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***Testing, Measuring and Assessing EFL  
Learners Reading Abilities***

***The Case of Third Year Secondary School Pupils***

Dissertation Submitted In Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
of Doctorate in Didactics of English Language.

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## *Dedication*

*To my dear parents...*

*My darling children...*

*And my husband.*

*Fatima Zohra, Ayachi*

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### *Abstract*

The current study entails a qualitative and quantitative exploration intended to provide an actual picture of the reading comprehension difficulties that inhibit our learners from being developed linguistically and culturally and to show the importance of the concept of assessment as a strong pedagogical tool in the field of language learning. The participants of this investigation are third-year secondary school pupils from Zeddour Ibrahim School in Sidi Bel Abbas. The researcher adopts a triangulated approach, which includes three research instruments specifically a reading comprehension test, a questionnaire, and an interview. The reading comprehension test intends to illustrate the comprehension level of the pupils; then draw out their comprehension difficulties. The main objective of the questionnaire is to get data that permit us to make statistical analysis of the pupils' answers and to acquire a feedback of quantitative nature. The aim of the interview is to obtain information about the main hindrances that meet learners in reading and the main assessment techniques teachers apply in the classroom during the reading session. Regarding the research hypotheses suggested in this research, the researcher confirmed them statistically. The first hypothesis confirmed the necessity and the importance of the assessment procedures in teaching and learning for two main reasons; firstly to diagnose learners' strengths and weaknesses, and secondly to enhance urgent classroom instructions. The second hypothesis assumed that assessment of the reading skill should rely on different techniques and procedures to make the teaching of the reading more purposeful. Whereas, the third hypothesis proved that the ill-requirement for the reading skill is primarily related to poor background knowledge, vocabulary scarcity, lack of monitoring strategies, and the inability of predictions and inferences. In sum, the findings indicate that assessment of reading comprehension is a crucial matter to English language teaching as it lets teachers know about learners' needs, obstructions, and deficits. Hence, teachers need to select the most suitable techniques and apply the assessment results to develop their classroom instruction and improve their learning abilities. Indeed, the results proved that vocabulary knowledge and comprehension strategies are fundamental to reading comprehension.

## *List of Abbreviation*

<b>CBA:</b>	Competency Based Approach
<b>ELT:</b>	English Language Teaching
<b>EFL:</b>	English Foreign Language Learners
<b>CLT:</b>	Communicative Language Teaching

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# ***General Introduction***

## *General Introduction*

Historically, foreign language teaching has undertaken various changes at the level of promoting new concepts, appropriate ways, and practical procedures for the sake of helping learners become successfully involved in the process of learning. Consequently, eminent researchers have carried out wide research studies and have provided multiple views in the field of English language teaching. They put great emphasis on the reading skill and the main assessment techniques to measure knowledge of text structure and improve learners' reading abilities. Indeed, foreign language teachers started to put reading assessment into focus to equip learners with the necessary reading strategies and constructive tasks to cope with reading difficulties that inhibit their development.

Reading is considered as one of the most important skills that individuals mainly foreign language learners have to process to promote language acquisition and be able to succeed in other related skills such as writing sanely without spelling mistakes or communicating perfectly without any anxiety, or understanding passages during the listening phase. As a result, reading is a central component in the learning process and is necessary for all stages of learning; primary, middle, secondary, and university levels. It is impossible to do without it as its deficiency causes paralyzed thought and failure in studies.

Experts in the field of reading agree that the skill needs careful consideration because it is central to the language learning process and necessary for language development. For this reason, teaching reading is not an easy task and it does not happen unexpectedly, but it has to be wisely prepared and well planned so that to make the reading session more fruitful and enjoyable. It is significant for teachers to think of the reading goals to be achieved in the class and the desirable assessment criteria to be adopted to measure learners' evolutions. Thus, making pupils aware of the reading objectives and the assessment procedures enable them to take an active part in the learning process.

Improving the quality of teaching reading in the Algerian secondary schools is the ultimate goal of many English Language Teachers. Hence, The Ministry of the Algerian Education introduces many educational reforms within the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) concerning the teaching of English as a subject matter, if not, but a little attention is attributed to the assessment of reading. This fact urges the researcher to be more critical about the problems that our pupils encounter with reading. Such difficulties include poor reading skills, insufficient vocabulary, inaccurate words identification, structural complexity, improper recognition of cohesive devices, inappropriate use of schemata, and thus inability to understand text structure. Additionally, pupils' lack of interest is another main reason behind their failure in reading which they consider a passive and dull activity.

If we continue teaching reading blindly without making any pedagogical reflections, the Algerian education is at risk of getting worse instead of teaching reading properly within the assessment procedures that will certainly improve learners' outcomes and value their progress. More importantly, no educational programme yield evolution without an evaluation process. Yet, it is time to make a change for the assessment of reading within our schools as most of the pupils show difficulties to deal with the skill especially those with low achievements and unsatisfactory results.

Ideally, reading assessment is a vital component in the teaching-learning process. It informs teachers about their learners' progress, allows them to make judgments on learners' performance, and thus enables them to make plans for adjustments. Therefore, assessing pupils' reading- even if the results are drastic- can be rewarding because it enables to adjust teaching, plans for new procedures to correct the misuse of reading strategies, and misunderstanding of assessment criteria. Only through reading assessment, teachers can establish a thorough account of their teaching, whether their lessons are satisfactory and meet their pupils' needs or not. They can also measure the learning process and undertake efficient measures accordingly.

Assessment of reading becomes one of the most important functions in the teaching and learning process that should be treated with great care. It informs

researchers and teachers about the constraints that learners are confronted with so that to find effective solutions to treat the raised issue. In this sense, assessing reading is seen as a helpful and essential tool in the teaching process so that to adjust learning accordingly.

Assessment gives immediate measures of progress, achievements in learning, guides and improves instructions, and even more diagnose learners' comprehensions. It provides teachers with opportunities to localize weaknesses and strengths in their instructions and encourage them to further research to better satisfy their learners' needs as well as to improve their teaching.

This work has been raised from deep concern and a significant problem statement. Assessment of reading needs to be carefully treated and properly conducted to regulate and monitor learners' achievement in that skill. In this sense, teachers need to look for useful and efficient assessment techniques to apply within the teaching /learning process so that to meet learners' needs and bridge the gap towards effective and accurate knowledge notably in the reading skill. Undoubtedly, they should be relevant to the current material presented in the classroom to enhance understanding and comprehension as well as making students aware of the importance of assessment as a sustainable tool in the area of education.

It is worth mentioning that the chief purpose of assessment is to support teaching and regulate learning opportunities, hence allowing learners to improve their level and achieve a good command of the language. Indeed, it is a central function needed to be found in the classroom so that to enlighten the road map of learning and to develop learners' comprehensions about the provided facts. Nonetheless, It provides a day-to-day improvement in attaining excellence in the educational system,as well as providing teachers with opportunities to localize weaknesses and strengths in their instructions and encourage them to further research to better satisfy their learners ' needs and, therefore, becoming skilled teachers.

The ultimate goal of this research is to demonstrate the procedure of assessing reading comprehension skills concerning third-year secondary pupils. Respectfully, this

sort of assessment is considered a valuable challenging matter for both teachers and pupils since it comprises the ingredients of effective teaching and successful learning. For this reason, the researcher seeks to find the main criteria of assessment that support the reading skill so that to make students benefit from the process and be more advantageous in dealing with reading. Furthermore, it is quite apparent to reveal that the use of the suitable techniques of assessing reading help teachers not only to diagnose the point of strengths and weakness of their learners but also to establish the appropriate teaching strategies that they should adopt to satisfy their learners' needs.

Certainly, assessment of reading is an issue characterized by specific features that need accuracy and objectivity, the criteria, which make learners more careful while dealing with the reading skill. They will be able to not only read and understand the presented information, but they can interpret and decipher different kinds of texts to attain the desired goal. Specific tasks and activities should be planned and tailored according to learners' levels to assess their abilities and determine how well they can read, understand and interact with various types of passages. In this sense, many comprehensive questions can be developed to check learners' understanding of the presented texts and whether they have constructed critical thinking of the given material or not. Hence, many researchers in the field and qualified teachers have designed numerous techniques and approaches of reading comprehension assessment to present effective tasks, activities, and tests that enable learners to better interact with the text and encourage them to develop a successful understanding of the text.

Among the objectives of assessment is to find out definite reasons that make learners fail in any subject. Concerning the reading comprehension skill, the present research tries to put stress on the hindrances that inhibit learners from achieving success in that skill and accordingly attempts to offer direct solutions to support learners' abilities to tackle and comprehend any reading passage easily and effectively.

The present study attempts to find reasonable answers to the following research questions:

1. Why is it important to utilize assessment procedures in teaching and learning?

2. What measures should we adopt to assess reading comprehension skills effectively?
3. What are the reasons behind the failure of pupils in the reading comprehension test?

Therefore, out of these questions, the research aims to investigate and confirm or disconfirm the following hypotheses:

1. Implementing assessment procedures in the teaching-learning process is necessary for two main reasons: first to diagnose learners' strengths and weaknesses, and second to empower immediate classroom instructions.
2. Assessment of the reading comprehension skill should possess different measures, procedures, and techniques, which rely on clear and logical principles.
3. The low achievement of the reading skill is mainly related to the lack of reading strategies and deficiencies of vocabulary items.

To test these hypotheses and provide concrete answers, the present research adopts a triangulation research methodology, which involves collecting data from different sources via different research tools to achieve understanding and accurate validity and credibility of the results. The procedures used to explore this research comprise three different methods that are an interview, a questionnaire, and a reading comprehension test.

The study is intended to investigate the reading assessment process in the Algerian secondary schools precisely in Sidi Bel Abbes where the respondents are teachers from different secondary schools and pupils from Zeddour Ibrahim School. They teach English within the issue of "the Competency-Based Approach which is a process of apprenticeship involving a transfer of skills from a coach/ teacher to the trainee/ learner" the syllabus (2005). The approach stresses the importance of the section **Read and Consider**. "We have paid particular attention to the development of the reading skill, one of the most demanding achievements not only for this final year of English study at school but also for further studies at university" the syllabus(2007). However, the assessment of reading is almost missing in the syllabus that is why the

researcher holds the challenge to investigate this area in an attempt to arrange some extent implications for improving learners' reading skills within the assessment process.

This research study is divided into five interrelated chapters. The first one is devoted to a literature review, which includes two parts. The first part describes the process of classroom assessment and its relation to measuring learners' progress along the teaching-learning process. It puts forward some theoretical issues such as definitions, objectives, and types of classroom assessment approved by EFL practitioners. Whereas, the second part entails a theoretical description of the reading skill. This includes the definition of reading, classification of reading strategies, the different models of reading namely the bottom-up, the top-down, and the interactive models. It also stresses the purpose and the importance of teaching reading.

The second chapter attempts to present an overview of the conditions that affect the third-year pupils' reading behavior. For this purpose, it deals with the status of English teaching in Algerian secondary schools and the main objectives stated by the Algerian ministry of education as well as it introduces the different teaching approaches that undertake the teaching of English in Algeria. More precisely,

It also presents a full description of the textbook used to teach English in particular reading skills to third-year secondary school pupils, the teaching methods, and the practices and activities used in reading. This chapter ends by stating some important observations on the teaching of writing skills.

It illustrates the general background and objectives of the ELT situation in the Algerian Secondary Schools. It reveals methods, procedures, practices, and activities used to teach reading for third-year classes as well as provides a presentation of the assessment procedures used to measure the skill.

The third chapter is the empirical phase, which provides an exhaustive account of the research methodology used in the study. It describes participants, tools, and instruments adopted to collect the necessary information for this exploration. Regarding the research method, the mixed-method approach was adopted and data were collected through a reading comprehension test and a questionnaire that have been addressed

tolearners and structured interviews for teachers in secondary schools. Holding interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind participants' experiences. It allows the researcher to compare and contrast different answers given to the same questions and depict multiple views from interviewees.

As far as the fourth chapter is concerned, it includes data analysis, which is the process of inspecting, rearranging, and summarizing views and perspectives to extract useful information. More precisely, it interprets and analyzes data and findings collected from the interview with EFL teachers, the questionnaire, and the reading comprehension test, which were conducted with secondary schools pupils.

We examine the tests to describe learners' degree of achievement in reading. However, the information provided by the questionnaires and the interview is analyzed to provide an overall view about the reading teaching/learning situation. After the analysis of the data attained from the various instruments, the results are interpreted through qualitative and quantitative analyses of the collected information. Finally, the main research results are discussed by referring to the findings and explaining the amount of confirmation of the collected data.

At least, the fifth chapter suggests some recommendations concerning teaching and assessing reading comprehension. This area is reserved for implying a range of techniques and practical tasks to be implemented in EFL classes to improve the quality of teaching reading within the assessment process. It also enables teachers to measure their learners' shortcomings and providing them with adequate adjustment to support their learning, overcome their difficulties, and assure their success not only in reading but also in all aspects of educational life as reading and assessment proved vital components of any educational programme.

***Chapter One***  
***Theoretical Issues of***  
***Assessment and Reading***

**Chapter One: Theoretical Issues of Assessment and Reading**

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## **1.1 Introduction**

English Language Learning has been overloaded with so many techniques of assessment intended to diagnose and measure learning outcomes, or to make judgments about the learning process. After receiving this information, teachers can reflect on how well each pupil has performed and decide on the level of achievement of the whole group so that to customize their teaching plans.

This chapter seeks to provide a clear picture of classroom assessment and highlight the importance of assessment with reading comprehension for third-year secondary school pupils in Sidi Bel Abbes. Thus, an attempt to define the term assessment will be given, the objective of using classroom assessment will be highlighted and the different forms of assessment will be illustrated through a careful description for each.

More significantly, the chapter will stress the importance of assessment as a central ingredient to teaching and learning in general and more specifically to reading. Hence, it reveals strong and weak points of learners' high and low achievements. It is, then, a direct indicator that enables teachers to collect authentic facts about their learners' deficiencies, so that to provide immediate and practical solutions.

In this sense, classroom assessment is the process of gathering evidence of students' knowledge, understanding, and ability to do tasks. Moreover, it can help teachers to identify students' needs. This criterion does not only reveal the expected outcomes of the learning process, but it facilitates teachers to make judgments about student performance. It enhances them to think about the urgent ways to better implement techniques and strategies to develop learners' motivation and show eager progress towards learning.

Accordingly, skillful teachers will consider classroom instructions and act in response to their learners' achievements through personal reflections on the teaching process by formulating

1. several objectives such as:

2. involving learners in the course.
3. helping them reacting to the given instruction positively
4. . demonstrating real progress in their learning.
5. making classroom assessment improve students' learning

In short, teachers make explicit decisions to address areas of confusion.

Implementing classroom assessment entails gathering and interpreting evidence about students' knowledge, .developing logical instruction, and making practical feedback. These fundamental components put teachers at the central position of assessment as they enable them to recognize their learners' achievements, progress, and competence in the process of learning. In brief, the assessment allows teachers not only to hear students as they intend to be heard, but it helps them to establish and design effective procedures, strategies, and techniques based on their learners' needs and interests.

## 1.2 Definitions of Assessment

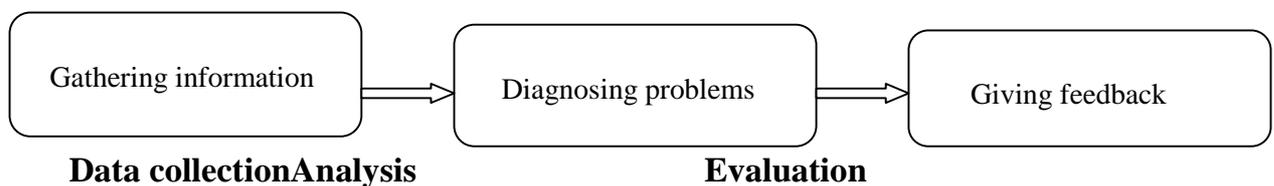
Assessment is a continuous process aimed at describing and measuring learners' understandings, perceptions of knowledge, learning abilities, and individual skills. More precisely, it is a classroom task used to support learning by gathering data and giving feedback (**Black and William 1998**). It is also defined by the same researchers as broadly including all activities that teachers and learners undertake to get information that can be used diagnostically to alter teaching and learning. In other words, the assessment process investigates students' management towards learning, the amount of achieving knowledge, and the rate of responding to classroom instruction. **According to McMunn (2000, p.6)**

*“Assessment is an ongoing process through which teachers and learners interact to promote greater learning. The assessment process involves using a range of strategies to make decisions regarding instruction and gathering information about learner performance or behaviour to diagnose learner problems monitor their*

*progress, give feedback for improvement. The classroom assessment process also involves using multiple methods of obtaining learner information through a variety of assessment strategies such as written test, interviews, observation and performance tasks”.*

**McMunn (2000:6)**

Having considered the above definition, assessment can be represented through the following process:



**Figure 1.1: Definition of assessment**

In general, assessment is about perceiving how learners receive knowledge and are involved in the process of learning so that to make the right decision in drawing goals, designing courses, and giving feedback. Similarly, it is defined by Palomba and Banta as follows:

*“Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken to improve learning and development”.*

**Palomba and Banta, 1999: 4**

Assessment is the basic ground on which effective teaching and learning are based. It is a practical key that unlocks complexity and sheds light on classroom difficulties that inhibit learners from progressing. Thus, assessment empowers the quality of education in general and strives for excellent teaching and practical learning. Additionally, according to the **(North-South Wales [NSW]-Department of Education, 2007)**, the central purpose of assessment is to offer information about

learners' performance and progress and to establish realistic goals for ongoing teaching.

More precisely, assessment involves three important components which are graded as follow:

- a. gathering data about learners
- b. interpreting evidence
- c. improving instruction

They are the criteria through which teachers make the learning outcomes more successful as well as adjusting the process of teaching. Thus, assessment is used in the sense of judging the extent of learners' development.

Generally speaking, assessment is regarded as a process by which information is obtained relative to some known objective goal. It is a process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using, and communicating information about a learner's progress and achievement during the development of knowledge, concepts, skills, and attitudes **Kizlick (2009)**. From this definition, one can conclude that assessment typically relies on obtaining and analyzing information about learners and giving feedback. It is, also, defined by Carr and Harris as follows: "*Assessment is an integral part of instruction...effective classroom assessment is relevant to immediate learning.*" (**Carr and Harris, 2001:35**)

Certainly, assessment is directly related to instruction and learning because it improves the quality of teaching and scores opportunities for learners' achievements. In the area of assessment, different procedures and methods should be adopted to guarantee that learners surely demonstrate what they possess and what they still need to obtain. This can be done by setting suitable principles for learning quality. More precisely by gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to find out how well instruction meets learners' requirements and; thus, using the appropriate tasks and activities to adjust and regulate the teaching process.

A more distinctive and explicit definition of assessment is provided by Douglass Brown when he declares that assessment entails any judgment vis-a-vis the students' performance, be it little or much. Such assessment can be carried out by the teacher or the student in case of self or peer assessment. Even more, Brown affirms that assessment always goes hand in hand with teaching, as they are firmly interrelated and constitute a central unity in the class. Briefly speaking, assessment is the gathering of information about students' ability to perform learning tasks (**Brown, 2003: 4**).

### **1.3 Benefits of Assessment**

Assessment is regarded as an integral part of the learning process and an essential issue in the trend of pedagogy. It is a collaborative effort, it is something "done to students" rather than something "done with students" in which they acquire significant information about their learning.

Teachers surely develop an extensive range of tasks and activities for the purpose to measure what learners possess and can do. Indeed, it is quite apparent that assessment is not only a process of synthesizing and evaluating learners' performance through grading, but it is a deep matter that involves a set of techniques, procedures, and strategies that give teachers logical opportunities to formulate judgments about learners' abilities.

Furthermore, involving students in the assessment process would certainly result in many different positive points among which the following ones:

- When students are actively involved they can participate in selecting evidence (for example, samples of their work) that best demonstrate the intended learning outcomes.
- The process of assessment develops students' understanding of the desired outcomes and success criteria.
- Making judgments is closely linked to developing the skills of self and peer assessment.

- This can lead to shared expectations of learning and understandings of standards between teachers and students.
- Students develop greater confidence in teacher judgments.
- Greater transparency of the assessment process is provided for students.

Nonetheless, teachers should adapt the assessment procedures according to everyday instructional needs so that to make learners easily involved in the assessment process. This fact allows teachers to make a direct judgment about the mastery of particular skills. In this sense, assessment is an outstanding means that enables teachers to get immediate and objective feedback about learners' development in the process of learning.

In addition, assessment is regarded as an essential tool that helps teachers to diagnose not only learners' ability in getting knowledge, their achievements, and their progression, but also it provides them with the effect of the teaching process that learners are engaged in. This permits teachers to get reliable data about their movement in handling teaching. Thus, teachers would be able to adjust instructions, regulate teaching, make correct decisions and introduce appropriate innovations.

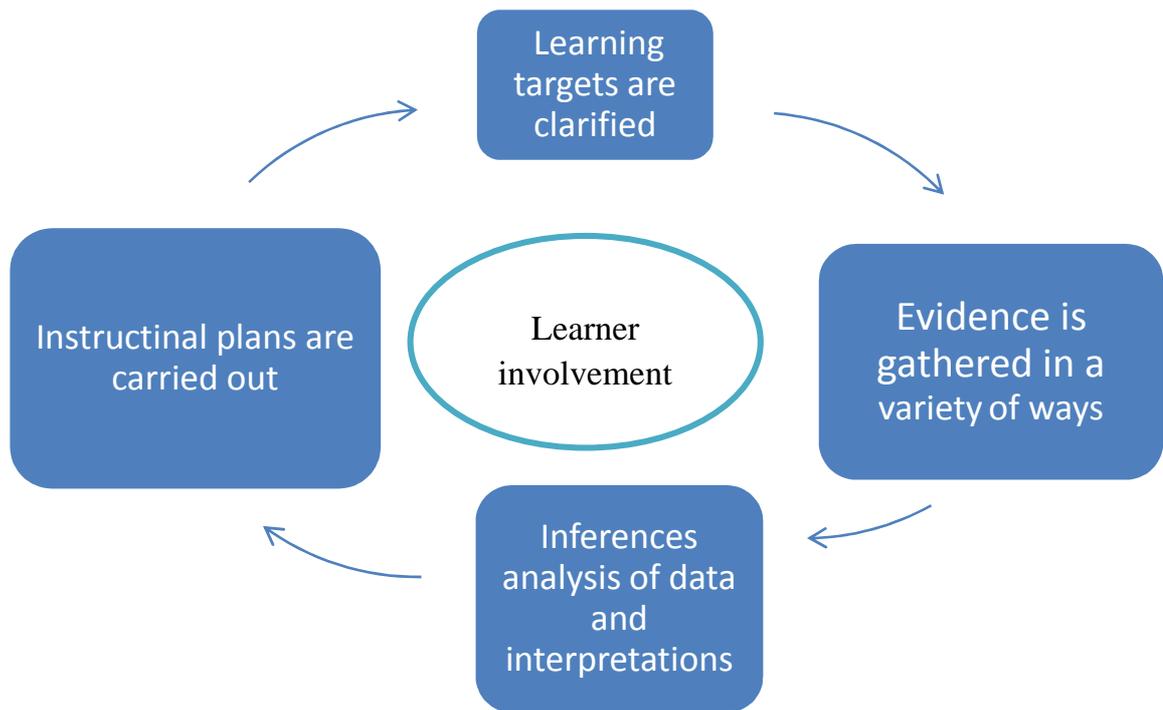
In short, assessment is an evident stimulus factor in learning. It empowers learners' motivation, increases self-confidence, promotes self-esteem, and reduces anxiety. More precisely, it rebuilds the missing points so that to develop skills of evaluation. Even though teachers would be able to identify their learners' strengths and weaknesses, spot their needs and measure their progress. The assessment then is an outstanding process in education that needs careful attention since it is a pedagogical aid to fulfill success and achievement for both teachers and students.

#### **1.4 Perspectives of Classroom Assessment**

Classroom assessment is an ongoing process in teaching whose goal is empowering and improving students' learning. Thus, the more we know about students and their experiences during the learning process, the better we can meet learning needs and establish a positive learning environment. so, classroom assessment

is an integral part of teaching that teachers should not do without it. It enhances teaching, measures learners' progress, and informs teachers about the missing points which they will review later through constructive instructions.

In an attempt to achieve a convincing definition, the following figure which is suggested by (McMunn, 2011) will support the explanation.



**Figure 1.2: Classroom Assessment Cycle( McMunn: 2011)**

According to McMunn (2011), the cycle outlines an operational plan on which teachers can base their assessment procedure, and it clarifies a logical process through which assessment can be better undertaken. The classroom assessment cycle is illustrated through the following explanations:

### 1.4.1 Learning Target

Learning targets are short-term goals that should be clearly stated from the beginning to know what students be able to do at the end of the lessons. More precisely, learning targets offer a precise account of the learning objective. They tell students what they will learn, how deeply they will be involved in the learning process. Indeed, they include a performance of understanding, or learning experience,

that provides evidence to answer the question “What do students understand and what are they able to do?”

For (**Wiggins & McTighe, 2000**), the first step of the whole assessment for the learning process is the establishment of learner learning goals, the ultimate factor that should learners set up beforehand to increase motivation and appraise learning.

Keeping in mind the learning targets, Teachers need to outline the goals and identify successful landmarks of their lessons, know how well all students in their class are progressing, and know where to go next. In particular, Learning targets ensure that students know what they are supposed to learn during the lesson, they can build skillfulness in their ability to assess themselves and be reflective, they take control of their learning and monitor their progress, and they know the essential information to be learned.

Learning targets are also helpful for teachers. They enable them to plan, monitor, and assess students’ learning easily as they allow them to make instructional decisions that will help all students reach mastery. When teachers are clear on their learning targets and criteria for success, they become more focused and likely to eliminate the instruction that has no relevance.

Having identified learning targets, students recognize what they are supposed to learn and can restrict their understanding of specific information; without a clear learning target, learners risk being lost and their learning is automatically disturbed. Indeed, learning targets raise the ability of self-assessment and self-reflection. Learners can constantly monitor and guide their learning by making changes when necessary. They become able to choose relevant learning strategies and adopt the essential information to be learned so that to achieve success and mastery.

All in all, learning targets are indispensable for both teachers and learners. On one hand, they help teachers to outline the skeleton of their lessons, monitor and assess students’ learning to develop practical instructional decisions that satisfy students’ requirements to reach mastery. On the other hand, learners become aware of the

learning instruction and more focused on the important knowledge to be grasped. Therefore, they will eliminate any irrelevant fact that impedes their understanding.

### **1.4.2 Gathering Evidence**

To prove that learning has taken place, we look at products and performances that learners build and this entails direct evidence of learning. Hence, effective outcomes assessment efforts rely on gathering evidence which includes the collection of truthful data of learning. In this case, Teachers use a multiple and diverse assessment to produce a fuller and clearer view of how well learners meet the learning targets(McMunn, 2011).

Regarding evidence of learning, it is collected within the context of learners' performance relative to curriculum outcomes. Any external factors such as discipline, tardiness, or unfinished assignments are excluded. Teachers need several pieces of evidence derived from different assessment strategies to demonstrate the efficiency of learning. It is in fact, their responsibility to gather and report evidence about curriculum outcomes. It is indeed evident to include appropriate knowledge and skill outcomes when designing assessments. The collected evidence must be based on the learning goals that teachers have articulated.

There are two kinds of evidence teachers can collect: direct and indirect.

*Direct methods* offer concrete evidence of whether a student has command of a specific subject in the content area, or can perform a certain task, exhibit a particular skill, demonstrate a certain quality in his or her work, or hold a particular value.. They can also include students' attendance, retention and engagement data which are also known as quantitative evidence.

Other measures are commonly used in the direct method to provide evidence of students learning are exams and quizzes, research projects, class participation, and grades related to learning goals.

*Indirect methods* simply qualitative evidence which reveals characteristics about learning, whether it has occurred or not. These characteristics include learners' self-appraisal, their perceptions of their abilities, attitudes, and potential achievements. Criteria of the indirect method may comprise course evaluations, concepts and skills covered in tests, percent of class time spent in active learning, number of students' hours spent on classwork, and course-related activities.

Considering qualitative evidence, teachers are allowed to make formal and informal observations that entail peer interactions, behavior, engagements, student-teacher relationships, learning styles, and classroom dynamics. Additionally, a structured interaction is another kind of qualitative evidence. It consists of records from student interviews, parent interviews, and staff conferences on students.

Schools and teachers cannot do without gathering learners' evidence to prove the efficacy of learning. So, it is necessary to take it into account to determine whether students have achieved learning goals that were designed by teachers.

### **1.4.3 Inference, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data**

Data need to be analyzed to learn whether or not the criteria on the student learning outcomes were met and to give meaning to the information that has been collected to conclude. Therefore, analyzing data includes determining how to organize, synthesize, interrelate, compare, and present the assessment results. It is then, a means of evaluating student performance throughout the curriculum, and it also provides information about program strengths and weaknesses so that to make decisions.

Having collected information about students, teachers call for their pedagogical tools to analyze and interpret the available data so that to find out the amount of learning their learners achieve and to look for ways to reach desirable goals towards progress. This can be maintained by (McMunn, 2011) when he argues *“that teachers determine what assessment result means and what they say about how learners are learning and how learning might be improved.”*

#### 1.4.4 Instructional Plans and Modifications

Having evaluated and considered the accessible data, teachers design new or modify instructional plans for the reason to satisfy learners' needs. **Shute (2008:154)**, supported the idea when he claimsthat:“**Formative, or descriptive feedback is information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify his or her thinking or behaviour to improve learning.**”

Teachers will probably find that students with deficit results tend to benefit from some type of instructional modification. It helps learners with a low income in their learning to achieve success afterrehabilitation. When a modification is used, teachers need to take into consideration learners’ language abilities, lesson presentation, the physical arrangement of the classroom, and work assignments.

Briefly speaking, assessment involves the process of evaluating, marking, and grading learners' performance. It is viewed as a process of gathering, analyzing, and interpreting information to make decisions on students' performance. In class, assessment can be conducted to diagnose students' problems, to judge their academic performance, to provide feedback to students, and to plan instruction (**Airasian1994**).

In short, assessment is described as being diagnostic, formative, and summative. These essential criteria are adopted to adjust learningand determine the right way toprogress

#### 1.5. Types of Assessments

There are various sorts of assessments that are suggested at different levelsto meet different objectives. They can be illustrated as follow:

##### 1.5.1. Diagnostic Assessment

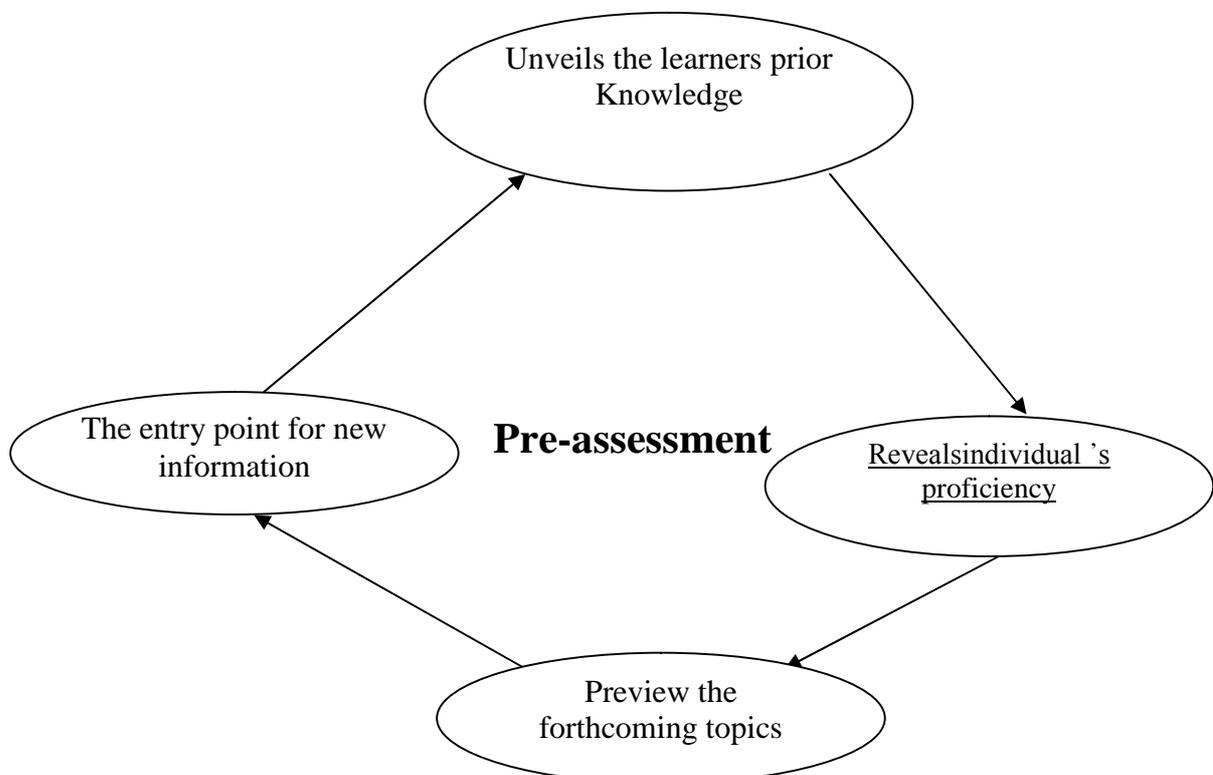
The diagnostic assessment generally takes place at the very beginning of a term or a unit of study. It is the procedure through which teachers diagnose learners' strengths and weaknesses. In this sense,(**Swearing,2002**)said“*the purposeof diagnostic assessment is to ascertain, prior the instruction, each learner’s strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills.*”Indeed, it helps teachers to adapt instructions and tasks according to their learners ‘abilities. For this, Jean Jacques Rousseau, in the

following statement, assures the introduction of pre-instruction assessment activities: **“Teachers, make it your first task to know your students better, for you surely do not know them.”(Jean Jacques in Ellis, 2001: 67).**

Undoubtedly, teachers adopt this kind of assessment to demonstrate learners’ abilities towards particular information or a programme in general. Thus, it makes teachers aware not only of the learners' needs and requirements, but also to find out the target difficulties that inhibit learning to plan suitable instructions and effective procedures to review the missing points that learners encounter in their learning process.

The aim of diagnostic assessment then is to determine learners’ needs and to review the basic rules in more complex and challenging activities in order not to demotivate them with the information they have already acquired in previous situations(*Chapman and King 2005*).

A well-planned pre-assessment task provides the teacher with necessary information about each learner competence:



**Figure 1.3: Importance of Diagnostic Assessment**  
(Adapted from Chapman and King 2005, p 64)

The circle outlines the importance of the pre-assessment process which reveals the area of strengths and weaknesses within each learner

All in all, diagnostic Assessment is a pedagogical strategy that involves making judgments about learners 'performance vis-a-vis a prearranged set of criteria. It bridges the gap between the current educational level and the desired goals as well as it easily paves the way to a continuous formative assessment.

### **1.5.2. Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment involves assessment for student learning. It is, in fact, a permanent, interactive, and dynamic process through which teachers measure their learners' progress. It is used constantly during the learning process. Its purpose is to inform the teacher and the students how well the learning is going" (Reeves, 2011, p.106). Hence; teachers and students are engaged in formative assessment practices continuously throughout the learning process. It is based on numerous strategies to satisfy learners' requirements to meet their needs.

The distinctive feature of formative assessment is that both teachers and students use the data it generates to shape further instruction and learning (Reeves, 2011, p.106). This implies that it tries to find out how learners are progressing and where they are having difficulties. Additionally, it enables teachers to make the necessary instructional adjustment to present more opportunities to practice. Examples of formative assessment practices include observations, questioning strategies, self and peer assessments, student record keeping, and goal setting.

Certainly, educators use formative assessment for several purposes specifically to:

- Refocus students on the learning process and its intrinsic value, rather than on grades or extrinsic rewards.
- Encourage students to build on their strengths rather than fixate or dwell on their deficits.

- Help students become more aware of their learning needs, strengths, and interests so they can take greater responsibility for their educational growth. For example, students may learn how to self-assess their progress and self-regulate their behaviors.
- Give students more detailed, precise, and useful information. Because grades and test scores only provide a general impression of academic achievement, usually after an instructional period, formative feedback can help to clarify and calibrate learning expectations for both students and parents. Students gain a clearer understanding of what is expected of them, and parents have more detailed information they can use to more effectively support their child's education.
- Raise or accelerate the educational achievement of all students, while also reducing learning gaps and achievement gaps. Adapted from **the Glossary of Education Reform July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

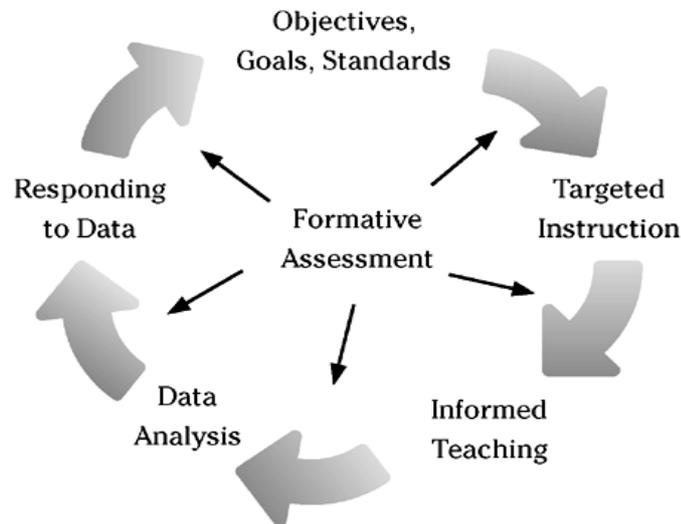
This means that formative assessment is a process that necessitates proficient teachers who can better extract and interpret information for the interest of their learners to enhance both teaching and learning strategies. It is introduced continuously and at any time. A good assessment helps the teacher to ensure a permanent improvement of students' learning (information provided by feedback), and to adjust his teaching strategy to satisfy learners' requirements and make them more effective and self-directed (**Black and William 2001**).

Formative assessment is firmly intended for the student. It does not emphasize how teachers give out information but, rather, how students receive that information, how well they comprehend it, and how they can apply it. Formative assessment, allows teachers to gather information about their students' progress and learning needs and use this information to make instructional regulations. Briefly speaking, formative assessment helps teachers

- Informed teachers about their learners
- They collect and analyze data
- Learners respond to data through a given feedback

- Teachers set objectives and goals to adjust teaching
- Provide appropriate instructional activities

It is through those principles that assessment becomes formative. The following figure demonstrates the broad sense of formative assessment principles.



**Figure 1.4** *The Cycle of Instruction with Formative Assessment*  
(Black & Wiliam, 1998)

Formal assessment as the word implies is a technique used to collect data about learners' achievement during the instructional period. These include exams; diagnostic tests, achievement tests, screening, and intelligence tests. They also have a formal method of grading as well as interpretation thereby allowing teachers to assess the performance or the level of skill of a student using these formal methods of assessment. Indeed, it allows teachers to identify problem areas and to know how much learners have learned during the course or the academic year.

On the other hand, informal assessment is a way of collecting information about learners' performance under ordinary classroom conditions. It can judge and evaluate students' performance and skill levels without making use of standardized tests and scoring patterns.

In short, formative assessment is a shared process between the assessor who is the teacher and the learner who is submitted to a regular measurement by making a direct judgment about the learning task.

### 1.5.3. Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is notably the most frequent system of assessing students' learning outcomes through examinations which take place generally at the end of an educational process. It is a graded test through which the teacher can evaluate students' abilities. In other words, summative assessment is making a judgment about students' competency/proficiency after an instructional unit (or part of an instructional unit) has been completed, more precisely at the end of a specific term of learning. It is, mainly, used to find out the degree to which students have achieved specific learning goals/performance indicators (e.g., completely, partially, minimally, not at all) and to reveal the missing areas that need extra attention in the future. As the purpose is to measure the level of learning after provided instructional opportunities, the results should be used in grading students. **Black et. al, (2003:2)** defines summative assessment as involving:

*Frequent tests, isolated from learning, carried out on special occasions with formal rituals and often conducted by methods over which individual teachers have little or no control*

*Black et. al, (2003:2)*

Furthermore, summative assessment should be planned so that to allow learners to prepare themselves and to be ready for the task. Thus, it should be based on specific criteria which involve validity, reliability, and fitness; that is it should meet what learners have received during the course to assess them fairly and accurately. In this sense, teachers should develop a wide range of assessment strategies that match all aspects of their instructional plans for the purpose to meet course and programme objectives as well as satisfying learners' requirements.

Briefly put summative assessment measures if and how students are learning and if the teaching methods are effective. More importantly, it is used to determine learning progress and achievement, evaluate the efficiency of educational programs, measure progress toward desirable goals.

#### 1.5.4 Self Assessment

Self-assessment is another kind of assessment that enables teachers to get fair information about their learners in terms of expectations, needs, difficulties, and deficiencies. Moreover, it makes learners aware of their progress, their achievements, and the procedures they adopt in doing so. Thus, self-assessment is an outstanding means that lead to autonomous learning as it makes learners involved in self-directed learning allowing them to establish their goals and direct their learning.

In this respect, self-assessment fosters learner autonomy in the sense that it increases responsibility which is a key issue for independent learning, this can be supported by Holec (1981) (*as cited in Little, 1991; p. 7*) autonomy is "*the ability to take charge of one's learning*". Additionally, self-assessment enables students to have a thorough understanding of the subject matter, skills, and procedures. Accordingly, the status of students turns from passive consumers into active participants in the process of learning; the fact which permits them to be self-assessors who can develop their understanding, judgement, and a deeper approach to learning.

