

Building Global Citizenship Through Language: The Role of Algerian EFL Communities in Shaping Social Justice, Cultural Exchange, and Educational Equity

Abdelkrim Dekhakhena, University of 8 Mai 1945–Guelma, Algeria

The Paris Conference on Education 2026
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

In an era of intensified globalization and interconnected social challenges, the role of language education in fostering global citizenship has become a critical area of inquiry. This paper explores how Algerian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) communities function as transformative sites for the development of global citizenship values, with a particular focus on social justice, cultural exchange, and educational equity. Situated within a postcolonial, multilingual context traditionally dominated by Arabic and French, English in Algeria is increasingly positioned as a strategic, neutral tool for global engagement. Through a qualitative study involving 36 students and 8 instructors across Algerian higher education institutions, this research examines how EFL pedagogies informed by critical pedagogy, intercultural competence, and sociocultural learning theories can empower learners. Findings reveal that EFL classrooms and extracurricular communities serve as vital spaces for developing critical awareness of social inequalities, facilitating empathetic intercultural dialogue, and cultivating civic agency. Students leverage English as a medium to connect with global networks, advocate for local issues, and negotiate complex identities. However, these promising developments are tempered by significant structural challenges, including resource disparities, rigid curricula, and societal skepticism. The paper concludes that Algerian EFL communities hold significant potential for incubating informed, engaged global citizens. It argues for a deliberate pedagogical shift towards community-focused, justice-oriented curricula, enhanced support for learner-driven initiatives, and sustained institutional and professional development to fully realize this transformative potential within the Algerian educational landscape and beyond.

Keywords: global citizenship education, EFL, Algeria, critical pedagogy, intercultural competence, social justice, higher education

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

Introduction: Language Learning in a Globalized World

The 21st century is characterized by unprecedented global flows of people, information, and capital, alongside persistent and complex challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, political instability, and cultural polarization. In this context, the concept of global citizenship has moved from a philosophical ideal to an educational imperative (UNESCO, 2015). Global Citizenship Education (GCED) aims to equip learners of all ages with the values, knowledge, and skills necessary to contribute to a more inclusive, just, and sustainable world. It fosters a sense of belonging to a common humanity, emphasizing interdependence, empathy, solidarity, and respect for diversity.

Within this framework, language education is uniquely positioned. Language is not merely a system of communication but a profound site of identity formation, cultural representation, and power negotiation (Norton, 2013). Consequently, the teaching and learning of foreign languages, particularly global lingua francas like English, present a crucial nexus for GCED. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy, when consciously framed, can transcend instrumental goals of grammatical accuracy and lexical range to become a platform for critical global engagement (Byram, 2008; Porto, 2014).

This study investigates this potential within the distinctive context of Algeria, a nation with a rich and complex sociolinguistic tapestry. As a postcolonial society, Algeria's official languages are Modern Standard Arabic and Tamazight, while French remains deeply entrenched in administration, media, and higher education as a legacy of colonial rule. However, the global ascendancy of English is increasingly felt. English is perceived by many Algerians—particularly the youth—as a language of modernity, scientific and technological advancement, and international opportunity, often viewed as more “neutral” than French in the postcolonial psyche (Benrabah, 2013). Its role in Algerian higher education is expanding, signaling a strategic pivot towards broader global networks beyond the Francosphere.

This research posits that Algerian EFL communities—comprising formal classrooms, university clubs, online forums, and project groups—are emerging as significant, yet under-explored, incubators for global citizenship. These spaces provide a unique milieu where Algerian learners can engage with global discourses, reflect on local realities through a critical lens, and develop agency as ethical actors. Grounded in the principles of critical pedagogy (Freire, 2000), intercultural competence (Byram, 1997), and sociocultural learning (Vygotsky, 1978), this paper addresses two central research questions:

1. How do Algerian EFL communities foster intercultural dialogue and social justice awareness among learners?
2. How does participation in these EFL communities contribute to learners' civic engagement and identity formation?

