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ARTICLE

The Problem of Translating Contemporary Didactic Terminology in Algeria: A Conceptual and Terminological Approach

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Doi Serial

<https://doi.org/10.56334/sei/8.6.75>

Keywords

Translation, terminology, concept, Didactic term, Algeria.

Abstract

The specialized school lexicon is one of the most important pedagogical tools that support the learner's linguistic and scientific knowledge. Both teachers and students rely on it to overcome difficulties in understanding the content of various didactic curricula. In practice, the didactic field presents many challenges. Some of these are operational, such as issues of communicative teaching and the situations that arise during instruction. Among the most significant of these is the problem of didactic terminology. This issue has become increasingly visible in recent times. The latest didactic reforms in Algeria have played a key role in highlighting the importance of translating didactic terminology in specialized school dictionaries. These reforms have prompted the transfer and translation of didactic terms to and from Arabic.

Citation

Slah S., Nemra M. (2025). The Problem of Translating Contemporary Didactic Terminology in Algeria: A Conceptual and Terminological Approach. *Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems*, 8(6), 688-694; doi:10.56334/sei/8.6.75. <https://imcra-az.org/archive/364-science-education-and-innovations-in-the-context-of-modern-problems-issue-6-volvi-2025.html>

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Received: 01.08.2024

Accepted: 25.12.2025

Published: 20.05.2025 (available online)

1. Introduction

Discussing the issue of didactic terminology—both in its placement within specialized school dictionaries and its usage after being translated into Arabic—leads us to a key question: What is the current state of translating didactic terms from French into Arabic? Have the authors of specialized school dictionaries managed to overcome the challenge of the multiple Arabic equivalents for a single Western term?

The same difficulty seen in the field of linguistics with regard to translating contemporary linguistic terminology—where translation from foreign languages into Arabic remains unstable—has also affected the field of didactics and its terminological lexicon. Our observation of this issue is based on our academic specialization and direct engagement with it. The problem began to appear within didactics research for several reasons, the most important of which is the limited attention given to didactic studies in

universities. This lack of focus is due to a stronger preference for linguistic studies over didactic research in Arabic language departments.

2. The Concept of "Terminology": Linguistically and Technically

In linguistic dictionaries, the word terminology (in Arabic: al-muṣṭalaḥ) comes from the root Ṣ-L-Ḥ. According to Lisān al-ʿArab, the term ṣalāḥ means the opposite of corruption, and iṣlāḥ is the opposite of causing harm. Ṣulḥ refers to reconciliation among people; it means peace or accord. The verbs iṣṭalaḥū, ṣālaḥū, iṣlaḥū, taṣālaḥū, and iṣṣālaḥū all refer to mutual agreement and settlement...¹.

In the Arabic dictionary of Larousse, we find the word (term) denoting² :

Definition of "Ṣulḥ" (Reconciliation)

Ṣulḥ refers to peaceful settlement and agreement. The expression "hum lanā ṣulḥ" means that they are at peace with us, or they are reconciled. It also means the end of conflict or war—peace.

Scientific Terminology According to Mahmoud Fahmi Hegazi

Mahmoud Fahmi Hegazi defines a scientific term as a word or a phrase, but not a long descriptive sentence. A term should not describe the thing fully or suggest all of its features. It is not necessary for the term to reflect all the qualities of the concept it refers to. Instead, a term should represent at least one key feature of the concept. A term cannot, from the beginning, cover every aspect of the concept. Over time, the original linguistic meaning fades, and the technical meaning becomes the dominant one. Eventually, the term refers directly to the full concept through its accepted use"³.

Youssef Oughlissi defines a term as: "A linguistic sign (either a single word or a phrase) with a single, unambiguous meaning. It is somewhat removed from its original meaning and refers to a clear, specific critical concept that is either

already agreed upon by specialists in a given field, or is expected to gain such agreement"⁴.

3. Translation

Translation is the transfer of a foreign term into Arabic in meaning, not in form. Translation from foreign languages into Arabic follows two main approaches. The first is to look at the word in isolation and translate it based on its direct meaning. This is known as literal translation. The second approach is to consider the entire sentence, understand its meaning, and express it using an equivalent sentence in the target language. This is called sense-for-sense translation.

Translators often use a combination of both methods when transferring terms into Arabic. In doing so, they aim to preserve the meaning of the original text, while also respecting the grammar and usage rules of both the source and the target languages.

