Global Trends, Local Contexts:

Ideological Positions and their Impact on Early Childhood Education Practices in Algeria

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores how ideological positions impact on a group of early childhood educators and managers' everyday life activities and educational practices. This research was carried out at three different types of childhood reception centres in Algeria.

To investigate the complexity of ideologies, this qualitative ethnographic study employed fieldwork observations, including observations of social media, mainly Facebook. It also used various types of interviews, as well as documentary sources and cultural artefacts. The data generation occurred over a three-month period, involving seven main and thirteen peripheral participants.

The findings demonstrate paradoxical tendencies. On the one hand, different situations and participants' accounts positioned them in the ideology of *West idealisation.* This denotes how they eulogise the West in various ways. My analysis focuses on epistemic, material, and ethical idealisation. The evidence presented in this thesis shows that idealisation of the West has engendered an inferiority complex and a state of subordination to the West. This limits the knowledge production in the non-West in the sense of restricting alternative knowledge practices, serving to strengthen the inefficiency and deficiency of the local early childhood education system. On the other hand, data also indicates participants' *demonisation of the West*. Their rejection of certain Western cultural aspects as well as their constructions of gender and secularism as Western products had an impact on the type of content of provision, the arrangement of activities, and their conducts with children. That is translated into an unwelcoming attitude towards Western content along with global forces and stressing the local cultural attributes and religious education. The findings also reveal educators' simultaneous adherence to both monolingual language use and translanguaging. Such language ideologies, according to the findings, produce ambivalence and generate *a zerolingual state* which proved to largely shape and inform a variety of communicative practices within the research settings of this study.

This thesis accentuates how those ideologies interrelate and enact ties of universality versus authenticity, the local versus the global. Through such linkages, they yield practices that are not the exclusive product of a single ideology. In light of these findings, it is clear from this study that taking ideologies into consideration is fundamental to understand the link between early childhood education practices and the social world. More specifically, their impact on early childhood education practices, and in particular language practices in the specific context of this study, to which scant attention is directed.

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List of Abbreviations

AA- Algerian Arabic

ECEC- Early Childhood Education and Care

EFL- English as a foreign language

MENA- Middle East and North Africa

SA- Standard Arabic

Glossary of terms

Algerian Arabic: the everyday language utilised by Algerians for informal communication. It displays a range of regional and geographical variations across the country (Abbassia, 2021).

Berber: the indigenous peoples of some North African countries including Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and their Berber languages, which encompass varieties including Amazigh or Kabyle Berber, Mzab Berber, Shawiya Berber, Tuareg Berber (Boussemart, 2009).

Darija: the local spoken varieties of Arabic, which are used across Arab countries (the MENA regions). The pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary of Darija deviate from that of Standard Arabic (Al-Batal, *et al.*, 2004).

ECEC: the provision of care and education to children from birth to mandatory school age, with a focus on promoting children's development across physical, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects. This approach establishes a strong foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing (The Department for Education, UK, 2022).

Kabyle: a Berber ethnic group and their language (Boussemart, 2009).

Kuttabs: are typically found in Muslim communities. Historically, *Kuttabs* have been important traditional educational institutions in providing young Muslims with both Islamic and Quranic studies, Arabic language, and academic knowledge.

I'Gwerr: Plural form of *Gawri* (singular masculine) and *Gawriya* (singular feminine); a slang word which is widely used to refer to Westerners/Europeans in Algerian dialect.

Louha: a wooden board with a smooth surface, used as a traditional method of writing with a special feather quill ink pen. The writing can be erased for reuse by wiping the *Louha* with a special clay or sponge. It has been a part of educational practices in many cultures for centuries, particularly found in *Kuttabs*.

Standard Arabic: also called Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), is the formalised and standardised version of Classical Arabic (the language of the Quran and early Islamic literature). Standard Arabic has undergone some linguistic modifications and simplifications to accommodate modern usage, while preserving many characteristics of Classical Arabic. In the Arab world, it is the spoken and written form utilised in formal settings such as official communication, media, education, and literature (Al-Batal, *et al*. 2004).

Tamazight: (see Kabyle).

Chapter One: Introduction

This Chapter introduces the thesis focus and the development of the research aim and questions. It also highlights the significance of the study and autobiographical influences that sketch my personal account, positionality, and reflexivity. Additionally, it provides an account of the methodological approach, research participants and a background of the context of the study. These are followed by the thesis structure.

1.1 Thesis focus and its development

Given the considerable influence of ideologies on our daily lives as they shape our behaviour, our conduct of ourselves and perception of the world and those around us; and given the importance of such social influences on education in general and early childhood education in particular, this thesis ethnographically unpacks how ideological positions held by a group of early childhood educators and managers impact on their everyday practices. I conducted a fieldwork in three different types of childhood reception centres for a period of three months in Algeria, alongside interacting with research participants in different spaces and immersing myself into their world. I examine their lived experiences and the meanings they construct out of such experiences to understand the complex interplay of ideologies and practice with young children.

In doing so, this research has the following aims:

First, it seeks to explore the ideological positions underlying early childhood education and care (henceforth, ECEC) provision in Algeria, and to identify how they are constructed;

Second, to understand how such ideologies are enacted or demonstrate themselves in day-to-day activities within the ECEC settings;

And third, to discuss the practical implications of the issue being discussed.

As such, this study answers the following gradually developed questions:

1. How do educators and managers position themselves ideologically in early childhood education and care institutions in Algeria?
   1.1. How are these ideological positions embedded and enacted in participants' everyday interactions?
   1.2. How do the mechanisms of ideology impact daily educational practices with young children?
2. What factors contribute to the construction of these ideologies?

3. In what ways do the simultaneous idealisation and demonisation of the West among participants intersect with language ideologies?

4. What are the implications of these ideological tensions?

This study yielded significant findings. Much of the discourses related to the early childhood educational activities and practices within the studied community define and are defined by participants' ideological positioning which both idealises and demonises the West, and most often it is accompanied with feelings of inferiority and superiority to the West respectively. The findings reported that the ideology of West idealisation drives participants to perceive themselves as unable and failed to perform certain activities and tasks with children. It further limits the knowledge production in the non-West in the sense of restricting alternative knowledge practices. The findings also reported that the ideology of West demonisation impacts on the type of content of provision, the arrangement of activities, and educators' conducts with children, which leads to participants' rejection of Western cultural immersion and them stressing the local cultural attributes and religious education in their daily work.

Earlier studies on ideologies in the Algerian context were mainly conducted in the field of English as a foreign language (EFL), mostly in higher education settings, as I show in section 2.3.2). Researching ideologies in the Algerian early years' context has almost been completely overlooked. Scholars identify that early childhood education and care is relatively a new and modern phenomenon in many Muslim countries and that it has not yet been established as a research subject and teaching at higher education in those countries (Gul, 2008; Kaytaz & Ozturk, 2020; Aslan, 2022). Previous research has addressed some of the ideological constructs discussed in this thesis that are related to the non-West images of the West (for example, Jalal Ali, 1984; El-Enany, 2006; Deylami, 2011; Ugbam, Chuku, and Ogbo, 2014; Simić, 2016; Takayama, 2016; Crynes, 2019; Hiouani, 2020; Yun, 2020; and Crowe, 2021). However, they either focus on ideologies and their relation to identities (e.g., Hiouani, 2020; Bara, 2022), or they rigidly divide people into two ideological streams with an unnecessary binary between idealisation and demonisation from the perspective of cultural imperialism (e.g., Simić, 2016; Crowe, 2021). They have also generally failed to address the impact of such ideologies on practitioners' actual practice.

My thesis instead offers a comprehensive study on ideologies and more importantly examines the impact they have on the daily educational practices in the specific context of this study. My thesis, moreover, contributes to the existing studies on the construction of gender within the context of early childhood settings (e.g., Robinson, 2002; Robinson, 2005; Duke

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and McCarthy, 2009; Surtees Gunn, 2010; Ferderer, 2017; Aprilianti, Adriany, and Syaodih, 2021) and on the secularisation thesis (e.g., Wu, 2007; Findlow, 2008; Haynes and Ben-Porat, 2010; Smith and Schapiro, 2021; Aslan, 2022; Kuusisto, 2022), by providing perspectives on gender and secularism from the Algerian ECEC context, to which there seems to be scant attention.

Algeria's complex linguistic profile (see section 3.4) makes researching language ideologies even more important. This thesis productively links the linguistic and social analysis of language views and their situation within the particular Algerian cultural context. The findings reveal educators' simultaneous adherence to both monolingual language use, translated in their emphasis on the use and instruction of Standard Arabic as a national language, and to translanguaging, by endorsing the practice of using various languages of which SA, *Darija* and French as one linguistic act in their daily practice in a variety of ways. These opposing ideologies and competing language agendas, according to the findings, produce ambivalent behaviour in practice. That ambivalence in itself might impact and be a factor of a serious issue of language in the Algerian context, that of zerolingualism. The latter proved to largely shape and inform a variety of communicative practices within the research settings of this study.

This PhD will extend the already existing knowledge about ambivalent behaviour in language practices (e.g., Loutfi, 2020; Messekher and Miliani, 2020; Jaspers, 2022) by adding more nuance regarding the nature, factors, as well as impact of such ambivalence in some nursery settings in Algeria. My research will further make an important contribution to the few studies that have investigated the notion of zerolingualism (Jaspers, 2011 and Song, 2019) by unveiling how different ideologies interrelate and yield practices that are not the exclusive product of a single ideology. This reinforces the significance of this study.

This research's significance also lies in the implications it provides. Early years' educators and managers alike are encouraged to develop their professional autonomy and critical language awareness by reflecting upon predominant and opposing ideologies and political dimensions. Language policy makers might find the findings related to zerolingualism important in relation to decisions regarding the linguistic approaches in Algeria and its education system. Developing economic and cultural autonomy in relation to resources, and knowledge production is also encouraged in this thesis. I suggest designing the country's own curriculum, teaching materials, and textbooks, and the inclusion of grandmothers' stories, memorising the Quran, poetry, and the folklore heritage in family and in educational contexts.

Further to what is mentioned above, this research on ideologies as a central concern productively helps fathom the social practices and the nature of provision as well as the

dominant sociocultural components of early childhood education in Algeria. That is, the teaching and learning concerns, realities, and expectations upon which the Algerian society is based. Precisely, it helps understand questions like what activities constitute and occupy children's time within the Algerian early years' educational settings, why and how. This study also sets forth links between global politics, local culture, policy, and educational practices. It, hence, offers the chance to reflect on global themes that surround young children's education and care. In this vein, Bruce (2020) highlights the importance of researching early childhood education' heritage in various societies and cultures around the globe as the interpretation of core principles varies in the broad sense and in more specifically the variation of individual early childhood specialists' interpretations and outlooks even within a culture.

As noted earlier, researching ideologies in the ECEC Algerian context is under-studied from the framework which does not solely document ideological positions but also their impact on the early years' practices were academic motives that prompted undertaking this study. Beside these, there are personal motivations that fuelled this research, to which I now turn.

Originally, the idea of researching the early years' context grew from an interest in early childhood education and care as a research field, which flourished when I studied a module of educational psychology, covering emotional, cognitive, and social child development in my BA and MA education course. Although ECEC has never been established as an independent field of study at Algerian universities, I developed a reading interest around methods of education like Montessori as part of my life goal at that time to be an owner and manager of my own nursery. When I had the chance to pursue my PhD in Canterbury Christ Church University, it became possible for me to join early childhood community of research and practice events and investigate questions that resonate strongly with my personal motivations.

There is a particular incident that spurred my decision upon this thesis topic. My eldest nephew grew up in an upper middle-class family, with a father who works full-time and a *stay-at-home* mother. My nephew was not enrolled at any type of childhood reception centre and spent his early years socialising in an extended family. Free, unsupervised, and outdoors (in the street) play has also characterised his early years. At the age of six, he started school. Although he grows physically and mentally healthy, within the first months of his primary school, his family received weekly (if not daily) reports and complaints from the schoolteacher about his academic performance. When this situation became frustrating to my sister and her husband, I decided to intervene, and I personally went to the school to learn about the matter. To my surprise, the teacher said that my nephew is behind his peers as he does not know how to write his name and the date, he does not know French while most of his peers do. She

added that she has thirty-five children in her class and does not have time for him. She also questioned why his parents did not enrol him at the nursery as the latter prepares children for primary school. What left me astonished is her expectations of the nursery education to prepare children for school. Here I started to reflect upon my own childhood when I used to play freely outdoors too but, I also used to attend Quranic classes at the mosque where I learnt how to write and read Arabic as well as how to recite the *Quran* before I started school. And questions about the content of provision of preschool education and society's conceptualisations of the child and childhood education nourished my interest into the journey of carrying out a PhD in this research area and context. Answering it would plausibly feed my curiosity!

I therefore started this research with the assumption that *schoolification* (i.e., preparing children for primary school in the early years) makes up the constructions and the socially shared beliefs about early childhood education among the population under study. Navigating my way into the field of study, I allowed the ethnographic nature of my research to gradually delve me deeper into the way of thinking of my participants. I began to reflect about certain frequently recurrent and predominant patterns my participants brought up. I am here referring to how the notion of the West evolved as a social construct in this study (this is described in detail in section 5.2). My focus was also expanded to comprise language ideologies based on my observations of a type of a language being produced in the field, especially in relation to the songs children learn in the research setting.

I entered the field with a prior reading on Van Dijk's work on ideology. Having an understanding of ideology as the socially shared set of convictions, beliefs, and ideas that are constructed cognitively and maintained by discourse, and that people may or may not be aware of, enabled my decision upon what is and what is not ideological. To avoid neglecting the circumstantial nature of ideologies, the term 'ideological positions' is mostly used in this thesis along with 'ideologies'. That is, participants show different and paradoxical sets of ideological positions about the West and about languages, contingent upon the type of realities they choose to display in specific social contexts. Therefore, using social constructionism paradigm in this thesis was particularly advantageous in broadening my perspective about the way to interpret such opposing instances that I was at first uncertain in dealing with them. That can also be explained in relation to how different scholars approach the term ideology with different levels of complexity and contradiction (as explained in section 2.2). However, keeping the theory and my research questions apart in interpreting my data and let it speak independently was important to understand how participants' everyday discourses position them ideologically in their community.

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Speaking of the influences on the knowledge production, I acknowledge that I am part of the social world I am researching and thus I cannot claim a detached position from my own dispositions, history, and values. My identity as a Muslim, Algerian, Arab, and female, sharing the same language repertoires and socio historical background as participants gave me privilege and eased my access to gain and co-construct knowledge with my participants. That technically positioned me as 'an insider'. However, it would be naïve to assume that my positionality was static. It was in fact dynamic and relative, fluctuating between *insiderness* and *outsiderness* (see section 4.6.3 for details about my positionality), depending very much on my participants and their changing views and perceptions towards me socially and culturally. I developed an emotional intelligence and continuous negotiations in order to actively build personal and social relationships with research participants alongside earning their trust.

At the start of my data generation, I had probably perceived myself taking the researcher role: watching every move the participants make, despite my awareness of the necessity of reflecting on my reflexivity (see section 4.6.1 on reflexivity). Being myself immersed in the type of discourses and occurrences of the community that I was part of, makes it challenging at times to perceive them through a different lens. Notwithstanding, I paused and came to realise that I could relate to many views, meanings, and narratives my participants were giving. Born and raised in Algeria, where expressions of the dream to quit the country and settle in Europe are constantly heard among the society members. I myself idealised certain aspects about the West before living in one of those countries of the Global North, I also supported the objection to French elitism and the challenge of French as hegemonic force of a dominant group. Those became even more meaningful when I began to *defamiliarise* myself with the familiar (see section 4.6.2) and to think back about how I myself was not all that dissimilar from them, I had also long been there participating in the maintenance and production of statements similar to theirs. Overall, recognising that participants construct their experiences from the product of the intersection of socio-historical situations, and that my personal sensibilities and trajectories as a researcher had an impact on this research' process throughout, makes me acknowledge the ongoing process of reflexivity upon those subjectivities and the implicatedness of myself as the researcher in trying to work things out. In the following section, I briefly outline the methodological choices.

1.2 Methodological approach

In order to unravel the intricacies inherent in ideologies and early childhood education practices, I conducted a qualitative ethnographic study using throughout the phases of data generation and interpretation the social constructionist paradigm (see section 4.2). This is on

the basis of the acknowledgement of the social influences on people's experiences. I employed a variety of methods to generate data (see section 4.3.2). This includes fieldwork observations, various types of interviews and visual representations. These research methods illuminated each other, and all together contributed to an in-depth understanding of the realities and meanings represented through participants' accounts and behaviours. In terms of language, being cognisant that participants' language choices in this context can potentially say important clues from an ideological point of view, I ascertained that all conversations are held in my participants' chosen languages. All the types of interviews in this research were characterised by the use of a mixture of various languages. Participants mostly shifted and mixed or code- switched between their Algerian local dialect, Standard Arabic and French. None of the interviews were conducted in a single language. I, thus, transcribed all the interviews as they were in their original languages because they carried deep meanings, and I translated only the segments that I needed as supportive evidence in my data chapters. I decided to keep several expressions used by my participants during interview conversations in their original language as I felt that their exact equivalents in English is hardly kept; but I retrieved the codes and themes mostly in English. I analysed the generated data thematically (see section 4.5).

1.3 Participants and the broader research setting

Participants in this study are seven early childhood educators and managers, working at three different types of childhood reception centres in a city in Algeria. They are all Algerians, Muslims, females, aged between twenty-five to forty-nine years old, with different work and training experience. Table 4.2 summarises the profiles and biographical information of the research participants. Section 4.4.2 provides details about the gatekeepers and explains the recruitment of the participants.

For a better understanding of the occurrences discussed in chapters number five and six, the next sub-sections briefly outline the socio historical as well as the early childhood educational backgrounds of Algeria.

1.3.1 Algeria: A socio-historical background

Algeria or the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria is situated in northern Africa and is the largest country in the continent. It shares borders with the Mediterranean Sea, Tunisia, Libya, Niger, Mauritania, Mali, Morocco, and Western Sahara. It is now officially made up of 58 provinces. To contextualise the views and practices of my research participants, it is important to understand the key influences and conditions under which these views and practices have been constructed. That requires taking into account the backdrop of the social context in which

it occurs, including economy, religion, and ethnicity as they relate significantly to various constructs discussed in this thesis.

1.3.1.1 Socio-economic situation

Algeria is primarily reliant on the production and export of hydrocarbons (gas and oil). Between 2004 and 2018, they made around 97% of its exports (Safir, 2020). However, the drastic fall in petrol and oil prices on the international market witnessed in 2014 onwards affected the economic stability of the country causing severe poverty. Although Algeria is encouraging domestic production of non-oil and gas industries and is taking measures to reduce its imports, it is characterised of high cost of living. According to Safir (2020), Algeria now is in open crisis and unstable economic system. The latter led to a dire unemployment among (youth) Algerians (13,2% of unemployment rate in 2018) which is considered one of the origins of the social movement (popular revolt) against the authoritarian system *(hirak* in Arabic*,* prominent for "*Yetnahaw Gaa*" expression (*they must all be sacked)* that began in Algeria in mid-February 2019 seeking the establishment of a democratic regime. Such economic reasons are key in determining, for instance, my participants' views of the West as ideal. My findings show that idealisation of the West has often been made in relation to the economic prosperity of the West in comparison to Algeria.

1.3.1.2 Religion, life, and family

Since the Arab conquest of North Africa and the adoption of Islam by the Berbers, Islam has been regarded as one of Algeria's defining characteristics and a key factor of Algerian national unity and identity (Achoui, 2006). However, during French colonisation, Algerians strived to maintain the status of Islam. According to Article 2 of the Algerian Constitution, (Sunni) Islam is the state religion. While 99% of Algerians are Muslims, less than 1% are Christians and Jews (Atlapedia, 2011). There exists also a secular elite (Achoui, 2006). Islam tends to be deeply incorporated within most Algerians' daily lives and practices. Not only in the hearing of the *Adhan* (the call to prayer) five times a day and the watching of people from all classes, ages and genders heading to mosques (especially on Fridays and during the month of Ramadan) to perform prayer, but also in the integration of Islamic education (the holy Quran and the *Sunnah*, doings and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) in educational institutions, including nurseries and Quranic schools as the findings of this research reveal. It is worth noting that many people seem not to distinguish between religious and cultural rituals in Algeria.

Islam and Islamic law also strongly shape the values and principles according to which family and family life are managed, as indicated by Laws about family relationships found in

The Algerian Family Code (*Code de la famille*). Family, in Algeria, is the first place for a religious socialisation (Lakjaa, 2007). The Algerian family's collectivist nature is being challenged by an individualistic and nuclear one as a result of urbanisation, industrialisation, and the rise in the number of women's participation into the workforce, increasing competition and independency, especially in urban regions (Tiliouine and Achoui, 2018).

Such religious life and conceptualisations of family seem to have influenced participants' accounts related to their views of the West as *essentially* 'secular', and 'demon' as should be discussed in later chapters.

1.3.1.3 Population and Ethnicity

According to the Algerian National Office of Statistics, Algeria's population reached an estimate of 45.7 million in 2022. It is characterised by a constant increase and a predominant young population. In 2018, people aged between fifteen and fifty-nine years make up 60.6% of the population. 30.1% of the population represent those aged less than fifteen years and only 9.3% of the population is over sixty (ONS, 2018). The people of Algeria are also mostly characterised by their diversity.

Algerian people are mainly Arabs or Arabised-Berbers, making up around 80% of the population (as the Berbers are considered to be the native inhabitants of Algeria), and Berbers (representing approximately 20% of the population) (Benrabah, 2013). Benrabah (2013) suggested the labels 'Berberophones' and 'Arabophones' rather than the polarised terms 'Arabs/Berbers' arguing that the latter does not so much take a racial sense but rather refers to people raised in places where the Arabic and Berber languages and customs prevail. Berbers or Berberophones comprise ethnic groups *viz.* the Kabyle Berbers (Northwest-Algeria, the Shawi Berbers (East-Algeria), the Touareg (Algerian Sahara), and the Ibadis of the Mzab oasis (non-Sunni Muslims) (Sharkey, 2012). Minorities from European descendants (French, Italian, Spanish, Maltese, and Corsican) represent an estimate of less than 1% (Atlapedia, 2011).

Considering the ethnic diversity of the Algerian population, it is important to note that my participants identify themselves as Arabs, which likely explain their positions regarding a variety of topics such as languages.

Given that this thesis focus includes language and language ideologies (see chapter three), the linguistic background of Algeria is allotted a whole section (section 3.4) in which I will explain how French colonisation contributed to the conflicting status of languages in Algeria, namely Arabic, Algerian Arabic, Berber languages, French and English. I will also examine the policy and ideology of Arabisation in Algeria. I will further discuss how the issue

of language in the Algerian education system is caught between partisanship of individual or group interests. This is important to make sense of how this specific contextual background factor in the construction of the language ideologies revealed in this thesis.

The following sub-section depicts the state of affairs of the early childhood education and care system in Algeria, which has emerged under specific historical, socio-political, and cultural circumstances. This helps in understanding the issue being studied.

1.3.2 Overview of ECEC in the Algerian context

Early childhood education and care in Algeria, as in many other countries and cultures, 'takes place first and foremost within the ambit of the family' (Bouzoubaa and Benghabrit-Remaoun, 2004; Mekki, 2019). However, two other spaces have been identified in this context. First, the street or '*zanka*' has always offered a play area for many children (Mekideche, 1990; Mekideche, 1994; Mekideche, 1996; Benamar, 2010; Mekki, 2019). Second, traditionally, as part of a long-established custom, mosques *Kuttabs*[1] (today Quranic schools) are spaces optional for young children for learning Quranic verses with some elementary reading and writing (National Centre of Research in Social and Cultural Anthropology *CRASC*, 2020). The role of Quranic schools in the Algerian context explains why many Algerian parents are orientated and choose to enrol their children in such settings. This, therefore, highlights the importance of investigating ideologies in Quranic schools.

After independence, Algeria institutionalised compulsory, public and free education to all children from 6 to 16 years old. Early childhood education and care was far away from the government agenda due to limited human and financial resources (Keddar, 1990; Senouci, 1992; National Centre of Research in Social and Cultural Anthropology, *CRASC,* 2020). In 1981, kindergarten (for children aged 5 to 6) was integrated within the public sector with the objective of preparing children for primary education. It was until 1992, a framework was announced to permit the creation of private early childhood care structures including home-based nanny. In 2008, the framework was renewed in accordance with the executive Decree 08-287 to set out the conditions for the establishment and organisation of different early childhood education and care institutions (Mekki, 2019).

Today preschool provision is characterised by an institutional plurality. There is a wide variety of ministerial responsibilities, educational practices, and educators' profiles (National

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[1] In the *kuttabs,* young children memorise a Quranic verse then they write it on '*louha'* after the 'Sheikh' first wrote in using pencil. (*louha* is a traditional wooden board that children use to write on with a special feather quill ink pen and it is cleaned with a special clay).

Centre of Research in Social and Cultural Anthropology, *CRASC,* 2020). Preschool is currently structured under the following institutions:

- − Kindergarten (preparatory class or reception class), public and located in the same building as primary grades, is governed by the Ministry of National Education. It is for children aged five to six and operates for four hours and forty-five minutes a day. These state-funded kindergartens are education-oriented and based on academically focused official programme since 1990 and direct assessment tools.

- − Nursery schools receive under-school-age children. The words *crèche*, *jardin d'enfant* and *rawda* are sometimes used interchangeably in Algeria to include all those settings within the private sector and which are under the superintendence of the Ministry of Social Activity and Solidarity. They are optional and operate for more than eight hours a day. A national survey conducted by the CRSCA team in 2018 indicated that the sector is largely run by women with a BA to MA education level. The survey also indicated that the major objective, according to 79.30% of the 1,669 educators from private and public preschool settings, is to prepare the child for schooling. Generally, children from urban areas and economically and socially advantaged families and backgrounds have better chances of being enrolled in such preschools (CRSCA, 2018). Lately, it is not only working mothers who enrol their children in preschools, but also women with no outside home employment (National Centre of Research in Social and Cultural Anthropology, *CRASC,* 2020).

- − Quranic schools, run by The Religious Affairs Sector, are considered to be more modern than *Kuttabs* and similar to public preschools in their organisation and programmes (National Centre of Research in Social and Cultural Anthropology *CRASC,* 2020).

This institutional diversity countrywide was conducive to a dramatic increase in preschooling rates in Algeria, with the private sector gaining higher rates (National Centre of Research in Social and Cultural Anthropology *CRASC,* 2020). This ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in three different types of childhood reception centres: a Quranic school, a private nursery and a public one. Section 4.4.1 provides details about the selection of the research sites and shows how the choices of these research settings were very much based on *opportunism*.

1.3.2.1 Curriculum and training in Algerian ECEC provision

Several studies have identified the absence of standardised curriculum and mandatory training for educators and managers within the Algerian ECEC system. For instance, Shraytiya (2013) assessed the Algerian ECEC against quality standards and concluded that ECEC provision in Algeria did not meet the minimum quality benchmarks in that it lacks a national programme and training for all staff. Similarly, Benghabrit (2005) noted that the early childhood educator is responsible for organising the educational activities of the nursery. She further emphasised that such freedom in the absence of a general framework and a specific training constitutes a real issue in early childhood education. Additionally, Pisani (2019) underscored the employment of unqualified and non-specialised staff as a weakness in Algerian ECEC. Across a continuum of related investigations, Benyahia and Sahnoune's (2022) study raised concerns about the design quality of ECEC reception centres in Algeria. They found that the current architectural, functional, aesthetic, and environmental conditions are not appropriate to children's needs, noting adverse effects on children's physical, emotional, and educational well-being. Moreover, Zerf (2019) highlighted physical activity garden curriculum as a missing practice in Algerian early childhood educational system.

Indeed, my observations and experience during the conduct of my fieldwork corroborates the absence of a formal curriculum in early childhood education in Algeria, as I discovered during visits to the Directorate of Social Action and Solidarity '*Direction de l'Action Sociale et de la Solidarité* (DASS), which stores documents related to early childhood education in Algeria. Officials confirmed there existed no official policy document or curriculum guiding the ECEC sector in Algeria. Furthermore, available documents such as "*Le cahier de charge*" does not specify mandatory training for managers and educators (for more details, see section, 4.3.2.3).

1.4 Thesis structure

Chapter two 'Review of the literature on ideologies' justifies why Van Dijk's (1998) work is a particularly relevant theoretical framework to approach the concept of ideology in this thesis. It also delineates the concepts surrounding the themes and the findings of this research.

Chapter three 'Language ideologies' critically reviews the notion of language ideologies, reflecting the lens I looked through language and addressing how ideology and language are intertwined. It further presents a critical engagement with relevant literature in the Algerian context related to historical factors, policy, and languages in the education system.

Chapter four 'Research Methodology' elaborates my philosophical and ontological perspective, my research design including justifications of the relevance of the ethnographic approach in exploring the research problem as well as practical procedures and methods of data generation. It also covers a thorough explanation of the modes of access used for gaining entrée to the different sites, gatekeepers, participants, ethical considerations, and the thematic interpretation and analysis of the data. It further explains how this research ensures rigour and trustworthiness, with specific reference to my reflexivity and the roles I had to undertake as an ethnographer.

Chapter five 'The West, ideal or demon!' and **chapter six 'Language ideologies in practice'** are empirical chapters, in which a discussion of the data gathered in this study is provided. These data chapters are presented in a particular order following the flow of the story my thesis tells. Therefore, chapter five starts with tackling two major themes: Idealisation of the West and Demonisation of the West. They were both particularly equally prevalent in the field. Chapter six moves on to report on how those ideologies interrelate with language ideologies and provides insights into how they are enacted in the daily Algerian nursery practices.

The Conclusion chapter provides a summary and discussion of the research findings, demonstrating the contribution, implications, limitations, recommendations for future research and personal reflections.

The Appendices contain relevant materials and documents I used to approach my participants as well as ethnographic descriptions of the three research settings. This facilitates the reader's construction of an image about my research and a better understanding of it.

Chapter Two: Review of the literature on ideologies

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature related to the concept of ideology, which forms the basis for this study. It argues for the need to avoid using ideologies negatively. It equally argues for the necessity to study ideologies and their impact on the daily lives and behaviours of social actors in specific early childhood educational settings.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section tackles the notion of ideology and then it explains the chosen theoretical framework and its usefulness in this study. The second and third sections discuss two major ideologies, namely *West Idealisation* and *Westoxification* as part of the findings of this study and for their relevance to the context of my research.

2.2 Traditional approaches to ideology and the chosen theoretical framework

In this section, I start by briefly reviewing how ideologies were viewed historically. Then I present my argument that it is not their truth value that matters as they are not essentially about what is true or false; it is, rather, about their functions. This section also explains Van Dijk's (1998) theory on ideology and justifies its use as a theoretical concept. It comprises sub-sections dealing with the nature, organisation, and structure of ideologies, a socio-analysis of ideologies, the social practices and discourse.

The definition of ideology has proved elusive, vague, controversial, and contested. At first, it was characterised with the "science of ideas" (Destutt de Tracy). It, however, acquired its pejorative usage, which is usually attributed to Marx and Engels (and their proponents, like Lukacs, Gramsci, and Althusser). This negative connotation connects ideologies to systems of the dominant ideas of the ruling class and to the wrong, false, distorted, or misguided beliefs of the working class. Later, less pejorative notions of ideology have been developed by the Non- Marxists (Durkheim and Mannheim).

Traditional approaches (Marxist or non-Marxist) generally limit definitions of ideology to notions of 'class, dominant groups, social movements, power, the political economy, [… or after to] gender and culture' (Van Dijk, 1998, p. viii). Succinctly, in most classical work, ideologies are '(a) false beliefs; (b) ideologies conceal real social relations and serve to deceive others; (c) ideologies are beliefs others have; and (d) ideologies presuppose the

socially or politically self-serving nature of the definition of truth and falsity' (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 2). However, that tradition has been challenged based on the argument that accounts for 'ideologies of opposition or resistance, or ideologies of competition between equally powerful groups, or ideologies that only promote the internal cohesion of a group, or ideologies about the survival of humankind' (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 11).

Accordingly, I view ideologies in a non-pejorative sense, while acknowledging the fact that they might implicate negative subtexts. In this vein, Clifford Geertz (1973, in Woolard, 1998) asserts that negative uses of ideologies must be eschewed in social science. The latter should concern itself with the way ideologies mediate meanings for social purposes rather than their truth value. Put differently, I concur they are not entirely negative, and not necessarily bound to conceptions of 'false consciousness' nor to social structures of domination. This is not, however, to suggest that the socio-economic, institutional, cultural, and political structures of ideology are less important. Earlier studies of ideology were indeed substantial but based (only) in the social sciences. They commonly restrict conceptions of ideologies in terms of truth and falsehood. They were essentially philosophical rather than theoretical, and they failed to account for the socio-cognitive and the discursive dimensions of ideologies. It is these limitations that led me to consider Van Dijk's (1998) theory. In what follows, I will cover the usefulness of the chosen theoretical framework for my approach to ideology and justify its resonance with my study.

In this study, I draw on the work of Teun, A. Van Dijk (1998) to make my argument that what is taught and not taught in preschool institutions is largely ideological and that these institutions play an instrumental role in the acquisition, expression, use and reproduction of ideologies. With a focus on understanding the ways in which ideologies relate to social practices and to discourse, and how ideologies are constructed and reproduced, I employed Van Dijk's (1998) theory as it convincingly establishes these various mutual relations. Van Dijk's emphasis not only on the social aspects but also the cognitive and discursive representations of ideology is especially useful to my analysis as it allows me to 'both describe and explain in detail how *exactly* members of specific groups [early childhood educators] speak, write and act ideologically' (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 130). To this end, Van Dijk's (1998) distinction between ideologies and other (systems of) 'ideas', i.e., mental representations like values, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and between personal beliefs and social belief systems (social representations) is generative for grasping how they are different but very much related. This helped me in identifying what is to be considered an ideology and what is not. It is here also that Van Dijk's attention to the manifestations of ideology is of value for informing how ideologies are constructed and transmitted through discourse, everyday uses, and other

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social practices. Having said that, my decisions about what would be classified within the category of ideology was made with respect to Van Dijk's (1998) classification and description of what ideologies are and are not. To this end, Van Dijk's (1998) approach for theorising ideology was pertinent to delineate my categorisation of the various occurrences that emerged in my research.

Van Dijk (1998) developed a multidisciplinary notion and theory of ideology that serves as the interface between the cognitive, social, and discursive dimensions. His framework for theorising ideology integrates three central components: psychology, the social sciences, and discourse studies, emphasising how the concepts of social cognition, society and discourse are multiply related in extremely complex ways. First, Van Dijk (1998) argues that social cognition is needed to study the mental functions of ideologies, and their status as well as their internal organisation. Second, ideologies can entirely be understood exclusively in terms of their societal conditions, structures, and functions, which are clearly not only cognitive but essentially social, political, cultural and historical. And third, socially situated discourse and communication is required largely for the expression, formation, change and reproduction of ideologies. More precisely, social cognition provides the necessary interface between the personal uses of ideologies and their social dimension. Language users' discourse is hard to explain without cognitively analysing the minds of such language users, and particularly how their minds shape and are shaped by discourse and other social practices in context. However, cognitive science hardly concerns itself with social issues or ideologies and their social representations, development, uses and language-use processes. Therefore, discourse should be directly linked to the personal and social mind' structures and strategies, in addition to those of social situations, social interactions and societal structures. Similarly, cognition should be related to both discourse and society, providing the interface through which social structure can be clearly related to discourse structure. Throughout this section, thus, I will examine the nature, the structures, and the functions as well as the (re) production of ideologies.

2.2.1 The nature, organisation, and structure of ideologies

The socio-cognitive analysis of ideology is what first characterises Van Dijk's approach. It initially entails the integration of a special kind of socially shared mental representations and the processes of their use in social contexts. The very association of ideologies with system of ideas and belief systems is, as such, an emphasis that they are definitely positioned in people's minds, and they are thus properties of the mind. The latter, Van Dijk argues, is social and ideologies' location should be in the social mind. Cognitive representations (e.g., beliefs or ideas) are not only personal or mental, nor they are limited to the individual mind but instead

'distributed' among 'many minds'. Ideologies hence cannot simply be identified with systems of beliefs given the several types of beliefs that are not ideological. Ideologies, in Van Dijk's specification/definition, are the general abstract and shared social beliefs of a group. Their prime cognitive function is to organise the more specific social beliefs or representations of a group (knowledge, opinions, and attitudes). They also monitor personal beliefs.

Van Dijk (1998) put forward a fundamental ideology-schema constituting the internal organisation and components of ideologies. In other words, ideologies are organised by particular social categories or criteria that form the following structure of ideologies:

- (Group) membership: entails roughly inherent features like nation and origin, ethnicity, religion, gender, language, class, or age. Put differently, the basic questions of who we are, where we are from, our appearance, who belongs to or can join our group delineate the criterion of membership, which may also be a source of pride and pleasure.
- (Shared) activities: include questions like what we are expected to do and why we are here.
- Goals: involve what we want to realise and why.
- Values/norms: relate to what our main values are, what we should (not) do and how we evaluate ourselves and others.
- Societal position and relations to other groups: refer to a specific social position of a group (what they stand for) in relation to other social groups. It identifies the enemies or opponents of the group, who are like them, and who are different to them? Hence, it is also a representation of group (ideological) polarisation (Us versus Them, superiors versus subordinates) as social groups.
- Resources: stand for the group's access or lack of access to the necessary social (material or symbolic) resources.

However, the schema seems incomplete, tentative, and simplistic. It hardly represents all kinds of ideologies, especially complex ones that might require more schema than a simple structure. Although it contributes to the acquisition, changes, and uses of ideologies, it fails to explain how such acquisition, changes, and uses as well as manifestations and reproduction of ideologies come about in social practices. Notwithstanding, the discourses and the social practices that seemingly express my participants' ideological beliefs appear to be organised according to Van Dijk's ideological schema (an account of how these categories formed the basis of what I considered ideological is further detailed in chapters five and six). It, thus, organises the cognitions and the basic beliefs of social groups and their members. That is,

ideologies (like language systems or grammar rules) have both mental and social dimensions; neither one needs to be reduced to the other.

The above structural analysis of ideology is said to be abstract and context-free, and accounts only for what social actors know. A more strategic approach that accounts for what social actors are actually doing in concrete situations will hence be dealt with next. More specifically, since both approaches are definitely complementary, in addition to the cognitive functions of ideologies, a focus on their equally essential social functions is the concern of the following part.

2.2.2 Social functions of ideologies

The social analysis of ideology brings us first to the discussion of the various social functions of ideologies. To be sure, ideologies serve multifaceted roles in society. They can both divide and unify, challenge and legitimate power structures, shape social norms and collective identities.

Almost all definitions of ideologies highlight their 'prime' negative functions in society, including the legitimation of power and inequality, as well as the manipulation and concealment of truth and reality and other related notions. According to Weber (1978), ideologies justify the authority of dominant groups and institutions, therefore serving to legitimise power structures, whether cultural, political, or economic. Along the same lines, Adorno (1950) and Marcuse (2013) contend that ideologies can conceal oppression and exploitation, thereby veiling ruling elites' interests under *false consciousness*. Similarly, Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony clarifies how ideologies function as tools of social control, allowing the dominant class to preserve its supremacy voluntarily rather than by force. In other words, hegemonic ideologies exert influence across all aspects of society, shaping institutions, norms, and values that uphold the existing social order (ibid.).

Ideologies contrastingly also serve positive functions, argues Van Dijk (1998). They represent social problems and contradictions. They are a means for resistance, challenge, dissidence, and change. In this light, they oppose power abuse, domination, and inequality, and hence they empower dominated groups. Moreover, they create solidarity, organise struggle and conflict (ibid.). Furthermore, ideologies maintain social cohesion by developing a sense of collective identity among individuals sharing similar values and beliefs. In this sense, ideologies unite people through discourse, symbols, and rituals, strengthening group solidarity and common goals. By way of example, the concept of 'imagined communities' introduced by Anderson's (2020) illustrates how ideologies, particularly nationalism, foster a sense of belonging among diverse populations within nation-states.

Regardless of the type of function they perform, ideologies are useful on both positive and negative aspects. They are indeed needed to protect group interests and resources. Generally, the basic social function of ideologies is simply serving in organising and managing the social practices and actions as well as the whole daily social life of groups and their members, and ultimately realising their goals. They are also useful for the collective management of group relations inclusive of those of competition and co-operation. All such functions are social, serving groups rather than individuals solely (Van Dijk, 1998). Those prime social functions of ideologies are mostly discursive, and they are all closely connected to specific properties of groups.

The ideology schema discussed earlier does not only represent the cognitive structures of ideologies. However, the formats are also essentially the representations of the social conditions for the (re)construction (existence and reproduction) of social groups and their ideologies. This accentuates the mutual constitution of the social and cognitive dimensions of groups. Hence, the cognitive and the social are indeed inextricably interwoven. Although an explicit boundary between social groups and other collectivities of people is ill-defined, not any collectivities of people constitute social groups and develop shared ideologies; but only those that meet the set of the basic permanent properties of social groups, namely membership, activities, goals, values/ norms, social position and relations to other groups, and resources. That is, those criteria identify and characterise social groups and their members. They, jointly, also define the social or collective groups' identity and their interests (the 'self-schema' or 'social self' as a Group). In Van Dijk's words (1998, p. 118), 'whenever a group has developed an ideology, such an ideology at the same time also defines the basis for the group's identity'. A more or less continuity (beyond one event), permanence, organisation, institutionalisation, and reproduction are also criteria for groupness.

Ideologies are social by definition as they are socially shared by members of a social group. However, this is not to say that all individual social members have identical copies of the socially shared ideologies. Incontestably, there is no specifically personal or individual ideology, but each member of a society/group might be considered as the bearer or have a 'personal version' of the shared social belief or ideology. In van Dijk's terms (1998), ideologies are individual only in their personal, contextual uses, and applications by autonomous individual social actors. This means that these social actors in principle control their opinion formation and change to a great extent regardless of their group membership or the significant influence of social representations. Despite the fact that ideologies presuppose coherence and a relative stability (at the group level) as they are criteria for their continuity and reproduction, such personal uses by group members may vary in specific situations and contexts due to various factors. For instance, the interplay of a mixture of existing ideologies,

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attitudes, knowledge, current goals, and the many social group memberships and personal experiences and interests of the social actors. In other words, group members can share a mixture of ideologies due to various social positions they occupy, which can be a factor to the multiplicity of their identities. That is to say, ideological influence may or may not yield the desired results. This does not mean that individual social members cannot act as group members, they in fact, generally act in the interest of the group as a whole (ibid.).

The socio-cognitive and social analysis of ideologies still seems abstract and lacks empirical grounds. Hence, to understand further how ideologies work and what they look like in reality, a thorough examination of their discursive manifestations is needed.

2.2.3 The production/ reproduction of ideologies

The development and reproduction of ideologies is 'a social, two-way process, in which [both] top-down leadership and influence is closely tied to bottom-up influence, experience and action' (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 175). This means that one or a few individual thinkers, writers, scholars, journalists, revolutionaries, politicians, or other elites are generally said to be ideological leaders who have initially invented specific ideas. They hold a special role in preformulating and stimulating ideological debate, and hence in the formulation and reproduction of ideologies due to their special access to, and control over public discourse. However, only if such ideas are essentially socially shared, they can develop into and constitute an ideology. One of the most important conditions for the success of such social sharing and ideological influence or reproduction process is the recruitment of group members who can identify with the group and its ideology. Those specific properties of social groups and their interests and practices discussed above must also be applicable to them and to their everyday experiences. Other situations, however, include when social members do not have other options for their opinions and actions than the suggested ideological models, or when they are manipulated to believe (misguided) information even when that is not consistent with their best interests.

Van Dijk points out that ideologies are not contextualised as they can be used in different social contexts. However, they are obviously context-sensitive because context controls discourse production through language users' subjective mental or context models, which ensure the social appropriateness of discourses in the social situation. That is, the social context and mental representations also have a role in ideological influence and reproduction in addition to discourse structures. On the other hand, ideologies may be subject to a dynamic nature and formation, but it requires time for them to change as change itself entails public persuasive ideological discourse. A point in case is the ideology of democracy. Even though it is the dominant ideology in many countries, it is not exactly the same in each country. For

instance, the democratic system in the United States supports the right of citizens to bear arms while the democratic system in Britain restricts gun ownership. This is a demonstration that ideologies may be drawn upon a generic model of some sort, but they can be subject to change in relation to the beliefs of the society and thus, they reflect the cultures and societies uniquely wherein they exist.

Ideological discourse production is a complicated cognitive and social process in which discourse structures map mental models. The very notion of production indicates that such systems do not involve only application, implementation, or passive use but also constitution and reconstitution, as well as a gradual development, by contextual uses of social actors. The concept of reproduction of ideology, on the one hand, implicates continuity, persistence, endurance, and a state of remaining, and lasting. On the other hand, it suggests an active human aspect and agency as it involves people's creation and what they do or bring about. The prefix 're' denotes that the production process is being repeated daily. Ideologies are, thus, like languages are reproduced daily by many individuals by means of their everyday use. Although ideological models and social representations are explicitly manipulated, ideological reproduction may occur indirectly without the speakers' realisation or intention on account of the normal and habitual processes of discourse production and as part of 'normalised' and accepted 'common sense'. Indeed, racists usually deny that they are so.

To reiterate, discourse constitutes a crucial aspect of social practices. Therefore, it is requisite in the study of ideology as it explicitly 'articulates' ideologies. The next subsection highlights the concept of discourse and explores the ways in which ideologies are *manifested* and lived by social actors in concrete social situations and everyday social practices.

2.2.3.1 Discourse

The concept of discourse is as vague notion as 'culture', 'society', and 'language'. It is perceived differently by different scholars.

While Fairclough (2012) contends that the role of discourse lies in its ability to depict social life through diverse representations, Van Dijk (1993) ascribes to discourse the role of meaning construction. Discourse, according to Van Dijk (1993), refers to a spoken or a written verbal product of highly complicated communicative events. It involves at least several social actors, who are members of groups and cultures, interacting in a specific setting (time, place, circumstances) and based upon other contextual factors. Examples include a chat with friends over lunch, a doctor-patient dialogue, or reading/ writing a newspaper's piece (ibid.). Van Dijk (1998) also accounts for the semantic analysis of various types of meaning as well as the levels, structures, units, strategies and functions of text and talk. He explains how discourse

structures (e.g., forms, expressions, schemata) 'may express underlying ideological contents and structures, such as phonological, graphical, syntactic, lexical, stylistic, rhetorical, schematic 'e.g., argumentative, narrative', pragmatic and conversational structures' (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 317). He defines discourses as 'forms of social action and interaction, situated in social contexts' (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 6). Discourse, hence, is seen by Van Dijk as a means of (re) production of ideologies. Van Dijk (1993) further examines discourse as a form of social practice that mirrors and influences social reality. His perspective involves the analysis of linguistic features and rhetorical strategies utilised in different discourses to legitimise dominant ideologies and marginalise subordinate groups (2000). He also stresses the significance of uncovering concealed power dynamics and advancing social justice through critical linguistic analysis (ibid.).

Stuart Hall, a prominent figure whose works serve as a reference to many pieces of research attempting to delineate the concept of ideology and discourse, had a similar but different view to that of Van Dijk. He explains that,

> By ideology I mean the mental frameworks — the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation — which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, figure out and render intelligible the way society works
>
> (Hall, 1996, p. 26, in Van Dijk 1998).

This means that, Hall (1992) defines discourse in the same way ideologies function in the production of knowledge that serves the interests of a certain class or group. According to Hall (1992), although discourses are irreducible to class-interests and evade truth/falsehood issues in ideology, they at all times entail and operate in relation to power. His arguments are based on the ground that it is power, and not the facts about reality, that produces knowledge or 'makes things true'. Therefore, for discourses, it is their effectiveness in practice that matters the most.

In line with Van Dijk (1993; 1998; 2000), the present research addresses discourse not solely as a medium linked with ideologies, but also as a mechanism through which ideologies are produced and maintained. In what follows, I will discuss the production and functions of such ideological discourse.

2.2.3.2 The role of discourse in the production/reproduction of ideologies

In the interrelationship between ideology, social practices and discourse, Van Dijk (1998) put a special emphasis on discourse based on the arguments that ideologies and their socially shared mental representations, he argues, are socially acquired, constructed, shared, used, and changed by members of groups in complex social situations. They indirectly control social practices in general, and discourse structures in particular by way of information exchange, i.e., through perception, interaction, communication, and discourse or through the expression or enactment of ideologies in symbols, rituals, or other social and cultural practices. They particularly influence and shape how individual social members of specific groups speak, write (their actual, situated text and talk) and act ideologically. Reciprocally, hence, ideologies are usually (re)produced by social practices, and mainly by discourse through their everyday uses by social members. Van Dijk (1998) continues to argue that discourse has undoubtedly a special and the most crucial function, among other social practices, in the explicit creation and formation, expression, formulation, (re)construction of ideologies in society.

However, he acknowledges that ideologies cannot be reduced to or identified with discourse; otherwise, it would not be possible to explicate how ideologies can have an impact on other social practices. 'An analytical distinction should be made between ideologies as general, abstract, socio-cognitive (mental) representations shared by a group, on the one hand, and the specific, personal, interactional, contextualised uses of the ideology in specific social situations by individual social members, on the other hand' (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 317). Therefore, discourse is neither an essential nor a sufficient means of ideological reproduction. As a matter of fact, ideologies are not expressed and reproduced only by text and talk. Clearly, many other non-verbal forms or social and semiotic practices (such as photographs, pictures, images, signs, paintings, movies, gestures, dance) are also likely to exhibit ideological beliefs and underlying ideologies, as demonstrated in the next chapters (section 5.3.1).

