such activities not only deepen learners' understanding of linguistic structures but also prepare them to transfer their knowledge to real-life communicative situations. For example, when learners are asked to solve a case study or respond to a critical incident in the target language, they



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mobilize both linguistic resources and higher-order thinking skills, which enhances their overall proficiency. Figure 3 compares levels of cognitive engagement in traditional teacher-centered classrooms versus classrooms that employ problem-solving and reflective tasks, showing that higher engagement leads to stronger linguistic and critical thinking outcomes.

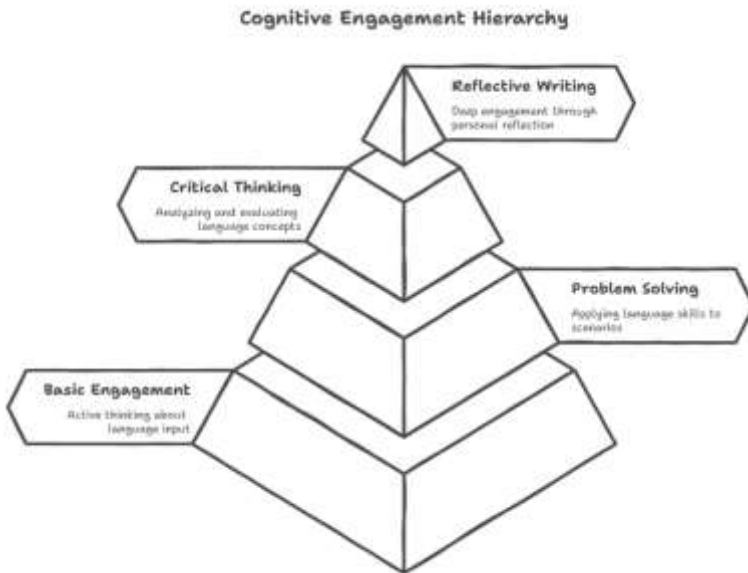


Figure 3: Levels of Cognitive Engagement in FL Classrooms

This figure compares cognitive engagement levels between traditional teacher-centered classrooms and those employing cognitively stimulating activities. The data highlights how problem-solving tasks, critical thinking exercises, and reflective writing assignments contribute to

higher levels of cognitive engagement, including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation skills. The visual emphasizes the importance of fostering deep, meaningful engagement with language content.

1.3. The Ludic Dimension: Learning through Play

The ludic dimension, which refers to learning through play and gamification, has gained significant attention in recent years as a strategy for enhancing motivation and lowering affective barriers in language learning. Prensky (2001) argues that game-based learning creates immersive environments in which learners are more likely to take risks and stay engaged. Ludic strategies in FL classrooms include games, role-playing, simulations, and the use of digital platforms to gamify the learning process.

These approaches are particularly effective in reducing language anxiety, as the playful environment allows learners to experiment with language without the fear of making mistakes. For instance, role-playing activities such as mock interviews, shopping simulations, or travel scenarios provide students with opportunities to practice functional language in realistic settings. Moreover, gamified activities foster a sense of competition and achievement that can significantly boost learners' intrinsic motivation.

As Mahfoud, Belarbi & Raïssi (2024) argue, "by integrating game elements and interactive activities, it stimulates motivation, encourages learners' active engagement, and facilitates the development of language skills in a playful way."

« en intégrant des éléments de jeu et des activités interactives, elle stimule la motivation, encourage l'engagement actif des apprenants et facilite le



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développement de compétences linguistiques de manière ludique », (p. 100).

Their findings reinforce the idea that ludic strategies are not mere diversions but rather integral components of a serious and effective pedagogy. Figure 4 demonstrates the impact of ludic activities on learners' motivation, showing notable increases in enthusiasm and classroom participation after the introduction of games and role-playing exercises.

