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**The Impact of English Media Exposure on EFL Learners' Cultural Identity
The Case of Graduate Students at Blida 2 University**

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in Didactics of English and Applied Linguistics

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Dedications

To my parents, who bestowed on me the gift of life and shaped my dreams.

To my husband, whose unwavering support has instilled in me the virtues of generosity and selflessness.

To my kids, whose laughter fills my heart with joy and whose very presence renews my hope every day.

I dedicate this work.

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Abstract

While media use is widely recognised as a valuable source of authentic language learning, its influence on cultural identity remains underexplored. This study examines how exposure to English-language media shapes the cultural identities of Algerian EFL learners, addressing gaps in understanding the dual role of media as both a linguistic resource and a cultural disruptor. A mixed-methods research design was adopted to investigate the phenomenon, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative focus group discussions. The survey was administered to a diverse sample of two hundred and forty-five (245) Algerian EFL learners to collect generalisable data on their media consumption patterns and perceived cultural influences. To gain deeper insights, sixteen (16) participants were engaged in semi-structured focus group discussions, allowing for nuanced exploration of how media exposure intersects with their cultural identities. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were utilised to analyse quantitative data, while Grounded Theory was applied to interpret the qualitative responses. Results indicated that Algerian EFL learners are prolific consumers of English media, particularly social media, which dominates their daily exposure. This engagement fosters the development of hybrid cultural values, simultaneously reinforcing, challenging, and altering their identities. Remarkably, participants demonstrated critical reflexivity by consciously comparing foreign media content with local norms. Three factors emerged as pivotal in identity negotiation: religious beliefs, real-life experiences, and the intensity of media exposure. Overall, these findings underscore the critical role of media in shaping cultural perceptions and highlight the importance of equipping EFL learners with media literacy skills.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English media, Algerian EFL learners, media exposure, cultural identity

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1.General

Introduction

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1.1. Background

The 21st century is marked by technological evolution and the information revolution. Information and communication technologies have reached an unprecedented degree of development. “Digital practices have become a global culture, and societies are moving towards information society” (Mubarak, 2016, p. 113). Soon, technology may dominate all aspects of life, leaving those who cannot embrace it behind. Technology has become an inevitable part of our daily lives as it facilitates our activities and saves us time and money.

The information revolution has profoundly affected the education landscape, with new media platforms serving as alternatives to the traditional classroom. New digital media have made learning a very flexible experience, as individuals can access an unlimited repository of knowledge and information at their fingertips anytime and anywhere.

Language learning has become an enticing experience in the information technology era. With a single click, students can hear native people speak. They can immerse themselves in the target language simply by enjoying English movies, music, and series. EFL learners have long utilised popular movies, TV, and other means of mass media beyond the classroom. This trend persists and grows with the saturation of new media technologies. This easy access to English language materials sometimes made students addicted to this kind of media, unaware that their interest extends beyond language.

As a graduate English student, I followed the same approach to increase my proficiency and fluency in English. I envied classmates with good English accents who could easily express themselves. Later, as I started consuming English media content, I noticed that I could not resist the temptation to watch these programs daily. I spent more and more time in front of the TV, and I started to develop an affinity for the characters who appeared in these movies and admire their

lifestyle. At first, I was captivated by the technological advancements and improved life quality in Western societies. Over time, however, my fascination extended to encompass their ideals and beliefs.

As time passed, I noticed that improving my English using this approach cannot occur without other side effects. I became familiar with English, but I became addicted to watching English media.

This is how the idea of conducting this study started. I have always been interested in the impact of random consumption of English-language media products by English majors. Being an EFL learner and having used English media content as an essential learning instrument made me question the influence of this exposure on other learners. I could not help but wonder if other Algerian EFL learners consume English media materials to improve their English proficiency. How do they approach this content? Have they been influenced by the values and beliefs ingrained in this type of media? Does this exposure affect their sense of belonging in any way? Moreover, how do they deal with the cultural disparity between the local and foreign cultures? As an EFL teacher, I feel responsible for addressing the aforementioned questions and exploring the impact of English language media exposure on our EFL learners. The objective is to raise EFL students' awareness of media consumption and empower them to manage its potential adverse effects.

1.2.The Statement of the Problem

Most available literature on media and EFL learning indicates the positive effects of using media outside the classroom as an informal learning instrument. New technologies such as mobile phones, television, and social media offer rich, authentic input that can support language learning (Pemberton, Fallahkhair, & Masthoff, 2004). Instances of informal language learning

comprise nearly every opportunity to learn a second or foreign language outside the classroom, including conversations with friends or family using the foreign language, exposure to subtitled videos, chatting with online friends, etc. (Dressman, 2020).

Media provides various written, audio, and visual content for EFL learning. Nevertheless, it also signifies a challenge to our social practices and a demand for a “pedagogy of multi-literacies” (Quinlisk, n.d., p. 35). While it provides learners access to authentic, real-life input, the use of media may entail the transmission of pre-planned ideology. Hence, educators, as well as learners, should be cautious with the selection and use of media (Oroujlou, 2012). This implies that the media are very beneficial and necessary for language learning, yet they may negatively affect learners as they are ideology-laden.

When discussing the effects of media, the concept of identity formation cannot be ignored. Media technologies play an important role in shaping people’s perceptions of both the self and the other. “It is through communication that cultures define themselves. In modern societies, much of this shared identity is communicated through media technologies. These technologies help to transmit shared symbolic forms, a sense of group culture” (Wheeler, 2000, p. 432). Hence, individuals’ sense of identity is primarily influenced by their mediated experiences, which sometimes replace their real-life experiences and contribute to their self-formation. As Thompson (1995) asserts, “individuals draw on mediated experience to inform and refashion the project of the self” (p. 233). In this globalised world, many researchers believe that the pervasiveness of media is changing the meaning of identity. National and cultural identities are being eroded and replaced by a global consumer culture, whose aspects, such as Coca-Cola and McDonald's, are present worldwide (Mathews, 2000).

Nowadays, with the advent of digital media, most Algerian EFL learners rely on various media outlets to improve their English language skills. This constantly exposes them to foreign cultures, which may have discernible effects on their cultural identity.

1.3. Research Purpose

This study aims to shed light on a significant phenomenon among Algerian EFL learners: university students' unprecedented degree of consumption of English media products. In addition to entertainment, the use of English media offers EFL learners an array of functions encompassing communication and information sharing, which facilitates language learning. However, this consumption poses a threat to students' cultural identity. Thus, this research attempts to effectively understand the intricate relationship between EFL learners' engagement with English media and their cultural norms and values. By examining this complex link, the present investigation has the potential to inform students, educators, and policymakers about the challenges and opportunities presented by the use of media as an informal language learning strategy. Additionally, this study seeks to identify strategies to protect and empower young people to manage their media consumption. Moreover, theoretical and pedagogical implications concerning students' use of English media can be derived at the end of this study.

1.4. Research Questions

This study attempts to understand the impact of using English, mainly American and British, media content on students' cultural identity. To achieve this broad objective, the following questions were proposed:

- RQ1 What are the media habits of the Algerian EFL learners?
- RQ2 To what extent are Algerian EFL learners immersed in English language media?

- RQ3 Does exposure to English media correlate with increased acceptance of Anglo-American values among Algerian EFL learners?
- RQ4 How do Algerian EFL learners perceive both their Algerian culture and the Western culture?
- RQ5 In what ways does English media exposure impact the cultural identities of Algerian EFL learners?

1.5. Research Hypotheses

This research employs the cognitive functional theory of socialisation effects to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of English media exposure on EFL learners. The theory suggests that continuous exposure to foreign media content results in the acceptance of the values of the target culture. Consequently, the research hypotheses guiding this investigation are as follows:

- H1: Increased recognition of a value in English language media correlates with a higher likelihood of considering it important among EFL learners.
- H2: Increased perception of a value as functional in the Algerian context correlates with a higher likelihood of considering it important among EFL learners.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the cognitive-functional theory of television socialisation, which emphasises TV socialisation as a major process through which media consumers acquire new values, norms, attitudes, and beliefs. This process happens through four stages: 1) individuals observe an event and learn its content, 2) they evaluate its realism and functionality, 3) they internalise the evaluation, and finally 4) they assimilate the cultural components of the event.

This framework is particularly relevant to the present research as it helps explain the effects of media exposure on EFL learners.

1.7.The Significance of the Study

In this digital age, the media has become indispensable to individuals' lives, shaping their views and attitudes towards various issues. With its array of functions encompassing communication, information sharing, education and entertainment, media plays an important role in today's world. According to Ward (2005), the media is a significant force that shapes our thinking and behaviour. It is highly responsible for many social issues and problems, such as obesity and violence. However, "less public attention has focused on how media use shapes young viewers' beliefs and behaviours in these domains" (p. 63).

A substantial body of literature has focused on using English media in EFL classrooms. Nevertheless, little has been written about the impact of these foreign products on learners. Additionally, previous research has been mostly limited to media use inside the classroom, while most EFL students rely on media outside the classroom. Furthermore, most studies suggest that using English media products is highly beneficial as it facilitates language acquisition and increases intercultural competence; however, there is insufficient evidence regarding its effects on beliefs and behaviour. Finally, while extensive research has been conducted to examine the impact of media on different aspects, its specific effects on cultural identity are still of paramount interest.

The significance of this study lies in the fact that it examines a very alarming social phenomenon represented by the excessive use of English media content by university EFL learners. Understanding the impact of English media content on Algerian EFL learners' identity will hopefully provide valuable guidance on how they might engage with diverse media products

in ways that preserve and enhance their Algerian cultural identity. The preservation of the Algerian cultural identity should be the top priority of individuals as well as societies for the reason that “the loss of one’s cultural identity---ethnic identity or national identity---is an imperceptible process, but once people within one culture sense or find out their culture is defamiliarised with the past one, their culture has already broken.” (Ye, 2010, p. 157).

Moreover, cultural identity comprises all the traditions, values, languages, arts, and customs that distinguish one nation from the rest of the world and the loss of a country’s cultural identity entails a loss of “its specificities and its reason to exist as an independent community.” (Gil, 2014, p. 474). Hence, the protection of the Algerian cultural identity is a matter of profound importance and research in this field can play a pivotal role in safeguarding the Algerian heritage.

1.8. Definition of Operational Terms

Media Exposure: While the term “media exposure” has been conceptualised in different ways, a simple definition of the term can be “the extent to which audience members have encountered specific messages or classes of messages/media content” (Slater, 2004, p. 168). Nevertheless, what the term “encountered” comprises poses an important question. According to Potter (2009), there are four degrees of media exposure: automatic, attentional, transported, and self-reflexive. The main difference between the four levels is the degree of message awareness. While automatic exposure implies no awareness, self-reflexive exposure encompasses the full degree of awareness of the message. For this study, media exposure is defined as the amount of time and the frequency with which people use various forms of media, the types of media outlets they use, and the kind of media content they consume.

English Language media: According to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (n.d.), the word "media" refers to "the main ways that large numbers of people receive information and entertainment, that is television, radio, newspapers, and the Internet." The term "English media" is used in this study to refer to all the media outlets produced in English or by countries where English is the primary language, such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom. This includes English newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and social media.

Cultural Identity: Raman (2006) defines cultural identity as a "multidimensional construct referring to a developing sense of self as a member of one or more groups" (cited in Britto & Amer, 2007, p. 138). It constitutes the interaction between culture, religion, ethnicity, and national identity (Britto & Amer, 2007). Jackson (1998) elaborates on the definition by saying that cultural identity is "a set of patterns, beliefs, behaviours, institutions, symbols, and practices shared and perpetuated by a consolidated group of individuals connected by an ancestral heritage and a concomitant geographical reference location" (p. 44). In this study, cultural identity is operationally defined as a strong sense of belonging and self-identification with a group whose members share a common set of values, beliefs, traditions, language, religion, etc.

1.9. Research Methodology Design

A mixed-methods approach elicits data in response to the research questions by combining quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative aspect involves administering a structured survey questionnaire, while qualitative insights are gathered through focus group research. This combination is found to be very beneficial as it provides information with greater breadth and depth, as Roberts and Hyatt (2019) assert:

Combining what with a possible why can add support to your findings. With quantitative methods, you can summarise large amounts of data and reach generalisations based on statistical projections. In contrast, qualitative research recounts the lived experience of a smaller sample to provide rich descriptive detail. (p. 228)

This study followed a convergent mixed-method approach, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected at roughly the same time and merged to provide a comprehensive understanding of the problem under study.

The current study population consists of all the graduate students (Master One and Master Two students) of the Department of English Language and Literature at Blida 2 University for the academic year 2021-2022. Graduate students were selected because they had finished at least three years of intensive English learning and were preparing for their master's degree. Therefore, they had the most prolonged exposure to both English culture and media. Moreover, they were accepted into the master's program based on their educational merits in the past years. Thus, they were expected to have good English proficiency, allowing them to answer the survey and participate in the focus groups.

Considering the purpose of the study, cost versus value, time constraints, and the amount of acceptable error (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011), a convenience sampling approach was adopted. It is a type of non-probability sampling based on contacting easily accessible people (Basit, 2010). As a result, 245 survey responses were received and validated, in addition to the 16 students participating in the focus groups.

This study used two primary data collection tools: a questionnaire and a focus group. The survey was adopted to provide answers to the first three research questions, which tend to be descriptive, and to test the two hypotheses since a survey “provides a quantitative description of

trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population, or tests for associations among variables of a population” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 207). Focus group interviewing was deemed the most appropriate data-gathering tool for answering the last two research questions as it combines the strengths of both in-depth interviews and observation in a group context (Bouma & Ling, 2006). The two instruments were combined and used simultaneously to offer a holistic comprehension of the issue at hand. While the survey ensures broadness and precision, the focus group interviewing provides details and depth to the analysis.

The quantitative data obtained from the survey is analysed using SPSS Statistics 23. Descriptive statistics and frequencies are used to answer the first three questions, while regression analysis is employed to test the two hypotheses. As for the qualitative data analysis, grounded theory is utilised to develop a framework to explain the impact of English media exposure on Algerian EFL learners. “Grounded theory is a qualitative research design in which the inquirer generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, an action, or an interaction shaped by the views of a large number of participants” (Creswell, 2013, p. 83). Due to the lack of theoretical knowledge about the phenomenon under examination, grounded theory serves as a perfect approach as it aims at developing theories that are “grounded” in the collected data instead of using preconceived theories.

1.10. The Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the study; it explains the context in which the study problem emerged, states the research problem, research questions and hypotheses, emphasises the importance of the study, and gives a succinct description of the research methodology.

The second chapter provides a theoretical background for the study. It reviews the primary research conducted about the impact of media exposure in general and on EFL students in particular. It discusses the existing literature in three main areas: mass communication models and theories, culture and media, and finally, the use of media in English language learning both inside and outside the classroom.

The third chapter outlines the research methodology. It starts with an elaborate overview of the research questions and hypotheses and a comprehensive account of the population and the sample. Then, it describes the two research instruments, the questionnaire and the focus groups, along with the reasons behind their selection. Finally, data collection, data analysis, and validity and reliability tests are explained.

The fourth chapter reports the empirical findings gathered from the survey, which answer research questions one, two, and three and test the study hypotheses. This chapter deals mainly with EFL learners' media habits in general and their use of English media in particular. Furthermore, the final section of the chapter discusses how their values are affected by the use of media.

The fifth chapter presents the findings of the focus groups. This chapter provides answers to the fourth and fifth research questions. It discusses the major themes that emerged from the discussions with the participants, illustrating the impact of English media exposure on EFL learners' cultural identity. The significant factors that influenced this impact are also revealed in this chapter.

The sixth chapter discusses the study's quantitative and qualitative findings overall. It is divided into five sections, each devoted to a specific research question. In every section, the

major findings are reviewed, appropriate explanations and interpretations are provided, and discussions are presented in light of previous research.

The seventh chapter, the concluding chapter, summarises the study findings and includes the study's implications, limitations, and suggestions for further study.

1. Literature Review

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2.1.Introduction

Media, with its different forms, play a pivotal role in shaping the public's perceptions, feelings, and actions. With the advent of digital communication means, the influence of media on individuals and societies has noticeably increased. This chapter reviews the available research on media impact and explores its multi-faceted nature. Comprehending the nuances of media effects in this digital age, where information is disseminated at unprecedented speed, is crucial to scholars. Therefore, this review will explore key issues related to media influence, such as media theories, media imperialism, media and identity, and using media in language learning. Through analytically analysing and synthesising the existing literature, this chapter aims to provide a theoretical background to this study and highlight any gaps or shortcomings.

The first part of this review will delve into media and communication definitions and theories, including media effects theories, audience research, and media exposure. The second part will shed light on the key concepts of culture, identity, and media, exploring their intricate relationship. Subsequently, the attention will be turned to language learning research as it provides the context for this study, examining the two types of language learning and the media's role in both. Finally, the theoretical framework for this study will be explained along with the study hypotheses.

2.2.Media and Communication Theories

2.2.1. Communication Models and Theories

Definition of Media and Communication

Media is powerful in our daily lives as it shapes our thinking and behaviour. Even those who manage to control their media consumption cannot be immune to media effects. Media as a term is “used to refer to the particular medium used to deliver a message to a large, anonymous,

diverse audience” (Pearce as cited in Orbe, 2013, p. 235). Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries defines media as “the main ways that large numbers of people receive information and entertainment, that is, television, radio, newspapers and the internet.” Media has traditionally been viewed as comprising the following industries: printed media, recordings, radio, movies, and television. However, new technological inventions, such as the computer, have created new forms of mass mediums (Orbe, 2013, p. 237).

The term mass communication, on the other hand, usually refers to a process in which “an organisation employs a technology as a medium to communicate with a large audience” (Baran & Davis, 2015, p. 5). In its simple meaning, communication can be defined as “the activity or process of expressing ideas and feelings or of giving people information” (Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries). Hence, “media” and “mass communication” are interconnected. While media refers to the channels and tools through which information is stored and delivered, mass communication is the process of transmitting and disseminating messages.

No matter how developed the media is, we can always consider mediated communication as a process happening “on a continuum that stretches from interpersonal communication at one end to traditional forms of mass communication at the other” (Baran & Davis, 2015, p. 6). The position of any medium on this continuum depends on the extent of control and involvement people have when they use this medium. For instance, people have unlimited control when they use their mobiles, so mobiles are interpersonal communication means, and the opposite is true for Hollywood movies where there is limited control over the communication process occurring (Baran & Davis, 2015).

2.2.2. Models of Communication

Models of communication are conceptual frameworks used to explain the communication process and describe its elements. McQuail (2010) distinguishes between four models of communication, which differ in terms of the purpose and the function of human communication:

A transmission model: It is based on the idea that mass media's primary function is transmitting the sender's message. This model follows Lasswell's definition of mass communication as an attempt to understand "Who says what to whom, through what channel and with what effect?" This simplistic version of the mass communication process was later developed by Westley and MacLean (1957) to include the "communicator role." According to them, mass communicators do not originate messages; they actually "relay to a potential audience their own account ... of a selection of the events occurring in the environment" (as cited in McQuail, 2010, p. 82). They view mass communication as a self-regulating process shaped by the audience's interests (McQuail, 2010).

A ritual model: The transmission model is seen as incomplete and misleading because it does not represent other types of media activities that serve as means of "sharing, participation, association, fellowship and the possession of a common faith" (cited in McQuail, 2010, p. 83). Accordingly, Carey introduced an alternative model called "expressive" or "ritual." This model is based mainly on shared understandings and emotions in society and aims to achieve social integration. Its messages are latent and ambiguous but use culturally-shared symbols and associations (McQuail, 2010).

The display-attention model: Often, the main aim of media is neither transmission nor sharing. Instead, it catches the audience's attention, which means more media consumption and, therefore, more audience revenue. That is, the economic goal of media is selling the audience's

attention to advertisers. This is the immediate goal and the sign of success or failure for many mass media. The publicity model describes media as ‘spectatorship’ and the audience as ‘spectators’ instead of media participants or information receivers (McQuail, 2010).

Encoding and decoding of media discourse: A reception model. This model is totally different from the transmission model and originates from the critical theory, semiology and discourse analysis. The essence of this model is the idea that “media messages are always open and polysemic and are interpreted according to the context and the culture of receivers” (McQuail, 2010, p. 86). Therefore, media communicators encode messages to serve ideological and institutional ends. Receivers, or decoders, on the other hand, can interpret these messages according to their own experiences and outlook. By doing so, they can resist the ideological influence and even “reverse the intended direction of the message” (McQuail, 2010, p. 86).

According to Jensen and Rosengren (2005), “reception analysis speaks of media messages as culturally and generically coded discourses while defining audiences as agents of meaning production” (p. 60). Reception analysis describes the audience as active recipients with complete control over their media consumption, decoding and social uses. It is based on comparing media discourse-content structures with audience discourse-structures of audience responses. The findings are then interpreted with reference to the social and cultural contexts of the audience.

The four communication models mentioned above describe a broad and diverse set of media activities. The transmission model fits instructional contexts such as religion, education and government. The ritual model applies to media forms that have a ‘sharing’ nature, like art, drama, and entertainment. The publicity model covers all media activities that fall under

advertising or public relations. Finally, the reception model stresses the primacy of the audience in the communication process (McQuail, 2010).

Table 1

The Four Models of Communication Compared (McQuail, 2010, p. 88).

Orientation of		
Model	Sender	Receiver
Transmission model	Transfer of meaning	Cognitive processing
Expression or ritual model	Performance	Consummation/shared experience
Publicity model	Competitive display	Attention-giving spectatorship
Reception model	Preferential encoding	Differential decoding/ construction of meaning

2.2.3. Research on Media Effects

Emergence and Development of Media Effects Trend

Through the last century, media effects research has received much attention, and consequently, thousands of studies have been conducted to explain the communication process and its impact on the audience. While early communication models were simple, linear, and one-way and emphasised the power of the medium to change opinions and behaviours, recent studies suggested that communication is a two-way process in which both the sender and the receiver influence each other (Media Effects, 2010).

Media effects research emerged from the fear of the “sometimes exaggerated and misapprehended notions” of media impact on vulnerable social groups such as children and uneducated people (Jensen & Rosengren, 2005, p. 54). Over the years, the effects research has

developed in many ways. The notion about the strength of media effects has evolved cyclically from strong to weak and back again. The notion of the character of the media effect has changed radically from specific, direct and short-term effects to diffuse, indirect and long-term effects. Moreover, the notion of the audience has changed from being seen as passive to active and selective (Jensen & Rosengren, 2005).

The early research on communication in the 1920s and 1930s viewed media as a very effective means of persuasion and the audience as potent recipients (Petty, Brinol & Priester, 2008). The central assumption was that the media is an all-powerful source of influence and that it causes a direct and immediate impact on viewers. This line of theorising is known as a magic bullet or the hypodermic needle approach. As its name suggests, it was based on the assumption that media messages are “strong drugs or potent weapons that would have powerful effects on a helpless audience” (Media Effects, 2010, p. 1). Scholars who assume this approach argue that media audiences are passive and naïve consumers.

Most Contemporary media researchers see this theory as simplistic (Orbe, 2013, p. 243). Most of the conducted research during this phase was informal, based on anecdotal data instead of solid empirical evidence (Petty et al., 2008). Furthermore, this theory failed to explain that the audience members have varied responses to the same message. As a result, a new theory emerged during the 1950s and 1960s. It was called “limited effects theory” because it was based on the belief that media impact is limited. This theory appeared as an alternative to the direct effects theory, which had little scientific evidence over time. Scholars who introduced this theory believed that media had a limited influence on viewers who “selectively exposed themselves to media messages that were consistent to their existing belief, attitudes, and values” (Orbe, 2013, p. 243). Over time, researchers became aware that there are many factors, along with media, that

affect people's attitudes and behaviours towards an issue. They concluded that media does, in fact, reinforce prior attitudes instead of producing new ones. Some of them talked about an indirect two-step flow of the communication effect instead of a direct impact. In other terms, media influences opinion leaders who, in turn, influence the average person (Petty et al., 2008). During the second half of the twentieth century, more research was done, and most of it came to the conclusion that the power of media differs from one situation to another and from one group to another (Media Effects, 2010).

The development of this media effects trend, which became the dominant paradigm in the second half of the twentieth century, owes great credit to the scholars Paul Lazarsfeld and Carl Hovland. Their main contribution could be summarised in the use of scientific methods such as surveys and experiments to produce a significant body of research about media influence. In effect, their research provided little evidence that the media has a powerful influence on people. According to them, media effects were limited in scope, affecting only some individuals in specific conditions, and varied in degree due to many factors such as the message content and source, the pre-existing knowledge and attitudes, and the social and religious background of the audience (Baran & Davis, 2015).

Many factors speeded the development of this trend. First, adopting scientific methods led to more systematic, objective and reliable data about media effects. Consequently, old mass society and propaganda theory approaches were dismissed and regarded as unscientific and yielding subjective results. Second, postpositivist researchers could also attract commercial and administrative attention and support for using the new research methods to understand consumer attitudes. Third, media companies also play an important role. Many of them sponsored and conducted this type of research in order to improve their services. Finally, the financial support

of private and government foundations such as the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Science Foundation of media-effects research was an important factor that fostered the development of this research trend (Baran & Davis, 2015).

Conceptualising Media Effects

The term ‘Media effects’ “refers to the many ways individuals and society may be influenced by both news and entertainment mass media, including film, television, radio, newspapers, books, magazines, websites, video games, and music” (Media Effects, 2010, p. 1). However, this seemingly simple term cannot be treated in generalities. Instead, scholars have to ask specific questions such as what type of effects is measured, what type of people is involved, at what level of society, and under what conditions the impact happened (McQuail, 1979).

According to Potter (2009), three fundamental issues should be taken into consideration when dealing with media influence. First, the time of influence is critical. This refers to how long it takes an effect to appear. Some effects are immediate; some are long-term. Second, the change that takes place during media influence is also critical. Sometimes, the media causes change, but sometimes, they reinforce the status quo. Finally, whether the effect can be manifested should also be considered. Therefore, four influence patterns were suggested: gradual long-term change, gradual long-term non-change (reinforcement), immediate shift (lasts for a long time), and short-term fluctuation change.

Moreover, Potter (2009) provided a broad description of media effects types that captures most of the associated elements. According to him, the processes and products of mass media influence act directly on targets (such as individuals and macro units of society and institutions) as well as indirectly on targets through other units. They can be intentional or nonintentional on the part of both the media senders and the target receivers. They can be manifested or hidden

from natural observation. They can be constant or ongoing. Besides, they are shaped not only by media influence but also by other elements. Indeed, their shaping process occurs in a constellation of other factors that act in concert with the influence of the media.

Parts of the Media Effects Phenomenon

Literature is abundant about media effects. However, most of this literature lacks a unified vision of what these effects are. Different studies covered different types with different names. That is why Potter stressed the need to organise all of these effects in order to take stock of what has been documented and position future research (Potter, 2009, p. 267).

Potter (2009) introduced a map of the media effects phenomenon, which he called the media effects template (MET). As the table below shows, there are six types of media effects: cognitive, attitudinal, belief, affective, physiological, and behavioural effects. A cognitive media effect is the impact media has on an individual's mental processes. An attitudinal effect describes the way people make judgments about something. Beliefs can be defined as "judgments about the probability of something existing or occurring" (Potter, 2014, p. 102). An affective effect is the impact on people's emotions, moods, and sensory reactions. A physiological effect is a body response. It can be beyond conscious control or under the control of the conscious mind. A behavioural effect is "an overt action of an individual" (Potter, 2014, p. 103).

The second dimension of the template describes how media affects individuals. There are four ways: acquiring, triggering, altering and conditioning. The acquiring function refers to the addition of something to the existing knowledge, attitudes, and feelings. The triggering function is the process of evoking some kind of reaction in the individual during media exposure. The altering function can be understood as "gradually changing something in the person over the long

term” (Potter, 2014, p. 103). The conditioning function refers to the reinforcement of the individual’s existing knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and feelings (Potter, 2014).

According to Potter’s study (2014), the type of media effect that is most motivated by theory is “beliefs.” This could be explained as a result of the dominance of cultivation, agenda setting and third person theories which all emphasise media’s function of “changing, then reinforcing” an individual’s beliefs about things (p. 104). Additionally, Potter found that beliefs and the altering function are always studied together.

Table 2

Media Effects Template (Potter, 2009, p. 276)

Type of effect	Media Influence Functions			
	Acquiring	Triggering	Altering	Conditioning
Cognitive	Memorise message element	Recall information Construct pattern	Memory structure	Strengthen skills Reinforce connections
Belief	Memorise belief	Recall belief Construct belief	Belief change	Strengthen generalisations
Attitudes	Accept attitude	Recall attitude Construct new attitudes Need for new attitudes	Attitude change	Strengthen evaluation Reinforce attitudes
Affects	Learn emotional information	Recall emotion	Mood change	Strengthen emotional connections Reinforce mood Emotional sensitivity
Physiology		Automatic response		Improve reactions

Behaviour	Learn behaviours	Recall behaviour Imitation behaviour Novel behaviour	Behavioural change	Reinforce habits
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Despite its popularity, media effects research suffers from many difficulties in theoretical conceptualisation and empirical conduct (Livingstone, 1996). Two main criticisms of media effects research have been persistent and prevalent in the last few decades. First, the assumption that the accumulated evidence showed little indication of sizable media effects on the audience's ideas, feelings and behaviours despite the widespread "myth" of big media influence. Second, most of the available research has not attempted to explain the mechanisms through which the effects take place. In other terms, the main focus has been on the relationship between the input variables (e.g., media messages) and the output variables (e.g., attitudes, feelings, actions), while little is known about the underlying cognitive processes that mediate this relationship (Shrum, 2009).

2.2.4. Media Effects Theories

In a fascinating study of communication theories, Potter (2014) assumes that a field's main sign of scholarly development is its increasing number of theories and theory-based literature. After reviewing the available research about the prevalence of media theories in general and media effects theories in particular, Potter concluded that:

The scholarly field of media effects has generated a great number of theories throughout its eight decades of existence. However, only a small subset of those theories has generated more than a handful of tests. Also, the proportion of research published each year that acknowledges a theory of any kind remains at a fairly low level (around 30

percent), and most of those studies do little more than simply mention a theory; they do not test it or critique it (Potter, 2014, p.98).

In general terms, communication theories fall into four categories. First, post-positivism theory is based on empirical observation using the scientific method as the only way to gain real knowledge. Its main aim is to explain, predict and control social phenomena. Second, cultural theory is based on the subjective interpretation of the texts and actions of individuals in a given society. It aims at understanding how and why a given human behaviour happens through the analysis of the content and structure of social communication. Third, critical theory is based on criticising the existing structures and challenging the existing patterns of social order. Its main objective is to correct the flaws of society and make it a better one. The only way to do so is by freeing people from the influence of the powerful. Finally, the normative theory is based on evaluating media systems and judging their worthiness according to a set of ideal social values. It uses comparative analysis (Baran & Davis, 2015, pp. 13-16).

A scan of the available literature on media effects revealed the prevalence of ten most-cited theories in communication research. They are agenda setting, cultivation, diffusion, feminism, framing, priming, selective exposure, social learning, third person, and uses and gratifications (Potter, 2014). An investigation of three prominent communication research journals spanning from 1956 to 2000 revealed that cultivation theory, uses and gratification and agenda setting were the three most cited media theories (Romer, Jamieson, Bleakley, & Jamieson, 2014).

Uses and Gratifications Theory

It was introduced in 1959 by Elihu Katz, who argued that studying media choices instead of media effects can save the whole field of communication. During the 1940 presidential

elections, research on the power of media to shape voters' attitudes found that media had no effect on voters' electoral choices. This made communication scholars doubt the value and importance of media studies. Katz, alternatively, shifted the focus of communication research from the question: "What do media do to people?" to the question "what do people do with media?" (Sparks, 2012, p. 358). This marked a shift from the mechanistic direct effect perspective to a psychological one that attempts to find answers about how people use media (Rubin, 2009).

Supporters of this theory view audiences as active media users who actively select to use specific forms of media to fulfil specific needs and wants. The idea of audience activity is essential to uses and gratifications research. It stresses the audience's utility, intentionality, selectivity, and involvement (Rubin, 2009). Accordingly, the outcomes of the communication process differ according to "the functions that the various forms play in the lives of consumers" (Orbe, 2013, p. 244). Rubin (2009) provides a very concise description of the theory as follows:

Uses and gratifications sees communication influence as being socially and psychologically constrained and affected by individual differences and choice. Variations in expectations, attitudes, activity, and involvement lead to different behaviours and outcomes. Personality, social context, motivation, and availability—based on culture and economic, political, and social structure—all affect the potential influence of media and their messages (p. 176).

The underlying assumption of this theory is that media users make deliberate choices regarding which kind of media they use based on their individual needs and goals. That is, people have needs which they gratify through the use of media. Therefore, the most important question for Uses and Grats theory is, "Why do some people choose to watch TV while others

decide to play a video game or read a book?” (Sparks, 2012, p. 360). The main objectives of the theory can be summed up in three main points: understanding how individual needs are gratified through the use of media, uncovering the motives behind media behaviour, and defining the functions and results of media behaviour (Rubin, 2009).

Since no theory is perfect, uses and gratifications has received a lot of criticism. As Sparks claims (2012), a good theory is one which “explains the past and the present and predicts the future” (p. 363). The main problem with uses and grats theory is being “too heavy on description and light on prediction.” That is, it failed to meet the criteria of a good theory by offering predictions that could help media researchers as well as producers. Additionally, people cannot accurately report the reasons behind their media choices, which are not always conscious and deliberate (Sparks, 2012, p. 364). Rubin (2009) summarises the major weaknesses of the uses and Gratifications theory as follows:

- (a) the compartmentalised nature of typologies, making it difficult to predict beyond those who were studied or to consider the implications of media use, (b) the lack of clarity of central constructs and how researchers attached different meanings to concepts such as motives and gratifications, (c) the treatment of the audience as being too active or rational in its behaviour, and (d) the methodological reliance on self-report data (p. 169).

Agenda Setting Theory

Recently, with the increasing media research, more complex theories about media effects have emerged. These new theories acknowledge a balance between possible media effects and active media usage. One main theory is Agenda Setting Theory which is established on the premise that media does not control how people think but it does control what they think about (Orbe, 2013, p. 244).

Agenda-setting theory was introduced early in the 1970s by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw. It explains why some issues on the news get more attention than others. The fundamental assumption of the theory is that media can influence what people think about and consider important-public agenda since they “look to news professionals for cues on where to focus [their] attention” (Griffin, 2012, p. 378). The central concept of agenda-setting theory is that “the mainstream media creates a public agenda by focusing attention on certain issues while ignoring others” (Potter, 2014, p.98). Therefore, the media’s influence on what issue people think about is more potent than its influence on how they think about this issue (Potter, 2014).

The first agenda setting research was conducted during the 1968 presidential elections by McCombs and Shaw. They first measured the media agenda by analysing the prominence of news stories in significant print and broadcast media. Prominence was established through two main criteria: position and length. At the end of the analysis, they came out with a composite index of media prominence which contained five major issues prominent in media (Griffin, 2012). After that, they measured public agenda by asking voters to outline what they considered key issues in the campaign. The results revealed a list almost identical to the one of media agenda.

This is the first level of the theory concerned with the transfer of salience of “an attitude object in media to a prominent position” (Griffin, 2012, p. 383). The second level of the theory is attribute agenda setting, or the transfer of salience of a set of attributes associated with an attitude object to a prominent position (McCombs & Reynolds, 2009). This is sometimes considered as framing, which is “the selection of certain aspects of an issue, images, stereotypes, messengers, metaphors, and so on, which are used to cue specific responses” (Potter, 2014, p. 100).

In terms of research instruments, agenda setting theory is based on the application of two main tools: content analysis and surveys. Researchers use content analysis to establish the media agenda and surveys to measure public opinion (public agenda). After that, correlation between the two agendas is established using quantitative statistical tests (Griffin, 2012).

Like the Uses and Gratifications theory, agenda setting has some limitations that should be addressed. The logic of this theory is well suited to the question of news and political campaigns, but what about other kinds of content? Most importantly, the nature of the relationship between the news and the audience provokes a fundamental question: Can the public agenda influence the media agenda? The agenda-setting hypothesis implies a direction of influence from the media to the audience. However, the opposite can be true as well (Baran & Davis, 2013).

Cultivation Theory

This theory focuses on the relationship between the real world and the world portrayed in media. Its central hypothesis is that media consumption helps create distorted images and perceptions of the world. In other terms, heavy media consumers start to see the real world as it appears in media (Orbe, 2013).

According to Potter (2014), cultivation theory was developed as “an explanation of how a population’s constant exposure to mass media messages shaped its members’ beliefs about the world” (p. 99). It was born out of the supposition that TV has become “the dominant entertainment medium in American culture” and that heavy exposure to TV messages led to a distorted view of social reality and “cultivated a fearful attitude to the world” (Romer, Jamieson, Bleakley, & Jamieson, 2014, p.115). Subsequently, TV has reinforced, instead of challenging,

the unequal societal structure and hindered the empowerment of weak social categories, such as women and kids, who were mostly portrayed as victims of violence (Romer et al., 2014).

