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- Abstract: The abstract should not exceed 200 words and not less than 150 words (Font: Times New Roman size: 13, italics).
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Wartime Encounters, Diasporic Divides: African American and French Colonial Troops in the Great War

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Elalami, J., & Sakhkhane, T. (2026). Wartime encounters, diasporic divides: African American and French colonial troops in the Great War. *Journal of Afro-Asian Studies*, 9(28), 09-21.

Abstract

This article explores one of the least charted episodes of the Great War, in which race and diaspora intersected to shape the experiences of African American and French African troops and workers deployed to France during the global conflict. Using Brent Edwards's concept of "décalage" in the field of diaspora studies, this article examines African American narratives of the Great War to map the role of the people of African descent in the war, looking for the roots of "the chasm" that developed between people of African descent in their diaspora in France. The racial and colonial circumstances that brought them to the war in Europe, their reception by the French, and their views of each other offer new perspectives on the chasm that developed between them in their diaspora in France. This chasm gradually gave rise to different diasporas, characterised by a permanent décalage between people sharing the same race and descent.

Keywords: *The Great War, people of African descent, race, diaspora, décalage*

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1.Introduction

The Great War presented an unprecedented opportunity for Americans, Moroccans, and other Africans to encounter one another on a large scale for the first time in history. The global conflict precipitated the massive movement and forced displacement of millions of people across all five continents. In France, where Allied Armies were garrisoned, European, African, Asian, and American troops and workers fought and collaborated against the Central Powers led by Germany. The Western Front in France became a sort of “Tower of Babel” a typical site of cultural and racial encounters between the ordinary, uncultivated masses who had never ventured beyond their native villages and hometowns, let alone encountered people from distinct parts of the world with different customs, races, and languages. The Great War was not just an armed conflict but also a site of cultural and racial interactions between a myriad of ethnicities and nationalities. During the war, cultural negotiations extended beyond the exclusive, narrow academic circles of travellers and scholars. The fresh and spontaneous encounter between the troops generated various narratives written by those who were part of it. Among these narratives, many were written by American soldiers and military personnel, detailing their daily lives on the frontline and describing the different races and nationalities they fought alongside or against.

Historically, the Great War narratives produced in the United States can be subdivided into two distinct categories. The first covers writings prior to the United States’ entry into the war in 1917. This category mostly comprises newspaper reports, personal narratives, and diaries of Americans who, in one way or another, individually joined the war in Europe before the official entrance of the American army. The second category encompasses the bulk of writings that began with the American entry into the War. In addition to the available historical archive of newspapers that used to provide the American audience with the daily exploits of the American army on the Western Front, there were also massive compilations of military reports, studies, official correspondence, diaries, memoirs, postcards, pictures, soldiers’ newspapers¹, and personal letters. They were written by different interveners in the war, ranging from the highest ranks of the military staff and experts to the rank and file of the army. Workers, porters, nurses, doctors, ambulance drivers, canteen tenders, and many other Americans who were linked to the war also have a significant share of these writings. As the writers’ social and professional backgrounds vary, so do their academic and intellectual levels. While some texts and narratives are indeed challenging for the ordinary reader, as they are written by military experts and are full of military statistics, maps, and war strategies, other writings come from soldiers who were hardly familiar with writing and reading. These latter accounts are the most valuable, as they contain uncensored, fresh views and images of “the other” they encountered during the war.

¹ Soldiers’ newspapers were a common source of entertainment and news exchange between soldiers of the same army. They were produced by educated officers and contained entertaining stories, jokes, pictures, and carefully censored news of the war. They were distributed for free on the frontline. As Robert L. Nelson argues in his article, “Soldier Newspapers: A Useful Source in the Social and Cultural History of the First World War and Beyond,” *War in History*, Vol. 17, N. 2, (2010), pp. 167–191, soldiers’ newspapers were a famous genre of writing during the Great War.

Exploring the representation of French colonial soldiers in the war narratives written by Americans during the First World War, the difference between white Americans' and African Americans' views was glaringly evident and impossible to ignore. While white Americans' narratives generally view colonial soldiers with the usual racialised and stereotypical images and tropes, African American narratives provide a different mode of representation, reflecting a sort of racial and military affinity due to their similar skin colours and military service conditions. Both African American and French colonial troops were assigned inglorious, marginalised paramilitary roles or deployed as shock troops on the frontline. In the context of the Great War, the term "shock troops" had racial implications. Colonial soldiers were chosen as shock troops because they were expendable, and their appearance and colour instilled fear in their enemies. It also means they were expendable troops, or cannon fodder, in the war.

The encounter between African American regiments and French colonial troops highlights critical issues of race and war, the relationship between African Americans and their African ancestors, and the question of the African-descent diaspora in France. African Americans in France easily adapted to French society during the war and flourished in postwar France. They established renowned literary and artistic circles that became integral to French culture after the war. These black artistic and literary movements in interwar France became historically known as 'the Jazz Age'. On the other hand, French colonial troops from Africa had little effect on French culture and society after the war. They were quickly forgotten from French public life and culture as soon as they were demobilised and sent back to their native towns in Africa. Some African regiments were linked with infamous racial incidents and acts of rape during the war or in the German province of the Rhineland, which France occupied in the 1920s. Though they were brought to France as part of a French army raised in the empire, African troops' presence there was less remarkable than that of American soldiers of African descent.

The encounter between African Americans and French colonial troops in the Great War chronicles a critical moment in the diaspora of people of African descent. It highlights the origins of the ongoing questions regarding the different statuses of black people from America and the black people from Africa in the diaspora. African Americans easily integrated into French society, describing it as "colour-blind", free from racism and discrimination against people of colour. On the other hand, people from African colonies were granted a marginal position in French society, history, and memory, and were usually associated with negative memories and events of the war. This status has continued to shape the uneasy relationship of the African diaspora with France to this day.

While African troops left no significant written records of their experiences in France during the Great War, African Americans left numerous narratives, personal memoirs, and letters, which are now available online or in public libraries. Going through some of these war narratives, the question of why African Americans and Africans from French colonies have taken different paths in diaspora, even though they were both brought to France under similar conditions of racism and coloniality, will be highlighted. Using Brent Edwards's notion of "décalage" in the field of diaspora studies, I will argue that the geographical, historical, and cultural discrepancies are behind the

shaping of “the liminal space” and the emergence of an uneven diasporic relation between Africans and African Americans, causing an unbridgeable “chasm” between them in France.

2. African American views of colonial soldiers in France

African American troops stationed in France faced similar racial discrimination and Jim Crow laws that they had been conditioned to back in the United States. While they answered President Wilson’s call to make the world “safe for democracy” with the hope that their loyalty and military service would secure racial respect and equality, they were faced with disrespect, discrimination, and mistreatment (Williams, C. L, 2010, p3). Chad Williams, a historian of African American participation in the Great War, argues that “the white supremacist realities of American democracy ... remained vividly present throughout the experiences of African American soldiers in France.” (Williams, C. L, 2010, p182) While in France, the American army replicated the American racialised structures that had been inflicted on African Americans back in the United States. African American officers faced defamation, and black labour troops endured systematic mistreatment. Segregation permeated all facets of the American military in France.

Fortunately for the African American troops, they were affiliated with the French army, which would provide training, armament, and equipment (Barbeau, A. E., Henri, F,1974, p112). This decision “to give away” the black regiments to the French solved the problems of the American army in France. First, the American white troops were under control again, as their recurrent disputes with black units had caused disturbing disciplinary issues on numerous occasions. Second, French demands for more troop supplies were met. The death toll had taken a substantial number of the French forces, and they no longer had the human resources to replace those who had perished on the battlefield. As the American army wasn’t yet ready to engage in battle, the French, by handling the black regiments, temporarily solved the problem of troop supplies.

The transfer of African American regiments to the French was a successful story. The French approach to deploying black troops was radically different from the American methods. France had accumulated considerable experience in dealing with black soldiers from Africa and had no reservations about letting them fight side by side with its white metropolitan troops. As the American army’s initial plan to use African Americans mainly in paramilitary activities didn’t work, they were “exiled” to the French army, which used them as combat troops. African American units welcomed their transfer to the French army, viewing it as a liberation rather than an exile (Slotkin, R. 2005, p136). France granted them “the honour” of being combat soldiers rather than labour battalions, which the American army had denied them. African American regiments fought alongside French metropolitan and other colonial African troops on equal terms for the rest of the war.

Satisfied with their new combat duties under the French army, African American troops viewed France as a colour-blind country with no discriminatory views about people of colour. The African American troops viewed their treatment by the French as an advanced form of racial egalitarianism compared to the treatment they received back in the United States or from the American army in France. However, their views were based more on self-centred rhetorical arguments than on historical knowledge of French colonial and racial realities. In their search to challenge the racial

system of American society, they used the experiences of African troops in France to expose the racial structures of American culture. However, their views were informed and shaped by their social and political realities within American society, rather than by a genuine interest in the French treatment of African people and colonial troops. They devoted particular attention to the recruitment of African soldiers by the French army to highlight the distinction between France and the United States on questions of racism and equality between races. By adopting this attitude, African American soldiers and activists back in the United States refrained from examining France's imperialistic and inherently contradictory historical relationship with people of African descent. They viewed the presence of African troops in Europe as additional proof of France's commitment to racial egalitarianism, overlooking the fact that the French coercively conscripted these soldiers to fight in a war they had no stakes in.

African American newspapers played a crucial role in perpetuating the myth of a colour-blind France. Several stories about French colonial servicemen appeared in African American newspapers, presenting France as a Western nation where black people played a significant role in defending "the motherland". African soldiers were used as a source of racial pride and also to criticise American racial society that prevented black Africans from having equal opportunities to contribute to the war effort: "Whenever and wherever black soldiers are placed, they fight with the same steadiness and intelligence as white soldiers", and France was the only Western nation "that appreciates this fact and makes the most of it." (*New York Age*, 1914, sep 3).

Published pictures of African soldiers fighting in Europe played a key role in the African American activists' campaign against racism and segregation. They served as visual proof of black people's effective role in defending the motherland side by side with other white troops. They also sparked global racial pride by emphasising the black troops' military prowess and courage. A caption accompanying a picture of colonial soldiers published in a black newspaper conveyed this sense of pride and manhood: "These Stalwart Men are Relied upon for their Courage and Valor." (*Chicago Defender*, 1916, April 22). Feelings of pride and valour are also reflected in another picture, which was similarly captioned: "These Brave Troops Have Meant Much to the French in Their Success Around Verdun." (*Chicago Defender*, 1916, June 3).

In addition to the racial pride they invoked, the pictures were living proof of black people's martial heroism, valour, and sacrifice, especially for those who couldn't read. The pictures refuted the racialised and civilisationist construction of the African peoples, emphasising their essential humanity. They demonstrate not only the combat capabilities of black people but also the human dimension of their experience by capturing them eating, relaxing, and socialising. They appeared not as primitive savages, as white racialised narratives of the war tried to depict them, but as people possessing fundamental humanity that transcended racial differences. A picture showing wounded African soldiers with a white soldier sunning on the balcony of a luxurious hotel in Paris had special connotations in the context of the American racial system that put African Americans on a lower ladder in comparison to white citizens (*Chicago Defender*, 1916, July 22). While black people were enjoying their lives in Paris like any white French citizens, without segregation or discrimination, African Americans were being abused, lynched, and segregated all over the United States. Other pictures published in the African American press also depict African soldiers operating complex

war machines. Through such images, African American activists were trying to refute racialised propaganda that claimed people of colour lacked the inherent mental capacity to operate modern war machinery.

However, despite the apparent pride in African troops, the pictures were framed within a specific ideological and political context. They served as a critique of the American racialised social and military structures by comparing them to the “egalitarian” and “colour-blind” France. What the pictures didn’t frame was also important. They were published in newspapers, accompanied by short captions that did not place them in their historical or geographical context. The pictures stood alone, removed from the colonial context in which African soldiers were conscripted and brought to Europe to fight under the French tricolour. In this way, they further reinforced the romantically distorted view of France’s relationship with its black populations from the colonies. The pictures served as a discursive strategy to underscore the racially marginalised conditions of African Americans and to promote the idea of France free from racial or cultural biases against black people.

While black American activists’ views of the war privileged domestic nation-centred political concerns, they also promoted a self-proclaimed cultural superiority toward French colonial troops from Africa. Their representation of these troops demonstrated a political, parochial, and naive understanding of the racial realities of French colonialism and unfamiliarity with the historical and cultural diversity of African people. They referred to African soldiers not as a separate subject but to emphasise their claim that they were more developed and civilised than those soldiers. As a black newspaper editorial argued, “if the French Senegalese are the terror of the enemy, the well-trained Southern Negro will make a worthwhile soldier. We believe it without qualification!” (*Richmond Planet*, 1917, June 9) Thus, if African soldiers were savage warriors by nature, African Americans were receptive to training and would make equally, if not more, effective soldiers than their African counterparts. African American newspapers positioned American soldiers as occupying a higher echelon than African soldiers on the ladder of modern Western civilisation, thus demonstrating African Americans’ fitness for full citizenship rights and equal treatment.

While celebrating France, a colour-blind country, African American activists fully adopted the French idea of the colonial civilising mission. Édouard Réquin, a French military representative in the United States, delivered a speech to a group of black press editors in an effort to garner their support for the French war effort. Réquin lauded France’s employment of African soldiers, particularly those from North Africa. He argues that, as “Mohammedans”, North African soldiers were a prime example of the colonial civilising mission’s effectiveness in overcoming Muslim colonial resistance. According to him, “If one considers that in North Africa the Mohammedan group has been essentially refractory to all foreign intervention, the voluntary participation of colored men in the defense of French soil consecrates definitely the motivating principles of our expansion.” (Williams, C. L, 2010, p158). On the other hand, the “Senegalese” soldiers, for Réquin, were still living in a state of savagery, utterly devoid of self-conscious agency and autonomous thought, and unable to handle complex weaponry and modern war tactics. Yet, they were “equally devoted to France, whom they serve most loyally, and to the flag which represents France,” and “just as we have delivered these black men from African barbarism, so we have given them

civilisation and justice; it is their duty in turn to defend among us that justice and that civilisation against Prussian barbarism.” (Williams, C. L, 2010, p158)

For Réquin, the savage qualities of African troops didn't apply to African Americans. African soldiers were “primitive men without civilisation—men who cannot be compared from this point of view with colored Americans,” (Williams, C. L, 2010, p158) he claimed. It was this part of Réquin's argument that most interested the African American press and activists. They used it to promote a socially constructed military worthiness, cultural hierarchy, and evolutionary superiority that elevated them from “the savage” troops from Africa. *New York Age*, an influential African American paper, featured Réquin's article on the front under the subheading “French Officer Says Colored Soldiers of France are Received Exactly the Same as White Soldiers—Foreign Colored Troops Cannot be Compared with Colored Americans who are Products of Civilization.”(*New York Age*, 1918, August 10) The subheading highlighted the two central points of Réquin's article for the reader. First, it positioned the supposed “egalitarian” and “colour-blind” policies of France in contrast to the American army system built on racial segregation and inferiorisation of black people. Second, it promoted a civilisation-based hierarchical stratification among people of African descent by portraying African Americans as holding superior mental, cultural, and historical characteristics in comparison to those from Africa. By this racialised logic, they legitimised their campaign for full social and political integration into contemporary Western democracy, particularly American democracy.

3. “The *décalage*” between African American and French colonial troops.

While the ideological debate on black people's involvement in The Great War was heightening both in the United States and Europe, the encounter between African American and colonial African troops was also taking place on the Western Front in France. The encounter between the two was unavoidable, as the racialised nature of their duties as stevedores at the rear of the army or shock troops at the front brought them together and fostered a sense of racial affinity between them. However, despite their racial affinity, numerous linguistic, cultural, and civilisational barriers framed their daily interactions. Dressing in distinct military uniforms and foreign attire and speaking different languages represented a remarkable challenge for both. Their initial encounter was, therefore, characterised by mutual exoticisation and cultural misunderstanding.

The language barrier played a significant role in “the *décalage*”² between African American soldiers and French colonial troops. Neither African Americans could speak Arabic, Wolof, or other African languages, nor could colonial soldiers speak English. According to a report on the relationship between African American troops and the French, African American soldiers were surprised that the French “colored colonial soldiers” they encountered on the Western Front couldn't speak a word of English.³ What was an “inconsequential item” for the report's writer was

² Brent Edwards uses the term “*décalage*” to describe the geographical and historical discrepancy that shapes “the liminal space” and the uneven diasporic relation between Africans and African Americans (Edwards, B. H. 2001. Pp:45-73).

³ A post-war military report on the relation between African American troops and the French refers to “inconsequential items” such as “the astonishment of US colored troops at the inability of the French colored colonial to speak English.” (as Quoted in Williams, C. L. ,2010, p174).

crucial in shaping the encounter between African Americans and African troops, as they were unable to engage in productive conversations or exchange opinions and feelings.

