

**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**

**Abou-El-Kacem Saadallah University –Algiers 2-**

**Faculty of Foreign Languages**

**Department of English**



**Dissertati**

**on Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of Magister in**

**Linguistics and Didactics**

# **The Competency-Based Approach in the Algerian High School: Analyzing Constraints and Obstacles**

A Case Study of Three High Schools in the Wilaya of Chlef: Bennouna Mabrouka (El Marsa), Zerrouki E'Chikh (Taougrite), and Abdelkader Salhi (E'Chorfa)

**Presented by:**

**Fathi DJEROUANE**

**Supervised by:**

**Prof. Zoulikha BENSAFI**

**January, 2018**

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation and that reference or acknowledgment is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

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## Dedication

*To my parents, to my grandfather and the soul of my grandmother;*

*To my wife and her family;*

*To my beautiful daughter Razane;*

*To my brothers and sisters;*

*To uncle Ali and his wife;*

*To uncle Moussa and my friend Ali;*

*To you my friends wherever you are.*

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## **Abstract**

Many countries worldwide have launched reforms in their educational systems to be in harmony with the ever-evolving challenges and demands of an increasingly globalized world. In Algeria, the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) has been recently adopted to enhance the quality of education and push learners to take charge of their own learning by being autonomous and the center of the teaching-learning process.

This work is a tentative analysis to identify a number of possible obstacles and constraints which hindered the correct implementation of the CBA in the Algerian High School after thirteen years since its adoption. To reach this end, a case study was conducted in three High Schools in the Wilaya of Chlef: Bennouna MABROUKA (EL Marsa), ZERROUKI E'Chikh (Taougrite), and Abdelkader SALHI (E'Chorfa) relying on a number of sources and research methods for data collection. A questionnaire was administered to 340 SE3 learners, another one to 96 English teachers, classroom observation, and interviews with Secondary School Headmasters, Principals, Counselors, and Assistants were used.

The data collected from the previously mentioned research instruments were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The triangulation of results revealed that neither learners nor teachers were ready to adapt their teaching practices to the principles and objectives which underlie the Competency-Based Education. Accordingly, this research emphasizes that mastering in depth the theoretical and practical underpinnings of the CBA is crucial to achieve the objectives of the Algerian educational reform.

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## **Abbreviations**

AECM: Algerian English Curriculum for Middle School

AEF: Algerian English Framework

ALM: Audio-Lingual Method

ASTP: Army Specialized Training Programme

B1: Secondary Education, Year 1

B1+: Secondary Education, Year 2 and 3

CA: Communicative Approach

CBA: Competency-Based Approach

CBE: Competency-Based Education

CBLT: Competency-Based Language Teaching

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

DM: Direct Method

DTT: Didactic Transposition Theory

EFL: English as Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as Second Language

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

FL: Foreign Language

FLA: Foreign Language Acquisition

FLL: Foreign Language Learning

FLT: Foreign Language Teaching

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

ICTs: Information and Communication Technologies

KT: Knowledge Transfer

Ls: Learners

MNE: Ministry of National Education

NA: Natural Approach

PES: Professeur d'Enseignement Secondaire

SE 1: Secondary Education, Year 1

SE 2: Secondary Education, Year 2

SE 3: Secondary Education, Year 3

T: Teacher

TBA: Task-Based Approach

TBLT: Task-Based Language Teaching

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

TC: Target Culture



# General Introduction

## General introduction

For any responsible authorities in the world, enhancing the educational system is a priority as education is the tool by which the leaders can form the future generations. Hence, since 1962, Algeria has undertaken a series of actions in its policy towards education to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of schooling. Following the same path as many ambitious countries in the world, Algeria has adopted a new educational reform built upon structural functionalist assumptions that focus on particular problems/issues in order to improve the teaching-learning quality. Such conviction has taken place when the different methods and approaches that were implemented by the Ministry of National Education proved to be inadequate to face the new challenges and demands brought by Globalization, and advanced technology the world is witnessing. These circumstances imposed logic on nations to modernize and update their educational systems if they want to remain in pace.

For these reasons, in 2001, Algeria set a contemporary educational reform that touched almost all the levels related to this field: Primary, Fundamental, Secondary, and even University education. In this work, we are interested in Secondary Education.

So, Algeria after making an end to a purely French system in the 1970s, the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was immediately replaced by the Audio-lingual Method (ALM). Yet, due to the behaviorist approach that relies on the principle of *stimulus-response* where the learner was considered as a machine which responds to the teacher's stimuli to learn, a clear weakness to form fluent learners who can communicate emerged as far as language learning is concerned. Calls for change have arrived, in the 1980s, the Communicative Approach (CA) paved its place with the 'teaching with objectives method'. However, little was done to prepare the Algerian classrooms to cope with this teaching method, mainly in terms of classroom density and teaching materials/tools, and therefore, a total failure was declared.

After a lengthy marathon, the Academic Year of 2003-2004 seemed promising with the adoption of the Competency-Based Approach as an educational revolution. This approach termed CBA to refer to the teaching-learning theory which appears in the teaching process of any subject be it Mathematics, Physics, Biology, Arabic, etc. While the term CBLT which can be found in writings about the topic to refer to *the Competency Based Language Teaching* is restricted to the teaching method of foreign languages, EFL in our case.

Within this trend, much emphasis is given to language use rather than teaching/learning the language system in isolation; that means developing the learner's linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competency. Consequently, moving from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness so as to form efficient FL learners who can communicate, understand, and be understood when interacting with native/native-like speakers, or elsewhere. Practically, communicative competence as a new approach is far reaching since all the teaching practices stop at the level of mastering the linguistic knowledge.

### **The problematic**

More than a decade has elapsed since the new reform has been introduced. Yet, the vast majority of teachers are still encountering problems to adapt the teaching practices with the objectives and principles of the new approach. Now, it is obvious that simply mandating change is not sufficient to successfully achieve advances in both students and teachers progress/development. The resistance attitude is expected since accepting blindly the change by the teachers as it is supposed to with little or no regard to their expertise or professional options is somehow difficult.

Therefore, the current research, in connection with the English language teaching/learning sheds light on the obstacles and constraints that prevent the implementation of CBA in the Algerian High School after 13 years of sustained efforts. Further, it is an analysis of the reasons that stand against the attainment of the new competencies (interactive, interpretive, and productive) stated in this approach, prescribed by the syllabus designers, and declared by the Ministry of National Education. The present work aims on the one hand at identifying the obstacles and constraints which cause learners' and teachers' failure revolving around three constituents that are intimately linked; i.e., the teachers' training, the learners' attitudes and motivation towards FL learning, and the devised teaching materials. On the other hand, this study tends to show the tight rapport between these three didactic poles and hence their influences on the success or failure of the Competency Based approach implementation.

### **Research questions and hypotheses**

This research runs after identifying the main difficulties that teachers and learners face to successfully adapt CBA principles in the classroom. To reach such an objective, we have devised the following questions that we seek to answer throughout this piece of work:

## **1/ Questions**

- a- What are the obstacles and constraints that hinder teachers to correctly implement the C.B.A and then cause a comeback to traditional practices?
- b- How do learners' motivation and attitudes affect EFL learning and thus the teachers' way of teaching?
- c- Do CBA principles and objectives go hand in hand with the designed teaching materials to respond to learners' interests and needs?

## **2/ Hypotheses**

The previously asked questions led the researcher to present the following hypotheses:

**H1):** We hypothesize that the failure of teachers to cope with the CBA could be linked to the theoretical and practical aspects related to their training courses on the new approach.

**H2):** We hypothesize that the learners are not interested in FL learning, and thus show little or no motivation towards English language learning which in turn influences the teachers' way of teaching.

**H3):** We hypothesize that the utilized teaching materials do not suit the prospects of EFL learners and the CBA's objectives.

## **Data collection**

### **1. Qualitative data**

#### **1.1 Textbook analysis**

A tentative analysis of the **SE3** textbook, **New Prospects**, to see whether the materials suggested by the designers of the textbook fits both learners' interests, needs, age...and are in harmony with the objectives of the new approach.

#### **1.2 Classroom observations**

Classroom observation is used as a supportive instrument to obtain data in this study. We consider classroom observation among the essential research methods that permits the researcher to directly see the classroom without relying on what they say. Therefore, a certain amount of objectivity is reached in such data when compared to second hand self-report ones (Robson, 1993).

On this basis, several classroom observations are to be recorded and analyzed; DTT (Didactic Transposition Theory). These kinds of observations enable us to pay close attention to teachers' implementation of the objectives of the new approach. The latter will not focus only on the learners' output, but on the process that leads to it as well. Thus, we will be able to verify if the theoretical principles of the CBA are mastered by their users (teachers), and therefore, effectively implemented to better acquire the *know-how* by the learners to become effective and competent language users outside the classroom in real-life situations. So, the recorded sessions represent a suitable opportunity to validate or invalidate the transfer of the theoretical concepts into daily class practices.

## **2. Quantitative data**

### **2.1. Questionnaires**

Using questionnaires in our case is supposed to be fruitful since they provide us with a broad range of information that suit the objective of our research.

*Questionnaire 1* will normally consist of 23 close-ended and open-ended questions given to Secondary School teachers regarding the methodology and the learners' didactic triangulation: the Teacher, the Learner and the Knows. Our aim, thus, is to understand:

- the informants' viewpoints about the CBA implementation;
- their training itinerary;
- their professional data;
- their expectations.

This sample will concern teachers of English at High School level from different regions in the Wilaya of Chlef and other Wilayas, to see in what way the environment affects the teaching-learning process and English language acquisition.

*Questionnaire 2* will be directed to 3AS learners to check their attitudes towards learning English and the use of this language. We mainly concentrated on:

- learners' attitudes towards English Language Learning;
- their views concerning the English people and their culture;
- their attitudes towards their teachers' performance;

- their motivation towards English Language Learning.

To avoid ambiguity, the questions are delivered in a simple form with Arabic translation to be understood by the informants.

## **2.2. Interviews**

Interviews are an instrument I shall use in order to support my findings. I shall conduct some interviews with a number of High School Directors, Principals, Counselors, and Assistants to answer sixteen questions related to the recently adopted approach, the MNE, the Baccalaureate Examination, and the teachers' and learners' level.

### **Data analysis**

The results obtained from the SE3 textbook analysis and observations will be carefully described in details to make matters clear. Concerning the questionnaires and the interviews, the process will be different, i.e., the collected data should be translated in numbers and percentages to explain any kind of statistics. This method of analysis is widely used in similar researches by famous scholars, experts and theorists as in Richards & Rodgers, (2001), Allright, (2002), and other researchers whenever quantitative data are there. I believe such pattern of analysis will simplify and make data interpretations easier for both researchers and readers of this work since everything will appear in numerical data/information.

### **The organization of the research**

The present research is divided into four chapters:

Chapter one deals with the literature review. Education is a diverse and complex field of enquiry which has direct bearing on many facets of language teaching. This chapter intends to show the history of the different approaches and methods which have marked foreign language teaching.

Chapter two is divided into two parts: part one will be a presentation of the Competency-based Approach, its objectives, the targeted competencies, the teacher's and learner's roles, and the definition of some key concepts which have relation with the CBA implementation. However part two will tackle the CBA in the Algerian Educational context, the expected outcomes, the implementation of the Competency-based Approach to the 3AS syllabus and the Algerian Framework for 3AS.

Chapter three includes, on the one hand, the research methodology, the field work, and the criteria of selection of the subjects, the schools and the tools used for the purpose of the research work. On the other hand, it will

focus on the collection of data so as to answer the questions and hypotheses put beforehand.

Chapter four provides analyses and interpretations to the data gathered in the previous chapter to come to some conclusions and suggest solutions to better the current situation that education in Algeria witnesses.

# Chapter I

## An Overview on the different Language Teaching Methods and Approaches

### Introduction

We feel it is necessary to state the necessity to present these different approaches and methods for they have by and large been used and experimented by a vast majority of Algerian schools previously. It is attested that the Ministry of National Education has always recommended that the teaching of English should be adequately handled. Hence, new methods and approaches were ipso facto experimented by Inspectors and teachers.

Moreover, the complexity of contexts and other issues led to the conclusion that the panacea of a single, universal, optimum method for teaching and learning modern languages does not exist. Instead, teachers now acknowledge the need to adopt an informed eclectic approach, incorporating elements from the range of methods available. Most language teaching today focuses on oral communication, although many Higher Education programmes still place greater emphasis upon grammatical mastery and reading. Klapper (2001) strengthens this view by claiming that:

...there is, as Gebhard et al.(1990:16) argue, no convincing evidence from pedagogic research, including research into second language instruction, that there is any universally or 'best' way to teach. Although, clearly, particular approaches are likely to prove more effective in certain situations, blanket prescription is difficult to support theoretically. The art of teaching does not lie in accessing a checklist of skills but rather in knowing which approach to adopt with different students, in different curricular circumstances or in different cultural settings. (p.17)

### 1. Defining concepts: *Approach, Method, and Technique*

In attempting to define what 'method' is, since most teachers use interchangeably terms like approach, method, and technique. We can consider Edward Anthony's tripartite distinction of Approach, Method and Technique (Anthony, 1963). This distinction was developed and recast by Richards and Rodgers (1982, 1985) as Approach, Design and Procedure, encompassed within the overall concept of Method, "an umbrella term for the specification and interrelation of theory and practice" (Richards & Rodgers, 1985, p.16)



## **1.1. Approach**

It is commonly agreed that an approach is a level of belief. At this level, beliefs about language and language learning have to be specified though theoretical principles are described in an approach to enable its users adapt adequately. It seems, then, that both language theory and learning theory are the subject matters of an approach. The language theory embodies a model of language competence and an account of the fundamental characteristics of linguistic organization and language use. On the other hand, the learning theory covers ‘an account of the central process of learning and an account of the conditions believed to promote successful language learning’ (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.24). No approach specifies any procedure of teaching a language. It is a design which links an approach with a procedure. A particular view of language and theory of learning will help a teacher to formulate her/his own teaching procedure. Anthony (1963, pp.63-67) holds ‘an approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning’.

An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. Correspondingly, an approach refers to theories about the nature of language and language learning that serve as the source of practices and principles in language teaching. Yet, no approach leads to a specific set of prescriptions and techniques to be used in teaching a language (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

## **1.2. Method**

A method is a way of teaching a language by following systematic principles and procedures. A method includes the actual activities the learner and the teacher are engaged in while teaching and learning a language. Davies and Pearse (2000, p.208) opine that a method is the ‘way of teaching based on ideas about language, learning, and teaching, with specific indications about activities and techniques to be used’. A theory of language is put into practice in a method. A method is more abstract than teaching activities.

Hence, Knowledge of methods is part of the knowledge base of teaching. It helps to widen a teacher’s repertoire of techniques. Anthony (1963, pp.63-67) defines ‘method’ as an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural”, cited in Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.19). Methods ‘describe a certain ideal, based on certain beliefs. They deal with what, how and why. They say little or

nothing about who/ whom, when, and where,' (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, pp. 181-182).

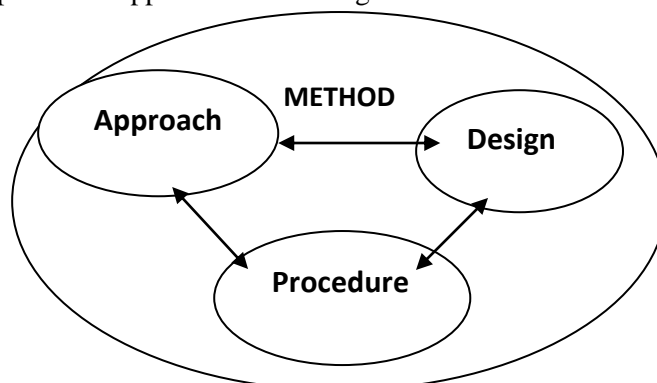
### 1.3. Technique

A Technique is a specific process or procedure used to fulfill a certain objective. It is an implementation that actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well. Technique encompasses the personal style of the teacher in carrying out specific steps of the teaching process. Through technique, teachers enable to develop, create and implement, using her/his distinctive way, the procedures (method) of teaching," (Anthony, 1963, pp.63-67).

All in all, it is clear that approach is the level at which assumptions and beliefs about language and language learning are specified; whereas, method is the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about the particular skills to be taught, and the order in the content will be presented; technique is the level at which classroom procedures are described. In a hierarchical form, 'approach' is placed at the top followed by 'method' and then 'technique'.

This distinction was developed and recast by Richards and Rodgers (1982, 1985) as **Approach, Design and Procedure**, encompassed within the overall concept of **Method**, "an umbrella term for the specification and interrelation of theory and practice" (Richards & Rodgers 1985, p.16) where:

- **Approach:** refers to the beliefs and theories about language, language learning and teaching that underlie a method;
- **Design:** relates to the theories of language and learning to the form and function of teaching materials and activities in the classroom;
- **Procedure:** concerns the techniques and practices employed in the classroom as consequences of particular approaches and designs.



**Figure 1: Approach, Design, and Procedure** (Richards & Rodgers, 1985, p.17)

## 2. Language Teaching Methods and Approaches

Approaches and methods in teaching foreign languages (FL) can be seen as a historical progression of revolutions and evolutions, and also a growing range of teaching options. The twentieth century saw new methods emerging with regularity in what Marckwardt (1972, p.5) put as a cyclical pattern of “changing winds and shifting sands” with each new method breaking from what preceded, while incorporating some of the positive aspects of its predecessors. Whereas in a study conducted by Douglas Brown in 2001, it is stated that:

A glance through the past century or so of language teaching will give an interesting picture of how varied the interpretations have been of the best way to teach a foreign language. As disciplinary schools of thought – psychology, linguistics, and education, for example – have come and gone, so have language-teaching methods waxed and waned in popularity. Teaching methods, as “approaches in action,” are of course the practical application of theoretical findings and positions. (pp. 16-17)

The grammar-translation method, the Direct method, Audio-lingual method, Suggestopedia etc., are among the methods that have been and still are being used commonly by most teachers of English in the world. Therefore, reviewing some of these methods & approaches is considered a necessity at this stage.

### 2.1. The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM)

The Grammar-Translation Method is considered to be one of the oldest methods and approaches in English language teaching, previously, known as The Classical Method. It was mainly advocated by the German scholars Johann Seidenstücker, Karl Plötz, H.S. Ollendorf and Johann Meidinger to become famous in the USA as the *Prussian Method* first (Richards & Rodgers, 2007, p.5).

As the name already suggests, grammar was seen as the starting point for instruction (Thombury, 2000, p.21). The GTM dominated the European and foreign language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s, and in a somehow modified form it continues to be widely used in some parts of the world today. The GTM became popular in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and that, as it is highlighted by Stern Heinrich Hamf (1983), there is evidence that it was the regular combination of grammar rules with the translation into the target language focusing on “accuracy and not fluency”

(p.453). In this way learners learn more about the language than the language itself. Indeed, learning in a classroom in which principles of the GTM were taught meant learning as Dendrinos (1992, p. 106) claims:

To understand the rules underlying the sentence constructions, to memorize paradigms, to analyze sentences in their constituent parts, to classify these in terms of grammatical categories and to be able to produce new sentences on the basis of the grammar and vocabulary taught.

It worth noting that the GTM invaded the field of EFL in Algeria in the 1960's at all levels of education: Primary, Fundamental, and Secondary Schools. Mastering the grammatical rules of a foreign language in a detailed way followed by tasks of translating sentences into and out of the target language related to that knowledge were the main principles of this method.

Let us now have a look on the most relevant principles which underlie this method as stated by experts in the field education. According to Larson-Freeman (1986), and Richards and Rodgers (1986) studies, these principles can be summarized as follows:

- It emphasizes the study and translation of the written language, as it is considered superior to spoken language;
- Successful learners are those who can translate each language into the other, though they cannot orally communicate;
- Reading and writing are the main language skills;
- Teachers play an authoritarian role in the classroom (teacher-centered learning).
- Grammatical rules are learnt overtly and deductively;
- The native language is the medium of instruction and used as well to compare with the language studied.

### **Limitations of the GTM**

- No account of present-day language usage is presented. Norms are imposed from the great literary authors.
- It gives a predominant place to morphology but neglects syntax. So, the ability to systematically construct correct-complex sentences by the learners is absent.
- Translations are often unsatisfactory as they are done word by word.
- Memorizing a lot of grammatical terms is favored over other skills; which in turn causes frustration on the part of the students.

The GTM as claimed by Richards & Rodgers (2014) is a...method for which there is no theory. There is no literature that offers a rationale or justification for it or that attempts to relate it to issues in linguistics, psychology, or educational theory (p. 7). In fact, it is general knowledge that it is necessary to practice all four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in order to have pupils who take active part in the process of communication. But in the Grammar Translation Method, the skills practices are reading and writing only.

## **2.2. The Direct Method (DM)**

While Henri Gouin's *The Art of Learning and Studying Foreign Languages*, published in 1880, can be seen as the precursor of modern language teaching methods with its 'naturalistic' approach, the credit for popularising the Direct Method undeniably goes to Charles Berlitz, who marketed it as the Berlitz Method. It is also known as Reform Method / Natural Method / Phonetic Method / Anti-Grammatical Method. The development of the DM is also associated with L. Sauveur, who argued that a foreign language could be taught without translation or the use of the learner's native language if meaning was conveyed directly through demonstration and action (Richards and Rogers, 2014, p.12).

Enthusiastic supporters of DM introduced it in France and Germany at the turn of the century and it became widely known in the United States through its use by Sauveur and Maximilian Berlitz in successful Commercial Language Schools (ibid, p.12). Accordingly, the DM is characterized by the use of the target language as a means of instruction and communication in the language classroom, and by the avoidance of the use of the first language and of translation as a technique.

Lindsay Cora and Paul Knight (2006) mention that the DM was an important step forward the use of the target language as the language of instruction underpins a lot of teaching today (p.17). Its aims are only speaking, reading, understanding and having good pronunciation. The learners are encouraged to speak, but not forced. Writing is postponed as much as possible. Therefore, this method maintains that language could be taught without translation or the use of the learner's mother tongue if demonstration and action are used to convey the meaning.

Like the GTM, the Direct Method stands upon a number of principles. Richards & Rodgers state that in a DM environment:

- Classroom instruction is only given in the target language where the use of the mother tongue is prohibited;
- Oral communication skills are shaped in a carefully graded process in form of question-and-answer exchanges between teacher and learner;
- Grammar is taught inductively;
- New teaching items are introduced orally first;
- Vocabulary is taught through demonstration, actual objects or pictures;
- Much importance is given to listening and speaking skills.

The Direct Method reached Algeria in the 1970's with new textbooks to substitute the GTM. The problem was practicality because this method needs native/native-like teachers. Thus, it seems to be dependent on teacher's personal skills for creating a certain harmony with the practical realities inside the classroom rather than relying totally to textbooks.

### **Limitations of the DM:**

- All language activities are related to the classroom context, not to real life situations;
- Learners are not ready to use their FL for outside communication as teachers do not prepare them to;
- It is complex and time consuming since pointing at objects and dramatization are not easy ways to explain the meanings of difficult words, particularly the abstract ones;
- It requires highly competent and fluent teachers (native or native-like) in the foreign language, besides patience in the classroom;
- It gives innovations at the level of teaching but misses a clearly defined methodological basis;
- Lack of insight into the reality of the classroom situation for most learners, in its aspiration to a mastery of the language that few could achieve. (2007, p.13)

### **2.3. The Audio-lingual Method (ALM)**

This method was developed by Professors at Michigan and Pennsylvania University and it became known as Oral, Aural-Oral or Structural Approach. While the story of the ALM is dated back to World War II, when American soldiers had an urgent need to learn languages such as German, French, Chinese or Japanese to communicate effectively during wars. The Army Specialized Training Programme (ASTP) was established in 1942 by American linguists to meet this emergency. Then, fifty five American

Universities were involved in the programme by the beginning of 1943. This technique of teaching was initially called the 'Army Method' and was the first to be based on linguistic theory and behavioral psychology. The objective of this programme, as stated by Richards Jack, C. and T.S. Rodgers (2014), was for students to attain conversational proficiency in variety of foreign languages.

Later, in the 1950s and 1960s, it was believed that learning a language was similar to learning new habits (Lindsay and Knight, 2006, p.18). Nunan (2000) claims that it was, in fact, the first approach which could be said to have developed a 'technology' of teaching and based on 'scientific' principles. In the ALM the dominant emphasis is placed on listening and speaking while reading and writing are not neglected, they are given priority in the teaching sequence precede reading and writing.

Audiolingualism which was coined by Nelson Brooks in 1964, tries to develop target language skills without reference to mother tongue (Stern, 1983, p.464). This method was based on stimulus response reinforcement model which basically means drilling. Mistakes were immediately criticized and correct utterances were immediately praised. Its objectives are accurate native-like pronunciation and grammar, an ability to respond quickly and accurately in any speech situations and knowledge of sufficient vocabulary to use the grammar patterns. One of its premises was the scientific descriptive analysis of a wide assortment of languages (Harmer, 1991, p.13).

On the other hand, conditioning and habit-formation models of learning put forward by behavioristic psychologists were integrated with the pattern practices of the ALM. The latter, indeed, consists of an underlying theory which stipulates that habits are established when reinforcement follows response, i.e., negative assessment is to be avoided as much as possible for it could inhibit and discourage learning because it is regarded as a 'punishment'. Positive assessment provides reinforcement of correct responses and promotes learning (Ur, 1991, p. 243).

Therefore, focusing on checking appropriate linguistic features use is the main role of the teacher when assessing learners' products. Then, the ALM central goal is to make learners fluent orally when using the target language in everyday situations, i.e., language is speech and learning is habit formation. Oral skills are prioritized and written form is delayed because:

Introduction of the graphic form of the language has been regarded as a potential threat to the mastery of the sound system and the development of a

near-native accent because the symbols used in writing or printings already have associations with native language pronunciation.

(Rivers, 1968, p. 37)

Through reading about the Audio-lingual Method, we were able to jot down six main characteristics:

- Dependence on mimicry and memorization of set phrases;
- Teaching structural patterns by means of repetitive drills;
- No grammatical explanation, i.e., inductive grammar teaching;
- Learning vocabulary in context using tapes and visual aids;
- Emphasis on pronunciation with focus on listening and speaking skills;
- Immediate reinforcement of correct responses.

### **Limitations of the ALM**

The ALM popularity waned after 1964 because of the below shortcomings:

- It fell short of promoting communicative ability; students could not transfer the skills learnt in class to interaction in real life situations.
- It paid undue attention to memorization and drilling
- Downgrading the role of context and world knowledge in language learning
- Language was not acquired through a process of habit formation and errors were not necessarily bad or pernicious.
- Noam Chomsky rejected the behaviorist learning theory; he states that ordinary linguistic behavior characteristically involves innovation, formation of new sentences and patterns in accordance with rules of great abstractness and intricacy. (Chomsky 1966, qtd in Richards & Rodgers, 2007, p. 65)

### **2.4. The Silent Way**

Developed by Caleb Gattegno, the Silent Way requires that the teachers remain silent much of the time, hence its name. In this method, learners are responsible for their own learning. Based on the belief that pupils are initiators of learning and capable of independently acquiring language, the Silent Way provides a classroom environment in which this can take place. The teacher models once and the students are then given the opportunity to work together to try to reproduce what has been modeled. Silence is regarded



as the best instrument for learning in the classroom, because in silence students concentrate on the task to be accomplished and the potential means for its accomplishment. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001)

The techniques of the Silent Way “made it possible for the teacher to say less and less as the lessons advanced, while the pupils were saying more and more and using their own inner criteria developed in this approach” (Gattegno, 1972). In general, there are three basic theories on which Gattegno’s work is founded:

1. Learning is regarded as a problem-solving, creative, discovering activity in which the learner rather acts and participates actively than just being passive and doing nothing but listening to the teacher. If the learner is involved directly, he automatically benefits from the so called “discovery learning.
2. The use of special physical objects such as coloured wooden rods or colour-coded wall charts facilitates learning. These physical objects “provide physical foci for student learning and also create memorable images to facilitate student recall.
3. Learning is facilitated by involving the learners and letting them solve problems on their own with the help of the provided materials.

The learning hypotheses underlying the Silent way are stated by Richards and Rodgers (1986, p. 99):

- Learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates rather than remembers and repeats what is to be learned;
- Learning is facilitated by accompanying (mediating) physical objects; rods and color-coded pronunciation charts;
- Learning is facilitated by problem-solving involving the material to be learned.

### **Limitations of the Silent Way**

- Teachers must know their teaching objectives clearly and make use of the teaching aids effectively;
- Students may be confused with the symbols of the colored wooden rods;
- Students waste too much time struggling with a concept that would be easily clarified by the teachers’ direct guide;
- It is difficult for teachers to evaluate students’ progress in their learning process;

- It is criticized as being too focused on building structure, and misses out on cultural input through the language;
- The silence of the teacher can prevent students from hearing many active models of correct usage that they may find useful;
- In trying to create a less teacher-orientated classroom, many say that the Silent Way goes too far to the opposite extreme;
- Other problems are a little more practical in nature. Getting together the prerequisite materials can take a lot of time and money; there is the sound-color chart, 12 word charts each containing around 500 words, and 8 Fidel Charts for the English language alone;
- To maximize the learning potential of students using the Silent Way, teachers would have to be prepared to invest quite heavily in materials.

## **2.5. Suggestopedia**

This method was advocated by Dr. Georgi Lozanov, a Bulgarian Doctor of Medicine, psychiatrist and parapsychologist. It is also known as Desuggestopedia where specific set of learning recommendations derived from Suggestology which Lozanov describes as a science concerned with the systematic study of the non-rational and/ or non-conscious influences that human beings are constantly responding to, involving loading the memory banks with desired and facilitating memories (Stevick, 1976, p.42). Lozanov (1978) comments on the utility of this method and claims that there is no sector of public life where Suggestology would not be useful... Memorization in learning by the Suggestopedic method seems to be accelerated 25 times over that in learning by conventional methods.

Lozanov wants to eliminate the psychological barriers that people have to learning through integrating drama, art, physical exercise, and desuggestive–suggestive communicative psychotherapy as well as the traditional modes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing to teach a second language. The influence of the science of suggestology is clear in this method that calls class meetings sessions.

In this method, the classroom atmosphere is crucial. Creating a relaxed, nonthreatening learning environment is essential for its success. The goal is that pupils will assimilate the content of the lessons without feeling any type of stress or fatigue.

Classrooms are equipped with comfortable seating arrangements and dimlighting in an effort to provide an inviting and appealing environment. Suggestopedic learning is built on a particular type of music and a particular rate of presentation. Lozanov recommends a series of slow movement (sixty

beats a minute) because it is under the stimulation of sixty rhythmic patterns that the body relaxes and the mind becomes most alert and aware to receive learning.

The use of the native language is also allowed, especially to give directions and to create that welcoming atmosphere. If the learner feels they can learn, they will. The use of drama, songs, and games provides for much practice, yet in a less threatening and more enjoyable fashion.

The central assumption that underlies the suggestopedic method is that the learner learns not only from the effect of direct instruction but from the environment in which the instruction takes place. The bright decor of the classroom, the musical background, the shape of the chairs, and the personality of the teacher are considered as important in instruction as the form of the instructional material itself (Freeman and Freeman, 1998).

In De-suggestopedia, five main characteristics can be drawn:

- The learner does not focus on linguistic forms, but rather on using the language. Hence, the teacher should present and explain the grammar and vocabulary not dwell on them;
- Communication takes place on ‘two planes’: on one the linguistic message is encoded; and on the other are factors which influence the linguistic message;
- Student can learn from what is present in the environment, even if their attention is not directed to it (Peripheral learning). Peripheral learning means that people perceive much more in their environment than that to which they consciously attend;
- Fine art, music, art, and drama provide positive suggestions for students and enable suggestions to reach the subconscious;
- Errors are corrected gently and indirectly. The teacher gives the students the impression that learning is easy and enjoyable in order to make them appreciate their learning.

Despite the advancements over the audio-lingual method, Suggestopedia has not been widely adopted in the United States for instance, it is impractical for large classes. In addition, current textbooks do not embrace this methodology, thus making it difficult for teachers to apply the principles in regular classrooms.

## **Limitations of Suggestopedia**

- Lacks the flexibility; the focus on relaxed, no pressure learning environment creates lack of flexibility to some students who have difficulties to learn spontaneously, and causes indolence on their learning;
- Lacks trust to teachers; students' respect and trust to teachers are the most important thing to let this teaching strategy proceed fluently. If students cannot trust teachers, then they may lack a sense of safety, become punctilious, reject teachers' suggestions, and therefore turn pessimistic to success;
- Over emphasis of language use; it gives much importance to vocabulary learning than grammar which leads in turn to the ignorance of grammatical rules and styles of language;
- Absence of tests; teachers grade their students according to their performance in class not through traditional tests mode. Thus, students could lack pressure and may lose motivation towards learning.