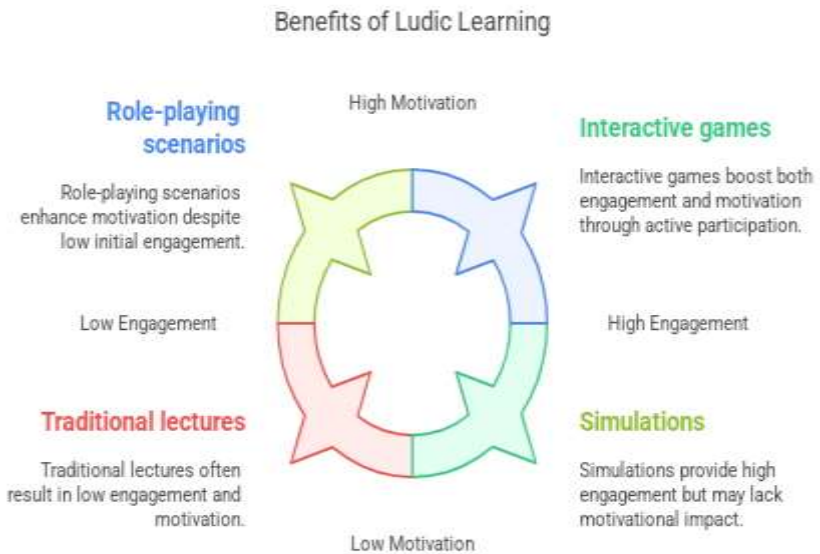


Figure 4: Impact of Ludic Activities on Student Motivation

This figure tracks changes in student motivation levels before and after the introduction of ludic activities, such as language games and role-playing. The data shows a significant increase in student enthusiasm and engagement, highlighting the effectiveness of playful learning strategies in reducing anxiety and making language acquisition more enjoyable.

Benefits of Ludic Learning

1. **Increased Motivation:** Playful activities capture students' interest and make learning enjoyable, which can lead to higher levels of motivation.
2. **Enhanced Engagement:** Interactive games and simulations encourage active participation, making students more involved in their learning process.
3. **Safe Learning Environment:** The playful nature of these activities reduces anxiety, allowing students to take risks and learn from their mistakes.
4. **Real-life Application:** Role-playing and simulations provide practical contexts for language use, helping students to apply their skills in real-world scenarios.

Practical Examples of Ludic Strategies

- **Language Games:** Incorporating games like word puzzles, bingo, or vocabulary charades can make learning vocabulary fun and engaging.
- **Role-Playing:** Students can act out various scenarios, such as shopping or traveling, which helps them practice conversational skills in a supportive setting.
- **Interactive Simulations:** Using technology to create virtual environments where students can interact and communicate in English enhances their learning experience.

Incorporating ludic learning strategies into EFL classrooms can significantly enhance student motivation and engagement. By creating a playful and supportive environment, educators can help students develop their language skills more effectively.



1.4. Synthesis of Literature

Taken together, the reviewed literature highlights the complementary roles of the social, cognitive, and ludic dimensions in fostering successful foreign language learning. Social interaction enables learners to co-construct meaning and gain communicative confidence, cognitive engagement develops critical and analytical skills that go beyond memorization, and ludic strategies enhance motivation while reducing affective barriers to learning.

Despite the abundance of international research supporting these approaches, their integration remains limited in Algerian university classrooms, where traditional methods and contextual constraints continue to dominate. This research therefore aims to address this gap by empirically exploring how these three dimensions can be implemented in Algerian higher education and by identifying both their potential benefits and the challenges that accompany their integration.

2. Methodology

The methodology of this study was designed to ensure both breadth and depth in exploring how social, cognitive, and ludic dimensions can be integrated into foreign language teaching in Algerian universities. By employing a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, the research sought to capture not only generalizable patterns but also the nuanced experiences and perceptions of students and teachers.