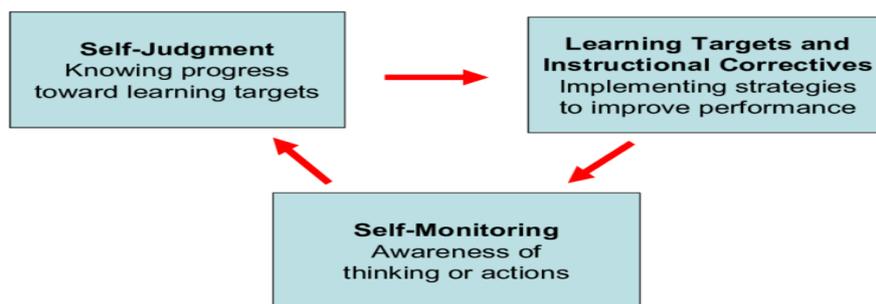
More significantly, self-assessment develops the process of reflective thinking as a reflection in education is considered an important key for successful learning. A clear definition is provided by **Andrade and Du (2007)** which regards self-assessment:

*as a process during which students reflect on and evaluate the quality of their work and their learning, judge the degree to which they reflect explicitly stated goals or criteria, identify strengths and weaknesses in their work, and revise accordingly.*

*Andrade and Du (2007, p.160)*

Hence, the self-assessment allows learners not only to reflect on their work and judge how well they have performed in acquiring knowledge but also to give them opportunities to identify areas of misunderstanding and hindrances that inhibit their

well-doing. Therefore, students can use this knowledge to enhance their future work in the trend of learning as they can multiply their efforts to satisfy their needs and remove ambiguity from areas of misconception. **McMillan and Hearn (2008)** conceptualized self-assessment as a cycle of three components closely related to each other: self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and identification and implementation of required remedies and corrections (Figure 1.5). In this context, students are required to evaluate their learning and performance outcomes, construct their feedback based on well-defined standards.



*Figure 1.5: Student Self- Assessment Cycle*

*(McMillan and Hearn 2008, p 41)*

All in all, self-assessment provides learners a chance to be lifelong learners directing their learning effectively.

### **1.5.5 Peer Assessment**

Peer assessment essentially involves students providing feedback to other students on the quality of their work. Thus, they make a judgement about their peers through observing, monitoring, and measuring their performance. This fact is supported by **(Falchikov,2007,p.132)**when he said:

*Peer assessment requires students to provide either feedback or grades (or both) to their peers on a product or a performance, based on the criteria of excellence for that product or event in which students may have been involved in determining*

*(Falchikov, 2007, p.132).*

Like self-assessment, peer assessment values autonomous learning that leads to collaborative work since it offers students the opportunity to watch each other without the interference of their teachers. Therefore, it enables learners to be self-reliant by analyzing and monitoring their learning as well as developing their competence concerning a particular skill. In this respect, both self and peer assessment involve students in their destiny, encourage autonomy, and increase motivation.

More importantly, peer assessment is a significant pedagogical tool that encourages learners to rely on themselves and assume more responsibility for their learning. This allows them to adopt different strategies to learn from each other, the exclusive quality which enhances collaborative work in identifying their needs and meeting their requirements.

Additionally, students engaged in such assessment quickly develop critical thinking along with a reflective mind that is considered the major ingredients for successful learning as they make learners active participants rather than passive consumers waiting to be spoon-fed by their tutors.

To sum up, the key point of peer assessment is that it helps learners to learn more deeply through constructing their understanding, developing their progress, and adjusting their learning towards a particular skill. Thereby, it encourages autonomy, maturity, and collaboration among peers, whose goals are the development of judgement skills, critiquing abilities, and self-awareness.

### **1.6. The Framework of Assessment**

Assessment is the process that underlies a set of collected data about students' achievements to identify their strengths and weaknesses. The criterion involves a deep understanding of what students can achieve and what cannot get in the area of knowledge acquisition. Thus, the assessment process consists of a wide arrange of procedures, tasks, and techniques to be fulfilled effectively. Its primary goal then is to obtain valid and reliable information which teachers rely on to make the correct decisions so that to improve subsequent learning.

In general, assessment support teaching on one hand, fosters and encourages learning on the other. It typically promotes personal growth as it is an ongoing and integral part of the teaching/learning process. Nonetheless, it is an endless cycle that involves data collection, interpretation of those data, manipulating information, and applying remedial components to teaching.

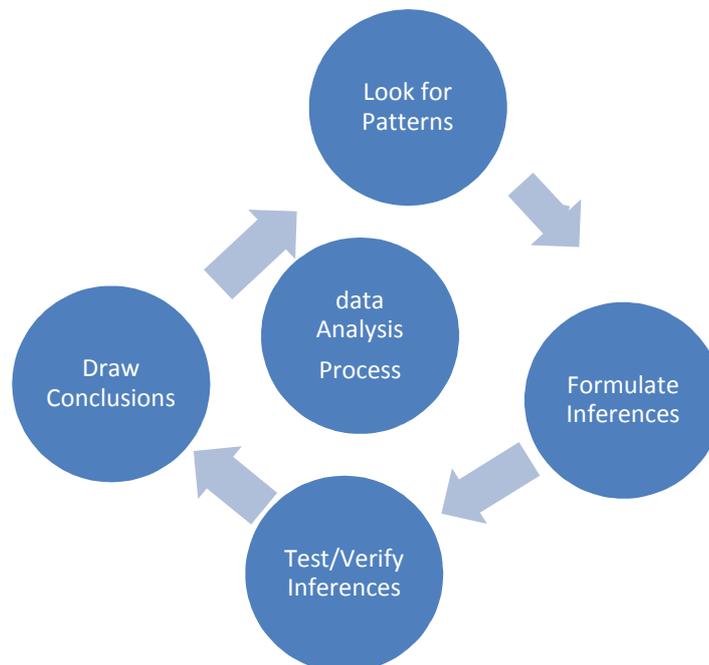
Teaching, however, is an active task that cannot be managed successfully without careful planning and integrated assessment of the given instruction. They constitute the major ingredients of the educational system as they help teachers to attain instructional goals and meet their learners' needs. The educational assessment then looks for improving learners' ability through multiple measures on multiple occasions. According to **Glaser (1990)**:

*Assessment must be used to support learning rather than just to indicate current and past achievements. Assessments must focus on the learners' ability to use knowledge and skills learned. It is therefore important to interrogate the rationale of assessment.*

*Glaser (1990)*

The most significant fact about assessment is that it relies on the teachers' skill to diagnose data and use the outcomes to plan future instructions and take corrective decisions.

The following cycle demonstrates quite clearly the process of data analyses:



**Figure 1.6:** Data Analyses Process (Susan and Nancy, 2005: 54)

The above figure provides a thorough description of the process of data analysis that helps teachers to figure out the amount of students' learning. More precisely, after having collected data, teachers make inferences and test them accordingly so that to

arrive at the expected conclusions that help them to identify learners' capacities which in turn enable teachers to take corrective decisions.

Successful learning takes place when there is a logical correlation between instruction, assessment, and outcomes. Teachers cannot succeed if they do not incorporate these components in the teaching process otherwise they will never achieve the desired goals. Additionally, When assessing learners, teachers should adopt different strategies and tools such as observation, portfolios, and communication in class. Authenticity, feedback opportunities, validity, fairness, efficiency, feasibility, and using multiple methods are important characteristics of assessment (MCCMillan, 2000).

It is argued that for effective learning to occur, logical correlations should exist between instruction, assessment, and outcomes. As a result, congruency between the three elements should be well established and envisaged. When assessing learners, teachers should use different strategies and tools such as observation, portfolios, and communication in class. Likewise,authenticity, feedback opportunities, validity, fairness, efficiency, feasibility, and using multiple methods are important characteristics of assessment (MCCMillan, 2000).

### **1.6.1. Assessment and Teaching**

Assessment is a pedagogical instrument that supports teaching. It helps teachers to make judgments and take corrective decisions about the instruction they use in class.

Learner accomplishment and higher expectations are the ultimate objectives of all educational activities. So, it is the task of the teacher to develop himself professionally about learners' assessment which can be used as a tool to measure the teaching approaches and methods. One major fact in making assessments more appropriate is to develop techniques that help learners to acquire knowledge effectively. Among them are explanation, paraphrasing, long answers, drawings, and other different performance tests which increase learners' expectations.

As far as assessment and teaching are concerned, it should be recognized that teaching to the test has a negative implication among many teachers. Thus, assessment tasks need to reflect what learners should be able to do in a particular skill, then instruction and curriculum are closely associated and the teaching to the test is correctly appropriate.

The assessment seeks to support and improve pupils' learning and it is often thought that the teacher should partake principles for assessment with the learners, and make the whole process clear and visible so that learners could be easily involved in the process. One of the major criteria of good assessment practice is that the principles are communicated to learners (Lorrie, 2000). This gives the possibility for the educators to manage better the teaching/ learning process and expect decisive and desirable learning outcomes.

### **1.6.2. Assessment and Learning**

Assessment reveals each student's performance in the learning process as it is the procedure of seeking and interpreting evidence to be used by both teachers and learners to decide how to tailor instruction to meet and fulfill the learning requirements (Black and William, 1998). Additionally, it supports and adjusts the learning by providing opportunities to gain and use information about learners' abilities.

Indeed, it comprises strategies and techniques which help learners and teachers decide about the effective decisions to take so that to accomplish and fulfill the objectives through formulating realistic concepts about the different criteria that are used in assessing the learning achievements.

As is closely related to learning as it allows learners to be aware of the "how" and the "what" of their learning. Hence, teachers need to make plans and try to find the techniques that urge learners to contribute to the process of assessment.

It is recognizable that assessment gives educators more than just data and information. It opens doors to strategic change and helps measure progress. It can lead EFL learners to increase their motivation and change their attitudes towards their

learning process, and they will have a clearer vision of what is expected from them. Consequently, assessment as a teaching tool is used to:

- Help students see their strengths and weaknesses, and thus, improve their progress
- Increase their motivation
- Foster a desire for learning
- Help them learn how to learn

The assessment then serves as a process of setting high expectations for student learning, measuring progress toward established learning outcomes, and providing a basis for reflection, discussion, and feedback. More importantly, this assessment helps gather, interpret and judge evidence about the learning outcomes (Earl, 2003).

In short, assessment in learning is considered a key professional skill for teachers who constantly gather and analyse evidence to give constructive feedback to learners and tailor the instruction according to their needs.

### **1.7 Definition of Reading Comprehension**

Reading is a fundamental skill that foreign language learners should master. It is a life-long process that gives access to other related skills. Without reading, one can neither develop an understanding of a specific topic nor express himself appropriately. Good reading provides opportunities to succeed both in studies and in life. Indeed, it helps readers become more knowledgeable about facts, current issues, will have well-developed minds and strong-built personalities.

Reading is a dynamic process in which the reader uses a set of abilities, connotations, and strategies to get involved in the text and obtain comprehension. It is regarded as a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols to construct a personal understanding. In this sense, Grabe and William described reading as:

*An active process of comprehending where students need to be taught strategies to read more efficiently ( e.g. guess from context, define expectations, make inferences about the text, skim ahead to fill in the context, etc ).*

*Grabe and William, 1991:377*

This means that reading is a dynamic process that requires students to be provided with some strategies and techniques to deduce meaning from the presented material. It is an interactive process in which the reader interacts dynamically with the text as he wishes to extract meaning and other kinds of information such as perception of ideas and words that he comes across with.

As far as comprehension is concerned, it is the direct objective of reading. It entails several thought processes that allow learners to make sense of the presented material. In reality, to understand a text, they have to read and decipher words, make connections between phrases and sentences, and call for their background knowledge which surely helps them to gain comprehension which “occurs when the reader extracts and integrates various information from the text and combines it with what is already known”(Koda, 2004, p. 4).

Goodman, in Carrell (1988), confirms that reading implies seeking meaning and information processing:

*Reading is a receptive language process. It is a psycholinguistics process, in that it starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning which the reader constructs. There is thus, an essential interaction between language and thought in reading. The writer encodes thought as language, and the reader decodes language to thought.*

*Goodman, in Carrell, 1988: 12*

From Goodman’s view, we conclude that there is a direct interaction between language and thought. The writer encodes language to thought and the act of decoding

entails interpreting the sounds carried out by letters from the part of the reader. **L.Vecca et .al.( 2000: 168-187)** shared the same opinion with Goodman in terms of letters and sounds. They argue that “*readers identify words by matching all the letters and sounds, in that, the reader links the sound sequence with the letter sequence*”. However, for **Alderson (2000)** “*to read means to process text meaning through some process of interaction with print*”. This definition has been already supported by Widdowson (1979) when he stated that reading is a sort of interaction between the reader and the text. In the same context, **Marinak; Moore; Henk; and Keepers (1997)** described reading as “*a dynamic process in which the reader interacts with the text to construct meaning. Inherent in constructing meaning is the reader’s ability to activate prior knowledge, use reading strategies and adapt to the reading situation*”.

According to this definition, reading is perceived as:

- a. A dynamic process
- b. It involves interaction between the reader and the text to derive meaning
- c. It activates prior knowledge to draw meaning
- d. Promoting individual reading strategies according to each situation

Reading then is an active process and a dynamic skill that requires the reader to apply his mental capacities to decode the language into comprehension and thus extract meaning. On the other hand, it is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension. It incites readers to use their background knowledge and adopt different reading strategies to establish what that meaning is.

## **1.8 The Reading Process**

Reading comprehension is the ability to construct meaning from a written text. Thus, it is quite important to know how this occurs at the level of readers’ brains while reading. Once the learner acquired the necessary structural and lexical knowledge of a

language, he calls for thought processes to achieve comprehension (**Alderson, 2000**). The materials constructing the text such as letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs constitute meaning and it is up to the reader to activate his prior knowledge, demonstrate his skills, and apply certain strategies to depict the so-called meaning. Meanwhile, important competencies are represented to predict the content of a specific text as follow (**Hedge, 2000**):

- a. Linguistic competence: involves knowledge of spelling, vocabulary, word formation, grammatical structure, sentence structure, and linguistic semantics.
- b. Discourse competence: involves knowledge of cohesion and coherence and how parts of a text are related to each other.
- c. Strategic competence: the knowledge that allows readers to use strategies to cope with any unexpected difficulty they may encounter in the text; that is applying the top-down and the bottom-up strategies.
- d. Sociolinguistic competence: the ability to classify the text in its appropriate social context and identify the socio-cultural dimensions that entail the text.

Studies have shown that readers who use these competencies are more likely to succeed in reading comprehension as they can develop other individual sub-strategies concerning a particular text and topic. Certainly, teachers need to be aware of what happens in the reading process about their learners' comprehension so that they can devise specific aims and general objectives for the reading lesson.

### **1.9 Models of Reading**

Reading models explain the mental negotiations that exist between the reader and the text to construct meaning. They refer to thought processes used by the reader to guess and predict the meaning of a printed script. **Davies( 1995)** defined the term model as “*a systematic set of guesses or predictions about a hidden process*”. Thus, the operation involves the level of perception of the text by the eyes with what

happens at the level of the brain during reading. As a result, it led researchers to bring three theoretical models that are well-recognized in the process of reading.

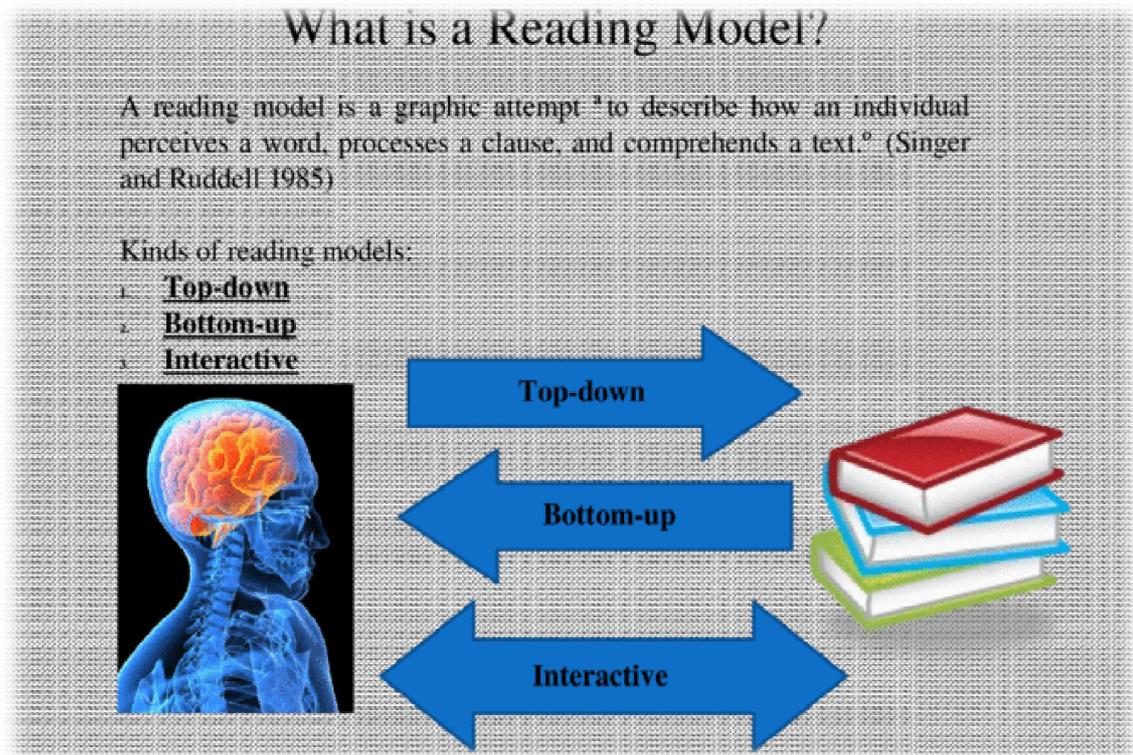


Figure 1.7: The Reading Model

### 1.9.1 The Bottom-up Model

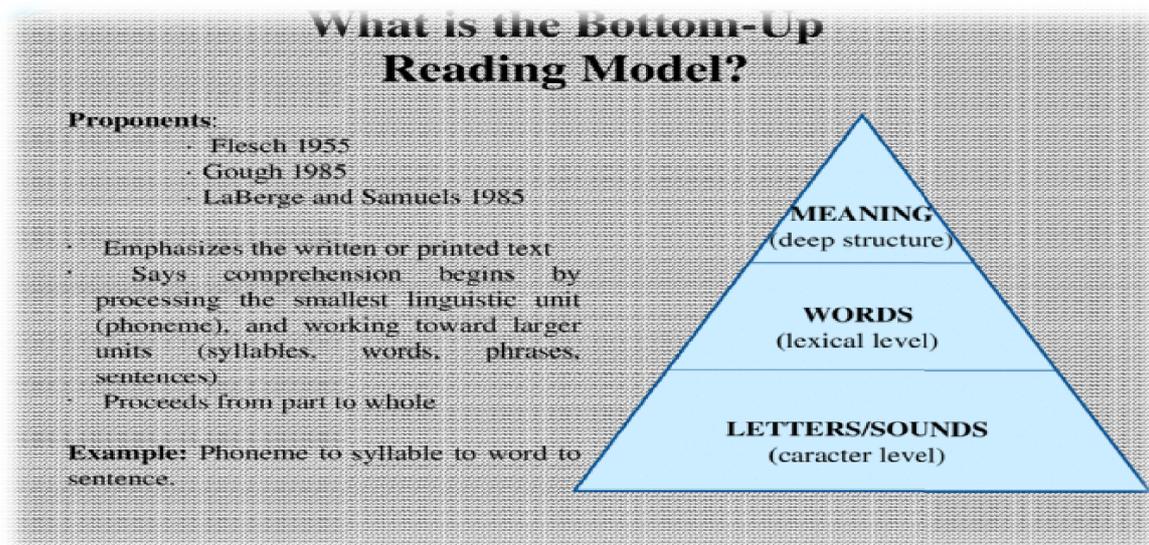
The model was suggested by **Gough (1972)**. It underlies the text recognition or bits of the text. For **Nuttall (1996: 17)** “*the reader builds up a meaning from the black marks on the page: recognizing letters and words, working out sentence structure*”. Readers use this model when they are confronted with a first reading, seeking comprehension without using background knowledge. They simply depend on contextual meaning since it is a text-driven.

More precisely, the bottom-up model is a mode of activating the process of reading that goes through different stages:

- ❖ Letters identified and sounded out
- ❖ Words recognized

- ❖ Words allocated to grammatical class and sentence structure
- ❖ Sentences give meaning
- ❖ Meaning leads to thinking

So the process goes from letters to sound, to words, to sentences, and finally to meaning and thinking.



*Figure 1.8: The Bottom-Up Reading Model*

### 1.9.2 The Top-down Model

It was firstly proposed by **Goodman (1967)**. The main aspect of this model is that “*the reader comes to the text with a previously formed plan, and perhaps, omits chunks of the text which seem to be irrelevant to the reader’s purpose*”(Urquhart and Weir: 42). Similarly, Nuttall’s (1996: 16) claim on top-down approach is:

*We draw on our intelligence and experience- the predictions we can make, based on the schemata we have acquired- to understand the text. ... We make conscious use of it when we try to see the overall purpose of the text, or get a rough idea of the pattern of the writer's argument, to make a reasoned guess at the next step.*

*( Nuttall’s 1996: 16)*

In this respect, the reader makes presence of his own experiences, plans and expectations to interpret the text lucidly and gain a purposeful understanding of the writer's intention, as to enable him to take a reasonable step forward.

Additionally, the top-down model involves thinking and meaning at an early phase. This includes the following criteria:

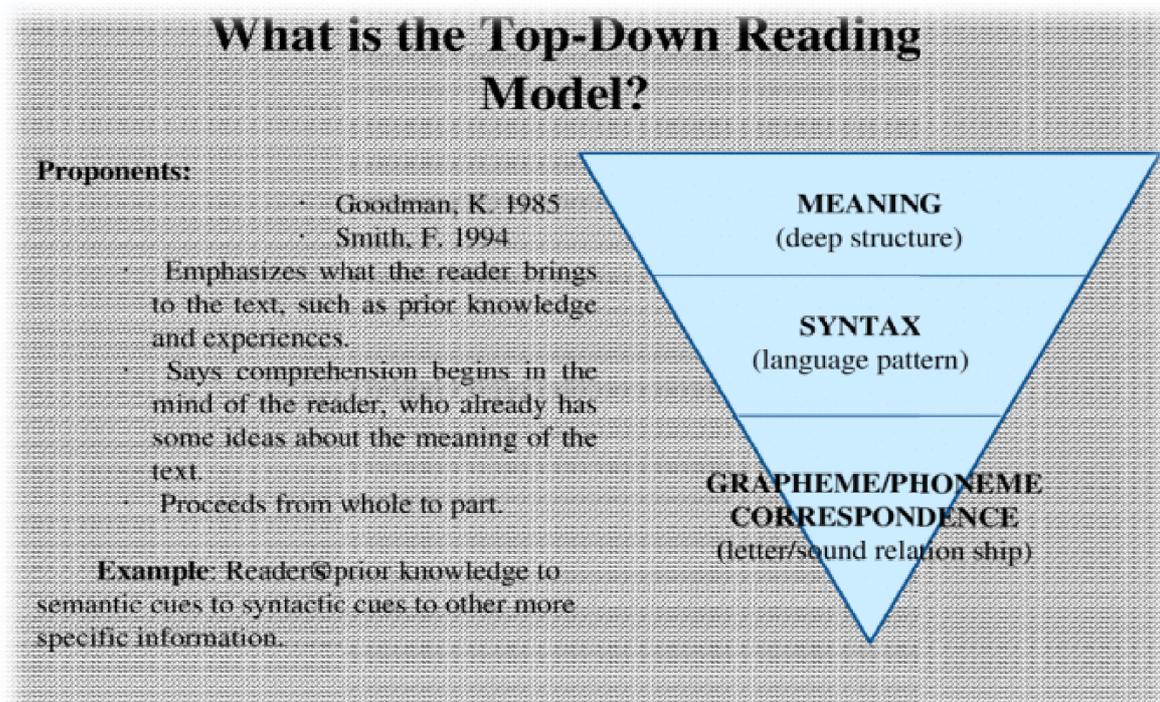
- Eyes look.
- Thinking/ predicting about meaning.
- Sample sentences as a whole to check meaning
- check further, look at words.
- If still uncertain, study letters.
- Back to meaning prediction. (**Davies, 1995: 58**)

This processing relies on a prediction about meaning through the utilization of many thought processes that occur at the level of the brain, the criterion which is supported by **Eskey** when he said "*what the brain tells the eyes is much more important than what the eye tells the brain.*"

Henceforth, there is an abrupt differentiation between these two models. While the bottom-up process is text-driven, the top-down process is reader-driven since meaning is drawn out by the reader. **Parry (1987)** has summarized this difference as follow:

*Some argue that reading is a "bottom-up" process: graphemes are perceived as forming words, words as forming sentences, and sentences as forming paragraphs and so on (Gough, 1972); others argue that the process is a "top-down" one: the reader starts with a general idea, or schema, of what should be in the text- this being derived from the previously acquired knowledge- and uses this scheme in perceiving and in interpreting graphic cues.*

**Goodman 1967**



*Figure 1.9: the Top-Down Reading Model*

### 1.9.3 The Interactive Model

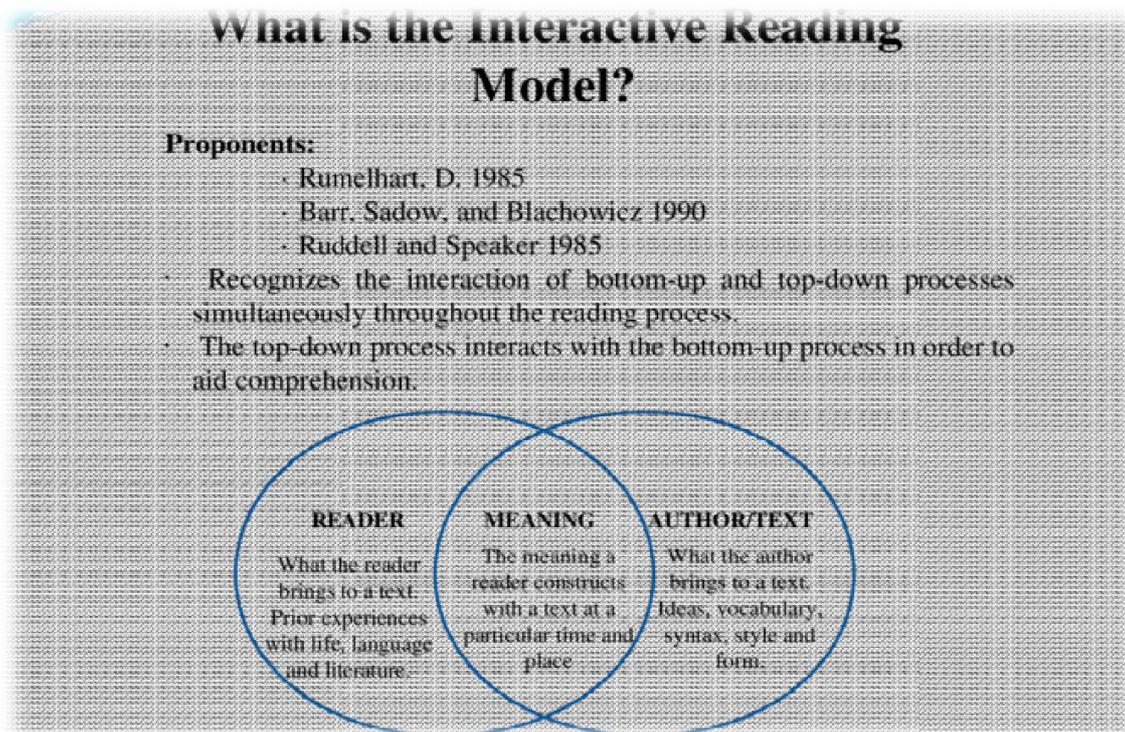
This model as its name implies is the interaction between bottom-up processing and top-down processing. Many experts explain that no effective reading could take place without the combination of the two models. Hence, a proficient reader switches from one model to another according to the situation he is involved in and the demand of the reading strategy he is using. **Nuttall (1996: 17)** comments,

*A reader continually shifts from one focus to another, now adopting a top-down approach to predict the probable meaning, then moving to the bottom-up approach to check whether that is really what the writer says.*

*Nuttall (1996: 17)*

In the same context, **Eskey (1988)** sees that “*the interactive model takes into account the continuous interaction between bottom-up and top-down processing in the construction of the meaning of a text*”. So, reading is not only a one-sided

approach but both the reader and the text share certain connotations to create this interaction. **Carrell and Eisterhold (1983)** state that interaction “*occurs between the reader and the text.*” Conveying the meaning of the text depends on the reader's schematic knowledge and the cues providing by the text. Simultaneously, he relates his background knowledge with the one that exists in the text.



*Figure 1.10: the Interactive Model*

### **1.10 Reading Strategies**

The term strategy refers to the set of plans one person applies to perform a specific thing. Hence, Reading efficiently requires the adoption of some strategies that are strictly related to the reading process. They are used before, during, and after reading. . For **Mcnamara (2007:6)**, “*reading strategies refer to the different cognitive and behavioural actions readers use for achieving reading comprehension*”. Efficient readers adopt numerous strategies that rank from predicting, skimming, scanning, inferring, guessing, and summarizing. Therefore, the foreign-language literature has

brought endless strategies into existence, whereas the researcher will provide some of them that she finds necessary for the reader.

### **1.10.1 Skimming**

Skimming is reading the text quickly to get the main idea and general understanding of the material. It is a rapid glance through the text to determine its gist (Nuttall (1996: 49). The reader uses this strategy to determine an overall meaning. He will not read the whole text, but just have a look at headings, sub-headings, first and last sentences, or first and last paragraphs. This strategy enables readers to constitute a general sense of the text and it is often considered as the starting point in initial reading that enhances other strategies to interfere later.

### **1.10.2 Scanning**

Scanning is reading to look for specific information. For Grellet (1996) scanning is “*glancing rapidly through a text either to search for a specific piece of information (e.g. a name, a date) or to get an initial impression of whether the text is suitable for given purpose*”.

Williams (1996: 107) stresses that scanning is “*reading for particular points of information.*”

In short, scanning is letting the eyes wandering for particular information the reader is asked for.

### **1.10.3 Inferring**

Inferring is a fundamental strategy that every reader needs to require as it allows him to interact actively with the words in a sentence, and among sentences (Kristin et al, 2009). They viewed that inferring contain such sub-skills as:

1. Pronoun reference (knowing what a pronoun in a sentence refers back to
2. Forming a hypothesis about what is coming next in the text
3. Guessing the meanings of unknown words or phrases

4. Forming impressions about character motives and behaviours across multiple locations in the text
5. Knowing the subtle connections of words as they are used in particular contexts
6. Understanding cause-effect relationships of events mentioned at different times in a text
7. Drawing upon background knowledge to fill in gaps within a text.

### **Types of Reading**

The literature review of EFL has suggested different types of reading. Each is used for a specific purpose and has its criteria.

#### **Extensive Reading**

The term extensive reading has brought about diverse definitions. Some use it to refer to the "skimming and scanning activities", while others associate it to the quantity of the reading material. It is considered by **Hafiz and Tudor (1989)** as:

*The pedagogical value attributed to extensive reading is based on the assumption that exposing learners to large quantities of meaningful and interesting L2 materials, will, in the long run, produce a beneficial effect on the learners' command of L2.*

It means that extensive reading is regarded as an outstanding pedagogical instrument in language teaching in which learners are subjected to a wide range of language tools. Therefore, they will master different forms of language skills, extend their vocabulary items and obtain a good command of grammatical rules. This can occur after being exposed to a variety of lexical, syntactic, semantic, and conceptual features of the reading material.

Nation (1997) supports the same claim when he says that extensive reading increases students' vocabulary knowledge because in extensive reading students come

across the same words frequently, and can guess their meanings from the context. Additionally, Nuttall (1996: 142)) has identified two reasons for extensive reading. The first reason is that extensive reading is the 'easiest and most effective way of developing learners' 'reading skills. The second reason, it serves as an effective pedagogical tool that makes students interested and excited about the learning process. **Day (2004)** affirms that "Good things happen when EFL students read extensively." He explains that extensive reading does not only make the students fluent readers but also allows them to learn new words and emphasize their perception of words they have already known. Extensive reading also enables them to write better, and "their listening and speaking abilities improve." All in all, extensive reading provide readers with an enjoyment and interesting feeling that excite their language practice and their progress in different language skills.

### **Intensive Reading:**

It is a process in which learners are involved in short text reading to extract specific information. It is referred to by **Grellet (1946)** as "an accuracy activity" that favours explicit reading. In the same context, **Bright and McGregor (1970)** point out "...it is not whole lessons but parts of lessons that may properly be so divided. In the middle of a chapter, we may stop to dwell on one word. This is intensive study." In this case, it is a classroom activity that is influenced by the teacher's interference in developing comprehension tasks to check students' understanding.

This type of reading allows learners to develop metacognitive and linguistic strategies, practice reading strategies, and improve training strategies. **Nuttall (1996)** states that: "to arrive at an understanding, not only of what the text means but of how the meaning is produced. The 'how' is as important as the 'what', for the intensive lesson is intended primarily to train strategies which the student can go on to use with other texts".

Most educators agree that intensive reading is much useful in promoting learners' reading abilities and the development of the sub-reading skills that enhance understanding of texts' conceptual values such as inferring, word identification,

paraphrasing, ideas association, sentences relationship, and paragraph organization. Barry (2002) argues that intensive reading enables students to be ‘meditative, reflective, and personal’ in their reading. That is, students are required to read, find out the main ideas, and build their understanding of the text.

In short, both intensive and extensive reading are necessary for language learning and complementary to each other since they enhance effective reading and generate skilled readers as Williams (1986 ) points out, “for every hour of intensive reading, a learner should be doing at least another hour of extensive reading.”

### **1.11The Purpose of Reading**

The purpose of reading is to extract meaning from a particular piece of writing so that to get comprehension, make relevance between ideas, and obtain information about a specific subject. Therefore, number of purposes are suggested by **Donald Martin (1991 )** to justify the necessity of reading.

- **Improving Comprehension.**

Reading comprehension requires motivation, mental frameworks for holding ideas, concentration, and good study techniques.

- **Develop a broad background.**

Broaden your background knowledge by reading newspapers, magazines, and books. Become interested in world events.

- **Know the structure of paragraphs.**

Good writers construct paragraphs that have a beginning, middle, and end. Often, the first sentence will give an overview that helps provide a framework for adding details. Also, look for transitional words, phrases, or paragraphs that change the topic.

- **Identify the type of reasoning.**

Does the author use cause and effect reasoning, hypothesis, model building, induction or deduction, systems thinking?

- **Anticipate and predict.**

Really smart readers try to anticipate the author and predict future ideas and questions. If you're right, this reinforces your understanding. If you're wrong, you make adjustments quicker.

- **Look for the method of organization.**

Is the material organized chronologically, serially, logically, functionally, spatially, or hierarchical?

- **Create motivation and interest.**

Preview material, ask questions, discuss ideas with classmates. The stronger your interest, the greater your comprehension.

- **Pay attention to supporting cues.**

Study pictures, graphs, and headings. Read the first and last paragraph in a chapter, or the first sentence in each section.

- **Highlight, summarize, and review.**

Just reading a book once is not enough. To develop a deeper understanding, you have to highlight, summarize and review important ideas.

- **Build a good vocabulary.**

For most educated people, this is a lifetime project. The best way to improve your vocabulary is to use a dictionary regularly. You might carry around a pocket dictionary and use it to look up new words. Or, you can keep a list of words to look up at the end of the day. Concentrate on roots, prefixes, and endings.

- **Use a systematic reading technique like SQR3.**

Develop a systematic reading style, like the SQR3 method, and make adjustments to it, depending on priorities and purpose. The SQR3 steps include Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review.

▪ **Monitor effectiveness.**

Good readers monitor their attention, concentration, and effectiveness. They quickly recognize if they've missed an idea and back up to reread it.

More precisely, getting knowledge, summarizing, and reviewing are the ultimate goals of reading as they allow readers to be in touch with the wider world and understand the culture of the target language since language and culture are closely related. Hence, numerous reasons are of paramount importance to be classified as follow:

- a) for pleasure
  - To follow a narrative
  - To enjoy the sound, rhythm of a literary text
- b) For a general impression
  - To gain an idea of the writer's viewpoint
- c) For organizing reading and study
  - To identify the important content of the text
  - To answer (a) specific question(s)
  - To identify which section of a text to start studying
- d) For learning content or procedure
  - To understand new concepts
  - To learn certain facts from the text
  - To follow instruction
- e) For language learning
  - To learn new vocabulary
  - To identify useful structures of writing
  - To consider the text as a model of writing

- To practice pronunciation

In short, reading is the skill that an EFL learner needs to master as it constitutes the fundamentals of language learning through which he can acquire new concepts, refresh his vocabulary, have the ability to decode meaning, analyse ideas, follow a new pattern of writing. Therefore, it helps the EFL learner develop not only his linguistic skills but also his communicative skills as he will interact positively with the text, the teacher, and the class.

### **1.12The Importance of Teaching Reading**

In the history of foreign language learning, educational researchers have emphasized the importance of reading skills, as they admitted that there is a strong correlation between reading and school achievements in which good readers demonstrate further success in foreign language learning than weak readers.

In this respect, Hedge (2003) states that any reading component of an English language course may include a set of learning goals:

- The ability to read a wide range of texts in English. This is the long-range goal most teachers seek to develop through independent readers outside EFL/ESL classroom.
- Building knowledge of a language that will facilitate the reading ability
- Building schematic knowledge.
- The ability to adapt the reading style according to reading purpose (i.e. skimming and scanning)
- Developing an awareness of the structure of written texts in English
- Taking a critical stance on the contents of the texts

It is the teachers' responsibility in helping learners' attain these goals through increasing their motivations towards reading. This can be achieved by selecting appropriate texts, elaborating and designing practical reading tasks, and creating a

positive classroom environment for practising reading. Therefore, learners are allowed to recognize their strengths and identify their weaknesses.

### 1.13 Procedures for Teaching Reading

Unlike the traditional materials, modern reading tasks involve three-phase procedures: pre-, while-, and post-reading stages. **Zhang (1993, p.5)** stated that *“comprehension is facilitated by explicitly introducing schemata through pre-reading activities”*. Thus the pre-reading stage helps in activating the relevant schema. Hence, teachers should stress the importance of the pre-reading procedure since it prepares learners for further reading. Pre-reading activities stimulate students before the actual reading takes place.

Similarly, **Abraham (2002, p.6)** states that an interactive approach *“demands that the teachers activate the students’ schema”* during the pre-reading phase by helping students recognize the knowledge that they already have about the topic of a text i.e. through discussion of titles, subheadings, photographs, identifying text structure, previewing, etc. Such activities are called “pre-reading strategies”.

The aim of the while-reading stage (or interactive process) is to develop students' ability in tackling texts by developing their linguistic and schematic knowledge. This phase offers teachers the opportunity to adopt a balanced approach to teaching reading by incorporating both top-down and bottom-up processes, provided they are given flexibility in choosing the reading tasks.

**Haller (2000, p. 21-24)** introduced many school-based post-reading activities which promote learning comprehension through the use of matching exercises, cloze exercises, cut-up sentences, and comprehension questions. For the cloze activity, the teacher puts blanks in the story in place of some of the words, usually every fifth word but not the first or the last words in the text. A cut-up sentence activity uses sentences from the given text and helps learners to gain confidence by manipulating the text in various ways.

In short, reading comprehension is a complex process that needs much attention from both teachers and learners. Teachers should supply learners with all techniques and strategies to develop a concrete awareness for texts' interaction.

### **1.13.1 Assessment-Reading relationship**

Assessment and reading have been a controversial matter for many scholars over the history of foreign language learning since both of them are much closely related to each other and neither of them can do without the other one. However, in recent years EFL practitioners have explored the concepts thoroughly to alleviate reading through new assessment techniques and to show their importance in the teaching /learning process. In this sense, assessment means "any methods used to better understand the current knowledge that a student possesses" (**Collins& O'Brien, 2003**). Moreover, **Crooks (2001)** defines assessment as any process that provides information about the thinking, achievement, or progress of students.

Reading comprehension cannot be measured without assessment. It is through a planned assessment framework that learners and readers typically can be evaluated by receiving feedback on the skills, processes, and knowledge resources that represent reading abilities(**Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005: 179**). Reading can be rewarding in an EFL class only when it is related to assessment practices because these latter have the power to inform teachers about learners' progress. Hence, reading and assessment need to be carefully treated on the part of educators as they can affect learners positively or negatively. Responsibility is put much more on the teacher in selecting purposeful assessment criteria to support the reading process.

Assessment is not a matter of measuring learners' outcomes only, but it rather supplies them with practical data to surmount reading deficiencies, empower reading abilities, promote comprehension and adjust learning. Because assessment is important in teaching and learning, every teacher should assess his/her students' learning regularly. There are innovations in assessment procedures today, where the shift is from summative assessment to formative one. The assessment procedure should not rely on grading students and giving them marks to categorize their ranks, but it has to stress the importance of formative assessment and let it be a part of the learning

programme that is meant to improve learners' reading skills. That is; teachers should not focus on teaching just for the sake of tests and exams, this may discourage learning opportunities and engender reluctant learners who unconsciously refuse promotion and success because they do not feel secure, but they always feel threatened by the mark. Instead, we should equip them with sufficient assessment techniques and methods to promote learning and achieve success in their reading skill.

### **1.13.2 The Purpose of Assessment in Reading**

Good reading is the ultimate goal of every language teacher and accurate assessment of reading comprehension is a crucial impetus to see if this goal is being met as it allows teachers to measure the effectiveness of their teaching. It is the process through which teachers identify, gather, and interpret information about student achievement and learning. It urges them to take action, adjust learning and provide immediate feedback to promote learning. Hence, this feedback enables learners to identify their strong points and deficiencies to indicate where improvement is needed. Assessment influences reading and makes learners more aware of their achievements and permits them to monitor their progress simultaneously.

The purpose of assessment in reading does not concern teachers and students only, but it includes many groups of people within the educational community such as school administrators, parents, syllabus designers, and policymakers. Each has its definite goal to appreciate the value of reading assessment. They all contribute to identifying the question of why assessment is necessary for reading.