### **2.6. Total Physical Response (TPR)**

The Total Physical Response method is based on James J. Asher's idea that the more active learning is, the more effective it becomes (Nunan 2000, p.134). TPR was originally developed by the American Professor of psychology James Asher, in the 1960s and became well-known in the 1970s. He tried to recreate the conditions in foreign language classrooms and the children received their initial input in the form of instructions in the imperative which required them to make physical responses. His statement is supported by a modern scientist named Nunan who notes that in this technique, "the target vocabulary items are 'paired' with relevant physical actions" (pp.134-135). The method derived its main principles from observing how children acquire their first language. That is what Harmer (2001) in his study states:

If children learn much of their language from speech directed at them in the form of commands to perform actions, then adults will learn best in that way too. Accordingly, TPR asks students to respond physically to the language they hear. (Harmer 2001, p. 90)

In other words, language learning is reinforced through body movement and associating language to physical actions (smiling, reaching, grabbing, etc.). According to Krashen's theory of first language acquisition, children are first exposed to the language and through listening and following simple

instructions, they slowly acquire the language. TPR lessons are based on teachers' instructions and pupils' physical response (Harmer, 2001, p.36). Successful adult second language learning is seen as a parallel process to child first language acquisition. Adults should recapitulate the processes by which children acquire their native language. Harmer (2001) reminded us that TPR allows a pre-speaking phase where students are not forced to speak until they feel confident to do so. So, within this approach, three basic characteristics are extracted:

- Much emphasis is given to the role of comprehensible input as comprehension precedes production;
- Memory is stimulated and increased when it is closely associated with motor activity;
- Learning should be as fun and stress-free as possible, and ought to be dynamic through the use of accompanying physical activity.

### **Limitations of TPR:**

- Its limitation is that mostly imperative form is used and only limited language structures can be introduced;
- Experience shows that this method is very useful for kinesthetic students, especially children and beginner learners in the way that it helps them pay attention to the teacher and behave in appropriate way.

### **2.7. The Natural Approach (NA)**

The Natural Approach, with echoes of the 'naturalistic' aspect of the Direct Method, was developed by Krashen and Terrell (1983). It emphasizes "Comprehensible Input", distinguishing between 'acquisition' as a natural sub-conscious process and 'learning' as a conscious process. They argued that learning cannot lead to acquisition. The focus, then, is on meaning, not form (structure and grammar). The goal is to communicate with speakers of the target language. For more clarity, Krashen summarises the input hypothesis as follow:

We acquire language in an amazingly simple way – when we understand messages. We have tried everything else – learning grammar rules, memorizing vocabulary, using expensive machinery, forms of group therapy etc. What has escaped us all these years, however, is the one essential ingredient: comprehensible input. (1985, p. vii)

Stephen Krashen's linguistic theories had a more direct relationship to language learning and acquisition, thereby bringing them to the attention of language teachers around the world.

Krashen, along with Terrell, developed the "input theory," which stresses maximum amounts of passive language or what Krashen (1979) refers to as 'i+1' (input + 1), language input that is just a little beyond the learner's current level of comprehension. Krashen contends that through context and extra-linguistic information, like a mother talking to her child, hence the 'natural approach', learners will climb to the next level and then repeat the process. The message is more important than the form. The input is one way, from the teacher, and learners will participate when ready.

Let us now have a look on the different characteristics of the NA. We have here an adapted version belongs to Nunan's overview of the Natural Approach (1989, pp.194-195)

<b>Theory of language</b>
The essence of language is meaning. Vocabulary not grammar is the heart of language
<b>Theory of Learning</b>
There are 2 ways of L2 language development: <u>Acquisition</u> a natural sub-conscious process; <u>Learning</u> a conscious process. Learning cannot lead to acquisition
<b>Objectives</b>
Designed to give beginners/ intermediate learner communicative skills. Four broad areas; basic personal communicative skills (oral/written); academic learning skills (oral/written)
<b>Syllabus</b>
Based on a selection of communicative activities and topics derived from learner needs
<b>Activity types</b>
Activities allowing comprehensible input, about things in the here-and-now. Focus on meaning not form
<b>Learner roles:</b> Should not try and learn language in the usual sense, but should try and lose themselves in activities involving meaningful communication
<b>Teacher roles:</b> The teacher is the primary source of comprehensible input. Must create positive low-anxiety climate. Must choose and orchestrate a rich mixture of classroom activities
<b>Roles of materials:</b>
Materials come from realia rather than textbooks. Primary aim is to promote comprehension and communication

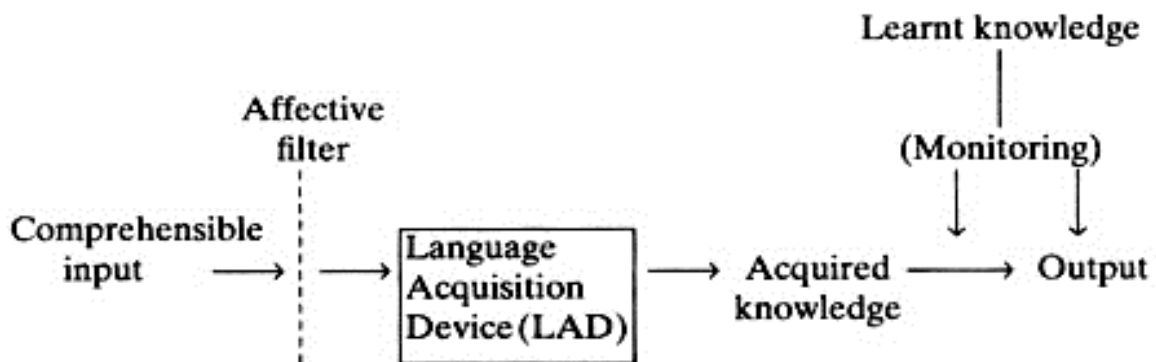
**Table 1: Characteristics of the Natural Approach**

The Natural Approach was based upon Krashen's theories of second language acquisition, and his Five Hypotheses:

<b>Krashen's Five Hypotheses</b>
The <b>Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis</b> : claims that there are two distinctive ways of developing second language competence: <i>Acquisition</i> , that is by using language for "real communication" <i>Learning</i> ... "knowing about" or "formal knowledge" of a language
The <b>Natural Order hypothesis</b> ; 'we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order'
The <b>Monitor Hypothesis</b> : 'conscious learning ... can only be used as a Monitor or an editor' (Krashen & Terrell 1983) and cannot lead to fluency
The <b>Input Hypothesis</b> : 'humans acquire language in only one way – by understanding messages or by receiving "comprehensible input"'
The <b>Affective Filter Hypothesis</b> : 'a mental block, caused by affective factors ... that prevents input from reaching the language acquisition device' (Krashen, 1985, p.100)

**Table 2: Krashen's theories of second language acquisition (Krashen, 1984)**

To see the whole process and how it functions in the human mind, Cook presents a combined model of acquisition and production on his website:



*The Input Hypothesis Model of L2 learning and production (adapted from Krashen, 1982, pp. 16 and 32; and Gregg, 1984)*

**Figure 2: Cook's Combined Model of Acquisition and Production**

For Krashen, a conscious knowledge of grammar rules is of limited value and can at most enable the student to 'monitor' production (Krashen 1982, p.15).

## **Limitations of the Natural Approach**

The Natural Approach, according to some educationists such as Richards & Rodgers, does not introduce any new teaching procedures and techniques:

- It rejects explicit grammar instruction and the organization of the syllabus around grammatical categories;
- It emphasizes comprehensible and meaningful practice activities, rather than production of grammatically perfect utterances and sentences;
- It does not introduce any innovations in terms of language teaching/grammar materials. (Richards & Rodgers, 2007, p.190)

### **2.8. The Communicative Approach (CA)/ Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

This approach, also known as “Functional-National” Approach, emerged in the 1970s as a result of the Council of Europe’s experts’ work. The CA was mainly designed to meet adult learners’ needs, tourists, or people engaged in academic, cultural, technical or economic activities. Yet, it can be traced back to the work of Chomsky in the 1960s when advancing the two notions of ‘competence’ and ‘performance’ as a reaction to the prevalent ALM and its view on language learning.

There are a lot of origins to the Communicative approach. It could be said that it is the product of educators and linguists who had not been satisfied with the ALM and the GTM (Morea, 2007). Lindsay and Knight (2006) think that these methods put little, if any, emphasis on the ability to communicate or interact (p.20). In fact, as previous methods failed at producing learners who could communicate effectively, there was a growing recognition among both linguists and educators of an urgent need for reform. As clearly stated by Allen & Widdowson (1975):

There is need for a new approach to language teaching which will shift the focus of attention from the grammatical to the communicative properties of language in order to show the student how language system is used to express scientific facts and concepts. (pp. 1-21)

Thus, proposals for an urgent reform in ELT were the key factor that accelerated the development and the adoption of the communicative approach. Communicative language teaching was also influenced by developments in the way the language was described taking into account the communicative function of language. If we want to characterize the pedagogy of the last fifteen to twenty years in one word it would definitely be



“communicative”. Widdowson (1980) believes that it is of course the CA which is in current fashion in methodology (pp.102-103). He continues his description of the CA as follow:

...it concentrates on getting learners to do things with language, to express concepts and to carry out communicative acts of various kinds. The content of a language course is now defined not in terms of forms, words and sentence patterns, but in terms of concepts, or notions, which such forms are used to express, and the communicative functions which they are used to perform. (ibid: 159)

Obviously, the communicative Approach is being widely used and welcomed by many schools and institutions around the world where syllabuses are designed, textbooks are published, and curricula are developed. And this is the opinion of Richards and Rogers when they remind us that:

The work of the Council of Europe; the writings of Wilkins, Widdowson, Candlin, Christopher Brumfit, Keith Johnson, and other British applied linguists on the theoretical basis for a communicative or functional approach to language teaching; the rapid application of these ideas by textbook writers; and the equally rapid acceptance of these new principles by British language teaching specialists, curriculum development centers, and even governments gave prominence nationally and internationally to what came to be referred to as the Communicative Approach, or simply Communicative Language Teaching. (2001, p. 154)

Such wide acceptance of CA and its varied way of interpretation and application can be attributed to the fact that practitioners from different educational traditions can identify with it and therefore interpret it in different ways. For some, Communicative Language Teaching means little more than an integration of grammatical and functional teaching. Moreover, Littlewood (1981) argues that communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language.

Yet, we have to mention that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has two versions: ‘strong’ and a ‘weak’ version. Howatt (1984, p.279) distinguishes between them by stating that there is a ‘strong’ version of the communicative approach and a ‘weak’ version. The weak version which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years stresses the importance of providing learners with the opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching... The ‘strong’

version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself.

Examples of those who have knowledge about the language without fluently use it are numerous (weak version of CA), but we should train ourselves as learners of a certain language, English for example, to use it daily and in different contexts (communication) to learn English (strong version of CA). The following principles that characterize the Communicative Language Teaching as an approach can support our comment because in CA environment:

- Learners learn a language through using it to communicate. The CA provides communicative functions (uses) and notions (semantic themes & language items) to reflect real life use of the language;
- Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities, whereas grammar is taught as a language tool;
- Fluency is an important dimension of communication and errors are tolerated;
- Communication involves the integration of different language skills.
- Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.

(Richards & Rodgers, 2007, p. 172)

### **Limitations of the CA**

Like the previous methods and approaches the CA has been subjected to many criticisms as:

- It relies on the functional-national syllabus which places heavy demands on the learners, chiefly at the first stages of language learning;
- Language functions are overlapped as they are not systematically graded like the structures of the language, thus, confusion and difficulty while teaching these functions take place;
- No overt error correction and any kind of such process should be incidental not systematic. Prabhu (1987) states that incidental correction, by contrast to the systematic type, is confined to particular items. So, the error is corrected but there is no generalization to the type of error it represents;
- Syllabus modification by the teacher to comply with every single learner's needs and interests seem unrealizable and far reaching.

It is claimed that the CA is very widely used all over the world. It has shifted the focus in language teaching from learning about the language to

learning to communicate in the language. However, there are problems associated with it. The most serious criticism of CA is that it is not as effective as it claims to be.

## **2.9. Task-based Language Teaching (TBL)/ Task-Based Approach (TBA)**

Task-based language teaching is an approach which uses tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. TBA or TBLT was developed in the 1980s by Dave Willis and Jane Willis who presented it as a logical development of Communicative language Teaching as it draws of some of its principles where

- activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning;
- activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning;
- language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

In TBLT, learning is promoted by giving students tasks to be done while using the target language (Lindsay and Knight: 23). Tasks are believed to foster processes of negotiation, modification, rephrasing, and experimentation that are at the heart of second language learning. This statement brings us to a question what a task is. David Nunan (1989) in his book Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom, offers this definition:

...the communicative task [is] a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right. (1989, p. 10)

Whereas Van den Branden (2006, qtd. in Richards & Rodgers, 2014) puts it simple when claiming that “a task” is an activity in which a person engages in order to attain an objective, and which necessitates the use of language. (p.177). As task is the key element of TBA, task types are important, because they should reflect types of situations in which language might be used by the students and also types of activities in which students practice certain functions of language. Therefore, according to Hanušová Svěltana (2004) the typology of the TBA can be the following: ordering; sorting/classifying; listing; comparing/matching; problem solving; creative tasks/projects; sharing personal experience/anecdote telling.

In TBL, it is the sequence of tasks that is the key to success and according to Willis Jane (1996) it includes: Pre-task, Introduction to topic and Task. However, though such process consumes both time and efforts, it enables on the other hand learners to have many opportunities to practice and recycle the vocabulary or structures that they have just been taught.

### **The characteristics of TBA**

- The students are free of language control; in all three stages (task, planning, report) they must use all their language resources rather than just practicing one pre-selected item;
- A natural context is developed from the students' experiences with the language that is personalized and relevant to them;
- The students have a much more varied exposure to language with TBL;
- The language explored arises from the students' needs;
- It is a strong communicative approach where students spend a lot of time communicating;
- It is enjoyable and motivating.

### **Limitations of the TBA**

- It requires a high level of creativity, initiative, and time on the part of the teacher. If the teachers are limited to more traditional roles or do not have resources, this type of teaching may be impossible;
- It requires resources beyond the textbook and related materials usually found in language classrooms;
- It needs individual & group responsibility, and commitment on the part of students since it is not a teacher-centered method. If learners are notably lacking these qualities, difficulty in implementing TBL appears;
- There is naturally more concern for using lexis and lexical chunks than for grammar and grammatical accuracy;
- Pressure of time may well force learners to make use of language that can be readily accessed rather than to attempt to create language in real time;
- Evaluation in TBL can be difficult; the nature of task-based learning prevents it from being measurable by some of the more restricted and traditional tests.

## **Conclusion**

In chapter I, we worked on providing a brief overview on the different language teaching methods and approaches that have been, and are still being used to the present day. In this dissertation, we tried to mention the most popular methods or approaches with definitions and the main features that characterize each one.

Henceforth, one may ultimately say that each of the different methods and approaches contributed new elements and has attempted to deal with some issues of language learning. However, they derived in different historical context, stressed multi-social/educational needs and have different theoretical consideration. Consequently, it could be concluded that it is fairly difficult to arrive at the perfect approach or method since language learning is such a complex process that it is impossible to offer a single solution to all our problems, i.e., no single method could guarantee successful results. The latter largely depends on a set of factors such as students' motivation and appropriate selection of the teaching materials that are mostly determined by learners' psychological characteristics like: learning styles and types of intelligence.

The best method, perhaps, is the one which works, and this varies from context to context. Any method which creates conditions for learning to take place is good. It should enable the learner to acquire the strategies of learning rather than merely equipping him with knowledge. What becomes important for the teacher, therefore, is to find out what approach/method enables her/him to realize a certain objective under a set of particular circumstances.

In the next chapter, we shall present the Competency-Based Approach. As CBA is our interest in this dissertation, we are going to spare more space for it to discuss the main points that concern this trend in relation to the Algerian educational context.

# Chapter II

## Part One

### The Competency-Based Approach (C.B.A)

#### Introduction

The increasing number of information and mobility brought by technology shifted the needs of the field of education, and made societies more open to other cultures and languages. Moreover, the demand to master different roles within the community has significantly maximized the level of aspirations that will be justified by an education in the terrain of social construction. In such a context, implementing a competency-based education is a key issue in modern educational science.

#### 1. History of the Competency-based Approach

The Competency-based education or CBE can be traced back to the philosophy of experimentalism and to the work of John Dewey in the early 1900s. The concept of competency has a long history and it is linked with the philosophical foundations and approaches in educational and learning theories. Three of the most important ones are Behaviorism, Cognitive Theory, and Constructivism. Its antecedents include vocational education and progressive education (Flowers, 1990; Stoffle, & Pryor, 1980). Competency-based education (CBE) is surging in popularity as schools around the world scramble to implement their own versions of competency-based curricula (cf. Ash, 2012; Mulder, Eppin, & Akkermans, 2011; Nederstigt & Mulder, n.d.; Wong, 2008).

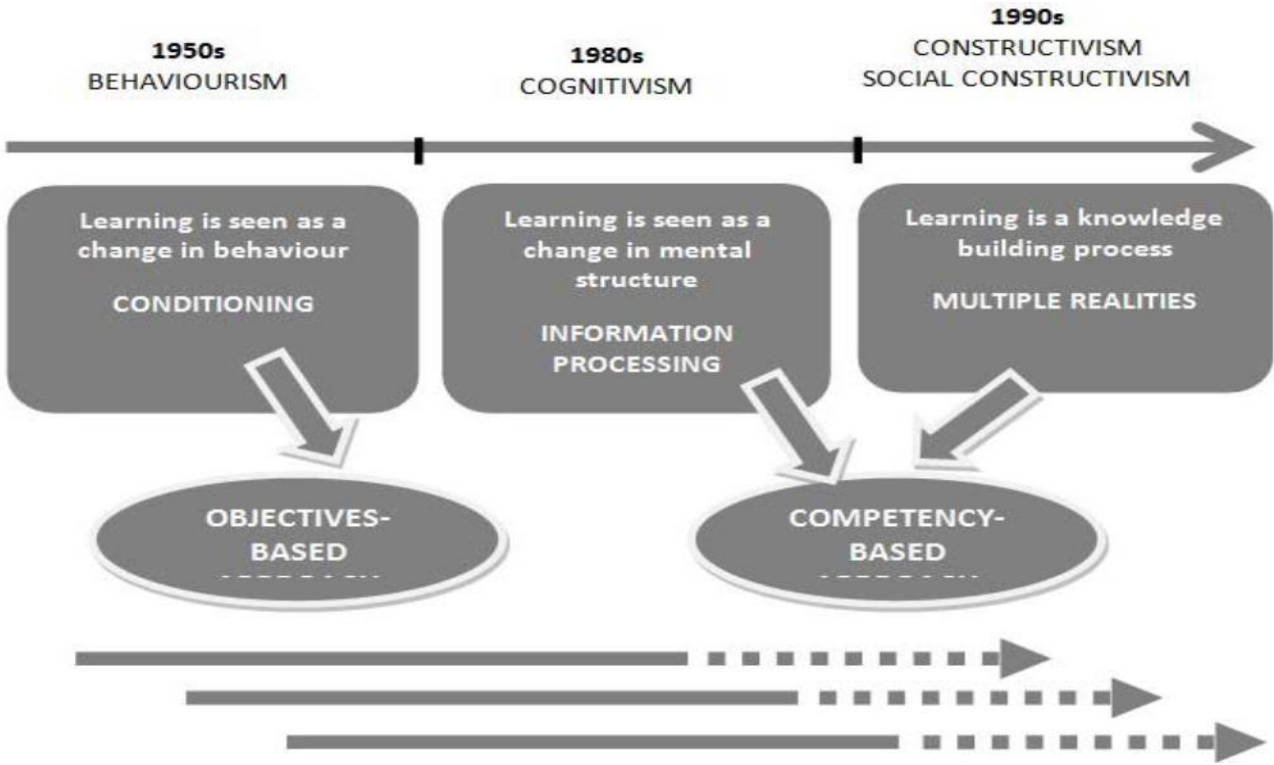
CBE which has its roots firmly attached to the Behaviorist tradition grew and popularized in the United States during the 1950s by educators such as Benjamin Bloom. It became known in the U.S during the 1970s where it was used in vocational training programs. The approach spread to Europe in the 1980s and by the 1990s, it was being used in Australia too to measure professional-skills. Throughout its evolution, CBE has been known by a variety of names including *performance-based learning*, *criterion-referenced learning*, and *capabilities-driven instruction* (Bowden, 2004).

Because there is no conclusive evidence showing a link between knowledge about a subject and the ability to use that information in context, CBE expressly focuses on what learners can *do* rather than on what they *know* (Smith & Patterson, 1998). The basic idea is to focus on objective and observable outcomes which can be easily measured. The approach requires

that students demonstrate value-added skills which are assessed by looking at outcomes rather than process (Bowden, 2004; Guskey, 2005).

**1.1. Key Learning Theories related to CBA**

The following diagram, as presented by Cora Brahimi (2011), situates these theories in time and shows that they were applied concomitantly. An empirical view, according to which “learning is simply deposited in receptive learners,” preceded these theories.



**Figure 3: Evolution of Learning Theories by Cora Brahimi (2011, p. 5)**

As it is displayed above, three basic theories: Behaviorism, Cognitivism, Constructivism and Social Constructivism are the major paradigms that have been shaping the world of education since the mid-twentieth century and gave birth to trends in teaching with competencies., these paradigms are frameworks that standardize knowledge building. They are shared by researchers who work in the same scientific community (Savoie-Zajc and Karsenti 2000, cited in Brahimi, 2011). Because they underpin learning theories, and learning is viewed differently depending on the paradigm upon which it is based. It is important, then, to refer to these paradigms.

**1.2. Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT)**

This approach originates from competency-based education (CBE) which is an educational movement that emerged in the United States in the 1970s.

Competency-based language teaching (CBLT) is an application of the principles of CBE to language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2014: 151). Its earliest applications were particularly in adults' work-related and survival-oriented language teaching programs for immigrants. By the 1990s, the approach had become so widely accepted in the U.S. that refugees wishing to receive federal assistance were required to attend some kind of competency-based ESL program to learn the skills necessary to function in society (Auerbach, 1986; Grognet & Crandall, 1982).

CBLT demands that language be connected to a social context rather than being taught in isolation. It requires learners to demonstrate that they can use a language to communicate effectively (Paul, 2008; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Wong, 2008). According to Docking (1994), CBLT:

...is designed not around the notion of subject knowledge but around the notion of competency. The focus moves from what students know about language to what they can do with it. The focus on competencies or learning outcomes underpins the curriculum framework and syllabus specification, teaching strategies, assessment and reporting. Instead of norm-referencing assessment, criterion-based assessment procedures are used in which learners are assessed according to how well they can perform on specific learning tasks. (p.16)

## **2. Definitions**

### **2.1. What is Competency-based Approach (C.B.A)?**

While reviewing the term Competency-Based Approach, many attempts were made to come to a precise definition. Here are some of them as stated by famous experts, scholars and researchers in the field:

For Richards & Rodgers:

CBA is an educational movement that focuses on the outcomes or outputs of learning... CBA addresses what learners are expected to do rather than on what they are expected to learn about. It refers to a movement that advocates defining educational goals in terms of precise measurable description of knowledge, skills, and behaviors students should possess at the end of a course of study. (2014, p. 151)



While Savage, L. claims that:

CBA is a functional approach to education that emphasizes life skills and evaluates mastery of these skills according to actual learner performance. It was defined by the US office of education as “performance-based process” leading to demonstrate the mastery of basic and life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in society. (1993, p.15)

Whereas Schnek, A. E. states that:

CBA is outcome based instruction and is adaptive to the changing needs of the students, teachers, and community. Competencies describes the student’s ability to apply basic and other skills based on a set of outcomes that are derived from an analysis of tasks typically required of students in life role situation. (1978, p.141)

Indeed, there are several definitions of CBA. We will attempt to give a comprehensive one as presented by the Ministry of National Education in the National Programme of English as a Second Foreign Language in the First Year Middle School teachers’ guide (2003). It is interpreted in relation with the definition of the term competency, which is:

... a know how to act process which interacts and mobilizes a set of capacities, skills and an amount of knowledge that will be used effectively in various problem- situations or in circumstances that have never occurred before. (2003, p. 4)

Thus, the competency-based approach (CBA) to teaching English is similar to communicative teaching, which we are familiar with. In some ways it could be considered as an adequate communicative teaching that goes one step further by making sure that the learners can apply what they learn in class to real-life situations outside the school.

In the competency-based approach, learners study English within situations and contexts that are varied and relevant. In other words, the language is introduced and practiced in different situations that are similar to situations which might occur in real-life. The aim is that learners develop language and problem-solving abilities that they can use in new and challenging situations in and out of school. Therefore, learners will see learning English as useful to their school life as well as their future.

## 2.2. Competence or Competency

Finding a definition for “competenc(e)y” is problematic for there are too many. For Ibn Manzûr in his famous book LISAN AL-ARAB (1997, p.413). Competency or in Arabic الكفاءة أو الكفاية (*el-kafa'a or el-kifa'ya*) means *equality* and *similarity* between two things, persons, etc. Indeed, competence at work is the ability to perfectly perform it. And there is almost no difference between كفاءة (*kafa'a*) and كفاية (*kifa'ya*). The former is used in the Maghreb Countries whilst the latter is known in the Middle East (Abdallah, K., & Hannach, F 2009).

For the French: Le *Grand Larousse Illustré* (2015, p.277) defines: La Compétence: *n.f*: « capacité reconnue en telle ou telle matière, et qui donne le droit d'en juger. ». Roughly translated as: proven ability in a particular subject and that gives the right to judge.

For the English: *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2015, p.304) defines competency as “the ability to do something well” and as “a skill that you need in a particular job or for a particular task”. Thus, the definition of a competent person is one who possesses the attributes necessary for job performance to the appropriate standard (Gonczi, 1996).

According to Bunda and Sanders (1979), there are two types of competencies. One type of definitions conceives of competence as a hypothetical construct. The second type of competence refers to a standard of performance either implicitly or explicitly. For the first type of competency, it refers to words such as “skill”, “achievement”, and “intelligence” constructs. Others see competency as synonymous with behavioral objective which is generally a restrictive definition of a “skill”. For the second type of competence which refers to a standard of performance either implicitly or explicitly, the term closely parallels definitions of mastery or criterion levels of performance. Mrowicki (1986, cited in Weddle, 2006) defines competencies as follow:

Competencies consist of a description of the essential skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors required for effective performance of a real-world task or activity. These activities may be related to any domain of life, though have typically been linked to the field of work and to social survival in a new environment. (p.2)

Whereas Docking (1994, qtd. in Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.145) who defines competency as:

An element of competency can be defined as any attribute of an individual that contributes to the successful performance of a task, job, function, or activity in an academic setting and/or a work setting. This includes specific knowledge, thinking processes, attitudes, and perceptual and physical skills.

Therefore, since real life situations oppose to use a pseudo-commercial language of markets, investment and products. The interest in *competence* and *competency* has been part of this move. These two terms remain difficult to define in a satisfactory way. The former is the quality of being adequately or well-qualified physically and intellectually, whereas the latter is the ability to do something well measured against a standard, especially the ability acquired through experience or training.

In this research, we have adopted the broader definition which presents competency as a combination of social, cognitive and communicative skills as the operational definition. And, no difference between *competence* & *competency* is established. Hence, the two terms will similarly take place each time.

### **2.3. Problem- Solving Situation**

As its name suggests, problem solving situation concerns a teaching situation in which the proposed tasks conduct learners to solve a problem. Thus, problem situation is an obstacle to surmount, a hurdle to pass, or simply a problem for which a solution must be found. As Astolfi (1993, as cited in Perrenoud (1999a) clearly puts it as a problem situation is centered on an obstacle to overcome through hypothesis generation, the problem to surmount needs to be challenging but not unsolvable (p. 319)

Consequently, the Competency-Based Approach recommends to teachers to place learners in front of problem-based situations to reflect on, rather than spoon-feed them with ready-made information that will no longer motivate them to assume their own responsibilities towards learning. Yet, encountering such situational problems, they (learners) will hardly provoke the previously acquired knowledge to find new solutions which automatically lead to the construct of new knows that are, in fact, experiences for the future.

## 2.4. Knowledge Transfer (KT)

The CBA strongly encourages learners to re-invest the previously obtained knows in one situation to new ones, i.e., transferring knowledge. Knowledge transfer has to do with the effect of past learning on present learning and with the effect of intervening learning on the recall of the past learning.

Knowledge transfer/sharing, then, is a process by which past knows, ideas, and experiences move from one learning situation to another so as to provide inputs to problem solving. Henceforth, knowledge transferability is a skill to be acquired via competencies development and effective information use, but not through rote memorization as it is difficult to re-call what has been learnt by heart. Salvin (2003) in a related research views that what is memorized by rote is unlikely to be transferred to new situations no matter how thoroughly it was mastered. (P. 242)

The initial acquisition mastery of the skills and information, the similitude between the initial situations and the ones the learner is supposed to deal with plus an effective training in knowledge transfer, all the three are the key factors which enable the learner to successfully transfer knowledge in order to solve problems. Salvin (2003) in his book Educational Psychology: Theory and Practice beholds:

Students must receive specific instruction in how to use skills and information to solve and encounter a variety of problem solving experiences if they are to be able to apply much of what they learned in school. (p.241)

Being able to transfer knowledge and skills to new situations, requires a serious preparation of learners so as to be able *to apply* those learnt skills inside the classroom to situations outside of the classroom and hence be prepared to take risks as they seek to implement what they have learned.

## 3. Characteristics of the Competency-based Approach

The benefits of this competency-based approach have been recognized by policy makers and influencers in higher education. They say that CBA could be the key to providing quality education to all social classes. In our country, the Ministry of National Education (MNE) provided a useful review of factors involved in the implementation of CBA programs and identified four key features:

### **3.1. Action-Oriented Approach**

In that it gears learning to the acquisition of know-how embedded in functions and skills. These will allow the learner to become an effective as well as a competent user of language in real-life situations outside the classroom. The goal is to enable students to become autonomous learners capable of coping with the demands of the world. They can, for example, follow discussions or debates and understand the main points, make conversations, and watch English programmes shown on TV. Indeed, it is a focus on life skills and successful functioning in society rather than teaching language in isolation (Auerbach 1986, pp.414-415; Griffith, 201, p. 2).

### **3.2. Problem-Solving approach:**

It places learners in situations that test/check their capacities to overcome obstacles and problems, make learners think and they learn by doing. What counts is what the students can do as a result of specified instructions in terms of behavioral objectives so that they know exactly what behaviors are expected of them. The emphasis is on overt behaviors rather than on knowledge or the ability to talk about language and skills. So, CBA gives priority to task or performance-centered orientation as languages are best learned when they are used in problem-solving situations (MNE, 2005, p.8).

### **3.3. Social Constructivist Approach**

It regards learning as occurring through social interaction with other people. In other words, learning is not concerned with the transmission of pre-determined knowledge and know-how to be reproduced in vitro, but as a creative use of a newly constructive knowledge about the language through the process of social interaction with other people. Learners are given the opportunity to construct knows inside their classrooms with teachers and mates. These situations are supposed to be similar to real-life situations outside in order that they will be able to deal with them relying on what has been constructed previously. (Benabed, 2011, p. 40)

### **3.4. Cognitive Approach:**

It is indebted to Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, B et al. Taxonomy of Education Objectives, vol 1, The Cognitive Domain in vol 2 and the Affective Domain in New York, 1964). Bloom has claimed that all the educational objectives can be classified as cognitive (to do with information) and affective (to do with attitudes, values and emotions) or psychomotor (to do with bodily movements ...). He claims that cognitive objectives form a hierarchy by

which the learner must achieve lower order objectives before he/she can achieve higher ones. He (1956, pp. 78-79) states that:

All the educational objectives can be classified like cognitive, in relation to information, and emotional, in relation to the attitudes, values and emotions, or psychomotor, in relation to the physical movement...the cognitive objectives form a hierarchy according to which learner must carry out the objectives of a lower nature before he can complete those of higher order.

In the 1950s, Benjamin Bloom led a team of educational psychologists trying to dissect and classify the varied domains of human learning. The efforts resulted in a series of taxonomies in each domain, known today as Bloom's Taxonomies. The latter are divided into three interrelated domains namely *cognitive* (knowledge), *affective* (attitude), and *psychomotor* (skills). The cognitive domain involves knowledge and the development of intellectual skills. In this domain, Bloom et al. distinguish between six different levels which are hierarchically ordered and thought of as degrees of difficulties as shown below:

Category	Difficulty
<i>Knowledge</i>	Very easy
<i>comprehension</i>	↑
<i>Application</i>	
<i>Analysis</i>	
<i>Synthesis</i>	
<i>Evaluation</i>	Very difficult

**Table 3: Cognitive Domain from Bloom's Taxonomy (1956)**

The affective domain describes the way people react emotionally, such as feelings, values, motivations and attitudes whereas the psychomotor domain is based on learning physical skills which includes movement, coordination and manipulation. The development of these skills requires practice and can be measured, for example, in terms of speed and precision.

#### 4. Competencies within the CBA

The Algerian English Curriculum for Middle School Year 4 (MS4), as published in the Middle East Partnership Initiative library, mentions that *Language involves three basic competencies*: Interactive competency, Interpretive competency, and Productive competency

#### **4.1. Interactive Competency**

Interactive competency or competence is the ability to orally use the language so that to interact with others; create social relations, express needs, understand and address others' requirements to get things accomplished. Engaging in a discussion is an example of using one's interactive competency (mepi.org).