Distinguishably, several properties of text and talk, as well as natural and different sign languages, actually enable social members to express, formulate, and articulate general abstract ideological beliefs, meanings, knowledge, socially shared opinions, and many other social beliefs related to such ideologies more explicitly and directly than most other semiotic codes or social practices and specific actions which only warrant indeterminate inferences and indirect expressions of ideologies according to Van Dijk (1998). This does not necessarily mean, in communication, such approximate interpretations are less persuasive. The concreteness of the 'example' is what strictly leads to persuasiveness. Conversely, visual messages may sometimes be a far more effective way of opinion expression than through words. As Van Dijk (1998, p.192) put it, 'if an image is worth a thousand words, this is mostly

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because of the visual details that are hard to describe verbally'. Indeed, the methods employed in the collection of data for this study accentuate the fact that visuals are, plausibly, especially well-suited to conveying the visual dimension of mental models. And that will be further detailed in the research methodology and data chapters.

Overall, Van Dijk characterised the social reproduction of ideologies in the following dimensions/ criteria that at the same time constitute ideological discourses functions:

- **System-Action:** (top-down) language use, text, talk and communication (discourse or more broadly other semiotic practices) are essential for the display of group knowledge, and for the application, use, articulation, and implementation of general, abstract ideological beliefs in concrete daily social practices. Here, a discourse strategy is often implemented. It typically attributes ideologies to the opponent groups rather than to one's own (ours is the 'truth', theirs is the ideology). This explains the positive self-presentation or properties of the ingroups and the negative other-presentation or properties of the outgroups.

- **Action-System:** (bottom-up) those socially shared systems are sustained, confirmed, continued, and changed, constructed, as well as constituted by group members.

- **Group-Members:** The continuous reproduction of ideologies takes place owing to the fact that new social members adopt, acquire or learn the socially shared representations of the group through ideological communication. In other words, other (well versed in) group members initiate, convey, inculcate, or teach ideologies to novices through socialisation, persuasion, or manipulation.

- **Members-Group:** group members accept and comply with the ideology of the group as part of membership and allegiance, and some others resist or dissent it or its elites. This involves argumentation, challenge, and ideological conflict.

- **Local-Global:** this involves the formation and construction of ideology by comparing and normalising values and evaluation criteria of the social practices through decontextualising and extending specific experiences and opinions to similar or abstract contexts. This inevitably implies (over) generalisation, stereotyping, and prejudice.

Organisation or institutionalisation (socialization) is usually a requirement for the reproduction of ideologies. Ideological organisations and institutions such as those of politics, the mass media and education play a major ideological role in the implementation and reproduction of group ideologies. They are in charge of organising, managing and propagating cognitions, actions, interactions and group relations. For instance, the production of news, advertisement, documentaries, films and literature, games, talk shows and other shows and

media genres, organise discourses, sounds and images in a way that ideological production and reproduction are successful for such a media-based ideological control of society.

In summary, Van Dijk's (1998) theory of ideology has crucial cognitive and equally important social components. It advocates that ideology and discourse are both cognitive and social constructs. It has been argued that the three dimensions of ideology are all needed. Ignoring any dimensions of the theory and focusing merely on societal structures is plausibly an inappropriate reduction of complex social processes and explains not how they are interrelated and hence provides an incomplete picture of ideologies and subsequently an inadequate theory.

Van Dijk's (1998) theory allowed me to position my approach to the concept of ideology. It offered a theoretical and conceptual groundwork; however, it remains mainly theoretical. Some questions are left open than answered in Van Dijk's work, which makes his theory of ideology incomplete. For instance, much empirical research will be required to explain 'under what conditions groups develop ideologies', 'how some groups use (and abuse) discourse in very specific ways', 'what kind of ideological discourse is typical for what groups, what are its properties, and how is it in turn socially and institutionally embedded?', and 'how are ideologies discursively expressed and reproduced in such important social domains as politics, the media and education?' (Van Dijk, 1998, pp. 319-320). My study, hence, provides empirical and practical implications to Van Dijk's approach as I empirically studied ideological *manifestations* at the levels of organisational and institutional dimensions of ideologies as well as in social interaction and discourse. It hopes to have answered some of those open questions for a better understanding of ideologies.

The next two sections cover two contradictory ideological constructs that emerged as part of the current study's data collection and analysis.

2.3 Idealisation of the West

This part discusses the ideology of West idealisation and seeks to explain its relation to other notions that relate to my participants' ideological positions. It particularly seeks to demonstrate how idealisation of the west as an ideological construct works. However, before addressing the idealisation issue, it is crucial to clarify the meaning of the term 'West' as it was constantly referred to by my participants (see chapter five).

2.3.1 The notion of the West

It should first be noted that the idea of 'the West' represents complex meanings that change over time. There is no simple or single meaning associated with it (Hall, 1992). According to

Bonnett (2004, in Ali, 2016) the name West was not present until the nineteenth and early twentieth century when it acquired a role and range of meanings.

Hall (1992) discussed the development of the 'discourse' of 'the West and the Rest'. He emphasised that the concept of 'the West' is a linguistic and historical construct, and not a geographical construct in the sense that the physical location of a country is not a criterion for it to be considered Western or non-Western. Jalal Ali (1984) also contends that the concepts 'East' and 'West' are economic and no longer geographical or political concepts. On the other hand, Dabashi (2008, p. 500, in Ali, 2016) identifies the binary 'Islam and the West' as both cultural constructs. He believes that the two 'feed on the universal need to create a 'Self', as an 'Other' is being simultaneously given birth to. As 'The West' created 'the Orient' to complete its 'Self'-imagination, Muslims … invented 'The West' for precisely the same purpose'. Regardless of the several stated views, I agree with (Ali, 2016) that the 'West' as a concept is the by-product of the European colonialism.

Hall (1992) further argues that the notion of the West functions in the same way ideology does. That is, it generates a particular form of knowledge and attitudes and also have real effects in that it leads people to think and speak of certain things in certain ways. Indeed, it is a system of representation on the ground that it works together with other structures of thought forming a set and not per se. By way of example, the West is associated with 'a society that is developed, industrialized, urbanized, capitalist, secular, and modern', good, and desirable; as opposed to the 'non-western' (non-industrial, rural, agricultural, under-developed, bad, and undesirable) (Hall, 1992, pp. 186-188). Therefore, the very term 'the west' compares, evaluates, characterises, and classifies societies, cultures, peoples, and places into different essentialised categories and set of images. Having said that, however, it does not essentially depict a unified or homogenous one place. Internal differences within and between different western nations and cultures have always of course been existent.

Hall (1992) stated that partially it is the ideas that are held by the 'Rest' about the West along 'stereotyping', contributed to the formation of the dualism 'West-Rest' and other ideological implications it carries with it, which includes idealisation of the West.

2.3.2   The idealised West

Research on idealisation of the West has not received enough attention in the field of education in general and early childhood education in particular in spite of the fact that it is an immense issue.

I consider Idealisation of the West an ideological construct which could be deeply rooted not only within Algerian society but within many other societies around the world, in accordance with Hall's (1992) delineation of this ideology and Van Dijk's (1998) categorisation and theory of ideology that emphasised both the mental or cognitive construction and social sharing of ideologies. Furthermore, as the fifth data chapter demonstrates, the data analysis provides descriptions and instances of how idealisation of the West was enacted in different Algerian nurseries.

The concept of Idealisation of the West has been typically approached in relation to other prevalent notions like westernisation (Von Laue[2] (1987), globalisation, universality, capitalisation, and the like.

By way of example, Mehmet (1996) addresses the idea of 'Westernising the third world' and connected it to universality. He calls into question the assumption about the scientific attributes of Western economics. His argument rejects the universality and uniqueness of the experience of capitalism in the west. He argues that Western idealism entails Eurocentricity which denies non-Western societies' cultural diversity by viewing it as irrational and seeks to substitute it with Western- imported ethics of the marketplace. It, instead, attempts to rationalise Western cultural specificity and Western individualism. He exemplified such Eurocentricity in the non-acknowledgement of Ibn' Khaldun's work. Mehmet (1996) further attributes the perceived supremacy and superiority of the West to the idealisation of everything Western, especially Western arts and sciences including social sciences, and the perception of 'others' as inferior, continuously striving to 'catch-up' to the west. However, it seems that what Mehmet's (1996) referred to as 'Western idealism' revolves around the West's 'projection of its own idealised self-superiority', rather than to how I am using it in my research as the non-West's idealisation of the West itself.

A relatively recent study of Ugbam, Chukwu, and Ogbo (2014) examined the impact of globalisation on African/ Nigerian culture. Their findings suggest that *most* Africans struggle with an 'inferiority complex' which is conducive to the belief that western culture or way of life is in every way better than and superior to their own. This, they asserted, makes them willing to embrace everything Western while rejecting everything African. It should be noted, however, that their study absolutely made no mention to the concept of west idealisation, they

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[2] Von Laue's (1987) book which was very much historical and philosophical could be said to have failed to provide a clear definition of Westernisation. The latter has been referred to in his book by many things. Moreover, it seems that the term has been sometimes used interchangeably with the notion of modernisation and other related meanings.

broadly touch on cultural homogenisation and Americanisation, which further indicates the scarcity of research on West idealisation.

On the other hand, Simić (2016) studies the idealisation of the West in the context of Serbia in relation to literary forms and popular culture. His findings suggest that there is an ideological divide among Serbian people: between those who lean towards the West in terms of culture and politics and those who have a strong internal orientation towards their nation and its traditions. He perceives such an ideological conflict as 'cultural dissonance'. The study's main issue, however, is that the concepts of ideologies and culture were approached with a certain degree of rigidity. Simić (2016) seems to address those concepts based upon his personal understanding of a collective and communal Serbian culture contrasted with a Western culture rather than his participants' perceptions.

A study in the Algerian context took place in a department of English at an Algerian university (Hiouani, 2020). It revealed many levels of participants idealising the West, among those were education and critical thinking, living conditions and ethics. Hiouani (2020) categorised her participants' views and behaviours into pro- and anti-Western poles which according to her they underpin forms of superiority and inferiority to the West that are themselves grounded in what she labels 'compartmentalisation' ideology. She further argues that the ideology of 'native speakerism' (participants idealising the English language of what they call native speakers) and 'West idealism' are bound to perceptions of inferiority to the West. Although the setting, aim and focus of her study is different, Hiouani (2020)' 'west idealism' indicates how such an ideological position is widespread not only in Higher Education among EFL students and teachers but (as my research suggests) also in nurseries among early childhood educators and the wider Algerian setting. That is actually another evidence of how the ideology of idealisation of the West is predominant in the whole Algerian context.

Contrastingly, ideas of the West and its goods and culture as ideal carries with it, according to the current study, a fear and depiction of the West as a threat to the East (as I shall refer to as West demonisation in subsequent chapters). Even though the ideology of idealisation of the West and West demonisation overlap as they are strictly related to each other, a key difference between the two appears to be that the first one relates to the way the non-west idealises Western culture and many other aspects of life. West demonisation ideology, on the other hand, entails idealisation of the West and it can be thought of as the consequence of West idealisation. The next part explains Jalal Ali Ahmad (1962)'s notion of 'Westoxification' or the infiltration of *Westoxifying* illness (I decided to call it West demonisation in this study to eschew any misinterpretation) and how this pertains to this research.

2.4 Westoxification

'West demonisation' summarises my participants' depictions of the West as a threat to the Muslim generation and their education. This finding is echoed in the Iranian social and political thinker Jalal Ali Ahmad's (1962) theory and concept of the problematic Persian term *Gharbzadegi*. The latter was initially coined by Ahmad Fardid. Jalal Ali adopted and used it as the original title of his work. His book was first banned by the authorities, but it has later been translated to 'Occidentosis: a plague from the West' (1984).

Many labels have been suggested as English translations of *Gharbzadegi*. The most literal translation could be 'weststruckness' in the sense that *gharb* (Arabic word for the West) has similar etymological roots to the word *gharib*, its meaning is associated with strangeness, foreignness, and the unknown, 'signaling simultaneously a discomfort with awe of the West'. In turn, the suffix *zadegi* means being struck with disease, pathogen, or toxin (Deylami, 2011, p. 246). Other translations include: 'Occidentosis', 'Westoxification', 'Westoxication', 'Westernization', 'Westafflictedness', 'Westamination', 'Westernitis', and 'Blighted by the West'. Commenting on Jalal Ali's work, Crynes (2019) asserted that *Gharbzadegi* (Westoxification) represents a vital framework that is still valid, not only within Iran but also in context of broader discourse on the developing nations for a better understanding of the dynamics of today's world. However, Jalal Ali's ideas have sometimes been misinterpreted, twisted, and obscured (Crynes, 2019).

Jalal Ali raised concern over western intrusion into his country's Islamic life and the fear that Iran was being intoxicated by the West. Westoxification conveys his critique of the economics, values, and culture that the 'western machine', as he calls it, propagates. It also expresses his disapproval of the imitation of the West along with the invasive and coercive aspects of its influence upon Iran's politics, economics, society, religion, and culture causing harm and total chaos.

According to Jalal Ali, the West's possession of what he called 'mechanosis' (i.e., the machines), technology, and modern science strengthens its power, domination, and control over Iran. That is to say, the West imposes its 'capitalist machinery' upon Iran in order not to simply extract and exploit resources, mainly oil, but also to produce needs and desires (a system of consumption) that the nation itself can never fulfil. That is in order for Iranians to turn to the West for all kinds of goods as well as information which are alien to the Muslim and Iranian qualities and way of life. For that, Jalal Ali (1984, p. 63) stated,

> To follow the West—the Western states and the oil companies—is the
> supreme manifestation of occidentosis [Westoxification] in our time.
> This is how Western industry plunders us, how it rules us, how it holds
> our destiny. Once you have given economic and political control of

your country to foreign concerns, they know what to sell you, or at least what not to sell you. Because they naturally seek to sell you their manufactures in perpetuity, it is best that you remain forever in need of them, and God save the oil reserves. They take away the oil and give you whatever you want in return—from soup to nuts, even grain. This enforced trade even extends to cultural matters, to letters, to discourse. Go flip through our half-dozen so-called heavy literary publications. What news do you see of our part of the world? Of the east in the broadest terms? Of India, Japan, China? All you see is news of the Nobel Prize, of the new pope, of Frangoise Sagan, the Cannes Film Festival, the latest Broadway play, the latest Hollywood film. This is not to mention the illustrated weeklies, which are quite notorious. If we aren't to call this occidentosis, what are we to call it?

For Jalal Ali (1984), Westoxification was more than just an economic disease but a cultural destruction that renders indigenous Islamic/Iranian culture a buyable good void of historical and geographical meaning. It consequently makes it unsustainable. He identified such cultural Westoxification in education, media, dress, and architecture. Such machine system, based on consumerism theory and consumptive impulses, produces individuals whose desire becomes resembling more and more Westerners (ibid.). Jalal Ali (1984) further argues that it is the Westoxified subjects (Iranians/Muslims) themselves perpetuate Westoxification through western mimicry. Westoxification, thus, 'embroils its subjects into identifying with it so that the enthralling effects are no longer products of the West but the products of ourselves and of our own desires' (Deylami, 2011, p. 246). Put simply, the West indoctrinate the East by first indicating the 'insufficiencies' of Eastern culture and then introducing goods that eases life. 'They range from imported food to 'brilliantine' that makes Middle Eastern hair less unruly and more polished, just like their western counterparts' (Deylami, 2011, p. 255). Therefore, consumerism, according to Jalal Ali (1984), necessitated the replacement of traditional culture and cultural heritage and conformity of Muslims, their governments, economics, cultures, society, and their daily lives to the machine order.

Jalal Ali (1984) has been criticised for merely condemning the hegemonic cultural and economic apparatuses. Critics in favour of the structures of Western power have often interpreted anti-imperialist movements and Jalal Ali's (1984) criticisms of the West as mere expressions of anti-modernism and anti-globalisation, and as nativistic dispositions or nationalistic orientations. I argue that that is a misreading of Jalal Ali's notion of Westoxification. On the contrary, he actually warns Iranians and the Islamic East against continuing to be only passive consumers of the machines or completely submitting to the West

(the juggernaut of the twentieth century, in his terms) to regain their economic and cultural independence. Deylami (2011, p. 259) interpreted his solutions to combat mechanosis through 'acknowledg[ing] history, adopt[ing] a spirit of intellectual rigueur, and advocat[ing] self-representation in the face of Westernization'. This requires access to, consciousness, engagement and familiarity with the tools and processes of the machine order of capitalism but at the same time revising, adapting, and configuring it, i.e., borrowing, transforming, and discarding. Jalal Ali (1984) advocated for neither a complete rejection nor a full acceptance and embracement of Western global modernity. He declares that Islam is the vehicle to constructively respond to Westoxification. In other words, he suggested refashioning the global imaginary through critically responding to new cultural and global changes and trends yet relying on owns culture.

Using the work of Jalal Ali that promotes national authenticity and shows how Islamic political thinking is dynamic, Deylami (2011) disproved assertions that Western civilisation is superior and called for a separation of globalisation and modernity from Westernization. She refutes the view that globalisation and modernity are exclusively a Western activity. Such constructions, she believes, generate a wrong dichotomy between globalisation and cultural autonomy. They depict Western culture as modern and global, evolutional, and penetrating, while the East as stagnant, closed-off and inflexible. Thus, Westernization and modernity, anti-Westernism and anti-modernity should not be conflated. Through her arguments, Deylami (2011) challenged the binary understanding of Islam and modernity. She illustrated that Westoxification and anti-western sentiments are not just a resistance to the flux of globalisation and modernisation. They are instead attempts to reinvent, reinterpret, and develop a novel, fresh and alternative conceptions of modernity or modern globalisation in the Islamic world (healthy modernisation).

While it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss notions of modernity, I find that Jalal Ali's concept and theory of Westoxification important to explain the interplay between Westoxification and West idealisation and how they impact language ideologies and practices. I argue that his ideas about the West and East and consumerism are valid, but they lack many important elements like language. Therefore, I complete his theory through an in-depth study of language ideologies which the next chapters will look at in more detail.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have delineated the theoretical framework I relied on to approach the concept of ideology, which is that of Van Dijk (1998). I have discussed two major ideologies in accordance with the findings of this study. West idealisation and Westoxification, although differing strikingly, have had an important impact on the daily practices in nurseries as my

findings suggest. The next chapter will explain the complex interplay between ideology and language in addition to how language ideologies impact on language practices within these educational settings.

Chapter three: Language ideologies

3.1 Introduction

Language ideologies factor heavily into my analysis of the daily practices at nurseries. This chapter first starts with discussing how I approach language in this research. It discusses how the role of ideology in the study of language is needed to understand the ways in which ideology and language are intertwined. I accentuate that, as ideological processes, they both operate in tandem (section 3.2). Second, after discussing how language ideologies serve as a crucial mediator between institutions and human actions, social processes or structures and linguistic features or forms of talk, section 3.3 delineates the concept of language ideologies. The last part (section 3.4) helps us understand the social practices presented in chapter six by highlighting historical factors, policy and language ideologies and drawing attention to the problem of languages in the Algerian educational system. This in part explains the Algerian complicated linguistic portfolio and how that impacts on the daily linguistic practices at nurseries.

3.2 Language and ideologies

Van Dijk's (1998) theoretical approach to ideology clearly acknowledged the significance of the place of language in the study of ideology. That is, the very fact that ideologies are socially shared by social members requires their articulation or representation in a social and public form. Language is, hence, needed largely for the creation, formulation, (re) construction and reproduction of ideologies in society. Like Van Dijk, many scholars (including Stuart Hall, see section 2.2.3.1) attempting to define ideology recognise that language is mainly a necessity for our understanding of what ideology is and how it functions. Although they explicitly or implicitly take into consideration the close link or connection between ideology and language (for more details see section 2.2.3.2), the question now is how the place of ideology in the study of language should be used to explain that language is itself very much defined by ideological processes. In this vein, Cameron (2006) contends,

> where language is taken to be a significant element in ideological processes generally, we need to resist any temptation to treat language in aprioristic terms. Invoking language to explain ideological processes is unsatisfactory if it fails to recognize the relevance of those very same processes to the constitution and deployment of language itself… one is not a precondition for the other, nor is one simply the reflection or outcome of the other, they are intertwined ideological processes working in tandem.

(Cameron, 2006, p. 146).

As Cameron (2006) suggests, social and ideological processes shape language and vice versa. Language, thus, should not be viewed as an already existing raw material for the construction of ideologies or as a post-hoc medium for their expression. I come to argue, then, that language is not merely a social practice for the expression of ideas, it is ideological as per the fact that 'it reflects a specific perspective and emerges within a particular context' (Rosa and Burdick, 2017, p. 104). Through this lens I was able to consider not only what my participants were doing with language (their language use and interaction), but also the features that shaped the day-to day life in the community where I conducted this research. And that brings us to the study of language ideologies.

The focus on language ideologies in my thesis is an integral part of the study of ideology. The interrelatedness of language and ideologies makes it an obvious concern or a specific branch of ideology research. Focusing research on language ideologies 'allows us to relate the microculture of communicative action to political economic considerations of power and social inequality, to confront macrosocial constraints on language behavior, and to connect discourse with lived experiences' (Woolard, 2021, p. 32). On the significance of language ideologies, Schieffelin and Doucet (1998, p. 285) wrote that they often determine 'which linguistic features get selected for cultural attention and for social marking, that is, which ones are important and which ones are not'. They, thus, do not simply teach us about language conceptualisations in specific contexts, but also about how they bridge linguistic and social theory together. Interestingly, the study of language ideology contributes to our understanding that it relates to and shapes social, discursive, and linguistic practices significantly. It is considered as a vital link mediating human acts and institutions, social life, and language, and not simply an epiphenomenon (Woolard, 2021). Language ideologies are, therefore, socially, politically, and linguistically significant, especially in multilingual communities where language has been debated. The following section discusses in detail the concept of language ideologies.

3.3 Language ideologies defined

At the outset, it is important to note that the notion of 'language ideology' has been approached differently in various fields with a variety of emphases. 'Language ideology' or 'linguistic ideology' are sometimes used interchangeably albeit acknowledged differences among them in certain disciplines or body of research. Drawing upon multiple definitions of language ideologies I use the terms 'language ideologies' or 'ideologies of language' (in the plural), as my findings illustrate the co-existence and the interplay of a mixture of existing ideologies at the same time and not necessarily the adherence to a single dilemmatic ideology, for instance, monolingual language use and translanguaging (section 6.2).

Silverstein (1979) developed the concept of 'linguistic ideology' as 'sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use' (Silverstein, 1979, p. 193), for instance, in terms of correctness or beauty, which indicated his emphasis on linguistic structure more (Woolard, 2021). With a greater emphasis on the sociocultural facet, Heath (1989) defined language ideologies as institutionalised and prescriptive evaluations of language, 'self-evident ideas and objectives a group holds concerning roles of language in the social experiences of members as they contribute to the expression of the group' (Heath,1989, p. 53) and also, they 'attempt to guide collective socio-political beliefs and actions regarding language choices' (Heath,1989, p. 393). Emphasising also the sociocultural side, Irvine (1989, p. 255) interpreted language ideologies as 'the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests'. From which it follows that language ideologies, as conceptions of language and language use, are necessarily constructed from the sociocultural experience of the speaker. They are situated, context-bound, and represent incomplete, partial or partially successful attempts to rationalise language usage (Errington, 2001, in Kroskrity, 2006; Kroskrity, 2010).

Commenting on Heath's (1989) and Irvine's (1989) definitions, Woolard (2021) explains that cultural conceptualisations of language and language use are ideological because they reflect a socially purposive action about speakers' social experience, social relationships, and group membership. Ideologies of language are, thus, politically (and economically) and morally loaded as whether explicitly articulated or implicitly embodied in communicative practice they represent not merely how languages are (their nature, structure, and use in their social worlds), but also how they ought to be. Viewed in this manner, language ideologies engender linguistic evaluations and asymmetries in how languages are perceived. In the same vein, Kroskrity (2010) specified that language ideologies are 'beliefs about the superiority/inferiority of specific languages […] beliefs about the linguistic adequacy […] beliefs about how languages are acquired […] beliefs about language contact and multilingualism' (Kroskrity, 2010, pp. 497- 498).

Altogether, language ideologies are shared, widely accepted, and informed by particular communities' political historical circumstances. They inform the ways in which speakers use language and understand themselves and judge others within those circumstances, i.e., their relationships to their own and others' languages. In so doing, they mediate between the social practice of language and the socioeconomic and political structures within which it occurs (Cameron, 2006; Makoe and McKinney, 2014; McKinney, 2017; McKinney, 2019; Cavanaugh, 2020). I take all those definitions as a conceptual blueprint

to emphasise how those linkages of language ideologies play out in a specific linguistic and cultural setting: language practices in Algerian nursery contexts.

3.4 Languages, policy, and education in Algeria

This section covers three subsections. The first one explains how French colonisation contributed to the conflicting status of languages in Algeria, namely Arabic, Algerian Arabic, Berber languages, French and English. The second subsection tackles Arabisation as both a policy and an ideology. It also accentuates how the Algerian education system is caught between partisanship of individual or group interests. It ends with my viewpoint on such language issues. The third subsection highlights the issue of languages in the Algerian education system.

3.4.1 The French colonial rule in Algeria and its effects on its current (socio-) linguistic situation

Algeria is a postcolonial country. It has encountered various groups of conquerors and invaders, each with their own languages, which contributed to the shaping of the nature of its inhabitants, their cultures and customs, as well as their languages. These were the Phoenicians (860 BCE), the Romans (second century BCE), the Vandals (429 CE), the Romanised Byzantines (533 CE), The Spaniards (irregular intervals in time), the Muslims/Arabs (647/648 CE, more precisely Banu Hilaal who arrived in the 11th century and dwelled for four centuries), the Spanish (1505), and the Turks (1529, stayed for three centuries). The French occupation came last and lasted for one hundred thirty-two years (from 1830 to 1962) (Benrabah, 2007). This subsection discusses French colonialism in Algeria because its 'assimilationist policy of total Frenchification' *(l'Algérie Française)* with the intention of 'deracination and deculturisation' of the colonised, and its efforts towards eliminating Arabic language and the Islamic religion (Benrabah, 2014, p. 44) explain its effects on the enduring debate between monolingual versus multilingual education language policies and other ideologies presented in chapter six.

Algeria suffered from brutal French colonisation (Bouherar and Ghafsi, 2022). During the French colonial period, the influx of European settlers (known as *les pied-noirs)* into Algeria made the local Algerian population marginalised and second-class citizens in their own land. The French colonisers promoted the use of 'vernacular Arabic' instead of 'literary Arabic,' which has historically played a role in Islamic education. They also aimed to degrade local varieties by instilling among Algerians unfavourable attitudes against these varieties

(stigmatised by negative terms as 'dialects'[3] and 'patois'). Examples include likening the sounds of local languages with vomiting, the demise of Berber for the absence of its written form, and Arabic as a backwards language, not satisfying the modern world and its scientific limits (Benrabah, 2014). As part of their 'divide and rule' policy, the French exploited the distinction in Algeria between ethnic groups and 'cultivated a 'Kabyle Myth' about the Berber people of northeast Algeria. This 'myth', according to Lorcin (1995; Silverstein, 2002, in Sharkey, 2012, p. 432), held that 'Berbers were less fanatical, more authentic, and more civilisable than Arabs'. The effects of this are unfortunately conspicuous in the current Algerian society in which regionalism, egocentrism in culture, and linguistic insecurity, according to Bouherar and Ghafsi (2022) persist. Colonial authorities banned Arabic use and they by coercion replaced it with French to be the only official language, in addition to banning Islamic institutions[4] (Sharkey, 2012; Le Roux, 2017). That resulted in high rates of illiteracy among the local population (Daoudi, 2018) because only few Algerians had chances to obtain French education. Indigenous Algerians were mostly excluded from education until 1895, when a school was established for the children of French colonial bureaucrats (Kashani-Sabet, 1996). French, according to Benrabah (2007), had to be inevitably acquired as a way of awareness-raising about the need of resistance despite its connotation of invasion and oppression by many Algerians. From that, it can be argued that some of those social beliefs about languages such as the view that individuals speaking French were deemed 'educated' or 'civilised' persist currently according to my data, which might explain that they are in part firmly historical. The French destructive aims continued even upon leaving Algeria. They burned numerous old books and archives; they stole Algerian historical manuscripts and took them to France. Worse than that, they kept behind their successors in all domains who maintained undercover fidelity to France to carry out its agendas and guarantee an enduring French dominance over Algeria (Bouherar and Ghafsi, 2022)[5].

As a reaction, two major associations were developed to resist the French colonisation and claim the status of Arabic language, Islamic religion and the Algerian identity at that time: the *Etoile Nord-Africaine* (created in 1926 in France, consisting mainly Algerian migrant

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[3] The categorisation of the same language' varieties as dialects or the selection of one variety to be standardised and codified channels the power relations among national or ethnic groups and makes boundaries legitimate between them (Woolard, 2021).

[4] Before the French conquest, the Algerian education system traditionally comprised Islamic institutions of learning reading and writing Arabic along with Islamic religion principles, as well as socialising young students into local cultures and practices. Islamic institutions include, the *kataba*, or elementary schools, the *madrasa*, or secondary schools, and the *zawiya*, or schools of higher education (Kashani-Sabet, 1996).

[5] The newly independent Algeria was left without any governmental or intellectual order. There was a need, thus, to seek assistance from and retain few French leaders for employment. The fact that among those involved in decision making, about 50.000 Algerians have French passports is another evidence of the continuous French dominance in Algeria (Bouherar and Ghafsi, 2022)

workers) and the *Algerian Muslim 'Ulemas* (the Scholars League) (created in 1931, by Abdelhamid Ben Badis). Consequently, Quranic schools, cultural centres, newspapers, and mosques, among others, were spread out. Arabic, then, became a form of liberation and a symbol of defiance (Kashani-Sabet, 1996). This reveals that language has been Algeria's most critical problem since French occupation. In this vein, Djité (1992, p. 21), posit 'nowhere else in Africa has the language issue been so central to the fight against colonialism [as in Algeria]'.

Algeria now faces a complex linguistic diversity (a 'most severe' one, in Le Roux's (2017) words). There exists an array of languages and a variety of mother tongues spoken across the country, which makes it a multilingual country, characterised by code switching and a unique case of diglossia[6] as well as a 'language rivalry[7]' (Benrabah, 2014). Said differently, such linguistic richness featuring Algeria has brought conflicts as to which language has more status and symbolic value. I now present the status of each language and variety.

Arabic

The formal, classical (or its simplified form: Modern Standard Arabic, MSA) (*el-fus'ha* in Arabic) is the first official and national language of Algeria as acknowledged by the Constitution. Its main use is in education (as a medium of instruction in schools and some universities), media, publications, mosques, and religious institutions. Its association with the language of the *Quran* makes it hold a symbolic power, status, and value of sacredness. 'It preserves its prestige and its quality by its eloquence, high degree of rhetoric and beauty' (Abbassia, 2021, p. 82).

The Arab invasion of North Africa has been conducive to the spread of Islam which 'brought with it a strong language, a great literary culture and a relatively advanced system of administration and education' (Ennaji, 2005, p. 17, quoted in Belmihoub, 2018, p. 209). Arabic thereby dispersed and most of the indigenous Berber populations became Arabophones. Article 2 of the Algerian constitution states that Arabic 'is a component of the "authentic" national personality and a standard feature of the nation' (Messekher and Miliani, 2020, p.

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[6] According to the sociolinguist Ferguson (1959, p.336, in Hamzaoui, 2019), diglossia involves the coexistence and alternation of a 'high' and a 'low' variety of language (s) within a community. The former is largely used for the most formal written and verbal contexts including education, and the latter is the mother tongue used in day-to-day practices. Ferguson's definition has been challenged as per his claim about the stability of diglossia, it has later been altered and it is widely used as a conceptual framework in sociolinguistic research. However, I contend that the concept is problematic as it connotes that one variety is superior to the other. In a similar vein, Jaspers (2020) insists that the distinction of 'high' and 'low' fails to address that it in itself arises from a conflict regarding each variety's symbolic value in a society which is unequally organised. Having said that, diglossia studies have not completely disregarded power differences but treated them as factual instead of an ethical issue to be criticised by scholars (Jaspers, 2020).

[7] Such rivalry might be due to (1) the conflict between Arabic and Berber; (2) the tension between Arabic and French; (3) the tension between French and English. Accordingly, choosing to use one language over the other is rather ideological and not random (Benrabah, 2014).

153). However, 'unfortunately, not all Algerians do master Modern Standard Arabic' (Abbassia, 2021, p. 82). According to Bouherar and Ghafsi (2022), Arabic in Algeria is currently in deterioration, and this chiefly goes back to the fossilised ideologies inherited from colonisation, propagating the superiority of French language as well as products and developing a dependency policy and an inferiority complex among Arabic speakers who do not write or speak French. This is likely to occur in the African post-colonies where most members of the post-colonial decision-makers and elite, consciously or subconsciously, espouse ideologies of language which propagate the idea of the essential 'superiority' of the ex-colonial languages through which formal education must be carried out and the inferiority of indigenous or national African languages (Wolff, 2017). As a result of this growing ideology, Arabic and other local languages are expectedly disliked.

Algerian Arabic

The majority of, if not all, Algerians speak the colloquial Algerian Arabic (known as '*Al-āmmiya*' or *Darija*) in informal and functional daily mode of expression. It is very common in popular arts. It is derived from Standard Arabic. A mixed code of some borrowed words mainly from French, Berber, Turkish, Spanish (West Algeria) and Italian (East Algeria) also exists. Although marked discrepancies exist along most Algerian cities which affect its homogeneity, different varieties remain 'mutually intelligible' (Abbassia, 2021). According to Daoudi (2018), in recent years e-Arabic[8] has emerged as a new variety of Arabic.

During the National Conference on the Evaluation and Application of Educational Reform (2015), Nouria Benghabrit-Remaoun[9] (former minister of national education) proposed a transition from Modern Standard Arabic to *Darija* as the primary language of instruction. She argues for a need to address the reality or actuality that Algerian students lack mastery of formal Arabic, claiming it is grammatically complex and exceeds the learning capacity of young children. This is thought to be the reason for their fall behind academically from an early age. She further made (a pointless) argument that education in *Darija* would make it easier for

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[8] e-Arabic, according to Daoudi (2018), is prevailing in Algeria as a result of cultural globalisation. It is mostly used on social media and mobile telephony. It permits its users to code-switch and code-mix and use numbers to represent some missing sounds or alphabets in one language or another, and most importantly to break language rules. That is, it is not bound by the traditional grammatical, syntactic, semantic, and lexical rules. Romanised Arabic, Standard Arabic, and its local varieties, French and English can all be used in such a 'new writing genre'. E- Arabic, thus, becomes a means of power for those who lack it in their offline lives as it is accessible and is no longer for only the elite or people in power. It serves as a vehicle for the democratisation of literature and breaking the literary and linguistic canon (Daoudi, 2018).

[9] Slimani *et al.* (2017) maintained that Benghebrit's suggestion to omit the expression 'In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful' from the Algerian textbooks' cover received severe critique from the society and Muslim scholars alike. She has been accused of serving foreign regimes against the role of Arabic language and Quranic teaching in the Algerian education system (ibid.).

students to learn formal Arabic afterwards. An official announcement in that regard has accordingly been made by the Algerian ministry of education (Nourhane, 2015). Belmihoub's (2018) study, however, reveals that unanimously *Darija* has been rejected to be promoted to an official status by Algerians. Zaytoni (2013, in Bouherar and Ghafsi, 2022) wrote that the promotion of Darija in independent Algeria is a colonial policy intended to replace Arabic and gradually ban it in schools under the pretext that *Darija* fills the gap in learning Standard Arabic.

Berber languages (Tamazight[10])

About 20–25% of the Algerian population speak Berber in Algeria (Abbassia, 2021). Tamazight was established as a second official language of the country in 2016 in the Algerian Constitution after movements for its recognition (the Berber Spring 1980s) (ibid.). Now, many building signs carry Tamazight alongside Arabic or French. Furthermore, among many other change in the Algerian constitution, Yennayer (Berber new year) was recognised and taught in school as a national and public holiday. According to Bouherar and Ghafsi (2022), the former government granted the Kabyle people the right to standardise their language under the pretext of buying peace in the Kabyle region. Tamazight is still undergoing corpus planning and linguistic standardisation, with attempts to develop its writing system to become a language. However, such step excludes varieties of other ethnicities and creates tensions as to which Tamazight variety is to be standardised. Despite the fact that the Algerian regime promoted Tamazight teaching and learning in schools and universities, it faces many challenges among which the reluctant attitudes of youngsters to study or speak it (ibid.).

French

After 60 years of independence, the French language in Algeria is still maintained and spread, preserving a well-respected social and linguistic status. 'The current government shows anti-French intentions on paper, but the reality of education, administration, and official meetings seem to tell a different story' (Bouherar and Ghafsi, 2022, p. 223). A large number of Algerians still habitually speak, read, or write French in day-to-day life in many domains of use. French remains the main medium of instruction and communication in scientific and medical university departments (ibid.).

French status in Algeria has been caught between two views. On the one hand, 'a remnant of a violent past', 'a colonisation's legacy' or 'spoils of war' that indicate colonial connotation and history. On the other hand, a language of cosmopolitanism, progress, and prosperity,

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[10] A term usually used interchangeably with Berber. It refers to the indigenous peoples of some North African countries including Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia and their Berber languages, which encompass varieties including *Amazigh* or Kabyle Berber, *Mzab* Berber, *Shawiya* Berber, *Tuareg* Berber.

providing paths towards modernising Algeria (Benrabah, 2007; Le Roux, 2017). The problem, according to Bouherar and Ghafsi (2022), is that the Algerian society consider French to be superior to other local languages and a symbol of prestige and higher social position. In Algeria, the ability to speak French is a defining characteristic to measure and classify the educated and the uneducated. An example of that is a recent incident of mockery in a press conference to one of the national team players when he asked for translation as he was addressed in French. Such social beliefs of giving social advantage to French speakers led to the creation of Francophone elites who continue to be the guardians and servants of French interests in Algeria. Occupying important positions in Algerian ministries in the post-independence era, succeeded to indoctrinate some groups in the Kabyle region to fight for Amazigh identity in order to split the society so as to ease French decision makers to control over and legislate their laws in Algeria (ibid.). In view of this, Benrabah (2013, p. xi) wrote 'conflict arose between two mutually exclusive cultural groups: first, the coloniser and the colonised [during the War of Independence]; and later, between the dominant Francophones and the Arabisers [during the Black Decade]'.

The suggestion of the former Minister of Education in 2016, Nouria Benghebrit, for the adoption of French teaching in schools to ease the difficult transition to university for many Arabic-speaking Algerian students[11], created heated debate between lobbies wishing for their political agenda to be applicable. Nevertheless, Messekher and Miliani (2020) make the hypothesis that despite French current dominance, English will most likely overtake it in the next 20 years, given many academics and educated individuals' voices that recommend English as a better substitute.

English

In recent years, English has gained popularity as a means of economic opportunity and social mobility in line of globalisation and the advances in science, technology, information, and communication (Abbassia, 2021). Although the spread of the English language has long been critiqued as a colonising tool itself, it is considered by many in the Algerian context as the best 'decolonising' or 'decolonial' option and also a means for improving the education system, especially higher education and academic scientific research (Jacob 2020). In fact, many academics suggest that the language of instruction in universities should gradually shift away

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[11] Many academics confirm that receiving education at the primary, middle, and secondary levels in Arabic, then being compelled to transit to French language at the university ultimately lead to experiencing a 'linguistic shock' as most students are ill-equipped in French. Accordingly, due to such linguistic incompetence, 80% of first-year students failed their exams (Inam Bioud, in Mathews, 2014; the Minister of Higher Education 2005, in Hamzaoui, 2017; Le Roux, 2017).

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from French to English, and that was also the recent proposition of the Algerian Minister of higher education and scientific research in 2019[12].

Before this, in 1993 Algerian pupils in the fourth grade of primary school were opted to choose between French and English, with the purpose of making a gradual transition to English as an official foreign language in Algeria. However, according to Benrabah's study (1999), most parents favoured French and thus the attempt failed (Benrabah, 2007). Messekher and Miliani (2020, pp. 154-159) consider the replacement of French with English as a "sheer intellectual suicide"[13], claiming that English 'was not a social demand' although it is being 'fantasised and popular among the young generation'. According to Daoudi, (2018, p. 467) 'in practical terms as much as the French language holds bitter memories, it is not profitable (including for economic reasons) to switch to English, particularly for the Francophone elite'.

In contrast to what Benrabah claimed, the minister of Algerian National Education at that period of time revealed in Aljazeera Channel TV show that opposing to what others claim, most parents surprisingly opted for English rather than French language. He was threatened and had to resign after attempts to hold him responsible for leaking Baccalaureate exam. This justifies the challenge of enacting a language planning policy that do not align with Francophone policy makers' interests in Algeria. Efforts to lessen the hegemony of French in Algeria and the integration of English instead is dissatisfying for the Francophones for several reasons. First, the demise of French in Algeria threatens the existence of Francophones and their influence on the decision-making process. In other words, it restricts their social and political prerogatives in the country. Another reason is to ensure access to the world's diverse educational programmes and research instead of the constrained French- Algerian research partnerships managed by Francophones in Algeria (Bouherar and Ghafsi, 2022).

In 2005-2006, English was included in the first year of middle school as a foreign language (Chaouche 2006, in Le Roux, 2017). At the present time, children are being introduced to English at a very young age in some private nurseries or in social media. From their first year at middle school to their secondary education, pupils study English subject as

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[12] According to Messekher and Miliani (2020, p. 162), such announcement in favour of English 'does not spell good news to the French language'. Miliani (quoted in the newspaper El Watan, October 5, 1993, in Messekher and Miliani, 2020, p. 162), as a reaction to the 1993's introduction of English, expressed his fear of a 'creolization and pidginization of languages' and viewed it as 'an exacerbation of social tensions, more acute identity crises, [and]a loss of cohesion'.

[13] The fact that Messekher and Miliani (2020) describe those in favour of English as a replacement of French as 'partisan enthusiasm from Islamists as a continuation of the struggle against French, rebuffing very objective considerations' and the other extreme as having 'measured doubt embodied by more scientific and less ideological people' is another evidence that language has been a lasting problem reflecting significant political, social and ideological issues in Algeria.

a foreign language. Those with a Baccalaureate degree can choose to study English as a major at university to get a BA degree after three years, followed by an MA (two years). Such degrees can offer them a teacher career at middle and secondary schools or even at university with a PhD. The use of English extends significantly to social media among others (Belmihoub, 2018).

This subsection explained how historical factors had a lasting effect on the status of languages in current Algeria. The following subsection discusses a very important decision to restore the status of Arabic language after French colonisation, as well as its consequences.

3.4.2 Algeria's Arabisation (*ta'rib*) (1962- 1999)

After Algeria's independence, the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) rapidly ascended to power. This nationalist and political party committed itself to uplifting the country through establishing a nation-building approach. It was primarily concerned with the promotion of unity of Arabs, Arab states, and Algerian people in efforts to recover the Arab Muslim and national identity. Adopting Sheikh Abd al-Hamid Ibn Badis's motto 'Islam is our religion, Algeria our homeland and Arabic our language', the Arabisation process was then introduced mainly to substitute French with Arabic as the only national language (monolingualism). It was to be exclusively used, first, in primary and secondary schools, and university humanities and social science programmes (Arabic literature, philosophy and history sections). Schools were, then, the ideal settings for raising a new generation that would promote the leaders' nationalist agenda. Arabisation was also implemented in administration, the media (except for already-approved French newspapers), films, physical environment (road signs) and other founding texts of the country (Mostari, 2004). One thousand teachers[14] from Egypt, Iraq, and Syria were imported to teach Arabic in Algerian schools due to the government lacking qualified Arabic teachers and manuals and a paucity of financial means (Sharkey, 2012). According to Mostari (2004, p. 440) 'Arabisation, in the end, was not merely a matter of language promotion; rather, it entailed the promotion of a particular state-centred vision of culture and power'.

However, the question of language in Algeria has always been linked to its elite's political and economic goals (Tilmatine, 2020). On the one hand, supporters of the Arabisation policy (Far-right political parties, the *Ulema*-Islamic scholars, 'Islamists' and the masses at that time, (Benrabah, 2007) agree that 'without the recovery of this essential and important element

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[14] These teachers, according to Abu Haidar (2000, in Le Roux, 2017) were not qualified (of very low calibre, in Daoudi's words, 2018) and received no formal teacher training. He added that it was the officials at that time who were concerned only with recruiting monolingual and fluent individuals in Arabic regardless of their qualifications.

which is the national language [i.e., the Arabic language], our efforts will remain vain, our personality incomplete and our unity a body without soul' (President Boumediene, in Tilmatine, 2020). They contend that Arabisation would make up for the erasure of Arab identity and Islamic values France aimed at, and therefore, a tool for decolonising Algeria. As McDougall (2006, cited in Chemami, 2011, p. 229) put it, the Arabisation decision stood out because: '(1) Arabic symbolises the cultural aspect of independence, with French being the language of the colonizer; (2) Arabic is the language of Islam; (3) Arabic is the language of the Arab nation'. Pro-Arabisation lobby mainly stand for the 'defrancisation' (de-Frenchification) (Messekher and Miliani, 2020) and the eradication of all 'traces of gallicisation' (Le Roux, 2017).

On the other hand, (mainly) secular parties including many French elite oppose the Arabisation of the public sector. They presume that the religiousness and power attributed to Arabic is being exploited by politicians to enforce its legitimacy and social control (Benrabah, 2004). They perceive Arabic as likely identical to the 'colonial assimilation' and as a 'de-Algerianisation' tool, as a top-down as well as a form of indoctrination and manipulation and linguistic dictatorship, and an imposition and exclusion policy making imbalance in dealing with linguistic, religious, and regional diversities (Messekher and Miliani, 2020; Tilmatine, 2020). Opponents of Arabisation argue that 'their ideology of linguistic homogeneity as a precursor for cultural homogeneity' is too simplistic (considering the Algerians' linguistic needs), unpragmatic and rather nationalist (Djité, 1992; Wolff, 2000).

Inspired by Nye' theorisation, Daoudi, (2018) describes Arabisation as practice of a 'soft power' without resorting to force, unlike the *Frenchification* when the coloniser imposed its language by force 'hard power'. The Berber scholar Tilmatine (2020), among many others for instance, rejects the idea of national unity or oneness and believes it is a myth. He claims that 'what we know for sure is that on their arrival, the French found populations whom they describe as divided "into distinct communities by origin, customs, language, institutions, way of life, religious conceptions" (Isnard, 1949, p. 469), which gave rise to debates about whether or not an Algerian nation really existed' (Tilmatine, 2020, p. 140). Anti-Arabisation academics also accuse the policy of being a 'breeding ground' for 'Islamisation'[15].

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[15] Some believe that the civil war in Algeria (also known as the Black Decade 1990s) was a significant outcome of Arabisation. For example, according to Benrabah, 1999; 2007; Byrd, 2003; Coffman, 1992 in Le Roux, 2017, Arabisation engendered religious fanaticism and fundamentalism. However, Mostari (2004, p. 41) posits 'we cannot accuse it [Arabisation] of responsibility for the Islamists' crimes and for the bloody war in Algeria. In fact, neither Islam nor Islamism, nor even Arabisation, is directly responsible for today's political chaos in Algeria'. He further argues that Arabisation is not Islamisation, quoting Benbella (the first president of independent Algeria). He states that although Algeria is a Muslim country, it applies a moderate Islam, and has never been an Islamist state adopting a radical or extreme approach to Islam in the same way Iran or Afghanistan. Islamism is often the perversion and the total transformation of traditional Islam. It is often linked to the violent and most extremist Islamist movements that flourished by exploiting the Arab anti-western sentiments, which arose especially in the 1970s and 1980s, in order to gain ground worldwide. Islamism politicises the religion, following profoundly a political path. It takes a hostile position regarding human rights by oppressing innocent people in the name of God and a wrong interpretation or version of the Quran. By way of example, in Algeria, 'Islamists' during the Civil War exerted violence towards the Algerian French elites. They associated speaking French with the language of 'non-believers' or 'allies of France' 'leftovers' (*Hizb Fransa*) who could be accused of betraying the 'nationalist

Arabisation in Algeria was widely deemed a failure (Benrabah, 2004; Benrabah, 2007; Belmihoub, 2018; Abbassia, 2021). The following points summarise the plausible factors for the inadequacies and consequences of the implementation of Arabisation according to a number of academics:

- The unity and alliance between the Algerian-Francophone lobby and France was a major reason for the failure of Arabisation (Bouherar and Ghafsi, 2022, p. 118). It was, hence, in itself a form of hypocrisy in the sense that Algerian officials (who were mainly Francophone lobby) enrolled their children (and mostly children of upper class) into the few remaining French schools while the majority of Algerian children were enrolled into Arabic (government) schools. French-speaking Algerians, including Kabyles, were granted privileges to the job market (to well-paid and most influential state jobs) and to certain courses of study in higher education (Benrabah, 2007). This has been referred to as 'elite closure', in that Algerian elites preserved their '*eliteness'* through limiting access to French fluency (Djité 1992, in Benrabah, 2004). These elites 'reproduced the same attitudes to French language and culture as in France' (Ruedy, in Benrabah, 2013, p. 63).

- The Arabisation process lacked a coherent and pragmatic strategy of application. Only the political aims (language for national security and unity) of the nation were taken into consideration, but no account was taken of the socio- economic and linguistic realities as well as the cultural environment or parameters of the country in general and Algerian students in particular (language as an expression of culture and identity) (Mostari, 2004; Belmihoub, 2018).