4. The "Didactic" Term

In the last decades of the twentieth century, there was a global effort to improve the performance of didactic systems. This movement led to a new way of thinking about the teaching-learning process. It focused more seriously on the three key elements of the process: the teacher, the learner, and knowledge. It also recognized the interaction between these three elements and their openness to the natural and social environments, as well as how they are influenced by them.

This shift revealed the limitations of the older view, which assumed that having knowledge alone was enough to teach effectively.

The term didactics in Arabic comes from the French word Didactique, which itself is derived from the Greek word Didaktikos. In ancient times, the word referred to a kind of poetry similar to didactic verse. This form of poetry aimed to make learning easier by presenting information in verse form, such as in traditional poetic texts used to teach grammar or religious law⁵.

At first, researchers understood didactics as a synonym for the art of teaching. Comenius was

¹-Ibn Manzur, Lisān al-ʿArab, entry (reconciliation), Vol. 8, Vol. 28, Dar Al-Maaref, Cairo, Egypt, New Edition, no date, P 2479.

²-Khalil Al-Jar, The Modern Arabic Dictionary of Larousse, entry (reconciliation), Larousse Library, Paris, France, 1st ed., 1973, P 749.

³-Mahmoud Fahmy Hegazy The Linguistic Foundations of Terminology, Gharib Library, Cairo, Egypt, 1st ed., 1991, p15.

⁴- Youssef and Ghalisi, The Problem of Terminology in the New Arab Critical Discourse, Ikhtilaf Publications, Algeria, 1st ed., 2008, P 24.

⁵-See: Muhammad Al-Darij, Introduction to the Science of Teaching (Analysis of the Educational Process), Qasr Al-Kutub, Blida, Algeria, 1st ed., 2000, p 03.

the first to use the term over three hundred and fifty years ago in his book *The Great Didactic*¹.

The concept of didactics as the art of teaching remained in use until the mid-nineteenth century. At that time, Johann Friedrich Herbart (F. Herbart, 1841) established its scientific foundations as a theory of instruction. It became a theory concerned with teaching and learning activities aimed at providing learners with various types of knowledge².

With the rise of the modern didactic school at the beginning of the last century, led by its founder John Dewey (J. Dewey, 1959), greater emphasis was placed on the role of the learner in the teaching-learning process. Dewey considered didactics a theory of learning, not a theory of teaching³.

The term didactics is a derived noun from the word teaching (ta'lim). It originates from the root 'ilm (knowledge), meaning to assign a characteristic or sign to indicate something⁴.

The term didactics has multiple Arabic equivalents due to the variety of translation approaches. While some researchers prefer the direct transliteration *Didactique* (Didactic), others have proposed different terms such as the science of teaching, the science of education, teaching methodology, or instructional science. Among these, ta'limiyya (didactics) is the most commonly used and widely accepted in didactic literature⁵.

The concept of didactics has evolved. It no longer refers to poetic or artistic systems, as earlier definitions suggested. Rather, it has become a science with its own subject and methodology, similar to other scientific fields. Its work focuses on organizing, analyzing, and monitoring the teaching-learning process. It also involves designing appropriate curricula and ensuring their implementation.

Smith (1962) defines didactics as "a branch of education concerned with summarizing the

components and relationships between didactic situations, their subjects, and the means and methods involved, all within a pedagogical context. In other words, its focus is on planning the pedagogical situation and on monitoring and adjusting it when necessary"⁶.

And Mialari knows it (Mialaret, 1979) as: "A set of teaching methods, approaches and techniques."⁷.

As for Brusso(Brousseau, 1983) believes that the basic subject of education is: "studying the conditions that must be met in the situations or problems that are proposed to the student in order to allow him to demonstrate how he operates his ideal concepts or rejects them "⁸.

Didactic also means: "The scientific study of teaching methods and techniques, and of the forms of organizing the learning situations to which the learner is subjected in order to achieve the desired goals "⁹.

From the previous definitions, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Didactics is an organized scientific study that has evolved from an artistic practice to a scientific discipline. It aims to organize the teaching-learning process with all its components and foundations, including the curriculum, competencies, methods, didactic tools, pedagogical assessment, and didactic interventions.

- Didactics is an independent science built on rules and theories. It draws on multiple fields of knowledge, such as applied linguistics, psychology, education sciences, and sociology.