Two stories narrated by American soldiers in France typically demonstrate how the lack of verbal communication between them influenced their perceptions of one another. The first was published in 1918 in the *Cleveland Advocate*. It narrates how an African American soldier, who the newspaper described as “a genuine negro from a southern cotton plantation”, thought that all “black men” he encountered in France were African American “negroes”. However, when the African American soldier met “a French Algerian” and asked him for a light, “the Algerian looked at [him] while he was repeating his request and then walked away.” The disappointed African American soldier complained to his fellow comrade, “Lordy, Lordy, man; doan it beat all how some of dese kin fight so long heah in dis country dat they clean fergit dere own languidge?” (*Cleveland Advocate*, 1918, September 28) The distressed African American soldier believed that the Algerian soldier was an American “negro” who forgot about his English language for the extended period he spent in France.

Another frustrating story happened to Private Julius Paul, an African American soldier, during his first encounter with a Senegalese soldier. The story was narrated by Karl Bardin, Paul’s white American officer. Paul was disappointed, as he could not converse with the Senegalese soldier, whom he thought “talk United States”. After they failed to communicate, Private Paul presumed the Senegalese soldier to be crazy and reported him to Officer Bardin. Bardin assured him that he wasn’t what he thought and was indeed one of his “real brothers from Africa. He is just the same as [him], but he only speaks French and his own African dialect.” (Bardin, Quoted in Williams, 2010, p. 175).

Such stories illustrate the isolation of African Americans and the absence of any communication with the world, let alone their contact with their ancestors from Africa. Before his encounter with the Senegalese soldier, Julius Paul had never encountered a black man who couldn’t talk “United States,” while the other soldier quoted in the first story presumed the Algerian soldier was an African American who had forgotten about English because of his extended stay in France. The fact that they didn’t speak a common language revealed a cultural and political divide between them. Their identities were firmly anchored in their distinct national and cultural realities. African Americans viewed themselves as Americans struggling for more civil rights under the Jim Crow laws within the space of the American nation. French colonial soldiers were Africans negotiating their realities with the French metropole within the framework that was imposed by colonialism and empire.

The stories, however, are written proofs that document the attempt of African Americans and Africans to build up a common ground as members of the same race and victims of similar military service conditions. Their efforts to approach one another and forge constructive relations demonstrated remarkable racial and diasporic consciousness. Linguistic and cultural barriers didn’t prevent the development of a positive attachment between them. Their skin colour and the nature of their racialised service as labourers and shock troops were behind this sense of convergence.

Gradually, the presence of African soldiers became less of a shock. African American veterans developed a strong admiration for their African counterparts.

In their struggle against Jim Crow laws within the American army that devalued their service, African American soldiers viewed French colonial soldiers from North and West Africa as a source of racial diasporic pride. Over time, the language barrier no longer posed a challenge for them as they learned French, and African soldiers also picked up some English words. A journalist accompanying the African American regiments wrote to the *New York Age*, observing how “Many of the men [African American soldiers] have become fluent French talkers, and I have heard animated conversations between Colored men and the Senegalese who chanced to be passing. Negro lads get along famously with both white and black Frenchmen.” (*New York Age*, 1918, June 8). The sight of each other became less of a shock, familiarity and interactions increased, and friendly sentiments began to develop between them. Horace Garvin, an African American soldier, remembers how he “came in contact with Algerians. They seemed to be good soldiers.” (as quoted in Williams, C. L., 2010, p175). The bandleader James Europe also expressed his respect for French colonial soldiers in a letter to the editor of the *New York Age*:

It is glorious to see the French regiments intermingled with black boys, and I wish to state here that of all the black French troops I have seen over here, I have never seen one without some sort of decoration, and I have met thousands (*New York Age*, 1918, p2).

The camaraderie between African Americans and Africans led to a form of political exchange that laid the foundation for a post-war common diasporic condition and the emergence of Pan-Africanism (Williams, C. L., 2010, p269). While African soldiers were brought to Europe as a result of enduring coloniality under the French empire, African American soldiers were also victims of the colonial situation, not because of a foreign imperial power but because of the racial segregation and exploitation imposed on them by the white American population and government, since they were coercively brought to “the New World” as slaves. As people of African descent, both of them shared a common marginalised space created by white Western hegemony. Recognising this context, they established the foundation for what may be described as the genesis of the modern African diaspora in Europe. This initial sense of diasporic attachment was expressed through various forms of concern and admiration for each other. For instance, a black American soldier expressed surprise when a black “Frenchman,” likely another soldier, enquired whether the American army planned to execute the remaining men found guilty in the famous Houston rebellion of 1917, in which African American soldiers retaliated against racial mistreatment and killed seventeen white Americans. The soldier described the French Africans he met as politically aware of what was happening to black people around the world: “They know everything, and for what they don’t know, we will inform them.”⁴ The mobilisation for war fostered transnational networks of social, cultural, and political exchange, enabling African Americans to engage in diasporic conversations with French colonial troops, thereby establishing transatlantic solidarity among people of African descent.

⁴ Unnamed soldier to W. E. B. Du Bois as cited in Williams, C. L., 2010, p. 176.

While these embryonic forms of political and cultural exchange between African soldiers and French colonial troops were made possible by the mutual respect and racial affinity that developed between them, they didn't overcome the disparities that separated them. These disparities were political and historical and not just linguistic. Their encounter was shaped by elements deeply ingrained in their historical and political backgrounds. African American soldiers failed to understand the colonial dimensions behind the participation of African troops in the war and their uneven relations with the French metropole. Horace Pippin, an African American artist and soldier in the Harlem Hellfighters Regiment, described the feeling of safety provided by Algerian troops stationed next to his regiment, saying that "everything was still. On our right flank, the Algerians were holding that part of the line. They were a good lot of fellows with us." (Pippin, ca. 1920-1943, p. 1) Meanwhile, their antipathy for the French caught his attention as he remarked that "they didn't care for the French much. If we were with one of them and a French man came by us, the Algerian would say Pas-Bon. Dar. French Por-Bon. he meant that the French were no good for him." (Pippin, ca. 1920-1943, pp. 29-30).

Nevertheless, Pippin never bothered himself to search for an answer to the question of why the Algerians didn't care for the French. Being an African American soldier coming to France for nationally bound reasons and goals kept him from understanding the tense colonial relations behind France's recruitment of troops from Africa. Violent colonial aggression and fervent resistance had marked the relationship between France and Africa since the early 19th century. Pippin lacked both the historical context and a fully diasporic consciousness necessary to grasp such intricacies. Reading African American narratives of the Great War reveals that they largely perpetuated the common Eurocentric stereotypical depictions of African soldiers as ruthless, savage warriors. Horace Pippin may have appreciated the Algerian soldiers he encountered, but his observations were primarily based on their brutal combat skills, primitive weapons, and callous disregard for their German opponents. Pippin remembered:

They were bad to their foe, for they would not give a foe a chance. I have seen them go over the top many times and they never have a prisoner, but their knife would have fresh blood on it when he came back. They carried a knife with the blade about 8 inches long, 2 inches at the butt of the blade and would [?] to a point. They would carry this knife in their belt all the time. But when they would go over the top, they put their knife into their mouth and no rifle at all with them. I have seen them do it. But when they come back do not look for a German, for they would not have any with them. That is the way they would handle the Germans (Pippin, ca. 1920-1943, p.30).

In a 1977 documentary about African American veterans of the Great War, Albert Veyrenc, who was with Horace Pippin in the same 369th Infantry Regiment, similarly described Moroccan soldiers:

The Moroccans were good, good, very good fighters and brave fighters except for one thing... they couldn't stand the shellfire and the loud explosion of the big guns. They figured it was something from the heavens but for fighting. They go over the top with their rifles slinging strung over their backs ... with knives in their hands, they were game, and they wouldn't take any prisoners. They wouldn't take nothing. Now, I can say this without fear of contradiction might be wrong in the amount, but something like 200 or 500 Francs, the French government paid the

Moroccans who brought in a prisoner alive. I would have brought in a thousand; I wouldn't get a quarter, but they didn't bring any prisoners. They killed them. They cut their ears off and strung them on a string, tied them around their waist. That was it for them for the Moroccans; they shave without lather. What else can I say about a Moroccan? and there was no racial pressure; they were all colors and all shades. They were black with kinky hair. They were white with blond hair, but they were all Moroccans.⁵

Pippin and Veyrenc's narratives illustrate feelings of racial pride and diasporic affinity for people of African descent by celebrating the bravery, manliness, and capacity of North and West African troops to kill and capture Germans without repercussions. On the other side, they replicate and perpetuate the common stereotypes found in white American and other Eurocentric narratives about African soldiers in the Great War. The perceptions of African soldiers taking no prisoners and performing acts of mutilation served as proof of the continued lack of civilisation among African people and, subsequently, supported African Americans' presumption of an evolutionary superiority toward other black people from around the world. Although military service, with its martial heroism and sacrifice, facilitated a deeper mutual understanding among people of African descent in the diaspora, the rift was hierarchical and shaped by broader civilisationist ideologies that elevated African Americans to a higher position in political and cultural development than other people from Africa.

This sense of civilisationist hierarchy was also greatly influenced by the pervasive racist belief that Africans were incapable of perceiving the intricacies of modern warfare and operating sophisticated weapons, thereby situating them outside the purview of the Western definition of modernity. This common apprehension was behind the shock of African American soldiers at the sight of African soldiers operating giant artillery machines on the Western Front:

Some of the objects that exacted their [African American troops] particular attention were huge guns mounted on trucks and were propelled by large locomotives. They were manned by French and African troops, who took delight in explaining some of the important features to these interested and curious spectators (Mason & Furr, 1920, p. 113).

The scene of African soldiers explaining to European spectators how to operate sophisticated war machines quite astonished African American onlookers, who found great symbolism in it. While their participation in the war was, in one of its aspects, an escape from and a struggle against the American racial order that denied them fundamental civil rights because of their colour, in France, black people from the French empire had the same rights as white French citizens. The African soldiers referred to in the passage were not only demonstrating their ability to operate complex weaponry alongside French soldiers but also teaching the white "interested and curious spectators" about the machines and how to operate them. This was a scene that African Americans were confident would never occur in their segregated society back home.

The African soldiers' capacity to operate complex machines didn't prevent the authors of the passage from situating them in a lower echelon of civilisation in comparison to African American soldiers. After praising them in the above passage, they later criticised them for being savage,

⁵ Albert Veyrenc in *Men of Bronze*, Documentary, researched, produced, and directed by William Miles, 1977.

impatient, and “unsurpassed by any of the Allies” in valour (Mason & Furr, 1920, p. 114). The writers made an appalling comparison between African and African American troops to show that the latter were more organised and civilised. The “furious” African troops attacking the German lines in a “fiendish glee”, careless about the human loss in the ranks:

Never was there a more appalling sight. The furious Africans plunged onward waving their arms and huge knives with fiendish glee, charging German machine-gun nests with absolute disregard of death and injury. Although their ranks were seriously depleted by the unerring machine-gun fire of the Huns, they drove on taking one position after another, leaving nothing but the wounded and dead, and utter destruction in their wake (Mason & Furr, 1920, p. 118).

On the other hand, the African American troops used “scientific” war methods that made their attack more effective and with fewer casualties in their ranks:

The American blacks advanced in a more scientific manner, using the wave formation, which made it appear that there were double the number of men. They used shell-holes and deserted and ruined trenches as a cover from the fierce and well-directed machine-gun fire of the Huns. They poured machine-gun fire and grenades into the Hun ranks, which were fast becoming thinner and more demoralised. Groans of agony, curses, prayers, and all manner of heartrending cries rose up from the lips of the wounded and dying men, but this served as a stimulus (Mason & Furr, 1920, p. 118).

The two passages exemplify the political endeavours of African American activists, who present the exploits and accomplishments of African American troops in the war as evidence of their entitlement to equal citizenship and rights with the rest of the white American population. They also revealed an internalised sense of cultural and evolutionary superiority, a widespread perception of how many African American soldiers saw their African counterparts, and a readiness to emphasise diasporic differences in order to advance full African American integration into the American nation.

4. Conclusion

This paper has explored perceptions of black Americans toward French colonial troops by examining a broad range of black American writings about the Great War, including newspaper reports, narratives, and notebooks of Black American veterans who encountered French colonial troops in France during the war. The paper has also exposed the myth of “a colour-blind France,” which African Americans developed by comparing their treatment by the French during the war to their treatment back in the racialised, segregated society in the United States. The social and racial context back in the United States influenced their reactions to and interactions with other “coloured” troops from West and North Africa, whom the French perceived as less civilised and ranked lower in the hierarchy of civilisation. The encounter between African American soldiers and African colonial soldiers exemplified the historical, cultural, and experiential differences that defined the diaspora of people of African descent in Europe in the early 20th century. Their failure to form a common bond, despite their racial affiliation and the similarly racialised nature of their military service in Europe, resulted in a cultural, linguistic, and intellectual “*décalage*” between African Americans and other African populations in the diaspora that persists to this day.

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Investigating Orientalist Claims of Antisemitism in the Arab World and Morocco in the late 19th Century: Bernard Lewis's Accounts of Jewish Experience as Study Case

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Abstract

Western attitudes to Jews changed drastically after World War Two. Historians of the experience of Jewish life everywhere in the world started rewriting this history from a more sympathetic angle. Perhaps more than any other religious group, the experience of Jews has had a remarkable presence in print, film, media and all forms of narratives transmission. One of the most prominent historians of Jews' experience in the Arab world and in Morocco is the British Orientalist Bernard Lewis. He belongs to, a by now, dubious discipline that became notorious for its ideological biases and discursive slippages that demonize its subjects of study and predispose public opinion in the West to tolerate aggression against the Arabs. Whence our interest in examining Lewis's narratives of Jewish experience at a turning point in the history of both Arabs and Jews: the late 19th century. Given modern Westerners sympathy with Israel and their rewriting of the history of the Jews, and given Orientalist discourse' ideological biases, it is incumbent on us to examine to what extent were Lewis's accounts fair in their narrative.

Keywords: 19th century Arab antisemitism, Jewish experience, Orientalist discourse, Bernard Lewis, Orientalist criticism.

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1. Introduction

Orientalist discourse on the Arabs is one aspect of the relationship between the West and the Middle East. Since the mid-decades of the 20th century Orientalism fell under the scrutiny of scholars from Arab backgrounds who sought to dismantle the huge edifice of “knowledge” about the Orient as it is presented to Westerners. The discursive biases: the ideological demonization of the Arab and the gross generalizations that stamped this discourse were jaw-dropping. These critics’ criticism demonstrates discrepancies between history, life and culture of the Orient and how inaccurate and at times fantastic were Western conceptions of them, which pressed the need for further research in the topic. Our interest in Orientalist discourse’s accounts of Jewish experience stems from two motives: first and given modern Westerners’ sympathy with Israel and the Zionist cause in general, this is bound to be a factor interfering with the imperative objective of fair handling of the subject. Second, given again Orientalist discourse inaccurate depiction of Arab history, life and nature; both factors put the need forth, on our part, to reexamine how Orientalist discourse presented Jewish experience under Muslim rule to Western and world readers in general.

The queries we seek to answer are: to what extent were Orientalist discourse’s accounts of Jewish experience under Muslim rule fair? Did the experience of the Western Jews, which in my opinion was harsher than anywhere else, influence Orientalists? Would their intimacy with this experience in the West blind their scholarly eyes to the gross and minute differences between the two experiences? For after all, Christianity and Islam are monotheistic religions that came after Judaism, and their relationship to Judaism was on the whole strained. Christian antisemitism is by now an old trope that accurately represents this schism that existed from early on in the Christian tradition between Christians and Jews. Islam’s early victory over Jewish attempts to discredit its prophet and the Jews’ loss in battle had a different impact on this relationship. Jewish life under Islam was tolerable. They enjoyed the *dhimmi* status, which allows them freedom of worship, a substantial margin of autonomy in running their affairs and the liberty to seek a livelihood by the skills and the means at their disposal.

In this paper we explore Orientalist discourse’s narrative of Jewish experience under Muslim rule. We have limited our interest to the work of the British Orientalist Bernard Lewis, and temporally to a short period that witnessed a change of attitude on the part of Arabs and Moroccans toward Jews within the late 19th century. We will proceed by giving brief definitions of the key terms: Orientalism and antisemitism. Then we will tackle the main topic of the paper: how objective is Lewis’s narrative of Jewish experience under Muslim rule? We divide this task into two parts. First, we will investigate Lewis’s narrative about the Arab change of attitudes toward Arab Jews in the late 19th century: our interest is to demonstrate that this change of attitude was not the outcome of European influence of the antisemitic tradition, but had its motives elsewhere. Our next task is to investigate, validate or refute Lewis’s accurate or inaccurate description and characterization of Moroccan Jews’ life during the late 19th century. We will explore the narratives from both perspectives; Lewis’s representing the Orientalist narrative, and Moroccan native historians’ perspective representing native narrative.