- The sudden extreme use of Arabic, after over a hundred years of 'Frenchification' that resulted in French becoming entrenched in Algerian society, engendered Arabic language illiteracy particularly for Berbers and many French speaking Algerians who received a French education (Kashani-Sabet, 1996), and who claimed to have experienced 'exile' in their own country or at least feeling linguistically alienated (Le Roux, 2017; Daoudi, 2018; Tilmatine, 2020).

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sentiment', and being unfaithful to Arabic and Algeria (Daoudi, 2018). Indisputably, that does not represent the tolerant, indulgent, and peaceful nature of Islam (the religion of the Quran and Sunna or many other religions).

- It often resulted in internal conflict 'cultural civil war' and a clash between Algerian people and elite, namely Arabic and French as well as Berber speakers, regarding the linguistic, cultural and national identity of the country (Benrabah, 2004).

- There seems to be a wide consensus that Arabisation is a major source of the failure of the Algerian education system (Mostari, 2004; Benrabah, 2007; 2007b; Le Roux, 2017; Daoudi, 2018). Grandguillaume (1997, p. 3, in Mostari, 2004 and in Le Roux, 2017) asserts "*l'école Algérienne se porte mal*" (The Algerian school is in bad shape).

Since the early 2000s, however, the Arabisation policy has been fairly discontinued (Le Roux, 2017). Karmani (2005, in Benrabah, 2007b) argues that as part of the Global War on Terror following the terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001, the West put a strong pressure on most Arab-Muslim countries (including Algeria) to reform educational curricula. Other factors against maintaining a monolingual educational system include 'the demand for economic reforms comes from the pressure exerted by internationalism and the transition to a market economy, [… and] socio-political demands for democratisation and minority linguistic rights' (Benrabah, 2005, in Benrabah, 2007b). Baker (2003, p. 101, quoted in Benrabah, 2007b) asserts that educational reforms aiming towards bilingual/multilingual education are more than just an issue of education, they are 'expressions of political ideology, tides of political change and political initiatives'.

The new regime of Abdelaziz Bouteflika (who has been elected as a President from 1999 to 2019) evinced a positive attitude towards the French language. The president's political speeches (in which he used both French and Arabic) made explicit assertions regarding the language issues facing Algeria, denoting the failure of the Arabisation policy and the intention of reverting to French alongside Arabic (bilingualism), especially in scientific and technical specialities (medicine, the hard sciences and engineering). From that era onwards, The Algerian-French political and economic relations took a relatively new direction; and an educational reform[16] was implemented in Algeria accordingly. French has been introduced as the first compulsory foreign language in the fourth grade of primary schools and English in the first grade of middle schools (Benrabah, 2014).

In fact, linguistic diversity seems to be gaining acceptance among academics like Le Roux (2017), Belmihoub (2018), Messekher and Miliani (2020), Tilmatine (2020). They insist that

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[16] Since 2000, several reforms have been introduced to the Algerian education system at the primary, middle, and secondary levels as well as higher education. For instance, the adoption of the LMD system in higher education (Licence, Masters, Doctorate), substituting the precedent 'classical system'. The LMD entails, for instance, the transition to a more student-centred teaching approach, the incorporation of a number of formative assessments rather one single summative examination, and teachers developing their own curricula or syllabi rather than depending on courses issued by higher authorities. It allows degrees of Algeria to get international recognition and enables Erasmus participation for some Algerian students (Belmihoub, 2018).

Algeria needs to embrace and promote linguistic pluralism and support the idea of adding English to Arabic and French rather than replacing French with English. They see multilingualism as a unanimous solution in Algeria as it 'provides for greater openness, versatility and integration with and competitiveness in the globalised world and would certainly be to the benefit of Algeria' (Le Roux, 2017, pp. 125-126).

Nonetheless, it could be argued that *Arab nationalism* and *Islamic unity* that are centred in Arabisation as a concept should still be supported**,** given the success of countries which prospered with the use of the country's own mother tongue language and with outlawing the employment of other countries' languages in government positions of high status. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and more specifically since 1539, France for example followed a unitary linguistic approach. It executed laws in mainland France to adopt a process of language standardisation through choosing one variety to be imposed and used in all domains until it became the standard (Laitin 1992, in Sharkey, 2012; Dendane, 2013). In this vein, Bouherar and Ghafsi (2022) noted that while multilingualism under the French territory is viewed as a linguistic crime, France certainly encouraged opposite language policies in colonised countries of which Algeria. They cited Lynn Scheel (1998) and Hornsby (1998) who discussed how French people view their language as an expressive aspect of their civilisation, history, culture, and ideology; and how the French, especially French scholars, struggle to protect the French language against threats from other foreign languages such as English and its spread because of globalisation. Therefore, the use of English language in France has been restricted.

Arguably, the language issue, especially in education in Algeria, is a question of partisanship. As Messekher and Miliani (2020, pp. 150) put it 'ideology is at its height in the domain of education where language policies seem to follow a very bumpy trajectory depending on the decision-makers' political colours… [it] has become a real battlefield of individual interests or groups…leaving the construction of education in total shambles'. This raises the question: how teachers/ educators position themselves in such conflicting ideologies, and how that is translated into their practice. In what follows, I review the studies that dealt with conceptualisations of language in the Algerian context. These are important as they explain the nature of ambivalent practice my data indicate (section 6.2).

3.4.3 Languages in the Algerian education system

Studies around languages in the Algerian educational context have had sustained attention on language attitudes (especially by sociolinguists). Research on language attitudes tracks how language is viewed based typically on survey and experimental methods, including for example interview questionnaires and matched-guise tests. It

highlights their significance for language promotion and for determining language status, fate, maintenance, and revitalisation (Haqoune, 2012; Loutfi, 2020). However, it dismisses language ideologies by excluding the culturally specific conceptualisations of language. It generally takes attitudes at the subjective level and then takes the overt expression of language views directly at face value, rather than considering them as performative modes in specific cultural contexts (Rosa and Burdick, 2017). Although in my study I take a wider look focusing on language ideologies and their impact on the daily education practices rather than on language attitudes, it is important to consider some sociolinguistic studies on language attitudes among Algerians to explain my data. Indeed, such focus enabled me to explain my participants' objections to multilingual education (section 6.2).

Research revealed positive attitudes towards Standard Arabic by Algerians. For example, Hamzaoui (2019) investigated teachers' and pupils' attitudes towards Standard Arabic and Algerian Arabic (Arabic *diglossia*) based on quantitative and qualitative approaches, and random sample population. The methodology included a questionnaire distributed among twelve primary school teachers from two different schools in Tlemcen (a town in Algeria), teaching at various grade levels and having diverse experiences and skills. It also included the 'matched-guise' technique (Lambert, 1967), used with seventy-two pupils (from pre-school until the fifth grade). This method is centred on mentalist conceptions. It involved an indirect assessment of personalities in respect of features, namely, cleverness and pleasantness in relation to the forms of Arabic used. The researcher made pupils listen to a text passage from 'Cinderella' story performed by the same speaker in two forms (SA/AA) while they did not realise that the person is the same for all guises, believing they are listening to two interlocutors. Then, pupils were asked to respond to a series of questions that demonstrate their attitudes towards 'each interlocutor' and the language varieties in use. The findings of the study revealed that all the teachers and the pupils from the first to the fifth-level display high appreciation and homogeneous attitudes towards Standard Arabic accompanied by feelings of being proud and perceptions of it as 'pure', 'real' 'and 'correct'. On the other hand, pre-schoolers displayed a low esteem and negative attitudes towards SA and a preference of Algerian Arabic. They perceive SA as unfamiliar and difficult to be expressed, learned, and understood due to their little or no contact with it outside the school milieu. However, Hamzaoui (2019) noted that the finding about pre-schoolers holding less- positive attitudes towards SA is hard to establish considering their young age. Another example is Belmihoub (2018) who used questionnaire to first- and second-year engineering students at an Algerian university. He found that both speakers of Algerian Arabic and *Tamazight* put in an order their preferences as follow: Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), English, and French and then

Tamazight (by Tamazight's speakers). However, in terms of use, Chemami's (2011) study (in which fifty students from Algeria, ages 16 on average, completed a bilingual questionnaire) showed that the majority of Algerian students use (in order) Algerian Arabic, French, Standard Arabic, English, then *Tamazight*. On the other hand, Messekher and Miliani (2020) reported that many Algerians view Algerian Arabic as unworthy of teaching and learning in schools.

Similar findings have been documented in the Moroccan context. A number of studies showed that most Moroccans have negative attitudes towards their mother tongues. For instance, Loutfi's (2020) qualitative and quantitative research involved one-hundred participants including the "non-educated people" (in his words) as well as students from the departments of Islamic studies, English, and Science. The study used a survey and a non-participatory observation in one primary school and one high school in the city of Salé, Morocco. The Data, which was analysed using SPSS, demonstrated negative attitudes towards Moroccan Arabic. Loutfi (2020) asserted that such attitudes stem from the non-official status of mother tongues adopted by the state as they guarantee no economic returns. He further called for changing these attitudes through the use of mother tongues as a subject on its own rather than as merely a means of instruction. Similarly, Haqoune's (2012) study based on observations, interviews and questionnaires handed out to hundred respondents (including thirty students of English department) on a random basis also revealed a rejection of the use of mother tongues as the language of instruction in Morocco. His participants perceived the use of local languages to lay the foundation of learning in schools to be 'a waste of time', 'with no value', and they associated it with the 'non-elite'. Likewise, Belhiah and Lamallam's (2020) study suggests that despite both the teachers and students' agreement of the potentiality of mother tongues in facilitating learning, they resisted the possibility of implementing mother tongues officially as media of instruction on the ground that they are 'not worthy and inadequate of academic study'. Their study adopted a mixed method approach and used classroom observations and questionnaires to 247 Amazigh as well as Moroccan-Darija speaking students and teachers at primary public schools in Morocco.

All in all, I reiterate that my study focuses on language ideologies. Research around language attitudes shows that unlike *Darija*, Standard Arabic holds positive attitudes by both teachers and students. Interestingly, it also shows that *Darija* is used in the classroom as a means of instruction. This is relevant as it demonstrates the complexity of the issue of languages in education and highlights the significance of the present research in unveiling how educators respond to such opposing ideologies in their actual practice.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued how language is ideologically loaded, and how both language and ideology are interrelated in a sense that neither one is a prerequisite to or an outcome of the other. Drawing upon multiple definitions of language ideologies, I have established the significance of language ideologies socially, politically, and linguistically.

I have addressed the linguistic situation in Algeria and how several scholars attribute its language issues to the French colonialisation and the presence of 'Francophile apostles' in the country who encouraged the implementation of French policies and language in Algeria. Although many see English as the redeemer of the French authoritative and colonial period in Algeria, it is crucial to remember that all languages, without exception, are not value or ideology-free.

Arabisation in Algeria has been dealt with as both a cultural and language policy as well as an ideology. I concur that the choice of French language to communicate with Algerians living in UK by the Consulate of Algeria in London, and the Ministry of Higher education and Scientific Research's requirement to complete *fiches de suivi* by Algerian laureates in UK and their supervisors in French instead of English or Arabic speaks volume about linguistic and cultural imperialism and presents a serious political threat to the Algerian national sovereignty (Bouherar and Ghafsi, 2022). Overall, conflicting ideologies could be said to significantly affects education in relation to the issue of which language (s) ought to be integrated into education and used in the classroom. My findings suggest that educators are simultaneously oriented to such coexisting ideologies which produces an ambivalent behaviour in practice as argued in chapter six.

The next chapter explains the significance of the research methodology I employed in this study.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at demonstrating how my research methodology is capable of responding to the issues and challenges arising from the attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. How do educators and managers position themselves ideologically in early childhood education and care institutions in Algeria?

   1.1 How are these ideological positions embedded and enacted in participants' everyday interactions?

   1.2 How do the mechanisms of ideology impact daily educational practices with young children?

2. What factors contribute to the construction of these ideologies?

3. In what ways do the simultaneous idealisation and demonisation of the West among participants intersect with language ideologies?

4. What are the implications of these ideological tensions?

This chapter has been organised into five sections as follows: the first section (4.2) concerns itself with the philosophical perspective that underpinned my research. The main thrust of the second section (4.3) has been to problematise the naturalistic ethnography and suggest the relevance of the constructionist approach in interpreting knowledge through the various research methods deployed: fieldwork observations, interviewing, documentary sources and cultural artefacts. It further includes the challenges that seemed to have affected both the kind and amount of data collected during the fieldwork. Within the third section (4.4), I explain the modes of access used for gaining entrée to different sites in the field where I undertook this study. I also describe gatekeepers and my participants. A detailed subsection is dedicated to the choices I made about what is axiologically correct. Section (4.5) deals with the way I analysed the generated data. The final section (4.6) justifies how this research ensures rigour and trustworthiness, with specific reference to my reflexivity and the roles I had to undertake as an ethnographer.

4.2 Research philosophy: Exploring my ontological and epistemological positions

This section emphasises the ontological argument that reality is seen, described, understood, and interpreted in different ways allowing for multiple realities to be expressed, as well as to the epistemological argument that the knowledge of everyday life is socially constructed. Building upon an ontological and epistemological foundation situated the framework of thinking about how I set about formulating the problem, the purpose, and the research questions of this study, and how I went about delineating the kinds of data required and subsequently answering those questions (Creswell, 2013; Denscombe, 2010). The philosophical direction that I have adopted was indeed of central importance in informing my methodological approach and in developing my research design and methods. I attempted to answer my research questions by employing a broadly qualitative approach for reasons outlined below.

A wider qualitative approach is taken here with a view to developing an understanding of what meaning early childhood educators attribute to their world. While quantitative approach takes meaning for granted (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016), the power of qualitative research lies in understanding the meaning in a context-bound situation (ibid.). My research was highly contextualised and situated which makes it relevant to this stance. The questions I raised were primarily concerned with understanding how the mechanisms of ideology impact on educational practices with young children. I was not interested in quantifying, counting, or measuring this impact but I was more interested in making sense of the ideological positions and the impact they had in shaping the early childhood educators' practices. I was not aiming to deductively test a hypothesis, I rather attempted to develop concepts or theories inductively (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Following the arguments above, a qualitative approach was therefore best suited to my research aims and questions. The insistence of qualitative research upon the importance of situated meaning-making process often leads logically to the use of interpretive stance which is arguably the single most important characteristic of qualitative approach.

I contend that understanding the complexities of the everyday life world necessitates interpreting the particular social actors' interpretations of situation-specific meanings (Gergen, 2015). I recognise that people are not objects of the natural sciences (Bryman, 2016). As a researcher I should bear in mind that it is inconceivable to cover everything about reality because 'the reality of everyday life always appears as a zone of lucidity behind which there is a background of darkness. As some zones of reality are illuminated, others are adumbrated. I cannot know everything there is to know about this reality' (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 59). This claim joins others, outlined by Gergen (2015, p. 11) who posits that 'any description of the world is as true as any other' and Galbin (2014) who asserts that universal truth or falsehood is unknowable, what can be known are only stories about truth or falsehood. In this

line of thought I argue that meaning is varied, and reality is multiple in the sense that there is no single true or valid interpretation of a single event; the meaning we make is of the world and not about the world itself.

By adopting an interpretivist research agenda, I refute positivists' ontological view of one truth external to the mind (Lincoln and Guba, 2013). I also reject constructivist perspective that sees the individual's mind as a representation of a mirror of reality. In so doing, I understand that the individual's role is at the heart of the interactive and relational process (Galbin, 2014). I furthermore celebrate that any representation is only a partial perception of reality. The features of interpretivism make it well-suited to this study as I was interested in providing an interpretation of early childhood educators' interpretations of the world around them and then I suggest their connection with a conceptual framework. This very idea seems to have called for the consideration of the process of constructing the world as a co-production between myself and my participants and hence for the democratisation of the research relationship (Burr, 2015). Therefore, this study adopts a social constructivist approach.

Lincoln and Guba (2013, p. 11) remind us that there exist two forms of reality: the 'physical, out there, reality' and 'the socially constructed realities'. Although physical reality can be located, it is seldom that it determines our response to the world we inhabit. It is, rather, the meaning-making activities that shape our actions. They called this process of sense-making 'developing a construction' (2013, p. 29). This is another way of saying that reality is believed not to be existent before it is socially constructed within communities. At this point, it is worth remembering that existing constructions are open to continuous change, innovation and thereby to reconstruction since new experience leads to the creation, improvement, or development of a new worlds of meaning and shared reality (Lincoln and Guba, 2013; Gergen, 2015). Schwandt (1998) further argues that there is no social reality 'out there' waiting to be independently found or discovered by the individual mind, it is rather socially created or constructed jointly with others to make sense of experience. Interpretation thus in itself involves meanings construction (Schwandt, 1998). Simply put, when socially interacting with the actors I study through watching, listening, asking, negotiating, recording, and examining, I will provide my construction of their constructions of this world of lived reality. In line with this I take the stance that knowledge is socially constructed through interactions, relationships, and communications with others. It is shared with other people we live with in an 'intersubjective' world and is constantly built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Bryman, 2016).

Although the interpretivist-constructionist research proved to be useful by giving-up 'expertise-based, rational, hierarchical, and result-focused models' and endorsing 'more

participatory, co-creative, and process-centred ones' (Galbin, 2014, p. 91), it remains open to criticism. These accusations imply that interpretations are subjective, relative, and descriptive, lacking criteria of objectivism and critical purchase. Problems of the researcher's authority and privilege and issues of making epistemological claims have also been raised (Schwandt, 1998). By the same token, issues of replicability, generalisation and lack of transparency were ascribed to qualitative-interpretive accounts (Bryman, 2016). Moreover, constructivism was reviled by realists for not distinguishing between facts and beliefs about facts, its failure to explain the pragmatic successes of science and for denying the existence of the world before human beings (Kukla, 2000). These objections according to Kukla (2000) are inadequate.

In attending carefully to the foregoing issues, I argue on the one hand that this study makes no claim for objectivity. Burr (2015) states that social constructionism entails a critical stance by challenging the taken-for-granted knowledge that assumes objective and unbiased observation of the world. Indeed, since individuals interactively co-create subjective knowledge, the objective epistemology takes a back seat. I am in agreement with the view that 'no human being can step outside of their humanity and view the world from no position at all' (Burr, 2015, p. 172). In taking up this argument, I am in a position that acknowledges my own involvement in the social meaning-making of accounts and other texts, and I should therefore reflect on the subjective meaning transactions between me and my participants and how this can draw out my own conclusions. On the other hand, my research makes no attempt to search for an immutable truth or to generalise the findings in other settings or provide cause-effect explanations. I rather strive to expand the possibilities of understanding and integration of perspectives (Galbin, 2014). Furthermore, I am not interested in radical change although some feminist social constructionists draw on critical theory tradition to address this challenge (Schwandt, 1998). While recognising this, it is also important to acknowledge that adopting an interpretive/ constructionist and more specifically ethnographic perspectives is not without dilemmas. Questions of representing the other's voice, views or culture raise issues of legitimation and power. When the available forms of representation are restricted, constructions will consequently be limited. Hence, attaining 'a consensual construction' is contingent on negotiation that fully acknowledges all voices. All in all, ethical, non-manipulative and most important collaborative relationships in the field are the fulcrum to resolving issues of legitimation and power (Lincoln and Guba, 2013). In what follows I will intently consider two significant works that tackled relevant issues of constructionism.

In his book *The social construction of what?* Hacking (1999) called into question the very idea of what kind of reality accounts are being precisely constructed, especially apropos of natural sciences. In considering the opposition between constructivism and realism, he put forward three philosophical issues, or 'sticking points' that he himself seems to be ambivalent

about. The first sticking point holds that constructionism involves a contingency thesis and though scientific realism might also be congruent with contingency, it insists on denying this. The second sticking point is related to the idea that constructionism is deeply committed to nominalism (accounts being 'true' only in relation to specific experience and interaction). The third sticking point is whether explanations of stability are external or internal to the scientific belief. While I do not fully agree with Hacking's position, I do recognise the need to argue that the contention between constructionists and realists is just a spat because 'one need not to be an antirealist to be a constructivist. One can reasonably hold that concepts and ideas are invented (rather than discovered) yet maintain that these inventions correspond to something in the real world' (Schwandt, 1998, p. 237). Goffman (1959), however, had quite different analysis for social constructions that are considered in depth in what follows.

In taking up Goffman's (1959, p. 26) definition of social interaction as 'the reciprocal influence of individuals upon another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence', I have to consider his interactionist/ dramaturgical perspective. According to Goffman (1959), social interactions are very similar to dramaturgical performances onstage. In interacting with other people in the social world, individuals adopt different social roles in relation to other teams of actors and constantly attempt to manage the impressions others might receive of them. This involves projecting a certain image of themselves by manipulating the setting, appearance, and manner. In other words, we continually wear contextual masks in everyday life; behave in an oppositional way or conceal our feelings for different reasons. For instance, the traditions of an individual's group, their role or social status necessitate a particular kind of expression to 'fit in' to society. Sometimes individuals seek to benefit their audience or ultimately their own personal goals because they are likely to be interested in obtaining a specific response from them. Simultaneously the audience attempt to ascribe meaning to the individual actor and their performance by giving a definition to the situation. Put differently, misunderstanding or misinterpretations of the other's meanings is likely to happen although the actor may or may not be inclined to convey such an impression. All in all, these performances communicate meaning and impressions to ourselves and to others, defining our identity in a specific situation.

Ultimately one can learn from Goffman's theory that in order to get to an understanding of people true selves, we need not to merely engage with them in their front stage- where they know they are being watched and act accordingly- but rather to interact with them in their backstage region- where they are more relaxed as they stop performing and relinquish the roles they formally perform in front region-. Therefore, in order not to be perceived as a member of an audience or get answers that could just be a performance put on for my benefit, I employed a research methodology that permit me achieve my goals, to which I now turn.

4.3 Research Design

In the previous section I argued that for a better understanding of the world we inhabit, we have to live in it (Weinberg, 2008). Now we shall see how this has been translated into the strategy of inquiry or methodology- '[the] larger entities in the research approach'- and the methods of collecting- 'the smaller things that we do to carry out investigation'- I employed to conduct this research (Holliday, 2016, p. 13). The bulk of the discussion in this section then falls into two parts. The first part aims at providing an account of the methodological approach adopted with an emphasis on the rationale behind the employment of ethnography. The second part describes the methods used which mainly include fieldwork observations, interviews, and visuals.

4.3.1 Why ethnography?

The aim of the present study was to understand how ideologies influence the early childhood education and care daily practice in the Algerian context. Attending to such question appeared to require a methodology that can capture a holistic picture of the daily experiences of nurseries in this very specific social context. Reading the literature surrounding ethnography alongside my own experience in conducting it reinforced my conviction of its suitability for answering my research questions. In what follows I seek to justify my choice of ethnography and explain how relevant it was to my research.

4.3.1.1 Ethnography inspired

Before delving into the focal points of ethnographic principles, it is important to point out to what I am taking the term 'ethnography' to mean. At the outset, it should be mentioned that the various origins of ethnography and its use in different disciplines brought complexity in outlining a well-defined meaning of the concept (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). However, many scholars, for example Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), highlighted the essence of ethnography while recognising that their definitions do not encompass all its meaning in all contexts. It is generally agreed that ethnography involves 'direct and sustained contact with human agents, within the context of their daily lives (and cultures), watching what happens, listening to what it is said, asking questions, and producing a richly written account that respects the irreducibility of human experience' (O'Reilly, 2005, p. 3). Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 3) add 'in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry'. In other words, the goal of ethnography is to grasp what the world is like to people and their vision of it (Malinowski, 1922 in Spradley, 1979). Therefore, ethnographers concern themselves with 'learning from people' rather than 'studying people' (Spradley, 1979, p. 3). However, it would be naïve to think of ethnography

only in those terms. It is in fact more than that. Before addressing what *the more than that* implicate, it is worth reiterating the rationale for my methodological choice in this context.

The underpinning principles that ethnography is based upon seem to be of relevance to my research. First, ethnographic research is deeply committed to *understanding* human interpretive meaning making processes and this clearly mirrors what I intended to do. Second, a key element of ethnographic work is *discovery.* I therefore considered the importance of the initially exploratory nature of ethnography which makes its research design flexible (open for some 'trial and error'), and unstructured in that the immersion within the field of study allows the themes of research to be embedded in the data rather than being guided by predetermined theories (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Another foundation stone of ethnography is *naturalism*. And it is to a critical examination of this assumption that the following lines emphasise.

Naturalism takes the premise that researchers should study the social world in its natural settings (rather than 'artificial' or manipulated settings) as very much the same way anthropologists used to conduct their ethnographic enquiries. A central aim for naturalist ethnographers is to describe human experience, social behaviour, and action as it naturally occurs in everyday activity without any disturbance or interference from their part (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Naturalism is hence very much like positivism in that they both in their very essence objectify and marginalise the role of researchers treating them as separate from the research. The arguments against naturalistic inquiry's premise rests on two assumptions. The first criticism attends to a rejection of the realist impulses in naturalism (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). In other words, like positivism, naturalism limits the role of social research to that of representing the characteristics and occurrences of social phenomena. The second assumption will be discussed later in this chapter in regard to reflexivity.

The problem that seems to occur with the practice of ethnographic study is inclinations to characterise 'the other'. Edward Said's seminal work on 'Orientalism' engendered some evolutions in the conduct of ethnography (such as collaborative ethnography) (Gergen, 2015). On the other hand, ethnographic research still carries with it inconclusive tensions between the naturalistic realism and constructionist agendas as their analytic orientations vary. This point would lead us to a discussion of constructionists' sensibilities in ethnographic research.

4.3.1.2 Rethinking ethnography: Constructionist Ethnographic foci

Given that naturalistic ethnography seemed not to correspond with my aims of doing research and my positionality, I adopted an ethnographic methodology with a different perspective. An ethnography that moves beyond naturalistic description of daily experience and which centres

itself on 'constructive actions more than on objects' and on 'reality-constituting practices more than on the realities themselves' (Holstein and Gubrium, 2008, p. 375). It is constructionist ethnography thus that resonates strongly with my research approach epistemologically and ontologically.

Holstein and Gubrium (2008) explained that whereas naturalistic ethnographers are deeply concerned with only describing social reality by inquiring 'what is going on?' with and within it, constructionist ethnographers describe social realities but also attempt to reflect upon them by questioning how they are socially created in the first place. This means that whilst constructionist fieldworkers still retain a common interest of naturalists' attention to capture the details of settings and their goings-on, they are less troubled with the dynamics of social realities but very much concerned with the construction of these realities in everyday life.

Instead of considering what participants say as mere conveyances of events and then claim to discern the meanings they make about their lives like naturalists do, constructionist ethnographers treat the actual 'talk-in-interaction' as a means to construct field realities (Holstein and Gubrium, 2008). In very down-to-earth terms, constructionist ethnography studies socially situated discourse and language use with intent focus on linguistic activity or communication *in situ* by asking most generally what social actors 'do with words' in their everyday talk. Throughout my fieldwork period, I had not only watched but also especially listened to the daily discursive activities and interactional communicative processes through which early childhood educators '*manifested'* ideologies (for example through songs and cultural artefacts). With this in mind, I had to follow ethnographic data generation methods with a constructionist agenda as suggested by Holstein and Gubrium (2008) to allow for the collection of 'indigenous discursive detail' and data to the greatest extent possible. And now to a discussion of these practical field procedures I turn.

4.3.2   Research methods

This section highlights the ways in which my methods are best placed to answer my research questions and how each research method illuminates the other. My humble experience in conducting this ethnographic enquiry had taught me that it is unnecessary to classify social research methods into typologies especially when conducting ethnography. This, as put forward by Holliday (2016), brings up the issue of oversimplification. It is difficult to think always of observations or interviews in terms of participant or non-participant, structured, semi-structured or unstructured. They are indeed more than limiting them into hard categories. Interviews in ethnography, for example, can be more 'structured', directive, or strategic at the outset when asking specific questions about demographic data for all participants or towards the end of the fieldwork when checking inferences stemming from the ongoing analysis. They

usually take 'semi-structured' form, but they are relatively 'unstructured' as in informal conversations (Hamersley and Atkinson, 2007). With this in mind, the nature of my research methods seems to be best explained in terms of constructionist techniques including constructionist interviews, observations, and documents. The specifics of how these three data generation methods were used for this study are outlined below.

4.3.2.1 Fieldwork observations

Observation was the primary method of constructing this ethnographic research. My presence as a researcher was completely overt. My participants were informed that I am a researcher, and they are being observed. I did not merely make observations but I was attempting to experience directly and closely the lives of my research participants and engage in the typical activities of the specific social situation that I was in as much as possible. Although that exactly what makes up participant observation (Spradley, 1980; Bernard, 2006), the degree of involvement with my participants and with the activities I observed varied and that was largely determined by the nature of the setting. In a fundamental sense, I was not completely under the control of my field roles as an ethnographer. I was sometimes an observer only, taking notes and watching the activities. It was hardly ever to become a complete participant as I could not be positioned as an early childhood educator. The three different nurseries did not offer me the same opportunity to participate in a natural way and this has consequently added to my experience in conducting ethnography. It is thus irrelevant, in my case, to categorise my role into what scholars call types of participant observation. Spradley (1980), for example, identified five types of participation that ranges along this continuum: nonparticipation, passive, moderate, active, and complete participation. Not only that there is no clear-cut distinction between these types, but they also suggest that the researcher's role can either be this or that which is restricting. I next substantiate how I found the conduct of observations helpful.

Observations have proved to be manifold in their usefulness. First, they yielded unanticipated behaviours and events and thus allowed me to obtain a first-hand account of the daily activities in the nurseries (Cohen *et al.*, 2018; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Moreover, given that 'what people do may differ from what they say they do' (Roberson, 2002, p. 310 quoted in Cohen et al., 2018), observations were indispensable to compare between what was said and what was done in practice (Patton, 2015). Furthermore, they generated important themes that I further discussed in interviews. Being both an insider and outsider observer (see section 4.6.3) was also useful to consider what my participants might have not noticed routinely in their settings (Patton, 2015). More importantly, observations gave me an opportunity to get to 'the feeling of what is it like to be there, in that place, doing those things,

with those people' (Patton, 2015, p. 335) and therefore to experiencing contextual sensitivity, little judgement and empathy. I did not only observe things but also developed an intellectual and emotional understanding of my participants and their environment.

Observations entailed watching almost everyone everywhere. They took place in the 'classrooms', canteens, play areas, reception, and communal areas within the nursery especially when parents come to collect their children. Although I did not consciously search these out, they were not actually divorced from my interests. 'Such peripheral data serves to connect the core setting with the important context of a wider society, community or history, in respect to which it is of course not peripheral, thus enabling the critical sociological imagination' (Holliday, 2016, p. 40). Indeed, they yielded unforeseen sources of data. They were data in their own right. Fieldnotes lied at the core of recording my observational (and interview) data and I next talk about this process more fully.

Keeping field notes was useful to understand what I have been observing in the first place. They had become an interpretative tool that fuelled my sense making of things that happened around me. They enhanced my own reflections and thinking about the 'whole' context, including why and what people say and do (for example, the nonverbal communication like tone and facial expressions during interviews). This consequently enabled me 'to participate in new ways, to hear with greater acuteness, and to observe with a new lens' (Emerson *et al.* 2011, p. 19). The writing of fieldnotes, both during actual observations and after returning home or at the bus through memory (given the impossibility to always capture or scribble everything immediately), empowered my authorial voice as a researcher in two ways. On the one hand, I represent my participants' experiences and concerns through *my* person and perspectives. On the other hand, through the compositional choices I make about how to convey meanings (Emerson *et al.* 2011). Such written account constituted the basis raw data from which my study findings eventually emerged.

As the fieldwork progresses, the notes become more intense, targeted, and selective. What emerged in the setting helped me accentuate the focus of my observation. What I previously thought was insignificant and irrelevant to my research, began to take on new meaning. With the course of getting to know the routines and activities of the nurseries, I went through reflexive moments on any occasion in situ and later. I recorded my own perceptions and made some initial reflections about the many occurrences including my personal relationship to the site and its people. Such reflexive processes, according to Jeffrey, 2018, p. 150), 'is one way in which researchers can meet and deal with their "bias"... [and they become the major] research instrument'. This gradually helped me to start writing what Jeffrey (2018) terms reflective field notes, where I critically examine ideas and theories and attempt

to relate them to my data and my subjective reactions with what I was observing. However, it is important to recognise that conducting observations is not without limitations or challenges.

It was especially challenging during the early days of my fieldwork[17] when I did not know where I should begin, what to focus on and which actors to shadow. To me anyone and anything had the potential to carry data. I made sure to adopt an unobtrusive role trying to make as little impact as possible. I had to work out where I should sit. I often sat at the back or front of the room but sometimes there was no spare place for me. That is not to say, however, that my presence had no important effect. I was well aware that my presence could affect how I interpreted what people say in interviews and how this led me to see things differently in observations (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). I used always to begin with writing the date, the number of children and make some drawings about the structure of the nursery. I described the context and social relations in it: for example, how my participants used to greet each other. My fieldnotes also covered some inscriptions about what Emerson *et al.* (2011) called 'the sometimes-inchoate understandings and insights'. Initially, my observations were clearly exploratory and my fieldnotes were mainly descriptive and wide in their scope.

Another challenging aspect is that observations necessitate some acuteness in taking decisions about tiny details. For example, my initial plan was to make sure whenever possible to arrive very early in the morning and leave when the staff of the nursery do to get hold of a full image of the scene. But I could not achieve that constantly since I am not habitually an early riser person. To be there at 8 am or before meant that I had to get up early, get to the bus station for half an hour drive. In the evenings, the staff used to stay until very late hours and by that time I felt almost burn out, especially at the outset when it took me some time to adapt to the nurseries' noise. I even experienced having migraine for the first time ever in my life.

A further issue occurred when my participants stared exploiting my presence. Once in the Quranic school, the director of the institution popped in. My participants asked me to give him a good impression about their work. In the private nursery, an early childhood educator wanted me to take over her role for some minutes to go get a coffee, but the manager insisted for this not to happen again.

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[17] I remember the first day of my research fieldwork in each setting; I attracted all people' attention especially children when they all direct their gaze towards me before my presence became normalised.

A different challenge that occurred to me was when some participants wanted to know what I am all the time jotting down. For instance, I vividly remember one day I was recording notes, and Noudi was so curious to know what that I am writing. She came near me and bowed her head. I was writing the song they were reiterating in Arabic and luckily, I wrote all important analytic notes in English. From that time whenever they sing a song, she repeats it to me in a bid to help me in my research. If it was a test, I appeared to have passed it. I also had to encounter the issue of managing 'loitering' and waiting around at the nap time. I however learnt to use that time to write my reflections of the occurrences. All the above-mentioned challenges helped me to enrich my data in the first place and increased my confidence as a researcher.

Observations of social media, mainly Facebook, became a supplementary observation station in my ethnographic research and a rich source of socially relevant data. This started when I have been added by one of my participants to different Facebook groups (a group of early childhood educators, a group of nursery managers, and another group of parents). I did not realise at first that such platforms could be any sort of data for my study until I started reflecting on what I observed and heard in real world with what is presented in these virtual groups. I then decided to amend my ethics application and I obtained the approval to use Facebook data in my research, which were all translated in the form of fieldnotes. They were extremely important as other methods especially after I exited the field. At times, I felt the need to get back to the field to get more specific information about certain things. However, due to Covid19, all nurseries were closed for a very long period in Algeria. The Facebook posts, reactions and comments were thus significant in linking my participants' behaviours and accounts with the larger community of practice and in making sense of my data. They also helped me exemplify the instances that I observed better in visuals as the data chapters number five, and six display. They indeed contributed to construct social reality.

While observation provided information about behaviour, interviewing granted access to understanding 'the context of people's behaviour, and thereby the meaning of that behaviour' (Seidman, 2006, p. 10). Although questions have been raised about how possible it is for researchers to understand others perfectly, what it should be accentuated here is the importance of context for meaning (Elliot Mishler, 1979 in Seidman, 2006). As acts in which social meaning making is co-facilitated, interviews were another primary source of data in this study as substantiated in the following subsection.

4.3.2.2 Interviewing

The social ways of knowing entail social interactions which are paramount contexts for knowledge exchange. Interviewing, in Kvale's (2007, p. 21) words, is 'literally an inter-view,

an inter-change of views' and thus are sites of knowledge and reality construction. The social constructionist perspective adopted in this research which holds that knowledge is co-constructed necessitates a socially constructed character of interviews as advocated by Ljungberg (2008).

A social constructionist framing of the research interview changes conventional notions of interviews in that it moves away from independent or individual responses, researcher-driven, predetermined, and predictable ideas to polyvocality of knowing (Ljungberg, 2008). Put differently, the interviewer's interest is not confined to examining the interviewees' knowledge or experience of something. Alternatively, both researcher and researched are not external actors in knowledge production; they engage in dialogue and learn from one another to actively share and jointly construct information. Ljungberg (2008, p. 443) explained that since each of the participant and the researcher 'carries sociocultural and political consequences of constructed knowledge', they express themselves as 'individuals located in a socially constructed setting from situated perspectives'. From this viewpoint, constructionist/qualitative interview is a purposeful conversation and an interactional event (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, 2003 in Ljungberg, 2008), during which negotiation is necessary for transcending potential differing worldviews and social asymmetries (Ljungberg, 2008). The rationale and the way I employed interviews is discussed below.

I deployed in-depth, open-ended interviews. The interviews were conducted person-to- person to provide opportunity for each participant to respond comfortably. At the start of each interview, I also ascertained that my participants understand that there is no right or wrong answer. The average interview length ranged approximately between ninty mintues to two hours conducted separately. I explained to my participants at each interview that the audio-recordings are used only for (verbatim) transcriptions to aid in the analysis of data. Indeed, they warranted an elaborated reconstruction of what has discursively occurred (Holstein and Gubrium, 2008). I was cognisant that participants could feel uncomfortable of being recorded. However, during the interviews the participants forgot that they were being recorded. I also respected that sometimes some participants wanted to be off record. The interview questions reflected my interests in uncovering the ways in which my participants select details of their experience and world, reflect on it and make sense of it; what Schultz (1967 in Seidman, 2006) calls their 'subjective understanding'. In other words, they focused on the meanings my participants made of their experience as it 'affects the way they carr[ied]out that experience' (Bulmer, 1969 in Seidman, 2006). They elicited information about my participants' daily and cultural practices.

During my fieldwork I started by some informal conversational interviews that took place haphazardly, or what Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) referred to as unsolicited 'naturally occurring' oral accounts. Participants gave me their consent to use such informal discussions as data, and they were even eager to provide more details. I recorded some of them using phone and I most of the time wrote notes on my phone or notebook at the first opportunity available. Such friendly two-way discussions were particularly useful. They first eschew the sort of generally perceived control in the usual one-way or researcher-led questioning. They also help to build rapport with participants and learn enough about them, their routine and situation. I found them useful evidence about my participants' discursive accounts and concerns. They further aid to formulate questions for subsequent formal interviews that took place at the end of my fieldwork.

Although I prepared beforehand a set of questions to be covered, I did not follow them rigidly. The interviewee's responses were a guide for asking sub-questions to clarify and expand their answers, allowing for a spontaneous generation of questions and then a natural flow of the interaction. Such ethnographic nature of interviewing offered flexibility and allowed participants agency to discuss what was important to them. However, to eschew feeling lost with unconnected pieces of information, retaining some control over the proceedings of the interview was needed. They were, further, powerful ways to gain insight into unobservable things such as feelings, thoughts, perspectives, and intentions (Patton, 2015). They also allowed covering events that occurred in the past as well as sensitive topics. The following are some measures I considered to ensure the interview experiences runs smoothly.

I was fully aware of the risk of malfunctioning equipment during the recording of data, but I was cautious that the recording on the phone was on. As a safety measure, I copied the transcripts, the printouts, photographs, signed consent forms etc., on an external memory stick with the idea that there are two copies of each raw data. Any subsequent modifications, additions or alterations were clearly identified and dated. I informed my family the location of the nursery and the time I should have been expected back. I wrote fieldnotes after each interview to contextualise the interview experience, and to record my analytic thoughts and information not captured on the audios. However, there were some other challenges inherent in using interviews.

Interviewing did not work as I expected. It was far more difficult than I had imagined it would be. Finding an adequate time and place was a rather complex procedure. I had originally planned to do interviews in the mornings and at their offices or restaurants or any calm places. However, all interviews took place inside the nurseries and often at noontime. My participants were busy due to various commitments related to their jobs. It was thus challenging to get hold

of them. I was only left with the opportunity of interviewing them at naptime when children go to sleep. However, educators sometimes used that time to rest, check their phones and sometimes end up with a nap as well. With some participants, I had to lay at a spare child's bed, switch on the audio recording and start the interview. On some occasions, I ended up taking a nap with them as well. I made the error of being overly polite and solicitous about seeking interviews. I did not want to appear over-insistent, so I tended to wait for a long time. I also felt guilty when I saw tiredness in their eyes because of their workload with children. Despite those challenges, interviews overall enabled me to answer my research questions that pertain to understanding how early childhood educators position themselves ideologically in nursery settings and how that impact their daily practices.

The educational, social, and cultural factors were crucial elements among others in developing my ideas around ideologies which are immensely connected to the context. Contexts fundamentally involved 'documentary constructions of reality' (Coffey and Atkinson 2004, in Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). In effect, I collected the materials that engendered during the conduct of my fieldwork. I also photographed some events and videoed a range of educational and social activities that made up the children and educators' experiences at the nurseries. Pictures, videos, text/class books, programme frameworks and cultural artefacts became another interesting aspect of my data as discussed below.

4.3.2.3 Documentary sources and cultural artefacts

As an ethnographer, I paid close and serious attention to the visual data that was a powerful key companion to the daily lives of children and educators. The term document is broadly used here to encompass any written records, physical or digital, public or personal, including visual images and popular media and other materials relevant to the study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Documents served different important functions that other forms of data could not provide. Indeed, they were valuable resources for understanding the three different settings and their wider context (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). They did not only supplement observations and interviews, but they also aided in the presentation and substantiation of my findings and in the identification of how children and early learning were described in these documents. They can even allow tracking change or development of a phenomenon.

The architectures of the nurseries' buildings, the soft furnishings and fittings, the collection, selection and display of objects, colour schemes and décor of each site that were open to the gaze of the passing stranger were integral to the organisation of my participants' everyday living. The early childhood educators' clothes (wearing white aprons and white nurse shoes and the Kabyle dresses worn at special occasions such as Mawlid (the celebration of the Prophet's Birthday) were also co-authors in the making up of their selves and the construction

of their identities. In light of that, I had to step outside my 'thinking-as-usual' about these familiar objects and start 'asking ethnographic questions'. It was also important to engage my attention to 'what the document *does* and *projects* rather than the information it provides' (Holliday, 2016, p. 78, emphasis in original). This is therefore an understanding that these cultural artefacts were not simply there as part of their everyday functions, they were deeply implicated in 'the *physical representation of the* [nursery] *as a culture, how* [it] wants to present itself in terms of image, values, [and] ideology' (Holliday, 2016, p. 78, emphasis in original). All that invoked in me (as a stranger) a sense to myself (the researcher) and to others (the educators) and played a part in conveying ideological thinking that was embodied even in small acts of their everyday social life. However even if documents are sometimes free, easy to access and take less time and effort to collect compared to other forms of data, considerable care is needed when dealing with documentary data for reasons outlined below.

Linders (2008) provided a detailed account of the potential issues of employing documents. The problem of availability of documents lied at the core of these challenges. This relates to the methods on which to locate particular documents that pertain to the research questions posed. My strategy was using anything I managed to obtain for collecting enough and rich information and for learning about the context. Other problems include missing documents, never produced documents, and inaccessible documents (due to language constraints or restricted access). Linders (2008) further asserts that abundance of data from one source does not always compensate for data gaps from another source. In dealing with such issues, a determination of what and why information is missing or restricted in the first place is necessary as this becomes a methodological problem in affecting the analysis and conclusions drawn on the basis of missing data. Such determinations are in part linked to the distribution of power to produce or preserve resources in a given social setting (Linders, 2008). In effect, this pertains to my research. When I headed to the Directorate of Social Action and Solidarity '*Direction de l'Action Sociale et de la Solidarité (DASS)*' as a mediating institution storing documents related to early childhood education in Algeria, there existed no official policy document/guidance regarding ECE provision in Algeria during the conduct of my fieldwork. '*Le cahier de charge*' available seems to be uninformative. This in itself should tell something about the context (Guba and Lincoln, 1981 cited in Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Another notable methodological problem is linked to truth-related and credibility issues of documents that are worth devoting an in-depth discussion.

Constructionist research is not persuasively committed to problematising the 'truth value' the way non-constructionist research is deeply troubled with the parallelism between the apparent reality portrayed in textual or visual accounts of data and that reality itself. Indeed,

the existence of true and unbiased reality is denied in the realm of constructionism. In this vein, I concur with Linders (2008) that documentary data are skewed in a way or in another. Our intention as constructionists is far away from providing an objective description of the world from biased accounts in a process of social construction. This said, the identification and management of potential biases and inaccuracies inherent in documents is nevertheless needed. This can be achieved through an examination of who produced the document, how, for what purposes, under what conditions and constraints, and the intended audience as they can all affect the content and structure of documents (Linders, 2008; BERA ethical guidelines for educational research, 2018). However, the bias is not only associated with the document itself but with the researcher as well in the case of a biased selection of documentary data or the decision of where to point the camera when taking ethnographic photographs. In parallel with this, then, managing subjectivity is equally applicable to both visual and descriptive data substituting 'what is seen' by 'what is read' (Holliday, 2016).

After a thorough discussion of my research design, I now should move on to the practicality of my fieldwork which is outlined in what follows.

4.4 Data generation[18]

The data generation of this study occurred over a three-month period between November 2019 and February 2020. I spent nearly a month in each of the three preschool settings on an everyday basis, except on weekends and public holidays. This time allowed me to gain a deep knowledge and an in depth understanding of the shared ideologies among early childhood educators through the diverse activities they employed in their settings and especially through the daily unpremeditated *natural* incidences.

In this section I take you through my data generation process beginning by how I gained access to the three different sites and ending by how I physically left them. Within the same section, I explain the research context, my gatekeepers and participants, and the axiological considerations in conducting this research.

4.4.1 Sites' selection

This subsection discusses how decisions have been made in regard to the *choices* of the three different types of childhood reception centres.

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[18] Although I give preference to the term "information generation" instead of "data collection", I use both in a broad and inclusive way in this study to emphasise how a researcher intentionally and actively arranges and creates empirical situations that produce qualitative data rather than only or simply collecting and gathering 'ready-at hand' (already existing) data (Goldkuhl, 2019). 'While easily gatherable data may exist' (Goldkuhl, 2019, p. 577), in qualitative research, researchers see the concept of data collection as problematic since it may presuppose that the process of 'information generation' is a mechanical mapping process.

The research sites were three early childhood education institutions. All of them are located in the same city (to avoid breach of confidentiality and anonymity, the geographical locations and names of preschool sites; identities and personal information of all the participants are kept confidential and anonymous). The city is a growing big town of population estimated at 150. 335 in 2022 based on the city government's website. I chose this particular city for practical considerations: it is my hometown, its proximity to the house where I live with my family, the availability of transportation means, and mixed social intake which increased the likelihood of offering a diverse ideological thinking.

As I have made clear so far in this chapter, attempts to restrict qualitative research in general and qualitative sampling more specifically into categories might lead to oversimplifications. I found it unsuitable to categorise my *choice* of settings in terms of *non-probability*, *purposeful/criterion sampling* or *convenient sampling* as the question was more about what Holliday (2016) calls *opportunism*. I concur with him that 'the choice of social setting is determined very much by opportunity…the question is rarely one of choice between opportunities, but how far available opportunities fulfil valid qualitative research criteria', and that 'the researcher is led to research whatever is there; and it is the subsequent surprise of discovery that makes the experience all the more poignant' (Holiday, 2016, p. 88). In my experience, that was so true in the sense that the types of sites and data to be collected were undecided before entering the field, they in effect arose or emerged from the social settings themselves. All what I had to give full attention to is getting myself into settings which 'are sufficiently rich for data to emerge' (Holliday, 2016, p. 81). The following is evidence of how my intentions were so different from actuality that made me 'go with the flow'; a flow which was very much led by opportunity.

Intentions and actuality

Doing fieldwork requires a great amount of flexibility and readiness for deviations no matter how one is well prepared. It is my experience that I had to put aside my intended plan to conduct this study in three sites located in different cities of Algeria. Once I thought that maximum variation in sampling would enable me to identify important dimensions of interest that could be common across the diversity (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). Nonetheless, my initial explorations within the field led me to find out that within the same city there is much to discover. It is here when my journey to data generation began to take shape. Because the choice of each nursery had led itself to me by opportunity and each of them had a different administrative culture, I prefer to talk about each one per se.