It was introduced by George Gerbner, who stated that TV content involves a lot of violence and that individuals who spend a lot of time watching TV end up viewing the world as scary and mean in an exaggerated way. According to him, TV is a powerful tool for moulding public perspectives as it has become a key member of the household. Later on, other scholars used the theory to find out how TV affects people's perceptions of politics, health issues, and gender roles (Griffin, 2012).

Gerbner's theory can be seen as a three-pronged plug, and each prong is linked to a particular kind of analysis. The first prong is linked to "institutional process analysis". As its name suggests, this type of analysis uncovers the real motives behind the production of media messages by uncovering the practices and policies that control media institutions and organisations. In order to achieve this, in-depth interviews with media producers, accountants, and studio executives are conducted. The second type of analysis is called "message system analysis." If you wish to understand the effects of TV messages on viewers' perceptions, you have first to understand what these messages are. Scholars analyse the media messages, such as TV content, through the use of quantitative content analysis. The last prong represents "cultivation analysis" which carries "the most electrical current in the theory." The aim of this analysis is to understand how TV messages affect viewers in general and heavy viewers in particular (Griffin, 2012, p. 370).

Unlike other media effects theories, the theory of cultivation "does not imply a simple, linear, 'stimulus-response' model or immediate short-term responses." It instead focuses on "long-term cumulative exposure to television's repetitive and stable messages" (Morgan,

Shanahan & Signorielli, 2014, p. 482). According to Cultivation theory, change takes time. It happens over months and even years. Therefore, surveys, instead of experiments, are the most suitable research techniques for cultivation theory because experiments cannot measure long-term effects. Surveys for cultivation research include two types of questions: questions that measure TV exposure to distinguish between heavy and light viewers and questions that measure the perceptions of social reality for both types of viewers (Griffin, 2012).

Cultivation works through two main processes: resonance and mainstreaming. Resonance shows “how a person’s everyday reality and television viewing patterns may provide a double dose of messages that ‘resonate’ and amplify cultivation” (Morgan et al., 2014, p. 485). Mainstreaming, on the other hand, means that TV exposure leads to enhancing similarities among different categories of people through erasing boundaries of age, class and region, and overriding differences in opinions and behaviours. As Morgan et al. (2014) put it: “‘the mainstream’ is a relative commonality of outlooks and values that is cultivated through consistent and heavy exposure to the world of television” (p. 485).

Paradoxically, cultivation theory is one of the theories that have received a lot of criticism despite its popularity. A very controversial issue in cultivation research is whether differences in program-genres should be taken into account or not. The original idea of Gerbner’s TV viewing is general since different types of TV programs have a lot in common. As Morgan et al. (2009) argue, “deeper analysis often shows that surprisingly similar and complementary images of society, consistent ideologies, and stable accounts of the ‘facts’ of life cut across many different types of programs” (p. 36). Therefore, the overall pattern of programming remains the same across different TV products, and this is the pattern that cultivation analysis is most interested in (Morgan et al., 2009). However, many researchers

believe that research on cultivation should focus on specific genres of TV content because diverse programs present diverse views about the world and, as a result, they create diverse versions of social reality (Morgan et al., 2014).

Notwithstanding the critical discourse, cultivation theory continues to gain momentum in the age of new media as its assumptions are still valid and applicable. According to Morgan et al. (2014),

... as we continue in the twenty-first century, the relationship between what is seen, the stories that are told, and the way people see the world remains as vital as ever. Gerbner's far-reaching idea of cultivation thus continues to be as relevant today as it was in the early 1970s. (p. 495)

Cultivation theory emerged at a time when TV was the most dominant form of media. Things have changed since the emergence of new technological means of communication, such as the Internet. The latter has offered the audience an unprecedented degree of choice. Yet, the main patterns of media content remain the same as the socio-economic dynamics that control media industry have not changed. The viewing habits of the audience have not changed, and the hypothesis that heavy viewing leads to a distorted image of reality is still valid (Morgan et al., 2009).

2.2.5. Audience Research

According to Potter (2009), the audience has been treated by media theorists in three main ways. From media organisations' point of view, the audience "is seen as a macro unit of aggregated individuals who are relatively passive" (p. 97). The aim of these organisations is to reach a particular type of audience, to reach as much of this audience as possible, and to keep this audience attracted to their products. From a sociological perspective, the audience is

regarded as a social group with the same values who interpret media messages according to their cultural and social affiliations. Lastly, from a psychological point of view, the audience is defined as active individuals who are different and have different experiences with media. They use media in a personal way to meet personal needs and goals.

In the beginning, media research was solely focused on media effects. It was built upon the postulation that the audience is a group of passive individuals directly affected by media messages. Nevertheless, over time, researchers started to realise that media effects were not as powerful as they were assumed to be. Henceforth, they shifted the focus from media effects research to audience research (Baran & Davis, 2015).

According to Baran and Davis (2015), early theories of the audience were source-dominated. Propaganda theory, for instance, focuses on the role of the propagandist and the impact of his messages on the audience, assuming that the former can dominate and manipulate the latter. Therefore, audience activity was ignored. This state of affairs has shifted over time, and consequently, more attention was devoted to the audience's role and activity. Questions such as how do individuals use media and for what purposes? started to preoccupy researchers. As early as the 1940s, researchers like Herta Herzog, Paul Lazarfeld and Frank Stanton became very active in what was later called “uses and gratifications” research.

There is a disagreement among scholars concerning audience research traditions. While McQuail (2010) takes a historical approach and distinguishes three traditions based on the purpose of audience research that has evolved over time, Jensen and Rosengren describes five traditions and classified them into humanist type, social-science type and mixed type.

According to McQuail (2010), the history of audience research has seen three traditions:

The structural tradition: The earliest and simplest form of audience research was concerned with the size, reach and social composition of an audience of a radio station or a print publication. The aim was to improve management in order to increase paid advertising (McQuail, 2010).

The behavioural tradition: Audience research, in its early stages, was affected by media effects theory. It was preoccupied with, mostly seen negatively, the media's impact on the audience, especially children and young people. The audience was seen as a passive recipient and likely to be affected by media messages. The other type of behavioural research was influenced by the Uses and Gratification Theory, which is centred on media use. The main concept of this theory is that the audience is active and is in charge of their media consumption. The main concern of this type of research is to find out “the nature and degree of motives for choice of media and media content” (McQuail, 2010, p. 418).

The cultural tradition, a reception analysis. It is the most recent development in audience research. According to Jensen (as cited in Jensen & Rosengren, 2005), the reception analysis tradition covers different “forms of qualitative empirical audience research which, to different degrees, seek to integrate social–scientific and humanistic perspectives on reception” (p. 57). At the essence of the cultural tradition is the idea that people’s use of media is a reflection of their social and cultural context and is an attempt to give meaning to their daily social and cultural experiences. According to Drotner (as cited in McQuail, 2010), audience ethnography is characterised by three main features: It looks at a group of people rather than the media or the content; it follows the group in different locations; and it stays long enough to avoid preconceptions. Reception analysis is effectively the audience research arm of modern cultural studies, rather than an independent tradition.

Table 3

The Three Audience Research Traditions Compared (McQuail, 2010, p. 420)

	<i>Structural</i>	<i>Behavioral</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
Main aims	Describe composition; enumerate; relate to society	Explain and predict choices, reactions, effects	Understand meaning of content received and of use in content
Main data	Social-demographic, media and time use	Motives, acts of choice, reactions	Perceptions of meaning regarding social and cultural context
Main methods	Survey and statistical analysis	Survey, experiment, mental measurement	Ethnographic, qualitative

Jensen and Rosengren (2005), on the other hand, believe there are five traditions of audience research: 1/ effects research, 2/ Uses and gratifications research, 3/ literary criticism, 4/ cultural studies, and 5/ reception analysis. These theories can be divided into two types: the humanistic type, which includes literary criticism and cultural studies, and the social-science type, which includes effects research and uses and gratification research. Reception analysis can be said to belong to both types. Both types of theories are centred, to varying degrees, on three main components of the communication process: the message or the text, the audience or the recipient, and the social system or the context.

2.2.6. Media Exposure

The definition and conceptualisation of how individuals get exposed to media messages, which is significant for the comprehension of media use and influence, has been a challenge for researchers (de Vreese, C. H., & Neijens, P., 2016). The term “media exposure” has been

conceptualized in different ways according to different theorists but, overall, there were three conceptualizations for media exposure which are discussed below (Webster and Wakshlag as cited in Potter 2009).

1/ exposure as choice: this perspective follows an economic approach and likens an audience' exposure to a consumer's consumption of a given product. The audience, like the consumer, makes "rational, well-informed choices to maximise the value of their resources" (Potter, 2009, p. 100).

2/Exposure as attention: Many media models conceptualise attention differently, and there is no single common definition of the term. While some scholars define attention in terms of how long people gaze at screens, others conceptualise it in terms of its primacy compared to other activities that take place at the same time.

3/Exposure as a preference: This perspective has been influenced by the ideas of the uses and gratifications theory, according to which individual exposure is seen as a product of personal motives and expectations.

For exposure to take place, three main criteria have to be met. First, physical presence entailing that "the message and the person [should] occupy the same physical space for some period of time" (Potter, 2009, p. 101). Second, perceptual reception means sensory reception through visual and auditory senses. Finally, psychological exposure which represents the creation of some trace element (image, sound, emotion) in the mind of the person (Potter, 2009).

A very simplistic definition of media exposure can be "the extent to which audience members have encountered specific messages or classes of messages/media content" (Slater, 2004, p. 168). Nevertheless, what is meant by "encountered" poses a challenge here. As a response to this question, Potter (2009) suggests the existence of four main types of exposure

states: automatic, attentional, transported, and self-reflexive. The main difference between these states is the degree of awareness the person exhibits in response to media messages. The automatic state is being exposed to media messages without being aware of them. The person in this state has no objective or plan for seeking out messages. The attentional state refers to being aware of and actively interacting with media messages. The transported state is a state of high awareness and concentration in which the person loses themselves and their sense of separateness from the message. The self-reflexive state refers to hyper-awareness of the message and its processing in the mind. “This represents the fullest degree of awareness: people are aware of the media message, their own social world, and their position in the social world while they process the media message” (p. 107).

Potter (2009) introduced a media exposure model, which is basically a matrix of exposure states and information-processing tasks. The model is very helpful for understanding what happens during exposure. The following table illustrates the model:

Table 4

Media Exposure Model (Potter, 2009, p.110)

Exposure States	Information-Processing Tasks		
	Filtering	Meaning Matching	Meaning Construction
Automatic	Screening	Highly automatic	Highly automatic
Attentional	Searching	Automatic	Typical construction
Transported	Swept	Personal and highly automatic	Highly emotional construction

Self-reflexive	Deep analysis	Sorting through learned meanings	Highly personalized construction
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2.3.Cultural Identity and Media Imperialism

2.3.1. Culture, Identity and Globalisation

Culture

Culture is one of the terms that have been loosely used and differently defined. Its meaning comprises “all socially transmitted and shared ways of thinking and acting.” It includes “language, religion, ideas, values, ways of doing and making things and the artefacts themselves” (Goonasekera, 1987). Many people tend to think that culture belongs to a specific society or country: Algerians have an Algerian culture, Americans have American culture, the French have French culture and so on. But in today’s world, we actually belong to our national culture, yet many of us select aspects of our lives that belong to “the global cultural market.” For example, we may eat “raisin bran for breakfast, curry for lunch, and sashimi for dinner” (Mathews, 2002, p. viii). Hence, the traditional meaning of culture as “the way of life of a people” has to be combined with the contemporary meaning of culture as “information and identities available from the global cultural supermarket” (Mathews, 2002, p. 1).

In its straightforward meaning, culture can be defined as “the learned behaviour of members of a given social group” (Baran S. , 2014, p. 9). But a more inclusive meaning that takes into account the functions and effects of culture can be: “it is socially constructed and maintained through communication. It limits as well as liberates us; it differentiates as well as unites us. It defines our realities and thereby shapes the ways we think, feel, and act” (Baran S. , 2014, p. 14).

Accordingly, culture is created and maintained through communication between members of society: communication between friends, parents and children, teachers and students, media professionals and media users and so on. It limits our options, but it can liberate us as well. It defines who we are and, in so doing, it has the potential to divide and unite us (Baran S. , 2014).

Since culture has the potential to limit and divide or liberate and unite, this means that it can offer us endless opportunities to use mass communication in a good way. In order to understand our opportunities and our responsibilities in the mass communication process, we have to view mass media professionals as storytellers and mass communication as a cultural forum. Thus, for people who work in the media industry, they have to be as professional and ethical as possible. For media consumers, they have to be critical and thoughtful (Baran S. , 2014).

Identity

Identity is a difficult word that is worth sociological exploration. Western definitions of identity hinge on a contradictory combination of sameness and difference. The origin of the word ‘identity’ is the Latin word *idem*, which means same or identical. One important meaning of identity, then, is that we are identical to others because we share common identities as humans. At the same time, there is another meaning of identity that suggests that people are unique and different from each other (Lawler, 2014).

Identity, contrary to its traditional meaning of being identical and seamless, can be a product of difference and exclusion. It is only constructed “through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks” (Hall, 2003, p. 4). According to Gil (2014),

“Identity is what makes an object unique, what makes it different from others and original” (p. 466). So, identity here is an equivalence of uniqueness and exceptionality.

A more inclusive definition of the word identity is “the ongoing sense the self has of who it is, as conditioned through its ongoing interactions with others. Identity is how the self conceives of itself, and labels itself” (Mathews, 2002, p. 17). Likewise, Giddens (2008) uses the term ‘self-identity’ to describe something that must be routinely created and sustained through the person’s reflexive activities. He continues that self-identity is not a trait or a collection of traits possessed by a person. It is “the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography” (53). Lawler (2014), on the other hand, argues that identity is not personal or individual; it is rather socially produced through social relationships such as kinship and storytelling.

Cultural Identity

While scholars disagree on whether identity is an individual or social construct, most of them agree that cultural identity is both individual and social. Raman (2006) defines cultural identity as a “multidimensional construct referring to a developing sense of self as a member of one or more groups” (cited in Britto & Amer, 2007, p. 138). It represents the interaction between culture, religion, ethnicity, and national identity (Britto & Amer, 2007). Orbe & Harris (2015) stress the social dimension of cultural identity as a means of social communication and interaction by defining cultural identities as “central, dynamic, and multifaceted components of our understanding of self and others. They provide an essential framework for organizing and interpreting our interactions with others” (p. 142).

The notion of cultural identity has been viewed in two different ways. According to the essentialists, identity is defined by a set of intrinsic, innate and unchangeable features such as

blood, race, culture and language. They emphasize national genius as a basic criterion for a common identity. The historicists, on the other hand, define identity as a result of a common series of historical circumstances. They emphasize the notion of the civic nation, which is based on the willingness of people to belong to a particular community. Gil (2014) believes that a more inclusive definition should take both views into account. She states: “In order for a community to become independent and self-determined, it must perforce to go through a consolidation of its identity traits, such as language, ethnicity, religion, tradition, customs, history, myths of origin, and so on” (p. 465).

One of the themes that attracted much scholarly interest is cultural identity development. Much of the research in the field of identity development has been centred on how children and adolescents are involved in the process of developing personal and cultural identities. Theorists in different disciplines have developed various models explaining and describing how people formulate cultural identity. But most of these models reflect Phinney’s model. Phinney argues that cultural identity formation happens through three main stages: “(1) unexamined cultural identity, (2) cultural identity search, and (3) cultural identity achievement” (as cited in Orbe & Harris, 2015, p. 114).

In the first stage, the unexamined cultural identity, people take their cultural norms, traditions, and other characteristics for granted. At a certain point, something triggers them to move to the next stage. It could be a conflicting message from family, friends, or media about race and ethnicity. The next stage, cultural identity search, involves a process of exploration and evaluation. Finally, people are able to build a clear and confident understanding of who they are, and, as a result, they achieve a strong cultural identity. Central to this model is the idea that our cultural identities are “dynamic and subject to constant examination, re-examination, and

possibly alteration” based on our life experiences and interactions with others (Orbe & Harris, 2015, p. 143).

Thus, identity is an enduring journey of ongoing development, and its major shaping force is culture. Mathews (2002) argues that selves are shaped by culture at three main levels:

(1) deep shaping taking place beyond the self’s control and beyond all but indirect comprehension; (2) middle-level shaping taking place beyond the self’s full control but within its comprehension; and (3) shallow shaping taking place with what the self sees as full control and comprehension (Mathews, 2002, p. 15).

Henceforth, according to Mathews (2002), cultural identity can be defined as “how people conceive of who, culturally, they are through their choices on the cultural supermarket level (third level) on the basis of their shaping at the two deeper levels” (p. 17).

By linking these seemingly diverse perspectives about cultural identity, one can arrive at a more holistic comprehension of the term. Cultural identity can be seen as the way individuals define themselves in reference to a certain group. It encompasses language, ethnicity, religion, tradition, customs, history, myths of origin, and so on. It both nurtures and is nurtured by social communication and interaction between the group members.

Identity and Globalisation

Prior to dealing with the interconnection between identity and globalisation, a fundamental prerequisite involves understanding the meaning of globalization. Globalisation as a term has many aspects: cultural, economic, political, etc. For the sake of this study, only the cultural dimension of globalization will be considered. A very comprehensive definition of globalization is provided by Mazrui (2000), who defines it as “the force that results in flexing the world into a global village, reducing distance, homogenizing culture, enhancing mobility and

shrinking the distance of geopolitical borders” (as cited in Nurullah, 2008, p. 46). So, globalisation has made the world a small village and has eroded all boundaries between cultures and nations.

There has been a heated discussion over identity and globalisation. Historically speaking, identity was seen as a treasure that linked local communities together. It was considered as something fragile that needed protection and preservation. In this context, globalisation was seen as a flood tide that swept local cultures and was widely viewed as the destructive power of local and national identities.

Recently, new voices emerged that celebrated the positive role of globalisation in promoting local cultures. Tomlinson (2003), for instance, argues that cultural identity is actually the product of globalisation rather than its victim: “... (identity) is the product of deliberate cultural construction and maintenance via both the regulatory and the socialising institutions of the state: in particular, the law, the education system and the media” (p. 271). So, identity is not some merely weak “communal-psychic attachment,” that is a victim of globalisation, as Tomlinson believes, it is rather an important dimension of modern life.

In a similar vein, Manuel Castells (2010), in his celebrated work “the power of identity,” asserts that “Our world, and our lives, are being shaped by the conflicting trends of globalisation and identity” (p. 1). This conflict resulted in the emergence of “powerful expressions of collective identity that challenge globalisation and cosmopolitanism on behalf of cultural singularity and people’s control over their lives and environment” (p. 2). Unlike the old argument, which sees identity as weak and fragile, Castells views identity as an upsurging power of local cultures in the face of globalisation.

Nurullah (2008), on the other hand, asserts that cultural globalisation has resulted in the “rapid transformation of cultures around the world” (p. 45). It has brought detrimental effects to the Muslim world and has created an identity crisis among Muslims. For all Muslims around the world, Islam is the main force that shapes their cultural identity. While Muslims may have different cultural traits, they share the same cultural identity that is based on Islamic principles and practices. Globalisation poses a challenge to Islamic identity in three main ways: “a) globalisation promotes media to propagate the hegemony of Western culture, (b) it regenerates local culture to replace it with the Americanised secular one, and (c) it challenges the collective Islamic ways of life, values, behavioural patterns, and principles” (p. 45).

2.3.2. Cultural Imperialism, Media Imperialism, and Media Literacy

Cultural imperialism

Elteren (2014) defines cultural imperialism as “the domination of one culture over another” (p. 400). A more specific definition of the term could be (as cited in Salwen, 1991) “a verifiable process of social influence by which a nation imposes on other countries its set of beliefs, values, knowledge and behavioural norms as well as its overall style of life” (p. 29). This state of the power imbalance between cultures can be a result of unintended economic and technological inequities between societies or a consequence of a deliberate set of policies adopted by the dominating country to achieve political and economic aims. Cultural imperialism manifests across many aspects: education, religion, business, law, government policies, etc. Media is probably the aspect that is most associated with cultural imperialism due to its overwhelming role (Elteren, 2014).

As a theoretical and analytical framework, cultural imperialism was developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It emerged as a response to many contemporary theories such as

modernisation theory. The latter supported the “unilinear diffusion of Western technologies, social institutions, life patterns, and value systems to what was then called the ‘Third World’” (Elteren, 2014, p. 402). The economic and political changes of the 1970s also contributed to the emergence of cultural imperialism. The 1970s was a time of economic expansion of American multinational corporations (MNGs) and the expansion of Western-backed military dictatorships in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Elteren, 2014).

Cultural imperialism has many forms but it, in its most extreme form, refers to the huge influx of foreign material, particularly from the developed countries of the West into the mass media of the Third World” (Goonasekera, 1987, p. 11). The most visible form of cultural invasion in developing countries is the import of foreign programs from developed countries. However, there are other ways through which cultural domination can take place. One way is through institutional and organisational collaboration between a Western country and a third-world country. The second way is through educating media producers in third-world countries. The third way is through the diffusion of professional values in the media workplace (Goonasekera, 1987).

Individuals, as well as societies, should preserve their cultures because “the loss of one’s cultural identity---ethnic identity or national identity---is an imperceptible process, but once people within one culture sense or find out their culture is defamiliarized with the past one, their culture has already broken” (Ye, 2010, p. 157). Therefore, identity preservation should be a nation’s top priority, “each nation has to preserve its own traditions, its own language, its own political self-determination.” The nation that fails to do so “will lose its specificities and its reason to exist as an independent community” (Gil, 2014, p. 474).

In order to protect one's culture from foreign cultural invasion, Ye (2010) suggests four approaches. First, there should be nation-wide cultural policies that prohibit the dissemination of foreign ideas and beliefs. Second, culture should be prioritised over business and money. Third, national and local cultures should be output to the West through different means in order to strengthen national pride. Last but not least, the amount of national cultural goods (books, magazines, ...) and services (libraries, museums,) should be increased (Ye, 2010, pp. 159-160).

Media imperialism

There has been a long debate over the effects of Western media on other cultures. Many scholars addressed this issue using the term "media imperialism," assuming that the West's long-exercised hegemony over world media systems has powerful effects on other cultures. Media imperialism thesis could be understood as the dominance of a few powerful countries, such as the USA, over the national and international media structures and the imposition of the cultures and ideologies of these powerful nations on the less powerful countries. This dominance is consciously aimed at by powerful countries and multinational corporations for economic and ideological ends (Sepstrup, 2005).

The problem with this model, as Morley & Robins (2002) argue, is its dependence on a simplistic hypodermic media effects model, which assumes that media have direct and necessary effects on their consumers. At the same time, however, they believe "one should not overestimate the freedom of the media consumer to make whatever he or she likes of the material transmitted" (p. 127). And even if they have the freedom to do so, they still have to choose materials from the constructed menu of powerful media companies. As a solution, they suggest that

We must balance an acceptance that audiences are in certain respects active in their choice, consumption and interpretation of media texts, with a recognition of how that activity is framed and limited, in its different modalities and varieties, by the dynamics of cultural power (p. 127).

Simply put, how Western media affects other cultures is a complex phenomenon that differs from one culture to another. According to Elteren (2014), standard research on imperialism tended to focus on external factors and undervalued internal ones such as resistance. “It tended to ignore the particularities of local cultures and their meaning systems, as well as other processes of modernisation, which often occur along with media development” (p. 406). Proponents of “audience research” and the resistance idea argue that media users interpret media messages differently depending on their social and cultural background. Therefore, they do have some kind of resistance to foreign values and ideologies.

In his article entitled “Cultural Imperialism: A Media Effects Approach,” Salwen (1991) reviewed some early studies that examined the cultural impact of western media. He found that cultural values are not easy to change as they are deeply ingrained and that there is an active resistance to foreign media messages sometimes. Nevertheless, foreign media have great potential to “create distorted images of foreign cultures” (p. 36).

Media Literacy

One way to reduce the negative power of the media over people is by developing critical literacy skills or ‘media literacy’ (Orbe, 2013; Downs, 2019; Smith, 2015). A book containing 25 chapters, edited by Edward Downs (2019), was devoted to shed light on the dark side of our relationship with media and technology in the 21st century. Downs concludes the book by asserting that media has four dark outcomes: “Commodification, Threats to Individual Well-

being, Exploitation, and Threats to Democracy.” In order to combat these outcomes, he suggests four solutions: “literacy, media literacy, technological literacy, and computer literacy” (p. 288). Hence, understanding media effects alone is not sufficient in the 21st century; one needs to be media literate in order to confront the harmful effects of media.

The term ‘media literacy’ has been around for a long time ago, with different definitions (Smith, 2015). Media literacy can be defined as “a critical understanding of how mass media operate, including learning to read messages behind the media’s images” (Orbe, 2013, p. 251). Downs (2019) defines the term ‘media literacy’ as “the ability to access, analyse, evaluate, and effectively communicate in a variety of forms” (p. 290). According to Baran (2014), media literacy is “the ability to effectively and efficiently comprehend and use any form of mediated communication” (p. 18). As is evident from the above information, all the definitions stress the individual’s ability to analyse, evaluate and read behind the media lines and images in order to effectively understand and comprehend the real messages of mass media and be able to use media in a thoughtful way.

According to Orbe (2013), media literacy involves three main skills. First, media audience should be able to understand the different techniques used in creating media images. Second, consumers should also be aware of the fact that “media are businesses geared toward earning profits.” Finally, media users should be able to understand that specific mass media images “project particular ideologies” (Orbe, 2013, p. 251).

At the heart of media literacy theory, there is a set of core concepts with a set of corresponding questions. These questions are very helpful in the critical evaluation and analysis of different media messages. The concepts and the corresponding questions are:

- 1) Media are constructions.

(Q1) *Who created this message?*

(2) Each medium has its own creative forms, language, and rules.

(Q2) *What creative techniques were used to get my attention?*

(3) Different individuals and audiences may experience the same messages differently.

(Q3) *How might other people understand this message differently than me?*

(4) Media have embedded points of view, values, and ideologies.

(Q4) *What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented or omitted?*

(5) Media have commercial purposes and are organized to gain profit and power.

(Q5) *Why is this message being sent?* (Downs, 2019, p. 292)

Media literacy is very important as it helps in the creation of a society that is based on inclusion, trust, tolerance and understanding (Downs, 2019). If we are savvy consumers of media, we can certainly make the world a better place. “We can change the world through media literacy, and we need to start with the young people in our lives” (Smith, 2015, p. xiv). One way to achieve media literacy among children and young people is through education. Smith (2015) stresses the importance of media literacy education which aims at helping individuals to acquire the necessary skills of inquiry and expression to be “critical thinkers, effective communicators, and active citizens in today’s world” (p. 4). Media literacy in the classroom should produce individuals who are able to question media history, messages and processes.

Baran (2014) analogises mass communication to a cultural forum in which the media professionals are the storytellers. Our responsibility as an audience in this cultural forum lies in questioning the tellers and their stories, in interpreting the stories “in ways consistent with larger

or more important cultural values and truths,” in being thoughtful, in reflecting on the meaning of the stories and what they tell about us and our culture (Baran S. , 2014, p. 15).

Potter (2016), identified seven skills that should be mastered in order to be a media literate person. These skills are: “analysis, evaluation, grouping, induction, deduction, synthesis, and abstracting” (p. 59). These skills are of great importance if we consider the role of mass media in creating and maintaining our culture that defines who we are and how we live. The table below includes the definitions of these skills.

Table 5

The seven skills of media literacy (Potter, 2016, p. 59)

Skill	Definition
Analysis	Breaking down a message into meaningful elements
Evaluation	Judging the value of an element; the judgment is made by comparing a message element to some standard
Grouping	Determining which elements are alike in some way, determining how a group of elements is different from other groups of elements
Induction	Inferring a pattern across a small set of elements, then generalizing the pattern to all elements in the set
Deduction	Using general principles to explain particulars
Synthesis	Assembling elements into a new structure
Abstracting	Creating a brief, clear, and accurate description capturing the essence of a message in a smaller number of words than the message itself

2.4.Identity, Language Learning and Media

2.4.1. Identity and Language Learning

Language and Identity

Identity and language have an intriguing relationship. This is due to the fact that debates on theories of both concepts are equally inconclusive and indeterminate. One of the prominent scholars in the field of language and identity is Norton Bonny. She is recognised for her theories of language and identity and her constructs: “investment” and “imagined community.” Norton (2008) uses the term ‘investment’ to describe the historical and social relationship between the learners and the target language and their ambivalent desire to learn it. So, language learners engage in the learning process because they expect to acquire unlimited symbolic and material resources, which will certainly increase their cultural capital in return. This investment in the target language is also an investment in the learner’s own identity.

Central to language investment is the notion of ‘imagined communities.’ While engaging in a second language learning activity, learners’ scope of their desired “imagined” community go beyond the four walls of the classroom. This imagined community offers them a range of identity possibilities in the future. According to Norton (2008), “an imagined community assumes an imagined identity, and a learner’s investment in the target language must be understood within this context” (p. 48). As Norton’s constructs show, the language learning process entails an identity change and transformation.

Recent research about second language acquisition and identity is based on the idea that language is more than a cognitive process, more than a system of signs; language is actually “a social practice in which experiences are organized and identities negotiated” (Norton, 2013, p. 1). According to identity theorists, language is the bridge that links the individual to the social world. “Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organisation and their

likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed” (cited in Norton, 2013, p. 2).

Speech, speakers, and social relationships are interconnected. When language learners speak, they are not only communicating with their interlocutors, they are also engaged in a process of identity construction and negotiation (Norton 1997; Norton 2013). Man (2008) further suggests that a person’s speech is actually a marker of his identity. She adds that language, and speech in particular, plays an important role in identity construction. People usually adjust their linguistic systems to resemble those of the group they want to identify with.

In a similar vein, recent theories of language learning have shifted from the traditional psychological paradigm that treated learning as a mere cognitive process to a sociocultural one that also considers the social and cultural dimensions of learning. Language learning is seen as an activity that happens between speakers within a specific sociocultural context. Learners are treated as members of social and historical groups who appropriate the practices of a particular group rather than mere language producers (Norton, 2013).

As it is apparent from Norton’s constructs, the definition of identity has undergone a fundamental shift from “a unified, stable, pre-linguistic and essentialist” notion towards a socially-constructed dynamic notion (Man, 2008, p. 124). The meaning of identity within language learning has been viewed in different ways. From a sociopsychological perspective, identity was seen as stable and unchangeable. From a poststructuralist perspective, however, identities are multiple, dynamic, and subject to change, and the relationship between language and identity is mutually constitutive (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001). In this sense, language learning is viewed as a “process of becoming, or avoiding becoming, a certain person, rather than a simple accumulation of skills and knowledge” (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 319).

At the centre of the poststructuralist theory is the idea that language is a site for identity construction, that language acquisition is a process of language socialisation, and that language learners are agents whose identities are in constant change. Language learning, thus, is seen as a process of participation, assimilation, and gaining membership into new communities (Pavlenko, 2001).

Different Languages, Different Selves

Do bilinguals and multilinguals perceive themselves differently when they speak different languages? This kind of question is usually raised in discussions about bilingualism, but is seldom raised in the literature. The changes in verbal and non-verbal behaviour that result from language change are usually taken for granted. Traditionally speaking, bilingualism was viewed as a problem of having two conflicting identities, or what is called ‘linguistic schizophrenia.’ Bilingual people were seen, especially in monolingual societies, as individuals “whose shifting linguistic allegiances imply shifting political allegiances and moral commitment” (Pavlenko, 2006, p. 2). This negative view of bilingualism lessened in the second half of the 20th century, when a more positive attitude towards its benefits emerged (Pavlenko, 2006).

In order to answer the question mentioned above, Pavlenko (2006) conducted a survey with 1039 bi- and multilingual speakers of different ages and from different linguistic backgrounds. She also relied on reflections from bilingual writers. She discovered that some bi- and multilinguals perceive the world differently. They change their perspectives, ways of thinking, and verbal and non-verbal behaviours when they switch languages. She attributes this to the fact that “the two languages may be linked to different linguistic repertoires, cultural

scripts, frames of expectation, autobiographic memories, and levels of proficiency and emotionality” (p. 27).

To understand the relationship between language and identity in L2 learning, Pavlenko (2001) conducted another study about the negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts. She examined how American writers, for whom English is a second language, position and reposition themselves regarding their multiple identities and languages through the analysis of their written autobiographies. She found that five aspects of identity may be subject to transformation during the process of L2 socialisation. They are linguistic, racial and ethnic, cultural, gender, and social identities. She concluded that written texts of L2 are ideal spaces for identity negotiation.

One topic that has attracted increased scholarly interest is the relationship between language, identity, and resistance. While the practices of the second language classroom may place students under undesirable conditions, learners can resist these conditions in unexpected ways. Learners may feel ambivalent about second language learning and “may resort to clandestine literacy practices to create “pedagogical safe houses” in the language classroom (Norton, 2013, p. 5). These practices are actually means of resistance to the identities that are imposed on the students. Furthermore, these pedagogical safe houses are sites for identity construction in which students negotiate the contradictory tensions they face as members of different groups (Norton, 2008; Norton, 2013; Man, 2008).

Effects of English Learning on Learners’ Identities

Language and identity are intricately intertwined. Identity is constructed by language, and language is shaped by identity. Thus, a prolonged contact with a foreign language has some effect on one’s identity, indeed. Nonetheless, empirical evidence for that has not been established yet. A study conducted with 178 English major students at Batna 2 University revealed that most

participants did not construct a new cultural identity, and among those who did, they claimed their new identities were complementary to their Algerian identities (Tobbi, 2021).

Atay and Ece (2009) conducted a study about the clash of multiple identities within EFL classrooms in Turkey. They interviewed 34 third-year students of English. The main question guiding the study was whether learning English would impact the construction of the sociocultural identities of the Turkish prospective EFL teachers. The findings of the study revealed that the Turkish students were aware of their multiple identities, and they regarded their Turkish and Muslim identities as primary. They considered their English learning an ‘investment’ with many advantages.

In another study conducted in Iran, the home culture detachment of two groups of EFL and non-EFL learners was measured. The findings of the study confirmed the assumption that EFL learners became less attached to their home culture as a result of learning English and becoming familiar with Western culture (Hejazi & Fatemi, 2015).

Overall, language is not just a set of words; it is a living force that shapes how we see ourselves and others (Ouahmiche & Bouguebs, 2024). It serves as a key factor in the construction of cultural identities as it facilitates the transmission of cultural values and traditions. Contact with other cultures leads to the interaction between language and culture, resulting in adaptation and borrowing. While this process promotes openness, flexibility and inclusivity, it may signify a challenge to old values. Understanding these dynamics is fundamental to balancing cultural preservation with openness (Ysmailova, Akmatova, Ysmayilova, Arzymatova, & Turgunbaeva, 2024).

2.4.2. Language Learning

Evidence is accumulating that a major shift is underway in how second language (L2) development occurs. Increasingly, especially among young people, that process is occurring outside of institutional settings, predominantly through the use of online networks and media (Godwin-Jones, 2018, p. 8).

As Godwin-Jones claims, language learning is undergoing a massive transformation due to the widespread use of technology today. Language learners, like other young people, are adopting new ways of learning that did not exist 20 years ago. Most of this learning takes place outside the classroom, at home, on the street, and anywhere one can use their phones. This section will elaborate on this type of learning that happens outside educational institutions.

Difference between Formal and Informal Learning

Although the discussion of informal learning has been around for quite some time, its role is minor compared to that of formal learning. However, there has been an increased interest in informal learning in the last few years (Rogers, 2008). The term "informal learning" first appeared in the work of Knowles (1950). It refers to the lifelong process by which people gather knowledge and skills from different sources in their environment. It could be home, work, newspapers, TV, radio and so on. So, unlike formal learning, informal learning is unorganised, unsystematic and sometimes unintentional (Bahrani & Sim, 2012).

The concept of learning itself implies much informal meaning, as Rogers (2008) defines it:

Learning is the way in which the experience of the external is internalised and utilised for growth, a way of drawing from the natural and human environment the sustenance for

living. Much of it is making sense (meaning) of experience and using that for dealing with new experiences” (p. 133).

While a significant portion of learning is structured and intentionally designed, much of what individuals learn throughout their lives occurs unintentionally and without conscious planning. Marsick and Watkins (1990), as discussed in Pemberton, Fallahkhair, and Masthoff (2004), distinguish between formal and informal learning by emphasizing that formal learning usually takes place within institutional settings, follows a structured curriculum, and is teacher-led. In contrast, informal learning, which includes incidental learning, is more flexible, learner-driven, and may happen within or outside formal environments. Incidental learning, specifically, emerges as a secondary outcome of engaging in other activities—such as performing tasks, interacting with others, adapting to organizational culture, or participating in formal education—often without the learner being fully aware that learning is taking place. While informal learning can be supported intentionally, incidental learning tends to occur naturally and pervasively, regardless of the learning environment.

Rogers (2008) distinguishes four types of learning that differ in terms of power and control: formal, informal, non-formal, and incidental. According to him, formal learning is controlled by the opportunity giver, while informal learning is controlled by the learner himself. The control in non-formal learning is usually shared between the learner and the teacher. Finally, incidental learning is a type of learning where no one is in control.