CBLT recommends students to use the language in authentic situations likely to be encountered outside the classroom. For instance, a student might have to fill out an application form, provide a personal medical history, ask for and give directions. Although students must practice in order to become competent, competencies are not practice activities. Competencies are not activities done for the sake of giving a student a grade, nor are they done only to allow a student to become better at a task. Competencies are practical applications of language in context (Griffith, 2014, p.2).

#### **4.2. Interpretive Competency**

Well-designed competencies targets learners ability to understand both written and spoken language through reading & listening; it includes several components. First, they describe the specific knowledge and skills that can be applied to novel and complex situations. The knowledge and skills must have value beyond the classroom because if you teach the principles and how to learn, that knowledge will be useful for a student's whole lifetime (mepi.org).

For example, the ability to understand emergency instructions is important outside of the classroom and that knowledge will be useful for years in the future. Next, each competency must have clear performance criteria that allow students to know where they are and what they need to work on to improve. Each task requires its own specific rubric identifying specific weaknesses and strengths. Finally, the competency must be personalized (Sturgis, 2012).

#### **4.3. Productive Competency**

The productive competency is the ability to produce coherent, appropriate and relevant messages in writing and speaking. It is also the capacity to effectively express ideas and organize thoughts in a suitable way (mepi.org). So, instead of being *knowledge-focused*, competency-based courses are built around the skills necessary to carry out specified tasks. Suppose, says Griffith in his article, the specific competency is to "make a telephone call to an office to complain about a service". What skills would be needed to complete such a task? Several come immediately to mind, including:

The ability to read and understand telephone numbers; the ability to identify oneself when answering or calling; the ability to ask to speak to someone; the ability to respond to a request to hold the line; the ability to give a message or respond to an offer to take a message; the ability to express opinions politely following the target language conventional cultural norms; the ability to use past tenses; and the ability to provide relevant information. (2014, p. 3)

In this example, daily lessons should be planned around activities that address these individual sub-components. At each step, students would receive information providing feedback about their individual progress toward mastering the written and oral competencies.

Therefore, key *competences* or basic *competencies* should be determined according to the analysis of external demands and by careful consideration of students' needs to provide them with a stance that gives them a firm grounding and an ability to co-ordinate their actions with high-speed changes in the world.

## **5. Supporting competencies**

In order to develop the previously mentioned competencies; *interactive, interpretive, and productive competencies*, language learners also need to develop supporting competencies (Linguistic competency & language strategies). The Algerian English Curriculum for Middle School (AECM), when writing about the competency-based approach, has defined them as follow:

### **5.1. Linguistic Competency**

Linguistic competency includes the learning and mastery of grammar, pronunciation, and the vocabulary needed in a given context. There is a separate set of descriptors of linguistic competency for each grade level.

### **5.2. Language Strategies**

Language strategies are ways that help students acquire, remember, organize and use information on an ongoing basis. The language strategies are incorporated into the competencies, rather than listed separately.

## **6. Roles in the Competency-Based Approach**

What is remarkable with this widely spread approach is the obvious shift from the teacher as the only source of knowledge-provider to the learner as an active participant, not a container to be filled with information. Indeed, it is a move from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness. Under the CBA, the increasing emphasis on learner-centered learning has moved the center of



gravity away from the teacher and closer to the learner (Hannafin, Land & Oliver, 1999, pp. 115-140).

### 6.1. Roles of the Teacher

The role of the teacher changes from one of being an information-giver to that of a *facilitator*, just as Albert Einstein says *I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn*. The omniscient teacher has to disappear from the stage as sage to stay as guide on the side. This does not mean that teachers no longer give information, but they open the door for their learners and let them enter under a wise guidance. Richards & Rodgers claim:

Teachers too have an active role in CBLT, although the role of the teacher will depend on the extent to which the teacher is primarily implementing a CBLT course design that has been developed by others, or developing a course for a specific group of learners. (2014, p.159).

CBA teachers, according to Richards & Rodgers (2014), are materials developers and materials resource assemblers, assessors, and coaches who guide students towards use of appropriate learning strategies and to provide necessary guidance and support for this purpose. They provide the materials, the activities, and the practice opportunities to their students (Paul, 2008). The quality and authenticity of these materials are central to the success of the class.

Besides, planning becomes a central part of the teaching process. First, each competency has to be identified and subdivided into the relevant skills. Modules need then to be developed which give students the opportunity to learn and practice those skills. Teachers ought to determine exactly, what and how well, students must perform in order to master the competency. Specific rubrics assessing each competency should be developed and made public to the students as from the beginning of the lesson (Auerbach, 1986; Richards & Rogers, 2001).

Teachers will have to devote large amounts of time to creating activities related to the specific skills necessary to fulfill the competency requirements. Significant time will also be required to assess students and provide specific, directed, and personalized feedback. Let us say that, the teacher works as much as possible to avoid the direct transmission of knowledge. He is then, a *facilitator*, *mediator* and *motivator* who:

- planifies and organizes activities;
- advises, accompanies, encourages and supports;
- learns in the course of the process;
- supports the learner, takes account of his possibilities, his strengths, his needs, his feelings.

(Rodgers 1961, as cited in Benabed 2011, p. 44)

## 6.2. Roles of the Learner

Richards & Rodgers see learners as active participants in the learning process in CBLT (2014, p. 159). We believe that the role of the learners in the class should also change. They will no longer be able to rely on the teacher only and the classroom as the sole sources of information. Instead, they should become apprentices. Their role will be to integrate, produce, and extend knowledge (Jones et al., 1994). Students must take an active part in their own learning and work toward being autonomous learners. They learn to think critically and to adapt and transfer knowledge across a variety of settings. Because expectations and standards are clear and precise, students have to be committed to continuing to work on each competency, mastering it, and then progressing to another (Richards & Rogers, 2001; Sturgis, 2012).

Pupils may be resistant to this approach at the beginning, especially if they do not see any real need for learning the language. Successful classroom interaction depends on the students' participation. Students need to find ways to motivate themselves and find ways to apply information to their own lives and to integrate it into the classroom. (Marcellino, 2005).

We generally assign the below mentioned roles to the learner to accomplish his mission towards an effective learning. Thus, a competency-based learner is:

- ***a knowledge processor:*** who observes, applies and refines through practice when given the opportunity;
- ***an effective performer:*** who is taught to be increasingly aware of his learning will be a more effective performer and, as a result, will become active in monitoring his progress;
- ***a problem-solver:*** who actively seeks information, appropriately re-call the obtained experiences, and continuously adapt and create knowledge.

## 7. Activities, Materials, and Syllabus

Although teachers are free to develop the strategies and tactics most likely to work in a given educational situation, a CBLT syllabus design is different from those of more traditional classes. CBLT courses and units are developed around competencies and the skills necessary for mastery. Syllabi must include performance activities that allow the student to practice the requisite skills (Griffith & Lim, 2010; Wong, 2008).

This may require a shift in both thinking and organization. In many traditional classes, lessons are likely to be organized by topics such as present tense, past tense, irregular past tense, future tense with '*be going to*', and so on. While these topics will still be taught, they will not drive the lesson nor will they be the focus. Instead, if a specific competency requires a student to use the past tense, then teachers will introduce that form and the vocabulary necessary for the specific task. The tense would be taught as an integral part of the lesson, along with relevant vocabulary, register, pronunciation, and so on. (Griffith, 2014, p.4).

Class materials have to be oriented to *doing* rather than *knowing*. There should be few exercises that require learners to fill in the blank, circle the right answer, or specifically test only grammar. Rather, each task should be developed around a real-world situation requiring the use of some or all of the components of the specified competency. For example, if the competency is "giving personal information", then tasks require students to use knowledge about self to produce such information. Students might practice by creating a family tree, talking about favorite past-times, or describing what they did over the weekend.

The activities in the CBLT classroom must be oriented toward the ability to successfully complete a real-world task. The most effective materials will be authentic sample texts related to a specific competency (e.g., completed job applications; recordings of a complaint about a service). The materials help provide students with the essential skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors required to meet the competency standards. (Rebecca Klein-Collins, 2013, p. 9).

## 8. The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

The Competency-Based Approach, undoubtedly, came to modernize the teaching-learning process, free the language learners, and offer the teachers new roles in the class room. One way towards the modernization of education is the use of ICTs as they present a powerful learning environment for students in the classroom. Many countries make investments in ICT

integration since it is viewed as an effective tool for renewing the educational practice where a variety of approaches and pedagogical philosophies may be implemented.

In CBA classes, the students work independently with technologies such as computers, PCs (Personal Computers), Internet, electronic books, radio tapes, etc. with the goal of arriving at a specified level of mastery of a given knowledge set. At the same time, it provides flexibility to learners which is a 'must' for mastery of learning and the quality of learning too. So far, the effective use of ICTs has impacts on learners and on various aspects of the learning process in the sense that it:

- increases learners' motivation and enhances personal commitment and engagement;
- improves independent learning;
- emphasizes collaboration and interaction between learners;
- improves learners' attainment and outcomes;
- provides pedagogical changes for learners through avoiding spoon-feeding teaching.

Though ICTs have many disadvantages, none can deny the truth that, they provide opportunities for learners in the era of global competition to hone and promote competences on an international scale.

## **9. Assessments**

Assessment in competency-based class refers to the general process of monitoring or keeping track of the learners' progress. In fact, it is (Rebecca Klein-Collins, 2013) the gathering of evidence and documentation about learners' achievements and outcomes as an integral part of the teaching-learning process. Thus, CBE has been getting a lot of attention because of its direct assessment model that can take one of two forms: *formative* or *summative*.

First, formative assessments are used to determine how well a learner is progressing along the path to competency. Formative assessments must be frequent and specific. Because their goal is to assess progress and provide information about strengths and weaknesses, they are rarely graded. In CBE, the majority of assessments will be formative. Summative assessments, on the other hand, are designed to determine whether or not the pupil has mastered the competency. Therefore, summative assessments are typically administered at the end of each module as the final test. (Online Learning Insights, 2012; Richards & Rogers, 2014).

Second, summative assessments are performance-based and may include a variety of measurement tools. Paper-and-pencil tests cannot be used to assess a competency unless one is assessing a writing competency. True-false, fill-in-the blank, and multiple choice tests are forever banished from the CBLT classroom as final competency assessments (Richards & Rogers, 2014; Sturgis, 2012; Sturgis & Patrick, 2010). Assessments, like activities, must be authentic as they require the *use* of knowledge and skills to complete a task. Similarly, authentic assessments require the measurement of real-world tasks.

So on, none can deny the differences that exist between traditional classrooms and competency-based ones when it comes to assessments. These differences between assessments and grades in traditional classes and those in competency-based classes are summarized by O'Connor (2002) as follow:

Traditional Classrooms	Competency-based Classrooms
One grade is given per assignment. An assignment may be a quiz, a test, homework, project, or anything the student must complete.	One grade is given for each specific competency. Students may be assessed throughout the process but these formative assessments will not typically be considered in the final evaluation.
Assessments are based on a percentage system. Criteria for success may be unclear.	Standards are criterion or proficiency-based. Specific criteria and standards are made available to students ahead of time.
Traditional grades may rely on a mix of assessment, achievement, effort and behavior to determine the final grade and may include late penalties and extra credit.	Grades measure only achievement. Information about effort and behavior may be reported but it is not part of the competency assessment. There are no penalties or extra credit given.
Everything goes in the grade book regardless of purpose. Every assessment score is included in determining the final grade no matter when it was collected during the module. The final grade determines whether the student advances to the next level.	Students advance only upon mastery of the competency

**Table 4: Traditional Versus Competency-Based Grading Style**

### **10. The competency-based language teaching classroom**

The teacher's role in the competency-based approach is not simply to give information to learners, but to help students take an active role in their own learning. The table below describes what normally occurs in classrooms that follow such an approach to teach the English language:

<b>The goal</b>	For learners to act in English using a range of skills and knowledge and to use English in various real-life communicative situations that may be different from the situations in which the skills and knowledge were learned.
<b>The role of learners</b>	Learners are actively involved in all aspects of the lesson. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•They regularly speak, read, write and listen within communicative situations in order to exchange ideas, information or messages;</li> <li>•They figure out the rules and patterns of language;</li> <li>•They plan for and use strategies to help them learn and communicate better.</li> </ul>
<b>The role of teachers</b>	Teachers support learners in taking active roles in the classroom by providing them with experiences that meet their interests and needs. Teachers are mainly responsible for facilitating what happens in the classroom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•creating a comfortable, supportive and collaborative environment where learners can work actively, free from fear of making mistakes;</li> <li>•presenting language so that learners can figure out the rules and patterns and learn from their mistakes;</li> <li>•providing communicative practice using English that supports learners in developing listening, reading, writing and speaking skills;</li> </ul>
<b>The types of tasks</b>	The types of tasks used in competency-based instruction are focused on the communicative purpose. They require learners to take an active role by thinking about the language; thinking about the situations; mobilizing the language; using strategies to aid communication.

**Table 5: the Competency-Based Language Teaching Class work.**  
(algeriatesol.org)

## 11. Pros and Cons

There are several *advantages* of a CBA, more precisely CBLT. First of all, CBLT focuses “*on language as a tool for communication rather than on language knowledge as an end in itself*” (Nunan, 2007, p. 425). It promotes responsible and accountable teaching. Referring to benefits of CBE, Norton (1987, as cited in Sullivan, 1995) states that in CBE learners’ confidence is enhanced because they can achieve competencies required in the performance in real life. Another benefit is that, the instructor in CBE is a facilitator and more training time is devoted to working with learners individually or in small groups rather than presenting lectures. It is believed to have four advantages of a competencies approach:

1. The competencies are specific and practical and can be seen to relate to the learner's needs and interest;
2. The learner can judge whether the competencies seem relevant and useful;
3. The competencies that will be taught and tested are specific and public, hence the learner knows exactly what need to be learned;
4. Competencies can be mastered one at a time so the learner can see what has been learned and what still remains to be learned.

CBA establishes standards which must be defined and tested against reality. It also increases productivity of educational instructions (Corcoran, 1976 as cited in Stoffle & Pryor, 1980).

Taking **disadvantages** of CBLT into consideration, Auerbach (1986) points out that critics of CBLT argue this approach carries hidden assumptions about reality and social order. It is value-governed in that, it imposes its own norms. Therefore, it is determinist, prescribing social roles to students and reinforcing the power structure. In addition, teaching overt behaviors seem *mechanical*, inhibiting critical thinking.

CBLT is also considered within reductionist approach by its critics. That is, the sum of the discrete objectives does not equal the essence of the complexity of the whole language. CBLT advocates bottom-up processing which makes students not to see the forest for the trees. It emphasizes observable outcomes. However, much learning cannot be observed. Focusing only on results obscures the complexity and dynamism of language and teaching process, therefore, creativity and innovation may be suppressed. The nature of language is creative and unpredictable; it does not include successive acquisition of discrete forms.

Another criticism, although CBLT claims to be student-centered, it takes control of learning out of students hands by extensive information gathering process prior to instruction as well as pre-specifying standardized competency lists. For CBLT to be learner centered needs have to be identified collaboratively as a result of trust and experience rather than as a precondition for instruction. Corder (1967), as cited in Auerbach, (1986) believes that only through classroom interaction a learner-based syllabus can be determined.

Sullivan (1995) adds that unless training and follow up assistance is provided for the teachers, there is a tendency to slip back into the role of the traditional teacher. Tollefson (1986) argues that there are no valid procedures to develop competencies for most programs. On the other hand, many of the areas are impossible to operationalize.

## Conclusion

In Competency-Based Education, students are rewarded only for successful completion of authentic tasks. Ideally, at the beginning of a course, each student is given an initial assessment determining the level of proficiency. Students then proceed to learn the material, at their own pace, getting lots of informational feedback from the teachers. Students know, at every level of their work, where they are and what they need to do to meet the competency standards.

Some have criticized this approach saying it may be impossible or impractical to identify every necessary competency for specific situations. Supporters, however, argue that if students have clearly specified tasks and useful feedback, they are more likely to be able to learn to use the language in practical settings because the teachers:

- ✓ Clarify the processes, the ways the learners think and act; thus the teacher displays greater transparency.
- ✓ Encourage and guide the learner's efforts by showing the learner that he is allowed to make errors and to have doubts.
- ✓ Enhance the value of co-operation between the learners.
- ✓ Proceed to formative evaluation in working situations.
- ✓ Open to other disciplines and have discussions with his colleagues about methods and interdisciplinary concerns.

Whatever the view is, it is clear that competency-based education has become more popular than ever. If it is to be successful, both students and teachers need to step out of their comfort zones and adopt new roles; since the approach leads to a serious revision of the teacher's profession. In the short term, this unfamiliarity may create uncertainty and discomfort but as classes progress the benefits should become clear. If, however, students and teachers try to adopt a competency-based approach without making the necessary changes in their behaviors, there will be no guarantee to get satisfactory results. On the other hand, if both embrace their new roles, they are likely to find learning becomes more effective.

In the next coming part of this chapter, the researcher is going to present the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach in the Algerian educational context to see if they are in harmony or not.



## Part Two

### The Competency-Based Approach in the Algerian Educational Context

#### Introduction

The 2000's in Algeria represent a re-opening to the outside world after a wave of instability during the 1990s. This re-opening triggered off the need for foreign languages not only in the economic sector but also in Education and Foreign Language Teaching (FLT). Such growing importance towards FLT gave the Algerian learner the opportunity to better understand the "Other", communicate, effect and affected, besides knowing more about different cultures and civilizations for his own *cognitive* and *socio-constructive* development.

The implementation of CBA (CBLT) was therefore supposed to achieve these socio-educational goals and to meet the learners' needs in terms of citizenship, vocational and life competencies.

As the aforementioned approach has been widely used [and is still being used] in different parts of the world, the Algerian text-book designers built confidence in adopting the CBA principles strengthening learners' competencies to establish a relationship between what is acquired at school with its use in contextual and realistic situations outside it.

#### 1. ELT and Reform in the Algerian Educational System

English enjoys an eminent status around the world for the utility it provides to anyone who seeks access to the highly globalized world. Besides, it is largely considered as the language of international communication and diplomacy, economy, science, tourism, and many other fields. Then, no country almost could escape the integration of English as an official, second or foreign language for its observable significance.

Algeria is a nation where a number of languages co-exist as a result of economic, cultural, historical, religious, and political reasons. Indeed, policy makers and language planners in Algeria have long been worrying about the suitable way to select the language that better fits the needs of the country and individuals as well. Thus, the history of Algeria as an independent country shows a change of emphasis from one language to another. More recently, Algeria adopted a new policy which wisely favors English for different causes. In this vein, Miliani (2000) states:

In a situation where French has lost much of its ground in the sociocultural and educational environment of the country, the introduction of English is being heralded as the magic solution to all possible ills-including economic, technological and educational ones. (p.13)

Despite the fact that the apparatus of educationalists' views has swung against or for teaching English, it was allowed more space and prestige, primarily to elbow out French which was labeled as the reminder of the colonial past. Thus, many reforms have taken place in order to abandon the behavioral and information processing models that proved to be mechanical.

For instance, the 1980's have brought a new reform with the implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to promote fluency and accuracy in language teaching and learning. Automatically, a number of ELT textbooks were designed; *Newlines, Midlines, Think it Over* during the 1980s, then *My New book of English, New Midlines...* during the 1990's (Hadi, 2012, p. 46).

Unfortunately, CLT and due to globalization, was challenged by new demands where learners are required to master new skills, strategies, and competencies inside and outside the school. The former Minister of National Education Benbouzid launched a reform which adopts the Competency-based model, and that aims at building an efficient educational system to cope with the necessities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Khelifi, 2013: 41). This view is expressed in the English Programme for Middle School:

English language teaching in our country has to contribute to the development of the Algerian learner in all dimensions. Among what it advocates is the value of openness on the world, with respect to the self and the others as well as the tolerance required in a society that tends towards globalization. (2002, p.47)

Hence, in this reform, the purpose behind giving much importance to English within the Algerian educational system, as declared by the syllabus designers, is to enable the Algerian society to follow modernity through full and entire participation in the linguistic community that uses the English language for all types of interaction. (ibid, p. 41)

## **2. Objectives of ELT in the Algerian Schools**

The Algerian officials are strongly aware of the bound importance of Foreign Language Learning, particularly English. They integrated it to the

curriculum in an attempt to reinforce its socio-cultural and educational impact in order to gain economic, cultural, educational, and technological benefits to the country. Nait Brahim (2000. (qtd. in Benabed, 2011 ) illustrates:

English has become the privileged means for international communication and business and stands as a prerequisite in the world of research...English Language Teaching claims to introduce students to foreign culture, a different way of apprehending life as part of the students' intellectual instruction basic to a university education. (p. 90)

Whereupon, the teaching of English as a second foreign language seeks to give our learners a world vision which allows them to win a multilingual position through a good command of English, and to be able to integrate harmoniously as well as efficaciously in the process of globalization.

English is also taught for specific purposes (ESP), especially with the advent of technology, the economic development of the country in industrial, pharmaceutical, aviation, and many other fields has called for the teaching of scientific English. It is more than a foreign language, it has, since independence, become a professional medium for training and working. Strevens (1980) claims:

ESP entails the provision of English language instruction devised to meet the learner's particular needs; related in themes and topics to designated occupations or areas of study, selective as to language content, where indicated, restricted as to the language skills included. (pp.108-109)

Therefore, ESP refers to teaching a specific genre of English for adult learners in a specific environment and for specific objectives. Unlike ESP, the General English (GE) courses do not frequently meet the special field learners' or employers' needs.

Let us now state the objectives. Since English in the Algerian schools has primarily an educational function, four main categories of **objectives** can be mentioned here:

### ***2.1. Linguistic Objectives***

- ✓ Provide the learner with a solid linguistic basis in grammar, vocabulary, syntax, and pronunciation.
- ✓ Allow the learner to understand and easily communicate in the target language.
- ✓ Permit the learner to pursue successfully studies at university or in a professional milieu.

## ***2.2. Methodological Objectives***

To provide learners with autonomous learning strategies in order to broaden their knowledge and reinforce their mental and intellectual capacities such as analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating through pertinent activities. Moreover, they prepare the learner for professional life through learning the rational use of English texts, and enable him to utilize ICTs (Information Communication Technologies) while learning.

## ***2.3. Cultural Objective***

- ✓ Raise the learner's intercultural awareness by exposing him to diverse civilizations and cultures;
- ✓ Stimulates the learner's curiosity and open-mindedness;
- ✓ Encourage interdisciplinary learning through bringing themes studied in other subject matters to integrate all the acquisitions.

## ***2.4. Socio-Professional Objectives***

Normally, such kind of objectives are the final results of the whole process because they allow the learner to be an active participant in life after a series of academic work moving from theory to real practice. (1<sup>st</sup> year English syllabus, 2005; 2<sup>nd</sup> year English syllabus, 2006; Syllabus of English of 3<sup>rd</sup> year, 2011). Especially when knowing that the Algerian policy makers and programme designers provide all the necessary means to achieve the above mentioned objectives, whilst the adoption of CBA is the best way to realize what is already planned.

## **3. Teaching under the CBA in Algeria**

As previously mentioned, the prime objective behind teaching foreign languages and more precisely English to Algerian learners is communication. The learners are supposed to be taught how to acquire 'targeted' competencies and to stimulate their cognitive development so as to react in an adequate way to real situations with verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction (Bouhadiba, 2015, p. 7). Consequently, enable the learners to:

learn how to read, write and calculate, not only in vitro, but to be able to face situations of everyday life; to be able to write a receipt, an invoice, a letter of thanks, condolences, to be able to defend their rights, to be able to weigh & measure  
(Programme d'Anglais 2002, p. 52)

The second objective is purely cultural; the textbooks that are dispatched for use in the Primary and Secondary levels are based upon a socio-

constructive approach. The third objective, according to the programs worked out by the Ministry of National Education and its application in the text books, is functional. According to many professionals and teachers, a huge breach and obvious contradictions are detected between what is being said about CBA on documents and the reality on the ground.

Nowadays school, according to Inspector Benabed (2011), is perfectly able to produce learners who acquire knowledge during several years, meanwhile, they remain unable to transform this knowledge or use it in real life-situations. Our pupils today:

- can decipher a text without being able to seize its essence to be capable to act consequently;
- learn grammar, vocabulary, and conjugation, yet they do not have the ability to produce a short meaningful paragraph;
- can carry out an addition or a subtraction, but when confronted with problem-situations, they do not know which one should be used.

#### **4. Third Year Secondary School Textbook “*New Prospects*”**

Achieving the objectives of the 2000’s Reform necessitates designing new textbooks which are consistent with the new guiding theory. Thus, the table below gives a general overview of English textbooks applied in Secondary Education:

<b>Level</b>	<b>Stream</b>	<b>Time load of the English Course</b>	<b>Coefficient of English</b>	<b>Text book</b>
<b>Year One</b>	-Literary streams	4 hours	3	<b>At the Crossroads</b>
	-Science and Technology	3 hours	2	
<b>Year Two</b>	-Experimental Science -Economy and Management -Technique and Mathematics	3 hours	2	<b>Getting Through</b>
	-Literary and Philosophy	4 hours	3	

	-Literary and Feign Languages	4 hours	4	
<b>Year Three</b>	- Experimental Science	3 hours	2	<b>New Prospects</b>
	-Economy and Management			
	-Technique and Mathematics			
	-Literary and Philosophy	4 hours	3	
	-Literary and Foreign Languages	4 hours	5	

**Table 6: English Time Load, Coefficient, and Textbooks (Khelifi, 2013, p. 50)**

As shown in the previous table, '*New Prospects*' is mainly designed for Third Year classes. It reflects constructivist principles that intend to enhance individual learning and with peers. It is accredited by the Ministry of National Education and contains *270 pages*. '*New Prospects*' is hoped to be a valuable aid for teachers who are expected to exploit its content positively through being selective, i.e., choosing the suitable activities which seem beneficial to their learners. Riche (2005) quotes:

Our ambition has been to design a pleasant and flexible resource book from which teachers will pick up or leave aside activities depending on their teaching schemes and on their student capacities. (p.vii)

Textbooks, then, are useful materials and essential in the accomplishment of the teaching-learning process. But, they remain always one thing not everything for the teachers. '*New Prospects*' encompasses six units dealing with distinct topics in an attempt to meet the different needs and interests of students in all the streams; Mathematics (M), Technique & Mathematics (TM), Experimental Sciences (ES), Economy & Management (Ec), Literary & Philosophy (L Ph), and Literary & Foreign Languages (L LF):

Units	Streams	
	M –TM –ES – Ec	L Ph - L FL
Ancient Civilizations		✓
Ethics in Business	✓	✓
Education in the World		✓
Advertising, Consumers, and Safety	✓	
Astronomy and the Solar System	✓	
Feelings and Emotions	✓	✓

**Table 7: Secondary Education Programme, Year Three (Syllabus of English of 3<sup>rd</sup> year, 2011, p. 64)**

The textbook (*New Prospects*) has a cyclical design in the sense that all its units are made up of similar sequences that are structured in the same way. Thus, learners in each stream will have the opportunity to study or deal with four compulsory units among the six available. With the teachers' guidance, the students will go smoothly through the units which are related to their field of interest.

### **5. Competencies and Objectives of the CBA for the 3SE Learners**

The Third Year Secondary school class is given much importance because it is the last step towards the University. Hence, the browser of the English course book syllabus (Year Three) notices at the very beginning, an introduction "FORWARD" written by the National Curriculum Committee (NCC) of the Ministry of National Education ( **SE3 book**, 2015, 4), an explanation of the goals beyond choosing such programme to the **SE3** & the book content. While the overall approach remains basically competency-based which helps learners give sense to their learning through acquiring intellectual competencies and develop various processes necessary to the assimilation and the use of their knowledge.

Within the course book, three major features of the syllabus have been given careful consideration:

- the fact that the Baccalauréat is exclusively of the written mode;
- the emphasis on a thematic orientation;
- the need to cater for the pedagogical requirements of all Baccalauréat streams.

(SE3 Course Book, 2015, p.4)

## 5.1. Competencies targeted by the CBA in the “New Prospects”

*New Prospects* (3SE Course Book) progressively develops in the learner the three competencies: *interaction*, *interpretation*, and *production*, to cover all areas of language: *syntax*, *morphology*, *vocabulary*, *pronunciation*, and *spelling*. These tasks are graded to make the learner ready to overcome the requirements of the Baccalauréat Examination.

In this sense, the book, and with respect to the CBA principles, provides a large number of effective learning tasks through which students are brought to *notice*, *reflect*, *interpret* authentic or written documents, and *analyze* how English is used. The tasks devised offer ample opportunities for learners to interact in the classroom and negotiate meaning. Most of these tasks involve the use of ‘discovery learning’ (inductive learning), and are intended to enhance individual learning as well as learning and *interacting* orally in pairs or groups.

These tasks are devised in such a way as to encourage learners to use more complex utterances, more fluently and accurately than in previous years of education. The cumulative effect of the diversity of the tasks enables students to gradually automatize their knowledge and recall the acquired language with greater control and ease during *producing* oral and written messages.

On the other hand, the syllabus is geared to raise more awareness of the complexities of the English language in terms of *lexis* and *discourse*. So, the selected texts present language in different types and styles: radio interviews, dialogues, news reports, newspaper and magazine articles, poems, etc. As a result, the students are prepared to respond to the various language situations they will encounter in real life. *New Prospects* text book:

- implies a *know-how* (capacities) and *know-how to be* (attitudes) to deal with any situation to reach learners competences;
- the re-investment in a certain situation differs from mere application in the sense that it is contextualized and meaningful to the student, because it requires the use of several types of resources which the learner should identify and articulate;
- the knowledge acquired is operationalized and becomes stable over time since it is internalized, and ready to be mobilized for and in action.

(Teacher’s Book for SE3, 2011)

To sum up, the utmost goal is to train learners who are supposed to be *competent and skillful*, to be able to select, adapt their discourse and attitudes according to the needs of the situations. Wendens (1991 as cited in Benabed 2011) clarifies:



Successful' or 'expert' or 'intelligent' learners have learnt how to learn. They have acquired the learning strategies, the knowledge about learning, and the attitudes that enable them to use these skills and knowledge confidently, flexibly, appropriately and independently of a teacher. Therefore, they are autonomous. (p.15)

## **5.2. Objectives of the CBA for the 3SE Learners**

Naturally, the stated objectives behind teaching foreign languages in Algeria, more particularly English, resemble those of the Competency-based Approach. Mustapha Louznadji (2013) makes this view clear when he claims that: CBA objectives are not new. Actually, educationists have always been interested in developing general “know-how” process and in fixing knowledge acquired in class. (eltalgeria.org)

Yet, the newly adopted approach (CBA) enables educationists, assistants, and teachers to better develop these objectives and picture them in their learners. As a consequence, three main objectives are worked out:

### **5.2.1 Linguistics Objectives [*Knows*]**

To make the building/construction of fundamental knows easy, the competency-based approach considers equipping learners with tools (declarative knows) as its prime objective in order to enable the learners deepen, widen, modify, and relate what they have already learnt before. Obviously, the learners' *meta-linguistic* reflection is primarily fed by the knows: *linguistic, referential, pragmatic, conceptual*... which are dependent on the perfect mastery of the mother tongue.

The declarative memory is the reservoir of facts which we are informed about and knowledge that we constructed. Similarly, we need to distinguish between the declarative memory and the procedural memory which contain the rules of action controlling the know-how to do (Benabed 2011, p. 95).

### **5.2.2. Methodological Objectives [*know-how to act (Skills)*]**

Forming an autonomous learner who is able to manage his own learning, transform his knows into actions, is one of the ultimate objectives that the CBA targets, and it clearly appears in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year textbook designed by the MNE. One of the ways to reach such goal is to promote learners' strategies, i.e., the specific behaviors or thought processes that students use to enhance their L2 learning (Rebecca, 2003, p.8).

In the same path, Allwright (1990. as cited in Rebecca, 2003, p. 9) claims that learning strategies can also enable learners to become more independent, autonomous, and life-long learners. While using these strategies, learners develop, broaden, and deepen their knowledge. Meanwhile, they also plan, formulate, reflect, and self-evaluate their own learning. Indeed, the general principle of any *know-how to do/act* is learning through practice, i.e., learning by doing which is highly encouraged by the CBA (project work for example) and supplemented by the conceptualization or simply the ability to reflect on the practices. The training requires an interaction between learner and the object for learning. (Dewey, 1975, p. 175) As a teacher, and through daily experience, arriving at *the know-how to act* stage for learners has to go through:

- ✓ Constructing a procedural rule [*by the learner*] starting from a unit of declarative *knows* and using general procedures for problem-solving situations such as inference & reasoning by analogy (comparing situations);
- ✓ Carrying out an action in conformity with the goal set in advance;
- ✓ Calling upon declarative data-base stored in memory to re-build a procedural rule adapted to the new situation.

The aforementioned steps can be observed, for example, in the **Reading & Writing** sequence (*pp.158-159*) *task1* in *As you read* rubric, *and task1* in *After reading* rubric in the 3AS **New Prospects** book where students are asked to read the whole text and answer questions, after dealing with the **Before reading** rubric.