After many trials to negotiate access with nursery owners, I had several disappointing refusal situations accompanied with expressions like '*I am sick …sorry… I cannot get what*

you want', '*why my nursery*!', '*sorry, I am currently having another intern in my nursery*'. Hearing these expressions made me think that I might have failed to gain their trust and conceivably due to their little knowledge of social research, they were (quite rightly!) suspicious about me. Overnight at a meeting with my MA supervisor back in Algeria, he asked me about my research and explained my struggle to gain access to nurseries. It coincided that his sister works at a nursery, and he promised to liaise with her in this regard. At that point, I felt that luck started to knock my door. He gave me her phone number and the address of the nursery she works in. I could not catch her in phone, so I only left with heading to the location. As I came nearby the place, I saw a woman waiting at the gate and I asked her whether this is a nursery as I could not find anything that indicated so. She said that this is a Quranic school and that if I am planning to register my child, I would make the best choice. She went on to say that her child is enrolled in there and she is so happy with the service they provide as her child come to memorise the Quran and learn a great deal of things. She also mentioned that the enrolment fees are decent. I asked her the way to get in and she showed me the other gate. I entered the building suspiciously as it did not look like a nursery at all. But that feeling soon vanished when I heard children voices reciting the Quran. The door man approached me and asked for the reason I was there. After explaining to him that I am a researcher, he recommended that is the Quranic school section. I met the manager of the Quranic school and by providing an account of my research, the consent form (appendix 2 and 7) and the participant information sheet (appendix 3 and 8), I got his approval. He asked me to bring a photocopy of my identity card and a request letter written in Arabic to the director of the institution (appendix 6 and 9). He welcomed me and took me to meet the early childhood educators including the sister of my MA supervisor.

On my way back to home, I realised that my initial plan did not include such type of settings. By thinking deeply and carefully about the aims of my research that were mainly to unpick the ideologies embedded in early childhood education provision in Algeria, I came to a decision that such type of nursery can provide me with an experience from which the best can be learned.

For the private nursery, the manager's emphasis that her nursery "*ce n'est pas donné à tout le monde*" (fieldnotes, #Pvt. N) perhaps best translated to English as "not available to everyone" rose my interest in conducting my research in such type of setting. For the public nursery, I felt that being a different type of setting would lead to interesting data.

A full description of the three nursery settings along with a typical day within each of them is provided in appendix eleven. In what follows I give information about my gatekeepers and participants in addition to how I gained access to the research settings.

4.4.2 Gatekeepers and participants' recruitment

Identifying the actors with the power to permit or obstruct access to the nursery settings was a key element of the 'sociological knowledge about the setting' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 50). Such task was not as difficult as I had previously thought. It was actually carried out by different personnel in the three different sites. In the Quranic school, the manager, the man in charge of the administrative expenses and who had a mainly supervisory role, was a key mediator between me and the director of the institution. In the other two nurseries the managers/the owners of the nursery were my main gatekeepers and also my main participants.

Studying large organisations such as nurseries made the selection of participants an extremely challenging and complicated issue to me. I did not simply often have the time to interview all the early childhood educators in all the three nurseries. I had thus to cull a sample of them. In such circumstances, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) suggest for ethnographers to 'target the people who have the knowledge desired and who may be willing to divulge it to the ethnographer' and to 'draw on assumptions about the social distribution of knowledge and about the motives of those in different roles' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 106). Having said that, choosing interviewees is highly dependent on the researcher's 'best judgements' and their ability to 'revise these judgements on the basis of experience' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 108). Therefore, as I did not know any of my participants previous to data generation, I made sure to allow enough and adequate time for me to get to know the role that each of my participant occupied in the nursery before deciding on the main participants to formally interview. The following table provides the people found in each of the nursery institution excluding the cooks, security agents and others.

Quranic School		Nursery B **Private Nursery**		Nursery C **Public Nursery**	
Main participants	Peripheral participants	Main participants	Peripheral participants	Main participants	Peripheral participants
Nadjia Tema Emma	Lamia Sabrina Noudi	Sacha	Nabila, Zahra, Bichou, Linda, Ferrie	Hanna, Farah, and Bissam	Mamia, Sofia, Salha, and Amel

	Malek				

Table 4.1 Participants in each setting

In the early stages of my fieldwork, I targeted individuals who seemed to fall within the broad category of 'early childhood educator'. As the study gradually progressed and based on the fieldwork observations and the many informal conversations that took place prior to the formal interviews, I was able to locate people who can uncover knowledge that could inform my research. The study involved seven main participants with whom I conducted several formal interviews and thirteen peripheral participants with whom I engaged in many fruitful conversations and informal interviews. Pseudonyms were assigned to the main participants as: Nadjia, Tema, Emma, Sacha, Hanna, Farah, and Bissam. The pseudonyms given to the peripheral participants are Lamia, Sabrina, Malek, Noudi, Nabila, Zahra, Bichou, Linda, Ferrie, Mamia, Sofia, Salha, and Amel. It is evident that all my participants were females, and this is another reference to the specifics of early childhood education in Algeria, where predominantly women occupy such role. The table below summarises the profiles and biographic information of the main participants (whom I conducted formal interviews with).

Nadjia (Quranic school, preparatory classroom)	Nadjia is 48 years old. She has 29 years of experience in working with young children. She has got a secondary education level. She had received no training.
Tema (Quranic school, preliminary classroom)	Tema is 46 years old with 19 years of experience of working with young children. She has got a secondary education level. Unlike Nadjia, Tema received some kind of training.
Emma (Quranic school, preliminary classroom)	Emma is 49 years old. She started her job as an early childhood educator in 1991. She has got a secondary education level. She received the same training as Tema.
Sacha (the manager at the private nursery)	Sacha is the owner and manager of her newly- opened private nursery. She is 40 years old. She has a baccalaureate and paramedic science degree. She worked as a midwife for twelve years. She is the mother

	of two sons and has no prior experience working at a nursery. Her main role is to supervise early childhood educators and make sure everything is running smoothly in the nursery.
Hanna (the manager at the public nursery 'her newly assigned job')	Hanna is forty years old. She has got a secondary education level, an IT certificate, and a certificate in special needs education. The latter had been obtained by attending a training course for two years.
Farah (Public nursery, preparatory classroom)	Farah is 25 years old. She has got a secondary education level and an early childhood education certificate accredited by an official public institution. The certificate had been obtained by enrolling in a two-year training course and a six-month traineeship. She has now two years of experience in working as an early childhood educator.
Bissam (Public nursery, preliminary classroom)	Bissam is 26 years old. She has got a secondary education level and an early childhood education certificate accredited by a private institution. She has also got an IT certificate.

Table 4.2 Participants' information

The decision for excluding the peripheral participants from formal interviews is justified not only by the unavailability of time and the impossibility of interviewing them all but also on other grounds. For example, all the early childhood assistants in the Quranic school (Lamia, Sabrina, Malek, and Noudi) occupied temporarily this job. In other words, they did not identify themselves as early childhood educators. In the private nursery I was not allowed to formally interview any early childhood educator but the manager. In the third nursery, I did not feel the need to interview the assistants that their role mainly involved taking care of babies under three years old. However, I engaged in depth informal conversations with all of them which yielded and abundant amount of interesting data. Because of the importance of negotiation in the whole process of data generation, the forthcoming subsection tries to provide evidence of this step in my study.

4.4.3 Negotiating access and establishing relationships: It is all about trust

Gaining access was not a simple matter of providing gatekeepers a paper of consent form and participant information sheet. I had to request my funding body (The Algerian ministry of Higher education) to issue an attestation (see Appendix 10) which proved the credibility of my research in the eyes of my gatekeepers. My persona and interpersonal skills also helped me to get the gatekeepers approval. Moreover, my 'biography' as an Algerian government-funded PhD researcher at a UK university was a bonus; a card I had to play often in order to obtain access. Notwithstanding, securing entrée to the settings through gatekeepers by no means guaranteed access to all the relevant sources available within it. Negotiation was a recurrent preoccupation for me. I had to skilfully negotiate and renegotiate access with all early childhood educators of each nursery as I anticipated that they could feel powerless into making decisions about participation just because the manager/ director agreed to be involved in my research. I successfully mitigated that through my ethical practices by giving consent letters to all my participants, as well as asking throughout my engagement with them if they were still happy to be part of the research. They were informed continuously throughout the process of data generation that their participation is voluntary. There seemed to be, as far I know, no objections or any complaints about my presence.

Developing ethical relations is likely to take considerable time for any ethnographer (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). In the early stages of my data generation period, I received impressions of suspicion or espionage when their eyes followed me almost very often, but that later dissipated when contact increased. They first considered me a government official or intruder and with time my presence became familiar. I always made sure to greet everybody and behave in a humble manner. This, I believe, is a skill that reduces tensions in human relationships in life not just in research. I always attempted to make my way through their group discussions as an icebreaker to enter their realm. I also showed interest in listening to their concerns, expressing the importance of their answers and significance of their voices in my research. Furthermore, I jumped at many opportunities in which I felt the need to relinquish the researcher role. I once helped in heating food for children in the Quranic school and once in scrubbing the floor as my participants were too busy, have workload and had interview schedule with me. Taking all these steps seemed to have helped me build trust and respect which were the core in maintaining good and comradery rapport with all my participants. It is worth noting that being a female researcher facilitated my relationship with participants. One can imagine how difficult it would be for a male to manage relationships in a setting where females predominate.

However, obstructive and facilitative relationships are to be expected (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) and this depended highly on the participants themselves. My case was no exception. I had been confronted with obstructive relationships. The manager in Nursery B (the private nursery), for instance, attempted always to draw lines and distance between herself and her employees and also between herself and me. This could perhaps be explained in terms of her work relationships predetermined plan or her personality. On the other hand, I had facilitative friendly relationships with almost all participants. We shared food together at lunchtimes throughout my whole presence in the nurseries due to their generosity and treating 'guests' with a high position as part of our culture and religion. On many occasions, I have been called a 'guest' probably to make me feel welcomed. If I go a little bit late to the nursery, one of my participants call me to inquire the reason for my lateness. Sometimes participants exploited my presence. This could be seen for example when one of my participants asked me to tell the manager that she is hard working and innovative in bringing new ideas to work with children.

It goes without saying that establishing good relationships in the field is a key factor in making research sustainable. I had to build strong relationships gradually and carefully with all personnel of the nursery even the cook in Nursery C. The cook always seemed to reveal that her role was not only cooking the meals for children and staff but also to spread out information to the manager about the nitty-gritty details of events that happened in the nursery. We often stumbled upon range of conversations which yielded answers to my curious questions. She even asked me to write about her in my thesis. Relationships in the field might sometimes develop into friendships with some participants. Noudi in the Quranic school became a friend of mine who could supply explanations to the many occurrences that I could not make sense of without her. Is this considered as an exploitation of participants? Something which, strictly speaking, the ethics committee had wanted me to avoid.

Ethically sound research depends on axiological considerations, ethics and aesthetics. The ethical principles that I considered in conducting my research are discussed at length in the next subsection.

4.4.4 Ethics

This subsection aims to discuss my approach to ethical procedures and issues that arose throughout the process of data generation. Notwithstanding, I should assert from the outset that such process was *messy* and involved certain improvisations. It was not easily foreseen and managed. Thus, this subsection does not hope to project the idea of an ideal or linear process.

Conducting research ethically is central to the goodness of any study. Ethics are broadly referred to as 'principles of conduct about what is right and wrong … [expecting that] what is right for the researcher may not be right for the participant' (Thomas, 2017, p. 37). That is, as researchers we ought to appraise the nature of our research activity in contemplation of furthering knowledge, accommodating the possibly conflicting interests of the researcher and the researched**.**

In line with Canterbury Christ Church University's research policy, I submitted a proposal to the education ethics committee before the start of my fieldwork along with supporting documents. These included information about the study and risks that could have been engendered by it as well as precautions taken to minimise their impact. The proposal elucidated in detail how I endeavoured to conduct this study to the standards conforming to ethical requirements of which 'selflessness, integrity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership' (Canterbury Christ Church University Code of Conduct, 2018, p. 2).

My ethics application was successful. It complied with the ethical procedures and guidelines outlined in documents set out for researchers by universities and professional and academic associations such as the British Education Research Association (BERA) (2018). No amendments were required except the consideration of one aspect of the language I have used in my information sheets, particularly where I referred to ideologies. This was plausibly over-academic for my participants and could have even deterred them from participation or possibly rendered the findings of the research. As recommend by the ethics committee, I simply explained my interest in talking to them about their views and experiences in early childhood education and care. I received my ethics approval letter in July 2019 (see Appendix 1). I later applied for ethics amendment to include Facebook data in my research and that has been approved.

However, engaging with this process was but the beginning. Ethics is complex and extends the administrative activity that stops when getting ethical clearance. Ethics is very much situational and relational, i.e., it involves values that inform the everyday decisions, practices, and actions in place for dealing with people in different situations. This 'ethical situationism' or 'ethical relativism', according to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), implies that the context dictates what is appropriate and not appropriate to a large extent. Indeed, different cultures and situations might require different procedures.

Nonetheless, I have been cautious to develop a research strategy that adhered to the general ethical considerations: informed consent, protecting privacy, minimising harm, avoiding deception and exploitation, treating people equitably and eschewing favouring or

discriminating against anybody (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Hammersley and Traianou, 2012). All those principles are discussed below.

4.4.4.1 Informed consent

Ethically, all direct or indirect participants need to be informed that research is going on. Their free and informed consent need to be sought and renegotiated over time. I conveyed clearly to my participants verbally and in the participants' information sheets and introductory letters (see appendix 4 and 5) the nature and aims of my study. I reiterated at the start of each interview the potential risks that might crop up during the interviews and/ or observations. This allowed them to make judgment or decision for themselves as to whether or not they wish to participate on the ground of respecting autonomy (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012). I reminded them of their right to withdraw from the research without justification and there would be no consequences; and their right to refuse answering any question about particular topics. I also explained that I should withdraw from the site and stop collecting data in case of any risk explained in the participant information sheet or asked to do so by a member of staff.

As written consent seems not to be suitable for all cultures (Habib, Richa, and Abou-Mrad, 2021; Tabbi, 2021), I decided to seek the early childhood educators' verbal consent first. At the end of my fieldwork, I required the consent form to be signed. Some of them had expressed straightforwardly wonder towards having to get their written consent. I also sought consent for photography which enabled me to interpret the practices regarding items that could not be gathered in note form. For young children, they considered me a 'teacher', an 'adult'; so, I always sought to distance my adult-self from children. Although it was difficult to explain to them why I was there, what a researcher is and what my research is about, I took every occasion to introduce myself to their guardians and sought their verbal consent. The decision about using oral declarations instead of written signed informed consent is justified in the following lines.

Many scholars point out the challenge of undertaking research in contexts where the notion and process of informed consent play out differently. The challenge, according to Marshall and Rossman (2016), lies in meeting the demands for the protection of participants required by universities and still respecting the cultural norms operating in the research settings. In the same vein, Farrimond (2014) states that 'the internalisation of the research world also means flexibility is required. In some cultures, if you ask people to sign your form, they might think you don't trust them' as detailed by Habib, Richa, and Abou-Mrad (2021) in their article 'challenges of the informed consent in some countries of the MENA region'. This was true in my case. The challenge I anticipated before data generation was the explanation of the ethical procedures and presentation of written informed consent. Informed consent is

sought in Algeria based on 'trust' and 'words'. Asking people to sign a written consent or have their oral consent recorded would not fit the Algerian context with some participants such as parents. First, it could seem rude to ask people to sign after giving their 'word' as this would signify lack of trust and disrespect and might also be considered offensive in Algerian culture. Second, it would have put some sort of power and pressure over participants as they might be suspicious about the whole notion of approval and sceptical in case felt obliged to sign a document that is not culturally accepted, to a 'stranger'. It is important to note that the oral/verbal consent is as equal as written consent. Therefore, informal conversations with my participants informed my decision regarding what could be the best way to gain informed consent. My ultimate goal was to follow the ethical procedure of my university through negotiation with my participants to respect the cultural and social norms of my country.

4.4.4.2 Protecting Privacy

In accordance with the data protection act (2018), some steps have been taken for ensuring and maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of participants and data. A first point is that all data gathered is being used for research purposes only. I encoded it by changing participants' names as well as the name of institutions to which they were affiliated and the regions in which they were situated. Moreover, electronic data (audio recordings and documentation) was stored carefully on a secure, password-protected computer. Writing any identifying information about participants on any published document, or data analysis summaries and manuscript drafts is refrained. Any identifying details or features were blurred. Furthermore, the interviews were held in private to prevent conversations to be overheard or disturbed.

Nonetheless, I made it clear to my participants that my commitment to confidentiality as a researcher may be overridden given my legal or moral duty to report incidents of harm, inappropriate treatment, or discrimination of children. This is in accordance with the BERA 2018's guidelines in which it is stated that 'researchers who judge that the agreements they have made with participants about confidentiality and anonymity will allow the continuation of illegal behaviour which has come to light in the course of the research should carefully consider making disclosure to the appropriate authorities…and they must be aware of these responsibilities' (BERA, 2018, pp. 25-26). I did not fortunately encounter such circumstances as they are most unusual. Despite that, my plan included that if any parental mistreatment of children was disclosed, I would have communicated it to the director/ manager of the setting to follow their procedures and policies, and if necessary, reported it to special units (child protection services). If it was caused by the early years staff members, which could present a professional/reputational risk for the setting itself, I would have discussed this with my

supervisor and reported it to the appropriate government oversight body (The Directorate of Social Activity).

4.4.4.3 Minimal Harm

Safeguarding my participants was a predominant concern to me. I was particularly aware to avoid disrupting or adding to any sort of distress in the course of my data generation process. Afraid of being judged, early childhood practitioners could feel embarrassed or confused while being observed, interviewed or audio recorded. I tried to minimise such emotional harm by ensuring that all my participants could conduct their daily practices and activities as usual without any discomfort. During interviews the participants seemed to forget that they were being recorded. I made it clear that the data is not used to make decisions about them. Put differently, I explained that I am not an authoritative expert aiming at evaluating them but a researcher observing to understand early childhood education practice. Moreover, adopting the role of a 'learner' as someone seeking knowledge to learn allowed me to show a sense of empathy and thus minimising any stress. I also put them on duty to report anything they might have not been happy with. Furthermore, should my presence have caused unease to any participant or interrupted the flow of the teaching and learning activities; I would have stopped taking notes/ recordings /photos or discontinued the study.

4.4.4.4 Avoiding Deception

As it might happen to any researcher, I have often been through some instances in which I found my participants' conduct incompatible with my own beliefs and values. Thus, I had to take decisions in place about how much self-disclosure is convenient. I had to retain my ideas unrevealed and not challenge theirs. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) indicated that in some situations researchers might even show agreement to what they disagree with. According to Hammersley 2005a (cited in Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) such toleration is presumably needful to ethnographic work. Sometimes nodding my head in maintaining flow in interviews, however, could have been construed as acceptance of my participant's views. Although I concur with Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) that such issues might not always imply gross deception, I would like to maintain that they are matters worthy to consider in the course of fieldwork.

4.4.4.5 Avoiding Exploitation

There are controversial views regarding offering reciprocity and the matter of exploitation of participants in research. Participants share information, time and they probably disclose personal matters about their lives without getting anything in return. Researchers might also offer 'exploitative friendship' in return for data (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007;

Hammersley and Traianou, 2012). Whilst I did not perceive this to be a problem in my case, I did tend to develop natural relationships in the field. I further argue that as far as nurturing 'friendships' in the field could be perceived as a way to extract information, it is by no means a strategy of 'faking of friendship or commodification of rapport'. Although I offered my participants no direct material benefits as I did not promise them so when seeking their consents, some of them expressed to me that taking part in my research was useful as it enabled them to reflect upon different matters.

Ethics put me always on duty. I constantly recognised moral responsibilities towards not only myself or my participants but also towards future research and other researchers as well as audiences. However, some ethical obligations were sometimes unattainable. There were several occasions in which conversations were overheard due to challenges related to interviewing (see, 4.3.2.2). Similarly, some principles were sometimes conflicted necessitating a trade-off. By way of example, I had to prioritise minimising potential harm to children and infringe or violate their personal autonomy by insisting that their guardians should give permission of participation on their behalf.

My ethical position was based on Hammersley and Traianou (2012)'s argument that the ethnographer's prime concern should be the effective pursuit of enquiry. This however, Hammersley and Traianou (2012) continue to argue, appears to carry with it various meanings given the variety of research goals on the ground that some researchers aim not only at the pursuit of knowledge per se but rather their interest fall in promoting social justice or bringing about some sort of educational improvement. I am in agreement with Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) that adhering to 'genuine ethical ideals' or absolute rules 'ethical absolutism' can sometimes be problematic and thus disregarded.

In conclusion, I wish to argue that the above did not aim to communicate how ethically-informed my research was, it rather hopes to demonstrate how I developed an integration of both the ethical principles mentioned earlier and my own understanding or 'common sense' virtue vis-à-vis research. On the whole, I conducted my study in Algeria, and I committed myself to follow the ethical guidelines of Canterbury Christ Church University to represent its international reputation, and that of my nation and myself professionally.

'It is easy for close relationships to be forged during research and these should not be terminated abruptly' (Thomas, 2017, p. 50). Therefore, to a consideration of how I managed my exit from the field and ended the research relationships with participants the following subsection outlines.

4.4.5 Exiting the field

For every beginning there is an end. However, this does not usually apply to social research. It is very difficult to end relationships especially with participants without whom research can never be achieved. Participants who we attempted hardly to build relationships with throughout the period we spend in the field. Notwithstanding, leaving the field, at least for me, did not mean a complete termination of all the relationships that I established with my participants. I still keep some contact with some of them as friends or as acquaintances as I expected to return to them for follow-up interviews for example. Facebook facilitated maintaining these relationships as we exchange messages, likes, reactions, and comments from time to time through social media platforms. Some of my participants especially in the pandemic period of Covid-19 (2020) frequently text and call me to express their concerns for me being far from home. This indicates the extent to which I had developed *good* relationships in the field. I got genuinely used to being part of the daily routines and activities of my participants and that was probably reciprocal. With every goodbye there were expressions like 'we got used to you', 'you will be missed', 'don't forget us… come to visit us', 'good luck in your research', 'stay in touch', and the like. In most instances bidding farewell to every site and participants carried with it a mixed feeling of some oddness and some sadness on the ground that I would, at least to some extent, turn back into a stranger. But I should admit that at some point I felt relief when I bade adieu to the fieldwork because it was a laborious experience for me, and I had to arrange for my flight back to the UK and mainly to think of the writing up of my research.

When the fieldwork came to an end, the managers in the first and second settings asked me to write a report of my investigation in their sites, which I was not expecting at all. I asked them what it should comprise, and it seemed that they wanted me to summarise what I come up with. Although I acutely explained that I would be happy to share my findings (as I indicated in the Participant Information Sheet) after completing my PhD or at least after engaging in deep analysis, the manager in the Quranic school insisted so much claiming that it is part of the formalities of their institution, and the manager in the second nursery also insisted claiming that she was waiting for another eye to give an image of her *new* nursery (this can be probably best explained in relation to the issue of 'expert' perceptions discussed earlier. Eventually, I decided to provide a written account in which I included my thanks to all the participants in being so helpful and how I considered them to be highly competent early childhood educators who did their jobs with complete integrity.

The difficulty of terminating the fieldwork does not revolve only around the emotional farewell to people. The decision is often determined by the non-availability of further resources and the collection of all the necessary data (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Nevertheless, the complexity of researching the ideologies embedded in the early childhood education in Algeria could make the research go on forever and never be complete anyway.

Considering that, Geertz (1993, p. 29, quoted in Holliday, 2016) puts forward that 'cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. And, worse than that, the more deeply it goes, the less complete it is' and that 'there are no conclusions to be reported; there is merely discussion to be sustained'. Indeed, there were always things that I wanted to explore further. For example, when my participants mentioned that a lot of what they do and believe is emanated from the training they had over two years and a half made me curious to discover it. Yet I had to draw a line somewhere and make a decision regarding the 'saturation of data'. In my case, collecting data from the seven study participants in the three different settings seemed to generate an *emerging* rich set of data. This indicated to me that no more observations or further participants were needed. In point of fact, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 91) remind us that 'there is no point in hanging on in the field to no good purpose, just for the sake of being there, just 'for interest', or from a lack of confidence that one has enough information'. On this basis I ultimately exited the field on Thursday, 13th of February 2020 when occurrences started to be redundant, and no new information or insights emerged.

In the next section, I give a detailed account of my thematic approach to data interpretation and analysis.

4.5 Interpretation and analysis of data

As suggested by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), analysis should be carried out throughout the entire research process since the initial stages of research to the final phases of writing. The process of interpreting and analysing my data did not begin after 'all' the data was collected but it was rather an integral part of my data collection, during which I simultaneously undertook a mainly initial and somewhat superficial but continuous mental analysis. That helped me to pause, interpret, collect, and explore other data, and decide on what steps to take next. Then, an in-depth, thorough, and tangible type of analysis of data was followed. While I acknowledge that there exists no one perfect method/ology or 'right' way for qualitative data analysis (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996), I analysed all the collected data thematically as discussed below.

The choice of thematic analysis was for its coherence with and appropriateness to my research questions and social constructionist epistemology[19] which investigates how events, realities, meanings, and experiences, among other things are influenced by a variety of discourses working within society. It is in alignment with the overall research design, and it supports the aim of the present research: exploring my participants' subjective experiences and sense-making to understand their complex practices by accessing their settings and

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[19] Thematic analysis can also be essentialist or realist reporting meanings, experiences, and participants' reality (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

nuanced as well as multi-layered accounts. During the data collection phase, I began noticing issues of potential interest across the data items and searching for repeated patterns of meaning or themes for analysis. Thematic analysis was, therefore, a suitable qualitative analytic method to identify, analyse and report patterns and themes within data. It does not only organise and describe data set but also interpret various aspects of the research topic. It provides 'a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data' ('thick description' of the data set). Moreover, I chose thematic analysis for pragmatic reasons: it is a useful method offering flexibility (especially in terms of the theory framing the study. Because it is not bound by any pre-existing theoretical framework, it can be used to a variety of theoretical frameworks, but not all of them), relative ease, and accessibility to novice researchers, in addition to social and psychological interpretations of data. Furthermore, it usefully generated unanticipated insights and enabled me to refine my research questions as the project progresses (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 78; Braun and Clarke, 2021).

Braun and Clarke (2021) suggested a reflexive approach to thematic analysis. It recognises that coding is 'unstructured and organic' (p. 39). Its salient feature is the inescapable and inherent subjectivity of data coding and interpretation on the part of the researcher. In the process of developing and generating themes, the researcher considerably engages in, analyses and interprets the data without relinquishing their 'research values, skills, experience and training' (ibid). Codes and themes capture the researcher's deepening understanding of the data and thus cannot exist separately from the researcher. For that, researcher's reflexivity, reflecting on our assumptions and how these might shape and delimit the coding and interpretation process, is required. Reflexive thematic analysis also emphasises 'later theme development, with themes developed from codes, and conceptualised as patterns of shared meaning underpinned by a central organising concept […] Although themes might encompass data that on the surface appears disparate, such themes unite implicit or latent meaning' (Braun and Clarke, 2021, p. 39).

I mainly based my thematic analysis on Braun and Clarke's approach. It involves six recursive phases; however, they could be summed up into familiarisation, coding, generating themes, and writing up. Although those practical guidelines might appear linear in the sense of simply moving from one phase to the next, my analysis was ongoing and progressive. I constantly moved back and forth across the phases which are in no way entirely separate. Overall, I learnt that the process of analysis progresses over time and thus should not be rushed (Ely et al., 1997, in Braun and Clarke, 2006). What follows is a description of these processes.

4.5.1   Familiarising myself with the data

Familiarisation involved continuously immersing myself in the data to search for meanings, and to create and identify possible patterns. I repeatedly and actively read through the entire data set noting down and marking initial list of ideas (e.g., about what is in the data and what is interesting about them, about the context), reflecting upon what went on in the field, and connecting the various statements made by the participants. This step helped me build a close and engaging relationship with my data. Transcription was key in the familiarisation step, which is fully discussed now.

4.5.1.1 Transcription

Transcription is an important aspect of the research process. It is in itself 'an interpretive act' (Tilley and Powick, 2002, p. 292) involving an analytical process. It is an artificial representation of interview conversations, on account of voice, tone, and other nonverbal features' abstraction (Kvale, 2007). It is not only a mechanical operation or a matter of typing what was articulated in the interview down on paper. It is rather a process of construction, in which the researcher takes on the role of 'channel' representing the interchange of spoken words (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Braun and Clarke, 2006). However, some see transcripts as 'impoverished decontextualized renderings of interview conversations' (Kvale, 2007, p. 93). This lies in the challenge of producing a transcript as close as possible to the original conversation or intended meanings. This being said, I aimed in my transcription work for maximising transcription quality. I decided in the first place to transcribe all interview recordings fully, verbatim, and to an appropriate level of detail by myself as I did not want anything to be overlooked. I spent about ten hours for each one hour of interview. An interview of ninety minutes typically produced about 30 pages of single-spaced text. After transcribing the fourth interview or so, I was able to transcribe at a rate of approximately eight hours for every hour of interview conversation. At the start of the transcription process, I transcribed using Arabic keyboard which was time consuming especially I was a slow transcriber. In hindsight, after asking my colleagues how they went about transcription, I realised that transcribing in Latin was less time consuming. When the transcription was completed, I returned to each audio recording several times while reading through the transcripts to check, review and compare what was said with the way it was re/presented in the text as a means of ensuring a plausible agreement between them. I preserved the informal language, grammatical mistakes, and non-verbal features in the original transcripts. Maintaining the nature of the spoken language helped me remember what happened in the interview.

Despite the fact that transcription was time consuming, I found that the act of transcribing everything by myself yielded an unforeseen advantage in terms of living with the

data. In order to ensure readability and allow for clarity and consistency throughout my written transcripts, I constructed my own set of transcription symbols, which are described below.

um, ah	thinking before someone speaks
uhum, aha, uha, mmm	listening and encouragement/ affirmative sounds
(laughing/ laughter), (coughing), (sighing)	nonverbal behaviour, sounds, facial expression, or hand gesture, etc.
CAPITAL LETTERS	to signal that the tone of the speaker is louder
(pause)	+5 seconds
(inter.)	when interruption/break happens
.	at the end of a complete idea/ thoughts
,	clause
...	to indicate that the thought has not been completed by the speaker
(CT)	Cross-talk, two or more speakers speaking at the same time/ over each other
(?)	unclarity of a word, utterance, or phrase
~~(abc)~~	deletion of part of the transcript
" "	the use of reported speech
[]	square brackets signal translating a passage in English after keeping the original in the report
Bold	an emphasis on a word, utterance, or sentence
Italics	names of people, places, or titles
(( ))	double parentheses indicate my descriptions rather than transcriptions

Table 4.3 The notation key/ system of transcription (adapted from different sources)

4.5.1.2 Translation

In terms of language, I decided to conduct the interviews in the Algerian local dialect spoken by my participants to reach mutual intelligibility and avoid any ambiguity or misunderstanding. However, I ended up with transcripts in a mixture of languages as all my participants used words or expressions in Algerian dialect mixed with Standard Arabic and French. Being

cognisant that language choices by the interviewees in this context can potentially say important clues from an ideological point of view, I ascertained that they were comfortable in the language they used and not to view the interview as a (language) test.

Given that my thesis is in English, translation was, in which case, needed. Decisions about translation were in no way straightforward and I admit that some of the translations were challenging. I had the possibility to do a formal translation by an accredited translator. Although that might have increased the perceived *validity* of the data, because of ethical grounds and my ability in English and Arabic and the fact that the original transcripts were written in Lantin form and were in informal local dialect and not in standard Arabic, I decided to translate by myself but not everything I recorded. It has been suggested to translate the interview recording while transcribing them, but I preferred to transcribe all the conversations as they were in their original languages to increase the *reliability* of my translations and ensure that I stayed true to my participants' stories and represented their intended meanings. After I analysed the data, I translated only the segments that I needed as supportive evidence in my data chapters. I decided to keep several expressions used by my participants during interview conversations in their original language as I felt that their exact equivalents in English is hardly kept; but I retrieved the codes and themes mostly in English. I next talk about how I organised and labelled my data.

4.5.1.3 Organising and labelling the data

Organising and labelling my data set was necessary to facilitate the data analysis process. I firstly transferred all the audio recordings to my personal computer. Then I named each interview recording after the participant's name (I have done the same with transcripts). I stored All the data set in three documents (namely, Nursey A, Nursery B, Nursery C), each document contains files for, for instance, interviews, visual representations, fieldnotes, and Facebook data. The following table explains the way I labelled my data.

Data set	In-text labelling
formal interviews	(Anonymised name of participant (name), type of nursery, status, formal interview).
informal interviews, conversations, discussions	(Name, type of nursery, status, informal conversation)
Observations/ Fieldnotes	(Excerpt from field diary, name of nursery)
Overheard conversations	(Name, status, overheard conversation)
Documents, images	(image, type of nursery)

Social media/ Facebook data	(image, Facebook)

Table 4.4 Description of in-text data labelling

After familiarisation, I now turn to describe the process of producing codes from the data.

4.5.2   Coding[20]

Bryman and Burgess (2002, p. 218) see coding as 'a key process since it serves to organize the copious notes, transcripts or documents that have been collected and it also represents the first step in the conceptualisation of the data'. Throughout the entire analysis of data, coding continuously get developed and defined: since the initial data interpretation during the fieldwork which outlined which further data should be collected (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). For example, fieldnotes data provided insights into the different language varieties used inside the three distinct nurseries, and how the expressions are used to determine certain societal beliefs. That was a topic to be explored deeper subsequently. I began working with the first ideas (such as: participants' constant comparisons of the West and Algeria, modernisation, Westernisation, and how that relates to language choices).

Within the process of coding, I made sure to read thoroughly and separately each interview, fieldnote, or discussion, giving full and equal attention to each data item, systematically identifying the codes for as many potential themes/patterns as possible given that my research questions have been initially broad. I kept the possibility that some aspects of the data could be interesting later ('anything and everything of interest or relevance' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 207). I thus coded all actual data set as Braun and Clark (2006) put forward. I then moved to characterising features in the data that appeared interesting to me and relevant to the overall aims of my research. Progressively, I reformulated and narrowed down my research questions. Consequently, some of the codes that were irrelevant to answering my research questions had to be discarded. However, many of the initially coded elements that I realised were unrelated to the study's focus helped me to strengthen my arguments or demonstrate the research significance.

Using the features of Microsoft Office Word documents, I wrote my notes and comments (reflections, descriptions, and interpretations of the data in relation to other sets) on the margins of the texts being analysed. I spotted anticipated and unexpected occurrences as well as inconsistent ones, and I indicated potential patterns by highlighting related codes with similar colours. Next, I associated and organised similar concepts and data passages into meaningful groups/categories by matching the codes with data extracts relevant to each code.

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[20] Kvale (2007) defines coding as the act of breaking down a text into manageable pieces and then attaching keyword (s) to a text segment which enables retrieving it later.

So, I first copied extracts of data from individual transcripts, then brought or collated codes together in separate computer files. After categorising the repeated patterns, I attempted to explain the meaning conveyed by those categories and determine the link between various codes.

Gibbs (2007, p.39) reminds us that 'coding means recognizing that not only are there different examples of things in the text but that there are different types of things referred to'. With that in mind, I attempted to categorise not only what appears similar participants' views and behaviours, but also to label different types of occurrences containing diverse examples. At this stage, I questioned myself why my participants made particular statements and looked for any similarities and differences between their statements. Paying attention to nuances, I also compared the various similar incidents.

In identifying the themes and patterns within my data, I had to determine how and why I am coding the data. I acknowledge that, as a researcher, I cannot free myself of my theoretical and epistemological orientations, as Braun and Clark (2006, p. 84) put it 'data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum'. Indeed, although I was interested and set out to investigate ideologies surrounding early childhood education in Algeria and have had adopted Van Dijk's (1998) approach to ideology prior to data collection, I coded the data without any attempt to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame or to drive it by my analytic preconceptions. I read and re-read the data set for any themes related to ideology, and coded diversely, without considering the themes that previous research on ideologies in ECEC might have identified. The identified themes are, thus, highly related to the data themselves and have little to do with the specific questions posed to the participants. For example, the theme 'zerolingualism' evolved through the coding process. In this sense, my approach maps onto what is referred to as thematic analysis inductive or data-driven approach. This is in contrast with what is called theoretical or deductive thematic analysis approach in which the coding process is more explicitly directed by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest in the topic or area (analyst/theory driven) (Braun and Clark, 2006). With that being said, I attempted to progress from description to interpretation. From simply organising and summarising the data to theorising the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications in relation to previous literature (Patton, 1990, in Braun and Clark, 2006). As the analysis get deeper, the coded data were brought together to form broader themes (units of analysis).

4.5.3 Generating themes

After coding and collating all data thoroughly, inclusively and comprehensively, I ended up with a lengthy list of various codes. My judgements and flexibility were required to figure out what a theme is, as 'rigid rules really do not work' (Braun and Clark, 2006, p. 82; 2013, p. 84).

My determination of themes was based upon the idea that 'a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the overall research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set'. That is to say, a theme should in most cases have a 'central organising concept' (ibid.).

At this phase, I re-focused the analysis at the broader level of themes, instead of codes. I started analysing the codes with a consideration of how they could be separated or combined and sorted to form main overarching themes and/or sub-themes (themes-within-a-theme). The latter structured large and complex themes and the hierarchy of meaning within the data. By way of example, among the themes developed is 'idealisation of the West'. It possessed several different aspects, all of which shared a common feature encapsulated in the theme's name itself, like: 'epistemic idealisation' (knowledge), 'material idealisation' (resources), 'ethical idealisation' (moral values) and so forth. Then I collated all the relevant coded data extracts in relation to the identified themes. However, some codes such as 'schoolification' did not seem to fit into my main themes. I kept them temporarily as I did not want to abandon anything whilst I was unsure if the themes hold as they were. A decision had been taken to discard some others though.

In developing themes, I cross-examined and checked that they work in relation to the coded extracts, and I reviewed them against each other and back to the original interviews, informal conversations, fieldnotes and visual representations. Then I refined, defined what each theme is about and then named[21] them accordingly. At this point, I started to have a sense and understanding of the significance and specifics of individual and overall themes. Those themes formed the titles and subtitles of the upcoming data chapters.

Internal coherence and distinctiveness are also key in determining themes. For that, producing and constructing a thematic 'map' of the analysis was useful to conceptualise in an overall manner the data patterns and the relationships between codes, themes as well as sub-themes (see appendix 12). Notwithstanding, there have been some contradictions and tensions within and across my data items which engendered some accounts that do not go in line with and deviate from the analysis' main story (see chapter 5 and 6). In here, my social constructionist position and more specifically Goffman (1959) 's theory of 'the presentation of self in everyday life' (see section 4.2 of this chapter) was particularly helpful to make sense of the several instances where participants appeared to be paradoxical. That could be explained in relation to the conscious or subconscious type of realities participants displayed which they were plausibly dictated by different circumstances. For instance, within the same or different

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[21] The labelling of the themes was driven by my data (expressions participants used) as well as names and terms in the literature.

social situations, participants displayed a West-idealist position on some occurrences, and a view that the West is threatening on others. That could be determined by the conditions under which they made their statements.

Three types of realities might be identified here. First, participants' social image, peer pressure and certain expectations stipulate the statements they make (stipulation reality). Second, their statements might reflect what they naturally and genuinely believe to be the case (natural reality). Third, participants' statements are generally constructed and acquired through continuous habitual exposure in the society and community, and they are therefore subconscious and made without careful consideration (deep-rooted reality). However, at times these categories overlap which added to the challenge of making sense of my data, given that in certain cases the incidents might belong to more than one category. That is not to say that those inconsistencies were ignored. They were, in effect, important in providing an even more complete story.

Analysis necessitates writing. The latter does not happen at the very end but rather it starts with the jotting down of ideas and continue throughout the process of coding and analysis. The writing up of the report is discussed next.

4.5.4 Producing a scholarly report of the analysis

Analysis carries on with reporting the content and meaning of the themes and patterns, besides relating the analysis back to the research questions together with other works in the field, relevant literature, and theory. That also involves a reorganisation of the themes and a final analysis of them in addition to selecting vivid, compelling extract examples[22]. The ultimate aim is telling a convincing and well-organised complicated story which makes sense of the data and topic and a coherent flow of the account (Braun and Clarke, 2006). That also necessitated a consideration of several criteria to increase the quality of this study, to which I now turn.

4.6 Trustworthiness

Several qualitative researchers contend that concepts such as reliability[23] and validity[24] are quite laden with positivist and quantitative assumptions. Those conceptions have been

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[22] I acknowledge the limitations of snipping, clipping, and juxtaposing quotes. However, for clarity and readability purposes, I decided to edit transcript excerpts, and tried my best to preserve the intended meanings of my participants. For instance, I edited for agreement of the tenses and deleted extensive repetition of phrases, words, and sounds like "um" and "ah".

[23] Reliability in quantitative research relates to the consistency of a research account. That is to say whether different researchers using the same method (s) can later replicate and reproduce the same findings, transcription, and analysis (Kvale, 2007).

[24] Quantitative researchers relate validity to whether an argument is strong, sound, true and correct. In the social sciences, it is more related to checking, questioning or theorising whether 'a method investigates what it is intended to investigate' (Kvale, 2007, p. 122).

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reinterpreted in ways appropriate to the premises of qualitative research, and they have been substituted[25] with terms like trustworthiness. The goodness or quality criteria in qualitative research are, thus, judged in terms of the trustworthiness of the research report. Some scholars (such as Rallis and Rossman (2009) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define trustworthiness in research in relation to the researcher's sensitivity to ethical matters. There are other criteria to increase the quality of research. This section addresses some of them (taken from Rallis and Rossman, 2009; and Creswell and Creswell, 2018) which I considered to ascertain that the current study has been rigorously conducted. It mainly discusses reflexivity, making the familiar strange and my position as a researcher.

- **'Triangulation':** I co-constructed my data with different 'sources' including early childhood educators in addition to the managers in the three nurseries. I used multiple methods jointly, of which: observations, formal and informal interviews, conversations with most people within the settings, as well as visuals. That helped me develop comprehensive, deepened, complex and thorough insights and an understanding of the views and behaviours of my participants.

- **Member checks** 'participant validation'**:** although I strived to convince my participants to review the transcripts and segments of the early stages of analysis of the data (giving ample time for that), they apologised for their limited availability. As I was expecting that from the experience of previous researchers, I undertook a verbal technique. When in the field, I repeatedly asked each participant about what they said for example during interviews or what I observed along with statements of my preliminary interpretations of their words to check whether I captured their thoughts correctly. In these discussions, participants provided feedback and commented on some of the developing themes that enabled me to obtain interesting elaborations and clarifications and even critique on the co-constructed data and data representations. Furthermore, I read to them orally how I described them and gave them examples of how they will be quoted in the thesis. They required no change and expressed their satisfaction with their pseudonyms and with the way I concealed their identifying information.

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[25] The terminology of credibility/ plausibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability in qualitative research replaces the quantitative internal validity, generalisability or external validity, reliability/ replicability, and objectivity respectively (Lincoln and Guba, 1986; Kitto et al., 2008, in Lincoln and Guba, 2013).

- **Thick description:** I provided enough details of the context of my research study by describing the sites and its people and features of the social and cultural milieu within which its associated meanings are constructed (Holliday, 2016). I abided to go beyond the description and reporting of incidents, behaviours, feelings, and symbolic forms (thin description) (Holliday, 2016). I have tried to get deeper to explore and analyse the cultural meanings of human action and its social purpose (thick description) (Geertz, 1973, 1993; Denzin, 1994, in Holliday, 2016; Holliday, 2016). By providing such 'detailed, context- sensitive, and locally informed' experiences (Emerson *et al*. 2011, p. 14), I come to an understanding of my participants' lives by intimately and deeply immersing myself into their world and to developing rich and miscellaneous data that provided some dimensions of contrast. Lincoln and Guba (1985, in Lincoln and Guba, 2013) argue that thick description enables readers to determine the possibility of transferability of the research 'findings' to their context.

- **Reference to contradictory evidence:** this has been discussed fully with examples of certain discrepancies in the data analysis section.

- **Physical presence in the fieldwork and prolonged engagement:** Going every day to each nursey from eight in the morning and sometimes at 7: 30 to six in the evening over a period of three months was enough time to develop understanding of the research topic. I made every effort to use this period wisely. I developed some sort of friendship with some participants that led to meeting them outside of the nursery walls. After physically exiting the field, social media and phone interactions carried on. Adding me to their Facebook groups was advantageous as it enabled me to continue my observations virtually.

- **Peer debriefing and external auditor** (or what Kvale (2007) labelled 'audience validation')**:** I constantly discussed my interpretations and data with my supervisors and some fellow researchers (critical friends) whose research included people with similar socio-historical backgrounds. I also presented at conferences and seminars with academics unfamiliar with my study as well as within my community of practice. That provoked more thoughts and analysis and enabled me to consider more questions and different angles.

- **Transcript checking:** see full details in the analysis section

- **Consistency of codes and themes:** see the analysis section

Although I have tried to evidence my position and reflexivity in the many instances and situations throughout the chapters, in what follows I discuss them in more details.

4.6.1 Reflexivity

Being part of the social world we study, we cannot escape involving our own common-sense knowledge and role within the research focus. This, however, does not detract us from our primary goal of producing knowledge and accounts of the social world as well as justifying them or from understanding the field. It, by contrast, strengthens the complex interactions within it. The point is that we should attempt to minimise any distortion of our data by our political convictions or practical interests to change or preserve the world in some way or other (Hamersley and Atkinson, 2007). And here comes the need for reflexivity.

In writing about reflexivity, Hamersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 15) state that 'the concept of reflexivity acknowledges that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them'. That denotes 'a rejection of the idea that social research is, or can be, carried out in some autonomous realm that is insulated from the wider society and from the biography of the researcher, in such a way that its findings can be unaffected by social processes and personal characteristics' (ibid.). On this line of argument, reflexivity is about self-consciousness and awareness of what researchers bring to the research that makes it one unique piece, what they take from the research itself that makes it what it is, and what they take from the participants that makes them who they are.

My reflexivity as a researcher has spoken for itself throughout the thesis chapters in a variety of ways starting with the choice of the research topic. Part of my reflexive practice was that my own understanding of the setting, my vision of the views, accounts, discourses, actions, and behaviours of my participants were any longer constrained by the set of structurally connected aspects I had in mind. My active reflexivity was also reflected in the way I interacted with my participants, and how I constructed and represented what I observed, in addition to how I chose to handle a number of situations. I was also reflexive in regard to the operational decisions I had to make in the field. My reflexivity has also proved itself in relation to the methods of investigation. The use of diary made the challenging transitions easier for me and helped me keep my reflections tangible.

I realise that research is very complex and thus cannot be viewed objectively. My personal trajectories, cultural and contextual background, assumptions, experience, and my own activity within the context influenced the process and outcomes of this study and affected the design, execution and interpretation of the data. My research had an impact on me as a

researcher which shaped how meanings have been understood, and thus my perception of both myself and the world around me.

Overall, reflexivity enabled me to contextualise and clarify my positions for both myself and the readers of my research. It is certainly important to make explicit our thought and articulate the dynamics of our own subjectivities. However, my experience in the field made me recognise that no matter how reflexive and theoretically aware of the necessity of reflexivity one could be, it is particularly challenging to be exerted on the ground that there are plausibly aspects of the self that only other people may be aware of, and areas of ourselves that we are unaware of and therefore could be missed, unknown, or self-dismissed as irrelevant.

Part of my reflexivity as an ethnographer was immersing myself into the new cultural setting and with time step back and learn how to every single day detach myself from that immersion. The aim behind that was to intellectualise my observations and my participants' accounts, and put them into perspective (Bernard, 2006). I next discuss how constantly de-familiarising myself with the daily routines that became tacit within the approached group which I might have previously taken at face value was a key aspect in my study.

4.6.2 Making the familiar strange

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 89) wrote that '[t]he ethnographer needs to be intellectually poised between familiarity and strangeness' in the sense that we should commit ourselves to both making the strange familiar to understand it and also making the familiar strange in order not to trivialise it. Making the strange familiar entails that it is essential to accept the assumption that human actions and behaviours as well as social forms are explicable, intelligible, and rational. An example of that is when I concerned myself to seek convincing explanations for language use by the early childhood educators and children at the nursery. Using Standard Arabic, French and Algerian local variety in one statement initially appeared to me not needing explanation, perplexing and meaningless or even wicked. Similarly important is to make the familiar strange in that we reject normalising the conventions and taking for granted almost everything that the members of the group who were approached believe is unquestionable. Placing in question the presence of the Algerian flag or the clothing of the personnel in each of the three nurseries which usually seem at first sight perfectly natural, apparent or obvious to people using it enables me to produce an analytic understanding of the research topic instead of the mere reproduction of participants' understandings. That makes other people's lives not easily or immediately comprehended in our terms (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

Holliday (2016) states that researchers are likely to develop a sense of sympathy towards the setting as the people already there; and thus, they have to work out how to recuperate the position of the stranger even in situations wherein the research scenario is familiar. At the outset being a 'stranger' for some time may be inescapable, but progressively there might be a danger of 'thinking-as-usual' which provides a sense of security to those who are already there. Schutz (1964, in Holliday, 2016, p. 79) put forward perceiving the meaning behind the cultural symbols and seeking diligently to keep discipline in understanding fully the position of stranger before the new culture becomes too familiar and consider how things might change as a result of the researcher's presence.

Milligan (2016) reminds us of how active reflections about our roles in the field can bring important contribution in shifting relationships and how this could dissolve boundaries between the 'researcher' and the 'researched' and ultimately the 'insider' and the 'outsider'. Having said that, I continually negotiated and renegotiated through interactions a sense of my role as a researcher within different and busy nursery contexts aiming to subtly develop a position from which the necessary data could be generated. The following is a theoretical and methodological discussion of insider/outsider perspective.