Informal Language Learning

Language learning could happen in an informal context where the learner is exposed to the target language outside the classroom. This could happen at home, at work, or in another place through social interaction with native people or exposure to media. People can

unintentionally learn a language when they watch a movie, listen to music, or read a newspaper. The main difference between formal language learning and informal language learning is that in formal context, the focus is on the language itself, while the focus in informal context is on meaning. That is, in an informal context, such as watching a movie, learners get engaged in a learning process when they try to understand the meaning of the movie using a dictionary or a subtitle (Bahrani & Sim, 2012).

The history of informal language learning research is relatively recent. It emerged in the 1970s with the studies of Krashen (1976), d'Anglejan (1978), and later Ellis (1980, 1982), who discussed the role of informal experiences in second language acquisition. However, today's informal language learning research is very different from that of the past due to the communication and information technologies that offer the language learner a breadth of learning opportunities. Given the newness of this field of study, there is not a big deal of previous research on informal aspects of language learning among adults, and many researchers in the field sometimes had to start from scratch (Dressman, 2020).

Informal language learning could be defined as “any activities taken consciously or unconsciously by a learner outside of formal instruction that lead to an increase in the learner's ability to communicate in a second language” (Dressman, 2020, p. 4). Formal instruction here means any activities organised by an instructor and regularly scheduled. Foreign language classes in a language centre, public or private, are examples of formal learning as long as they are regular and organised by a teacher. Toffoli and Sockett (2010) agree with Dressman that the main difference between informal and formal language learning is the purpose of the learning activity, whether it takes place as part of class or not. They believe that informal learning

involves practices which do not take place as part of a lesson, whether during class time or as a homework assignment, and any activity prescribed by a teacher in such a context could not therefore be considered an informal learning activity even if the activity itself was indistinguishable from other activities spontaneously engaged in by the language learner (as cited in Codreanu & Combe, 2020)

While researchers agree about the role of the teacher in formal language learning, they disagree about the learner's consciousness in informal learning. Tissot (2004), for example, believes that informal learning necessarily entails the idea that learners may not be aware of their informal learning daily activities at home, at work, or elsewhere. According to him, informal learning is a spontaneous activity that takes place all the time. Cross (2006), on the contrary, asserts that informal learning is an intentional activity that is aimed at developing certain skills (Codreanu & Combe, 2020).

Examples of informal language learning are numerous. They include nearly every occasion to learn a second or a foreign language, such as discussion with friends or family using the target language, exposure to captioned and subtitled videos, chatting with online friends and so on (Dressman, 2020). In brief, the term informal language learning refers to any learning activity that takes place outside the language classroom, regardless of being conscious or unconscious.

2.4.3. Media and Language Learning

Use of Media in Formal Language Learning

Most of the available literature related to media and ESL/EFL is about the use of media inside ESL/EFL classrooms. Many studies have examined the role media could play in enhancing and improving EFL learners' skills and competencies if appropriately integrated into

classroom activities. Integrating digital technology into EFL learning improves learners' practical engagement, enhances their spoken English, and enriches their vocabulary (Felcida & Parameswaran, 2024). In addition to enhancing the linguistic and communicative skills of the learners, they are an excellent source of information about the culture and the society of the target language (Oroujlou, 2012).

There are four reasons that make media language attractive for applied linguists and sociolinguists. First, media provide easy access to authentic language data for both learning and research. Second, media represent an important linguistic institution as they produce a large proportion of the language that we read and hear every day. Third, media language is used in linguistically interesting ways. Fourth, media are an essential social institution. They reflect and shape culture, politics, and social life (Bell, 1995, as cited in Oroujlou, 2012).

Research on the use of television and video for language learning has been well-established since the 1980s. Many researchers have promoted the use of TV and video in language learning and considered them ideal means for acquiring authentic language and learning the culture of the target language. In addition to the content of TV and video, which is rich in terms of linguistic output, the subtitles and the captions are also very effective. Watching TV programmes with subtitles over a long period could have a strong and cumulative effect. So, overall, the use of TV for language learning is valuable for developing cultural as well as linguistic knowledge about the target language if it is structured, well-selected and well-prepared (Vanderplank, 2010).

One of the main sources of authentic output is TV and radio news, which could be excellent teaching material for EFL learners. Previous research showed that exposure to audio

and visual news in EFL classrooms could improve listening comprehension and speaking fluency (Bahrani & Sim, 2011).

News is undoubtedly a great source of authentic language, but sometimes it can be very boring and uninteresting. Films can be equally valuable for language learning and very enjoyable at the same time. Stewart (2006) believes that films can help students on all counts. Properly selected and presented in the classroom, films can improve learners' vocabulary and listening comprehension; they can be used as references to writing assignments and oral presentations. Additionally, the subtitles and the closed captioning can help the learners increase their reading skills. Films can be integrated into EFL classrooms through various activities such as reading, writing, debates, group presentations, and group discussions. A study conducted with Chinese EFL learners yielded interesting results about using films in EFL classrooms. The results revealed that integrating English language films, with their unique feature such as subtitles, in the school curriculum can create a very effective and motivating learning environment (Hsieh, et al., 2010).

With the pervasiveness of social media among young people, new interest in the role of social network services emerged. Mubarak (2016) contends that social media is an important vehicle for language learning as it has made it possible for a flexible, autonomous and self-guided language learning experience to take place. He carried out a study with a group of university students to explore the students' perceptions of using social media as an instrument for language learning. The results indicate that most of the students used social media to enhance their communication skills and that they believed that social media is a powerful tool for language learning.

Media can be used as an alternative to social interaction in an EFL context where there is no social interaction with native speakers. A study that was conducted in two different contexts (ESL context and EFL context) to examine the role of both social interaction and media exposure on ESL learners and EFL learners, respectively, showed that media exposure does not only offer an authentic alternative for EFL learners, it also contributes to greater language development than social interaction with native speakers (Bahrani & Sim, 2012).

Use of Media in Informal Language Learning

Most of the available research on informal language learning is centred on the possibilities of using new technologies to support language learning. Mobile phones, interactive television, video materials and social media were the most investigated. Media technologies offer a variety of activities that can be used to support language learning. Moreover, some of these activities cannot fit in a formal educational setting as they are embedded in people's daily lives. (Pemberton, Fallahkhair, & Masthoff, 2004).

The integration of 'non-desk' technologies in informal language learning is gaining an increased interest among scholars. While traditional desk computers are highly appreciated in formal language settings, new media technologies such as mobile phones and interactive television have been recognised for their great potential to support language learning (Pemberton, Fallahkhair, & Masthoff, 2004). Using the results of a focus group study, Fallahkhair, Pemberton, and Masthoff (2004) generated a rich scenario for informal language learning through the use of a combination of mobile phones and interactive television. According to them, using a dual medium approach is very beneficial as it offers the best aspects of each medium.

Videos, including TV and films, are probably among the most common and earliest sources for informal language learning. They offer rich content for language learning in addition to its compelling nature and user-friendly interface. Additionally, one feature of TV and films that is very helpful for informal language learners is subtitles and captions, which increase comprehension and encourage learning new vocabulary. “No teacher, no classroom, no textbook can provide the richness, range, and variety of language available in television and films” (Vanderplank, 2020, p. 183). The term “video” today means a multiplicity of resources which did not exist 20 years ago, as Vanderplank (2020) assumes,

Informal learners also have a great deal more choice and control over what they watch, when they watch it, and how they watch it compared to 20 years ago. It is this profound change in the opportunities to engage in informal language learning through video which has altered the nature of the task, allowing learners to exploit the affordances of technology in ways which could barely have been imagined 20 years ago (p. 183).

Despite the limitless opportunities of TV and films, they can be useless if the learners lack interest, motivation, commitment, and other learning skills. Vanderplank (2020) believes that the best way to make the most of video materials is to communicate one’s experiences of watching them. That is the only way to promote greater engagement with the language of the video material.

The popularity and pervasiveness of social networking services among young people have recently attracted significant interest from educators (Hamat & Hassan; Rahimah, 2018; Zourou, 2020). Utilising social media for education can create opportunities for students to socialise and share knowledge. Educators and instructors, particularly in higher education, are increasingly advocating for the use of social media, especially Facebook, as a valuable teaching

and learning tool. Research on social media and informal language learning indicates that learners commonly and naturally utilise social media as an informal learning resource to collaborate with classmates, exchange information about their courses, or organise class projects (Hamat & Hassan).

Hamat and Hassan (n.d) conducted a study about the use of social networking services outside the classroom. They investigated whether university students in Malaysia (n=6085) think using social media helps them learn English and what areas of language proficiency improved most due to using social network services (SNSs). The results indicate that the overwhelming majority (99.7%) use social media to learn English outside the classroom, and 97.4% think that SNSs are very helpful for their English learning. The areas of English that were mostly developed are writing, communication, vocabulary and reading.

A strong correlation has been found between the use of social media and academic achievement among ESL learners, according to Ramzan, M., Bibi, R., & Khunsa, N. (2023). They investigated 412 secondary school students in Karachi to explore the relationship between social media use and academic performance in English. The study's findings revealed that social media plays an essential role in students' daily lives. Furthermore, the results indicated that students with high and fair grades in English demonstrated a higher level of engagement with social media compared to those with lower grades. It is important to note that the researchers concluded their study with a series of recommendations for optimising the use of social media in informal learning. They propose:

By promoting responsible social media habits, fostering effective time management skills, and exploring the educational potential of social media, students can strike a balance between their online activities and academic pursuits, ultimately enhancing their

academic motivation and performance. (Ramzan, M., Bibi, R., & Khunsa, N., 2023, p. 418)

A similar study was conducted to shed some light on the use of Facebook as a second language tool by university students in New Zealand (n=190). The findings suggest that learners are using a range of Facebook features that expose them to the second language they study and enable them to communicate with native speakers using a second language. The use of Facebook varied among learners according to their proficiency level, strength of social ties with native speaker Facebook friends, and personal attitudes towards Facebook (Alm, 2015).

The use of vlogs has been at the centre of informal language learning research, though little has been published about it. Available research focussed on YouTube videos and their potential regarding informal language learning. Vlogging can be an excellent source of informal learning in many aspects: learning the skills of sustained monologue, engaging in multilingual interactions, acquiring digital literacy skills, and getting involved in intercultural exchanges (Codreanu & Combe, 2020).

Researchers have also been interested in how people use their mobile phones and portable devices as informal learning tools since these devices are “versatile everyday tools that are always close to hand” (Kukulska-Hulme & Lee, 2020, p. 169). Collaborative language learning using mobile phones has the potential to support informal learning and connect out-of-class learning with in-class learning. It encourages the learners to explore information instead of having it presented to them. It can also strengthen their identities through intercultural contact with each other (Kukulska-Hulme & Lee, 2020).

To sum up, the technological revolution of recent years has paved the way for the emergence of informal language learning as a key source of linguistic knowledge and skills. Yet,

to better comprehend this phenomenon and understand the factors leading to successful informal language learning, as well as the approaches that help us effectively utilise the latest technologies, further research into the processes and practices involved in informal language learning across different contexts should be conducted.

Media Literacy in EFL Classroom

Many ESL/EFL teachers depend on magazines, advertisements, newspapers, internet-cites, and TV as convenient, up-to-date, authentic sources for English language learning. Indeed, mass media offer various types of written, audio, and visual materials that can be used in the language classroom. But they also represent a challenge to our social practices and a demand for a “pedagogy of multi-literacies” (Quinlisk, n.d., p. 35). One of the implications of multi-media literacies is the ability to understand the interplay between media texts, images and cultural stories, on the one hand, and the learners’ identities, on the other hand. So, media literacy in the language classroom should be developed not only as a way to incorporate media in the classroom but also as an instrument to analyse multiple layers of media messages (Quinlisk, *n.d.*).

Quinlisk (n.d.) argues that students can use cultivation theory as a framework to examine the media content they usually consume. She uses a fascinating analogy to explain the cultivation theory of media effects. The idea that one has in mind about another culture is like a seed. The water and the nutrients that make the seed grow and flourish are the media images and stories. The individual choices and experiences are like the soil and the weather conditions in which the seed grows. She suggests three instructional opportunities for examining media content in ESL/EFL classrooms: rhetorical analysis of advertisements, content analysis of people in TV and film, and broader social analysis of powerful cultural stories.

Media literacy education (MLE) has become increasingly integrated into curricular initiatives in different parts of the world as a result of the increasingly saturating media. It refers to the knowledge of how to interpret and decode media messages. It is not a simple rhetoric and visual content analysis. It is an attempt to give answers to persistent questions as to “why certain images are normalised in media, how social interactions are shaped by mediated portrayals of others, and how alternative representations might challenge established hegemony” (Quinlisk, 2012, p. 43).

The importance of MLE is that it provides a framework for closely examining the relationship between media messages, on the one hand, and the social practices that resist or reinforce them, on the other hand. In other terms, language teachers and learners are not passive players; they are “capable of interpreting, resisting and creating alternatives” (Quinlisk, 2012, p. 45).

In an attempt to guide teachers on how to practice media literacy education, Quinlisk (2012) introduces critical media analysis (CMA) as a model for ESL/EFL educators to integrate in their classrooms. Drawing on both the transmission approach and the cultural studies approach, CMA is based on two steps: identifying patterns in imagery and rhetoric in media and opening classroom discussions with the learners about these patterns. By doing so, students are given an opportunity to critically reflect on and evaluate the media messages they get exposed to on a daily basis.

Oroujlou (2012) further stresses the importance of media literacy skills when using media in the language classroom by suggesting that the language that is used in media is not neutral. It is actually ideology-laden. He adds that it is the duty of teachers to raise the students’ awareness about this. According to Fairclough (1995), the main objective of education is to train students

to be critical of the media language they are exposed to. They should be able to answer questions about any media text, such as:

1. How is the text designed, why is it designed in this way, and how else could it have been designed?
2. How are texts of this sort produced, and in what ways are they likely to be interpreted and used?
3. What does the text indicate about the order of media discourse?
4. What broader socio-cultural processes is this text a part of, what are its broader social conditions, and what are its likely effects? (cited in Oroujlou, 2012, p. 27)

These questions will increase students' awareness of the underlying ideologies and structures in the media materials.

2.5.Theoretical framework

Similar to a telescope or microscope, a conceptual or theoretical framework narrows and brings into focus your field of vision, which is necessary for limiting the scope of your study. It helps define the research problem and structure your literature review. In addition, it acts as a filtering tool to select appropriate research questions and to guide data collection, analysis, and interpretation of findings (Roberts & Hyatt, 2019, p. 173).

This study was heavily influenced by the work of Tan , Nelson, Dong, & Tan (1997). Their study was an attempt to explain how television influences adolescents' values acceptance using a cognitive functional theory. This theory was drawn from three major theories about learning and socialisation: cultivation theory, social cognitive theory and social exchange theory.

Cultivation theory is a theory that was introduced by Gerbner and his colleagues in the late 1960s. It is one of the three most popular media theories, along with uses and gratifications

and agenda setting. Its underpinnings are rooted in the premise that individuals who spend a lot of time watching TV end up viewing the world as scary and mean in an exaggerated way. Later on, other scholars used the theory to find out how TV affects people's perceptions of politics, health issues, and gender roles (Griffin, 2012). In its general sense, cultivation theory means that media consumption helps create distorted images and perceptions of the world and that heavy media consumers start to see the real world as it appears in media (Orbe, 2013). The

Social cognitive theory, also known as social learning theory, is a theory that was developed by Bandura (1973). It was a result of his research on Children's learning of aggressive behaviour. He found out that behaviours can simply be learnt by observing role models' actions. That is, people do not need to perform the action in order to learn it; they can learn its patterns vicariously. His theory was later expanded to the observational learning of behaviour depicted in mass media. Central to Bandura's theory is the assumption that people are "self-developing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting" rather than simply being passive, reactionary creatures (Potter, 2014, p. 101).

The main idea of social cognitive theory is that humans learn from observation, and so does the media audience; they copy behaviours they see on screens. Two important processes in social learning theory are imitation and identification. Imitation can be defined as "the direct reproduction of behaviour," while identification means copying a model instead of a specific behaviour (Baran & Davis. 2015, p. 170). Though imitation is more observable, identification has a more significant and lasting impact.

Homans' social exchange theory was developed as a reaction to the neglect of the economic dimension when explaining human behaviour and relationships. It is based on the assumption that "Social behaviour is an exchange of goods, material goods, but also non-

material ones, such as the symbols of approval or prestige” (Homans, 1958, p. 606). In other terms, the behaviour one emits is reinforced to some extent by the behaviour of the other, and “the greater the reinforcement, the more often is the reinforced behaviour emitted” (Homans, 1958, p. 599). So, human exchange is usually shaped by how much people give “cost” and how much they get “reward.” People behave in a certain way in order to get rewards and avoid punishment.

Homans (1974) suggested two principles that are important for the understanding of the exchange of behaviour between individuals: the ‘Value Principle’ and the ‘Success Principle’. The ‘Value Principle’ entails the idea that “the more valuable to a person is the result of his action, the more likely he is to perform that action.” The ‘Success Principle’ is the view that “for all actions taken by persons, the more often a particular action of a person is rewarded, the more likely the person is to perform that action” (cited in Tan, Nelson, Dong, & Tan, 1997, p. 84).

Tan al. (1997) used elements and principles from the three theories to develop their cognitive-functional theory of television socialising effects. They define the term socialisation as a process in which members of a group acquire the values, norms, attitudes, beliefs, principles, and language characteristics of their group. That is, members of a particular group share basic cultural elements, and while adults strongly manifest these elements, adolescents learn them through socialisation. The unit of analysis is the individual within a social group. In order to understand the role of television in socialisation, Tan al. (1997) suggest four postulates:

1. Learning the observed event: The first step in the socialisation process is learning the observed event on TV. Two processes take place here: attention and coding. The viewer attends an event on TV and then codes it.

2. Evaluating the observed event: The viewer then evaluates the realism and functionality of the event. Realism means how true the event is to life. The events that happen in a similar environment to the viewer and include people similar to the viewer are usually perceived as real by the event observer. Functionality refers to how much the observed event, materially or spiritually,
3. Internalising the functional evaluation of the observed event: The third stage is when the viewer starts expecting that the event will lead to the same reward in reality.
4. Assimilating the observed event: As a consequence of the previous steps, the norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, and language characteristics of the event will be assimilated. So, assimilation is the final result of the socialising process.

These postulates form the foundation for a cognitive-functional theory of the television socialising effect described by Tan al. (1997). It is based on the idea that observed norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, and language characteristics in the media are assimilated after they are learned and perceived as real and functional. This happens through four stages. The media users attend (read, listen or watch) an event on media (TV, radio, social media and so on) and learn its content; they evaluate the realism and the functionality of the event, they internalise the evaluation, and finally, they assimilate the cultural elements observed in the event.

The cognitive-functional theory is adopted as the main theoretical framework for this study because it helps examine the effects of media exposure on EFL learners. The fact that it draws on different theories makes it most appropriate for covering the various aspects of media impact. Using its socialising process as a lens would provide some insight into how young Algerians are influenced by the different means of information and communication technology they use to improve their English language proficiency. Practically speaking, this study tests two

hypotheses that deal with two important concepts of the cognitive functional theory: learning and functionality. The two hypotheses are:

- H1: The more frequently EFL learners recognise a value in English language media, the more likely they would regard it as important.
- H2: The more EFL learners consider a value functional in their life in Algeria, the more likely they would regard it as important.

2.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter reviews major studies and theories about media impact and related areas. It offers an examination of key media theories and communication models, exploring the complex relationship between media messages and individuals. The review of the literature highlights the evolution of communication models from simple, linear, one-way, and media-centric to a two-way process in which both the sender and the receiver influence each other. It also underscores the importance of recognising the multifaceted nature of media effects and accounting for their different dimensions. Yet research in this area tends to ignore the mechanisms by which the effects occur and the underlying processes that mediate them.

The second part of the literature review explores the concepts of cultural identity and media imperialism and the intricate relationship between them. Research about cultural identity emphasises the significant impact of media on individuals' perception and construction of their identities. Furthermore, while media imperialism has been accused of potentially destroying local cultures, the review suggests that media can serve as a means of cultural resistance. Moreover, the literature highlights the role of media literacy as a counterforce, empowering individuals so they can challenge dominant media narratives.

The last part of the chapter examines the intriguing relationship between language learning and identity. Previous research found that language learning is more than a cognitive process, it is a social and cultural process that entails an identity change and transformation as well. Hence, language plays a pivotal role in identity construction, and prolonged contact with a foreign language may lead to the construction of a new identity. Nonetheless, empirical evidence in this area has not yet been adequately established. This section also discusses informal language learning as an alternative to traditional formal learning and as an emerging field of study that warrants further investigation into the factors, processes, and practices that lead to successful informal language learning across different contexts. Lastly, the review highlights the importance and the numerous advantages of using media in both formal and informal language learning. Yet, it also accentuates the recognition of the challenges posed to students' identities. This underscores the need to incorporate media literacy to help students resist the negative impact of media.

3. Methodology

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3.1.Introduction

The preceding chapter elaborated on the major concepts and theories related to the study of language learning, culture, media, and identity while highlighting any possible gaps in understanding media's impact on identity in the Algerian context. The main aim of this chapter is to discuss the methodological decisions made in this research. The methodological discussion will proceed in the following manner. The research questions and the hypotheses are revisited at the beginning of the chapter. After that, the research design and the reason for its selection are discussed. This is followed by a description of the population and the sample dealt with in this study. The main instruments used in the data collection, namely the survey and the focus group interview, are explained in the subsequent section. The chapter then details the measures, the pilot study, and the data collection procedures and phases. Finally, the chapter concludes by discussing the techniques used to analyse quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2.Research Questions and Hypotheses

As stated earlier, the chief objective of this empirical endeavour is to investigate the impact of English media exposure on Algerian EFL learners' cultural identity. By examining and assessing how Algerian EFL learners are affected by this type of media content, it is hoped that the findings of this study will provide significant theoretical and empirical implications for the use of media in the EFL context. To achieve this aim, the following research questions were raised:

- RQ1 What are the media habits of the Algerian EFL learners?
- RQ2 To what extent are Algerian EFL learners immersed in English language media?
- RQ3 Does exposure to English media correlate with increased acceptance of Anglo-American values among Algerian EFL learners?

- RQ4 How do Algerian EFL learners perceive their Algerian culture and the Anglo-American culture?
- RQ5 In what ways does English media exposure impact the cultural identities of Algerian EFL learners?

The aim of the first research question, RQ1, is to understand how Algerian EFL learners use media (both traditional and social media) in their daily lives. Understanding this can help us distinguish between heavy and light users based on how much time they spend using media. Also, we can gain a deeper sense of the media type and content they consume.

The second research question, RQ2, is more specific and aims at measuring how much English language media (British and American in particular) EFL learners consume daily. A well-known fact is that EFL learners need to make use of all available resources, including traditional media and social media, to improve their proficiency in English.

The third question, RQ3, aims to test cognitive functional theory in the context of Algerian EFL learners. The theory has synthesised three major theories: cultivation theory, social cognitive theory and social exchange theory. It is based on the assumption that constant and long exposure to media content may lead to more acceptance of the cultural values embedded in it.

To delve deeper into the impact of English media products on Algerian EFL learners, it is critical to examine their understanding of their Algerian culture and the Anglo-American culture, which is the purpose of the fourth research question, RQ4. This would allow us to draw inferences about how their perspectives have been changed by English media exposure.

Finally, the last research question, RQ5, is this study's core question as it explores the impact of English language media on EFL learners' cultural identity. There is an agreement among researchers that heavy media exposure may have great effects on people's sense of

identity. Yet, research about the impact of foreign media on Algerian EFL learners is nearly non-existent. Consequently, this question examines the extent to which Anglo-American media impacts the cultural identity of these young people.

The cognitive Functional theory of media socialisation effects is the main theory used in this research to measure the impact of English media on young Algerian EFL learners.

Therefore, two hypotheses were formulated; they deal with two important concepts of the cognitive functional theory: learning and functionality. The two hypotheses are:

- H1: Increased recognition of a value in English language media correlates with a higher likelihood of considering it important among EFL learners.
- H2: Increased perception of a value as functional in the Algerian context correlates with a higher likelihood of considering it important among EFL learners.

3.3.Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to collect data, combining the survey method to obtain quantitative data with the focus group method to gather qualitative insights. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches would yield “additional insights beyond the information provided” by either of them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 41). Mixed-methods viability has been validated in many books and journals, all of which highlighted the benefits of using this research approach in the social and human sciences. Roberts and Hyatt (2019) assert:

Qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study can complement each other by providing results with greater breadth and depth. Combining what with a possible why can add support to your findings. With quantitative methods, you can summarise large amounts of data and reach generalisations based on statistical projections. In contrast,

qualitative research recounts the lived experience of a smaller sample in an effort to provide rich descriptive detail. (p. 228)

Mixed methods are used when the quantitative or the qualitative approach, each by itself, is not enough to understand the research problem and when combining the strengths of both approaches, a more comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon would be gained. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), there are three types of mixed methods. They mainly differ in the sequence and the relationship between the quantitative and the qualitative data collection phases. These three types are:

- **Convergent mixed methods** in which both quantitative data and qualitative data are merged to obtain a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon under examination. In this type of research, both forms of data are collected at roughly the same time.
- **Explanatory sequential mixed methods** in which the quantitative data are collected and analysed first. After that, the results are built on to collect the qualitative data. In other words, qualitative data are collected to explain the results of the quantitative data further.
- **Exploratory sequential mixed methods** in which the qualitative data are collected first. The information obtained from this phase is then used to collect the quantitative data.

These core designs can also be used in more complex ways depending on the nature of the topic. This study, as mentioned earlier, employed a mixed methods approach using a quantitative method, consisting of a survey questionnaire, and a qualitative method, consisting of focus groups. The use of both methods was essential to obtain various types of data about EFL learners' habits, as well as their perspectives regarding the impact of English language media on cultural identity. The two forms of data, quantitative and qualitative, were collected at roughly

the same time to support each other. The questionnaire and the focus group guidelines were designed to produce independent and different data. This design aims to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the problem under study.

3.4. Population and Sample

One objective of scientific research is to describe the characteristics of a population. A population is a “group or class of subjects, variables, concepts, or phenomena” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 87). The population of this study comprises all the graduate students (master I and master II) of Blida 2 University. The choice of the research population was made based on the following criteria:

- Graduate students have already finished their BA (Licence) degree and are preparing for their master's degree. To enrol in the master's program, these students were selected from many BA degree holders. They were selected based on their educational merits during the past three years. This implies that graduate students, compared to undergraduates, have the longest exposure to English language media. Furthermore, they likely experience less difficulty in completing the questionnaire and provide valuable insights regarding the topic under examination.
- Blida 2 University is a big university located in the north of Algeria. Its strategic location makes it an excellent choice for students from neighbouring cities. The university, in general, and the department of English in particular, attracts hundreds of students from Blida, Tipasa, Algiers, Ain Dafla, and Medea. Thus, the researcher would have access to students from different regions in Algeria in one place.

However, studying the whole population is almost impossible due to time and resource constraints. In this case, the solution is to study a portion of the population, ‘a sample’. A sample

consists of “a subset of the population that is representative of the entire population” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 87). There are two types of sampling: probability and nonprobability sampling. The main difference between the two types is that probability sampling uses mathematical guidelines to calculate each unit’s chance of being selected, while nonprobability sampling does not.

There are four issues to take into consideration when choosing the type of sampling: purpose of the study, cost versus value, time constraints and amount of acceptable error (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Having taken these issues into account, I opted for a convenient sampling approach, a type of nonprobability sampling. Convenient sampling means contacting those who are easily accessible (Basit, 2010).

284 master students of English language and literature at the University of Blida 2 responded to the questionnaire. Upon examining the responses, I identified 39 with missing data. I removed the 39 cases and retained the remaining 245 responses for analysis, which constitute the final sample for this study. The table below describes the demographic data of the sample members.

Table 6

Demographic Information of the Questionnaire Respondents

		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	38	15.5
	Female	207	84.5
Educational level	Master I	205	83.7
	Master II	40	16.3
Age	20-25	198	80.8

26-30	24	9.8
31-40	16	6.5
more than 40	6	2.4

As stated earlier, 284 graduate students of English responded to the questionnaire, but only 245 responses were considered valid for analysis. Among them were 207 (84.5%) females and 38 (15.5%) males. This significant disparity between males and females is anticipated in foreign language classes, as the majority of those who choose to study languages and gain admission are typically females. Consequently, females outnumber males in literary fields in most Algerian universities.

205 (83 %) of the respondents were Master One students while 40 (16.3 %) of them were Master Two. This can be attributed to the timing of the survey, which was conducted during the second semester. During this time, master two students do not attend classes as they are primarily busy writing their master's dissertations.

Concerning age, the participants' ages ranged from 20 to 50 years old. The average age of the sample members is 24 ($M = 24.11$, $SD = 5.13$). Based on their ages, the respondents were categorised into four groups: 198 (80%) of them were aged 20-25, 24 (9.8%) were aged 26- 30, 16 students were aged 31-40, and 6 were over 40 years old. As can be seen from the figures, the majority of the survey respondents were aged 20-25, which is the typical age range of Algerian graduate university students. Yet, older individuals are allowed to pursue a master's degree in Algeria, provided they meet the eligibility criteria.

3.5.Instrumentation

3.5.1. Survey

Survey research is a mode of observation that is used frequently in the social sciences. It is the best available method for studying a population that is too large to be observed directly (Babbie, 2002). It is convenient, practical and cost-effective. It helps examine the problem in realistic conditions, and it allows the collection of a great amount of data with ease and from a variety of people. Surveys are not limited by geography; they can be done almost anywhere (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

A survey questionnaire was adopted for this study because it “provides a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population or tests for associations among variables of a population.” It is very useful for researchers who are looking for answers to descriptive questions, such as what questions and questions about relationships among certain variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 207). In this study, the questionnaire is considered the most effective instrument for obtaining reliable answers for RQ1 and RQ2 (which are descriptive questions), and RQ3 (which tests for relationships between variables) as well as for testing the two hypotheses H1, and H2.

According to Cultivation theory, the effects of media exposure occur gradually over months and even years. In this case, surveys rather than experiments are the most suitable research methods because experiments cannot measure long-term effects. Surveys for cultivation research address two types of questions: questions which measure TV exposure, to distinguish between heavy and light viewers, and questions which measure the perceptions of social reality by both types of viewers (Griffin, 2012).

There are three types of questionnaires: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. This study used a structured questionnaire that included only closed-ended questions (except the last

question, which was open-ended) to achieve high uniformity and easy quantification of the answers (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Besides, closed-ended questions can be completed swiftly, reducing the possibility of the students getting bored, thereby ensuring a greater return rate (Basit, 2010).

While designing the questionnaire, considerable effort was undertaken to ensure the questions were clear, short, and directly related to the research purpose. Additionally, the questions should not be double-barrelled or leading, should not include biased terms, and should not ask for highly detailed information (Babbie, 2002; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

The questionnaire was written in English, as the respondents were master students of English who had been studying the language for over three years. Consequently, they were expected to have no difficulty understanding and filling out the questionnaire in English.

The Questionnaire is made up of five parts. Each part contains a set of questions that address a specific research question. Parts one and two were designed to provide answers for RQ1 and RQ2 respectively. Parts three and four were designed to answer RQ3 and test the two hypotheses. The last part is background information. It measures the demographic data of the respondents including gender, age and education.

Measures

The present study was inspired by the work of Tan, Nelson, Dong, and Tan (1997), entitled “Value Acceptance in Adolescent Socialization: A Test of a Cognitive Functional Theory of Television Effects.” In this work, the authors introduced a new theory which explained television’s effects on value acceptance among adolescents. Their theory, called cognitive functional theory, was derived from three main theories: cultivation theory, social cognitive theory and social exchange theory.

The main assumption of cognitive functional theory is that young people's socialisation process may be influenced by television in the following ways: 1) they learn about the requirements of socialisation through event observation, 2) they evaluate whether the observed event is real and functional, 3) they internalise the evaluation of the observed event, and 4) they assimilate the socialisation requirements (Tan et al., 1997).

Drawing upon the theoretical framework provided by cognitive functional theory, this study employed the following measures:

- **Media habits.** The first part of the questionnaire was devoted to obtaining data for the first research question, RQ1, which is mainly about the general media habits of EFL learners. Hence, this part included questions about the type, the content, and the language of media consumed by EFL learners. The first item solicited the respondents to rate from 1= never to 5=always the frequency of using the following media outlets: newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and social media. The subsequent item requested the participants to report the frequency of their consumption of various media content, including news, movies, series, music, vlogs, documentaries, games, and podcasts. Finally, the participants were prompted to indicate how often they read/listen/watch media content in the following languages: English, Arabic, French, and Turkish. The same scale was used for all three items.
- **Total media exposure time.** The amount of time individuals devote to media consumption significantly shapes their perceptions and attitudes. Media content is full of cultural values, and prolonged engagement with such media increases the likelihood of internalising and adopting these values (Tan et al., 1997). Therefore, this study initially measured overall media exposure duration by eliciting responses about the number of

hours the participants allocated to various media outlets (newspapers, magazines, television, radio, social media) daily. Subsequently, the investigation moved to measure English media exposure specifically by asking the respondents to indicate the number of hours spent reading/listening/watching English media content daily. Possible answers for both items were 1=never, 2= less than one hour a day, 3= one to four hours a day, and 4= more than four hours a day.

- English media exposure. Since this study is concerned with the impact of English media products specifically, there was a need to measure EFL learners' exposure to such products. Hence, several questions were designed to measure English language media exposure. The first item solicited the respondents to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1= never to 5= always) how often they use media to improve their English. To ascertain the most frequently used media outlet by English language learners, the second item requested the participants to rate, on a 5-point scale, the frequency of using the following media outlets for enhancing their English skills: newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and social media. The third item contained 11 statements about English language media habits, prompting the respondents to indicate how often they engage in these activities.
- Being abroad. Given that international travel may have an impact on value acceptance, it became imperative to measure this independent variable. The respondents were asked whether they had visited a native English-speaking country in the past and, if they had, how long their visit was. Possible responses were: 1=less than one month; 2= one month to one year, and 3= more than a year.

- Values. The researcher selected 14 values from the original 16-item scale adopted by Tan et al. (1997). Some of these values were adapted from Rokeach's scale (1968), and some were taken from the literature about democratic values (Selnow, 1990). The primary criterion for selecting these values was their representation of the Anglo-American culture. Consequently, these values are intended to distinguish Anglo-American culture and its people from those of other cultures (Tan et al., 1997).

These 14 values, listed in the same sequence they appear in the questionnaire, are: *Being tolerant of other races, being tolerant of other opinions, being independent, being individualistic, being competitive, being honest, pursuing wealth, enjoying wealth, freedom, equality for all, working hard, participating in the political system, discussing political issues, being obedient to authority.*

These values represent “the six dominant American cultural patterns”, which are “individualism, equality, materialism, science and technology, progress and change, and activity and work” (Tan et al., 1997). The respondents were asked to indicate how important each value was to them on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from not important (1) to extremely important (5).

- Value recognition in media. Following Tan et al. (1997) work, the present study measured how often the participants recognised the 14 values in English-speaking media they were exposed to. They were requested to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1= never to 5= always) the frequency of encountering these values in the media.
- Value functionality. Cognitive functional theory cannot be fully implemented without measuring value functionality. The latter refers to the practical significance or the extent to which these values serve a purpose or lead to desired outcomes in the Algerian context. According to cognitive functional theory, values perceived as functional will likely be

accepted by media users. The participants were requested to indicate how important the 14 values are for having a successful life in Algeria. Possible responses ranged from 1= not important to 5=extremely important.

Piloting the Questionnaire

No matter how carefully questionnaires are designed, errors can always occur. The “surest protection against such errors is to pretest the questionnaire in full or in part” (Babbie, 2002, p. 254). Henceforth, conducting a pilot study before the actual research project is highly recommended. Researchers should perform at least one pilot study to detect errors in the survey as piloting saves “time, money, and frustration because an error that could void an entire analysis sometimes surfaces at this stage” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 215).

There are many ways to pilot a questionnaire depending on its type. The self-administered questionnaire should be piloted with the same people who will take part in the actual survey. It is wise to discuss the content of the questionnaire with the participants after they fill it out. Whether they think the questions are clear and easy to answer can help the researchers refine the questionnaire (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

I conducted the pilot study of the questionnaire in April 2022. This was the middle of the second semester when students were not stressed. They had not yet started their midterms, so they were willing to complete the questionnaire. Since it is not necessary for the pretest participants to be a representative sample, the pilot study took place at Batna 2 University instead of Blida 2 University (Babbie, 2002). The reasons for pretesting the questionnaire with the students of Batna 2 University instead of Blida 2 University, from which the sample was drawn, are:

- The inconvenience of travelling to Blida, which is significantly far from the researcher's workplace and residence.
- The pilot sample possessed almost the same characteristics as the actual sample. They were both EFL learners who were studying English at an Algerian university.
- The main aim of the pilot study was to detect any errors or problems with the questions. This can be achieved with any Algerian EFL learner regardless of the place where they study.

Twenty students participated in the pilot study. While filling out the questionnaire, the researcher was present to answer the participants' questions and receive their suggestions. Most participants answered the questionnaire without difficulty and said it was easy to understand. Feedback and recommendations were also solicited from friends and colleagues. Their suggestions and the notes made during the pilot study led to minor changes in the questionnaire structure and content.