2. What is Orientalism?

Orientalism is a highly contentious designation today. So much so that one using it without referring, even briefly, to the changes its use has undergone through the ages risks not making sense at all. It is fitting, therefore, to start our paper by rehearsing a brief definition of the term, and a cursory detour suggesting how it fell from grace as a term designating allegedly a respectable discipline of study. Orientalism is the name given to the discipline concerned with the study of the Orient; the geographical area extending from North Africa west to Japan east. Bernard Lewis, himself an Orientalist, argues that Orientalism “has been a branch of scholarship... which dates from the great expansion of scholarship in Western Europe from the time of the Renaissance onward.” (Lewis, 1982) Lewis contends: The area deserving of the name the ‘Orient’ for these scholars early on was the Middle East and their early scholarly interest was centered on Hebrew. Further interest in other Middle Eastern languages and areas developed in the 18th, 19th centuries and after, and drew subsequent generations of Orientalists to the study of the area, its languages, history, arts and law, extending this interest further East to Oriental civilizations like China and India.

By the mid-twentieth century the term ‘Orientalism’ and its derivatives came under scrutiny by Orientalists themselves and by critics of Orientalism. So much so that the label fell into lasting disrepute. The first serious turning point in the use of the word touched on the term ‘Orientalist’. It was in the twenty-ninth International Congress of Orientalists in 1973, convening in Paris, that the congressional majority voted in favor of abandoning the label ‘Orientalist’ and instead opted for more accurate labels denoting area studies specialists and specialties. (Lewis, 1982) The second and most devastating incident, which temporally preceded the Orientalists Congress a decade earlier, was the Egyptian scholar Anouar Abdel-Malek’s revisionist argument that Orientalism has up till that point in history posited its object of study i.e; the Oriental as this different other, assumed in him an unchanging essence (Abdel-Malek, 1963/1981) going back in history and simultaneously unaffected by historical forces grinding their axes around and within him and is, in Spivak’s terms, unable to speak for himself. This thematization covered not only peoples, but also nations and cultures. These metaphysical, learned and ‘characterized typologies’ were unquestionably devised and taken as *a priori* conditions of possibility for further knowledge on the Orient and Orientals.

Abdel-Malek’s argument inspired Edward Said’s eye-opening work *Orientalism* (1978). His ideas were developed, given extensive proofs, and taken to the extremes of polemic by Said. The crux of Said’s work is: that, first, the West’s culture has, from the times of Aeschylus (525/ 524-456 BC) to the present day developed and subsequently instituted a discourse about the Orient and Orientals redolent with fantastic, homogenizing and heritable tropes cum images essentializing and othering the area and its people (Said, 1978). The Orient became a land of exotic landscapes and climes, fantastic creatures, sensual women; absolute despots wearing robes, turbans and daggers; deranged, sanguinary fanatics, supine servitude, jaw-dropping traditions and conduct... etc, and all are comportmental essences of the Orient and Orientals. Millennia of time resulted only in superficial variations on the same tropes and images in this discourse and some institutional

changes that fixed further this denigrating image of Europe's most intimate and geographically closest other. Second, on the domestic front in the West this discourse has had the effect of predisposing public opinion to accept these inaccurate, inconsiderate and indiscriminate conceptions of the Orient and Orientals as facts, whence the loosening of moral standards, judgments and attitudes when Western aggression, colonial exploitation and oppression sat eyes on the Orient, its territories and its peoples. For Orientalism is, in Said's terms, a discourse, a form of knowledge, that has from early on, been in the service of power. Apart from the fact that some Orientalists filled the rank and file of the colonial armies as experts, advisors and governors, even those at home or in the colonies, who seemingly had no direct interest in the colonial adventure, like travel writers, artists, novelists, poets and so on, compiled cultural material that rationalized and justified colonial plunder, oppression and even genocide.

Said's work has stirred unabating controversies and opened undreamed-of vistas of research for several academic disciplines. His central argument has so far stood the test of time. What came under heavy critical shelling from Orientalists and conservative intellectuals alike, mainly in the West, were his 'disrespect' of rather minor academic conventions like: The fact that he was a comparative literature specialist dealing with history (Habib, 2005, pp.40-46), his insufficient coverage of Orientalist scholarship in languages like German, Portuguese, Spanish and Russian; his provocative excessive polemic (Lewis, 1982), his decontextualized misuse of quotes, and his gross and inconsiderate generalizations about, and wholesale condemnation of, Orientalist scholarship that differed in no way from those of the very discourse he was criticizing.⁶

Said's brilliance lies in the use to which he put Michel Foucault's theory of discourse. Discourse is a way of organizing knowledge about a subject, using specific language and having the support, conservation and propagation of real institutions. By itself a discourse is only as important as it affects behaviors, simultaneously setting limits to others, fix habits and mold humans in such a manner that they take the limits of discourse for natural limits. Some Orientalists, having inherited a discourse about the Orient, rarely paused, rethought or reassessed the biased claims this discourse makes about Orientals. They have accepted them for facts, whence their political passivity towards, even enthusiastic endorsement of, their domestic civil, judicial and security institutes' discrimination against, and foreign policy institutes' aggression toward, Orientals. Whence our interest in examining how Orientalist discourse covered the Jewish experience in the Arab world and Morocco.

3. What is antisemitism?

Antisemitism has been overused as a term in world literature and media since the late 19th century. The word's definition boils down to 'hatred of Jews' (Kassel, M. 2021, 7 December). Orchestrated, "violent popular hatred of Jews" and assaults on Jewish people, property and places of worship in every form is considered antisemitic (U.S. Department of State, Office of the Special

⁶ This is the Lebanese Marxist philosopher Mahdi Amel's critique of Edward Said's *Orientalism*. See his work. 3rd Ed. *Hali l'akl lilgharb Wa lqalb li Cha'rq*. Al Farabi Publishing House: Beirut. 2006.

Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism [OSEMCA], 2016). Some enthusiastic Zionists expand the scope of antisemitic acts to include all kinds of criticism condemning Israel's use of force against the Palestinian people, criticism of Israeli state policy and the conduct of Israeli military personnel in the ever-expanding illegal settlements in Palestinian lands. Anti-Semitism has deep roots in Western societies. But it was reinvigorated as late as the last two decades of the 19th century, particularly in Russia, Eastern Europe, Germany and France. This was the time when national sentiments were on the rise and forms of racism and others' hatred were pervasive. Racist tropes included racial and social groups within European societies, and Western colonial nations *vis-à-vis* pretty much the rest of the world without.

What stands out in Western antisemitism is the fact that it had an overwhelming sway over German and French intelligentsia at the time and was propagated through print, caricature, public speeches and public behavior (Avineri, 2008). It was deliberate and thought-through in terms of the amount of "respectable" names addressing the subject in books, pamphlets and journalistic writings that were devoted to the topic. So much so that it soon caught up with public anti-Jewish sentiments, had fervent endorsement as an idea and as practice among student fraternities, diverse civil organizations and political parties on both the left and the right. What Hannah Arendt calls "race thinking" (Arendt, 1951) is but the act of compiling, mythologizing, elaborating, scientizing – a trend of the age- and propagating sentiments of hate and hostility of the lowest common denominator against others as valid knowledge. The general appeal of race thinking proved enormous, as racist slurs and daily persecution of Jews multiplied in the streets and public places of Vienna and wherever Jews could be found in Areas in Europe touched by antisemitic sentiments.

Arendt and the Israeli historian Shlomo Avineri's conceptions of antisemitism are similar. They hold that there are forms of hatred directed against a racial group – in this case the Jews – by individuals with anomalous predispositions to those prevalent in a society – that are part of common living in every human social group. These are rather pathetic and marginal convictions and behaviors that are usually overlooked by the rest of the sane society in question. They are isolated phenomena. Avineri seems to distinguish the two trends, for example, when he argues that young Theodor Herzl, the father of political Zionism, was aware that the German racist philosopher Eugen Dühring's propaganda book about the Jews (1881) and a subsequent ceremony of a student fraternity club's applause to an antisemitic speech in Vienna were not "an *isolated phenomenon*, but, rather, a manifestation of a growing political anti-Semitic trend in German-speaking lands and elsewhere." (Arendt, 1951) Then there are collective, organized, thought-through campaigns like the one against Jews culminating in the Holocaust that merit the designation 'antisemitic.' Arendt seems to suggest the same thing when she alternatively uses the term "antisemitism" and the expression "the violent popular hatred of Jews" as synonyms.

What distinguishes the serious menace of antisemitism from individual marginal and passing whims is the fact that it is institutionalized. Take the Ku-Klux-Klan in the US for example: Groups of whites that designed members' outfits, held marches, had a hierarchy and their members took great pains in attending rites and rituals of massacres of black people, with the necessary

paraphernalia and executed their crimes with method. Nothing was left to chance; the outfits, the Bible, the Cross on fire, and the instruments of torture and murder. This is what I mean when I distinguish here, following Arendt and Avineri's trend, between isolated individual actions of racial hatred, and those institutionalized, organized and orchestrated campaigns of hatred. Irregular convictions and behaviors exist in every society. It is a statement of fact to say that uncommon convictions of racism, religious fanaticism, bigoted nationalist sentiments...etc are bound to exist.

What's more, every society has, invents and needs enemies in a sense (Eco, 2011). It happens that some societies have enemies without; others invent and need enemies within. Whether these are: the Jews, the immigrants, the blacks, the physically-disabled, the homosexuals, the Muslims...etc, societies invent and need enemies. I am not defending racist thought or behavior; I am describing a basic human need and preoccupation. Having a unanimous consensus on the noble need for hatred to disappear is – in a sense—anti-human. The Italian philosopher Umberto Eco expresses this rather urgent human “need” well in an essay entitled “Inventing the Enemy.” He argues that human societies badly *need* enemies to reinforce the group's identity, achieve internal unity and fortify themselves against foreign threat. My contention, therefore, is that outbursts of violence against Jews in Morocco prior to 1948 are indeed isolated, socially unacknowledged and mob phenomena. They are not, in my opinion, antisemitic acts in the sense of Western-style antisemitism; an organized, thought-through body of thought and behavior that is constant. There were exceptions to this in Morocco's long history, but on the whole, antisemitism has rarely been endorsed by sane people, and waves of violence that touched Jewish life were isolated phenomena.

Our next task in this paper is to examine and investigate Orientalist discourse covering the history of Jews in the Arab world and Morocco, and to what extent it has been biased or unbiased in this coverage. The method is clear: we will relate the Orientalist narratives and examine their objective validity by comparing them with native narratives about the issues at the designated time.

4.Examining Bernard Lewis's historical accounts of Arab Jews life under Muslim rule

Bernard Lewis (1916- 2018) was a well known British- American Oriental studies specialist and a public intellectual. He was a prolific author whose interest covered millennia in Arab history, and a geographical area of Islam's spread across Asia eastward, Africa west and southward, Northern Asia and Eastern Europe. He wrote several books and essays about the Jews of Islam. His many works on the subject, as I see them, display a disturbing and ill-justified ambivalence. On the one hand, he argues, throughout his many works on the status of Jews and other religious minorities in Muslim lands, that their treatment under Muslim rule was favorable⁷ to what their Western co-religionists had to deal with for example. On the other hand, he repeatedly argues that modern Muslims have replaced the Nazis and communist Russia in their hatred of Israel and the West. His

⁷ See Lewis Bernard (1990). In this article (“The roots of Muslim rage”) Lewis argues that Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire were given extensive rights that even modern European states do not provide for their minorities. That the Jews had their courts and schools that even though alcohol was forbidden in the empire, the Jews had the right to consume it in their homes and rites, that legal arbitration was often shared between Muslim and Jewish courts in cases wherein a Muslim and a Jew had a legal dispute.

description is an exaggeration to say the least, but what disturbs more in his scholarship is the interpretation he provides for this change of behavior.

Lewis's basic maxim about Muslim- Jewish relations within Muslim territories is this: up to the last two decades of the 19th century Jews' life under Muslim rule was generally tolerable; they enjoyed the right to worship, to conduct trade and to run their affairs on their own. The changes in the mood of Muslims towards Jews began in the late 19th century *under Western antisemitic influence*. [emphasis is mine]. Under Ottoman rule, for example, Jews enjoyed relative comfort, peace and prosperity unknown to them elsewhere in the West before World War Two (Lewis, 2007). The exceptions to this Lewis singles out are Morocco and Iran, wherein Jews, he claims, were occasionally subject to waves of violence, restriction of movement, confinement to specific quarters in cities and the obligation to dress in particular garbs with special colors denoting their religious identity.

But all of these rather favorable living conditions, which the Jews enjoyed under Muslim rule came to an end during the last two decades of the 19th century, and antisemitism flourished from then on. Lewis attributes Muslim hostility to the Jews to the impact of colonial Europe (Lewis, 1986). In characterizing what type of influence he is talking about Lewis uses terms he imports from biology like: "infect" and "stages of infection". For him, Arabs, the blind herd, were so baffled by Europeans that they 'imported' –Lewis's word – this trend of hatred just for this purpose: to placate the desire to look like Europeans. The Arabs even learned how to hate from Europeans, Lewis's words again: the Muslims learned from Europe "new ideologies of hatred and new techniques of repression" through priests, missionaries and commercial emissaries. 'How likely would a 19th century Muslim be influenced by a European missionary protected by a Christian colonial army occupying his land?' seems like a question that Lewis never asks and therefore does not bother to answer. In addressing the exact mechanism of this influence Lewis argues that it was through nationalism; a newly imported ideology to the Arab world from Europe, and that moreover Arabs learned to hate the imperial powers and the Jews, his words:

"The subsequent growth of Arab anti-Semitism to its present tidal proportions is due to many causes – to the imperialist challenge and national response, to the mingling of imported chauvinism and home-grown fanaticism, to the rise, in a time of violent and painful change, of a new intolerance that exacerbated all hatreds and angered all minorities." (Lewis, 1984).

Nowhere in Lewis's quote do we find any mention of, what I believe, are a lot more serious reasons behind this change of attitude on the part of Arabs toward Jews.

This period in Western history –the late 19th century – coincides with the rise of antisemitism (Eco, 2011), particularly in Germany and France; a historical fact which, in Lewis's consideration, led Muslims; belonging to a defeated and backward civilization, to the emulation of their former Christian foes, turned idols now (Eco, 2011). To my mind, Lewis's explanation of the sudden rise of antisemitism in Arab lands in the last two decades of the 19th century as the result of young Arabs' fascination with, and emulation of, Western antisemitism is hilariously unworldly. He

glosses over gross historical facts that explain better the rise of Arab hostility to the local Jews. How come news of the spread of antisemitism in the West reached the Arabs, who blindly sought to emulate their European “superiors”, but not the news of Zionist activities planning to establish a state for Jews in Palestine? Why wouldn’t the gradual rise and spread of Arab antisemitism be seen as a reaction against Zionist plans, but, explained instead, as an idiotic replication of Christians’ behavior toward the Jews in Europe? Why wouldn’t Arabs living in Palestine at the time develop a form of awareness of the plans behind the increasing Jewish immigration to their land?

Let us examine this point in history from both perspectives: I mean developments in the West and the possibility of their influence on Muslim societies, despite the possible lag the slower means of communication at the time could cause. On the one hand, the last two decades of the 19th century are a point in history in which Herzl and his Zionist colleagues from all over Europe were concocting the Zionist scheme to overtake Palestine as home for Jews of the world (Avineri, 2008). Theodor Herzl (1860- 1904) began his political career as the father of Zionism in 1885. Though it is known that he kept his early activities for the Zionist cause secret, later public activities like the Zionist Congresses were made public by media coverage. Herzl’s brilliant plans for the Jewish state were published in book form in 1896. Moreover, as a journalist Herzl wrote for papers in both France and Germany. What’s more, the early wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine started in the 1880s. These new arrivals, though able early on to disguise their land purchases, with no avowed pretense or intent of occupying the land and expanding from the few colonies already in existence, had conflicts with local Arabs over grazing lands and water supplies dating as early as the last decades of the 19th century (Ben-Bassat, 2009, pp. 42-63). The news of their quarrels with local Arabs spread throughout the villages culminating in the bloody struggles of the early 20th century.

On the other hand, considering that Arab students’ delegations and Arab embassies were present in Europe long before this date, it is clear that news of the Zionist plans, or at least, rumors about the subject had reached Arab lands through them. Seen in this light the new hostility toward Jews in Arab lands can be explained in a more convincing way than the explanation suggested by Lewis. It was a reaction against the encroaching Zionist plans to settle-colonize Palestine. Lewis ignores all these worldly factors, with real influence, in the general mood of the Arabs toward Jews at the designated time. This gross overlooking of parallel historical facts; this unsettling amnesia, dates back in Zionist literature on the subject to Herzl’s early writing and thoughts on the question of: “what was to be done about the indigenous inhabitants?”, he rarely addressed the question, and when he did, it was always with his liberal attitude of political tolerance the Jews should extend to the Arabs. For example, upon meeting the Chancellor of Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany in Jerusalem in 1898 Herzl was asked: “how much territory were the Zionists asking for? Up to Beirut or perhaps beyond?” Herzl’s response was: ‘we will ask for what we need – the more immigrants, the more land.’” (Avineri, 2008). Not a word passed between Herzl and the Chancellor about the Arabs of Palestine, their destiny, their property, the very territory they plough and harvest and where they have buried their ancestors for millennia...!