4.6.3 Positioning 'myself' in the field

Following the logic of Merton- who challenged the belief that an insider status is necessarily guaranteed by being a member of the studied community- it would obviously be a mistake to assume that, for instance, only black scholars have the capacity to comprehend black issues (Merton, 1972 in McNess *et al.*, 2015 and Xu, 2017). Gadamer (2012, in McNess *et al.*, 2015) further argued that both insiders and outsiders have inescapable past histories, 'prejudices' or pre-judgement which are in turn a strength enabling them to understand and not to necessarily agree with others. An assertion that led McNess *et al.* (2015) to argue that linguistic and cultural knowledge, closeness, or distance are far less important than the attempts of understanding the others' meanings and sharing their feelings and experiences. Thomson and Gunter (2011) mobilised Zygmunt Bauman's (2004) concept of 'liquid/ fluid and multiple identities', acknowledging the insider-outsider continuum. They recognised how tensions between insider and outsider can be blurred in a messy research practice depending on the situation and context. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to delineate only a single status or position during the research process. I found these perspectives helpful in relation to the experiences I had undergone during my fieldwork. I was in challenging and complex situations that made me make active attempts to place myself as both an insider and an outsider, combining and alternating between all of these experiences.

My 'insider' status was likely mediated by reason of my Algerian nationality, Arab ethnicity, being an Arabic and French language speaker, my female gender, cultural background and sharing life experiences as that of my participants. Yet, my endeavour to understand professional backgrounds and nursery contexts of which I had no prior knowledge, in addition to researching people with whom I might have had different interpretations of the world made me feel somewhat an 'outsider'. I was cognisant that even with intensive participation, my participants would unlikely perceive me as 'one of them' 'in the same sense that those who are "naturally" in the setting are members', especially they knew I was leaving the nursery after completing my study (Emerson *et al.*, 2011). As I have been treated with some suspicion at the beginning of my fieldwork as discussed earlier in this chapter, I had to spend some time to gain the trust of my participants; meanwhile I became much more aware of the things which made me simultaneously both an insider and outsider depending on different circumstances.

With some participants, I could be said to have been more of an insider, i.e., a friend or a colleague sharing mutual interest in early childhood education and care. Relating to many of their provided narratives and meanings in a sense made me an insider. With others, I remained very much an outsider with whom they were unwilling to share some details. Some participants' expectations of me as the 'knowledgeable outsider', evaluator or inspector were apparent. I, on reflection, didn't allow my identity as a researcher to outweigh other identities and relationships with my participants. I sought to distance myself from the roles of both the expert and the critic by explicitly reiterating that I am a student learning. This reflects my belief that being humble in seeking knowledge would lead them to open up and avoid assumptions that my education conveyed superiority. The 'expert' role would have rather created a fear of criticism or judgment. I was also particularly cautious to adopt a mode of dress that fits the norms of my society. My apparel was casual but smart.

My 'insiderness' allowed me access to the physical locations and spaces; and in some way, to gather a richer set of information that might otherwise have remained inaccessible or hidden to a researcher who did not share those features in common. It is that sense of belongingness or 'proximity' that ensured me a feeling of being comfortable. My understanding of the colloquial language and nonverbal cues as well as the local cultural knowledge, norms and values of my community averted me from confusion or 'culture shock'. However, as this was advantageous, it was, at times, also disadvantageous. I might have unknowingly and inevitably been 'biased'; making it increasingly difficult to retain a degree of rigour and critical distance as well as detachment from the everyday taken-for-granted events and mores. Because of the 'assumed shared knowledge', my participants seemed to be reluctant to articulate or explain information which they thought it should be 'obvious' to me. Asking

questions such as 'can you explain that?' and 'what do you mean by…' were often followed by 'you know!', 'as you know!', which could have been conducive to potential misinterpretations of my participants' stories. Therefore, constant prompting that I greatly value and need any details they supply was necessitated.

My 'outsiderness', on the other hand, warranted me seeing 'the tacit cultural rules at work' by virtue of being unfamiliar with the studied social situation (Spradley, 1980, pp. 61-62). Being 'fresh eyes' (Thomson and Gunter, 2011) made me observe and perceive matters with emotional distance (Kerstetter, 2012). It also made my participants reveal to me sensitive information on the ground that we would have minimal future encounter. Simmel's (1950, in McNess *et al.*, 2015 and Xu, 2017) theory of the stranger sees the outsider as the newcomer who attempts to become tolerated and accepted by the researched community and who has the ability to view the new environment with a degree of *objectivity* and less *prejudice*. Nevertheless, lacking past experiences and understanding of the history of the researched group might lead to misinterpretations and unclarity of the new knowledge and conflictions with previous values and biases (McNess *et al.*, 2015).

I designed this research project from the understanding that my positionality necessarily influences the research process especially in relation to the power differentials in the field (McNess *et al.*, 2015). I considered locating myself in relation to myself (how I viewed myself), and in relation to others (how I and my participants viewed each other), as well as in relation to the research context at large; whilst acknowledging that the way such identities have been constructed might have been unknown to others. Indeed, my perception to my participants and my participants' perception to me influenced the way in which knowledge was constructed and produced. This already indicates the different roles and spaces I occupied and my fluctuated identities which were in flux, ever shifting and overlapping. It also points to a conscious flexibility and reflexivity I was trying to achieve.

4.7 Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to examine the impact of ideological positions on the daily practices in early childhood education settings in Algeria. To come to an enriched understanding of ideological practices, I had to study 'the evolving fields within which actors are situated' (Maton, 2014, p. 52). That necessitated a methodological approach that would provide rich and in-depth data.

In this chapter, hence, I have started by an account of my epistemological and ontological orientations. I then moved on to justify how ethnographic principles were adequate to investigate the complex nature of ideologies, using a variety of tools for data generation. I

provided a description of the sites, gatekeepers, and participants, after which I discussed how I ethically behaved and conducted myself when confronted with a variety of possibilities in the field, and my ability to deal with things. I highlighted the theoretical framework and underpinnings of thematic analysis and explained how it was useful for uncovering and unveiling the complexities of the researched topic. Finally, I tackled the criteria followed to insure rigour throughout my research process.

After presenting methodology-related matters, the coming chapters report the findings, discuss the themes, and answer the research questions related to this study. The themes produced during the collection and analysis of data informed the structure of the following data chapters.

Chapter Five: The West, ideal or demon!

5.1 Introduction

Ideologies influence our daily lives and shape our behaviour, our conduct of ourselves and perception of the world and those around us. This research focuses on the importance of such social influences on understanding early childhood education practices in Algeria. In light of this, throughout the data chapters, I attempt to make sense of the interplay that exists between ideology and practice. In this chapter, I first start with identifying these ideologies in the specific context of this study through a discussion of two major themes: Idealisation of the West and Demonisation of the West. They were both particularly equally prevalent in the field.

This chapter is presented in two main sections. The first section reports the ways in which participants idealise the West (for a discussion of the term West, see section 2.3.1) at many levels including Western knowledge, resources, and moral values. My data designates the spread of such social beliefs about the West within the same community at large, which appears to indicate an interconnectedness between the various social practices and discourses of individuals that feed into their West idealisation positions. My findings further suggest a state of subordination to the West triggered by idealisation of the West. Significantly, my findings shed light on the importance of social media, immigrants residing in European countries, perceived lack of resources and 'poor' living conditions in shaping the discourses around idealisation of the West which could be a reason behind legal or illegal immigration and brain drain.

The second section discusses participants' fear of the West or what I refer to as the ideology of West demonisation as the term depicts participants' social practices and discourses that demonise the West. That, my findings suggest, included a rejection of Western cultural aspects such as the celebration of Halloween and Christmas in the Algerian early childhood education settings, as well as ideas of transgenderism and secularism that are believed to be purely product of the West and are constructed as a threat to Muslim cultural norms and education. My findings demonstrate that constructions of the West as ideal and the West as demon influence early childhood educators' accounts, actions and behaviours, choices of activities and conduct with children. This realisation is crucial as it supports the argument that ideological positions impact on the day-to-day practices in the early childhood education and care settings.

5.2 Idealisation of the West

In this section, I report evidence from my data that positions my participants in the ideology of West idealisation. As I show below, many participants tend to idealise the West at different

levels in almost every aspect of life. In addition to Van Dijk's categorisation of ideologies (**2.2.1.2**)[26], the natural and incognisance of instances in which participants perceived the West as ideal helped me delineate this social construct as an ideology.

It all started during the informal conversations I had with participants prior to formal interviews. At the time of the data generation, participants constantly referred to the West. The following are examples that display how the theme of idealisation of the West started to be frequently recurrent and predominant in the field.

> Today I first introduced myself to Nadjia, during which she posed to me this question: "Bochra, please tell me, there, where you live, they have everything, the living conditions there are better, aren't they? Then she asked me if I could bring her medication from the UK, saying twice, "because there it's effective not like here"
>
> (Excerpt from fieldnotes)

> "Seriously! why do you want to come back to Algeria? If I were you, I would stay there. Just find a man and get married there. Don't come back to Algeria, Bochra".
>
> (Bissam, public, nurs. ECE-prelim., informal conversation)

> "There in Europe, their kids are better"
>
> (Mamia, responsible for the babies' section, Excerpt from fieldnotes)

> "I like your bag, where did you get it from? You bought it from there, right?
>
> (Malek, Excerpt from fieldnotes)

I began to notice a frequent reoccurrence and predominance of a social construct that appertains to West idealisation. My central concern became to understand the ways in which participants give meaning to such ideological construct. It should be noted that participants interchangeably used the words "there, abroad, European countries, l'Gwerr[27], and the West or Westerners". The thick description of different data sets indicates that those

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[26] My participants social practices that position them in the ideology of West idealisation seem to fall within Van Dijk's (1998) categories of ideologies which are:
(Group) membership: Algerians, '*Third world*'
(Shared) activities: imitate the West
Goals: become like the West
Values/norms: undeveloped, uncivilised, backward
Societal position: inferior to the west
Resources: We don't have knowledge, resources, nor ethics, but the West has.

[27]Plural form of "Gawri" (singular masculine) and "Gawriya" (singular feminine); a slang word which is widely used to refer to Westerners/Europeans in Algerian dialect.

complex notions in themselves represent ideological functions on the ground that they work together as a system of representation, generating a particular form of knowledge and attitudes about what essentially characterises the West and Algeria as explained by Hall (1992) (section 2.3.1). The analysis that follows demonstrates how participants' constructions of the West took different forms of idealisation that I refer to as: epistemic idealisation (knowledge); material idealisation (resources); ethical idealisation (moral values). It also discusses the consequences of such idealisation in the specific context of this study.

5.2.1 Epistemic idealisation: West idealised knowledge

An aspect of the idealisation of the West in the data generated is that of knowledge. Participants tend to eulogise Western knowledge based on imaginaries they hold about the West. By way of example, in providing suggestions for enhancing the ECEC sector in Algeria, Sacha commented:

> [T]hey [the Algerian government] need to assign training courses abroad, eeh in developed countries, European countries that really care about early childhood domain, they provide specialised and real Montessori training by professional and highly qualified people not as in here. By next academic year, I promised parents that I will start applying a Canadian programme I will have to buy […]
>
> (Sacha, Priv.nursery, manager, formal interview)

Here, Sacha seems to be entirely sure that Western countries provide quality ECEC training courses and programmes. While being not specific about the use of 'abroad' at the beginning, she seems later to emphasise the association of the word with European countries that she identifies with development. Noteworthily, although she is cognisant that ECEC training courses are also available in Algeria, she still seems to think that in Western countries they must be more specialised. Sacha's account exemplifies her position of idealising Western knowledge. This is significant as it tells us how her position led her to appraise all what is Western and disqualify what is Algerian.

Another example that falls within the idealisation of Western knowledge is Nadjia, who thinks that foreign psychologists would be more specialised and competent than psychologists in Algeria. When the topic of the role of educational psychology in early childhood education had been brought up, Nadjia illustrates:

> Many educational psychologists visited us, but I don't believe in psychologists at all […] may be those based overseas in Europe I don't

know about Western psychologists, God knows. But I swear to God
that psychologists in here themselves need psychologists

<div align="right">(Nadjia, KS. ECE-prep., formal interview)</div>

This extract also implies an idealisation of Western knowledge in that she appears to believe that psychologists in Europe would be better. This is important as it signifies her deprecation of the knowledge practised and developed in her country. In another instance, Nadjia expressed her concerns about the start age of schooling in Algeria; she said that the ideal age should be seven. When I asked her why, she replied: '[...] yes because in Western countries, I don't remember which country, children start going to schools at seven. I think London they do' (Nadjia, KS. ECE-prep., informal conversation). Although Nadjia is unsure about which country the schooling start date is seven, she seems to associate the ideal schooling age with an ideal country which happens to be western. This idea suggests that her views might be based on a hypothetical image of the West. Therefore, it could be argued that the constant comparisons Nadjia made between what is Algerian and what is Western seem to be drawn from an embedded social construct that she does not know about, as she stated, given the fact that she had never been to a Western country before. However, she still believed in its trueness as given. This confirms Van Dijk (1998)'s argument that ideologies might affect what is accepted as true or false, particularly when certain views are deemed relevant for the group. Idealising Western schools was common amongst participants. For example, when providing suggestions for enhancing the education system in Algeria, Hanna proposed that the state should reconsider the school timings 'because schools in Western countries run from 9 am to 3 pm' and that Algeria should follow Western school systems. She inclines to idealise Western school systems by drawing an image of a school she saw on a YouTube video (the open school in Copenhagen-Denmark) (Hanna, Public. nursery, manager, formal interview). Such instances evoke participants' representative view of Western schools based on their generalisations. The extract is also an indication of how social media can contribute to drawing an image of Western school systems and West idealisation ideology.

A similar view was expressed by Bissam, whose statements also indicate a west idealist position. In talking about what young children should receive at nursery, she made the following comment:

In my experience, we can teach children anything at an early age, even counting and mathematics. At the age of two-and-a-half and three years, children can learn. This has already been established/set by l'Gwerr […] why early education and childcare is set for free for all children in Western countries. Why our government invests only in

primary, middle secondary, and higher education? Why doesn't Algeria make nursery education free and compulsory at the age of three? Why they don't specify public infrastructure plans for early childhood education and care like the West does.

<div align="right">(Bissam, public, nurs. ECE-prelim., formal interview)</div>

This extract clearly demonstrates Bissam's west idealist position. She seems to construct the West as the 'right knowledge establisher'. She tried to support her argument that children can be taught anything at an early age by referring to the idea that the knowledge that has already been validated by the West must be right and unquestionable. Seemingly, development and success seem to be associated with European countries and the West. This beckons to a largely spread social reality of how right and ideal the West is. Such perception might have led Bissam to knowingly or unknowingly draw an over-generalised picture of how the ECEC system operates in all developed countries and, consequently, disapprove of the way the ECEC system works in her country. While her own perception of the Algerian early childhood education system's unsuccessfulness compared to the one in the West might sound justifiable, her idealisation of the West seems to indicate an inclination to imitate Western ECEC system in order to rally or catch up with the West.

The findings discussed in this sub-section show that development and success seem to be associated with European countries and the West. Sacha's preference of the training courses and programmes of the West, Nadjia's belief that psychologists of the West are competent than the ones in Algeria and that the school start age should be seven because the West established that, in addition to Bissam's association of the right knowledge with the West all demonstrate participants' idealisation of Western knowledge. These findings are important because they shed light on the idea that despite participants' limited knowledge about the West, their ideas about the West appear to be no longer questioned and held to be axiomatic. What is particularly significant is that such idealisation of Western Knowledge engenders a deprecation of the knowledge practised and developed in Algeria. In other words, their positions can be a justification for the exclusion of their country from quality and exemplar of nursery education. This is in line with other studies like Takayama (2016) and Yun (2020). Yun (2020), for example, suggested that the glorification of Western education system has served to strengthening the inefficiency and deficiency of that of the non-West, and that according to her study, have continuously constrained people's thoughts, views, and talks. Her findings indicate that both the logics of 'Western Orientalism' and Eastern 'affirmative Orientalism' underpinned a persistent and perpetuated tide of 'West-to-East' education policy borrowing. Her research accentuates the importance of decolonising global knowledge production. Takayama (2016) alike called for alternative knowledge practices in relation to

non-Western education to go beyond 'the West as method' prevalent in Japanese scholarship. My findings corroborate these studies and further suggest that idealisation of Western knowledge is accompanied with a sense of inferiority towards the West. Another facet of West idealisation ideology is related to resources. The details of such a point are discussed below.

5.2.2 'They are far more advanced than us': Idealisation of the West in terms of resources (material idealisation)

Many participants adhered to the idea that the West is a utopian world where advancement and development spread over. This can be seen in a variety of participants' assertions. For instance, Farah argued that the West is better and more advanced than us in terms of materials, means, and ideas. Her position is interesting enough to be worth quoting at length:

> Me: Are you inspired by any other national or international programme for ECEC? I mean, in different states of Algeria or other countries.
> Farah: (laughing) it's obvious that another country is better better than us. I mean, they have a lot a lot of things better than us (pause)
> Me: things like what?
> Farah: for example, I see some nurseries in France and Switzerland (inter.)
> Me: Have you been there or…?
> Farah: no, I have some relatives who send me pictures […] their nurseries organise outdoor activities children go for an excursion to the forest in autumn they were asked to collect leaves falling off trees to glue them later on their drawings of trees there are many other things […] they are far more advanced than us
> Me: In what ways are they better? Can you please elaborate?
> Farah: in everything in their materials means ideas education eh well education each country has its own norms our educational norms are different from theirs, but they have many things better than us they have developed nurseries with sports hall and swimming pools we don't have that in here our nurseries are limited no advancement no development our nurseries have only some toys
>
> (Farah, public, nurs. ECE-prepr., formal interview)

The laughs at the starting point might signify the obviousness of the answer to my question. It seems that Farah took it for granted that another country is obviously better than Algeria. I should note that her use of the word 'better' repeatedly denotes the intensity of her West idealist position. It also points towards how embedded this social construct is in the community. At first, my interpretation of the meaning she wanted to convey was built upon the idea that there is a feeling of inferiority and subordination to the West. However, based on the thick description of other occasions wherein I interacted with Farah, I came to realise that this idealisation of the West has sprung from the idea that what she assumes, or knows, to exist as resources within European countries make the West somehow better than Algeria in her

eyes. This demonstrates that the idealisation of the West is strongly associated with the means and materials of the West. Whilst her assumptions about the West as having materials, means, and resources could be true, what is more interesting to know is what drove this idealisation in the first place. As Farah asserted, she has never been to the West before; on that account, what contributed to the production of such discourses? It can be inferred from this extract that immigrants residing in European countries seem to contribute to a certain extent in creating an image about the other part of the world. Reflecting upon the example she gave about the outdoor activity makes me question why she thinks she cannot perform such activity in Algeria. Having direct and sustained contact with my participants within the context of their daily lives and listening to their accounts about the challenges they face daily allowed me to understand that the lack of resources and facilities within nurseries might hinder their practice with children. As the extract illustrates, having limited resources can be considered a factor in prompting idealisation of the West. It can also explain the seemingly participants' apparent inclination to look down upon their country that is likely to drive them to think that what exists 'there' is not available 'here' and, consequently, draw an imaginary scenario of how nurseries are in Europe. More importantly, Farah's account indicates that the claim of lack of resources in one's country is used as an excuse to explain the non-fulfilment of certain tasks.

Emma's comment also led me to understand that the lack of resources could be a constituent of West idealisation. When the topic of international early childhood education programmes has been brought up, Emma stated:

> We use a clearly defined and identified programme for early childhood education. For overseas/outer/external programmes, you know, they might surpass us in the means they may have better resources than us and the necessary tangible equipment that children need to learn through. We would like to improve our practice, but we have a shortage of resources. If we had the resources that the West has, we would have achieved better results with children rather than using verbal techniques only.
>
> (Emma, KS. ECE-prelim., formal interview)

Here, I feel a variance in the extent to which participants idealise the West. Unlike Farah, who firmly believes that another country's programme is necessarily better than the one in her own country, Emma seems to be convinced that the early childhood education programme they use is reliable. Although initially not explicit or specific about 'overseas/outer/external' countries, her ensuing statements clearly singled out the West. Her expressions 'they might surpass us', 'they may have better' might allude to a reality that she

either finds it difficult to accept or a reality that she is unsure of its trueness. A possible explanation for this might be that such expressions outspread to society to the extent that they become common and indisputable. This extract markedly juxtaposes the West and Algeria and idealises the West in terms of 'its' resources, means, and equipment. What seems to be particularly stimulating in Emma's account is that the West is apparently also associated with empowerment. Emma tends to perceive that the West has better resources that empower its early childhood education system. This idea suggests that resources and power is what makes the West better in participants' eyes. It also indicates that the lack of resources drives participants to perceive themselves as limited and unable, powerless, and incompetent. In another instance, Emma commented on the lack of resources in Algeria as follows,

> The morning session ended. The educators are helping the kids to wear their jackets. Emma to Malek "My cousin who lives in France sent me a video of how there they teach kids to put on their own jackets independently by themselves. Look [showing Malek], they first take the jacket and turn it upside down like this, they throw it on the floor in front of the kids so the hood or top of the jacket is towards the kids and then they ask the kids to dip their arms in the armholes and flip it over. But that is there not here. They have resources I wish we reach them one day. Look at the ground here, there they have carpets covering the whole floor. We don't have the means otherwise our kids become better than theirs
>
> (Excerpt from fieldnotes)

This extract also depicts Emma's idealisation of the West in terms of 'their' resources. It is significant to notice how specific properties that she assumes or knows to exist within another country and that lack in her own led participants to think that they cannot perform certain simple things because they belong to a country where the ground is not usually covered with a carpet. This is an important finding as it demonstrates that idealisation of the West creates individuals who believe that living in an undeveloped country restrain their abilities and thus creates a feeling of subordination to the West. Another common view that participants seem to share is that of the West as supportive, as discussed below.

'But if I were in Europe, they would have helped me': The imagined supportive West

As part of their west idealist positions, participants tend to compare the reality they currently live in their country with an imagined reality they believe exists in the West. This is apparent in Hanna's point of view that the West provides support other than her own country:

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> But if I were in Europe, they would have helped me; that's the difference between them and us. Why we always say Europeans are developed because when they see that I made progress with children, they help me, they don't commercialise in childhood even if the building's income is millions per a month, we are a poor country, and the town hall needs an income out of this public building
>
> (Hanna, Public. nursery, manager, informal conversation)

In another instance she made the following comment,

> Why in the West with its greatness they don't ban nurseries in apartments and here in Algeria they do.
>
> (Hanna, Public. nursery, manager, informal conversation)

Although Hanna has not been into the West before, she seems to hold a definite idea about how the West is. Having had several conversations with Hanna allowed me to understand that some of the assumed bureaucratic procedures she had to go through might have led her to think that European countries are characterised by adhocracy. This could be what makes her believe that the system in the West is somehow better than that of her own. I believe that her apparently subconscious beliefs emanated from her immersion into a deeply rooted, socially shared, and constructed ideology about the West. Her association of the West with greatness says a lot about how deep her position of West idealisation is. A similar point was made by Farah in expressing her desire to open her own nursery, she commented:

> There, when you have an idea, they help you to achieve it but in here even if you intend to add something no one assists you to succeed. Our government doesn't provide financial support either encouragement that's why everyone is working restrictedly
>
> (Farah, public, nurs. ECE-prepr., formal interview)

Referring to the West as supportive and Algeria as unsupportive might imply the idea that West idealisation is bounded by a sense of an inferiority complex grounded in society at large. The presupposed image of 'there' and 'here' might give another reason why participants view the West as ideal. As part of broader society, Hanna and Farah's discourses feed into the larger community's set of thoughts about the imagined supportive West that might have led to the so-called human capital flight or brain drain. Participants' unpleasant feeling for belonging to a 'third world'[28] country which they associate with backwardness engendered constant comparisons between 'us' and 'them'. This could be seen in Hanna's accounts. For example,

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[28] Although the term 'Third world' is problematic, I am here emphasising my participants' choice of the word.

in talking about her and her staff's perceptions of children with special needs enrolled in her nursery, she stated:

> I am a person who is a bit in dispute with the society regarding their comportment with childhood [...] because we are a backward society, we tend to perceive disabled children as inept our society needs to change [...] we could have produced fruitful category from children with special needs as they are genius, but our country is undeveloped it doesn't provide materials to facilitate our work with them [...] we are Third World...*Allah Ghaleb*[29] anything tires us
>
> (Hanna, Public. nursery, manager, informal conversation)

Although Hanna did not directly refer to the West, it might be that since there is something called the 'third world', something is perceived to be the first world, which happened to be the West. Apparently, there is an engraved reality that compares the West with the rest and the backward with the modern, developed, and civilised. It seems that Hanna tends to justify the society's '*improper*' comportment with and constructions of children by the fact that they belong to a 'backward country'. This could be the reason why calling for societal change. It perhaps justifies her tendency to hold a negative image and look down upon her own society, people, and the community at large. The asserted lack of government's support might explain the blame to her country. This seems to corroborate a point other individuals frequently made about themselves, their country, and their people. Their discourses habitually include statements to characterise some actions and occurrences they believe are specific and unique to their own society of which they are naturally apart. Examples of the statements that I jotted down in my fieldnotes are: "Oh Arabs are..." "because you are in Algeria" "this happens only in Algeria" "in Algeria we don't have...". It appears that those statements are commonly shared to draw explicit and sometimes implicit comparisons of themselves and their country with other countries where they expect a utopian world wherein everything is available and perfect.

Throughout the course of my interviews with her, Hanna constantly expressed her idealisation of Western comportment towards childhood and her willingness to explore any opportunity to do training courses in Europe. Notwithstanding, when I deliberately posed a more confronting question whether she thinks she idealises the West, Hanna seems to controvert that arguing:

> Not at all. I already have had many opportunities to emigrate to Europe, but I am a person who likes to live with dignity. I can't as an

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[29] 'Allah Ghaleb' is a widely used expression among Algerians when in a situation that does not go the way they want, and they can change nothing about it.

Algerian living in England or France and see another Algerian being
humiliated/ bullied or insulted in front of me and do nothing about it
because we Algerians can't tolerate I *Hogra*[30] we have *Nif*[31]

(Hanna, Public. nursery, manager, informal conversation)

There seems to be an apparent contradiction in Hanna's positions. While displaying a
reluctance to live in Europe, her idealisation of the West can be noticeable and conceding.
The fact that what she said in some instances contradicted what she said in others is likely to
happen in any social interaction in which individuals usually like to project a particular image
of themselves, as Goffman (1959) (**section 4.2**) put forward in his dramaturgical perspective.
In other words, the socially constructed perspective adopted in the analysis helped me develop
an understanding of what meanings she attributed to her world through appreciating the
different realities she expressed when trying to construct meaning.

Based on the assertions made by my participants, it becomes evident that the West is
being idealised in terms of its resources, materials, and means. As discussed in this
subsection, the West has been associated with "obviously better, advanced, and developed
(Farah), and empowered (Emma), as well as supportive (Hanna, Farah). Jalal Ali 's (1984)
concept of "mechanosis" or the Western machines is relevant to this discussion. His argument
revolves around the idea that the West's possession of technology, and modern science
strengthens its power, domination and control over Iran and the Non-West in general.
Evidence from my data further suggests that the belief that the West as possessing resources
and the non-West as lacking resources produces individuals who identify themselves as
limited, unable, powerless, incompetent, and making excuses of belonging to the non-West to
explain their failure. In other words, it creates a desire to remain only consumers of Western
products and to believe they can never make their own contribution to their own success. In
other words, participants seem to ascribe any perceived failure or anything of low standard
with the "Third World". This appears to feed into West idealisation because it is this ideology
that has likely engendered a belief of inferiority and subordination to the West. The significance
of my findings also lies in explaining the factors that led to the production of such discourses
in the community. They highlighted that social media along immigrants residing in European
countries seem to contribute to a certain extent in creating an image about the other part of
the world which might also explain the phenomenon of human capital flight or brain drain.

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[30] A word used in Algerian *Darija* (dialect) that generally means being subjected to structural injustice, marginalisation, contempt, and oppression.

[31] A slogan used as a distinctive attribute of Algerian people. It literally translates to 'nose' which symbolises honor and dignity.

Participants' ideological positions of idealising the West also encompass the morals of the West. This idea is discussed entirely next.

5.2.3 'They show respect toward others': Idealising the West in relation to moral values (Ethical idealisation)

Participants tend to believe that Western people essentially have high morals, and they are more deferential than them. For instance, in talking about her travel experience to Europe, Bissam said:

> The only good thing about them and their education is that they respect. I have seen this myself like I had been to Europe, and I saw that, how they respect women, especially pregnant women, and children, not like here […] I am talking about l'Gwerr they show respect toward others apart from Muslims living in there.
>
> (Bissam, public, nurs. ECE-prelim., formal interview)

It should first be noted that initially, Bissam talked about how the West contributes to the destruction of today's Muslim and Arab generation (this is discussed in relation to the subsequent theme). She then instantly shifted her talk towards the qualities of the West. Her statement indicates a great degree of idealisation of the West in relation to its morals and a state of aspersing Muslims living abroad. Unlike other participants who seemed to idealise the West based on hypothetical images others might have drawn to them, Bissam in here talked about her own experience. She appears to be firmly convinced of her position.

Another evidence that falls within idealising the morals of the West is shown in Emma and Sacha' statements.

> Emma: Here unfortunately hitting kids and violence against them still exist because here there are no regulations. I know there that is strictly prohibited not like here. They are developed peoples because they respect the laws of their country, they respect humanity.
>
> (Excerpt from fieldnotes)

> Sacha: Why in Western countries the parent/ guardian collects their children at maximum 4 o'clock otherwise they will be declared as abandoning their children. Here from 7 to 7 no one cares because there are no laws and no rules. The West has a definite law and high morals and values. The law applies to everyone and that what makes them great.
>
> (Excerpt from fieldnotes)

These extracts seem to speak volume about Emma and Sacha' positions of idealising the West in relation to its morals and values. In here they appear to idealise not only Western individuals because they respect the laws but also the Western states themselves as they are associated with setting laws. It could be inferred that the perceived absence of a law for the protection of children' rights in their country is what engendered this idealisation of Western values and associating it with laws. Another instance that corroborates the idea of idealising the West in terms of their morals can be seen at a larger level:

> On my way back home, I took a taxi to the bus station. The taxi was about to crash with another car whose driver was a bit mad, swearing at the taxi driver. The taxi driver turned to me and said, 'for this reason, I sold my house and set my heart to immigrate to France with my wife and son. I am just waiting for the visa. I don't want to raise my son with such crazy ill-mannered people. You know in Europe there is respect there is a very well-grounded education...

(Excerpt from fieldnotes)

This extract is crucial as it seems to denote how the ideology of idealising the West is socially promulgated within the Algerian society to a large degree. Although the incident can be ubiquitous, the taxi driver seems to perceive the West as a utopian world wherein everything is ideal, and all citizens are perfect and respectful. It can also be inferred from the extract that idealisation of the West is likely to drive people to immigrate to European countries to live a 'better' life, according to them. It might undesirably drive many youths to venture their lives for illegally crossing the sea to reach the West. Delving deeper into this extract made me work out how these social ideological constructs of idealising the West impact not only on education and the content of early childhood education provision but also on a more discursive and extensive level of life.

The findings in this subsection demonstrate how participants idealise the West on the basis of high values and morals of the West as Bissam, Emma, and Sacha indicated. What is interesting about the findings is that they show how my participants' belief that their country is misgoverned contributed to idealising the Western morals. Extracts from Emma and Sacha confirm this. In the same Vein, El-Enany (2006) asserted that Arab misgovernment in the postcolonial era has been responsible for the conscious or unconscious adherence of Westernism by writers, intellectuals, and the educated classes at large. In his work, El-Enany (2006) examined Arab representations of the occident in Arabic fiction. He used the term Occidentalism to depict Arab's responses to Western culture and values not only in their idealisation of the Western Other but also in their desire to become the Other, or at least to

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become like the Other. The findings in this subsection are particularly important as they highlight how such beliefs about the West are spread through the whole community. The incidence of the Taxi driver is of significance as it suggests that idealising the west and its morals could be the main reason behind immigrating legally or illegally to Western countries.

The findings in this section are centred on the theme 'idealisation of the West' ideology. It reflects how the West is being idealised at many aspects of life, including Western knowledge, resources, and morals. My participants seem to perceive the West as ideal, advanced, developed, supportive, respectful, and having exemplary conduct with children. In contrast, they appear to perceive their country as backward, less supportive, failed, and needing change. These findings relate to Woltering's (2011) study which explored Occidentalism in the Arab world, more specifically in Egypt. Through an analysis of political speeches, popular literature, and recurrent images, Woltering (2011) underscores the Arab world's perception of the West and the role of ideology in shaping those images about the West. Woltering (2011), however, did not include the analysis of the factors contributing to the perpetuation of those ideologies.

My data suggest that idealising the West has been likely conducive to participants' conscious or subconscious considerations of the minor aspects of their country as subordinate to those of the West. The view that European countries' medication is effective and that of Algeria is not effective is shared and spread within the community at large. Bissam's advice to me to remain in the UK seems to speak volume about her West idealist stance that she seems to display blatantly. She appears to perceive that people's dream is to settle down in Europe, and it would be unwise to get back to Algeria and forego the opportunity. The expression 'their kids are better' and the preference of the products of the West all demonstrate that participants' views appeared to be entirely constrained by an idealised image of the West in this community which likely drove them to depreciate their society and country.

Interestingly, my participants naturally refer to the West in their statements to corroborate their arguments. This might explain the socially embedded beliefs about what they construct as realities.

The findings reported in this section stress the importance of ideologies as principles (which were approached in this research as not simply a 'world view' of a group) in forming the basis of specific beliefs, arguments for and explanations of certain social arrangements, and in fact influencing a specific understanding of the world (Van Dijk, 1998). These findings considerably resonate with Simić's (2016) findings regarding the predilection for the Western culture and goods. He reported evidence of his participants' rejection of their own Serbian native traditions and culture which they stereotyped as "primitive," "archaic" and "backward".

His findings indicate that many Serbs aspire to obtain belongingness to the West and become similar to it due to their inspiration by idealised images, ideas from and perceptions of the West including lifestyle, freedom and democracy. Furthermore, the finding of inferiority is reminiscent of Ugbam, Chuku, and Ogbo (2014) and Hiouani (2020)' studies, in which they reported their participants' senses of the inferiority complex as Section 2.3.2 described.

My data focuses on the factors contributing to idealisation of the West. It suggests that socio-economic factors, the challenges faced by early childhood educators, the phenomenon of globalisation, and its impact on consumer preferences and aspirations directly or indirectly shape participants' ideological positions about the West. The literature underscores the wider dynamics of power, and cultural hegemony's influences on such ideological beliefs. The analysis of these findings reflects a prevailing sentiment frequently encountered in the body of migration studies. For example, Dennison (2022) investigates twelve countries within the MENA region and identifies gender, psychological, economic, and political factors associated with migration to Western countries. More specifically, Abbott (2017) found that educated males exhibit a higher propensity to migrate from the MENA region, frequently in pursuit of temporary opportunities for employment. On the other hand, Killian *et al.*'s (2012) study showcases the migration experiences of Arab women. The scholars observe that new opportunities have arisen for Arab women to migrate for educational purposes. My findings further highlight the significance of social media, Algerian immigrants, lack of resources and 'poor' living conditions in driving participants to think that the outside world is heaven. They also highlight possible consequences of West idealisation translated in legal or illegal immigration and brain drain.

Notwithstanding, my data indicates a nuanced interplay between idealisation and demonisation. While participants' social practices indicated a West idealist ideological position, they vacillate between idealisation and an anti-Western sentiment, perceiving the West as toxic. This contradiction highlights the complexity of participants' ideological positions towards the West and suggests a self-contradictory position or a more nuanced understanding beyond simple idealisation. The following subsection provides a detailed account of the ways in which the ideology of West demonisation is portrayed through participants' discourses.

5.3 West demonisation

In labelling my themes, I initially used the notion of West demonisation[32] as it plainly and clearly captures my participants' constructions that demonise the West. However, I also

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[32] The ideology of West demonisation also falls within Van Dijk's (1998) categorisation of ideologies as displayed below:

(Group) membership: Muslims, Arabs, the non-West, conservatives

employ Jalal Ali Ahmad (1962)'s notion of Westoxification (as discussed in section (2.4) because they are both very similar revolving around the idea that the West is perceived as a threat to Muslim societies. While Westoxification in itself entails idealisation and imitation of the West and the consequence of such imitation and idealisation, West demonisation is more about the rejection of the West and its 'culture' and hence it is related more to the West as evil. Indeed, Participants, as the findings of this study reveal, perceived the West as 'toxic' and 'wicked'. Their views highlighted the idea that the unselective adoption and imitation of Western cultural aspects led to the prevalence of Western 'immoral' and 'unprecedented' acts in the Algerian society. They often expressed feelings of rejection of Western 'odd ideas' that are believed to cause a loss of traditions and cultural values of the community in general and threatens their 'collective identity' in particular. They also displayed negative judgements about the ill-will intentions of the West to politically dominate the entire world as another form of cultural imperialism.

This section addresses facets of West demonisation ideology within the context of this study. It is divided into three subsections. The first subsection reports the finding that demonises and rejects Western cultural aspects in the Algerian society with a reference to the celebration of Christmas and Halloween. The second subsection discusses my participants' demonisation of the West in relation to notions of transgenderism as a product of the West. The third subsection is about another aspect of West demonisation in regard to the secularisation thesis as a threat form the West to the Muslim societies. The details of those points are discussed in what follows.

5.3.1 'That knowledge is not ours; it's odd to our education': Perceiving the celebration of Western cultural aspects in Algeria as toxic

Participants' social practices indicated that the exposure to global cultural aspects as threatening. As a case in point, on my first day at the Quranic school, I noted that 'all children had henna[33] on the palms of their hands except one child' (excerpt from fieldnotes). When I asked Nadjia about that, she answered sorrowfully:

> That kid did not come to the Mawlid[34] celebration ceremony. When I
> asked children to wear their traditional suits for the party; he said, "I

(Shared) activities: resist Western toxic, peculiar, and secular ideas.
Goals: preserve our children from the threatening West
Values/norms: we have religious and cultural values.
Societal position: we are superior to the west.
Resources: morals, religion, Quran

[33] Henna is a natural dye that can be applied on hands, feet, and hair. It is generally used for decorative purposes and celebrations as part of an ancient cultural tradition.

[34] Mawlid is an Arabic term, meaning the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him.

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won't attend, we don't celebrate the Mawlid, I don't like putting henna,
I am waiting to celebrate Hilloween [sic]". I was shocked when he didn't
turn up that day. I have no idea about Hilloween. My assistant told me
it's a western thing celebrated there by l'Gwerr. It is the evil West that
is contaminating peoples' thought and minds.

<div align="right">(Nadjia, KS. ECE-prep., informal conversation)</div>

Nadjia seems to perceive the child's nonattendance of a local cultural event at the nursery as an anomaly. While the reason for his opposition to the Mawlid remained vague to me despite my attempt to inquire into his background[35], it appears that the child is well cognisant of the meaning of Halloween. Interestingly, although Nadjia indicated being unknowledgeable about the word and meaning of Halloween, she seems to reject its presence within her community. Her statements appear to demonise the West for the presence of Western cultural events in her society. Her position can perhaps be explained by the fact that Halloween is Western. In the formal interview, Nadjia further spelled out her attitude about the issue:

That knowledge is not ours; it's odd to our education. It's not the child's
fault, he is still incognisant of the purpose behind the Mawlid. It's the
germ the West has implanted into our society. Technology, internet,
Facebook, and YouTube invaded our society they have led to
immorality/moral disengagement. We fancy imitating them, wearing
indecent clothing, boys dyeing their hair and little girls polishing their
nails […] the problem is that what children receive at our school is
becoming different from the type of education they are exposed to at
home or outside […]

<div align="right">(Nadjia, KS. ECE-prep., formal interview)</div>

On another occasion, Nadjia expressed her concerns about the consequences of Westernisation that, according to her, have had led individuals to embrace and prefer the other global Western cultural elements over the indigenous or the local ones (excerpt from fieldnotes). Nadjia appears to reject external or Western influence upon her society's traditions and norms. This finding shows that the West is seemingly perceived as 'toxic,' bringing about cultural invasion. It is interesting as it highlighted how technological advancement and modernisation are believed to be appertained to the West that is likely condemned of wickedly causing the transformation of societies and empowering forces of change rather than forces of traditions. Conceivably the acceptance and the unselective imitation of and fascination by

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[35] The child's mum appears to be a Muslim veiled woman.

the West from community and parents might have led her to view the West as the reason behind society's distortion and destruction of her culture.

Similar to Nadjia, Bissam also appears to reject Western cultural aspects as shown in her statements.

> Many parents asked us whether we are going to celebrate Christmas this year. And I am like, really! Is this happening in Algeria! Well, I know there are here in X city some nurseries do celebrate Christmas, but I am completely against that. It is not ours; it is Western, and it is against our religion. I bet in their Western nurseries they teach them about Islam or about the prophet Mohammed (PBUH). You know what! they want us to be like them, they want us to celebrate their celebrations, do Haram like they do, and slowly slowly destroy our Islamic religion. And how I am going to answer a kid when they ask me the meaning of Christmas. Parents and now the whole society are being brain washed.

(Bissam, public, nurs. ECE-prelim., informal conversation)

Bissam's extract demonstrates not only a rejection of Western cultural aspects but also a fear that the West will destroy Islam. Bissam accuses the West of changing her society's norms and traditions. This appears to feed into her position in the ideology of West demonisation. Data from Nadjia and Bissam' extracts also indicate an apparent ethnocentric and culturally biased position that judge Western cultural features as morally wrong and indecent. That might also be justified as per their conservative positions that also seem to speak volumes about their cultural essentialist position that divides what is "ours" and what is "theirs". It is interesting to note how other interrelated ideological positions have jointly exacerbated West demonisation ideology. It could thus be argued that cultural essentialism coupled with ethnocentric and conservative positions fuel the socially shared beliefs about the West demonisation ideology. It seems that the latter impacted on the content of provision of early childhood education and care at childhood reception centres as they are seemingly sometimes incompatible with society and parents' expectations. Nadjia and Bissam's accounts can be juxtaposed with Facebook data as we shall see next.

As already discussed in section (2.2.1.4), ideological beliefs and underlying ideologies are also enacted in visuals (Van Dijk, 1998). The following pictures depict a celebration of Halloween at a nursery located in Algeria. The access to the Facebook post and page is made public. The intriguing about the following images is that they seem to say the opposite of Nadjia' and Bissam' position, that seems to bear on the socially shared belief that celebrating

a global cultural event such as Halloween is threatening and toxic to the Algerian norms as portrayed below.
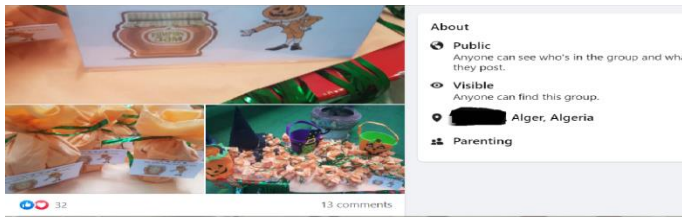
Image 1. Number of likes to the public post showing a celebration of Halloween in an Algerian nursery.

Image 2. Teaching kids about *'Jack-O'-Lantern'*

Image 3. Inculcating Western cultural aspects of Halloween in nurseries
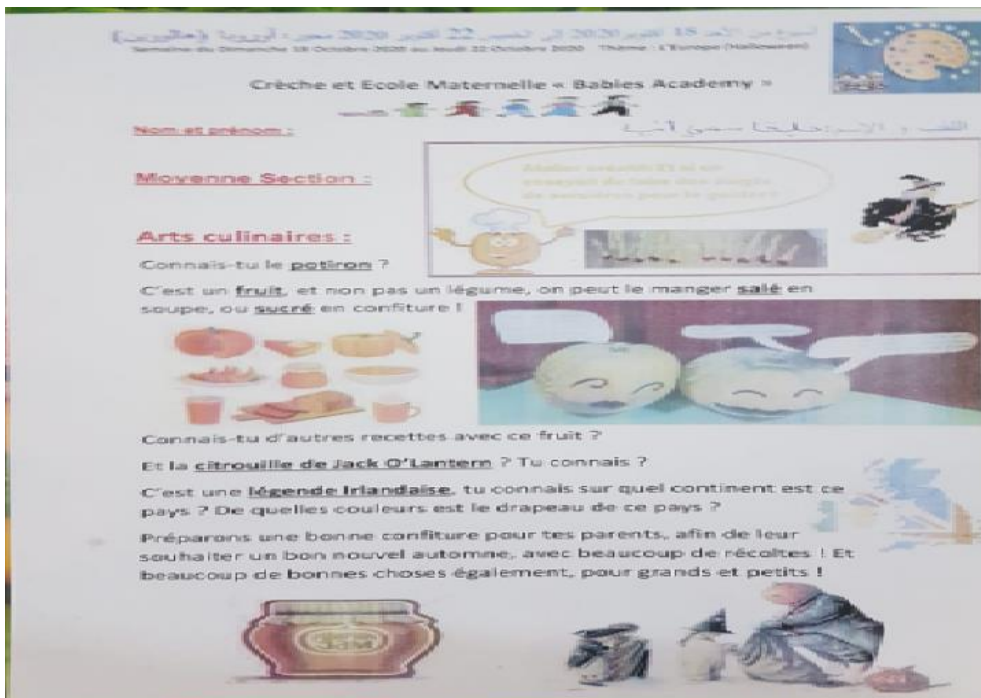
Image 4: A handout given to children containing information and questions about Halloween.

It should first be noted that I investigated the location of the nursery and attempted to interview the manager of the nursery, but she did not give her consent to be interviewed. The first picture indicates peoples' reactions to the celebration of the Halloween event at the nursery. The post got thirty-two likes. This shows that peoples' perceptions of the event were noticeably complimentary. Concerns should be raised of whether or not people are knowledgeable that all those representations including masks and colours and pumpkins

designate Halloween as a Western cultural aspect. Although that is difficult to know, images number two and three indicate a direct inculcation of Halloween aspects by the educators. Image number four further appears to suggest an overt intention to induct children about Halloween by providing details of the 'Irish Myth' and 'Jack-O'-Lantern'. However, as already mentioned, the purpose of the event is not unveiled, given the incapability to interview the manager of that nursery. Notwithstanding, the comments seemed to be mostly from parents. They appear to denote some parents' approval and acceptance of their children to embrace ideas about Halloween. Interestingly, the following pictures of a public post by the Facebook page of the 'Algerian Organisation for Consumer Protection' highlights the tension in the social discourses regarding aspects of 'global culture' or precisely 'global education'.

Image 5. A Facebook post shared in one of the nursery groups

Image 6. Reactions and comments to the Facebook post

APOCE je vous remercie infiniment de dénoncer cette attitude tout à fait étrange à notre société et par conséquent aux consommateurs. Il se trouve que certains confondent entre respect et consentement. Une relecture de l'islam s'impose vivement à un bon nombre de personnes.

Like · Reply · See translation · 1 y

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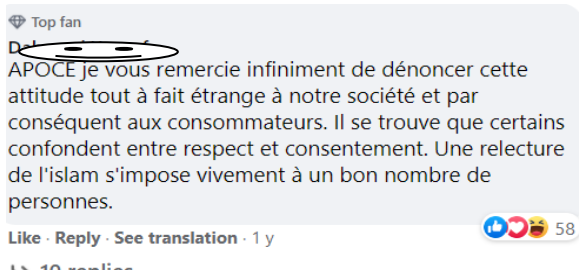
Image 7. Facebook comment

Jiha[...] je suis d'accord avec ce que vous dites et que nos fêtes ne sont pas du tout attrayantes mais tout de même christianiser nos enfants petit à petit et à longue échéance est un danger.nos enfants fêtent noêl,halowyn qui est la toussaint ,saint valentin et Dieu sait quoi encore.

Like · Reply · See translation · 1 y

عيب سيدتي اننا نسعد اولادنا بتقاليدهم هم.
ليس منطق ان نقدم هدايا على طريقة leur papa noël
اعتذر لأنه من تشبه بقوم أصبح منهم.
اما في يخص هاته العملية فهي مقصودة لضرب هوية و
جيل... أولادكم امانة.. هل تعرفين معنى الامانة.
اطلب من اي مسيحي يفرح ابنه بالاحتفال بالمولد النبوي
الشريف.
لا اله إلا الله و حسبي الله و نعم الوكيل فبمن يرى أو يريد
تحطيم اسلامنا

Like · Reply · See translation · 1 y · Edited

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Image 8. Facebook comment   **Image 9. Facebook comment**
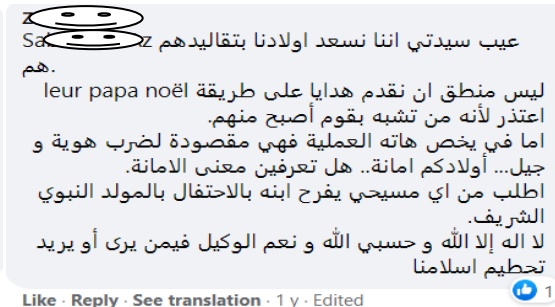
Image 5 is a Facebook post by The Algerian Organisation for Consumer Protection, shared in their official Facebook page. The Organisation seems to denounce the celebration of Christmas at Algerian nurseries. It considered such act to be against Algerian law and opposing the Islamic religion. The post views it as 'tampering with the minds of 'innocent' children' and called for protecting children's beliefs. As the post indicates, the role of the ministry of solidarity and social affairs is being questioned. It further interrogates if celebrating Christmas is officially in the nurseries' programme. This is interesting as it shows how the organisation itself (re) produces underlying ideological positions through social media, as a means of communication. This seems to corroborate the Westoxification/West demonisation ideology discussed in this section.

Image 6 displays reactions and comments to the Facebook post. The post received 11K of reactions of likes and dislikes and 4.9K of comments as well as 5.3k of shares. The comments show paradoxical views. A number of people expressed their disapproval of the Christmas celebration in Algeria. Comments in images 6, 7, 8, and 9 roughly, albeit not literally, translate to:

> We do have such type of nurseries where French is the main language
> for them… only FAFA[36] bands flock into them.