2.1. Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The decision to use mixed methods is grounded in the recognition that neither quantitative nor qualitative approaches alone could adequately capture the complexity of teaching and learning processes in Algerian higher education. Quantitative data, collected through surveys, offered measurable insights into learners' and teachers' perceptions of social, cognitive, and ludic strategies. Qualitative data, gathered through interviews and classroom observations, provided rich descriptions and deeper insights into how these strategies are experienced in practice.

As Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) argue, mixed-methods research allows for the convergence of numerical trends with narrative data, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of findings. In the present study, the quantitative strand offered statistical evidence of trends in motivation, engagement, and proficiency, while the qualitative strand illuminated the contextual realities, challenges, and benefits of integrating innovative approaches in Algerian classrooms. This complementarity was essential to the study's aim of not only evaluating outcomes but also understanding the processes behind them. Figure 5 illustrates the sequential design of the research, beginning with surveys, followed by interviews, and finally classroom observations to triangulate findings.



Mixed-Methods Research Approach: Data Collection & Analysis

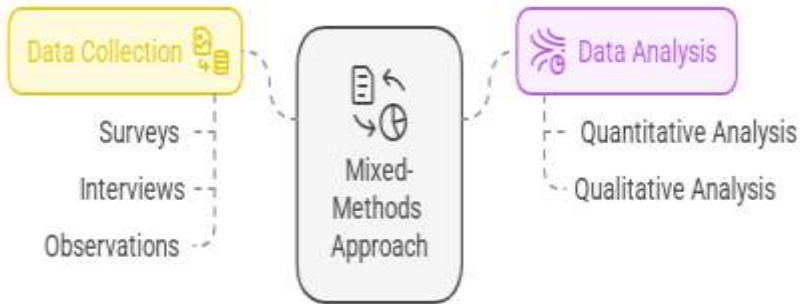


Figure 5: research design

This flowchart visualizes the systematic approach used in the study's research design. It outlines the combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, including surveys, interviews, and classroom observations. The figure emphasizes the comprehensive strategy employed to capture diverse perspectives and ensure reliable findings.

2.2. Sample

The sample consisted of 150 students and 20 foreign language teachers drawn from three major Algerian universities. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure diversity in perspectives and experiences. Student participants were selected to represent different academic years and disciplines, thereby reflecting the varied needs and challenges of FL learners in Algerian higher education. Teachers were chosen based on their varying levels of

professional experience, including novice instructors and senior lecturers, to provide a well-rounded understanding of classroom practices.

The inclusion of both students and teachers was crucial, as it allowed the study to examine not only learners' perspectives but also teachers' strategies, attitudes, and constraints. The diversity of the sample enhances the representativeness of the findings, ensuring that they speak to broader realities in Algerian FL classrooms. Figure 6 presents a demographic breakdown of the sample, including variables such as gender, academic year, and teaching experience.

Purposive Sampling in Algerian EFL Study

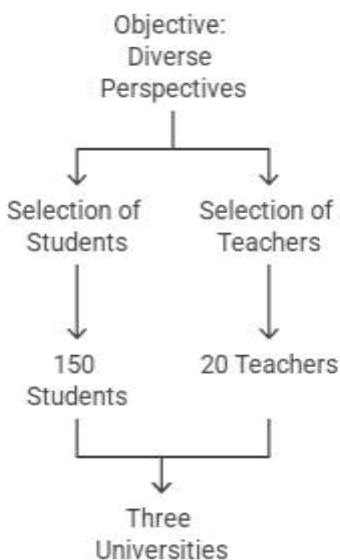


Figure 6: Sample Demographics



This figure provides a demographic breakdown of the study participants, showcasing diversity in terms of gender, academic year, and teaching experience. It visually demonstrates the representativeness of the sample, ensuring that the findings reflect a broad range of experiences within the Algerian EFL context.