### **5.2.3. Cultural Objectives [*know-how to be (Attitudes)*]**

Open-mindedness, Solidarity, Cooperation, Collaboration, Accepting the other, etc. are among the values of positive socializing that our policy makers try to rehabilitate right the infancy. “*No Man is an Island*” by John Donne, is a whole unit which is taught to 2<sup>nd</sup> year Secondary School pupils in their textbook entitled *Getting Through* (*p.120*). It empowers the culture of brotherhood, mercy, and collaboration between humans. Also, *Ancient Civilizations* (pp. 14-44), *Feelings and Emotions* (pp. 165-195), *Education in the World* (pp. 74-105). are three other units designed by the Ministry of National Education (MNE) in *New Prospects (SE3)* to let the learners discover others’ culture; customs, traditions, inventions, etc.

This *know-how to be* enables the learners to adopt attitudes of tolerance and respect with regard to the different cultures; there is no need to worry about losing one’s identity as learners ought to be capable of taking some distance, bearing in mind that they are themselves structured by their

environment, their national education, and their history. Thus, wherever they go, their identity remains safe.

According to experts, scholars, and linguists nowadays, learning any language depends a lot on knowing the culture of its people to give the knows a context. In fact, our educational system in Algeria under the CBA's light, teaches learners how to co-exist in an increasingly globalized world (era of ICTs) that requires the acquisition of competencies and values which allow all humans to live in a context which is strongly marked by a wide range of cultural and linguistic diversity.

The CBA aims at helping the learner give sense to his learning, it makes him acquire intellectual competences and develop various processes to the assimilation and the use of knowledge as well as re-invest, later, the obtained knows at the schools, outside it. This idea is explicitly stated by Finachiaro & Brumfit (1983, p.90):

The first assumption is that we are concerned in the classroom with language use, not language knowledge; the second is the view that we learn language most effectively by using it in realistic situations.

Familiarity with other cultures is a gradual process especially with the different cultural characteristics of the English speaking world (USA, UK, Australia, Ireland...). That is why the English language and cultural skills are closely intertwined and integrated in the learning process. Therefore, the teacher plays a great role in explaining every single difference, *in pronunciation for example*, referring it to social classes, otherwise learners may well pay little or no attention to the specific communicative codes of the speaking countries they are learning about.

## **6. Algerian English Framework (AEF)**

The Algerian English Framework is a comprehensive, general description of the expected level of attainment of each of the competences for each grade level and across grade levels. The AEF is organized around competences that correspond to those in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) – *a framework for language teaching and assessment developed by the European Council of Europe in 2001* (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p.165), but have been adapted to fit the Algerian Middle and High school context. They correspond to levels A1, A2 (basic language user) and B1 (independent language user) in the CEFR. The leap from being an A2 to B1 language user is important and thus significant time is devoted to the *independent language user* level. Then, the other levels appear as follow:

MS1 corresponds to level A1, MS2 corresponds to level A2, MS3 corresponds to level A2+  
MS4 & SE1 correspond to level B1, and SE2 & SE3 correspond to level B1+.

It becomes clear that the last grade in high school (Terminale) is considered by the AEF as *independent language users* who are normally able to use English without the presence of instructors. Why not, and their EFL learning lasts seven years since Middle School. The Algerian English Framework enables the user to see two views of the curriculum, one is vertical (by year), and the other is horizontal (over the years).

### 6.1. The vertical view

It is an overall view of learning targets by competence for a particular grade level. The competencies are categorized according to: Interaction (speaking competence); Interpretation (listening & reading competences); Production (writing & speaking competences); Linguistic competence.

The aim, therefore, within this view is to see what the learner *can really do* by the end of the year, with respect to the kinds of **topics** and the **breadth** language they can use. For speaking and writing, the learning targets include the **functions** learners can do. Whereas listening, reading and writing, the learning targets involve the **genres** the learners are able to read, listen to or write about.

The AEF describe at a general level, what students should know and be capable to do in relation to each of the competences *by the end of that year*. The descriptions, thus, provide the targeted learning outcomes for the whole year. As far as 3<sup>rd</sup> Year pupils are concerned, the descriptors draw what they ought to be able to do with respect to interactive speaking, interpretive listening & reading, productive writing & speaking, grammar & strategies at the end of the *Third Year* in High School.

### 6.2. The horizontal view

The AEF also allows one to view pupils' expected progress in every single competence over the course of the seven years of English instruction. The competence for each year articulates with the previous one (year) through building on and expanding what has been attained in that year. i.e., learners expand and deepen the competences over the seven years moving from a self and local environment focus in the earlier years, to an emphasis on larger community and the world in the Secondary Education.

The horizontal view enables to compare, for example, one part of the interactive spoken competence across three grade levels: *grade 6, grade 9, and grade 12.*

**Grade six:** the learner can interact orally to ask and answer questions on:

1. topics and situations related to describing himself and others, home & time;
2. using memorized phrases and basic sentences

**Grade nine:** the learner can interact orally to start and maintain short conversation. i.e., asking / answering questions and responding to information or news of others.

3. on a range of familiar topics related to self & community;
4. using both routine and simple, spontaneous sentences.

**Grade twelve:** the learner can interact orally to start and maintain a conversation (greetings for example, asking questions and follow-up questions, answering in detail, giving & seeking facts, reasons, advices and opinions, agreeing and disagreeing)

5. on topics of interest and familiar matters (films, books,...);
6. using a range of appropriate simple language.

On paper, the development in oral competencies is obvious from one grade level to another. What is needed is the realization of these steps and others on the ground, starting from Middle School and reaching Secondary School under the guidance of experts, Inspectors, and more importantly the teachers. The purpose of the AEF, then, is to provide a guide for teaching and assessing students;

- The competencies describe learner achievement expected for each year; that tells teachers what they need to teach.
- Because the competencies all describe how learners will be able to *use* English, the document tells teachers that teaching requires providing learners with a lot of practice using and thinking about the language.

## **7. General Description of the Core Competencies**

According to the AEF, the Secondary Education Syllabus is based on three main competencies: *interactive, interpretive,* and *productive.* The AEF (2008) provides a general description of the expected level of attainment of each competency for each grade level in Middle and High Schools. He explains how normally the three basic competencies are gradually developed and/or acquired by the learners.

As far as our research concerns Secondary Education, we mention the general description of these competencies which are related to levels: *B1=SE1*, *B1+=SE2*, and *B1+=SE3*, and how they are progressed.

### 7.1. Oral Interaction Competency

	SE1 (B1)	SE2 (B1+)	SE3 (B1+)
<b>Interaction Competency</b>	<p>Can interact orally to start and maintain conversation (e.g. greetings, asking and answering questions, giving opinions and advice, responding to ideas and news of others)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> on topics of interest and familiar matters outside of self and community</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> of a primarily concrete nature (e.g. everyday life, travel, current events)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> using simple, but primarily spontaneous language.</li> </ul> <p>Can carry out common functions involving two people (e.g. apologizing, asking for and offering help, making plans, giving opinions and advice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> in a range of contexts and situations</li> </ul>	<p>Can interact orally to start, maintain and close a conversation (e.g. greetings, asking questions and follow up questions, giving and seeking facts and opinions, good-byes) on topics of interest and familiar matters (e.g. current events or concrete issues related to personal life and found in media, such as film, books and music)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> using generally simple language</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> with some variety of expression.</li> </ul> <p>Can carry out common people (e.g. apologizing, asking for and offering help, making plans, giving opinions and advice), with some variety in contexts and situations.</p>	<p>Can interact orally to start, maintain, and close a conversation (e.g. greetings, asking questions and follow up questions, answering in detail, giving an seeking facts, reasons, advice and opinions and agreeing and disagreeing) on topics of interest and familiar matters (e.g. current events and contemporary issues; concrete issues related to personal life and found in media such as film, books and music) using a range of appropriate, simple language.</p> <p>Can carry out common functions involving two or more people (e.g. making plans, giving opinions and advice, apologizing, asking for and offering help)</p>

**Table 8: Oral Interaction Competency (adapted from AEF, 2008, p. 31-32)**

The purpose behind enhancing the oral interaction competency is to help learners become effective users of English in and out the school. The components of the process the learner practices and develops, and which are significant to the development of the competency, are:

- ✓ Reacting non-verbally to messages using strategies;
- ✓ Transmitting oral messages using strategies;
- ✓ Maintaining oral interaction.

These key features are interrelated and constantly activated through the dynamic process of the competency.

## 7.2. Interpretive Listening Competency

	SE1	SE2	SE3
<b>Interpretive listening competency</b>	<p>Can listen to and understand main points and some important details of medium length monologs and dialogs of roughly one minute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ with key information presented in relatively straightforward language</li> <li>□ on a range of topics of interest and regularly encountered matters, events and issues found in media that are delivered clearly.</li> </ul>	<p>Can listen to and understand main points and the important details of medium-length (roughly minute-long) monologs and conversations with two or three people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ on a range of topics of interest and well-known matters found in media (e.g. radio and film), such as plot, characters and themes.</li> </ul>	<p>Can listen to and understand main points and the important details of longer (more than minute-long) monologs and conversations with two or three people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ on a range of topics of interest and well-known matters found in media (e.g. radio and film) such as plot, characters,...</li> </ul>

**Table 9: Interpretive Listening Competency (adapted from AEF, 2008, p. 32-33)**

The aim here is to have a learner who is able to listen, follow and demonstrate understanding of different inputs such as monologues, conversations, dialogues, etc. that contain less common or more complex language with some complex sentences and unknown words. The interpretive competency as a covert mental activity requires (Rost 2002, cited in Benabed, 2011: 107) a set of processes:

- **Receptive:** hearing what the speaker exactly says;
- **Constructive:** constructing and representing meaning;
- **Collaborative:** negotiating the meaning with the speaker and responding;
- **Transformative:** creating meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy.

Learners use two distinct processes when listening. Either a ‘top-down’ process in which prior knowledge interferes to decode messages, or a ‘bottom-up’ process to make reasonable guesses or maintain a helpful state of mind to look for specific details.

### 7.3. Interpretive Reading Competency

	SE1	SE2	SE3
<b>Interpretive Reading Competency</b>	- Can read and understand the main points and some important details of longer texts (three detailed paragraphs) on familiar topics (e.g. school, interests, health, personal experiences, stories and straightforward events or issues) that contain a few complex sentences and less frequent expressions (e.g. advice columns, book jackets, autobiographies, diary entries).	-Can read and understand the main points and significant details of long and detailed texts of three or more paragraphs on familiar matters (including some more abstract cultural and contemporary issues) that contain some complex language, but are generally straightforward, e.g. encyclopedia entries, award nominations, eyewitness accounts.  forward	-Can read and understand the gist and significant details in texts of three or more paragraphs on familiar matters of a more abstract nature (such as cultural and contemporary issues) that contain some unexpected or complex language and ideas, such as political speeches, social commentaries, book or movie reviews.

**Table 10: Interpretive Reading Competency (adapted from AEF, 2008, p. 34)**

As indicated a in the table above, and at the end SE3, learners should be able to read and demonstrate understanding of texts that have three or more paragraphs of a more abstract nature such as cultural and contemporary issues, and which contain complex and difficult words. Thus, the type of activities devised by the teacher ought to target learners' reading proficiency.

### 7.4. Productive Writing Competency

	SE1	SE2	SE3
	-Can write short narratives, descriptions and factual reports on personal and/or concrete topics ( e.g. diary entries,	-Can write narrative, descriptive and expository texts, on a range of familiar matters and topics of	-Can write narratives, descriptions, expository texts or essays (e.g. articles for media, reports, essays, film



<p><b>Productive Writing Competency</b></p>	<p>imaginative stories, reports, advice letters)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• getting across in writing points he/she feels are important</li> <li>• organized into two paragraphs that are unified by topic.</li> </ul> <p>-Can write a personal message conveying news and asking for/making brief comments about a friend's news, about topics of interest related to self and community, following a conventional letter format consisting of one main detailed paragraph.</p>	<p>interest that are straightforward and consist of two to three relatively cohesive paragraphs.</p> <p>-Can write a short, persuasive letter to the editor on a familiar matter, exhibiting simple characteristics of an argument.</p> <p>-Can write personal messages giving news and expressing thoughts and opinions on topics of interest related to self and community and beyond, or responding to the news of his/her correspondent.</p>	<p>reviews), on a variety of concrete and more abstract subjects related to his/her interests and studies, that are relatively detailed and consist of three generally clear and cohesive paragraphs.</p> <p>-Can write a simple factual argument exhibiting a line of development which includes some subsidiary points and relevant examples, and a conclusion.</p> <p>-Can write personal letters giving news and expressing thoughts and opinions about well-known abstract sociocultural topics (films, music, etc.</p>
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**Table 11: Productive Writing Competency (adapted from AEF, 2008, p.34)**

Writing is a cognitive skill which must be regularly practiced to be maintained. That is why the acquisition of the productive writing competency needs much more time and effort. So, according to the table above, SE3 learners should be able to write narratives, descriptions, expository texts or essays on a variety of concrete and more abstract subjects related to his/her interests and studies, that are relatively detailed and consist of three generally clear and cohesive paragraphs. This requires social skills which can be acquired only by first-hand experience in a supportive and appropriate environment that sets high standards of performance.

## 7.5. Productive Speaking Competency

	<b>SE1</b>	<b>SE2</b>	<b>SE3</b>
<b>Productive Speaking Competency</b>	Can sustain an oral narrative (story, personal experience or event) or a description, on a variety of topics of interest, consisting of one to two paragraphs loosely organized by topic and basic connectors.	Can sustain an oral narrative or description, on familiar matters and topics of interest, consisting of more than one somewhat	-Can produce an oral narrative or description, on a variety of topics, e.g.dreams, hopes, ambitions, plots of books, unpredictable occurrences such as accidents, consisting of more than one somewhat cohesive paragraph that includes some basic sensory details and vivid description..

**Table 12: Productive Speaking Competency (adapted from AEF, 2008, p. 34-35)**

With regard to the productive speaking competency, SE3 learners should have acquired the necessary skills to produce an oral narrative or description, on a variety of topics, and can, as well as, give an oral report prepared from researched facts on a familiar matter or topic of interest. Learners ought to have the capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of productive strategies used to maintain conversations.

## 7.6. Linguistic Competency

	SE1	SE2	SE3
<b>Linguistic Competency</b>	<p><b>Vocabulary</b></p> <p>-Can exploit a wide range of simple language (words and phrases) to appropriately express much of what he/she wants to say on a range familiar topics, in order to be easily comprehended much of the time when trying to say exactly what he/she wants to.</p> <p><b>Grammar</b></p> <p>-Can use a range of routines and patterns in predictable and some less predictable situations with general accuracy, though mistakes can occur that affect comprehension.</p> <p><b>Pronunciation</b></p> <p>Can intelligibly pronounce most language used, with a foreign accent often evident and mispronunciations to be expected.</p>	<p><b>Vocabulary</b></p> <p>-Can effectively use the vocabulary needed to fully express his/her ideas on most topics pertinent to his/her life and community, appropriately and with errors that only occasionally affect comprehension.</p> <p><b>Grammar</b></p> <p>-Can use grammar needed to express ideas in a range of familiar situations with good accuracy, with native - language influence present and mistakes that only occasionally affect comprehension</p> <p><b>Pronunciation</b></p> <p>Can intelligibly pronounce language used, though a foreign accent is evident and mispronunciations occur.</p>	<p><b>Vocabulary</b></p> <p>-Can effectively use the needed vocabulary to fully express his/her ideas with precision on matters connected to his/her interests and generally known topics.</p> <p><b>Grammar</b></p> <p>-Can use grammar needed to express ideas on matters connected to his/her interests and generally known topics, with good accuracy and precision, though minor mistakes may occur.</p> <p><b>Pronunciation</b></p> <p>Can clearly and intelligibly pronounce language used, though a foreign accent is evident and occasional mispronunciations occur.</p>

**Table 13: Linguistic Competency (adapted from AEF, 2008, p. 35)**

Depending on the table above, the linguistic competency seems to have three main components: *lexical*, *structural*, and *phonetics*. Therefore, SE3 learners are expected to be able to use grammar needed to express ideas on matters connected to his/her interests with good accuracy and precision, though minor mistakes are predicted. With regard to lexis, learners need to be effective when selecting or using vocabulary to fully express their ideas with precision. As far as phonetics is concerned, SE3 pupils should have clear and correct pronunciation though mistakes can take place.

So far, the AEF adapted tables present clearly the competencies targeted by the syllabuses of Secondary Education. They reflect the overall language proficiency that pupils will have to exhibit to be independent learners who efficaciously *use* the language rather than just *know* about it. The SE3 syllabus, indeed, aims strongly at developing the learners' communicative competence in English to enable interaction with others using *receptive, interpretive,* and *productive skills*. Besides the mastery of grammar and vocabulary that serve to convey the intended meaning.

## Conclusion

In this chapter II, we have presented the Competency-Based Approach as a banking model of education (in Part One). We attempted to go through all the necessary stages starting from a historical background to recent day implementation of this approach. Despite diverse criticism, CBA continues to be widely used internationally attracting a large political following from those seeking accountability for educational investment. (Richards & Rodgers, 2014)

In part two, we were mainly interested in the Competency-Based Approach in the Algerian Educational Context. We dealt with the history of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Algeria and the objectives behind. Several titles were mentioned to show how the English language was/is being taught to learners in the Algerian High School, **3SE** in particular, under *Performance-Based Learning*.

Obviously, the **3SE** learners are expected to develop competencies which certainly bring them to cope with, primarily, the Baccalaureate examination, and more importantly, the different situations faced later in life. Therefore, learning should raise their awareness towards human relations and enhance cooperation, collaboration and solidarity.

However, to effectively apply what has been planned depends on a number of factors, precisely the teacher's knowledge and practice, the learner's motivation, the compliance of the suggested didactic materials with his/her interest and level. Besides other extra-school factors such as the learning environment/atmosphere inside as well as outside the classroom.

In chapter III, therefore, we aim at collecting data using multiple research methods to test whether these factors exist in teachers and learners, or they are still far reaching.

## Chapter III

### Methodology and Data Collection

#### I- Methodology

##### Introduction

Since speech differs totally from deeds, i.e., “*Saying is one thing, doing is another thing,*” says Michel De Montaigne, we have decided to be within the teaching-learning process to see where the CBA exactly stands in our classrooms, touch the teaching materials, live the teacher’s-learner’s actions and re-actions, hear their sounds, see the knowing-doing operation, and feel the environment with its response towards the overall approach.

Henceforth, chapter III and through an ordered stage that includes several methods, precisely, textbook analysis, classroom observation, questionnaires, and interviews, will try to scrutinize the true utilization of the Competency-Based Approach inside our schools and highlight the constraints and obstacles which impede the reaping of its basic competencies.

##### 1. Field Work

###### 1.1. Data Collection

To carry out this research, a well-known process named *triangulation* is used to approve or disapprove the previously mentioned hypotheses. This scientific method of investigation is based on three kinds of experiments which include: the textbook analysis, the class observations, the questionnaires and interviews. These methods are chosen on purpose to check textbook compliance with the CBA’s objectives, the teachers’ way of teaching, and more importantly the learners’ motivation towards learning English as a foreign language.

As we have mentioned in the general introduction, this research is adopting a mixed research method, i.e. qualitative and quantitative. The former consists of the observational phase inside the classroom and the **SE3** textbook content analyses, while the latter comprises two survey questionnaires and interviews. The researcher believes that this kind of research will probably ensure the maximum degrees of both *validity* and *reliability*.

###### 1.1.1 NEW PROSPECTS Textbook Analysis

Adopting a new educational system means necessarily a revolutionary change in almost everything. Naturally, the move towards the CBA in Algeria gave birth to a new set of textbooks of English for both **Middle** and

**Secondary** schools for they are important materials in the teaching-learning process accomplishment. Hutchinson & Torres (qtd in Sayed. T. 2014: 571) argue:

The textbook is an almost universal element of teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in countries...No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook.” (1994, p.315)

Whereas Sheldon in a study conducted in 1988 also confirms that textbooks do not only represent the visible heart of any ELT program, but also offer considerable advantages for both students and the teachers when they are being used in ESL / EFL classrooms.

It should be noted that, due to time and means non-affordability, this research concentrates much more on the Third Year Textbook “**NEW PROSPECTS**”.

In the Algerian context, the book designers and publishers interpret programs in full freedom and the choice of the essential teaching material is the teacher’s responsibility (Benabed 2011, p.115). Nevertheless, I, with the help of experienced teachers are going to analyze this textbook in an attempt, on the one hand, to provide an overall diagnosis and not to establish a track record. On the other hand, we descriptively check the textbook content’s compliance with both the syllabus and the CBA’s objectives. Thus, the previous analysis draws a clear picture of the constraints and obstacles which facing teachers when using the textbook as one of the most inevitable teaching materials.

### **1.1.2 Classroom Observation**

Observations have led to some of the most important scientific discoveries in human history. Today, social scientists, natural scientists, engineers, and educational researchers use observation as a primary research method since it can be conducted on nearly any subject matter. Dörnyei stresses the importance of observation as a tool of research:

Besides asking questions, observing the world around us is the other basic human activity that all of us have been involved in since baby-hood to learn and gain understanding. From a research perspective, observation is fundamentally different from questioning because it provides direct information rather self-report accounts. (2007, p.178)

Classroom observation in our case is an appropriate technique to collect data as it enables the researcher, as an observer, to have a closer look on the class interactions. Indeed, it is a live show of all what happens inside this small world. Robson (1993. qtd in Benabed, 2011) states that: Class observation seems to be pre-eminently the appropriate technique for getting at 'real life' in the real world. Direct observation in the field permits lack of artificiality which is all too rare with other techniques. (p.116)

In our dissertation, observation concerns four sequences: LISTEN AND CONSIDER, READ AND CONSIDER, LISTENING AND SPEAKING, and READING AND WRITING. Certainly, I have attended many sessions in the three mentioned High Schools in the Wilaya of Chlef, namely: ZERROUKI E'Chihk (Taougrite), Bennouna MABROUKA (EL-Marsa), and SALHI Abdelkadder (E'Chorfa). In fact, it was a direct overlook without any single interference in order to assure the highest levels of honesty as an observer only.

### **1.1.3 Questionnaires**

Invented by Sir Francis Galton (Anol 2012, p.74), a questionnaire is simply a 'tool/instrument' for gathering and recording information about a particular issue of interest. It is mainly made up of a list of questions, but also includes clear instructions and space for answers or administrative details to capture responses from respondents in a standardized manner. In fact, structured questionnaires are usually associated with quantitative research, i.e. research that is concerned with numerical data.

In what concerns us, we chose questionnaires, regardless of their disadvantages, for their profitability because they allow the collection of maximum information, consume less time, help to describe, compare, and explain. So, we tried as much as possible to design questions so that respondents could read, understand, and respond to them in a meaningful way.

**1.1.3.1. Questionnaire 1:** It consists of 23 close-ended and open-ended questions targeted to Secondary School teachers. Here, we aimed at understanding:

- ✓ the informants' viewpoints about the CBA implementation;
- ✓ their training itinerary;
- ✓ their professional data;
- ✓ their expectations.

This sample has concerned teachers in High Schools in different regions in the Wilaya of Chlef, and other Wilayas over the nation namely Mostaganem, Algiers, Biskra, Setif, and El-Oued, in an attempt to converge teachers' views and see whether they were facing the same problems, constraints and obstacles.

**1.1.3.2. Questionnaire 2:** This type was directed to SE3 learners to check their attitudes towards learning English and the use of this language. We focused on:

- ✓ learners' attitudes towards English Language Learning;
- ✓ their views concerning the English people and their culture;
- ✓ their attitudes towards their teachers' performance;
- ✓ their motivation towards English Language Learning.

Absolutely, the questions were delivered in a simple form and with Arabic translation to be clearly understood by the informants, and then, rise their motivation to respond to it genuinely.

#### **1.1.4 Interviews**

Unlike questionnaires, *interviews* are a more personalized form of data collection method, yet, the interviewer uses the same research protocol as questionnaire, that is to say a set of standardized questions. During the interviewing process, the interviewer could record personal observations and comments; he also has the opportunity to clarify any issues raised by the respondent or ask probing or follow-up questions (Anol 2012, p.78). Despite the fact that *interviews* are time-consuming, resource intensive, and need some special skills on part of the interviewer, we dared to utilize them in our research for their uncountable values.

As far as High School Head Masters, Principals, and Counselors were concerned, the researcher visited a number of schools and had fruitful discussions (after answering the conducted questions) with their Directors where a clear image was pictured about the problems faced by the staff in each school. In addition, what I personally appreciated was the fact that most of the interviewed Head Masters and Principals were experienced teachers.

## **2. Pilot Study**

Whatever you tried as a researcher, doubts via respondents' re-actions regarding the clarity and easiness of the questions remain alive especially those delivered to learners. Naturally, a sample questionnaire was distributed and filled by a random group of informants (15 learners) to see whether they



found any kind of difficulty or ambiguity when answering the questions concerning learning in general and learning English in specific. Hopefully, this step was encouraging and brought to me peace of mind since the chosen category had no problems in understanding and tackling the questions.

## **2.1 Subjects**

### **2.1.1 Teachers targeted by the questionnaire [1]**

As a researcher who is looking for satisfactory findings, I attempted to reach a big number of the English language teachers through hand-delivering or sending the questionnaires to no less than 100 Secondary Education teachers. The participants were randomly chosen and from different Wilayas: Chlef, Mostaganem, Algiers, Biskra, Setif, and El-Oued.

### **2.1.2 Learners targeted by the questionnaire [2]**

The informants were selected from Third Year classes only. We believe that final year levels (3AS) are sufficiently exposed to the same amount of hours in all sections besides their preparation to the Baccalaureate exam which means they give equal importance to all modules as far as English is concerned. Surprisingly, all the schools targeted by the study had at least 5 classes of Baccalaureate candidates in both scientific and literary streams. Yet, the number of girls in almost all streams and schools exceeds that of boys; and this case is in itself another field of study which could be envisaged in by other researchers.

## **2.2 . Schools**

Concerning the three chosen schools, they were selected on purpose and not randomly. I am one of those who strongly believe that *geography* has its own influence on foreign language acquisition. Thus, the choice fell on SALHI Abdelkader High School in Chorfa which is an urban area and just 3 or 4 kilometers from the Wilaya of Chlef. Then, ZERROUKI E'Chikh High School in Taougrite, a semi-urban area and it is 63 km away from the Wilaya of Chlef. Lastly, Bennouna MABROUKA High School in El Marsa, a semi-urban, sea-side area, and it is 100 km far from the Wilaya of Chlef. The researcher tried to see to what extent the location or the environment where learners grew up, study, and live are factors that affect language acquisition, and the use as well as attitudes towards language learning.

## **Conclusion**

After dealing with the methodology and the instruments which shall be used to collect data in this dissertation through multiple research tools, we move to the second part where we mention the obtained data from SE3 textbook, classroom observation, questionnaires, and interviews. As previously said, the collected data appear in numbers, percentages, and tables.

## **II- Data Collection**

### **a) Qualitative Data**

#### **Introduction**

Instructional materials may take two forms: Printed ones such as textbook, workbook, teacher's guide, and non-printed, like audiotapes, videotapes, and computer-based materials. They are considered key component in most TEFL programs, particularly textbooks which are the mostly used materials by both teachers and learners. Hence, this part of the research work provides a practical analysis of the **SE3 NEW PROSPECTS** Textbook as a didactic material. We highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed teaching materials with regard to the competencies targeted by the Competency-Based Approach.

#### **1. NEW PROSPECTS Textbook Analysis**

Textbooks are used for knowledge transmission in school systems, especially where financial resources are limited (qtd in Lilia Maria 1995, p.1). Textbooks developed for EFL classrooms organize a language based on theoretical principles that provide support for the method (ibid, p.8). In Algeria, the evolution of the contents of the textbooks is mainly due to the new teaching prospects structured around the principles of the CBA, particularly competency, since this approach is based on learning not on teaching.

Therefore, in this analysis, we seek to bestow data about the contribution of this textbook to create the didactic framework so as to facilitate both teaching and learning effectiveness. Here again, I shall remind that the analysis is first of all descriptive and it checks the adequacy of the **New Prospects'** contents adequacy with the objectives and principles of the CBA.

#### **1.1. Structure**

The textbook has a cyclical design in the sense that all its six units with distinct topics (EXPLORING THE PAST, ILL-GOTTEN GAINS NEVER PROSPER, SCHOOLS: DIFFERENT AND ALIKE, SAFETY FIRST, ARE WE ALONE? and WE ARE A FAMILY) are made up of similar sequences which in their turn are built in the same way to meet the different needs and interests of learners either in literary or scientific and technical streams. After a series of revisions and modifications, the general structure of each unit appears as follow:

- Presentation of the Project Outcome; an ongoing research about a subject matter done by learners through the unit;
- Two parts: each one contains two sequences that are subdivided into rubrics;
- Take a Break: a station where learners can relax to be ready for the next part;
- Research and Report: here learners will individually or in groups try to re-invest what has been learnt in the first part;
- Project Outcomes; learners hand back and present the project;
- Assessment: checking learners progress and performance;
- Time For...: a pause which is made up of songs and poems.

## 1.2. Analytical Description

The 3AS English textbook is normally structured with a progression which is supposed to simplify the development of competencies for the learner.

### 1.2.1. Part One: Language Learning Rubrics

The first part in each unit contains two sequences: ‘LISTEN AND CONSIDER’ (pages: 15, 46, 75, 107, 136, and 166) and ‘READ AND CONSIDER’, (pages: 21, 53, 82, 113, 142, and 173) the focus of which is to study grammatical structures, vocabulary building, pronunciation and spelling. The two sequences are subdivided into more or less the following similar rubrics:

- ✓ **Language Outcomes:** This rubric has no tasks to deal with; it is just a green box that tells the learner about the main language objectives that are to be attained by the end of the sequence. For example, at the end of sequence one in page 15, the pupils will be able to ask and answer questions with ‘ago’.
- ✓ **Getting started:** Let’s say it is a warming up rubric, the aim here is to introduce the learner to the topic through activating and accessing his prior knowledge when looking at the thematic pictures like in pages 15 & 107 , discussing the theme with his peers and responding to

comprehension questions (see pages 46 & 166). Indeed, it prepares him to the next coming phase.

- ✓ ***Let's hear it*** (LISTEN AND CONSIDER): Provides a number of listening tasks and exercises such as 'Listen and answer' in page 76, and 'Listen and re-order' (in pages 137 & 167) to better the listening skills and make the students react to the suggested scripts.
- ✓ ***Taking a closer look*** (READ AND CONSIDER): Requires learners to read a text silently and individually or in pairs, then to answer some questions of comprehension or to mark statements as true/false (as in pages 21, 54, 113, and 174) in an attempt to develop students' reading skills.
- ✓ ***Around the text***: The focus is made on the grammatical and lexical content of the text. The learners are asked to concentrate on specific grammar features (as in pages: 23, 47, 55), and vocabulary (as in pages: 57 & 147). The kind of tasks included in this rubric may contain matching sentences, identifying the functions of words, etc. the rubric includes two types of exploring activities: Grammar Explorer and Vocabulary Explorer.
- ✓ ***Pronunciation and Spelling***: Is devoted to develop the students' understanding of the sound-spelling relationships that are specific to the English language, stress pattern, and final "s or ed" pronunciation (as in pages: 20, 28, 51, 57, 88, and 179) to achieve a good level in listening, and then speaking ability.
- ✓ ***Think, pair, share***: It is one of the most important rubrics in each unit, indeed, it is a situation of integration where learners require to use their background knowledge and what has been acquired along the sequences (1 & 2 in each unit) to write about a subject matter be it short talks (pages 20 & 112), expository essays/articles (pages 29, 119, and 141), public statement (page 52), poems and checklists (page 81), or letters/newspaper article (as in pages 172 & 180).

The sequence 'READ AND CONSIDER' in the first part ends with the '**TAKE A BREAK**' section that offers a space for rest and leisure through jokes, proverbs/sayings, school crosswords, and idiomatic expressions (as in pages 30, 59, 91, 181, and 150). '**RESEARCH AND REPORT**' is another section that follows 'Take a break', wherein students are given the opportunity to work individually or collaboratively outside the classroom to prepare some written (page 31, 182...) or oral pieces like poems, short stories,

and speeches (as in 122). The research and report, in fact, is a training ground for the students' designing of the project proper.