3.5.2. Focus Groups

Focus group, or group interviewing, is a research strategy that is employed to understand people's attitudes and opinions. It consists of 6 to 12 individuals being interviewed at the same time. With the help of a moderator, these individuals engage in a focused discussion about the topic under investigation (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Thus, focus groups usually have five characteristics: "(1) a small group of people, who (2) possess certain characteristics, (3) provide qualitative data (4) in a focused discussion (5) to help understand the topic of interest" (Krueger & Casey, 2015, p. 32).

Focus groups are good because they combine the strengths of both in-depth interviews and observation in a group context (Bouma & Ling, 2006). There are five advantages of focus

groups: they are flexible, they have high face validity, they have quick results, and they are not expensive (Babbie, 2002). Focus group interviews can be advantageous over individual interviews when a discussion between the interviewees likely produces the best information, when the participants are similar and interact well with one another, when the time for data collection is limited, and when individual interviewees are hesitant to provide the needed information (Creswell, 2013). Unlike individual interviews, focus group discussions can have a beneficial snowball effect. In other words, one respondent's answer may stimulate other respondents to express more ideas. This results in more complete and less inhibited ideas.

Hence, focus group interviewing has been identified as the most appropriate instrument to provide answers for RQ4 and RQ5. Focus group interviews can be implemented in three main ways: self-contained, supplementary, or multimethod. In the present study, the focus group strategy is utilised in a multimethod way along with the questionnaire to collect data. Its results are combined with the survey results to understand the problem under examination fully. It stands as an equally important methodology (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

3.6.Data Collection

The data for this study were collected during Spring and Summer 2022. The data collection process went through the following stages:

- First stage: due to the inconvenience of moving to Blida and conducting a face-to-face survey, an online questionnaire was designed using Google Forms. In May 2022, the questionnaire was sent to colleague teachers at Blida 2 University, who were requested to share the link to the online questionnaire with their students. Despite reminder calls to fill out the online questionnaire, only 50 students completed it.

- Second stage: since the online phase did not yield enough data, it was inevitable to move to Blida and conduct a face-to-face survey. Upon arriving at Blida, at the end of May 2022, the researcher went to the university and met the students. Only master one students were available as master two students did not have classes during the second semester. The researcher had to go to the university for three consecutive days to meet the three different groups of Master One students: Didactics, Literature and Civilization, and Translation students. Most students agreed to complete the questionnaire, and 202 questionnaires were returned. At the same time, the researcher asked the students if they were available to participate in focus group interviews. Most of them apologised, and only a few of them accepted and brought their friends to take part in the interviews. With no time to be wasted, the researcher immediately started to conduct the focus group interviews.
- Third stage: after the researcher returned to her city, she was still determined to get more questionnaires. Subsequently, she sent the link to the questionnaire to Master Two teachers and solicited them to share it with their students. As a result, 32 students filled out the online questionnaire.

As mentioned above, the researcher utilised two types of questionnaires for quantitative data collection: an online questionnaire and a paper one. The online questionnaire was designed and administered first as it was inconvenient to travel to Blida, given that the researcher works and lives in Batna, which is over 400 km away from Blida. Online surveys have become prevalent in recent years. The process is straightforward. The participants are contacted via email, Facebook, or other means of online communication and provided with a link to access the survey online. When they finish answering the questions, they click “submit.” The process of

designing online surveys has become very simplified thanks to websites such as Survey Monkey, Zoomerang, and PollDaddy. These websites, which sometimes provide free services, are popular among students as well as researchers (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Online surveys can be an excellent alternative to traditional surveys due to their numerous advantages, as Wimmer and Dominick assert:

Online research offers a vast list of advantages including, but not limited to, low costs, no geographic limitations, no specific time constraints because respondents can complete the survey or measurement instrument at their convenience, flexibility in the approach used to collect data, and the ability to expose respondents to almost any type of audio or visual materials (p. 210).

The online survey was designed using Google Forms, a free tool in Google Drive devoted to designing online survey forms. It was selected due to its user-friendly interface and accessibility from any computer. Moreover, the responses are automatically recorded in a spreadsheet and can be downloaded in various formats (xlsx, ods, and CSV). (University Libraries, 2022)

In addition to the online survey, a paper questionnaire was used to yield enough data and reach the minimum desired response rate. The paper questionnaire was self-administered in the presence of the researcher to address any inquiries from the respondents. A brief overview of the study was provided to familiarise the participants with the project. Additionally, they were informed that participation was entirely voluntary and that they were free to decline involvement in the survey.

As explained earlier, this study employed two instruments: questionnaires and focus groups. The focus group discussion is employed to answer RQ4 and RQ5. Consequently, it is

performed at the same time as the survey questionnaire because each of the two instruments collected independent data. Three Focus groups were conducted and were decided enough for data collection because the researcher achieved saturation, a state in which “the focus groups no longer provide any fresh information” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 136).

3.7.Data Analysis

The final phase of this research is the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The significance of quantitative data lies in its broadness and precision while qualitative data provides details and depth (Basit, 2010). Since this study was based on two types of data, namely quantitative and qualitative, different data analysis techniques were employed.

3.7.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

After data collection, the phase of data processing started. The researcher began analysing the quantitative data first. There were two types of quantitative data: online data (online questionnaire) and hard data (paper questionnaire). The online survey yielded 82 responses, while 202 paper questionnaires were completed. In total, 284 responses were obtained. The online data were gathered through Google Forms which was employed to design and administer the questionnaire online. Google Forms offers a distinct advantage in facilitating data processing and analysis by providing readily accessible spreadsheets. However, the data obtained from the paper questionnaires had to be entered into an EXCEL sheet and combined with the online data.

After reviewing the survey responses, the researcher found that some data were missing because some respondents left many questions without answers. Upon examining the missing data, she decided to adopt a deletion method. She manually deleted all the cases (people) whose

data on many variables were incomplete. This resulted in the validation of 245 out of 284 questionnaire responses.

The quantification process started after the data from the paper questionnaires were entered in EXCEL and added to the online data. The quantification process refers to the conversion of the data into a numerical format, a form that can be processed and analysed by computers (Babbie, 2002). The first step in quantification is the coding process. The final result of the coding process is the formation of a codebook. A codebook “is a document that describes the locations of variables and lists the assignments of codes to the attributes composing those variables” (Babbie, 2002, p. 400). Once the data were coded, they were sent to an SPSS expert for statistical analysis.

The next step after data collection was statistical analysis. The latter would enable us to describe the data and explain the emergent patterns. However, first, let us define statistics and review the fundamental statistical metrics used in this research endeavour. Statistics refer to “mathematical methods to collect, organise, summarize, and analyse data” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 267). Nevertheless, statistics cannot do their magic if the study is poorly conducted. They provide valid results only if the data collection is done according to the established scientific procedures (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data. The primary function of descriptive statistics is to condense data sets and organize them in a meaningful way for easy interpretation. To make the questionnaire data manageable, the two primary descriptive statistics that were used were frequency distributions and summary statistics. Frequency distribution, usually represented in a table or a graph, orders the scores according to their occurrence

frequency. Summary statistics further condense the data into a more manageable form through the use of central tendency and dispersion (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). &

The quantitative analysis types used in this study are univariate analysis to answer the first and the second questions, and bivariate analysis to test the two hypotheses. Univariate analysis refers to the description of a case in terms of one variable. This includes using different forms of descriptive statistics, such as frequency distributions, central tendency, and dispersion. Univariate analysis is applied here to describe the media habits of EFL learners, in general, and their exposure to English language content, in particular. That is, univariate analysis is used for merely descriptive purposes. Bivariate analysis, on the other hand, involves the analysis of a case in terms of two variables simultaneously. It aims to describe and explain relationships between variables. In this study, it is employed to describe the relationship between English media exposure and value acceptance among Algerian EFL learners.

A regression analysis using SPSS was conducted to test the causal relationship between the dependent variable (value importance) and the independent variables (value recognition and value functionality). Regression analysis is the most appropriate statistical technique because it allows the researcher to “predict the specific value of one variable when we know or assume values of the other variable” (as cited in Cohen et al., 2018, p. 802). In other words, regression provides the exact amount of one variable when the amount of the other variable is known.

There are two types of regression analysis: simple linear regression and multiple regression. Simple linear regression analyses the relationship between one dependent variable and one independent variable while multiple regression analyses the relation between one dependent variable and two or more independent variables at the same time (Cohen et al., 2018).

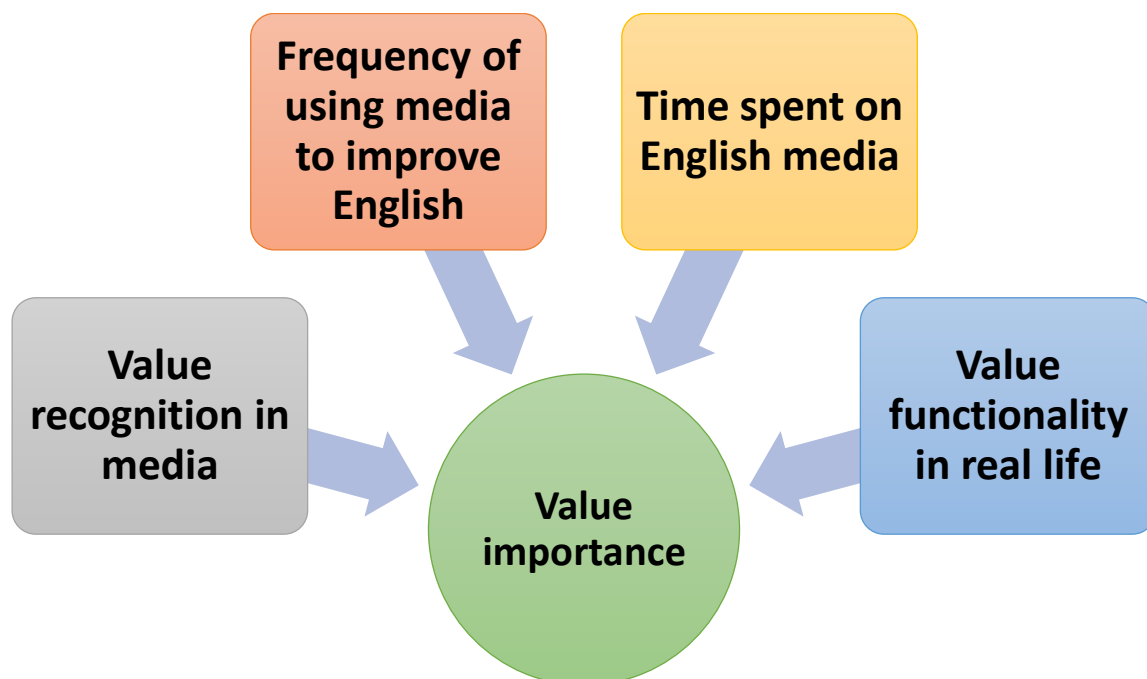
In this research endeavour, the second type was applied to study many variables and their intricate relationships simultaneously.

An important step before applying regression is determining the control variables, which researchers strive to keep controlled throughout the research to limit their influence on the outcomes (Voxco, 2021). They are usually controlled because of their potential to affect the other variables and, eventually, the results. After running multiple correlations in SPSS, the following variables were found to have strong correlation coefficients with the dependent and independent variables: Frequency of using media to improve one's English and time spent using English language media. Therefore, they were controlled in the regression analysis. The final regression equation, illustrated in Figure 1, developed to test the two hypotheses, is as follows:

$$\text{Value importance} = \text{Value recognition in media} + \text{Value functionality in real life} + \text{Frequency of using media to learn English} + \text{Time spent on English media}$$

Figure 1

Regression Equation



3.7.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

The second data analysis phase deals with the focus groups' qualitative data. As stated previously, the focus group was utilised along with the questionnaire to provide sufficient data for a comprehensive understanding of the investigated issue. Qualitative data analysis, like quantitative analysis, aims to move from raw data to understanding and explaining the issue (Taylor and Gibbs as cited in Cohen et al., 2007). Hence, qualitative data analysis is a long process that includes a set of important steps such as: “organising, describing, understanding, accounting for, and explaining data, making sense of data in terms of the participants’ definitions of the situation (of which the researcher is one), noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities.” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 643)

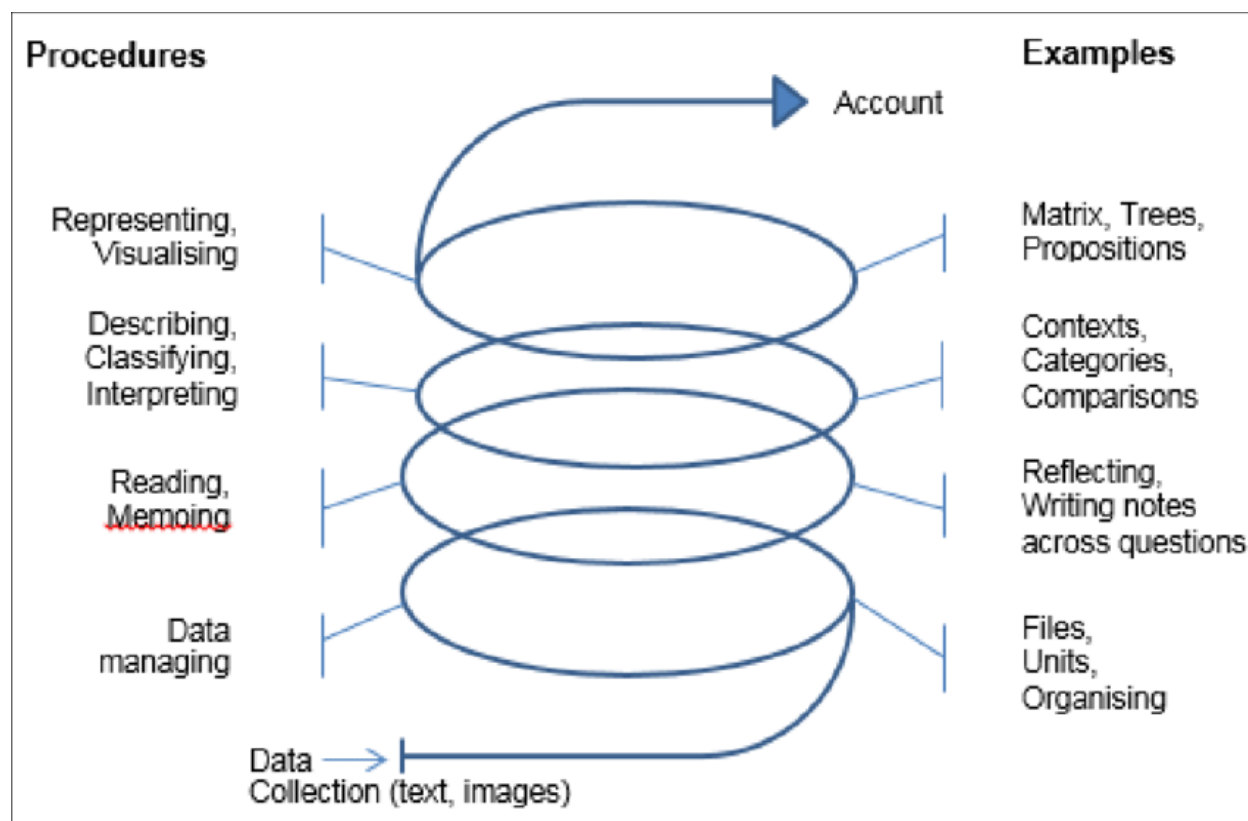
However, qualitative data analysis differs from quantitative analysis in the role of the researcher, who is a principal research instrument himself/herself in the qualitative investigation. Furthermore, it is not a straightforward process as there is no simple formula to generate the findings from the raw data. Rather, it is “recursive, non-linear, messy and reflexive, moving backwards and forwards between data, analysis and interpretation.” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 644). It involves a series of actions that can be listed as follows:

- Preparing and organising the data;
- Describing and presenting the data;
- Analysing the data;
- Interpreting the data;
- Drawing conclusions;
- Reporting the findings;
- Ensuring accuracy, reliability, coherence, corroboration, validity and reliability.

Qualitative data analysis is an inductive process, in which the researcher “reads, re-reads, reflects on, infers from and interprets” the collected data without preconception from a certain pre-given framework (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 645). He/she moves from data to interpretation to theory, in a bottom-up direction. According to Thomas (as cited in Cohen et al., 2007), this inductive process proceeds as follows:

Understanding the research objectives → preparation of the raw data → reading and re-reading the raw data, and reflecting on the raw data and their meanings → category generation, revision and refinement ... → model generation ... → answering the research purposes and questions. (p. 645)

To put it simply, qualitative data analysis is a long process that usually consists of three main phases: preparing the data for analysis, reducing the data into themes (coding) and finally representing and discussing the data (Creswell, 2013).

Figure 2*The Data Analytical Spiral*

Source: (Creswell, 2013, p. 183)

Grounded Theory

The theoretical framework that was adopted to analyse the qualitative data and interpret the findings is Grounded theory. The latter was applied in this study due to the lack of knowledge concerning the influence of English language media on Algerian EFL learners. Grounded theory design facilitates the understanding of how individuals experience a particular process and enables the identification of the steps involved in that process. It answers questions such as “What was central to the process (the core phenomenon)? What influenced or caused this phenomenon to occur (causal conditions)? What strategies were employed during the process (strategies)? What effect occurred (consequences)?” (Creswell, 2013, p. 88). These questions are

very useful in understanding how Algerian EFL learners are affected by English-speaking media content.

Unlike narrative and phenomenological research, grounded theory research moves beyond description to theory generation. “Thus, grounded theory is a qualitative research design in which the inquirer generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, an action, or an interaction shaped by the views of a large number of participants” (Creswell, 2013, p. 83). This research design was developed in 1967 by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, who believed that theories used by researchers are often not suitable for individuals under investigation. They argued that theories should be “grounded” in the data collected in the field.

According to Creswell (2013), grounded theory research is characterised by a set of defining features. First, the main focus of a grounded theory analysis is an action or a process that occurs through different phases over time. Second, grounded theory research aims to generate a theory that explains this action or process. Furthermore, memoing is the main instrument the grounded researcher uses to follow and understand the process under study. Moreover, the basic data collection form is an interview, which allows the researcher to constantly compare the information from participants to develop his/her theory. Finally, the data analysis in grounded theory is based on developing open categories (open coding), detailing new categories (axial coding), and studying the intersection between categories (selective coding). This ultimately leads to the generation of a theory which takes the form of a diagram, a set of hypotheses, or a discussion.

Practically speaking, Grounded theory is conducted in three main stages. The first phase is called “open coding” in which the inquirer forms major categories of information. After that, they identify one coding category as a central one, from which more categories are identified.

These new categories could be causal conditions, strategies, or consequences of the central category. This phase is known as “Axial coding.” The final step in this design is called “selective coding.” Here, the investigator defines relationships between categories to create a theory that takes the form of propositions or hypotheses.

Focus Group Analysis

Inspired by the work of Krueger and Casey, who extensively discussed focus group methodology in “*Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*” (2015), the analysis of the focus group data was conducted through several systematic phases. The process began during the focus group sessions themselves, where the researcher actively listened for inconsistencies or ambiguous language and probed for clarification when necessary. Key questions were summarized after each discussion to seek participants' confirmation and enhance the accuracy of the data. Immediately following each session, the researcher systematically filed, copied, and documented the field notes and audio recordings to ensure the integrity and organization of the collected data.

In the subsequent phase, the researcher listened to the audio recordings and prepared an abbreviated transcription. When preparing data for analysis, it is important to consider whether full transcription of focus group discussions is necessary. Transcriptions offer significant advantages, as they “provide important detail and an accurate verbatim record of the interview.” However, they also have limitations, as they “omit non-verbal aspects, what may take place before or after the interview and contextual features of the interview” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 646). An alternative approach is to summarize the data directly from the audio or video recordings, which can help maintain focus on broader patterns and avoid becoming overwhelmed by excessive detail.

According to Krueger and Casey (2014), there are two types of transcripts: full transcripts and abbreviated transcripts. While full transcripts take a lot of time and energy and are usually 30-40 pages long, abbreviated transcripts are a better alternative as they are less time-consuming, more efficient, and cost-effective. Abbreviated transcription relies on listening to the audio recording of each focus group and capturing the relevant portions of the discussion, ignoring any irrelevant comments. In essence, abbreviated transcription is transcribing only useful data.

Once the transcripts were prepared, the coding process started. Krueger and Casey (2015) state that coding is “placing similar labels on similar things.” In other words, coding is a process of sorting similar comments into similar categories. The researcher started by reading the transcript and then selecting a specific question to deal with. Following this, she read the first response and gave it a code that described the comment. She read the second response and gave it the same code if it was similar to the first one. She used a new code to describe the comment if it was different. This process continued with all the responses and all the questions until the data were exhausted. This technique is known as Constant Comparative analysis.

There are two principal approaches to coding: the classic approach and the computer approach. The classic one relies on classic tools, such as paper, scissors, and coloured marking pens, to cut, sort, and arrange the relevant comments. It is less overwhelming and more doable. The computer approach, on the other hand, allows for managing larger sets of text and carefully examining data (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Various software types are utilised for qualitative data analysis, but the researcher opted for the use of a Word processor because it is easy and free.

The last phase of the data analysis was writing the report. At this stage, the researcher looked at the coded data and gave thought to the following:

Frequency—How often was a concept mentioned?

Extensiveness—How many different people mentioned the concept?

Intensity—How much passion or force was behind the comments?

Specificity—How much detail was provided by respondents?

Internal consistency—Did individual participants remain consistent in their views?

Participant perception of importance—Did participants cite this as an important concept?

(Krueger & Casey, 2015, p. 342)

It is important to note that the steps mentioned above, while initially listed in a numerical sequence, were subject to modification and re-ordering. Additionally, the decisions made earlier were occasionally revised.

3.8.Validity and Reliability

3.8.1. Validity

Validity is a key factor in research effectiveness, and its absence can lead to failure to produce reliable results. One cannot avoid threats to validity and reliability, but “rather the effects of these threats can be attenuated by attention to validity and reliability throughout a piece of research” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 133). Therefore, absolute validity is unattainable, however, researchers can strive to increase validity in research as much as possible at various stages of the research process.

Cohen et al (2007) suggested a list of measures to minimise invalidity throughout the various phases of a study. The items presented below are most relevant to my research:

Design Stage

- Ensuring that there are adequate resources for the required research to be carried out (that was ensured during research preparation)

- Selecting an appropriate methodology for answering the research questions (as discussed in the section “research design”)
- Selecting appropriate instruments for gathering the type of data required (quantitative and qualitative, as explained in the section on “instrumentation”)
- Using an appropriate sample (as discussed in “the population and sample” section)
- Using appropriate instruments: (achieved through the pilot study)

Data Collection Stage

- Trying to avoid dropout rates among respondents (providing the respondents with a clear explanation of the project and its importance when distributing the paper questionnaires)
- Taking steps to avoid non-return of questionnaires (by self-administering the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher)
- Ensuring standardized procedures for administering interviews and gathering questionnaire data (through administering all the questionnaires, except online ones, and conducting all the focus group interviews by the researcher herself)
- Building on the motivations and confidence of respondents (using the researcher’s friendly communicative skills)

Data analysis stage

- Avoiding poor coding of the qualitative data (through careful reading and frequent discussion with experienced colleagues)
- Avoiding making inferences and generalizations beyond the capability of the data to support such statements
- Avoiding selective use of data
- Avoiding unfair telescoping of data (degrading the data)

3.8.2. Reliability

Reliability is the second important key factor for the effectiveness of scientific research. Its meaning differs in quantitative and qualitative research. In quantitative research, reliability is “a synonym for dependability, consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and groups of respondents. It is concerned with precision and accuracy” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 146). Reliability refers to the extent to which a study, if conducted with similar respondents under comparable conditions, would produce consistent results. When reliability is properly established, it can be assumed that “instrumentation, data and findings should be controllable, predictable, consistent and replicable” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 148).

To ensure reliability in the questionnaire, the researcher took a set of measures. To address non-response, the researcher administered the questionnaire herself to obtain the maximum response rate. She also stressed the importance and benefits of the questionnaire to the participants. Indeed, a high response rate was achieved (more than 90% of the students) at the end of the process. Some difficulty was faced with the online questionnaire. As a result, frequent reminders were sent to the students (through their Facebook group) to maximize the response rate.

On the other hand, the researcher employed several strategies to construct reliability in the qualitative data analysis. For example, she engaged in frequent checking and discussions with experienced colleagues to decrease the unreliability of the interpretations of qualitative data (Denzin & Lincoln , 1994).

Bias is one issue that decreases the interview research reliability. Bias could come from various sources: the interviewer, the respondents, or the content of the questions (Cohen et al.,

2007). To maximize reliability, the researcher was cautious and aware of the actions that might lead to bias, such as:

- The attitudes, opinions and expectations of the interviewer;
- a tendency for the interviewer to see the respondent in her image;
- a tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support her preconceived notions or theory;
- misperceptions on the part of the interviewer of what the respondent is saying;
- misunderstandings on the part of the respondent regarding what is being asked. (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 150).

3.9.Conclusion

The current chapter provides a detailed account of the practical part of this study. It highlights, in great depth and detail, the key methods adopted, the data collection instruments, the analysis procedures employed, and the methodological decisions deemed necessary for this project. These methodological choices were carefully made to address the research questions and hypotheses suggested earlier. The methodology followed provides a solid basis for reliable results and for achieving the objectives of this study. The following chapters present and discuss the results of the data analysis of both the questionnaire and the focus groups, following the procedures outlined in this chapter.

4. Analysis of the Questionnaire

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4.1.Introduction

After reviewing the available literature relevant to the subject under investigation and explaining the methodology employed in this research, this chapter is devoted to reporting the findings from the quantitative data analysis. The main purpose of this study is to examine the impact of English language media exposure on the cultural identity of Algerian EFL learners. To accomplish this aim, it is essential to investigate the media consumption habits of EFL learners and specifically assess their exposure to English language media. Therefore, this chapter presents the analysis of the collected data to address the following research questions:

- RQ1 What are the media habits of the Algerian EFL learners?
- RQ2 To what extent are Algerian EFL learners immersed in English language media?
- RQ3 Does exposure to English media correlate with increased acceptance of Anglo-American values among Algerian EFL learners?

The answer to the final question is derived from testing the following two research hypotheses:

- H1: Increased recognition of a value in English language media correlates with a higher likelihood of considering it important among EFL learners.
- H2: Increased perception of a value as functional in the Algerian context correlates with a higher likelihood of considering it important among EFL learners.

The data analysed in this chapter were obtained from the questionnaire, which mostly includes close-ended questions. The questionnaire was conducted at Blida 2 University during Spring 2022. Both online and paper questionnaires were used to collect data from graduate students who majored in English language and literature. At the end of the study, 287 responses were obtained, but only 245 were accepted and validated after examination. The data were

processed and analysed using SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences), and the findings are reported below.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section presents the results related to Research Question One (RQ1), which investigates the media habits of EFL learners. The second section reports the findings concerning the learners' exposure to English language media, corresponding to Research Question Two (RQ2). The final section covers the outcomes of the statistical tests of the research hypotheses pertaining to Research Question Three (RQ3).

In this chapter, tables and graphs are used to describe the data, as they are an integral component of a well-written report. The selection of tables or figures is determined by the nature of the data and the specific objectives of the analysis. Tables are employed when the data is complex, dense with detail, or heavily quantitative, as they offer a clearer and more systematic means of presentation. They are useful when consolidating similar information to facilitate the comparison. Conversely, figures are preferred when the purpose is to illustrate distinct patterns or trends within the data, allowing for more immediate visual interpretation.

4.2. Media Consumption Habits of Algerian EFL Learners

The first part of this chapter aims to uncover the common habits and tendencies among university EFL learners regarding their use and consumption of media. The data are obtained from the first section of the questionnaire, which contained four questions about the type, the content, the time, and the language of the media the study participants typically use. The findings are presented in the same order as the questions in the questionnaire.

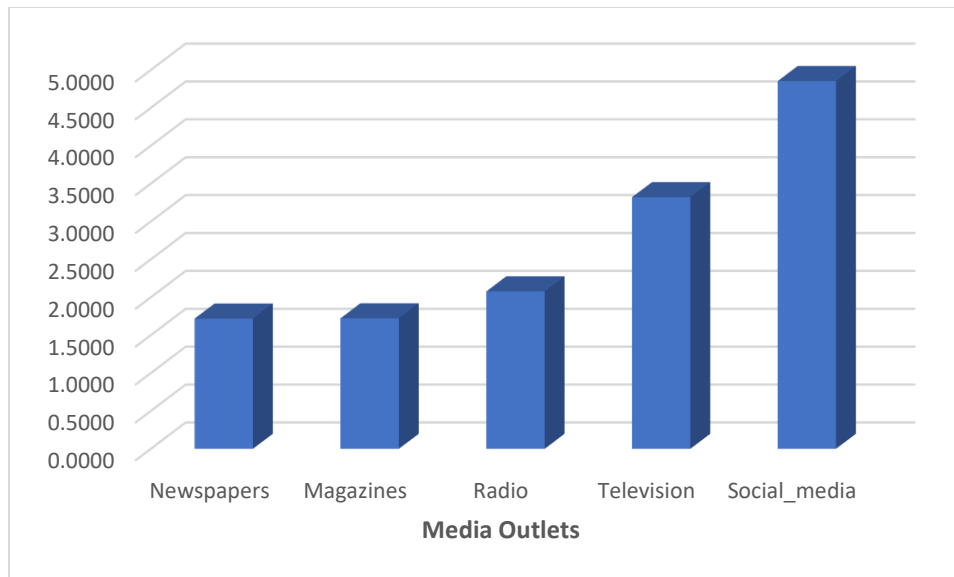
Question 1: In your daily life, how often do you use the following media outlets?

The first question aimed to explore the most frequently used media outlets by EFL students. On a five-point Likert scale (never=1, rarely=2, sometimes=3, often=4, always=5), the

survey respondents were asked to describe their daily use of different types of media outlets: newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and social media. The results are illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Frequently Used Media Outlets



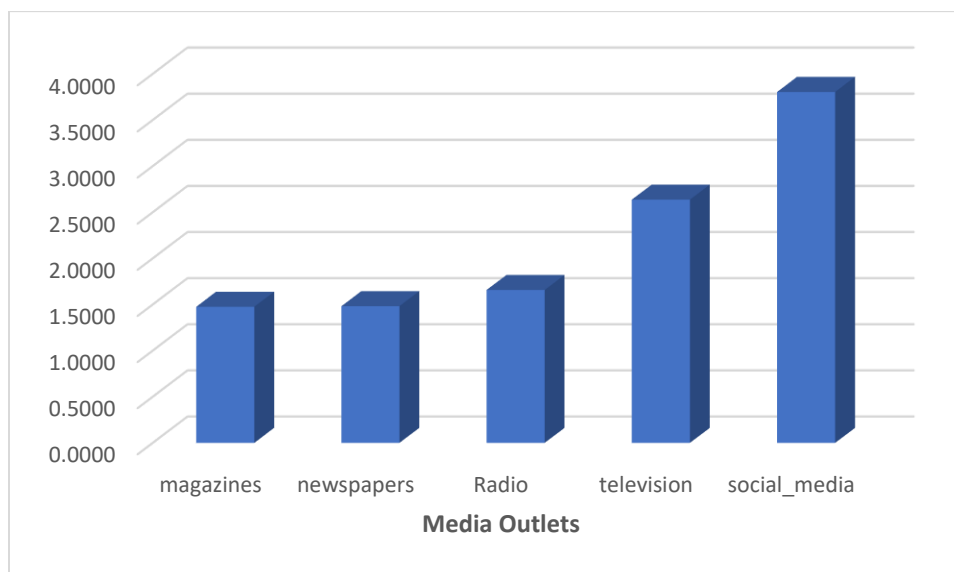
As can be seen in Figure 3, the students utilised various media outlets to different extents. While they ‘rarely’ used print media (newspapers $M=1.71$, magazines $M= 1.72$) and ‘sometimes’ used audio media (radio $M=2.07$), their consumption of audio-visual media was somewhere between ‘sometimes’ and ‘always’ (television $M=3.32$, social media $M= 4.85$). This shows that the students prefer to use audio-visual media, which can be regarded as contemporary in contrast to traditional newspapers and magazines. Furthermore, this type of media's visual component enhances user engagement with the material. Moreover, Figure 3 demonstrates that the students' most frequently used media outlet is social media, which includes a variety of applications and platforms for creating and sharing content.

Question 2: How many hours do you spend using the following media outlets daily?

Since media use frequency alone does not fully capture the extent of media engagement, it was necessary to also measure the time spent using media. Thus, the second question queried the study participants about the number of hours they spent using different media outlets every day. The participants had to select among the following options: Never=1, Less than one hour=2, One to four hours=3, More than 4 hours=4.

Figure 4

Time Spent on Different Media Outlets



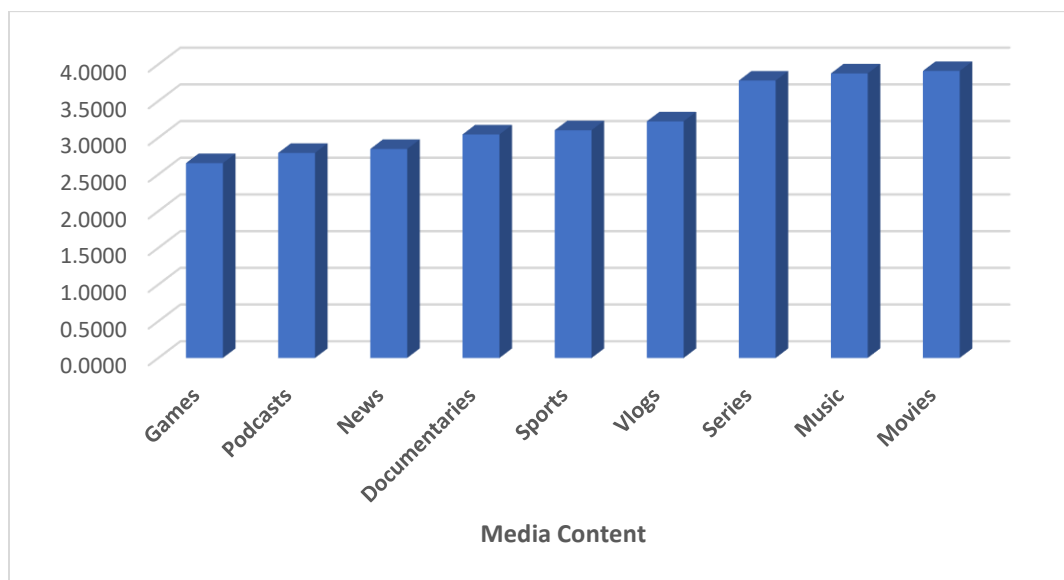
As can be seen in Figure 4, the amount of time the students spent on print and audio media (magazines $M=1.47$, $SD=0.59$; newspapers $M=1.48$, $SD=0.54$; radio $M=1.65$, $SD=0.73$) is very low compared to that spent on audio-visual media (television $M=2.63$, $SD=0.74$; social media $M=3.80$, $SD=0.52$). Daily, students spent less than one hour reading magazines and newspapers and listening to the radio; however, they spent at least four hours watching television and more than four hours using social media. These findings further corroborate the results of the previous question, indicating a preference for consuming audio-visual media, with social media being the most popular choice.

Question 3: How often do you read/listen/watch the following media content?

To fully understand the students' media habits, it was necessary to examine the content of media they typically consume. The third question provided the survey respondents with nine types of media content and asked them to rate their consumption frequency on a five-Likert scale ranging from never=1 to always=5.

Figure 5

Most Consumed Media Content



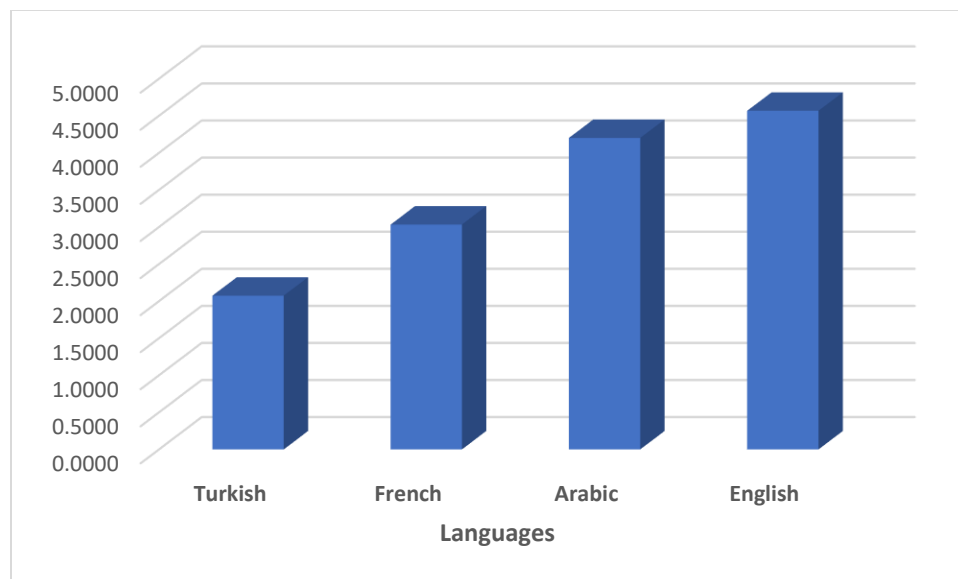
The results (illustrated in Figure 5) indicate variation in media content use among the students. Movies ($M=3.91$, $SD=1.02$), music ($M=3.87$, $SD=1.26$), and series ($M=3.77$, $SD=1.15$) rank as the most consumed media content among them. In the second place are vlogs ($M=3.22$, $SD=1.24$), sports ($M=3.10$, $SD=1.28$), and documentaries ($M=3.04$, $SD=1.13$). News ($M=2.84$, $SD=1.16$), podcasts ($M=2.79$, $SD=1.31$) and games ($M=2.65$, $SD=1.29$) are the least consumed media content.