2.3. Data Collection Instruments

Three complementary instruments were used to collect data:

- **Surveys:** Structured questionnaires were distributed to students in order to gather quantitative data on their perceptions of social, cognitive, and ludic learning strategies. The survey included both closed-ended questions (such as Likert-scale items measuring motivation and engagement) and open-ended questions to capture qualitative insights.
- **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers to provide in-depth insights into the challenges and benefits of integrating innovative strategies into their teaching practices. The interviews allowed teachers to share personal experiences and reflections on their pedagogical choices. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.
- **Classroom Observations:** Observations were carried out in foreign language classes to assess how social, cognitive, and ludic activities were actually implemented. A standardized observation checklist was used to ensure consistency, focusing on the frequency, type, and effectiveness of interactive and playful activities. Observers noted not only the

activities themselves but also students' levels of participation, enthusiasm, and interaction.

Together, these instruments provided a triangulated dataset, offering multiple perspectives on the phenomenon under study.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis combined quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data from surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, and percentages, to summarize learners' responses. Where appropriate, cross-tabulations were conducted to compare patterns across groups (e.g., male vs. female students, or first-year vs. advanced students).

Qualitative data from interviews and open-ended survey responses were analyzed thematically. Following the approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), responses were coded inductively to identify recurring themes related to the integration of social, cognitive, and ludic strategies. Codes were then grouped into broader categories, such as "perceived benefits," "classroom challenges," and "student motivation." Observational notes were analyzed in parallel to confirm or challenge emerging themes from the surveys and interviews. This process of triangulation strengthened the trustworthiness of the findings.

2.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the study. All participants were informed about the purpose and scope of the research and gave their consent before participating. Student participants were assured that their survey responses and classroom behaviors would remain



confidential and would have no impact on their academic standing. Teachers were similarly assured of confidentiality, with pseudonyms used in reporting qualitative data. In addition, participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. These ethical safeguards ensured that the research respected the dignity, privacy, and autonomy of all involved.

3. Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study are presented and discussed according to the three main dimensions explored: the social, the cognitive, and the ludic. Each subsection integrates students' and teachers' perspectives, supported by quantitative and qualitative evidence, and is connected to the existing literature reviewed earlier. Additional challenges encountered during the integration of these dimensions are also examined to provide a holistic view of the Algerian higher education context.

3.1. Social Dimension Findings

Survey results revealed that students consistently reported increased engagement and more frequent language practice when collaborative activities were included in their classes. Group discussions, peer review sessions, and cooperative projects emerged as particularly effective in encouraging active use of the foreign language. Teachers also noted that such activities fostered a greater sense of community in the classroom, creating an atmosphere of mutual support and collective responsibility for learning.

Qualitative data provided vivid illustrations of these findings. One student explained during a survey: *"When we*

work in groups, I feel less afraid of making mistakes because my peers help me. I learn more from the discussion than from only listening to the teacher." Teachers echoed this perception, stating that group activities often allowed weaker students to benefit from peer scaffolding, while stronger students consolidated their knowledge by explaining concepts to others.

These findings are in strong alignment with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development. They also resonate with Swain's (2000) output hypothesis, which suggests that collaborative dialogue mediates language acquisition by forcing learners to produce language, negotiate meaning, and refine their linguistic output. In this respect, the Algerian data confirms international research showing that social interaction is not only beneficial but indispensable in foreign language learning. Figure 7 highlights the positive outcomes of incorporating social activities, showing increased levels of student engagement, confidence, and fluency as a direct result of collaborative tasks.