Lewis's discussion of Islam's theological issues is usually rich and convincing. Not the same thing, however, applies to how these theological rules of conduct influence, or mostly, in Lewis's case, should influence daily Muslim conduct. He never hesitates to chastise Muslims for not being obedient enough to their theological prescriptions. His interpretation of why and how Muslims came under Western influence and how uncritical they were in imitating their Western "idols" is weird and unconvincing to say the least. He often invokes passing sentiments on the parts of Muslims like envy of the US's style of life, jealousy of the West's prosperity compared with their relative decay, and the irrational, unjustifiable and fanatic hatred of Jews as rational explanations for Arab hostility to Israel, the US and the West in general. Their terror and fanaticism are all symptoms of these sentiments.

If Lewis asked, and he would be justified in his question: why would Syrian Muslims react with acts of hatred against local Jews at this time, while Zionist plans were meant for Palestine? For after all, the issue of land occupation by Zionists concerns the Palestinians and not the Syrians, or Moroccans for that matter. The answer to this query lies in the history of Islam, Islamic theology and Arabs as a race. For Muslims, from the early revelations of Quranic verses the *Umma*, the community of believers in Islam, is a fundamental concept that has operated as a glue linking Muslims together. Through the *Umma* Muslims share a feeling of togetherness in this life, and a rewarding fate in the hereafter. They are bound by the bonds of faith in monotheism, veneration of *Allah's* prophet, and unquestioning obedience of *Allah's* will as it is revealed to his prophet in words known as the *Qur'an*. This bond of *brotherhood*, which is so strong among Muslims that the prophet used an organic parable to describe it in a well-known *Hadith*, is informing. The *Hadith* says: "The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever." (Al-Bukhārī, n.d., ḥadīth 6011). Moreover, not only do Muslims share this bond alone, But Muslim Arabs also share a further form of belonging, which is that of race. The *Umma* is a term often used interchangeably with both adjectives: Arab and Islamic. We have here two of the strongest known forms of bonds known to, and studied by, anthropologists: bonds of belonging to one faith and bonds of belonging to one race. Post-colonial developments in the Arab Muslim world added national inconveniences in the face of these bonds, but it remains a little weaker, and a lot newer than the former two bonds.

Considered in this way, hostility against Jews everywhere in the Arab Muslim world is seen as an-eye-for-an-eye reaction against Zionism. What's more, I assume that the historical conditions of the time being that most of the Arab Muslims had been under foreign colonization enforced by Christian Europe, Islam's earliest and most bitter foe, adds further twist to the topic. Due to these circumstances sentiments of solidarity with Palestine against an imminent, planned foreign occupation by Jews, with the approval and aid of the already existent Christian British colonization are bound to be high. And popular reactions against cases of similar import are bound to be in the form of popular outbursts of violence. I must caution the reader here, I am not justifying the act, I am instead arguing that unlike antisemitic sentiments and acts in Europe at the time, which were pure hatred; hatred for hatred's sake, Muslim acts of hostility against Jews can, in comparison be,

not approved of for sure, but need to be understood as popular reactions, and popular reactions are rarely sane.

5.Examining Lewis’s account of Jewish experience in Morocco

Lewis’ generalizations do not stop here. He goes on to address, briefly, the living conditions of Jews under particular regimes in the Arab world; among those we find in his works scattered references to Moroccan Jews. He argues that with few exceptions in the Muslim world Jews were allowed to roam Muslim dominions and practice trade or crafts as befit their inclination and learning. Unlike elsewhere in Islamic lands Moroccan Jews were *confined to ghettos in residence and occupation*, Lewis’s words: “unlike the Jews of Europe, [the Jews of Islam] ... were – with certain exceptions, for example in Iran and Morocco – confined in neither territorial or occupational ghettos, but were fairly free in their choice of residence and profession. They enjoyed freedom of worship, and some autonomy in their communal affairs.” (Lewis, 1984). Lewis does not discriminate between the more oppressive confinement of the Jews of Europe to ghettos, which were meant to isolate them for all their alleged “innate evil, their sickening rituals of blood libel, their malevolent scheming to conquer the world...etc, and Jewish quarters in Moroccan cities, which were meant to protect them.

Lewis goes on. In his work *The Jews of Islam* he enumerates aspects of what he considers Jews’ misery under Moroccan rulers, which became worse from the 19th century onward: the obligation to wear a specific garb with a definitive color that demonstrates their religious belonging, to walk barefoot, or wear straw sandals when stepping out of their designated quarters, their confinement to specific quarters called *mellahs*, the taxes (heavier than usual at times) enforced upon them by the *dhimmi* status (and which is interpreted by Lewis not as a reward for Muslim protection, but as “a symbolic expression of subordination;”) the permission, sometimes requirement of *dhimmi* women to walk out barefaced (which Lewis interprets as a way of equaling Jew (and Christian) females with female slaves, who were permitted or required to do the same. Moreover, in Lewis’s views, this demonstrates the Muslim discrimination against these women in terms of social decency and propriety associated with the veil Muslim women were required to wear outdoors.

Let us address each of Lewis’s claims alone. First, Lewis does not hesitate to liken the Jewish quarters in Moroccan cities known as *mellahs* to European ghettos. He even uses the word ghetto to talk about *mellahs*, which is a grave historical inaccuracy. While ghettos in Europe were instituted to isolate an unwanted social group i.e. the Jews, not the same rules can be said about Jewish quarters in Moroccan cities. In a brilliant essay, the American historian Emily Gottreich explores the origins and social significance of the *mellah* of Marrakesh. Built in the mid-16th century, the *mellah* was initiated with intentions far nobler than those behind the institution of the ghettos in Europe. Gottreich stresses this point when she argues: “However striking such parallels [parallel trajectories between the *mellah* and the ghetto] may be, care must nonetheless be taken not to overstate their significance. For just as Rome is not Marrakesh, the *mellah* is not a ghetto.” (Gottreich, 2003, pp.287-305). Listing the differences, Gottreich argues that the *mellah* of

Marrakesh, for example, was built near the royal palace in the city due to: 1) the fact that the Sa'di dynasty claimed a dubious *Sherifian* descent; a central requirement in the legitimization of rule in Morocco since the Idrissids, which 'proves' the ruling dynasty's descent from the offspring of the prophet of Islam. The Sa'di *Sherifian* claims were refuted by the *Ulema*; religious scholars of Fes. This refutation of Sa'di legitimacy posed a serious threat for their dominion over Fes; already a major imperial city, and the North in general. This pushed the Sa'dis to initiate a policy of *bunyan*; erecting monuments to defend their legitimacy against speculators, rebuilding the city of Marrakesh, attempting in the process to create a newer and better Fes; the rival imperial city. So the declaration on the part of the Sa'di Sultan Abdallah al-Ghalib to initiate the building of a *mellah* for the Jews of Marrakesh was part of a general plan to renew and polish the city.

2) The building of the Marrakech *mellah* was an attempt on the part of al-Ghalib to propagate a good name for the dynasty against suspicions mentioned earlier. 3) *Mellahs* in Moroccan cities are often found next to the royal palaces. This explains why they were created in the first place, which is: a commitment on the part of the Sultans to the *dhimmi* status, which dictates protecting religious minorities within Muslim dominions. Another reason is the fact that the Jews of Morocco are often remembered today as an industrious people, whose good skills in crafts, trade and other feats were often needed by the royal palace, and so locating them nearby served this purpose. 4) Becoming the hub of monument-erecting activities Marrakesh attracted artisans, craftsmen and builders from everywhere in the country and even from abroad. Added to this, the arrival of expelled Jews from *Al-Andalus* required the expansion of Jewish quarters to accommodate the new arrivals.

Moreover, it is a grave mistake to ignore the differences between social life in the *mellah* and life in the ghetto. In the former, Gottreich argues, life was porous. Muslims crossed the quarter daily pursuing their daily interests and the *mellah* served Christian merchants from Europe as a place of abode and a center for conducting their trade. So the Jewish quarter in Marrakech for example harbored no intent on the part of its builders to isolate the Jews and seclude them in particular quarters that defied their attempts to have normal relations with the rest of the population, their life and work environment. On a popular level, Muslim visitors of Muslim saints shrines often prayed in neighboring shrines of Jewish saints (Hmammouchi, 2022, p. 74-75).

Another claim made by Lewis, which we have addressed above, is the change in Muslim attitude toward Jews in the 19th century, which he claims was due to the influence of Christian Europe, and a reaction against Jewish embrace of modernization. The Moroccan comparative religions specialist Ahmad Chehlan (1944) for example provides historical evidence that refutes Lewis's claims. He says that Jews lived a normal life in Morocco, conducted their trade, were appointed to high positions in governments, and befriended the ruling Sultans. Chehlan argues that during the mid-decades of the 19th century the Jews of Essaouira; a major port city on the Atlantic coast of the country at that time, were the majority traders: 14 out of 19 traders were Jews. By the 1880s there were 31 Jewish traders out of 51. More than that, Chehlan cites royal decrees and letters exchanged between the Sultans and the wealthy Jewish merchants in Essaouira, which demonstrates the intimate terms these merchants were on with the Sultan (Chehlan, 2009).

Another claim made by Lewis is that among the forms of humiliation the Jews of Morocco had to undergo was the fact that they were forced to walk barefoot. It is true that Jews were forced to abide by certain regulations like this one. But it is inaccurate that they had to do so everywhere. There were places before which Jews were required to show humility like mosques and sanctuaries; forms of this humility included walking barefoot until they pass the places in question. Reciprocal veneration of Jewish sacred sanctuaries, in fact, voluntarily applied to Moroccan Muslims as well. Several Jewish shrines and synagogues in Morocco were even visited by Muslims in search of worldly or otherworldly things.

It is a fact that Moroccan Jews were occasionally subject to sporadic outbursts of violence, on yet rarer occasions forced to convert to Islam and had at times to abide by codes of dress that distinguished them from the general population, but on the whole their life was normal. It was under special circumstances like the occasional droughts and famines, plagues and foreign threat that Jewish life fell under duress. Like the rest of the population they were forced to secure their livelihood in times of famines under unpleasant circumstances; some were forced to convert to Christianity to receive aid from European missionaries. Forced conversion under Muslim threat of death was, however, a rare event in the history of the country. On the contrary most Jewish quarters had the political figure of *Sheikh al-Yahud* who arbitrated quarrels and ran the affairs of his co-religionists with no qualms or interference from Muslim authorities. They had a vibrant culture with folklore activities ranging from hymns and poetry, to music and songs and a highly sophisticated philosophical and literary culture (Zafrani, 1983).

That Moroccan Jews were treated with a mix of mild tolerance and silent contempt is possibly true. Popular narratives about the relationships between Muslims and Jews in Morocco still relate anecdotes on the piety and humility a Jew was required to show in public places, but that there was a systematic antisemitic thought tradition and acts is also an inflammatory unneeded exaggeration; just like the idea that the Arabs replaced the Nazis and the communists in their “unjustified” hatred of the US, Israel and the West in general (Lewis, 1990, pp.47-60). Public attitudes and opinions of this kind are often moved to action and articulation by acts of aggression undertaken by the US, Israel or both against Arabs or Muslims for that matter. That there is an obsessive form of hatred of both, for hatred’s sake, or for other reasons Orientalists devise like jealousy, envy or some such is a highly ungrounded, idiosyncratic interpretation of more than a millennium and half of complex relationships between Islam and the West.

6. Conclusion

The relationship between Muslims and their northern Christian neighbors is a long and complex one. Prior to Islam, the relationship between the classic Occident and Orient was strained. From the conflicts of the Persians on one side and Spartans and Athenians on the other this relationship knew, and still, ebbs and tides of invasions and counter invasions that left the two shores of the Mediterranean in almost perpetual enmity. Developments like the arrival of monotheistic religions, primarily Christianity and Islam exacerbated the already existing animosity. The historical acts of

aggression and counter aggression fed and were fed in turn by, a by now, an elephantine edifice of cultural stereotyping entertained by the peoples of the two continents: Images of enlightened, democratic Spartans, Athenians and Romans on the one side, and despotic Orientals on the other; noble warriors on the eastern shores and degenerate savage Occidentals on the northern one; “saved” communities of faith east and south of the Mediterranean and hell-destined alterers of the Book north; democratic republics of the West and tyrants of the modern Middle East, are overarching generalized images that each people entertain on the other.

The latest development in this relationship is the effort made by critics of Orientalism to dismantle this grand edifice of exaggerated knowledge of the other. Our task in this paper was to trace one line of this effort. I have tried throughout to examine Orientalist claims made by the historian Bernard Lewis about the experience of Arab and Moroccan Jews throughout their long history sharing life with Muslims, with a particular focus on the 19th century; a turning point in the history of this relationship. The change started with the rise of violent actions directed against Arab Jews by their Christian and Muslim compatriots during the last decades of the 19th century. Lewis argues that most of Jewish life under Muslim rule was on the whole tolerable until this point in history. The cause for this change, contends Lewis, came under the influence of the antisemitic tradition from the West. I think Lewis’s interpretation of this change is unworldly. As I argue in this paper, the causes of the change are deeper and far reaching. They were reactions against the Zionist plans to establish a Jewish state in Palestine and the increasing Jewish immigration to the holy land.

Other claims Lewis makes about the experience of Moroccan Jews this time are on the whole inaccurate. Lewis often likens and compares Jews experience in Morocco to their co-religionists’ experience in Europe which was, in my opinion, harsher and far crueler. The Jews’ isolation in *mellahs*, the obligation that they walk barefoot in public, the obligation to wear specific garbs with specific colors...etc are claims, some of which are gross generalizations, and others as I have proven are inaccurate descriptions of this experience that veer towards demonizing Muslim and Moroccan dispositions. In fact, Lewis is not the first Orientalist to commit himself as an allegedly honest historian of Islam to such generalizations. He has a history behind him of intellectuals, artists, travel writers, comparative politics specialists...,the list goes on, of a whole culture with a long history of misrepresentations that often slip into demonization. His final assessment in several essays on the relationship between the West and Islam leads him to compare Muslims to Nazis and communists for their unabating and irrational hatred of the West and Israel. A step, in my opinion, as dishonest and irrational as the claim made there.

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Teaching British Civilisation to EFL Learners in the AI Era

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Abstract

The emergence of artificial intelligence is reshaping the teaching of British Civilisation to EFL learners, offering both new opportunities and significant challenges. AI-powered tools enable access to authentic multimodal materials—historical documents, cultural artefacts, political data, and media representations—while providing personalised scaffolding that supports comprehension and engagement. Intelligent tutoring systems, chatbots, and automated summaries can help students navigate complex socio-historical content and develop intercultural awareness. However, the increasing reliance on AI raises pedagogical concerns, including the risks of factual inaccuracies, cultural oversimplification, algorithmic bias, and diminished critical inquiry. Educators must balance AI's efficiency with the humanities-driven goals of interpretation, contextual analysis, and reflective thinking. Effective teaching of British Civilisation in the AI era requires cultivating students' AI literacy, fostering critical engagement with sources, and preserving the human dimension of cultural learning. This integrated approach ensures that technology enhances rather than replaces the deep cultural understanding essential to civilisation studies.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, AI Literacy, British Civilisation, Cultural Studies, Critical Thinking, Digital Pedagogy, EFL Learning, Intercultural Competence.*

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1. Introduction

The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into educational systems is transforming how knowledge is produced, accessed, and evaluated. In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, AI-driven tools—ranging from adaptive learning platforms to generative AI models such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude—are increasingly used to support grammar instruction, vocabulary building, and writing skills (Godwin –Jones, 2023; Holmes et al., 2019). However, AI is now extending beyond linguistic competence to reshape content-based learning, including subjects such as British Civilisation. Traditionally, British Civilisation courses aim to develop learners’ understanding of the United Kingdom’s historical evolution, political institutions, cultural identities, social transformations, and contemporary debates (O’Driscoll, 2009, McDowall, 2017). These courses rely heavily on textual interpretation, critical thinking, and reflective discussion—skills that are profoundly influenced by the presence of intelligent technologies.

In the AI era, learners have unprecedented access to machine-generated summaries, virtual simulations of historical sites, data-driven analyses of British society, and personalized explanations of complex political or social phenomena. AI can create timelines of the Industrial Revolution, simplify the British constitutional system, or generate multiple perspectives on issues such as multiculturalism or Brexit. Such tools offer significant opportunities: they facilitate access to cultural knowledge, personalise learning pathways, and enhance motivation through multimodal content (Hockly, 2014; Chapelle, 2003). For students who may never visit the UK, AI powered virtual tours, digital museum archives, and interactive maps can create new forms of cultural immersion.