5. The term (Competence):

The Algerian didactic system recently adopted the term *compétence*, which is widely discussed in didactic literature. However, its Arabic translation varies. In Moroccan, Tunisian, and some unofficial Algerian publications, it is translated as *kifāyah* (sufficiency). In contrast, official Algerian documents issued by the Ministry of National Education, as well as most Algerian publications, use the term *kafā'ah* (efficiency).

¹- Jean Maurice Posier: *La Didactique de France*, presse Universitaire de France, France, 1 year ago, 2002, p 07.

²-See: Muhammad Al-Darj, *A Return to the Definition of Didactics or Teaching Science as an Independent Science*, Journal of Educational Sciences, Al-Najah New Press, Casablanca, Morocco, Issue: 47, March 2011, p11.

³-See: Muhammad Al-Darj, *A Return to the Definition of Didactics or the Science of Teaching as an Independent Science*, p11.

⁴-See: Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, entry (knowledge), Vol. 4, Part 34, p 3084.

⁵-See: Bashir Ibrir, *Teaching Texts Between Theory and Application*, Modern World of Books, Irbid, Jordan, 1st ed., 2007, p18.

⁶- General Education and Psychology, Special training for primary school teachers within the framework of the temporary apparatus (distance training), p 02.

⁷- The same reference, p02.

⁸- The same, p02.

⁹- Bashir Ibrir, *In the Education of Scientific Discourse*, Al-Tawasul Magazine, Badji Mokhtar University, Annaba, Algeria, Issue: 08, June 2001, p 70.

The Moroccan scholar Abd al-Rahman al-Toumi (2003) addressed this matter scientifically. He showed, based on various linguistic references, that *kafā'ah* means a counterpart or equivalent, while *kifāyah* refers to sufficiency or achieving the desired purpose. In his linguistic conclusion, he confirmed that many dictionaries support *kifāyah*—derived from the verb *kafā* (enough)—as the accurate term¹.

The Algerian researcher Meziani Alounnas prefers using the term "capacity" rather than "competence" in the field of education. He argues that "competence" refers specifically to an elite group, excluding other learners. This, in his view, makes education elitist and neglects the principle of individual differences among students².

The two Algerian researchers, Muhammad bin Yahya Zakaria and Abbad Masoud, confirm that: "Sufficiency is more eloquent, broader, more comprehensive, and clearer than the term efficiency in the field of the teaching-learning process, as sufficiency means achieving the goals and desired results with the least costs and the least effort, and at the same time means the ratio between the inputs and outputs of learning, so it means the quantitative aspect and the qualitative aspect together at the same time."³ While efficiency represents only the quantitative aspect.⁴

In Arabic, the term "kafa'a" (competence) is traditionally used to mean resemblance or equivalence. The Cairo Arabic Language Academy has not approved the use of "kuf" to mean strength or ability. The Arab Academy in Damascus has also rejected this usage. It criticized the expression "so-and-so is kuf" for this position, stating that "kuf" only means "equal" or "similar." It referred to the Quranic verse: "He neither begets nor is born, and there is none equal to Him" (Surah Al-Ikhlās, 3–4). The cor-

rect usage, according to the academy, is to say "the person has the required capacity."⁵

For all these reasons, we have chosen to use the term capacity instead of competence as a pedagogical and linguistic concept in this study. In doing so, we move beyond the common yet incorrect translation of the French term *compétence* that is widespread in our context.

According to Lisan al-Arab, the verb *kafā* means "to take charge of something" or "to handle a matter." One says, "*istakfaytuhu amran fakafāniyah*"—meaning, "I entrusted him with a task, and he fulfilled it." It is also said, "*kafāka hādha al-amr*"—"this matter is sufficient for you." The word *kufāh* refers to attendants or servants who carry out tasks; it is the plural of *kāfin*. The expression "*kafā al-rajul kifāyah*" means "the man fulfilled the task," and he is described as *kāfin* or *kufā*⁶.

In the Hadith, it is stated: "Whoever recites the last two verses of Surah Al-Baqarah at night, they will suffice him." This has been interpreted to mean that the verses make up for the night prayer. Others have said that they represent the acceptable portion of recitation for night worship. Another interpretation is that the verses protect the reader from harm and guard against misfortune.

In another Hadith, it is said: "God will grant you victory, and God will suffice you," meaning that God will spare you from battle through the victory He grants⁷.