Through an analysis of qualitative data, this paper argues that Algerian EFL education, when leveraged intentionally, can powerfully contribute to shaping socially conscious, interculturally competent, and civically engaged global citizens, thereby promoting greater educational equity and social justice.

Theoretical Framework: Conceptualizing Language, Learning, and Citizenship

Three interconnected theoretical pillars that illuminate the relationship between language learning and global citizenship development frame this study. Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy

provides the ethical imperative for justice-oriented education. Michael Byram's intercultural communicative competence outlines the necessary skills and attitudes for global engagement. Finally, Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory explains how these capacities are co-constructed within learning communities. Together, they offer a robust foundation for analyzing Algerian EFL spaces as sites of transformative learning.

Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Language Education

Paulo Freire's (2000) critical pedagogy provides the foundational ethical and political orientation for this research. Freire critiqued the "banking model" of education, where students are passive recipients of depository knowledge. In contrast, he advocated for a problem-posing education that centers dialogue, critical consciousness (*conscientização*), and praxis—the cycle of reflection and action upon the world to transform it. Applied to EFL, a critical pedagogy approach moves beyond teaching English as a neutral tool. It encourages teachers and learners to interrogate the geopolitical power of English, question representations in texts and media, and explore how language is intertwined with issues of race, class, gender, and colonialism (Crookes, 2013; Pennycook, 2001). In the Algerian context, this involves examining the historical tensions between Arabic, French, and English, and using English as a space to critically analyze both global and local structures of inequality.

This framework is particularly resonant in postcolonial Algeria, where language is inseparable from identity, power, and memory. A Freirean approach in Algerian EFL classrooms challenges learners not only to acquire linguistic competence but also to decode the ideological dimensions of language. Students are invited to question: Who speaks English, and why? How does English interact with—or challenge—the dominance of French and the policies of Arabization? Through dialogue and critical literacy, learners can deconstruct narratives in textbooks, media, and digital content, linking language use to broader social justice themes such as educational access, gender equity, and cultural representation. Thus, English becomes a medium not merely for communication, but for *conscientização*—awakening a critical awareness that fuels informed civic engagement and transformative action within Algerian society and beyond.

Intercultural Competence: Beyond Linguistic Fluency

Michael Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is essential for understanding the "citizenship" dimension of language learning. Byram argues that effective communication across cultures requires more than linguistic skill (*savoir*). It necessitates a set of intercultural attitudes (*savoir être*), knowledge (*savoirs*), skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*), and critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*). This last element, critical cultural awareness, is the cornerstone of global citizenship within language education. It is the ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures (Byram, 2008).

For Algerian EFL learners, developing ICC means using English not only to describe cultural differences, but to engage with them empathetically, ethically, and critically—challenging stereotypes while building relational understanding. In practice, this translates to classroom and extracurricular activities that foster *savoir être* (openness and curiosity toward other cultures), *savoir comprendre* (interpreting events from multiple cultural perspectives), and *savoir s'engager* (critically reflecting on one's own and others' cultural assumptions). Through

structured exchanges, collaborative projects, and reflective discussions, learners move beyond superficial cultural comparisons to meaningful intercultural dialogue. This competency enables them to navigate Algeria's multilingual, postcolonial identity while participating confidently and critically in global conversations, embodying the role of informed and empathetic global citizens.

Sociocultural Learning: Community as a Catalyst

Lev Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory posits that learning is fundamentally a social process, mediated by tools like language and situated within a cultural and historical context. Learning occurs in the "Zone of Proximal Development" through interaction with more knowledgeable others. This perspective shifts the focus from the individual learner to the learning community. Algerian EFL communities—whether a classroom, a debate club, or a digital exchange—are such sociocultural sites. They are "communities of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) where learners, through legitimate peripheral participation, gradually adopt the practices, discourses, and identities of more globally-oriented, critically-engaged individuals.