However, the integration of AI into civilisation teaching also has introduced pedagogical and ethical challenges. Generative AI systems frequently produce inaccurate, biased, or overly simplified accounts of British history and society due to limitations in their training data (Bender et al., 2021; Crawford, 2021). The risk of cultural stereotyping, factual distortion, and homogenisation of narratives is particularly acute in civilization courses, where nuance, context, and multiple perspectives are essential. Moreover, students may become overly dependent on AI-generated content, weakening their analytical skills and reducing engagement with primary and academic integrity, authenticity, and responsible use in higher education (QAA, 2023). Teachers also face new expectations: they must not only master AI tools but also guide learners in developing AI literacy, critical digital skills, and ethical awareness (Long & Magerko, 2020; Schiff, 2022).

This changing landscape places British Civilisation teaching a crossroads. On the one hand, AI offers powerful opportunities to enrich cultural learning; on the other hand, it challenges fundamental pedagogical principles concerning interpretation, authenticity, and critical inquiry. As Civilisation courses are deeply rooted in human interpretation of cultural phenomena, it becomes crucial to understand how AI can be integrated without undermining the intellectual and intercultural aims of the discipline.

Given the pedagogical, epistemological, and ethical implications of AI, the central question guiding this study is: How can AI be effectively integrated into the teaching of British Civilisation for EFL learners that enhance learning without compromising cultural accuracy, critical thinking, academic integrity, or the human-centered nature of intercultural education?

2. Literature Review

This section situates the study within the broader theoretical and conceptual frameworks that inform the use of Artificial Intelligence in education and language learning. It examines key perspectives on AI-enhanced pedagogy with particular attention to its implications for EFL instruction and content-based courses such as British Civilisation. By reviewing foundational theories of technology-mediated learning, intercultural competence, and critical digital pedagogy, this section establishes the conceptual basis for analyzing both the opportunities and the challenges posed by AI integration. The discussion provides a framework for understanding how AI tools can support learning while also shaping knowledge construction, learner agency, and cultural representation.

2-1 The Changing Ecology of Education and AI's Structural Role

Contemporary reviews and monographs argue that all AI has moved from experimental pilot tools to a structural educational force that affects curriculum design, assessment, and institutional practices (Holmes et al, 2019; Zawacki-Richter et al, 2019). Research highlights the capacity of adaptive tutoring systems and learning analytics to personalise learning pathways but also stresses uneven pedagogical adoption and unclear impacts on teacher agency (Holmes et al., 2019; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). Scholars recommend careful alignment of AI affordances with clear pedagogical aims, rather than technology-driven adoption (Holmes et al., 2019; Luckin et al., 2016).

2.2 AI in language learning: potential and limits

Applied linguistics literature documents show that AI can foster EFL learning-supporting practice, feedback, and scaffolding for writing and speaking (Godwin-Jones, 2023; Kessler, 2018). Generative models enable simulated interlocutors, tailored explanations, and immediate corrective feedback, which can increase practice opportunities beyond the classroom (Chapelle, 2003; Hubbard & Levy, 2006). However empirical findings emphasise that learning gains depend heavily on task design, teacher mediation, and learners' prompting skills; technology alone is insufficient (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

2-3 Ethics, Reliability, and Epistemic Risk

A large critical literature highlights the limits of Large Language Models LLMs –particularly issues of hallucination, biases in training data, and the production of plausible but inaccurate text (Bender et al., 2021). Critics stress environmental, governance, and fairness concerns, urging transparent, accountable, and human-centered deployment of generative AI in education (Crawford, 2021; UNESCO, 2023; European Commission, 2021). For content-based cultural teaching, these risks are especially consequential because civilization knowledge is contested and requires contextual nuance.

2-4 Intercultural Competence and Civilisation Pedagogy

Byram's intercultural communicative competence framework (1997) remains central: civilization teaching should cultivate the ability to interpret, relate, and critically evaluate cultural differences (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2009). Kramsch (1993, 2013) advocates dialogic, context-rich approaches emphasizing learners' interpretive agency. These perspectives imply that technological mediation must preserve dialogical practice, plural perspectives, and critical reflexivity-areas where unmediated AI outputs may fall short.

2-5 British Civilisation: Plural Narratives and Contested Knowledge

Studies in British cultural studies and political emphasise plurality and contestation in narratives about British identity, class, empire, and constitutional politics (Colls & Dodd, 1986; Gamble, 2014; Pilkington, 2011). Contemporary phenomena- Brexit, devolution, immigration debates-continue to reconfigure cultural meanings, complicating reliance on single-source or machine-curated narratives (Evans & Menon, 2017). Thus AI's curation of culture must be examined for whose voices are amplified and what interpretive frames are privileged.

2-6 Synthesis and Gaps

In Sum, the literature is conditionally optimistic: AI offers multimodal resources and personalised pathways that can enrich civilisation teaching, but it also presents unique epistemic risks. Crucially, gaps remain: empirical studies have focused mostly on language skills rather than content courses that require interpretive judgment; there is limited research on AI's effects in intercultural competence; and institutional guidance often lacks classroom-level models for integrating AI while preserving critical pedagogy (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2023). These lacunae motivate the pedagogical framework proposed below.

3. Pedagogical Framework for AI-Enhanced Civilisation Teaching: Principles and Propositions

To reconcile AI's affordances with the goals of civilisation teaching, I propose a human-centered pedagogical framework based on six principles:

- 1- **AI as complementary, Not Authoritative.** AI should be used to scaffold inquiry, not to replace interpretive judgment. Teachers present AI outputs as provisional, to be verified and discussed (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 2013).
- 2- **Critical AI Literacy.** Students must learn to interrogate AI-generated content-checking for bias, factual accuracy, and source provenance-and to understand basic model limitations (Long & Margeko, 2020; OECD, 2021).
- 3- **Dialogical and Collaborative Learning.** Group projects and debates should integrate AI as a voice among many, encouraging negotiation of meaning and reflexive discussion (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993).
- 4- **Ethical and Institutional Safeguards.** Clear guide lines on transparency (disclosing AI use), citation norms, and assessment integrity must be established (QAA, 2023; UNESCO, 2023).
- 5- **Teacher Professional Development.** Continuous training in AI literacy, digital pedagogy, and intercultural facilitation is essential (Hubbard & Levy, 2006; Schiff, 2022).

4. Practical Classroom Applications

This section presents a set of detailed, pedagogically grounded classroom applications that integrate AI into the teaching of British Civilisation for EFL learners. Each activity is designed to balance AI affordances with critical, source-based, and dialogical learning processes essential for civilisation courses. The activities are organized into five clusters, each with objectives, procedures, benefits, and cautionary notes for teachers.

4.1 AI-Supported Comparative Inquiry Tasks

Objective

The goal of this activity is to develop learners' critical thinking and historical literacy by comparing AI-generated accounts of British historical or political events with primary and secondary resources.

Sample Topics

- The Industrial Revolution
- The British Empire and its Legacies
- The Magna Carta and constitutional history
- The Victorian Era and Social Reforms
- Post-War Immigration and Multicultural Britain.

Procedure

1- Prompting Phase:

Students ask an AI tool (eg. ChatGPT) to explain a specific British historical event. Example prompt: "Explain the causes and consequences of the Industrial Revolution in Britain in 250 words."

2- Source Collection Phase:

Teacher provides 2-3 examined sources (primary documents, textbook excerpts, academic commentary).

3- Comparative Analysis Phase:

Students identify similarities, differences, inaccuracies, omissions, and biases in the AI text.

4- Interpretation Phase:

Students discuss:

- "What perspective or voice dominates the AI version?"
- "What important interpretations are missing?"
- "How reliable is AI in representing contested events?"

5- Written Output:

Students write a critical report (300-400 words) assessing the accuracy and narrative framing of AI-generated history.

Learning Benefits

- Strengthens historical reasoning
- Builds AI literacy (accuracy checking, source evaluation)
- Reinforces academic English writing skills

Teacher Notes/Risks

- Highlight that AI explanations often lack citations
- Warn students about hallucinations and oversimplification
- Encourage triangulation with scholarly sources.

4.2 AI-Augmented Virtual Fieldwork on British Institutions

Objective

To enhance cultural immersion and observational skills using virtual tours supported by AI-generated guiding questions, context notes, and reflection prompts.

Possible Virtual Locations

- The Houses of Parliament
- The British Museum
- Buckingham Palace
- The National Gallery
- The Tower of London

Procedure

1- Virtual Tour Exploration:

Students explore a virtual museum or institutional website individually or in groups.

2- AI-Assisted Interpretation:

Students use AI to request explanations of artifacts, paintings, or architectural elements.
Example: “Explain the symbolic significance of the crown jewels in British history.”

3- Observation Grid:

- Description
- Interpretation
- Historical context
- Personal reaction
- AI query record (what they asked, and how accurate the answer seemed)

4- Post-Visit Reflection:

Students discuss representation, cultural narratives, curatorial choices, and what is not being shown.

Learning Benefits

- Encourages independent inquiry
- Provides multimodal exposure to British cultural heritage
- Strengthens content-based vocabulary.

Teacher Notes/Risks

- Encourage students to validate AI interpretations with museum websites or scholarly sources
- Discuss issues of representation, heritage politics, and cultural authority.

4-3 Debate and Argumentation with AI-Generated Perspectives

Objective

The aim is to develop argumentative skills and intercultural understanding by analyzing and critiquing AI-produced viewpoints on British political and cultural issues.

Sample Debate Topics

- Should the UK abolish monarchy?
- Is multiculturalism successful in Britain?
- Should the House of Lords be reformed?
- Was Brexit beneficial for the UK?
- Should Britain return artifacts to former colonies?

Procedure

1- AI Arguments Generation:

Students ask AI to produce arguments for or against a stance.

2- Critical Evaluation:

In groups, students identify:

- Biases
- Logical misconceptions
- Missing historical facts
- Over-generalisations
- Cultural assumptions

3- Reconstruction phase:

Students rewrite the arguments using stronger evidence, citations, and original critical insight.

4- Class Debate:

Teams debate using a mix of AI-sourced ideas (clearly labelled) and human-developed arguments.

Learning Benefits

- Develops critical and rhetorical skills
- Encourages intercultural perspectives-taking
- Models responsible and transparent AI use

Teacher Notes/Risks

- Emphasise that AI-generated arguments must be verified
- Make students cite AI as a tool, not as an authoritative source.

4.4 AI-Integrated Digital Cultural Portfolios

Objective

The purpose is to support knowledge consolidation through the creation of personalised, multimodal portfolios on British cultural themes.

Components of the portfolio

- Timeline of a British historical period
- Biographical sketches of key figures
- Cultural artefacts(poems, speeches, paintings)
- AI-assisted summaries (annotated for accuracy)
- Reflective journal on AI use and reliability

Procedure

- 1- Students select a theme (e.g., “The evolution of British democracy”).
- 2- AI assists in drafting outlines, generating vocabulary lists, or suggesting multimedia resources.
- 3- Students annotate all AI-generated content with comments such as “I verified this with source x” and AI’s interpretation here seems biased toward an institutional perspective.”
- 4- At the end, students submit a critical reflection on how AI shaped their learning.

Learning Benefits

- Encourages autonomy and metacognition
- Provides a comprehensive demonstration of content knowledge
- Helps students develop academic and digital literacies.

Teacher Notes/risks

- Portfolios allow for repetitious work, reducing the risk of AI-produced plagiarism.
- Ensure that students differentiate between AI-assistance and their own writing.

4.5 Assessment Innovation in the AI Era

Purpose

To redesign assessments that protect academic integrity while utilizing AI as a learning tool.

Assessment Models:

1- In-Class Synthesis Tasks

Students read short texts on British history during class and produce a synthesis without AI.

2- Oral Examination with AI Audit Trail

Students explain how they used AI during their research.

3- AI Critique Assignments

Students must critique a flawed AI-generated explanation

4- Process-Based Assessment

- Students document drafting stages (AI use must be annotated)
- Emphasises learning process over product.

Teacher Notes

- Provide rubrics that reward AI literacy
- Make expectations for permitted AI use explicit and transparent.

This section reinforces the core thesis: AI can enrich British civilisation teaching only when guided by critical pedagogy and ethical integration. The AI can be used as a scaffold not a replacement for interpretation. Besides it can be used as a comparative tool by exposing inaccuracies. It can also be used as a stimulus for discussion rather than a source of truth. AI can also be a partner in inquiry, with human judgment at the center.

5. Policy Frameworks, Teacher Development, and institutional Responsibilities in the AI Era

The effective integration of AI into the teaching of British Civilisation to EFL learners cannot be understood solely as a pedagogical matter. It is equally a question of educational policy, institutional governance, and professional development. Research on AI in education consistently demonstrates that without coherent regulatory and pedagogical frameworks, AI adoption tends to be fragmented, technology-driven, and misaligned with learning objectives (Holmes, Bialik & Fadel, 2019; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). This risk is particularly acute in civilisation courses, where interpretation, critical judgment, and cultural sensitivity are central.

5.1 Educational policy and Governance in the AI Era

At the policy level, international organizations increasingly emphasise the need for human-centered and ethically grounded AI in education. UNESCO's *Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research* explicitly stresses transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and the primacy of human agency, warning against uncritical automation of teaching and assessment (UNESCO 2023). These principles are especially relevant to British Civilisation courses, which deal with contested histories, political institutions, and cultural identities.

National and institutional policies must therefore define clear parameters for AI use, distinguishing between acceptable support functions (idea generation, linguistic scaffolding, formative feedback) and academically unacceptable practices (unacknowledged AI-generated assignments). Selwyn (2019) argues that policy silence often leads to covert AI use by students and inconsistent enforcement by teachers, undermining trust and academic integrity.

Furthermore, governance frameworks must acknowledge disciplinary differences. Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) note that much AI policy assumes standardised knowledge domains, whereas humanities subjects require interpretive flexibility. British Civilisation teaching thus requires policy models that allow pedagogical discretion while maintaining ethical safeguards.

5.2 Redefining the Role of the Teacher in AI-Mediated Classrooms

The growing presence of AI does not diminish the role of the teacher; rather, it reconfigures pedagogical authority. In AI-mediated classrooms, teachers act less as transmitters of factual knowledge and more as epistemic guides who help students evaluate sources, interrogate narratives, and contextualise information (Holmes et al., 2019).

This role is particularly crucial given the documented limitations of large language models. Bender et al. (2021) demonstrate that AI systems can produce fluent yet misleading or biased content, especially when dealing with historical or political topics. In British Civilisation courses, teachers must therefore explicitly guide students in questioning AI outputs, identifying omissions, and recognizing ideological framing.

Moreover, teachers model ethical academic practice by demonstrating transparent AI use and explicitly discussing its limits. Such practices align with Byram's (1997) emphasis on developing critical cultural awareness, reinforcing the idea that cultural knowledge is constructed, contested, and subject to interpretation rather than algorithmic certainty.

5.3 Teacher Training and Professional Development

For AI integration to be pedagogically meaningful, teacher training must go beyond technical competence. Research stresses that educators require critical AI literacy, including an understanding of how AI systems generate outputs, where biases originate, and why inaccuracies occur (Selwyn, 2019; Crawford, 2021).

In the context of British Civilisation teaching, professional development should focus on four clusters. First designing inquiry-based tasks supported-but not replaced- by AI. Besides, to enhance both the teachers' and the students' facilities there should be identifying cultural and historical bias in AI-generated content. Third, teaching verification strategies using scholarly sources. In addition to cope with this era, developing assessments that reward critical engagement rather than textual production has to take place. Holmes et al.(2019) argue that continuous professional development is essential because AI systems evolve faster than traditional curriculum cycles. Institutions must therefore support ongoing training through workshops, communities of practice, and interdisciplinary collaboration, ensuring that AI adoption remains pedagogically driven rather than technologically deterministic.

5.4 Institutional Responsibilities and Infrastructure

Institutions play a decisive role in shaping classroom-level AI practices. Crawford (2021) warns that reliance on commercial AI platforms without institutional oversight raises serious concerns related to data privacy surveillance, and power imbalances. Universities must therefore provide secure, transparent infrastructures and clear guidelines on data protection and consent.

Equally important is fostering an institutional culture of reflective innovation. Selwyn (2019) notes that when innovation is framed purely in terms of efficiency or competitiveness, humanities disciplines are often marginalised. Institutions should instead encourage pedagogically informed experimentation, recognizing that critical reflection is as valuable as technological adoption.

Embedding AI literacy as a transversal learning outcome further ensures that responsible AI use becomes a shared institutional objective rather than an individual teachers' burden (UNESCO, 2023).

5.5. Equity, Access, and the Global EFL context

AI integration also raises pressing equity concerns, particularly in Global South EFL context. Unequal access to stable internet connections, institutional subscriptions, and digital devices risks deepening existing educational gaps (UNESCO, 2023). Institutions must therefore prioritise inclusive access strategies and avoid assessment designs that privilege technologically advantaged students.

Moreover, AI systems trained predominantly on Anglophone and Western datasets may produce Eurocentric or Anglo centric perspectives, reinforcing dominant narratives of British history and culture (Bender et al., 2021; Crawford, 2021). In British Civilisation teaching, this necessitates pedagogical strategies that foreground comparative perspectives and encourage learners to critically position British culture in relation to their own socio-cultural contexts, in line with intercultural pedagogy (Byram, 1997).