*The table below illustrates the purposes of assessment for different audiences*

Assessment Audience	Assessment Purpose
Students	To report on learning and communicate progress To motivate and encourage To learn about assessment and how to self-assess To build independence in reading
Teachers	To determine the nature of student learning To inform instruction To evaluate students and construct grades To diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses in reading
School Administrators	To determine reading program effectiveness To prove school and teacher accountability To determine resource allocation To support teachers' professional development
Parents	To be informed about children's achievements To help connect home efforts with school efforts to support children's reading development
Policymakers	To establish accountability of schools To inform the public of school progress To monitor the quality of education To formulate policies
syllabus designers	To introduce reforms in the educational programme which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- redrafting of school curricula</li> <li>- developing teachers' education</li> <li>- considering teachers' autonomy</li> <li>- encouraging teachers to develop personal techniques and materials.</li> <li>- involving novice teachers in a training programme</li> </ul>

**Table 1.1. Representative Audiences and Purposes for Reading Assessment**

*(P. Afflerbach 2007, p 6)*

Assessment approaches inform and improve students' learning in general and when it is applied to the reading process, it makes them understand the goals of the process of assessment as they become more interested in developing their reading

skills even outside the classroom environment. Students should be aware of the importance of assessment in their learning programme far from being graded for this matter frequently weakens their learning process and impedes all sorts of development.

#### **1.14 Assessment and Reading Ability**

Considerable exploration has been taken in search of the reading assessment definition. It mainly concerns the measurement of "the reading ability" which entails "the levels of understanding" a reading text among EFL learners, the term is introduced by Kintsch and Yarbrough (1982). In their research, they diagnose levels of comprehension; thus, "*it is possible to comprehend a word but not the meaning of a sentence*", and so far not have the ability to understand the meaning of the reading passage, neither have the possibility to recognize the order of the ideas. Kinstch and Van Dijk (1978) refer to the meaning of the word as 'micro-processes ability' and comprehension of the sentence as 'macro processes ability', which generally deal with an overall understanding of the text.

In search of a clear definition of the term reading ability, it involves the capacity to use all mental processes and background knowledge to deduce meaning from the text. In such context, countless lists and taxonomies have been established, as Alderson and Lukmani (1989) point out. The New York City Board of Education is cited by Lunzer and Gardner (1979) as classifying thirty-six different skills. Davis (1968) identifies eight skills, as follows:

1. recalling word meanings
2. drawing inferences about the meaning of a word in context
3. finding answers to questions answered explicitly or in paraphrase
4. weaving together ideas in the content
5. drawing inferences from the content
6. recognizing a writer's purpose, attitude, tone, and mood
7. identifying a writer's technique
8. following the structure of a passage

In this respect, Munby's taxonomy of micro-skills has been quite significant in syllabus and materials development as well as the design of language tests. Munby (1978) determines the following reading `micro-skills:

1. recognizing the script of a language
2. deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items
  - understanding explicitly stated information
  - understanding information when not explicitly stated
  - understanding conceptual meaning
  - understanding the communicative value of sentences
3. understanding relations within the sentence
  - understanding relations between parts of a text through lexical cohesion devices
4. understanding cohesion between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices
  - interpreting text by going outside it
5. recognizing indicators in discourse
  - identifying the main point or important information in discourse
6. distinguishing the main idea from supporting details
  - extracting salient details to summarise (the text, an idea)
  - extracting relevant points from a text selectively
7. using basic reference skills
8. skimming
9. scanning to locate specifically required information

Providing EFL learners with such taxonomies offer teachers opportunities to develop classroom test or isolated reading tasks to be tested. Even more, they enable teachers to diagnose readers' problems and spot the main obstacles that discourage comprehension. They urge them to elaborate appropriate remediation to overcome misunderstanding points. Nevertheless, those taxonomies are undoubtedly influential skeletons for test construction that would be constantly used in reading assessment.

### **1.14.1 The Importance of Assessment in Reading**

Reading is a multifaceted skill that cannot be measured by a single method for the process has multi-components features that call for a variety of assessment procedures from the part of instructors. For Alderson (2000) any single technique for assessment will necessarily be limited in the picture it can provide. We should always be aware that the techniques we use will be imperfect, and therefore we should always seek to use multiple methods and techniques.

Scholars confirm that EFL instructors should bear in mind that activities and tasks linked to reading can help students achieve comprehension. In other words, students should be acquainted with a variety of assessment techniques so that to be sufficiently trained and get the possibility to do well when they come across different types of texts.

Teachers have an advantageous role in developing learners' tasks awareness of different reading practices. Their ultimate responsibility in the teaching process is to be not only field practitioners but assessors whose task is assessing learners' achievements regularly. They have to assist, facilitate, organize, and direct learning coherently. More significantly, teachers need to confess to their learners about their weaknesses and disabilities to react accordingly and rebuild their deficiencies.

Good assessment design can enhance students' learning and support their reading skills. Beaver, J. (2002) has suggested the following tips for teachers.

- Use language that students understand.
- Use authentic tasks that engage students.
- Link assessment to the curriculum to help students focus on the steps needed to achieve the curriculum expectations.
- Share models of expected products and performances with students.
- Provide students with continuous, constructive feedback and suggest "next steps".
- Encourage students to set goals for their future learning.

- Have students engage in self-assessment and peer-assessment activities.
- Use home response journals to encourage home–school connections.
- Encourage students to explain their thinking, not only to acquire insight into their strengths and needs but also to involve them in the assessment process.
- Plan and hold teacher-student conferences – using the student's literacy portfolio as a focus – in part to provide feedback and in part to develop students' ability to discuss their goals and achievements with the teacher, their parents, and their peers.

EFL teachers should take into account the importance of reading assessment techniques and incorporate them into their syllabi to make learners familiar with them so that they become skilled readers who can manage their reading process efficiently. Indeed, they should equip learners with various reading practices which are prevalent in their reading activities. Formative assessments such as portfolios and reflective journals can be applied in the class to diagnose learners' achievements and measure their progress regularly. Such assessment also contributes to the development of student's critical thinking skills (Tang, 2016)

### **1.15 Conclusion**

As far as this chapter is concerned, it offers a theoretical overview of the concept of reading according to various experts. Therefore, most of the relevant research studies underline the importance of reading comprehension in language classrooms, and without it; no learning opportunities will take place. Indeed, the chapter describes the three models of reading which include the bottom-up, the top-down, and the interactive model. This latter is an amalgamation of the two models, it supports reading and helps learners attain text comprehension. The chapter also reveals the purpose of reading and presents a pedagogical description of the procedure of teaching and assessing reading.

This chapter confirmed the necessity for assessment as a classroom activity to promote learning and enhance learners to consider it as an incentive factor for their development and progress. It is of vital importance to assert that assessment is not only a test at the end of each learning unit to identify learners' outcomes, but it is rather an integral part of the teaching process that directs and enlightens prospects for teachers and learners alike.

Additionally, the chapter stressed the importance of assessment as a basic tool for measuring learners' achievements at different stages of the learning process. Nonetheless, it is used for serving numerous pedagogical purposes which are planning, applying, and measuring final products. Teachers are required to gather evidence about their learners and understand their feedback so that they can monitor learning and improve teaching accordingly.

Indeed, teachers need to be competent enough to help learners articulate their needs and develop their skills and competencies to make clear judgments about the instruction they obtain so that to be able to participate in the process of assessing their learning. From this point, learners start to construct their autonomy towards learning. Furthermore, while preparing instructional activities, teachers should consider such factors as a class environment, the state of learners themselves, school organization, and the educational system as a whole as well as other factors which influence the task of assessment.

In sum, the chapter emphasized the importance of assessment as an everyday classroom activity that includes different methods, techniques, and strategies. It is closely related to instruction and it tries to meet learners' requirements. As for teachers, they need to plan, reflect and rethink about the assessment process.

***Chapter Two***  
***Situational Exploration***  
***of ELT in Algeria***

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## **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will undoubtedly reveal some issues that surround the ELT situation in the Algerian schools namely secondary education where the learner is supposed to acquire the basic notions of the target language. Nevertheless, since independence Algeria has promoted various reform movements in the educational system including English for the sake of the welfare situation of ELT in the Algerian curricula, and for engendering elite of successful language learners who will take the responsibility to strive for the best.

The Ministry of Education endeavours to improve English language teaching/learning so that to endorse the perception of English among EFL learners as it is not the language of social interaction. Trying to achieve the goal and with the help of educational researchers, the history of language teaching in Algeria has submitted different teaching methods, innovative pedagogical techniques, and corrective teaching procedures to activate the teaching/ learning process and ensure the survival and the development of the language in an EFL context as it has been proved the vitality and death of languages in social disciplines.

Fulfilling such objectives, decision-makers, syllabus designers, and ELT practitioners take careful steps in the selection, adaptation, and implementation of optimal methods and approaches to satisfy the need of ELT in the Algerian educational system. Similarly, considerable efforts are generated for the improvement of the teaching methodology, the English textbooks, teacher training, and professional development as well as offering a positive expectation to the language. So, the chapter provides a brief account of the teaching approaches and methods adopted in the Algerian secondary school classes. It also demonstrates the crucial roles of EFL teachers and learners in relevance to third-year classes.

## **2.2 The status of English in Algeria**

Throughout historical events, English has evolved drastically and gained a respectful rank among world languages as it becomes the language of science,

technology, politics, business, tourism, and many other fields of human sciences. The universality of the language becomes more apparent with the era of internet development and mass communication in the world. It is virtually impossible to deny the space of the globe map that English has occupied. Nonetheless; it preserved a sizeable spot in Algeria regarding ELT in the Algerian secondary schools.

Competing with the world progress, Algeria reviews the teaching/ learning methods of English to satisfy the concept of globalization that by no means interfere with all aspects of modernization and human life. For the reason of being a global language, David Crystal stated:

*“The history of a global language can be traced through the successful expeditions of its soldier/sailor speakers and English has been no exception. But international language dominance is not solely the result of military might. It may take a military powerful nation to establish a language, but takes an economically powerful one to maintain and expand it”.*

*(Crystal, 1997: 9)*

Having occupied such rank, English Language Teaching has witnessed some reforms within the Algerian educational programme in 2003. Its major concern has stressed the importance of using English to negotiate current worldwide issues mainly scientific and technological activities which are carried in English. This latter becomes the language of scientific research in the most technologically advanced universities in the world. It is now used almost exclusively as the language of science **Drubin and Kellogg (2012)**.

The Algerian educational policy does not hesitate to give the language a certain consideration so that to deal with the latest world requirements by setting new goals and objectives behind teaching the language in the Algerian schools. Therefore, advantageous approaches and methods have been developed which focused on the learner as an agent of study. They intend to build up his linguistic abilities and increase

his language competencies so that to communicate effectively in different social situations.

The Algerian policy has given the language countless considerations through innovative formulas in the way of teaching and learning it. Thus; pupils are exposed to acquire the language for a period of seven years: four years in middle school where they received the basic notion of the language through a graduated syllable and three years in secondary school where they undertake more advanced courses about English. This tendency reinforces the position of ELT in Algerian schools and gives it a powerful status among other subjects, as it enables learners to develop both their linguistic and communication skills.

As far as higher education is concerned, English is taught as a branch of study with its specific subjects and as a separate module; that is English for specific purposes (ESP) in other different branches such as Biology, Medicine, Engineering, Management, Law, etc. This policy justifies the strength of English as a global language that achieved much success in the field of science, technology, and human sciences.

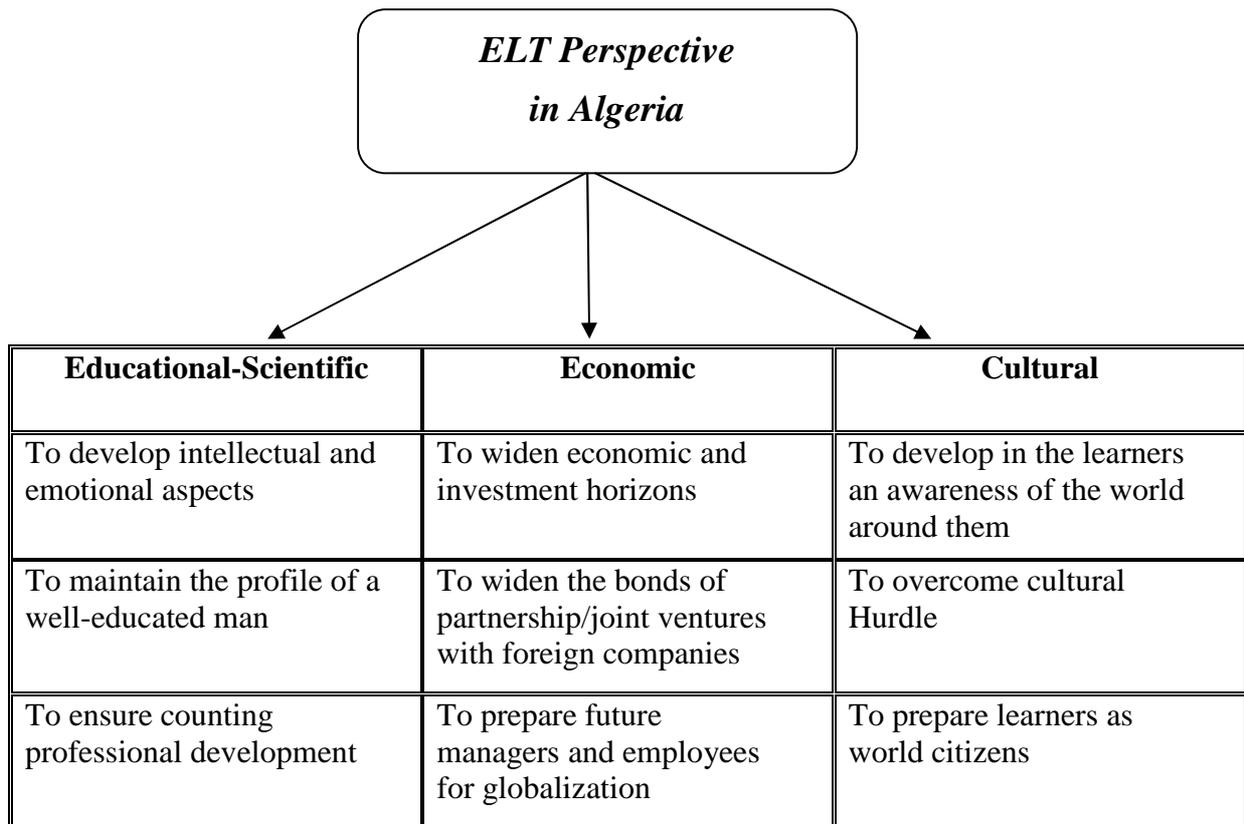
### **2.3 Aims and Objectives of English Language Teaching in Algeria**

Like many African countries, Algeria is recognized by its linguistic diversity in which Classical Arabic is the language of administration, Algerian Dialectal Arabic, Berber along with other varieties are commonly used to satisfy everyday social contact, French is the second language that was inherited from Colonization, still constitutes a powerful status in the Algerian society and strongly affects people's lives and cultures.

It goes without saying that English stands as a global language that goes beyond the border of the class. It does not represent educational and scientific objectives only, but it strives to achieve cultural and economic prospects. This tendency is stimulated by the national policy of education that regards English as the language of technology and innovation as stated by **Millani (2000:13)** *the introduction of English is being*

heralded as the magic solution to all possible ills-including economic, technological and educational ones"

According to **Benmouset ( 2003)**, the teaching of the English language in Algeria has different perspectives. It satisfies both educational and scientific needs and gives more access to the wide horizon of science and technology attributed by developed countries. Indeed, it is a tool of economic interaction with other countries around the world that permits our country to tied economic relations and improves external and local commercial activities. Meanwhile, we should not deny the importance of the cultural objectives that English tries to attain in our society. ELT in Algeria stresses the value of cultural awareness among our learners to know more about other English-speaking countries. The following table summarizes the objectives of English language teaching in Algeria.



**Figure 2.1:** Mid and Long Term Objectives of ELT in Algeria (Benmoussat 2003, p 253)

Though the English language is restricted within the class boundaries as it is not a language of daily contact in the Algerian community, learners are required to use other authentic materials such as dictionaries, grammar books in school libraries, electronic magazines, and newspapers, as well as various information on every accessible field accessible via the internet since English is the main language in the world wide web (McCarthy 1998).

In brief, learners need to give the language great importance since it is used in the spread of all kinds of information; responses to educational and scientific inquiries strengthen business relations and reduces cultural disagreement.

## **2.4 Third-year secondary pupils' EFL objective**

The Algerian National Committee of the Ministry of Education does not hesitate to establish pragmatic goals for introducing English in the national syllabus from the very beginning of learning English until third-year secondary school. Though the objectives differ from one level to another, they strongly meet on two precise points that entail supplying learners with the linguistic and cultural objectives so that to contribute enormously in areas of education, economy, technology, and so many others. For that reason, the Algerian educational system including ELT has undertaken continuous reforms to meet worldwide needs and satisfy the concept of globalization.

### **2.4.1 Linguistic Objectives**

EFL teaching in the Algerian context makes it possible to achieve such goals by setting the main criteria to equip the third-year secondary students with the necessary linguistic tools of the target language so that to be able to solve real-life situational difficulties.

- *Engages learners in real and meaningful communication.*
- *Give learners opportunities to process content relating to their lives and backgrounds,*
- *To develop both fluency and accuracy.*
- *Ensuring the learners' competencies.*

*Teacher's Guide (2006: 59)*

Certainly, ELT in Algeria provides students with a variety of learning engagements in which they are able to practise the different language skills to become competent learners who can read, speak, listen and write successfully. Indeed, it is introduced in a lineate way so as “*to encourage students to use more complex utterances, more fluently and more accurately*”. (ibid) Therefore, the variety of tasks presented in the syllabus brings students to perceive, reflect and analyze language function as well as notice how English is used in different contexts. This tendency helps students to learn through perception and analogy which are two major features of language learning.

Attaining language proficiency is a desirable goal of any foreign language teaching. Thus; ELT in secondary schools performs the role by accumulating several grammatical rules, vocabulary items, language patterns, skills, and strategies to nurture learners' requirements and establish their linguistic framework to better acquire the language and reach the level of proficiency, the direct ambition of any foreign language learner strives to get.

On the other hand, teachers need to assume responsibility. They must recognize and target the key language to engage their students in appropriate learning commitments as it is worded in the Teachers' **Guide (2006:59)** “*It is naturally up to the teacher to opt for the most appropriate tasks, following the needs of the classrooms.*” Teachers then should help their students to grow by adapting knowledge and adopting techniques relevant to their needs. They are required to diagnose students' learning, monitor their progress, and adjust instructions accordingly. Moreover, they should equip their learners with training strategies to decipher segments of the language so that to build up the first ingredients of EFL learning. This parameter enables students to be more acquainted with the language and so more proficient learners.

It is advisable to proclaim that the present third-year English textbook is an advantageous instrument that asserts language learning and fulfills learners' linguistic objectives for the diversity of learning experiences it contains in terms of lexis,

discourse, grammar, strategies, skills, and the different language forms each text includes.

## 2.4.2 The Cultural Objectives

Language and culture are interrelated terms that cannot be separated, as they are used interchangeably. Many scholars and anthropologists support the claim and regard that *“Language is a social institution, both shaping and shaped by society at large, or in particular by the cultural niches, in which it plays an important role”* “n.a“. Sharing the same opinion, **Halliday (1973)** states that *“ language is made of a range of possibilities, an open-ended set of option in behaviours that are available to the individual in his existence as a social man”*, to put it differently, the language includes endless of social and cultural factors that exist along with his life.

Following the same view, **Swiderski (1993)** affirms that *“culture is usually seen emerging directly out of the language and seems to be derived from it. It appears as a corrective to habits of speech guiding the use of forms in actual conversation”*. Culture is deeply rooted in the language and extracted out of it, for it constitutes the basic set of social patterns that are diagnosed and adjusted by speech behaviour in an authentic social situation. To this effect, language and culture are investigated from different perspectives among which are the following:

- Language is a means of cultural transmission among members of a large society.
- Language allows learners to become members of the new culture.
- Culture is regarded as a set of social practices, shared values, and beliefs demonstrated through language.
- Culture enables learners to acquire knowledge and information about
- people’s ideologies and thoughts.via language practices.

To this point, it is virtually evident to note that knowing a language implies knowing a culture, and learning the one relates to learning about the other either explicitly or implicitly. Having stated those definitions, none could deny Goodenough's famous declaration about culture.

*“As I see it, a society’s culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members. Cultures, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end-product of learning knowledge in a most general sense of the term”.*

**( Goodenough, 1957:74 )**

This eloquent summary indicates quite enough the close connotation that language and culture possess. It points out that the rules of culture work through the rules of language in a given society. More accurately and far from biological indications, individuals reveal their cultural points of view through languages.

Considering ELT, culture is taught in context within the themes presented in the textbook. Learners are subjected to a variety of cultural dimensions through the target language in which they manipulate tasks and activities to nurture their language acquisition. This tendency makes pupils aware that language is strongly related to culture, the fact which is quite apparent through the cultural objectives introduced within language teaching and which are stated as follow:

- Make learners aware of the target culture,
- Enhance their curiosity to discover more about other people's culture,
- Compare and bridge the gap between their native cultural values and the foreign ones,
- Extend learners’ knowledge by exposing them to a great variety of themes that embody cultural beliefs and values.

Having realized such goals, teachers need to establish a suitable environment conducive for learning by exposing learners to real-life situations through which they can practice the language as well as learn about the desirable culture. In this sense, language classroom offers the possibility of culture transmission that operates with language transmission. Even more; learners would develop a sense of curiosity to explore more about foreign cultures.

In brief, introducing culture in ELT serves learners to be aware of cultural values regarding a specific social group. It allows them to communicate effectively in a cultural situation and transmit the message intelligibly respecting the norms of language exchange. So, the approach to language teaching needs to put cultural patterns and experiences under focus so that to constitute a distinctive achievement of language learning.

## **2.5 Approaches to English Language Teaching in Algeria**

Considering any foreign language teaching presumes a common understanding among the staff who decides on how the language should be taught and the main criteria affecting language learning. This refers to the so-called approach, it is then:

*"The sum of assumptions course designers make about language and language learning. This term describes the many ways psychologists and linguists look at language... it is a combined theory involving both language and the learning process"*

*(Miliani 2003: 20)*

EFL teaching in Algeria has experienced many approaches and methods for the sake of having a better quality of language learning. Having adopted the Grammar Translation Method and the Direct Method, they no longer prove their efficiencies with the rapid growth of modernization and prevalence of globalization that influences different aspects of human life. In an attempt of achieving worth education, the Algerian Educational designers stimulate the communicative approach which is based on teaching for communication as well as the competency-based approach (CBA)

which is currently applied in EFL classes. The two approaches are the most recognizable ones for EFL teaching in Algeria.

### **2.5.1 The Communicative Approach**

The Algerian educationalists have acknowledged the effectiveness of such approach as it promotes learners' communicative competence and regard teaching as communication:

*“The first act of pedagogy is communication...Teaching implies a "know-how to communicate". The first apparent element is the one of language, more exactly of discourse and of the logic it carries”.*

***Morandi 2002: 20***

The definite goal of the communicative approach is developing learners' skills and having the ability to use the language in an appropriate culturally social context where learners demonstrate their communicative competence rather than their linguistic competence which constitutes a set of vocabulary items and many grammar rules. The communicative approach enables learners not only to use the language effectively, but it stimulates them to use their knowledge in negotiating meaning.

As far as the error is concerned, it is a welcomed feature and a natural fact that enhances the development of communicative skills and promotes learning. Indeed, the role of the teacher under this principle is no more the instructor who provides knowledge, neither the dominant person who imposes rules, but he is the one who creates a non-threatening environment conducive for learning. He needs to be a facilitator and a monitor for learners' performance, a counselor, and a manager of classroom tasks and activities.

On the other hand; the Algerian pupils feel reluctant to assume such responsibility of learning because they are not equipped with sufficient linguistic and communicative skills to be self-directed learners, or manage their learning successfully. For them communicating in the language they had struggled to learn is a hard task. Respectfully, the Communicative Approach implies learning through induction. It is the role of the learner to come across hidden rules and discover

language outcomes, however; it was difficult to involve learners in such learning situations because of cultural and social reasons that impede the application of such approach in the Algerian context.

### **2.5.2 The Competency-Based Approach**

Due to political circumstances, Algerian educational reforms have taken place in 2005. Thus, EFL teaching methodology has shifted from Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) into Competency-Based Approach (CBA) meeting the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs. It is stimulated from the cognitive and constructive theories which favour the relationship between classroom learning and real-life situations. That is; the learner can apply what he learns in the class to the outside world. For **(Richards & Rodgers, 2001)**, CBA seeks to teach learners the basic skills they need to prepare them for situations they commonly encounter in everyday life.

The CBA approach involves the development of learners' competencies. A competency is the ability to act in English using a range of skills and knowledge; that is learners would be able to solve linguistic problems in the various situation by applying prior proficiency and information

Concerning ELT, the competencies are surely related to learners' needs in and out of school. They learn to read, listen, speak and write, and to use the language in every new situation. Teachers introduce those skills implicitly and in an integrated way including various contexts practice until they become part of learners' behaviour to be used in solving real-life problems. A key concept of this approach is competency meaning:

*“a know-how-to-act process which integrates and mobilises a set of capacities and skills and an account of knowledge that will be used effectively in various problem-solving situations or circumstances that have never occurred before. I.e. a competency continues throughout and beyond the school curriculum”*

*(Louznadji 2003)*

In the competency-based approach, emphasis is given to the productive, interpretive, and interactive competencies:

- Productive competencies: speaking and writing
- Interpretive competencies: reading and listening
- Interactive competencies: speaking and writing

These competencies enhance learners' skills to better cope with everyday difficulties as they are tools that help them to read, listen, speak and write in English effectively.

The competency-based approach aims at making learners successfully engaged in real-life situations where they can manage their interaction and cooperation with others. For this approach, the teacher is not the only source of information, but he needs to involve learners in the learning process by having multitude of characteristics such as:

- A less authoritarian attitude
- Openness to discussion and negotiation
- Sensitiveness to learner's concerns.

### 2.5.3 Competency-based English Teaching

The goal	<p>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.</p> <p>The focus is on learners being able to <u>use</u> English.</p>
The role of learners	<p>Learners are actively involved in all aspects of the lesson.</p> <p>They regularly speak, read, write and listen within communicative situations in order to exchange ideas, information, or messages;</p> <p>They figure out the rules and patterns of the language;</p> <p>They plan for and use strategies to help them learn and communicate better.</p>
The role of teachers	<p>Teachers support learners in taking active roles in the classroom by providing them with experiences that meet their</p>

	<p>interests and needs.</p> <p>Teachers are mainly responsible for facilitating what happens in the classroom:</p> <p>creating a comfortable, supportive and collaborative environment where learners can work actively, free from fear of making mistakes, and where they want to use English and have a ‘real’ purpose in using it;</p> <p>presenting language so that learners can figure out the rules and patterns and learn from their mistakes;</p> <p>providing communicative practice <i>using</i> English that supports learners in developing listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills they need to exchange ideas and information to meet their needs and interests.</p>
<p>The types of tasks</p>	<p>The types of tasks used in competency-based instruction are focused on the communicative purpose. They require learners to take an active role by</p> <p>thinking about the language;</p> <p>thinking about the situations;</p> <p>mobilizing the language;</p> <p>using strategies to aid communication.</p>

**Table 2.1:** Illustration of Competency-Based Approach

As far as the above table is concerned, it summarizes the main issues that underlie competency-based English teaching. It provides learners to use a variety of skills and knowledge that enable them to use English in different real-life situations. Secondly, it makes learners actively involved in the process of learning in which they practise all aspects of language skills within communicative situations. They comprehend rules and language patterns as they would be able to plan for and use strategies to solve situational problems which lead to language learning.

The teachers' role in competency-based approach learning is of strategic importance. He takes an active role in the classroom, creates a non-threatening

environment conducive for learning, meets learners' needs, facilitates learning, and provides opportunities to practise the language through listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills.

Regarding instruction in this approach, it requires learners to take a positive step in learning by adopting various responsibilities; thinking about the language and situations, mobilizing the language by using effective strategies to overcome situational issues.

In short, competency-based teaching aims at developing learners' skills and knowledge to solve particular problems they encounter in their learning process. It notably prepares students to be active members of their society and surpass the inner circle of ambiguity that surrounds them. Indeed, it focuses on learners in helping them developing their capacities to be good listeners, speakers, readers, and writers, as it allows teachers to be planners and organizers of the lessons. Thus; they can get inspired to develop tasks and activities that facilitate learning and provide their students with practical strategies that enhance their development regarding the target language.

## **2.6 Teaching English in Secondary Education**

Being exposed to EFL for three years in secondary school, learners grasp the basic concept of the language through different streams notably literary, foreign languages, scientific, mathematic and management ones whereby they attain fundamentals of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation that urge them to be more acquainted with the language and highlight their prospects towards advantageous learning. Meanwhile, the following subsections underline teaching English at secondary school about third-year classes and the main objectives that surround ELT at that level.

### **2.6.1 The Language Teaching Syllabus**

It is indispensable to define the term syllabus which is exclusively associated with education and teaching. The term has been subjected to different interpretations

from the very beginning of ELT exploration. It is defined as a " *plan of what is to be achieved through teaching and learning*" (Been, 1984 quoted in Carter and Nunan, 2001: 151. Whereas unningsworth (1995), suggests another description which is " *a specification of the work to be covered over a period of time, with a starting point and a final goal*" (Cunningsworth, 1995:54). As for Rabbini (2002), a syllabus is " *an expression of opinion on the nature of language and learning; it acts as a guide for both instructor and learner by providing some goals to be attained*" (2002:01). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) welcome the prospect when they say that " *a syllabus is an implicit statement of views on the nature of language and learning*" (1987: 84)

Interestingly, the entire definitions agree on a particular axe which implies that a syllabus is a view of language and language learning. For this reason, the policy of education in Algeria considers the syllabus as an important teaching tool that serves both teachers and learners in language teaching/ learning. It may serve as a contract (Parkes and Harris, 2000) or an agreement between learners and their tutors to achieve certain goals. It is also considered as a plan or an outline that supports teachers' instructions through which learners will be engaged in the process of learning. Indeed, it is regarded as a cognitive map that stresses both the initial and the final points of a particular course.

In this sense, the present syllable is entitled *New Prospects*. It is designed and reviewed by the Ministry of education in 2006. It consists of several units that enclose different themes suggested to meet learners' needs. Thus; pupils will progressively develop three competencies as worded in the syllable:

- competency of interaction
- competency of interpretation
- competency of production

(The Teacher's guide, 2006)

The above competencies are fostered and expanded through a list of tasks and activities that " *cover all areas of language (syntax, morphology, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling) through six graded units*" (the teacher's guide, 2006 P 60).

Each unit exploits a particular theme based on either a literary or scientific view. They can be presented in the following table:

The Themes	The Units	Literary Streams	Scientific Streams
Exploring the past	Ancient Civilizations	+	-
ILL-Gotten Gain Never prosper	Ethics in Business	+	+
School: Different and Alike	Education in the World	+	-
Safety First	Advertising, Consumers, and safety	-	+
It's Giant Leap for Mankind	Astronomy and the Solar system	-	+
Keep Kool!	Feeling, Emotions, and Humour	+	-

*Table 2.2: 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Themes Distribution for all Streams*

As it is illustrated in the table above, four obligatory units are intended for each stream. Each unit is allocated 24 hours through which learners are required to develop three major competencies of interaction, interpretation, and production that comprise all areas of language (morphology, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, syntax).

### 2.6.2 Third Year Learners' Textbook

It is strictly important to note that a textbook is a basic tool for a language programme. "It is an almost universal element of ELT teaching (**Hutchinson and Torres, 1994: 35**). Foreign language learning cannot do without the textbook as it is considered a key component for learners' development. Having proclaimed the importance of this instructional material, **Hutchinson and Torres (1994)** assert "*No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook*" (**ibid**).

So, **New Prospects** is the official English textbook designed by the National Curriculum Committee of the National Ministry of Education in March 2006 for third-year secondary students. It is by essence, the deliberate material that supports learners' achievements and meets their requirements as cited in **Harmer (2001: 304)**: *“Coursebooks also provide material which students can look back at for revision, and at their best, their visual and topic appeal can have a powerfully engaging effect.”* Its principle objective is to provide learners with learning strategies to enhance their communicative competence so that to cope with real-life situational problems they face in and outside the class. Learners are supplied with realistic opportunities to link content to their personal backgrounds.

The New Prospects is regarded as an ongoing process in which learners are submitted to a wide range of knowledge. Thus; they are tolerated for committing mistakes as it is a part of their learning development. Moreover, vocabulary items and grammar rules are of crucial importance since they are the basic elements of successful language learning. They are taught through a context that enables learners to practise and apply them to language functions.

Learners' textbook is a task-based material. It contains a variety of tasks and activities through which learners perform different language skills and assimilate learning opportunities that meet their personal needs. They do not only manipulate language forms and patterns, but they acquire pragmatic perceptions of the language being taught through cooperation and negotiation of meaning within learners themselves. Most of the tasks comprise inductive learning that promotes autonomous learning and enhances peer learning. Hardly could these tasks discourage any learning situation for they stimulate their pre-requisites and activate their current knowledge. Teachers' task is to enlighten instructions and provide positive support so that learning could take place.

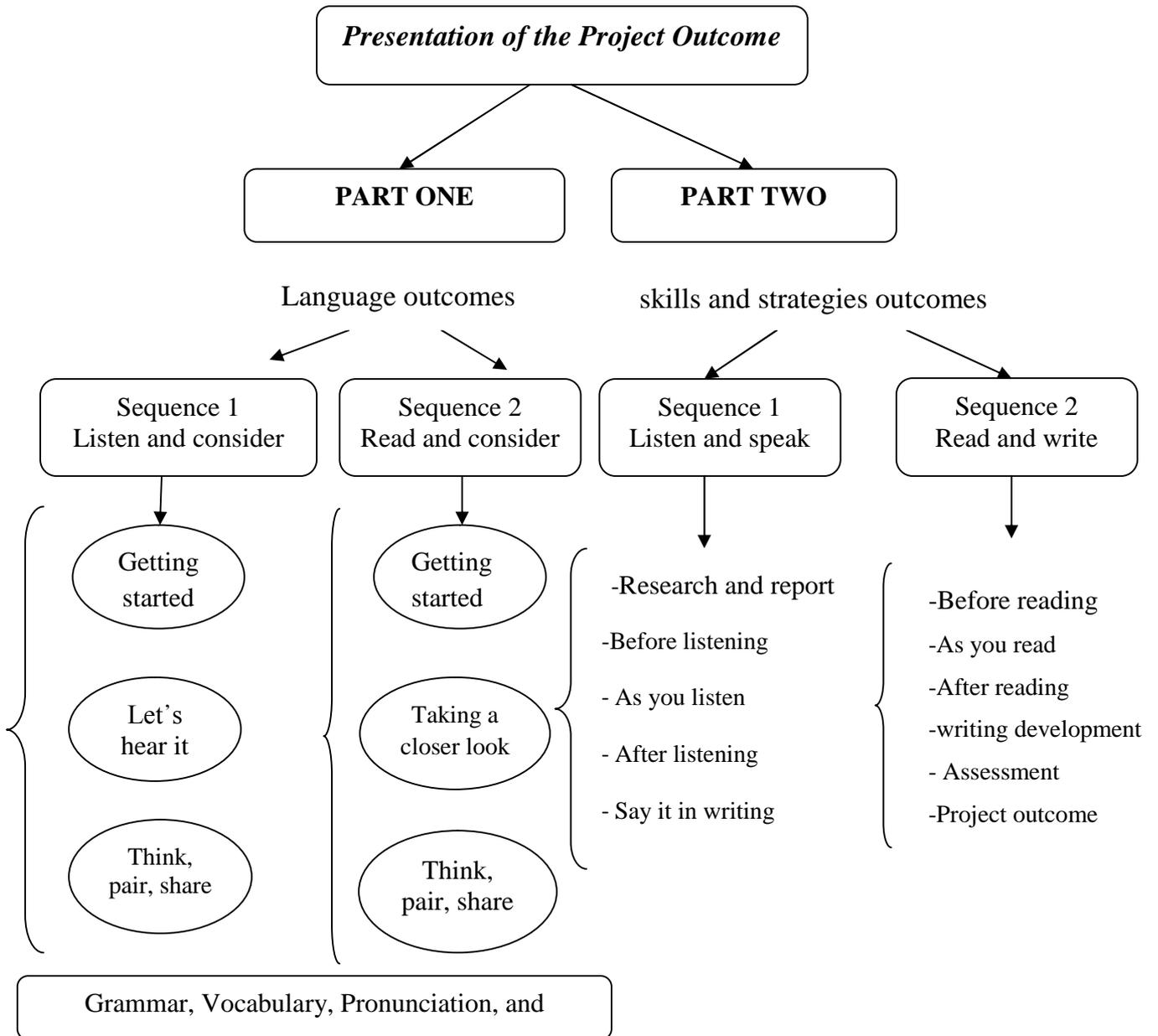
### **2.6.3 Description of the Textbook**

Having designed this book, three major features have been taken into consideration:

- *The fact that the baccalaureate is exclusive of the written mode;*
- *The emphasis on a thematic orientation;*
- *The need to cater to pedagogical requirements of all baccalaureate streams.*

#### **New Prospects (2006:4)**

New prospects, the pupils' textbook contains six major units that deal with the six main themes worded in the syllabus as shown in the table above. It handles grammatical structures, language functions, language components such as vocabulary and pronunciation exploration, language skills as well as learning strategies that empower learners' achievements. It is mainly designed to prepare students for baccalaureate examination through developing their competencies and interaction with the language. The six units can be illustrated through the following skeleton.



**Figure 2.2:** *New Prospects Units' Distribution*

Each unit consists mainly of two parts, and each is composed of two sequences. The first part is Language Outcomes which in turn includes Listen and Consider, Read and Consider. Here students are exposed to different forms of language exponents among which grammatical structures, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling. Therefore, both sequences end with a rubric referred to as Think, pair, share in which students re-produce in writing or speaking the language items they have learned so far.

Regarding the second part of the unit, it is recognised under the heading Skills and Strategies Outcomes which are divided into two sequences: Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing through which learners utilize different learning strategies to exercise various language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), as well as social skills such as group work, peer assessment, and autonomous learning. The unit is closed up by Project Outcomes assignments, the possibility that allows students to undergo web research and synthesize the required knowledge in the form of a presentation paper. By the end of the unit, learners are exposed to a twofold language assessment: self/peer assessments which are related to language functions and components, and objective assessment which chiefly focuses on skills and strategies performance.

Getting inspired by the CBA approach, the New Prospects textbook is developed and organized to practice English according to real-life situations. Likewise, learners are provided with a set of language exponents as well as a number of strategies to formulate concrete and realistic concepts of the language being learned so that to cope with authentic situational problems in and outside the classroom as it is indicated in the syllabus.

*“New Prospects has been thought out in such a way as to instil in learners ease and confidence in their communicative use of English. The units of this coursebook offer a variety of activities reflecting real-life situations and prompting the students to practise English in creative ways. Their consolidation of skills, whether oral or written, is to be realised through a number of activities stemming from the competency-based approach.”*

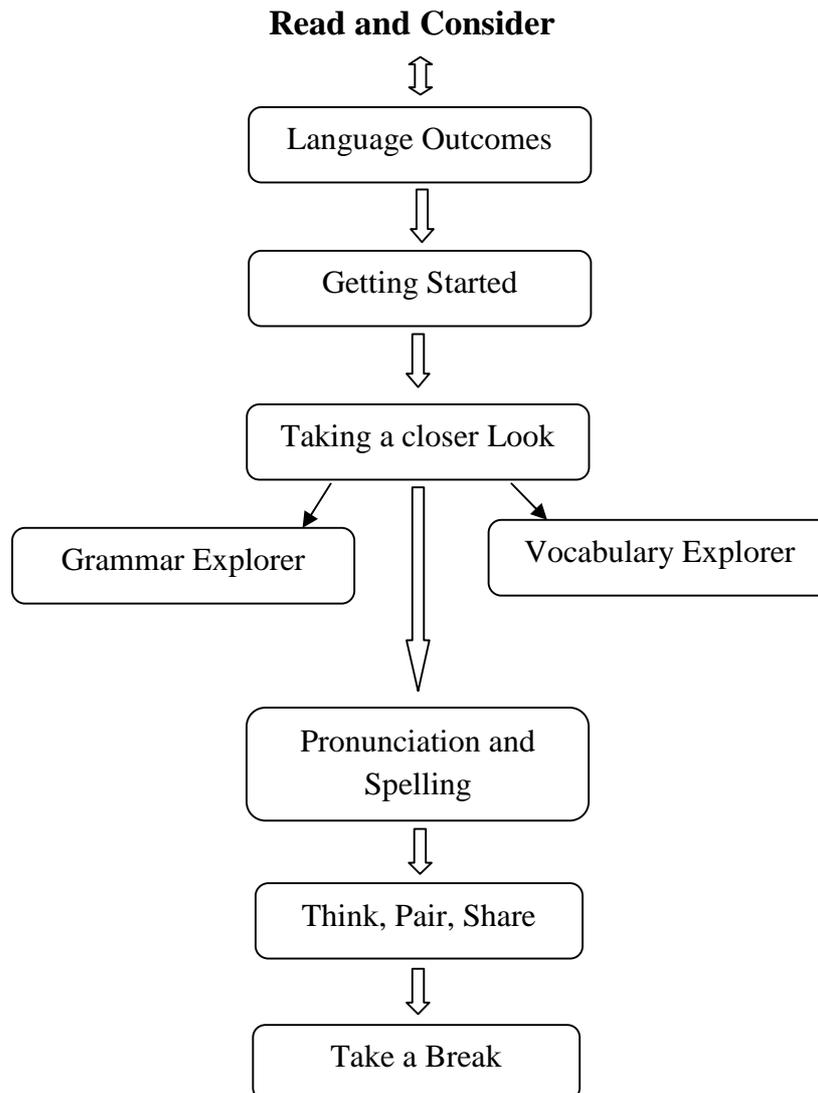
***The syllabus (2006:20)***

All in all, the third year secondary book is planned in such a way to meet the criteria of EFL learning, for it focuses on the basic elements of foreign language acquisition among which language components, skills, and strategies that are

exemplified via tasks and activities and performed either autonomously or through cooperation.

## 2.7 Presentation of the Reading Skill in the Textbook

The reading skill is presented in the textbook through the sequence Read and Consider as follow:



**Figure: 2.3:** An outline of the sequence Read and Consider

The second sequence of the unit is **Read and Consider**, it is composed of six rubrics that put a great emphasis on the reading skill, one of the most important language matter a foreign language learner needs to expertise either for the near

objective, or the for the farthest one. Besides, the sequence embraces a limitless number of additional materials for extensive reading.