It is worth noting that the Holy Qur'an used derivatives of the word (sufficiency) in many verses in the Holy Qur'an, including the words of God Almighty: "And We have sent you to mankind as a messenger, and sufficient is God as Witness (79)"⁸ That is, the testimony of God Almighty is sufficient and there is no need for anything else. And His statement also: "Is it not sufficient for your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness?"⁹ God is sufficient as a witness over the actions and words of His servants.

Therefore, the word "sufficiency" in the Arabic language means doing something in the best way, and this is by dispensing with others.

¹- See: Abdel Karim Gharib, *Pedagogy of Integration (Concepts and Didactic Approaches to Integrative Practices)*, Alam Al-Tarbiya Publications/New Success Press, Casablanca, Morocco, 1st ed.1, 2010, p175.

²-See: Meziani Lounes, *Between Efficiency and Competence in Educational Institutions*, Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Special Issue: Forum on Training in Competencies in Education, University of Kasdi Merbah, Ouargla, Algeria.2011, p 56.

³- Muhammad bin Yahya Zakaria and Abbad Masoud, *Teaching through the objectives approach, the competency approach, projects, and problem solving*. National Institute for Training and Improving Education Personnel, El Harrach, Algeria, 2006. p 70.

⁴-See: the same reference, p 70.

⁵-See: Abdel Rahman Al-Toumi, *Competencies (a systematic approach)*, Dar Al-Hilal, Oujda, Morocco, 1st ed.3, 2005, p 28.

⁶-Ibn Manzūr, *Lisan al-Arab*, entry (*kafa*), Vol. 5, Part 43, p 3907.

⁷- The same source, p 3907.

⁸- Surah An-Nisa, verse 79.

⁹- Surah Fussilat, verse 53.

The word "competence" was established in the French language in the late fifteenth century, and it means the legitimacy and authority of public institutions to address various issues. Since the late eighteenth century, its meaning has been extended to include individuals as well, as it has come to refer to every ability resulting from knowledge and experience¹. The concept of the word (competence) appeared at the end of the nineteenth century in the field of work, then crystallized at the beginning of the last century when it was used in the field of vocational training, where its use was linked to professional competence, and it also became linked to military training and combat maneuvers, offensive and defensive, then it was developed and finally employed in the field of education, as it became closely linked to the construction of didactic curricula, which is what was called in the didactic environment the competency approach.²

It is worth noting that no one can claim to give a final definition of sufficiency³. But as Lepoterrf described it (G. Le Boterf) in the chameleon concept⁴, This indicates the diversity and multiplicity of its meanings. As for Berno (F. Pernoud) describes it as a mercurial concept⁵, The concept of sufficiency, as Bernard Rie Rie explains, Bernard Rey) does not settle on one definition but rather knows many different challenges⁶.

Philip Carey is considered (Philippe Carré (1994) states that competence is: "everything that allows for the solution of professional problems within a specific context by mobilizing and re-

cruiting diverse capabilities in an integrated manner"⁷.

Competence, according to Chomsky, is: "the ability of the ideal speaker or listener to produce, from implicit rules, an infinite number of sentences that guide the process of speaking"⁸.

Chomsky is considered the first contemporary researcher to use the concept of "linguistic competence," which he contrasted with the concept of "theA"Linguistic disease" thus forming a duality similar to the duality of "language and speech" according to De Saussure.

Xavier Rogers (Xavier Rogiers) Director of Bief*: "The possibility of a person mobilizing, in an inward manner, an integrated set of resources, with the aim of solving a class of problem situations"⁹.

Andre Jelly (André Guillet): "It is related to the effective use of knowledge and skills to accomplish something, as a result of professional experience, and its occurrence is indicated by the level of performance related to it, and it is observable based on effective behaviors within the activity to which it is related"¹⁰.

Philippe Pernod ((Philippe Pernoud): "The ability to act effectively in a given type of situation"¹¹.

Center for Pedagogical Studies for Experimentation and Guidance (CEPEC): "A system of conceptual and skill-based (practical) knowledge, organized in the form of procedural plans that enable, within a set of situations, the identification of a task-problem and its solution through appropriate performance"¹².

Quebec Ministry of Education, Canada: "It is the ability to perform a complex task, which depends on the summoning of a set of energies

¹- See: Joachim Dols and others, The Puzzle of Competencies in Education, trans. Izz al-Din al-Khattabi and Abdel Karim Gharib, Alam al-Tarbiya Publications/Al-Najah al-Jadida Press, Casablanca, Morocco, 1st ed., 2005, p 29.