### 1.2.2. Part Two: Skills Development Rubrics

Two more sequences entitled 'LISTENING AND SPEAKING' and 'READING AND WRITING' take place in the second part of each unit. The first sequence which is 'LISTENING AND SPEAKING' consists of the following rubrics:

- ✓ ***Skills and Strategies Outcomes:*** It resembles the 'language outcomes' in part one, i.e., this rubric does not include tasks or activities, but it just presents the main objectives that are primarily communicative and which the learner will normally attain by the end of the sequence. For instance, by the end of the 'Listening and Speaking' sequence in page 93, the learners will be able to listen to a lecture and to take notes, then use them to orally summarize what has been said.
- ✓ ***Before listening:*** It aims at preparing learners to understand an aural text relying automatically on pre-listening activities which help them (learners) predict the content. If just we visit the 'before listening' rubric in page 32 or 93, we can clearly penetrate the process; the learners have a map (in page 32) and a photo (in page 93), they try to identify them through some guiding questions that may well give them an idea about the content of the next coming step in 'as you listen' rubric.
- ✓ ***As you listen:*** After making predictions the teacher asks his learners to listen and check their answers, i.e., they need to confirm or disconfirm their anticipations that have been made previously. In fact, task one in page 94 is a good example to test this operation.
- ✓ ***After listening:*** It differs from the pre-listening stage in the sense that it enables the learners formulate their understanding of the text rather than only predict its content. Furthermore, this rubric provokes the learners to implement the speaking, reading and writing skills. The tasks in pages: 34, 63, 125, and 154 are appropriate to act out the suggested procedures.
- ✓ ***Saying it in writing:*** In this rubric learners are asked to produce written pieces from what they were listening to. This section is found in pages: 34, 64, 95, 127, 155, and 187. They aimed at getting the students to eventually concretize what is termed in the official syllabus as '*l'objectif terminal d'integration*' (SE3 textbook, 2015: 6).

The second sequence (and the last in each unit) in part two displays 'READING AND WRITING' as a title since learners will be engaged in activities and tasks that develop, consolidate, and reinforce their reading and writing skills/abilities. Therefore, this sequence like the previous ones is subdivided into the following rubrics:

- ✓ ***Skills and strategies outcomes:*** It defines the objectives that learners need to arrive at in terms of linguistic, communicative, and cognitive ones. It is essentially concerned with the structural and discursive aspects of the texts.
- ✓ ***Before reading:*** It is a rubric that offers learners the opportunity to predict the content of the topic when re-acting to a number of questions. In page 36, for example, the students are requested to look at and identify pictures 1-3 which are about pyramids and pharaohs masks and tombs to be ready later to tackle a text (in 'As you read' rubric) regarding 'Ancient Egyptian Civilization' that is the main topic of the sequence.
- ✓ ***As you read:*** A rubric which focuses on learners' use of two famous reading techniques namely ***skimming*** and ***scanning*** to make sense of the texts. The instructions in task one pages 37-66 or tasks 4 & 1 in pages 39 -66 suits practically what has been said theoretically.
- ✓ ***After reading:*** At this level learners will be questioned to identify the structure of a text; finding the general meaning, sub ideas, synonyms, antonyms, and reference words. It also prepares them (learners) for the next rubric through the use of writing activities as in task two (2) in page 40 where the students are instructed to write a short summary to the text in pages 37 & 38 so as to be ready for the writing development rubric.
- ✓ ***Writing development:*** It is the final rubric in the second sequence (and the last in each unit) that provides learners with an opportunity to express their opinions, give reasons, present arguments, etc. The pages: 40, 69, 101, 130, 160, and 192 are all the sections where learners are pushed to ultimately use their writing skills to manufacture articles, paragraphs, essays, etc.

The '**Project Outcome**' (pages: 42, 71, 103, 132, 162, and 193) always comes after the fourth (and the last) sequence in each unit to supply suggestions and guidelines on how to perfectly realize the project-work handed at the very beginning of the unit. Besides, it offers alternative projects with websites references to be visited by the students for further help. The

project designing procedure runs parallel to the unfolding of the unit, and its progress is signposted by reminders like: brainstorming, fact finding, organizing, and writing up.

The last section, before dealing with a new unit, is ‘**ASSESSMENT**’ (pages: 43, 72, 104, 133, 163, and 194); it contains a number of activities for learners to weigh their outcomes and achievements. In reality, assessment in the newly designed syllabuses and textbooks (as far as New Prospects is concerned) is part of the teaching-learning process, and not separated. According to the SE3 textbook, it is of two kinds: self-assessment and objective assessment.

- **Self-assessment:** It is combined with peer assessment, bearing on the functions and language components. Tables (see pages of assessment) that summarize all the functions and the language components dealt with through the whole unit, and that enable the learner evaluate his level either it is *very well, fairly well, or not well*.
- **Objective assessment:** Bearing on the skills and strategies. The latter kind is devised by the teacher who selects a suitable text for that purpose from the Resources Portfolio. So, it is the teacher’s turn to check his learners’ progress. (SE3 textbook, 2015, p. 7)

‘**TIME FOR...**’ apparently perceived as being a session of entertainment since it is designed as a continuation to the learning of the unit. The choice of activities such as poems (page: 44) and songs (pages 73, 105, 134, 164, and 195) make it possible for the learners, according to Benabed 2011, to apprehend the culture via literature and music. And why not learn to produce other discourses as well as improve the competency of comprehension (interpretive competency), not only linguistic, but especially extra-linguistic.

### **1.3. Intercultural Communicative Competence in the ‘New Prospects’**

The National Curriculum for English as a Foreign Language in Algeria issued by the Ministry of National Education (MNE) in 2005, is a reform that encouraged both teachers and learners to come to a fruitful interaction under the Competency-Based Approach (Keskes & Ait Aissa, 2015). The National Curriculum came as a response to the overall rapid global changes taking place around us as well as to the demands of national economics needs. The, the communicative objectives cannot be possible if appropriate cultural content is not incorporated. It seems that learning English as a Foreign Language requires the ability to effectively communicate with those from different cultures. As a consequence, incorporating an intercultural approach

to EFL education becomes a necessity, i.e., integrating a variety of cultural topics, themes and categories within the textbook to promote international understanding.

### 1.3.1. Culture in the textbook

English textbooks have been undergoing huge changes in terms of content and objectives in order to correspond with knowledge required from the Secondary School levels. Naturally, the recent circumstances of EFL education imply that English textbooks have to ensure that they are not only suitable, but also capable of helping both teachers and learners realize the pedagogical goals of the nowadays language curricula and syllabi. That is why the three target textbooks for Secondary Education (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> year) are designed by the National Curriculum Committee (NCC) of the MNE in December 2005, relying altogether on the CBA which stresses many outcomes such as the communicative and intercultural objectives/competencies that are in built through a ‘pertinent typology of activities’ (SE3 textbook, 2015: 6).

Since language and culture are closely interwoven, integrating culture into textbooks has become a widely accepted process. McKay (2003) claims that culture influences language teaching in two important ways: linguistically and pedagogically. Linguistically, culture is significant in the linguistic dimension of the language itself, affecting the semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels of the language. Pedagogically, it influences the choice of language materials because cultural content of the language materials and the cultural basis of the teaching methodology are to be taken into consideration while deciding upon the language materials. He argues that in order to master a certain language students have to learn both; its linguistic and cultural norms (qtd in Choudhury 2013, p. 22). So, the current stage is going to report on content related to cultural issues “categories and themes” in the in-use textbook to see to what extent it meets today’s requirements.

#### a- Big ‘C’ Culture:

Nine themes are included in big “C” culture: Education, Architecture, Society Norms, Economy, History, Music, Government, and Geography; and which were significantly found in the textbook. According to a study conducted by Said Keskes & Mouloud Ait Aissa 2015, the nine (09) themes were ranked as shown in the following table:

Themes	Occurrence in the Textbook in percentage
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<i>Economy</i>	72.76%
<i>Education</i>	19.19%
<i>History</i>	12.49%
<i>Geography</i>	09.82%
<i>Literature</i>	05.80%
<i>Government</i>	04.90%
<i>Society Norms</i>	04.01%
<i>Architecture</i>	02.23%
<i>Music</i>	01.78%

**Table 14: Big ‘C’ Cultural themes in the SE3 Textbook**

(Keskes & Ait Aissa, 2015, p. 26)

- **Economy:** This theme is detailed in terms of issues such as activities of enterprises, business in a country, statistical data of consumption, and international economy in relation to both categories of culture (big ‘C’ & small ‘c’). These economic aspects appear explicitly in **Unit 2 (ETHICS IN BUSINESS)** and unit 4 (**SAFETY FIRST**) in order to increase learners’ awareness and ability to deal with ethics in business as being active participants in the development of their society. In unit 4, however, aspects related to the target culture are introduced aiming at equipping learners with the values of modern economy and how the target nations manage their economy in the sense of making them understand the multiple issues about advertising, consumption, and safety.
- **Education:** It presents knowledge and develops skills about the teaching-learning process in schools through stating the organization of educational systems, structures, curricula, syllabuses, and courses, particularly the American school system in pages 97, 98, and 99 and similarly the British in pages 82, 83, and 84. . According to the textbook, education is a factor that improves the quality of one’s life since we cannot get a good job without being well-educated especially in the era of technology and globalization.
- **History:** This theme involves the presentation of the history of ancient civilizations (**Unit One**), and concentrates generally on describing some decisive points of their emergence and decline. Page 15 can be taken as an example in which a map is provided; the latter, locates the areas where most of the ancient civilizations had stood such as the Sumerian, the Egyptian, the Maya, and the Aztec civilization.

All in all, the historical events displayed in the **3<sup>rd</sup> year** textbook considered mainly that these ancient facts constitute the benchmarks of the modern world as they can help us understand today’s events. Regarding the target culture, it includes the presentation of the history of the world in

general and U.S.A in specific through a picture in page 141. The picture refers to a Russian astronaut (Yuri Alexeyevich Gagarin), but the question was about a famous American astronaut (Neil Armstrong) to let the learner discovers that America has its own touch when talking about space programs and technologies.

- **Geography:** This section is concerned with the geographic factors and peoples of the target and non-target culture (non-English culture). Many statistical and general facts about the non-target culture are mentioned in the textbook. For instance, the geographical areas of the ancient civilizations (**Unit 1**) were found as well as the famous Algerian's seven **World Heritage Sites** (page 21). Also, in multiple examples some statistics and facts (in **Unit 5**) about the distances of many planets, the universe, and the space involving the solar system are clearly stated in pages 143, 144, and 145.

To sum up, we say that most of the stated examples in the textbook are essential and interesting for learners to build/construct knowledge about geography in its cultural aspect.

- **Literature:** The different pieces of writings that are valued as works of art, especially novels, plays, and poems are introduced to manifest the literature theme. Hence, the targeted textbook contains the presentation of some well-known Algerian works of art (page 22) which truly symbolizes the great cultural heritage of the nation. Indeed, it is a picture about the sculptures that the ancient inhabitants made on the rocks. The latter drawings entitled 'Algeria at the Crossroads of Civilizations' provides us with much access to the Mediterranean and the Algerian Sahara.

Incidentally, the literature theme is observed through the famous pieces of art produced all over the world at several periods of time. Such works are illustrated on page 41 where a number of pictures are shown like 'Polyphemus the Cyclops, Paris's Abduction of Helen, Trojan Horse, Ulysses's Homecoming, The Sirens, Greek Siege of Troy, Penelope and Ulysses. Besides, the 'Time For...' rubric at the end of each unit suggests poems and songs about the topic tackled in the whole unit to support the literature theme.

- **Government/Politics:** The Institutions State and their meanings related to either the target culture or the non-target culture, all are introduced in this theme. Unfortunately, few references to the governmental and political institutions are noticed in the current textbook, that is to say 04.90% and most of them are only mentioned by name and meanings. For example, it is pointed

that the ‘Accounting Council/ Accounts Court’ or in Arabic ‘مجلس المحاسبة’, is the building (picture in page 45) which is in charge of fighting corruption and corrupt practices (page 68). Additionally, the customs body is mentioned and it involves its meaning in terms of fighting counterfeiting as a kind of corruption through a picture (page 53) under-titled as ‘A customs officer showing counterfeits of famous European paintings’; at least, the students learn that the name customs officer is equivalent to the Arabic word ‘جمركي’.

- **Society Norms:** This section discusses the behavioral expectations and cues within a society of both categories of culture (social class, social interaction, and behaviors). These aspects explore learners’ behaviors in terms of when and where it is appropriate/inappropriate to say certain words, discuss certain topics, make certain deals, wear certain clothes, etc. such activities appear generally in **Unit 2**, i.e., ETHICS IN BUSINESS. It mainly presents some unethical behaviors through both images and texts along the unit; from page 46 to 52, a variety of corrupt practices are mentioned such as bribery, fraud, money laundering, false accounting, tax evasion, and smuggling so as to be avoided in a way or another.

Within the textbook, **Unit 2** in particular, learners are taught to encourage ethical and moral values like probity, honesty, loyalty, and fair business over immoral and malpractices without any single exception. By the way, some sayings about business are introduced, E.g., ‘Business is business’ on page 61 is shown to be judged as a mistaken belief in the sense that ethics and business are simply born to live together. Many and many businessmen (as in pages: 61, 65, and 70) have to fire hundreds of workers or use children in order to make more profits.

Away from ethics & business, the textbook makes a difference between communities relying on the living standards of each. It differs between American and British people when it comes to expressing feelings and emotions (**Unit 6**). For Americans, nearly all of them prefer sharing their thoughts and feelings with others. In contrast, the British do not like showing or talking about their emotions or private lives (visit page 174 & 175) as an effect of the environment where they grow up.

- **Architecture:** The art of designing buildings and their styles are discussed to some extent in the textbook. This section provides the theme of “Architecture” in terms of the aspects such as great architectural products, styles of buildings, cities and towns. The historical and giant constructions in Egypt are one of the greatest buildings (the Pyramids) which were erected by human beings and considered as one of the Seven Wonders of the World

(page 36/37). Other topics concerned with the architectural theme are introduced in page 41 when students are asked to write their own versions of the Ancient Greek myth of Ulysses.

- **Music:** The sounds that are arranged in a pleasant way to listen to, is found in some parts of the target textbook under the ‘Music’ theme. It includes mixed types of music, i.e., modern, classical, and great musical works. Such kinds are usually given in the ‘Time for...’ section. They are presented through some famous songs.

To conclude, the ‘Music’ theme seems to be an integral part in human lives whatever, whenever and wherever they are either in professional, social, or private life. In other words, it goes side to side with all the aspects of life to depict an image about cultures of the world. (Adapted from KESKES & AIT AISSA)

#### **b- Small/Little ‘c’ Culture:**

It contains ‘Beliefs and Values, Hobbies, Gestures, Food, Customs, Living styles, and Holiday.’ Some of these themes under the small ‘c’ culture are found in the **NEW PROSPECTS** textbook. They are categorized according to their dominance in the textbook. The ‘Food’ theme is ranked as top frequency with total percentage of **06.24%** occurrences. ‘Beliefs & Values’ come second with **05.35%**, followed by ‘Living styles’ **03.56%**, ‘Customs’ **0.44%**, ‘Hobbies’ **0.44%**, and ‘Holiday’ **0.44%** respectively.

- **Food:** This theme normally introduces how the actions related to the food and eating habits for both cultures (target & non-target) in the textbook. Depending on the findings, the daily routines of food are mainly discussed in” **Unit 4.**” They are dealt with in terms of making a comparison between ‘organic food’ and ‘genetically modified food,’ to see which one is harmful in page 109.

The groups of consumers are also advised to have a certain culture about food consumption through asking them (as far learners are concerned) to read the labels on packages of food before they buy any kind in order to make them aware about the ingredients, the expiry dates, and other important information related to the products they consume (page 107). In addition, the eating habits are further explored in page 109 when talking about the role of advertisements.

- **Beliefs & Values:** This section offers examples of taken-for-granted actions among any social group. Moral beliefs and values which form the daily life of the target societies are observed in the textbook. The moral

beliefs and values of American and British people are discussed through introducing some differences between them. As citizens, they are similar in many things, but when it comes to expressing their feelings, the British and American people are totally dissimilar, i.e., the British show more reservation (they are introvert) than the Americans who are flexible (extrovert) as in pages 174 and 175.

Moral beliefs concerning business are tackled on page 64 where learners are instructed to express their own beliefs and moral values when doing business, that is to say, whether ethics has nothing to do with business or it has everything to do with business. Moreover, beliefs and values appear again in page 37& 38 when dealing with a text about ancient Egypt.

- **Living Styles:** The different practices like the daily routine, interpersonal interaction and social activities, family life, and entertainment all constitute the living styles theme. In the **NEW PROSPECTS**, there are some examples of the conventions of verbal behavior. In **unit 6**, it is said that the Americans love to openly cry and say what they feel directly, while the British prefer to hide their feelings unless they trust you (p.174). The interpersonal interaction aspect is mentioned on page 183/184 when talking about friendship.

- **Customs:** The way(s) of behaving, practice, or rule of conduct established in a particular community. This theme is presented through wedding ceremonies, invitations, and all the traditions that symbolize the life mode of any society. **Unit 6** displays some special modes of life using pictures to show the structure of families in the target culture as in page 165. Another aspect about wedding ceremonies is noticed on page 179 when talking about the Princess Diana Frances Spencer with Prince Charles. Concerning the non-target culture, there are several pictures of Algerian famous comedians and their performances in comparison to foreign ones (page 166).

- **Hobbies:** An activity or interest pursued for pleasure or relaxation and not as a main occupation (dictionary.com). It is introduced in terms of some TV program preferences, reading books, collecting stamps, shopping, etc. Such topics are listed in **Unit 4 (SAFETY FIRST)** on page 112 in the ‘Think, pair, share’ rubric where students are told to prepare a short speech about the possible changes that are likely to happen in our life styles, then, learners are going to include something about shopping habits, entertainment and leisure. Other examples captured in page 167 (**Unit 6**) where a comparison between the British and Americans on how they spend their free time (sense of humor) takes place.

- **Holiday:** A day fixed by law or custom on which ordinary business is suspended in commemoration of some events or in honor of some person (dictionary.com). Such topics are rarely found in the textbook; it is expected to discuss them through the purpose, significance of the holiday, symbols and signs of the holidays, and people's particular activities on holidays. This theme is presented only on pages 130 & 131 when learners are asked to write a holiday advert, and then imagine themselves as holiday makers who have come back from a disappointing vacation abroad to complete a letter of complaint. (Keskes & Ait Aissa, 2015)

### **1.3.2. *New Prospects* compliance with the Objectives of the CBA**

Textbooks can at best provide only a base or core of materials (O'Neill, 1982, p. 152). Actually, the textbook is the subject of debates around which revolves research related to its structure, its organization, and its role in the teaching-learning process in the current context. We have to remember that an effective planning of the learning can hardly be done without considering learners themselves. It rests on a deep knowledge about the program, the material, and more importantly on a good knowledge of learners.

So, it is the teacher who can take the initiative to choose from the given materials what seems appropriate or suitable, and to avoid or re-adjust what he thinks it does not meet the learners' needs and interests. According to many researchers and scholars, the teacher who does not take learners' specificities into account suffers from major deficiencies. *We believe that whatever the textbook, whether approved or not, it must be a tool that should be considered with a critical eye.* (qtd in Benabed, 2011, p. 140)

## **2. Classroom Observation**

A research method for data collection that permits the researcher to have a live show to, on the one hand, make visible the implementation of the competencies stated in the activities which are suggested in the '**NEW PROSPECTS**' textbook for both the teacher and the learner. On the other hand, to compare what the informants (teachers & learners) say and what actually happens in real settings; a structured, non-participant, overt classroom observation (see Appendix) was conducted. Furthermore, classroom observation allows observing many aspects such as learners' behaviors, re-actions, and interaction within a specific context (real life situation).

Thus and following a broad practical period, a series of class observations were conducted in the three secondary schools which are taken as a 'case study'. The researcher, and deliberately, attended most of the

sessions with 3<sup>rd</sup> year literary streams (Philosophy + Foreign Languages) since they have English as one of the compulsory subject matters beside its high coefficient, i.e., coefficient 3 to Philosophy and 5 to Foreign Languages classes. Moreover, these two streams attend English lectures four hours a week while the scientific streams just three hours weekly. The researcher was present with first and second year classes too, for more and better understanding to the ‘newly’ adopted approach practically.

To record data during observation, two techniques were utilized: a rating scale and note taking. The latter helps in registering the data that the researcher might neglect, or in observing new aspects which were not included in the rating scale. In fact, the rating scale was divided into three parts (*see Appendix A*) to observe learners’ and teachers’ behaviors, as well as the classroom setting in this respective order. The purpose behind the first part was to notice students’ behaviors in the classroom with specific attention to their ability to work autonomously, in pairs, and collaboratively, to take care of their own learning process.

## Results

- a- The results that belong to the first part devoted to learners’ behaviors in the classroom were posted in Table with frequencies of event repetition in percentage (%):

<b>Behaviors</b>	<b>Always (%)</b>	<b>Often (%)</b>	<b>Sometimes (%)</b>	<b>Rarely (%)</b>	<b>Never (%)</b>
Learners choose where to sit	13.33	46.66	26.66	--	13.33
The lessons’ objectives are discussed with learners	--	--	53.33	33.33	13.33
Learners prepared the lecture at home	--	--	26.66	60.00	13.33
Learners decide how long to spend on each activity	--	--	33.33	40.00	26.66
Learners select the appropriate material to use	--	--	06.66	26.66	66.66
Learners are interested in the lesson	--	20.00	80.00	--	--
Learners are motivated and participate	--	40.00	60.00	--	--

Learners interact with the teacher and ask questions	--	06.66	20.00	73.33	--	
Learners interact with each other	--	20.00	40.00	40.00	--	
Learners work in pairs	--	40.00	60.00	--	--	
Learners work in groups	--	26.66	60.00	06.66	06.66	
Learners are calm	13.33	53.33	20.00	06.66	06.66	
Learners are noisy	--	13.33	46.66	26.66	13.33	
Learners are disruptive	--	06.66	06.66	13.33	73.33	
Error correction is made by	The teacher	--	73.33	13.33	13.33	--
	The learner	--	13.33	60.00	26.66	--
	Peers	--	--	26.66	46.66	26.66
The project work is	Handed to students	20.00	06.66	06.66	--	66.66
	Presented by learners in the class	06.66	06.66	20.00	--	66.66

**Table 15: Learners' Behavior in the EFL Classroom**

During all the sessions, the researcher was able to observe that learners in the classrooms were not very active participants though 59.99% of them have the opportunity to (always/often) choose where to sit. Also, throughout the fifteen sessions the teacher was, often, the one who decides on the teaching materials and the time to be spent on each task or activity. In fact, the learners seemed uninterested in most lessons and they (60%) were 'sometimes' participating except for six to seven students in each class who showed interest and motivation rather than their colleagues (73.33%) who 'rarely or never' prepared their lectures at home. Surprisingly, the majority of the learners did not use to bring their books to be an excuse to leave the classroom not to work.

Furthermore, these students were not sufficiently motivated to participate or ask questions which were almost (73.33%) absent during the whole observations. The same thing was noticed regarding either interaction between learners or collaborative work; they happened 'sometimes' (40% & 60%) because many teachers believe that they do not have time to be spared for pairs and groups. In addition, learners' errors were often corrected by the teachers to reach around 73.33%, whereas correction done by learners



occurred ‘sometimes’ (13.33%) which really seemed very low as the teachers’ role in such cases should be lessened. As far as the project work is concerned, more than half of the classes (66.66%) were not working on it as their teachers did not/rarely mention that they were required to prepare a project by the end of the unit.

In general, students in all the classrooms did not show any single attempt to take charge of their own learning; they were, unfortunately, passively sitting in their places waiting the teacher to spoon-feed them as they were containers to be filled with information. In each class, no more than six to seven learners were trying to make efforts to acquire knowledge and develop their skills.

**b-** The teacher and his behaviors in the classroom were also observed throughout the whole process and summarized in the table below:

<b>Behaviors</b>	<b>Always (%)</b>	<b>Often (%)</b>	<b>Sometimes (%)</b>	<b>Rarely (%)</b>	<b>Never (%)</b>
The teacher gives control over the classroom	13.33	06.66	26.66	46.66	06.66
The teacher permits learner’s initiatives	46.66	40.00	13.33	--	--
The teacher spare enough time for thinking	26.66	26.66	40.00	06.66	--
The teacher uses cognitive terminology	53.33	40.00	06.66	--	--
The teacher encourages autonomous learning	--	26.66	40.00	33.33	--
The teacher supports discussions among learners	--	26.66	53.33	20.00	--
The teacher feeds learner-learner interaction	--	26.66	40.00	33.33	--
Peer teaching is allowed	--	13.33	53.33	26.66	06.66
The teacher tolerates errors	13.33	53.33	13.33	13.33	06.66
The teacher in his	Guide	20.00	46.66	26.66	06.66
	Controller	73.33	26.66	--	--
	Assistant	--	53.33	40.00	06.66

class is a (n)	Facilitator	13.33	33.33	40.00	13.33	--
	Promoter	13.33	40.00	33.33	13.33	--
The teacher uses ICTs		--	--	--	20.00	80.00
The assessment occurs while teaching		--	06.66	--	60.00	33.33
Activities and experiences are	Authentic	06.66	--	93.33	--	--
	Motivating	--	--	73.33	26.33	--
	Useful in real life	--	--	26.66	73.33	--

**Table 16: Teacher’s behavior in the EFL Classroom**

The first impression that the researcher had from the first session being observed was the fact that the classroom was teacher-centered dominated by a traditional spoon-feeding model of teaching. Absolutely, the teachers were most of the time the sole authority (79.98%) in their classrooms who rarely or never gave the opportunity to their learners to control the classroom. Along the process of observation, the researcher noticed that the teachers ‘sometimes’ (not much) if not to say ‘rarely’ let their learners take decisions, performing the controller’s role in all the cases.

In addition, the instructors (73.33% & 53.33%) were not really encouraging their learners to be autonomous or even how to work collaboratively believing that the new approach (CBA) portrayed the teacher as “nothing” to use the teacher’s expressions word for word though learners’ initiatives and questions (86.66%) were accepted. On the other hand, learner-learner interaction arrived at its minimum (73.33%) as it was the case with peer teaching for example. Paradoxically, the teachers always state that they are fully aware of the importance of innovations in the field of education and teaching involving project-work, portfolios, and journal writing although none of it was clearly noticed in their classrooms. Furthermore, the teaching experiences seemed to be unauthentic, non-motivating, and useless (73.33%) in learners’ real life outside the classroom.

Regarding assessment, the teachers did not, frankly, use any kind of informal/ formative evaluation, but they only rely on formal assessment in the form of trimestral tests (pen-paper tests) and exams. It is worth noting that the use of ICTs rarely (20%) if not never took place (80%) during the observed sessions and along the teaching-learning process.

c- The third part of the classroom observation was gone to the Algerian EFL classroom and its suitability for CBA in terms of organization, size, and equipment with ICTs. The results were displayed in the table below:

Class shape		Yes	No
The classroom is organized		73.33%	26.66%
The classroom is	Over-crowded	46.66%	53.33%
	Large	33.33%	--
	Normal	26.66%	--
	Average	26.66%	--
	Small	06.66%	06.66%
The classroom is equipped with ICTs		--	100%

**Table 17: EFL Classroom Setting**

Unexpectedly, more than half of the visited classrooms (53.33%) were not populous, and even the other 46.66% were not very crowded, but most of them (73.33%) were organized and large enough for an acceptable learning atmosphere. However, all the classrooms (100%) without any single exception lacked ICTs equipment when excluding the rooms devoted to computing sessions besides the laboratories of subjects matters like physics and biology.

## **b) Quantitative Data**

### **Introduction**

Part “b” tackles the two questionnaires administered to both Secondary School teachers of English (**questionnaire I**) and SE3 students (**questionnaire II**), and an interview with a number of high/middle school headmasters and principals. The two research methods enabled the researcher to collect an acceptable quantity of data that helped reach fruitful discussions.

### **1. Teachers’ Questionnaire**

It was designed for the purpose of gathering information from secondary school teachers of English Language. Besides the three schools taken as a case study in our research work, the researcher has sent the questionnaire at random to different high schools in the following wilayas: Chlef,

Mostaganem, Algiers, Biskra, Setif, and El-Oued. The total number of those administered by the questionnaire was normally 100 teachers, but only 96, as shown in the below table, responded to it. We aimed at collecting a broader range of data in connection with the objective of our topic which concerns the implementation of CBA so as to diagnose accurately the difficulties that can prevent the true practice of this approach.

**1.1. Informants’ Biographical and Professional Data**

*(Tick the right box)*      **Item 1:** You are.....

statistics	Gender	Female	Male	Total
<b>Number</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Percentage (%)</b>		<b>60%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>96%</b>

**Table 18: Informants selected for the questionnaire**

So, as it is displayed above, the total number of the respondents is 96/100. 60% of them were females while 36% were males to come to a 96% out of 100% because three (03%) respondents did not sent them back and one informant (01%) refused to respond to the questionnaire.

**Item 2:** Your age is.....

Age	Number	Percentage (%)	
20-25	15	15.62%	<b>24.99%</b>
26-30	09	09.37%	
31-40	52	54.16%	
Over 40	20	20.83%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>99.98%</b>	

**Table 19: Distribution of teachers according to age**

The table indicates that more than half of the teachers (54.16%) have an age ranging from 31 to 40. About 20 of them are over 40 years, that is to say 20.83% whereas 09.37% (nine teachers) are between 26 to 30 years. Lastly, those who are aged between 20 to 25 reached 15 teachers (15.62%).

**Item 3:** You are a (confirmed/contract/substitute) ...teacher.

	Number	Percentage (%)	
<b>Confirmed</b>	84	87.50%	
<b>Contract</b>	09	09.37%	<b>12.49%</b>
<b>Substitute</b>	03	03.12%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>99.99%</b>	

**Table 20: Teachers' professional status**

The table shows that the vast majority of our respondents (87.50%) are confirmed teachers. Yet, only 09.37% who are contract and 03.12% of the informants are substitutes.

**Item 4:** What kind of degree (s) do you have? (Master/Licence/PES "ENS")

	Number	Percentage (%)
<b>Licence</b>	40	41.66%
<b>Master</b>	09	09.37%
<b>PES (ENS)</b>	47	48.95%
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>99.98%</b>

**Table 21: Teachers' academic degree (s)**

More than 48.95% of the respondents have a PES degree (Professeur de l'Enseignement Secondaire) a diploma delivered by the 'l'Ecole Normale Superieure, roughly translated as "Teachers' Training College". 41.66% of the targeted teachers have a *licence diploma* which is a four-year university training course provided by the Department of Foreign Languages at the university level. The last category composed of those who earned a master degree (09.37%); in the new system the master is awarded after three years of licence at the faculty plus two years of master studies.

**Item 5:** How long have you been teaching English?

Experience in years	Number	Percentage (%)
<b>5 and less</b>	20	20.83%

<b>5-9</b>	41	42.70%
<b>10-15</b>	15	15.62%
<b>16-20</b>	10	10.41%
<b>21-25</b>	08	08.33%
<b>26-30</b>	02	02.08%
<b>More than 31</b>	00	00.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>99.97%</b>

**Table 22: The professional experience of teachers**

It is noted that only two informants (02.08%) out of 96 have between 26 to 30 years of professional experience, and none has more than 31 years of teaching. 08.33% (n=8) of the respondents have been teaching for 21 to 25 whereas 10.41% (n=10) of them have an experience ranging from 16 to 20 years. Besides, 15 of the whole number of the targeted teachers (15.62%) said they have between 10 to 15 year-professional career, and 42.70% (n=41) which appears the big category that have accumulated an experience of 5 to 9 years. Lastly, 20 teachers (20.83%) out of 96 stated that their experience in the teaching field stands at 5 years or less.

**Item 6:** What levels are you teaching? (1<sup>st</sup> year/2<sup>nd</sup> year/ 3<sup>rd</sup> year)

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>First year</b>	47	48.95%
<b>Second year</b>	75	78.12%
<b>Third year</b>	70	72.91%

**Table 23: Secondary education levels taught**

The table shows that we got 72.91% (n=70) of the teachers who teach third year students and 78.12% (n=75) have second year levels. Yet, only 47 teachers (48.95%) teach first year students.

**Item 7:** In which region are you teaching? (Urban/Semi-urban/Rural)

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Urban	30	31.25%
Semi-urban	36	37.50%

Rural	30	31.25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 24: Regions where teachers work**

The number of the respondents who work in high schools that are located in urban regions reached 30 teachers (31.25%) and the same number in rural areas. While 37.50% (n=36) of them teach in secondary schools that are situated in semi-urban places.

**1.2. Informants' Training Itinerary** (tick the right box)

**Item 1:** Do you have an idea about the language approaches and methods implemented in Algeria?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	96	100.00%
No	00	00.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 25: Teachers' background knowledge**

The data collected after administrating this question related to CBA, were amazing in which all the 96 respondents said they have an idea about the Competency-Based Approach to reach a percentage of 100% that seems somehow positive.

**Item 2:** What language teaching approach/method do you prefer?

Approaches/Methods	Responses/Choices	Percentage (%)
The Grammar Translation Method	00	00.00%
The Audio-Lingual Method	06	04.16%
The communicative Approach	36	25.00%
The Task Based Approach	18	12.50%
The Objective Based Approach	15	10.41%
The Competency-Based Approach	69	47.91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>99.98%</b>

**Table 26: Teachers' favorite approaches/methods**

The table indicates that 47.91% (n=69) prefer CBA as a teaching approach, and 25% (n=36) said that they are familiar with the CA. 18 informants (12.50%) are attracted to TBA whereas 10.41% (n=15) of them prefer the OBA. However, only 6 informants (04.16%) who are ancient teacher told the researcher that they prefer the ALM.