The first rubric is entitled *Language Outcomes*. It contains no tasks, but it merely informs learners of the desirable linguistic objectives to be achieved throughout the sequence. Thus; these language outcomes can be assessed at the end of the unit through the rubric assessment.

The second rubric is labeled *Getting Started*. It introduces a brainstorming session under which the topic of study is discussed and elaborated; meanwhile, students' background knowledge is demonstrated through the exhibition of language structures, forms, functions, and vocabulary. To this effect, the students construct an overall schematic knowledge needed to understand the text.

The third rubric is represented under the heading *Taking a Closer Look*. It precisely deals with individual silent reading of the text, and questions answering. The current rubric does not care for language content and comprehension only, but it also caters learners' requirements of language function. Two types of activities stimulated from the intended text: grammar explorer and vocabulary explorer. The former involves three levels of activities of graded difficulty in which grammatical points appear in the text are cleared up. Whereas, the latter enhances vocabulary development and broadens learners' linguistic knowledge in terms of word formation and idiomatic expressions.

The fourth rubric is known as *Pronunciation and Spelling*. It handles the main issues that clarify the differences between the pronunciation system and the spelling system that exist in the English language through a number of language-related tasks.

The fifth rubric is *Think, pair, share* stresses autonomous work as well as collaborative work since it invites interaction between group members. Hence, the teacher performs the role of a facilitator and a guide for learning.

The six rubrics, *Take a break* is the last one as it closes up the Read and consider sequence. It is concerned with the lighter side for it introduces jokes,

proverbs, songs, etc referred to the intercultural dimensions of the target language. It makes learners more acquainted with the foreign culture, people's lifestyles, customs, and habits within their social milieu.

Additionally, reading is also focused in sequence four within the reading and writing section that is derived from skills and strategies outcomes. It is a rubric that identifies the linguistic, communicative, and cognitive goals to be fulfilled by learners.

*Before Reading, As you Read, and After Reading* are graded stages that stimulate students to use their skimming and scanning strategies. Undoubtedly, learners are required to activate their pre-existing knowledge to generate predictions about the current topic as well as to unveil the structure of the text, extract meaning, and make inferences from context. Having tackled those issues, learners would certainly construct a general understanding of the reading text.

## **2.8 Reading Strategies Presented in New Prospects**

As learners become more acquainted with the process of English Language Learning, they are asked to read more complex texts of different themes as shown in the table above. They need to adopt specific strategies and use them effectively in different contexts to become successful readers. It is a common virtue that reading is a thinking process in which readers apply a number of reading strategies to gain meaning and comprehension. For this reason, reading skills and strategies need to be taught explicitly while students are learning subject-specific content through authentic reading tasks. Effective readers use strategies to understand what they read *before, during, and after reading*.

Third-year students are equipped with a number of strategies to deal efficiently with the themes presented in the textbook and they are presented in the book map as follow:

Units	theme	Reading strategies
1	Ancient Civilizations	Skimming, scanning, identifying referents of reference words, recognizing types of discourse, summarizing.
2	Ethics in Business	Skimming, scanning, responding to a text, identifying and using reference words
3	Education in the World	Skimming paragraphing ideas, scanning, making logical links between sentences and paragraphs.
4	Advertising, consumers, and safety	Persuading, skimming, scanning, analyzing, and summarizing.
5	Astronomy and the Solar System	Predicting the content of a text, identifying types of discourse, making inferences
6	Feelings, Emotions, Humour	Making inferences, distinguishing between facts and opinions, demonstrating critical thinking, responding to a text

*Table 2.3: Reading Strategies in New Prospect Book Map*

Teachers need to encourage learners to be good language readers through the multiple uses of reading strategies that can be applied in different circumstances. Researchers in this field argue that readers who are not aware of the reading strategies do poorly in the skill and have less chance to succeed, "*Poor readers are less likely than good readers to question their guess about the meaning of reading, and are less likely to recognize evidence that contradicts their guess*", Kletzien and Pressly cited in **Aebresold and Field (1997)**.

In short, reading strategies are the key components of the reading process. They solve the problem of comprehension and help learners develop other personal sub-strategies to regulate potential misunderstanding.

### **2.8.1 Reading and Assessment Strategies in New Prospects**

In the Algerian context, learning is strongly associated with the assessment regime such as tests and examinations. Learners cannot be evaluated without grading, the fact which frequently inhibits learning to take place. Hence, effective assessment should be based on authentic tasks and meaningful processes (**Beverley and Bronwen, 2000**). These tasks are planned and elaborated to check learners' comprehension as to develop in them the sense of better knowledge about facts. They would, therefore, realize how important learning is. Effective assessment is multi-dimensional and uses a wide range of tools and methods such as tests, observation, projects, and rubrics.

Attaining a good assessment practice, teachers are required to use a wide range of instruments that mirror learners' strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, it should be continuous, ongoing, and meet daily instruction so that learners can receive continuous feedback and show constant progress. This can be fulfilled through formative assessment because within this paradigm, learning, teaching, and assessment were conceptualised as an integrative process (**Harlen & James, 1997**). Formative assessment enhances student development during learning, through teacher/student interaction (**Crooks, 2002**).

Some tasks are presented in the book in a form of formative assessment in order to make teachers aware of students' abilities and to find out what is within students' reach. In this context, teachers supply students with support and experiences to adjust learning and develop new skills to cope with reading difficulties. However, teachers are supposed to develop more activities related to reading comprehension to offer more opportunities and more practice sessions for learners.

By the end of each teaching unit, the textbook includes two steps of assessment procedures; the first is language **assessment** which is included in a learning log. It deals mainly with language items such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. The second step is strongly related to the assessment of reading **skills and strategies** in which the teacher assigns a test on one of the texts that existed in the Resource Portfolio so as to check learners' progress. However, it should be noted that the texts are too long

and need to be adapted and instruction-tailored according to learners' requirements, for adoption often proves inadequacy. Teachers' interference in developing assessment strategies is mandatory because the textbook remains merely a pedagogical tool that needs adaptation and adjustment according to learners' needs.

From this perspective, it appears the role of the teacher as a vital assessor in this process.

### **2.8.2 The Key Role of Assessors**

The ultimate responsibility of the teacher in the process of teaching is to be not only a researcher but an assessor whose task is assessing learners' achievements. In this sense, teachers are the most responsible assessors who strive for assisting, facilitating, organizing, and directing learning coherently. As present learning relies on a learner-centered approach, the role of teachers has accordingly changed from using inadequate assessment techniques for their learners into applying encouraging methods to help learners gain confidence and access to further learning. More significantly, teachers need to confess to their learners about their weaknesses and disabilities so as they recognize their deficiencies and be aware of their requirements to make progress in their learning.

Additionally, it is of crucial importance for the assessor to find out, plan, and apply the suitable assessment techniques and instruments, and adapt them according to learners' needs so that to make positive decisions that serve learners' interests. Effectively, when learners demonstrate their comprehension and understanding of the target skill, the assessor then, should establish reports and make clear and reasonable judgements about whether the objectives were attained or not. Therefore, teachers' skills and proficiency constitute the most outstanding ingredients for successful teaching.

Considering learners' assessments, teachers do not need to supply them with excessive help. Subsequently, they should give them the possibility to think through making logical judgments, and suggest solutions for the enhancement of their learning

outcomes. Thus, teaching and assessing are closely related to each other and represent exceptional functions for teachers to accomplish their tasks perfectly. Indeed, they should be applied in a manner that develops and enhances learners' skills and knowledge. To achieve such aims, teachers need to provide abundant opportunities for learning practices to get their learners easily involved in the process of assessment. Assessors, who are field practitioners, need to develop assessment plans so that to cover what requirements to be assessed, and how and when they should be assessed.

In order to involve students in an assessment process, Beaver, J. (2002) has suggested the following tips for teachers.

- Use language that students understand.
- Use authentic tasks that engage students.
- Link assessment to the curriculum to help students focus on the steps needed to achieve the curriculum expectations.
- Engage students in brainstorming the criteria (e.g., rubrics) for exemplary products and performances.
- Share models of expected products and performances (e.g., exemplars) with students.
- Teach students how to select work samples for their literacy portfolio.
- Provide students with continuous, constructive feedback and suggest “next steps”.
- Encourage students to set goals for their future learning.
- Have students engage in self-assessment and peer-assessment activities.
- Use home response journals to encourage home–school connections.
- Encourage students to explain their thinking, not only to acquire insight into their strengths and needs but also to involve them in the assessment process.
- Plan and hold teacher-student conferences – using the student's literacy portfolio as a focus – in part to provide feedback and in part to develop

students' ability to discuss their goals and achievements with the teacher, their parents, and their peers.

- Design student-led conferences where students discuss their personal or class literacy learning goals and achievements with their peers or their parents.
- Design celebrations of learning and achievement, including "open classroom" events to which students and teachers from other grades, parents or the community are invited, as a way of motivating students to learn.

In the Algerian situation, Teachers need to bring out various techniques, strategies, and tools to assess their learners. Thus; it is their task to make their learners acquainted with assessment strategies and involve them in different assessment procedures to regulate learning and identify where remediation is needed.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

This chapter tried to provide an overall description of the English language teaching in the Algerian secondary schools concerning third-year classes. Intending to achieve the rank of progress and development, Algeria strives to review its educational system so to make it more practical and feasible. Like other subjects, English has been given considerable attention and deeply urged the Algerian government to establish concrete goals to make the teaching of the language more satisfactory at all levels.

Henceforth, significant steps have been put forward to improve learners' language skills; thus, introducing new approaches, methods, and teachers' training sessions in the ground make it possible to set up the first ingredients of such a change. Fulfilling the task, teachers' roles were indicated in the teaching approaches as their tasks have been shifted to learners' centeredness and involving them in real-life learning situations so that to grasp the main criteria of language learning.

Additionally, learners' textbook has undertaken the reform standards so that to meet the national expectations and so international ones. It precisely reflects the most salient principles of foreign language teaching as it includes explicit learning

opportunities that are followed by a number of tasks and activities which generally take the form of formative assessment. Indeed, the textbook assessments areas encourage both self and peer assessments. This virtue strongly motivates the students as they make them feel more responsible for their learning and would certainly develop the concept of autonomous learning.

For the sake of a better quality of teaching in secondary schools, the Algerian government still making substantial efforts to develop learners' language skills and make them more conscious about the importance of English in various disciplines.

The current chapter has tried to explore and analyse the Algerian educational situation of ELT regarding third-year secondary.

# ***Chapter Three***

## ***Research Design and Procedure***

***Chapter Three: Research Design and Procedure***

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### **3.1 Introduction**

This study includes the assessment of the reading skill for the third-year secondary school level. It is stimulated by the lack of earlier research in this subject and the need for multiple approaches to teach the skill accurately and to equip learners with sufficient techniques to deal with reading successfully, for they are supposed to have a BAC examination in this matter.

Indeed, it is through assessment that teachers can distinguish between the slow and the skilled learners in a particular skill notably in reading comprehension. It is a crucial task that necessitates careful consideration on the part of both teachers and learners. Thus, to apply assessment effectively in the class, it should meet specific criteria such as appropriate techniques and strategies to improve learners' awareness. By no essence, assessment is the tool that stimulates teachers' interest to design and reshape tasks and activities for their pupils at different levels. Therefore, it supplies them with reliable information about their students' aptitudes, levels, and other pedagogical requirements, which permit them to adjust their teaching through establishing purposeful instructions.

More specifically, this chapter includes the empirical phase of this study. It tries to provide a practical description of the educational context in which the research has taken place. It deals mainly with the aim of the research, the implementation of the research project, the presentation of the research design, and data collection procedures.

Therefore, this chapter provides a thorough description of the sample and instruments used to collect data. It clearly describes the methodology adopted in this research study, which relies mostly on a reading comprehension test, a questionnaire addressed to students, and an interview with teachers.

### **3.2 The Aim of the Research**

The aims and objectives of the study are extremely related to the research questions because they justify the reason behind holding such an investigation. Objectives are significant features for researching because they direct the researcher on the right path and help him to investigate the variables under study. Indeed, they

permit us to check the reliability of the obtainable information in relation to the existing one.

Therefore, the main objective of this investigation is to illustrate how reading comprehension can be properly assessed in Algerian secondary education where English is taught as a foreign language, and to point out the different procedures and techniques that should be applied for a quality assessment. Meanwhile, the research pinpoints the main difficulties that inhibit learners from doing well in reading especially they will undergo a baccalaureate examination in which part one depends firmly on reading comprehension.

More importantly, a study stresses the importance of assessment in our schools either for the teacher to measure students' progress, give feedback and adjust teaching or for the students to make judgments about their performance and improve upon it. Moreover, it gives them opportunities to develop the skill and make their learning more active and productive. In general, the research aims to emphasize the effects of assessment in promoting efficient and effective reading skills.

### **3.3 Research Methodology**

Research methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the procedures applied to a field of study (Kothari, 2004). It entails a process of describing and explaining current phenomena and providing solutions to the problem.

This part is concerned with the description of the research design method as well as the research instruments involved in collecting data. Research tools will be described thoroughly to present the advantages of each of them. Moreover, the researcher will give a full account of the target population and the sampling size, description of case study research and mixed methods approach, which are included in the study.

#### **3.3.1 Research Design**

The nature of any research study depends on a research design, the skeleton upon which the researcher builds her research. Thus, the study is based on two wide approaches of research, which are qualitative research method (open-ended), and quantitative research method (closed-ended) data. They are adopted by many

researchers in order to elicit information, opinions, views, and perceptions from participants to find convincing answers for their inquiry.

A qualitative approach is a way of gathering observations, interviews, field data records, questionnaires, transcripts, and so on (McDonough,1997) as it permits direct interaction between the researcher and the participants at the time of the research (Creswell,2003). It is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. **Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 2)**. Regarding this method, researchers use a variety of methods to develop deep understandings of how informants identify and perceive their actual situations and how they act within such issues.

As far as the quantitative research method is concerned, it gathers data in a numerical form, which can be put into categories. This type of data can be used to construct graphs and tables. It seeks to confirm a tested and analysing a theory mathematically (Trochim, 2000). Quantitative researchers aim to establish general laws of behavior and phenomenon across different settings/contexts. Research is used to test a theory and ultimately support or reject it. Put it differently, quantitative research is concerned with numbers and figures. It is used to quantify opinions, attitudes, perceptions, and other defined variables with the purpose to support or disapprove hypotheses about a specific phenomenon, and potentially contextualize the results from the study sample in a wider population (or specific groups).

In brief, the quantitative research method addresses the “what”, the “where”, and the “when». It explicitly specifies what is measured and how it is measured in order to reveal patterns such as behavior, motivation, emotion, and cognition, quantitative data collection is considered to be much more structured than qualitative methods. Miles & Huberman (1994) have planned traits of qualitative and quantitative research, which are shown in the following table:

<b>Qualitative Research</b>	<b>Quantitative Research</b>
The aim is a complete, detailed description.	The aim is to classify features, count them, and construct statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed.
A researcher may only know roughly in advance, what he/she is looking for.	The researcher knows clearly in advance, what he/she is looking for.
Recommended during earlier phases of research projects.	Recommended during the latter phases of research projects.
The design emerges as the study unfolds.	All aspects of the study are carefully designed before data is collected.
Researcher in the data-gathering instrument.	The researcher uses tools, such as questionnaires or equipment to collect numerical data.
Data is in the form of words, pictures, or objects.	Data is in the form of numbers and statistics.
Subjective – individuals' interpretation of events is important, e.g., uses participant observation, in-depth interviews, etc.	Objective: seeks precise measurement & analysis of target concepts, e.g., uses surveys, questionnaires, etc.
Qualitative data is more rich, time-consuming, and less able to be generalized. Qualitative data is more rich, time-consuming, and less able to be generalized.	Quantitative data is more efficient, able to test hypotheses but may miss contextual detail.
The researcher tends to become subjectively immersed in the subject matter.	The researcher tends to remain objectively separated from the subject matter.

**Table 3.1: Features of Qualitative and Quantitative Research**

*(Miles & Huberman, 1994)*

To obtain a more reliable answer to the problematic, a case study was adopted in this research to help us gather data about the assessment procedures teachers use to check pupils' reading comprehension. It involves one hundred and twenty students from Zeddour Ibrahim School. They belong to different streams literary and scientific ones taught by the researcher herself.

The use of a case study to explore an area of interest is exclusively important as described by **Patton (1987:18)** “*case studies become particularly useful where one needs to understand some particular problem or situation in great-depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information*”. For such situation, the case study carried out in this research is convenient to scrutinize assessment of reading comprehension among learners whose immediate goals not only to acquire the language but to get familiar with the various techniques of language assessment that surround text comprehension.

A case study, then, is an exhaustive investigation that lightens our research and maintains our claims. It can supply us with a thorough description of the issue being investigated so that to support our hypothesis, perceptions, intuitions, and previous judgments. Nonetheless, it is a pragmatic approach used to test whether theories and models essentially work in the real world; as **Yin (1984:23)** proclaimed: *A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries and context are not evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.*

For **Anderson (1993:152)** a case study is “*concerned with how and why things happen to allow the investigation of contextual realities and the differences between what was planned and what actually occurred*”. It is proposed to stress a particular point, an aspect, or a segment of analysis to decipher its components. This method incites the researcher to recognize the complex real-life phenomena in which a variety of data are examined and proofed through a number of data collecting instruments.

Therefore, a case study is a research methodology that relies on a thorough investigation of a single individual, group, or phenomenon to comprehend facts so that to draw concrete rules and coherent judgments. It can comprise quantitative evidence as well as qualitative one, which is based on numerous sources of facts and takes advantage of the previous development of theoretical assumptions. In short, it can be a combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence.

According to Adelman et al. (**1976 cited in Nunan1992:78**), a case study is a method of research that is 'strong in reality and mostly adopted by researchers whose goal to clarify ambiguity and unveil illusion about the raised concerns; as it can

indicate a diversity of perspectives and viewpoints that could be supported by consistent rules. Additionally, **Cohen et al. (2000)** declared that case studies can establish cause and effect as they observe effects in the real context which is in turn, a persuasive determinant of both causes and effects.

Nevertheless, some practitioners such as **Kothari (1990)** argued that the case study method requires extra time and needs a lot of expenditure, and the extracted results are mostly not comparable and the findings may not be generalized only if another researcher observes their application within a desirable context.

All in all, a case study is of paramount importance in experimental research since it stimulates the researcher to make an objective examination in a specific area of interest, as it allows him to make generalizations in possible identical circumstances and the outcomes can lead to some form of reproduction.

### **3.3.2 The Research Sample Population**

The cores of exploration in any educational situation are the participants who represent the main point of focus that needs to be more appreciated. The participants of the study were 24 teachers EFL teachers from six secondary schools in Sidi Bel Abess and their third-year scientific Stream pupils. The following sub-titles include a detailed description of the informants and the schools where the study took place.

#### **3.3.2.1 Secondary School Profiles**

The school where the research took place is Zeddour Ibrahim. To carry on this research, the researcher asked for permission from the school's headmaster to speak with teachers, hold interviews with them and distribute questionnaires for pupils.

The choice of the school did not come incidentally, but it was done on purpose, it is the school where the researcher practises her job of teaching. It is situated in the city of Sidi Bel Abbes. It is also easy for the researcher to contact both pupils and teachers for any request.

#### **3.3.2.2 Teachers' Profile**

The teachers participating in this study are EFL teachers from different secondary schools located in the Wilaya of Sidi Belabes. Their number includes 24 teachers whom they exercise their tasks in different secondary schools which are Zeddour Ibrahim, the former Technicum, Abdelhamid Dar Abid, Inal SidAhmed,

Azza Abdelkader, Si Elhaoues, Ennadjeh. This stratum of teachers is recognized as PES in the Algerian educational milieu.

It is worth mentioning that most the EFL teachers in the Algerian secondary schools receive almost theoretical issues about the subject without any practical training. There is a gap between what they study at the university preparing their License Degree and what they find on the stage at secondary school in front of their pupils. It is a matter that needs to be appreciated and reviewed to prepare qualified teachers.

Their experience of teaching varies from one to another. These teachers were indispensable informants in this analytical study for the sake of extracting information about their perception regarding assessment techniques of reading in relation to their pupils' attitudes.

Respectively, our participants were selected at random excluding their age, sex, and length of experience in their teaching career. They are exclusively mandatory in such case of study for two main reasons: first to obtain more relevant and systematic ideas since they are the more direct observer of their learners, and second, to achieve concrete objectives to reassure that the research was carefully conducted.

### **3.3.2.3 Pupils' Profile**

The area under discussion includes 120 third-year pupils enrolled during the academic year 2013/ 2014. Most of them were from Zeddour Ibrahim secondary school as they are distributed in the researcher class. The pupils undertake their studies under a designed national curriculum for both literary and scientific streams with a mere difference in one teaching unit as was indicated earlier.

Third-year pupils are supposed to have learned English during six years; four years in the middle school where they have acquired the early basic notion of English, and three years in secondary school at a rate of three hours per week for scientific streams and four hours per week for literary ones during the schooling year. They pursue their studies of the English subject under the CBA approach in which teachers are committed to adopt.

These pupils, who are in the age group of seventeen to nineteen years old, shared nearly the same learning background situations. Their first language acquisition

is the Algerian Dialectal Arabic, which is the mother tongue(MT) for the majority of the Algerian people, and the French language for some. They learn Modern Standard Arabic in schools that is the official language for Algeria since independence in 1962.

Throughout this period of research, they were so supportive to respond to the questionnaire and show a great willingness to participate in the actual study.

Respectively, most of the pupils in the sample were distributed in the researcher’s classes randomly. To sustain this tendency **McDonough et al. (1977)** claimed that, research, which is done by teachers, contributes to numerous conclusions counting innovation in teaching methodology, classroom organization, and curriculum and knowledge improvement.

Having selected the desirable informants that constitute effectively the whole population, the researcher takes a further step of the study, which is appointing the necessary instruments for collecting data.

<b>Zeddour school</b>	<b>Dar abid school</b>	<b>Inal school</b>	<b>Azza school</b>	<b>Ennadjeh school</b>	<b>El Haoues</b>
<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Teachers</b>
3	4	5	4	4	4
<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Pupils</b>
40	20	20	15	15	10

*Table 3.2:Participants*

### **3.3.3 Research Instruments**

The research instruments or the research tools are the various methods the researcher uses to gather data for his inquiry such as questionnaires, interviews, tests, think-aloud protocols, etc. In this part, a thorough description of the research instruments will be introduced. The researcher will illustrate the advantage and the

disadvantage of each tool adopted in this study, and describe the objectives and the reasons behind the use of each instrument.

An important way to validate the hypotheses of the present study is the use of triangulation, which refers to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 1999). So the main objective of triangulation is to obtain and gather different dimensions, perspectives, and facts of the same phenomenon being investigated.

Action researchers in general use multiple methods to collect data to produce understanding and enhance the credibility of the research study. In this context, **Denzin (1978)** and **Patton (1999)** identified four types of triangulation:

- **Methods triangulation**—To check the consistency of findings that is got by different methods of data collection. It is common to have qualitative and quantitative data in a study. These elucidate complementary aspects of the same phenomenon. Often the points where these data diverge are of great interest to the qualitative researcher and provide the most insights
- **Triangulation of sources** - examining the consistency of different data sources from within the same method. For example: at different points in time; in public vs. private settings; comparing people with different viewpoints
- **Analyst Triangulation** - using multiple analysts to review findings or using multiple observers and analysts. This can provide a check on selective perception and illuminate blind spots in an interpretive analysis. The goal is not to seek consensus but to understand multiple ways of seeing the data
- **Theory/perspective triangulation** - using multiple theoretical perspectives to examine and interpret the data

There is a great tendency that triangulation is a valuable tool to enhance the validity of hypotheses. Therefore, the researcher adopts three different tools to collect data, which are a reading comprehension test, a questionnaire, and an interview

Actually, in the present study, three different instruments were used to obtain qualitative and quantitative data. First, a reading comprehension test was used to

describe the comprehension level of the pupils, and identify their comprehension difficulties. A questionnaire was conducted with the EFL third-year secondary school pupils to illustrate the reasons behind the failure of the reading comprehension skill, and a structured interview was administered to EFL secondary school teachers to depict the importance of assessment procedures in teaching and learning. The validity of the data collected and the necessity for practical outcomes demand the use of the above sources to carry out a purposeful research study.

A combination of the data source is likely to be necessary for most evaluations because no single source can describe adequately such a diversity. To describe features as they are found in the educational settings, and the need for validation of the findings require using data from different sources (i.e. triangulation) Bryman(2001).

Therefore, triangulation emerged out of this process as **Gorard et al. (2004)** pointed out “*if we are using two different methods then the results have to be genuinely combined if something new is to result*”. In this sense, triangulation is a practical approach to combine both qualitative and quantitative research. **Seale (2004)** advocated, “*Employing different methods in a research project can generate consistent findings.*”

All in all, to show the importance of assessment and the reading difficulties that learners face in an EFL context, we apply three diverse tools: a reading comprehension test, a questionnaire, and an interview. Each instrument is described below.

### **3.3.3.1 The Reading Comprehension Test**

The primary purpose of tests is to measure and evaluate learners' skills, aptitudes, and understanding of specific content. They are considered a valuable source of information because they inform us about students' learning, the teaching materials, and the teaching process. For **Scott and Morrison (2006: 245)**, “*...tests allow researchers to compare the results from their own tests given to a small sample of respondents with the results from a national population*”. This means that the researcher uses tests to indicate both learners' performances and to analyze the teaching and the learning situation.

Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1997) provided a similar definition when they said that a test is *a measurement to sample behaviour in which a teacher tests a restricted sample and then generalizes from the results*. Therefore, tests are useful instruments used in empirical research to furnish qualitative or quantitative data **Thomas, (2003)**.

In this respect, experts in EFL reading assessment practically advised that reading comprehension can be evaluated in less traditional ways among which is the reading comprehension test; a tool of research mostly adopted to detect learners' conception of the text they are exposed to.

Based on such description, we admit that the ultimate goal of the reading comprehension test is to assess and check learners' reading abilities and the extent of their interaction with the text. Hence, while preparing these assessment procedures, different criteria are to be considered to determine the suitability for testing the targeted skills and strategies among which are the following:

- ***Appropriateness***: selecting appropriate texts that suit pupils' capacities and meet their personal needs.
- ***Familiarity***: making sure that the theme presented is so common to the pupil, and belongs to the learning unit they have already dealt with so that to avoid all sorts of ambiguity.
- ***Language Difficulty***: the difficulty of a text lies in its linguistic, organizational, propositional, and discursal features (**Urquhart and Weir, 1998**). For this reason, we make sure that the language used in the text is at the level of pupils' proficiency.
- ***Scrutiny***: test elaborator needs to scrutinize the text so to make sure that the information in each paragraph is tested.
- ***The wording of reading test items***: these items should be clearly presented for test-takers. It should not go beyond their capacities. In the same way, responses should make minimal demands in writing ability (**Hughes, 1989**).

Having described the main features for handling a reading comprehension test, the researcher selected a passage that agree with the syllabus. The text consists of a topic sentence "*Child Labour*" is, generally speaking, work for children, which harms

them adapted from "UNICEF, Social Media", it is followed by eight activities. It is authentic in the sense that it is a former baccalaureate examination (2013) with some modifications as it belongs to pupils' learning unit." *Ethics in Business*"

The text is classified under the expository type and contains descriptions, definitions, and classification of facts. The text contains 12 lines and four short paragraphs. A number of tasks that concur with the criteria of the academic reading test; it entails the features to:

- Read for general information( skimming);
- Identify specific information(scanning);
- Locate ideas in paragraphs;
- Comprehend the main idea of the text.
- Recognize vocabulary in context;

### **3.3.3.2 Pupils' Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is frequently recognized as the most popular research tool in applied linguistics as it is flexible, easy to construct, collect and manipulate a large amount of data. *Dornyei( 2007: 101)The popularity of questionnaires is due to the fact that they are relatively easy to construct, extremely versatile, and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a readily processible form.*

Actually, the questionnaire is mainly regarded as a popular instrument of gathering data that can be analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. It is a tool that permits to collect a larger sampling and get different and numerous responses to the same questions. The responses can be used as evidence in drawing concluding outcomes, which in essence are measured by numerical data. Wilson et al. (1994: 1) stated that *the questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyse.*

***Wilson et al. (1994: 1)***

Data were collected through a questionnaire. This instrument was adopted as **Burton & Barlett (2005)** indicate that it is a suitable means of obtaining data from a large number of respondents. On the other hand, **Khotari (1990)** pointed out that this

method is not a perfect way to obtain the expected responses quickly. It shows some limitations for some respondents who may not return the questionnaire in time or they provide insignificant and inaccurate answers when they do not understand the questions, or they simply feel embarrassed to be given such questions.

Among educational researchers in the field of ELT **McDonough (1997)** states the advantages of questionnaires as follows:

- The knowledge needed is controlled by the questions; therefore it affords a good deal of precision and clarity;
- Questionnaires can be used on a small scale, in-house, and on a large scale, requiring little more extra effort than photocopying and postage;
- Data can be gathered in several different timeslots: all at once in a class, in the respondents' own time as long as it is easy to return, at convenience when a suitable respondent happens to come along, and in different locations at different times; but in all of these the data is comparable, the questions are the same and the format is identical;
- They ensure the anonymity of the respondents and give them sufficient time to think, fill in it and send it back.
- Self-completion questionnaires allow access to outside contexts so information can be gathered from colleagues in other schools.
- They are less time-consuming than the interview.
- They are a method that can be conducted at a low cost even when the number of respondents is large.
- Uniformity of questions
- Each respondent receives the same set of questions phrased in the same way. Questionnaires may, therefore, yield data more comparable than information obtained through an interview.
- They are free from the prejudice of the researchers.
- Respondents have adequate time to give well-thought answers.
- Reluctant respondents can be easily approached.
- The result of this method is more dependable and reliable as the research is conducted on a large scale.

Fulfilling the desirable goal of my research study, a questionnaire was administered to 120 EFL learners from Zeddour Ibrahim secondary school in Sidi Bel abbes. This sample of pupils belongs to the scientific, mathematic, economy, and management as well as literary streams. The questionnaire entails 20 questions that have been aimed to collect pupils' opinions, worries, and proposals about learning and assessing reading comprehension within the Competency-Based Approach. The pupils demonstrated great cooperation in completing the handout in time for the sake of a better quality of learning and an advantageous way of assessing.

This part of the questionnaire is formulated through the use of close-ended and open-ended questions which are aimed at providing adequate answers to the research questions. Moreover, they permit the researcher to gather data that can be objectively analysed fitting the scientific research dimensions; that is undertaking the quantitative and qualitative examination.

Close-ended questions generally refer to 'yes' or 'no' answers or they may include multiple-choice questions that are mostly used by investigators to elicit as much information as possible from their informants. Open-ended questions, however, allow the respondents to supply a free-response using their own vocabulary to explain and clarify their beliefs.

The researcher designed the questionnaire for students in order to draw out information of interest points regarding perceptions and beliefs about reading and assessment in third-year secondary school classes. In fact, the questionnaire is divided into three major parts: the first part deals with general learning of English, the second one includes questions about reading comprehension and the main difficulties that learners meet in the skill while the last part essentially tackles some issues concerning the assessment of reading comprehension from the learners' point of views. The participants were requested to complete the questionnaire without being stressed as it was the first time undertaking such an inquiry. The researcher explains every segment for the participants so that not to be confused and react clearly and objectively while reporting their opinions, views, and requests.

After having completed the questionnaire, they give it back to the researcher for analysis and comments. The participants were so helpful and compassionate that they ask if the researcher needs additional information.

### **3.3.3.3 Teachers' Interview**

Interviews are by definition the verbal conversation between two people to collect relevant information for research.

Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents (McNamara, 1999).

It is then, a method of data collection used to extract information directly from the informants with reference to the researcher's area of inquiry. They are often used "when we want to investigate people's views, attitudes, experience, etc, in-depth" (Wallace, 1998:151). Furthermore, the interview procedure involves three distinct formats: structured interview, semi-structured interview, unstructured interview.

- a. **Structured interview:** is the kind of interview that requires a set of standard, predetermined questions about a specific area of research so that to obtain information from the participants. Hence, it permits the researcher not only to observe and listen but also to get trustworthy and convincing data.
- b. **Semi-structured interview:** a semi-structured interview is somewhat flexible in the sense that it combines a certain degree of control with a certain degree of freedom. The participants are allowed to expand upon their answers using their own words. Semi-structured interviews are useful when there is a need to collect in-depth information in a regular way from a number of respondents.
- c. **Unstructured interview:** the specific criterion about this type of interview is that the interviewee introduces the topic area and gets the interviewer probes for extra information and let them express their insights by revealing their personal point of view, perceptions, and attitudes freely without any constraint. "Personal data can be revealed which might otherwise be withheld in a more formal setting" (Wallace, 1998: 147).

Interviews in research methodology demonstrate significant advantages: interviewers can collect unlimited information, interviewees' concerns, and

suggestions about the study. They are flexible and feasible; that is they can be framed differently depending on different circumstances. On the other hand, interviews reveal some disadvantages. They are "time consuming" and analysis of data can be difficult for this method produce non-standard time-consuming the interviewers' reactions may affect the proper outcome of the interview. Indeed, consistency and objectivity are hard to achieve because the data collected are, to an extent, unique owing to specific content and the specific individuals involved.

Regarding this research, a structured interview was conducted with twenty-four teachers because "the interview is a very good way of accessing peoples' perceptions" (**Punch, 1998: 174**). The interviews lasted from 15 to 20 minutes. They took place at an appropriate time that suits the respondents.

For an efficient interviewing, the researcher attempted to ensure a carefully elicited and interpreted interview under the form of open-ended and closed-ended questions. Thus, she tried to include skilled and artistic characters to absorb as much information as possible. Indeed, she requires time, experience, and effort to achieve her goal successfully as "to establish and maintain good rapport to be able to control the pace and direction of the conversation as needed, and to know how to follow up important issues" (**Johnson, 1992: 88**).

More importantly, "the interviews were considered a method of triangulation, a checking out the reliability of the data obtained from the questionnaire responses."

(Patton, 1990: 464) McDonough and McDonough(1997: 184) state that 'a structured interview' is considered as "being closer to the qualitative paradigm because it allows for richer interaction and more personalized responses".

The interview included some questions about the teaching and the learning of the English language in order to spot the problems and find out the solutions from teachers' views. Thus, most schools teachers, whom the researcher met, demonstrated great cooperation in completing the handout in time.

In short, this research instrument was adopted to extract information from the teachers' viewpoints, perceptions, and beliefs regarding the assessment of reading comprehension at the third-year secondary level, as well as to find convincing answers for the prior research questions.

### **3.3.4 Research Procedure**

The current section illustrates the procedure of data collection with the three instruments used: the reading comprehension test and the questionnaire were administered to pupils, and the interview was conducted with EFL teachers to prove the efficiency of the survey instruments, the researcher tried to be more accurate and precise while preparing and holding the three different tools.

As far as the test administration is concerned, thirty pupils were given several instructions beforehand regarding the sitting of the test, the nature of the study, and the tasks they will deal with. After doing this, we gave each pupil from the selected sample a copy of the test and reminded him or her to work independently in one hour and to raise any questions if there are some difficulties.

Regarding the questionnaire and the interview are not easy to be formulated, as they require much care, objectivity, and accuracy to get responses that are more reliable. Consequently, the researcher used his logical mind while preparing the questions so that to avoid all sorts of ambiguity and confusion and also not to affect the participants when answering.

#### **3.3.4.1 The Study Proper**

The researcher started with a reading comprehension test at the secondary schools in the city of Sidi Bel Abbes. She has chosen two different texts that conform to the current learning programme. She decided on the activities through which learners were supposed to be tested and how they would be assessed so that to measure their reading abilities accurately. The researcher was not allowed to use tape or video recorders except for her presence with test holders in the class. Thus, constructing a test is not an easy task, but it necessitates careful consideration about the choice of the text, the degree of difficulty, appropriateness, wording, timing, and setting. The researcher prepared suitable and non-threatening conditions in which the tests took place. Hence, it was explained for pupils that the test concerned research far from being graded for schooling evaluation.

A second instrument addressed to the third-year secondary school pupils was the questionnaire. Its major aim was to identify the difficulties pupils encounter in reading comprehension and the major assessment techniques they were exposed to in

relation to academic needs. Moreover, specific responses were extracted from respondents in which they expressed their concerns, worries, and expectations directly.

Having stated the two first procedures, the last tool was devoted to interviewing EFL teachers at secondary schools. Designing the structured interview enabled the researcher to set up multiple questions to elicit as much information as possible from the interviewees. Unfortunately, no record tape or dictaphone was used, but the interviewer asked the questions and the teachers replied. The researcher adopted the structured interview because there were a set of questions that require careful and exact answers from the participants as well as to gather consistent and comparable data. It was rather a closed discussion with the teachers. It enabled the researcher to take notes and write down the collected data.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The chapter includes a full description of the research design and a presentation of the research instruments that were adopted in the empirical phase of this study. Therefore, the data collection tools used for testing the research questions and hypotheses have been described. They include a reading comprehension test and a questionnaire for learners and structured interviews for teachers. The reading comprehension test is considered an important data tool to measure learners' reading comprehension. According to **Oakley(2011)**, reading comprehension is the desired result of reading and can be defined as the skill consideration in test development. As for **Ogan bekiroglu(2004)**, studies show that tests are the most widely used instruments for revealing students' comprehension of a subject or concept. Whereas the questionnaire is regarded as a data collection tool of a soft category (**McDonough, 1995**), it allowed gathering significant information on the learners. The use of triangulation research tools enables us to reveal and transcribe relevant assumptions and beliefs concerning teaching and assessment of reading comprehension in secondary schools as well as pedagogical inadequacies that entail the subject matter.

In short, data are collected through the above research instruments, and then the obtained results have been subjected to interpretation and discussion in the following chapter. The fourth chapter will analyse and discuss the results of each instrument according to the research questions and hypotheses previously raised.

# ***Chapter Four***

## ***Data Analysis and Interpretation***

*Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Interpretation*

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## **4.1 Introduction**

The current chapter aims to present significant perceptions through the data collected from the pupils and EFL teachers from secondary schools level regarding the framework of assessment of the reading comprehension skill, the role of assessment procedure in teaching, and the main difficulties that inhibit learners' comprehension of the reading texts.

To test the research hypotheses, the researcher used three means of data collection, a reading comprehension test, a pupils 'questionnaire, and teachers' interview to elicit information about the quality of assessment of reading comprehension at the secondary school level.

Having fulfilled the concept of triangulation in research; the researcher correlates responses of the participants to tackle all possible issues that surround assessment of reading in secondary schools notably third-year classes.

The research procedures of data collection were previously discussed in the previous chapter; whereas the analysis of the results will be illustrated and discussed in this chapter. Data analysis which is used in this case study corresponds to the research questions raised so far. It tries to depict as much information as possible about the expected objectives of the study.

Concerning the methodological process adopted in this case study, data was carefully analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. In this respect, most of the researchers agree that using more than one type of analysis enables us to obtain more consistent and reliable findings that meet the desired objectives.

## **4.2 Analysis of the Reading Comprehension Test**

This section is concerned with the analysis of the pupils' reading comprehension test to measure their comprehension and understanding of a reading passage. Then it examines the aspects that inhibit learners from doing well in the skill through the

papers that are collected, corrected, and graded out of 20 points (.../20) by the researcher herself.

#### 4.2.1 Design

Having designed the reading test, the researcher took into consideration the choice of the text which is in line with the teaching syllabus and programme purpose, familiar to pupils, suits their interest, and is appropriate to their language proficiency level.

It is, in fact, a diagnostic reading test that aims to measure pupils' abilities in reading at four different levels:

1. Pupils' ability in building an overall understanding of the reading material content.
2. Pupils' ability in using and applying reading strategies such as Skimming, scanning, and guessing.
3. To show how much pupils know about language structure and vocabulary and the ability to use these linguistic features properly.
4. The right use of pupils' background knowledge in solving reading-related problems.

More accurately, the test intends to identify the weaknesses and strengths of pupils concerning reading for comprehension subjects. Besides, to assess their ability to seize the gist, understand details, find specific information, guess the meaning of lexical items in context, and draw inferences from the text.

Type of test	Diagnostic test
Type of text	Expository
Text length	100 to 120 words
Activities	Eight
Time allowed	Forty-five (45) minutes

*Table 4.1: Reading Comprehension Test Design*

The test construction includes the following activities:

Activities	Descriptions
1	This activity aims to process the text quickly to choose the main idea of the text (skimming). It consists of multiple-choice questions (MCQ).
2	In this activity, pupils are asked to find out if statements are true or false.
3	The pupils are required to locate specific information in the text. (scanning).
4	In this activity, items are given to pupils whose tasks are to find their reference in the text; it is an information transfer activity (scanning).
5	It requires pupils to provide answers according to the text; it is also information transfer that relies on scanning strategy
6	It is related to vocabulary, it asks pupils to find in the text words or phrases closest in meaning to the ones given.
7.	It is a question design task, two sentences are given and pupils are required to supply WH- questions that the underlined words answer
8	It consists of a cloze procedure task in which pupils have to fill the gap by supplying the word they think has been deleted, and this activity aims to test pupils' overall understanding of the text

*Table 4.2 Task Design and Administration*

Stating the above descriptions of test construction, the researcher tried to verify her hypotheses

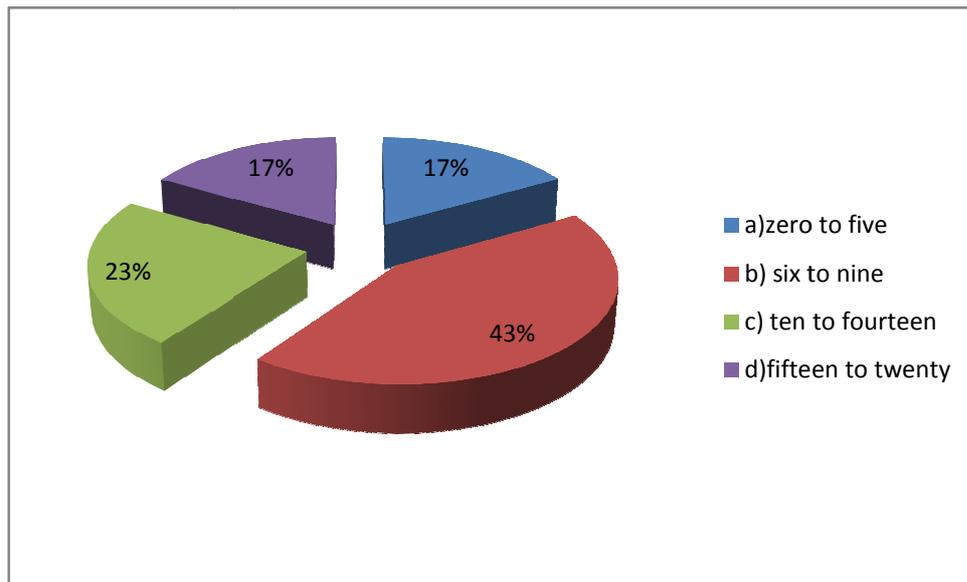
1. The vast majority of third-year EFL pupils display a weak level in reading.
2. The current teaching of reading does not provide pupils with adequate skills and strategies to overcome vocabulary difficulties.