Question 4: How often do you read/listen/watch media content in the following languages?

The last question in the first section of the questionnaire addresses the language of the media content that EFL learners typically use. The importance of this question lies in its potential to reveal any connections between the students' media habits and their field of study at university (English). It also can reveal some information about the students' social and cultural orientations as language is regarded as an important indicator of one's cultural and social status. Following the same structure as the previous questions, the members of the sample were asked to indicate how often (never=1, rarely=2, sometimes=3, often=4, always=5) they read/listen/watch content in each of the following languages: English, Arabic, French, Turkish.

Figure 6

Most Used Language of Media



As Figure 6 shows, the most frequently consumed content in media is English content ($M=4.56$, $SD=0.74$), followed by Arabic content in the second position ($M=4.20$, $SD=0.97$), and French content in the third position ($M=3.03$, $SD=1.25$). Turkish content is the least consumed among the respondents ($M=2.07$, $SD=1.38$). Not surprisingly, English is the most used language among EFL learners because the media have become one of the most reliable sources of

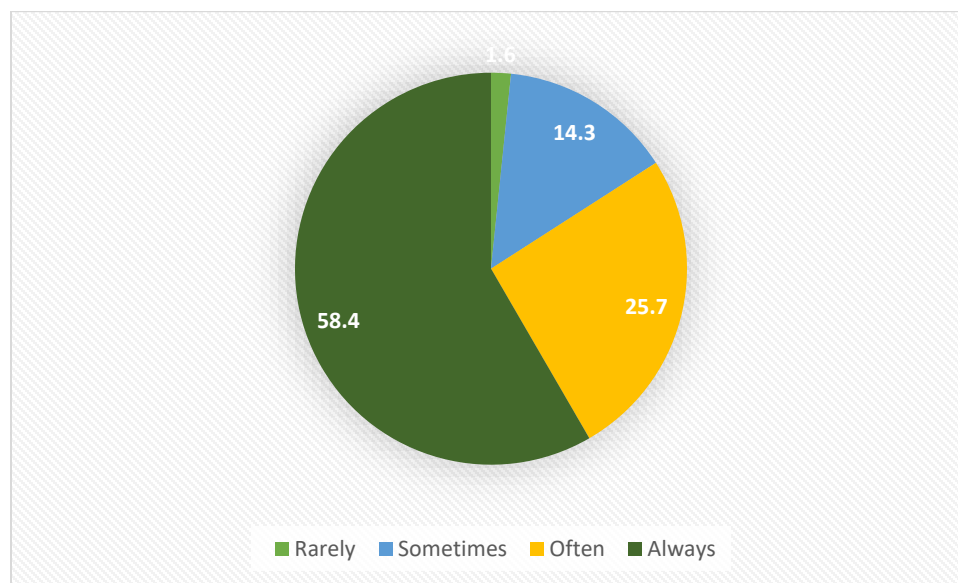
authentic language learning for university students. What is interesting is that French, which is the second language in Algeria, and which was once the main language of media and education, comes third after Arabic. The new generation of Algerians is less attracted to French than the previous one.

4.3.EFL Learners' Exposure to English Language Media

The preliminary findings indicate that EFL learners frequently engage with English-language media content. Yet, this alone is insufficient to draw definitive conclusions regarding their exposure to English language media. Therefore, the second research question seeks to dig deeper into EFL learners' media practices and ascertain the extent of their exposure to English language content. To achieve this aim, the second part of the questionnaire was designed to address EFL learners' engagement with English media content.

Question 5: How often do you use media to improve your English?

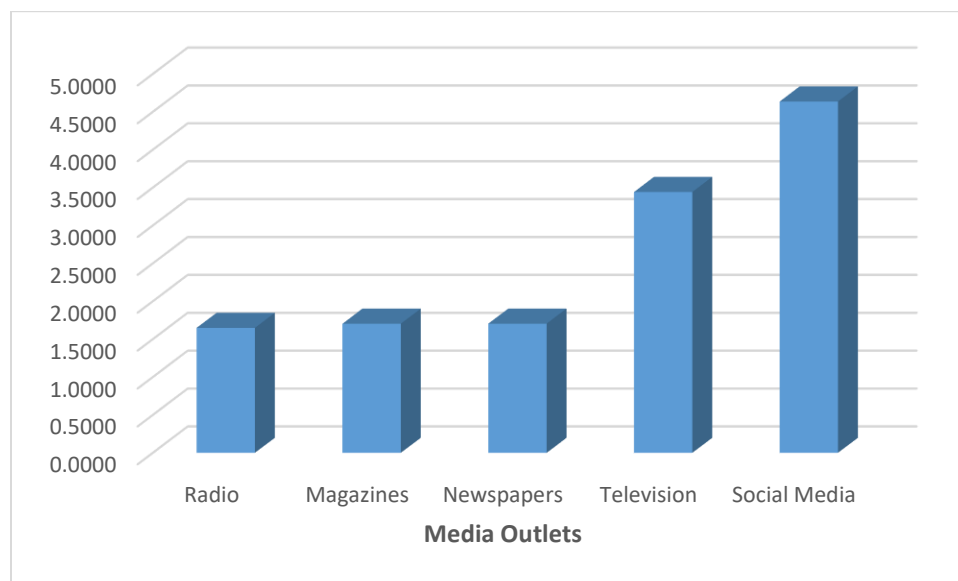
Since media have become a major source of authentic language input worldwide, and since the primary concern of EFL learners is to enhance their English skills, the first question asked the respondents to describe how often they utilised media to improve their English using a five-point Likert scale.

Figure 7*Using Media to Improve English*

As Figure 7 suggests, the majority of the survey respondents (58.4%) always used media to improve their English, 25.7% of them often used media for this purpose, 14.3% of them sometimes used media for English improvement and only 1.6% of them rarely used media to enhance their English proficiency. These findings corroborate the previous findings that English is EFL students' main language of media.

Question 6: How often do you use the following media outlets to improve your English?

To further understand how EFL learners utilise media to improve their English, the second question requested the sample members to describe how often (never=1, rarely=2, sometimes=3, often=4, always=5) they use different media outlets (newspapers, magazines, television, radio, social media) to improve their English.

Figure 8*Media Outlets Use to Improve English*

As illustrated in Figure 8, the most frequently utilised media outlet to improve the students' English is social media ($M=4.63$, $SD=0.72$), followed by television ($M=3.44$, $SD=1.22$). Most of the study participants reported they often or always used social media to improve their English, and sometimes used television for the same purpose. According to the participants, the other outlets such as the radio ($M=1.64$, $SD=1.03$), newspapers ($M=1.70$, $SD=0.98$), and magazines ($M=1.70$, $SD=0.92$) were never used or rarely used. The findings of this question align with those of questions 1 and 2, indicating that audiovisual media, in general, and social media, in particular, are the most popular forms of media among the students.

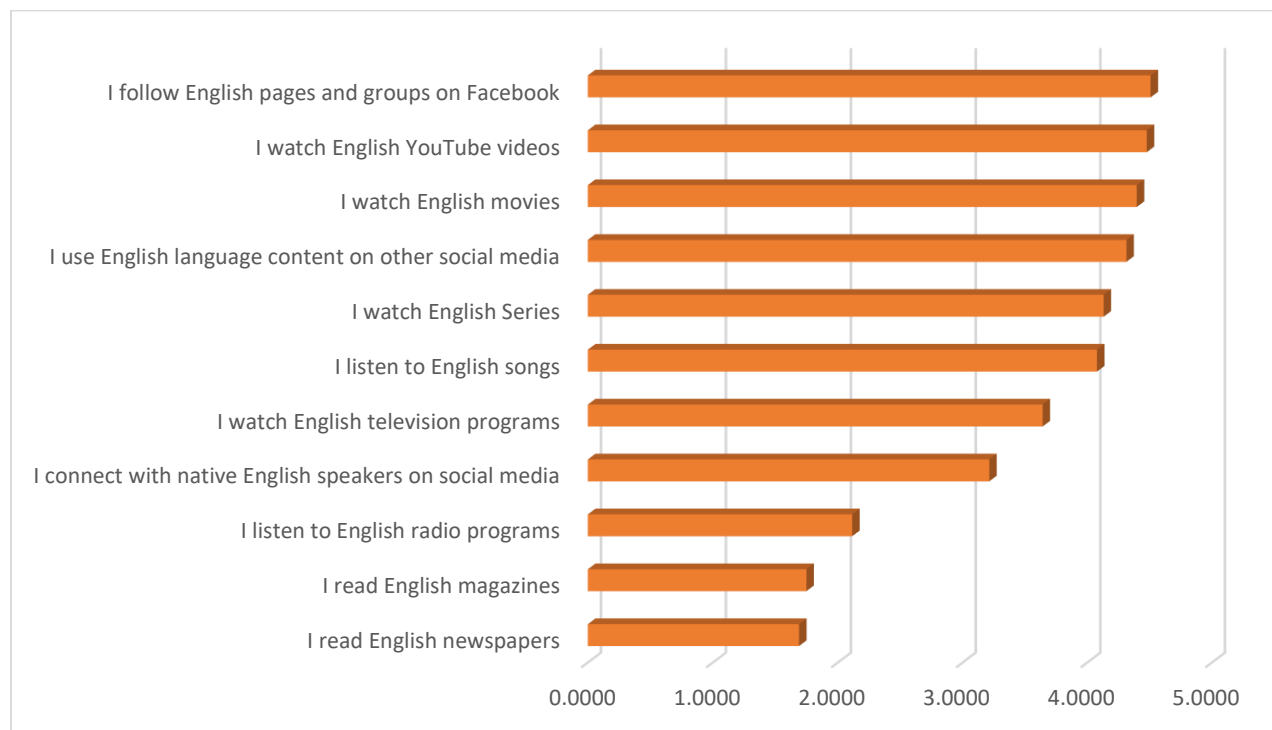
Question 7: How often do you do the following?

In addition to media outlets, it was important to explore common habits and activities of EFL learners when using media to improve their English. The participants were given eleven suggested media activities and asked to indicate how often they engage in each one using the same

five-point Likert scale (never=1, rarely=2, sometimes=3, often=4, always=5). Figure 7 shows the results.

Figure 9

English Language Media Habits



According to Figure 9, the top four media activities the students “often” or “always” engage in are following English pages and groups on Facebook ($M=4.50$, $SD=0.89$), watching English YouTube videos ($M=4.47$, $SD=0.82$), watching English movies ($M=4.39$, $SD=0.87$), and using English language content on other social media ($M=4.31$, $SD=1.04$). It is apparent from these findings that Facebook and YouTube are the most popular social media platforms among the students. In second place come the following activities: watching English series ($M=4.13$, $SD=1.11$), listening to English songs ($M=4.07$, $SD=1.29$), watching English television programs ($M=3.64$, $SD=1.19$), and connecting with native speakers on social media ($M=3.21$, $SD=1.42$). Like the previous findings, listening to English radio programs and reading English newspapers

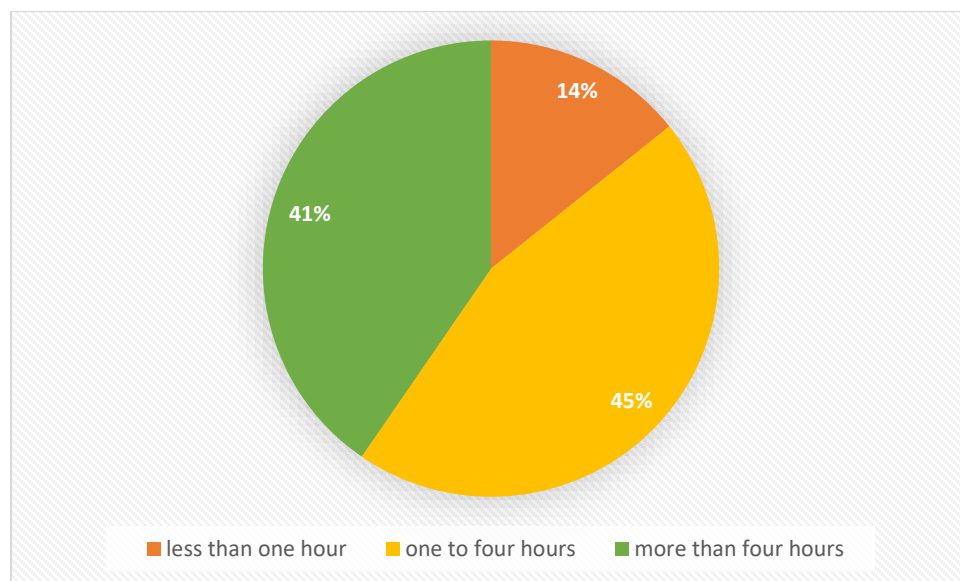
and magazines are activities that the students “never” or “rarely” engaged in. The results of this question reinforce those of Question 3 in the first section, suggesting that movies, music, and series are the most attractive media content for EFL students.

Question 8: How many hours do you spend reading/listening/watching English media content on a daily basis?

To fully understand the extent of EFL learners’ exposure to English media content, the time they spend using English media should be measured. Using a four-point scale (never=1, less than one hour=2, one to four hours=3, more than 4 hours=4), the survey respondents were prompted to report the number of hours they spend when using English media content in their daily lives.

Figure 10

Time Spent When Using English Media Content



As displayed in Figure 10, the two options, ‘one to four hours’ and ‘more than four hours’ scored almost the same percentages (45% and 41%). Almost half of the sample members (45%) spent between one and four hours per day consuming English media content, while 41%

of them spent more than four hours doing that. Accordingly, it is reasonable to conclude that most of the students (86%) spent at least one hour per day on English media content. The remaining 14% of the respondents spent less than one-hour using English media content.

4.4.The Impact of English Language Media Exposure

The third research question is about the potential influence media exerts on people's thoughts and attitudes regarding their identity issues. It aims to understand how extensive exposure to English media content affects EFL learners' cultural identity. Cultural identity is perceived as a set of values that one adopts from their society and environment. This process of values adoption is known as socialisation. Therefore, the third part of the questionnaire was designed to address three main variables: 'value importance,' 'value recognition in media' and 'value functionality in real life.' The respondents were provided with a list of fourteen values that represent the Anglo-American culture and were asked to rate their importance, recognition, and functionality.

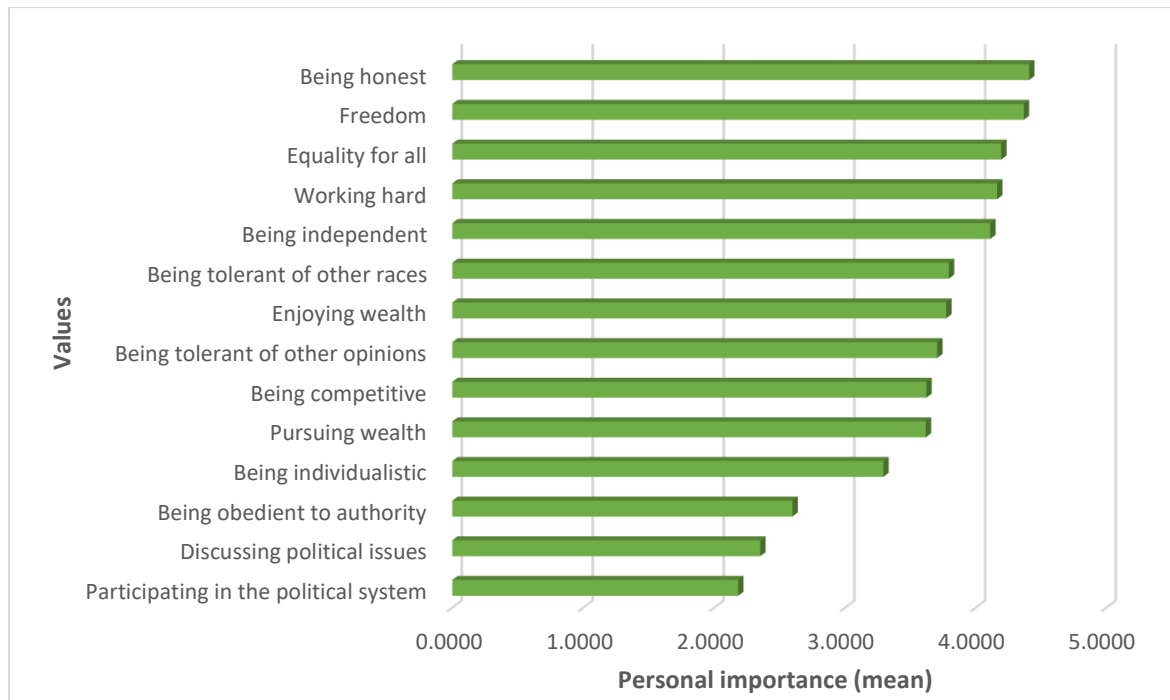
Question 9: Please indicate how important each of the following values is to you, personally.

The first question in the third part invited the participants to indicate how important (Not important at all=1, Slightly important=2, 3=Important, 4= Very important, and 5=Extremely important) the fourteen values were to them personally. As illustrated in Figure 11, most of the values (eleven out of fourteen) were important to the respondents. The most important values to them were: being honest ($M=4.40$, $SD=.88$), freedom ($M=4.37$, $SD=.87997$), equality for all ($M=4.19$, $SD=1.08$), working hard ($M=4.16$, $SD=.95$), and being independent ($M=4.11$, $SD=.98$). On the other hand, the values that were considered "slightly" important were: participating in the political system ($M=2.18$, $SD=1.22$), discussing political issues ($M=2.35$, $SD=1.22$), being

obedient to authority ($M=2.60$, $SD=1.19$). The results show that all the values were personally important to the students, except those related to politics.

Figure 11

Values Importance



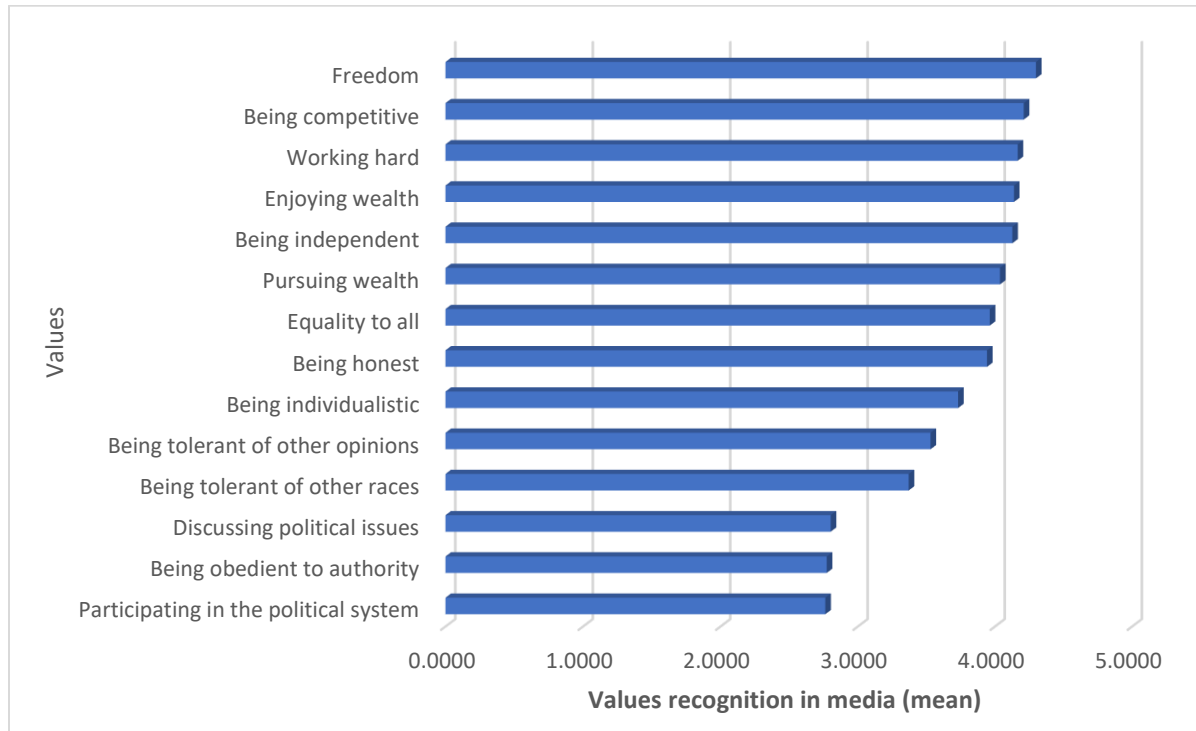
Question 10: Think about media content that you watch/listen to/read frequently. How often do you see these themes portrayed in this media?

Using a five-point Likert scale (Never=1, Rarely=2, Sometimes=3, Often=4, Always=5), the second question asked the students to state how often they see the fourteen themes (values) portrayed in media. In response to this question, most of those surveyed indicated that the following values were “often” portrayed in media: pursuing wealth ($M=4.04$, $SD=1.02$), being independent ($M=4.13$, $SD=.92$), enjoying wealth ($M=4.14$, $SD=1.01$), working hard ($M=4.17$, $SD=1.03$), being competitive ($M=4.21$, $SD=3.44$), freedom ($M=4.30$, $SD=.93$). However, the following values were “rarely” seen on media: participating in the political system ($M=2.76$, $SD=1.36$), being obedient to authority ($M=2.77$, $SD=1.32$), discussing political issues ($M=2.80$,

$SD=1.38$). In summary, these results show that all fourteen values were, but to varying degrees, portrayed in the media consumed by the students, with politically related values being the least portrayed.

Figure 12

Values Recognition in Media



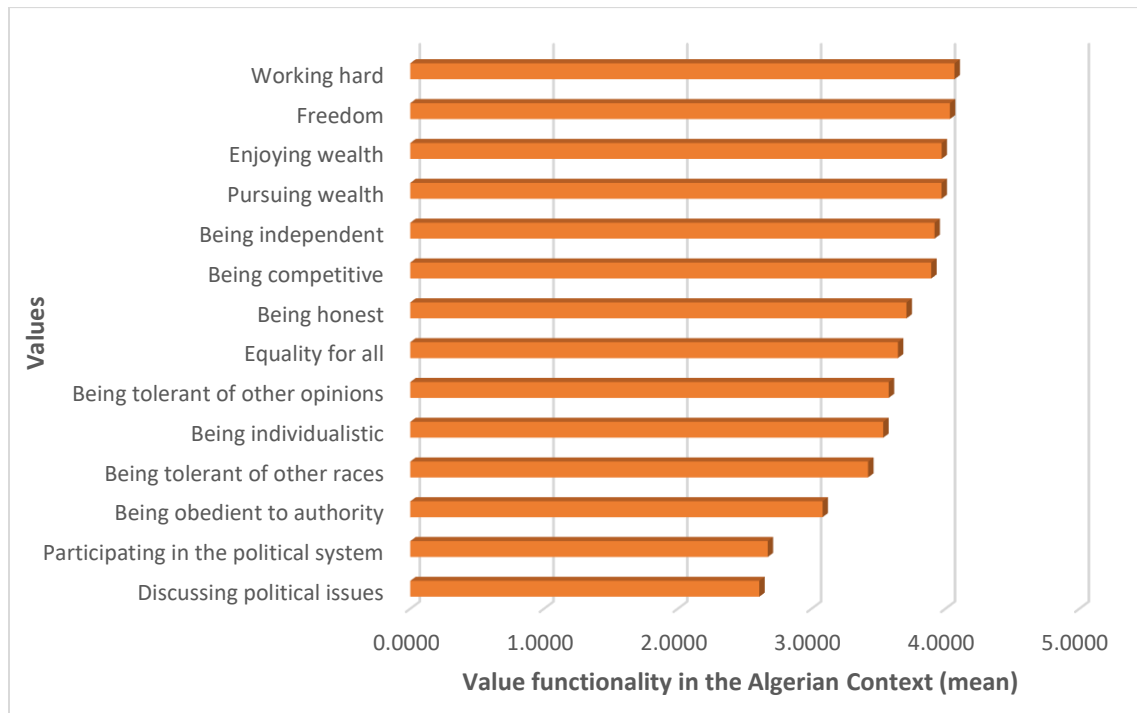
Question 11: To have a successful life in Algeria, how important are the following values?

The final question requested the respondents to rate the functionality of the fourteen values in the Algerian society by asking them to indicate how important (Not important at all=1, Slightly important=2, 3=Important, 4= Very important, 5=Extremely important) the values were for having a successful life in Algeria. The responses, depicted in Figure 13, varied across different values, yet they all agreed that the values were functional within the Algerian context. The most functional values according to those surveyed were: freedom ($M=4.03$, $SD=1.19$), and working hard ($M=4.07$, $SD=1.20$). However, discussing political issues ($M=2.60$, $SD=1.43$) and participating in the

political system ($M=2.67$, $SD=1.43$) were regarded as “slightly” important. The remaining values were all considered “important” for success in Algeria.

Figure 13

Values Functionality in Real Life



The results of the last three questions are summarised in Table 7. As shown in the table, the most important values are those frequently recognised in the media and considered most functional in real life by the respondents.

Table 7

Summary of third part results

	Value importance	Value recognition	Value Functionality
Being tolerant of other races	3.79	3.37	3.42
Being tolerant of other opinions	3.70	3.53	3.58
Being independent	4.11	4.13	3.92

Being individualistic	3.29	3.73	3.53
Being competitive	3.62	4.21	3.89
Being honest	4.41	3.94	3.71
Pursuing wealth	3.62	4.04	3.97
Enjoying wealth	3.77	4.14	3.97
Freedom	4.37	4.30	4.03
Equality for all	4.20	3.96	3.64
Working hard	4.16	4.17	4.07
Participating in the political system	2.18	2.76	2.67
Discussing political issues	2.35	2.80	2.61
Being obedient to authority	2.60	2.77	3.08

To provide an adequate answer to Research Question Three, the researcher used the Cognitive Functional theory of media socialization effects which is based on three main theories: cultivation theory, social cognitive theory, and social exchange theory. The good thing about this theory is that it captures the core elements of the three theories and merges them into a more inclusive model. It is based on the assumption that observed norms, values, beliefs, attitudes and language characteristics that appear in media are assimilated after they are learned and perceived as real and functional. Consequently, two hypotheses were formulated:

- H1: Increased recognition of a value in English language media correlates with a higher likelihood of considering it important among EFL learners.
- H2: Increased perception of a value as functional in the Algerian context correlates with a higher likelihood of considering it important among EFL learners.

To test the causal relationship between the dependent variable (Value importance) and independent variables (Value Recognition and Value Functionality), a multiple regression analysis using SPSS was utilised. Additionally, the following variables were found to have strong correlation coefficients with the dependent and independent variables: Frequency of using media to improve one's English, and Time spent using English language media. Therefore, they were controlled in the regression analysis. The final regression equation developed to test the two hypotheses is shown below:

Value importance= Value recognition in media+ Value functionality in real life + Frequency of using media to learn English+ Time spent on English media

The multiple regression analysis yielded different results for the different values. The results are reported in terms of three measures: Adjusted R square, ANOVA significance level, and standardized coefficients (the β weightings). Adjusted R square (AR^2) is a more accurate form of R square (R^2) as it tells us the extent of variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variable. Its value ranges from 0 to 1 and it indicates the fit degree of a regression model as follows: <0.1: poor fit, 0.11–0.3: modest fit, 0.31–0.5: moderate fit, >0.5: strong fit (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p. 804). The significance level indicates the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis. Worth noting is that the level of significance that is used in this study to support or reject the null hypothesis is $\alpha=0.05$. That is if $p<0.05$ the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is supported which entails the existence of a significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The last measure that is used is the standardized coefficients (β). Unlike the unstandardized coefficients, the standardized coefficients provide more precision, comparability and accuracy. They refer to “the amount of standard deviation unit of change in the dependent variable for each standard

deviation unit of change in the independent variable” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 804). The results of each value are reported independently first. Then, the results are discussed in relation to the two study hypotheses.

Value One: Being tolerant of other races

A multi regression analysis was used and the following results were yielded: adjusted R square (0.244) and ANOVA level of significance ($p < 0.001$). Table 8 illustrates the β coefficients of the variables entered. Relative to each other, the independent variables (value functionality and value recognition) exerted the greatest influence on the dependent variable (value importance) with the coefficients ($\beta = 0.292$, $\beta = 0.252$) and they were both statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). However, the controlling variables (Using English media to improve English and Time spent using English media content per day) exerted small and insignificant influence ($\beta = 0.068$, $p = 0.266$; $\beta = 0.105$, $p = 0.091$). These results show a positive relationship between value importance and its recognition and functionality.

Table 8

Summary of Regression Results of Value One

Variables	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)		2.512	.013
Value Recognition	.256	4.231	.000
Value Functionality	.292	4.915	.000
Using media to improve English	.068	1.115	.266
Time spent on English media	.105	1.696	.091
AR ² = 0.244 p=0.000			

Value Two: Being tolerant of other opinions

The multi-regression analysis for the second value yielded an Adjusted Rsquare of 0.172 and a level of significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.001$). Illustrated in Table 9, the results indicate that the independent variable “value functionality” has the strongest effect on the dependent variable “value importance” ($\beta = 0.300$, $p = 0.000$). In second place is “value recognition” with a β coefficient of 0.204 and a significance of 0.001. In contrast, the control variables’ influence is very small and not statistically significant (Using English media to improve English $\beta = 0.016$, $p = 0.809$ and Time spent in using English media content per day $\beta = 0.063$, $p = 0.325$).

Table 9

Summary of Regression Results of Value Two

Variables	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)		3.593	.000
Using media to improve English	.016	.242	.809
Time spent on English media	.063	.986	.325
Value recognition	.204	3.285	.001
Value functionality	.300	4.841	.000

AR²= 0.172 $p = 0.000$

Value Three: Being independent

The third regression analysis examined the value “Being independent” (adjusted R square = 0.126, $p = 0.000$). As Table 10 demonstrates, only one independent variable, “value functionality,” has a significant effect on the dependent variable ‘value importance’ ($\beta = 0.263$, $p = 0.000$). However, the independent variable ‘value recognition’ has an insignificant effect on the dependent variable ($\beta = 0.172$, $p = 0.008 > 0.001$). Both control variables have insignificant effects on the dependent variable ($p = 0.762$, $p = 0.213$) and one of them has a negative effect on the dependent variable ($\beta = -0.020$).

Table 10

Summary of Regression Results of Value Three

Variables	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)		4.989	.000
Using media to improve English	-.020	-.303	.762
Time spent on English media	.084	1.248	.213
Value recognition	.172	2.696	.008
Value functionality	.263	4.158	.000

AR²= 0.126 p=0.000

Value Four: being individualistic

As with the previous values, the independent variable ‘value functionality’ ranks highest, exhibiting the most significant effect on the dependent variable ($\beta = 0.354$, $p = 0.000$). Value recognition comes second with an effect of $\beta = 0.279$ and $p = 0.008$. However, both control variables did not have significant effects on the dependent variable ‘value importance’ ($\beta = 0.53$, $p = 0.388$; $\beta = 0.52$, $p = 0.436$)

Table 11

Summary of Regression Results of Value Four

Variables	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		.781	.436
Using media to improve English	.053	.865	.388
Time spent on English media	.052	.849	.397
Value recognition	.279	4.765	.000
Value functionality	.354	5.981	.000

AR²= 0.280 p=0.000

Value Five: Being competitive

As shown in Table 12, the regression analysis for Value Five yielded interesting results. Though the Adjusted R square is smaller, the level of significance is still high ($AR^2 = 0.075$, $p < 0.001$). The only variable which has a significant effect on the dependent variable is “value functionality” ($\beta = 0.273$, $p = 0.000$). The second independent variable has a very small and statistically insignificant effect ($\beta = 0.078$, $p = 0.216$). The control variable “using media to improve English” has a positive but insignificant effect ($\beta = 0.048$, $p = 0.486$). The second control variable “time spent on English media” has both negative and insignificant effects on the dependent variable ($\beta = -0.008$, $p = 0.906$).

Table 12

Summary of the Regression Results of Value Five

Variables	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		4.977	.000
Using media to improve English	.048	.698	.486
Time spent on English media	-.008	-.118	.906
Value recognition	.078	1.240	.216
Value functionality	.273	4.299	.000
$AR^2 = 0.075$ $p = 0.000$			

Value Six: Being honest

Unlike the previous values, the regression analysis results of value six yielded a very low adjusted R square (0.008) and a low significance level ($p = 0.206$). As shown in Table 13, all the independent and control variables have very small and insignificant effects on the dependent variable “value importance.”

Table 13

Summary of Regression Results of Value Six

Variables	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)		8.247	.000
Using media to improve English	.090	1.276	.203
Time spent on English media	.052	.741	.459
Value recognition	.003	.045	.964
Value functionality	.093	1.397	.164

AR²= 0.008 p=0.206

Value Seven: Pursuing wealth

The results of multiple regression for value seven (Table 14) indicate a very low adjusted R square (0.089) but a high significance level ($p=0.000$). The variable that exerted the most significant influence on 'value importance' is 'value recognition' ($\beta= 213$, $p < 0.005$), followed by 'value functionality' ($\beta= 153$, $p < 0.05$). The variable 'using media to improve English' exerted a very small effect ($\beta=0.077$) which is statistically insignificant ($p=.266$). The variable which exerted the smallest insignificant effect on the dependent variable for value seven is 'time spent on English media' ($\beta= -0.035$, $p=0.615$).

Table 14

Summary of Regression Results of Value Seven

Variables	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)		3.563	.000
Using media to improve English	.077	1.115	.266
Time spent on English media	-.035	-.503	.615
Value recognition	.213	3.110	.002

Value functionality	.153	2.251	.025
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AR²= 0.089 p=0.000

Value Eight: Enjoying wealth

According to the regression results of the value ‘enjoying wealth,’ the variables that have a significant influence on the dependent variable are ‘value functionality’ and ‘value recognition’ ($\beta=0.284$, $p=0.000$ and $\beta=0.244$, $p=0.000$). However, the control variables have a very small and statistically insignificant influence ($\beta=0.072$, $p=0.286$ and $\beta=-0.071$, $p=0.279$). Worth noting is that the control variable ‘time spent on English media’ has a negative correlation with the dependent variable ‘value importance’ of value eight.

Table 15

Summary of Regression Results of Value Eight

Variables	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)		3.135	.002
Using media to improve English	.072	1.069	.286
Time spent on English media	-.071	-1.084	.279
Value recognition	.244	3.907	.000
Value functionality	.284	4.510	.000

AR²= 0.174 p=0.000

Value Nine: Freedom

The multiple regression analysis for value nine yielded the results illustrated in Table 16 (AR²= 0.078, $p=0.000$). As demonstrated by the table, both variables ‘value recognition’ and ‘value functionality’ exerted influence on the variable ‘value importance’ ($\beta=0.150$, $p=0.022$; $\beta=0.187$, $p=0.004$). The control variables, on the other hand, did not exert a big influence on the variable ‘value importance’ ($\beta=0.002$, $p=0.976$; $\beta=0.103$, $p=0.134$).

Table 16

Summary of Regression Results of Value Nine

Variables	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)		6.686	.000
Using media to improve English	.002	.031	.976
Time spent on English media	.103	1.502	.134
Value recognition	.150	2.310	.022
Value functionality	.187	2.893	.004

AR²= 0.078 p=0.000**Value Ten: Equality for all**

Table 17 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis of value ten ‘equality for all.’ The greatest effect on the dependent variable ‘value importance’ is exerted by the independent variable ‘value recognition’ ($\beta=0.257$) and the effect is statistically significant ($p<0.001$). ‘Value functionality’ exerted a smaller but also significant effect ($\beta= .179$, $p=0.006$). The influence of the control variables was small and insignificant ($\beta= 0.92$, $p=0.171$; $\beta= 0.056$, $p=0.403$).

Table 17

Summary of Regression Results of Value Ten

Variables	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		4.356	.000
Using media to improve English	.092	1.374	.171
Time spent on English media	.056	.837	.403
Value recognition	.257	4.039	.000
Value functionality	.179	2.795	.006

AR²= 0.140 p=0.000

Value Eleven: Working hard

For the value ‘working hard,’ the results of regression yielded a very low adjusted R square (0.077) but a high significance level ($p < 0.001$). The independent variable that exerted the biggest influence on the dependent variable is ‘value recognition’ ($\beta = 0.211$, $p = 0.002$), followed by the variable ‘value functionality’ ($\beta = 0.141$, $p = 0.035$). The control variable ‘using media to improve English’ has a small and insignificant effect ($\beta = 0.100$, $p = 0.158$). The second control variable ‘time spent on English media’ has a negative and insignificant effect on the variable ‘value importance’ ($\beta = -0.043$, $p = 0.541$).