Enhancing Language Skills through Collaboration

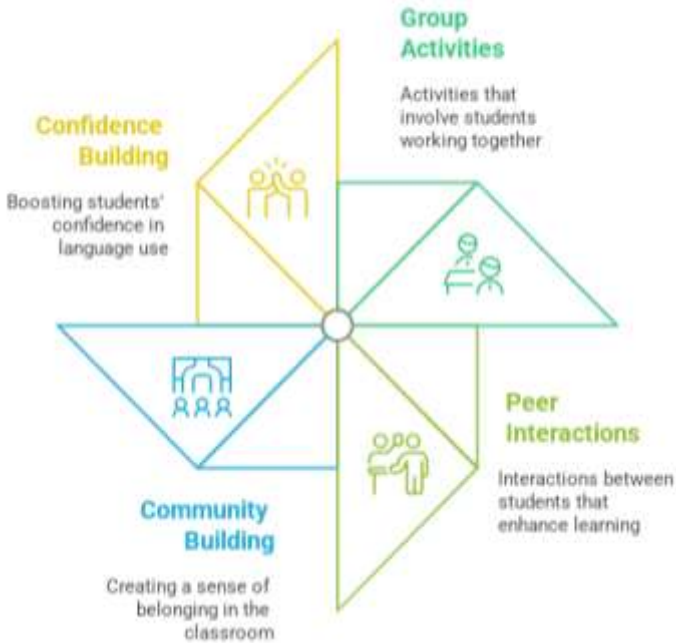


Figure 7: Student Engagement in Social Activities

This figure highlights the positive outcomes of incorporating social interaction activities in EFL classrooms. It shows an increase in student engagement, confidence, and fluency as a result of collaborative tasks. The data underscores the role of social interactions in creating dynamic and supportive learning environments.

3.2. Cognitive Engagement Findings

Findings also revealed the transformative role of cognitively demanding activities. Students who participated in problem-solving tasks, critical reading, and reflective

writing exercises reported feeling more confident in their ability to use the language analytically. Teachers similarly observed that such tasks helped students to develop not only linguistic proficiency but also higher-order thinking skills.

For example, reflective writing assignments encouraged learners to analyze their learning process, articulate challenges, and propose strategies for improvement. One teacher explained: *“When students reflect on their learning, they become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses. This metacognitive awareness is a skill they can transfer beyond language learning.”* Problem-solving activities also proved particularly effective, as they required students to apply linguistic knowledge in novel contexts, thereby strengthening the transferability of skills to real-life situations.

These results corroborate Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives, which places analysis, synthesis, and evaluation at the top of cognitive skills. They are also consistent with Anderson and Krathwohl’s (2001) revision, which highlights the necessity of moving beyond remembering and understanding toward applying and evaluating. The Algerian case thus demonstrates that even in contexts with structural constraints, cognitively engaging tasks can elevate foreign language learning to deeper levels of comprehension and application. Figure 8 illustrates the relationship between higher levels of cognitive engagement and improvements in language proficiency, making clear that cognitively stimulating activities are crucial for academic success.



Unveiling the Impact of Cognitive Engagement

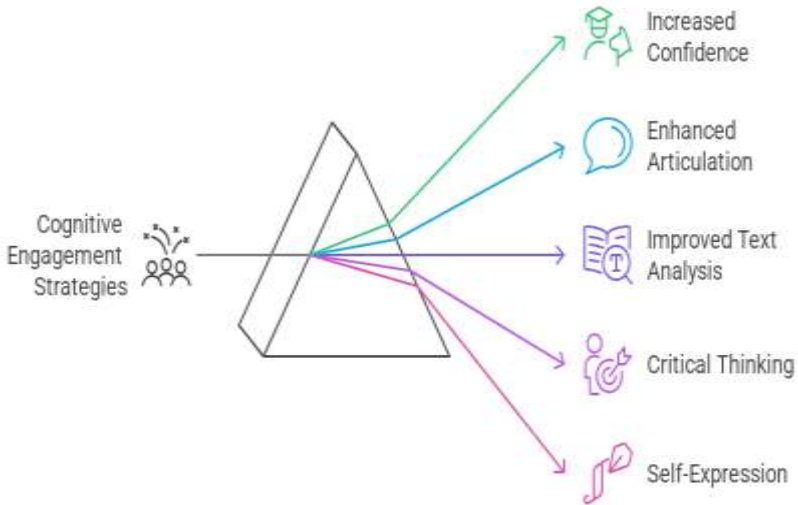


Figure 8: Impact of Cognitive Engagement on Language Proficiency

This scatter plot illustrates the relationship between cognitive engagement activities and language proficiency levels. The data reveals that higher levels of cognitive engagement, such as problem-solving and reflective tasks, are associated with significant improvements in language skills, emphasizing the value of critical thinking in language learning.