### 4.2.2 Results and Interpretation

The frequencies and percentages of test scores of the whole group are presented in the table below.

Score / 20	Number	percentage
15-20	05	17%
10-14	07	23%
6-9	13	34%
0-5	05	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4.3:** Reading Comprehension Test Scores Frequencies and Percentages.



**Figure 4.1:** Pupils' Test Scores

Table 3.1 and chart 3.1 represent varying results. Thus, the highest percentage is displayed by 43% which means that the group under investigation has a low level as its greatest scores varied from 6 to 9 out of 20. If we further add 17% of those between zero to five, we obtained a total of 60% out of 20 below the average level. The following percentages cover 23% which includes 10 to 14 out of 20 and 17% which

encloses 15 to 20 out of 20; this means that the total percentages above the average level equal 40%.

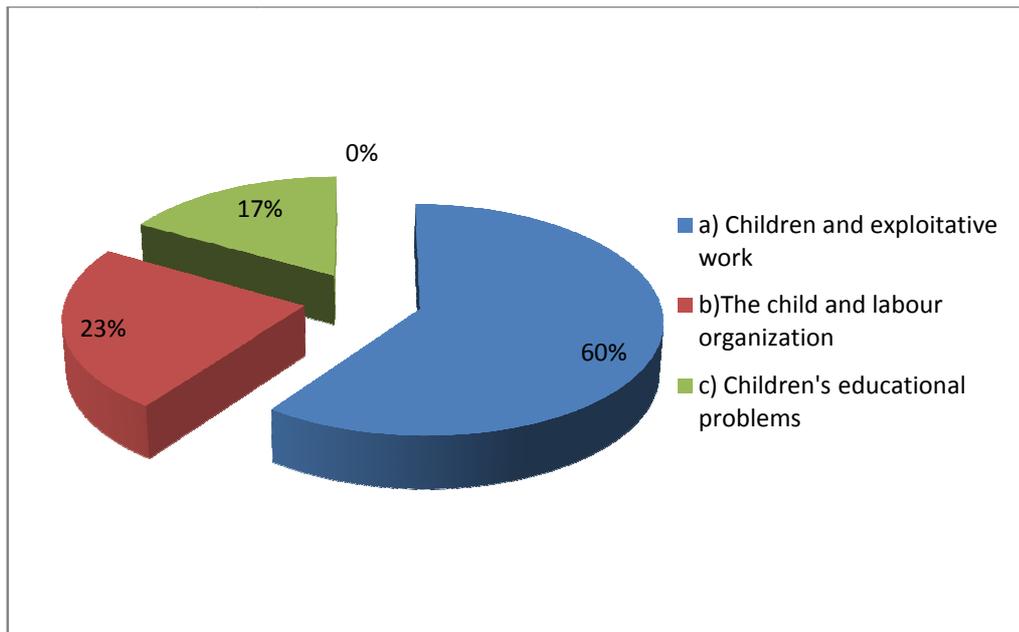
All in all the chart indicates that 60% of the pupils have a below –average level in reading in English, and the level of the rest pupils about 40% is rather average to high. As a result, we can cautiously conclude that the level of the whole group is relatively low. These early results appear to sustain the statement raised in the general introduction that third secondary school pupils meet some difficulties with reading comprehension.

The scores of the test varied from minimum/ 0 to maximum/ 20 and each question receives one point for the correct answer and zero point for the false one. The comprehension questions cover 11points; that is 55% out of the total score. Three points for the vocabulary items which are represented by 15 % of the total score, two points for asking questions (10%) of the total score, and finally four points for the cloze passage (20%) of the entire score. Now, we will tackle in a thorough analysis the test activities concerning the reading passage.

### **Activity 1: Multiple-choice Questions**

Read the text carefully. Then choose the main idea of the text.

- a. Children and exploitative work
- b. The child and labour organization
- c. Children’s educational problems

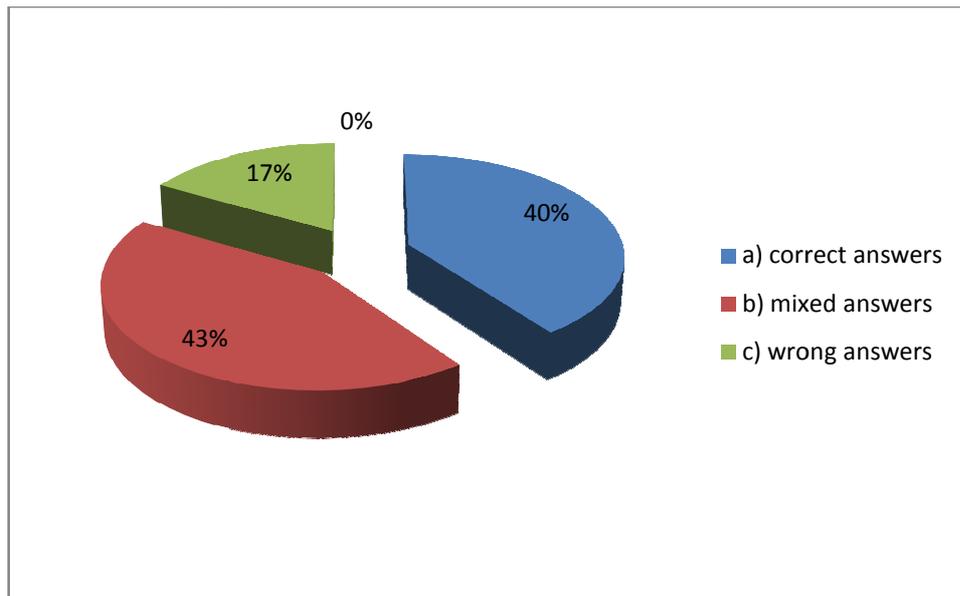


**Figure 4.2:** Pupils' selection of the main idea of the text

The multiple-choice activity was used to assess the respondents' comprehension of the text. Hence pupils skimmed through the text to depict the main idea. The results in chart 3.2 clearly revealed that 60% of the pupils did rather well in this task, against 40% who performed poorly.

**Activity 2:** Say whether the following statements are true or false according to the text.

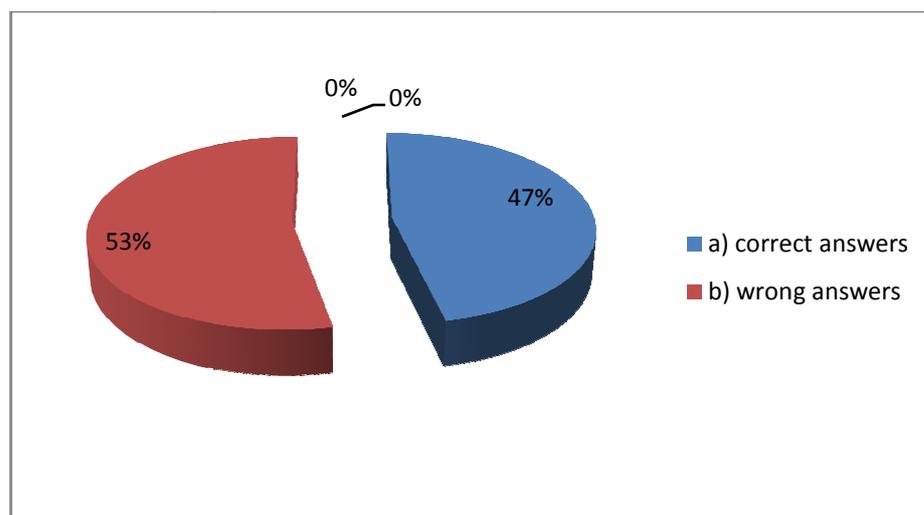
- a. Children's work is always harmful.
- b. The number of African children involved in work is higher than the one in Latin America.
- c. Poverty is considered the only cause of child labour.



**Figure 4.3:** Pupils' Answers of True/ False Statements

Activity two was reading for general information in which pupils were asked to find whether statements were true or false. Chart 3.3 indicates that 40% of the pupils managed successfully to find correct answers; whereas 43% of them arrived at mixed answers and 17% did badly in finding any correct answer. These results confirm our hypotheses that our pupils confront some obstacles with reading comprehension mainly in identifying correct and wrong sentences.

**Activity 3:** In which paragraph is it mentioned that children are involved in exploitative work?



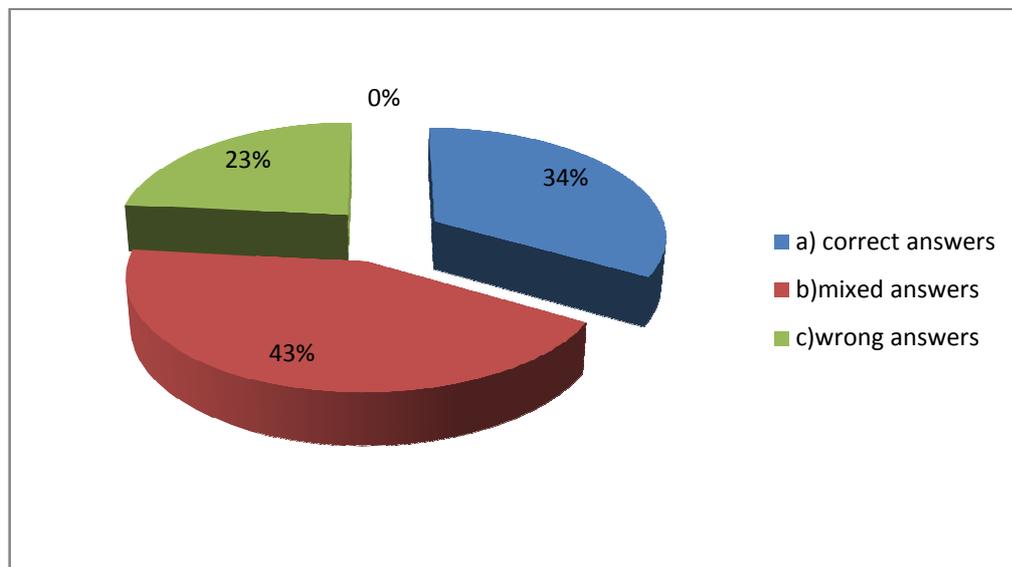
**Figure 4.4:** Pupils' Findings of the Right paragraph

Activity three implied reading for specific ideas. Participants were asked to find in which paragraph the idea was mentioned. We notice in the above chart 3.4 that 47% of the pupils found the right paragraph in opposition to 53% who failed in the task. This frequency ascertains that pupils still have some deficiencies in dealing with reading notably in locating the number of paragraphs.

**Activity 4:** What or who do the underlined words refer to in the text?

That ( §1)

b) their ( §4)

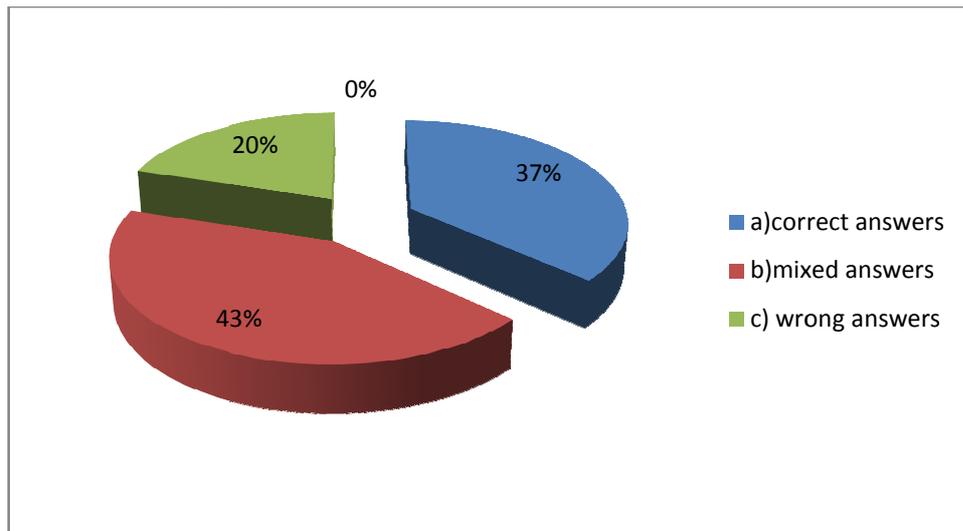


**Figure 4.5:** Pupils' answers to Reference Words

Activity four stood for reading for details. Pupils were asked to find reference words; thus, 34% of them did efficiently against 43% with mixed answers and 23% with totally wrong answers. We perceive here again that our respondents assert our hypotheses that reading texts in English is something challenging.

**Activity 5:** Answer the following questions according to the text.

1. What does child labour mean?
2. Which continents are concerned with child labour?
3. What are the causes behind child labour?



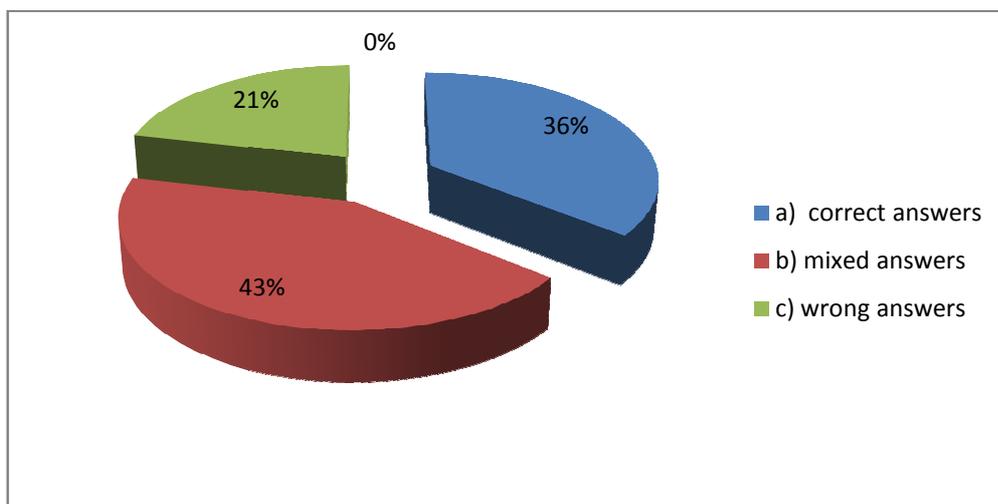
**Figure 4.6:** Pupils' answers to the Questions

Activity five was also reading for specific information in which pupils were given three comprehension questions to find their right answers. In this respect, only 37% performed successfully, against 53% who failed moderately or completely in finding details of the text.

In short, reading for details is another burden that pupils suffer from, for they cannot identify the specific piece of information they were asked to look for.

**Activity 6:** Find in the text words or phrases closest in meaning to the following:

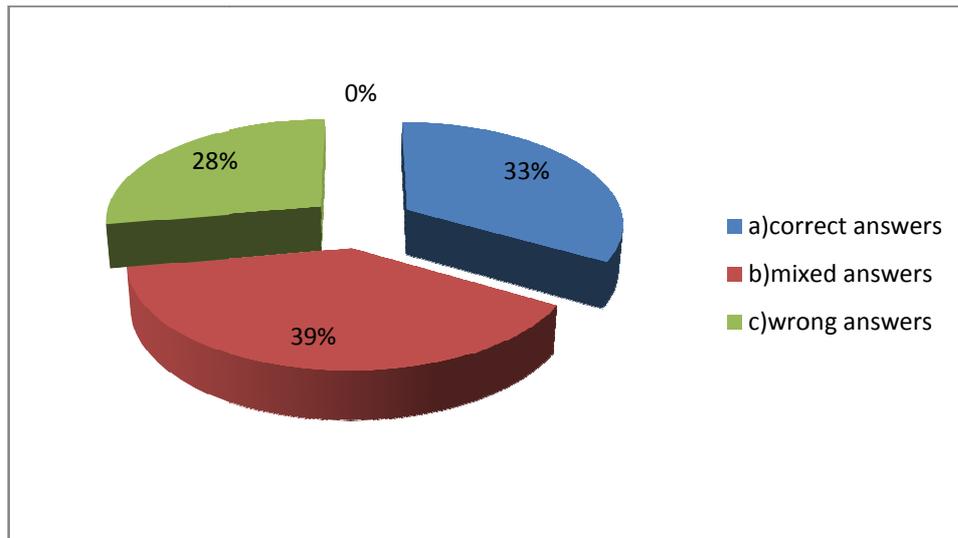
- Safe ( §2)                      b) in addition ( § 3)                      c) unsuitable ( §4)



**Figure 4.7:** Pupils' answers to Vocabulary Items

Coming up to vocabulary, it is the activity to look for words or phrases closest in meaning to the ones given. Chart 3.7 reveals quite well the results; the percentage who got average to above average scores is 36%. On the other hand, 64% failed in doing the task and could not extract words in context.

**Activity 7:** Ask the questions that the underlined words answer.



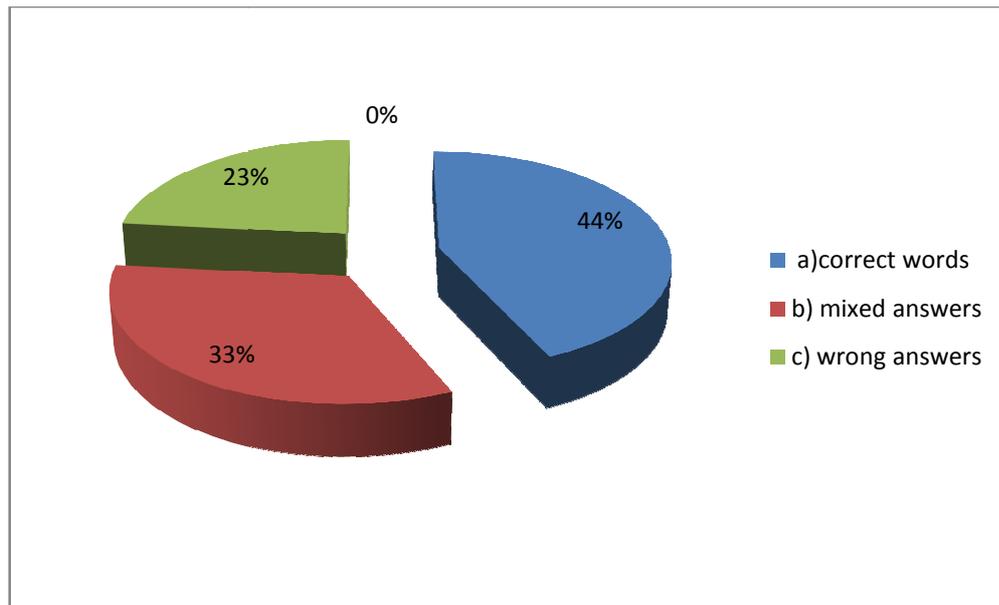
*Figure 4.8: Pupils' questions Building*

Question building was another task that participants were asked to perform in order to check their abilities in question design. Surprisingly, only 33% of test-takers fairly succeed in the task against 67% who partly or entirely perform negatively. It is another sign that supports our hypotheses about pupils' inaptitude in dealing with reading and comprehension.

**Activity 8:** Fill in the gaps with four words from the list.

Schools- illegal- poverty- due- think

Child labour is a worldwide issue. It is.....(1).....to overpopulation, unemployment and especially to...(2).....Parents have to send their children doing...(3)..... Works rather than studying. If they..... (4)..... that this brings them the happiness they are mistaken.



**Figure 4.9:** Pupils' Gaps Filling

Activity eight is about gap filling. Test-takers were asked to select four words out of five to measure their logical choice of the right item according to meaning. Effectively, 44% of them were able to find the right answers, whereas 56% of the participants' answers were not satisfactory.

### 4.3 Analysis of Pupils Questionnaire

The current section is devoted to the analysis of the data collected from the pupils' questionnaire. We wanted to perceive how third-year secondary pupils assume and understand their reading, which is an important skill that correlates an interaction between the text and the readers' existing knowledge to have a better understanding of the text and a good level of reading proficiency. We also desired to identify their problematic areas during reading to provide assistance, help reduce worries and try to remedy the problem. For this purpose, a questionnaire was addressed to third-year secondary pupils in the city of Sidi Bel Abbes

#### 4.3.1 Design

The choice of the questionnaire as the second research tool relied on the fact that it is a reflective instrument of data collection. It includes multiple-choice

questions, which were carefully prepared and simplified to suit pupils' language proficiency level. The completion of the questionnaire took ten to fifteen minutes under the teacher's supervision to make things clear and avoid all kinds of inquiries. It was accomplished, and given back at an overall rate of 80 %. It included two hundred and forty pupils from different schools in Sidi Bel Abbas, but only one hundred and twenty were completed properly and then could have been used for this investigation.

The purpose of the questionnaire in this investigation is to elicit information about three different areas of interest:

1. Students' motivations towards learning English. Illustrated in questions 1,2,3, 4,5,6.
2. Their attitudes towards the reading comprehension skill. Illustrated in questions 7, 8, 9,10,11,12.
3. Their beliefs about classroom assessment concerning reading. Illustrated in questions 13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20

The pupils' questionnaire was developed to obtain information from learners to gain a practical adjustment in the way EFL learners experience the learning of the reading skill.

### **4.3.2 Results and Interpretation**

#### **▪ Findings Concerning the Motivation Level**

The first six research questions aimed at investigating the level of motivation among pupils in learning English at Zeddour Ibrahim School.

**Question 1:** Do you enjoy learning English? , or do you feel obliged to learn it?

To measure pupils' attitudes towards learning English, or they simply feel compelled to do so as it is an obligatory subject in the curriculum; the data revealed in pie-chart 3.1 show that pupils have a strong tendency towards learning English not only because it is included in the educational prospectus, but it is the subject that

represents a sign of modern civilization, the language of scientific research and a means of mass communication in the globalized world.

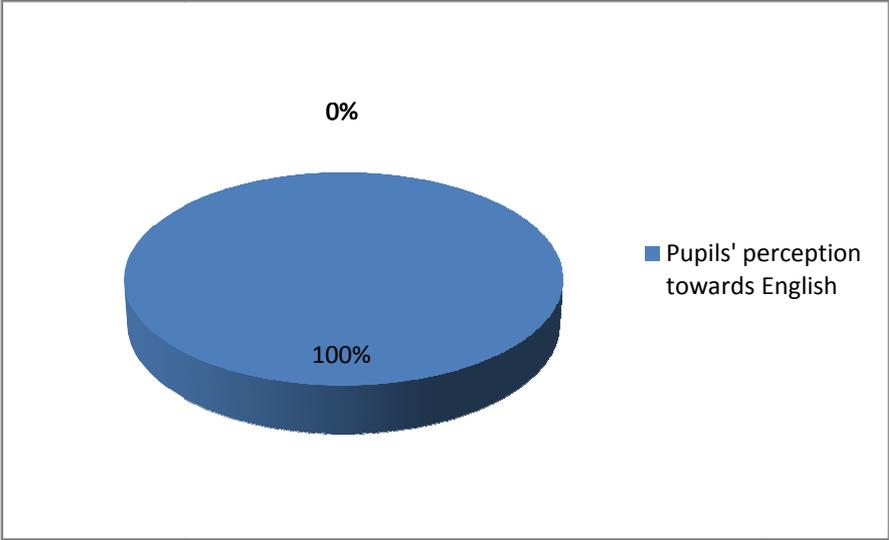
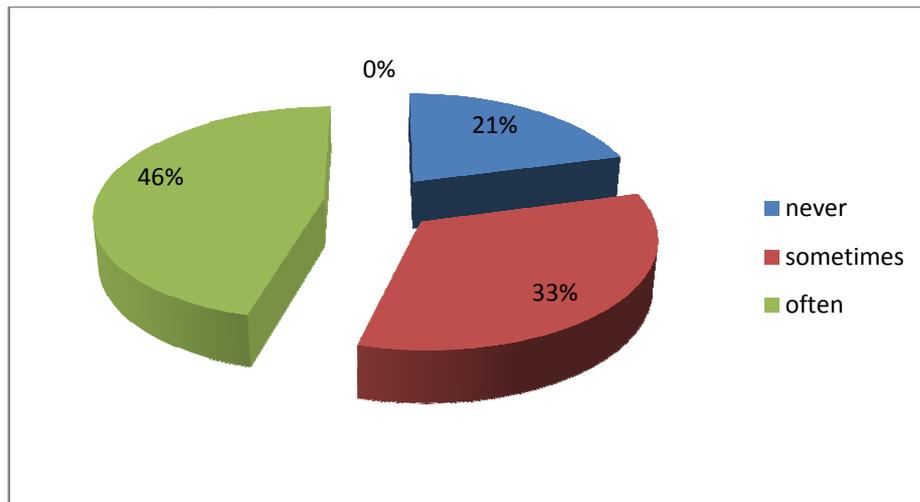


Figure 4.10: Pupils' perception towards English

**Question2:** Do you place English among the important subjects to revise?

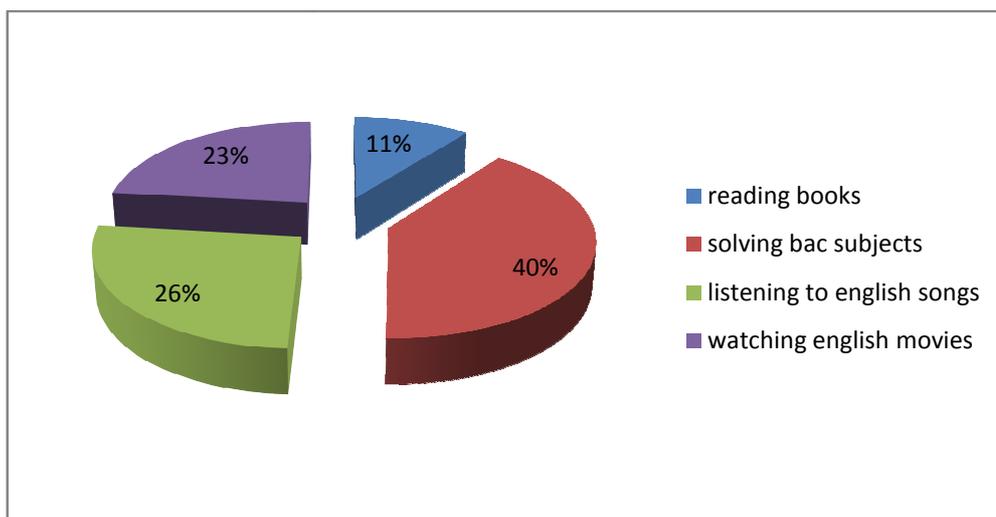
To detect pupils' readiness if they consider English as an important subject to revise. The results are demonstrated in pie chart 3.2 in which 46% often revised their English, whereas 33% sometimes did depend on the studying circumstances if they had something to prepare such as home works or projects or preparation for the examination. On the other hand, only 21 % stated that they never put English as the most important subject to revise. As a result, most of the pupils give English a considerable ratio among other subjects they receive during the educational curriculum.



**Figure 4.11:** Revision of English

**Question3:** Do you consider other sources to develop your English?

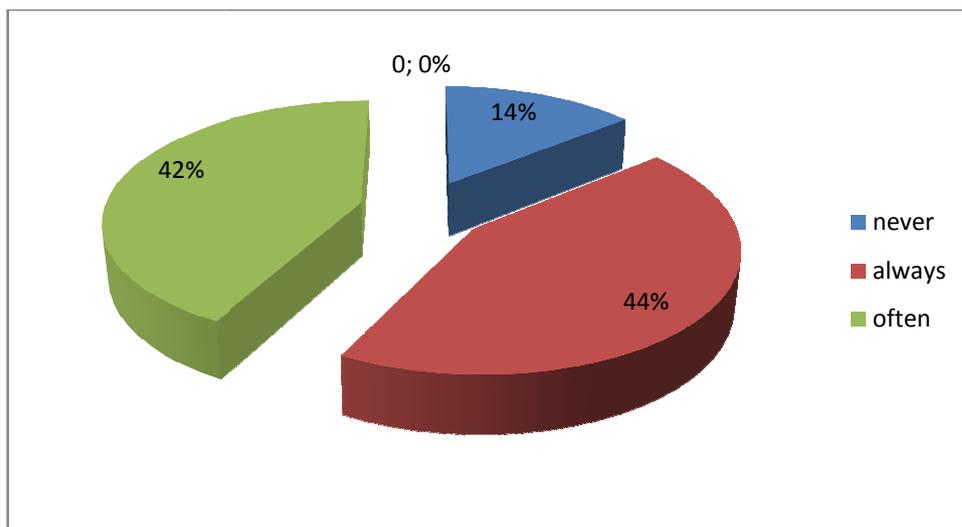
To find out if pupils take the advantage to improve their English by using other sources rather than the class; the outcomes are displayed in pie chart 3. 3 indicating 40% of the informants solved previous baccalaureate examination to develop their comprehension of texts and so their vocabulary items, 26% preferred listening to English songs whereas 23 % enjoyed watching English movies so that to learn the language in context as they claimed, a ratio of only 11 % develop their language via reading books. This activity is continuously diminishing among our learners. Therefore, all of the pupils attempt to extend their language in a way or another.



**Figure 4.12:** Multiple Sources to Develop Engli

**Question 4:** Do you participate freely in the class or does your teacher compel you to do so?

Having asked pupils these questions, the results in chart 3.4, indicate diverge frequencies among pupils in the sense that 44% of the respondents always participated, for English is their favourite subject, and the class is the unique place where they can practised the language orally. On the other hand, 42% of the participants articulated that they often took active roles in the class depending on circumstances such as the theme of the unit if it is interesting or not, the mood of the learner, the atmosphere of the class, and the attitude of the teacher towards his pupils. The Least percentage of 14% belongs to those who never contributed in the class session because they feel anxious while doing so. All in all, pupils' participation varies according to pedagogical and psychological factors.

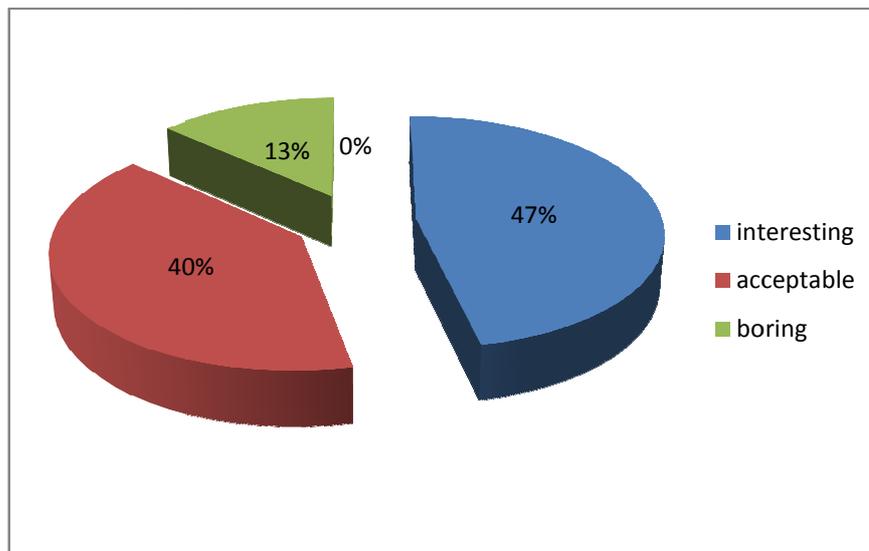


**Figure 4.13:** Participation in English classroom

**Question5:** Do you find the way of learning English satisfactory, acceptable, or boring?

In an attempt to know about pupils' impressions regarding the way of learning English, chart 3.5 demonstrates that 47% of them pointed out that the manner of receiving the lessons is interesting, since the teacher meets their personal needs, 40% found it acceptable as they acquire the notion of the language and are capable of

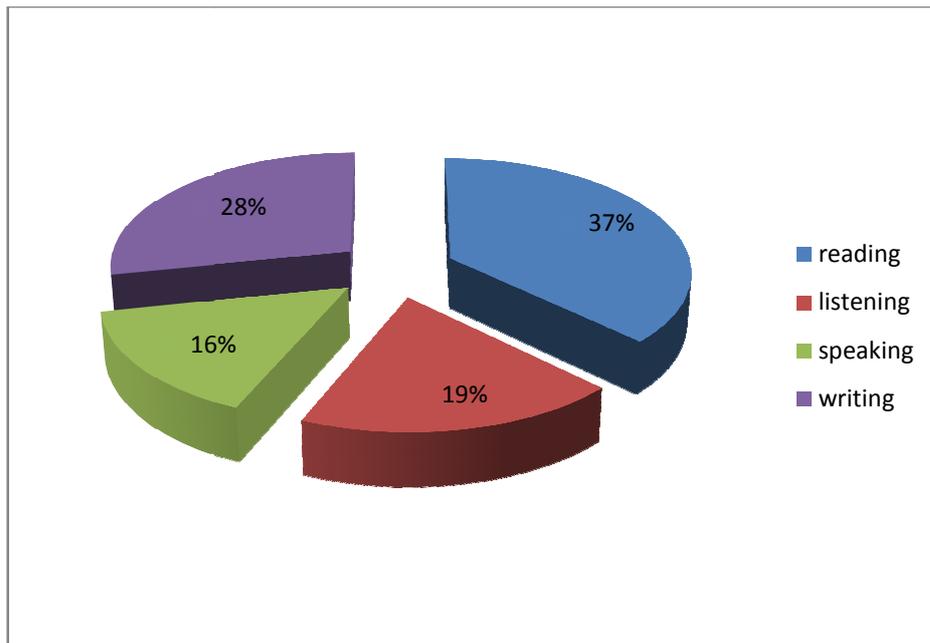
solving baccalaureate subjects, and only 13% stated that the hours of English lessons are boring because they feel that they are doing just tasks and activities but no learning. In short, learners' impression about learning the language differs from one category to another depending on teachers' personalities, the way of presenting the lessons, and the extent of involving pupils in the learning process.



**Figure 4.14:** *The impression about the way of Learning English*

**Question 6:** Which of the skills do you consider beneficial for your education?

To elicit information about the skill that learners find advantageous for their learning, 37% announced that reading was the most important skill as their baccalaureate English examination includes a reading text with comprehension questions; so, they need to be successful in that skill. Whereas, 28 % mentioned that writing was an outstanding skill since it gave them the possibility to express themselves while writing paragraphs ,or communicating through the net.19% claimed that listening must not be disregarded for it permitted them to understand the language notably from native speakers when matters deal with news or English songs, and the least amount of 16 % admitted that speaking was so significant that it made the discourse between interlocutors successful. Therefore, we conclude that reading and writing gain great value because pupils are prepared for a written examination.

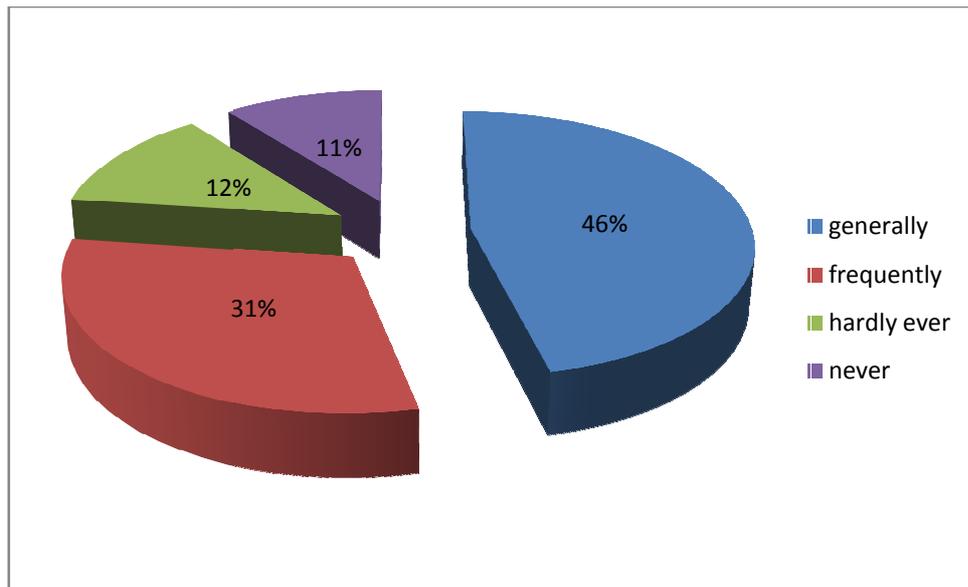


*Figure 4.15: The Importance of the Skills*

- **Findings concerning attitudes towards the reading comprehension skill.**

**Question 7:** Do you associate your prior knowledge while you are reading a text?

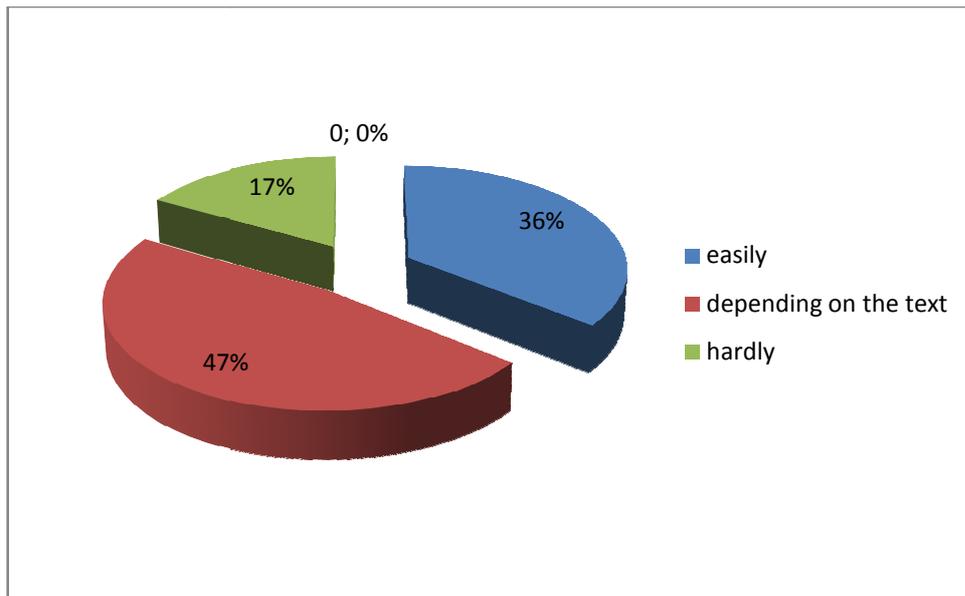
Having spotted this point, the aim is to know whether pupils apply their previous knowledge during reading a text or not. Chart 3.7 exhibits the results in which 46% of the participants said that they generally related their background knowledge with the current one and created a sort of interaction with the text they were dealing with. However, 31% of them answered they frequently used; they added that what they possessed was not compatible with what they found .12% of the subjects replied that they hardly ever used their prior knowledge simply because they ignored how to correlate between the previous and the latest one. Similarly, 11% added that they never employed such knowledge because they lacked them. As a result, pupils who associate both previous and recent knowledge demonstrate greater success in their learning than the ones who do not.



*Figure 4.16: The Use of Prior Knowledge while Reading*

**Question 8:** During reading, can you extract details and specific information easily?

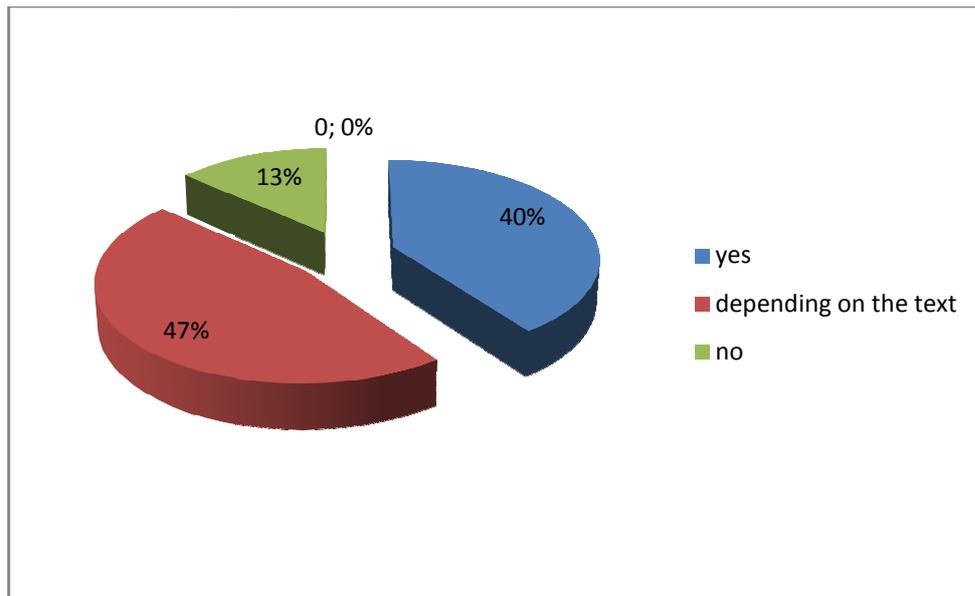
The focus on this point is to identify if pupils manage to obtain details easily from the text they are reading. 36% of them claimed they could easily get the information because they are more acquainted with English vocabulary as they have the habit to read more in English. On the other hand, 47% responded that they could get information depending on the difficulty of the text; whether it contains familiar items and treats a common theme. Only 17% said they could not extract information easily, but they need to re-read the text to satisfy their need. Thus, pupils who are equipped with vocabulary items are more successful than those who are not for understanding a written script depends on knowing the word.