Table 18

Summary of Regression Results of Value Eleven

Variables	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		6.087	.000
Using media to improve English	.100	1.415	.158
Time spent on English media	-.043	-.613	.541
Value recognition	.211	3.145	.002
Value functionality	.141	2.118	.035

AR²= 0.077 p=0.000

Value Twelve: Participating in the political system

As can be seen in Table 19, the results of the multiple regression analysis indicate that three variables have strong correlations with the dependent variable under study. The independent variable ‘value recognition’ exerted the biggest effect which is also significant ($\beta = 0.339$, $p < 0.001$). The independent variable ‘value functionality’ has a positive and significant

effect on the dependent variable ‘value importance’ ($\beta = 0.236$, $p < 0.001$). Although the effect of the control variable ‘using media to improve English’ is so small ($\beta = 0.154$), it is statistically significant ($p = 0.013$). The control variable ‘time spent on English media’ has a negative and insignificant effect on the dependent variable ‘value importance’ ($\beta = -0.087$, $p = 0.157$)

Table 19

Summary of Regression Results of Value Twelve

Variables	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)		.518	.605
Using media to improve English	.154	2.494	.013
Time spent on English media	-.087	-1.421	.157
Value recognition	.339	5.685	.000
Value functionality	.236	3.987	.000

$AR^2 = 0.242$ $p = 0.000$

Value Thirteen: Discussing political issues

The results of the multiple regression analysis, demonstrated in Table 20, yielded a comparatively high adjusted R square (0.286) and a high level of significance ($p < 0.001$). According to the results, the four variables have strong correlations with the dependent variable. The most effective variable is ‘value recognition’ ($\beta = 0.356$, $p < 0.001$), followed by ‘value functionality’ ($\beta = 0.259$, $p < 0.001$). The control variable ‘using media to improve English’ also has a significant positive effect on the dependent variable ($\beta = 0.177$, $p = 0.004$). The control variable ‘time spent on English media’ has a negative but significant effect on the dependent variable ($\beta = -0.143$, $p = 0.022$).

Table 20

Summary of Regression Results of Value Thirteen

Variables	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		1.153	.250
Using media to improve English	.177	2.893	.004
Time spent on English media	-.143	-2.312	.022
Value recognition	.356	6.087	.000
Value functionality	.259	4.476	.000

AR²= 0.268 p=0.000**Value Fourteen: Being obedient to authority**

Based on the results of the regression analysis of the last value (see Table 21), the independent variables ‘value recognition’ and ‘value functionality’ exerted influence ($\beta=0.297$, $\beta=0.264$), which is significant ($p<0.000$), on ‘value importance.’ However, both control variables have very small and insignificant influence: ‘using media to improve English’ ($\beta=0.063$, $p=0.314$), ‘time spent on English media’ ($\beta=-0.009$, $p=0.887$)

Table 21

Summary of Regression Results of Value Fourteen

Variables	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)		1.855	.065
Using media to improve English	.063	1.008	.314
Time spent on English media	-.009	-.142	.887
Value recognition	.297	4.817	.000
Value functionality	.264	4.283	.000

AR²= 0.210 p=0.000

- **H1: Increased recognition of a value in English language media correlates with a higher likelihood of considering it important among EFL learners.**

The first hypothesis predicted that greater recognition of a certain value in media will lead to increased importance given to that particular value by EFL learners. In other terms, there is a strong correlation between the independent variable ‘value recognition’ and the dependent variable ‘value importance.’ The results of the multiple regression analysis on the fourteen values, as summarised in Table 23, show that the hypothesis is mostly supported. Out of the fourteen values analyses, the effects are significant for twelve of them. These values are: Being tolerant of other races ($\beta=.256$, $p=.000$), Being tolerant of other opinions ($\beta=.204$, $p=.001$), Being independent ($\beta=.172$, $p=.008$), Being individualistic ($\beta=.279$, $p=.000$), Pursuing wealth ($\beta=.213$, $p=.002$), Enjoying wealth ($\beta=.244$, $p=.000$), Freedom ($\beta=.002$, $p=.022$), Equality for all ($\beta=.257$, $p=.000$), Working hard ($\beta=.211$, $p=.002$), Participating in the political system ($\beta=.339$, $p=.000$), Discussing political issues ($\beta=.356$, $p=.000$), Being obedient to authority ($\beta=.297$, $p=.000$). on the other hand, the values that do not have strong effects are ‘being honest’ ($\beta=.003$, $p=.964$) and ‘being competitive’ ($\beta=.078$, $p=.216$). This indicates that the importance EFL learners assign to the twelve values is influenced by the extent to which they recognize them in the media. The values they consider very important are typically more frequently observed on TV and social media than those considered less important.

- **H2: Increased perception of a value as functional in the Algerian context correlates with a higher likelihood of considering it important among EFL learners.**

The second hypothesis predicted that a stronger belief in a certain value’s functionality in real life will lead EFL learners to assign greater importance to it. The results of the multiple

regression analysis show that the hypothesis is supported for all the values except the value 'being honest' ($\beta=.093$, $p=.164$). For the remaining thirteen values, strong and significant effects are found. Being tolerant of other races ($\beta=.292$, $p=.000$), Being tolerant of other opinions ($\beta=.300$, $p=.000$), Being independent ($\beta=.263$, $p=.000$), Being individualistic ($\beta=.354$, $p=.000$), Being competitive ($\beta=.273$, $p=.000$), Pursuing wealth ($\beta=.153$, $p=.025$), Enjoying wealth ($\beta=.284$, $p=.000$), Freedom ($\beta=.103$, $p=.004$), Equality for all ($\beta=.179$, $p=.006$), Working hard ($\beta=.141$, $p=.035$), Participating in the political system ($\beta=.236$, $p=.000$), Discussing political issues ($\beta=.259$, $p=.000$), Being obedient to authority ($\beta=.264$, $p=.000$). This suggests that values perceived as more practical and relevant in Algerian society are generally regarded more important by EFL learners, and vice versa.

The control variable 'using media to improve English' was significant only for two values: Participating in the political system ($\beta=.154$, $p=.013$) and discussing political issues ($\beta=.177$, $p=.004$). The second control variable 'Time spent on English media' has a significant effect on the dependent variable 'value importance' for only one value 'Discussing political issues' ($\beta=-.143$, $p=.022$).

Table 22

Summary of Regression Results for all the Values

Values	Value recognition (β , p)	Value functionality (β , p)	Using media to improve English	Time spent on English media	Adjusted R square	ANOVA level of significance
Being tolerant of other races	.256 .000	.292 .000	.068 .266	.105 .091	0.244	0.000
Being tolerant of other opinions	.204 .001	.300 .000	.016 .809	.063 .325	.172	.000

Being independent	.172 .008	.263 .000	-.020 .762	.084 .213	.126 .000	.000
Being individualistic	.279 .000	.354 .000	.053 .388	.052 .397	.280 .000	.000
Being competitive	.078 .216	.273 .000	.048 .486	.008 .906	.075 .000	.000
Being honest	.003 .964	.093 .164	.090 .203	.052 .459	.008 .206	.000
Pursuing wealth	.213 .002	.153 .025	.077 .266	-.035 .615	.089 .000	.000
Enjoying wealth	.244 .000	.284 .000	.072 .286	.071 .279	.174 .000	.000
Freedom	.002 .022	.103 .004	.002 .976	.103 .134	.078 .000	.000
Equality for all	.257 .000	.179 .006	.092 .171	.056 .403	.140 .000	.000
Working hard	.211 .002	.141 .035	.100 .158	-.043 .541	.077 .000	.000
Participating in the political system	.339 .000	.236 .000	.154 .013	-.087 .157	.242 .000	.000
Discussing political issues	.356 .000	.259 .000	.177 .004	-.143 .022	.255 .000	.000
Being obedient to authority	.297 .000	.264 .000	.063 .314	-.009 .887	.210 .000	.000

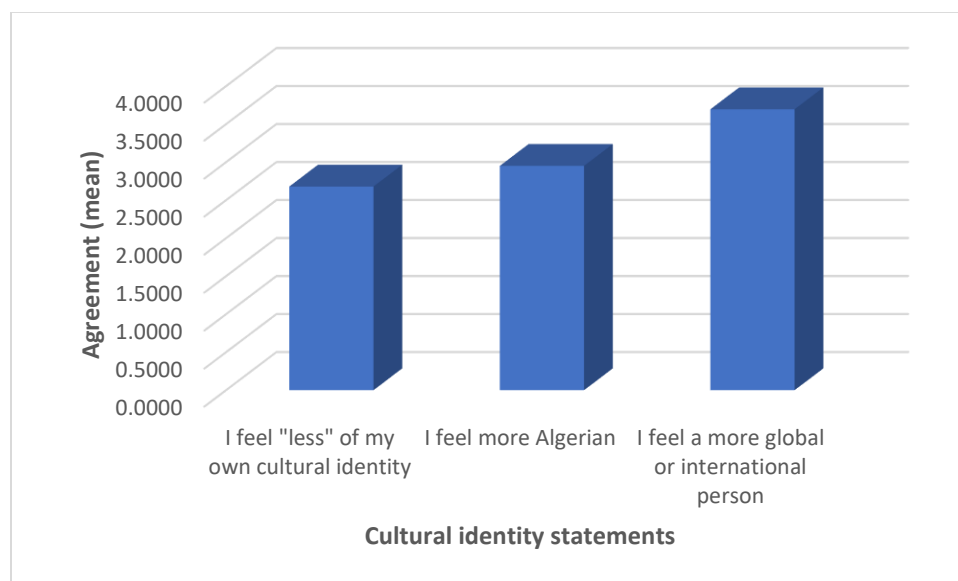
The results of the multiple regression analysis along with the descriptive statistics of the variables ‘value importance,’ ‘value recognition,’ and ‘value functionality’ suggest that EFL learners frequently recognize most of the fourteen values on the media and perceive them as functional in real life. This, in turn, leads them to regard these values as important.

4.5.Cultural Identity Change

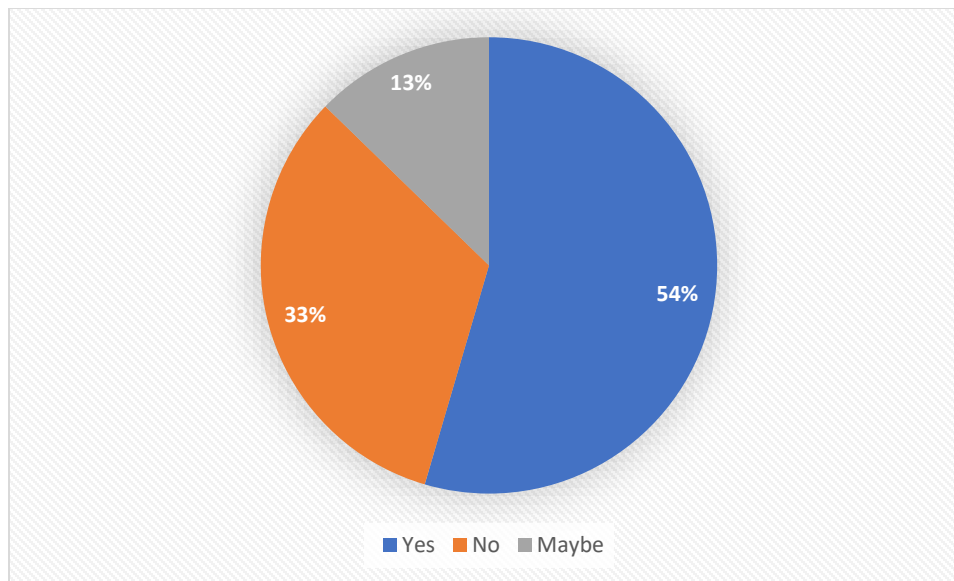
Question 12: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

The last part of the questionnaire was designed to measure cultural identity change. It includes two questions. The first one provided the study participants with three statements and asked them to indicate their agreement using a five Likert scale: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), or strongly agree (5). The results are displayed in Figure 14.

According to Figure 14, the majority of those who responded to this question either disagreed with or felt neutral about the two statements: ‘in some ways, I feel less of my own cultural identity than I did before I started studying English’ ($M=2.68$, $SD=1.23$) and ‘I feel more Algerian since I started studying English’ ($M=2.95$, $SD=1.26$). When it comes to the third statement which states ‘I feel that I am a more global or international person now,’ the results ($M=3.69$, $SD= 1.11$) indicate that most students either agreed with or felt neutral about the statement. What is striking about these results is that a big proportion of the respondents felt neutral about the three statements. In general, the survey participants tended to disagree with the idea that their cultural identity changed as a result of studying English while they agreed with the idea that they became more global and international than before.

Figure 14*Cultural Identity Change***Question 13: Do you think English media exposure has affected your sense of identity?**

When asked whether constant exposure to media in the English language changed the way they conceive their identity, most of the survey participants answered yes (54%), a third of them said no (33%), and 13% of them were not sure (Figure 15). It is apparent from the results that most of the survey respondents believed that English language media had affected their sense of identity.

Figure 15*Identity Change Due to Media Exposure*

The second part of the question requested the participants to provide an explanation of their answer. 154 replied to this question. After scrutinising the obtained responses, three broad themes emerged. Several sub-themes were also identified from the analysis. The major themes, as well as the sub-themes, are:

1. English media exposure did not affect the students' sense of identity. A big proportion of those who answered this question reported that their Algerian identity has been strengthened as a result of exposure to other cultures because this made them appreciate the uniqueness and the particularity of their Algerian culture. Some of them even expressed their keen awareness of media effects and their determination to protect and preserve their cultural identity against any changes. Below are some examples of their responses:

- It made me more aware of the particularity and uniqueness of my culture and how should I portray it to others.

- No. It did not affect my identify, but it opened eyes to other cultures, life styles and minds.
- I am not affected with the English media in my identity. I am proud Algerian Muslim Berber.
- I am the owner and the controller of me.
- I believe that my identity is something fix. Nothing can touch it.
- I don't give importance to other identities as I do to mine. I watch English media to discover other cultures not to change mine.
- Not really, because I have already developed strong barrier, from other cultures, that has shielded me from being affected by other strong religions.
- Learning English is important but it has nothing to do with the identity of the person, it is just a plus to the knowledge of the person.

2. English media exposure did have an effect on the learners in general but not on their identity. Almost a third of those who responded to this question said that media did not affect their identity but made them more educated and more cultivated when it comes to other cultures. They learnt so many interesting things about different cultures. This, in return, made them open-minded and tolerant towards other cultures. These are some of their thoughts:

- I am more open minded and tolerant as I am aware of the existence of other races, cultures and religions that may not share my point of view.
- I became a bit more open-minded person so I respect some cultural aspects that were totally a big 'No' for me before due to the fact that I understand that cultures differ.
- Thanks to English Media, I have learnt a lot of things I have never heard before. For example, how the English community works, their opinions and how they view the

world from their perspective as well as I have gained a little information and facts from every field and culture.

- The English media which predominately portrays western values and ideology, promotes a supportive narrative to their nations' interests and such process is present in all other media including Russian propaganda in Russian media or Arab nationalism in the media of Arab countries. Consequently, intellectual individuals should worry and aware of such process and seek to educate themselves even further in order not to fall in the intricacies of conflicting opinions mostly portrayed either by twisted media outlets or by uneducated folks in social media. In addition, culture is an important aspect of every human's personality but it should never be the dictating factor in any individual's core identity as everyone should seek to build their own personality with a huge accumulation of knowledge through time from different views and cultures and form their own interpretations based on factuality and reasonable and logical thinking.
- To some extent, our culture is not that tolerant of other cultures (which is mostly the case when it comes to any other culture or country) and I grew up having the same mentality as everyone else (having a very deep belief that prejudices and assumptions about other cultures are the truth) but after I started using English media, (of course after a lot of disbeliefs and experiences) I came to the realization that other cultures do not include only the limited image I had about them nor do they consist of only the prejudices and the assumptions I had in my mind, they are much more vast and contain different yet beautiful aspects. And I wish that other people from other

countries get to understand our culture and be open minded about it the same way me or any others like me view them.

3. English media has affected the learners' sense of identity. The rest of those who answered the open-ended question reported that their personality and identity have changed as a result of exposure to English media. Some of them expressed their admiration to the west and their desire to have a western lifestyle. Some of them talked about how media made them adopt feminist ideas. Others mentioned 'building a third space' as a solution to their conflicting identities. These are some of their responses:

- Yes, it has. It affected the way we think and the way we see and orient life. We got more open to other cultures and traditions. we accepted some costumes that we never thought we'll do years ago. It affected the way we wear and speak and communicate with each other. It has highly contributed in changing our lives .. not sure whether for better or worse.
- Because when you are exposed to a certain language, you will indirectly be affected by its culture before the language you speak.
- I am exposed to videos that show how others live, so, I wish sometimes I was American to achieve my dreams.
- I just wish we had more of women supporting and celebrating other women success, I wish women would fight more for the rights of other abused females instead of asking them to sit quiet and be patient, there are many things wrong with our society and culture but I've always noticed them before exposure to other cultures. However, the exposure increased them. But the thing that the English media taught me is how mental issues are more common and normal, how they are caused and how to be

generally more aware. Nevertheless, there are many things about our culture that I prefer too many to mention.

- It helped me to build the "third space."
- Somehow, I started to feel distant from my culture and wanted to change so many traditions (though honestly from the beginning I did not like our tradition, some of them).

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of the quantitative data collected through the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to graduate students studying English language and literature at Blida 2 University. Its purpose was to provide answers to Research Questions 1, 2, and 3. The analysis of the data revealed that most respondents preferred audio-visual media outlets such as television and social media. They spent at least four hours watching television and more than four hours using social media. Movies, music, and series were the most preferred media content among the students, with English being the language used most frequently.

Additionally, the findings show that most survey respondents used media to enhance their English skills, with social media being the preferred platform for language learning. The most common activities among the students included following English pages and groups on Facebook, watching English YouTube videos, viewing English movies, and accessing English language content on other social media platforms. Nearly half of the participants spent between one and four hours daily consuming English media content.

Furthermore, the findings also demonstrate that the two hypotheses were mostly supported. The first hypothesis was confirmed for twelve out of fourteen values, and the second

one for thirteen out of fourteen. In other terms, the learners frequently recognised most of the fourteen values in media and regarded them as functional in real life. This eventually made them believe that the values are important. The majority of the students disagreed with the idea that their cultural identity changed as a result of getting exposed to English media but they agreed with the idea that they became more global and international than before. They believed that media had somehow affected their sense of identity.

Having presented the quantitative data analysis, the following chapter will report the findings of the qualitative data analysis which deals specifically with the influence of English media exposure on EFL learners' cultural identity.

5. Qualitative Data Analysis

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5.1.Introduction

The effects of media exposure on cultural identity have been a matter of growing concern and interest among scholars. Various forms of media, including television, radio, newspapers, and social media, play a critical role in shaping individuals' perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes. Different media outlets expose people to a wide range of cultural values, representations, and stereotypes. These representations have the potential to reinforce existing cultural identities or completely change them. Being constantly and excessively exposed to media content in the English language, Algerian EFL learners exhibit significant potential for influence in terms of their cultural identities. Therefore, this study set out to investigate the impact of English-language media products on Algerian EFL learners' cultural identities.

This chapter presents the data analysis of the focus groups conducted. It aims to explore the experiences of EFL learners regarding their English media consumption and their perceptions of the impact of media on their cultural identities. By doing so, it allows for a better understanding of the complex relationship between English media exposure and cultural identity.

A total of 16 graduate English-majored students took part in the focus group discussions. The demographic information demonstrates that the participants represent different cultural and academic backgrounds (Table 23). Their ages ranged from 21 to 40, and they pursued studies in different disciplines. It is worth noting that the names demonstrated in the table are pseudonyms chosen by the researcher and assigned to the participants instead of their real names to protect their confidentiality.

Table 23*Description of the Focus Group Participants*

Name	Gender	Age	Level	Job	Field of Study
1. Nour El Houda	Female	21	Master One	Not working	Translation
2. Lamia	Female	21	Master One	Not working	Translation
3. Sara	Female	21	Master One	Not working	Translation
4. Joha	Male	21	Master One	Not working	Translation
5. Lila	Female	21	Master One	Not working	Translation
6. Youssra	Female	21	Master One	Not working	Translation
7. Karima	Female	29	Master One	Not working	Literature and Civilisation
8. Sid	Male	23	Master One	Not working	Literature and Civilisation
9. Samah	Female	29	Master One	Not working	Literature and Civilisation
10. Kussai	Male	22	Master One	Not working	Literature and Civilisation
11. Amina	Female	33	Master One	Middle school teacher	Literature and Civilisation
12. Houria	Female	29	Master One	Not working	Literature and Civilisation
13. Fatima	Female	28	Master One	Not working	Literature and Civilisation
14. Youma	Female	24	Master Two	Not working	Literature and Civilisation
15. Rayan	Female	22	Master Two	Not working	Didactics
16. Rania	Female	41	Master Two	Middle school teacher	Didactics

During the focus groups, the participants engaged in open and facilitated discussions that followed a semi-structured interview protocol. The questions revolved around the students' media habits, their exposure to English media content, and the impact on their cultural identity. The conversations focused, in particular, on exploring how English media materials affected their view and understanding of their cultural identities.

The data obtained from the focus groups were transcribed and coded using a constant comparison approach. This approach allows for comparing the answers to the same question from different participants. During the analysis, several themes and patterns emerged, capturing the various ways in which English-language media exposure affects EFL learners' cultural identity. The data analysis provided a deep understanding of how English language media influence Algerian EFL learners.

This chapter is divided into the following sections based on the focus group questions and the emerging themes from the data analysis.

1. Media habits of EFL learners
2. English language media exposure
3. The meaning of cultural identity
4. The Algerian cultural identity
5. The Anglo-American culture
6. The impact of media exposure on cultural identity

5.2. Media Addicts

The findings of the focus group discussions revealed notable insights into Algerian EFL learners' media usage patterns. When asked what type of media they usually use, social media was the most common answer. 14 of all the participants named social media platforms as their

favourite media outlet, claiming that social media unlike traditional media allows for more freedom and control over the content as one of the participants commented, “*I usually use social media not other forms or kinds of media because I can or I am able to control the content I'm finding (and) I'm facing.*” (Lamis)

While the participants named various social media platforms, most of them mentioned YouTube and Facebook. They utilised YouTube to watch movies, series, documentaries and videos about any topic they wished, as Lamis suggested, “*I like YouTube to find videos about any topic I'm looking for.*” Rania, who was a middle school teacher, talked about using Facebook to get news and updates about her job while using YouTube to watch movies and documentaries. Additionally, two participants mentioned the streaming platforms Egybest and Netflix which offer a wide range of TV shows, movies, series, anime, and documentaries. They used these platforms to watch American movies and series.

It was notable from the participants’ responses that their use of traditional media, such as television, radio, and newspapers, has diminished, with only two of them claiming to watch TV occasionally. For example, Karima justified her disapproval of TV by explaining that it is not always available as it is usually shared by all family members, especially in prime time. She said, when asked whether she watches TV, “*When (TV) is available (...) when it is free ... and we don't have time sometimes to move from your room to another.*” Thus, watching TV means changing your setting and moving to another room while social media can be used anywhere and everywhere. Another reason for not watching TV is the limited control over the content, as Lamis expressed, “*No. I feel like it's not the content I'm looking for.*”

In addition to Facebook and YouTube, the participants mentioned other social networking websites. For example, Sid, who demonstrated a keen interest in philosophy, talked about using

Reddit which allows him “*to check theories and thoughts of people.*” Amina stated that she liked reading online books and newspapers in addition to listening to podcasts, “*It is my first thing to do in the morning to check the new podcasts, it is motivational, spiritual.*” Kussai, on the other hand, mentioned Twitter, saying, “*I like Twitter a lot and I like Elon Musk’s tweets a lot.*”

When inquired about the amount of time they spent on media, the majority of the participants acknowledged spending a significant amount of time on various media outlets daily. Six of them spent at least six hours engaged with social media while five of them spent more than 6 hours. Sarah, for example, could not provide an exact number of hours, emphasising that she spent “a lot” of time on social media. While Fatima explicitly admitted that she spent at least nine hours a day on social media, Kussai described himself as an “addict” to social media. Likewise, Amina indicated that she spent “*all day long*” on different media platforms, switching between her phone and computer,

“I use the internet all day long, the exception is when I am eating, reading a book or doing something in school or in university studies ... I use my phone and my computer. It depends on the battery. If it is almost off, I will let it charge and use the other material and, then go back to my phone (when it is fully charged).” (Amina)

Only three participants out of the 16 cohort attested that they allocated a small amount of time to media. Samah, Karima, and Rania revealed that they spent less than three hours on diverse forms of media.

The findings of the focus group discussions revealed that the participants were interested in a variety of genres of media content. Movies emerged as the most popular genre, with most participants (five) expressing a strong inclination to watch movies both through social media and TV. The news followed in the second position along with the series. A considerable portion of the

participants (four) claimed they used media to stay informed about the world and local affairs. Other types of media content such as music, games, anime, and documentaries were positioned third with only one participant for each genre.

The majority of the participants claimed that they used media for two main reasons: entertainment and education. Lamis further mentioned communication and sharing with friends as another purpose for using social media. The themes of media content that the participants preferred reflected their interests in life. For example, Lamis and Lila, who were both translation students, were interested in media content about English translation and linguistics. Sid, on the other hand, was a literature and civilisation student who used to read about literature and philosophy. Kussai, an amateur filmmaker, was following everything about filmmaking and programming. Houda, a literature and civilization student, had a keen interest in culture, religion and other countries. Finally, Amina was interested in motivational and spiritual podcasts.

5.3. Heavy Exposure to English-Language Media

The second purpose of the focus group discussions was to gain insight into the students' use of English language media materials. The questions addressed to the focus group interviewees included what proportion of their global media consumption constitutes utilising English language content. While all of them agreed that at least 50% of their media consumption revolves around English-oriented content, seven stated that a substantial portion (80%) comprises English-language materials. Furthermore, Joha and Sid claimed that English-language media content constituted 90% of their global media consumption, "let's say 90% of my consumption of media as a whole is mostly English-based," Joha commented.

After five years of university education, specialising in English as a major, the students adeptly assimilated the English language into their daily lives and practices. They didn't regard it

as a mere foreign language, rather, they viewed it as an integral facet of their everyday existence, as Amina expressed,

I think in my mind in English, I dream in English, .. I am an English-oriented person but I do have much respect and deep fulfilment for Arabic I am not melting in English but I embrace it very well. At a young age, I started thinking in English.

Regarding the type of English media materials they used, most of the participants preferred movies and series because they are both entertaining and educational. Some students also mentioned educational videos about different topics and documentaries.

The focus group interviewees consumed English-language media for several reasons. The primary reason was to improve their English proficiency and develop their language skills. For example, Lila watched English movies to improve her pronunciation, gain new vocabulary and acquire new casual expressions. She expressed this by saying:

"I watch movies in English because I like to acquire some casual expressions to enhance my vocabulary in everyday including vlogs on Instagram, there are also English videos about learning the language and common mistakes, I follow native speakers especially people who correct the pronunciation of words and accents." (Lila)

Lamis, a translation student, watched educational videos about English translation and linguistics on a daily basis to increase her vocabulary, as she said, *"I am interested in several languages, but since my major is English, I need to learn more about this language. Every day, my concern is to acquire more of this language. So, my content is 60% English."* Some students watched movies and series on social media instead of TV to avoid the subtitles in Arabic. This view was expressed by Karima as follows: *"I try not to watch the TV to avoid the subtitles, and sometimes I move to YouTube to find the subtitles in English to help myself read them ..."*

Some students, like Samah and Youma, wished to improve their “*speaking*” skills through English media content. Other students wanted to gain a good accent in English. Kussai, who wished “*to discover new accents,*” and Rayan, who “*loved the American accent,*” shared this incentive.

In addition to learning the language, the participants stated other reasons for consuming English media content. These reasons include a love of English, English content and people. This view was expressed by Joha, who started watching English language materials since being a kid, as follows:

“It is not a matter of language; it is a matter of the content. I prefer the English content, it is much more mature, I watch a lot of educational videos, for example like science, and mathematical theories, they are mostly in English and video games are in entirely English for example. I do not like a lot of Arabic movies I find them dull.” (Joha)

Many participants had similar opinions about English language media. Lamis stated that “*English content is fun,*” while Sid said “*English language and people are more interesting Arab people are not interesting.*” Amina explained the reason behind her admiration for English-oriented media by saying that she feels “more comfortable and related to English content” than the Algerian one, “*Algerian TikTok is disrespectful content in Arabic is shallow*” she added.

5.4.Cultural Identity: A Difficult Term

The definition of cultural identity appeared to be complex and intellectually demanding, necessitating deep contemplation among the participants. They took considerable time and effort to arrive at a comprehensive definition of the term. Although they provided distinct interpretations of the concept, they had some commonalities that united them. The following is an exploration of the participants' convergent understandings.

Some students regarded cultural identity as a social construct that defines individuals and persons in a particular society. The social aspect of cultural identity includes all the shared beliefs and principles that emerge from interpersonal interactions. This perspective was expressed by Amina, who said, *“Cultural identity for me is all the social, religious traditions and elements that we use to define our individualism and who we are as persons and as part of our society.”* Lamis had a similar definition of cultural identity as *“what represents society or a group of people from language, religion, principles.”* However, other students believed that cultural identity is a geographical construct in the first place. *“It is everything that has to do with a special area. For example, Algerian identity is everything that specialised Algeria from other countries including the traditions, the language, the customs,”* Rayan commented.

One of the participants, Houda, described cultural identity as “sacred” and linked it to the history of a nation. The historical experiences of its individuals shape the cultural identity of a specific community or nation. History and heritage play an important role in defining and preserving the different cultural aspects of a particular group of people. According to her, not every country has a cultural identity; only countries with long histories have cultural identities. She used the example of Israel to explain this idea. She said, *“For example, like the Zionist entity, it does not have a cultural identity. It does not even exist. The country that has a cultural identity is the one which exists and has a history.”*

Cultural identity is all the tangible and intangible aspects of a culture that were inherited from our ancestors. It includes all the customs and traditions that were passed down through generations. These cultural elements serve as a link to past generations, preserving the group’s identity over time. The idea that cultural identity is intertwined with cultural heritage was expressed by Karima as follows: *“It is what we found our fathers and mothers doing, and how*

they educated us. But this changes throughout time because time is changing.” Karima addressed an important aspect regarding the dynamic nature of cultural identity. Cultural identity can be a subject of transformation over time. This view was also shared by Sid, who believed that cultural identity *“has to do with art,”* he added, *“with time and influence, it (cultural identity) could be changed. Ideologies, and thoughts all can influence your identity.”*

According to the participants, history and heritage serve as reminders as well as supporting pillars for one’s identity; they provide a sense of belongingness to a particular community, culture, or even a nation. The acknowledgement of one’s history can strengthen their links to their community and foster a shared sense of belongingness. Rania, for example, said *“Identity is a sense of belongingness. When we say Cultural identity, we are talking about culture, a specific category of culture that we belong to.”*

5.5. Religion at the Heart of the Algerian Identity

One of the objectives of the focus groups was to delve into the students’ understanding of the Algerian cultural identity. What it means to be Algerian, what the most important values and traditions that characterise Algeria are, and what they think about Algerian culture were the main questions that guided the discussions. The participants offered a wide range of perspectives, revealing various elements that shaped the Algerian cultural identity. Yet, almost all of them agreed that religion is the most important factor that defines and constitutes the Algerian culture. As a predominantly Muslim country, religion plays an important role in Algerian society; it guides Algerians’ daily lives, shapes their lifestyle, and serves as a reference for what is right and wrong.

The interviewees stressed the role of religion as the major force shaping Algerian identity in various ways. Karima, for example, described Algerians as Muslims in the first place. She

said, “*We are first Muslims Religion is the most important part of our identity. Even though there are some new things, we always go back to religion.*” The participants stated that the first thing that defines Algeria and separates it from other countries is the Islamic religion. Rayan expressed this idea as follows:

When I think of the Algerian cultural identity, religion comes to my mind. We are among the countries which still preserve their religion, compared to the other Arab countries. I think religion is something that specialised Algeria from other Arab countries.

Likewise, Rania said, “*the Algerian cultural identity is influenced (or defined) by many factors. For example, our religion, which is the most important factor that defines our cultural identity.*” For Lamis, Islam is more than just a religion; it is a way of living. Religion has an influence over all aspects of life for the majority of Algerians, who consider it the basic guiding force as well as the moral framework for their daily conduct. She commented,

For Algerians, I think religion is the most important thing, I mean, it is religion, it is principles, it is everything, it is lifestyle for us. Maybe, we have other values and traditions that we follow but basically, we always come back to religion and we have to see if it is halal or haram. If our grandparents did it or followed it, we need to check.

The students’ responses revealed a strong presence of the Islamic religion in the lives of the majority of Algerians. For instance, Youma said that the Algerian customs and traditions “*are related to religion. In Algeria, everything we believe in is linked to our religion.*” When she was asked to give an example of Algerian traditions and values, Youma talked about Hidjab, the Islamic dress of women. She said, “*For example, in the Algerian conservative families, when the girl reaches the age of 12, she starts putting on the scarf.*” Moreover, when she was trying to express her feelings towards the Algerian culture, she referred to religion again, implicitly

claiming that religion is the paramount factor that defines the Algerian society, exerting a profound influence on its cultural and social practices. According to her, religion, which predominates Algerian daily life, does not restrict individual liberties. She said,

“I am very satisfied with our Algerian culture because I believe that the Algerian traditions conform to the Islamic religion. They are not strict, they are tolerant. We do not feel restricted in our society, we have freedom that does not contradict with the Islamic religion.”

When asked what she liked about the Algerian culture, Rania responded by saying, *“I like the Algerian culture with all its varieties, except, of course, some aspects which belong to some people and which contradict our religion, maybe, and our traditions.”* She mentioned an example of Kabyle people, who are kind and hospitable, but too open-minded and Westernised. Rania visited Tizi Ouezou in 2016, and she did not like how Kabyle women dressed and how Kabyle people celebrated their weddings. According to Rania, this contradicted the Islamic teachings of the Algerian society.

5.6. Taking Pride in the Algerian Culture

Another theme that emerged from the discussions is a strong sense of pride among the students. Except for Kussai, who had very negative feelings towards Algerian culture, all the participants expressed deep gratitude for being Algerian. For them, Algeria's long history, marked by sacrifice and determination to achieve independence from France, had always inspired Algerians and foreigners alike. Amina articulated this idea with an evident sense of pride and a very confident tone,

“To be Algerian is, or what I like about me being Algerian, is the heavy history that we carry upon our shoulders that no one universally ignores or dismisses while dealing with

us even for the Arab world or the world. All the people know that Algerians have a hidden revolution inside them. We are stubborn when it comes to our principles. We have a word whenever we are in political, military, or geographical terms of setting boundaries, we do that successfully and we gain respect. I like when I hear other people, foreigners, talk about Algeria. Even when they talk randomly, it is like they take a step back and watch their words carefully. They select how they deal with us because they know who we are ... I am very proud."

The participants also expressed their admiration for the richness of Algerian culture, including its diverse music, food, dress, etc. Rayan, for instance, said *"I am so proud of being Algerian I think our culture is fascinating, it is varied between regions, the music, the language,, I like it. It is very rich."* Sarah also claimed that Algeria is better than many countries, even though the media tend to portray it in a negative way sometimes. She said *"In Algeria, we are so good. I like being in Algeria, I won't lie."* Lamis agreed with Sarah that Algeria is a nice place to live. She stated that the media have further enhanced this idea by saying: *"From the content I have seen on social media and the people I have talked to, I always feel proud to be part of the Algerian society."* Sid, on the other hand, stressed the importance of Algerian art. For him, art is what mostly defines a specific culture. He was proud of the Algerian art and he mentioned some important figures that contributed significantly to it such as Mohammed Rassim. He also asserted that most of the Algerian art was stolen by Europeans.

5.7.Negative Views of Algeria

The students' strong sense of belonging and pride did not prevent them from being objective and discussing the shortcomings of Algerian culture. They mentioned a few problems

that faced Algerian society and needed fixing. Chief among these issues were the lack of freedom of expression, regionalism, and closed-mindedness.

Despite being a democratic country, many accuse the Algerian government of oppressing the opposition. While the Algerian constitution guarantees the right to freedom of expression, there were instances where these rights were not fully met. Kussai, an amateur filmmaker, seemed significantly influenced by Western democracy and freedom of speech. He claimed he was dissatisfied with the government's practices against the opposition figures who faced legal action for simply expressing their dissenting views regarding sensitive issues like religion. He commented:

"I think being an Algerian is stupid sometimes. There are some people who hide some stuff we can't search and find it. There are people who always stop us from searching We don't have full freedom of expression in Algeria, I have many friends who are against religion or something, I think we should debate with them. When they talk, they go for like five years in jail. They just say I am an atheist; they go to five years in jail."

In addition to the government policies, other participants talked about the Algerian people's mentality. Algerians have some bad qualities, making them hard to deal with sometimes. Joha mentioned some of these qualities by saying: *"Algerians hold grudges, they have prejudices, they are very negative people for most of the time, and they are very close-minded and irrational. I wish they could think more rationally."* Another participant, Rayan, shared the same view as Joha, acknowledging that some Algerians are close-minded and challenging to deal with. She particularly emphasised the concept of regionalism as the major reason behind this.