5.6. Towards Sustainable and Ethical AI integration

Sustainable AI integration requires long-term institutional vision rather than short-term technological enthusiasm. (UNESCO, 2023) emphasizes the importance of regular policy review, organisation consultation, and ethical oversight mechanism. Institutions should involve teachers as well as students in evaluating AI practices to ensure alignment with educational levels.

Ultimately, the goal is not AI-dependent learners but critically autonomous individuals capable of navigating complex cultural narratives in digital environments. In British Civilisation courses, this means fostering historically informed, culturally reflexive, and ethically aware learners-outcomes that remain fundamentally human, even in the AI era.

To sum up, this section demonstrated that the integration of AI into the teaching of British Civilisation to EFL learners is fundamentally shaped by policy decisions, institutional governance, and teacher preparedness. AI cannot be treated as a neutral or purely technical enhancement; it rather operates within social, ethical, and disciplinary frameworks that directly influence how cultural knowledge is produced and interpreted. Without clear policies, structured professional development, and institutional support, AI risks reinforcing superficial learning, epistemic bias, and inequitable access. AI should be approached not as a substitute for human expertise but as a pedagogical tool requiring ethical governance and critical mediation. In Civilisation courses, where cultural narratives are complex and contested, teachers play a crucial role in guiding interpretation and fostering intercultural awareness. A sustainable and equitable approach to AI adoption therefore relies on aligning technological innovation with educational values, academic integrity, and human-centered pedagogy.

6. Research Agenda and Methodological Considerations

The rapid integration of AI into education has outpaced systematic empirical research, particularly within humanities-oriented and content-based courses such as British Civilisation for

EFL learners. While existing scholarship has largely focused on language skills development and learning analytics, comparatively little attention has been paid to how AI shapes cultural understanding, historical reasoning and intercultural competence. This section proposes a future-oriented research agenda and outlines methodological considerations necessary for investigating AI-enhanced British Civilisation teaching in a rigorous, ethical, and context-sensitive manner. It aims to bridge theoretical insights from applied linguistics, cultural studies, and educational technology with empirically grounded research designs.

6.1 Research Agenda: Key Areas for Future Inquiry

6.1.1- AI and Intercultural Communicative Competence

One central area for future research concerns the relationship between AI use and the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). While AI tools can expose learners to diverse cultural representations, there is limited empirical evidence on whether such exposure fosters critical cultural awareness or merely reinforces dominant narratives (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 2013). Future

studies should investigate how AI-mediated tasks influence learner's ability to interpret, compare, and critically evaluate British cultural practices and values in relation to their own socio-cultural contexts.

6.1.2. Epistemic Trust, Authority, and Historical Knowledge

Another priority involves examining how learners perceive the epistemic authority of AI-generated content. Research has shown that students may attribute undue credibility to fluent AI outputs, even when such outputs contain inaccuracies or ideological bias (Bender et al., 2021; Crawford, 2021). In British Civilisation courses, where knowledge is often contested, future research should explore how AI affects students' understanding of historical complexity, source reliability, and interpretive plurality.

6.1.3- Teacher Agency and Pedagogical Decision-Making

Teacher beliefs and practices play a decisive role in shaping AI integration. While policy documents emphasise ethical AI use, little empirical research has examined how teachers in humanities and EFL contexts negotiate institutional expectations, technological affordances, and disciplinary values (Holmes, Bialik & Fadel, 2019; Selwyn 2019). Future studies should explore how teachers conceptualise AI's role in civilisation teaching and how professional development influences pedagogical choices.

6.1.4. Equity, Context, and the Global EFL Classroom

A further research priority lies in examining AI use across diverse EFL contexts, particularly in regions where access to digital infrastructure is uneven. UNESCO (2023) highlights the risk that AI may exacerbate educational inequalities if contextual constraints are ignored. Comparative and cross-cultural studies are needed to understand how AI integration varies across institutional, national, and socio-economic settings, and how local pedagogical traditions shape AI adoption.

6.2. Methodological Considerations

6.2.1. Research Design

Given the complexity of AI-mediated learning, mixed-methods approaches are particularly well suited to this field of inquiry. Quantitative data (e.g. pre-and post-tests, surveys on AI attitudes) can capture measurable learning outcomes; with qualitative methods (e.g. interviews, classroom observations, discourse analysis) provide insight into interpretive processes and learner perceptions (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

Design-Based Research (DBR) is also a promising methodology, as it allows researchers to iteratively test and refine AI-supported pedagogical interventions in real classroom contexts while maintaining theoretical grounding (Holmes et al., 2019).

6.2.2. Data Collection and Analysis

Data sources may include student portfolios and reflective journals documenting AI use. It may also embed classroom recording and interactional data. The AI can also generate texts annotated by learners. In addition there are teacher interviews and lesson plans.

Discourse analysis and qualitative content analysis are particularly appropriate for examining how learners engage with AI-generated cultural narratives and how critical awareness develops over time (Kramdch, 2013). Quantitative analyses may complement these findings by identifying trends in learner engagement or attitude change.

6.2.3. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are central to AI-related research. Issues of informed consent, data privacy, transparency of AI use, and participant autonomy must be explicitly addressed (UNESCO, 2023). Researchers should ensure that students understand when and AI tools are used and that participation does not disadvantage learners with limited technological access.

Moreover, ethical research design must account for power dynamic between institutions, teachers, students and commercial AI providers, as highlighted by critical scholarship on educational data and surveillance (Crawford, 2021).

6.2.4. Validity and Limitations

Researchers must remain attentive to the limitations of AI-related studies. Rapid technological change may affect the replicability of findings, while contextual specificity may limit generalisation. Transparent reporting of tools, prompts, and pedagogical conditions is therefore essential to ensure methodological rigor and interpretive validity (Selwyn, 2019).

To sum, this section has outlined a forward-looking research agenda and methodological framework for investigating the role of AI in teaching British Civilisation to EFL learners. It has argued that future research must move beyond instrumental evaluations of technology to address deeper questions of cultural meaning, epistemic authority, teacher agency, and educational equity. Methodologically, interdisciplinary, mixed-method, and ethically grounded approaches are essential for capturing the complexity of AI-mediated learning in humanities contexts. By pursuing this research agenda, scholars can contribute to the development of pedagogically sound, culturally sensitive, and ethically responsible models of AI integration in civilisation teaching.

7. Conclusion

This article has examined the implications of Artificial Intelligence for the teaching of British Civilisation to EFL learners, addressing both the pedagogical opportunities and the challenges introduced by AI-driven educational technologies. AI can enhance access to information, support language development, and simulate inquiry-based learning. However, the study emphasises that AI should not be treated as an authoritative source; in civilisation courses, critical interpretation, historical reasoning, and cultural awareness remain central to meaningful learning.

The analysis also underscores the importance of teacher mediation, ethical governance, and institutional support. Effective AI integration depends on coherent policies, professional development, and equitable access to technology, ensuring that AI serves as a pedagogical tool rather than a substitute for human expertise. Classroom applications, including comparative analysis, debates, and digital portfolios, demonstrate how AI can be used responsibly to enhance engagement and critical thinking while preserving academic integrity.

Finally, the study highlights the need for future research exploring the impact of AI on learners' cultural understanding, epistemic trust, and teacher agency in diverse EFL contexts. By positioning AI as supportive and critically guided tool, educators can ensure that British Civilisation teaching remains intellectually rigorous, culturally sensitive, and human-centred in the AI era.

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A Comprehensive Review of Blockchain and Federated Learning Integration for Secure Healthcare Systems

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Abstract

The swift advancement and growth of Internet of Things (IoT)-based technologies have strengthened the way we live and our quality of life. Health is the most sensitive area of application of IoT given its relationship with human well-being. The use of IoT in healthcare is called the Internet of Medical Things (IoMT). It has become a booming trend aimed at improving the health and well-being of billions of people by providing seamless medical facilities and improving services provided by doctors, nurses, pharmaceutical companies and other governmental and related non-governmental organizations. The amount of data generated by the human body every day is two terabytes. We can now collect most of it by the advancement of these technologies including information on heart rate, sleep patterns, blood sugar, stress levels and even brain activity. That is why the security of this data, especially in real time, becomes a major concern. This article aims to explore the role of integration of Blockchain technology with federated learning in strengthening data security and ensuring privacy in healthcare sector. We aim to present a concise yet comprehensive overview of the Blockchain integration with federated learning in securing health data and ensuring privacy in the healthcare sector.

Keywords: Healthcare, IoMT, Blockchain, Federated learning, Data security.

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1.Introduction

Traditionally, the main objective of healthcare focused on treating patients with medical interventions, leading to a lack of attention related to data privacy and safety (Patel et al., 2024, pp.18-46). In modern times, the healthcare sector has become pivotal for the holistic progress of countries across the globe. Due to increasing deployment of IoMT, a large amount of data is being generated. Data privacy, secure storage, the exchange of sensitive health information, and controlled access have emerged as the key concerns within today's healthcare system.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has accelerated the evolution of healthcare, primarily driven by the swift advancements in AI, cloud computing, machine learning, and blockchain technologies (El Khediri, 2025) (Wang et al., 2020, pp. 869-904). Machine learning (ML) and deep learning (DL) algorithms play a crucial role in revealing hidden patterns in healthcare data. Traditionally, data employed for training ML/DL algorithms was maintained in central storage facilities, which may result in several challenges, such as security issues, single points of failure, and heightened latency (Alpaydin, 2020).

With the aim of ensuring the security of patients' private data, several technologies have emerged, including IoMT, AI, blockchain, and federated learning (Casola et al., 2016, pp10-14). Since 2018, a significant surge has been witnessed in the adoption of blockchain technology in the healthcare sector (Hiwale et al., 2021, pp.190-213). Blockchain has gained widespread adoption because of its strong security features, such as immutability and cryptography, including the new concept of lightweight blockchain (Mershad & Cheikhrouhou, 2023, p100984). As a distributed, immutable, and append-only data structure, blockchain offers effective solutions to challenges faced by remote healthcare applications, improving transparency, security, trustworthiness, and authenticity of health data (Brogan et al., 2018, pp.257-266).

Recent literature has extensively examined blockchain applications in healthcare. Comprehensive research has evaluated the effectiveness of blockchain technology in healthcare (Agbo et al., 2019), addressed privacy challenges and preservation mechanisms (Bernabe et al., 2019, pp. 164908-164940), and introduced use cases while assessing unresolved concerns (Casino et al., 2019, pp.55-81).

Federated Learning (FL), an emerging technology, shows significant potential for enhancing healthcare data analytics while addressing concerns related to sharing sensitive information. Several studies have examined the recent advancements and challenges associated with federated learning in healthcare informatics, including future directions for this promising field (Xu et al., 2021, pp.1-19). FL enables entities to develop collaborative global models without sharing raw data with external parties (McMahan et al., 2017). A comprehensive categorization based on data distribution and privacy mechanisms (Bagdasaryan et al., 2020), and classification of security threats with strategies to improve privacy (Mugunthan et al., 2020).

Together, federated learning and blockchain technologies hold great promise for secure health data analysis and administration, offering complementary approaches to protecting patient privacy while enabling collaborative research and improved healthcare delivery. **Figure 1** illustrates advantages of combining blockchain with federated learning across various use cases. This paper is structured as follows: Following the introduction, Section II provides a comprehensive literature review; Section III explains how federated learning preserves privacy in healthcare; Section IV reviews how with its decentralized architecture, the blockchain helps to create a transparent healthcare workflow; Section V assures on the exploitation of these two technologies to guarantee enormous benefits in the healthcare sector; Section VI presents the discussion of this work; Finally,

in section VII, we present the conclusion.

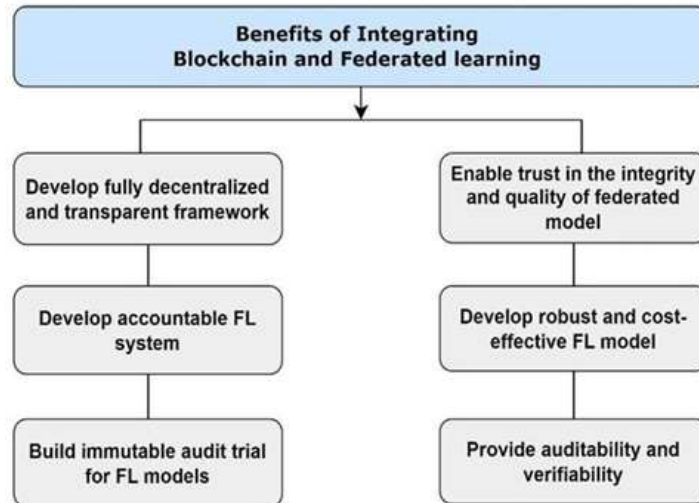


Fig. 1. Advantages of combining blockchain and federated learning for various applications

2.Literature review

Recent literature has extensively explored the application of federated learning and blockchain technologies in healthcare and IoT environments. Hao et al. provided a comprehensive overview of security benefits offered by federated learning in the health sector, emphasizing how this approach ensures private data remains protected (Li et al., 2023, pp. 8076-8094). Their analysis of potential attacks in medical environments highlighted the advantages of combining federated learning with blockchain to enhance security, particularly as healthcare data volumes continue to grow.

Several researchers have investigated the integration of blockchain with IoT systems. Dai et al. introduced the concept of Blockchain of Things (BCoT) (Ali, Salek, et al., 2018, pp. 1676-1717), outlining its core principles and examining challenges in merging blockchain with IoT infrastructures. Similarly, Ali et al. analyzed how blockchain addresses decentralization and security requirements in IoT networks, while proposing future research directions (Al Asqah & Moulahi, 2023, p.203).

Muneerah Al Asqah et al. provided an extensive review of how federated learning and blockchain can work together to improve security and privacy in IoT ecosystems (Pandl et al., 2020, pp. 57075-57095). Their work categorized existing solutions based on privacy preservation mechanisms, offering valuable insights into the integration of these technologies in distributed systems.

Despite these valuable contributions, few studies have conducted systematic literature reviews specifically examining the convergence of blockchain and federated learning for healthcare applications. Some notable exceptions include research by Dasaklis et al., who investigated the potential applications of combining intelligent systems with blockchain across various industries (Singh et al., 2020, p.102364), and studies by Singh et al., which explored how these emerging technologies can facilitate secure storage and sharing of patient data while improving overall care quality (Rieke et al., 2020, p.119).

- To perform an in-depth survey of existing literature on blockchain and federated learning aimed at advancing dependable healthcare applications.
- To examine and evaluate prior studies addressing the intersection of blockchain and federated learning approaches for ensuring privacy within healthcare systems.

- To highlight the benefits of combining blockchain with federated learning in safeguarding the security of patients' data.

Table 1: outlines various existing surveys in the literature that address security using Blockchain and federated learning solutions for the Internet of Things (IoT).

Proposed Work	Year of publication	Blockchain	Federated learning	Dedicated to IoT	Contribution
Hao et al.	2023	×	✓	✓	This work contributes significantly to the understanding of security issues related to federated learning (FL) in healthcare contexts
Dai et al.	2019	✓	×	✓	This work highlights the convergence of blockchain and IoT. Authors refer to « Blockchain of Things (BCoT) »
Viriyasitavat and al.	2019	✓	×	✓	This work highlights how the combination between blockchain and IoT technology can lead to enhanced security, transparency and efficiency in various application
Ali and al	2018	✓	×	✓	This work proposes a conceptual framework for integrating blockchain with IoT systems, providing a structured approach for researchers and practitioners to follow when implementing blockchain solutions in IoT
Pohrmen and al.	2019	✓	×	✓	This work proposes a framework for integration of blockchain with IoT architecture to improve security. This framework outlines how blockchain can be effectively utilized alongside traditional security mechanisms to create a more secure IoT ecosystem.
Muneera Al Asqah and al	2023	✓	✓	✓	This work proposes a framework that integrates federated learning and blockchain technology specifically aimed at enhancing privacy protection in IoT environments.
Y.Qu and al	2022	✓	✓	×	This work provides a comprehensive overview and evaluation of existing research on blockchain enabled federated learning, by categorizing different approaches and highlighting their strengths.
D.C.Nguyen and al	2021	✓	✓	×	This work introduces the concept of FL chain, a new paradigm that combines federated learning and blockchain to create decentralized, secure and privacy-enhancing systems.
S.Vyas and al	2019	✓	✓	×	This work introduces the concept of FL chain, a new paradigm that combines federated learning and blockchain to create decentralized, secure and privacy-enhancing systems.
S.Singh and al	2020	✓	✓	✓	This work provides a comprehensive overview of the potential benefits and use cases of integrating blockchain, AI and IoT for developing smart cities.

3. Federated Learning for data privacy in healthcare

3.1. Federated Learning

Federated learning is a new training method that uses machine learning models, yet maintains the confidentiality of the data. The models are also trained at several computers in a decentralized fashion instead of transferring sensitive patient data. In this system, all devices will construct a local model based on their own data and only send the learned model parameters or updates to a central server. This process will guarantee protection of privacy and provide collaborative learning among distributed sources. The federated learning architecture depicted by **Figure 2** depicts a typical example.