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[36] FAFA Bands also called '*Wled Franca*' which translates to '*the sons of France*'; a term assigned to those Algerian people who venerate France and French language. The term is sometimes correlated with the word '*Harka*' which applies to Algerian traitors to their country who collaborated with the French colonisers and supported French-Algeria during the Algerian War of Independence.

Such nurseries aim to build a generation parallel to and imbued with the culture of the West, detached from our Islamic religion and fundamental constants.

(Image 6)

I infinitely thank APOCE [the acronym for the organisation] for denouncing such attitude absolutely strange to our society and consequently to the consumer. It seems that some confuse respect with acceptance. A reinterpretation of Islam is being strongly imposed on a good number of people.

(Image 7)

[…] Christianising our children gradually and in the long run, is a danger. Our children celebrate Christmas, Halloween, and all that is Saint, Valentine, and God knows what else.

(Image 8)

It is a shame, madam, to make our kids happy with their traditions. It is illogical to present gifts in the manner of their Papa Noel (Santa Claus). I am sorry but whoever imitates a people becomes one of them. […] This is intended to destruct our identity and generation […] and Islam […] why Christians do not celebrate and induct their children about the Mawlid of our prophet.

(Image 9)

All the comments above, which appear to correspond to Nadjia and Bissam' beliefs, suggest a complete rejection of Western cultural aspects including the celebration of Christmas and Halloween at Algerian nurseries. They seem to perceive such act as "strange to our society" (as the comment in image 7 indicates). As it seems, the West is believed to present a danger to children, to identity and to Islam. This, I argue, falls within the ideology of West demonisation because there is a strong association of the West with threat. This data shows that there is a fear that imitating the West and celebrating their cultural aspect will necessarily negatively impact the society as it will detach it from its fundamental Islamic religion and thus would lead to 'Christianising' and Westernising people. It also demonstrates a sentiment that these Western ideas are being imposed, leading to a confusion between respecting the other culture and accepting it. As it appears, Islam constitutes a compelling entity within the studied community. It seems to form a basis of their membership and their group identity, which likely explains their West demonisation position. This finding is particularly crucial because it

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demonstrates the role of identity (Islam) in shaping their stances that seem very much culturally essentialist, ethnocentric, and conservative. I argue, thus, that all these fuel West demonisation ideology.

Regarding the comment in image 6, it significantly offers another perspective of how the socially shared beliefs in society might characterise existing mélange of social groups, and probably also social class, their choice and views of language, and the social meaning they attribute to the West in general and Western cultural aspects in particular. In plain terms, the comment appears to associate the acceptance of the culture of the other West with a specific social group (FAFA group) and its language choice. That could be explained by the heterogeneity of the Algerian society. While social groups are remarkably easy to notice within the studied community, and they are conceivably elements constituting positions in relation to West demonisation, the one comment does not allow us to claim that those who prefer French language, or those nurseries of higher social status are inclined towards Western culture or its cultural aspect. Although that perhaps could be only a partial of the explanation, the issue is more intricate. Other studies (for example, Becker, Kraus, and Rheinschmidt-Same, 2017) investigated the implications of social class and cultural expressions for group-related beliefs and behaviours, nonetheless the focus and interest of this study did not set to explicate the relationship between underlying ideologies and social group and or social class. Furthermore, the present research has no intention to generalise any of the findings.

As stated earlier, it turns out that there are strains and collision in the discourses surrounding West demonisation/ Westoxification ideology as some other members of the community seemed to be pleased about the post, as the screenshots below denote.
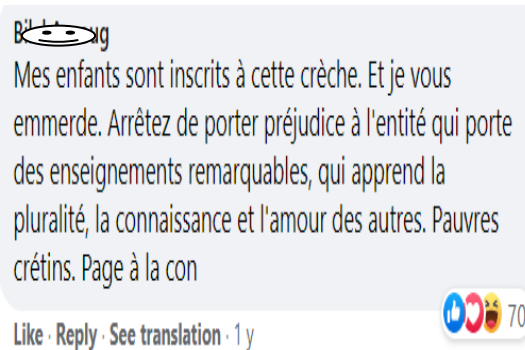
Image 10. Facebook comment

Image 11. Facebook comment
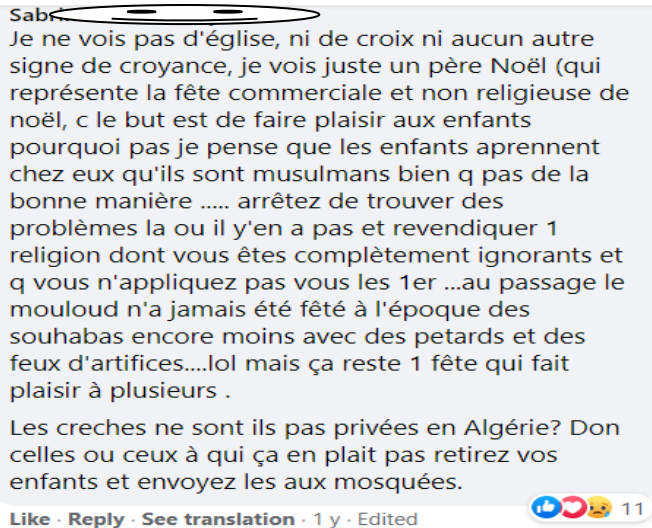
Image 12. Facebook comment

Comments in the above images approximately translate to

> My kids are enrolled in this nursery […] stop prejudice against these remarkable teachings that teach plurality, knowledge/ cognisance, and love of others […]
>
> (Image 10)

> Priest or Santa Claus or Jesus or ghoul […] Anyway this celebration has no harm and has no distortion of our religious beliefs. People are after peace and coexistence of different religions, beliefs and beautiful traditions and we are still in 'oh this is Christmas tree' 'oh it is Haram'.
>
> (Image 11)

> I see no church, nor a cross, or any other sign of belief. I see just a Father Christmas (which represents only a commercial party and a non-religious celebration) that aims to please children. Why not! I think that children learn that they are Muslims at home (although not in the right way). Stop problematising and claiming a religion that you yourself are completely ignorant and you do not even apply. By the way the Mawlid has never been celebrated in the era of the Prophet let alone with petards and fireworks lol, but it remains a party that people have fun celebrating it. Since nursery education is private in Algeria, those who disapprove of Christmas should enrol their children in mosques.
>
> (Image 11)

Those comments view the Facebook post that denounces the event as prejudiced and biased. There is a belief that inducting children about and celebrating Christmas at Algerian nurseries carries noble notions of 'plurality, cognisance, and love of others'. They deemed the celebration to cause no damage or distortion upon their religious belief. The comments seem to speak volumes of the acceptance and tolerance of the other (West). This finding is particularly interesting as it shows how views of the West and Western cultural aspects are perceived differently among the same community members, engendering apposing states. The idea of ambivalence put forward by Bhabha (1984) is particularly relevant to this discussion. Bhabha (1984) maintained that 'mimicry' which revolves around the idea of copying the coloniser in power, leave the colonised in an ambivalent state, a state of love-hate towards the West. However, what seems to be missing in Bhabha's concept of ambivalence is how the state of ambivalence emanates in the first place. In view of this, Jalal Ali's (1984) work is more suited to explain my data. Indeed, in discussing the cultural destruction in Iran, Jalal Ali (1984) elucidated that the non-West mimicry of the West entails the replacement of traditional culture and cultural heritage and conformity of Muslims, their cultures, society, and their daily lives to the West. In other words, the West creation of desire and consumerism makes the 'Westoxified subjects', as he calls them, to identify with Western culture and its aspect, so that the effect become the product of the non-West's desire and no longer products of the West. This also supports Simić (2016) study that highlights that the inevitable consumption has been one of the West's most enduring effects.

The Facebook post by The Algerian Organisation for Consumer Protection and the subsequent reactions and comments provide additional perspectives on the ideological tensions and nuances found among individuals. The organisation's denouncement of Christmas celebrations in nurseries reflects a stance against what they perceive as a departure from Algerian cultural norms and Islamic teachings. The comments from individuals further exemplify the divergence of opinions within Algerian society regarding the appropriateness of embracing Western customs. For example, certain comments express approval for upholding Algerian cultural identity and Islamic principles by eschewing Western celebrations such as Christmas and Halloween. These individuals perceive such festivities as a challenge to the sanctity of their religious and cultural legacy.

Conversely, other comments promote tolerance and acceptance of diverse cultural practices, underscoring the significance of peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding among various religions and traditions. They counter rigid interpretations of religious tenets

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and propose that children can cultivate their Muslim identity at home while also partaking in non-religious festivities.

These contrasting perspectives underscore the intricacies of negotiating cultural identity in an interconnected world. The discourse transcends mere cultural rituals to encompass broader ideological conflicts between conservatism and modernity, religiousness and secularism, local and global influences.

To sum up, the excerpts and corresponding social media engagements present a nuanced depiction of the challenges posed by the encroachment of Western culture on Algerian society. Through scrutinising the subtleties in participants' viewpoints and the wider ideological dialogue, my data enhances an understanding of the complexities inherent in contradictory ideological positions and beliefs about the West and the East, the local and the global.

Overall, this subsection discusses the finding about participants' rejection of Western cultural aspects like Halloween and Christmas. This finding, my data suggest, corroborates the theme of West demonisation ideology that perceives the West as toxic, a danger, and a threat to Islamic religion and to identity. The findings in this subsection highlighted the significance of visuals, cultural aspects, and social media among others in (re) producing underlying ideologies. All these findings are particularly important because it demonstrated how West demonisation ideology could co-exist with other ideological positions such as cultural essentialism, ethnocentrism, and conservatism. Such a finding is reminiscent of Simić's (2016) study in the context of Serbia. He expressed participants' concern about the erosion of local traditions. He referred to it as a form of cultural imperialism. My findings are also in line with other studies as such of Deylami (2011), Crynes (2019), and Crowe (2021). For example, Crowe (2021) used observations of five public and private kindergartens in Shanghai- China, as well as their social media websites, in addition to 25 semi-structured interviews with early childhood education officials and kindergarten staff, along with 188 questionnaires to parents. Crowe (2021) findings showed that early childhood education in Shanghai- China is shaped by 'obedient bodies' (Foucault 1991) of local forces characterised by the dissemination and internalisation of traditional Chinese values (labelled 'values and citizenship education' and the cultivation of monolithic vision of 'Chineseness' and patriotism through the celebration of Spring Festival and China's National Day, and global forces resisting the nationalisation of early childhood education in Shanghai- China by promoting 'Western' cultural immersion because of market demands through practicing the celebration of Halloween and Christmas, as globalisation-generated constructs. In the current research,

however, the issue seems to go beyond 'obedience versus resistance' and extends to opposing states of approval and disapproval, rejection, and acceptance. In fact, my data further suggests an acceptance and tolerance of the other (West) by members of the community, viewing that embracing the culture of the other causes no distortion of one's own culture or religion but rather brings about plurality and love of others. Although it has been alluded that all those social beliefs might be linked to specific social group and class and their language choices. Evidence was not enough to generate claims as the issue is very complex. It has also been argued throughout this subsection that Jala Ali's (1984) concept of Westoxification is a good explanation of the complexities of my data. The significance of Jalal Ali's (1984) work lies in advocating for neither a complete rejection nor a full acceptance and embracement of western global modernity through critically responding to new cultural and global changes and trends yet relying on own culture.

Another facet of West demonisation ideology, discussed in the following subsection, is participants' view of the West as distorting notions of gender in the Arab/ Muslim societies.

5.3.2 Transgenderism … Product of the West: Condemning the West for spoiling societal norms

My participants expressed their fear that the West infiltrates 'abnormal' ideas about gender that, according to them, never existed in Algeria as an Arab/Muslim country before. I have chosen to use the word transgenderism as I believe it best describes the meaning I co-constructed with my participants, as the extracts presented in this subsection illustrate. In many instances, participants provided a perception of the West as spoiling the social norms of the community in relation to their gender expectations. Sacha criticised ill-considered imitations in Algeria of the West's attitudes to gender.

> I am afraid we get into mazes the West tries to instil into our society. They made things go upside down, females turn into males, and vice versa. They even indoctrinate young kids in their nurseries. They tell the boy if you prefer to be a girl you can, and girls can become boys. They want us to deviate from our norms and do like they do; those are Western ideas, not ours; we don't tolerate that. It has become really threatening the Muslim world now.
>
> (Sacha, Priv.nursery, manager, formal interview)

Sacha's statements indicate an unfavourable perception of the West. Her conceptualisation of transgenderism as ideas originated in and induced from the West/ Europe might explain her depiction of the West as 'a threat'. The uncommonness of transgender people in Algeria

could be the reason for the condemnation of the West for bringing about an unusual aspect from her vantage point. Her talk denotes a cultural essentialist and an ethnocentric position grounded upon an evaluation of 'their' features as erroneous, morally wrong, and intolerable. Her position clearly demonises the West for producing and permeating ideas of transgenderism corroborates the ideology of West demonisation.

Other participants' social practices seem to signify a transphobic stance. For example, in an informal conversation with Bissam about the arrangement of children and activities in her group, as I noticed that some activities involved only one gender, she stated:

> In my daily work with children, I make sure children understand their limits, especially at their early age. The girl is a girl, and the boy is a boy. I have in my group Z who likes to play, sit, and sleep only with girls and X he wants to get himself deeply immersed with girly activities, he likes to play with dolls. We don't want to get to those abnormalities […] That's why I split girls and boys into separate groups. We are Muslims, our childhood education is primarily and fundamentally based on the precepts of the Islamic religion; we are not like Europe where you live. Their education and culture are different from ours; they have many homosexual and transgender people. We can't live like them; they teach their children sex education at schools and then get involved in sex at a very young age. And they call it a culture! Really insane and evil! That's manipulation, not education! God forbid that gets to us too.
>
> (Bissam, public, nurs. ECE-prelim., informal conversation)

Bissam's transphobic sentiment seems to be prevalent throughout her account. It is interesting to note how the beliefs she holds about gender appear to have a significant influence on her daily work with young children and on her perception of what is right and wrong. Her identity as a Muslim seemingly impacts her judgment about 'good' and 'bad' childhood education. It could then be argued that her identity might explain her beliefs. Discourses of 'us' and 'them', 'our education' and 'their education', 'our culture' and 'their culture' seem to prevail within the community. 'God forbid that get to us' speaks volumes of, as it seems, her fear of the West to influence or change the social norms of her society. That account exemplifies how participants' view of my positionality and identity as an Algerian living abroad made them repeatedly refer to the West to present their arguments. While the examples presented in the extract could only mean that the boy likes to join activities in which girls are involved, Bissam's association of abnormality with the West and condemning the

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West of its inculcation to children is another evidence of my participants' position in the West demonisation ideology.

Farah expressed views similar to that of Bissam. When talking about other global educational approaches to early childhood education and care, Farah mentioned:

> […] I know many Algerian migrants who decided to return and settle down here permanently lest their children adopt abnormal European mode of living, transgenderism, and homosexuality that the West encourages […] (laughing). In our nurseries, although not as good as the West, at least parents are reassured that their kids are in safe hands and are not being indoctrinated about changing their kids' gender identities.
>
> (Farah, public, nurs. ECE-prepr., formal interview)

Farah seems to perceive the Western aspect, including transgenderism, as abnormal and bizarre as per her laugh. This appears to go back to some already-existent social beliefs about the West that are apparently widespread among individuals in the community. Her example of Algerian migrants leaving Europe to avoid the risk of their children become transgender could be strong evidence of the socially shared beliefs about the objection of ideas of transgenderism and thus about West demonisation ideology.

An incident that corroborates Farah, Bissam, and Sacha' beliefs is described in the following extract:

> A child fell to the ground and started shedding tears. Hanna told him: "don't cry. The man should be strong and solid". The boy instantly stopped crying. I took the opportunity to ask her about her conduct, and she argued […] we give our children according to our religion, not like the West they consider transgenderism liberation … It's true we follow their knowledge and all that, but it's not them who show us how to educate children it's us who teach them principles and values which they lack. They have technology, achievements, resources, but not education. They play with kids' minds from nursery age. They teach them about sexuality and gender preferences and many crazy beliefs …crazy world!
>
> (Excerpt from fieldnotes)

Although the extract apparently conveys a traditional gender role ideology and an ideology of genderism (gender binarism), it also tells a transphobic sentiment that Hanna, like other

participants, seems to hold. The Islamic/ religious identity is again an indicator that might justify Hanna's position. I believe that Hanna's statements reflect essentialist and preconceived ideas about the West and transgenderism. That negative image she holds about the West might have led her to form a biased opinion about education in the West. Being against 'crazy' ideas of the West shows Hanna's rejection of the Western ideas and thus also positions her in West demonisation ideology.

The data above suggest participants' rejection of transgender ideas that they believe the West is infiltrating in Muslim/ Arab societies. I considered their positions to be part of the ideology of West demonisation. The data further suggested homophobic and perhaps sexist stances held by my participants which are likely engendered by their seemingly cultural essentialist and ethnocentric positions. This finding is important as it demonstrates how West demonisation ideology is strongly embedded in their actions and behaviours. It also draws attention to its influence upon their daily activities and their conducts with children. The separation of boys and girls play activities is an example of that. More importantly, data in this subsection highlights the significant role of early childhood educators and settings in maintaining discourses and constructions about gender and transgenderism as part of West demonisation ideology that could intersect with my participants' religious, cultural as well as moral values and norms.

Interestingly, a body of literature around the construction of gender and sexuality in early childhood education (Robinson, 2002; Robinson, 2005; Duke and McCarthy, 2009; Surtees Gunn, 2010; Ferderer, 2017; Aprilianti, Adriany, and Syaodih, 2021) shows that education continues to be gendered and gender biased within the context of early childhood settings. More specifically, Aprilianti, Adriany, and Syaodih (2021) literature study noted that the assumed patriarchal culture that characterises Indonesia has contributed remarkably to gender constructions in settings of early childhood education. The study further noted that differences have arisen in relation to how educators in learning activities direct girls to pick out dolls rather than toy cars and 'restrict' them to play only in areas that are claimed to be girls' activities, otherwise they are considered out of the ordinary. In a different context in Australia, Robinson (2002; 2005)'s qualitative study used interviews and a survey to a group of early childhood educators from diverse sociocultural backgrounds, working in pre-schools and long day care settings. His findings suggest the pervasiveness of hegemonic discourses of the irrelevance, invisibility, silencing and exclusion of gender-related issues, which according to him exacerbate homophobia and heterosexism in early childhood settings. Similarly, reviewing thirty-one articles, Duke and McCarthy (2009)' research shows that early childhood education programmes often reinforce homophobia, heterosexism, and sexism and that early childhood

educators usually express fear of children to become transgender and they are not comfortable with policies, practices and curricula that acknowledge gender-related issues.

The above data present an analysis of participants' beliefs on transgenderism in Algerian society in connection with Western influence. A more in-depth exploration of these findings, their evaluation in light of existing research, and the nuances within participants' responses are crucial.

Sacha, Bissam, Farah, and Hanna demonstrate a strong disapproval of transgenderism, portraying it as a byproduct of Western impact that jeopardises traditional Algerian cultural values and Islamic beliefs. This viewpoint corresponds with the concept of demonising the West, where Western aspects are viewed as inherently detrimental and conflicting with Algerian/ local societal norms.

Sacha's portrayal of transgenderism as a menace to the Muslim community reveals a profound apprehension of cultural decline and ethical deterioration spurred by Western influence. Likewise, Bissam and Farah's opposition to Western lifestyles, including transgenderism and homosexuality, highlights a wish to safeguard Algerian cultural and religious authenticity against presumed Western infringement.

Furthermore, the linking of transgenderism with abnormality and deviation from Islamic principles is apparent in participants' statements. Bissam's insistence on segregating boys and girls in educational contexts to avert "abnormalities" demonstrates a firmly established gender dichotomy and traditional perspective on gender roles rooted in religious and cultural traditions.

Hanna's assertions regarding the alleged brainwashing of children in the West concerning gender preferences and sexuality further illustrate the vilification of Western education and values. Her critique of Western education for lacking in principles and values exposes a prejudice against Western cultural and educational systems.

The participants' rejection of transgenderism and their attribution of its origin to Western influence also intersect with homophobic and sexist attitudes. Their emphasis on upholding gender separation and traditional gender norms reinforces patriarchal standards and marginalises gender identities that do not conform.

Concerning the literature, the participants' beliefs and behaviours align with broader trends observed in early childhood education worldwide. Research by scholars such as Robinson (2002; 2005), Duke and McCarthy (2009), and Aprilianti *et al.* (2021) sheds light on the pervasive impact of gender ideologies in educational environments and the perpetuation of dominant narratives that sustain homophobia, heterosexism, and gender prejudice.

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The significance of the data lies in its depiction of how the demonisation of the West ideology intersects with participants' religious, cultural, and ethical values to influence attitudes towards gender and sexuality. It underscores the role of early childhood educators and settings in perpetuating and reinforcing these ideologies, thereby shaping societal norms and constructs of gender.

Regarding the implications of this finding, Kostas's (2023) study addresses gender issues within the realm of education and emphasises the need for challenging gender stereotypes within educational settings and the establishment of official protocols for deliberating gender equality matters in classrooms. The study further highlights the significance of in-service gender-training courses for educators. This is relevant in the context of my study as it underscores the necessity of early childhood educators to be aware of and reflect critically on international literature and guidelines on gender issues in education.

While the focus of the above studies is different from mine, they present evidence about gender ideologies in early childhood education. The importance of my data is in the relevance of the discourses around gender in reinforcing the ideology of West demonisation within the specific context of my study. Another idea appertaining to Westoxification/West demonisation is participants' view of the West as bringing about secularism, to which I now turn.

5.3.3 Fear of secularism[37] (Anti-secular ideologies)

Some participants expressed their anti-Western sentiment in relation to a preconceived idea that the West constitutes a threat to Islam. Their accounts seem to indicate an unwelcoming position towards the transformation of the Algerian society from a strong identification with Islamic religion and its values to a less religious society. As a case in point, Bissam soundly excluded the West when the topic of networking was brought up. She stated: "I get many ideas from other nurseries in Arab countries but not from local nurseries in Algeria, neither Western countries" (Bissam, public, nurs. ECE-prelim., formal interview). When asked about the reason for excluding the West, she argued:

> Bissam: Because the West aims at Westernising our education.
> Religious/ Islamic education was essential in our education system

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[37] While the literature acknowledges the difference between secularisation and secularism and how they are both linked, I used the two interchangeably in this study. Wu (2007, p. 56) defines secularism as 'thoughts and theories focusing on the separation of religion and politics, which the secularists endeavour to realize intentionally as their goal'. Secularisation, on the other hand 'is a process of this separation, as either a result of intentional endeavours, or a mere natural outcome of the interaction among various social factors' (ibid.). Wallis and Bruce (1989, in Haynes and Ben-Porat, 2010, p. 126) further explain that 'secularisation is a process whereby religion loses its public significance, affecting the operation of the social system, either through general popular disengagement from churches or mosques or other religious focal points, leading to subordination of religious values to secular ones'.

and society, but it's losing status. The West is undoubtedly behind all this!

Me: I'm not sure I understand what you mean. Could you elaborate on that?

Bissam: I can give you many examples! There was an instruction from the ministry to write on the blackboard "In the name of Allah" before starting class, but now it has been eliminated. Do you know why? Benghabrit [Former minister of education] instructed to ban prayers in schools and removing some Quranic Surratt from the textbook. Because she is secular. She thinks by eliminating Islamic education from schools she is modernising humanity and makes it like Westerners… All those examples and many others explain the fact that we are moving towards a secular age, I am afraid! They are trying to eradicate Islamic education in schools and then step by step eradicate Islam. Islam is their main problem. Secularisation will destroy Muslims.

(Bissam, public, nurs. ECE-prelim., formal interview)

In here, it seems conspicuous that Bissam views the West as a threat. The West, according to Bissam and some other participants, necessarily causes the loss of religious authority and society's Westernization. Her comment seemingly indicates her fear of secularism which appears to be conceptualised as a Western output. At a larger level, Bissam's belief seems to be a part of some of the discourses within the community on the ground that the examples she mentioned made a fuss in the Algerian media, accusing the former minister of conspiracy to impinge on religious constituents. A very similar statement was made by Hanna, who commented:

There is now a shout against religion; the West wants us to become a secular society; they gonna certainly destruct us. Our religion is falling away and is moving backward to Jahiliyyah[38]. Our current generation wears indecent clothes, short skirts, and tight trousers […] Unfortunately, we are not giving our children from the foundations of our religion. Unless we apply our religion properly, we protect our children from the Western world and conserve them religiously and ethically from the change in the name of modernisation, thus changing society. It all starts at the nursery…secularisation is today's threat!

(Hanna, Public. nursery, manager, formal interview)

As it appears, Hanna believes that the secular culture threatens contemporary Algerian society and causes a decline in the social and cultural significance of Islamic religion. Hanna's account seems to designate her vision of the importance of religious education at the nursery system, plausibly as part of her religious identity, ethnocentrism, and religiocentrism. On many occasions, Hanna and other participants spoke highly of the

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[38] Is literally translated to the age/ era of ignorance (pre-Islamic period).

effect of Westernisation on their religion involving their identity, which can explain their anti-secular positions. This bears similarity to what I have written in my fieldnotes.

> When talking about my (qualitative) PhD project with my MA supervisor back in Algeria, he stated that I am brainwashed, and I should be careful of the knowledge I get from 'them' as 'they asked me' to do qualitative research (over quantitative) about Algerian ideologies and political matters to know more about us!
>
> (Excerpt from fieldnotes)

It seems that not only my participants condemned Western intents. Anti-Western sentiments can be said to prevail at a larger level within the same community. His comments corroborate my participants' beliefs about the West and speak volumes of the prevalence of West demonisation ideology.

This subsection has reported how my participants rejected secularisation as per their pro-Islamic religion position and how this corroborates West demonisation ideology. This finding is important as it refutes the predictions of the secularisation theory about the decline of religion. Other research is in support of my finding. Haynes and Ben-Porat (2010) and Smith and Schapiro (2021) argue that contrary to the prediction that the secular worldview has substituted religion, the latter has instead proved remarkable resiliency, retaining a substantial force in many social and political structures, not least in the Muslim world.

Evidence from my data further suggest participants' constructions of secularism as a unique Western phenomenon. This finding is reminiscent of Wu (2007) who confirmed that the Western influence engendered the emergence of secularism in the Arab world. He noted the danger of transplanting secularism from the West to the non-West on the ground that the specific need of the West to secularism led to its emergence in a European context, but that does not necessarily apply to the strikingly different Muslim world. In this vein, Haynes and Ben-Porat (2010, pp. 128-129) suggested that 'globalisation– seen, *inter alia*, in increased economic liberalisation, demands for political changes, including democracy, and a more generalised spread of human rights concerns– has both secularising *and* 'religionising' influences upon states and societies'. It could be thus said that secularisation is a result of globalisation. On the other hand, Findlow (2008) studied the interplay between Islam, secularisation, and modernity at the tertiary education level in the Arab States of Bahrain, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Her study based on fieldwork, using teachers, students, senior administrators, and international consultants' interviews as well as higher education planning archives, institutional documents and media coverage analysis challenges

the essentialist discourses that associate secularism and modernity and argues that politics and power influence regional patterns of infrastructural engagement with religion and that societal and cultural ideologies are of minor influence. My findings are, however, in discord with Findlow (2008)'s argument. They rather demonstrated that ideologies are of major influence in the Algerian context of early childhood education.

It is noteworthy that research on religion's place and role in early childhood education and care is scarce and presents one of the most current heated and still unresolved scholarly debates (Kuusisto, 2022). In my attempt to discuss early childhood educators' beliefs about the secularisation thesis in the context of early childhood education, it was challenging as per the dearth of contextualised studies on the issue. Some research has been conducted with reference to few Arab countries, for example, the institutionalisation of Islam as a religion in early childhood education in Egypt and Turkey (Aslan, 2022), with scant regard for the Algerian context[39], which emphasises the significance of my findings.

Overall, the above findings emphasise participants' anti-secular ideologies and their fear of secularism as perceived threats from the West.

Bissam and Hanna articulate a profound aversion to secularism, perceiving it as a Western imposition intended to eliminate Islamic teachings and principles from Algerian society. Their discourses underscore a deep-rooted opposition to perceived Westernisation and secularisation, portraying these trends as harmful to the maintenance of Islamic identity and cultural authenticity.

Bissam's exclusion of the West as a source of educational inspiration underscores a broader sentiment of scepticism and distrust towards Western influence. Her claim that secularisation jeopardises Islamic teachings and values mirrors an essentialist perspective on religion as inseparable from Algerian identity and opposition to external intervention.

Hanna's depiction of secular culture as a threat to Algerian society resonates with similar viewpoints, accentuating the alleged erosion of religious and cultural values in the wake of Western influence. Her observations on the decline of Islamic education and the societal

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[39] Using a cross-national survey (The International Social Survey Program (ISSP) to Templeton Religion Trust IV Study, 2018-2020) conducted in 48 countries, Smith and Schapiro (2021) analysed the global advancement of secularisation. The findings of the report showed that Algeria ranked the 33rd and Indonesia was the lowest in total degree of secularism among the six other Islamic countries.

implications of secularisation underscore a profound fear of cultural displacement and ethical deterioration.

The anti-secular ideologies of the participants correspond with wider discourses within the community, reflecting a prevalent belief in the inherent clash between Western secular principles and Islamic principles. Their fear of secularism emanates from a perceived threat to religious identity and cultural authenticity, fostering opposition to Western impact and endeavours to uphold traditional values, according to the participants.

In connection to the scholarly works, the participants' rejection of secularism contests the projections of secularisation theory concerning the decline of religion in contemporary societies. Instead, their accounts underscore the resilience of religious identity and the enduring impact of cultural and religious beliefs on shaping societal standards and principles.

Research by Haynes and Ben-Porat (2010) and Smith and Schapiro (2021) corroborate the idea that religion continues to hold significant influence in numerous societies, notably in the Muslim world, notwithstanding the forces of globalisation and modernisation. The participants' aversion to secularism and their linkage of secularisation with Western influence mirror broader patterns in religious discussions and opposition to Westernisation.

Furthermore, the participants' perspectives on secularism intersect with broader discourses regarding the interplay between religion, modernity, and globalisation. Scholars like Wu (2007) and Findlow (2008) have analysed the intricate dynamics of secularisation in non-Western contexts, highlighting the impact of politics, authority, and cultural beliefs on perceptions of secularism and religious identity.

The importance of the data lies in their contribution to the academic discourse on religion's status and role in early childhood education and care. By underscoring the impact of religious beliefs on participants' stances towards secularisation and Westernisation, the results illuminate the intricacies of cultural identity and resistance to external influence.

In summary, this section demonstrated how the ideology of West demonisation was enacted in participants' social practices and discourses. Although I made clear the nuance between Jalal Ali Ahmad's (1984) notion of Westoxification and what I prefer to call West demonisation within the context of this study, I use both concepts interchangeably. To reiterate, Westoxification entails idealisation and imitation of the West and its economic, political, social, and cultural consequences in destructing Arab/ Muslim nations (Ali Ahmad, 1984), West demonisation depicted my participants' rejections of the West's 'interference' into

their country and considering it as the main threat to Muslim cultural norms and education. These constructions included a rejection of Western cultural aspects such as the celebration of Halloween and Christmas in nursery education settings. My data suggest that such acts seem to be unwelcomed by early childhood educators, viewing them as odd and toxic. This was a significant finding as it explained how that falls within the ideology of West demonisation and highlighted its co-existence with other ideological positions including cultural essentialism, ethnocentrism, and conservatism. Intriguingly, the (re)production of ideologies by means of discourses in social media and visuals showed opposing ideological positions embracing and accepting Western cultural aspects, believing they bring about no own's cultural or religious distortion but rather about pluralism and coexistence. Bhabha's (1984) notion of ambivalence was important in explaining such collision, however, I found Jalal Ali 's (1984) work that promoted alternative meaning of global life in the Islamic world more important in explaining of the complexities of my data.

My data further suggest how participants' fear and rejections of transgenderism and its essential association with the West were translated into the ideology of West demonisation. The West was demonised for distorting and spoiling societal norms and notions of gender in the Arab/ Muslim societies. This finding is significant in highlighting how early childhood educators' constructions of gender and transgenderism impact on their actions and behaviours as well as their daily activities and their conducts with children. It has also indicated how homophobic and sexist views could intersect with religious, cultural along with moral values and norms in fuelling West demonisation ideology.

The data in this subsection also discussed West demonisation ideology in relation to participants' anti secular ideologies and their fear and rejection of secularism as a purely Western phenomenon. Their pro-Islamic religion is evidence about the significance of religion in Algeria. This finding, as the data demonstrates, challenges the predictions of the secularisation theory about the decline of religion. Moreover, it has been noted how globalisation impacts the secularisation thesis. More importantly, my findings are of significance because they particularly contribute to the scholarly debate and scarce research on the place and role of religion in early childhood education and care and because they showed how researching ideologies is of major importance as it shows how they influence such discourses as well as practices in early childhood education settings.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed two themes that have been the most prominent and widespread in the field: idealisation of the West and West demonisation. They have both proved to be encapsulated in Van Dijk's (1998) categorisation of ideologies.

The findings suggest that participants idealised Western knowledge and deemed the West to be the 'right knowledge establisher'. This could be seen in the glorification of early childhood education curricular, and programmes developed in the West. The West has also been idealised, as the data show, in term of possessing resources which makes it 'better', more 'powerful' and supportive to its people in the eyes of my participants. The data designated that such idealisation had an influence on early childhood educators' actions and behaviours as well as views. Their social practices and discourses demonstrated that the supposedly lack of resources in their country led them create excuses for not being able to perform certain activities and tasks with children and thus use that as a justification of their 'unsuccessfulness'. Another aspect of west idealisation was in terms of Western moral and ethical values. Participants view Westerns and the West as more respectful. The findings show that these idealisations justified their imitation of the West and led them to depreciate their own country's knowledge and practices and consequently create a sense of inferiority towards the West. My findings further highlight how such social beliefs pervade at a larger level of the community. They also highlight the significance of social media, Algerian immigrants, lack of resources and 'poor' living conditions in driving participants to think that the outside world is heaven. They further indicate possible consequences of West idealisation translated in legal or illegal immigration and brain drain.

Many researchers (like Simić (2016), see section 2.3.2) rigidly divide people ideologically into two streams 'those who are oriented culturally and politically toward the West and those who are directed inward toward the nation and its traditions' (p. 104). I argue this creates an unnecessary binary. Unlike the aforementioned studies, my findings suggest that the same individuals hold images of the West as ideal and the West as demon. West idealisation ideology discussed above seems to patently contradict participants' discourses appertaining to West demonisation. Participants' social practices and discourses tend to also demonise the West. The celebration of Halloween and Christmas in some Algerian nurseries has been rejected by many. The spread of some ideas of transgenderism and secularism has been perceived as wicked and toxic. The West constituted a threat to the Islamic education and societies according to my participants. The findings, however, also designates a group of people who accept Western cultural aspects as part of the current global life bringing about peace and pluralism. Jalal Ali (1984)'s work is predominantly significant in understanding such collision. His idea that today's modern world necessitates familiarity with the global but also a self-representation of the local is applicable to my data.

This chapter argued that ideologies are significant in forming the basis of my participants' specific beliefs and understandings of early childhood education practices. They in fact, as the findings demonstrate, influence their specific practices with children. The

following chapter will explore how idealisation of the West and West demonisation have a particular impact on the language practices in the specific context of this study. Thus, the next chapter will concern itself with the issue of language ideologies.

Chapter Six: Language ideologies in practice

6.1 Introduction

During my fieldwork, the linguistic dimension was evident. I constantly encountered evidence of language ideologies in mostly all places: in the names of the nurseries themselves, in the Facebook posts, in the posters on the nurseries' walls, and in the everyday conversations of my participants and children's utterances, including children's songs learned in the nurseries and the early childhood educators' criticism or praise of children's ways of speaking.

Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how language ideologies are enacted in the daily Algerian nursery practices. The data in this chapter is presented in two sections. The first section deals with two ideological positions: monolingualism and translanguaging[40]. My findings show that participants tend to emphasise the instruction of Standard Arabic as a national language and dismiss multilingual language use and education, which positions them in the monolingual ideology. The findings also show how participants, knowingly or unknowingly, tend to disregard Standard Arabic in their actual practice, and often combine the monolingual Standard Arabic practice with children's mother tongue (Algerian Arabic) as a tool of instruction as well as code-switching and translating Arabic to French and vice versa. This positions them in the language ideology of translanguaging. However, my data reveals that crossing the boundary of a particular language rules and disacknowledging grammatical expressions as well as using multiple codes could be said to represent inconsistency, incoherence, and disharmonies and hence can have a negative impact on the acquisition of the school conventional language. Based on that, hybridity will be reviewed and translanguaging will be problematised. Furthermore, it will be argued that recognising the worth of both monolingual language use and linguistic diversity in education produces ambivalent behaviour in practice. This is significant as it shows the language ideologies' impact on early childhood education practices.

The second section deals with the theme of zerolingualism. My participants share an agreement that there is a language issue at the level of the production of a deficient, incompetent, broken talk, and a lack of language proficiency. Therefore, the definition of zerolingualism in this work stems from my understanding and interpretations of the meanings my participants make out in their actions, behaviours, and accounts. My findings are significant as they highlight possible factors contributing to the generation of such a zerolingual state.

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[40] Translanguaging has been developed as a resistant movement against monolingualism. It has been interpreted differently in various social, academic, and geographical contexts. As a pedagogical strategy for learning, it has been referred to as using various languages as one linguistic act.

The data indicates that the non-exposure and non-use of the linguistic norms and conventions of a language, the interference of many languages and adhering to certain linguistic practices that feature flexible bilingualism, and disacknowledging language boundaries, parents, society, education, and market systems may create a zero-lingual state.

6.2 Standard Arabic, Algerian Arabic and French: monolingualism vs. translanguaging and ambivalent behaviour in practice

Many scholars show a huge objection to the educational policies which persistently value monolingualism and national language on the ground that they disrespect and are incompatible with learners' diverse sociolinguistic realities outside school. They claim that the failure to acknowledge the pedagogical possibilities of non-curricular linguistic repertoires has detrimental effects on learners' sense of identity, self-image or confidence and well-being, as well as fuels social inequality and marginalisation. It is also claimed that it denies the learning opportunities of learners, decreases their learning performance, and makes their access to academic content and curricular knowledge more complicated. This is against the governments' conviction that monolingual and standard language instruction warrants greatest outcomes. On the other hand, proponents of multilingual education claim its potential for fostering equity in education for learners who are linguistically marginalised, and its promises for enhancing cognitive learning, international communication, and economic expansion, as well as promoting entry into the labour market (Loutfi, 2020; Belhiah and Lamallam, 2020). However, my data shows that my participants' actions and behaviours as well as their accounts adhere to monolingualism, translated in their emphasis on the instruction of Standard Arabic (SA, henceforth) as a national language yet at the same time adhere to translanguaging practice, translated in their use of SA, *Darija* and French as one linguistic act in their daily practice. Based on my findings presented below, I come to argue in this section that educators' simultaneous orientation to such coexisting and opposing ideologies produce ambivalent behaviour. More details are provided, and data is presented in what follows.

As I discussed earlier in section 4.3.2.1 (Fieldwork observations), Facebook became a social field for data after one of my participants added me to some groups. In a particular instance, my participant (Farah) commented on a Facebook post that seems to be by a parent asking for recommendations for 'the best francophone nursery' (as image 1 shows). My participant's reply and comments on the post provided significant data as presented as follows:
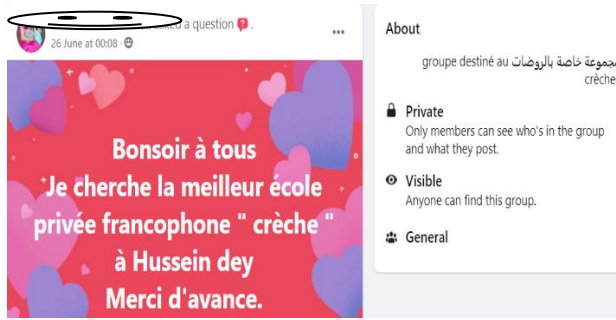
Image 1. A Facebook post asking for recommendations for 'the best francophone nursery in Algiers, Algeria'.

Image 2. Facebook comment
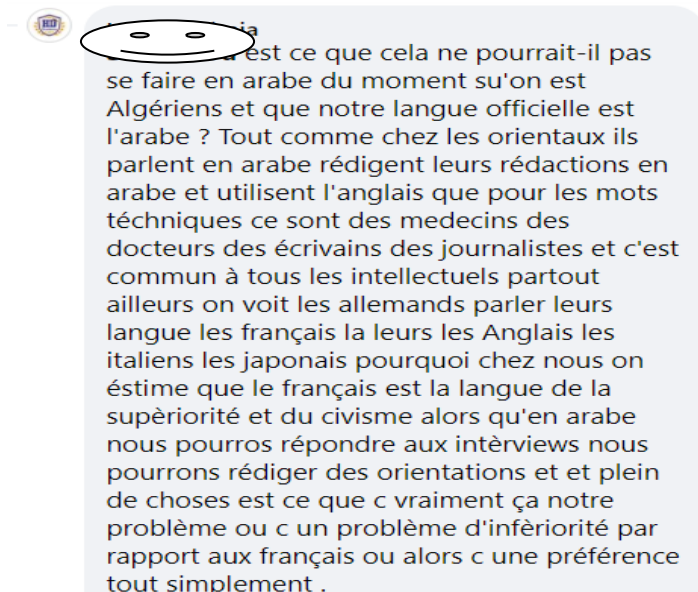
Image 3. Facebook comment
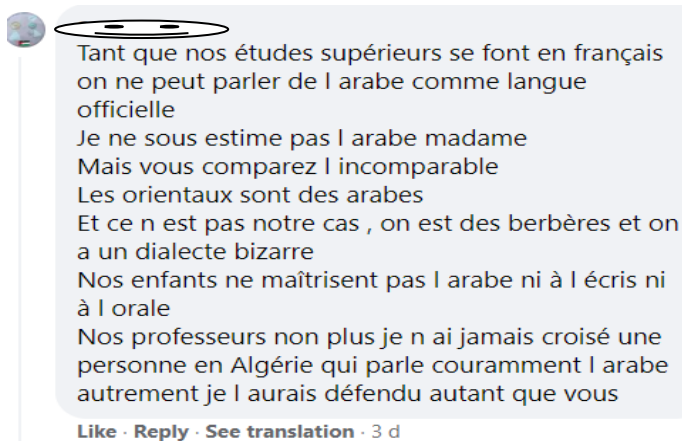
Image 4. Facebook comment

Comments in images 2, 3, and 4 roughly, albeit not literally, translate to:

> […] I would really like to know why you are insisting on Francophone education. Is there any problem with Arabic?
>
> (Image 2)

> We wish to have doctors who know how to write their orientation letters, graduates who can respond to journalists during interviews. We wish that our children master a language both in writing and in speaking.
>
> (Image 2)

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Could that not be achieved in Arabic language when we are Algerians, and our official language is Arabic? Just like people in the Middle East, they speak and write in Arabic. They use English only for technical terms. They are doctors, writers, journalists […] we see Germans speak their language, the French, the English, the Italians, the Japanese. Why we perceive French as the language of superiority and civility while with Arabic language we can answer interviews, write essays and everything. Is that really our problem? Or is that a problem of inferiority? Or is it simply a preference?

(Image 3)

Since our higher education studies are delivered in French language, we cannot say that Arabic is our official language. I do not underestimate Arabic language, madam. But you are comparing the incomparable. The Middle Easterners are Arabs. That is not our case. We are Berbers and we have a weird dialect. Our children do not master Arabic language, neither the written nor the spoken form. Neither do our teachers. I have never met a person in Algeria who speaks Arabic fluently; otherwise, I would have defended it just as much as you.

(Image 4)

While at first I understood the post as just a parent who would like her child to perhaps be a bilingual, the comments on the Facebook post appeared to tell a different story. Farah (in the first comment of image 2 and the comment in image 3) seems to stand for and value the official Arabic language as that could be part of her Algerian and Arabic identity. Her statements might indicate unfavourable position towards francophone education. Her insistence on the instruction of Arabic might also be accompanied with a position that favouring French language instruction presents a problem of superiority to Arabic. This was also confirmed in the interviews. During a formal interview, Farah posits: 'I think we should start with only one language which must be Arabic until children have command in it. Speaking French or English is not a necessity now. It creates an unnecessary confusion to children. That is my opinion and I prove it through my own experience' (Farah, public, nurs. ECE-prelim., formal interview). It could be, hence, said that Farah appears to commit to a monolingual position and object multilingual education at the nursery stage.

Research has indicated the significant impact of social media platforms on public discourse, influencing public perceptions and shaping policy debates by providing spaces for

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individuals to participate in discussions, express viewpoints, exchange and share information on a wide range of subjects, such as current societal issues, events, and politics. The field of discourse analysis presents valuable perspectives for comprehending the dynamics of communication on social media, encompassing the examination of user behaviours, content interaction patterns, and the broader implications of their online activities. Noteworthy examples include research findings indicating that social media discourse can fuel the dissemination of misinformation by using prevailing political narratives and stereotypes (Farkas and Xia, 2023). Moreover, studies have underscored the prevalence of negative interactions in discussions related to the COVID-19 pandemic across social media platforms, emphasising the necessity for fostering more constructive and positive virtual exchanges (Pavlova, 2023; Noor, et al., 2023). Additionally, scrutinising media discourse can yield insights into the formation of group identities and the perpetuation of ideologies within various societal groups (Martyanov and Lukyanova, 2023).

The findings from the Facebook post and its associated comments highlight participants' vacillation between prioritising Arabic as the primary language of instruction due to its cultural significance and advocating for French for its perceived economic advantages. This further emphasises the complex interplay of language and ideologies within the Algerian context. Such findings are consistent with existing literature on language politics in post-colonial nations, where the choice of language is frequently intertwined with issues of identity and power dynamics (Phillipson, 2009). Facebook functions as a platform for participating in linguistic and cultural debates, enabling individuals to articulate varied perspectives and challenge dominant discourses. The visual data obtained from Facebook provides a glimpse into these discourses, shedding light on the convergence of language and education.

However, it is crucial to recognise the limitations of social media as a vehicle for nuanced discourse. The succinct nature of comments and the absence of in-person interaction could oversimplify intricate matters and impede substantial conversations (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). The study by Boyd and Ellison (2007) presents an extensive examination of social network sites (SNSs), encompassing their definition, historical development, and scholarly research. It delves into the attributes of SNSs, their operational features, and how individuals interact and participate on these channels. Furthermore, the research scrutinises the implications of SNSs on social interactions, the construction of identity, and privacy matters, providing valuable perspectives on the influence of social media on present-day society.

The above articulations of beliefs about Arabic language seem to also be celebrated in the actual practice as the following excerpt from field diary indicates:

The educator is standing-up in front of the class. She asked children in Standard Arabic "ارفعوا اللوحة"[41]. Children showed no action. A child asked in *Darija*, "Do you mean نطلعو"[42]

<div align="right">(Excerpt from field diary)</div>

This incident suggests that the educator tend to emphasise the use and instruction of Standard Arabic in her practice. Children appear not to be familiar with hearing expressions in SA. One child deduced what she meant and explained to the other children its meaning using *Darija* (see section 3.4 for a discussion of *Darija* or Algerian Arabic in Algeria). Although such occurrence could be understood as a natural language learning experience, explained by the fact that most children probably had little or no encounter with SA before the nursery stage, I had to reflect how my presence as a researcher could have an effect on the daily natural occurrences and participants' language choice. I became more acute in pursuing what language (s) my participants use and what they do with language. Interestingly, in many instances, early childhood educators constantly corrected the use of *Darija* to Standard Arabic in the classroom which might speak volume for their insistence on homogeneous language use and monolingual education as the following data indicate:

Malek asked a question and children replied in *Darija*: "واه"[43]. She forcefully said, "we don't say "واه" we say "نعم"[44] (SA)

A child asked Emma to open the window referring to the window as "تاقة" (*Darija)*. Emma to the child "do we call it "تاقة"? How do we call it? What should we say? Some children answered "نافذة" (SA).

The educator Zahra wrote on the whiteboard 1 2 3… and asked a child to read them. A child answered in *Darija*, "واحد زوج تلاتة…". Zahra: "No, we say " واحد اثنان ثلاثة… " (SA).