Within these communities, English functions as both the object of learning and the primary mediating tool for socialization into new ways of thinking and being. As students collaborate on projects, engage in dialogue, and negotiate meaning with peers and instructors, they internalize not only vocabulary and grammar but also the values and dispositions associated with global citizenship—such as critical inquiry, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving. The community provides a scaffolded environment where learners can safely experiment with new identities, from hesitant speaker to confident debater, or from local student to intercultural mediator. Thus, learning English becomes profoundly intertwined with learning to *be* a certain kind of person: an active questioner, a cooperative collaborator, and an ethical global interlocutor.

Together, these theories form an integrated lens. Critical pedagogy provides the *why*—the justice-oriented purpose. Intercultural competence outlines the *what*—the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Sociocultural learning explains the *how*—the process through which these are developed within collaborative communities.

Context and Methodology

To ground this theoretical inquiry, the study is situated within Algeria's complex sociolinguistic reality and employs a qualitative methodology designed to capture the lived experiences of learners and educators within EFL communities.

The Algerian Sociolinguistic and Educational Landscape

Algeria's linguistic landscape is a living archive of its history. The legacy of 132 years of French colonization left French deeply embedded in key sectors such as administration, media, and higher education, creating a durable linguistic duality with Arabic. The post-independence Arabization policy sought to re-establish Arabic as the primary language of national identity and formal education, leading to complex social and generational tensions (Benrabah, 2013). In recent decades, English has entered this dynamic field as a significant third force. It is taught as a compulsory subject from middle school and constitutes a major discipline in universities. For many students, English represents a strategic escape from the Franco-Arabic binary—a language of global research, digital connectivity, pop culture, and diplomacy, widely perceived

as offering more neutral and equitable access to international academic and professional networks (Miliani, 2000).

Within higher education, EFL departments are thus sites of unique potential. They attract students who are, by definition, oriented toward global engagement. However, traditional teaching methods often remain heavily exam-centric, emphasizing grammar-translation and literary analysis over communicative fluency, critical thinking, or intercultural pedagogy. This creates a paradoxical space: classrooms full of globally curious learners are frequently subjected to pedagogies that look inward rather than outward. Consequently, this study intentionally focuses on the emergent pockets of innovation within this system—where instructors and learners collaboratively explore alternative, participatory, and critically-engaged approaches to English language education.

Research Design and Methods

This study employed a qualitative, interpretive research design to gain an in-depth, nuanced understanding of the experiences and perceptions of participants within Algerian EFL communities (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research was conducted over an 18-month period across three public universities in Algeria.

Participants

The study involved 36 undergraduate EFL students (aged 19–24) and 8 EFL instructors. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling to include individuals actively engaged in both formal coursework and extracurricular EFL activities (e.g., English clubs, online exchange projects, volunteer translation groups).

Data Collection

A multi-method approach was used to ensure triangulation:

1. *Semi-structured Interviews*: In-depth interviews (45–70 minutes each) were conducted with all 8 instructors and 18 focal students. Interviews explored perceptions of global issues, experiences with intercultural exchange, views on the role of English in Algerian society, and narratives of personal or civic action taken through English.
2. *Participant Observation*: Over 120 hours of observation were conducted in various settings: university EFL classrooms, English club meetings, and public events organized by EFL students (e.g., charity fundraisers with English themes, cultural celebration days).
3. *Document Analysis*: Student-produced materials were analyzed, including reflective journals (submitted voluntarily), project reports, social media posts from English-language club pages, and materials from student-led campaigns.
4. *Focus Groups*: Four focus groups with 4–5 students each were held to stimulate discussion on specific themes like “English and Social Media Activism” and “Representing Algeria in International Exchanges.”