²- See: Khaled Labsis, Scientific, Technical and Transparent Teaching with a Competencies and Objectives Approach, Dar Al Tanweer, Algeria, 1st ed. 2004, pp 100-99.

³- See: Philippe Mériot et al., Issues and Stakes of Modern Pedagogy, trans. Ezzedine El Khattabi and Abdel Karim Ghrib, Alam El Tarbiya Publications/New Success Press, Casablanca, Morocco, 1st ed. 1, 2013, p: 121.

⁴- Rachid Al-Kanbour, Competencies formulated in training, Regional Academy of Education and Training, Eastern Region, Oujda-Angad District, Morocco, D.T., Academic Year: 2005-2006, p3.

⁵- Christian Bosman and others, What future for competencies, translated and arranged by: Abdul Karim Gharib, Alam Al-Tarbiya Publications / New Success Press, Casablanca, Morocco, 1st ed. 1, 2005, p182.

⁶- See: Abdel Latif Al-Jabri, Integration and Evaluation of Basic Competencies, Reviewed and presented by: Abdul Karim Gharib, Publications of the World of Education, New Success Press, Casablanca, Morocco, 1st ed, 2009, p 34.

⁷- Muhammad Al-Darj, Competencies in Education (Towards a Scientific Foundation for the Integrated Curriculum), p19.

⁸- Noam Chomsky, Aspects of Grammar Theory, trans. Mur-tada Jawad Baqir, University of Basra, Basra, Iraq, 1st ed., 1983, p 28.

⁹- Muhammad Al-Durajj and others, Dictionary of Curriculum Terms and Teaching Methods, Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO). Alecsso, Arabization Coordination Office in the Arab World, Rabat, Morocco, 1st ed., 2011, p 53.

¹⁰- André Guillet, Developer of competencies, ESF éditeurs, Paris, France, 2nd edition, p13.

¹¹- Philippe Pernot, Building Competencies from School, translated by Lahcen Boutklari, Dar Al-Najah Al-Jadida, Casablanca, Morocco, 1st ed., 2004, p12.

¹²- Muhammad Al-Darj, Competencies in education for a scientific foundation for the integrated curriculum. Publications of the Knowledge for All Series, Rabat, Morocco, Issue 16, 2nd ed., October 2003, p 29.

and their effective use"¹.

Egypt and some Arab and Gulf countries: "It is an acquired skill, and it is dealt with accordingly in developing curricula, in the teaching and learning process, and also in assessing students' achievements"².

Algerian Educational Dictionary: "A cognitive or skill-based activity practiced in situations, or it is a possibility for students to employ a set of actual and behavioral knowledge to solve a situation-problem, to ensure that the student has acquired competence. The teacher asks him to solve a situation-problem"³.

From the Above

From the previous discussion, it can be concluded that competency is the learner's ability to mobilize and apply an organized set of resources, capacities, dispositions, and skills to respond to a complex problem situation or to complete a specific task. This applies to situations both inside and outside the school environment.

6. Conclusion

Despite the complexity of addressing the issues raised in this study, we have aimed, through this article, to highlight the importance of the problem of translating didactic terminology from French into Arabic. The following key findings have emerged:

- The difficulty of translating didactic terms becomes clear when we examine educational dictionaries and pedagogical glossaries. These often show multiple uses of different terms to express a single concept.
- Many linguistic studies confirm that effective translation depends on preserving contextual meaning. This must be done using a clear and concise linguistic form that respects the structure of the target language.
- didactic terminology follows the same principles that apply to translating terms in other specialized fields.

- One of the main barriers to fully understanding didactic content is the terminology itself and the issues surrounding it, especially the meaning it takes on once translated into Arabic. This was particularly evident in the case of terms like "competence" and "didactic."

- Translation serves as a central mechanism for achieving knowledge integration in its various forms.

- The act of translating scientific works and linguistic studies is influenced not only by linguistic factors, but also by epistemological and cultural ones.

¹ - Mohamed Belkabar and others, Modern Approaches and Pedagogies, Central Coordination of Teacher Training Centers, Rabat, Morocco, 1st edition, academic year:2004-2005, p12.

² - Mohamed Ben Fatima, Reference Document on Twenty-First Century Competencies, National Center for Technology in Tunisia, 1st ed.2013, p11.

³ - Unique Shanan and Mustafa Hijrisi, Educational Dictionary, Correction and revision: Othman Ait Mahdi, National Center for Educational Documentation, Algeria, dt., dt.,S 28.

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