A child to Malek: "خصني stylo bleu". [trans. I need a blue pen]
Malek: "we don't say "bleu" (French) we say "أزرق" (SA) what this "bleu" is it English! Children replied: "Français"

<div align="right">(Excerpts from field diary)</div>

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[41] Standard Arabic, translated to English as elevate/ raise up your boards.
[42] Darija, translated to English as lift up.
[43] Darja, translated to English as yes
[44] SA, translated to English as yes

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This data indicates how the early childhood educators emphasise the use of SA in the nursery settings and dismiss multilingual language use. They are an indication that SA is the most appropriate for use on the grounds of their corrections of the use of *Darija* by children. That is significant as it shows how ideologies are transmitted through discourse, everyday uses, and social practices (as discussed in section 2.2.1.4). It is noteworthy to mention that in the fourth instance, the child asking for a blue pen used both *Darija* for the verb 'I need' and then French for 'a blue pen'. What is interesting is that this time the educator corrected only the word 'bleu' in French and asked them to say the colour in SA instead. These data are important as they allude to the importance of learning SA enacted in educators' corrections of the use of both *Darija* and French by children. This data can be juxtaposed with expressions which were common amongst my participants and within the larger community. For example, 'of course, we should focus on Arabic as it is our first language' (Emma, informal conversation), 'Arabic is the language of Quran and we have to learn it first to understand our religion' (Bissam, formal interview), 'Yes, I see teaching the kids only one language at this age, why they need to learn French now' (Nadjia, informal conversation), and 'I am against teaching many languages now, we should rather focus on play and developing children's developmental skills than forcing them to learn more than Arabic language' (Tema, formal interview). These accounts position my participants in the monolingual ideology. They have been often made in relation to the teaching of French language. It is significant to note that monolingualism also defines the basis for my participants' collective identity (as explained by Van Dijk 1998, section 2.2.1.3) given the association of Arabic language with their Islamic religion. It can be said that participants' expressions of opposition to multilingual education might be explained by the positive attitudes towards Standard Arabic by Algerians (Hamzaoui, 2019) and the unfavourable position of *Darija* (Belhiah and Lamallam, 2020; Haqoune, 2012; Loutfi, 2020; Messekher and Miliani, 2020) as well as the negative attitudes towards French language carrying connotations of the coloniser's language and the shift away from French to English in Algeria (Abbassia 2021; Caulcutt, 2022) (section 3.4.3).

The interplay of language dynamics in the educational settings of early childhood in Algeria, as presented in the above data, first underscores the prevalence of Algerian Arabic (*Darija*) within these educational contexts. This finding aligns with existing literature on language use in multilingual societies with multiple languages, where informal linguistic forms tend to prevail in formal settings. Noteworthy contributions in this area include the research by Fattah and Salih (2022), Mohanty (2022), Serrani (2023), as well as Zhong and Sharmini (2023). Mohanty (2022) contended in his publication that the exposure to multiple languages from an early age, alongside the challenges of switching between them, nurtures an appreciation for languages and cross-linguistic reflections even prior to formal education,

thereby facilitating positive language transfer across different languages at an earlier stage than typically assumed in current bilingual education practices.

Second, the data also sheds light on the educators' emphasis on standardised linguistic forms and norms of the Arabic language within the nursery setting. This is consistent with previous research such as that of Deykina (2020) who discusses the relationship between understanding language norms, socio-cultural development, and the role of schools in mastering literary language standards. The paper underscores the significance of teaching language norms in educational institutions as a gauge of speech quality and communication abilities within a novel socio-cultural context. However, Rasmussen (2022) delved into the exploration of the concepts 'standard' and 'standardisation' in education, along with their educational implications. Her research findings indicate that standardisation is an ambiguous process, and an excessive emphasis on it can erode the educational and learning experiences.

Paradoxically, although my participants seemed to express an objection to a multilingual education as the findings above show, the following data demonstrate how they endorse the practice of using various languages as one linguistic act in a variety of ways yet without abandoning their positions of monolingualism. An example of such translanguaging practice is presented in what follows:

<div dir="rtl">

بصبع واحد أبزوج صباع أبتلث صباع أبريع صباع أبخمس صباع

قم يا **خويا** أحمد **نوض** صل الشيخ **راه** يأذن

يا **يما** أعطيني ألوان **باش ن**رسمك في الورقة **نرسملك** أجمل فستان و**السما فوقك زرقا** يا ماما يا

ماما **نرسملك** دار كبيرة **دايرة بيها** حديقة وأنت **تطلي مالتاقة** يا ماما ياماما

</div>

(Excerpts from field diary)

Those are examples of some songs that children learn at the three early childhood education and care settings wherein I conducted my fieldwork. The first song is in *Darija*. It informs children to count from number one to five using fingers. The second and third are songs in a mixture of both SA and *Darija*. I indicated the words in *Darija* with **bold**. The inconsistent use of multiple codes at a time, the use of one word in *Darija* and another in SA in one statement could be argued to be clear identification of a translanguaging practice. Translanguaging was not only embodied in the use of multiple languages and codes as one linguistic act to teach songs but occurs frequently. By waw of example,

The educator stuck pictures of vegetables on the whiteboard and is
asking children about the names and colours of vegetables.

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Educator: ما لون الطماطم كيفاش عامل؟ (SA and then *Darija*] [what is the colour of Tomato?

Some children answered: أحمر (SA) [red]

One child answered: rouge (French) [red]

Educator: bravo X c' est un rouge (French) [well done X. it's a red].

Educator: هادا آسم (*Darija*) [what is this?]

Some Children: Tomate (French) [Tomato]

Other children: طماطم (SA) [Tomato]

Educator: هادي آسم (*Darija*) [what is this]

Children: باطاطا [potato]

Educator: هادي آسم (*Darija*) [what is this]

Children: زرودية (*Darija)* [carrots]

Educator: الا جزر (*Darija)* [no]*, (SA) [carrots]*

<div align="right">(Excerpt from field diary)</div>

Another similar example is,

It's 11 am. Children are being arranged in a U-shape seating. Oranges, manual fruit squeezer, juice glass, cutting board and a knife are placed on the table. The educator is demonstrating a preliminary exercise of squeezing orange juice.

Educator: "ليوم راحنا رايحين نعملو jus d'orange عصير [today, we are going to prepare] (*Darija) [orange juice] (French) [juice] (SA)*

(*Darija*) هادي كيش نقولولها ؟ [how to call this]

(SA) برتقال [orange]

(French) [colour] (*Darija*) [its] (*Darija*) [what is] "نتاعها la couleur كيش عاملة؟

(*Darija*) كيش عاملة ؟

هادي تشين وباللغة العربية نقولوبرتقال وبالفرنسية orange واللون تاعه orange [this is an orange] (*Darija*) [and in Arabic we say an orange] (SA) [and in French orange] (SA and French) [and its colour] (*Darija*) [orange] (French)

A child answered in English: orange

Educator: "Bravo" [well done] (French)

Educator: قولوا برتقالة [say an orange] (SA)

<div align="right">(Excerpt from field diary)</div>

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The above extracts demonstrate language use and practice in the daily interactions of early childhood educators and children in nurseries. In the first extract, the educator used SA and then she initiates translations in the children's mother tongue (*Darjia*). Some children answered using SA and others used French. The educator in here seems to appreciate both answers children gave in the different languages. She herself used French to praise the child and then she used *Darija*. However, when children answered in *Darija,* she this time reformulated children's replies in *Darija* to SA. This indicates that despite the educator's insistence on the use of SA and monolingualism, she tends to combine her monolingual practice with various signs that evoke her recognition of children's linguistic repertoires by providing translations into their mother tongue and by code-switching Arabic and French as well as turning a blind eye to ungrammatical expressions. The second example is another evidence of translanguaging practice. The educator in here introduces the lesson by using in one statement *Darija,* French, SA and then *Darija* which is knowingly or unknowingly mostly used as a means of instruction by educators unlike SA or French. This means that despite educators' support of monolingualism, they often show a disregard to SA in their actual practice. The only SA word used during the lesson was 'orange'. The data also indicate a tendency of using English by some children and the educator's appreciation of this. The educators could be said to pursue monolingualism but relatively multilingually. These educators made meaning in relation to their use of translanguaging practice as follows:

> Children do not understand SA, it is foreign to them. So, we have to also use *Darija* for them to understand. So, we only use *Darija* to facilitate learning for them.
>
> (Nadjia, KS. ECE-prep., formal interview)

> We tend to use French and *Darija* with SA all in one ...that sounds a mess but (pause)
>
> (Hanna, Public. nursery, manager, informal conversation)

> That reflects the lived reality of the Algerian society .... we love Arabic but we speak *Darija,* and French is part of us too.
>
> (Emma, KS. ECE-prelim., formal interview)

> I know we use mixed language… the market necessitates that.
>
> (Sacha, Priv.nursery, manager, informal conversation)

mixed language use is also useful as it gives the kids the freedom to express themselves in any language they want without boundaries of languages. Once they have the confidence to talk and express freely, they will later learn with their primary school teacher to express themselves for example in writing with only SA for example, they might make mistakes at the beginning which is normal and that's the way we all learn.

(Sacha, Priv.nursery, manager, formal interview)

In here, participants appear to adhere to translanguaging practice as a strategy to facilitate learning (Nadjia) or a useful mixed language use that grants children freedom without language boundaries (Sacha). While it is perceived as a mess (Hanna), it is believed to reflect the lived reality of Algerians (Emma), and a tool used because it is necessitated by the market (Sacha). The above data, thus, indicate how educators seem to recognise the worth of both monolingual language use and multilingual education. This is in line with the argument that hybrid linguistic practices in class demonstrate positive impacts on academic achievement by increasing learners' socio-emotional-linguistic and communicative potential (Wolff, 2017). Moreover, much research approach translanguaging as purposeful in promoting social justice, equality, inclusion, diversity, plurality, mobility, and urban communication (for example, McDermott, 2022).

Considering that perspective, Lankiewicz (2021) delves into the concept of linguistic hybridity and its correlation with L2 learner identity. Through conducting focus group discussions, Lankiewicz (2021) examines the discursive practices of students engaging with more than one L2 in an English class, analysing their narratives and language use to comprehend how they establish their identities as L2 language users. Lankiewicz's findings (2021) emphasise the concept of linguistic identity as intricately linked to the choice of a linguistic code by individuals with knowledge of multiple languages, with learning a new language entailing the acquisition of a new identity. While my research does not specifically address issues of identity, it rather focuses on the implications of implementing translanguaging practices in early childhood education contexts, which Lankiewicz (2021) did not address.

On the other hand, my data also indicates that the multiple use of codes could be said to represent inconsistency, incoherence, and disharmonies in terms of language use. The following excerpt from my field diary perhaps explains best how such confusions can have a negative impact on the acquisition of the school language:

It's 10:10 am. Children are sitting in rows, and I am sitting at the back of the classroom. The educator standing up in the front. She wrote on the whiteboard in Standard Arabic (SA) (translates to) "the date, under it "In the name of Allah", and Review of letters". She wrote the letter "ج" [J] and said: "آسم راحنا راسمين," (Darija) [what letter is that?]. Croisez les bras (French) [fold your arms] وسمعوني, [and listen, what is this letter] الحرف هاد آسم (Darija). One child answered "جيم". The educator to her: "bravo, tu es champion [sic]" (French) [well done, you are champion] درك ايا (Darija) [now]. "prend [sic] le stylo (French) [take the pen] وكتبوها (Darija) [and write it].

<div align="right">(Excerpt from field diary)</div>

The extract illustrates an inconsistent use of many codes at a time in one activity in a session of Arabic language class, teaching the letter "ج". The data shows that the only SA utterance is the letter itself and all the instruction and communication is in both Darija, as well as some French expressions. The data also shows that there were some lexical and grammatical mistakes as in "tu es champion" instead of "tu es une championne" or "prend le stylo" instead of "prenez le stylo". This might either indicate the educator's incompetence in French language or a deliberate use of a form of language that is unconfined to a universal or homogeneous language use. Interestingly, the learning of French language is not different from the teaching of Standard Arabic. That is to say that the language of communication is mostly or entirely in Darija, with only one or two words in French, and the French being used transcends French language norms. For example, a French class runs as follows:

After Brunch break, children are back to class. Farrah to me: "it's a French session now. Normally I use French only, but children don't understand Arabic, let alone French". Then she addressed children in Darija:

ايا **سويفيو** معاي هاد **الباجا** قريناها لمرة لي فاتت هادا واسم هدا قريناه لمرة لي فاتت [translates to "follow me please, we have already seen this page in the last session, what is this?" (Pointing out to the nose)] (Darija).

a child: la bouche (French) [mouth]

another child: le visage (French) [face]

Farah: Bravo X (French) [well done, X]

She asked them in Darija to repeat all together the word "le visage". She then asked one by one to repeat the word.

My fieldwork reflections: All the session runs in *Darija*. The only French
words used are "le visage", and "bravo".

<div align="right">(Excerpt from field diary)</div>

This extract indicates how the teaching of French language is actually based on *Darija*
and that the only two words children could learn in French are "le visage", and "bravo"
although, as she mentioned, it was the second repetition of the previous lesson. It could be
that the educator's beliefs that children do not understand Standard Arabic and neither French
have led her to use *Darija* as a means of instruction. More importantly, we notice the use of a
new word "*paja*" instead of the French word "la page" and "*swiviw*" instead of "suivez-moi" as
well as a disregard to the grammars, syntax, lexis, and the linguistic norms of languages. This
is crucial as it supports the argument that using translanguaging that allows for crossing the
boundary of a particular language rules can affects the learning of a specific conventional
language. I now move on to review the idea of hybridity in translanguaging and discuss its
implications in my study.

In parallel with Homi Bhabha's (1999) delineation of hybridity, Canagarajah (2022)
approached translingualism as not a product and instead a way of resistant communicative
practice with or against regimes and power imbalances through negotiating and renegotiating
established meanings for ethical and inclusive achievements. Its claimed decolonising
potential contribute to empowering especially communities in the Global South as an
affirmation of their own resources (ibid). Therefore, its representations are not characterised
by another grammatical system, universal norms, or homogeneous use by all users, they are
rather diverse based on the interlocutors' interests and contexts. That is, as a theory of
language translanguaging has appropriated the idea of 'third', 'hybrid' or 'in between' space to
establish linguistic third space. The latter arises in the event of fluid language use through
creating safe and social contexts for multilinguals to use their whole linguistic repertoire. It is
claimed to be transformative in the sense that it interrupts, interrogates, goes beyond, and
transcends existing hegemonic language models and prevailing ideologies as well as
combines different values, practices and identities which do not simply co-exist, but they
generate as new**.** This means that translanguaging does not acknowledge the boundaries
between languages by focusing less on which language is used, language accuracy,
grammatical norms and language skills in teaching-learning practice, but more on how
language is used, speakers' agency, diversity, context, and the aims, the motivations, the
emotions as well as the values behind the use of multilingual resources (Wei, 2011; Flores
and García, 2013; García and Wei, 2014; and Garcia et al. 2015). However, I problematise
the argument that 'an ungrammatical expression of accurate content, or a grammatically
correct expression of inaccurate content, may be just as much a sign of learning as a

grammatically correct expression of accurate content' (Hornberger 2004, p. 166) because, for example, educators' decision to tolerate ungrammatical forms will eventually decrease the importance of grammatical correctness in the eyes of learners.

Canagarajah (2022) provides an analysis of translingualism from four divergent uptakes and scholarly interests. The first uptake is the academic one exploited by scholars and universities for their academic promotion and for making up novel concepts in respect of scholarship branding. The second one is the market uptake in which translingualism is appropriated and manipulated to serve the neoliberal capitalist interests and advance profit-making in economy under the pretext of linguistic flexibilisation. Holiday (2021, p. 3) discussed this in relation to 'powerful branding' and 'powerful ideological and commercial forces' that are in play. He exemplified with Gray's (2010) demonstration of 'how commercial English language textbooks often present an agenda-ridden and simplistic slice of English 'culture' for the purpose of selling an exoticized brand' (ibid.). The third is the philosophical uptake mirrored in two ideological effects of the first two uptakes of translingualism. That is to say, translingualism is just a remix and/or a continuation of already existing and dominant languages and language ideologies (codeswitching or code mixing) but presented as a novel framework or model to gain attention. Moreover, due to a limited knowledge of the language practices in all parts of the world, translingualism becomes a privileged discourse and an essentialising as well as universalising construct. Canagarajah (2022) discussed the fourth progressive uptake in relation to the critiques to translingualism. The most notable of these are Block (2018) and Jaspers (2018) which are worth discussing in detail now.

Block (2018) argues that despite its attempts to address matters of recognition of which ethnolinguistic racism, translanguaging has failed in all ways to transform the capitalist order and to address material inequalities and injustices. He also made critiques to translanguaging for being textual and centred merely around identity politics at local level. The latter, according to him, remains ineffective as it is disconnected from material and structural changes like resources' redistribution that are more important.

In such a view, translanguaging in here cannot be identified with the notion of 'hybridity' and 'third space' because translanguaging research reproduces the very idea of purity and essentialised constructions of language and culture that itself challenges. That is, the very notion of Bhabha's hybridity enables or necessitates the existence and emergence of different, in some way new and transformative positions and thus purer places that is possible for them to be mixed creatively. The commonalities translanguaging has with the monolingual order it initially deprecates is one of its limits among others (Jaspers, 2018; Jaspers, 2022). Jaspers (2018) continues to call into question the transformative claims that translanguaging research

takes for granted. He argues that the presumption and promise that just by encouraging fluid or diverse language use in class does not necessarily transform beyond the actual language use. He also maintains that translanguaging risks causality effects. It replaces its constituent histories with new political initiatives and authority structures. In this sense, it is not always a liberating force, but in some cases, it constrains, dominates, marginalises, and silences certain voices (ibid.).

A case in point is Charalambous *et al.* ' (2016) ethnographic study which revealed that promoting translanguaging practices in the context of a Greek-Cypriot primary school class engendered a problem of identity and resulted in a state of silence, resistance, emotional distress, and a fear that 'speaking Turkish' might be interpreted as 'being Turkish', despite the hybrid and multilingual realities of the school and the teachers' efforts to introduce among pupils of Bulgarian backgrounds Turkish language which is their home variety. Song's (2019) study also contests those studies around language learners' online linguistic practices which claim that their engagement in translingual practices enacts their cosmopolitan identities. She suggests that her participants rejection of translanguaging could reflect their challenge of the view that English language is a dominant group's hegemonic force.

It might seem that the above denies the potential of translanguaging effects, or diminishes its importance and worth, or discourages linguistic diversity in education. That is certainly not the case. That was not meant to favour linguistic purism over hybridity in translanguaging. The point is rather to make it clear that they are both deemed as the only justifiable and socially desirable option for language use in education and that they are both not ideology free. Having said that and based on my findings, I come to argue that the simultaneous acknowledgement of the reasonableness and values of both monolingualism and translanguaging invites ambivalent or what Jaspers (2022) called 'grey' behaviour by educators. My findings, hence, confirm Jaspers's (2022, p. 284) statements that 'linguistic uniformity versus linguistic diversity, curricular versus pupils' pre-existing knowledge, and teachers' authority versus pupils' well-being' create ambiguity. The notion of ambivalence characterises several research findings. For example, Loutfi's (2020) data suggests ambivalent attitudes towards the proposal to incorporate mother tongues into education. While that was disfavoured by the majority of participants on the grounds that such proposal could undervalue Arabic's status and that the latter represents their identity, the classroom observations in both the primary and high schools revealed an overwhelming use of Moroccan Arabic (mother tongue) as the medium of instruction as per teachers' beliefs that the mother tongue easily delivers information to students. Similarly, Messekher and Miliani (2020) who

support the use and teaching of the Algerian mother tongues in the Algerian schools claim that political narratives in Algeria feature a constant and recurrent attitude of unspoken and undeclared ambivalence. The reason behind such state of ambivalence, according to them, is the bias against used languages, i.e., politicians overrate Arabic and English 'against mere logic' in their words, and the depreciation and exclusion of mother tongues (Algerian *'dialect'* and Berber) from school. They also expressed their fear of the current Algerian language policies to create 'an individual who behaves less like a citizen, is often critical about Westernisation of the state, but develops an attraction- rejection relation towards these countries and their languages' (Messekher and Miliani, 2020, p. 160). In contrast, my data illustrate that that ambivalence is not necessarily limited to contradictions between educators' explicit statements about what they believe about language 'the front stage' and their implicit linguistic behaviour in class 'backstage'. It can also exist within their own articulations that adhere to both monolingual language use and translanguaging at the same time. My findings, hence, accentuate that such ambivalence is not the exclusive product of a single dilemmatic ideology. Ambivalence should therefore be dealt with as a serious and inevitable problem rather than dealing with it as an issue of attitude or simply a problem of lack of awareness.

Overall, this section discussed two competing and relevant language ideological positions and agendas of monolingualism and translanguaging and the ambivalence they both invite in the nursery settings in Algeria, the next section focuses on the notion of 'zerolingualism'.

6.3 'Jacks of all tongues, masters of none': the notion of 'zerolingualism'

There is a widespread belief that the use of multiple linguistic resources causes learning deficit. Many believe that 'youngsters who speak another language at home than the language of instruction are easily classified as 'pupils with a language problem'. Sometimes they are perceived as not very proficient, and even as 'not having much language' (even in their home language) (Slembrouck *et al.*, 2018, p. 14). This section deals with such perceived linguistic dilemmas with specific reference to 'zerolingualism'.

To start with, the theme zerolingualism describes my understanding of the meaning of the participants' social practices, language use and behaviours that mirror a lack of language proficiency. There seems to be an agreement among most of my participants that there is an issue of language in the Algerian context. Statements like 'cannot even express themselves properly in any language'; 'deficiency in language skills' (Bissam), 'speak broken French and an Arabic that is not Arabic' (Tema), 'master neither Arabic nor French' (Emma), 'have no

command of any language' (Nadjia), 'trouble expressing themselves and understanding others' (Farah), 'talk like no … zero language' (Emma), 'knowing no language'(Farah), 'produce incompetent talk' (Hanna), and 'it is not a language' (Sacha), point that such language issue revolves around zerolingualism. My findings further suggest that the non-exposure and non-use of a perceived conventional language system (s) (Bissam), the interference of another different language system (French language) without boundaries between the two languages (Tema, Emma, Nadjia, Farah), parents along the society at large, as well as the education and the market systems (Emma, Farah, Hanna) could be factors contributing to the generation of a state in which there is a lack of command of any language system. Based on my interpretations of the meanings my participants make out in their actions, behaviours, and accounts, I come to argue that adhering to certain linguistic practices that feature flexible bilingualism and disacknowledging language boundaries may create a zero-lingual state. I present here evidence from the data that supports such an argument.

The following extract from an informal conversation with Bissam, for example, indicates how her concern about children's inability to use language according to her standards of appropriateness could be related to the state of zerolingualism:

> You noticed that I mostly use *Darija* with children because if I use Al-Fusha, they consider that funny. You know why? They haven't got used to Standard Arabic. The former educator hasn't used it from the start. Believe me, I would like to start using SA for children to get used to it. I tried it once and they burst into laughter. They understood nothing! The sad thing about it is that children now cannot even express themselves properly in any language. From my experience I would say that today children suffer from a deficiency in language skills
>
> (Bissam, public, nurs. ECE-prelim., informal conversation)

In here, Bissam's justification of the use of the mother tongue (*Darija)* in her practice due to her convictions that children's lack of exposure to the standard language in the first place plausibly renders it funny and incomprehensible for children might suggest that the notion of zerolingualism could be related to the ineptitude to speak and understand the standard language. This bears similarity with a note I have written in my diary about an incidence with a taxi driver.

> On my way to the nursery, I stopped a taxi and asked him to take me to X 'nursery' (I used SA for the word nursery). The taxi driver gave a half-suppressed laugh. And then said, 'sorry, it is because I was not

sure what you meant at first… you looked so intellectual to me… you

know, no one ever asked me to take them to 'روضة', they always use

the French word for it …it feels that we Algerians are illiterate, we know

a bit of many languages and fail to understand fully our SA language

because in school they don't teach SA they teach AA (Algerian Arabic).

(Excerpts from field diary)

In here the taxi driver seems to associate the inability to understand fully SA with 'illiteracy'. Like Bissam, his statements suggest that the failure to use and understand fully the (standard) language presents an issue of language deficiency. They both appear to indicate that the use of the mother tongue occurs at the expense of SA. In this vein, the discussion around the use of mother tongues as a medium of instruction as per the Universal Linguistic Human Rights and from the perspective of promoting cultural autonomy and African Identity has won broad support by many researchers. However, for some, such political strategy creates 'latent tribalism and anarchy' mirrored into terrorism and civil war (Wolff, 2017). As a researcher, I see that this line of thinking seems to overlook challenges such as linguistic justice and linguistic diversity as well as economic and socio-political feasibility among other things in contexts where there exist various mother tongues. In other words, selecting one mother tongue over the other varieties might create ethnic conflicts among speech communities as it is likely to cause linguistic alienation to some learners. Moreover, the codification and standardisation of the chosen mother tongue is not always an easy process. Going back to the relation of such discussion to the notion of zerolingualism, Slembrouck *et al.* (2018) examined the assumption that using multiple linguistic resources negatively impacts on the acquisition of and the cognitive and linguistic advancement in the dominant language. Their four years longitudinal study point to a lack of 'hard' evidence of positive effects of home language use on the pupils' reading skills in Dutch. My findings however point at the inability to use and produce the school language generates a zero-language state.

Unlike Bissam, however, Tema, Emma, Nadjia and Farah similarly raise concerns about the zero-language state in relation to the interference of many language systems (French language) before the stability of the first language and without boundaries between the two languages. Their accounts read as follows,

The majority if not all speak *français cassée* [broken French] and an

Arabic that is not Arabic. Because the first language which is Arabic is

not yet fixed in children's minds and another totally different language

system interferes. You know, Arabic has particular places of

articulation and unique sounds that don't exist in other languages, and

it is written from right to left […] so why they don't just focus on Standard Arabic that is the most fundamental and it is part and parcel of our identity? They think they are doing good to children, but they are actually forcing the teaching of other languages at the expense of SA. They are working on blurring/ obliterating SA and thus Arabic loses its authority and value, alas.

(Tema, KS. ECE-prelim., formal interview)

I think children need first to pick up fully their mother tongue which is Arabic language and then could acquire other languages if they want (inter.) […] but now they exceed children's brain capacity, accordingly children now developed defect/ trouble in language. They master neither Arabic nor French

(Emma, KS. ECE-prelim., informal conversation)

Imposing a language, culture and values of a people equals erasing the language, culture, and values of a people […] we don't teach now French language in our Quranic school for fear that children forget Arabic. I think at their age we need first to make sure they are able to speak and have a good command of their first Arabic language. But honestly speaking, I have 60 children in my class and they still at the age of 5 years have no command of any language.

(Nadjia, KS. ECE-prep., formal interview)

Dealing with the child with more than one language before the stability of their first language is wrong as it affects the child's acoustic outputs/ sound production systems. I think that's the reason behind language delay. Many children have trouble expressing themselves and understanding others. *Touche- á-tout, bon á rien* [Jacks of all tongues, masters of none] This problem has not been spread in the past and it is considered one of the modern diseases. I am not against the learning of French as a second language I mean when the child acquires spontaneously/ subconsciously any other foreign language, but I am against urging and obliging the child to learn French and she/he doesn't understand it especially if his/her parents don't speak it. The consequence of that is the child developing a language issue

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and they might hate coming to the nursery at all. They are indirectly

being told they are "uncomprehending".

The above extracts are a clear indication of language deficit related to the non-mastery of any language, and the use of a broken talk/speech, unidentified with no particular language due to the inconsistent use of diverse linguistic systems. This is what Farah referred to as 'jacks of all tongues, masters of none', and hence the title of this section. I used the term zerolingualism to depict my interpretations of the meanings my participants made of the world around them. The data also suggests how the interference and imposition of teaching a language that is not the first language (French language) on children (especially if it is not used or naturally acquired at home) before the full development and stability of the first language (Arabic language) and without setting the boundaries between the two languages could harm children's production of language and might lead to a zerolingual condition. This finding is particularly crucial as it demonstrates what is common amongst the participants is an acknowledgement of the boundaries existent among languages and an adherence to a monolingual belief. This corroborates the Minister of Education in Belgium view that 'multilingualism leads to zerolingualism' (Slembrouck *et al.*, 2018). In varied, albeit related ways, Emma, Farah, and Hanna added other elements to which I now turn.

A number of participants believe that parents, the society, the education system and the market system have in part a role in the perceived language situation. For instance, Emma mentioned:

You know we have a problem of language in Algeria! French is like a language protocol among Algerians. Our society worships French. They see it as a sign of prestige progress modernisation and cultivation "c'est a la mode!". Oh! my child speaks French or English, that means we are educated, learned and intellectuals. As if we are still colonised! I am not against the teaching of other languages to children but not before the stability of the first language in their minds. To me parents and even nurseries are imposing the learning of other foreign languages on their children. They prioritise French over our Arabic language which is the necessity. They replace it with a language that children don't speak or understand. *Wallah* I tell you, this makes us and our children talk like no eeh like zero language haha!

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That is cognate with Farah's statements:

> I have come to realise that we are facing an issue of language. Once they start nursery, children barely speak *Darija* and that is not Arabic. So, Standard Arabic and French are both foreign languages for them. Parents want us to teach children Arabic, and French and perhaps also English in other nurseries. A mother recently came to me and told me: "my son's friend speaks French; my kid has to speak it too! Can you make him speak French in a month time?" Although the mother basically doesn't speak French at home, she demands it from the nursery! Forcing children to learn all these languages causes linguistic interferences and makes them end up knowing no language as you might have noticed. I don't blame only parents there is a defect and problem at the level of the ministry of education.
>
> (Farah, public, nurs. ECE-prelim., formal interview)

This is also similar to what Hanna stated:

> Children produce incompetent talk and use fragmented speech to compensate for lack of or "uncommand" of either language. What shall we do? The Problem lies in parents. They don't like their children to speak Arabic. They like them to speak French as it is seen superior, progressive, and privileged. I know we should develop children's languages communicative skills only and I told you before, that that doesn't respect/ consider/ surpasses children's power and mental ability but honestly speaking "Ça devient commerciale". Yes, I teach them French. Children know colours, numbers... in French because parents want their children to learn French and English at the nursery. If I don't include the teaching of foreign languages in my nursery programme, parents would withdraw their children from my nursery. The nursery is a just a victim of poor Algerian education system Bushra! because if the education system changes and is successful, the nursery education improves and succeeds as well.
>
> (Hanna, Public. nursery, manager, formal interview)

These extracts seem to speak volume about the issue of incompetent production and no command of language which appears to feed into the notion of zerolingualism. The data shows that parents and the social beliefs in the society at large about the French language as superior

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and more prestigious make children under a situation in which they are expected to talk French even they are not exposed to it at home (neither fully at nurseries or schools) in addition to *Darija* (the home language) and Arabic (the formal/school language). The data also demonstrates that schools and nurseries as well as the education system itself amount to such situation as part of the market system in order to satisfy the demands of parents and serve interests. On the other hand, Hanna shared a different outlook:

> Lack of Language proficiency among early childhood educators presents a challenge/ problem for us. Most of them if not all do not master or even speak French, and this applies also to SA…Recruiting educators holding diplomas of proficiency in languages requires a budget that can't be covered by the nursery. Remember! Nursery education is private. Also, those applicants holding higher education's diplomas are arrogant. They like to teach and not to care for children or change diapers … it's a nursery and she is dealing with children she needs to leave aside her diplomas and embrace the caring role…
>
> (Hanna, Priv.nursery, manager, informal conversation)

This extract seems to imply a problem of language at the level of educators. It suggests that early childhood educators' non mastery of Standard Arabic and French Language, as Hanna mentioned, could impact on children's mastery of these languages. That is, the zerolingual state might also develop out of such an issue. This data is interesting as it highlights the position and status of each language in the education system as well as the larger society and raises questions like what type of language is to be taught in nurseries and why they need to be taught in the first place. Contrary to the above data, the following extract indicates a dissimilar position to the 'no language' issue.

> Maybe it is not a language, but it is just the way we Algerians talk. We speak a bit of vernacular, a bit of Standard Arabic, and a bit of French to express ourselves. That's our language! No? Yes, we use slang/ street language/ *Darija* as a means of instruction. You can't use Standard Arabic with Children as they don't understand it! Why we take things for granted, why do we need to stick to one language or Arabic only? English for example is originated from Latin so why English people don't stick to Latin. Turkish also has a diversity of dialects that are used in education. So, I don't see that an issue.
>
> (Sacha, Priv.nursery, manager, formal interview)

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In contrast with other participants' positions, Sacha, here, does not seem to problematise the use of bits of many diverse languages as there is no need to use only one language on the ground that children might not understand it. She rather identifies such language practice with the way Algerians talk. Sacha, perhaps, could be said to support flexible bilingualism position. At the same time, this extract is an indication that the language being used could not meet the criteria of a language as Sacha stated. That, therefore, corroborates the idea of zerolingualism.

This subsection focused mainly on the construct of zerolingualism. My data demonstrated a language issue at the level of the production of an incompetent, broken talk, and the non-mastery of any language system. Similar views were echoed in Beauge´'s (2004, p. 17) study in which he posits that public schools in Algeria 'produce generations of illiterate people who master neither Arabic nor French'. Messekher and Miliani's (2020) study is also relevant to this discussion. They argue that there is a state of language schizophrenia among the younger Algerian generations which leads inevitably to students' semi-lingualism, i.e., their incompetence in either language' (Messekher and Miliani, 2020, p. 160). However, some of their employed methods' closed nature did not allow for in-depth data to be obtained. Therefore, qualitative and ethnographic research investigating language use in actual practice is needed.

My findings are analogous to Jaspers's (2011) study, entitled 'Talking like a 'zerolingual': Ambiguous linguistic caricatures at an urban secondary school', in which he alluded to the notion of 'zerolingualism'. Jaspers collected data ethnographically and demonstrated how the linguistic practices of a group of ethnic minority students at a secondary Belgium school featured the production of ambiguous linguistic caricatures through stylising broken Dutch. Those actions reflected pretending to be incompetent as well as choosing to produce incompetent or 'illegal talk' as they called it. The speakers also stigmatised other students which created dominant positions. In this way, they reproduced and took advantage of the very unequal social structures that they initially highlighted in a playful yet critical manner. More recently, zerolingualism has been highlighted by Song (2019), in her article, 'This may create a zero-lingual state': Critical examination of language ideologies in an English learning Blog'. Song (2019) examined the language ideologies in an English language learning blog based on an ethnographic study which used interviews, participant observation, and analysis of online posts and comments. Korean bloggers and their followers were the participants in the study. Song (2019) asserts that language learners adhere to monolingual ideologies and separate bilingualism to eschew the zerolingual state. My research findings therefore appear to reinforce Song's (2019) study. Notwithstanding, it should be noted that

very few scholars study the state of zerolingualism. Jaspers (2011) and Song (2019) seem to be the exception. My research adds to this body of literature and advances the discussion on zerolingualism to show how early childhood educators and managers in the Algerian context raised their concerns about children's non command of their language and how that have been enacted in their actual day to day practice.

My findings tally with another body of literature in the Algerian context. Tabbi (2021), for instance, noted that most Algerians use many languages simultaneously in communication because of a paucity of vocabulary and out of force of a habit and common practice. My findings are also congruent with Dendane's (2013) five years longitudinal case study in an Algerian nursey. Based on his observations, he showed that primary school pupils face an issue of language and that the poor level in the education system of Algeria and the Arab world is linked to the Arabic diglossic language situation as well as the gap existing between the 'high variety' (SA) and 'low variety' (Mother tongue). In line with that Benrabah (2007) asserts that ideological polarisation has led to the suffering and struggle of Algerian youth vis-à-vis language. Furthermore, similar to the present study, Abbassia (2021, p. 89), in her preliminary observations on the 'development of the Algerian sociolinguistic landscape', wrote,

> The linguistic situation is certainly becoming unstable… no mastery of either language by young group, this results in the use of the *mother tongue*s or L varieties (i.e., Algerian Arabic and Berber) in even formal settings… In front of the widespread view that Algeria is the second francophone country after France, nevertheless, quantitatively speaking the use of French language has reduced among Algerians. Paradoxically, what is noticed is the fact of using either loanwords which are rooted in their repertoires or code switching, except for the elite mass.

Although in these studies the notion of zerolingualism was not specified, all their statements confirm my findings. On the other hand, many studies in the Algerian context have identified linguistic insecurity[45] as a problem among Algerians (Dahou, 2016; Belmihoub, 2018; Garnier, 2020; Abbassia, 2021). However, there were no clear measures for such identification among these studies. My research rather identified and focused on

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[45] The idea of linguistic insecurity has been established in Labov's (1966) study which was based on respondents' pronunciation of certain terms and its relation to criteria of which social class, ethnicity, and gender. It concluded that New Yorkers, especially 'lower middle-class', were linguistically insecure on the ground that they said they adhere to the community norms, but they accept the alternative only as correct. From that, the sociolinguistic concept of linguistic insecurity has been taken to mean 'speakers' feeling that the variety they use is somehow inferior, ugly or bad' (Meyerhoff, 2006, p. 292, in Preston, 2013). Preston (2013, p. 304) proposed 'one's fear of a personal inability to carry out a linguistic task' as a definition to linguistic insecurity.

'zerolingualism'. That further indicates the scarcity of research on zerolingualism and reinforces the significance of the current study. Nonetheless, I take a broader look in the present research by focusing on unveiling the possible factors for the development of such zerolingual state. The data highlight that the non-exposure and non-use of the linguistic norms and conventions, the interference of many languages without setting their boundaries, parents, society, education, and market systems could produce zerolingualism. This, I hope, complements existing research on the studied issue.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that language ideologies in Algeria are in a conflicting state through an emphasis on the choices about which type of language (s) are used in the nursery settings and how they are acquired. Monolingualism, translanguaging, ambivalence, and zerolingualism, were all key themes that proved to have an important impact on the daily nursery practices. This is significant as it highlights the link between language ideologies and the actual language use, practices, and behaviour in the social world and how they largely shape and inform a variety of communicative practices in every-day interactions. This explains the complexity of the communicative repertoire of the studied community as well as the tensions the present thesis explores. Based on that, it is important to accentuate that ideologies of language do not operate in a vacuum and that they are seldom homogeneous in a society even in societies with apparent homogeneity of culture and language (Woolard, 2021) and especially within this research context given its complex linguistic nature.

My findings also illustrate the co-existence and the interplay of a mixture of existing ideologies. That is to say, participants' adherence to both monolingual language use and translanguaging at the same time accentuates that certain linguistic practices are not the exclusive product of a single dilemmatic ideology. In other words, social group members share a set of different ideological positions due to them occupying attitudes, knowledge, current goals, and the many and personal experiences and interests (Van Dijk, 1998). My emphasis on the use of 'language ideologies' in plural rather than 'language ideology' is, hence, justifiable.

The final chapter presents further discussion of the key findings and the current research implications.

Chapter Seven: Further discussion, implications, and conclusions

7.1 Introduction

This research investigates how ideological positions impact on early childhood education and care everyday practices in Algeria. I explored the issue ethnographically through conducting a fieldwork in three different types of childhood reception centres which enabled immersion with my research participants. This concluding chapter starts by providing a summary of the findings of this research discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, with an attempt to establish the relationship between all constructs and answer the research questions that guided the present study, namely:

1. How do educators and managers position themselves ideologically in early childhood education and care institutions in Algeria?

1.1 How are these ideological positions embedded and enacted in participants' everyday interactions?

1.2 How do the mechanisms of ideology impact daily educational practices with young children?

2. What factors contribute to the construction of these ideologies?

3. In what ways do the simultaneous idealisation and demonisation of the West among participants intersect with language ideologies?

4. What are the implications of these ideological tensions?

I will then seek to outline my contribution to the existing body of literature. The implications, limitations and recommendations for future research will also be highlighted. This chapter will conclude with personal reflections.

7.2 Key findings: Answering the research questions

In this section, I summarise and discuss the research findings under three headings: research participants' ideological positions, the factors contributing to the construction of these ideologies, and their impact on practice. Each sub-section highlights relevant themes.

7.2.1 Participants' ideological positions in the setting

Different situations and participants' accounts regarding a range of issues and topics positioned them ideologically within West idealisation ideology. Idealisation of the West, as the findings suggest, denotes how participants eulogise the west in terms of various aspects. This includes epistemic idealisation, material idealisation, and ethical idealisation. Sacha's preference of the ECEC training courses, curricular, and programmes of the West and its association with quality, Nadjia's belief that psychologists of the West are competent, and that Western schools and education systems are better than the ones in Algeria, in addition to Bissam's view of the West as the 'right knowledge establisher' all demonstrate participants' idealisation of Western knowledge. Idealisation of the West also encompasses participants idealising the West in relation to its resources, means and materials. In the eyes of my participants, the West is 'obviously better, more advanced, and developed' (Farah), and 'powerful' (Emma), as well as 'supportive' (Hanna, Farah) than Algeria. Furthermore, the findings demonstrated how participants idealise the West based on its moral and ethical values as indicated by Bissam, Emma, and Sacha. Participants tend to believe that the West is essentially more respectful, deferential and has exemplary conduct with children. My research, hence, takes its place alongside the literature that examines the non-West idealised images of the West (e.g., Jalal Ali, 1984; El-Enany, 2006; Ugbam, Chuku, and Ogbo, 2014; Simić, 2016; Takayama, 2016; Hiouani, 2020; and Yun, 2020), and argues for the merit of researching such ideology, its factors and impact in understanding the complex practices in the specific context of this study.

As detailed in section 2.3.2, the literature in this connection rigidly divides people ideologically into two streams: 'those who are oriented culturally and politically toward the West and those who are directed inward toward the nation and its traditions' (Simić, 2016, p. 104). I argued that this creates an unnecessary binary. My findings, rather, suggest that while the same individuals hold images of the West as ideal, their social practices and discourses tend to also demonise the West. Participants' ideological beliefs fed into the ideology of West demonisation. Demonisation of the West depicted my participants' fear and rejections of the West and its 'culture'. It further captures their perceptions of the West as 'toxic', 'wicked', 'demon', 'evil', and a threat to Muslim societies and to their cultural norms and education. Facets of West demonisation ideology within the context of this study included a rejection of Western cultural aspects such as the celebration of Halloween and Christmas in some Algerian early childhood education settings, as well as the spread of some ideas of transgenderism and secularism which are believed to be purely products of the West.

According to my participants, the exposure to 'global culture' or more precisely to 'global education' would lead to 'Christianising' and Westernising people, bringing about cultural invasion, as well as empowering forces of change rather than forces of traditions. They

perceived the presence of events like Halloween and Christmas as knowledge which 'is not ours', 'odd to our education', 'strange to our society' and as 'tampering with the minds of children'. Similarly, participants conceptualised transgenderism as ideas originated in and induced from the West. They condemned the West for permeating and infiltrating 'abnormal', 'unusual' and 'bizarre' notions of gender in the Arab/ Muslim societies, in addition to spoiling and distorting the societal norms. In the same way, participants expressed objections towards secularism, perceived as a Western output. Their anti-secular positions were translated in unwelcoming the transformation of the Algerian society from a strong identification with its fundamental Islamic religion and its values to a less religious society. Secularisation, based on their accounts, is the cause of such a detachment, loss and decline of religious authority.

My findings show that participants' actions and behaviours as well as their accounts commit to the ideology of monolingualism, translated in their emphasis on the use and instruction of Standard Arabic as a national language, accompanied with an objection to multilingual language use and education at the nursery stage. They revealed that they stand for homogeneous language use, value the official Arabic language as well as recognise the importance of its learning and that it is the most appropriate for use. Findings in this study also indicated educators' unfavourable position towards francophone education and that, according to them, favouring French language instruction presents a problem of superiority to Arabic. Such articulations of beliefs about Arabic language have further been celebrated in their actual day to day practice, enacted in their corrections of the use of both *Darija* (Algerian Arabic) and French by children.

Paradoxically, the findings also demonstrate educators' adherence to translanguaging by endorsing the practice of using various languages of which SA, *Darija* and French as one linguistic act in their daily practice in a variety of ways yet without abandoning their support of monolingualism. The educators could be said to pursue monolingualism but relatively multilingually: they often combine the monolingual Standard Arabic practice with various signs that evoke their recognition of children' s linguistic repertoires. For example, by using the mother tongue (Algerian Arabic) as a tool of instruction, by providing translations into children's mother tongue (Arabic to French and vice versa) and by code-switching Arabic and French as well as turning a blind eye to ungrammatical expressions. This positions them in the language ideology of translanguaging.

The findings presented in chapter six demonstrated how educators are simultaneously oriented to both monolingual language use and linguistic diversity. Based on these findings, I argued that recognising the worth and reasonableness of monolingualism and translanguaging at the same time produce ambivalence. My findings resonate with several

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studies that stress that acknowledging the values of coexisting and relevant 'linguistic uniformity versus linguistic diversity, curricular versus pupils' pre-existing knowledge, and teachers' authority versus pupils' well-being invite ambiguity and 'grey' behaviour in practice' (Jaspers, 2022, p. 284). They also corroborate growing evidence arising from studies in Algeria. For example, Messekher and Miliani (2020) who support the use and teaching of the Algerian mother tongues in the Algerian schools claim that political narratives in Algeria feature a constant and recurrent attitude of unspoken and undeclared ambivalence. The reason behind such a state of ambivalence, according to them, is the bias against used languages, i.e., politicians overrate Arabic and English 'against mere logic' in their words, and the depreciation and exclusion of mother tongues (Algerian '*dialect'* and Berber) from school. They also expressed their fear of the current Algerian language policies to create 'an individual who behaves "less like a citizen", is often critical about Westernisation of the state, but develops an attraction- rejection relation towards these countries and their languages' (Messekher and Miliani, 2020, p. 160).

In another context, Loutfi (2020)'s data suggests ambivalent attitudes towards the proposal to incorporate mother tongues into education. While that was discouraged by the majority of participants on the grounds that such proposal could undervalue Arabic's status and that the latter represents their identity, the classroom observations in both the primary and high schools revealed an overwhelming use of Moroccan Arabic (mother tongue) as the medium of instruction as per teachers' beliefs that the mother tongue easily delivers information to students. My research, hence, adds more nuance regarding the nature and factors of such confusions and ambivalent behaviour in some nursery settings in Algeria, and most importantly suggests how ambivalence in itself might impact and be a factor of a serious issue of language in the Algerian context, to which I now turn.

My findings demonstrated how early childhood educators and managers in the nursery Algerian context raised their concerns about children's language incompetence due to the reality that they speak many different codes and languages but fail to be proficient in any of these used languages. This defect is what has been referred to as 'jacks of all tongues, masters of none' by one of my participants. This, I argue, falls within the notion of zerolingualism, which stems from my understanding and interpretation of the meanings my research participants gave to the world around them. In fact, statements like 'cannot even express themselves properly in any language'; 'deficiency in language skills' (Bissam), 'speak broken French and an Arabic that is not Arabic' (Tema), 'master neither Arabic nor French' (Emma), 'have no command of any language' (Nadjia), 'trouble expressing themselves and understanding others' (Farah), 'talk like no … zero language' (Emma), 'knowing no

language'(Farah), 'produce incompetent talk' (Hanna), and 'it is not a language' (Sacha), describe a zerolingual state.

My research, hence, reinforces the work of Jaspers (2011) and Song (2019) which alludes to the notion of zerolingualism. Jaspers (2011)'s ethnographic study 'Talking like a 'zerolingual' demonstrated how the linguistic practices of a group of ethnic minority students at an urban secondary school in Belgium featured the production of ambiguous linguistic caricatures through stylising broken Dutch. Song's (2019) ethnographic enquiry, entitled 'This may create a zero-lingual state', examined the language ideologies in an English language learning blog and found that Korean bloggers and their followers adhere to monolingual ideologies and separate bilingualism to eschew the zerolingual state. In the case of most of the literature in the Algerian context, it identified a suffering and struggle of the younger Algerian generations vis-à-vis language (Benrabah, 2007). However, such linguistic situation has so far been related to linguistic insecurity (e.g., Dahou, 2016; Belmihoub, 2018; Garnier, 2020; Abbassia, 2021), or to the education system 'produc[ing] generations of illiterate people who master neither Arabic nor French' (Beaugé, 2004, p. 17), or to 'a state of language schizophrenia which leads inevitably to students' semi-lingualism, i.e., their incompetence in either language' (Messekher and Miliani, 2020, p. 160), or to the 'no mastery of either language by young group' (Abbassia, 2021, p. 89).

Although in these studies the notion of zerolingualism was not specified, all their statements confirm my findings. My qualitative and ethnographic research advances the discussion on the issue by unveiling the interplay between zerolingualism and the other ideologies mentioned above of which hybridity and ambivalence, which reinforces the significance of this study. I next highlight my findings' suggestions regarding possible factors of the above-mentioned ideologies.

7.2.2 Factors contributing to the construction of participants' ideological positions

Some participants' constructions of the West appeared to have originated from direct exposure to and personal experiences in Western countries. However, the findings demonstrated that social media (videos on YouTube and Facebook, for example the Coat flip trick video reported by Emma), Algerian immigrants residing in European countries who might portray and transfer certain judgements, perceived lack of resources, 'poor' living conditions, and misgovernment in one's country contribute largely to the production of the discourses around idealisation of the West in the community at large. Moreover, overgeneralisations and stereotyping established as part of participants interaction with society, its social beliefs, and convictions

(socialisation processes) also seem to have led directly or indirectly to the construction of assumptions about the West and the 'Third World' narratives that are often used in everyday discussions within the community. These perceptions of the West were communicated and maintained mainly through discourse.

As the findings of this study reveal, other interrelated ideologies of which essentialism and culturalism, coupled with ethnocentric and conservative ideological positions jointly fuel anti-Western views and the socially shared beliefs about the ideology of West demonisation. Participants' culturally biased positions knowingly or unknowingly divide what is 'ours' and what is 'theirs'. They judge or evaluate Western cultural features such as the celebration of Halloween and Christmas, transgenderism and secularism as 'unprecedented', morally wrong, indecent, and intolerable, while they perceive positively their 'own culture and religion' as better, superior and the rightest. Moreover, as Islam constitutes a compelling entity within the studied community and forms a basis of their membership and their group identity, their pro-Islamic religious identities and religiocentrism are also factors which contribute to the construction of West demonisation ideology. On the other hand, while the heterogeneity of Algerian society and social groups are obvious features of the studied community, it has also been suggested that the inclination towards Western culture or its cultural aspect including language choices and views might be linked to specific social group and class (as detailed in section 5.3.1). This supports previous research on the implications of social class and cultural expressions for group-related beliefs and behaviours (for example, Becker, Kraus, and Rheinschmidt-Same, 2017).