**Item 3: When have you become familiar with CBA?**

Predictable answers	Number	Percentage (%)
During initial training (ITE)	00	00.00%
Training at the university	54	56.25%
In-service training sessions	42	43.75%
Others,	00	00.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 27: Teachers' familiarity with the CBA**

56.25% of our respondents mentioned that they have become familiar with CBA while pursuing their studies at the university while 42 (43.75%) informants said during in-service training sessions. But none seemed to have knowledge about this approach via other resources or during initial training in the ITE.

**Item 4: Which approach/method suits your way of teaching?**

Approaches/Methods	Responses/Choices (--/96)	Percentage (%)
The Grammar Translation Method	00	00.00%
The Audio-Lingual Method	00	00.00%
The communicative Approach	39	40.62%
The Task Based Approach	21	21.87%
The Objective Based Approach	21	21.87%
The Competency-Based Approach	51	53.12%

**Table 28: Respondents' suitable approach/method**

It is noticed that 38.63% of the teachers said that CBA suits their way of teaching, and 29.54% think it is the Communicative approach which does. Yet, 15.90% chose the TBA and the same percentage went to the OBA.

**1.3. Views on the Competency-Based Approach and the hindrances precluding its implementation.** (tick the right box)



**Item 1:** Tick the number of in-service training sessions you attended during the last 13 years.

<b>Respondents' answers</b>							
<b>Frequency Year</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
2003-2004	---	---	06	03	03	---	---
(%)			06.25%	03.12%	03.12%		
2004-2005	04	---	03	---	06	---	---
(%)	04.16%		03.12%		06.25%		
2005-2006	---	---	12	---	---	---	---
(%)			12.50%				
2006-2007	05	---	06	06	03	---	---
(%)	05.20%		06.25%	06.25%	03.12%		
2007-2008	06	---	11	---	07	---	---
(%)	06.25%		11.45%		07.29%		
2008-2009	---	19	06	29	05	03	---
(%)		19.79%	06.25%	30.20%	05.20%	03.12%	
2009-2010	07	14	11	22	06	---	---
(%)	07.29%	14.58%	11.45%	22.91%	06.25%		
2010-2011	03	14	30	16	---	02	---
					---		---

(%)	03.12%	14.58%	31.25%	16.66%		02.08%	
2011-2012	09	20	42	21	05	---	---
(%)	09.37%	20.83%	43.75%	21.87%	05.20%		
2012-2013	04	23	38	25		---	---
(%)	04.16%	23.95%	39.58%	26.04%			
2013-2014	06	31	52	36		---	---
(%)	06.25%	32.29%	54.16%	37.50%			
2014-2015	07	37	55	30		---	---
(%)	07.29%	38.54%	57.29%	31.25%			
2015-2016	05	40	53		---	---	---
(%)	05.20%	41.66%	55.20%				

**Table 29: In-service training courses frequency and attendance**

According to the statistics in the table above, most of the respondents attended two (2) to three (3) and sometimes four (4) in-service training sessions with their inspectors per year, especially between 2011 and 2016 since a big number of our informants are somehow new teachers. Generally, the percentages were low because the majority of teachers affirmed that they are gaining nothing of value from these training courses, and they attend them because they are compulsory.

**Item 2:** The training focuses on: Theoretical aspects/Practical aspects/Both of them

<b>Respondents' answers</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1. Theoretical aspects	66	68.75%

2. Practical aspects	00	00.00%
3. Both of them	30	31.25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 30: In-service training sessions' aspects**

Everything is clear above, 68.75% (n=66) affirmed that the in-service training with inspectors concerning the CBA's implementation focuses much more on theory while 30 respondents (31.25%) stated that it emphasizes both theoretical and practical sides.

**Item 3:** Have you ever had an opportunity to reflect on those in-service training courses contents? (Yes/No/No idea)

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)	
<b>Yes</b>	30	31.25%	
<b>No</b>	56	58.33%	<b>68.74%</b>
<b>No idea</b>	10	10.41%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>99.99%</b>	

**Table 31: Respondents' reflection on the in-service training courses**

Relatively, the table indicates that 58.33% (n=56) considered that they never had the opportunity to reflect on the in-training sessions whereas 30 informants (31.25%) said 'yes'. 10 teachers (10.41%) declared to have no idea.

**Item 4:** Do you use extra resources to support the mandated textbook content? (Yes/No/No idea)

	Number	Percentage (%)
<b>Yes</b>	35	36.45%
<b>No</b>	61	63.54%
<b>No idea</b>	00	00.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>99.99%</b>

**Table 32: The use extra-resources**

When the chosen population was asked whether they use extra resources or not, 36.45% (n=35) said 'yes' they do while 61 (63.54%) teachers told the researcher 'no' they do not use any extra resources.

**Item 5:** If yes, what extra resources are using?

Informants' answers	Number (--/35)	Percentage (%)
Books, journals, magazines	17	48.57%
Tape recorder	07	20.00%
Over-head projector	04	11.42%
Data show	32	91.42%
Computer	32	91.42%
DVDs	01	02.85%
TV & Video recorder	02	05.71%
Others	01	02.85%

**Table 33: Types of extra resources**

The data gathered from the respondents who said they use extra-resources suggest that most of them use computers (91.42%) and the same number (32) use data show. 48.57% (n=17) utilizes either books, journals, or magazines while few teachers chose tape recorders, over-head projectors, DVDs, TVs & video recorders, and other resources such as games.

**Item 6:** Which of the following stand as roadblocks to the implementation of the CBA?

Answers	Number (--/96)	Percentage (%)
Learners' lack of motivation	57	59.37%
Shortage of means	42	43.75%
Inadequate in-service training courses	12	12.50%
Lack of practice in the training sessions	42	43.75%
The suggested teaching materials in the text...	36	37.50%
Class over-crowdedness	60	62.50%
Reduced timing	66	68.75%
Others,	00	00.00%

**Table 34: Obstacles facing the implementation of CBA**

The main obstacles according to our informants are the reduced timing (68.75%), the class over-crowdedness (62.50%), and the learners' lack of motivation with 59.37%. Shortage of means as well as the lack of practice in the training sessions come forth with equal percentages 43.75% for each, whereas 12.50% (n=12) refers to the inadequate in-service training courses.

**Item 7:** What sequence do you find useful?

Answers	Number (--/96)	Percentage (%)
<b>LISTEN AND CONSIDER</b>	30	31.25%
<b>READ AND CONSIDER</b>	60	62.50%
<b>LISTENING AND SPEAKING</b>	45	46.87%
<b>READING AND WRITING</b>	66	68.75%

**Table 35: The usefulness of the four sequences**

Most of the respondents (68.75%) according to the table seem to prefer the READING AND WRITING sequence while 62.50% (n=60) like the ‘READ AND CONSIDER’ one. 45 informants (46.87%) said they find the ‘LISTENING AND SPEAKING’ useful and 31.25% (n=30) have chosen the ‘LISTEN AND CONSIDER’ sequence.

**Item 8:** Does the syllabus meet the objectives of the CBA? (Very much/Somehow/No idea)

Informants’ answers	Number	Percentage (%)
Very much	03	03.12%
Somehow	87	90.62%
No idea	06	06.25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>99.99%</b>

**Table 36: Syllabus compliance with the CBA**

The table indicates that the vast majority of the informants (90.62%) think that the current syllabus ‘somehow’ meets the objectives of the CBA, and only 03.12% (n=03) believe it ‘very much’ does. Yet, 06 respondents (06.25%) told the researcher that they have ‘no idea’.

**Item 9:** Is the time spared to the teaching of the English Language enough?

(Yes/Somehow/No/NO idea)

Informants’ answers	Number	Percentage (%)
<b>Yes</b>	06	06.25%
<b>Somehow</b>	39	40.62%

<b>No</b>	48	50.00%	<b>90.62%</b>
<b>No idea</b>	03	03.12%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>99.99%</b>	

**Table 37: Time in/sufficiency for the teaching of English**

The statistics show that 50% (n=48) of the administered teachers see that the timing allotted to English is not sufficient whereas 40.62% of them said it is 'somehow' enough. On the other hand, 06.25% (n=06) think it is sufficient, and 03 respondents claimed that they have no idea.

**Item 10:** If no, what do you suggest?

<b>Respondents' answers</b>	<b>Number (--/96)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Increase timing	40	41.66%
Lighten the syllabus	54	56.25%
Review the textbook content	54	56.25%

**Table 38: Suggestions to adapt with the time unsuitability**

The table indicates that more than half of the respondents 56.25% (n=54) suggested to lighten the syllabus, and another 54 teachers proposed to review the textbook content. Yet, 30 informants (31.25%) said that the educational authorities have to dedicate more time to the teaching of English as a foreign language.

**Item 11:** After approximately 13 years, are you .....satisfied with the CBA implementation? (Fully/Partly/Not at all/No idea)

<b>Respondents' answers</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Fully</b>	01	01.04%
<b>Partly</b>	70	72.91%
<b>Not at all</b>	23	23.95%
<b>No idea</b>	02	02.08%
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>99.98%</b>

**Table 39: Dis/satisfaction with regard to CBA implementation**

More than two thirds of the teachers (72.91%) stated that they are 'partly' satisfied while 23.95% (n=23) told the researcher they are 'not at all' feeling good

with the CBA implementation. Only one teacher mentioned his ‘full’ satisfaction on the current methodology.

### **Item 12: Informants’ Expectations and Suggestions**

All the respondents beside others, and after long debates, have agreed on the instability that the Educational System in Algeria is living. Thus, immediate actions to repair the defects which were caused by everyone in the field are required. Teachers as informants said that the current reform itself needs reforms, and suggested the following:

- Provide more incentives for qualified and committed teachers;
- Non-teaching official duties such as electoral activities should not be allowed to interfere with the teaching process;
- Forums that permit and encourage teachers to exchange ideas, information, and experiences, including web-based portal, should be developed;
- Pre-service trainings need to be improved and differently regulated in both public and private institutions;
- Systems for in-service training require expansion and major reform that leads to greater flexibility.

### **2. Learners’ Questionnaire**

Since learners are the corner stone and the center of CBA, their views and impressions are very essential in this research. Therefore, a questionnaire was directed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Secondary Education pupils in the three Secondary Schools which were chosen to be the case study. The total number of learners initially targeted by the survey was **350** while the number of the effective respondents is **340**, then the percentage of participation is exactly **97.14%**. The latter means that representativeness was reached in this operation to be congruent to the expected results. The following table gives an idea about the procedure:

Secondary Schools	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)	Total	
			Number of students	Percentage (%)
Bennouna Mabrouka (EL MARSÀ)	151	44.41%	<b>340</b>	<b>99.98%</b>
Zerrouki Chikh (TAOUGRITE)	111	32.64%		
Abdelkader Salhi (E'CHORFA)	63	18.52%		
The random category AZZOUZE Halima (E'DAHRA)	15	04.41%		

**Table 40: Schools and informants targeted by the questionnaire**

### 2.1. Section 1: Learners' attitudes towards English Language learning.

We aim, here, at checking the importance given by students to English language learning.  
(*Tick honestly the right box*)

**Question One:** Do you consider English an important language? (Yes/Not much/No)

Respondents' answers	Number	Percentage (%)
<b>Yes</b>	241	70.88%
<b>Not much</b>	72	21.17%
<b>No</b>	27	07.94%
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>99.99%</b>

**Table 41: The importance of English**

As it is shown on the table above, 70.88% of our informants consider English an important language while 07.94% said it is not. This means that the majority know how much this global language weighs. And even the 21.17% did not tick the 'no' and ticked 'not much' which is somehow positive.

**Question Two:** Are you interested in learning the English language? (Yes/Not much/No)



<b>Respondents' answers</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Yes</b>	200	58.82%
<b>Not much</b>	118	34.70%
<b>No</b>	22	06.47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>99.99%</b>

**Table 42: Learners' interest towards English learning**

The highest percentage in the table is 58.82% that refers to more than half of our informants who are strongly interested in learning English. Indeed, the 34.70% of those who said 'not much', the researcher thinks they are not correctly motivated towards English learning. But, we all normally agree that the 'no' percentage (06.47%) is very low and may well refer to a small group of slow learners.

**Question Three: Is English.....?**

<b>Respondents' answers</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	
a- Different from Arabic	73	21.47%	<b>36.17%</b>
b- Somehow different from Arabic	50	14.70%	
c- Easy	127	37.35%	<b>66.17%</b>
d- Not very easy	98	28.82%	
e- Difficult	40	11.76%	<b>16.46%</b>
f- Not very difficult	16	04.70%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>118.80%</b>	

**Table 43: English in terms of difficulty for learners**

The results above tell us that 225 pupils (66.17%) out of 340 see the English language either an 'easy' or 'not very easy' subject to learn that is frankly an amazing percentage which proves that the majority of learners need just a wise guide to learn when compared to those who said that it is, in generally 'difficult' with 16.46% (only 56). On the other hand, 36.17% sees the English language a subject that differs from Arabic. The researcher might justify this low percentage as lack of concentration from respondents' part when dealing with the questionnaire.

## 2.2. Section 2: Learners' attitudes towards the English people and their culture.

The researcher wished to see how learners truly see the English people and their culture in the era of technology and globalization.

**Question One:** Do you like to learn about the English culture?

Respondents' answers	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	266	78.23%
Not important	50	14.70%
No	24	07.05%
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>99.98%</b>

**Table 44: Learning about the English culture**

What supports the researcher's view when he previously said that the majority of learners need motivation is the 78.23% percentage of informants who answered that they do like to learn about the English culture as far as culture and language are inseparable. Meanwhile, the other two percentages (14.70% & 07.05%) are still very low to say that our learners do not wish to know about the culture of the English people.

**Question Two:** The English people according to you are.....?

Informants' replies	Number	Percentage (%)
a- Under-developed	07	02.05%
b- Developed	216	63.52%
c- Model to be followed	58	17.05%
d- Bad example to follow	15	04.71%
e- No idea	74	21.76%
<b>Total</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>109.09%</b>

**Table 45: How learners see the English people**

The data in this table suggest that two thirds (2/3) of our informants are conscious that the English people are 'economically developed' whereas just 17.05% think they should be taken as a model. The latter percentage informs that probably this category judged the English people from other sides rather than the industrial or technological ones. The researcher could not ignore the 74 respondents (21.76) who said that they have 'no idea,' particularly those living in rural areas.

### 2.3. Section 3: Learners' motivation towards learning the English language.

Knowing to what extent learners are motivated to learn the English language may well help us bring ideas to bridge the gap between learners' levels and learning English. That is why we asked the below question:

**Question One:** Why do you like learning English? Because.....

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)
a- It is a global language	134	39.41%
b- To use it when travelling	45	13.23%
c- I need it in my studies	116	34.11%
d- To communicate with people...	172	50.58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>137.33%</b>

**Table 46: Learners' motivation to learn English**

Concerning the question related to motivation towards learning English, half of the respondents (50.58%) ticked the last choice which is 'communication with other people' around the world and this seems very normal nowadays in the digital era, especially when considering the other 39.41%. The last two statistics are connected either with its importance in their studies with 34.11% or when travelling abroad with just 13.23%. In fact, answer 'b' was ticked by 45 students only which may well be referred to the absence of the travelling culture within most families or more importantly to the lack of financial support.

**Question Two:** Your level at English is.....?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)
a- Excellent	24	07.05%
b- Good	47	13.82%
c- Average	173	50.88%
d- Bad	96	28.23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>99.98%</b>

**Table 47: Learners' levels at English**

Relying on the obtained data in question two, only 07.05% of our informants confirmed that they have an 'excellent' level while 13.82% selected the 'good' level. The majority ticked 'average' to say that they are not really satisfied. Yet, 28.23% of the respondents state that they have a 'bad' level. Logically, 269 out of 340 have

gotten an ‘average’ or ‘bad’ levels, that is to say 79.11% which is really an annoying statistic.

**Question 3:** Where do you find difficulties when learning English?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)
a- Listening comprehension	104	30.58%
b- Reading comprehension	103	30.29%
c- Speaking	156	45.88%
d- Writing	65	19.11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>125.86%</b>

**Table 48: Difficulties when learning English**

This table can tell us why we formerly said that most of our respondents have either an average or ‘bad’ level, i.e., as it is shown; most of the students have deficiencies in almost every competency. The first three competencies look as if in harmony with 30.58%, 30.29%, and 45.88% to understand that the respondents overcome problems with both receptive and productive skills. But, the last percentage (19.11%) is doubtful since the writing skill is not that easiness.

**Question 4:** How do you find the activities designed in the textbook?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)	
a- Very difficult	40	11.76%	<b>58.81%</b>
b- Difficult	160	47.05%	
c- Easy	130	38.23%	<b>41.17%</b>
d- Very easy	10	02.94%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>99.98%</b>	

**Table 49: Reflection on the textbook activities**

The 47.05% percentage means that approximately half of the respondents see the English language a ‘difficult’ subject where as 38.23% informed it is ‘easy’. 40/340 (11.76%) said it is ‘very difficult,’ but only 02.94% (10/340) who believe that English is a ‘very easy’ language to be learnt.

## 2.4. Section 4: Learners' attitudes towards English language teachers

Learners' judgments, i.e., how learners view their teacher's performance is probably the most valid way to re-adjust our ways of teaching. Thus, the researcher asked the next coming questions:

**Question One:** Does the teacher warm you up before the lessons?

Informants' answers	Number	Percentage (%)	
a- Always	105	30.88%	<b>74.65%</b>
b- Usually	66	19.41%	
c- Sometimes	83	24.41%	
d- Rarely	41	12.05%	<b>23.22%</b>
e- Never	38	11.17%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>97.92%</b>	

**Table 50: Teachers' behaviors according to learners**

When the learners were asked about the warming up session, 30.88% certified that their teachers 'always' warm them up before the lessons, and 24.41% said they (teachers) 'sometimes' do. On the other hand, 19.41% ticked the 'usually' box while 12.05% and 11.17% stood between 'rarely' and 'never'.

**Question Two:** Does the teacher explain and simplify things for you?

Informants' answers	Number	Percentage (%)	
a- Always	220	64.70%	<b>90.28%</b>
b- Sometimes	87	25.58%	
c- Never	19	05.58%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>95.86%</b>	

**Table 51: Learners' attitudes towards teachers' performance**

What seems positive in this table is that 220/340 which means 64.70% of the respondents told us that their teachers 'always' explain and simplify matters for them, and 25.58% chose 'sometimes'. Yet, the number of those who ticked 'never' was just 19/340, that is to say 05.58% only.

**Question Three:** Does your teacher encourage working in pairs and groups?

Informants' answers	Number	Percentage (%)	
a- Always	141	41.47%	<b>79.70%</b>
b- Sometimes	130	38.23%	
c- Rarely	32	09.41%	<b>18.52%</b>
d- Never	31	09.11%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>98.22%</b>	

**Table 52: Activities' assignment**

The above data suggest that teachers, according to their learners, are playing their roles in terms of encouraging learner-learner interaction. Indeed, 41.47% reckoned that they 'always' do, and 38.23% think this happens 'sometimes'. Lastly, 09.41% said they (teachers) 'rarely' boost them while 09.11% notified that their teachers 'never' energize collaborative work.

**Question Four:** Does your teacher give you enough time to do tasks?

Informants' answers	Number	Percentage (%)	
a- Always	212	62.35%	<b>86.76%</b>
b- Sometimes	83	24.41%	
c- Rarely	16	04.70%	<b>10.28%</b>
d- Never	19	05.58%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>97.04%</b>	

**Table 53: Time allotment**

Most of our respondents (62.35%) vouched that their teachers 'always' give them enough time to do tasks, and 24.41% think that they 'sometimes' do. But, only a few informants chose respectively either the 'rarely' or the 'never' box with 04.70% and 05.58%.

**Question Five:** Does the project work help you use the acquired knowledge outside the classroom?

<b>Informants' answers</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	
a- Very much	103	30.29%	
b- Not much	109	32.05%	
c- Little	70	20.58%	<b>35.28%</b>
d- Never	50	14.70%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>97.62%</b>	

**Table 54: Project work knowledge transfer**

Regarding the project work, the percentages in the table signalize that it is not really helpful though we could not ignore them. Generally, 30.29% insisted that it helps them 'very much' where as 32.05% told us 'not much'. Yet, 20.58% said that the project work assists them only a 'little', and 14.70% preferred to tick the 'never' box since they (according to them) gained no benefit from it.

**Question Six:** Do you use portfolios?

<b>Informants' answers</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
a- Yes	116	34.11%
b- No	117	34.41%
c- No idea	89	26.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>94.69%</b>

**Table 55: The use of portfolios**

The last question brought about interesting numbers, i.e., 34.11% told that they use portfolios to keep assessing themselves through, and 34.41% said 'no' they do not. In contrast, 26.17% apprised that they have 'no idea' about something called portfolios.

## **2.5. Geography and EFL acquisition**

It is generally believed that the environment where learners live has its own effects on language learning either positively or negatively. Hence, the researcher compared the obtained data from the questionnaire administered to SE3 students in the three schools and arrived at the following:

School/ Region	A.E.K SALHI (Urban) (%)	Zerrouki Chikh (Semi urban) (%)	Bennouna Mabrouka (Rural) (%)
The English language is important	68.25%	66.66%	<b>72.84%</b>
I like to learn the English language	50.79%	56.75%	<b>62.25%</b>
English is easy to learn	38.09%	40.54%	<b>31.78%</b>
I like to discover the English culture	79.36%	81.98%	<b>73.50%</b>
England is a developed country	60.31%	58.55%	<b>68.21%</b>
I have a good level in English	11.11%	18.91%	<b>09.27%</b>

**Table 56: Environment and EFL learning**

Through the observed statistics above, we might draw different conclusions regarding EFL learning; we were not expecting such results, all the percentages are in harmony. So, the effect of the environment on FL acquisition (according to the table) is melting owing to technological development which made the world small (globalization) and everyone becomes ready to use/learn foreign languages, English in particular, to discover others' cultures.

### 3. Interviews

The educational process at any country does not stand only on the efforts of teachers and learners, but it rather needs the collaboration of many associations, organizations, as well as administrators within this field. Without their participations things will not go well as they are an essential episode in this great operation. As far as headmasters, principals, and counselors are concerned, the researcher has randomly visited eight (08) high schools, one middle school and one primary school aiming at **interviewing** directors and administrators about the current situation that Education is living in our country. McNamara (1999) states interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic.

The researcher prepared a semi-structured interview (*see appendix*) that includes sixteen (16) open-ended questions with queries that probe for more detailed and contextual data. Fortunately, the targeted respondents provided us with rich, in-depth information that helped the researcher



understand/decode many ambiguities regarding the foggy image of everything related to the educational system in Algeria.

### **The Results**

In numbers, the researcher interviewed five (05) secondary school headmasters, one (01) middle school director, and one (01) primary school manager. Concerning principals and counselors, we have the opportunity to interview two (02) principals and three (03) counselors. In fact, and along this research, we had uncountable number of fruitful discussions with teachers, parents, assistants and even economists in order to have a clear picture from different sides. The data analysis discloses the following results:

**Question 1:** How would you describe the current status of education in Algeria?

When such question was put between our respondents' hands, none said that the situation is good or at least average, all of them have (100%) agreed on the same view which goes: "Education in Algeria is in a bad situation, and not promising at all."

**Question 2:** What are the reason(s) behind this description/assumption?

The informants referred to multiple causes. Most of them (10/12= 83.33%) have mentioned: the absence of 'education' within families and society; the teachers turned to be instructors more than educators. And 06/12 (50%) said the reforms failed to achieve the intended goals, while 04 informants (33.32%) believe it is the 'black decade' and the globalization which affected education. Lastly, 05/12 (41.66%) think that the main cause behind the deterioration of education in our country is the gap detected between society and the educational system (MNE).

**Question 3:** Is it necessary to each time launch new reforms in the field of education?

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Not necessary	07	58.33%
Necessary	04	33.33%
Go back to ancient methods	01	08.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>99.99%</b>

**Table 57: Necessity of reforms**

The table suggests that the majority of the respondents (58.33%) are against reforms each time; they said we need to be patient to judge the results. Less than half told us it is necessary to make reforms when taking the current

situation into account, whereas 01/12 (08.33%) believed we should go back to the previous approaches/methods.

**Question 4:** Do you have an idea about the Competency-Based Approach?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes (theoretically)	09	75.00%
Yes (theoretically & practically)	02	16.66%
No	01	08.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>99.99%</b>

**Table 58: Knowledge about CBA**

As it is shown on the above table, 75% of our informants declared that they have theoretical ideas about CBA, while only 16.66% affirmed that they practiced this approach. However, one of the respondents (08.33%) said that he has no idea about it.

**Question 5:** Is CBA truly better than ancient adopted approaches/methods?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	04	33.33%
No	08	66.66%
No idea	00	00.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>99.99%</b>

**Table 59: Respondents' preference**

Most of the respondents (66.66%) agreed on the idea that the CBA as a new approach does not seem better than the ancient methods depending on the 'bad' situation of education today. Yet, 04/12 (33.33%) do not dis-agree but they said that the CBA by its nature is better than the previous ones when we provide the required circumstances.

**Question 6:** Can we say that the CBA succeeded in Algeria since its adoption in 2003?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	00	00.00%
No	10	83.33%

No measures to judge	02	16.66%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>99.99%</b>

**Table 60: The Competency-Based Approach in Algeria**

The statistics suggest that the CBA does not realize what we are waiting for yet. As we see, 83.33% of the informants assumed that this approach did not succeed in our country, whereas 02/12 (16.66%) informed that they do not have measures to weigh success or failure. But, none of the respondents dared to say 'yes' its objectives came true.

**Question 7:** Are the implemented measures in the Baccalaureate exam in Algeria in harmony with those internationally?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	00	00.00%
No	10	83.33%
No idea	02	16.66%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>99.99%</b>

**Table 61: The Baccalaureate Exam in Algeria**

The table indicates that 83.33% sees the measures implemented in preparing the baccalaureate examinations in Algeria different from those in the world. And even the 16.66% did not bring something new; they said that they have no idea about the baccalaureate exam internationally.

**Question 8:** Can the (high) obtained results in the Baccalaureate exam be taken as evidence to declare the success of CBA in Algeria?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	01	08.33%
No	11	91.66%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>99.99%</b>

**Table 62: Results of the Baccalaureate exam as a unit of measurement**

It is so clear that the baccalaureate exams' results and statistics cannot be taken as an indicator of success; relying on the table 91.66% refused the idea, and 08.33% (one respondent) said they can relatively be adopted as a measure of success.

**Question 9:** What can you say about the level of your pupils?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)	
Very good	00	00.00%	
Good	00	00.00%	
Acceptable	01	08.33%	
Average	03	25.00%	83.33%
Less than average	07	58.33%	
Bad	01	08.33%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>99.99%</b>	

**Table 63: Students' level in relation to CBA**

The table says that more than half of the informants (58.33%) see their students' level less than the average, 25% told the researcher they are average, only one respondent (08.33%) who claimed that his students have an acceptable level, and another one preferred to choose the 'bad' level.

**Question 10:** Do teachers have role in shaping learners' current level?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)	
Yes	04	33.33%	
No	01	08.33%	
Shared responsibility	07	58.33%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>99.99%</b>	

**Table 64: Who assumes the responsibility?**

Our respondents in this question showed a great attention and most of them confessed it is a shared responsibility, not only teachers. While four informants stated that instructors hold a big responsibility, and just one respondent who said 'no' it is not the teachers who do so.

**Question 11:** Are you satisfied with teachers' performance?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)	
Yes	01	08.33%	
Not much	09	75.00%	91.66%
Not satisfied	02	16.66%	

<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>99.99%</b>
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**Table 65: The level of the teachers**

The table suggests that 75% of the informants are not somehow satisfied by the teachers' level, and 16.66% said they are not satisfied at all. Yet, only one respondent told us that he is satisfied.

**Question 12:** How can we enhance/better the teachers' level?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)
In-service training/Configuration	05	26.31%
Pre-service training	04	21.05%
Re-open specialized institutions	10	52.63%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>99.99%</b>

**Table 66: Ameliorating the level of teachers**

As we see, 10 out of 19 answers were calling for the re-opening of the specialized institutions (ITE), 26.31% see that teachers must have more in-service training sessions with inspectors, and 21.05% claimed that the pre-service training has a big importance in building competent teachers.

**Question 13:** Are the pedagogical and the teaching materials sufficient to make the CBA's objectives come true?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)
Sufficient	03	25.00%
Relatively	01	08.33%
Not sufficient	08	66.66%
Total	12	99.99%

**Table 67: Pedagogical & teaching materials sufficiency**

The majority (66.66%), based on the table above, think that the pedagogical and the teaching materials are not sufficient, 25% reported that they are available, and just one informant (08.33%) sees them relatively sufficient.

**Question 14:** Do you think that the Ministry of National Education is doing enough towards education in Algeria?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	01	08.33%
Somehow	03	25.00%
No	07	58.33%
Reservation	01	08.33%
Total	<b>12</b>	<b>99.99%</b>

**Table 68: Respondents' attitudes towards the MNE**

The collected data showed that more than half of the informants (58.33%) believe that the MNE is not doing enough, 25% agreed on the view that it is 'somehow' doing enough, and one says 'yes' the MNE is doing everything to better education. However, one of the respondents showed 'reservation' towards this question and prefer not to answer.

**Question 15:** Is the budget dedicated to the MNE, if compared to other Ministries, sufficient?

Answers	Number	Percentage (%)
Enough	03	25.00%
Approximately	00	00.00%
Not enough	09	75.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 69: The MNE's budget devoted to education**

According to the table, it seems that the vast majority reckoned that the budget devoted to the Ministry of National Education is not enough at all, 25% chose to say it is enough when it is spent correctly, but none said it is approximately enough.

**Question 16:** What are your expectations and suggestions?

As a researcher, whenever this question was asked, the respondents took a deep breath before starting to talk. This action proved that the situation education in Algeria is not promising, and it is not going to change at least in short term. But, what is encouraging is that all the respondents agreed on doing their best to move forward for a better morrow.

## **Conclusion**

Chapter III was devoted to methodology and data collection. The researcher used four methods: textbook analysis, classroom observation, questionnaires, and interviews.

The textbook analysis concerned SE3 **NEW PROSPECTS** where we dealt with the different aspects such as structure, nature of activities and tasks, and to what extent the TC (Target Culture) is taken into consideration when publishing this book. Then, several classroom observation sessions were performed to decide whether both teachers and learners were in harmony with the CBA principles in terms of practice, or not.

Next, we have distributed questionnaires (one for SE3 learners and a different one for teachers of English) on, firstly, teachers to see if they have been ready to implement the CBA (CBLT) as a new approach to teaching/learning, and secondly on learners to explore their attitudes towards the English language, the foreign culture, and the performance of their teachers in the classroom. Finally, the researcher conducted many interviews with Secondary, Middle, and Primary School Headmasters, Principals, Counselors, and Assistants since their opinions and attitudes are very important as administrators. They were requested to answer around sixteen questions regarding the educational system, the MNE, and the newly adopted approach in Algeria.

The researcher believes that the Educational Authorities play role in enhancing the quality of education in Algeria, but teachers, learners, and administrators are the key components towards the true realization of this giant process.

Consequently, the last chapter in this dissertation deals with the analyses and the interpretations of the obtained results in the present chapter. By doing so, we can at least have an idea about the obstacles and constraints that prevent the adequate implementation of CBA in Algeria.

# Chapter IV

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

### Introduction

After collecting data from different sources using a set of research instruments including textbook analysis, classroom observation, questionnaires (one for teachers and another for pupils), and interviews, the data were analyzed relying on a mixed approach which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Correspondingly, the present chapter is devoted to the interpretation of the results gathered from each instrument. It, further, spots light on the main results and conclusions drawn from this case study after the triangulation of data.

### Data Interpretation and Analysis

#### 1. Qualitative Data

##### 1.1. NEW PROSPECTS Textbook Content

For the first time and when we have a closer look on the *NEW PROSPECTS* textbook, the kind of activities, texts, topics in different aspects of life, or the units developed in it, they appear ambitious and bearers of a promising societal project. According to Bouhadiba (2015), the textbooks which were distributed in September 2003 do not reflect the real needs and gestalt of the learner. In fact, the SE3 textbook in question dates back to its first issue (in 2003). Up to today, it has not been updated, revised, or reprinted. The ‘mistakes’, ‘shortcomings’, and ‘drawbacks’ of 2003 still remain in the students’ textbook in 2015. The researcher verified the previous (2006) as well as the latest published version (2015) and approved what has been said.

Among the problems that teachers face is non-standardized versions of the textbook. In other words, a big number of students are still using old versions which differ in organization and structure, but none could prohibit the learners from using them as the MNE does not issue any notice to. We could, then, find these differences between the 2006 & 2015 versions: **Unit One:** Pages 30, 40, and 41, **Unit Two:** Page 50, **Unit Three:** Page 96, **Unit Four:** Pages 150 and 161.

When teachers refer their pupils to similar pages as the ones above, if two students have the two versions (2006 & 2015) they will find different activities or pages.