**Figure 4.17:** *The Way of Extracting Information*

**Question 9:** Can you guess the meaning of words in contexts using clues?

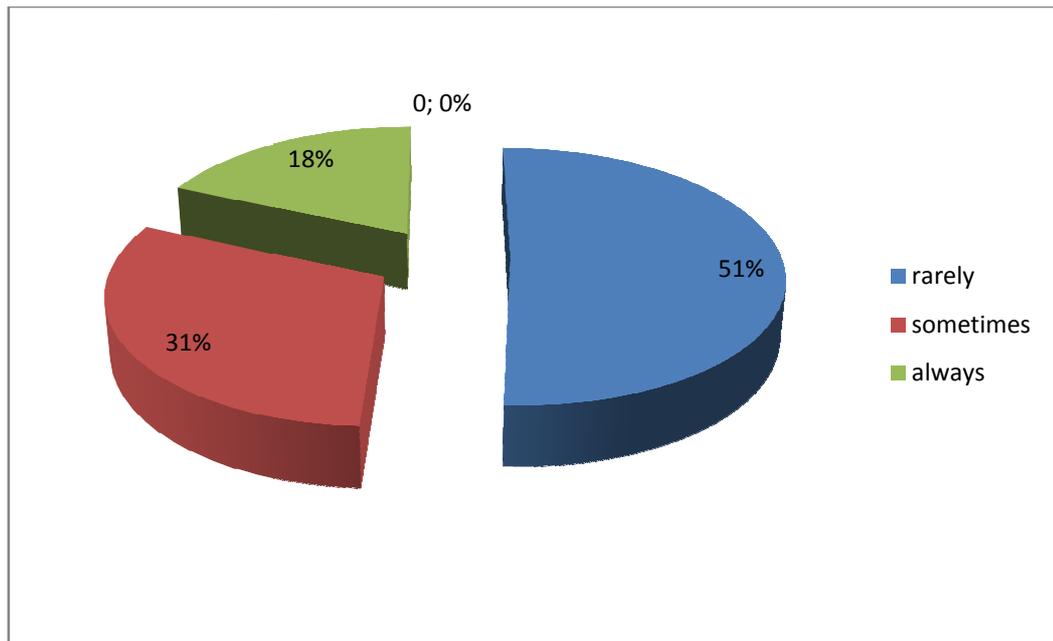
The aim of asking this question is to know whether pupils guess the meaning of vocabulary items using clues or not. 40% of them indicated that using clues is the best way to understand vocabulary items and so to get the meaning of the text. These clues could be used either through dividing the word into roots and affixes or through understanding meaning in context. 47% claimed that they used clues depending on the nature of the text; that is, if it contains common words that they are acquainted with, or the theme of the text is manageable. The least percentage of 13% confessed that they neither use clues nor try to understand the meaning. They lack prior knowledge and ignore the fact of using such criteria to become closer to the text. Consequently, pupils with background information who could derive words from their roots and extract meaning from context are more successful in dealing with the reading passage than those who do not use clues.



*Figure 4.18: Guessing Meaning of Words Using clues*

**Question 10:** Do unfamiliar vocabulary items inhibit your understanding?

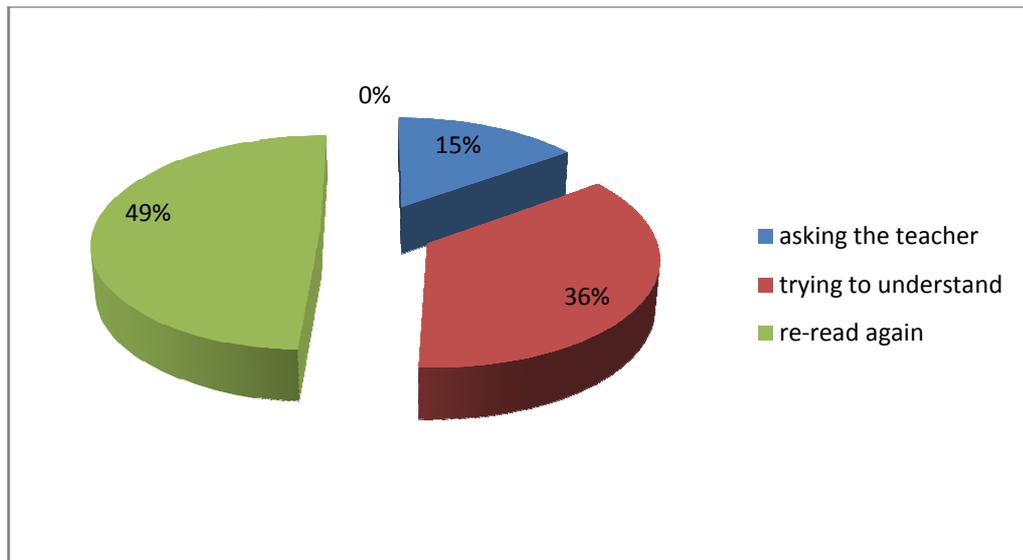
Since vocabulary items are the key elements to understand any written script, it is important to ask pupils if unfamiliar words prevent them from perceiving the meaning of any text. Pupils demonstrate various responses according to pie-chart 3.10. Most of them with a percentage of 51% rarely unfamiliar items inhibit their understanding; the given texts are generally comprehensible as they are provided with glossary items beforehand. Whereas, 31% of the informants mentioned that sometimes find it difficult to comprehend a text for it contains unknown vocabulary that they have never met before. The least percentage of 18%, pupils claimed that vocabulary items always inhibit their comprehension especially if the text is too long. They would be lost as they could not make connotations between ideas. Therefore, including common items with short texts help learners to understand better and facilitate the process of reading.



**Figure 4.19:** *Inhibition of Understanding due to Unknown Vocabulary*

**Question11:** When you do not understand a long sentence, do you stop reading, ask your teacher for help or do you re-read again?

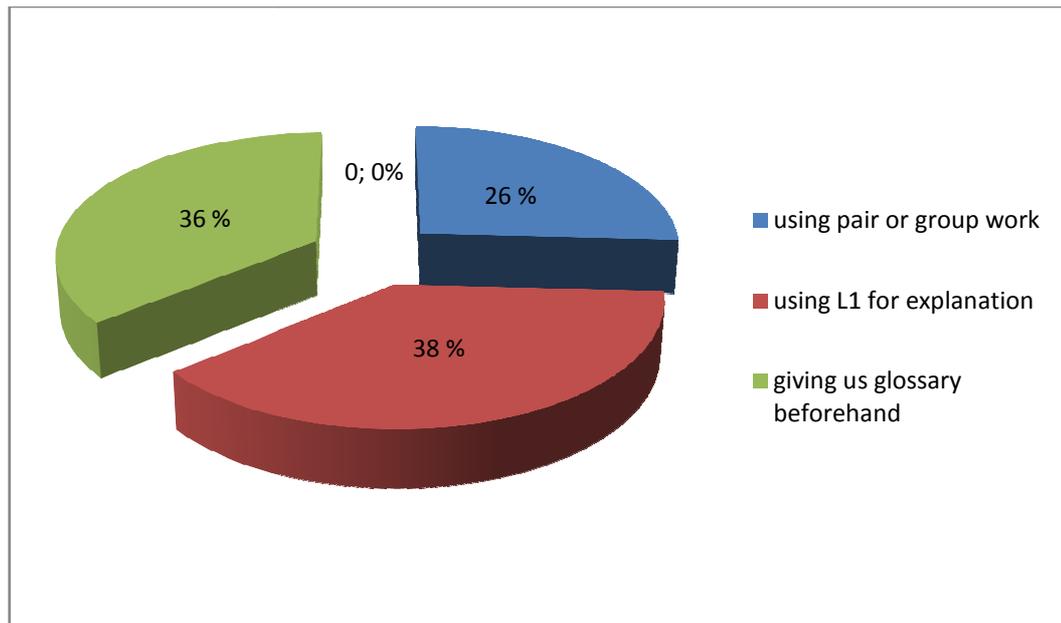
Having spotted light on this question, it is to know whether learners make an effort to understand the reading passage through splitting its long sentences into units to obtain the desirable meaning or not. Certainly, 49% of them re-read again until they got the significance of the idea while 36% try to understand through once reading as they are accustomed to reading in English. However, 15% said that they find it hard to understand long sentences without the help of their teacher. Essentially, this result proved that learners prefer concise sentences to understand the text easily and to motivate them to read more and learn better.



**Figure 4.20:** Dealing with Long Sentences

**Question 12:** How do you expect your teacher to teach you reading to understand the text better?

Asking such a question is to identify pupils' intention about learning reading and the best way to help them to deal successfully with the text. Identifying learners' expectancies would certainly facilitate the process of learning as they could satisfy their needs. In this context, 26% of the participants pointed out that learning through pair and group work is the perfect way to understand the text for interaction stimulates them to make things clear. By contrast, 36% admitted that teachers should provide them with glossaries of the text beforehand in which all the keywords are translated into Arabic (L1). Therefore, they could easily understand the text and would acquire new vocabulary. Similarly, 38% of them added that using L1 for explanation and illustration of any sort of ambiguity would surely support their comprehension. Thus, learners assured that introducing L1 in the class is the key to their reading troubles.

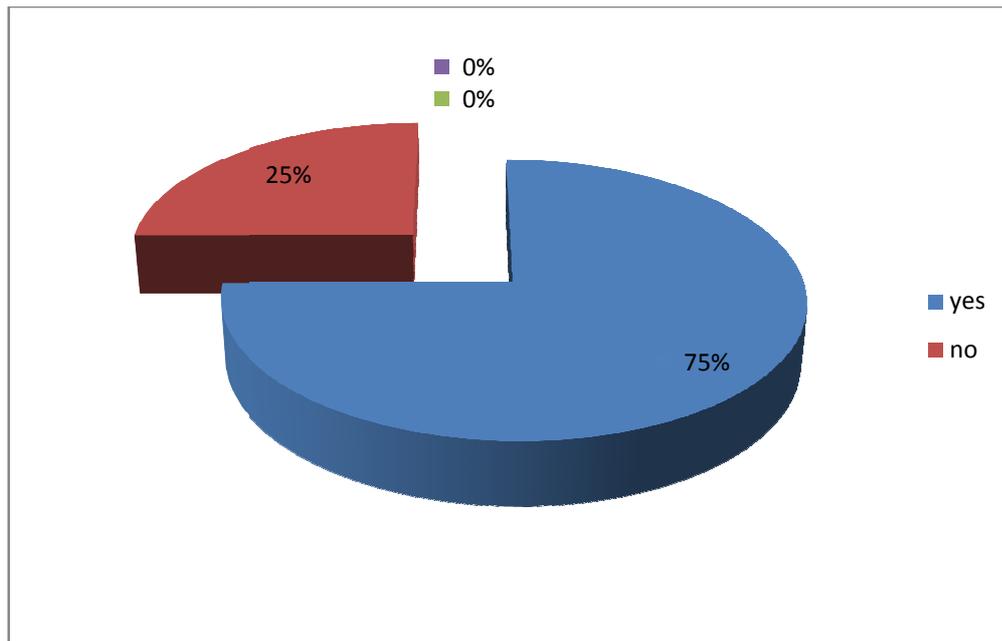


*Figure 4.21: Learners' Expectations about Learning Reading*

▪ **Findings concerning beliefs about assessment of reading**

**Question 13:** Does your teacher prepare you to handle a reading comprehension test?

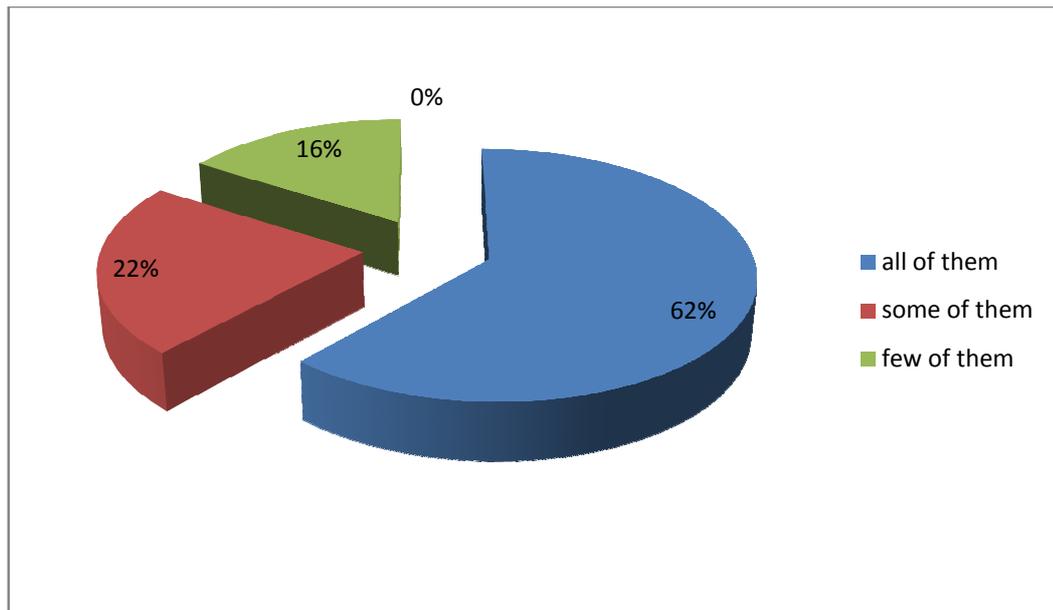
Since the area of research is the assessment of reading, it is important to measure pupils' willingness to handle a reading comprehension test. The results indicate that 75% of learners received enough practice in the class. As they proclaimed, they are exposed to a variety of tasks and activities, and some of them mentioned that they receive a list of instructions that are related to reading comprehension at the beginning of the year. The least category of 25% said that they did not obtain adequate practice of reading tasks, neither training activities. Hence, they found themselves unable to handle the reading comprehension test. To this point, we conclude that pupils who deal quite well with the tasks are better prepared for the reading test than those who do not.



*Figure 4.22: Pupils' Preparation for the Test*

**Question 14:** During a test, do you answer all the questions or skip some of them?

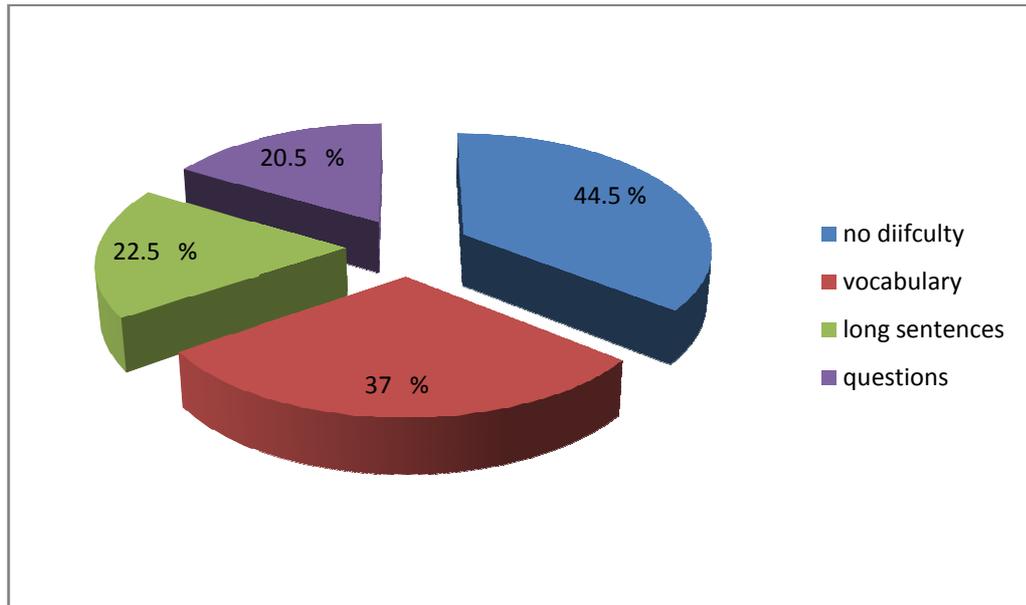
The issue is not less significant as it determined the subjects' tendency toward answering all the questions during a test. The data presented in pie-chart 3.14 indicate that a great majority of pupils ( 62%) pointed out that they answered all the questions even if they were not sure of the answers, they tried to do their best. On the other hand,22% admitted that they answered some of the questions as they did not understand the instruction or the text. Additionally,16% of them said that they answered a few of the questions for they spent many times reading the text without getting meaning as they lack background knowledge, vocabulary items, and training strategies to deal with the reading comprehension test.



**Figure 4.23:** Answering Questions during a Test

**Question 15:** What difficulties do you meet during reading when taking a test?

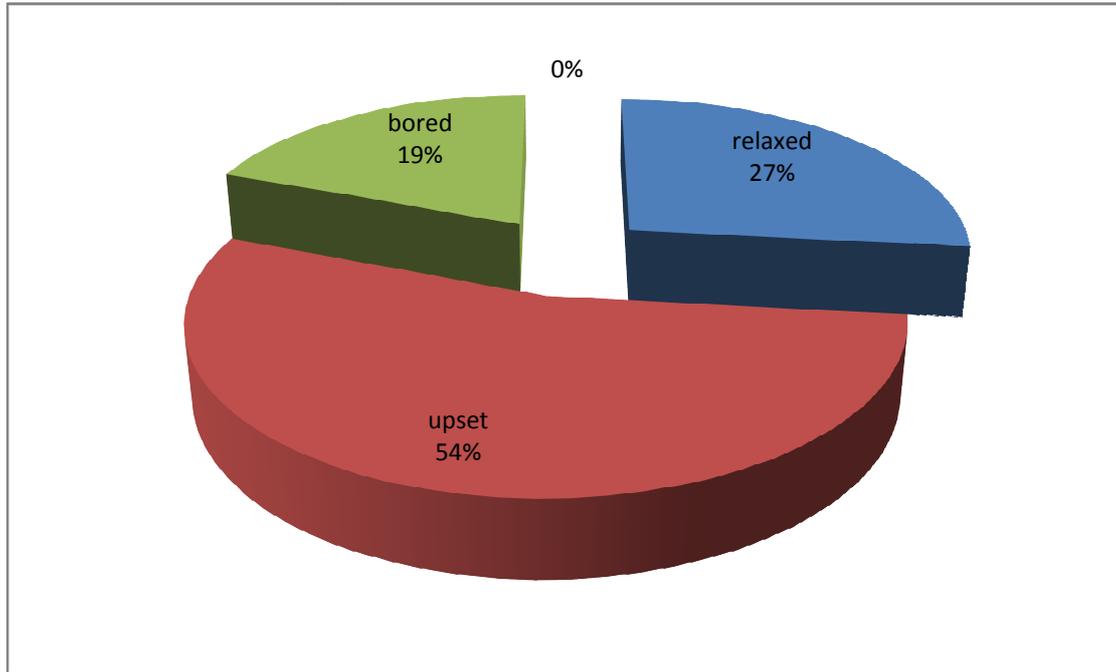
This question is of paramount importance as it identifies the main difficulties that pupils meet while holding a reading test. The results are demonstrated in chart 3.15 in which 44.5% showed no difficulty as they continuously revise and practise their English. On the other hand, 37% replied that vocabulary knowledge impedes them from dealing well in the test, they added when they did not know the word they felt anxious and lost the meaning of the text. 22.5% of the subjects admitted that long and complex sentences constituted an obstacle during a test, they found it hard to decipher the meaning quickly; so, they spent more time reading. Meanwhile, 20% proclaimed that instructions caused a dilemma for providing a correct answer for they did not practise fair enough the type of questions they encountered during a test. As a result, the lack of both vocabulary knowledge and instruction practice engendered reading failure.



*Figure 4.24: Difficulties Pupils Meet during a Test*

**Question 16:** What is your feeling when you are assessed?

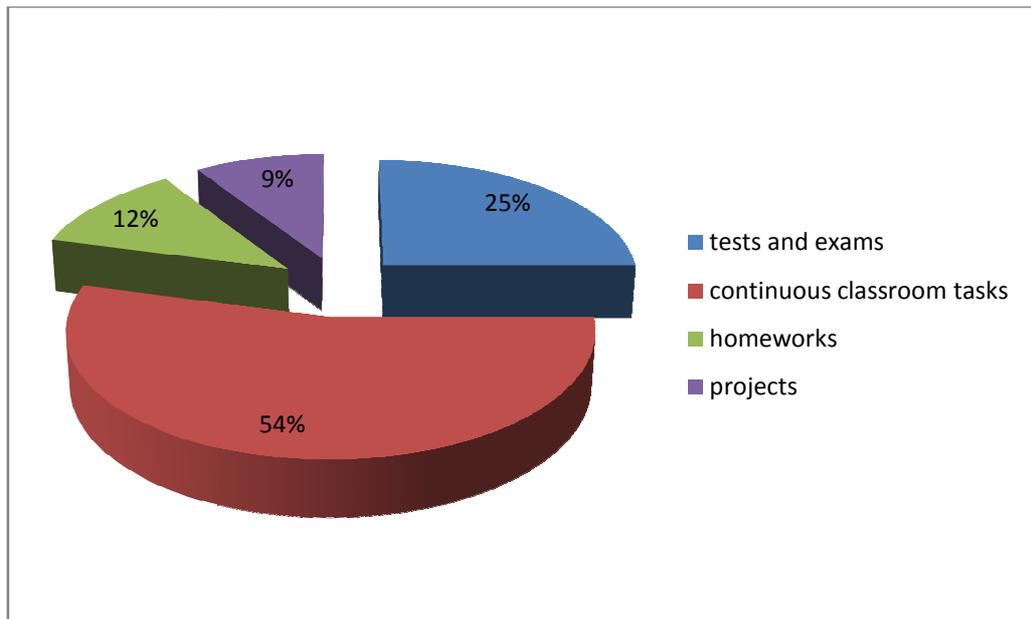
Concerning this issue, it is quite significant to identify learners' impressions during an assessment. The results varied from one category to another, the chart 3.16 demonstrates that 27% of the school subjects felt relaxed and more confident as they showed great success in the test. However, 54% of them experienced critical anxiety during assessment for fear of getting insufficient results, which might perplex them among their peers. Only 19% of the participants felt bored as they generally did not do well with the subject they underwent and they added that their learning did not take place. Essentially, the impact of assessment on learners affects their learning in a way or another.



*Figure 4.25: The Impact of Assessment on Pupils*

**Question 17:** What kind of assessment do you find practical to adjust your learning?

As far as this question is concerned, the participants provided various responses in order to adjust their learning through different kinds of assessments. A minority of 10% of them considered projects as the best means to develop their learning, in the same run 11% regarded that home works helped them better to meet their requirements and enhance their learning. 25% of them resumed that tests and exams managed their learning positively for they provide them with accurate results of their achievements. A great majority of learners nearly 54% favoured continuous classroom tasks as the most practical assessment to regulate their learning and fulfill their expectations.



*Figure 4.26: Learners’ opinions about the types of assessment*

**Question 18:** Do you make any self-assessment before getting assessed by the teacher?

Getting aware of the effectiveness of self-assessment, learners could improve their performance by articulating their expectations, needs, and their worries. Indeed, they would feel more confident about themselves as they could monitor their learning opportunities independently. Therefore, 69% approved self-assessment and made it part of their learning process, whereas 31% disregarded the procedure. These results justify that the majority of learners valued self-assessment as a factor of self-judgment and self-regulation, which motivate them to do better and meet their requirements. On the other hand, some of our learners are not much acquainted with the process of self-assessment, as they cannot reveal their weaknesses to receive practical feedback and corrective actions.

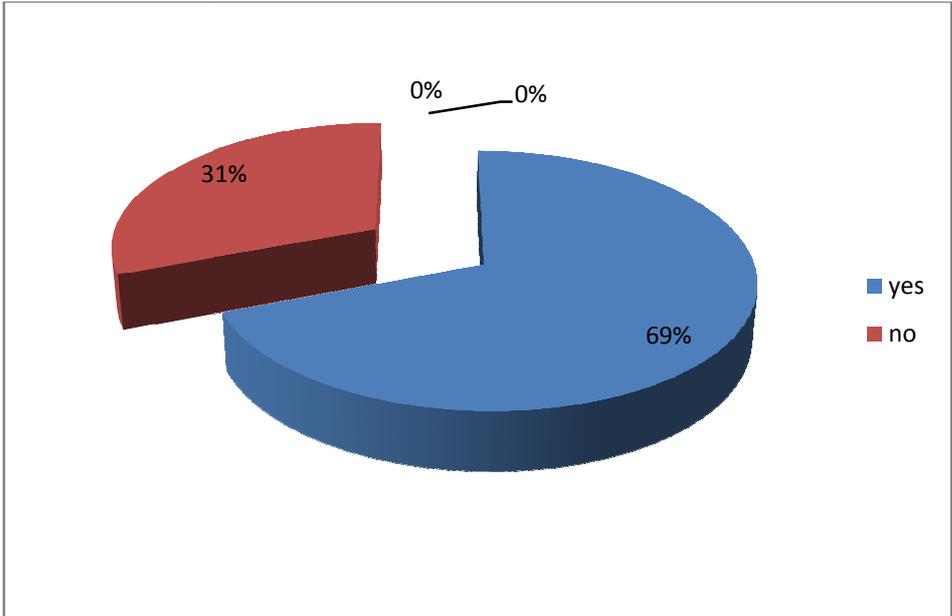
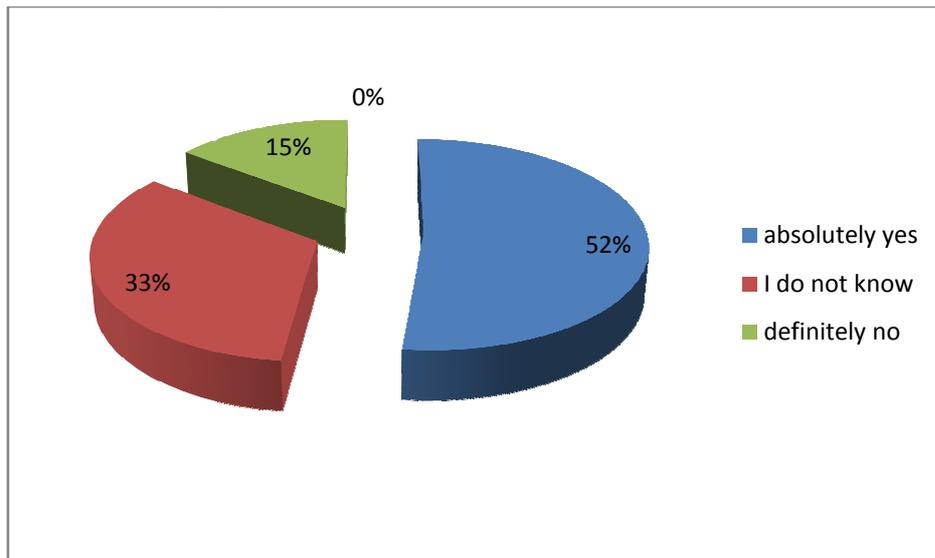


Figure 4.27: Pupils Self-Assessment

**Question 19:** Does your teacher’s assessment improve your reading skill and so your A9learning opportunities?

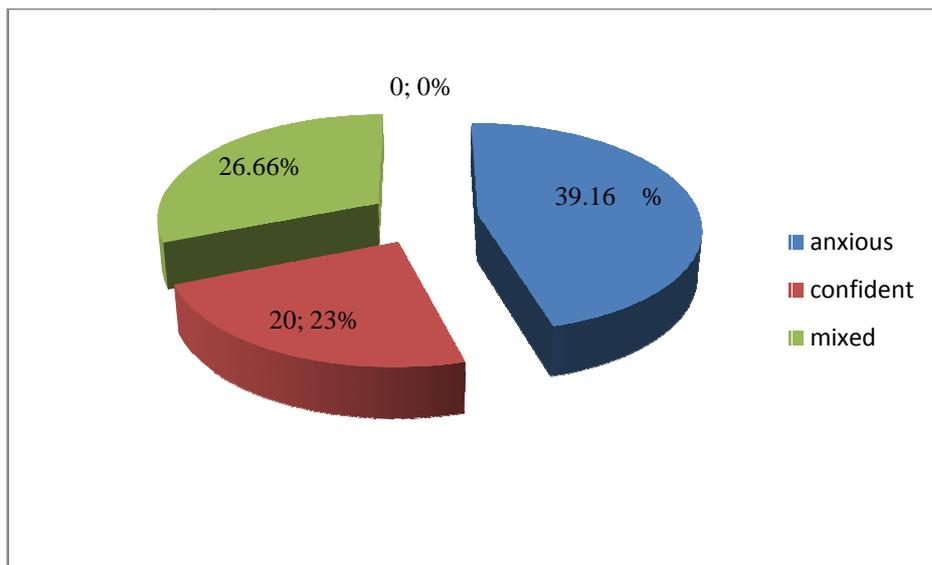
The rationale aim behind this question is to depict pupils' impressions about their teachers' assessment and the role it plays in improving their learning outcomes. According to the following data, 52% of the informants absolutely agreed that assessment developed their reading skill and so their attainment, whereas 33% of them ignored whether assessment enhanced their reading abilities or not. The rest percentage of 15% guaranteed that assessment did not contribute to their learning, as they did not consider their teachers' feedback.



**Figure 4.28:** Pupils' Impressions about their Teachers' Assessment

**Question 20:** How do you feel after being assessed: confident or anxious?

Assessment has a great influence on learners mainly in tests and exams. However, this impact varies from one category to another in the sense that 39.16% of the participants felt anxious after being assessed for they did not demonstrate the best of themselves. Whereas 20.23% felt at ease and more confident and they admitted that their focus was on learning, and how to become successful learners. Respectively, 26.66% of the subjects shared both anxiety and confidence depending on their personal achievement and the results they obtained.



**Figure 4.29:** Pupils' Reaction after Assessment

## **4.4 Teachers' Interview Results**

The teachers' interview was administered to thirty EFL secondary school teachers from different lycées in Sidi Belabbes. The ultimate goal of this research instrument ,was to identify teachers' perception about the teaching of reading and the assessment of learners' reading abilities within the Competency-Based Approach (CBA), and to extract valuable information and views that impede learners' achievement in dealing with the text, as well as to obtain the main solutions that enhance pupils to be successful learners and involved in the process of learning.

### **4.4.1 Design**

Teachers are the cornerstones of teaching and learning. The most common role they assume in the class is to teach knowledge to pupils and provide them with skills and strategies to cope with different learning situations. That is why a structured interview was addressed to EFL teachers. It was designed to focus on the factors that are correlated with the reading comprehension assessment. These factors imply the different testing techniques that unveil pupils' reading capacities and the role of reading assessment in designing appropriate instruction to satisfy learners' requirements, for the more we know about pupils, the better we meet their needs.

The interview was in English and lasted 15 to 20 minutes. The teachers' structured interview consists of thirteen questions (see appendix 3). They are followed by a thorough analysis of all the answers that were carried out to extract the most relevant finding and supply rational interpretations. The output yielded by the teacher are explored and examined according to the following features:

- Experience in teaching English. Illustrated in question 1.
- Teaching methodology( skills and strategies). Illustrated in questions 2,3,4,5
- EFL teachers' difficulties in teaching the reading. Illustrated in questions 6 and 7
- Assessment techniques in reading. Illustrated in questions 8,9,10,11,12,13

#### 4.4.2 Results and Interpretation

- **Experience in teaching English**

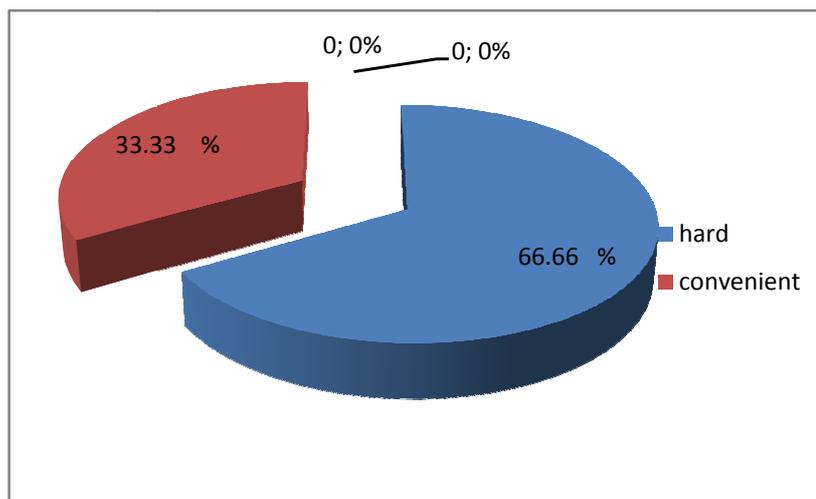
**Question 1:** How long have you been teaching?

This question aims to obtain information from different teachers whose length of experiences varied from one to another and to depict multiple opinions about the issue of reading assessment which is the area of this study. Yet, all the teachers questioned hold the license degree and are permanent teachers whose length of experience varied from 05 to 26 years.

- **Teaching methodology (skills and strategies).**

**Question2:** To what extent is the textbook suitable for the learner?

As far as the issue is concerned, the researcher wanted to know how far the textbook suits learners' abilities and supports their learning. Thus, the teachers supplied different answers with multiple opinions. Nearly 66.66 % approved that the syllabus contained long and hard texts, which went beyond learners' abilities. Whereas 33.33 % claimed that, it is convenient and meet pupils' need as it helped them to reach more knowledge about different themes. According to the results, we conclude that the syllabus does not suit our learners as language points, language outcomes and activities involve a certain degree of difficulty, which does not stimulate pupils to achieve success.

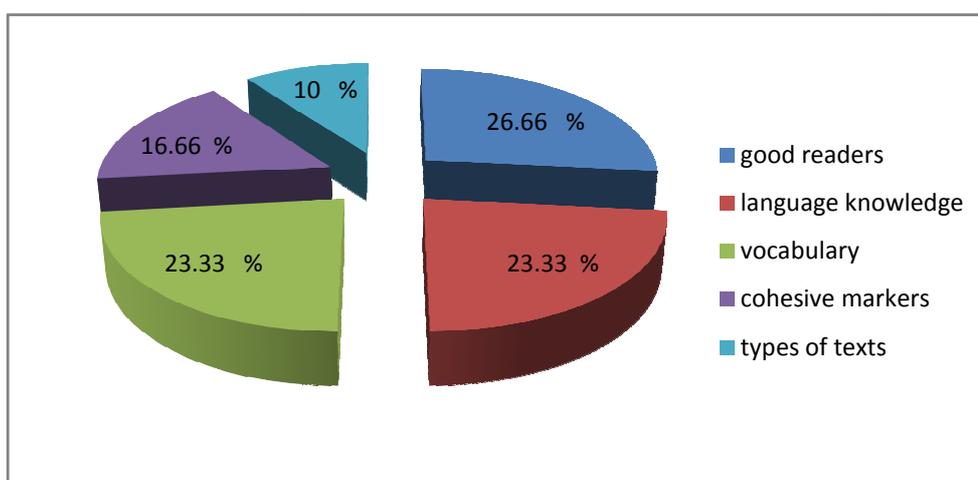


**Figure 4.30:** Teachers' Opinion about the Syllabus

- **Question3:** what objectives do you consider when teaching the reading skill?

Having asked this question, teachers did not hesitate to provide us with a variety of objectives they intend to reach while teaching the skill. Hence, the following chart summarizes the main results that teachers supplied, 26.66% of them claimed that their objective was to produce good readers who could quickly identify and decode words, grammatical structures, and other linguistic features. Another category of 23.33% stated that their objective was to master a wide range of language knowledge that stimulates them to acquire English automatically. In the same run, 23.33% maintained that they intended to make learners more acquainted with vocabulary items, as they are important components that pupils need to master to comprehend the text and be able to decipher any written script. On the other hand, 16.66 asserted that their objective was to make pupils aware of cohesive devices that exist in texts, for recognition of these indicators encourage pupils for a better understanding of facts and stimulate their learning. Only 10% of teachers argued that their ultimate point was making learners aware of the type of texts they are dealing with so that to limit their understanding and attention towards a particular genre.

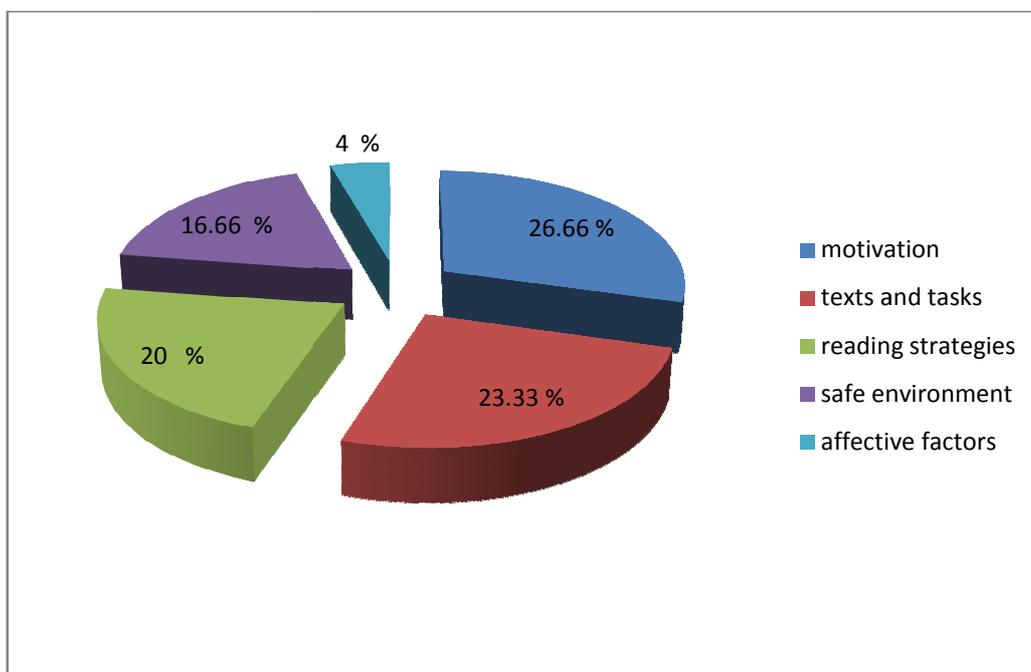
In short, all teachers resumed that it is their responsibility to help pupils fulfilling such objectives by selecting appropriate techniques, methods, and strategies and by adapting tasks and activities for them.



**Figure 4.31:** Teachers' Objectives for Reading

**Question4:** What measures do you think important to involve pupils in the skill?

This question aims to depict information about the most important measures needed to involve pupils in the reading skill. Therefore, the participants' responses differ from one another in which 26.66% claimed that motivation and positive attitude are necessary to make learners interested in the skill, as they would show a great willingness for learning and progression. Whereas, 23.33% of them pointed out that introducing texts and setting up tasks in such a way to stir pupils' desire and challenge them to become involved. 20% of the respondents added that providing pupils with a number of reading strategies made them fully engaged, and would automatically show a great success in the skill, nearly 16.66% indicated that pupils benefit from a safe and a supportive environment that permits them to feel at ease and confident in grasping opportunities, taking risks and sharing experiences with each other. The least category of 4% articulated that creating a warm affective relationship with learners incite their learning in general not only in a particular skill.



**Figure 4.32:** Measures of Pupils' Involvement in Reading

**Question5:** when teaching the reading skill, what strategies do you apply?

Most teachers argued that the ultimate goal of teaching reading is comprehension in which they include a number of strategies. Thus, these strategies need to be taught explicitly so that pupils could be involved meaningfully with the text for reading to promote language acquisition as they confirmed. Additionally, they asserted that they provide their pupils with the pre-reading, the while-reading and the post-reading strategies that entail skimming, scanning, predicting, inferring, comparing, synthesising, and paraphrasing .Furthermore, the informants resumed that pupils need opportunities to practise and consolidate these strategies through designed activities whose instruction is divided into pre- reading ,during reading and post-reading.

All in all for the sake of language acquisition ,teachers exploit reading passages to teach other related skills such as building vocabulary knowledge, introducing grammatical rules , inciting pronunciation awareness, setting up assessment procedures to measure learners' achievement and monitor their reading progress.

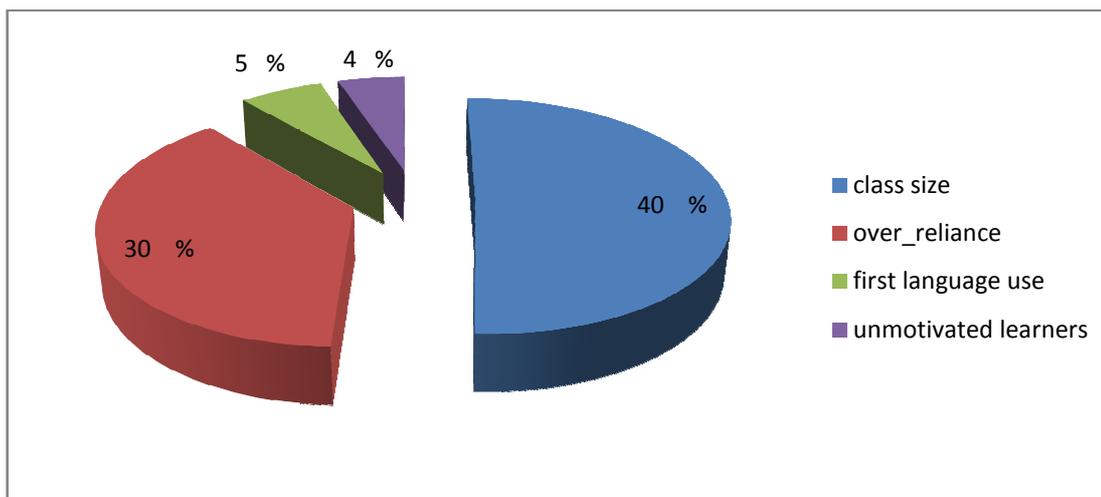
▪ **EFL teachers' difficulties in teaching the reading**

**Question 6:** based on your own observation, what sort of difficulties do you meet while teaching the reading skill?

Teaching reading effectively is entirely a definite goal of any EFL teacher; for this reason the researcher seeks to reveal the major difficulties teachers meet while dealing with the skill. Surprisingly, a wide range of informants complained about class size. 40% argued that managing overcrowded classrooms was a challenge they faced in their schools for a number of reasons such as the increase of noise level, lack of concentration, discipline problems and a great effort made by teachers to organize and present lessons. They asserted that such classes cause hindrances in the teaching-learning process.