My findings clarified that participants' adherence to monolingual positions seems to be part of their Arabic and Islamic identity, given the strong association of Arabic language with their Islamic religion and Arabic ethnicity as they clearly articulated this in their accounts. This is relevant to Van Dijk 1998's (section 2.2.2) explanation of how ideology defines the basis for the groups' collective identity. Moreover, as Bara (2022) claims, the long-standing Algerian French colonial history has led to participants revealing unfavourable positions towards the French language and francophone education: both carry connotations of the coloniser's language in the context of Algeria. This corroborates other studies (e.g., Abbassia, 2021; Caulcutt, 2022) and may also explain participants' expressions of opposition to multilingual education. Monolingualism could be said to be fed by the positive attitudes towards Standard Arabic by Algerians (Hamzaoui, 2019) and the negative attitudes towards *Darija* (Haqoune, 2012; Belhiah and Lamallam, 2020; Loutfi, 2020; Messekher and Miliani, 2020) and the shift away from French to English in Algeria (Abbassia, 2021; Caulcutt, 2022) (section 3.4.3). On the other hand, the data shows that educators' adherence to translanguaging practice is

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grounded upon their Algerianness, reflecting the lived reality of Algerians. Participants further revealed that they find mixed language use useful as a strategy to facilitate learning and grant children freedom without language boundaries. Some others indicated that it is a tool used because it is necessitated by the market.

My findings highlight possible factors contributing to the generation of zerolingualism. Participants suggested that the non-exposure and non-use of perceived linguistic norms and conventions of a particular language system, the interference of many diverse languages (French language, in the context of this study) and the use of multiple codes and languages at a time (for example using one word in *Darija* and another in SA in one statement), the imposition of teaching a language that is not the first language on children (especially if it is not used or naturally acquired at home) before the full development and stability of the first language (Arabic language), adhering to certain linguistic practices that feature flexible bilingualism, and disacknowledging the boundaries between languages, parents, society, education and market systems have all a role in such a language situation. A number of participants believe that early childhood educators' non mastery of Standard Arabic and French Language could also impact on children's mastery of these languages (as detailed in section 6.3). That is, the zerolingual state might also develop out of such an issue. My findings, therefore, contribute to the literature which examined the assumptions that 'multilingualism leads to zerolingualism' (the Minister of Education in Belgium, in Slembrouck et al., 2018) and that using multiple linguistic resources negatively affects the acquisition of and the cognitive and linguistic advancement in the dominant language (ibid.). My research suggests how opposing and competing language agendas and ideologies could be factors leading to zerolingualism. The following sub-section discusses the impact of those ideologies on every-day interactions.

7.2.3   The impact of participants' ideological positions on their practices

The findings highlighted how the ideology of West idealisation impacts on early childhood educators' actions and behaviours as well as views. West idealisation has likely engendered a sense of inferiority complex and a state of subordination to the West translated in participants' constant comparisons between 'us' and 'them', appraising all what is Western and a deprecation of their own country, society, people, and the community at large. Moreover, idealisation of the west drives participants to perceive themselves as limited, unable, powerless, incompetent, and failed to perform certain activities and tasks with children like outdoor activities based on their excuses of belonging to a 'third world' country which they associate with backwardness. It also seems to create a desire to unselectively imitate the

West and remain only passive consumers of Western products. It constrains participants' thoughts, views, and discourses and restricts their engagement to make their own contribution to their local ECEC system.

Therefore, West idealisation could be said to limit the knowledge production in the non-West in the sense of restricting alternative knowledge practices which serves to strengthening the inefficiency and deficiency of the local early childhood education system. That is to say, for example the hope to travel to the West for training courses and purchasing Western curricular and programmes for application in Algerian nurseries underpin the persistence of the 'the West as method' and 'West-to-East' spoon-feeding of knowledge and borrowing of education systems. At a broader level, my findings show how such social beliefs about the West pervade throughout the whole community and have been likely conducive to legal or illegal immigration and the phenomenon of human capital flight or brain drain.

The findings suggest that West demonisation ideology has a significant impact on early childhood educators' daily work with young children. First, the evidence presented in this ethnographic research indicated an impact on the type of content of ECEC provision. That is, participants rejection of the celebration of Halloween and Christmas in some Algerian nurseries which speaks volume about their West demonisation position makes them unwelcome, eschew and resist Western content and global forces and accentuate on the local cultural attributes. Their practices featured the cultivation of monolithic vision of 'Algerianness' and nationalist sentiments through the emphasis on patriotic songs as well as the dissemination and internalisation of Algerian traditions and values through the celebration of 'The Prophet Mohammed's Mawlid' and the 'Anniversary of the Revolution Day in Algeria'.

My findings, therefore, adds further evidence to Simić's (2016) study in the context of Serbia, expressing participants' concern about the erosion of local traditions. He referred to it as a form of cultural imperialism. My findings are also in line with other studies as such of Deylami (2011), Crynes (2019), and Crowe (2021). For example, Crowe (2021) used observations of five public and private kindergartens in Shanghai- China, as well as their social media websites, in addition to 25 semi-structured interviews with early childhood education officials and kindergarten staff, along with 188 questionnaires to parents. Crowe (2021) findings showed that early childhood education in Shanghai- China is shaped by 'obedient bodies' characterised by 'values and citizenship education' as well as global forces resisting the nationalisation of early childhood education in Shanghai- China by promoting 'Western' cultural immersion because of market demands through practicing the celebration of Halloween and Christmas, as globalisation-generated constructs. This research, however, goes beyond the issue of acceptance versus resistance and further suggests how

demonisation of the West was significant in forming the basis of my participants' specific beliefs and understandings of early childhood education practices in Algeria.

Second, participants' gender constructions in settings of early childhood education and care remarkably impacted on early childhood educators' discourses, actions and behaviours, the arrangement of activities as well as their conducts with children. They expressed being not comfortable with Western practices that acknowledge 'out of the ordinary' gender-related issues. Their accounts also demonstrated fear of Algerian children to become transgender and a fear that Western gender policies to be enforced in Algeria. In their daily work, they make sure to separate boys and girls play and learning activities and they constantly highlight the differences between the two genders. In this way, my findings add to the body of literature around the construction of gender within the context of early childhood settings (e.g., Robinson, 2002; Robinson, 2005; Duke and McCarthy, 2009; Surtees Gunn, 2010; Ferderer, 2017; Aprilianti, Adriany, and Syaodih, 2021). These studies show that education continues to be gendered and gender biased and how that often reinforce homophobia, heterosexism, and sexism and the pervasiveness of hegemonic discourses of the irrelevance, invisibility, silencing and exclusion of issues pertaining to gender.

Third, participants' constructions of secularism as a Western phenomenon and their fear of the danger of the West transplanting the secular worldview to the East had an impact on the ways educators accentuate the place and role of religion and religious education in their early childhood education and care practice through giving importance to the Quran and the teachings of the prophets on a daily basis. Quranic verses and supplications to God, according to my findings, took the lion's share within the three nursery settings of this research. My findings, therefore, build upon the body of evidence that challenges the predictions that the secularisation thesis has substituted religion and that the latter is in decline (e.g., Wu, 2007; Findlow, 2008; Haynes and Ben-Porat, 2010; Smith and Schapiro, 2021; Aslan, 2022; Kuusisto, 2022). These studies have instead proved religion's remarkable resiliency, retaining a substantial force in many social and political structures, not least in the Muslim world. That emphasises the significance of my findings in contributing to one of the most current heated and still unresolved scholarly debates about the place of religion in education systems (Kuusisto, 2022), and particularly to the dearth of research on the issue in the Algerian ECEC context.

Regarding language ideologies, the findings discussed in chapter six suggested that conflicting ideological positions in Algeria proved to largely shape and inform a variety of communicative practices within the three research settings of this study. The daily interactions of children and the early childhood educators who participated in this research embodied

inconsistency, incoherence, and disharmonies in terms of language use which likely affects the acquisition of the targeted language (s). The data illustrate the use of many codes at a time: a form of language that is unconfined to a universal or homogeneous language use, disregarding the grammars, syntax, lexis, and the linguistic norms of a language. For example, in a session of Arabic language aiming at teaching the Arabic letter 'ح', the only SA utterance is the letter itself and all the instruction and communication is in both *Darija,* as well as some French expressions that often carry some lexical and grammatical mistakes as in '*tu es champion*' instead of '*tu es une championne*' or '*prend le stylo*' instead of '*prenez le stylo*'. Likewise, at a French language class, the language of communication is mostly or entirely in *Darija,* with the use of only two words in French le '*visage*', and '*bravo*', and the French being employed transcends French language norms like in the use of a new word '*paja*' instead of the French word '*la page*' and '*swiviw*' instead of '*suivez-moi*'.

That means that the use of mother tongues as a medium of instruction as per the Universal Linguistic Human rights and from the perspective of promoting cultural autonomy and African Identity (Wolff, 2017) might occur at the expense of learning the school or formal language. This is in line with other studies that disapprove the use of the mother tongues or L varieties (i.e., Algerian Arabic and Berber) in schools (Dendane, 2013; Abbassia, 2021). For instance, Dendane (2013)'s five years longitudinal case study in an Algerian nursey shows that primary school pupils face an issue of language and that the poor level in the education system of Algeria and the Arab world is linked to the Arabic diglossic language situation as well as the gap existing between the 'high variety' (SA) and 'low variety' (Mother tongue). Based on that, I have problematised in this research the argument that 'an ungrammatical expression of accurate content, or a grammatically correct expression of inaccurate content, may be just as much a sign of learning as a grammatically correct expression of accurate content' (Hornberger, 2004, p. 166). That is because educators' decision to tolerate ungrammatical forms will eventually decrease the importance of grammatical correctness in the eyes of learners.

As discussed in section 6.2, much research advocate translanguaging in class (Wei, 2011; Flores and García, 2013; García and Wei, 2014; and Garcia et al. 2015; Wolff, 2017; Canagarajah, 2022; McDermott, 2022). However, this study adds to the literature that challenges hybridity in translanguaging (for example, Charalambous *et al.*, 2016; Block, 2018; Jaspers, 2018, Song, 2019; Jaspers, 2022), and further suggests that hybrid linguistic practices do not always lead to desirable impact, at least in the Algerian context. According to my findings, they could generate ambivalence and zerolingualism discussed earlier in section 7.2.1. I reiterate in this conclusion that this research was not meant to favour linguistic purism

or discourages linguistic diversity in education. I do acknowledge the potential worth of translanguaging in some specific contexts. However, it is important to remember that they are both not ideology free and that and none of them should be deemed as the only justifiable and socially desirable option for language use in education.

After summarising the key findings and answering the research questions, the following section sketches the contribution of conducting this ethnographic research.

7.3 Contribution

This section highlights the contribution of my study to knowledge and its findings' transferability.

An interdisciplinary position characterised this research which makes its contribution contextual. By this I mean that with a focus on education in the early years and applied linguistics, it sought to explore the importance of social influences on making sense of society and understanding the complex relations that exist between ideologies and early childhood education practices in Algeria, a context which remains understudied. A few exceptions have focused on ideologies and how they relate to identities (Hiouani, 2020, Bara, 2022). These studies were mainly conducted within Algerian higher education settings among EFL students. Their research findings indicated that paradoxical and 'compartmentalised' beliefs towards the West influence individuals' constructions of their identities. I am not aware of any research in Algeria that tackled ideologies in the early years' context and their impact on practice.

Many scholars note that early childhood education and care has not yet been established as a research subject and teaching at higher education in many Muslim countries, and Algeria to the best of my knowledge is no exception. In recent years (not until the beginning of the 1990s), however, it is gaining an increasing interest which makes it a relatively new and modern phenomenon in those countries (Gul, 2008; Kaytaz & Ozturk, 2020; Aslan, 2022). Aslan (2022), in examining the theology of ECEC in Turkey and Egypt, note an emerging paradoxical phenomenon of establishing ECEC by incorporating and combining tendencies that maintain and impart conservative traditional religious educational practices with 'modern' Western frameworks of education. This challenge, as he called it, was previously unknown within Islamic history of upbringing children. This research added to such existing studies by providing insights into the nature of such paradoxical tendencies, the factors as well as their impact on the actual practice. Therefore, it is clear from this study that taking ideologies into consideration is fundamental to understand the link between early childhood education practices and the social world.

This research also has useful theoretical implications. By combining Van Dijk's (1998) theory which allowed me to position my approach to the concept of ideology with Jalal Ali Ahmad's (1984) concept of Westoxification (section 2.4) as well as the concept of language ideologies (section 3.3), it was possible to understand the complexities of my data and the co-existence and the interplay of a mixture of existing ideologies. In other words, this contribution accentuates how participants' adherence to different ideologies at the same time and the interrelatedness of these ideological positions yields to practices that are not the exclusive product of a single dilemmatic ideology. That is to say, there is a non-arbitrary relationship between beliefs about the West and beliefs about other things. For instance, idealisation of the West may be very revealing about translanguaging practice. Similarly, West demonisation could relate to other ideological concerns and forge links to monolingualism. These ideologies enact ties of universality versus authenticity, the local versus the global. Through such linkages, such interrelated ideologies underpin ECEC practices, and in particular language practices in the specific context of this study, to which scant attention is directed.

Offering more depth, Van Dijk's work did not only offer a theoretical and conceptual groundwork but also helped to dispute the idea that certain perspectives are 'ideological' whereas other perspectives are scientifically objective. Having ideologies as a central concern in this study could be said to be a response to the appeal made by Van Dijk (1998) for empirical investigations into 'how are ideologies discursively expressed and reproduced in such important social domains as politics, the media and education?' (pp. 319-320). My research, therefore, shows empirical and practical implications to Van Dijk's (1998) approach and how it is useful to further our understanding of the figured world of organisational and institutional dimensions of ideologies as well as social interaction and discourse.

Another important contribution of this PhD thesis is related to the transferability of its findings. As discussed in section 4.6, thick description which provided enough details and description of the context of my research, the sites, its people, the features of the social, the cultural backgrounds and experiences of the research participants as well as the criteria of recruiting them enables readers to determine the possibility of transferability of the research 'findings' to their context (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, in Lincoln and Guba, 2013). This research offered insights into a group of early childhood educators' ideological positions in an early year's context. It showed how the Algerian context challenges the literature around hybridity and existing theory around East/West relations by highlighting that it actually involves more than a simple love-hate relationships (Bhabha, 1984). This research further suggested the impact of ambivalent behaviours on the day-to-day practices in the early childhood education

and care settings. Although I did not set to make any generalisations, as this study involved and arguably can only speak about a small number of individuals, its ethnographic nature might be transferable to other contexts and other populations from various parts of the world who can relate to them. For example, countries of the MENA region and especially postcolonial countries in which discourses about the West and the issue of previous colonisers' languages are prevalent.

After presenting the contribution of the study, the following section discusses its implications.

7.4 Implications

Following the findings related to my participants' envisagement of the West as '*ideal'* and as '*demon'* at the same time, the implication of this is neither a complete rejection nor a full acceptance of global cultural trends. This balance necessitates a critical openness to the foreign yet also a self-representation of the local. This further requires an understanding of the boundaries which exist between modernity and Westernisation. The point here remains that Islam and the Islamic world is and should be dynamic and not 'closed-off' as some might take it to be.

Moreover, Algeria and the East in general should develop their own resources and knowledge production in order to move away from the West as a method and discontinue passive consumerism, economic and cultural dependency on the West. This could be realised by, for instance, designing their own curriculum, teaching materials, and textbooks. Therefore, there is a need for eliminating the superior vision towards the 'Other' (the West). This would not only solve issues related to education but also at the larger societal level. That is, legal or illegal immigration could be reduced with raising awareness in the whole society regarding this matter.

Cultural autonomy, national authenticity and selectivity have profound implications. My observations indicated no place for stories, poetry, or folklore heritage in the three nursery settings where I conducted my fieldwork. Home cultures, thus, should be promoted in educational and social contexts by enhancing the role of the Islamic civilisation and high cultural input like grandmothers' stories, memorising the Quran, poetry, and the folklore heritage in family and schools.

Another relevant implication relates to Algerian administrative and ministerial policy. Bureaucratic procedures imposed by the administration and a lack of ministerial expertise in the domain of early childhood education was evident through my participants' accounts. In this vein, Bouherar and Ghafsi (2022) evinced that many ministers and their administrative

teamwork get appointed to different ministerial domains with a disregard of their knowledge in the field. Hence, the urge to reform the early childhood education system starts from the people in power. Speaking of the people in power in Algeria, I join Bouherar and Ghafsi (2022) in suggesting the eradication of colonial (French) alliances and allegiance in the country as well as their decision-making policies, manipulation, and control over education.

Given that ideologies are inescapable, and the interpretations of educators' actions would be assumed to present one ideological position than the other, educators should develop their professional autonomy and critical language awareness in relation to how language functions in terms of ideological and political dimensions. In this sense, they should engage in 'deliberative' or 'argumentative' thinking and social criticism by interacting with diametrically predominant and opposing ideologies. This calls into question the bifocal views of teacher as either the agentive professional who is critical of the status quo of language ideologies while rejecting the constraints of society and ideology, or the compliant actor who routinely transmits an ideology that they are largely ignorant of and could be duped by (Jaspers, 2022).

The findings reported in this research show how ambivalence characterised educators' articulations and practice. It could be argued that it should be dealt with as serious and problematic rather than viewing it as an issue of attitude or simply a problem of lack of awareness. As Jaspers (2022) states, diverse contradictions in teachers' professional lives are complex and 'chronic linguistic dilemmas'. This line of thinking effectively establishes that, instead of a cause for celebration, ambivalence is inevitable and therefore should be examined in relation to how teachers respond to it.

Based on the findings related to zerolingualism, this research suggests a balanced approach that acknowledges the importance of both language preservation and appreciation while embracing linguistic diversity. It calls for employing effective methods of teaching languages in the Algerian education system. In this perspective, it advocates for an early start of teaching SA, utilising methods such as role play, songs, and videos. Additionally, Algerian Arabic could be incorporated into nursery settings in Algeria as a facilitative tool for learning the targeted language. Nevertheless, this approach does not rest on the exclusion of additional languages and cultures. Instead, it promotes a multilingual educational system in Algeria, emphasising the importance of teaching both French and English languages and cultures to foster inter-cultural awareness and cross-cultural understanding. It is crucial, however, that linguistic diversity and cultural pluralism align with Algerian learners' values, social backgrounds, and cultural realities to eschew any form of manipulation.

Although it has not been a focus in this research, my fieldwork observations indicated that early years' settings emphasise the *schoolification* of children. That is, children's experience at these nurseries is centred more on 'school knowledge' justifiably to prepare them for primary education and less on play. As rightly put by Pachler *et al.* (2008), educators incorporate into their professional activities wider ideological views of society of what educators have to be as professionals and what children should become. As a researcher, I see that educational and free play is a necessity in these settings, and thus schoolification should be minimised. In this spirit I wish to mention that it was surprising to learn during the course of my research that there is (until present) no curriculum guiding the ECEC sector in Algeria, and I thus encourage the development of a curriculum in this field.

Based on the data which indicated that most of my participants have not had any type of training, teacher education and professional development programmes should be enhanced in the Algerian context. They should reinforce the inclusivity of early years' educators and managers by acknowledging their responsibility and role in curricular development. They should also address secular and gender issues which are always subject to interpretations and recontextualisations in actual classroom practice as suggested by the findings of this research (see sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3).

Lastly, given that many of my participants reported that they hoped to study early childhood education and care (which has never been available at Algerian universities), this research suggests a dire need to establish ECEC as a field of study at Algerian Higher education systems. Having ECEC as an independent educational concern and an object of teaching and research would open pathways for educators to learn early years' theories and engage in participatory research.

Researchers should reflect upon the research design's limitations and strengths, to which I now turn.

7.5 Limitations of this ethnographic fieldwork and overcoming its shortcomings

Among the strengths of my methodological approach is its ethnographic fieldwork enquiry characterising unexpected trajectories, which allowed for the exploration of areas that the PhD's original plans did not initially include. For example, the Quranic school, online platforms like Facebook, and discussions about the West and language ideologies were not on my agenda when I first began my fieldwork. It was the opportunity of being granted access that made exploring those spaces and domains possible. Furthermore, I backed up my observations with interviews, simultaneously collecting and analysing the data, and constantly confirming my interpretations with the research participants and asking them how they

constructed meaning about those observational accounts and interpretations. That eschewed misrepresentations of participants, helped to narrow down the scope of interest as the fieldwork is being conducted, and to generate for the most part inductively rich and diverse data. Engaging with different literature, theories and socio-historical backgrounds also enabled making sense of the data. Moreover, my research identity and role throughout the fieldwork were dynamic and relative: an outsider at times, and an insider at other situations, depending on my participants' view towards me and my view to myself and to them. This perspective of both an insider and an outsider necessitated emotional intelligence and continuous negotiations in order to actively build personal and social relationships with research participants alongside gaining their trust. That eased immersion and the co-construction of knowledge. Additionally, being Algerian, Muslim and female required making the familiar strange and reflexivity which led to the production of a trustworthy and ethical research. In doing so, I designed empirical chapters, each of which provides one part of the story of how ideological positions impact early childhood education and care practices.

The challenges encountered in conducting this ethnographic exploration (discussed in chapter four) reveal its possible limitations. First, because the recruitment of participants in this research was mainly based on their natural presence in the three different settings, this study could be said to have investigated only a smaller group of participants than it was initially anticipated. As I explained more fully in section 4.4.2. I have not been granted consent to formally interview the early childhood educators in the private nursery by them and their manager, despite my attempts. On the other hand, I was not able to get the consent to interview the manager of a nursery regarding the celebration of Halloween posts on her nursery Facebook page (section 5.3.1. gives details on this). Thus, the chance of including more educators would have perhaps yielded an exploration of more nuances regarding participants' ideological positions in the settings. Notwithstanding, generating data from a small number of participants allowed for attaining rich set of data, long and in-depth discussions, as well as fine-grained details about the complex nature of ideologies and their enactment in actual practice. That said, I stepped away from making generalisations and defining participants' experiences and practices within rigid boundaries.

Second, my initial research design included participants' focus group discussions and requesting them to provide images as visual representations of their thoughts. That unfortunately was not possible due to some challenges explained before. Their collective participation, in my opinion, would have added other perspectives to my research and would have further enriched my findings.

Third, the outbreak of the global pandemic led to the shutdown of the nurseries in Algeria which paralysed the return to the field and the generation of more data. Thereby, I had to use alternative methods to contact my participants through online platforms and integrate Facebook which became another social field for data.

Despite those limitations, my hope is for this PhD thesis to serve as a foundation for more in-depth investigations. This is discussed next.

7.6 Recommendations for further research

− For future research, it would be valuable to further scrutinise other ideological positions in the early years' settings across local or transnational contexts. For example, my participants' accounts and my observations of the nurseries' practices during the fieldwork indicated a strong focus on the discourse of 'preparing children for primary school' by overrating school knowledge. It would be interesting then to delve into these beliefs by investigating the why and how of such *schoolification* phenomenon.

− Some participants in this research constantly referred to the training they had over two years and a half to justify what and why they choose to perform certain things in their daily practice. Further research on ideological positions in the early years' training programmes is needed to develop our understanding of educators' beliefs and choices that position them ideologically within the nursery settings.

− Other areas of research could explore ideological positions from a political perspective: by interviewing policy-makers regarding decisions related to culture and language policies in education in the specific context of this study. This is especially relevant with the recent reform in Algeria's political and economic perspectives as well as its international relations.

− Researching ideologies in online and virtual platforms like nursery websites and Facebook pages is an angle that would add immense knowledge to the body of literature. Focusing on visual or online ethnography would be relevant to meet the aims of such an investigation.

− Comparative studies on ECEC ideologies between countries in the MENA regions or in other different contexts could be useful to the literature especially if undertaken from the perspective of postcolonialism and deconstruction theories.

- Given the few available papers on the notion of zerolingualism (Section 6.3), it could be relevant for researchers in the field of linguistics and applied linguistics to conduct longitudinal studies on how it works through primary, middle, and secondary schools' settings.

- As discussed earlier, the beliefs about the West and about language demonstrated in this study envision beliefs about other things related to other cultural discourses, such as the very notion of personhood and the social group. Therefore, the relationship between a community's ideologies and its identities is worthy of further exploration. This will not only enrich our understanding of how ideologies and identities are related but also will further our understanding of the actual educational practices through their daily enactment in the social world.

- Further research is needed to investigate parents' expectations from the early childhood education and care system, educators, and children, as participants in this research often referred to the idea that they do certain things like the teaching of French language in accordance with parents' demand and for parents' satisfaction.

7.7 Concluding note

This PhD thesis has undoubtedly been more than a piece of academic work. It has carried with it emotional, psychological, and physical challenges that revolutionised me at both the academic and personal levels.

At the academic level, despite the fact that I began this investigation with a less complex idea about ideologies, conducting it changed my perception of ideologies in that I became more concerned with the way they mediate meanings for social purposes rather than being concerned with their truth value. This study has further opened my eyes to reflect upon how I myself used to perceive the West and how I used to have certain conceptualisations of language and language use, which helped me to think over *my* ideological positions. Moreover, this research strengthens my conviction about the significance of social research and how important it is to develop good relationships in the field, and to conduct an ethically-sound research. It also taught me the craft of interviewing and many other skills that spoke for themselves throughout this thesis. Ultimately, I perceive this PhD as a means of voicing and understanding the experiences of early childhood educators and managers and the meaning

they give to such experiences, which made their stories worth of telling. This PhD made me embrace the idea that knowledge is built by research and publishing, then criticism and correction or revision. Having said that, it is important to accent that this research attends to only a limited number of experiences and thus its interpretations are just *an* interpretation.

At the personal level, I have learned how to develop myself in these key areas: flexibility, resilience, and empathy. Indeed, it was those moments when I faced plan's deviations that made me go with the flow and cease opportunities to embark on fields and centre on agendas that were not part of my original focus. I am referring here to the Quranic school and notions of the West and language ideologies. That enabled me to turn the perception of many incidents from challenging to a strength in my research. To be sure, the denial of access to some nurseries and the refusal to be given consent for participation in this research as well as the inability to return to the field due to the pandemic bear witness to my resilience. Speaking of empathy, having had the chance to not only 'watch' but also experience educators' everyday roles and challenges through the few instances my participants put me in made me feel how to be in their shoes and come to realise how tempting it could be to make easy judgements on the way they perform their practice. On the whole, I would like to reiterate that this learning journey has indeed been metamorphous.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethics approval letter

Canterbury
Christ Church
University

18/EDU/020   **16ᵗʰ July 2019**

Dear Bochra,

Project Title: Early Childhood Education and Care Provision in Algerian Preschools: An Investigation of Ideologies.

Further to the email correspondence you have received, this is formal confirmation of the approval of your ethics application by the Faculty of Education research ethics committee.

Please do let us know when you have completed the work so we can update

our records. Good luck with the study.

Yours sincerely

Dr Judy Durrant
Chair, Faculty of Education Research Ethics
Committee. Judy.durrant@canterbury.ac.uk

Faculty of Education

Canterbury Christ Church University

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Registered Company No: 4793659 A Company limited by guarantee Registered Charity No: 1098136 **Professor Rama Thirunamachandran**

Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Canterbury Christ Church University

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Appendix 2: Consent form (English version)

Canterbury
Christ Church
University

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: **Early Childhood Education and Care Provision in Algerian Preschools**

Name of Researcher: **Bochra Tari**

Postgraduate researcher - Contemporary Studies in Childhood, Youth and Parenthood.

Contact details:

Address: **Faculty of Education - School of Childhood and Education Studies- Canterbury Christ Church University.**
North Holmes Road, Canterbury, Kent; UK. Post code: CT1 1QU

Tel: **University phone number: 01227 767700**

Email: *b.tari142 @canterbury.ac.uk*

Please initial the box (es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.	
I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researcher will be kept strictly confidential.	
I agree that the interview will be audio-recorded and used only for research purposes.	
I understand that there are some potential low risks associated with this study (such as distress of being observed, overheard conversations, or breach of confidentiality and anonymity) and it is the researcher responsibility to take procedures to protect all the participants from harm during the research and to minimise it.	
I agree to take part in the above study and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	

Name of Participant:	Date:	Signature:

Name of person taking consent *(if different from researcher)*	Date:	Signature:
Researcher:	Date:	Signature:

_____   _____   _____

Copies: 1 for participant
                1 for researcher

Appendix 3: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (English Version)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

A PhD research study conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Bochra TARI.

Title of the research
Early Childhood Education and Care Provision in Algerian Preschools

Background

This study is funded by the Algerian government. It seeks to voice the views and experiences embedded in the early childhood education and care provision in Algeria. The aim of my research is not to evaluate performance. It is, however, to explore practitioners' perspectives of children's experiences in preschool education in Algeria.

To participate in this research, you must either be*:*
- Be an owner/manager/director of an early childhood setting (certified by the state) in Algeria.
- Be an early years' practitioner in Algeria.
- Be a child (parent of the child) enrolled in the preschool setting.

Procedures

If you are owner/manager/ director and/ or early childhood practitioner, you will be asked to:
- Be interviewed alone or in a group for 30-45 minutes.
- Be encouraged to make a collection of photographs and any other documents you use with children to frame the interview.
- Be observed on a daily basis over a period of a month by the researcher as you perform your daily routines in the preschool setting.

Feedback

You will be emailed a summary of the key findings of the research for distribution to all the early years' practitioners and parents. If required, copies of any reports or other publications arising from your participation will be attached.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's own data protection policies. No unrelated or unnecessary personal data will be collected or stored. Personal data will be used for research purposes only. Data can only be accessed by myself and my supervisors. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

Dissemination of results

The findings of this research will be published as a PhD thesis and will be available as an open access document on the universities library. The research will also be disseminated at academic research conferences, through conference papers and journal articles/reports. In all these publications, all data will be kept anonymous.

<u>Deciding whether to participate and process for withdrawing consent</u>

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to (i) withdraw consent at any time without having to give a reason and without penalty, (ii) request to see all your personal data held in association with this project, (iii) request that the processing of your personal data is restricted, (iv) request that your personal data is erased and no longer used for processing.

<u>Any questions?</u> Please contact me at

Email: b.tari142@canterbury.ac.uk

University: Faculty of Education, Canterbury Christ Church University.

Address: North Holmes Road, Canterbury, Kent, United Kingdom, CT1 1QU

Any further issues can be discussed with Dr Christian Beighton <u>christian.beighton@canterbury.ac.uk</u>, or <u>kate.smith@canterbury.ac.uk</u> who are supervising the research.

Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet and considering taking part in the research.

Appendix 4: Introductory letter to nursery staff

Invitation Letter to participate in a research study entitled
'Early Childhood Education and Care Provision in Algerian Preschools

Dear preschool staff,

My name is Bochra Tari. I am a PhD student funded by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education. I am currently studying at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK. I am conducting research into the views embedded in the early childhood education and care provision in Algeria. The aim of my research is not to evaluate performance. It is, however, to explore practitioner's perspectives of children's experiences in preschool education in Algeria.

Part of my data collection process is to conduct observations and interview owner/ manager/ director and staff working in the preschool setting. This will be held from November 2019 to December 2019. The interviews can be held in a place of your choice (workplace or a public place). The information gathered will be kept private and confidential to protect your identity. All data will be password protected and will be destroyed after five years. Any subsequent publication of findings as a result of the interview will be anonymised. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences. A summary of the results can be sent to you if requested.

If you would like to help me and take part in my project or you have any query about the research study, please contact me at: b.tari142@canterbury.ac.uk

Yours sincerely
Bochra Tari
Postgraduate researcher, Canterbury Christ Church University, CT1 1QU.

Appendix 5: Introductory letter to parents

<div align="right">13th November 2019</div>

Invitation Letter for your child to participate in a research study entitled
'Early Childhood Education and Care Provision in Algerian Preschools

Dear guardian,

My name is Bochra Tari. I am a PhD student funded by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education. I am currently studying at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK. I am conducting research into the views embedded in the early childhood education and care provision in Algeria. The aim of my research is not to evaluate performance. It is, however, to explore practitioner's perspectives of children's experiences in preschool education in Algeria.

I have the permission of the owner of the nursery to observe working practices in the nursery and as part of this I would like to ask for your permission to allow me to observe your child's daily routines at preschool over a four week period. The information gathered will be kept private and confidential by assigning a pseudonym to your child's name. All data will be password protected and held for a maximum of five years. I will not be sharing any confidential information about your child with anyone, including the nursery staff. Your child's participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent for your child's participation at any stage. There will be no consequences if you decide to withdraw. A summary of the results will be sent to you (if requested).

If you would like your child to take part in my project, please complete the tear-off slip below and return it with your child. If you have any query about my work, I will be at the nursery every day from (November) to (December). You can also contact me at b.tari142@canterbury.ac.uk

Many thanks,
Bochra Tari
Postgraduate researcher, Canterbury Christ Church University, CT1 1QU

✂ -
Name of the child   ……………
Your name (parent/guardian) ……………
I would like my child to be involved in your research project.
Signature   ...…………

Appendix 6: Request for Permission to Conduct Research in Preschool institutions

Request for Permission to Conduct Research in Preschool institutions

Dear Director of the preschool institution,

My name is Bochra Tari. I am a PhD student funded by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education. I am currently studying at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK. I am conducting research into the views embedded in the early childhood education and care provision in Algeria. The aim of my research is not to evaluate performance. It is, however, to explore practitioner's perspectives of children's experiences in preschool education in Algeria.

I am writing this letter to kindly ask for permission to conduct research in your preschools between November 2019 and December 2019. This permission will allow me to observe the daily practices and children enrolled in preschool settings as well as to interview staff who are interested in being part of the study. The information gathered will be kept private and confidential. Names of the preschools, practitioners, and children will be anonymous to protect their identity. All data will be password protected and destroyed after five years. Before any data is collected I will seek consent from all participants in the settings.

Please accept my sincere expressions of respect and gratitude.

Signature of the Researcher   Signature of the director of the preschool institution

Appendix 7: Consent form (Arabic version)

Canterbury
Christ Church
University

طاري بشرة

البريد الالكتروني: b.tari142@canterbury.ac.uk

رخصة الموافقة

موضوع البحث: التعليم والرعاية في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة في مؤسسات ما قبل المدرسة في الجزائر

يرجى وضع علامة في الخانة المناسبة إذا كنت موافقًا على البيان/ البيانات الاتية:

	أؤكد أنني قد قرأت وفهمت ورقة المعلومات للدراسة المذكورة أعلاه وأتيحت لي الفرصة لطرح أسئلة حول الدراسة.
	أفهم أن مشاركتي طوعية وأنني حر في الانسحاب في أي وقت ، دون إبداء أي سبب.
	أدرك أن أي معلومات شخصية أقدمها للباحث سيتم الاحتفاظ بها بسرية تامة.
	أوافق على أنه سيتم تسجيل المقابلة الصوتية واستخدامها فقط لأغراض البحث.
	أفهم أن هناك بعض الاشكاليات المحتملة مرتبطة بهذه الدراسة (مثل الضيق من الملاحظة أو المحادثات التي تُسمع أو انتهاك السرية) وتقع على عاتق الباحث مسؤولية اتخاذ إجراءات لحماية جميع المشاركين وعدم الكشف عن هويتهم أثناء البحث.
	أوافق على المشاركة في الدراسة أعلاه والموافقة على استخدام المعلومات التي أقدمها لغرض هذه الدراسة.

التوقيع	بتاريخ	اسم المشترك
التوقيع	بتاريخ	اسم الشخص الذي يأخذ الموافقة (إذا كان مختلفًا عن الباحث)
التوقيع	بتاريخ	الباحث

النسخ: 1 للمشارك

1 للباحث

Appendix 8: Participant information Sheet (Arabic version)

Canterbury
Christ Church
University

طاري بشرة

البريد الالكتروني: b.tari142@canterbury.ac.uk

ورقة المعلومات الخاصة بالمشاركين في الدراسة

عنوان البحث

التربية في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة في دور الحضانة و رياض الأطفال في الجزائر

خلفية الدراسة

هذه الدراسة هي بحث رسالة دكتوراه ممولة من قبل الحكومة الجزائرية، تدور حول الدور الذي تقوم به مختلف المؤسسات في تنمية و تكوين الطفل الجزائري قبل سن الدراسة. الهدف وراء بحثي هو ليس تقييم الأداء الذي تقوم به المعلمات أو المربيات أو الطفل لكنه يسعى للتعبير عن الآراء المتضمنة في توفير التربية في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة في الجزائر.

للمشاركة في هذا البحث، يتوجب أن تكون (ي) مدير (ة)، مسير (ة)، أو مربي (ة) في روضة أطفال (معتمدة من الدولة) في الجزائر. سيتضمن بحثي إجراء ملاحظات يومية ومقابلات فردية أو في مجموعة مع بعض من الطاقم التربوي لمدة 30-45 دقيقة. بإمكانك الاستدلاء بمجموعة من الصور أو أية مستندات أخرى تستخدمها مع الأطفال لإبداء رأيك لتأطير المقابلة. سيتم إرسال ملخص بالنتائج التي توصل إليها البحث عبر البريد الإلكتروني اذا كنتم مهتمين بذلك.

السرية وحماية البيانات

أتعهد أن هذا البحث سيتوافق مع أخلاقيات البحث المؤطرة من قبل الجامعة التي أدرس بها. أي معلومات شخصية تقدم للباحث سيتم الاحتفاظ بها بسرية تامة و سيتم استخدامها لأغراض البحث فقط. تقع على عاتق الباحث مسؤولية اتخاذ إجراءات لحماية جميع المشاركين وعدم الكشف عن هويتهم أثناء البحث.

مشاركتكم في هذه الدراسة طوعية وأنتم أحرار في الانسحاب في أي وقت، دون إبداء أي سبب.

إذا كانت لديك أي أسئلة بشأن طبيعة أو إجراءات أو متطلبات المشاركة، فلا تتردد في الاتصال بي في الرقم أو البريد الالكتروني المرفوق أعلاه.

شكرا لأخذ الوقت الكافي لقراءة ورقة المعلومات والتفكير في المشاركة في البحث

Appendix 9: Request for Permission to Conduct Research in Preschool institutions (Arabic Version)

11-11-2019

طاري بشرة

البريد الالكتروني: b.tari142@canterbury.ac.uk

الموضوع: طلب تصريح لإجراء بحث في مؤسستكم

إلى السيد

ادعى بشرى طاري، طالبة سنة ثانية دكتوراه تخصص التعليم ما قبل المدرسي .أدرس حاليا في جامعة' كانتربري'، بالمملكة المتحدة بتمويل من وزارة التعليم العالي الجزائرية .انا في صدد القيام ببحث حول الدور الذي تقوم به مختلف المؤسسات بما فيه الدينية في تنمية و تكوين الطفل الجزائري .

أود أن أحيطكم علما أن الهدف وراء بحثي هو ليس تقييم العمل الذي تقوم به المعلمات أو المربيات أو الطفل ولكن لدراسة تجربة الطفل في شتى مؤسسات ما قبل المدرسة. سيفيدني هذا البحث في كتابة رسالة الدكتوراه. سيتضمن بحثي بعض الطرق كإجراء ملاحظات ومقابلات مع بعض من الطاقم التربوي. أتعهد أن هذا البحث سيتوافق مع أخلاقيات البحث المؤطرة من قبل الجامعة التي أدرس بها .

لذلك، أتشرف بالطلب من سيادتكم الموقرة الموافقة على اجراء هذا البحث في مؤسستكم .

وفي الأخير تقبلوا مني فائق الاحترام و التقدير

امضاء الطالب

امضاء مدير

الجمهـــــوريــة الجزائريـــــة الديمقراطيــــة الشعبيــــة
وزارة التعليم العالي و البحث العلمي

مديرية التعاون و التبادل ما بين الجامعات
نيابة مديرية التكوين و تحسين المستوى بالخارج و الإدماج.

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شهادة

أناالممضي(ة) أسفله ، السيدة بلهوشات كريمة

المديرة الفرعية للتكوين وتحسين المستوى بالخارج والادماج بمديرية التعاون والتبادل مابين الجامعات

على مستوى وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي، أعطي موافقتي للسيد(ة) **طاري بشرى** طالبة

متفوقة تخصص لغة أنجليزية إستفادت من منحة دراسية وطنية لتحضير شهادة الدكتوراه (**Ph.D**)

بالمملكة المتحدة (بريطانيا) في إطار البرنامج الإستثنائي للغة الإنجليزية، بجمع المعلومات والبيانات

وقيام بمقابلات مع الأساتذة على مستوى المؤسسات التربويةالجزائرية(دور الحضانة ورياض

الأطفال)، إضافة الى حضور بعض الحصص وذلك لما فيه من اهمية لاستكمال البحث البيداغوجي

حول التعليم في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة في الجزائر .

وعليه أرجوا منكم تمكين المعنية من إجراء بحثها.

سلمت هذه الشهادة للمعني(ة) لإستعمالها في حدود ما يسمح به القانون.

، مديرة فرعية للتكوين و تحسين المستوى
في الخارج و الإدماج
إمضاء: بلهوشات كريمة زوجة بولعراج
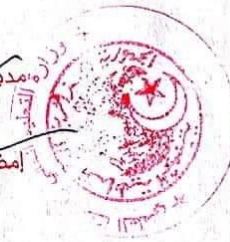
Appendix 11: Ethnographic Descriptions of the three settings

This section presents the three different types of childhood reception centres where I conducted this study. The following table describes the three fields of study. It also considers what is shared and what is distinct and what there is and there is not in the sites.

Type of childhood reception centre	Quranic school	Private Nursery	Public Nursery
Link to the state/ funding	Publically funded Managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs	Private funding and management Affiliated to the Directorate of Social Action and Solidarity	Private funding and management Public ownership Affiliated to the Directorate of Social Action and Solidarity
Opening times	Morning time: 8 am-11 am Afternoon time: 13 pm-3 pm	7 am- 6 pm 24/7 service available	7 am- 5 pm
Number of children	63 per group	18 per group	21 per group
Staff-child ratio	2-63	2/18	1/21
Language/ code	Arabic (standard and dialect)	Arabic (standard and dialect) French- English- Spanish	Arabic (standard and dialect) French
Resources	Preparatory: two textbooks same as public schooling Preliminary: two textbooks entitled "Mathematics" and "My first steps in writing"	One textbook for 4-5 years old children. It is entitled "My first steps in writing"	Preparatory: three textbooks entitled "Mathematics", "Writing", "Les nouvelles activités de Langue" Preliminary: one textbook entitled "My first discoveries with Mino and Mina"

Children's social background	Different social status families	Richer families	Middle-income families
Note	None of the three settings had an open natural space. This might indicate their vision towards the importance or unimportance of such a green area.		

Quranic school

The Quranic school is situated inside the Institute of Imams Training. The latter has been established in 2012. Before 2012, the learning of the Koran was held at the mosque. The Quranic school is publically funded and is managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. There is a free service for children from disadvantaged families.

The Quranic school department has three big classrooms, the managers' office, and one lavatory. Each classroom was furnished with tables, chairs, a chalkboard on the wall, an adult-sized desk with a chair, water dispenser, microwaves, heaters, and coat racks at the back of each classroom. There were around twenty-five tables that seated sometimes three children each, with two rows of girls and two other rows for boys. All early childhood educators, which are called 'Moaalima' (teacher) by children, wear white aprons. The walls had windows that overlooked the front grounds of the school. They were decorated with Arabic alphabets and numbers, photos of Spiderman and Dora, and other children's posters.

The Quranic school opens from September until June. It receives children from three to five years old. Children from three to four years (3-4) were grouped into two classrooms called '*Tamhidi*' (preliminary). Children from four to five and sometimes five years and a half (4-5-5.5) were grouped in one classroom called '*Tahdiri*' (preparatory). Children who miss the chance to be enrolled in public schooling due to limited spaces are also enrolled in this preparatory class. The number of children in each group ranged from 50 to 63, with the number dropping in afternoon times. Each age-group of children had an early childhood educator and one or two assistants.

A typical day at the Quranic school (fieldnotes# KS. Prep. class, 13/11/2019)
Children arrive at eight am, carrying backpacks and wearing aprons (pink for girls and blue for boys). They take off their coats and hang them in coat racks then they join their seats. They repeat after the educator Duaa upon entering the classroom. Then they rehearse two or three short Surah from the Quran. After that, the educator asks children to write some numbers on their handy chalkboards/whiteboards and then some Arabic alphabets on their copybooks. Children who succeed in writing get a motivational card, upon the collection of five cards they

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get a present. It is ten o'clock; time for a snack '*Lumja*'. Children recite Duaa upon eating then each one opens their snack (juice, biscuits, yogurt, bread and cheese, apple and orange). They share with children who didn't bring their snacks. After *Lumja* time, the educator turns the speakers on for singing a song. Children get prepared to leave the school at eleven o'clock after repeating Duaa for leaving out. Girls line up first then boys.

Some children do not leave the school; they stay in the classroom with their educator who warms up the food in the microwave for them. The other children return at noontime (at 1 pm.). Children say Duaa upon entering the classroom. The educator distributes the textbook, and she asks the children to open it on page 11 and colour the apple using red colour. After colouring the educator narrates the prophets' story. Children take their copy books for some writing at home. They say Duaa for leaving out the classroom at 3 pm.

Private nursery

The private nursery is a large three floors building equipped with CCTV cameras. The ground floor is the manager's office, fronted by a big camera monitor screen. On the first floor, there is a kitchen and a bedroom furnished with children's beds, pink and blue sheets. There is also a tray storage unit in which children place their stuff. The second floor has spacious play spaces grounded with fake grass. There are also lavatories, big plastic roundtables, and three well maintained and decorated rooms. One room is furnished with babies' beds and toys, the two others are furnished with small coloured ten tables and twenty chairs.

The personnel at the private nursery involve the manager, four main early childhood educators (some with BA level in French or Spanish and some hold EC educator certificates), three assistants, a cook, and a cleaner. Each early childhood educator occupies a group of children. There are four age groups: babies, two to three, three to four, and four to five years. The number of children in each group does not generally exceed eighteen. Children at the private nursery call their educators *Tata* (auntie). Educators wear white aprons and white nurse shoes (I had been given one to wear too).

A typical day at the private nursery (fieldnotes# Pvt. Nurs. 14/01/2020)

Children arrive at the nursery at different times in the morning. No formal dress is required (some come with pyjamas). Upon arrival, children take their shoes off and wear only socks. They then have their breakfast (chocolate milk and biscuits). From 8 am to 9 am children play freely in the playground under educators' surveillance then each group of children walk to their spaces.

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2-3 years age group: the educator tries hard to make everyone sit in the chairs. Children sit around the roundtable and play jigsaw puzzles. The educator is meanwhile naming colours in French then she asks each one to tell her which colour is the jigsaw.

3-4 years age group: the educator writes on the blackboard "today's lesson: the five senses". She sticks on it some pictures displaying hands, nose, mouth, eyes, and ears. The educator explains the five senses using dialect and standard Arabic as well as some French words "croiser les bras, bravo, tu es champion".

4-5 years age group: Children rehearse some Surah from the Quran. The educator makes sure that all children pronounce the words. They next write the Arabic letter "ح" on their copy books then they colour it. Every child has got a portfolio with some remarks "excellent- very good- good- notable progress- or continue".

Children line up and go playing for half an hour. They then wear aprons to have lunch (Couscous, chicken, and fruit) which is served in coloured plastic plates and spoons. After that, children wash their mouths and go take a nap.

In the afternoon children have diverse activities: dancing or physical activity, manual activity, or language class. In the latter, for example, the educator says "Hola Cómo estás?" and asks children to say "Estoy bien". Children are then served chocolate milk and biscuits and wait for their parents to collect them at different times.

Public nursery
The public nursery building is neatly manicured and very picturesque. At the entrance, there is a wide play area equipped with two small plastic slides. There is the manager's office, three large classrooms, and two bedrooms, a kitchen, and a lavatory. Plenty of artwork, colourful charts, and posters are displayed on the walls of the classrooms with whiteboards in the middle of the walls. At the corner of each classroom, there is a tray unit in which were usually stored children's notebooks and classroom supplies such as chalk, pencils, pens, and the like. The physical space in the classrooms was taken up by chairs and tables.

The personnel at the public nursery involve the manager, a cook, and five educators (two hold EC educator certificates, one has a BA in psychology and two are carers). Each early childhood educator occupies a group of children. There are five age groups: babies, two to three, three to four, four to five years, and a group for special needs children. The number

of children in each group ranges between seven and twenty-one. Children at the public nursery call their educators *Moaalima* (teacher). Educators wear white aprons.

A typical day at the public nursery (fieldnotes# Pblc. Nurs. 09/02/2020)
Children arrive at the nursery at different times. They immediately enter their classrooms and go to their assigned seats.

2-3 years age group (fourteen children): young children enter the room. The educator sings a song and tries to make children repeat after her but children seem disinterested. Her main role is changing diapers and make sure children are safe.

3-4 years age group (sixteen children): children repeat with their educator Duaa upon entering the classroom and some Surah from the Quran. The educator changes diapers for some children. She then writes an Arabic alphabet on the whiteboard and asks children to pronounce it.

4-5 (twenty-one children): children repeat with their educator Duaa upon entering the classroom and some Surah from the Quran. The educator then distributes French textbooks and pencils. She asks children to fold their arms. She uses mainly dialect Arabic to communicate with children. She uses French to show children "le visage, la tête, la bouche, *les Oreilles, le nez*". She then asks children to circle in their textbook parts of the face.

At 10:30 children have chocolate milk and bread then they join their classrooms again. They take a break to play freely. At 13 they have lunch (rice, chicken, and tomato salad). After lunch, they wash their hands and enter their classrooms where they take a nap. After naptime children have tea and bread and get prepared to be collected by their parents at different times.