3.3. Ludic Learning Findings

The third dimension explored, ludic learning, showed a strong positive effect on student motivation and classroom atmosphere. Playful activities such as vocabulary games, role-playing, and simulations were consistently reported to

increase enthusiasm and reduce the anxiety commonly associated with speaking in a foreign language. Students indicated that when they were engaged in ludic tasks, they felt less judged and more willing to take risks, which is critical for language acquisition.

Teachers, however, pointed out some challenges. While role-playing and gamified tasks were highly effective in simulating authentic communication, their implementation was sometimes difficult in large classrooms. One teacher remarked: "Role-playing works very well, but with more than forty students in the room, it becomes hard to manage." This highlights the need for clear classroom management strategies when applying ludic approaches in overcrowded contexts.

These findings reinforce Prensky's (2001) claim that digital game-based and playful learning can substantially increase engagement. They also echo Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby's (2006) argument that games provide a safe space for experimentation. More importantly, they directly support Mahfoud, Belarbi & Raïssi's (2024) conclusion that :

"The use of game mechanics and game thinking makes it possible to solve everyday real-world problems and, consequently, encourages engagement in tasks and activities." (« l'utilisation des mécanismes de jeu et de la pensée permettent de résoudre les problèmes quotidiens du monde réel et encouragent, par conséquent, l'engagement dans des tâches et des activités. ») (p, 105).

The Algerian evidence shows that even when resources are limited, simple role-playing and low-tech games can bring about significant motivational gains. Figure 9 displays the sharp increase in motivation levels following the



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introduction of ludic activities, illustrating their transformative effect on the learning environment.

Should ludic activities be implemented to enhance student engagement?

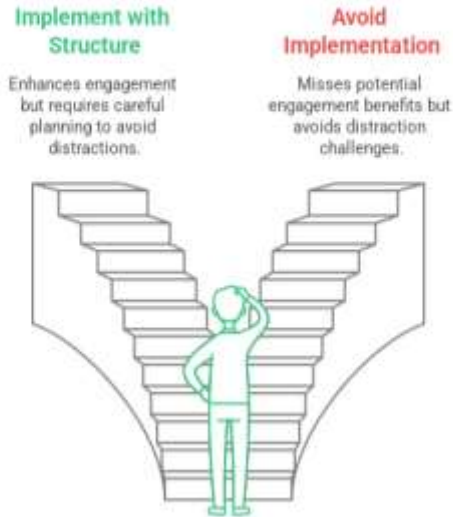


Figure 9: Student Motivation Levels with Ludic Activities

This figure presents changes in student motivation levels following the introduction of ludic activities. The data clearly shows that playful strategies lead to increased student enthusiasm and active participation, highlighting the potential of gamification and role-playing in fostering a positive learning atmosphere.

3.4. Challenges Identified

While the benefits of social, cognitive, and ludic strategies were clear, several challenges hindered their full implementation in Algerian universities.

- **Large Class Sizes:** Overcrowding made it difficult for teachers to monitor group activities and ensure equal participation. Teachers frequently reported difficulties in managing playful or interactive tasks when classes exceeded forty students.
- **Resource Limitations:** Limited access to digital tools, projectors, or internet connectivity restricted the use of technology-enhanced strategies, such as online simulations or gamified applications. Some teachers expressed frustration at not being able to implement ideas they had learned about in professional development sessions.
- **Teacher Training:** A recurring theme in interviews was the lack of training in how to design and integrate social, cognitive, and ludic activities effectively. Teachers acknowledged the potential of these approaches but requested institutional support and workshops to help them develop practical strategies.