Data Analysis

All interview and focus group recordings were transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was employed. This involved an iterative process of familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming

themes, and producing the final analysis. The theoretical framework informed the coding process, but themes were also allowed to emerge inductively from the data. Key themes identified included: “English as a Safe Space,” “Navigating Linguistic Identity,” “From Awareness to Action,” “Digital Bridges,” and “Structural Friction.”

Findings and Discussion

The analysis revealed that Algerian EFL communities function as multifaceted spaces where global citizenship is actively negotiated, practiced, and performed. The findings are organized around three core, interrelated dimensions: Critical Awareness, Intercultural Dialogue, and Civic Agency.

Fostering Critical Awareness: English as a “Safe Space” for Reflection

A prominent finding was that the EFL classroom, particularly when guided by a critically-minded instructor, was often described by students as a “safe space” or a “different world” compared to other academic settings.

Here, English served as a mediating tool that created critical distance from their immediate sociolinguistic realities, allowing for frank discussion of sensitive topics.

Reflecting on Social Inequalities

Students used English to analyze and discuss issues often considered taboo or polarized in mainstream Arabic or French media discourses. For example, in journal entries and class discussions, students critically examined gender roles in Algeria, compared them with representations in global media, and debated concepts of equality. One student wrote in her journal: *“In our English debate on women in STEM, I felt I could argue for more opportunity without it becoming a ‘Western vs. Algerian values’ fight. The language itself gave us a new framework.”* Similarly, issues of economic disparity, access to education in rural areas, and environmental degradation were explored through project-based learning, where students researched global statistics and connected them to local case studies.

Deconstructing Linguistic Hierarchies

The act of learning English itself prompted critical reflection on Algeria’s linguistic landscape. Students articulated an awareness of the symbolic power of French and the political history of Arabization. Many saw English as a strategic tool for “bypassing” these historical tensions. As one instructor noted: *“They tell me, ‘French is the language of the past, Arabic is the language of the state, but English is the language of my future.’ They see it as an equalizer.”* This perception, while potentially overlooking the neo-colonial dimensions of global English, demonstrates learners’ active negotiation of their multilingual identities and their desire for a tool perceived as more democratically accessible on the global stage.

Developing Critical Thinking Dispositions

Through analyzing diverse texts—from news articles on refugee crises to speeches by global activists—students practiced evaluating sources, identifying bias, and constructing evidence-based arguments in English. This process developed what Byram calls *savoir s’engager*

(critical cultural awareness). They were not just learning *about* the world in English; they were learning to *critique* it.

Table 1

Feedback on Developing Critical Awareness in EFL Spaces

Theme	Participant Category	Representative Feedback / Data Excerpt	Implied Pedagogical Value
English as a Mediating Tool for Sensitive Topics	Student (Female, Year 3)	<i>“Discussing gender roles in English class feels less charged. In Arabic or French, it’s immediately about ‘our traditions’ vs. ‘the West.’ In English, we can analyze global data and then ask, ‘What does this mean for us here?’ It creates a buffer for rational debate.”</i>	Creates a discursive “third space” for critical reflection detached from emotionally laden linguistic hierarchies.
Deconstructing Linguistic Power	Instructor (10+ years experience)	<i>“In their essays, students explicitly contrast the ‘colonial baggage’ of French with the ‘strategic neutrality’ of English. One wrote: ‘French is a locked door to the past. English is a key to many future doors.’ They are actively mapping language onto power and opportunity.”</i>	EFL prompts meta-linguistic awareness and a critical analysis of Algeria’s sociolinguistic landscape.
From Passive Reception to Critical Evaluation	Student (Male, Year 4)	<i>“Our teacher gives us two news articles on the same event—one from Al Jazeera English, one from BBC. Our task isn’t to translate, but to ask: ‘Who is the audience? What is emphasized? What is omitted?’ This skill now changes how I read everything.”</i>	Develops critical media literacy and source evaluation skills (<i>savoir s’engager</i>).
Linking Global Issues to Local Realities	Document Analysis (Group Project Report)	Project Title: <i>“Water Scarcity: From Cape Town to Ghardaïa.”</i> Excerpt: <i>“The ‘Day Zero’ framework used in South Africa helped us understand and communicate the urgency of our own local water stress to our community in a new way.”</i>	

Facilitating Intercultural Dialogue: Building Empathetic Bridges

EFL communities provided both structured and organic opportunities for meaningful intercultural contact, moving learners beyond superficial cultural comparison toward deeper relational exchange and the development of Byram's *savoir être* (intercultural attitudes).