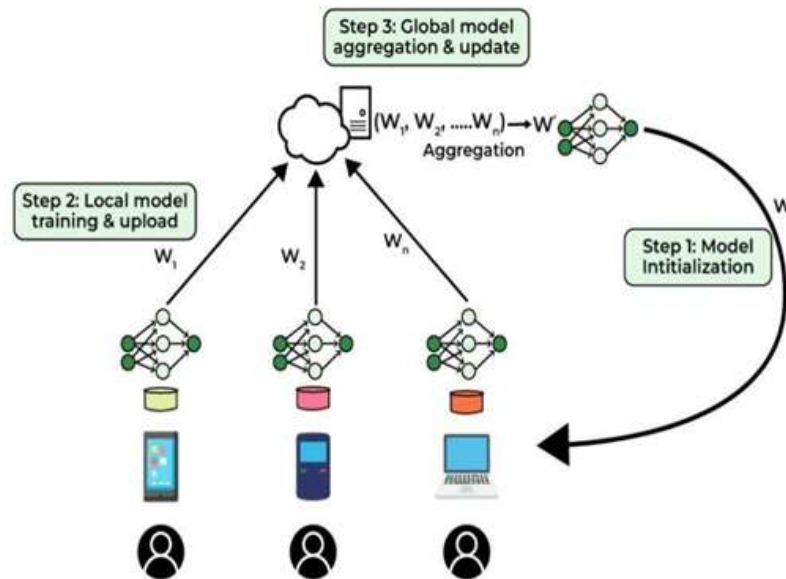


Fig. 2. Framework of federated learning

3.2. Preservation of Privacy in healthcare with federated learning:

Over the past two decades, machine learning (ML) models have developed into a powerful approach for attaining reliable and precise health data analysis. To fully utilize machine learning methods, a significant volume of health data is necessary to create efficient predictive models. Consequently, collaboration among multiple health organizations is essential for collecting and sharing medical information (Hussain et al., 2021, p.6985).

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the critical importance of effectively sharing health data, resources, and expertise on a global scale (Donawa et al., 2019). However, the sensitive nature of medical information, coupled with strict privacy regulations such as HIPAA and GDPR, limits the ability of hospitals to exchange raw patient data with external entities. This situation creates a persistent tension between safeguarding confidentiality and enabling more accurate predictive data analysis (Dasaklis et al., 2018).

The concept of Federated Learning (FL) has great potential to solve this issue, as it allows training a global machine learning model without sharing raw data. Being a new paradigm, FL protects the privacy of data but helps develop collaborative models with the involvement of many contributors. Its main strength in comparison to traditional machine learning is the fact that it does not require centralization of sensitive data in repositories, thereby eliminating the centralization of this critical data. Training is instead done locally at the individual nodes, and only model updates are shared, thus obeying privacy laws like GDPR (Mothukuri et al., 2021, pp.619-640).

There are three main stages involved in the execution of federated learning:

1. The central server initially shares the global model parameters with all participating clients.
2. Each client trains a local model using its own dataset and the provided parameters, then transmits the updated model back to the server.
3. The server combines the updates from all clients to build a refined global model, which is redistributed to the clients for further iterations.

This iterative process continues until the model attains a designated level of accuracy (Christ et al., 2019).

The healthcare sector is one of the most influential fields where federated learning can be used. In that regard, FL allows hospitals to train a global model together, retaining the privacy of raw patient data. Rather than transmitting sensitive records, the institutions transfer locally trained model updates to a central server that combines them into a single predictive model. This will not only protect privacy, but also guarantee compliance to legal and ethical standards (Hewa et al., 2021, p.102857) (Ulhaq & Burmeister, 2020).

Several important applications of federated learning were proposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. E.g., the Stanford Institute of Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence developed a framework that would allow tracking people with coronavirus symptoms at home. Meanwhile, NVIDIA Clara released a healthcare platform based on federated learning that ensured data privacy of patients in medical organizations (Nakamoto, 2008). The representative scheme of federated learning in healthcare is presented in **Figure 3**.

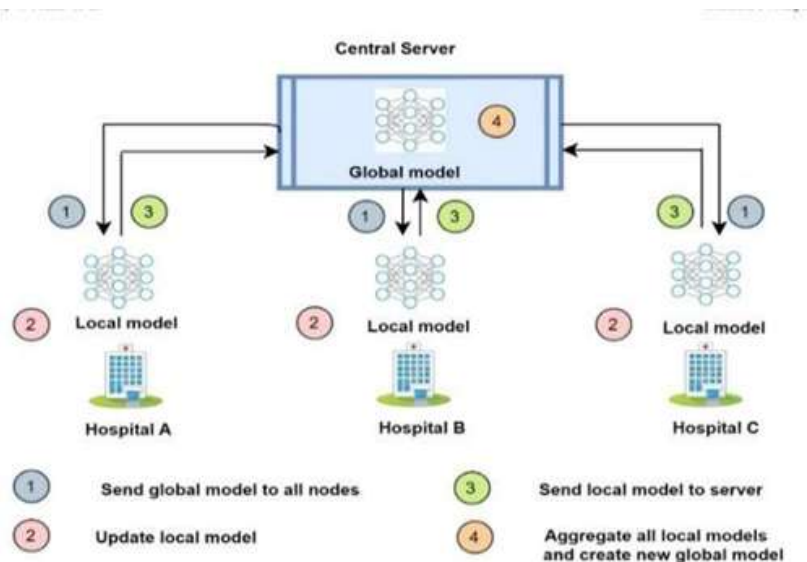


Fig.3. Structure of federated learning in medical contexts

Unlike traditional ML methods, FL inherently offers privacy protection. In federated learning scenarios, multiple hospitals collaborate to train models without centralizing their datasets. Hospitals exclusively transmitted their revised models to the coordinating servers. Consequently, the federated learning eliminates the need to aggregate extensive patient data in any primary database. The federated learning decreased both costs and the time of training and while enhancing data security. **Table 2** outlines the benefits and challenges associated with federated learning.

Table 2. Advantages and obstacles of federated learning

Benefits	Obstacles
Enhance Scalability	Data heterogeneity
Enhance security and precision	Lack of universal solution
Protect privacy	Cost of time
Inexpensive training costs	Prospective privacy
Decrease the time of training	Expenses of communication

4. Blockchain-based healthcare solutions

4.1. Blockchain

It is a distributed, decentralized digital ledger that records transactions across various computers in a network. The blockchain consists of blocks, each containing multiple transactions. Each time a new transaction takes place, it is recorded and incorporated into the ledger of every participant. Blockchain uses cryptographic signatures called hashes to link blocks together, causing it to be very hard to modify or infiltrate the system. **Figure 4** explains how blockchain works.

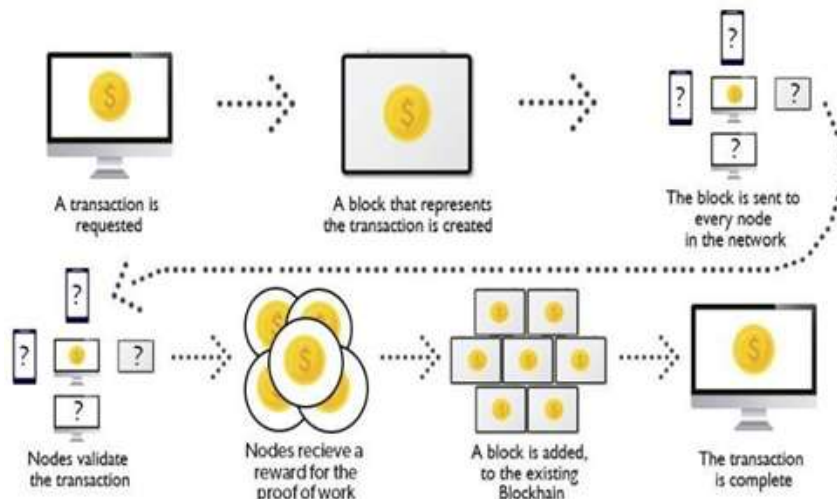


Fig.4. How blockchain works

4.2. Blockchain a solution in healthcare

The blockchain is a structure based on the distribution of data that is immutable and allows for append-only operations. Initially, the financial sector was the primary application of blockchain technology in the form of Bitcoin (Dasaklis et al., 2018). In recent times, thanks to its fundamental strengths, blockchain has proven to be highly adaptable across several fields beyond finance (Agbo et al., 2019). The healthcare sector holds immense potential for blockchain technology to drive a technological revolution. The decentralized and immutable characteristics of blockchain enable the creation of transparent healthcare workflows, allowing patients to monitor how their health data is shared and accessed within the system (Zheng et al., 2020, pp. 475-491). Furthermore, blockchain employs cryptographic algorithms to guarantee data security (Kuo et al., 2017, pp. 1211-1220). From a healthcare standpoint, the notable benefits of blockchain such as data provenance, accountability, availability, and robustness significantly enhance effective health record

management (Kang et al., 2018, pp S76-82). The technology facilitates secure, unchangeable, and expandable data exchange from diverse origins, including electronic health records (EHRs), clinical trials, genomic databases, and IoT data from numerous sensors (Ghosh et al., 2023, p38). Blockchain's focus in the health sector centers on creating secure systems for patient data management and secure transactions. Its tamper-proof characteristics, smart contracts, and data security solutions revolutionize healthcare operations, while in other sectors blockchain primarily serves for financial transfers, personal data security, and logistics (Yazdinejad et al., 2020, pp. 2146-2156). **Table 2** emphasizes the advantages and obstacles linked to blockchain technology. Several studies have examined blockchain's potential to transform healthcare information sharing. The following synthesis highlights an overview of pertinent research on blockchain-enabled healthcare solutions. Research by Tripathi, Ahad, & Paiva (2020) highlights how blockchain's decentralized nature eliminates single failure points and third-party dependencies, enabling efficient health data sharing. Similarly, Tomaz et al., (2020) demonstrates that blockchain's immutable, time-stamped transaction records foster trust and transparency in health information exchange. Smart contracts have been shown to facilitate patient-centered data access while enhancing security and promoting reliable information exchange among providers (Motohashi et al., 2019, p. e13385). According to Akkaoui et al., (2020, pp.113467-113486), blockchain's distributed, immutable, and transparent characteristics ensure safe and efficient data exchange among healthcare stakeholders and patients. Further research (Li et al., 2019, pp.2042-2053) reveals that smart contracts enable secure interactions between healthcare participants and clinical applications, addressing issues of permitted access and verification. When combined with smart contract logic, blockchain facilitates personalized and efficient electronic health record management, addressing security and interoperability challenges (Ndayizigamiye & Dube, 2019). Finally, Aich et al., (2022) emphasizes how blockchain ensures data provenance through traceability and immutability, while smart contract logic enhances system robustness and accountability.

Table 3. Benefits and Obstacles of blockchain.

Benefits	Obstacles
Distributed	Capacity for growth
Unchangeable	Limited interoperability
Clarity and Traceability	Compromise of privacy
Data reliability and privacy	Elevated energy usage
Access of data is authorized	Insufficient technical expertise
Confidence	Creating optimized smart contracts

5.Integrating Federated Learning and

Blockchain in Healthcare Applications

Implementing federated learning and blockchain technologies in healthcare offers significant advantages for secure storage, sharing, and utilization of medical data. During the COVID-19 pandemic, disseminating reliable and accurate information became crucial, leading several researchers to develop models combining these technologies (Kumar et al., 2020).

These integrated approaches enabled secure sharing of COVID- 19 patient data among multiple

hospitals while preserving data confidentiality (Rahman et al., 2020, pp. 205071-205087). This methodology extended beyond pandemic crisis management to encompass broader healthcare frameworks.

Several research teams devoted themselves to developing stable healthcare frameworks integrating federated learning and blockchain technologies. These frameworks primarily aimed at protecting the privacy of data from Internet of Health Things (IoHT) devices (Dwivedi et al., 2019, p326) and developing Internet of Medical Things (IoMT) solutions.

Recognizing the vast potential of these technologies, we have incorporated them into a framework for the healthcare sector, as illustrated in **Figure 5**.

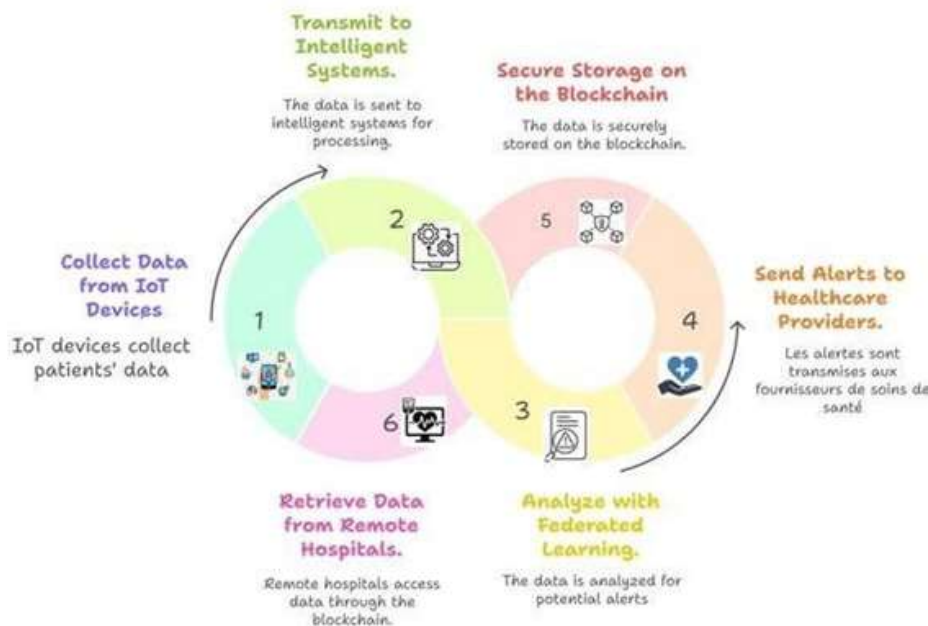


Fig5. Health Data Security Cycle.

The proposed framework demonstrates the integration of blockchain and federated learning with the Internet of Things in medical domain (IoMT).

In this architecture, IoT devices such as medical sensors (blood pressure monitors, glucose meters, insulin pumps, and other patient-connected devices) [47] generate raw data and transmit them to IoT devices. These devices then transmit the data to intelligent systems such as smart monitors, laptops, and mobile devices, which possess processing capabilities like translation and compression.

This data is subsequently sent to a blockchain and federated learning-based distributed network. Blockchain ensures security and privacy through a decentralized approach and maintains a tamper-resistant ledger. Federated learning analyzes the data and transmits an alert to the intelligent system in case of a problem, this alert being transferred to the healthcare provider without adding a block in the blockchain network.

This case study has shown that federated learning coupled with blockchain could be useful in preserving privacy in smart healthcare systems. With the combination of these technologies, the safety of medical data transfer and storage is guaranteed, and, simultaneously, the data analysis becomes efficient. Remote hospitals can now access patient clinical records and model aggregate updates, which promote privacy-preserving collaborative healthcare delivery, through blockchain.

The distant hospitals can retrieve patient clinical information and global model updates through blockchain.

Motivations

Traditional centralized data storage methods pose risks related to sensitive patient information, making it imperative to explore innovative solutions that prioritize both data integrity and patient confidentiality. That is why, we are encouraged to study the benefits of federated or collaborative learning which prevents data sharing and the advantages of blockchain technologies which remedies the problem of centralization and guarantees data security in the healthcare sector, especially in the IoMT environment. Moreover, the motivation to adopt these technologies is underscored by the potential for improved healthcare outcomes. By leveraging the capabilities of blockchain and federated learning, healthcare systems can enable more precise predictive analytics, enhancing clinical decision-making and streamline operations.

6. Discussion

we can present our discussion in the form of these points:

1. Challenges in implementing blockchain and federated learning:
 - Integration complexity: Integrating federated learning and blockchain into existing healthcare IT. infrastructures can be complex and resource-intensive.
 - Scalability concerns: The scalability of blockchain solutions remains a concern, particularly in environments with a high volume of transactions.
 - Need for standardized protocols: there is an urgent requirement for uniform procedures and interoperability frameworks to enable seamless communication among diverse IoMT sensors and systems.
 - Too much central-client communication.
 - Cost of time and precision
2. Potential benefits of federated learning and blockchain in medical sector:
 - Improving information confidentiality and protection
 - Enhancing collaboration plus the exchange of data among healthcare providers.
 - Streamlining clinical trials and drug development processes
 - Enabling real-time monitoring and personalized treatment plans.
 - Reducing administrative costs and improving efficiency in healthcare operations.