These challenges are consistent with findings in other Algerian studies (Bouyakoub, 2015; Bensemmane, 2018; Tadjer, 2019), which emphasize that systemic issues in higher education—particularly overcrowding and lack of resources—limit the adoption of innovative practices. Figure 10 summarizes these challenges, highlighting the systemic barriers that must be addressed in order for holistic and interactive teaching approaches to be sustained.



Figure 10: Challenges in Implementing Innovative Strategies

This figure identifies the key challenges faced by teachers in integrating social, cognitive, and ludic dimensions. These include large class sizes, resource limitations, and insufficient teacher training. The visual representation emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to address these barriers and enhance teaching effectiveness.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that integrating social, cognitive, and ludic dimensions into the teaching of foreign languages in Algerian universities significantly enhances students' motivation, engagement, language proficiency, and critical thinking skills. By drawing on quantitative and qualitative evidence, the research has confirmed that these three dimensions are not isolated strategies but rather complementary pillars of a holistic pedagogy that can

transform language classrooms into dynamic and participatory learning spaces.

The findings align with international scholarship and confirm several theoretical assumptions. In terms of the social dimension, the results strongly support Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and Swain's (2000) output hypothesis, which emphasize that collaborative interaction mediates language acquisition and fosters communicative competence. The Algerian evidence shows that group discussions, peer review, and cooperative projects not only build linguistic skills but also strengthen confidence and interpersonal abilities.

Regarding the cognitive dimension, findings corroborate Bloom's (1956) taxonomy and Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) revision by demonstrating that higher-order tasks such as problem-solving and reflective writing push learners beyond memorization into analysis and synthesis. Teachers observed that these activities nurtured learners' autonomy, critical thinking, and metacognitive awareness, which are essential skills for academic and professional success.

In the ludic dimension, results confirmed the transformative potential of gamification and playful activities as discussed by Prensky (2001) and Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (2006). Students consistently reported higher levels of motivation, reduced anxiety, and greater willingness to take risks in using the language when engaged in role-playing or game-based learning. Importantly, these findings directly reinforce Mahfoud, Belarbi & Raïssi's (2024) conclusion that gamification fosters engagement and creates a stimulating, interactive environment in the foreign language classroom.



However, the study also revealed persistent challenges specific to the Algerian context: overcrowded classrooms, insufficient technological resources, and limited teacher training. These systemic issues constrain the implementation of innovative approaches and must be addressed at the institutional and policy levels. Such challenges echo previous research on Algerian higher education (Bouyakoub, 2015; Bensemmane, 2018; Tadjer, 2019), highlighting that reform requires coordinated efforts from multiple stakeholders.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although this study contributes valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The sample, while diverse, was limited to three universities, which restricts the generalizability of findings across the entire Algerian higher education system. Furthermore, the study's cross-sectional design does not capture the long-term impact of integrating social, cognitive, and ludic dimensions on learners' academic and professional trajectories.

Future research should therefore adopt longitudinal designs to examine how these approaches affect learners over time and across different educational levels. Comparative studies between Algerian institutions and universities in other countries could also provide a broader perspective on contextual similarities and differences. Finally, experimental research investigating the effectiveness of specific gamification tools or cognitive engagement strategies would offer more targeted pedagogical insights.

Recommendations

To ensure the effective integration of social, cognitive, and ludic dimensions into EFL teaching in Algeria, a multi-faceted approach is necessary. This section outlines actionable recommendations aimed at addressing the challenges identified in this study while maximizing the benefits of holistic teaching strategies. These recommendations target key stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers, and emphasize the importance of teacher training, resource allocation, and strategic curriculum development. By adopting these measures, Algerian universities can create more dynamic and student-centered learning environments that foster meaningful language acquisition.

1. *Teacher Training:* Provide professional development programs to help teachers integrate social, cognitive, and ludic strategies into their teaching. Workshops and training sessions could focus on designing interactive activities, managing large classes, and using technology effectively.

2. *Curriculum Design:* Develop curricula that incorporate interactive and student-centered activities. For example, lesson plans could include group discussions, problem-solving tasks, and language games as regular components of the learning process.