About 30% of the respondents considered the total over- reliance on the teacher represented a major difficulty in teaching the skill, for some learners just wait to be

spoon-fed, they did not interact with the skill positively .However, 5% insisted on pupils' persistent use of the first language Arabic, the issue which hampered the reading class session.4% added that unmotivated learners consisted a major obstacle for the teacher because they showed no concern about the skill, they frequently need to be reminded about the task as they were reluctant learners who did not participate actively in the learning process.



*Figure 4.33: Difficulties Teachers Meet with Pupils in Teaching Reading*

**Question7:** Do you do anything additional to reduce these difficulties?

The more we know about pupils' concerns, the better we meet their needs that's why the researcher asks such question in order to extract potential solutions for the issue. Yet, all participants voiced that it was their responsibility to cope with all problems they met in the class. The graph below illustrates the output teachers suggest, for class size 33.5 %indicated that teachers need to activate their innovative awareness and capacities to introduce effective ways to deal with similar classes. Indeed, they have to be strict, tolerant, lenient and flexible with discipline. Regarding pupils' over-reliance on the teacher, 30 %proposed that they helped their pupils to build confidence in their own judgment and encouraged them to be independent learners. 5 %of the informants considered that first language use is not forbidden from now and then, but they enhanced pupils to use English instead. Besides, 6% confirmed that they kept the

lesson interesting through their pedagogical skills so that to motivate learners and engage them in the process of learning.

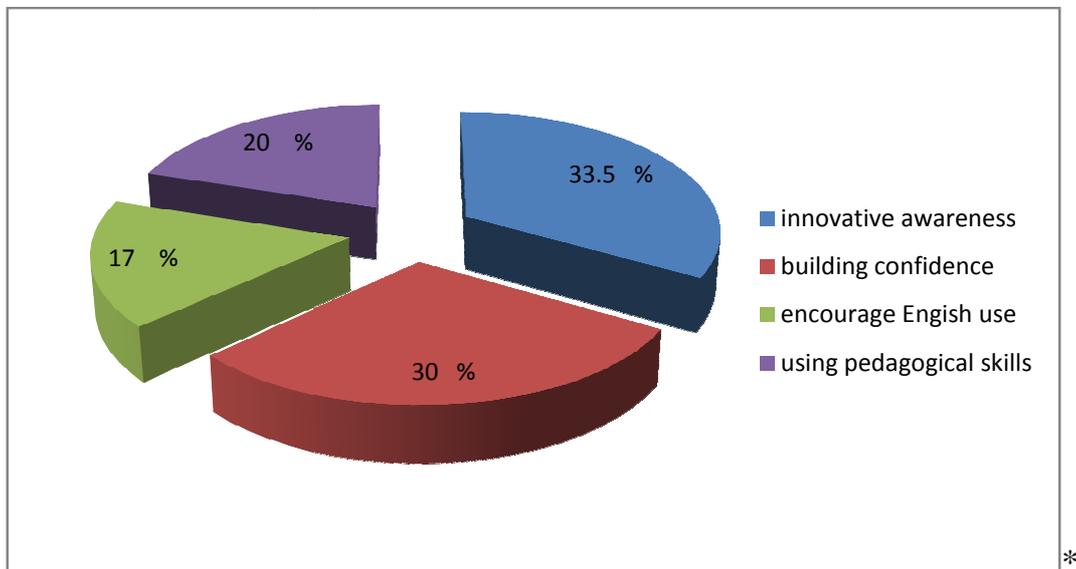
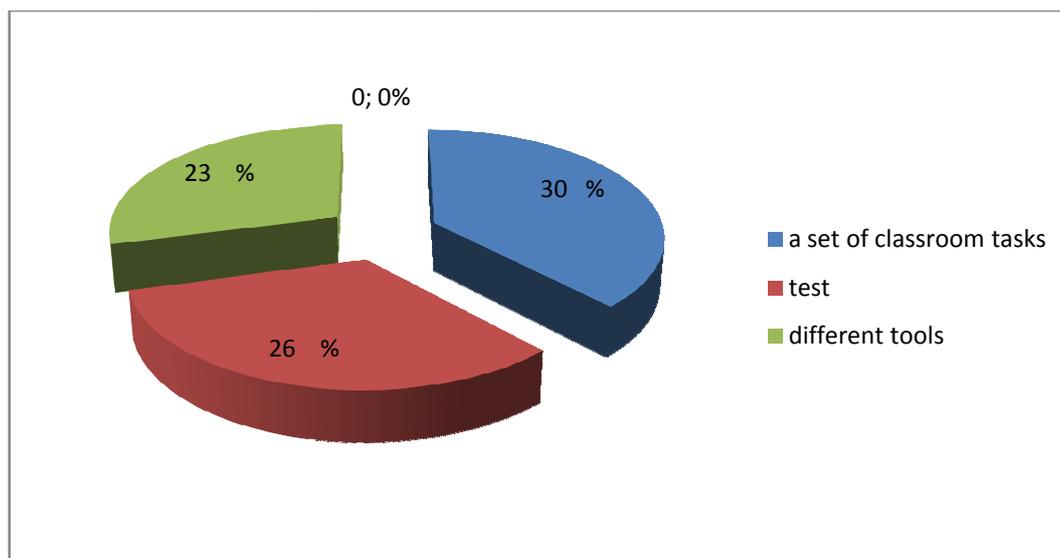


Figure 4.34: Solutions for Reading Difficulties

- **Assessment techniques in reading.**

**Question8:** what sort of assessment tool do you apply?

The purpose of introducing assessment in reading is to measure pupils' development in the skill. So, teachers' responses to the question indicated that 30% applied a combination of different tasks that promote comprehension, knowledge achievement and learning development. On the other hand, 26% favoured tests as a tool of assessment to evaluate the success of the subject matter. For the rest of the informants 23% relied on various tools of assessment to better meet their pupils' need. They added that this kind of assessment allowed them to monitor pupils' learning from different perspectives rather than one technique, which would be insufficient to measure the development of the reading process.



*Figure 4.35: Teachers' Assessment Tools*

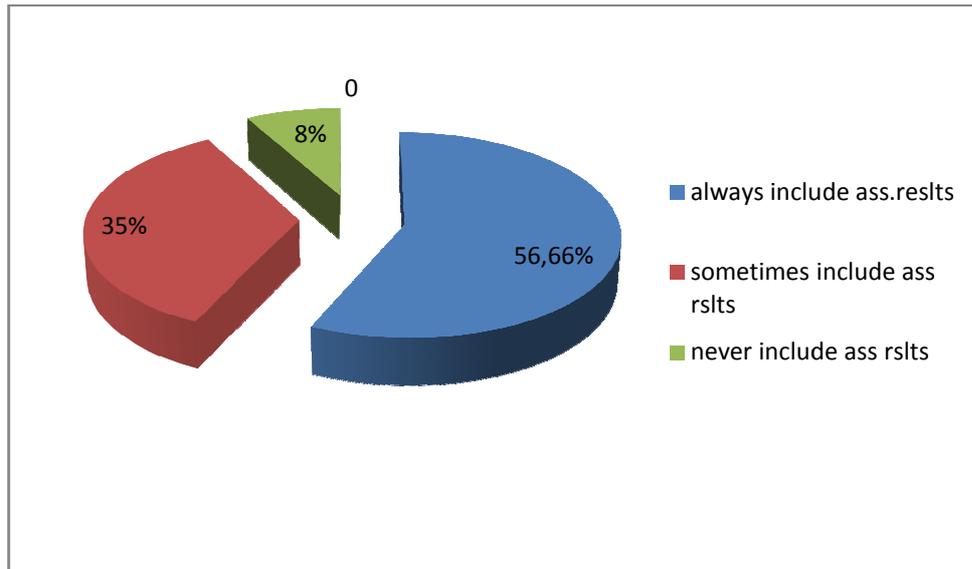
**Question9:** what test techniques do you find practical to assess reading comprehension?

Assessing reading efficiently is a matter that requires a careful consideration for it gives rise to indications that support learners' reading development. Therefore, applying different kinds of test techniques are necessary to assess all the components related to the reading skill and to provide practical data about pupils' strengths and weaknesses. In fact, most teachers' answers were identical in the sense that all test techniques they apply in the class are practical because they promote learners' comprehension and they empowered their understanding of conceptual values. These test techniques involve tasks such as: true/false statements, multiple-choice questions, find the paragraph, reordering text ideas, inference / reference questions and dealing with vocabulary items. These techniques are used to accomplish deep understanding of the reading text and to fulfill the purpose of the reading skill components.

**Question 10:** Do you include assessment results to plan future instruction?

Assessment is the ideal key that unlocks ambiguity and the starting point that permits teachers to review what has been done. Having asked teachers whether they include assessment results to design a new course or not, their responses vary according to chart 3.25 through which 56.66% said that assessment outputs helped

them to design challenging activities to reduce repeated errors and to reinforce comprehension. However, 35 % claimed that they sometimes take the assessment results in consideration to prepare a new lesson depending on the nature of the teaching unit and 8% never try to incorporate such results to plan future instruction because they need to respect the curriculum, as they do not possess complete freedom to teach as they wish.



**Figure 4.36:** Including Assessment Results for Future Instruction

**Question 11:** How can assessment be advantageous for both the learner and the teacher?

Regarding this question, the researcher aims to bring out the benefit of assessment for both learners and teachers. They asserted that assessment is an integral part of the teaching/learning process; it is a necessary criterion that reveals missing gaps required to be reconstructed. Others said that it is beneficial for the learner for it identifies what he knows and demonstrates his strengths and weaknesses, as it is a source of motivation for better achievement. One teacher added that assessment empowers pupil’s learning by receiving constructive feedback on his performance.

Most of the teachers believed that assessment is a collaborative task between them and the pupils since the results show them to what extent their teaching is taking place. Others thought that assessment allows them to measure pupils’

knowledge, understanding, and skills. It inspires them to develop corrective remedies to adjust their teaching accordingly. Other ones argued that assessment of reading helped them to prepare their pupils for the Baccalaureate Official Examination because this latter relies primarily on reading comprehension in the first section. Therefore, pupils need to master the ability to get meaning from the text, the automaticity of recognizing words rapidly, and the aptitude of classifying the main ideas of the text coherently in order to achieve success in this part as they added.

**Question 12 and 13:** What procedures do you suggest to develop the teaching of reading and how can you make reading assessment meaningful and relevant to pupils?

Considering question 12, nearly all the informants confirmed that reading is the major goal of education and it is the most important skill that promotes learning in an EFL class. They said that although they were given recommendations to teach reading, language teachers need to make an additional effort and develop personal pedagogical awareness to promote success among their learners. Yet, they proposed that texts in pupils' books need to be reviewed in terms of themes, length, and the degree of difficulty; the more texts are interesting, the better pupils become motivated and involved for such aspects stimulate learning and language acquisition.

Besides, they suggested that pupils required receiving more training strategies until they became part of themselves and used them automatically to solve comprehensive issues such as syntactic structures, vocabulary knowledge, and deriving text meaning. Other teachers insisted on autonomous learning in which learners should give reading considerable attention such as reading short texts, very short stories, newspapers' reports, and even written songs to build up a range of vocabulary items, to develop the concept of understanding while reading, and the ability to use comprehension strategies.

As far as question 13 is concerned about how to make assessment meaningful and relevant to pupils, the informants said that assessment is not something new, it has existed within the teaching process and it is the teacher's role to make it new by including the main criteria to be efficient and meaningful for learners. Some teachers

indicated that assessment allowed them demonstrating pupils' knowledge rather than catching them with tricky tasks; so, when developing any kind of assessment techniques, they have to keep in mind the curriculum content, whether the tasks are authentic and familiar to pupils or not, and if pupils have received accurate information about any given test or exam.

Other ones suggested that they should develop on pupils the positive side of assessment, it is not just a matter of positive and negative grading, but it is a source of learning and acquirement of different skills that served them to cope with authentic situations. One of the teachers persisted on the affective factors under which learners are assessed, he proposed to help them reducing test anxiety through test-taking strategies and made them aware that this kind of assessment enhanced their progress, but not threatened their safety and self-esteem. More importantly, he insisted on creating a warm supportive contact with pupils so that to enable them to be self-confident persons, taking risk holders, and searching success learners.

#### **4.5 Discussion and of the Main Results**

The rational aim behind this exploratory research was to investigate secondary school learners' needs, preferences, weaknesses, and the main reading difficulties they meet in their learning process following assessment and its various criteria. Thus, assessment for learning tends to be a practical issue that supports learners' achievements and monitors their daily class acquisition positively, for without assessment learning could never take place.

Having acquainted with such challenges, and in the light of the reading comprehension test results ,and the claims suggested by both teachers and pupils, valuable insights have been gained to overcome the difficulties behind the failure of the reading comprehension and to use assessment not only in terms of marks and grades but, it should support classroom pedagogical process which helps pupils develop themselves intellectually far from being always blamed for their errors.

Nevertheless, the findings of this study depend mainly on a classroom-reading test, views, and claims that were actually experienced by a number of participants who were willing to answer every single question without any hesitation. These findings measure to far extension learners' motivation towards learning English, the main obstacles they are confronted with while dealing with reading, and the assessment criteria that evaluate their reading assignment. Moreover, they illustrate teachers' perceptions regarding the major challenges they meet while teaching reading, the solutions they provide to adjust learning, and the procedures they propose to make assessment meaningful and advantageous for future instructions. Now, the researcher will interpret the research tools' results separately as they occurred in the section of analysis.

Regarding the reading comprehension test, the researcher concludes that the sample population certainly possesses a below-average level in reading for the results they achieve in a number of activities. This inadequacy of reading comprehension is surely due to the lack of reading strategies and deficiencies of vocabulary items which constitute the first ingredients of any language acquisition.

As far as learners' questionnaire is concerned, our pupils demonstrate a high tendency towards learning English, yet they are confronted with a number of difficulties in terms of reading texts, an association of prior knowledge with the present ones, and the assessment criteria they are subjected to in different learning situations. They are expected to better satisfy their needs and exclusively overcome all sorts of difficulties regarding the assessment of reading with the help of their teachers.

Teachers are by no means considered as field pioneers whom they strive for a better quality of teaching. Most of the respondents involving teachers' interviews considered the third-year syllabus moderately difficult for our learners since it contains long and complicated texts, abstract themes, too many language points, and numerous grammatical rules which go beyond learners' capacities. So, when designing a syllabus different factors should be measured such as learners' needs, concrete and practical goals to be achieved, cultural and actual dimensions to be fulfilled so that to make

learners aware of the current modern world they belong to, and ready to solve situational problems they meet in their daily life.

Additionally, teachers stated that their main objectives when teaching reading was to produce good readers who could interact positively with the text and extract its linguistic, semantic, and syntactic features which enable them to learn more about the target language. Furthermore, they valued their responsibility in terms of selecting suitable techniques and methods to better satisfy their learners' needs as well as creating a safe and non-threatening environment conducive for learning. The more pupils feel at ease and receive positive attitudes, the better learning opportunities take place.

Regarding teaching and the assessment of reading comprehension, teachers provided different views and perceptions that resulted from their own experiences in the field of teaching. They are not satisfied with one single technique of reading assessment, but they continuously use different methods and strategies to measure their pupils' progress and improve their learning standards. Those strategies involve the inductive learning of language points, vocabulary items, and grammatical exploration of syntactic rules via reading passages. It also includes the teaching of other related sub-skills that are essentially related to reading such as developing pupils' cognitive processes through the following taxonomies that were selected by Urquhart and Weir (1998: 90) as follows:

**Davis (1968)**

- Identifying word meaning.
- Drawing Inferences.
- Identifying writer's techniques and recognizing the mood of the passage.
- Finding answers to questions.

**Lunzer et al. (1979)**

- Word meaning.

- Words in context.
- Literal comprehension.
- Drawing inferences from single strings.
- Drawing inferences from multiple strings.
- Finding salient or main ideas.

Forming judgements.

### **Munby (1987)**

- Recognizing the script of a language.
- Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items.
- Understanding explicitly stated information.
- Understanding information when not explicitly stated.
- Understanding conceptual meaning.
- Understanding the communicative value of sentences.
- Understanding relations within the sentence.
- Understanding relations between parts of texts through lexical cohesion devices.
- Interpreting text by going outside it.
- Recognizing indicators in discourse.
- Identifying the main point of information in discourse.
- Distinguishing the main idea from detail.
- Extracting salient points to summarize (the text, an idea).
- Selecting extraction of relevant points from the text.
- Identifying basic inference skills.
- Skimming.
- Scanning to locate specifically located information.
- Transcoding information in the diagrammatic display.

The pedagogical values of these lists enhance learners' achievements, improve their interaction with texts, and evaluate their learning outcomes.

In the same context, the assessment of reading is a great matter of concern for EFL teachers. Most of the informants adopt numerous test techniques to assess their pupils and measure their development fairly. In this sense, true/false statements, multiple-choice questions, paragraph identification, inference /reference questions, and searching for vocabulary items in contexts are the most frequently used activities to check pupils' comprehension, evaluate their interaction with the text, and assess their overall understanding of facts and values presented in such a text.

Meanwhile, the continuous assessment of reading within different test techniques enable teachers to identify their pupils' strengths, weaknesses, and the main hindrances that inhibit their comprehension

Currently, most of the respondents complain of the lack of vocabulary knowledge which makes pupils reluctant in achieving comprehension and understanding. This major concern causes the persistent use of the first language Arabic that prevents teachers from teaching coherently and correctly.

Some teachers suggest a number of solutions to reduce similar difficulties such as practical strategies to teach vocabulary and using more pedagogical skills to keep pupils interested in the lesson notably in reading comprehension. Others think that asking pupils to prepare the reading of the text beforehand to make them acquainted with its vocabulary, ideas, and conceptual meaning. Thus, pupils acquire certain background information that enables them to develop a better understanding of the lesson and become more motivated for positive learning.

Additionally, other teachers appreciate the use of short texts because they allow learners to spend limited time in reading, to concentrate and focus better on the key element, and do not get bored with the text especially we are living in a globalized world where everything is running fast. People write and read short and abbreviated messages instead of traditional long letters. Modernization truly affects the new generation and makes them lazy readers and writers who mostly depend on symbols and abbreviations when exchanging messages, the major concern which is reflected in our pupils' behaviour. They are satisfied with the least amount of information as they

do not bother themselves to read long scripts; that is why most EFL teachers insist on short texts so that to attract our pupils' interest and make them good readers and successful learners. They add that the more pupils read shorter texts, the more competent reader they become.

Furthermore, teachers indicate pupils' total over-reliance on their teachers constitutes a real problem that slows down their progress. They need to become independent learners who rely on themselves at some extension in taking active roles in their learning process and find their own ways concerning various learning opportunities that support their progress. Yet, it is the teachers' responsibility to involve their pupils in autonomous learning and give them the salient tricks to be successful independent learners. It is impossible to promote learning without the teachers' existence. They are indispensable as they guide the learning/ teaching process and assume numerous roles ranked from facilitators, counselors, and managers of learning resources. Little (1991) claimed that the teacher's key role is to create and maintain a learning community; if teachers stop teaching, most learners will stop learning, and learner autonomy depends on teacher autonomy.

A great majority of teachers claim that they need to attain certain autonomy in their classrooms. In Smith's view (2001, p. 5), this teacher autonomy involves a set of six characteristics:

- (1) Self-directed professional action,
- (2) Capacity for self-directed professional action,
- (3) Freedom from control over professional action,
- (4) Self-directed professional development,
- (5) Capacity for self-directed professional development,
- (6) Freedom from control over professional development.

Briefly speaking, teachers require this autonomy in selecting appropriate assessment tools and adapted classroom instruction to meet their learners' needs. They want to exercise freedom from control over professional action and professional development because they feel they are bound by the curriculum requirements which

disregard teachers' intervention most of the time. Therefore, they need to include assessment results to plan future corrective instruction to satisfy their pupils' needs.

In a question addressed to EFL teachers in the interview about the advantages of assessment as it was raised as a research question in the introduction. Informants stated different points of view about the importance of assessment in the learning process. Hence, it determines the validity of the learning outcomes and if the objective of the course is being achieved, as it provides feedback to learners on their learning so that to better improve their performance. More importantly, their views indicate that assessment of reading does not only inform them about their pupils' attainments but it evaluates the effectiveness of their teaching during the short and long terms. Therefore, teachers can introduce new and effective plans for future instruction that will incite learners' development.

For the sake of ELT development in the Algerian schools, teachers suggested considerable propositions. They stressed the importance of study days, seminars, and inter-school workshops which allow teachers mainly novice ones to be improved in the field of teaching as well as to exchange ideas, views, and experiences regarding pedagogical skills that contribute to the teacher's professional development. Moreover, teachers valued the concept of autonomy in their classes, they claim that they should not be confined with the curriculum instruction, but they need to develop a personal touch in their classes for pupils do not learn similarly and at the same rate. There exist individual differences and everyone has his specific learning style; for this reason, teachers need to select, adapt and apply courses according to their pupils' capacities. They also consider teachers' participation when designing the syllabus for they are the ones who are directly connected with pupils and know quite well about their learners' requirements.

In short, teachers cannot do without assessment of reading because it allows them to understand learners' overall reading abilities and whether they are ready for further learning and educational advancement. Thus, it is important for teachers not to rely on one assessment tool, but they need to use different assessment techniques to demonstrate their pupils' strengths and weaknesses as well as to measure all the

reading components that include reading fluency, vocabulary knowledge, sentences processing, paragraph chronology, and the whole text comprehension.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

Throughout this exploratory research, valuable insights were achieved about the research questions and objectives. Besides, the results obtained from our informants made it possible for us to confirm our hypothesis and draw virtual concepts about the obstacles that slow down our learners' development and hinder their learning process. Thus, we could get information about the incentive strategies that empowered assessment of reading so that to make it more practical in achieving success and improving the quality of the reading skill which is estimated by most EFL teachers.

More importantly, the chapter demonstrates the empirical side of this research study that was supported by the three research tools; the reading comprehension test, the pupils' questionnaire, and the teachers' interview. They provide us with authentic pieces of evidence and important facts about the development of the reading skill and the major assessment techniques that teachers need to use to better help their pupils and enhance their involvement in the learning process

To sum up, this chapter interprets teachers' and pupils' views, reflections and suggestions about the assessment of the reading skill to find out practical solutions, appropriate classroom strategies and techniques to increase learners ' motivation and show them how well they can learn the language and get improved systematically.

# ***Chapter Five***

***Practical Implications and Recommendations  
for the Assessment of Reading***

**Chapter Five: Practical Implications and Recommendations  
for the Assessment of Reading**

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## **5.1 Introduction**

The current chapter is entirely devoted to present some recommendations and suggestions concerning the teaching and the assessment of reading and the main factors that enhance pupils to appreciate reading as an important skill that contributes to their language development as well as providing teachers with multiple hints to support their teaching of the reading skill and to assess their learners' progress and improvement in that skill.

More importantly, the chapter includes an overview of the main steps and strategies that should be respected to have a better quality of comprehension and the main issues that should be applied to assess this comprehension objectively. In the same context, the researcher tries to spotlight the most important steps that improve reading comprehension among which motivation, fluency, and prior knowledge participate in comprehension building.

Additionally, teaching vocabulary is another component that supports reading as it is considered a critical tool for comprehension and any limited language items impede understanding and prevent language development. In this sense, some suggestions and strategies about teaching vocabulary are provided to help EFL teachers develop that skill for their learners and motivate them to enrich their vocabulary knowledge.

Improving learners reading capacities through autonomous learning is another component that should not be disregarded. Yet, it is proved by many scholars that reading can be achieved by integrating autonomy in the teaching and learning process as Carrell and Eisterhold (1989) argue that there is a significant relationship between autonomous learning and reading skills. It is also recommended that extensive reading is a means to overcome reading disabilities that entail our pupils. Pupils need to be subjected to a variety of texts and trained to practice reading strategies so that to master the subject and develop personal comprehensive skills which sustain their learning and stimulate their language acquisition.

Moreover, this chapter stresses the importance of teachers' role as a factor to develop learners reading within the context of autonomy. He is still the agent who bridges the gap between learning and pupils' achievements through creating a positive learning environment, supplying learners with the necessary reading materials to meet their requirements, and supporting their learning via observation, guidance, and evaluation.

## **5.2 Principles for Teaching Reading**

There are many reasons why considering reading as an important skill. In the first place, it enhances the process of language acquisition; it makes readers well-informed and more acquainted with vocabulary items. Lastly, good reading stimulates positive discussion and excites creative writing. In addition, most researchers agree that reading is an active process that involves a reader and a text via several mental skills which incite recognition of words' structure and thus comprehension. For this reason, the researcher suggests four principles to develop the teaching of the reading comprehension skill as they can be stated as follow:

### **5.2.1 Motivation**

Motivation is the strong desire that someone possesses to do something in second and foreign language learning. It is an outstanding factor for language acquisition as it stimulates learners' readiness for positive learning. When it is strong enough, it arouses a learner's awareness to take a purposeful decision. Motivation can be external or internal; it is external when it is affected by many outside classroom factors such as the attitude of the society, family, and peers. On the other hand, internal motivation is the kind of motivation that is extracted within the classroom environment and is influenced by the teacher's personality, education, method of teaching, and the activities that pupils are exposed to.

In fact, it is the teacher's responsibility to cater to this motivation in a number of ways:

- Teacher's positive attitude towards his pupils.
- Good and thoughtful preparation of lessons.

- Interesting and purposeful activities.
- Exciting pupils' curiosity and involving them in participation.
- Keeping pupils interested in the subject matter.
- Stirring their desire for learning.
- Raising pupils' confidence in themselves.
- Teaching them how to be responsible for their learning.
- Teachers' continuous development to gain learners' trust.

As teachers and pedagogues whatever we do for our pupils to support their motivation, we can only encourage them to be eager and excited learners aware of their learning goals. Hence, real motivation comes from the individual himself who seeks success and ambition.

### **5.2.2 Fluency**

Most researchers in language teaching stress the importance of fluency in reading and they consider it as the basic ingredient for getting text comprehension. Thus, fluency is the ability to read accurately and gain comprehension simultaneously. Fluent readers are generally more successful than non-fluent ones because they are able to derive meaning quickly and complete their reading tasks more expediently. On the other hand, slow readers take more time in decoding words and, by the end, they may lose comprehension.

To improve learners' reading abilities, we need to help them to be competent readers and increase their reading fluency in many strategies:

- **Preview the text:** teachers ask pupils to read the text before coming to class, they examine its structure, look for unfamiliar vocabulary words and unveil all sorts of ambiguity.
- **Modeling:** every teacher needs to be a model reader for his pupils so that they imitate his reading without mistakes.
- **Engage in the act of reading:** involving pupils in the act of reading enables them to achieve fluency.

- **Repeated reading:** this reading strategy helps pupils develop fluency and comprehension during reading and it encourages them to be skillful readers.
- **Checking comprehension:** asking pupils questions about the text immediately after reading to check global comprehension.

Additionally, teachers should respect Mumby's taxonomy of 'micro-skills' that has been much influential in syllabus and material design as well as in language tests design. Mumby (1978) summarizes these reading micro-skills in the following points:

- Recognizing the script of a language
- Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items
- Understanding explicitly stated information
- Understanding information when not explicitly stated
- Understanding conceptual meaning
- Understanding the communicative value of sentences
- Understanding relations within the sentence
- Understanding relation between parts of a text through lexical cohesive devices
- Interpreting text by going outside it
- Recognizing indicators in discourse
- Identifying the main point or important information in discourse
- Distinguishing the main idea from supporting details
- Extracting salient details to summarise the ( text or an idea)
- Extracting relevant points from a text selectively
- Skimming
- Scanning to locate specifically required information

Helping learners in achieving such skills, they would undoubtedly fulfill the highest point of fluency which increases their ability to comprehend a text.

In short, fluency is an outstanding factor that supports reading. It includes accuracy, word recognition, and comprehension building. Therefore, teachers need to

assess their pupils' reading fluency by listening to them to provide immediate and constructive feedback.

### **5.2.3 Background Knowledge**

Background knowledge refers to the amount of information and previous experiences that learners acquire throughout their learning process. It is virtually clear that the more one knows about a topic, the better one understands and retains comprehension of the reading passage. That is why; researchers are continually looking for new strategies to activate pupils' prior knowledge in order to prepare their readiness for easier and quicker text comprehension. Hence, they suggest brainstorming, predicting, questioning, and topic talking as helpful means to achieve the goal.

Teachers as field practitioners need to find appropriate ways and effective solutions to improve their pupils' reading skills by stimulating their prior knowledge and relating it to the present information. They can provide them with

#### 1. Reading Strategy key-questions

A	What do I already know about this topic?
B	What have I read that is similar?
C	Have I seen or heard about the topic before?
D	What sort of vocabulary would I expect to find in the text?
E	What type of text is this?
F	What sort of vocabulary would I expect to find in the text?

Some pupils may find it difficult to bring out former experiences or they do not have the required background knowledge at all. By exploiting this strategy, they can develop a sense of self-reliance in activating prior information and connect them with the recent ones.

## 2. Making connections

Text to self and how does this text relate to me?

This can be done within the pupil himself during reading by connecting details between the text and his personal experiences.

Text to text and how does this relate to something I have read/ seen/heard?

In this situation, the teacher encourages pupils to compare different texts that have the same theme by making a list of common vocabulary items, similar phrases, and identical ideas that are expressed differently.

Text to the world and how does this relate to real-world events ( past and present)?

In this case, the pupil broadens his imagination to extend it beyond his personal experiences. He can call for information from the media such as television, the internet, or movies.

Having adopted the Making Connections strategy, teachers will be able to assess how pupils use prior knowledge to understand the text and give them the possibility to supply additional instruction. Indeed, they can plan for further corrective tasks that enhance pupils' reading.

### **5.2.4 Building Comprehension**

Comprehension is an active process of extracting meaning from a text. It does not only include isolated words' meaning or sentences connotation but an overall understanding of what is presented in the text. It is indeed a problem-solving thinking procedure that incites the reader to be actively involved in searching for real meaning.

In fact, building comprehension depends on specific factors such as vocabulary knowledge, thinking, reflection, reasoning, and logical interpretation of contextual facts. In this case, teachers should provide their pupils with a wide range of vocabulary relevant to the theme they are dealing with. Moreover, they should explicitly teach

pupils how to think and reflect about ideas and how to interpret them into concrete virtues.

Nonetheless, one of the most outstanding objectives of teachers in reading is making learners aware of text meaning and thus comprehension beyond the script structure. For this reason, learners should value the process of vocabulary learning, sentences building, and paragraphs' construction. Moreover, they should know how to use their pre-requisite skills to interact their background knowledge with the current ones using metacognitive strategies correctly to extract meaning appropriately.

Once teachers build pupils' comprehension, they need to assess this comprehension by exposing learners to reflective questions during the while and the post-reading phases. The issue helps teachers to better check pupils' understanding, regulate their learning, and take corrective actions immediately.

### **5.3 Implications for teaching Reading**

Teaching reading successfully is becoming the ultimate goal of many researchers.

And mainly foreign language teachers for it is the starting point of language acquisition that allows positive learning to take place. For this reason, the researcher hopefully suggests some implications for a better quality of teaching reading.

#### **5.3.1 Establishing Goals**

Setting goals deliberately gives teachers a long-term vision and short-term motivation towards the teaching of reading. They should help learners fulfilling the desirable purpose of each segment of reading throughout the following components:

- Raising pupils' ability to read a wide range and different kinds of texts; in this case, teachers need to develop numerous short texts with different subjects but related to the same theme of the unit. They are asked to read, to think, and to emancipate themselves from what they are reading through class discussion.

- Providing pupils with a set of reading strategies such as (skimming, scanning...) and giving them opportunities to exercise those strategies through exposing them to authentic reading tasks.
- Developing pupils' awareness of language knowledge for example vocabulary, semantic and syntactic structures which will improve their reading ability.
- Activating their cognitive knowledge in order to extract meaning from texts correctly.
- Increasing learners' involvement through the use of direct and meaningful instruction.
- Adapting tasks according to the different ability levels in the classroom.
- Making a reading session more enjoyable through avoiding long and boring texts. In such a situation, teachers adapt or adopt an appropriate text relevant to the theme they are dealing with by setting purposeful tasks.

Having clearly defined such goals, learners in return will automatically:

- Increase their motivation towards reading.
- Improve their self-confidence in dealing with texts.
- Increase their satisfaction in performing reading tasks.
- Be better believers in their own reading abilities.
- Establish personal reading habits outside the classroom.
- Improve their academic performance in learning in general.

Setting up definite goals is a matter of great concern. It offers teachers the possibility to teach reading correctly and coherently and permits learners to understand effectively reading passages as they can develop levels of language competency, increase the rate of reading ability, become more self-confident, and outline their learning success.

### **5.3.2 Criteria for Text Selection**

Most teachers rely on prescribed texts which are available in the pupils' coursebook, they do not bother themselves to adapt texts that are very long, so technical, or containing difficult words, but they deal with them as they are. They exclude both teachers' presence and personal touch. For this reason, the researcher outlooks that text selection either for teaching reading or for assessing pupils' comprehension is a very crucial issue that should be carefully considered. EFL teachers need to respect the principles for text selection so that they could attain their desired goals and meet their learners' needs. These principles can be resumed as follow:

- **Relevance:** Texts should be relevant to the theme of the unit approved in the textbook to give pupils the possibility to reconstruct pertinent information about the topic they are dealing with.
- **Authenticity:** teachers should care about the legitimacy of texts; they should be accurate, real, and genuine in order to raise pupils' interest and stir their motivation.
- **Linguistic ability:** linguistic difficulty may inhibit pupils from text comprehension and decrease their involvement in the text that's why teachers should consider the linguistic components of texts in terms of logical structure, organization, and lucidity of ideas.
- **Readability:** giving pupils opportunities to understand texts autonomously without teachers' help; this can be done by providing them with texts containing suitable lexical knowledge, syntactically appropriate, convenient discourse, and acceptable length to discourage readers' boredom and incites their eagerness towards reading.
- **Exploitability:** eitherfor teaching reading or testing reading procedures, the chosen text needs to reflect its flexibility in promoting various tasks for conveying the syntactic and semantic meaning of contextual data. Teachers would be able to exploit the text fully by devising varied activities that demonstrate the hidden linguistic, cultural, and artistic values of a text.

Respecting the above criteria for a text selection would facilitate the task of teaching reading as well as increases learners' involvement in the process of reading and so for learning.

### **5.3.3 Reading Strategies Instructions**

The word 'strategy' is frequently found in pedagogical research as it is accompanied by other different terms such as learning strategies, training strategies, reading strategies, and comprehension strategies. More precisely, strategies are the set of mental, conscious, and planned outlines that learners adopt to make a sense of the text. They need to develop those strategies to depict and solve reading problems that they encounter in their reading process. One of the most significant ways to promote strategy use is instructional strategies.

The primary goal of instructional strategies is to teach pupils how to understand a text and extract its meaning. So, the teacher utilizes plans to teach comprehension through direct and explicit explanation of facts, pre-reading tasks, modeling of new assumptions, and organization of reading activities that enhance motivation and support language acquisition.

Additionally, the instructor should select the most suitable strategies to make a sense of his reading lesson such as respecting the criteria of a text selection or adapting the prescribed textbook and above all making his lesson plan to decide on the right direction otherwise his teaching will fail.

When selecting strategies for direct instruction, teachers should consider certain factors such as text complexity, learners' language ability, learners' experience in reading, and the purpose of reading.

We suggest some steps for the reading based on Winograd and Hare, 1988. These steps involve:

- (i) describing the nature of the strategy the learners are going to learn,
- (ii) explaining why a targeted strategy is important,(To ensure effective training, teachers should also develop an overall plan before

- (iii) pointing out when and where a particular strategy can be used,
- (iv) demonstrating how to use a strategy by teacher modeling strategic reading processes and behaviour with reading tasks and activities, and
- (v) teaching them how to evaluate their successful use of strategy.

In short, instructional strategies maintain teacher-learner commitment, raise learners' self confidence and enable them to apply the right strategy while dealing with the reading tasks and activities.

#### **5.3.4 Vocabulary Instruction**

Teaching vocabulary is one of the greatest tasks foreign language teachers need to care about. It is almost recognized that limited vocabulary impedes understanding and presents barriers for learners to deal successfully with the reading materials. Hence, vocabulary is often considered an important tool for language acquisition, the more we build learners' vocabulary knowledge, the better successful readers become.

For many teachers, teaching vocabulary is problematic because they struggle to find the most efficient way to enable their learners to master a wide range of vocabulary items. For it is almost indispensable to learn a language without its vocabulary; even reading becomes a challenge for learners and constitutes difficulties in managing tasks. When teaching and learning take place, teachers should spot the main obstacles that impede vocabulary development so that to find immediate keys for the issue. They have to think of practical techniques to implement in the class and make their pupils interested in the lesson because when these latter feel satisfied, more learning opportunities occur smoothly.

Teachers should consider that the teaching of vocabulary as an outstanding matter in EFL class help their pupils to master a wide range of vocabulary item by the explicit teaching of new words through a set of tasks, activities and practical strategies that foster their vocabulary development starting with the most useful and learnable vocabulary, then moving gradually to the most complicated ones. Moreover, repeated

vocabulary instruction either of words or phrases will certainly promote the acquisition and allow learning to take place efficiently.

#### **5.3.4.1 Principles for Teaching Vocabulary**

Teaching vocabulary explicitly is a matter that has been suggested by many scholars in order to develop learners' lexical items. Norbert Schmitt (2000) considered a set of principles which are the following:

- Build a large sight vocabulary.
- Integrate new words with old ones.
- Provide numerous encounters with a word.
- Promote a deep level of processing.
- Make new words “real” by connecting them to the student’s world in some way.
- Encourage independent learning strategies.
- Diagnose which of the most frequent words learners need to study.
- Provide opportunities for elaborating word knowledge.
- Provide opportunities for developing fluency with known vocabulary.
  
- Teach words structure.
  
- Examine different types of dictionaries, and teach students how to use them.

Having stated those principles, teachers should look for appropriate ways to apply them effectively and incite pupils to be more aware of the importance of learning vocabulary so that to be motivated and ready to take responsibility towards personal vocabulary development. In addition, as teachers, we should help pupils become independent learners in and out of class and encourage them to be autonomous towards developing their vocabulary.

### **5.3.4.2 Techniques for Teaching Vocabulary**

The history of EFL teaching has witnessed numerous researchers looking for practical techniques for teaching vocabulary, helping language teachers to fulfill the task and learners to achieve the supremacy of language items. Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (1992) suggested the following techniques:

a) **Guessing from Context**

Guessing from context relies on four essential criteria which are the reader, the text, unknown words, and clues serving as an assistant guide for deducing meaning. This technique enables the reader to take the risk and be more responsible for his learning (Walters, 2004).

b) **Eliciting**

It is giving pupils a list of vocabulary items to be memorized

c) **Translation**

For some scholars, translation reduces motivation and makes learners reluctant to interact with vocabulary items (Cameron, 2001). This technique is used by providing pupils with glossaries so that to make sure that they know all the keywords related to the unit they are dealing with.

EFL researchers have developed endless techniques for teaching vocabulary and supply various strategies to promote vocabulary acquisition among which are the following suggested by (Richek & McTague, 2008).

#### **1. Anything Goes**

- This is used as a quick review of words that moves students from hesitation to rapid use.
- The teacher presents students with a list of words (board, overhead, or word wall).
- Teacher or student points to a word and asks:

- a) What part of speech is \_\_\_\_\_?
- b) What is the definition of \_\_\_\_\_?
- c) Give another form of \_\_\_\_\_.
- d) Spell (a derivative or inflected form of) \_\_\_\_\_.
- e) Use \_\_\_\_\_ in a sentence.
- f) Use \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in a sentence.
- g) What do \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have in common?
- h) Find two words that have to do with \_\_\_\_\_.
- i) Find a (the) root (or prefix, suffix) in \_\_\_\_\_.

## **2. Brain Power Words**

- Ask small groups of students to preview sections of a text and identify difficult words.
- For long chapters, assign different sections to different groups.
- Students place a Post-it next to the words in the text they identify as potentially difficult.
- After identifying the words, the group goes back and uses context clues to hypothesize what the words might mean.
  - a) Clues of substitution: A known word would make sense in the context and is probably a good
  - b) definition.
  - c) Clues of definition: The word is defined in the text (many textbooks do this).
  - d) Clues of opposition: Words “not, unlike” etc. are excellent clues to what a word is not and thus help define the words.
- After the Brain Power Words list is identified and definitions sought, the students check their work with the teacher.

## **3. Concept Definition Map**

- A graphic organizer that has students draw an illustration representing their text to help them think about it in terms of definitions, related concepts, and examples.

- Helps them to learn new vocabulary and concepts more holistically.
- May be used for a single concept or an entire passage.

#### **4. Connect Two words**

- A game where two lists of words are put on a blackboard or overhead projector.
- Students are asked to make connections between a word on the first list and a word on the second list and they must explain the reason for the connection that they made.

#### **5. Dictionary games**

- Set up timed competitions.
- Group students by tables or set one-half of the room against the other.
- A game-like structure motivates and involves students.

#### **6. Find that Word**

- Students are asked to record words they are studying when they encounter them in reading and speech.
- This enables students to see the words in different contexts and deepens their vocabulary knowledge.
- The teacher gives students a list of target words.
- Students write the sentence in which the words appear (students can be given strips of paper).
- One way to add interest is to see how many a class can collect!
- Devote a few minutes each week to reading the sentences – then post them.
- The activity takes a minimum of instructional time, yet encourages notice and use of vocabulary words.

#### **7. Personal Dictionaries**

- Have Students Develop a Personal Dictionary.
- You or students select organizing principle: Subject-specific, alphabetical, general/technical, social/academic

- English only or bilingual; Can include native language translations; Antonyms and synonyms.