"When you travel to another region, you find difficulty with people. We are in the same country; we share the same traditions and the same values but the mentality of people is

not the same. You find it difficult to speak with other people from other regions. They are somehow close-minded or what we call in Arabic 'djiawiya' (Rayan).

This could be attributed to Algeria being a vast country with various regions and cultures. While Algerians share the same country, religion, and history, they belong to various regions, each having its own culture and traditions, such as cuisine, dress, and sometimes language. Rania stressed this view by saying:

“Also, we can talk about the space, our vast space. In Algeria, we are only one country but we can find many cultural identities. We have a global cultural identity in general and we have some sub-cultural identities. For example, people in the South have a different cultural identity from ours.”

An important theme from the focus groups is the women's status in Algeria. Many of the female participants raised this point in their responses. They claimed that women in Algeria, especially in some conservative cities, are still suffering from male discrimination. They do not have the same rights, the same educational and work opportunities, and do not enjoy the same liberties as men. Amina is one of them. She explained that tribal and family restrictions shaped her childhood. As a result, she found her salvation in Western music and culture as she explained,

“Growing up; I was like a stand-out girl among the girls in my family. I didn't embrace the traditional way of looking at girls. It means you will get at a certain age; you'll get married and you'll have children. So, I have this tribal culture inside my father and uncles' heads. So, they liked to portray or see girls less smart than boys Growing up, I refused this modelling of my life until I started watching English movies, listening to music, pay attention to some words. I like a girl called “Amy Lee,” she is the lead singer of a group called Evanescence. It is an American band. Her songs are very spiritual,

talking about the inner conflict between you and yourself, between you and God. I felt related to her and from there I started to see myself in that culture, where I can be who I want to be to express my ideas I wanted more things than were given within my family. However, what I don't like is that they go beyond God. I don't like that. I am still holding on to my Islamic identity. I accept all the ideas until it gets to my faith.” (Amina)

As could be understood from Amina's words, she came into contact with and became a fan of English music as a reaction to her reality. She refused the traditions that her family and society imposed, and she started to search for a different identity, one that conformed to her nature as a female. She found this in the songs of Amy Lee, the lead singer of the American band Evanescence. However, what is striking here is her holding on to her religion despite being very influenced by the ideas transmitted through the songs. This demonstrates the importance of religion for many Algerians.

Other participants also talked about Algerian women's inability to travel alone or stay late outside their homes. For example, Youma, wished that Algerian women could have more freedom by saying:

“In our society, a woman cannot go out at night or stay away after maghrib time. I wish we can have a little more freedom in this aspect. I wish we could have amenities for women where we can breathe out... “

Rayan also addressed this issue as follows,

“For example, in the western society, it is acceptable for a girl to live alone and work to support herself, to travel and achieve her dreams. Here in Algeria, when they see you want to improve yourself, they do not support you.”

Gender discrimination against women in some regions can be a direct reason for embracing Western culture, which offers unlimited freedom for women. Unfortunately, this discrimination and other forms of oppression are practised in the name of religion. One of the participants raised this point, using the example of Saudi Arabia, a country known for its strict Islamic rules. She said:

“For example, is Saudi Arabia or khaleedj, they were so much suffocated to the point that they thought that Islam is doing this. One thing I don’t like about Arab countries is that Arab people mix religion with traditions. They impose traditions on the name of God and this is where our conflict comes from. When you read Quran and Sunnah, it is not what you are giving me and imposing on me. This leads to an identity conflict.” (Amina)

5.8. Western Culture Admiration

To understand the impact of English-speaking media on EFL learners’ cultural identity, it is necessary to elicit their perspectives about the West in general and the Anglo-American culture in particular. According to media theories, such as Cultivation Theory, constant exposure to certain media messages leads to the cultivation of these messages. Hence, one of the objectives of the focus groups was to find out to what extent heavy exposure to English media materials, containing a significant number of Western values, could affect EFL learners’ perceptions of Western culture.

One of the major themes that emerged from the analysis was admiration for Anglo-American culture. Most participants expressed deep appreciation for various aspects of Western civilization. Chief among these are Western lifestyle, education and economy. The following are some examples of the participants’ responses when asked what they liked about the Anglo-American culture: *“English people are so organised”* (Lila). *“It is true that they have a good*

lifestyle, a good healthcare system and so on” (Houda). “Duty, they are very strict to this word ‘duty’, they give everything to do what is needed from them to be done. They are hard-working for me” (Rayan).

Some were so fascinated by Anglo-American civilization that they thought it was better than Algerian civilization and hoped they could live there. Rayan, for example, commented,

“To be honest, I like everything concerning their way of life. I don’t know why ... I find it very beautiful..... I wish to go there and stay there. if you want to have a good future, the West is far better than Algeria.”

Rania had a similar opinion; she stated:

“I think the American culture is better than ours. We know that in our society with time we acquired such bad habits that destroyed and deteriorated our society. For example, the big problem of nepotism. If you talk to Algerians about this, they are all against it, but in reality, the majority of us acquired this bad habit.”

American and British societies place considerable value on competence, as seen in many fields, such as education and the workplace. They celebrate the people who show expertise and proficiency in their domains. Competence celebration is one of the things that Rayan and Rania addressed in their comments. They claimed that people’s efforts were appreciated and rewarded in the West unlike in Algeria. Rayan expressed this idea as follows: *“... they appreciate everything the persons do. For example, when you work, they appreciate that you are working, not like here in Algeria, you find yourself working without anything.”*

Youma, on the other hand, was greatly impressed by the American education which aims at nurturing children’s dreams. According to her, American kids are encouraged from an early

age to choose their future professions and, accordingly, are guided towards the fulfilment of their future dreams. she explained:

“What I like most about the American culture is their education. For instance, when a child gets to the kindergarten, they ask them what they want to be in the future and they direct their education towards the desired profession. Their educational system supports children’s dreams.”

Rania found the Western economy truly remarkable with its ability to generate millions of jobs for young people. “ ... *I like most their way of thinking and their independence, especially in the field of technology and economy. Their economic system could create millions of job opportunities, unlike our system,*” Rania said. One of the students, Amina, expressed her deep admiration for an important social aspect of American society: tolerance. She acknowledged that Algeria lags behind in this aspect due to the constant arguments between Arabs and Amazigh. She explained this idea by saying:

“What I like about the Western culture portrayed on social media is their acceptance. For example, they have many religions in America, and they have many races but they embrace each other; they let each other breathe somehow while in Algeria, we have only two races and we are still discussing if we are Arabs or Amazigh. So, it is kind of holding us back. There are a few things that thanks to social media we knew that we have to give them up in order to develop.” (Amina)

As could be noticed from the participants’ responses, most of the aspects they admire about Western culture are portrayed in the media. From tolerance and freedom to hard work and opportunity, Western values are ingrained in Western media and constantly portrayed in Western movies and series. However, some participants demonstrated a sense of awareness and ability to

distinguish between good and evil, real and fake, indicating that most of what is portrayed in the media is inaccurate. Below are some of their responses:

“Sometimes, there are things that are real and sometimes no, they are totally fake. I know some friends who travelled to America and Britain, they said they are totally different from what we see on TV, they are worse in reality.” (Rayan)

For me, the culture presented on social media is artificial and I don't believe everything I see in movies ... Americans always attempt to depict in movies perfect life. In effect, there is no ideal life. They try to show others they are the best but this is not true.” (Samah)

When asked whether the Western culture is better than the Algerian one, most of them stated that the Western culture has good and bad aspects. *“What they portray in media is exaggerated. It does not reflect the real American society. In reality, the American society has many shortcomings but it is portrayed as perfect in media.”* Youma commented.

5.9.Imperfect Western Culture

The students were constantly engaged in some sort of comparison between the two cultures: the Algerian and the Anglo-American. They were aware of the significant differences between the two civilisations and were able to appreciate what was good in each and discard what was bad. Even though they admired many aspects of Anglo-American culture, they also recognized its shortcomings. The interviewees discussed several problems Western society faced, which threatened its integrity, but the most recurring themes were the misuse of freedom, a colonial spirit, and a morally decaying society.

For the students, freedom is one of the pillars of Western society, but too much freedom may sometimes hurt. They did not like the Western definition of freedom and individual liberties, which tends to be absolute and unlimited. According to them, freedom should have certain limits

that are drawn by society in order to protect the individual as well as the collective. The students Youma and Lila explained this point as follows:

“I don’t wish to live their life. I think their life is different than ours. They have too much liberty.... For me, the Algerian culture is better than the Western culture because everything is allowed in their society under the name of liberty and freedom. When the girl reaches 18, she lives alone. Such things hurt the girl. On the contrary, our traditions protect the girl The West misuse freedom and exaggerate in its understanding. It is different here. You have freedom but within limits”. (Youma)

“They have freedom and democracy, yeah, this is a good thing. They have freedom of individuals, which is good but sometimes when you see someone who is doing a wrong thing, it is better to give him advice. You need to object to this. You do not let him go deeper into his mistake.” (Lila)

The participants also raised the issue of Western colonialism, arguing that it still exists but in different forms. Colonialism is still the driving force that shapes most Western actions towards other countries. Amina, for instance, talked about globalisation and cultural imperialism as a new form of colonialism. She said,

“They like to colonise and exploit. They do not share with us their movies, or their music (for nothing), the globalization is not for our sake, it is for them to get an easier access. It is for us to accept them very easily and quickly.”

Sid also agreed with Amina that a new form of colonialism is emerging, different from the old one, and is being practised by the Western world and its media. He said,

“They really love colonisation. The Western countries used to colonize weak countries and make them slaves. I see they changed now because they are trying to hide their

intentions, and their history that is full of blood, because they want to show the world they are civilised, not savages. If the world goes down, they will all take their masks off and show their intentions.”

Far from politics, the students also criticised the Western way of life that appears to be riddled with moral chaos as Joha described the current social situation in the West. He claimed,

“The Western lifestyle, right now, is a total mess. It is completely ridden in chaos. There are aspects of it which I really prefer and love like they are rational, they are critical thinkers, they are open-minded, they are organized and etc. but, in the meantime, there are a lot of aspects of it, they are too open-minded, take their opinions very strongly.”

Likewise, Houda used the adjective “ruined” to describe the Western society where children at the age of 18 *“can live alone and they can do whatever they want”* (Houda). Lila added, *“They are not spontaneous as much as us”* while Rayan thought people in the west were unfaithful, stating, *“I don’t think they are loyal, because when I watch some series, I find that loyalty does not exist.”*

5.10. Strong Algerian Identity

The final stage of the focus groups was devoted to discussing media impact. The participants were encouraged to share their experiences of how media affected them and those around them. According to their responses, they were divided into two groups: those whose Algerian identity had been enhanced and those who had adopted a balanced identity.

The first group of participants expressed positive opinions concerning media impact, explaining that media exposure had not changed or affected their identity. According to them, the media is just an instrument for improving their English and should not influence their sense of

belonging. They still felt very Algerian, even though they knew being Algerian was not perfect as Lila and Youma suggested,

“It did not affect my habits, I am Algerian, I wake late, I am not on time. We don’t have these protocols like English people. English people are so organised. They just don’t laugh. They are not spontaneous as much as us it is a bad thing, in my opinion. But sometimes, it could be good.” (Lila)

“For me personally, their culture has not affected me at all. I am watching English series for entertainment only. They helped me with vocabulary, they helped me with speaking. That is all. But they did not change my thinking or my culture.” (Youma)

The participants shared their views regarding highly sensitive topics that marked a significant divide between the Algerian and Western cultures. The concept of equality between men and women was raised many times during the discussions as an essential Western feature, yet many participants expressed reservations about it. They firmly believed in the Islamic settlement of a men-women relationship based on justice rather than absolute equality, as Lila stated, *“I believe there is no equality between men and women, there is justice. I don’t believe in feminism and these things.”*

Despite having suffered from a male-dominant society, in which females were not treated equally to males, Amina claimed that she was an opponent of feminism. She criticised feminism for repeating the mistakes of the past by marginalising men. According to her, feminists, in their attempt to achieve gender equality for women, tend to overlook the challenges that men face, falling into the trap of gender discrimination again. She added,

“For the feminists, I don’t like them at all, I appear to be a feminist but I am not. Because they are only talking out of their hormones, to be a little the other side. This is the same

thing that we endured for centuries. So, giving back what we have endured before is not going to solve anything. This is not what we are looking for. I believe that the perfect settlement of the relationship between a man and a woman is already given by our Islamic belief. It's not about power, it is about knowing your rights and duties.” (Amina)

Another issue raised by participants was the LGBT community, which has gained momentum recently and received unprecedented support in Western communities. They maintained a strong disapproval of homosexuality, claiming that it does not comply with human nature and innate tendencies. For example, Lila expressed her deep opposition by saying, *“The LGBT community, I am completely against them. They are considered something abnormal in our society, and we will never accept them.”* Through their words, it is evident that these students explicitly hold tightly to their Muslim Algerian values and refuse anything that is against them.

5.11. Take the Best and Leave the Rest

During the discussions, the participants showed high awareness and maturity. They were aware of the impact of media exposure on individuals as they were constantly making attempts to control their media consumption and resist its negative influence. Lila, for instance, was resistant to change, feeling that it was her duty to be faithful to her country and religion, she said:

“... because English people are not ready to change their habits ... , they try to prove themselves, why would I be affected by them? ... I am still a Muslim woman at the end, I fast in Ramadan, ... and I do my prayers. The Western culture, for example, includes daily habits such as waking up early, practicing sports, and eating healthy are something good ... I like their habits but not their values.... we took all the negative things and let the positive things. “

Houda, on the other hand, seemed to be the least influenced one among all the participants, likely because she spent more time on Arabic and Islamic content than the others, as she stated, *“Social media helped me to learn about my religion.”* She added that her generation was more aware and mature than older generations, *“I think this generation is more aware about their religion and culture. Many people believe the opposite, that this generation is in decay, but I think people of my age do pray and read about their religion.”*

Lamis and Kussai discussed the need to follow the good and eliminate the bad in Western media. According to them, the only solution to the negative impact of media is to be aware and critical by selecting what is good and discarding what is not. Below are excerpts from their statements:

“So, we need to get our motivation back to improve ourselves like they (west) do so. We need to make them our model in the positive things, in politics, in knowledge, and scientific fields.” (Lamis)

“I think we should be selective in choosing their ideas, like choosing some theories like the evolution theory and studying it in our schools, the real one not the fake one, and balancing it with religion. It can have some differences but it can have some similarities. We should take what they are good at, the best side, like making great movies. There are many great singers but they are hiding like Souad Massi, they should be more in schools, like middle school, we should know them early.” (Kussai)

5.12. A Balanced Identity

The second group of participants acknowledged that exposure to English language media materials has affected them in several ways. They explained how media made them wise and mature by widening their vision of the world around them, as Kussai commented,

“Me before media is not me after it because I have revolutionary thoughts from it and I have a really positive influence because I was selective in choosing topics that I should be influenced by. I became more mature and wiser. To conclude, I guess all Algerian people should choose the bright side of this influence of media in general.”

The students pointed out that their Algerian identity had not been affected negatively. Rayan, for example, admitted that she had changed, but she made it clear that her identity had been intact. She said, *“Yes (I changed) and a lot. I have now a different way, a different vision of things. I do not see things like I used to see them before. but I think my identity is the same.”*

Sid and Joha, on the other hand, talked about a ‘middle’ or ‘neutral’ identity as one which includes elements from both the Algerian and the English identity. Exposure to English media content made them adopt new cultural practices and values from the English culture while still retaining those of their Algerian culture. As suggested by them, this should not be considered a negative effect as they didn’t embrace any of the cultures fully; rather, they adopted the most favourable aspects of each of them, *“I would say it affected me in a positive way. I don’t think of myself as a western-culture type of person nor an Algerian person. I think I am neutral”* (Joha).

“Yes, I kind of changed, but not a big change. I used to have these thoughts but when I studied it and I had more knowledge from the Western culture, I got a little bit influenced by them. The change is not positive or negative, it is like in the middle. I see the bad side of them but I try to look to the bright side.” (Sid)

5.13. A Vulnerable Generation

The participants also articulated negative thoughts about the media's impact on young people and children. Excessive and unrestricted exposure to social media content has had

detrimental effects on this generation, leading them to waste their time and lives on these platforms, according to Sid,

“I think that western media kind of ruined our generation because they are all addicted to social media now and they are getting it in the negative way ... we take the negative side, like we are addicted to them, we are doing it for fun and we are wasting our time, and we wasting our life on social media.”

Hence, this generation in particular had the worst impact from media since they had been raised with the internet, unlike the previous one. *“The generation from 2000 till now are more influenced by social media and western culture. They love them, imitate them in everything but our generation, but we are mature,”* commented Samah. Previous generations had the chance to fully consume the Algerian identity through the limited but significant channels available at the time, including the national television, which was the only means of entertainment and information for most Algerians. The students regarded themselves as lucky enough to belong to the old generation, which had enjoyed the simple life before the internet.

“I belong to the generation where our childhood was spent without internet. As was born in 1989, I spent my childhood in the 1900s. We consumed the Algerian identity fully. And then got involved with the internet and started to see other people cultures. So, I still have this spirit and the balance between the two, who am I as an Algerian and how I get involved with other people's culture. This is the only point that we need to focus on, regarding this generation.” (Amina)

Lamis also shared the same views with Sid and Amina, expressing her concern about the younger generation. From her perspective, the English media has negatively affected young people; they have adopted Western lifestyle habits instead of Western science and technology.

They even adopted the Western attitude to religion, ridiculing the Islamic teachings and principles. Like Sid and Kussai, she also believed that young people should be selective and careful about what they take from the media and employ it positively. She explained,

“The thing I feel most sorry about is how the Western world affected the majority of our young people. They only take the lifestyle and music style.... and they forget the positive side which they need to take from.... We sometimes see young people criticizing their religion. We even have some classmates who are ‘murtaddin.’ But here, we ask why? Why didn’t they take the positive side? why didn’t they improve their universities to make them better?”

Rayan also stated that some of her classmates ultimately adopted the Western lifestyle practices, including the way of dressing. Moreover, they started to accept things which are considered wrong according to the Islamic religion and Algerian traditions.

“I see colleagues who have been very influenced. I have a male colleague who put on earrings, it is not our culture but it has become acceptable. I think the media changed young people in a bad way in the way they dress, the way they think, the way they see things. We are seeing people who are accepting homosexuality. They know it is haram and unacceptable but they are supporting them.” (Rayan)

Amina took the discussion further by attempting to explain this adverse effect. She explained that individuals vulnerable to media influence were those who had already experienced problems with their Algerian identity, such as having a weak sense of cultural belonging. These people were more susceptible to influence as they lacked a strong cultural foundation. She suggested,

“Anyone who is not sure of their identity, has doubts, or does not embrace it well, they are going to refuse themselves and look for the Western approval. They will do anything to appear like them and they will lose both because you are not one of them no matter what you do.”

One of the negative impacts of foreign media exposure is having conflicting identities. While many students claimed they adopted a balanced identity that represents a middle ground between the two identities, few of them could achieve this. They admitted having struggles reconciling the two conflicting identities. Rayan and Rania provided the following responses when asked whether they had any conflict in defining their identities.

“Yes, there is a conflict. I feel that my English identity is the opposite of my Algerian identity. There are some ideas that I accept but they are not accepted in our Algerian society. ... I had these ideas recently For example, in the Western society, it is acceptable for a girl to live alone and work to support herself. To travel and achieve her dreams. Here in Algeria, when they see you want to improve yourself, they do not support you.” (Rayan)

“(Yes) In the gender discrimination in our country, in the lot of restrictions that affect young women. I think there is a big difference between our Muslim identity and our English identity. When you watch American or British movies, you know a lot of things about the other culture ... You can see that the British or Americans value the field of justice more than our country. When you see that these values are more valued in the West than in our country, you start feeling bad. It changes your way of thinking. When we were younger, we used to think that we Muslims are better than others but when we got older, we realised that this is not true.” (Rania)

Both Rayan and Rania had inner turmoil due to the contradictory aspects of the Algerian and English identities concerning issues such as gender and justice. This situation causes confusion, stress, and a sense of not wholly belonging to any group.

5.14. Conclusion

To conclude, the present chapter has reported the findings of the qualitative data analysis. The data was collected through a series of focus groups conducted with EFL graduate students to investigate the impact of English media exposure on their cultural identities. The rich data indicated many interesting findings regarding EFL learners' media habits and impact. The following is a summary of the key findings:

The results suggest that the participants were social media addicts, spending an average of six hours daily engaged with various types of social media. Social media was ranked at the top, being the most popular media outlet among the participants. YouTube and Facebook were the most commonly used social media platforms, and movies were the most engaging media genre for the participants. The students used media for entertainment, education, and communication and were interested in various topics and themes.

The results of the focus group interviews indicate that EFL learners spent a significant amount of time on utilising English media materials, with an average of 80% of their global media consumption. Most of them stated that they watched American movies and series to enhance their English-speaking proficiency, improve their English pronunciation and increase their English vocabulary. They also thought that English media content was more interesting and enjoyable.

The participants' understanding of cultural identity revealed divergent views and opinions. According to them, the concept was not simple and could not be defined in one simple

sentence. It was actually a multifaceted construct that intertwined a set of dimensions: social, geographical, cultural, and historical. Yet, they all agreed that it was a manifestation of collective traditions, customs, beliefs, religion, language, and artistic expressions.

The discussions with the students revealed exciting results regarding their understanding of their Algerian cultural identity. Although they offered various definitions of Algerian cultural identity, they all agreed that religion was Algerian society's major shaping and defining power. Islam is not only a religion for Algerians, it is a way of living, dressing, speaking, and behaving. The students also demonstrated a strong pride in their culture and country; however, they identified some aspects they regarded as problematic and needing reform.

The students demonstrated mixed feelings toward the Anglo-American culture. While they appreciated Western development in education and economy, they expressed strong disdain for the decaying morals and excessive freedom associated with Western culture. Moreover, the discussions revealed that the students were mature and aware. They were not naïve media consumers. Instead, they exhibited a significant degree of intellectual awareness and critical thinking, tending to analyse the media messages they receive and make informed judgments about their accuracy and quality.

It would be reasonable to argue that the students' identity had been influenced in various ways. In addition to learning the English language, the students were constantly engaged in an identity construction and reconstruction process. Nevertheless, the influence was not easily predictable, as it varies significantly between individuals and across different contexts. While some have fostered their Algerian identity, others have adopted a new identity.

6. Discussion of the Findings

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6.1.Introduction

It is generally acknowledged that constant exposure to media may have discernible effects on individuals' thinking. Nevertheless, how these effects happen and which aspects are most affected are still subject to research. Therefore, this work attempts to understand how global communication affects local cultures by investigating the habits and perspectives of EFL learners regarding English media materials.

The primary purpose of this research is to examine how exposure to English media content may affect Algerian EFL learners' cultural identities. Two main phases were undertaken to achieve this. In the first one, the researcher tested the relationship between exposure to English language media and adopting key Anglo-American values using the cognitive functional theory of Tan, Nelson, Dong, and Tan (1997). This was accomplished by using a quantitative instrument, namely a questionnaire. In the second phase, the researcher aimed to gain deeper insights into the experiences and practices of EFL learners when they engage with English media content and its impact on their cultural perspectives. A series of focus groups were conducted to accomplish this.

The quantitative and qualitative data findings revealed many aspects concerning the impact of English language media on EFL learners' cultural identities. This chapter discusses the findings in the light of the existing literature. It is divided into five main parts, with each section dedicated to answering one of the five research questions in sequence. The discussion of the findings will proceed as follows: a brief account of the results of both the questionnaire and the focus groups will be provided, followed by a comparison with the literature review findings. By doing so, the researcher aims to uncover similar and contradictory results or trends that will enrich the existing literature.

6.2. Research Question One

What are the media habits of Algerian EFL learners?

As evident from the first research question, the study's first objective is to explore young EFL learners' daily routines regarding media consumption. Media habits here refer to all the daily practices and actions relevant to media that students engage in, including the type of media outlet, the type and language of media content, and the overall time spent on media activities. This kind of information is crucial for achieving the overall purpose of the research as it offers insights into how students generally use media and the key factors affecting this usage.

The first section of the questionnaire and the focus groups included various questions to uncover students' standard practices related to media consumption. This included questions about the frequency with which they used different media outlets, the amount of time they spent using media daily, the content of media they preferred to consume, and the language they preferred to use.

The data analysis of the questionnaire and the focus groups indicated similar results regarding students' favourite media outlets. The study participants ranked social media as the most frequently used medium, most of whom indicated they 'often' or 'always' used social media ($M = 4.85$). Likewise, 14 of 16 focus group participants identified social media as their favourite outlet. The findings demonstrate that "social media has ingrained itself as an indispensable component of students' lives" (Ramzan et al., 2023, p. 416). This is not surprising as we live in a digital age where people worldwide connect and share their stories via social media. Growing up in this digital era, young people have naturally developed habits that are inclined toward social networks, which offer interactive and participatory features. Moreover, the mobility of smartphones and tablets made it very easy to access content from anywhere.

These findings show consistency with Ramazan et al. (2023), who emphasised the significant role of social media in learners' lives. According to them, the widespread utilisation of social networks among learners can be attributed to their "accessibility, convenience, and the diverse range of features" they offer "for communication and information sharing" (Ramzan et al., 2023, p. 416). Thanks to the widespread use of smartphones and the internet, students can now easily use social media anytime and from any location. This enables them to participate in many activities such as following educational pages, joining interest groups, connecting with friends and sharing information. The findings also stress the significance of harnessing the possible benefits of social networks in educational environments and highlight the need to educate and monitor learners to become responsible users and maintain a good balance between their online and offline activities (Ramzan et al., 2023, p. 416).

TV use ranked second, as 'sometimes' to 'often' used among the survey respondents; however, only two out of the 16 interviewees expressed a liking for watching TV. As one participant suggested² is the advent of the internet and the rise of digital technology, enabling young people to share information freely. The convenience and accessibility of social media platforms have drawn individuals away from traditional media.

The results of the questionnaire and the focus groups revealed that EFL learners spend long hours in front of their digital screens, be they phones, tablets, or laptops. According to the questionnaire data, most students spent at least four hours on social media and at least one hour on TV every day. These findings were confirmed in the focus group discussions as most participants (13) reported they spent six to nine hours a day on social media. Some of the participants, describing themselves as addicts, even used social media all the time. The present results seem to be consistent with previous research which found that most Algerian university

students spend more than four hours on social media daily (Khelkhal & Ouahmiche, 2022; Benslama & Chadi, 2023; Benamour, 2019). By applying these results to Garbner's Cultivation theory, we can conclude that most Algerian EFL learners are heavy media users. According to Garbner, media users can be categorised as heavy and light. While heavy users are defined as individuals who spend more than four hours on media daily, light users are those who spend less than two hours a day (Mohamed, 2024). Heavy users tend to be more influenced by media, adopting a distorted view of reality that reflects the media's recurring messages.

The findings of the questionnaire revealed that students preferred various kinds of media content but movies ($M=3.91$, $SD=1.02$), music ($M=3.87$, $SD=1.26$), and series ($M=3.77$, $SD=1.15$) were the most popular among them. Similarly, most of the focus group participants preferred movies and series which they watched for the sake of improving their English.

The results also indicated that English is the most frequently used language for reading, listening, and watching media content ($M=4.56$, $SD=0.74$). The majority of the survey respondents as well as the focus group participants indicated that they were interested in English content more than other languages. Arabic came second after English as the most frequently used media language. The focus group participants explained that they used English mainly to improve their language proficiency including speaking, listening and vocabulary. Moreover, they used English because English content is more interesting and of high quality compared to other languages. But when it comes to getting local news and learning about religion and history, the students usually used their mother tongue, Arabic. The results are consistent with previous studies, highlighting the linguistic transformation of the Algerian society from francophone to Anglophone. The prevalence of social media platforms made Algerian youths no longer

interested in the French language as they have become more willing to speak and write the global language (Houichi & Dekhil, 2023).

Considering the aims of media usage, the students mentioned three main objectives that guided their media preferences: education, entertainment and communication. They used media mainly to read about topics they studied in class or to enhance their English skills. Yet, entertaining themselves, especially in leisure time, was also a priority for the students in addition to communication and sharing which is a major feature of social media. The topics that students showed interest in were directly related to their fields of study and reflected their intellectual tendencies.

6.3. Research Question Two

To what extent are Algerian EFL learners exposed to English language media?

The second chief objective of this study was to gauge the degree and frequency with which Algerian EFL learners use different forms of English media products. By measuring the degree of engagement with English media content, we can identify possible correlations between media exposure and changes in thinking and behaviour among EFL learners.

The empirical data revealed a high frequency and degree of English media consumption among Algerian EFL learners. Most of the survey respondents (48.5%) said they consumed English media products “always” in addition to 25.7% of them who consumed it “often.” When asked “how many hours” they spent consuming English media content daily, almost half of the respondents (41%) reported they spent more than four hours, which is indeed a significant amount of time that categorises them as heavy users according to Gerbner (Mohamed, 2024). Additionally, 45% of them said they spent one to four hours a day engaged with English media.

The results of the focus groups confirmed the survey findings, as the majority of the interviewees indicated a high level of English media exposure. Most of them (seven) claimed that English media content constituted 80% of their overall media consumption while it constituted at least 50% for the rest of them. These findings reflect the significance that the students attach to the English language media and corroborate the idea that the use of the English language is gaining popularity in Algerian society (Houichi & Dekhil, 2023). The participants incorporated English media into their daily routines, considering it an important aspect of their daily lives. These results are anticipated given that the participants were majoring in English language and literature.

Concerning the aim of English media consumption, the students claimed that their major objective was to improve their English proficiency. This is understandable given the sample members are language major students. One basic language learning method is direct interaction with native speakers of the target language, a resource that Algerian EFL learners lack. To address this problem, students have sought alternative sources of exposure to authentic language, primarily through the use of English language media. In addition to enhancing their language skills, the students expressed a preference for English content and found it more engaging compared to content in other languages. This preference can be attributed to the global popularity of English.

Regarding the type of media content, the students consumed for English enhancement, the survey respondents reported that social media is the most frequently used media outlet to improve their English. They often used Facebook ($M= 4.50$) and YouTube ($M=4.47$) in addition to other social media ($M= 4.31$) to consume content in English. These findings further support previous research suggesting that Facebook is the most popular social media platform among

Algerian university students (Khelkhal & Ouahmiche, 2022; Benslama & Chadi, 2023; Benamour, 2019; Social Media Stats in Algeria, 2024).

The questionnaire data indicated that the students consumed various types of media content but they were particularly interested in English movies ($M=4.39$), English series ($M=4.13$) and English songs ($M=4.07$). Similar results were also obtained from the focus groups, where most participants referred to Facebook and YouTube as their favourite social media platforms. They also displayed a keen interest in English movies and series. It is important to note that the findings produced in this section mirror those of the previous section. This suggests that the observed trends are robust and reliable.

The findings suggest that EFL learners frequently expose themselves to English language materials such as movies, series, and music to enhance their English skills. This self-directed method aligns with the principles of informal learning, where students take control of their learning activities by seeking authentic language input outside the classroom (Codreanu & Combe, 2020; Dressman, 2020). Moreover, students' media consumption for language enhancement underscores the effectiveness of media in language learning. By utilising media for language acquisition, students can immerse themselves in real-world language, which enhances their listening and comprehension, expands their vocabulary, and provides an excellent source of information about the target culture (Oroujlou, 2012). The results are also consistent with those of previous studies, suggesting that social media in general and Facebook, in particular, are important for language learning since they provide a flexible, autonomous and self-guided language learning experience (Hamat & Hassan; Mubarek, 2016).

6.4. Research Question Three

Does exposure to English media correlate with increased acceptance of Anglo-American values among Algerian EFL learners?

One of the most debated topics is whether heavy media exposure influences cultural values. Exposure to English media content entails exposure to the cultural values and practices of the Anglo-American communities. Constant exposure to this content may lead to increased familiarity and acceptance of these values and practices. To see whether this is the case with Algerian EFL learners, the third part of the questionnaire was designed to measure three relevant components: value importance, value recognition, and value functionality. Value importance refers to the amount of importance the students attach to a certain value, value recognition means the frequency with which a certain value is recognised in media, and value functionality refers to whether a certain value is important to succeed in the Algerian context.

The researcher adopted the cognitive functional theory of media socialisation, which assumes that media users assimilate values, norms, and practices that appear frequently on media after they learn them (recognise) and perceive them to be functional in the real world. Therefore, two hypotheses were formulated as follows:

- H1: Increased recognition of a value in English language media correlates with a higher likelihood of considering it important among EFL learners.
- H2: Increased perception of a value as functional in the Algerian context correlates with a higher likelihood of considering it important among EFL learners.

The data utilised for testing the above hypotheses is quantitative, derived from the third section of the questionnaire. Two main statistical methods were used to analyse the data in this section: descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. Both of them yielded similar

results which confirm the existence of a relationship between a value recognition in media and its acceptance and between a value functionality and its acceptance.

The importance ratings suggest that most of the Anglo-American values were important to the students. Moreover, all fourteen Anglo-American values were recognised in English media to varying degrees. Likewise, all the values were considered functional in Algeria except political ones: discussing political issues ($M=2.60$, $SD=1.43$) and participating in the political system ($M=2.67$, $SD=1.43$). We can reasonably conclude that the frequent portrayal of certain values in media and the perception of these values as functional leads to the acceptance and adoption of these values.

It is striking that the least important, recognised, and functional values were those related to politics such as participating in the political system, being obedient to authority, and discussing political issues. A possible explanation could be that young Algerians are not interested in politics. According to a survey that was carried out to report on Algerian young people's political preferences, 58% of the respondents said they were not interested in politics (Izarouken & Ould Oulhadj, 2023).

The evidence provided by descriptive analysis was deemed inadequate for testing the two hypotheses and making a valid conclusion. Hence, a more sophisticated analysis was conducted which allowed for more accurate results. Multiple regression was used to understand the intricate relationship between the variables and make predictions. The regression equation that was formulated to test the hypotheses was: Value importance= Value recognition in media+ Value functionality in real life + Frequency of using media to learn English+ Time spent on English media.

The results of the multiple regression revealed a strong correlation between the independent variable “value recognition” and the dependent variable “value importance.” Out of the fourteen values analysed, the effects were significant for twelve of them: Being tolerant of other races ($\beta=.256, p=.000$), Being tolerant of other opinions ($\beta=.204, p=.001$), Being independent ($\beta=.172, p=.008$), Being individualistic ($\beta=.279, p=.000$), Pursuing wealth ($\beta=.213, p=.002$), Enjoying wealth ($\beta=.244, p=.000$), Freedom ($\beta=.002, p=.022$), Equality for all ($\beta=.257, p=.000$), Working hard ($\beta=.211, p=.002$), Participating in the political system ($\beta=.339, p=.000$), Discussing political issues ($\beta=.356, p=.000$), Being obedient to authority ($\beta=.297, p=.000$). These findings unquestionably demonstrate that the first hypothesis is strongly supported.

A strong correlation was also found between the second independent variable, “value functionality”, and the dependent variable “, value importance.” Substantial and significant effects were found in thirteen values: Being tolerant of other races ($\beta=.292, p=.000$), Being tolerant of other opinions ($\beta=.300, p=.000$), Being independent ($\beta=.263, p=.000$), Being individualistic ($\beta=.354, p=.000$), Being competitive ($\beta=.273, p=.000$), Pursuing wealth ($\beta=.153, p=.025$), Enjoying wealth ($\beta=.284, p=.000$), Freedom ($\beta=.103, p=.004$), Equality for all ($\beta=.179, p=.006$), Working hard ($\beta=.141, p=.035$), Participating in the political system ($\beta=.236, p=.000$), Discussing political issues ($\beta=.259, p=.000$), Being obedient to authority ($\beta=.264, p=.000$). These findings strongly support the second hypothesis which indicates that more value functionality leads to more value importance.

All in all, the two hypotheses proposed at the beginning of this study were both supported, which leads us to confidently conclude that media exposure fosters the cultivation and adoption of new values. These findings are in line with the findings of Tan et al. (1997), who

conducted the first investigation with Anglo-American, Native American, and Hispanic adolescents and confirmed the two predictions that “learning and functionality evaluations of observed values lead to acceptance” (p. 93). These predictions are the basis of the cognitive functional theory, which assumes that the media is a major source of socialisation for individuals.

Interestingly, the control variable ‘Time spent on English media’ was a poor predictor of value importance, suggesting that “it is not how much television we watch that influences socialisation, but what we watch,” as Tan et al.,(1997) argue. However, this finding contradicts Garbner’s central assumption that long-term exposure to television content influences people’s perception of reality.

6.5.Research Question Four

How do Algerian EFL learners perceive their Algerian culture and the Anglo-American one?

To understand how English media products influence Algerian EFL learners’ cultural identities, it is essential to examine their perspectives on both Algerian and Anglo-American cultures. By analysing their perceptions, we can draw conclusions about how English media exposure has altered their cultural views. The data for this question is exclusively derived from the focus group discussions, which enable a more in-depth exploration of the aforementioned concepts.

Numerous themes emerged during the discussions with the students, offering much insight into their understanding of Algerian and Western cultures. The analysis of these themes has led us to conclude that Algerian students engage in two major processes when forming their cultural views: comparison and judgment. The qualitative data also suggest that Algerian students possess a pronounced level of awareness.