Structured Exchanges and Clubs

University English clubs served as vital hubs for this dialogue. They organized carefully planned thematic video-conference exchanges with peers in countries such as Turkey, South Korea, and Canada. These sessions focused on shared global challenges like youth unemployment or climate action, transforming language practice into empathetic dialogue. As one observation note recorded, discussions often revealed profound commonalities, such as when Algerian and Korean students bonded over shared societal pressures regarding academic achievement, demonstrating moments of cross-cultural recognition and solidarity.

Culture as Dynamic and Relational

Through sustained interaction, students' conceptualizations of culture evolved significantly. Initial engagements often relied on static, symbolic representations (e.g., food, traditional dress). However, prolonged dialogue fostered an understanding of culture as fluid and lived. Students began to discuss hybrid identities, generational shifts, and internal diversity, reflecting a move from cultural essentialism to a nuanced, relational perspective. One student's reflection encapsulates this shift: recognizing that culture encompasses both global pop culture consumption and local familial traditions as interconnected parts of a dynamic identity.

Digital Platforms as Intercultural Arenas

Participants actively extended this dialogue into digital spaces, using social media and language-exchange apps to engage with global discourses. This digital engagement often involved proactive cultural representation, such as students challenging stereotypes about Algeria by sharing verified content about the nation's achievements. One student described an act of "digital diplomacy" on a Reddit forum, using English not merely to contradict misinformation but to constructively educate others by citing examples of Algerian female professionals. This practice illustrates the development of critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*) and ethical communication skills in global digital publics.

Table 2*Feedback on Experiencing Intercultural Dialogue Through EFL*

Theme	Participant Category	Representative Feedback / Data Excerpt	Implied Competency Development
Moving Beyond Cultural Stereotypes	Student (Female, Year 2, English Club Member)	<i>“Before our Zoom exchange with Seoul, I expected rigid formality. We bonded over K-dramas and shared stress about university exams. We sent each other meme playlists. It shattered my monolithic idea of ‘Korean culture.’”</i>	Fosters <i>savoir apprendre/faire</i> (skills of discovery and interaction) and challenges essentialist views.
Culture as Dynamic and Lived	Focus Group Participant	<i>“We used to do ‘Culture Day’ with food and flags. Now our club runs ‘Issue Day.’ We partner with a university in Kenya to discuss ‘Youth Unemployment Solutions.’ Culture isn’t just what we eat; it’s the problems we face and how we try to solve them together.”</i>	Advances understanding of culture as a dynamic, practiced, and contested process rather than a static product.
Digital Platforms for Agency & Representation	Observation Note / Student Social Media Post	Observed Action: Student correcting a misrepresentation about Algerian women on an international forum. Posted Text Excerpt: <i>“As an Algerian woman studying computer science, I can tell you the narrative is more complex. Here are profiles of three leading Algerian tech entrepreneurs...”</i>	Develops skills for ethical digital engagement and active, respectful representation of one’s own community (<i>savoir être</i>).
Empathy through Shared Vulnerability	Interview with Instructor	<i>“The most powerful moment was when a student shared her family’s experience with economic hardship during an exchange with Turkish peers. A Turkish student then shared a similar story. They weren’t just practicing past tenses; they were connecting through shared human vulnerability in a new language.”</i>	

Cultivating Civic Agency: From Learners to Actors

The most compelling evidence of global citizenship formation was the translation of critical awareness and intercultural dialogue into concrete civic action. Learners began to strategically employ their English skills not merely for personal advancement, but as a practical tool for advocacy and community improvement, embodying the Freirean cycle of praxis.