Based on the findings above, it is clear that much importance was devoted to the big 'C' culture over the small 'c' culture though the former do not best respond to the real cultural needs of learners . And as we all know, it is not acceptable to teach particular cultural themes at the expense of others since small 'c' cultural topics are very essential for intercultural communication as they affect the ways of thinking, behaving, and using the target language appropriately and politely. So, macro cultural knowledge (KESKES & AIT AISSA) does not constitute the real Algerian requirements and aspirations especially at individual and societal levels as micro cultural knowledge. In other words, the content of the textbook should reflect the national Algerian aspirations through big 'C' and personal aspirations through small 'c'.

The textbook contains 37 topics related to small 'c' culture out of 224 topics. This might be a good reason that hinders Algerian learners to successfully communicate with others who are culturally different and henceforth have a low competence of intercultural interaction. Many theories insist that small 'c' culture plays more important role in daily communication across cultural boundaries than big 'C' cultural themes as learners require to construct the communicative competency about the daily actions, practices, thoughts, behaviors and private life when encountering real-life intercultural situations ahead.

Concerning the categories of culture, the percentage of target culture is 39.65% and non-target culture is 60.35%. These statistics show that more than half of the overall topics dedicated to cultural content are related to the non-target culture. This fact is not really in agreement with the textbook's suitability when it comes to the cultural content. We might well refer this big difference between the two percentages to the fear that the students will be influenced by the target culture and, therefore, lose their own identity since this may be categorized as linguistic imperialism.

Yet, most international schools do not deny the importance of incorporating culture in language teaching. As it has been addressed by international and national foreign language associations, such as TESOL that has stipulated the 3<sup>rd</sup> goal in ESL standards for Pre-K-12 students "to use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways." American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), in turn, determines the standards based on "knowing how, when & why to say what to whom" (Onalan, 2005 qtd in Choudhury, 2013, p. 22). In China's English Curriculum Standard, culture awareness is also one of the integrated language capabilities.

In conclusion, culture is a crucial facet of teaching English as a Foreign Language. The goal behind teaching culture in EFL should be inculcating communicative competence (as far as CBA is the basis) among learners, rather than propagating or showing superiority of the target culture over the native one. The foreign culture has to play the role of mirrors in which students can see their own culture reflected, and to provide an outside to our inside. According to Byram (1997), culture learning is seen as a comparative process where learners are motivated and encouraged to get aware of their own culture and contrast it with the target culture.

The success of the implementation of the competencies targeted by the CBA and transposed in activities in the textbook depends, for a great deal, on the know-how-to-do of the staff of teachers charged to apply and to work with the construction of these competencies. Hence, the following part will give the researcher the opportunity to lively check this implementation and to evaluate the shift from theory to practice within the classroom.

## **1.2. Classroom Observation**

After the fifteen official sessions of observation and discussions with the teachers even outside the Wilaya of Chlef, the researcher came to a firm belief that the Algerian EFL classroom is still a teacher-centered environment where the old ways of teaching, i.e., spoon-feeding and up-down transmission of the knows are the dominant procedures inside this small world.

In details, the learners showed a terrible lack of responsibility as well as autonomous learning in which the majority of them seemed unable to make any decisions in the classroom as they lost self-confidence, interest and hesitation was the common shared feature between them. Indeed, motivation decreased to its lowest degrees that turned most of the students over-reliant on the teacher who saw no embarrassment to all the time spoon-feed them since his authoritarian role over the classroom was not threatened. As a consequence, the learners did not bother themselves to make any effort though they are supposed to sit for the baccalaureate exam after few months; the vast majority did not use to prepare their lectures at home or at least work hard during the lessons to reinforce/consolidate their skills and abilities to be ready for the next coming commitments.

In fact, the Baccalaureate exam and other standardized tests were an additional reason to come to such situation because the students felt it is compulsory to learn not for level improvement and knowledge acquisition, but just to have good/average marks whatever the means. The researcher thinks that the regular way of testing followed by the educational system in

our country forced, indirectly, the learners to have such process towards learning so that to assure passing marks not the opposite. The latter, actually, pushed a big number of EFL teachers to favor transmitting grammar and vocabulary items over hypotheses, self-construction, deduction, and conclusions which are normally made by learners themselves. So, it becomes clear that within such an educational framework, the learner is completely a passive recipient of knowledge contrary to what CBA aims at; building active learners who can take charge of their learning and translate the knows practically in real life situations.

Obviously, almost all the teachers missed the rationale behind using the Competency-Based Approach in their classrooms due to many reasons. Firstly, their concepts towards the teaching-learning process were intelligibly traditional based on ontological and epistemological principles which are remote from the ones acknowledged by the CBA. Secondly, the teachers were lacking the will/enthusiasm to abandon the ancient ways of teaching vis-à-vis the ‘new’ models brought by the current approach because they are not making sufficient attempts to encourage their learners discover, construct knows, and solve problems either individually, in pairs or in groups. Thirdly, dictatorship was the best term to be given to the vast majority of the teachers as they dominated the classrooms, i.e., they were talkative, over-teaching, and time-managers. The latter has explanation, because the textbooks are heavily loaded with lessons, activities, and tasks to the extent that the teachers believe they do not have time to lend students the wheel of learning.

Therefore, it is not strange to draw the teaching-learning environment as a teacher-centered where learners are totally passive without forgetting to mention that the Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) were absent besides the non-availability of means of Xeroxing (failures of all kinds: out of order machines, electricity cuts, or simply a lack of paper to print) in the era of globalization.

## **2. Quantitative Data**

### **2.1. Teachers’ Questionnaire**

#### **2.1.1. Informants’ Biographical and Professional Data**

##### **Item 1: Teachers’ gender**

It is noticeable that the majority of population of Secondary School teachers is constituted of females. In fact, such statistics is no longer surprising since two thirds (2/3) of the pupils in secondary schools are girls. As a teacher in the field, I can confirm that most of those who make efforts to succeed and go to the university are girls whereas boys and because of many

reasons seem uninterested in continuing their academic studies. Besides, relying on a study done by the MNE reveals that at the level of the secondary school education, the literary streams are chosen by girl-students (Benabed, 2011: 178).

Maruani (2003, p. 3) states that most of the active women on the labor market belong to the literary sector activities, thus the phenomenon of the feminization of the teaching staff is nothing new neither in Algeria nor in the world. Moreover, this profession is being chosen by women since it generally fits their human nature, and even the weekly schedule is appropriate where the timing is flexible and enables them to have more free time to spend with the family when compared to other jobs.

### **Item 2: Teachers' age**

The highest percentage above went to teachers who are aged between 31 to 40 (54.16%); such category shows more readiness towards change, they are neither beginners nor highly experienced but they seek to better their performance and adapt with the new approach to confirm their professional projects. The second percentage represents those over 40 years old (20.83%); nostalgic teachers who just duplicate or reproduce ancient ways of instructing, but they keep fidelity to traditional methodologies and resist any kind of change since they are more concerned with projects related to their retirement. The third percentage concerned both 20 to 25 and 26 to 30 (24.99%); these teachers are, generally, starting their professional career and wish to show their qualifications in the field through transforming theoretical knowledge (pre-service) to practical one (in-service). Indeed, they aim to let their personal touch and say that they have broader views which differ from the traditional ones.

### **Item 3: Teachers' status (confirmed/contract/substitute)**

Stability is very important in any field to bring about satisfying results. Therefore, when looking at a percentage such 87.50% of confirmed teachers in our case, we remain optimistic since confirmation of tutors/teachers means approving continuity and constructing future experienced teachers who could adapt the change. Researches in the teaching field have demonstrated that stable staffs are crucial to learners' successful attainments, and then, it is not only the teacher's experience that matters, but also the teaching experience within one school where the staff exchanges the knows and learn daily from each other.

On the other hand, accommodating provisory jobs in the field of teaching to replace absent teachers, due to maternity, illnesses or whatever, causes

deterioration and troubles to learners in terms of performance, attainments or achievements. Although the contract and substitute teachers according to the data above seem very low (12.49%), it is not without consequences as this category are given the opportunity to teach all levels and streams without scrutiny. In other words, it is encouraging to enable them deal with different streams and levels, but these teachers should firstly be engaged at least for a whole school-year, and secondly to be well-monitored, supported, and regularly accompanied to enhance their teaching practices.

#### **Item 4: Teachers' academic degree (s)**

Due to the giant efforts made by the Algerian government to improve the teaching-learning quality, after a bloody decade, a great importance was devoted to graduate teachers of high competence through the re-launching of what is known today as the 'Teachers' Training College' in the late 1990s. The training in such colleges focuses more on pedagogy, approaches and methods in language teaching, and the psychology of learning to enable future teachers behave appropriately with their learners. Thus, most of the teachers who joined the field of education since the 2000s were those graduated from the ENS (Ecole Normale Supérieure).

In contrast, before the re-opening of the ENS, the vast majority of EFL teachers were and still are those who graduate from the faculty of foreign languages at the university level or the ITE. Hence, a big number of experienced teachers aged over 40 years (41.66%) who have a licence degree (ancient system) dominate the field of teaching. Indeed, the researcher can confirm that this category is larger than the one belongs to ENS, but the sample population in our case showed more ENS teachers since the researcher made contacts with friends graduated from the Teachers Training College. Back to teachers with licence diploma, their training concentrated more on literature, civilizations, language items, and no focus on pedagogy or psychology related to education. Consequently, this category is not well-impregnated of the various founding principles of the CBA which they are supposed to implement in their classes.

However, the teachers that have master degree (09.37%) showed low rates of readiness towards teaching. To put it differently, these teachers during pre-service training course deal with various methodologies relating to ELT only superficially where they construct theoretical views/aspects at the detrimental of the practical ones. This initial configuration at the level of universities which emphasizes the theoretical aspects does not really meet a legitimate need of adaptation to the current evolutions in the educational field.

### **Item 5: Professional experience of teachers**

No one can deny the truth that teachers' professional experience has an important role in boosting up class practices. The knowledge and the skills that teachers acquire or develop during the pre/in-service training courses and along the teaching process have their own influence on learners' attainments in and out the school environment. Unfortunately, in our case almost half of the respondents (42.70%) do not seem to have sufficient experience in the field to effectively equip their students with the necessary knows & skills they require though lots of them are highly motivated and competent as well.

Because of the laws related to teachers' retirement (May 1997), most of the experienced teachers left the field of education confessing that they must let the new generations continue on the road of challenge to enhance schooling. In fact, new teachers (20.83%) need to interact with the experienced ones for a strong sense of professional identity and better efficacy which represents an essential school property.

### **Item 6: Secondary Education levels taught by teachers**

We should keep in mind that teachers at Secondary Schools cannot teach the three levels (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> year) in one school year, they have the right to deal with two levels a year. The researcher sees it one of the non-detected constraints to teachers, i.e., although it is very rare to give teachers the opportunity to choose the levels they wish to have during the year, most of them prefer to teach certain levels (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> year for example) and avoid the terminal classes especially experienced teachers since they know that 3<sup>rd</sup> year streams should be afforded more attention/efforts as they have Baccalaureate examinations at the end of the year.

Therefore, if they have been given such levels, they might not work as serious as it should be because they are not psychologically and physically ready to tackle the lengthy program over the whole school year. On the other hand, administrators, headmasters and principals in particular, put much confidence in ancient teachers to assume the responsibility towards terminal classes. So, we need to attentively resolve such problems by offering teachers the freedom to choose the level they want though it is truly a complicated process.

### **Item 7: Regions where teachers work**

Linguists, scholars, and educators believe that the environment affects learners' motivation and their FL acquisition. In Algeria, foreign languages learning is not an area of interest chiefly in rural regions due mainly to

psychological, social, family, and school surroundings. It is obviously noticeable that learners who live in big cities are highly motivated towards FL learning and French in particular since society and families encourage them to learn languages, or they (parents) themselves received their studies in FL. By contrast in many wilayas in Algeria, secondary school learners come generally from poor families where parents work day long to support their children financially; therefore, they cannot spare enough time to educate their kids despite the fact that families play an extra-ordinary role as they are the first catalyst of a true blooming of children.

The researcher, after investigation, discovered that most contract and substitute teachers are positioned/employed in rural and remote areas which inspectors, honestly, rarely visit. Thus, undoubtedly rates of success in such regions were very low because of instability beside the terrible lack of materials, pedagogical, and psychological support to the new teachers to improve their professional outcomes.

### **2.1.2. Informants' Training Itinerary**

#### **Item 1: Teachers' background knowledge**

We are certain that all EFL teachers built ideas about CBA either at the university or during pre/in-service training with inspectors. Yet, when the researcher requested some respondents to explain how this method rightly functions (practice), the vast majority seemed 'paralyzed' to turn the theoretical aspects they acquired to practical ones. Moreover, along the classroom observation sessions that the researcher has attended, EFL teachers made few trials to picture the classroom as a CBA environment but they did not really succeed as they terribly lack the practical side in that process besides other circumstances that led to total failure. As a result and in an eye twinkle, we observed a direct comeback to traditional models of teaching where spoon-feeding was the solution.

#### **Item 2: The favorite approach/method for teachers**

Since the vast majority of our informants were to some extent new teachers (20.83% five years and less/42.70% have 6 to 9 years), it is quite normal to see the highest percentage (47.91%) in the above table goes to the CBA preference because they dealt with this approach in the pre-service courses at the university, and ENS in particular. So, it appears that 52.09% of the rest respondents do not enjoy using CBA when teaching or are not familiar with its principles. This category is certainly facing dozens of problems to implement the recently adopted approach which regards the development of the disciplinary and transversal competencies, learner-

centeredness, learner's autonomy, and progressive assessments as the main pillars of the teaching-learning process.

As far as I am concerned, it is noticed that a large number of EFL teachers are not well-equipped with the basics and underlying principles of the different methods and approaches related to FL teaching, not only the Competency-based Approach depending on the gap detected between what is learnt and its effective practice in/outside classrooms. Teachers suffocate from serious weaknesses when it comes to practice, and seem to have superficial definitions to the multiple methodologies notably CBA.

### **Item 3: Teachers' familiarity with the CBA**

In spite of the high percentage (56.25%) of teachers who have received courses about CBA when they were at the university, the researcher could confirm that this category lacks the practical nature since they tackled this approach theoretically. Besides, these teachers are generally novice ones who were recently recruited by the MNE with little or no experience in the field of teaching; then, they need assistance to benefit from what they have been equipped with at the university. Consequently, it is necessary to take into consideration the quality of the in-service training emphasizing the practical aspect as it is an essential factor if we are running after success.

The remaining 43.75% of the informants reckoned that they become aware of the CBA during in-service training seminars held by inspectors each year. Hence, any attempt to reconsider the in-service training course contents ought to look for appropriate strategies to ease the implementation of the CBA. As, almost, all EFL teachers keep saying, "The seminars have to focus much more on how to make the teachers able to transpose the theoretical aspects of the new approach into observable practices in real classroom settings."

In conclusion, the situation is going to worsen if urgent solutions have not been brought by decision makers and experts in the field. In other words, the MNE should organize additional training sessions for inspectors who are frankly weak when it comes to practicing CBA, these courses should be presented by university professors, experts, and specialists in the field. On the other hand, teachers had better try to ameliorate their performance, attend training courses with inspectors, and more importantly cooperate and coordinate with their colleagues in one school and why not visit different schools for more interaction.



#### **Item 4: Informants' suitable approach/method**

Fifty one (53.12%) of the informants have chosen the CBA as the suitable approach for their ways of teaching regardless they are practically poor, for this category knows well that the competency-based is one of the appropriate methods that human beings ever extracted from two famous theories (CONSTRUCTIVISM in 1980s & SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM in 1990s). However, its implementation in Algeria encountered a bitter criticism, after euphoria, not because it does not fit our environment, but because we did not prepare ourselves to adapt the change.

The other respondents (40.62%, 21.87%, and 21.87%) showed no interest towards CBA, they rather believe in the CA, TBA, or the OBA as appropriate methodologies to their teaching practices. The most plausible reason behind this choice is probably the fact that this group of teachers was definitely marked by their own experiences either as students or trainees.

One should admit that, in order to remedy the situation that our educational system is facing, it is necessary to incite the teachers in both categories (supporters or rejecters of CBA) to update their knowledge about the objectives and the strategies of the new approach. Indeed, extra-efforts are urgently recommended so as to explicitly render comprehensible with the teachers what these changes consist of (because till now CBA is ambiguous for most teachers) to adequately form autonomous, skillful, and competent learners who can easily cope with the outside situations in real life as citizens.

#### **2.1.3. Views on the CBA and the hindrances precluding its implementation**

##### **Item 1: In-service training courses frequency and attendance**

Considering the gathered statistics, one can understand some reasons why the majority of teachers find difficulties to be in agreement with CBA. The absences of sustained and continuous in-service training courses terrify the situation for teachers are left to their own intuitive decisions about what may help them instill the targeted competencies. Honestly, four (4) in-service training sessions a year (maximum) are proved to be insufficient, especially when discovering that these sessions focus mainly on theoretical aspects (*see item 2 below*). Therefore, in-service trainings in Algeria need to be reviewed so as to effectively provide teachers with opportunities to learn specific skills, techniques and new instructional approaches that can be practically beneficial inside classrooms, and also to:

- ✓ Suggest remedies for inadequacies of existing Teacher Training Programs;
- ✓ Update knowledge of developments in science, technology, and education;

- ✓ Reinforce understanding towards applicable pedagogical techniques and equitable teaching practices;
- ✓ Give teachers the chance to practice new teaching techniques/strategies and share experiences with their colleagues in the field;
- ✓ Increase teachers' familiarity with ICTs usage.

It could be argued that if teaching is to be done, it must be done well, and infused with pleasure, passion, creativity, challenge, and joy. Thus, the teaching and learning go on all the time whether it is done consciously or unconsciously, formally or informally.

**Item 2:** The main focus of the in-service training sessions

Any trial to separate practice from theory or vice versa will lead automatically to unsolvable problems since the two terms are reciprocally related. 'Knowing how' or 'knowing that', both are necessary to perfectly digest any work, process, job, etc. regardless which one should come first. Kurt Lewin (1951) says that "*There is nothing so practical as good theory,*" while Fullan (2001) puts it differently when he states, "*There is nothing so theoretical as good practice.*" (Qtd in Benabed, 2011: 195).

Our respondents, or at least the vast majority feel that they are sufficiently filled with theory (know that) and that practice (know how) needs to immediately take its place to equilibrate the equation. The researcher understood that teachers want from inspectors to translate their theoretical statements to practical procedures on, for instance, how to plan lessons, minimize their roles, push and motivate learners to work individually, in pairs, or in groups. In fact, they need their inspectors to take the initiative and lively show them how truly a CBA environment looks like in a real classroom setting.

**Item 3:** Teachers' reflection on the in-service training sessions

The above data strongly support what have been previously mentioned. 58.33% of our respondents assumed that they have never harvested fruitful procedures from the in-service training courses since their behaviors inside the classroom remained faithful to those traditional models of teaching. However, ten (10) informants (10.41%) told the researcher that they have 'no idea', that is to say they found themselves unable to decide whether they have benefited from those training sessions or not. Such doubt pushed the researcher to integrate them to the 'no' category because they would say 'yes' if they observed any change related to the founding principles of CBA inside their small world which is absolutely the classroom.

In contrast, 30 teachers out of 96 believe that those in-service training courses helped them to move towards the true implementation of the strategies and principles of the recently adopted approach.

To sum up, to create certain equilibrium between the different views, we need to attentively value and analyze the three opinions that the informants brought. Then, use their feedback as one of the resources to evaluate and re-adjust the followed procedures in the training sessions in order to optimize the teaching practices which means eventually importing positive learning environment. Also, inspectors should over-visit teachers not to make decisive judgments regarding their behaviors, but for a more noble, constructive attendance and criticism, i.e., to reflect on the difficulties that differ from one class to another in order to minimize the mal-practices that teachers act out.

**Item 4:** Extra resources used by the informants

Only the minority of teachers (36.45%) recognizes the importance of being an open-minded teacher who is not addicted to or slave of the textbook, and who each time searches for additional materials/resources to satisfy learners' needs and to cover the weaknesses that students' books involve. By contrast, 63.54% of the respondents are not using any extra-resources to support the mandated textbook content which means that teacher's critical thinking arrived at its lowest levels and the spirit of personal initiative does not exist anymore. This category must be reminded that the textbook is one thing not everything, i.e., the textbooks published by the MNE in our country or wherever are only one means among others to fulfill the requirements of the programs.

Indeed, none knows what suits the learners and what not except the teacher, and then, he should look for/modify tools, instruments, and means to equip his learners with the necessary competencies targeted by the CBA within the students' book. The latter needs a critical mind from the teacher's part to keep his learners away from all what threatens their learning process besides consolidating their knowledge, skills, self-confidence, self-esteem, and autonomous learning.

In general, teachers ought to dare to make decisive decisions concerning what is appropriate to be kept and what is inappropriate to alter or delete. Indeed, most teachers could not get rid of their teaching dilemmas because they lack the critical sense which certainly could enable them to sort out the different problems faced along the teaching-learning path.

**Item 5:** Types of the extra resources

Textbooks are not holy versions without mistakes or weakness, then, every teacher should adequately find out other tools to make his lesson as perfect as possible. One of the unavoidable means that, nowadays, serves teachers and brings enjoyment when teaching is the use of ICTs; they are undoubtedly necessary component in the classroom furniture. Integrating and equipping our classrooms with data-show becomes compulsory as this amazing technology is radically changing the ways learners learn and the teachers teach. 91.42% of the informants (n=32 out of 35) prefer to use the data-show when teaching, indeed, this instrument seems to be the most desired means that teachers integrate in their classrooms, especially most of them have laptops and they just need this device which ought to be provided by Secondary Schools Authorities.

Other respondents (48.57%) said they are using authentic materials such as books, journals, and magazines. These materials can be useful inside classrooms if teachers correctly decide when to utilize them; though such materials are resources not prepared originally for purposes of teaching, they might well help learners in all types of instruction because they expose them to real-world tools which they see daily in real-life situations. 20% (07/35) see the tape recorders as important as the other mentioned materials to bring assistance to both teachers and learners within the classroom environment.

Unfortunately, the above categories represent only small groups of teachers who attempt to enhance the teaching-learning process through supporting the suggested textbooks with other materials. However, the vast majority do not seem to have the will to do the same, i.e., most of the teachers are truly slaves of textbooks in which they dare not to change any type of activity whether it suits their learners or not, they just run after finishing the 'over-loaded' program (third year classes in particular) with zero percent of 'wasted time'. In fact, sometimes the extra-materials save time, efforts, and create an amazing atmosphere inside the classroom since learners love to get out of the daily routine imposed by the textbooks, and diversify their learning styles.

**Item 6:** The obstacles faced when implementing CBA

Reduced timing, class-over crowdedness, learners' lack of motivation are the major roadblocks that our informants have mentioned when implementing CBA. Observation proved that a big number of High Schools around Algeria are still suffering from crowdedness in their classrooms to stand sometimes at 55 to 60 pupils in one class, with slight difference in some areas. Experts

argue (that) for a better application to the competency based approach, the number of learners inside EFL classrooms should not go beyond 25 students. Thus, teachers have reason when they keep murmuring all the time and saying that they could not do well because of high population rates; they are constrained to adapt their teaching while trying to involve all learners in various class activities, and considering the different levels, skills, intelligences, learning styles and preferences of the learners.

Now, we need to say that teachers have no other choice but to harmonize and tolerate those differences to create a climate that facilitates learning, just as Meirieu (1990 qtd in Benabed, 2011: 202) says: *I do not only respect differences, but I take them into account*, though large-size classes do not allow such processes. Till Authorities find a definite solution to class-crowdedness, teachers have to be conscious that learners do not learn in the same way, pace, and rhythm. Meanwhile implement the appropriate strategies and techniques to meet their different needs.

Similarly, learners' motivation is considered as one of the keys to success in every EFL classroom. It is also a psychological force that helps people to achieve a goal. In EFL, this goal may be total fluency in the language, communicative competence, or just basic survival skills. So, if teachers failed to sufficiently motivate their pupils to be part of the target language community, they (pupils) may well lose the desire towards learning. Then, Secondary School teachers should be aware of the different kinds of motivations to make their learners more attracted to EFL. Most learners look for concrete results behind EFL learning, hence, instrumental motivation is the solution since it is a desire to gain something practical from the study of English as a subject.

The other obstacles are no less important, reduced timing (68.75%), shortage of means (43.75%), the suggested teaching materials (37.50%), lack of practice in the training sessions (43.75%), and inadequate in-service training courses (12.50%). In fact, all of them preclude the true implementation of any approach. Then, any reform whatever name gets has to put teachers' training and their professional development as the main foundations to ensure success because the lack of appropriate training in such cases is going to worsen the matter for teachers to cope with the suggested changes, particularly the activities and tasks proposed in the textbook.

**Item 7:** Usefulness of the four sequences (SE3 textbook)

The researcher has asked the respondents about the four mentioned sequences in the table above as he believes that Secondary School teachers

give them much importance and time. Yet, the TAKE BREAK, RESEARCH AND REPORT, PROJECT OUTCOME, ASSESSMENT, and TIME FOR... rubrics are rarely if never done by the vast majority of the teachers, which in turn means that such rubrics still pose problems for them. The reason behind this rejection is probably the misinterpretation and/or the total ignorance of the objectives that underlie each rubric. Obviously, the PROJECT WORK gives learners the chance to transfer their declarative knowledge into procedural one through the aid of the RESEARCH AND REPORT section that is a training ground for the students' designing the project proper. Therefore, teachers need to focus more on these rubrics as they are intensive experiences that engage learners in meaningful activities for them and essential to the learning objectives.

The highest percentages went to the READING AND WRITING (68.75%) and READ AND CONSIDER (62.50%) sequences because the teachers feel they have more control over the classroom where they have ready-made texts and questions that require answers from the learners' part. In fact, even students show great attention when treating texts since they are aware that such procedures are similar to those implemented in the Baccalaureate examination. Teachers make less efforts towards their learners, i.e., they just refer them to the page where they can have a written text accompanied with questions, and then, they (students) either skim through or scan the passage to find answers; if they failed the mission, their teachers never hesitate to directly provide the correct replies using the spoon-feeding process.

By contrast, most teachers do not feel like supporting the LISTEN AND CONSIDER (31.25%) and LISTENING AND SPEAKING (46.87%) sequences possibly because they are required to deal with listening scripts where learners rarely pay attention. The two sequences need great efforts from the teachers to push their pupils to listen and do, especially in overcrowded classrooms with mixed-abilities and skills where they (teachers) cannot give equal opportunities to all the learners to check whether they are doing well or not. Besides, a lot of learners suffer from lack of motivation as they believe they are unable to understand what is being read by the teacher, so, most of them remain handicap along the listening session or move to disturbing their classmates. The latter is less common during the READING AND WRITING/READ AND CONSIDER sequences.

We think if the listening scripts are to be performed in laboratories which are not found in High Schools, learners can show much attention as the reader will be a native speaker not the teacher. Providing that learners listen to native speakers in laboratories through tape recorders, or other tools that

enable them to get out of the daily routine they live with their teachers, they will probably become motivated towards EFL learning.

**Item 8:** Syllabus compliance with the CBA

Most of the informants (90.62%) have stated that the syllabus ‘somehow’ meets the objectives of the CBA. This statistic reveals that the teachers are not comfortable with the syllabus though they like to know more about the new methodology adopted by the MNE. In this case, teachers’ role as potential contributors is significantly important, i.e., their opinions, analyses, as well as their critical thinking can help add new things or review the syllabus contents because they are increasingly aware about what should be taught. Moreover, experienced teachers should be part of the reform agendas to benefit from their deep views in the field so as to promote learning and stand upon the constraints that hinder the true implementation of the competency-based approach.

**Item 9:** Time allotted to the teaching of English

The time factor is a determinant issue in FLA. That is why most of the teachers are not really satisfied, they all the time complain about lack of time, especially when it comes to the textbook content. The time allotted to SE3 classes to learn English is three hours per week for scientific streams and four hours (per week) for literary streams, thus, the timing system is not enough to deal with the whole syllabus and instill the targeted competencies, skills, and experiences.

**Item 10:** Suggestions to cope with time

Acquiring or learning a language requires much time and efforts from the learners no matter if it is easy or difficult to be mastered, it is a prolonged and consistent period. In our research, most teachers claimed that they want really to let the students work in pairs or groups, feed discussions, and interact between them using the target language, but it cannot be the habit because they are time consuming and they (teachers) are obliged to finish the program which is terribly long. Indeed, three to four hours per a week devoted to the teaching of English language is honestly insufficient to perfectly equip learners with the necessary skills and knowledge that they need.

Indeed, to reach an effective implementation of the competency based approach, other factors need to be present. The respondents focus mainly on the slimming down of the program plus a revision of the textbook content, particularly the repeated lessons and activities along the textbook. Besides the recommendations that were launched by our informants, the researcher and

through discussions with teachers concluded that in order to improve the quality of English language teaching in our secondary schools, the following propositions are mentioned:

- ✓ Increase the time available for EFL teaching to effectively develop students' skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing;
- ✓ Reduce the class size to about 25 to 30 students to facilitate the effective use of communicative activities;
- ✓ Apply placement tests to group students into appropriate classes;
- ✓ Revise the testing and assessment content that covers the skills and the competencies intended by the CBA;
- ✓ Vary the teaching styles and strategies according to learners needs;
- ✓ Implement efficient teacher professional development programs.

**Item 11:** Degree of satisfaction on CBA's implementation

Owing to the different constraints and obstacles which were previously mentioned, the vast majority of teachers (96.86%) seem dissatisfied with the CBA implementation in our country. They insist that a gap still exists between the spirit, principles, and objectives of the Competency Based Approach to language teaching (CBLT) and its implementation in the Algerian educational context. Indeed, a bitter criticism on its official application and its actual implementation and practices took place after the prevailed euphoria in Algeria around CBA and the Educational Reform. Based on some researches, views, and observations since this methodology settled in our country in 2003, the behaviors of both teachers as well as learners inside the classrooms and outside schools are indicative of the distancing between institutional decisions and field realism. What should be noticed, however, is a huge breach and obvious contradictions between the objectives as spelt out in the documents and the reality on the ground in its various shades and shapes either at school or outside the school (Bouhadiba, 2015, pp. 3-7).

Therefore, if Authorities in our country are looking for yielding reforms, Secondary Education system needs to be re-oriented to impart a broad repertoire of life-skills. These skills should involve the key generic competencies, non-occupation specific practical capabilities, ICTs, the ability to learn independently, to work in teams, entrepreneurship, and civic responsibility. They can be instilled through a shared foundational learning period and by deferring the tracking of students into academic and vocational streams for as long as possible. Such a model of Secondary Schooling is



expected to equip learners with multiple skills so that they are prepared to enter and re-enter the workforce several times in their working lives.

**Item 12:** Teachers' expectations and suggestions

To comply with the principles and objectives of CBA, teachers need to be fluent, considering a varied range of possibilities as well as actions. They have to encourage and model critical and creative thinking to bring about an appropriate learning environment. The potential for radical shifts in the school practice and programs via effective pre/in-service education courses has been acknowledged by most teachers, education committees and commissions. They have articulated their concern regarding the neglect and inadequacies of the current in-service education practice. So, teachers themselves, individually and collectively should endorse and treat non-negotiable the value of interactive professionalism, i.e., teachers learning from and contributing to the learning of other teachers.

Furthermore, teachers' professional development ought to be the center of gravity for the MNE. Professional development goes beyond the term 'training' with its implications of learning skills, and encompasses a definition that includes formal means that help teachers not only to learn new skills but also develop new insights into pedagogy and their practice, explore new or advanced understanding of content and resources. Fullan (1991a) states that professional development is the sum up total of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one's career from pre-service teacher education to retirement. Consequently, the Ministry of National Education has to provide and encourage teachers to:

- Attend seminars, workshops, and conferences;
- Visit colleagues in other schools to learn about the different teaching practices and exchange experiences;
- Engage in cultural activities and write articles for professional journals, especially on the net as they are numerous;
- Participate in refresher courses to get acquainted with the latest developments in the field.
- Use/post diaries and publications concerning the difficulties and issues facing teachers along their careers;
- Self-study, as Elmore (2004) claims that improvement is ...a function of learning to do the right things in the setting where you work. (p. 73)

As long as such propositions besides rehabilitating the value of work and others are taken seriously into consideration, the current situation of education will change and we will arrive at a satisfactory environment wherein teachers and learners know exactly their roles inside the classroom under the guidance of the competency based approach.

## **2.2. SE3 Learners' Questionnaire**

### **2.2.1. Learners' attitudes towards the English language**

Educationists agree on the importance of learners' attitudes as an integral part and an essential component in the teaching-learning process since they (attitudes) are effective factors in FLA which, in turn, control their performance in the classroom.

Bearing the questions about the English language in mind, a large majority of the questioned students (70.88%) appear attracted towards learning English, contrary to the insignificant minority (07.94%) who claimed that they do not like learning it. Despite the fact that the desire to learn English is so high, a certain contradiction emerged when 79.11% of the respondents said that they have either an average or a bad level while 66.17% think that English is almost easy! Here, the reasons should be pinpointed to render the fulfillment of the learners' willingness to learn English. However, an acceptable number of informants (123/36.17%) reported that English as a language is generally different from Arabic.