7. Conclusion

The combination of federated learning and blockchain has become a paradigm shift in healthcare system, namely the Internet of Medical Things. Federated learning allows training machine learning models collaboratively, but sensitive patient data stays local and secure, which is why its development is now seen as a response to the increasing concerns regarding the confidentiality of data. Simultaneously, blockchain provides a transparent, tamper-resistant, and audit system to manage and oversee medical information and transactions to improve the trust of the stakeholders. These technologies combine to create a privacy-conscious and decentralized ecosystem, which enhances the efficiency and security of delivering healthcare services. With continued growth of IoMT, the convergence between federated learning and blockchain will be extremely significant in enhancing data-driven healthcare and preserving the patient trust, privacy, and legal adherence. As is highlighted in this review, their joint potential lies in redeveloping the future of healthcare systems via secure, collaborative and innovative solutions.

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The use of a learning platform to face the challenges of the Moroccan university: Case of Rosetta Stone

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Abstract

This study explores the role of digital learning platforms in addressing the challenges of Moroccan higher education, with a focus on Rosetta Stone as a language learning tool. Drawing on active learning theories, the research evaluates how the platform supports personalized, interactive learning while considering local constraints such as massification and language barriers. A quantitative analysis was conducted with 165 university students using a pedagogical questionnaire. Findings reveal that Rosetta Stone effectively applies behaviorist, constructivist, and cognitivist principles but shows limitations in socioconstructivist and connectivist approaches due to limited social interaction and cultural adaptation. The study recommends enhancing the platform through translation options, collaborative tools, personalized feedback, and culturally relevant content to better align with Moroccan learners' needs. Ultimately, the research underscores the importance of adapting digital platforms to local contexts to foster more effective and motivating learning experiences.

Keywords: *educational technology, learning theories, national context, educational platform.*

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1.Introduction

Higher education in Morocco is a pillar of socio-economic development that occupies a central place in national strategies. King Mohammed VI gives strong importance to education and to the use of digital technologies to make it more effective. This includes using digital tools, new technologies, and online resources for teaching and learning. It's an approach aimed at improving access to knowledge, moving towards personalized learning for students, and developing their skills. The King calls for a national mobilization to support digital transformation and train generations in new technologies, so that they can adapt to changes in work and culture (Extrait du message du Roi Mohammed VI, 2001).

Since the 2000s, Morocco has launched several national strategies to integrate technologies into the education system. First, the GENIE program in 2006 aimed to modernize teaching and to train teachers and educators in digital tools. Then, the Emergency Plan (2009–2012) sought to strengthen this process by improving infrastructure and speeding up the use of technologies for teaching purposes. More recently, the ESRI Pact 2030 has focused on integrating digital technology into higher education (Diab, 2025), through the development of hybrid learning and the encouragement of innovative practices.

2.Research problem

The national higher education sector is facing many challenges that slow down the positive effect of different reforms, especially in open-access institutions, which host a very large number of students. These institutions have experienced a gap between the rising numbers of new students and the real capacity of universities. In 2024-2025, the number of students reached 1.300.000 an increase of 5.9% from the previous year (Miraoui, 2024). In addition to massification, the language barrier also makes academic integration harder, since most students enter higher education with Arabic-based education but continue their studies in French, except some specialties. "French as foreign language" is poorly mastered by a large number of students. Moreover, secondary school students enter higher education with some linguistic shortcomings. This situation leads many students to failure in higher education" (Smaili, 2022).

Nowadays, educational platforms play an important role in transforming learning into an interactive process, as they integrate adaptive learning systems that allow for a personalized educational experience. There is a close relationship between the integration of technology in education and active learning theories. Notably, the Connectivist theory; refers to a new educational approach that would adapt to online learning (Chekour et al., 2015, p.5). However, the use of such platforms must be supported by a methodological integration of these theories.

From this problem, two key research questions emerge:

- ✓ How does the educational platform apply the principles of learning theories to support personalized, effective, and motivating learning?
- ✓ What improvements can be made to the platform to enhance language learning and overcome linguistic difficulties?

Our study focuses on analyzing the Rosetta Stone platform as a tool for learning French, highlighting the importance of active learning theories. We assess its effectiveness through user experience and pedagogical criteria. The analysis shows both the strengths and limitations of the

platform, emphasizing the need for improvements to make it more compatible with active learning theories in order to strengthen student motivation and engagement.

3.Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research is grounded in major active learning theories that place the learner at the center of the educational process by valuing their participation and responsibility in the construction of knowledge.

We begin with Jean Piaget's constructivist theory, which considers that students learn by experimenting with their knowledge. This is a promising epistemological stance from the perspective of educational technologies. It promotes tools that provide students with great autonomy and allow them to progress at their own pace (Chekour et al., 2019,p.4).

Lev Vygotsky introduced the concept of social learning through his socioconstructivist theory. He emphasized the importance of social interactions in the learning process. These interactions often involve collaborative activities, exchanges, and group discussions.

John Sweller and his cognitive theory focus on managing cognitive load to optimize learning. For cognitivists, teachers are encouraged to use digital technologies that promote strong interactivity with students. This interactivity is shown through active student engagement, immediate quality feedback, and collaborative learning (Chekour et al., 2019,p.3).

After the rise of new technologies in education, George Siemens and Stephen Downes developed the connectivist theory. For connectivists, learning exists outside the individual, highlighting the importance of networks and connections in acquiring knowledge. Learning is not limited to individual activities, but students learn through interactions made possible by networks. According to Siemens (2005), the main principles of connectivism are:

- ✓ Learning and knowledge exist in the diversity of opinions and exchanges between people.
- ✓ Learning can also exist in non-human devices, meaning that knowledge is not only stored in human memory but also in external systems.
- ✓ Learning based on maintaining connections is necessary to support continuous learning.

The combination of active theories and educational platforms leads to an experiential learning approach. According to Edgar Dale's "Cone of Learning" (which shows the different levels of information retention depending on the learning methods used), active learning practice allows a retention rate of 75% of information (Basu, 2024, p.86). This includes practical activities, exercises, and simulations.

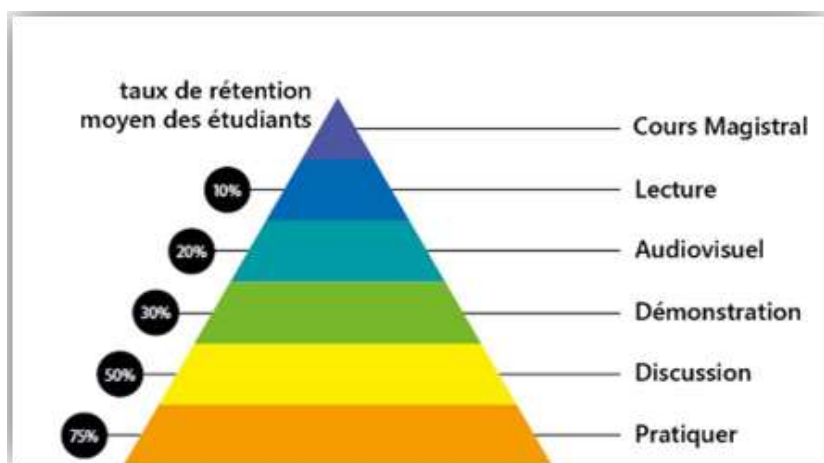


Figure1: Edgar Dale's cone of learning

4. Research methodology

To address our research problem, we conducted a study adopting a quantitative approach to pedagogically analyze the Rosetta Stone platform. A 14-item questionnaire was administered to a sample of 165 university students who had previously used the platform. The aim was to observe how the platform's practical activities integrate the principles of active learning theories to promote language acquisition while considering the needs of Moroccan university students. The analysis also took into account the researchers' experience with the platform.

5. Rosetta Stone: Multidimensional analysis

The Rosetta Stone platform aims to improve learners' language level through a full immersion method, without using the mother tongue. It offers interactive and adaptive lessons that adjust to the user's progress, providing personalized learning. The goal is to help learners develop their skills in communication, reading, and production at their own pace, with an intuitive and individualized approach. The platform offers two courses:

- ✓ Foundations: designed for levels A1 and A2
- ✓ Fluency Builder: for more advanced levels from B1 to C1+

Access to the content requires a test to identify the learner's real level and to assign the course that matches their level and addresses their language gaps.

5.1. Foundations

The content of this product focuses on the basics of the language and is designed for beginner learners. On the interface, there is a course space made of 20 units covering different topics. There is also a reading space where learners can download stories to read and listen to, a language guide to improve pronunciation, and an audio companion to develop listening skills by hearing native speakers. The Foundations interface fully respects the principle of consistency, which is one of Jakob Nielsen's 10 heuristics for evaluating the effectiveness of user interfaces (Nielsen, 1994). The principle of consistency means that the elements of a system should appear in a uniform way, reducing unnecessary cognitive overload. Language practice is done through an immersive approach, offering activities focused on listening, reading, and writing.

5.1.1. Pedagogical Analysis

5.1.1.1. Behaviorist approach

- ✓ **Stimulus-response association:** the platform offers activities linked to images and answer elements that capture the learner's attention. In the Foundations section, the image is closely connected to the answer elements. (For example: The boy is eating; an expression linked to a person who is eating).



Figure2: Image linked to an action

✓ **Repetition and reinforcement:** During the Foundations activities, we notice that similar activities are repeated, helping the learner to strengthen memory. This repetition is also seen in a feature where, when completing an activity like dragging a label to its answer, the audio instructor repeats the sentence aloud. For reinforcement, the platform provides feedback in the form of a final score to encourage the learner to repeat the activity and achieve a better score.

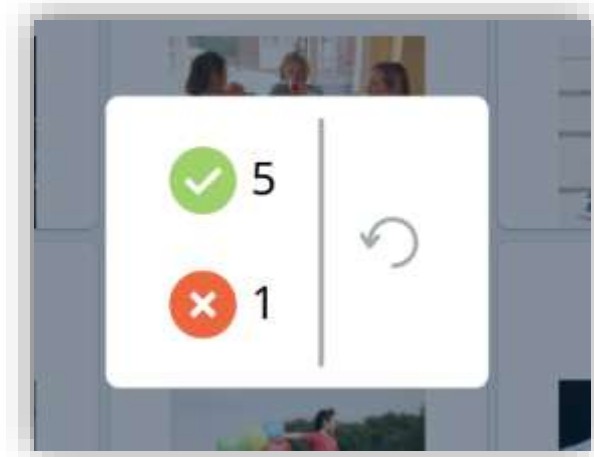


Figure3: Reinforcement by showing the final activity score

5.1.1.2. Constructivist approach

The positive part of Foundations is the variety of activities. First, for constructive learning, the course units allow learners to build knowledge step by step. Stories can be used to create meaning from context, linking the learning of expressions to narrative situations. Second, for active learning, the Foundations section includes a new “socio-constructive” element (live lessons), an important feature that gives learners the opportunity to interact directly and in real time with an instructor. For experiential learning, the Foundations part offers themes related to real-life situations (shopping, traveling, greetings, etc.).

5.1.1.3. Cognitivist approach

The positive part of Rosetta Stone in term of cognitive learning is the use of a multi-sensory approach (images, sounds, typing sentences, etc.). The platform is also well-structured, with topics organized in a gradual sequence of activities, which helps the natural process of information processing.

5.1.1.4. Connectivist approach

The presence of social interactions in Foundations confirms the principles of connectivist theory, especially the importance of connections and exchanges, allowing learners to build knowledge together while maintaining their connections.

5.2. Fluency Builder

The Fluency Builder section is characterized by rich content, covering several domains. Level B1 has 7 units, and Level C1 has 3 units (not counting additional units). A contextual difference between B+ and C1+ is that B+ focuses on common professional topics (for example, simulating hotel services) with terminology related to the specific field. C1+ focuses on more specific and specialized professional topics (for example, negotiating a contract) with vocabulary related to expert domain.

Fluency Builder has a completely different structure from Foundations. The topics are the same across levels but are redesigned for a higher level. This is seen in richer and more contextual vocabulary, including dialogues and more complex expressions. The current platform uses a more interactive approach with real-life situations. The Fluency Builder interface fully respects the principle of consistency.

5.2.1. Pedagogical analysis

5.2.1.1. Behaviorist approach

- ✓ **Stimulus-response association:** The Rosetta Stone platform presents learning activities with images linked to answer elements or dialogues. In this product, the image is initially a neutral stimulus because it has no connection with the answer elements.
- ✓ **Repetition and reinforcement:** During platform activities (for example, one activity from the B2 level unit “Practical Communications”), we notice a listening exercise that repeats. This is the behaviorist principle of repetition, which helps strengthen long-term memory. The more an activity is repeated, the more it is stored in the learner’s memory.



Figure 4: Listening activity



Figure 5: Repetitive activity

5.2.1.2. Constructivist approach

- ✓ **Active learning:** One of the strengths of the platform is active learning through a variety of activities (listening, writing, dragging labels to answers) that help learners avoid boredom.
- ✓ **Experiential learning:** The platform offers realistic learning situations based on context, for example, units related to professional activities (when the learner acts as a store salesperson). This means activities are sometimes grounded in real-life contexts, helping learners transfer knowledge to daily situations.
- ✓ **Autonomous and flexible learning:** The Rosetta Stone platform allows learners to progress at their own pace without time constraints. Users have full freedom to choose units and lessons according to their interests.

The negative part is the absence of *socio-constructive* activities. Unlike Foundations, which encourages exchanges and collective knowledge building through live lessons, Fluency Builder uses a more individual approach without interaction between learners and instructors. It remains more behaviorist rather than socio-constructivist.

5.2.1.3. Cognitivist approach

The Rosetta Stone platform uses several methods to stimulate cognitive processes. First, it uses elements such as images, sounds, and colors to stimulate the learner’s visual perception. Then, it offers a variety of activities to reduce the feeling of monotony. The platform fully supports the cognitive approach by engaging the key mental processes of language learning through:

- ✓ **Active information processing:** The activities present complex information in the form of fast dialogues, texts, and simulation videos. This pushes the learner to react immediately, make quick decisions, and stay involved in the learning process. The combination of audio

and visual elements immerses the learner in real-life situations, where they do not just memorize passively but participate actively in the educational process ("Mieux apprendre grâce à l'apprentissage actif," 2024).

- ✓ **Organization of cognitive schemes:** The Rosetta Stone platform organizes cognitive patterns through an immersive and multisensory approach. This approach aims to immerse the learner in realistic situations using active learning elements, helping them develop their skills in almost real-life contexts (Mazenc, 2024).

5.2.1.4. Connectivist approach

The Rosetta Stone platform, while effective for constructive and individual learning, limits the integration of connectivist principles because of the lack of social interactions and access to external resources.

6. Conclusion

Based on our analysis of the different products and elements of the Rosetta Stone platform, it is clear that it uses an immersive teaching method that combines three main active learning theories. The behaviorist approach is very present through stimulus-response association and repetition. The constructivist approach appears in realistic learning situations and gradual knowledge building. The cognitive approach is also used with visual and audio elements that help learners process and remember information. However, the connectivist approach is missing in the Fluency Builder section and less present in Foundations. The platform focuses on individualized learning but does not give enough space for collaborative work in a socio-constructivist perspective.

In general, Rosetta Stone is a platform that is very strong in immersion and progressive learning design for individual learning, but it could improve by adding more collaborative and interactive learning dynamics, and by reducing the strong behaviorist aspect to provide a more complete learning experience.

- ✓ **A mainly behaviorist approach:** learning relies too much on repetition and stimulus-response, which can make learners feel bored or discouraged because of the excessive repetition, even if the activities are varied.
- ✓ **Strictly immersive approach:** the activities use only immersion, without any translation help. This can be a problem for learners who need more understanding.
- ✓ **Completely learner-centered design:** the lack of social features, especially in Fluency Builder, can make learners feel isolated, which goes against the socio-constructivist theory that sees social interaction as essential for learning.
- ✓ **Limited feedback:** feedback is mostly text-based or scores, without detailed explanations of mistakes or suggestions for improvement.
- ✓ **Cultural sensitivity:** in some learning situations, we noticed the use of terms that do not match the cultural references of Moroccan learners, which can make the learning experience less relevant to their cultural reality.

6. Recommendations

Based on the limits observed in the two Rosetta Stone products, we propose some suggestions to improve the platform's performance:

- ✓ **Applying multidimensional learning approaches:** the platform could include different learning strategies and avoid relying too much on the behaviorist theory, so that learners do not feel stuck or bored with repetitive and monotonous activities.

- ✓ **Dynamic adjustment of difficulty:** the platform could offer levels of difficulty that automatically change according to each learner's skills, ensuring faster progress during moments of stagnation when repetition is still present.
- ✓ **Making immersion more flexible:** the platform could allow learners to turn on subtitles or translations when they need them.
- ✓ **Developing social learning:** the platform could add social features such as discussion forums, exchange groups, etc., to encourage interactions between learners of different levels and promote collaborative learning.
- ✓ **Improving feedback quality:** the platform could provide more detailed and personalized feedback, explaining mistakes and suggesting ways to improve.
- ✓ **Adapting content to the cultural context:** the platform should provide content that matches the Moroccan cultural context, adjusting vocabulary and topics to the real level of Moroccan learners.

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