The data analysis showed that the students are constantly engaged in a comparison process between the two cultures: the Algerian and the Western. Many instances from the qualitative data illustrate that the students compare and contrast the different aspects of their own culture with those of Western culture to deepen their understanding of the two civilisations. For example, when asked what she liked about the Anglo-American culture, Amina mentioned the acceptance and tolerance of other. She immediately used a contrasting example from the Algerian context to highlight the point. The fact that people in the West are tolerant towards different religious and racial minorities is further appreciated when compared to the present cultural struggle between Arabs and Amazighs in Algeria, as she said:

“What I like about the Western culture portrayed on social media is the acceptance. For example, they have many religions in America, and they have many races but they embrace each other, they let each other breathe somehow while in Algeria, we have only two races and we are still discussing if we are Arabs or Amazigh.” (Amina)

In a similar vein, Lila used a contrasting example from the other culture, when defining what it means to be Algerian for her,

“I am Algerian, I wake up late, I am not on time. Yeah, we do not have these protocols like English people. English people, I know that they are so organised. They do not laugh. They are not spontaneous as much as us.” (Lila)

This process of cultural comparison enables Algerian students to better understand their local culture as well as the foreign one and to make informed choices and decisions about what to accept or reject and what is good or bad.

The judgment process, on the other hand, entails the act of making an assessment and forming an opinion about something or someone. One of the major objectives of making a

comparison is being able to take a stand regarding a certain issue. Judgment is a mental process that involves weighing the negative and the positive aspects to make reasoned conclusions. This usually affects the individual's attitude and even behaviour. Accordingly, the students compare their local and foreign cultures to be able to make informed decisions on how they should view the two civilisations.

The qualitative data analysis showed that most Algerian EFL learners believe that both cultures were imperfect. Based on media representations as well as real-life experiences, they have been able to weigh the good and the bad aspects of the two cultures and make sound judgments about them. While most of the study participants expressed a high degree of pride and loyalty towards their country, Algeria, they criticised the Algerian society as being negative, close-minded, and irrational. The participants talked about many inspiring aspects of Algerian culture that made them proud to belong to Algeria. For example, Amina explained how Algerian history was a source of inspiration for her and other people worldwide and how the revolutionary spirit dwelling in the blood of Algerians resulted in everyone treating them with respect. Rayan, Sarah, and Lamis expressed their fascination with the diversity of the Algerian culture from the east to the west and from the north to the south. From one region to another, people have various traditions, customs, languages, foods, and traditional dresses, making Algeria a rich country. Sid, on the other hand, was amazed by the Algerian art which, he claimed, had been stolen by European countries.

Being fascinated by the Algerian culture did not prevent the participants from viewing its weaknesses. They addressed key issues and challenges undermining Algeria's image and reputation. Most of these issues are related to people's mentality and behaviour. For example, Joha described Algerians as negative and close-minded people who tend to hold grudges against

each other and have prejudices. Rayan raised the issue of regionalism, or that strong sense of loyalty towards a specific region within Algeria. This feeling makes it hard for people from different regions to communicate and get along. Moreover, Amina initiated a discussion on the issue of women's treatment in Algeria. She used her personal experience as an example to describe how women in some regions continue to suffer from systematic discrimination and unfair treatment. Unfortunately, some cultural traditions and norms undermine women's rights in the name of religion. Many of the female participants agreed with Amina and further highlighted this issue as a common one for most Algerian women. Rania, Rayan and Youma all discussed the need for more freedom and more opportunities to travel, study, work and achieve their dreams. On the other hand, Kussai addressed a different problem that Algerians face. He broached the subject of the lack of freedom of expression in Algeria. As he contended, Algerian citizens continue to suffer from political oppression, especially when they hold opposing views.

The students approached Western culture in the same manner. They compared the two cultures and made a final judgement. They all demonstrated some extent of admiration for Western development in education, economy, and other aspects. Yet, they criticised the Western definition of freedom, moral decline, and the colonial spirit. According to the participants, nobody can deny the fact that the West has pulled ahead of the East in many fields. They mentioned some examples that show Western progress, indicating their desire to live there. For instance, Rayan appreciated the Western celebration of competencies and expertise at work and education, while Youma valued the American education system, which encourages kids to pursue their dreams from an early age. Rania, on the other hand, praised the American economy for creating jobs for millions of people and Amina acknowledged social tolerance and coexistence between different cultural groups in America. Worth noting here is the fact that in all their

responses, the four participants used instances of comparison between the West and Algeria, supporting the comparison hypothesis discussed above.

Despite the tremendous progress the West has achieved, it still suffers from many problems, as most interviewees claimed. Most of the weaknesses they addressed were related to the moral aspect of Western civilization. For example, Youma and Lila criticised the Western use and understanding of freedom. According to them, the concept of freedom in the West is exaggerated and lacks balance, placing much emphasis on the individual's rights at the expense of those of society. As a result of this misused freedom, the West is living in a state of moral chaos and a decline of accepted ethical norms and values according to Joha. Houada, Lila, and Rayan all agreed with him and used many examples to support their point of view. The students also discussed the colonial spirit of Western countries which continues to exist but in different forms. Amina illustrated this very successfully when she talked about cultural imperialism which is based on the use of media and culture as a new means of penetrating the weak nations. Sid also agreed with Amina that the West is hiding their real intentions under the mask of spreading culture and civilization to other countries.

The findings pertaining to the fourth research question unquestionably demonstrate that Algerian EFL learners have acquired a tendency to approach things critically. Whether it is due to their English language learning or exposure to English language media, they have developed mixed views towards their culture and the Anglo-American one. While they praise the positive aspects, they also criticize the negative ones. Additionally, their attitudes are shaped by continuous comparison and judgment.

The students' responses demonstrated a keen awareness of both media and real-world events. Far from being naïve media consumers, they pay close attention to media content so that

they can form accurate evaluations. For example, many of the participants, including Lamis, Kussai, and Amina, talked about being selective of media products and making thoughtful decisions concerning what they read, listen and watch. Being selective means ensuring that one's media consumption aligns with their values, interests, and objectives. It is the ability to take control over media use and make correct choices that lead to a more informed vision of the world. Being selective also means that one should be inspired by the bright side of Western culture and civilisation, such as scientific and technological advancement. Kussai and Lamis both stressed this point by stating that young people and policymakers should integrate positive features of Western civilisation into Algerian culture and way of living to transform Algeria into a developed country.

Another piece of evidence suggesting that Algerian students are mindful of their media consumption is the fact that almost all of them were able to balance learning and entertainment. In addition to having fun, they used different media platforms to improve their English and acquire knowledge related to their studies. For example, most of the participants claimed that they used YouTube and other applications, such as Egybest and Netflix, to improve their English listening, pronunciation and vocabulary. They used YouTube also to learn about translation, linguistics, literature and other academic disciplines.

The study participants demonstrated a high level of awareness about the fact that media content does not reflect reality and that life portrayed on screens is totally different from real one. They proved to be savvy media consumers as they tend to question the authenticity of what they consume by seeking multiple sources to distinguish facts from fiction. This was clear in the words of Rayan, Samah and Youma who stressed that life in the West is not as ideal as portrayed on the screen and that they did not believe everything they saw in the media. *“Americans always*

attempt to depict in movies the perfect life. In effect, there is no ideal life. They try to show others they are the best but this is not true.” (Samah)

6.6. Research Question Five

In what ways does English media exposure impact the cultural identities of Algerian EFL learners?

This question is the core question of the whole study, as it aims to understand the nature and the extent of the influence that exposure to English language media content has on Algerian EFL learners. The answer to this research question is grounded primarily in qualitative data, while also drawing from the theoretical framework and quantitative data.

Both the qualitative and the quantitative data support the idea that the students had been influenced by English media exposure. The majority of the survey respondents either were neutral or agreed with the statement that “they became more global or international now” ($M=3.69$, $SD= 1.11$). Moreover, when asked whether their sense of identity had changed as a result of consuming English media, half of them (54%) said yes, while only 33% of them said no.

The results of the focus group discussions support those of the questionnaire, as most of the interviewees demonstrated some degree of change, be it positive or negative. As Kussai and Rayan claimed, “*me before media is not me after it*” (Kussai), “*yes [I have changed] a lot. I have now a different way, a different vision of things. I don’t see things like I used to see them before*” (Rayan), the students had undergone tremendous changes in their way of thinking as a result of media exposure.

These findings support the concept of “imagined communities,” introduced by Norton who argues that second language learners’ scope of their desired identity goes beyond the four

walls of the classroom as the new language offers them a range of new possible identities, leading to an identity transformation (Norton, 2008). In line with Norton's idea, it is clear that identities are not fixed but are shaped by how people perceive their places within particular (imagined) communities. These findings are consistent with previous research, claiming that media consumption significantly impacts people's cultural identities. (Sutrisno, 2023)

Sutrisno (2023) asserts that while media can open up new opportunities for cultural interaction and information dissemination, it can similarly pose a challenge to maintaining a balance between local culture preservation and adopting the global culture. Likewise, the analysis of the students' responses suggests three types of influence on their cultural identities: strengthened, balanced, and weakened.

Many participants reported a positive impact from English media exposure, noting that their Algerian identity, contrary to what was anticipated, had been strengthened. They were aware that English content merely serves as an instrument to enhance their language learning. They were proud of being Algerian and stressed this on every occasion. They also expressed their firm stand regarding several controversial topics such as gender equality and homosexuality. These issues gained much attention in the West but for the participants, these issues are already settled by Islam which offers "*the perfect settlement of the relationship between a man and a woman (. . .) It is not about power; it is about knowing your rights and duties,*" as Amina commented. The fact that the learners' Algerian identities had been strengthened confirms Potter's assumption that change taking place during media influence can sometimes reinforce the status quo. (Potter, 2009)

The second group of the participants admitted that media exposure had some influence on them which they described as positive. According to them, constant exposure to Anglo-American

media content made them more mature as they gained the ability to see things from a different perspective and developed a more objective view of the world. This group of students seemed to have adopted a new identity that is a mixture of both Algerian and Western cultures. While still retaining elements of their Algerian culture, such as religious beliefs and practices, they adopted some Western values and practices. By doing so, they were able to reconcile the two convergent cultures successfully. Sid and Joha illustrate perfect examples of the influence of balanced identity.

Whether explicitly or implicitly, the discussion with the participants revealed some negative effects of English media exposure on their cultural identities. Although they all claimed either no impact or a positive impact on themselves, they mentioned examples of other individuals, such as their classmates, being negatively affected. Rayan, Lamis, and Amina, for example, talked about some of their classmates who criticised the Islamic religion, supported the LGBT community, and dressed and behaved like Westerners. Moreover, most of the participants claimed that young people are negatively influenced by foreign media, especially social media. Young people are so addicted to social media that they are wasting their lives, according to Sid. Unlike the old generations, this generation had little chance to fully consume the Algerian identity since they were raised with the internet, as Amina asserted. Furthermore, some participants seemed to have two conflicting identities: their inherent Algerian identity, with which they were born and raised, and an English identity they had adopted after they started studying English. Rayan and Rania illustrate this situation, suffering from inner turmoil and confusion. As a result, their Algerian identity had been weakened somehow.

The qualitative data analysis revealed that three main factors affect Algerian EFL learners' views of their culture and the Anglo-American one, eventually affecting their cultural

identities. These factors are religious convictions, the extent of English media exposure, and life experiences.

Religion is an important component in the daily life of the participants. Most agreed that religion is the most important factor defining Algerian identity. It plays a significant role in how they view things and serves as a reference for what is right and wrong. For example, Karima, Rayan, Lamis, Amina and Youma all defined Algeria as being a Muslim country in the first place, and they all stressed the fact that Islam is more than just a religion; it is a way of life for most Algerians. These individuals demonstrated very positive views of Algeria and an enhanced sense of Algerian cultural identity. For instance, Lamis seemed to be a very religious person as she articulated this clearly at the beginning of the conversation by saying: *“I think religion is the most important thing, (....) we have other values and traditions that we follow but basically, we always come back to religion and we have to see if it is halal or haram...”* When asked about the Algerian culture, she responded by saying she is a very proud Algerian. She also demonstrated a high degree of consciousness saying that she consumed English content to learn the language and embrace the best from the target culture without losing her identity, *“So, we need to get our motivation back to improve ourselves (...) we need to make them our model in the positive things, in politics, in knowledge, and scientific fields”* (Lamis). It is obvious that religion has fostered Lamis's sense of identity and served as a shield against any form of identity erosion.

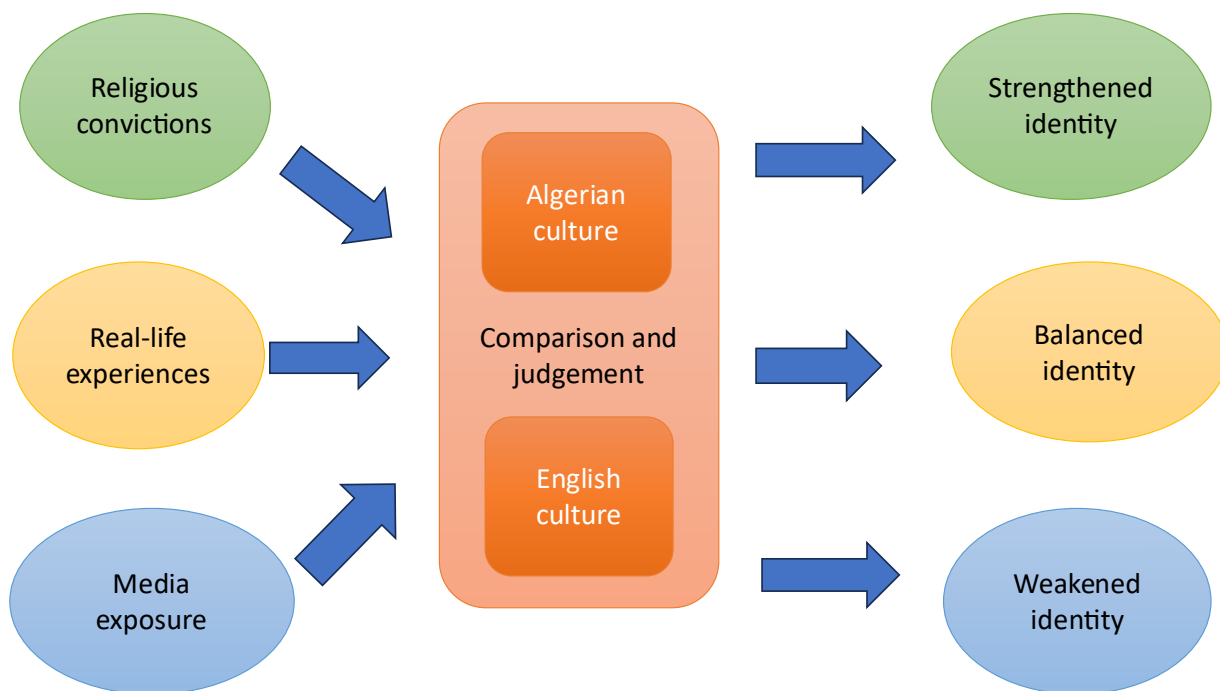
The extent and frequency of media exposure certainly influence the participants' attitudes towards the target culture. The data indicate that those who described themselves as social media addicts or admitted they spent a long time connecting to various media platforms are those who demonstrated more admiration for the target culture. For instance, Kussai, who had the most negative views about Algeria, described himself as addicted to social media such as Twitter and

Netflix. Similarly, Joha, who claimed to have a balanced identity, said that he used to consume English content since childhood and that 90% of his media consumption was English content. Samah, on the other hand, claimed that she spent only two hours daily on media, 50% of which was English content. This is very low exposure compared to other participants. Samah is one of the participants who demonstrated a very strong Algerian identity in addition to her deep awareness and consciousness of media effects.

The life experiences that the participants had appeared to have a significant impact on their perspectives of the two cultures. Most of them mentioned incidents from real life that directed their thinking toward a certain conviction. For example, Amina talked about gender discrimination in her family and how this made her seek refuge in English music. Also, Kussai, who had negative views regarding Algerian culture, had been dissatisfied with the government's practices against the opposition figures. He criticised the lack of freedom of speech in Algeria, claiming that many of his friends had been jailed for simply expressing their opinions. He said:

“I think being an Algerian is stupid sometimes. There are some people who hide some stuff we can't search for and find. There are people who always stop us from searching. We don't have full freedom of expression in Algeria, I have many friends who are against religion or something, I think we should debate with them. When they talk, they go for like five years in jail. They just say I am an atheist; they go to five years in jail.”

Rania, Rayan, Joha, and other participants mentioned negative examples from the Algerian society they had seen and faced such as nepotism and regionalism. These negative experiences had, unfortunately, left a lasting impression, shaping their memories and perceptions of their country.

Figure 16*Conceptual Framework of Cultural Identity*

6.7.Conclusion

The discussion of the quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrates strong alignment between the questionnaire results and the focus group findings, leading to consistent conclusions. Additionally, most findings corroborate previous studies. The findings indicate that EFL learners share common habits in their media consumption. Media is an integral part of their daily lives, allowing them to fulfil social and educational ends. The results suggest that the vast majority of EFL learners spend more than four hours on social media daily, categorising them as heavy media users. They usually watch movies and series and listen to music. The results also confirm the position of English as the major language of media consumption, indicating that most EFL

learners utilise English media products, not only to improve their English proficiency but also to enjoy the features and the appealing content of these products. They spend most of their media time engaged in activities that revolve around the English language.

The most significant finding of this research is the evidence suggesting that exposure to English media affects cultural identity. Constant exposure to English media content leads to the adoption of Anglo-American values. Moreover, it may affect how EFL learners view their culture and the target culture. This eventually affects the construction of their cultural identity, leading to three types of Algerian identity impact: strengthened, balanced, or weakened. Lastly, the data analysis suggests three important factors shaping how EFL learners view, compare and evaluate their culture and the English one: religious convictions, life experiences and media engagement degree.

7. General Conclusion

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7.1.Summary of the Study

With its wide range of functions encompassing information dissemination, entertainment, communication, and education, the media has become indispensable for people's lives, shaping their opinions and behaviour. Whether it is staying updated on the news, following favourite content, or staying in touch with friends, people rely on various media outlets to fulfil different needs.

The widespread use of media has affected all life spheres, including education, giving rise to a new learning mode known as informal education. This development has offered an excellent alternative to traditional classrooms, enabling students all over the world to learn more flexibly and conveniently.

Like their counterparts, Algerian students have integrated media into their educational practices. Algerian EFL learners, in particular, spend significant time consuming English-language media products to enhance their English language skills. While much of the existing research highlights the numerous benefits of media in education, its potential dangers cannot be overlooked. Prolonged exposure to foreign media may present challenges to an individual's cultural identity. The present study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of English media exposure on EFL learners' cultural identities.

To thoroughly investigate this issue, the present study aimed to accomplish the following objectives. First, it sought to elucidate the media consumption patterns of EFL learners and measure the extent of their exposure to English media. Additionally, this research intended to explore the complex relationship between English media consumption and the adoption of Anglo-American values. Another significant objective was to examine learners' perspectives on

their own culture compared to the English culture. The final aim of this study was to assess the impact of media consumption on the cultural identities of Algerian EFL learners.

To accomplish the above objectives, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the media habits of the Algerian EFL learners?
2. To what extent are Algerian EFL learners immersed in English language media?
3. Does exposure to English media correlate with increased acceptance of Anglo-American values among Algerian EFL learners?
4. How do Algerian EFL learners perceive both their Algerian culture and the Western culture?
5. In what ways does English media exposure impact the cultural identities of Algerian EFL learners?

We also hypothesised that increased recognition of a value in English language media correlates with a higher likelihood of considering it important among EFL learners (hypothesis 1) and that increased perception of a value as functional in the Algerian context correlates with a higher likelihood of considering it important among EFL learners (hypothesis 2).

To address the research questions, the study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining questionnaires with focus group interviews to elicit both quantitative and qualitative data. The mixed-methods approach was the most suitable for our research as it provides greater breadth and depth. The study population comprised all the graduate students of English language and literature at Blida 2 University during the academic year 2021-2022. 245 students participated in the survey, and 16 took part in the focus group discussions, representing the study's final sample.

Quantitative data were analysed to address RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3, which concern EFL learners' media habits in general, their exposure to English language media, and the impact of English language media on their adoption of Anglo-American values. Descriptive statistics and frequencies in SPSS were employed to achieve this aim. Furthermore, hypotheses H1 and H2 were tested using regression analysis. The qualitative data, on the other hand, were analysed using grounded theory due to the lack of theoretical knowledge about the issue under examination. The focus group discussions were transcribed, coded, and analysed to provide answers to the fourth and fifth research questions.

7.2.Main Conclusions

The ultimate objective of this study was to deliver comprehensive answers to the research questions. Therefore, this section reviews the key findings in relation to the research questions.

The results regarding EFL learners' media habits suggest that students utilise various media outlets; however, social media is the most frequently used platform, while traditional media is the least utilised. These findings underscore the widespread use of social networks among Algerian learners. The study also found that most Algerian EFL learners spend at least four hours on social media daily, classifying them as heavy media users. Additionally, movies, series, and music are the most popular genres, with English being the preferred language among learners.

The findings concerning English media exposure indicate that most Algerian EFL learners have incorporated English language content into their daily routines, regarding it as an integral part of their daily lives. They often engage with English-oriented media, which constitutes the predominant portion of their overall media consumption, to enhance their English language proficiency. Moreover, they are particularly interested in English-language movies,

series, and music. The widespread use of English-oriented media among learners underscores the effectiveness of media in language acquisition, offering an authentic and immersive source of language exposure.

The multiple regression results demonstrate a strong correlation between the independent variables “value recognition” and “value functionality” and the dependent variable “value importance,” suggesting that media exposure promotes the cultivation of new values. In other words, Algerian EFL learners tend to accept and adopt the Anglo-American values they frequently view in English media products.

The study found that Algerian EFL learners engage in two main mental processes that help them form reasoned conclusions about their local culture and the foreign one. They tend to compare and contrast various aspects of the two cultures, thereby enabling them to make informed judgments of what is beneficial or detrimental. As a result, they demonstrate an awareness of both the positive and negative aspects of each culture, resulting in nuanced perspectives on the two cultures. Moreover, they are not naïve media consumers; instead, they approach media content with discernment and critical analysis and tend to be selective of what they consume.

Finally, the findings indicate that Algerian EFL learners have been influenced by English media exposure, and their sense of identity has transformed. Constant media exposure can potentially affect learners' identities in three main ways. It may strengthen their Algerian identities, weaken them, or create new identities, a mixture of local and foreign identities. The results suggest that three factors are pivotal in the identity transformation process. They are religious convictions, real-life experiences, and media exposure. Algerian EFL learners regard religion as the most important criterion that guides their judgments and conclusions. Moreover,

real-life experiences significantly shape the way they view things. Most importantly, the type of media content and extent of engagement with media contribute to their cultural attitudes and beliefs.

To sum up, the study findings underscore the role of media as a shaping factor that affects people's cultural views and sense of belonging. Algerian EFL learners immensely rely on English-language media products as a vital learning tool. This intensive exposure affects their Algerian identities in multiple ways. These results make a valuable contribution to the existing body of literature regarding the impact of media on cultural identity. Furthermore, the study results confirm that language is a site for identity construction, language acquisition is a process of language socialisation, and language learners are agents whose identities are constantly changing. Language learning is viewed as a “process of becoming, or avoiding becoming a certain person, rather than a simple accumulation of skills and knowledge” (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 319).

7.3.Limitations of the Study

As with all research, this study has some limitations that should be acknowledged at this stage.

The major constraint of this research is the sample size and generalizability. First, the data was collected from one department and one university at one particular time, though the findings are suggested to be applicable in a wider context. It would have been better if the data had been collected from various universities in different regions of Algeria. Second, only master's students were involved in this study, while undergraduate students are also concerned with the phenomenon under investigation. It would have been better if undergraduate students were also included in the study.

Concerning the research methodology, using the survey instead of an experiment does not guarantee that the effects were a result of English media exposure only, as many other variables could not be controlled by the researcher. Furthermore, a longitudinal study may have allowed better results regarding how media affects students' cultural identities over time. A comparison of findings at various stages of the learning journey would result in a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

Another constraint was the distance. The researcher had to travel over 400 km to conduct the survey and the focus groups. This resulted in difficulty in recruiting and interacting with participants and in employing more effective sampling techniques. As a result, convenience sampling was used, which may not accurately represent the broader population.

7.4.Suggestions for Future Research

This study constitutes a valuable contribution to the current body of literature as it sheds light on the intricate relationship between media exposure and identity transformation. Nevertheless, further research is needed to deepen understanding in this area and address existing gaps in knowledge:

- ❖ A more diverse sample in subsequent research could help to gain more reliable results. This study was conducted at Blida University, a university in the central region of Algeria, near the capital. Future research could include students from various universities and regions in Algeria to assess the impact of social and cultural differences on the results.
- ❖ A comparative study with students of other disciplines, such as scientific fields, could be conducted to see whether there are any differences in terms of media consumption among Algerian learners.

- ❖ Content analysis could be conducted to examine the content of English language programs that are popular among learners to determine the most prevalent values in these programs.
- ❖ This study measured the impact of media exposure at one particular point in time. It would be more credible to conduct a longitudinal study at different points in time to observe the changes over time.
- ❖ This study found that some values, particularly political ones, were less significant. Further study is needed to understand why these values were less important for the learners than others.

7.5.Implications and Recommendations

Based on the study findings, some implications and recommendations can be made to help students optimize their language learning while managing their media consumption effectively.

- ❖ The results indicate that exposure to diverse media content may enrich cultural identity, yet it may challenge its preservation. These findings underscore the need to teach people about the impact of media on culture and cultural identity and raise awareness about cultural preservation. Hence, people should be aware of the dynamic nature of cultural identity and the role of media in reinforcing or undermining cultural beliefs and values.
- ❖ Both parents and teachers should provide guidance and promote awareness about responsible media consumption among young learners. Raising learners' awareness about the negative effects of media is important to maximize the benefits of using media for language learning.
- ❖ Both educators and parents should teach learners ways to control their media consumption so that they can achieve a balance between their academic commitments and media engagement. For example, they should teach them time management, setting priorities and

boundaries, planning and setting timetables, etc. Acquiring these practical skills can empower learners to navigate the media world safely without disrupting their academic pursuits.

- ❖ The findings suggest that Algerian learners spend long hours engaged with media. The evidence presented here highlights a pressing need to teach learners time management skills. These skills include allocating special time for studies away from media distractions, making study plans, and setting academic objectives.
- ❖ The study also found that students are addicted to social media. The latter can be positively exploited in the academic context by integrating it into classroom activities. It can be utilized for educational discussions, resource sharing, and assignment collaboration. Incorporating social media into academic life systematically can help learners benefit from the positive aspects of social networks while enhancing their academic performance.
- ❖ Educational institutions should consider integrating “media literacy” as a course in the EFL curriculum to teach learners important skills such as critical media content analysis. This would help learners discern credible sources, recognise misinformation, and detect biases in media content.
- ❖ To help young people, especially EFL learners, access authentic yet safe content, stakeholders such as media professionals and computer scientists should develop innovative tools and strategies. For instance, app developers can design mobile applications that filter English-language products, ensuring that only suitable educational materials reach students. These applications will promote safe media consumption while providing relevant, authentic content.
- ❖ Governments, local media industries, and other cultural institutions should promote the production of local cultural products, honouring local traditions and values. Local media, in

particular, should be encouraged and utilised as a vehicle for cultural preservation by shedding light on a community's positive aspects.

- ❖ The findings highlight the importance of media and technology in education. Thus, educational institutions and educators need to integrate media more fully in the classroom to make formal education more appealing and align with learners' informal learning habits.

In conclusion, this study highlights the role of media engagement in shaping cultural perceptions and beliefs. Continuous exposure to English-language media has the potential to either reinforce or undermine aspects of Algerian identity. This underscores the significance of media literacy skills in empowering learners to navigate media responsibly and preserve their cultural heritage. Media literacy should be integrated into the EFL curriculum to mitigate the potential negative effects of foreign media.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The Questionnaire

Dear respondent,

I am researching the impact of English-language media exposure on EFL learners' cultural identities. Your participation in the survey will take no more than 15 minutes, but it will immensely help the researcher gain insight into how EFL learners use media to improve their English and how this use affects their cultural values and beliefs. Please answer the questions as completely and honestly as possible. Please be assured that your information will be kept confidential and will be used for scientific purposes only.

Thank you for your participation.

Important Note: throughout the questionnaire, the word "English" refers to the language, not the country.

Part One: Media Habits of Algerian EFL Learners

1. In your daily life, how often do you use the following media outlets?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Newspapers					
Magazines					
Television					
Radio					
Social media					

2. How many hours do you spend using the following media outlets on a daily basis?

	Never	Less than one hour	One to four hours	More than 4 hours
Newspapers				
Magazines				
Television				
Radio				
Social media				

3. How often do you read/listen/watch the following media content?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
News					
Movies					
Series					
Music					
Vlogs					
Sports					
Documentaries					
Games					
Podcasts					

4. How often do you read/listen/watch media content in the following languages?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
English					
Arabic					
French					
Turkish					

Part Two: English Media Exposure

5. How often do you use media to improve your English?

Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always ☐

6. How often do you use the following media outlets to improve your English?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Newspapers					
Magazines					
Television					
Radio					
Social media					

7. How often do you do the following?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I read English Newspapers					
I read English Magazines					
I watch English Television programs					
I watch English movies					
I watch English series					
I listen to English songs					
I listen to English Radio programs					
I watch English YouTube videos					
I follow English pages and groups on Facebook					
I connect with native English speakers on social media					
I use English language content on other social media					

8. How many hours do you spend reading/listening/watching English media content on a daily basis?

Never ☐ Less than one hour a day ☐ one to four hours a day ☐ more than four hours a day ☐

9. Have you ever visited a native English-speaking country? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how long was your visit?

Part Three: Cultural Identity

1. Please indicate how important each of the following values are to you, personally.

	Not important at all	Slightly important	Important	Very important	Extremely important
Being tolerant of other races					

Being tolerant of other opinions					
Being independent					
Being individualistic					
Being competitive					
Being honest					
Pursuing wealth					
Enjoying wealth					
Freedom					
Equality for all					
Working hard					
Participating in the political system					
Discussing political issues					
Being obedient to authority					

2. Think about media content that you watch/listen/read frequently. How often do you see these themes portrayed in this media?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. Being tolerant of other races					
2. Being tolerant of other opinions					
3. Being independent					
4. Being individualistic					
5. Being competitive					

6. Being honest					
7. Pursuing wealth					
8. Enjoying wealth					
9. Freedom					
10. Equality for all					
11. Working hard					
12. Participating in the political system					
13. Discussing political issues					
14. Being obedient to authority					

3. To have a successful life in Algeria, how important are the following values?

	Not important at all	Slightly important	Important	Very important	Extremely important
1. Being tolerant of other races					
2. Being tolerant of other opinions					
3. Being independent					
4. Being individualistic					
5. Being competitive					
6. Being honest					
7. Pursuing wealth					
8. Enjoying wealth					
9. Freedom					

10. Equality for all					
11. Working hard					
12. Participating in the political system					
13. Discussing political issues					
14. Being obedient to authority					

Part Four: Cultural Identity Change

1. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
In some ways, I feel “less” of my own cultural identity than I did before I started studying English.					
I feel that I am a more global or international person now.					
I feel more Algerian since I started studying English					

2. Do you think English media exposure has affected your sense of identity?

☐Yes ☐No ☐Maybe

Explain

.....

Part Five: Background information

1. Age: _____

2. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

3. Education level: Master I ☐ Master II ☐

Appendix B: Focus Group Interview Guide

1. Would you introduce yourself quickly?
2. Tell me about your media habits: how do you use media in your daily life (type, content, and duration) and for what reasons?
3. Now let's talk about English-speaking media: How do you use media to improve your English (type, duration and content)?
4. Tell me your ideas about what cultural identity means.
5. Tell me about the Algerian cultural identity:
 - What does it mean to you to be Algerian?
 - What are the main characteristics of the Algerian identity? What are the main cultural values/traditions in Algeria?
 - What do you think of the Algerian culture?
6. Tell me what you think about Western culture in general and Anglo-American culture in particular:
 - What are some of the values/traditions of the Anglo-American culture? How is it different from the Algerian culture?
 - What do you think about the Anglo-American way of life and the values portrayed in media? What are the things you like about Western culture? Do you wish to live the same life?
 - Do you think Western culture is better than Algerian culture? What are the things that should be changed in the Algerian culture?
7. Tell me how English media exposure affects the Algerian cultural identity.
 - Do you think you have changed due to English language media exposure?

- If yes, what aspects of your identity have changed? Is it a positive or negative change?
8. Do you feel a conflict between your English language world/identity and your Algerian Muslim world/identity? How so?
 9. How can we protect young people's cultural identity and preserve the Algerian Muslim identity?

Appendix C: Informed Consent Statement

Thank you for considering participating in this study conducted by me, Khelkhal Salima, as part of my PhD research. This study explores the influence of English media on the cultural identity of Algerian EFL learners. During this focus group discussion, you will be asked to express your thoughts about Algerian cultural identity and recall your experiences of consuming English media content.

Your participation is voluntary. You may stop participating at any point in the focus group discussion without penalty, even if you have already given consent. Your participation in this study will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcription of the focus group discussions and when reporting the findings.

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher,

Contact Information

Khelkhal Salima: salimakhelkhal@ymail.com

Consent

I have read the above information. By signing below, I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Interviewer's signature _____ Date _____

Résumé

Alors que l'utilisation des médias est largement reconnue comme un outil précieux pour l'apprentissage authentique des langues, son influence sur les valeurs culturelles des apprenants reste peu explorée. À l'ère numérique, les apprenants algériens d'anglais langue étrangère (ALE) se tournent de plus en plus vers les médias anglophones pour améliorer leurs compétences linguistiques, ce qui peut façonner leur perception d'eux-mêmes et des autres. Cette étude examine l'impact de l'exposition aux médias anglophones sur l'identité culturelle des apprenants algériens. Une approche mixte a été adoptée, combinant des enquêtes ($n = 245$) et des groupes de discussion ($n = 16$) pour analyser les habitudes médiatiques des apprenants et les implications culturelles de cette exposition. Les données quantitatives ont été analysées à l'aide de statistiques descriptives et de régressions, tandis que les données qualitatives ont été interprétées selon la théorie ancrée. Les résultats montrent que les apprenants algériens sont de grands consommateurs de médias, les contenus en anglais — notamment sur les réseaux sociaux — représentant une part importante de leur consommation. Cette exposition peut à la fois renforcer et remettre en question leur identité culturelle, menant parfois à la formation de valeurs hybrides ou modifiées. Néanmoins, les participants font preuve d'un esprit critique, comparant souvent les contenus étrangers à leur culture locale avant de formuler un jugement. Trois facteurs principaux influencent cette transformation identitaire : les croyances religieuses, les expériences de vie réelles et l'exposition aux médias. Ces résultats soulignent le rôle puissant des médias dans la perception culturelle et la nécessité d'enseigner aux apprenants d'anglais des compétences en littératie médiatique et en conscience interculturelle.

Mots-clés : Anglais langue étrangère (ALE), médias anglophones, apprenants algériens d'anglais, exposition aux médias, identité culturelle

الملخص

بينما يعتبر استخدام وسائل الإعلام أداة قيمة لتعلم اللغة بشكل أصلي، لا تزال تأثيراته على القيم والمفاهيم الثقافية للمتعلمين غير مستكشفة بشكل كاف، في العصر الرقمي يعتمد متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجزائر بشكل متزايد على وسائل الإعلام الناطقة بالإنجليزية لتطوير مهاراتهم اللغوية، مما قد يؤثر على تصوراتهم لأنفسهم وللآخرين وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تأثير التعرض لوسائل الإعلام الإنجليزية على الهوية الثقافية لهؤلاء المتعلمين. تم اعتماد منهجية مختلطة شملت استبيانات (عدد المشاركين = 245) ومجموعات نقاش (عدد المشاركين = 16)، لتحليل أنماط استخدام الإعلام وتأثيرها على الهوية الثقافية، تم تحليل البيانات الكمية باستخدام الإحصاءات الوصفية وتحليل الانحدار، أما البيانات النوعية فتم تفسيرها باستخدام نظرية غراوندد. أظهرت النتائج أن المتعلمين الجزائريين هم من المستخدمين النشطين لوسائل الإعلام، حيث تشكل المحتويات الإنجليزية (خاصة عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي) نسبة كبيرة من استهلاكهم، وقد تبين أن هذا التعرض يمكن أن يعزز أو يزعزع الهوية الثقافية، بل ويؤدي إلى نشوء قيم ثقافية جديدة أو هجينة، ومع ذلك أظهر المشاركون درجة من الوعي والنقد حيث يقارنون بين المحتوى الأجنبي والثقافة المحلية قبل إصدار الأحكام. وتم تحديد ثلاثة عوامل رئيسية تؤثر في تحولات الهوية: الدين، التجارب الحياتية والتعرض لوسائل الإعلام، وتؤكد هذه النتائج على الدور الحاسم للإعلام في تشكيل التصورات الثقافية وتبرز الحاجة إلى تعزيز مهارات الوعي الإعلامي والثقافي لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وسائل الإعلام الإنجليزية، متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية في الجزائر، التعرض للإعلام، الهوية الثقافية.