3. *Resource Allocation:* Invest in technological tools and teaching resources to support innovative teaching practices. This could include providing access to digital games, online simulations, and other interactive learning tools.

4. *Classroom Management Strategies:* Develop strategies for managing large classes to facilitate interactive learning. For example, teachers could use group leaders or peer mentors to help monitor group activities and ensure that all students are participating.



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5. *Research Expansion*: Conduct further research to explore the long-term impact of these dimensions on student learning outcomes. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights into how social, cognitive, and ludic strategies affect language acquisition over time.

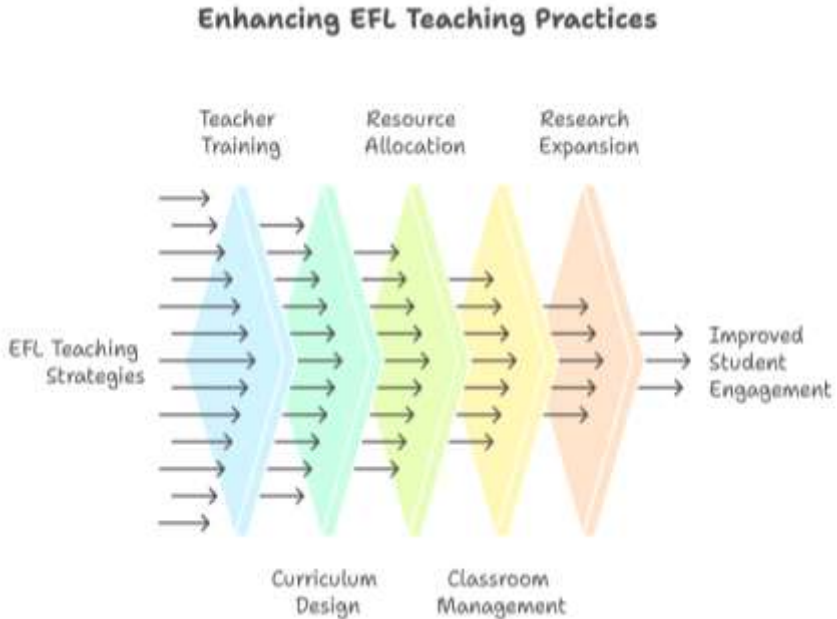


Figure 11: Recommendations Implementation Framework

This flowchart outlines a step-by-step framework for implementing the study's recommendations. It provides a clear roadmap for educators and policymakers to integrate social, cognitive, and ludic dimensions effectively into EFL teaching practices, ensuring a holistic and engaging learning experience for students.

The findings of this study emphasize the transformative potential of integrating social, cognitive, and ludic

dimensions into Algerian EFL classrooms. By adopting these holistic approaches, educators can foster an environment where students develop critical language skills, engage actively in learning, and build essential interpersonal and cognitive abilities. However, realizing this vision requires collaborative efforts from all educational stakeholders, including policymakers and teachers, to address the challenges of large class sizes, limited resources, and the need for professional development. As Algeria continues its educational reforms, embracing innovative and student-centered teaching practices will be crucial for fostering a generation of proficient and confident English speakers.

Conclusion

The findings of this research emphasize the transformative potential of integrating social, cognitive, and ludic dimensions into the teaching of foreign languages. Such integration not only enhances linguistic proficiency but also cultivates transversal skills, such as teamwork, creativity, and critical thinking, which are vital in today's interconnected and competitive world. Realizing this vision, however, requires systemic change: smaller class sizes, stronger investment in resources, and the establishment of ongoing professional development.

As Algeria continues its process of educational reform, embracing learner-centered and innovative teaching practices will be crucial for preparing a generation of students who are not only proficient in foreign languages but also capable of contributing meaningfully to academic, professional, and global communities. This study thus



contributes both to the academic literature and to the practical rethinking of language education in the Algerian context.

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