Applied English for Social Action

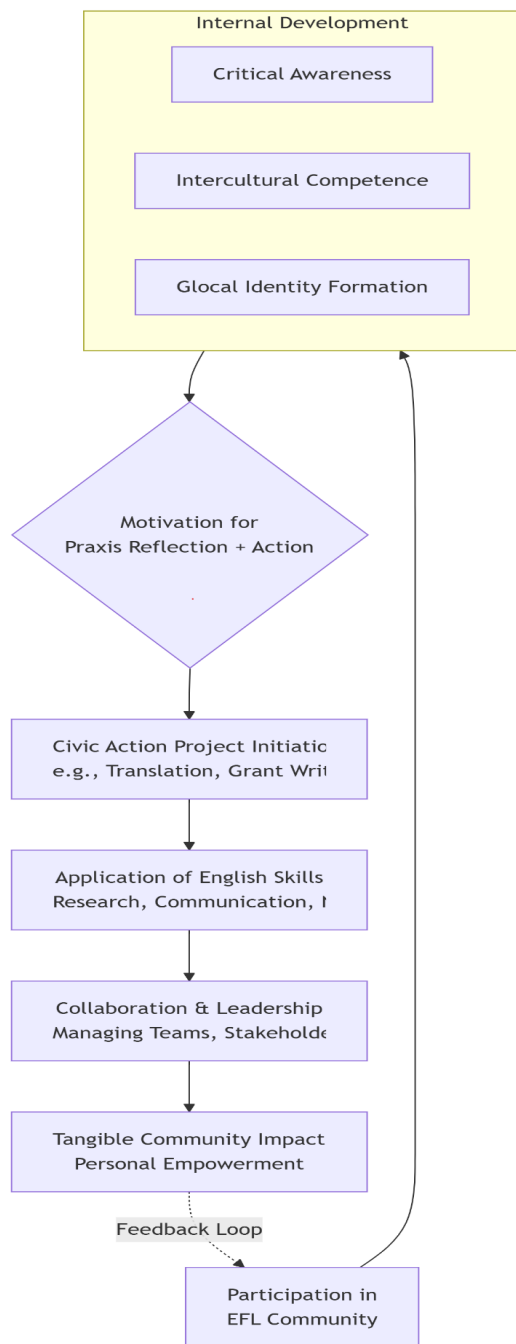
This agency manifested in student-initiated projects that directly addressed local needs by leveraging English as a key resource. Documented examples included a group that translated public health information on diabetes prevention from the World Health Organization's English materials into clear Algerian Darija dialect for a local clinic, bridging a critical information gap. Another student cohort successfully used English to research, write, and secure a small international grant to fund a library project in an underserved village. Further, the creation of a bilingual blog and social media channel, "Algeria Unveiled," served to document cultural heritage sites for both domestic and international audiences, promoting preservation and tourism. These initiatives moved learning beyond hypothetical classroom tasks into the realm of tangible social contribution.

Leadership and Collaborative Skill Development

Organizing such projects required and simultaneously fostered essential global citizenship competencies. Students navigated collaboration across diverse team dynamics, managed timelines and resources, and learned to communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders—from local community leaders to international NGO representatives. This process cultivated practical leadership. As one instructor noted, witnessing a once-timid student evolve into a confident project coordinator demonstrated that the core outcome extended far beyond linguistic accuracy to encompass personal empowerment and civic capability.

This flowchart illustrates the sequential and interconnected process through which learners in Algerian EFL communities develop and enact civic agency, moving from individual awareness to collective action.