### **2.2.2. Attitudes of learners towards English people and their Culture**

Thanks to the Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs), today's learners are not waiting any more for teachers to tell them about the outside world whenever a foreign language is being taught. As far as English Language Teaching is concerned, most learners have become familiar with the globalized universe and hardly motivated to surf and communicate using the 'none's-language' which is English, attempting to discover other cultures.

Interestingly, when asking questions about the target culture, most of the respondents are predisposed to learn about the English people and their culture. 78.23% of the informants showed their readiness to have knowledge about the cultural and social matters related to the English. Yet, only 07.05% of the ones targeted by the questionnaire think that they do not really want to learn about them.

Learners' attitudes towards the English language and their culture are, indeed and unconsciously, reinforcing the views which affirm that Language

and Culture have intimate relationship. That is to say, we cannot separate between them as they are interwoven.

### **2.2.3. Learners' Motivation and Difficulties**

Educators and parents value motivation in school for its crucial importance in the classroom well as for its long-term contribution to children's learning and self-esteem (Skinner & Belmont 1993, p.571). Indeed, learners come to foreign language classes with different incentives for language learning, i.e., they learn the FL for communication, better job, further studies, or due to parents' pressure.

In this section, most of our population (89.99%) seems to be highly motivated to learn the English language to turn competent when communicating with people since they are strongly convinced that English is a global language. Even the 13.23% percentage might be integrated with the one above; though it seems very low, the researcher is certain that most of the respondents did not tick it due mainly to both the absence of the touristic culture and more importantly to the terrible lack of financial support within their families. Finally, because parents' awareness about the importance of FL, English in particular, is rising daily, they make pressures on their kids to devote more efforts to FL learning, and that is why we cannot just ignore the 34.11% who said they are motivated to learn English as they need it for their studies.

Concerning learners' level at English, the statistics tell that 50.88% of the informants have an average level, 28.23% believe that they are weak (bad level), 13.82% said they are good, and only 07.05% from the whole respondents confirmed to have an excellent level.

As for the question related to the difficulties which are being overcome when learning English, the selected category, as detected, appear to have defects in all skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is noticeable that 45.88% and 19.11% (64.99%) suffer from problems in productive skills; while, 30.58% and 30.29% (60.87%) endure deficiencies affect the receptive skills. So, we obviously read that almost every respondent encounters multiple issues in EFL classes.

At last, when the learners administered by the questionnaire were asked about the teaching materials, especially the activities in the textbook, 58.81% consider them very/ difficult in general, however 41.17% claim that they are not very/easy. That's probably one of the answers to our wonders why most students get an average or bad level in EFL.

#### **2.2.4. Learners' attitudes towards their English Language Teachers**

Teachers' beliefs, practices, and attitudes are important for understanding and improving educational process. Because they are being judged by learners, teachers' roles have to be efficient to create successful experiences in order to revive students' motivation and make them study harder, persist and be the center of the teaching-learning process. David Nunan (1999) believes:

... in a learner-centered classroom, key decisions about what will be taught, how it will be taught, when it will be taught and how it will be assessed will be made with reference to the learner. (p.11)

Within the CBA, the teacher's interference should be lessened to give the opportunity to her/his learners to drive their way during the learning operation. Hence, section 4 was concerned with the teachers' behavior from learners' view point. The researcher was not really expecting to have such positive answers, i.e., 90.28% of our respondents asserted that their teachers explain and make matters easy for them, 86.76% reported that they are given sufficient time to think and do their tasks, and more interestingly 79.70% believed that, generally, the teachers encourage pair/group work. On paper, the shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered is on the right direction as students' role seems to dominate the classroom.

All in all, EFL classes are social by their nature and had better remain in a positively 'noisy' environment to enable students naturally learn from each other, build the policy of negotiation, value responsibility, and promote the culture of tolerance. If such factors are taken into consideration by the teaching staff, we may well have satisfactory levels of success.

### **2.3. Interviews**

#### **2.3.1. Respondents' attitudes towards education in Algeria**

The first three questions were about the general situation of education in our country; the researcher felt it is a necessity to check out the informants' re-actions towards what is going on. We were really waiting for such shocking responses, i.e., all the respondents (100%) without any single exception have agreed on the terrible situation that education in Algeria is going through. When the researcher wanted to explore the different causes lying behind, the vast majority answered it is the absence of "التربية" with a total percentage of 83.33%. The human mind cannot reject such important reason since learning in isolation will not probably bring about

fruitful objectives if the educational side has not been taken into consideration.

Similarly, more than half of the informants (58.33%) refused the reforms that the Ministry of National Education each time approves. They stated, on the one hand, that reforms are crucial to any country over the world to improve the quality of schooling, as far as Algeria is concerned. On the other hand, according to their views (58.33% & 33.33%), any kind of reform should be given time before making judgments about it, and this is not the case with the MNE.

### **2.3.2. The CBA according to our informants**

Since the Competency-Based Approach is the center of our research, the researcher could not just ignore questioning informants about it. Thus, when we asked the respondents whether they had an idea about the CBA, 75% of them informed that they know it but theoretically. And as we know, theory and practice have an intimate relationship which means they are inseparable because they were simply born to live together. That is why we need to perfectly digest the theoretical and the practical sides related to CBA before launching any judgments.

Further, the majority (66.66%) is convinced that the previous methods/approaches are better than this approach if we have a closer look on the general position of education that pictures the students as the weakest episode in the teaching-learning process. Therefore, we cannot (as the 83.33% of our respondents said) claim that this approach has succeeded since its adoption in 2003, and the Baccalaureate examination results were and still are not the best indicators of success as it is not in harmony with the ones held internationally (91.66% believe).

### **2.3.3. The informants' attitudes towards both teachers & learners**

Teachers and learners are the corner stone that 'education' stands on, then, their levels depict the general setting of the field. Thus, the researcher found it significant to ask the respondents if they are satisfied on their teachers and learners or not. As usual, 58.33% told the researcher that the learners' level is less than the average while 25% of them think that their student have an average level. So, these statistics pushed us to accuse the teacher, but the respondents' views were totally different; 58.33% of them put that it is a common shared responsibility and not only the teachers because the educational process involves administrators, assistants, teachers, parents, and the society as a whole. In contrast, 33.33% believe that the teachers played a big role for the vast majority see themselves instructors and forget to be

primarily educators; to some extent, the researcher approves this point of view as he is a teacher and a close observer who observes such behaviors/practices daily.

Based on the above discussion, it seems normal to get 75% of the respondents as headmasters who are not completely satisfied on their teachers' performance because the achieved results reflect, according to them, how much efforts they made through the trimester or the year. Consequently, 52.63% of the informants made calls to re-open the Institutes of Technical Education (ITE) where teachers used to graduate from, or accept only those who (they keep saying) graduate from the Teachers Training College (l'Ecole Normale Supérieure). In addition, 26.31% said that teachers must have more in-service training sessions to ameliorate their performance while 21.05% reported that instructors should have an adequate pre-service training to make them ready for the coming challenges.

To sum up, either this opinion or that one, all of the respondents have come to one point which means that the majority of teachers need training/formation to update their knowledge, skills...etc. to cope with the demands/needs of today's generations.

#### **2.3.4. Respondents' attitudes towards the MNE**

The Ministry of National Education is the Body in charge that provides schools with the necessary materials either in Primary, Middle, or Secondary levels to optimize learning. So, it is not surprising to accuse it whenever weaknesses and defects take place. Accordingly, the researcher asked several questions (in the last four questions) about the MNE and its efforts to enhance schooling in Algeria.

Firstly, we wanted to know if the pedagogical and the teaching materials are sufficient or not, so, more than half of the respondents (66.66%) think they are not enough and most teachers are still using old-fashioned materials such as computers, laptops, and DVDs. By contrast, 25% of the informants said the materials are sufficient and, according to them, everything has relation with the usage. If Head masters and Economists are serious, they may well provide all the necessities. The researcher, after some discussions with a number of Economists, deduced that the case of materials' availability depends on the budget transferred to each school.

Secondly, the informants were asked if the MNE is doing enough towards education in our country. 58.33% of them believe that the efforts made by the Ministry are still less than it should be, whereas 25% stated that they (the efforts) are somehow acceptable. As an interviewer, I saw that

almost all the respondents are not really satisfied while talking about the Ministry of National Education in which they kept complaining about the individuality of the MNE in making decisive decisions.

Last and not least, 75% of the respondents informed that the yearly budget given to the MNE is not sufficient if compared to the ones devoted to the other Ministries because education is considered one of the most important sectors in any nation. However, 25% of the informants said overtly that it is enough but we just need to correctly and fairly plan how to spend it over the whole school year; in other words, it is a problem of management.

Finally, the researcher at the end of the interview preferred to give the opportunity to interviewees to launch their expectations, and it was truly encouraging to hear words full of hopes and wishes. All the respondents, though they show some pessimism, wish a positive transformation in the field of education in our country; they said that changing the current situation is everyone's responsibility as governments could do nothing without the help of civil society.

## **Conclusion**

The last chapter in this dissertation was dedicated to the analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data which were collected through several research methods. We tried to shed light on the different angles that are considered as essential in the accomplishment of the teaching-learning process. In other words, our focus was directed to SE3 learners, Secondary Education English teachers, the classroom, and administration staff.

In fact, the analysis of pupils' questionnaires, teachers' questionnaire, classroom observation, and the interviews and the triangulation of the results revealed that neither pupils nor teachers are ready for the implementation of the competency-based approach. On the one hand, the pupils, though they are the main focus of the CBA, were unable to handle their learning, maintain independence, or even take autonomous action to construct knowledge. On the other hand, Secondary School English teacher showed no readiness and seemed practically poor. i.e., they have some ideas about the approach and its implementation, but in terms of practice and how to make CBA the heart of the teaching process inside their classrooms, the vast majority confessed the need to have more training to correctly implement the principles of this adopted approach.

Concerning the Algerian EFL classroom, it is far from being appropriate to create a CBA's atmosphere mainly because of classrooms crowdedness and lack the teaching-learning materials. However, the ambition and euphoria to move towards a competency-based education in Algeria will be realized if appropriate solutions such as teachers training, syllabus review, and other suggestions are undertaken.



## General Conclusion

Globalization keeps imposing new demands on nations at all levels: economic, scientific, political, and technological. Nowadays, the purpose of education passes the idea of enabling learners to memorize de-contextualized information and retrieve it later for use; education has to empower and equip the learners with the necessary skills, abilities, and knows that give them the opportunity to practically face the challenges in real life situations and to be active, effective, doers, and a productive persons who serve the community.

Undoubtedly, the Algerian Educational system was, and is being reformed for the sake of reaching the above objectives. Hence, the Competency-Based Approach has been brought as a learning theory that aims at building autonomous, self-made, explorers, and innovative learners who assume their responsibilities while learning. The latter, of course, should be performed under a smart and wise guidance of the teachers who are supposed to rely on the principles of CBA whenever the teaching-learning process takes place. Unfortunately, this is not really the case, what is being observed is a 'bitter truth' where the educational system in Algeria is failing the job as, on the one hand, our learners are depending much more on their instructors and could not step forward without them along the learning process. On the other hand, teachers are still addicted to the traditional models of teaching in which they become unable to forget about their old practices in advantage of more efficacies under the competency-based.

This research tried to contribute to the current popular and academic debate regarding the latest reform (s) which touched the educational system in Algeria through trying to answer the following questions:

- a- What are the obstacles and constraints that hinder teachers to correctly implement the C.B.A and then cause a comeback to traditional practices?
- b- How do learners' motivation and attitudes affect EFL learning and thus the teachers' way of teaching?
- c- Do CBA principles and objectives go hand in hand with the designed teaching materials to respond to learners' interests and needs?

Based on the three questions above, the researcher formulated the following hypotheses:

- a- We hypothesize that the failure of teachers to cope with the CBA could be the theoretical and practical deficiencies related to their training courses on the new approach.

- b- We hypothesize that the learners are interested in EFL learning, but they show little or no motivation towards English Language Learning which in turn influences the teachers' way of teaching.
- c- We hypothesize that the utilized teaching materials do not exactly suit the prospects of EFL learners and the CBA's objectives.

Therefore, the research was divided into four main chapters. The first one dealt with literature review where we mentioned the different approaches and methods in relation to language teaching. In the second chapter, the researcher shed light, in the first part, on the Competency-Based Approach as a teaching-learning method, and the second part was devoted to the CBA in the Algerian educational context. Chapter three includes methodology and data collection. The last chapter, then, tackled data analyses and interpretation of the obtained results.

Through designing and conducting an exploratory case study, the three hypotheses put forward were borne out. The results revealed that a big gap still exists between the prescriptive and descriptive didactics, the Algerian Educational Reform has taken form only in the official documents and on papers. Indeed, it never strikes at the heart of how learners learn and how teachers teach. That is why practice in this case differs a lot from theory; our learners rarely if never smell the freedom inside their classrooms where they are, normally, supposed to take the initiative, ask questions, interact with those inside the room, solve problems, work individually, in pairs and with groups.

None of the previously mentioned happened, and even the teachers seemed lost when dealing with the new textbooks to rapidly comeback to their old spoon-feeding habits because they are practically poor and have superficial views on what the competency-Based Approach really means, except for a minority who are aware of the principles of the CBA because they have received a university pre-service training and have just been recruited to join the teaching staff. To comprehend teachers' change, a close attention is required not just to their capacities to change but also the desire for change.

Similarly, the Algerian EFL classroom has its own effect to this resistance to change by teachers and learners alike. Actually, such classrooms are far from being appropriate for creating an environment keen on CBA instructions; they were over-crowded where discipline problems impeded teachers to implement this approach which needs concentration besides the terrible lack of equipment such as ICTs that are considered, today, an integral part in the teaching-learning process when implementing CBA.

What was noticed along this study is that, many obstacles stand against the attainment of the competencies targeted by the CBA: The timing spared to the teaching of English language is not sufficient, the didactics means are rarely available, the in-service training courses focus more on theoretical aspects rather than the practical ones, and the teaching environment is not well-organized and prepared which in turn de-motivated learners to do well while learning. In addition, other factors contributed to the worse situation that education in our country is living; no exposure to real life communication, rigidity of the curriculum, absence of informal assessment, and non-flexibility of the textbooks. So, it is a shared responsibility from the top to the bottom to review/fix everything related to EFL teaching and learning in Algeria.

Away from pessimism, though most teachers were unready to cope with the CBA, they showed on the other hand a good will to guide, support, and help their students become lifelong learners and acquire competencies that make them able to adapt with the different changes of life. They also believe in updating their knowledge and be in touch with all the latest researches made or being made in the field of education. Thus, it is significant that the educational system, as a vector in terms of re-production and also the social transformation, is to be swiftly re-adjusted with regard to the changes which the new era requires.

In this dissertation which was a modest attempt to contribute to the current debate surrounding CBA and its role in guiding as well as shaping reform in the educational system, we do not and never pretend that our work is the panacea for an effective and ideal implementation of this approach. It remains insufficient and incipient as the researcher has only skimmed superficially through the issue under investigation. Besides, we do not intend to hand the right answers to the question on how to teach learners better and instill in them the targeted competencies, skills, and attitudes. In such situations, there are no exact answers but only methods that may well work better or worse for each individual, each school, or each group. We should carefully look at the environment where teachers and learners work, the classroom, the materials, and the teacher's training, to achieve changes in the schooling quality.

It is ethical to say that the current research had limitations and many aspects were neglected either because of the researcher's unconsciousness of such issues as part of his non-perfectionist human nature or for some objective reasons. There are many factors which could contribute to the limitation of data including: the nature of topic being tackled, the choice of the research method, the instruments, the sample population, and the context

of the study. Besides, case study research is criticized by the fact that generalizations are not easily concluded especially when the sample population is approximately small. In fact, the researcher believes that a sample of 340 students and 96 teachers does not guarantee any attempt to generalize the findings. In addition, observing few (10) EFL classrooms do not ensure that the same practices are common in other classes around the country. Nonetheless, the obtained results gave insights into the teaching practices inside the EFL classroom and unveil the cover on the obstacles and constraints that secondary school teachers and learners face day-to-day under the CBA.

On the other hand, the results obtained so far are not perhaps for tomorrow because the constraints are numerous particularly those related to teachers' training. It should be reminded that even if we outfit all the means, raise time volume, reduce the number of learners within the classrooms, and lighten the syllabus, we cannot assure success though they contribute to it. In fact, the existing research would spark another debate on how to make the educational system in Algeria more efficient to form active, creative, innovative and, therefore, productive citizens.

To sum up, it seems obvious to say that by adhering to the principles of the CBA and implementing the new syllabus, the latter will help to free the teachers and learners from the constraints and obstacles which had prevented them from ameliorating for several decades, and to spread out their knows, know-how and know-how to be. Thus, it is necessary to take into consideration the constraints which preclude the materialization of the CBA, but surely this will be effective when it is grounded on double way, i.e., top-down and bottom-up collaboration amongst all the agents in the society where shared visions are to orchestrate their efforts to construct the road towards the future.

## **Recommendations**

For an adequate implementation of the Competency-Based Approach, it is first and foremost a must to come to a consensus among all the official partners in the educational system. Teachers, parents, learners, inspectors, school headmasters and decision makers should meet around the table of debate and discuss the issue as objectively as possible to look for, suggest and provide practical answers in order to sort out the problems that hinder at least an acceptable application of the CBA in Algeria. It is easy to blame this or that, especially teachers for the current situation, but the truth is that they themselves resulted from a whole educational system they live in; successful change means a careful planning, detailed explanation, and demonstration to educators including supervisors, administrators, and teachers in order to make them ready to adapt the move in methodology and content organization.

Moreover, all pedagogical and administrative actors should be consulted to assess what has worked so far and what not in terms of pre/in-service training resources, pedagogy, administration, etc. in such meetings, social partners and practitioners can suggest ways or solutions to reconcile the learner with the school, the textbooks, and the teacher. Indeed, an urgent re-evaluation of the textbooks by experts, inspectors, experienced and retired teachers, cartoonists, and drawers became a necessity for a revision of the programs in place and a re-adjustment according to the pedagogical principles of the CBA. This never means a total rejection of the presentation and contents of the 2003 textbooks. It is also necessary to give a better place to the learner in the didactic triangle, to revive the institutes for teacher-training and facilitate access to the multimedia and ICTs at school.

Finally, the researcher, as a teacher in the field, assumes that educators and experts in our country strongly believe in the re-formulation of the educational objectives in a more explicit and adequate way so that to respond to the issues and challenges in place and ensure a more appropriate relevance of education in an ever changing society. Unless we install competencies in our learners that make them able to become autonomous in developing their analytical capacities, mobilizing their knowledge acquisition and synthesizing when facing new problem-situations, the school cannot ensure its function of education, socialization, and qualifications.

In one word, improvements in school reforms are achievable when the principles are digested, the strategy of the approach is well-implemented, the materials are provided, and the teacher development programs are organized.

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**Appendix A**  
**Classroom Observation**

**School:**

**Class:**

**Date:**        /        / 2017

**Time: from.....to.....**

**Observation:**

**I. Learners' behavior in the EFL Classroom**

<b>Behaviors</b>		<b>Always</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
Learners choose where to sit						
The lesson's objectives are discussed with learners						
Learners prepared the lecture at home						
Learners choose how long to spend on each activity						
Learners select the appropriate material to use						
Learner are interested in lessons						
Learners are motivated and participate						
Learners interact with the teacher and ask questions						
Learners interact with each other						
Learners work in pairs						
Learners work in groups						
learners are calm						
Learners are noisy						
Learners are disruptive						
Errors correction is made by	The teacher					
	The learner					
	Peers					
The project work is	Handed to learners					
	Presented by learners					

## II. Teacher's behavior in the EFL classroom

Behaviors		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
The teacher gives learners control over the classroom						
The teacher permits learner initiatives						
The teacher spare enough time for thinking						
The teacher uses cognitive terminology						
The teacher encourages autonomous learning						
The teacher supports discussion among learners						
The teacher feeds learner-learner interaction						
Peer teaching is allowed						
The teacher tolerates errors						
The teacher in his classroom is a	Guide					
	Controller					
	Assistant					
	Facilitator					
	Promoter					
The teacher uses ICTs						
The assessment occurs while teaching						
Activities and experiences are	Authentic					
	Motivating					
	Useful in real life					

## III. The Classroom Setting

Classroom shape		Yes	No
The classroom is organised			
The classroom is	Over-crowded		
	Large		
	Average		
	Small		
The classroom is equipped with ICTs			

## Appendix B

### Questionnaire I: Directed to Secondary Education English teachers

#### Informants' biographical and Professional Data *(tick the right box)*

**Item 1:** You are a.....

Male

Female

**Item 2:** Your age is.....

a- 20 – 25

b- 26 – 30

c- 31 – 40

d- Over 40

**Item 3:** You are a.....teacher.

a- Confirmed

b- Contract

c- Substitute

**Item 4:** What kind of degree(s) do you have?

a- Licence

b- Master

c- PES (ENS)

**Item 5:** How long have you been teaching English?

a- 5 years and less

b- 5 to 9

c- 10 to 15

d- 16 to 20

e- 21 to 25

f- 26 to 30

g- 31 years and more

**Item 6:** What levels are you teaching?

- a- First year
- b- Second year
- c- Third year

**Item 7:** What region are you teaching in?

- a- Urban
- b- Semi-urban
- c- Rural

**II. Training Itinerary** *(tick the right box)*

**Item 1:** Do you have an idea about the language approaches/ methods implemented in Algeria?

- a- Yes
- b- No

**Item 2:** What language teaching approach/method do you prefer?

- a- The Grammar Translation Method
- b- The Audio-Lingual Method
- c- The Communicative Approach
- d- The Task Based Approach
- e- The Objective-Based Approach
- f- The Competency-Based Approach

Others,.....  
.....  
.....

**Item 3:** When have you become familiar with CBA?

- a- During initial training
- b- Training at the university
- c- In-service training session
- d- Others.....  
.....

**Item 4:** Which approach/method suits your way of teaching?

- a- The Grammar Translation Method
- b- The Audio-Lingual Method
- c- The Communicative Approach
- d- The Task Based Approach
- e- The Objective-Based Approach
- f- The Competency-Based Approach



**III- Views on the Competency-Based Approach and the hindrances precluding its implementation.**

**Item1:** Tick the number of in-service training sessions you attended during the last 13years.

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

2003-2004							
2004-2005							
2005-2006							
2006-2007							
2007-2008							
2008-2009							
2009-2010							
2010-2011							
2011-2012							
2012-2013							
2013-2014							
2014-2015							
2015-2016							

**Item2:** The training focuses on.....?

- a- Theoretical aspects
- b- Practical aspects
- c- Both, theoretical and practical aspects

**Item3:** Have you ever had an opportunity to reflect on those in-service training courses contents?

Yes                       No                       No idea

**Item4:** Do you use extra resources to support the mandated textbook content?

Yes                       No                       No idea

**Item5:** If yes, what extra resources are you using?

- a- Books, journals, magazines
- b- Tape recorder
- c- Over-head projector
- d- Data show
- e- Computer
- f- DVDs
- g- TV & Video recorder
- h- Others

**\*\*Specify,**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Item 6:** Which of the following stand as roadblocks to the implementation of the CBA?

- a- Learners 'lack of motivation
- b- Shortage of means
- c- Inadequate in-service training sessions
- d- Lack of practice in the training sessions
- e- The suggested teaching materials in the textbook are not appropriate
- f- Class over-crowdedness
- g- Reduced timing
- h- Others.....  
.....

**Item 7:** What sequence do you find useful?

- a- Listen And Consider
- b- Read And Consider
- c- Listening And Speaking
- d- Reading And Writing

**Item 8:** Does the syllabus meet the objectives of the CBA?

Very much  Somehow  No idea

**Item 9:** Is the time spared to the teaching of the English Language enough?

Yes  Somehow  No  No idea

**Item 10:** If no, what do you suggest?

- a- Increase timing
- b- Lighten the syllabus
- c- Review the textbook content
- d- Others suggestions.....  
.....  
.....

**Item 11:** After approximately 13 years, are you ..... satisfied with the CBA implementation?

- a- Fully
- b- Partly
- c- Not at all
- d- No idea

**Item 12:** Your expectations.

\*According to you, how can we enhance the implementation of CBA in Algeria?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**“Thanks a lot dear participant  
for your priceless efforts  
and contribution.”**

## Appendix C

### Questionnaire II

Directed to SE3 learners.

موجه الى طلبة السنة الثالثة ثانوي.

(Please, honestly tick the right box / (من فضلك، ضع ويكل صدق علامة في المربع المناسب /

#### Section 1: learners' attitudes towards English Language learning.

القسم الأول: موقف المتعلمين من تعلم اللغة الانجليزية.

Q1: Do you consider English an important language? هل تعتبر اللغة الانجليزية لغة مهمة؟

Yes  نعم Not much  ليس كثيرا No  لا

Q2: Are you interested in learning the English Language? هل أنت مهتم بتعلم اللغة الانجليزية؟

Yes  نعم Not much  ليس كثيرا No  لا

Q3: Is English.....?

س3: هل اللغة الانجليزية؟

- |                   |                          |                  |
|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| a- Easy           | <input type="checkbox"/> | أ- سهولة التعلم  |
| b- Not very easy  | <input type="checkbox"/> | ب- ليست سهلة جدا |
| c- Difficult      | <input type="checkbox"/> | ج- صعوبة التعلم  |
| d- Very difficult | <input type="checkbox"/> | د- جـد صعبة      |

#### Section2: learners' attitudes towards the English people and their culture.

القسم الثاني: رأي المتعلمين في الشعب الانجليزي وثقافته.

Q1: Do you like to learn about the English culture? هل تود التعرف على الثقافة الانجليزية؟

Yes  نعم Not important  لا يهتم No  لا

Q2: The English people are.....? س2: الشعب الانجليزي هو شعب.....؟

- |                          |                          |                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| a- Under-developed       | <input type="checkbox"/> | أ- شعب متخلف         |
| b- Developed             | <input type="checkbox"/> | ب- شعب متقدم         |
| c- Model to be followed  | <input type="checkbox"/> | ج- مثال يقتدى به     |
| d- Bad example to follow | <input type="checkbox"/> | د- مثال سيء للاقتداء |
| e- No idea               | <input type="checkbox"/> | و- ليس لدي أي فكرة   |

Section 3: Learners' motivation towards the English Language learning.

القسم الثالث: مدى تحفز المتعلمين لتعلم اللغة الانجليزية.

Q1: Why do you like learning English?

س1: لماذا ترغب في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية؟

- |  |                          |                            |
|--|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| a- It is a global language                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | أ- لأنها لغة عالمية        |
| b- To use it when travelling                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | ب- لاستعمالها في حال السفر |
| c- I need it in my studies                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | ج- احتاجها في دراستي       |
| d- To communicate with people around the world | <input type="checkbox"/> | د- للتواصل مع العالم       |

Q2: your level at English is.....

س2: مستواك في اللغة الانجليزية.....

- |              |                          |          |
|--------------|--------------------------|----------|
| a- Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> | أ- ممتاز |
| b- Good      | <input type="checkbox"/> | ب- جيد   |
| c- Average   | <input type="checkbox"/> | ج- متوسط |
| d- Bad       | <input type="checkbox"/> | د- ضعيف  |

Q3: Where do you find difficulties in learning English? الانجليزية؟

- |                            |                          |                     |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| a- Listening comprehension | <input type="checkbox"/> | أ- الاستماع و الفهم |
| b- Reading comprehension   | <input type="checkbox"/> | ب- القراءة و الفهم  |
| c- Speaking                | <input type="checkbox"/> | ج- المحادثة         |
| d- Writing                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | د- الكتابة          |

Q4: How do you find the activities designed in the textbook في الكتاب المدرسي؟

- |                   |                          |             |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| a- Very difficult | <input type="checkbox"/> | أ- صعبة جدا |
| b- Difficult      | <input type="checkbox"/> | ب- صعبة     |
| c- Easy           | <input type="checkbox"/> | ج- سهلة     |
| d- Very easy      | <input type="checkbox"/> | د- سهلة جدا |

Section 4: Learners' attitudes towards English Language teachers.

القسم الرابع: موقف المتعلمين من أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية.

Q1: Does the teacher warm you up before the lessons?

س1: هل يعمل الاستاذ على تحضيركم قبل الدرس؟

a- Always

أ- دائما

b- Usually

ب- أحيانا كثيرة

c- Sometimes

ج- بعض الاوقات

d- Rarely

د- نادرا

e- Never

و- أبدا

Q2: Does your teacher explain & simplify things for you?

س2: هل الاستاذ يشرح ويبسط لكم الامور للفهم

a- Always

أ- دائما

b- Sometimes

ب- بعض الاوقات

c- Never

ج- أبدا

Q3: Does your teacher encourage working in pairs and groups?

س3: هل يشجع الاستاذ العمل الثنائي والجماعي؟

a- Always

أ- دائما

b- Sometimes

ب- بعض الاحيان

c- Rarely

ج- نادرا

d- Never

د- أبدا

Q4: Does your teacher give you enough time to do tasks?

س4: هل يمنحك الاستاذ وقتا كافيا لإنجاز الانشطة؟

a- Always

أ- دائما

b- Sometimes

ب- بعض الاحيان

c- Rarely

ج- نادرا

d- Never

د- أبدا

Q5: Does the project work help you use the acquired knowledge outside the classroom?

س5: هل تساعدك المشاريع على استعمال المعارف المكتسبة في القسم خارج المدرسة؟

a- Very much

أ- كثيرا

b- Not much

ب- ليس كثيرا

c- Little

ج- قليلا

d- Never

د- لا أبدا

Q6: Do you use portfolios?

س6: هل تستخدم حافظة المشاريع، الاختبارات والفروض المنجزة؟

Yes  نعم

No  لا

No idea  ليس لدي فكرة

شكرا جزيلا عزيزي التلميذ / Thank you very much dear pupil

## **Appendix D**

### **The Interview**

It targets Secondary Education Headmasters, Principals, Counselors, and Assistants.

#### **The questions**

- 1- How would you describe the current status of education in Algeria?
- 2- What are the reason(s) behind this description/assumption?
- 3- Is it necessary to each time launch new reforms in the field of education?
- 4- Do you have an idea about the Competency-Based Approach?
- 5- Is CBA truly better the ancient adopted approaches/methods?
- 6- Can we say that the CBA succeeded in Algeria since its adoption in 2003?
- 7- Are the implemented measures in the Baccalaureate exam in Algeria in harmony with those internationally?
- 8- Can the (high) obtained results in the Baccalaureate exam be taken as evidence to declare the success of CBA in Algeria?
- 9- What can you say about the level of your pupils?
- 10- Do teachers have role in shaping learners' current level?
- 11- Are you satisfied on teachers' performance?
- 12- How can we enhance/better the teachers' level?
- 13- Are the pedagogical and the teaching materials sufficient to make the CBA's objectives come true?
- 14- Do you think that the Ministry of National Education is doing enough towards education in Algeria?
- 15- Is the budget dedicated to the MNE, if compared to other Ministries, sufficient?
- 16- What are your expectations and suggestions?

## الملخص

لقد قامت عديد الدول عبر العالم بإصلاحات جديدة مست أنظمة التعليم لديها من أجل خلق تناغم مع التحديات ومتطلبات عالم خاضع للعولمة. في الجزائر، تم مؤخرا تبني نظام تعليمي يُعرف بالمقاربة بالكفايات أو الكفاءات لأجل تحسين نوعية التعليم عن طريق دفع المتعلمين إلى تحمل مسؤولية التعلم بكونهم عصاميين، منفصلين عن معلمهم، بل هم أساس ومركز عملية التعليم والتعلم.

هذا البحث المتواضع هو محاولة لتحليل الصعوبات المحتملة والتي وقفت ولا تزال حجر عثرة أمام التطبيق الحقيقي والفعلي للمقاربة بالكفاءات في المدرسة الثانوية الجزائرية بعد ثلاثة عشرة سنة منذ تبني هذا النظام. ولبلوغ هذه الغاية، قمنا باعتماد ثلاثة ثانويات عبر ولاية الشلف كحالة دراسة، ونقصد هنا: ثانوية الشهيد مبروكة بتونة (المرسی)، ثانوية الشهيد زروقي الشيخ (تاوقريت)، وكذا ثانوية الشهيد عبد القادر صالحی (الشرفة). وسائل البحث لجمع البيانات كانت متعددة حيث نعتمد في هذا البحث على دراسة ميدانية شملت استبيان موجه إلى 340 تلميذ من ذوي الأقسام النهائية (ثالثة ثانوي)، إستبيان آخر موجه إلى حوالي 96 أستاذ لغة إنجليزية بالإضافة إلى حصص مشاهدة داخل الأقسام و حوارات أجريت مع مدرّاء ثانويات، نظار، مستشارو تربية و مساعدون تربويون.

يجدر الذكر أنه تم تحليل النتائج المحصّل عليها كميّاً ونوعياً حيث أظهرت هذه النتائج أنه لا الأساتذة ولا التلاميذ كانوا أو هم جاهزون للتكيف مع نهج المقاربة بالكفايات. في سياق متصل، أكدنا في هذا البحث على ضرورة الفهم العميق للجانب النظري والتطبيقي للمقاربة بالكفاءات بُغية الوصول إلى الأهداف المرجوة من وراء هذا الإصلاح التربوي في الجزائر.