## **8. Semantic Maps**

- A Semantic Map is one type of graphic organizer. It helps students visually organize and graphically show the relationship between one piece of information and another. Researchers have identified this strategy as an excellent technique for increasing vocabulary and improving reading comprehension. As a pre-reading activity, Semantic Mapping can be used to activate prior knowledge and to introduce key vocabulary words. As a post-reading activity, words, categories, and new concepts can be added to the original maps to enhance understanding. If the strategy is used during both pre-reading and post-reading instruction, it is suggested that different colored pens be used as ideas are recorded.
  - The teacher decides on a topic for instruction and the new words that are important to be taught. The topic or concept is briefly introduced, and a keyword is written on the chalkboard, overhead transparency, or chart paper.
  - Students are asked to think of other words that come to mind when they read the keyword. It is also appropriate for the students to write down a list of these words to be shared with the class.
  - The students share their recorded words. If any of the teacher's "new words" are not suggested, the teacher presents them for discussion.
  - After the list of words is completed, the words are grouped by category. Students discuss why certain words go together. Category names are assigned.
  - A class map of the words is created by putting the information on a large sheet of paper. The map is discussed. At this time, students are encouraged to add items to the categories or even to suggest new categories.

- As other new words that relate to the topic are discovered through the reading of the text, additions are made to the map.

### **9. Vocabulary Bingo**

- Makes learning new vocabulary fun.
- Hand out preprinted Bingo grids.
- Let students fill out the week's vocabulary words in any pattern on their papers.
- Instead of saying the word, pantomime, show, draw or give a verbal description (synonym).
- The winner must not just say the winning word, but use them all in a sentence!
- Increase motivation and participation by using a team approach that invites the team to create the sentences.

### **10. Word Expert Cards**

- Each student in the class takes the responsibility for thoroughly learning a few words – then teaching them to peers.
- Excellent for teaching tier 3 words.
- Each student takes 2-5 words from a new unit or chapter
- Each "word expert" constructs a card for each vocabulary word using a teacher-approved rough draft of the word's definition, part of speech, and an illustration.
- After a "word expert" is finished with his or her cards, the student presents her cards to a classmate and they exchange cards.

Providing learners with such techniques may enhance their vocabulary acquisition as it is for the teacher to present them appropriately or select the most suitable ones for his pupils. It is a common truth that teachers while presenting lexical items in the class, want their pupils to memorize, remember and apply the word in their process of learning. For this reason, teachers need to develop their personal techniques according to the class circumstances such as learners' personal needs, time availability, learners' attitudes and individual differences for some of them to acquire

positively. Indeed, teachers should keep in mind that pupils should be prepared for the BAC examination; a final secondary school national formal assessment where learners need to master a wide range of vocabulary items. It is almost the teachers' responsibility to elaborate techniques and strategies and implement them successfully in his class.

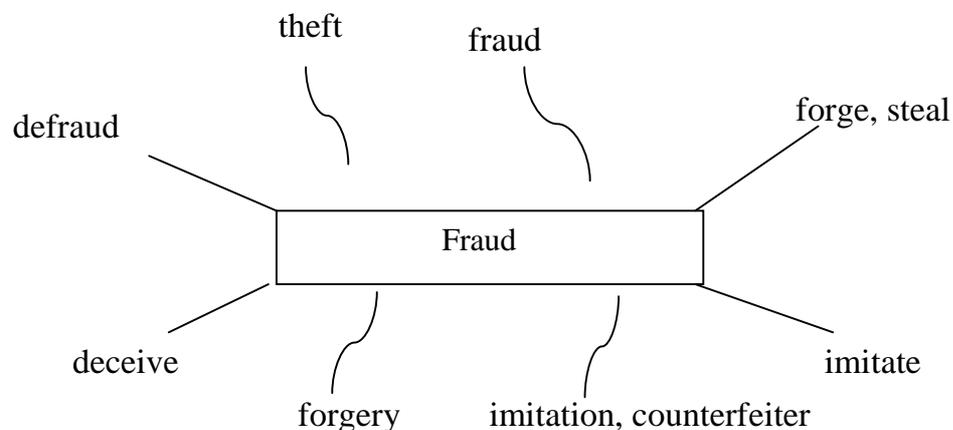
### **5.3.5 Tasks for Promoting Vocabulary Acquisition**

Language teachers have always strived to find the best and the most efficient ways to promote vocabulary acquisition and help their pupils overcoming the obstacle of vocabulary deficiency. Hence, different researchers in the field of teaching suggested endless activities and tasks to practice and possess a wide range of vocabulary items to facilitate reading comprehension and enable learners to reduce all sorts of hindrances that impede them from doing well in reading comprehension phase. The researcher suggested some tasks which are relevant to the third-year secondary school curriculum.

#### **Unit 2: Ethics in Business**

**Text:** Imitating a Property is Theft

**Task1:** Find in the text words related to Fraud and fill in the word map below. The straight line is used for verbs and the curved line for nouns. Add other words of your own.



**Task 2:** Form nouns from the following adjectives by adding appropriate suffixes to the words in the box below.

honest- stupid- responsible- cruel- moral- hospitable- legal

**Key to task 2:**

honest → ty → honesty

stupid → ty → stupidity

responsible → ty → responsibility

cruel → ty → cruelty

moral → ty → morality

hospitable → ty → hospitability

legal → ty → legality

**Task 3:** Form opposites by adding appropriate prefixes to the words in the box.

honest(adj)- approve(v)- agree(v)- approval(n)- legal(adj)-  
moral(adj)-fair(adj)-responsible(adj)-appear(v)

**Key to task 3:**

honest → **dis**honest

approve → **dis**approve

agree → **dis**agree

approval → **dis**approval

legal → **il**legal

moral → **im**moral

fair → **un**fair

responsible → **ir**responsible

appear → **dis**appear

**Task 4:** Fill in the blanks in the text below with the words you have formed in tasks 1 and 2 above.

**Key to task 4**

It is both **illegal** and **immoral** to imitate products. Piracy is due mainly to a lack of **honesty** and **responsibility**. I **disagree** with those who say that counterfeiting is beneficial to consumers. **New Prospects (2011: 57)**

**Task 5:**

Verb	Noun	Adjective	Adverb
To consume	.....	.....	.....
.....	Imitation	.....	.....
To corrupt	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	Ethically

Those tasks aim to develop learners' vocabulary components and make them more acquainted with strategies to form nouns, adjectives, verbs, opposites, and the use of affixes correctly. More importantly, teachers should be well-informed about the type of tasks they should develop for their learners and do not rely on the limited ones that exist in pupils' books.

They have to select, adapt and vary learning opportunities in order to help learners develop task awareness and make them more responsible about their learning in and outside the class as

**McCarten ( 2007)** summarizes his own words “ *we can help students be better learners and acquire good learning habits by setting structured learning tasks that can be done in and out of class.*” This fact might include inciting learners to construct a personal vocabulary notebook and use other sources to learn vocabulary.

## **5.4 Assessment of Reading Comprehension**

- 5.4.1 Type of Activities
- 5.4.2 Identifying Type of Text
- 5.4.3 True or False Statements Questions
- 5.4.4 Multiple Choice Questions
- 5.4.5 Paragraph Identification
- 5.4.6 Sentence Order
- 5.4.7 Comprehension Questions
- 5.4.8 Selecting titles for texts
- 5.4.9 Cloze tests

Assessment of reading is a fundamental issue that should be carefully considered for it is the means through which we diagnose pupils' strengths and weaknesses in reading development. Such assessment gives access to practical rehabilitation for learners who do not do well in their reading process as it makes them more conscious about their current situation and give them the possibility to take advantage of this assessment to adjust their learning.

The purpose of reading assessment does not lie on text comprehension only, but it permits the teacher to think of suitable ways to make reading more satisfactory and enjoyable as it incites them to develop more techniques and tasks to facilitate the teaching of reading. Thus, when designing a test, teachers should take into consideration different factors that affect the test itself such as the purpose of the test; which points should be assessed: comprehension, intellectual capacity, command of the language, conception of reading, vocabulary (word formation, synonyms, opposites, expressions and so on). Other factors that test designers should take into account are the length of the text, the degree of complexity, background knowledge,

timing, and the classroom atmosphere. Through such aspects, participants who are test holders will undertake the test appropriately and be assessed objectively.

Having provided pupils with multiple tasks and activities during the reading process, teachers need to assess and demonstrate their learners' outcomes in this matter. Hence, they should adopt a variety of techniques to measure pupils' reading abilities for one single method is inadequate. This may involve multiple-choice questions, true/ false statements, yes/ no questions, reference/ inference questions, paragraph identification, and cohesive markers which are more frequent in testing.

#### **5.4.1 Type of Activities**

Teachers and educators still struggle to find the best way to assess pupils' understanding. For a such matter, they develop multiple techniques, tasks, and activities to demonstrate learners' abilities and difficulties that allow them to tailor their teaching and take corrective actions to satisfy learners' needs. Among such techniques are the following:

##### **5.4.1.1 Identifying Type of Text**

This task aims to classify to which category the text belongs: expository, descriptive, narrative, or prescriptive. It is to assess pupils' ability regarding discourse classification.

##### **5.4.1.2 True/ false statements**

This activity is the most frequent one. It is based on a set of statements that pupils use their cognitive capacities to identify whether they are true or false according to the text.

##### **5.4.1.3 Multiple Choice Questions**

This type of activity is the most frequent one that pupils are familiar with. It is a form of an objective assessment in which learners are asked to select only one correct answer among a set of alternative ones which are wrong. The selection may imply different answers for a question, or to choose the best statement that summarizes the

passage, or to complete sentences with the right word. Those choices could assess one particular paragraph, a part of a text, or the whole text and this can be illustrated through the following examples.

**Task1:** circle the letter which corresponds to the correct answer.

- a. The Greek civilization
- b. Education in ancient Athens
- c. World civilizations

Regarding this task, pupils are required to select the best statement that summarises the passage. It mostly targets general comprehension of the text as it allows test holders to build an overview of the theme of the text and prepare them to tackle additional comprehension tasks.

**Task2:** Choose the right answer to complete the following sentence.

English primary education could be received at.....schools.

- a) high
- b) infant and junior
- c) junior

This task is often used to assess pupils' comprehension and check their misconceptions. It allows them to retrieve text information and interpret knowledge systematically. They are required to complete sentences with the most suitable word according to the text meaning.

In short, it is a feasible assessment tool that should be carefully constructed to assess the connotation that exists between learners' cognitive knowledge and the text data.

**Task 3:** What were Athenians famous for?

They were famous for:

- a) Literature, poetry, drama, theatre, and schools.

- b) Agriculture, ways of irrigation, and growing new crops.
- c) Astronomy, scientific experiments, and medicine.

The multiple-choice question should be cautiously designed to evaluate learners' comprehension capacities accurately. Thus, instructing pupils positively through using clear and familiar words to tackle the task intelligently and without any ambiguity. Clear instruction then, is a significant feature that promotes security and self-confidence when being assessed.

The advantage of multiple-choice questions is that they are flexible, easy to prepare, and target specific information intended to be assessed. They do not only measure pupils' literal comprehension, but they evaluate different levels of learning outcomes such as learners' reading ability, reflection on reading, knowledge organization, and concrete presentation of potential answers.

#### **5.4.1.4 Paragraph Identification**

It requires learners to make connotations between the given ideas and the paragraphs of the text. Then, they would detect the number of the paragraph for each idea. This task generally focuses on the general meaning and text structure; that is the logical organization of ideas and paragraphs. Moreover, it prepares pupils for further evaluative tasks.

#### **5.4.1.5 Sentence Order**

As far as this task is concerned, it includes a number of ideas in a scrambled way in which pupils try to reorder them logically according to their occurrence in the text. They need to read the text carefully so that to perform correctly for the task involves accuracy and coherency of events as it raises learners' linguistic awareness by concentrating on the meaning of the passage.

#### **5.4.1.6 Comprehension Questions**

Comprehension questions include both *wh* questions and yes/no questions. *Wh*-question generally starts with "what, when, where, who, why, and how». They invite

readers to supply precise and accurate information in their answers and enable them to demonstrate their comprehension skills. Day and Park ( 2005) wh-questions for they provide pupils with a literal understanding of the text as well as making inference, evaluations, and appreciations.

Yes/ no questions are merely questions that necessitate an agreement or disagreement on an opinion, an idea, or a statement. They also praise literal comprehension and encourage readers to grasp the meaning and make decisive judgments about current issues.

#### **5.4.1.7 Selecting Titles for Texts**

It is one of the most recognizable tasks for assessing pupils in reading. It is usually the last question to be asked after a number of activities. It requires learners to read a text and choose from three possibilities the most appropriate title.

#### **5.4.1.8 Cloze Test**

It is an assessment technique that consists of a part of text with deleted words (verbs, nouns, prepositions, or other types) generally four to five, then asking the learner to provide the missing element either by using their own words or selecting from a given list. This task primarily measures pupils' comprehension ability and the capacity to reveal the amount of information they have grasped during their reading experience. In fact, learners who use high mental processing skills such as retrieving, planning, evaluating, and making logical decisions can succeed better than those with low proficiency.

Cloze test designers, then, need to take careful precautions while designing this test. They have to decide on the exact words needed to be deleted to target a specific component.

## **5.5 Assessment of Vocabulary Items**

To ensure an effective vocabulary acquisition, teachers should develop an assessment framework for vocabulary learning as it is an essential component to reading comprehension allowing the reader to build an overall visualization of the text. The absence of vocabulary items leads to misunderstanding, confusion, and tasks failing. That is why involving learners in vocabulary assessment becomes a necessity in the learning process in order to produce efficient readers who can overcome occasional reading difficulties. Vocabulary assessment may be used to predict reading comprehension performance (Pearson 2009, Read 2000, and Thornbury, 2002). It means that recognizing much vocabulary is facilitating the reading process and increasing learners' self-confidence. Moreover, vocabulary evaluation reveals learners' progress and informs teachers whether the teaching/ learning process is taking place effectively. (Thornbury.2002)

### **5.5.1 Type of Activities**

Designing tasks and activities for assessing vocabulary is a controversial issue that receives much attention from EFL teachers and field practitioners. In this context, the researcher suggests tasks that are frequently used to assess vocabulary in reading comprehension.

- Finding in the text words closest in meaning
- Finding in the text words opposite in meaning
- Finding words in the text words whose definitions follow
- Matching words with synonyms/ opposites/ definitions
- What does the word he in paragraph 3 refer to?
- Word-building( verbs, nouns, and adjectives)
- Adding more words to the given lists
- Crossing the odd one out
- Classifying words of the passage

Assessment of vocabulary may measure learners' vocabulary development and inform the teacher about his learners' deficiency and inability to deduce meaning from

context. This latter may urge him to take realistic actions and find concrete remedies for the problem by developing satisfactory tasks and clever tips to implement in his class. Indeed, they should be careful when assessing vocabulary components and need to take into consideration authenticity, meaningfulness and transparency so that the evaluation will be objective.

## **5.6 Improving Reading Through Autonomous Learning**

Autonomy of learning has attracted much attention in the last few years, mainly in the EFL classes where learners are the focus of the teaching/learning process. Yet, it is often critical for learners to be engaged in such issues. Practitioners in the field strive to look for concrete techniques and procedures to involve learners in autonomous learning and making them responsible for their own decisions. In fact, learner autonomy develops out of the individual learner's acceptance of responsibility for his own learning (Benson & Voller, 1997; Dickinson, 1995; Little, 1991). This means that autonomy requires the learner to develop control over his/her learning. In this case, the researcher suggests implications for improving reading through autonomous learning which is the objective of many EFL teachers.

### **5.6.1 Learner Autonomy**

Constructing a self-directed learner is not an easy process to undertake, but a set of requirements are to be considered; a good language learner is the one who can find more learning opportunities for himself rather than being a complete follower of the teacher. He is willing to find solutions whenever he meets a potential difficulty and thus draws his way intelligently. According to Rubin and Thompson (1983), a good language learner develops personal strategies to make sense of learning opportunities, he uses linguistic knowledge of his first language to master the second language and creates learning experiments in and outside the classroom as well as he varies his learning style according to the formality of the situation he is involved in.

*“ learners take their first step towards autonomy when they recognize that they are responsible for their own learning.”(Holec 1981, Little 1991).* The learners' role

in an autonomous environment is not that of a passive consumer who receives information vainly. In contrast, learners here take an active role to support, direct and assess their learning. They feel more responsible for their performance and become successful when they exercise that responsibility through these criteria: planning, implementing, evaluating. Their autonomy grows as a result of their never-ending effort to understand the WHY, the WHAT, and the HOW of their learning.

According to Little (2002), autonomous learners are those who accept responsibility, plan and execute learning activities, and are willing to assess their own learning. In this sense, autonomous learning allows self-assessment, a fundamental factor that learners need to develop to monitor their learning process and measure their achievements. They have to detect their weaknesses and strengths to be able to guide themselves independently and take decisive actions accordingly.

In short, autonomy helps learners take an active approach towards learning and allows it to be part of themselves.

### **5.6.2 Autonomy in EFL Reading**

Integrating autonomy in an EFL reading class is a challenge that most language teachers struggle to realize and implement in their classes for the sake of making autonomous reading interesting and enjoyable among learners. Hence, there is a strong correlation between autonomy and reading in the sense that learners who are subjected to independent reading tend to be more successful than those who never read or are satisfied with limited reading in the class. It is a fact that characterizes most Algerian language learners in secondary schools.

Being an autonomous reader increases learning opportunities and enables the learner to work productively with the teacher through his positive interaction with the reading material. Thus, it gives birth to a proficient reader who surpasses all sorts of hindrances in the reading process. They can simply develop personal strategies that regulate their learning and promote their achievements.

Thanasolus (2000) and Little (2007) claim that in order to promote autonomy in language skills the learners should extend their strategies of learning beyond teacher-guided to self-guided and independent learning. In this respect, learners need to expand sub-strategies such as interacting, controlling, demonstrating, and formulating realistic objectives about their learning.

Important factors should be praised to incorporate autonomy in an EFL reading context. Learners are required to value the importance of reading and give it a certain consideration in their learning schedule. They have to build up a positive attitude towards individual development by convincing themselves to improve and be better in tackling reading; it is the rise of self-confidence and self-esteem that enhance effective learning. Indeed, motivation is an essential issue that should be regarded in this situation. It is increased whenever learners feel at ease and more content with their contribution to the learning process.

To sum up, successful reading could occur when it is fostered by the implementation of autonomy.

### **5.6.3 Self-assessment**

If autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's learning ( Holec 1981:3), then self-assessment is a means that supports that learning. It is an outstanding aspect that should be included within autonomous learning, for it enables assessors to decide what to assess, when to assess and how to assess their performance. Being engaged in such an issue, learners could monitor their knowledge and reflect on their assignments. Indeed, they could identify points of weaknesses and dissatisfaction which might be reconstructed by the teacher through valuable insights and constructive supports.

A number of researchers including Gardner argue that self-assessment helps learners monitor their individualised progress and improve their motivation to achieve their desirable objectives. This kind of assessment informs teachers about the current situation of their learners and urges them to take immediate remedies to adjust teaching and find equivalent procedures and techniques to help learners learn through



p. 320) explains, “Pupils are given the time, encouragement, and materials to read pleasurable without the pressures of testing or mark”.

Being involved in an extensive reading program, learners develop a wide knowledge of vocabulary for its deficiency often constitutes an obstacle for effective reading. They build up competencies and skills while confronting any text using different strategies and techniques to extract comprehension and gain automaticity of reading. They will learn in a non-threatening environment where they feel secure, motivated, and self-confident, the most important factor for positive learning. Thus, such reading not only increases pupils' motivation, but it enhances their confidence in reading without fear or anxiety of committing mistakes or being frustrated by insufficient reading outcomes (Day and Bamford, 2002).

In brief, extensive reading might breed autonomous readers who can lead independent reading either for pleasure or for academic purposes.

#### **5.6.5 Role of the Teacher**

Improving pupils reading abilities depends on the various roles the teacher takes notably within the issue of autonomous learning. In this case, the teacher's autonomy is indispensable to implement autonomy in his class for "learner autonomy depends on the teacher autonomy." (Little 1995). They cannot be expected to foster autonomy growth among his pupils without being an autonomous teacher who can adjust his pedagogical actions and develop his professional life via study days, seminar participation, being members of teachers' associations, or subscribers in pedagogical reviews.

In order to equip learners with the best reading opportunities, teachers need to perform different roles switching intelligently from one to another.

- ***Resource Provider***

He is the agent who provides pupils with sources and materials to better exploit the reading skill and give them the possibility to participate actively in the reading

session through text interaction and knowledge construction. Moreover, he offers pupils a warm environment free of anxiety and frustration where learners' attitudes towards learning become positive and meaningful. Any negative setting can impair learning and discourage satisfaction.

- ***Manager***

For the sake of enhancing learners' reading comprehension, the teacher needs to be the supervisor who organizes the learning atmosphere and manages the tasks in the classroom as well as making sure that the lesson is moving efficiently under considerable pedagogical rules.

- ***Facilitator***

Facilitating the learning components is supplying learners with plans, strategies, tips, and prospects to make the lesson flexible, smooth, and interesting so that to attract their attention and making them fully involved in the reading session. Indeed, learners might develop access to further independent reading.

- ***Assessor***

It is the teacher's role to bridge the gap between learning and learners' outcomes through constructive evaluation by using multiple means of formal and informal assessment during and after the lesson. It is his role to reflect on the teaching process and think logically to measure learners' progress.

- ***Counselor***

Being a counselor is a significant role that a teacher has to play. He is bound to possess many features to gain pupils' trust such as making them feel comfortable, trustworthy, building up a teacher-learner relationship. They need to inform learners and make them aware of the learning situations and give them the possibilities to practice, judge, and make decisions.

It should be well reminded that autonomous reading is not about leaving learners struggling alone with the skill without teachers' presence, but it is about teachers operating different roles and switching from one to another according to both pedagogical circumstances and learners' needs. It is indeed the teachers' task to make learners more responsible about their learning through practice and training until they become skilled readers who likely need less support and orientation in the future.

They could even hold independent reading, doing activities, and making decisions by themselves.

In short, it is worth mentioning that «*Good teachers care more about their students' learning than they do about their own teaching.*» **Harmer (1998:p3)**

## **5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to provide some recommendations and suggestions regarding the teaching of reading within the assessment framework in an EFL Algerian context. It is intended to shed light on the issues that inhibit learners from doing well in the reading process and constitute a real threat to their progress and their language acquisition. Meanwhile, the researcher focuses on some parameters that possibly elevate the teaching of reading and help learners surmount difficulties that impede their comprehension and their active interaction with the text.

Moreover, the researcher outlooks some criteria of a great necessity regarding the teaching and the assessment of reading such as selecting texts, establishing goals, practicing reading strategies, and training pupils of reading instruction. Hence, these factors may prove helpful for colleague teachers to establish strong corners of the reading skill as this latter is considered the core of foreign language learning, it incites self-improvement, a better understanding of facts, and correct decision-making. It also empowers other related skills like writing, listening, and communicating.

Deficiency in vocabulary implies poor reading and so far hard comprehension of contextually related facts, ideas, and meaning of conceptual values that authors intend to transfer. For this concern, the chapter interprets some remedies for vocabulary

acquisition through principles of approaching the subject and useful techniques for measuring its development along the teaching and learning process. As it is known, knowledge of vocabulary is necessary for every language mainly in an EFL context for it determines word recognition, sentence comprehension, paragraph identification, and thus text interaction.

A final speculative implication is empowering learners in reading through integrating autonomy within the reading process so that to master the skill adequately by applying the criteria of autonomous learning which include motivation, responsibility, self-esteem, and reflection. Hence, it is the role of the teacher to put this autonomy into practice by providing help, assistance, supervision, and evaluation to engender good and independent readers.

In short, the stated suggestions can be used to develop learners' reading outcomes, the ultimate goal of foreign language teachers that they try to achieve from the early days.

# ***General Conclusion***

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

This exploratory study aims to shed light on the main factors that enhance the promotion of reading through the assessment procedures at the secondary school level. It is an effort to explore the concept of reading assessment from the perspective of practitioners, teachers, and learners themselves who were under investigation. The researcher has concluded that no educational programme can succeed without being subjected to assessment criteria.

Although The issue of reading assessment is not a new field of study, the problems of reading disabilities and reading assessment still persist and pertain to our secondary education where pupils do not manage successfully in their reading skills. Therefore, out of this concern and as being a salient component in the field of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the researcher finds it unfair not to carry such a challenge and participates in improving the quality of teaching English mainly reading in our secondary education.

In the Algerian educational context, a great responsibility is put on the teacher. The success of learners is determined by his perseverance and commitment to teaching. In this sense, involving pupils in reading assessment is not an easy task to perform; considerable efforts need to be made by the teacher not only to provide knowledge and information to our pupils but to help them master the reading skill and provide them with the necessary features of reading assessment so that to ensure success and lifelong learning.

Promoting good language readers is the desirable goal of every EFL teacher for a number of reasons; their teaching process will be valued, their expectations will be guaranteed and their efforts will be considered. As a consequence, their pupils will be successful readers and thus will promote language acquisition.

Therefore, reading assessment is used to gather information about how learners achieve text understanding and to what extent they can tackle comprehension tasks successfully. Thus, it is the core of this study which the researcher intended to

investigate in relevance to third-year secondary school pupils in Sidi Bel Abbes, Algeria. Moreover, the main objective of this explanatory research is to contribute to the development of pupils' proficiency in learning the language effectively and provide practical implications for both PES and pupils in secondary schools to overcome the barriers they commonly meet when trying to be involved in reading assessment.

It is worth mentioning that after undertaking six years of learning English, our pupils at secondary schools are confronted with many difficulties regarding reading skills. So, the researcher tries to investigate this area about assessment that she finds necessary for any educational prospectus. In fact, the assessment of reading should be based on definite assessment criteria so that to inform teachers about their learners' outcomes and urge them to take corrective decisions. Therefore, the present research is a case study which is an attempt to answer the following research questions.

1. Why is it important to utilize assessment procedures in teaching and learning?
2. What measures should we adopt to assess reading comprehension skills effectively?
3. What are the reasons behind the failure of the reading comprehension skill?

Therefore, out of these questions, the research aims to investigate and confirm or disconfirm the following hypotheses:

1. Implementing assessment procedures in the teaching-learning process is necessary for two main reasons: first to diagnose learners' strengths and weaknesses, and second to empower immediate classroom instructions.
2. Assessment of the reading comprehension skill should possess different measures, procedures, and techniques which rely on clear and logical principles.
3. The low achievement of the reading skill is mainly related to the lack of reading strategies and deficiencies of vocabulary items.

Having founded the research questions and hypotheses, the researcher offers a general framework and context for the research problematic. In chapter one, she attempted to describe the situation of EFL teaching/ learning in Algeria at the secondary school level as she gives a general overview of the main research tools being used in this investigation to satisfy the research questions. The tools comprise an interview, a questionnaire, and a reading comprehension test.

The second and the third chapters have been dealt with the review of the literature and theoretical background underlying both assessment and reading skill. Chapter four entails the data analysis and interpretation. Eventually, chapter five undertakes some recommendations and implications regarding the teaching of reading and the way of carrying on assessment procedures in light of the results obtained in this study.

More precisely, the results indicated that no learning can be achieved without an assessment programme. Most of the informants mainly teachers praise the utility of assessment in the teaching process because it supports learners' apprenticeship and incites educational development not only in reading but in different areas of learning. They added that assessment is a central component of teaching. It enables them to undertake ongoing professional development as they adjust their teaching through renewable planning, more corrective methods, and reformed presentation. It is also crucial for teachers to share the assessment features with their learners and make them clear, purposeful, and meaningful in order to promote more learning opportunities and achievable results for everyone.

The assessment of the reading skill is multifaceted. It can be accomplished through different techniques for no single method can satisfy the learning requirements. It is the teachers' task to make pupils aware of the various assessment procedures and supply them with sufficient practice and exercise to fill the missing gaps and be able to overcome all sorts of difficulties they meet during the learning process. Indeed, learners will develop a sense of familiarity with the assessment means and this will automatically increase self-esteem and confidence, the most outstanding factors of

## *General Conclusion.....*

success and accomplishment. As a matter of fact, a planned assessment strategy should be incorporated into the learning process.

More importantly, it is worthwhile to mention that at the secondary level, the reading comprehension test should satisfy the criteria of assessment. Primarily, text selection should be cross-curricular, clearly worded instructions so that to avoid any confusing and manageable activities that learners are familiar with.

Despite the significant efforts made by the Algerian ministry of education regarding the teaching of English, our pupils perform badly in reading and face many difficulties such as linguistic deficiency notably the lack of vocabulary which is an essential component for any language acquisition. The ability to read depends on the number of lexical items someone possesses. Any deficiency causes complexity of understanding, anxiety in doing tasks, and troubles in doing well. In this case, reading is the basis of learning and is an important skill that should be given great care. It is a means of obtaining knowledge in different areas. That is why stakeholders need to appreciate reading and make learners aware of its value by enabling them to be proficient readers and providing them with the necessary strategies to be so.

Moreover, teachers need to plan a reading course that will address learners' weaknesses. They should bring a wide range of texts to the class because variety promotes the practice. So, learners will get accustomed to different types of reading and will be able to apply different reading strategies such as engaging with the text, demonstrating a high level of interaction, monitoring comprehension, synthesizing facts, and summarizing information. It is advisable to teach pupils how to be strategic in order to remember ideas of the text and understand better. Therefore, the explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies may avoid serious reading problems and enable readers to select the most appropriate ones for each reading situation.

It is quite apparent that limited vocabulary impedes successful reading. Therefore, this study indicates that the lack of vocabulary knowledge makes pupils unwilling to put forward steps in their development because there is a strong correlation between learners' vocabulary size and their performance. The more pupils learn new

## *General Conclusion.....*

words the better they raise levels of achievement. For this reason, teachers need to help their pupils developing this skill through different strategies that are available in the scope of teaching. Indeed, pupils should give vocabulary items considerable importance by using dictionaries, continuous revision of lexical items, and they should be encouraged to set up a personal vocabulary notebook that will help them memorize and retrieve word items when necessary. As foreign language learners, pupils should master a flow of vocabulary knowledge in order to weave meaning and depict comprehension.

The present study focuses upon the assessment of reading as an outstanding task for both learners and teachers. It enables teachers to pinpoint their learners' difficulties and identify those who need remediation so that to plan suitable future instruction and foster their learning requirements. Moreover, it makes learners aware of their learning situations and enhances them to reconstruct appropriate efforts to overcome all kinds of obstacles that impede their progress and makes fluent readers who can manipulate any reading text successfully.

In general, assessment of reading is performed through daily classroom activities, final units' projects, monthly tests, and term examination to measure learners' improvement over time, and rank their capacities with the whole group. Hence, teachers apply a number of activities such as multiple-choice questions, true-false statements, finding words in context, filling the gaps, and comprehension questions to extract pupils' understanding and measure their capacities in drawing text meaning.

Among the main result of this research is teacher autonomy that was given a certain consideration in the sense that teachers claim that they need this independence in their teaching environment in order to foster their pupils' needs and look for the best remedies for their students' learning problems. This freedom does not mean to get rid of the curriculum , but only to adjust the teaching/ learning process and to creat more suitable learning situations for their pupils and to pinpoint the major difficulties that impede their pupils', progress.

All in all, this autonomy enables teachers to develop themselves professionally and pedagogically and to have more responsibility in taking decisions to satisfy their

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pupils 'needs. By the end of the study, both teachers and pupils appraise the importance of assessment as it regulates teaching and enhances learning and none of them can do without it.

The nature of the study is limited to the data collected from 150 pupils studying at Zeddour Ibrahim School in Sidi Bel Abbes. For this reason, it can be said that the study is limited to a small group of secondary school pupils which makes it impossible to generalize the findings in similar educational settings that is in other secondary schools.

A further limitation is related to teachers' availability regarding their timetables and other circumstances. There was a kind of persistence to get back the questionnaire in time that's why the number of informants was reduced to 30 which is a limited number for such research.

Finally, although new evidence has come into existence, this dissertation remains limited regarding the findings obtained, as it necessitates extra research to qualify other issues related to reading assessment. The present study cannot supply an overall and absolute solution to the research problematic, but it is a humble exploration aroused out of the researcher's concern regarding the assessment of reading in Zeddour Ibrahim School in Sidi Bel Abbes, Algeria.

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# ***Appendices***

*Appendix n°01: The Reading Comprehension TEST*

Dear pupils,

I would be very pleased if you participate in this research study by doing this test. It is about the difficulties that you face in the reading skill and the major assessment techniques concerning reading comprehension that you meet in the class. All your requests will be taken in consideration.

Please, read the text carefully and answer all the questions. Thank you for collaboration.

**Text**

An estimated 158 million children aged 5- 14 are engaged in child labour one in six children in the world. Millions of children are engaged in hazardous situations or conditions such as working in mines, working with chemicals and pesticides in agriculture or working with dangerous machinery. They are everywhere but invisible: toiling as domestic servants in homes, laboring behind the walls of workshops, hidden from view in plantations...

In Sub-Saharan Africa , one child in three is engaged in child labour, representing 69 children. In South Asia, another 44 million are at work.

Children living in the poorest households and in rural areas are most likely to be engaged in child labour. Those burdened with chores are girls. Millions of girls who work as domestic servants are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

The UNICEF often interferes with children education . Ensuring that all children go school and that their education is of good quality , is a key of preventing child labour.

*Adapted from “UNICEF, Social Media. “*

**Activity 1: Multiple-choice Questions**

Read the text carefully. Then choose the main idea of the text.

- a. Children and exploitative work

- b. The child and labour organization
- c. Children's educational problems

**Activity 2:** Say whether the following statements are true or false according to the text.

- a. Children's work is always harmful.
- b. The number of African children involved in work is higher than the one in Latin America.
- c. Poverty is considered the only cause of child labour.

**Activity 3:** In which paragraph is it mentioned that children are involved in exploitative work?

**Activity 4:** What or who the underlined words refer to in the text?

- That ( §1)
- b) their ( §4)

**Activity 5:** Answer the following questions according to the text.

- 1. What does child labour mean?
- 2. Which continents are concerned with child labour?
- 3. What are the causes behind child labour?

**Activity 6:** Find in the text words or phrases closest in meaning to the following

- Safe ( §2)
- b) in addition ( § 3)
- c) unsuitable ( §4)

**Activity 7:** Ask the questions that the underlined words answer.

**Activity 8:** Fill in the gaps with four words from the list.

Schools-illegal-poverty-due-think

Child labour is a worldwide issue. It is.....(1).....to overpopulation, unemployment and especially to...(2).....Parents have to send their children doing...(3)..... Works rather than studying. If they..... (4)..... that this brings them happiness they are mistaken.

*Appendix n°02: Pupils' Questionnaire*

Dear pupils,

I would be very pleased if you participate in this research study by filling up this questionnaire. It is about the difficulties that you face in the reading skill and the major assessment techniques concerning reading comprehension that you meet in the class. All your requests will be taken in consideration.

Please, tick in the right box or supply full answers when necessary. Thank you for collaboration.

Age :.....

Year:.....

School:.....

1. Do you enjoy learning English? , or you feel obliged to learn it?  
Enjoy                            obliged
2. Do you place English among the important subjects to revise?  
Yes                            No
3. Do you consider other sources to develop your English?  
Yes                            No
4. Do you participate freely in the class or you teacher compel you to do so?  
Yes                            No
5. Do you find the way of learning English satisfactory, acceptable or boring?  
Satisfactory                            acceptable                            boring
6. Which skill do you consider beneficial for your education?  
.....  
.....  
.....
7. Do you associate your prior knowledge while you are reading a text?  
Yes                            No
8. During reading can you extract details and specific information easily?  
Yes                            No
9. Can you guess the meaning of words in contexts using clues?  
Yes                            No

10. Do unfamiliar vocabulary items inhibit your understanding?

Yes  No

11. When you don't understand a long sentence, do you stop reading, ask your teacher for help, or do you re-read again?

Stop reading  ask teacher  re-read again

12. How do you expect your teacher to teach you reading to understand the text better?

.....  
.....  
.....

13. Does your teacher prepare you to handle a reading comprehension test?

Yes  No

14. During a test, do you answer all the questions or skip some of them?

Answer all  skip some of them

15. What difficulties do you meet during reading when taking a test?

.....  
.....  
.....

16. What is your feeling when you are assessed?

Relaxed  upset  bored

17. What kind of assessment do you find practical to adjust your learning?

.....  
.....

18. Do you make any self-assessment before getting assessed by the teacher?

Yes  No

19. Does your teacher's assessment improve your reading skill and so your learning opportunities?

Yes  No

20. How do you feel after getting assessed: confident or anxious?

Confident  anxious

*Appendix n°03: Teachers' Interview*

Dear fellow Teachers,

I would be grateful if you contribute in this research study by filling up this questionnaire. It is about the difficulties that pupils face in the reading skill and the main assessment procedures that you adopt in order to support pupils learning.

Your contribution will count a lot for me to accomplish this investigation. Thank you for your cooperation.

**Question 1:** How long have you been teaching?

**Question3:** what objectives do you consider when teaching the reading skill?

**Question4:** what measures do you think important to involve pupils in the skill?

**Question5:** when teaching the reading skill, what strategies do you apply?

**Question 6:** based on your own observation, what sort of difficulties do you meet while teaching the reading skill?

**Question7:** Do you do anything additional to reduce these difficulties?

**Question8:** what sort of assessment tool do you apply?

**Question9:** what test techniques do you find practical to assess reading comprehension?

**Question 10:** Do you include assessment results to plan future instruction?

**Question 11:** How can assessment be advantageous for both the learner and the teacher?

**Question 12:** What procedures do you suggest to develop the teaching of reading?

**Question 13:** how can you make reading assessment meaningful and relevant to pupils?

### **Teachers' Interview**

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. To what extent is the syllabus suitable for the learner?
3. What objectives do you consider when teaching the reading skill?
4. What measures do you think important to involve pupils in the skill?
5. When teaching the reading skill, what strategies do you apply?
6. Based on your own observation, what sort of difficulties do you meet while teaching the reading skill?
7. Do you do anything additional to reduce these difficulties?
8. What sort of assessment tool do you apply?
9. What test techniques do you find practical to assess reading comprehension?
10. Do you include assessment results to plan future instruction?
11. How can assessment be advantageous for both the learner and the teacher?
12. What procedures do you suggest to develop the teaching of reading?
13. How can you make reading assessment meaningful and relevant to pupils?

1. How do you find the syllabus of teaching EFL?
2. Do your learners find the texts in the syllabus motivating?
3. Do you provide your pupils with enough strategies to deal with reading successfully?
4. Do you praise strategy training and make it part of pupils learning?
5. Do your pupils use their background knowledge to understand a text?
6. Which difficulties do your pupils meet while dealing with a reading text?
7. What are the benefits of reading assessment?
8. Do you make sure that the reading instruction are clearly worded?
9. Do you adapt reading book activities or you present them as they are?
10. Do you ask your pupils to make self-assessment after performing their activities?
11. Which assessment procedure do you find practical to adjust learners' development?
12. What test techniques do you adopt to assess reading comprehension effectively?

## Abstract

The aim of this research study is to emphasize the importance of assessment in the learning process, notably in the teaching of the reading skill in the Algerian secondary schools. It is noticeable that no educational programme can do without assessment as it is a strong pedagogical tool for learning. The study reveals the main hindrances that impede secondary school pupils from doing well in reading. So, the results demonstrate quite clearly the reasons behind that failure and the necessity of reading assessment to support not only learners' achievement, but also to inform teachers and researchers about the current reading disabilities that encounter our pupils. The research indicates that teachers need to use multiple assessment techniques to better understand their pupils' strengths and weaknesses so that to take actions accordingly and thus satisfy their pupils' need and regulates their teaching process. It is almost known that there is no best method for assessing pupils, but it is the responsibility of the teacher to make it best through his pedagogical techniques, perseverance and engagement for improving the quality of teaching.

**Key words:** assessment- reading- formative assessment-summative assessment- teaching- learning.

## Résumé

Le but de cette étude est de souligner l'importance de l'évaluation dans le processus d'apprentissage, notamment dans l'enseignement des techniques de lecture dans les écoles secondaires algériennes. Il est à noter qu'aucun programme éducatif ne peut se passer de l'évaluation puisqu'il s'agit d'un outil pédagogique puissant pour l'apprentissage. L'étude révèle les principaux obstacles qui empêchent les élèves du secondaire de bien lire. Les résultats démontrent donc clairement les raisons de cet échec et la nécessité de l'évaluation de la lecture pour soutenir non seulement les résultats des apprenants, mais également pour informer les enseignants et les chercheurs sur les difficultés actuelles en lecture qui se posent à nos élèves. La recherche indique que les enseignants doivent utiliser plusieurs techniques d'évaluation pour mieux comprendre les forces et les faiblesses de leurs élèves afin de pouvoir agir en conséquence et ainsi satisfaire les besoins de leurs élèves et réguler leur processus d'enseignement. On sait presque qu'il n'existe pas de meilleure méthode pour évaluer les élèves, mais il incombe à l'enseignant de tirer le meilleur parti de ses techniques pédagogiques, de sa persévérance et de son engagement pour améliorer la qualité de son enseignement.

**Mots-clés:** évaluation- lecture-évaluation formative- évaluation sommative- enseigner- apprentissage.

## ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة البحثية إلى التأكيد على أهمية التقييم في عملية التعلم خاصة في تدريس مهارة القراءة في المدارس الثانوية الجزائرية. من الملاحظ أن أي برنامج تعليمي لا يمكن أن يتم دون تقييم لأنه أداة تعليمية قوية للتعلم. تكشف الدراسة عن العوائق الأساسية التي تعيق تلاميذ المدارس الثانوية من الأداء الجيد في القراءة. لذا، فإن النتائج تدل بوضوح على الأسباب الكامنة وراء هذا الفشل وضرورة تقييم القراءة لدعم ليس فقط إنجاز المتعلمين، ولكن أيضا لإبلاغ المعلمين والباحثين حول الإعاقة القراءة الحالية التي تواجه تلاميذنا. ويشير البحث إلى حاجة المعلمين إلى استخدام تقنيات تقييم متعددة لفهم نقاط القوة والضعف لدى تلاميذهم بشكل أفضل بحيث يتخذون الإجراءات وفقاً لذلك، وبالتالي يلبي حاجات تلاميذهم وينظم عملية التدريس الخاصة بهم. من المعروف أنه لا توجد أفضل طريقة لتقييم التلاميذ، ولكن من مسؤولية المعلم أن يجعلها أفضل من خلال تقنياته التربوية والمثابرة والمشاركة لتحسين جودة التعليم.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** التقييم- القراءة- التقييم التكويني- التقييم النهائي- التعليم- التعلم.