Figure 1
The Process of Developing Civic Agency



Negotiating a Glocal Identity

Through this active engagement, students constructed what can be termed a “glocal” identity (Robertson, 1995). They came to perceive themselves as Algerian actors on a global stage, adept at using transnational tools—such as the English language and digital networks—to understand, reframe, and address local concerns. Their sense of civic identity thus expanded; it was no longer bounded solely by the nation-state but was reconfigured through a sense of responsibility that was simultaneously locally grounded and globally informed. This fusion of the global and the local within their self-concept represents a fundamental shift from being

learners of English to becoming active, ethically-oriented citizens who use language as an instrument for meaningful participation in interconnected communities.

Table 3

Feedback on Translating Learning Into Civic Agency

Theme / Project Type	Participant Role	Description of Action & Feedback	Developed Skills & Impact
Community Health Translation Project	Student Project Leader	Action: Translated diabetes prevention guides from WHO (English) into clear Algerian Darija dialect for a local clinic. Feedback: <i>“The doctors were so grateful. They said many patients did not understand the formal Arabic materials from the ministry. We used our English skills to access the science and our local language to make it actually useful.”</i>	Skills: Collaborative translation, community needs assessment, intercultural mediation. Impact: Improved accessible public health communication.
Bilingual Cultural Heritage Blog	Student Founder	Action: Created “Algeria Unveiled,” a blog/social media channel documenting historical sites in English & Arabic. Feedback: <i>“It started for a class project. Now we have followers from other countries asking about visiting. One local tourism office asked to use our photos. We’re becoming curators of our own heritage for a global audience.”</i>	Skills: Digital content creation, cultural representation, digital citizenship, entrepreneurship. Impact: Promotes cultural preservation and positive national image.
Leadership Transformation	Instructor Observation	Observed Change: <i>“I have a student, Yacine, who was painfully shy. He joined the club’s ‘City Clean-Up’ campaign and was tasked with writing the English press release. He did it well. Now he’s coordinating volunteers and liaising with the city council. His English is the tool, but his confidence and leadership are what truly flourished.”</i>	Skills: Public communication, stakeholder engagement, team management, leadership. Impact: Personal empowerment and the development of actionable civic leadership qualities.

Challenges and Structural Constraints

Despite the promising developments documented, the integration of global citizenship within Algerian EFL education confronts significant systemic obstacles that threaten its sustainability and equitable implementation.

Resource and Access Disparities

A pronounced digital divide and stark infrastructural inequalities between urban and rural institutions severely restrict opportunities for many students. Limited access to reliable internet or the financial means to participate in club activities excludes a significant portion of the student body from the very exchanges and projects that foster global engagement. This exclusion risks replicating and reinforcing social hierarchies within educational spaces, thereby undermining the core principles of equity and inclusion that global citizenship education aims to advance.

Rigid, Exam-Oriented Curricula

The prevailing university curriculum and national assessment systems remain overwhelmingly focused on grammatical precision and literary analysis, sidelining communicative competence and critical engagement. Instructors who endeavor to implement project-based or critical pedagogies are often forced to operate on the margins, treating such work as extracurricular supplements. This lack of formal curricular validation and assessment weighting creates a structural inertia that systematically marginalizes transformative educational approaches, limiting their reach and impact.

Societal and Institutional Skepticism

Persistent skepticism permeates both educational institutions and broader Algerian society regarding the role of English and the values embedded within Global Citizenship Education (GCED). Critics often frame GCED as a distraction from core linguistic study or, more pointedly, as a conduit for Western cultural imperialism. This underlying suspicion erodes institutional support, constrains funding, and challenges the legitimacy of programs designed to foster critical global awareness, thereby stifling innovation.

Need for Teacher Development

Successfully enacting a critical, intercultural GCED framework demands a substantial pedagogical shift for which many educators are underprepared. Trained predominantly in traditional, transmission-oriented methods, teachers frequently report a pressing need for dedicated professional development. This training must equip them with the skills to facilitate complex dialogues on social issues, design and scaffold community-engaged projects, and develop meaningful assessments for competencies like intercultural sensitivity and civic agency—skills not measured by conventional language tests. Without this support, the transformative potential of EFL as a site for global citizenship remains unrealized.

Conclusion and Implications

This study demonstrates that Algerian EFL communities are potent, dynamic spaces where the ideals of global citizenship are being actively—if sometimes imperfectly—lived and learned. Through the mediating tool of English, students are developing critical awareness of local and global justice issues, engaging in empathetic and transformative intercultural dialogue, and translating their learning into meaningful civic agency. They are constructing resilient, glocal identities that allow them to navigate Algeria's complex postcolonial reality while claiming a voice on the global stage.

However, realizing the full potential of this transformation requires moving beyond isolated pockets of excellence to systemic integration. The challenges are substantial but not insurmountable. They call for a coordinated effort across multiple levels:

Pedagogical Implications

Curriculum Innovation

EFL curricula at the national and institutional levels should explicitly integrate GCED principles. This involves moving from a content-based syllabus to a competency-based framework that values critical cultural awareness, ethical communication, and civic action as core learning outcomes alongside linguistic proficiency.

Community-Focused Learning

Pedagogy should emphasize project-based, community-engaged learning. Language tasks can be designed around real-world issues (environmental clean-ups, public awareness campaigns, cultural documentation), requiring students to use English for research, collaboration, and advocacy.

Assessment Reform

Assessment strategies must evolve to evaluate intercultural competence, critical reflection, and collaborative project work, not just discrete grammatical knowledge.

Institutional and Policy Implications

Support for Extracurricular Hubs

Universities should provide sustained logistical and financial support for EFL clubs, conversation groups, and digital exchange programs, recognizing them as core components of holistic education.

Investment in Teacher Training

Comprehensive, ongoing professional development programs are essential. These should equip teachers with the methodologies of critical pedagogy, intercultural teaching, and community-based project facilitation.

Bridging the Digital Divide

Public and institutional policies must prioritize equitable access to reliable internet and digital tools for all students to prevent the exacerbation of existing inequalities.

Future Research Directions

Future studies could longitudinally track the civic and professional trajectories of students engaged in such EFL communities. Comparative research with other postcolonial multilingual contexts (e.g., Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon) would enrich the understanding of how global citizenship is negotiated through language in similar yet distinct settings. Furthermore, research

exploring the development of teaching materials that locally contextualize global citizenship themes for the Algerian classroom is urgently needed.

In conclusion, English language education in Algeria stands at a crossroads. It can remain a conventional academic subject, or it can embrace its transformative potential as a catalyst for building a generation of critically-minded, interculturally adept, and civically-engaged global citizens. The voices and actions of the students and teachers in this study point clearly towards the latter, more promising path—one that aligns language learning with the urgent project of creating a more just, equitable, and interconnected world.

References

- Benrabah, M. (2013). *Language conflict in Algeria: From colonialism to post-independence*. Multilingual Matters.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M. (2008). *From foreign language education to education for intercultural citizenship: Essays and reflections*. Multilingual Matters.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Crookes, G. V. (2013). *Critical ELT in action: Foundations, promises, praxis*. Routledge.
- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th anniversary ed.). Continuum.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press.
- Miliani, M. (2000). Teaching English in a multilingual context: The Algerian case. *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies*, 6(1), 13–29.
- Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation* (2nd ed.). Multilingual Matters.
- Pennycook, A. (2001). *Critical applied linguistics: A critical introduction*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Porto, M. (2014). Intercultural citizenship education in an EFL online project in Argentina. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 14(2), 245–261.
- Robertson, R. (1995). Glocalization: Time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In M. Featherstone, S. Lash, & R. Robertson (Eds.), *Global modernities* (pp. 25–44). Sage.
- UNESCO. (2015). *Global citizenship education: Topics and learning objectives*. UNESCO.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.